

The woman in white by wilkie collins

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Wilkie Collin's *The Woman in White* Theme Analysis Wilkie Collins is considered to be one of the first of sensation fiction novels. Pykett, 71. His book *The Woman in White*, published in 1860, was the fifth of his published novels. Most of his writings focused on globally significant issues of gender, family and law. In this book Wilkie addresses the same issues through the events that take place around the main character Walter Hartright. The theme of the book is that irrespective of their education, social status, economic status or moral conduct, victimization of women is a common occurrence across different societies in the world.

Anne Catherick is "the woman in white" in the book (Pykett, 40). She is mentally ill and is locked up in a psychiatric hospital. She has a striking resemblance to her sister Laura Fairlie. She escapes from the asylum. It is after the escape that she meets with the main character in the story Walter Hartright on his way to work at the Limmerage House. Laura also falls in love with Walter when he moves to Limmerage House in Cumberland to work as a drawing master. She is however bound to her secretive and mysterious husband Sir Percival Glyde, who at times assaults her, but even the law cannot protect her. Glyde tells his best friend Count Fosco of the resemblance between Laura and Anne. They come up with a scheme switch Laura's identity with that of her sister Anne after Anne's death. The plan succeeds, and Glyde then inherits Laura's marriage settlement worth 20,000 pounds.

When Walter returns from Honduras, he is determined to restore Laura's real identity. While doing his researches, Walter discovers that Glyde was a con. His title and property were illicit. Glyde suspects Walter is about to discover

his secret. He tries to destroy the registry entry to hide his secret. In the process, the church burns down and Glyde dies in the fire. Walter confronts Laura's mother and learns that Anne and Laura have the same father. Fosco tries to flee from the country, but Walter catches him and forces him to write a confession that can enable him restore Laura's identity. Their son becomes the heir of Limmeridge. (Pykett, 127).

As seen through the experiences that Anne, Laura and other female characters go through in the book, Wilkie Collins paints a picture of a society that mistreats and oppresses women just because of their gender. Women undergo many forms of mistreatments including assaults by their husbands to denial of the rightful inheritances by their male siblings. Through the book, the writer paints a realistic picture of how women are victimized and oppressed in different ways even by people they have blood links with, for example, their brothers or husbands.

Works cited

Pykett, Lyn. Wilkie Collins. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2005. Internet resource.