

# Gender equality

People



" Gender equality is more than a goal in itself. It is a precondition for meeting the challenge of reducing poverty, promoting sustainable development and building good governance. " (Kofi Annan) In Paulette Jiles's poem, " Paper Matches" and in Judith Ortiz Cofer's poem, " The Changeling" the theme described is gender roles. In the two poems the women do not feel appreciated. These two poems are very similar in theme, content, and figurative language. However, the structures of the two poems are very different.

Jiles and Cofer both use symbolism, dialogue, figurative language, and imagery as instruments to reflect the cruelty of the women during these times. In Paper Matches, Jiles uses the simile of a match to display the irritation and anger of the gender roles forced when she was a child. Matches are tiny, insignificant items that are sold in packages, and one is interchangeable from another. They have no use unless they're lit; they're only good for one flame. These connotations roughly pare down what the author saw as woman's condition in society.

It seemed to her that women were hardly more than servants and not allowed much individuality. Another facet of the match-comparison is that matches are passive. Someone strikes up a flame with it, but matches can't do anything on their own decision. Jiles' anger is displayed by the final two lines, " We come bearing supper, / our heads on fire. " This continues the match-metaphor, but also implies anger directly resulting from the servitude involved in bringing in supper. If someone's angry, they might be called " hot-headed,"--Jiles' women's heads are figuratively on fire, they're so incensed at their position.

Something slightly ironic in the image is that the match's/women's usefulness starts at their heads. In the male-dominated society Jiles describes, women's heads--brains--wouldn't be very valued. That their heads are on fire in the end suggests that their anger at their position is borne out of the fact that they can think, reason and realize the limitations being placed on them, and this in turn suggests a basis for women's equality and the injustice of their situation in this poem.

The poem, "The Changeling" by Judith Ortiz Cofer, is a dramatic monologue that describes the life of a little girl who is "wing" for her father's love and attention (line 2). The girl who does not seem to be noticed by her father invents a game that would make him notice. Yet, the father is "baffled and amused" by her actions (line 5.) In "The Changeling", the speaker tells her audience that they were "molding me into boy shape" (line 8).

This line is for the most part an image because it is a specific detail that appeals to the senses. An image that helps imagine something beyond just a thought. This image is visual as we can actually see something being molded into a specific shape. Denotation is an important part of understanding figurative language, for it gives the reader the literal meanings of the words used. Molding means to work into a required shape or form and to have influence in determining or forming. This image is very significant to the theme of the poem.

It shows that the young girl wants to be a boy to make her father happy and she is willing to totally change her "shape" to make this happen. There are three main points to consider when determining if a piece of literature is

worthy of being placed in the canon. The piece of literature must have a perceived aesthetic value, have historical or cultural significance, and have longevity or subsequent influence on other works of literature. The poem "The Changeling" has these qualities and therefore should be part of the canon.

This poem has aesthetic beauty. It contains symbols, imagery, and ambiguities that help tell its true story. The poem is also full of figurative language, which adds to the beauty. The poem contains both historical and cultural value. It contains information about a great Argentinian revolutionary leader and describes how women lived and were valued not only in society generally but also in the hippie culture. Because the poem has both the aesthetic and cultural value, it contributes to the third point of being included in the canon.