

IMPACT FACTOR: 7.86

ISSN 0976 - 8165



THE CRITERION

AN INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL IN ENGLISH

12th Year of Open Access

Bi-Monthly Refereed and Peer-Reviewed
Open Access e-Journal

Vol. 12, Issue - 5 (October 2021)

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ISSN 2278-9529

Galaxy: International Multidisciplinary Research Journal
www.galaxyimrj.com

Submission and Sacrifice of Women: In *The Birthmark* and *The Oval Portrait*

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Article History: Submitted-23/08/2021, Revised-13/10/2021, Accepted-18/10/2021, Published-31/10/2021.

Abstract:

The paper joins vivacious conversations in the literature about feminist discussions that is submission and sacrifice of women in the male dominated society. It explores the literary presence of women how they submitted and sacrifice themselves to men. Collectively, in these short stories this study articulates how women have made themselves an object in the hands of a men and that they can play with their lives too either in the form of an experiment or in the form of representing an art (beauty).

By objectifying themselves these women results in devastating consequences. Submission and sacrifice occur when individual treat themselves as objects to be viewed and evaluated based upon their appearance. In this paper will know what were the roles of these women and feminist theory? Study of Marxist philosophical concept of cultural hegemony which refers to the domination of society by a ruling class. We can see in our paper the domination by ruling class that is a male society.

Keywords: Submission and Sacrifice, Feminism, Marxist Philosophy, Art, Experiment.

Introduction

As illustrated by his biographers, women often played crucial roles in Nathaniel Hawthorne's development. In Hawthorne's work the question of women is the dominating one which gives rich images of women; about their changing lives, dreams and frustrations. In his short stories, Hawthorne creates a broad spectrum of female characters. Some are independent-minded, self-confident others embody the gender expectations of women in Hawthorne's day, weak and dependent on men.¹

Edgar Allan Poe is a writer of 19th Century. Poe who is famously known for his theory that "the death, then, of a beautiful woman is, unquestionably, the most poetical topic

in the world”². In his short stories where women seem to be attractive, but passive victims who are murdered at the start or ending of the story are most widely read and are the popular ones. Submission can be best defined as the action of accepting that superior force or to the will or authority of another person. In simple words sacrifice can be defined a surrendering oneself to the other person. In modern society, however, women are free to adopt more gender roles differ from those traditionally regarded as “masculine” to more stereotypical female gender roles. Still some women continue to adopt traditional gender roles in which submission and sacrifice may persist. It is argued that girls and women act as their only first surveyors in predicting of being evaluated or judged by others.

‘Submission and Sacrifice’ by women is not which they do very newly. This submission of self to male society has been forced by the society also that a women should submit or sacrifice herself to their husband or males. Women was equally a part of society and there were equal rights for them also as man have but still, they have become an object to have love, affection or care from the man. Women have the secondary place in the society than males. In the 19th century the situation of women is not very much good. Women Sacrifice herself because to show herself as a true womanhood ideal. Women live her life as seen by other, by a patriarchal. It is important for the women to check themselves every movement and attire to portray right amount of femininity.

Submission and Sacrifice of Women in the Birthmark by Nathaniel Hawthorne

“The Birthmark” is Associate in nursing the representative story written by yank author writer Hawthorne. The story was first published in 1843 March in the pioneer and it was later included in Hawthorne’s 1846 collection Mosses from an old manse.

From the very first lines of the story “The Birthmark” the author introduces us to a weird man. A man of science with different principles in life. Principles of Science. The story reveals Georgiana as being subjugated by Aylmer who wants her wife to be a wife perfect woman. Georgiana “birthmark” becomes the object of revulsion from Aylmer’s point of view. We can see in the story “the birthmark” her first reaction to Aylmer’s criticism for her birthmark is to express the betray she feels “Shocks you, my husband! Cried Georgiana, deeply hurt; initially reddening with momentary anger, on the other hand bursting into tears”³. The position of Georgiana is very clear under the patriarchal oppression i.e. ruled, controlled and submissively obedient towards what Aylmer says. She submits to her will even before Aylmer asks her to. Wives of Hawthorne’s time were expected to obey their husbands. In a sense, Georgiana is the “perfect wife”, reflecting her physical perfection and overall story is concern

