ABSTRACT

This study investigates Marjorie Oludhe’s portrayal of male image in Coming to Birth and The Present Moment. Of primary influence to the study is that little attention has been given to the analysis of women’s writings in relation to the representation of male image even as the male characters are used as a foil to articulate the experiences of women which has risked perpetuating the derogatory views of women as victims and men as agents of social ills. The literary devices have also been manipulated to subvert the falsification of female image, raising the question of how the same has been exploited to represent the male image. Finally, the feminist literary writers have, in earnest, reasserted the female identity in manners that transform the stereotypes into liberating modes of selfhood and agency. However, the male characters have not been given the alternative paths. This research; therefore, is concerned with the impact that this has on the male characters. It is because of the above gaps that this research looked into the works of Marjorie Oludhe and analyzed the denigrated male image. The study is hinged on the premise that there are few critical studies on men. A study of male image in Marjorie Oludhe’s selected novels; therefore, enriches the available criticism on the author’s art. This research is limited to the following specific objectives that are to: explore the denigrating male image brought out in Marjorie Oludhe’s selected novels, examine the literary devices that Marjorie Oludhe use to depict the adverse male image in her selected novels and, analyze the social impacts of the denigration of male image on the characters in selected novels. Queer theory that is a response to perceived limitations in the liberationist and identity conscious politics guided this study. The study utilized analytical research design. A universe of feminist literary writings was targeted and a sampling unit extracted purposively. Marjorie Oludhe’s Coming to Birth and The Present Moment formed the primary sources of data that were used for this study. Data was obtained from a close reading of primary novels supplemented by secondary texts. From the findings, the ideas that are articulated with regard to masculinity are informed by and juxtaposed to those around femininity. Additionally, the study shows that Marjorie Oludhe deconstructs the male image; however, they are placed in a state of inactivity. The literary devices used are also permeated with an internalized ideology that imposes a unified meaning in the selected novels: the male characters are wicked. Finally, the concomitant impact of the shifts on the balance of power relations between the male characters and the female characters is overwhelmingly detrimental to the male characters. This study concludes that both men and women have a lot to learn from being seen through the lens of the other. This research; thus, recommends that the notion of masculinity needs revision in order to accommodate the multiple fissures that occur between them.