

A Tentative Study in Reasons that British Female Writers Sprung up in 19th Century

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Abstract

19th century was the most glorious era when a host of writers sprung up promoting the prosperity of British literature. There was an astonishing phenomenon among the batch of writers. That was the rise of female writers. British writers increased gradually in 19th century and created a large number of masterworks praiseworthy for future generations, such as Jane Eyre, Wuthering Heights and so on. As far as I am concerned, the emergence of the writers group must be connected closely with society, politics and economy.

Keywords

Britain writers in 19th century, female writers.

1. Introduction

It was not difficult for those who were familiar with the history of British literature to find that British literature in 19th century was glorious and that a large numbers of eminent writers who had great impact on future generations sprung on this era, such as Thackeray, Dickens and Hardy and so on. However, there was a group of writers was making their strength prominent. They were female writers. The number of female writers who had profound effect in 19th century were up to 30 like Charlotte Bronte sisters, Jane Austen, George Eliot, Mrs Gaskell, Browning and so on. Then, why did so many great female writers emerge in 19th century. This paper tries to analyze reasons behind the phenomenon from the perspective of society, writers and readers.

2. Social Reasons

First of all, it was the prosperity of social economy. Britain took the lead in completing the industrial revolution which promoted British economic development extensively. In addition, great changes took place in social classes due to the industrial revolution and the quantity and quality of middle class increased a lot. Thus, women in middle class were liberated from heavy work and the role changed to idle people from labor workers which let them have time and energy to be engaged in creative activities. And women in lower class had another way that women could make a living from literary work. Just as Mary Eagleton mentioned in Feminist Literature Theory, "If a woman has to work, she will immediately lose special identity contained in a word lady given by tradition although she may be a Christian with good manners. So most of them cannot but stay at home." As a result, writing is their better and decent choice. For example, Charlotte Bronte sisters preferred writing rather than being a teacher.

Secondly, it was enlightened political and social environment. Literature in any time could not be separated from political basis. The degree of political enlightenment decided whether literature would be more free. Britain in 19th century was in the era of Victoria when politics was most fair and Queen Victoria advocated freedom, democracy and equality. Because middle class was expanding, the requirements of democracy was increasing gradually and speech was more and more open. People could satirize current politics and express their own opinion by their works. In addition, British parliament enacted a series of formula to protect women. For instance, Women's Law explicitly stipulated that women can work no more than 8 hours in one day. The series of formula enhance female social status immensely and let women have more time, enthusiasm and self-confidence to write.

Lastly, it was tradition of society and culture. As Woolf said that great works could not be created without reasons and were crystals of wisdom and thought over the years. In the development process of British female literature in 19th century, Bain a female writer in 17th century could not be ignored. Woolf complimented that Bain had paved the way for female writers, all people should put flowers at her grave because she struggled the right to express thoughts for female writers. Exactly due to influence of Bain and accumulation of British culture for long time, British female writers sprung up in 19th century.

3. The Reasons of Writers

Firstly, it was female independence. Feminist movements were marching vigorously in this era to uphold justice and appeal to independent status even rights equal to male in society for female. More female voice were expressed which urged a series of law and regulation should be enacted in Victorian era. Act of Married Female Property explicitly stipulated that female can have right of independent properties. The act made females to own independent economical status and writers to have vast money to be occupied in the creative work of literature.

Secondly, it was educational equality. Another measure welcomed by people was educational equality in this era. Victoria appealed to reform in education which let education equal and generalized. Many women in lower class had access to good education which let them know how to read, edified by culture and laid the well cultural foundation to write for British female.

Thirdly, it was challenge against common customs. In traditional views, writing was male's occupation and female could not be occupied in writing. When the Bronte Sisters decided to challenge common customs and mailed their poetry anthologies to Southey Romantic poet laureate for advice, Southey told them that literature was not female occupation. The blow made them reflect whether they could be occupied in writing. However, they decided bravely to challenge common customs and used literature to uphold justice for female. As George Eliot mentioned in A Stupid Novel of a Woman Novelist, there was no any artists freely breaking strict rules than novels. Thus, most female writers chose to write novels. Charlotte Bronte shaped Jane Eyre who pursued freedom in mind and independence in personality with rebellious spirit in Jane Eyre. The figure was obvious contrary to current common customs, which was a challenge against common customs by her literature.