about the perfection. No doubt, Georgiana has been, like so many other women over the world “psychologically, victim of patriarchy to internalize the idea of her own inferiority⁴. She herself has given the extremity of her feelings toward the birthmark. She also hates the birthmark as much Aylmer hates it. We can see an effect of that Aylmer objectifies his wife for idolizing her as an object of beauty and later he re-convincing her as a fault that requires an “improvement”. And in this Georgiana partakes in her own ‘submission and sacrifice’ and participates for her own destruction that is death. The existential function plays an important role in objectification of women. It moves them away from the creaturely connection and provides a psychic protection from the fear of death. Women themselves participate willingly to be an object and being away from the corporeal creaturely body⁵. Georgiana has become, much like the trampled plant, simply an object for experiment. She herself suggests that Aylmer remove the birthmark since it bothers you so much, and even as Georgiana comes to a fuller understanding of the potential dangers of the experiment, she continues to wish her husband to remove this mark at any cost. In fact, she tells her husband that if he offered her poison, she would drink it. “Then let the attempt be made at any risk,” said Georgiana. “Life isn’t worth living while this hateful mark makes me the thing of your horror. Remove this tiny mark for the sake of your peace and my own”.⁶ This type of submission shows the power of husbands often expected to have over their wives the power of life and death. Georgiana’s imagine anything beyond her husband’s decision leads to her death and she welcomes the death very happily. Georgiana understands the potential risks of the experiment, but she decides she would rather die than continue to fail to satisfy her husband Aylmer.

“Think not so little of me that you cannot be honest about the risks we are taking”⁷ she said. “I will drink whatever you make for me, even if it’s a poison”. This extreme submission and sacrifice show unavoidable impacts of traditional gender politics, which identify men as dominant or supreme and women as subordinate, weak or powerless. Aylmer and Georgiana they know very well that this experiment can have risk even the death of Georgiana still they have done it Aylmer done it for perfection and Georgiana done it for the sacrifice. And at last they have to face repercussion, Georgiana dies as a result of experiment. “My poor Aylmer,” she said gently. “You have aimed so high. With so high and pure a sense, you’ve got rejected the simplest the world could offer. I am dying, dearest” “It was true. The hand on her face had been her link to life. As the last trace of color disappeared from her cheek, she gave her last breath”⁸.

Submission and Sacrifice in the oval portrait

Poe's "The Oval Portrait:" can be a perfect of ingenuity or creative talent and keenness would possibly surpass perfection and nature. This includes that woman is blemished by God or nature and man can improved them. In 'Oval Portrait' our heroine demonstrates devotion and legal status obedience. She permits herself to be confine, willingly submitting to the actions that cause their death. We tend to square measure ready to see among the story that lady allow herself or created sit prior of the person (artist) as a result of administrative unit is her lover in addition. Her beauty is exploited for the art. He was ignoring her needs. The 'weapons' square measure devised among the story for creating portrait by the husband like paint brush that's his tool, his trait of being a male and considering his wants by creating the portrait. She hates art apart from the sake of her lover she is sitting prior him.

"He wild, studious, austere, and having already a bride in his art; she a maiden of rarest beauty, and fewer stunning than jam- filled with glee; all light-weight and smiles, and rollicking as a result of the young fawn; caressing and cherishing all things; hating alone the art that was her rival; dreading alone the pallet and brushes and alternative untoward instruments that underprivileged her of the countenance of her lover".⁹

Whereas the creative person is making her portrait and she or he becomes recent, fades, he objectifies her, leading her even to the death. Girls obliges for it's her responsibility to conform her husband's needs and fulfil them. Once she becomes weak whereas sitting ahead of him this is often the time once creative person reaches to peak of creative thinking. The creative person has used his married person as a model for his painting or an object and build her sit ahead of him as a result of "she was humble and obedient, and sat humbly for several within the dark turret chamber"¹⁰. Here creative person is that the subject and therefore the woman is an object or material.

