

REGENERATING PATRIARCHY: A STUDY ON GEORGE ORWELL'S VIEWS ON WOMEN AND FEMALE CHARACTER

Khaled Zouaoui

University of Sindh, Pakistan.

Abstract

It is widely known that George Orwell, the penname of Eric Arthur Blair, was a prophet in the realm of political writing and he is largely applauded for defending the ideology he heartily adhered to; social democracy. In this respect, during his time and at least two decades after his death, his astute observations on politics confined the interest in his writings and views to the political field. On the other hand, George Orwell seemed to have a tinge of unusual attitude when it comes to women. It was not until the year 1984, when feminist scholar, Daphne Patai, published a blatant criticism on Orwell's depiction of women. So, what was it that could trigger the interest in Orwell's portrayal of women nearly thirty-six years after he died? One feminist critic; Daphne Patai, considers Orwell as an anti-feminist mainly because of his disparaging and despising attitudes towards women in his novels. Throughout his novels, Orwell seems to be interested in the old masculine traits and values. In fact, it is said that masculinity obsessed him and this is evident in all of his writings. Equally important, most of his portrayals of women and female figures are abidingly degrading and undermining. Many critics, as well, suggested that Orwell had an inclination to present his female characters as natural inferiors and of lower class compared to their male equals. And since it is possible that Orwell's opinions are reflected in his characters' beliefs and points of view, then, one can deduce that Orwell's view of women is dubitable. Overall, this paper examines whether George Orwell was a misogynist or it was his inclination to traditionalism and patriarchal ideology that justifies his constructions of male subjectivity. So he deliberately championed masculine dominance at the expense of the new social order that the female figure started to fit in during his days.