4. The Reasons of Readers

Firstly, it was increase of readers groups. After the second industrial revolution, traditional manual labor lost their jobs, got rid of heavy labor work and were liberated from manual industry. People had more spare time and extra energy to read books and newspapers. In this era, as the development of industrial revolution, newspaper industry was growing fast. And increase of printability made mass communication spread rapidly so that readers could immediately and correctly get real-time conditions of writers and works could spread at once which also attracted a great deal of readers. The increase of readers doubtlessly contributed to the blossom of literature, which pushed more writers to be occupied in creative writing and meanwhile brought up many female writers.

Secondly, it was increase of readers' level. In order to be accustomed to development of capitalistic economy, British government strived to develop education to raise workers' cultural quality in 19th century. British government built various kinds of schools and let common children have access to education, which also let people's knowledge level higher and allowed writers to be better occupied in creative writing.

References

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Other writers, including Thomas Hardy and Rudyard Kipling, who had established their reputations during the previous century, and Hilaire Belloc, G.K. Chesterton, and Edward Thomas, who established their reputations in the first decade of the new century, were less confident about the future and sought to revive the traditional forms—the ballad, the narrative poem, the satire, the fantasy, the topographical poem, and the essay—that in their view preserved traditional sentiments and perceptions. The revival of traditional forms in the late 19th and early 20th century was not a unique event. Boer troops lining up in battle against the British during the South African War (1899–1902). Universal History Archive/Universal Images Group/REX/Shutterstock.com. To their contemporaries, nineteenth-century women writers were women first, artists second. A woman novelist, unless she disguised herself with a male pseudonym, had to expect critics to focus on her femininity and rank her with the other women writers of her day, no matter how diverse their subjects or styles. We tend to forget how insistently Victorian reviewers made women the targets of ad feminam criticism. An error in Gordon Haight's *A Century of George Eliot Criticism* illustrates this common modern oversight; Haight quotes E. S. Dallas as saying of Eliot that no "Englishman" could approach her as a writer of prose. The word Dallas actually used was "Englishwoman."² To Haight, such a distinction may seem trivial; to George Eliot, it was not. The British Library is the national library of the United Kingdom and one of the world's greatest libraries. We hold over 13 million books, 920,000 journal and newspaper titles, 57 million patents and 3 million sound recordings. Open to everyone, the Library also offers exhibitions, events and a Treasures Gallery that displays over 200 items, including The Lindisfarne Gospel, Leonardo da Vinci's notebook, Shakespeare's First Folio, lyrics by The Beatles and the world's earliest dated printed book, Diamond Sutra. From marriage and sexuality to education and rights, Professor Kathryn Hughes looks at attitudes towards gender in 19th-century Britain. During the Victorian period men and women's roles became more sharply defined than at any time in history. 19th century - a special time in the development of science. Great discoveries follow one another. It seemed that some invisible wizard pulled back the curtain that hides the secrets of nature and man. But this wizard was the human mind. English writers of 19-20 centuries. Charles Dickens (1812-1870). Charles John Huffam was born in Portsmouth, England. The most popular English-language writer in his lifetime. Classics of world literature, one of the greatest prose writers of the XIX century. The population of the village was fifty peoples. The boy grew up in a family of simple stonemason and builder. Their family had four children: he is a brother and two sisters. Children grew alienated areas. Unlike their predecessors, novelists, writers and authors of 19th century Britain rose from the ordinary and challenged class system, gave a real view of the deplorable state of the working class, offered us our first taste of feminist literature, and created some unforgettable characters that have immortalized British literature and litterateurs. Be it Charles Dickens's "Oliver Twist", Thomas Hardy's "Tess of the D'Urbervilles" or Lewis Carroll's "Alice Adventure in Wonderland", Oscar Wilde's "The Picture of Dorian Gray" or Robert Louis Stevenson's "Treasure Island", each of them and many more British