

Female Ambivalence of Colonial Imitation

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1. INTRODUCTION

At the end of the century, the image of *Femme Fatale* is expressed to the extreme. It is characterized by striking sexuality and image of destruction with which it harms or leads men to their death. However, the image presents itself not only in 19th century literature but also in paintings and dance. They still appear today as a temptress or a witch. A docile woman is portrayed in contrast in the works of art. This paper looks into the background of sex politics and socio-cultural discourse, and tries to understand its concept and meaning. It also focuses on reiterated images of woman in the works, and interprets the colonial perspective on woman and its ambivalent meaning.

2. COLONIAL-TYPE AMBIVALENCE IN IMAGES OF WOMEN

At the end of the 19th century, woman image of *Femme Fatale* quickly spread throughout literature and symbolism paintings. This image was a direct contrast to a passive and saint-like image of a woman. It described a devilish woman, a witch or a subject of fear who owned fatal attraction. In truth, artists portrayed *Femme Fatale* as a new type of human figure representing shocking concepts of pleasure, agony, love and death suited to the 19th century. Thus it began to be an emphasis of lethal and absolute beauty and sexuality. Only the new *Femme Fatale* that rose in the end of the century had enough power to captivate a man with her invincible appeal and destroy and lead him to his death.

The origin of such character can be found in the Bible, especially in the Book of Genesis. According to Genesis, Eve was created with Adam's rib, but did not succumb to him. Instead due to the snake's lure, she passed on the forbidden fruit to her husband and was ban from Heaven. All responsibilities of Adam's sins were placed on Eve. The view toward woman as being seductive is one characteristics of the *Femme Fatale* which is rooted in the Middle Ages and continues until today. This is not the only case. The same myth about women exists with Salome, daughter of Herodias who beheaded Saint Jean-Baptiste or Dalila who led the heroic Samson to his death.

Such types of characters exist in dance, in which its background comes from a literary story. By being compared with a saint-like *Femme Fragile*, extremity is added to the image of *Femme Fatale*. All *Femme Fatale* threatens men into misfortune once they have fall under the woman's influence. The image of them is shown as being subject to men and this perspective is emphasized in many themes. *Carmen* and the *Black Swan* is such an example. Deadly beauty extends its seductive hand. On the other hand, innocence is shown by a swan or *Giselle*. In case of *La Sylphide*, James could not evade and he is persuaded to dump fiancé *Effie*. The interesting part is that unlike *Effie* who is pure, innocent and has no knowledge, the *Sylph* actively expressing and yearning love is a heavenly spirit prompting the audiences' interest but none the less a *Femme Fatale* who embodies a lethal sexuality.

The point here is that the work as a classic repeats itself during time. That is why we need to reevaluate the myth men has created because the perspective on women's body was that of men's. Leaving *Effie* for the *Sylph* under the pretense and name of love by a man is a dual symbol of men's wishes to simulate purity. We should note the ambivalence of men's perspective and that the way *Femme Fatale* was put opposite of *Femme Fragile* is a form of colonial society.

3. CONCLUSION

The *Femme Fatale*, a sensual being, appeared at the century's end as a symbol of fixed figure of women. This lets us estimate that we cannot exclude men's sexual desires corresponding to that image. Thus what *Femme Fatale* entails is a collective fantasy conjured by men's perspective and also a metaphor of men's thinking to embody that image within a stereotype rather than try to understand women. This is the result of men's obsession with sex and a distorted view on women, having originated from men's anxiety. Men might have tasted pride and freedom by exerting power for a long time by looking at seductive women and their naked body, which has been created by men. The paper chooses to focus on a specific part among the diverse images the *Femme Fatale* has and may be inclined to be partial. This paper hopes to present new direction regarding discourse on sex politics.

4. REFERENCES

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