Poe's girl is passive, sort of a sculpture and that we unskilled person of her thoughts. She is given no voice within the story. She isn't protestant for love or money that she is suffering whereas sitting in from of him for several weeks additionally the creative person also doesn't pay any attention towards the woman and within the finish once portrait was completed she was dead that shows that human itself isn't necessary however art and wonder is a lot of necessary. "This is so life itself! Turned suddenly to treat his beloved –she was dead!"¹¹.

Marxist Philosophy

Marxist philosophy of cultural hegemony refers the domination of society by a ruling class; repositioning of that cultural norm, a universalized, dominant ideology. In the context of patriarchy, the subordination of women to men is inevitable and natural. Being a women, we had been socialized to understand object hood as fixed, stable, social position.

Literature is all about reflections of life and society as a culture which produces powers. Women are exploited and objectified in the production of art and also the values of culture. We can see in both of the story that Georgiana surrender or submit herself to Aylmer for experiment and in the oval portrait that lady herself sit in front of the man (artist) because who is her lover also. Both of their beauty is exploited one for the art and other for getting perfection. Both ladies is used as an object by their men's. Here, we can see the domination by ruling class to the lower class that is men and women. Men are always been considered as primary or supreme on the other hand women are considered as secondary or inferior. The feminist said to the selfless notion of placing one's partner happiness over one's own is not good. In our society many women were routinely giving and so routinely receiving this thing from so long. Some feminist started promoting this idea to put another happiness before one's own was to become a victim, and in some cases it has become true or we can say it relates to the self-objectification of women. Men used their authority for keeping a social status and dominant position in the domestic area and society. Women becomes the victim of men power around their world. They are used as objects to pursue their own (men) obsession.

Conclusion

As our research demonstrates, by seeing that 'Submission and Sacrifice' of women in our both the stories either of Nathaniel Hawthorne or Edgar Allan Poe. Women suppressed or subjugates themselves for having love and care in return from the men. Love is an experience that many people in today's society aspire for many reasons. It is one thing that several individuals hold terribly expensive to them. People make significant sacrifices to receive the approval from those who they love; Nathaniel Hawthorne and Edgar Allan Poe proved this in their stories. What Georgiana and the lady did to prove her love to Aylmer and the painter respectively was a clear example of the submission and sacrifices they both have made. Self-esteem and love issues can be the motives. These motives may even be why girls in today's society have similar procedures done, for similar reasons. Women thinks that they are not individual human, but as an object of beauty, art, experiment, pleasure, play for the men. In a book Naomi Woolf, Beauty Myth she talks about beauty has gained his negative position in

society for women beauty is what men gave to them. Women slave themselves to the men for seeing beautiful into their eyes.

In the story of Poe, taking one's love for granted, passion, madness and loving someone unconditionally and incautious who does not care about you and put your life into risk shows a type of submission. The man or painter has murdered his wife in some sense. In the story of Hawthorne, we can see sacrifice by our heroine Georgiana for being perfect in the eyes of his husband (Aylmer). She submits or sacrifices herself or self-objectified to him to being a good woman or gets the affection from his husband. In return, her husband has given her death. The process of submission/ sacrifice or being self- objectified is not a newly one but it is going on and society also doesn't have demur on this thing. Women themselves don't take stand or argue on this issue. Women have equal rights as men have in the society. They also have full liberty to do whatever they want or achieve in their life. Not always they want to sacrifice themselves for others they are equal human being.

This submission / sacrifice of women leads them to drastic consequences into their life that is death. We know that our society is patriarchal or own identity is dominant towards the women but still they have an identity and that is of women. By sacrifice or objectifies women lose its own identity and see herself from the eyes of the other person. There is nothing like to get Respect, Love or Affection in return from the men that they have to self- sacrifice themselves always, they made themselves a toy or a tool in the hands of the men. When men have to play or enjoy, they used them as a play or toy object. This is all that is sum up for submission and sacrifices and how these two women have made themselves object in the hands of their husbands.

End notes:

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