

(no subject)

The Urth list — 1 messages, 1 voices, 22 Oct 2006

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Hmpf MacSlow — 22 Oct 2006, 16:44

I was away for a couple of days; I was going to add something in the misogyny discussion but going through the replies posted in my absence now, I see that my points have already been made by others:

Muskrat said:

I'd also like to agree with Hmph when she says:

I'd say the differences between men and women are somewhat (or, depending on which depiction we're actually talking about, often even *hugely*) exaggerated.

Oh, yes. Absolutely. I've met men who love children and women who genuinely can't stand the little bastards. Theodore Sturgeon wrote a book called "Venus Plus X" which touches on this theme.

I think the any differences that may exist are amplified by people's desire to see themselves as part of groups with defined roles and behaviors, rather than just another dumb human. Aside from childbirth and castration most behaviors can be found somewhere in both men and women.

Nathan Spears:

At 05:48 AM 10/20/2006, you wrote:
I agree with you that our emotions and our thought-processes may not be as different as they have been portrayed. Our experiences, however, are far more divergent than the tools with which we process them. I also believe that the best women writers, generally being more empathetic and observant, can create better male characters than male writers create female characters.

So, to sum it up: There probably *are* differences, but I don't think they're bigger or of a substantially different quality than those between people with different lifestyles or different cultural backgrounds. And a writer, whether male or female, should ideally be both perceptive and gifted with a high degree of empathy if he or she wants to write about people, so they should be able to write a person of the opposite gender just as well as they should be able to write a person who is in some other significant way different from themselves. I don't subscribe to the idea of the female mystique, and in fact find it quite annoying if people suggest there is something fundamentally incomprehensible and perhaps even sort-of-magical about women.

Of course, not all writers even *want* to write primarily about people; the assumption that good characterisation is central to good writing is a side-effect of the triumph of the 'modern' (19th century based) idea of the novel. There are writers whose main focus lies elsewhere, and that is perfectly legitimate - I'd argue that with Wolfe, his focus is certainly more on ideas/philosophy than people, and Tolkien, to give another example that's already been mentioned here, was more interested in history, linguistics, and possibly even geography (LotR is definitely more of a

love letter to landscapes than it is a story 'about people') than he was in people. I love both, and I'm *not* reading them for their characters.

David Lebling wrote:

I can't think of a female soldier in BotNS

I would assume *****he's***** thinking of Foila, who is indeed a sympathetic and likable character, a soldier recovering from wounds(?) in the Pelerines' hospice. (She's the prize in the story-telling contest, but turns the tables on the contestants by entering and winning.) This is in _Citadel of the Autarch_.

-- Dave Lebling, aka vizcacha

Yes, I meant Foila. But I'm female, please. I may deny that there are great differences between the genders, but for all that, I still identify as a woman. *g*

- Hmpf (going back into lurking mode now)

"You broke metaphysics. Fix it."

- Triangle & Robert