



Women in British Fiction Stereotypical Vs Multi-Dimensional Portrayal

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Abstract : *Since the dawn of civilisation, women have always been portrayed as the weaker sex. The representation of women by male authors has always been in the extreme—either as benevolent and complacent creatures or vile and wicked vamps. It can be said that male writers like Charles Dickens and Henry Fielding, among others, did not try much to probe into the psyche of the characters they wrote about. The portrayal of their characters was biased and male-centred, adhering to the norms of the patriarchal society. The literary works of male authors describing experience from a male point of view was considered the standard of universality.*

But, with the emergence of women writers, the stereotypical image of women changed and a more realistic image of women was brought forth by writers like Jane Austen and George Eliot, among others. They were more sympathetic towards their female characters and viewed them from a different angle. Though they had to face a lot of difficulties initially, with time and constant struggle, they succeeded in establishing a realistic image of women, opposed to that created by their male counterparts.

Keywords : *Stereotypes, Multi-dimensional, Condition of women.*

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Introduction:

The male writers were patriarchal and stereotypical in the presentation of their female characters and thus, they have been portrayed either in a very positive light or in a very negative light. It can be said that male writers like Charles **Dickens** and Henry **Fielding**, among others, portrayed them according to the male-centred worldview, either as angels and benevolent creatures who sacrificed their entire lives catering to the needs of their families, or as wicked vamps, who plotted against the other characters. They did not believe much in being sympathetic towards women and so, the women characters that they portrayed also failed to bring forth the realistic image of women.

The female characters of **Dickens and Fielding** in their works like **A Tale of Two Cities**, **Great**