

FEMININE HEROES: THE WOMAN'S MAN IN A LITERATURE OF THEIR OWN: BRITISH WOMEN NOVELISTS FROM BRONTE TO LESSING, BY ELAINE SHOWALTER

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Abstract

The chapter V highlights the feminine perspective of women novelists when they present the man in their novels. In another word, the novelists have described the man through "female glasses" which didn't care much of the reality. That's why the term "Woman's Man" has embodied what mentioned recently.

Keywords Impossibly idle and oversexed, impossibly pious and desexed, female glasses.

INTRODUCTION

The chapter V highlights the feminine perspective of women novelists when they present the man in their novels. In another word, the novelists have described the man through "female glasses" which didn't care much of the reality. That's why the term "Woman's Man" has embodied what mentioned recently.

The chapter has also shown many examples about how the women novelists have dealt with the man personality depending on the personal viewpoints of novelists towards the man.

The author, Elaine Showalter, has explained that, by the 1850s the "woman's man," impossibly pious and desexed, or impossibly idle and oversexed, had become as familiar a figure in the feminine novel as the governess.

On another hand, some women novelists have confessed that they didn't give real reading for man's personalities. As a result, Mrs. Linton thought it is "impossible for a woman to

understand the loftier side of a man's nature," Therefore women's men were all absurd, contemptible and unrealistic; all were either angels or devils.

On third hand, the woman's man characteristics were different on term of the nature of era and impacts of that time including social and political dimensions which may be different as known. As a result, there are many terms we could apply to the tradition of these heroes of woman : light and dark, conservative and radical, classical and romantic.

Moreover, Margaret Oliphant admitted to her friend Isabella Blackwood: "The men of a woman's writing are always shadowy individuals, and it is only members of our own sex that we can fully bring out, bad and good.

The result is that the men in a woman's book are always washed in, in secondary colours as George Eliot stated.

Also, the women novelists have used their

imagination to create a model hero to meet their fantasy and desires. The model hero was even less the product of adulation than of ignorance. To a considerable degree, he was the projection of women's fantasies about how they would act and feel if they were men.

Also, the chapter has focused on the differentiations between the eras like Victorian and mid-Victorian and how the novelists highlighted the emotions of the society towards the role of man and woman.

On other hand the religious novels, which adopted spreading the concepts and instruction of church inside the society, has also given different ideologies to understand the nature of man and women depending on the religious perspectives. The religious novels have shed lights on the "Clergyman" who represents the spiritual fatherhood and the perfect personality who lead to virtue and then to heaven.

The writer, Saturday Review, observed in 1859, "the English Clergyman is a person who can be easily worked up into a hero or an ideal. He is a gentleman, he is going to Heaven, he may make love. He has the attractions of both worlds."

Elaine Showalter added that Most of the religious novels by male authors during the middle of the century were in fact by clergymen, who saw the potential of the genre for religious propaganda and moral suasion.

An interesting novel that appeared in 1869 contains one of the clearest expositions of this process of emotional education through symbolic role-reversal. In Florence Wilford's Nigel Bartram's Ideal, the heroine, Marian Hilliard, is a novelist obviously modeled on Charlotte Bronte and George Eliot. She has written an anonymous best seller called Mark's Dream, a book that no one can believe is from a woman's pen. Marian, who is restoring a church with her profits from the book, is a quiet, retiring person whom no one suspects even of intelligence, much less genius. She carries Eliot's ideal of unpretentious female culture to its extremes of self-abnegation.

REFERENCE

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