

The link between childhood and the disposition of hester in john irving's, a pray...

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Views on Hester:

Choice of Diction Can Change Views

In the novel, *A Prayer for Owen Meany*, written by John Irving, characters such as Hester are described uniquely to show the audience that females can also have male attributes. Irving's diction varies as he continues with the novel to portray Hester in a different way than usual. Although John Irving uses sexual details to describe the qualities of Hester, she is genuinely not sexual because she grew up with an environment that was made up of mostly males, wanted to act out of the ordinary, and did not want to be excluded from her family, which shows that Hester's childhood played a major role in the development of her personality.

Hester grew up in an environment made up mostly of males, with two brothers leaving her as the sole female child. The author stated that, "The way they skim in water and on snow-and, late, the way they drove their cars-suggested to me that they thought nothing was dangerous. But Hester and I were dangerous" (60). Knowing that Hester loved hanging out with her brothers, she often participated in many different activities, such as skiing. The way they skied in any type of environment frightened Johnny because they were not afraid of experiencing thrilling and exciting adventures. In fact, they were injured so many times to the point where it became normal for them. Noah and Simon would log in the summer, which was a dangerous job if you were impatient. Johnny talked about his experience while working with his cousins, "Logging is the most dangerous if mosquitoes you're impatient; saws and axes, peaveys and cant dogs - these tools belong in

impatient hands.” (428). Wounds like these are common to Hester and her brothers because they usually play around like this.

Being the only girl in her family, Hester would want to act out of the ordinary in order to fit in with her brothers. In the book, *A Prayer for Owen Meany*, it states that Hester would pull on her brothers' doink as a dare or to show that she is not ashamed to touch a male's body part. In the novel it said, ' You touch me, I'll put your doink, Simon,' said Hester.” (72) Unlike other girls that are girl and loves to go shopping, Hester isn't ashamed of pulling her brother's private part. Her brothers would use her gender against Hester to do all these weird sexual stuff. In order for Hester to act out of the ordinary Hester would join in on those pranks such as having to kiss her if they don't reach the house before she does or when they were playing hide and seek with Owen; if Hester was able to find them, she would threaten to pull on their doinks. She grew up in a family where there are many active activities involved; with her being the only girl around many males she is most likely going to merge into the crowd. She is often view as having broad shoulders, being muscular, big bones, and was less attractive on her face, therefore she can be view as a tomboy because we would usually see women as slim, weak, and with curves. Hester breaks all of the standards in order to fit in with her brothers.

Growing up in a family where males usually dominate, women tends to be left out. Typically males usually are active, adventurous, muscular, leaders, strong, athletic, trickster, and work outside of the house, while females are usually calm, flexible, neat, weak, and a hard worker. Irving states that

Hester does not fully these typically roles of being a female, “ I would never describe my cousins as bullies; they were good-natured, rambunctious roughnecks and daredevils who genuinely wanted me to have fun-but fun in the north country was not what I was used to in my life with the women at 80 Front Street, Gravesend.” (52) Living in the country side most of the sports involve dangerous physically activities, such skiing up and down steep mountains and slopes. With Hester being the only girl in the family, she does not want to be the only one that is not participating in these supports. She would rather accompany her brothers on steep slopes and mountains than being stuck at home. As Johnny narrates, “ My cousins raced each other down the slopes, cutting each other off, knocking each other down-and rarely restraining their routes of descent to marked trails.” (53) Racing down the steep slopes and mountains has become a daily route for Hester; she will race her brother down the steeps hills, cutting edges that does not follow the marked trails.

Even though Hester may act out of the ordinary and try to fit into her environment that she grew up in, she also has a girl side of her. She may look tough and masculine on the outside, but she is still a girl. According to the novel Hester still have some attributes for being a female, Her wariness mature her; she had always known how to dress-I think it ran in the family. In Hester’s case, she wore simple, expensive clothes-but more casually than the designer had intended, and the fit was never quite right; her body belonged in the jungle, covered only essentially, possibly with fur or grass. (292)

Hester will tag along with her brother's joke in order to fit into her surroundings, but she also has a feminine side. Hester is not the person that loves to play pranks on people without caring; she also has a caring side towards her family members and her love one. Hester really cares about

Owen as she stated in the novel, ' I'll marry you, I'll move to Arizona-I'll go anywhere with you, Owen,' Hester said" ' I'll even get pregnant-if you'd like that, Owen... I'll give you babies!' Hester cried." ' I'd do anything for you-you know that. But I won't go to your funeral." Hester really cared about Owen, she does not want him to go off into the army just to save the Vietnamese children. She would rather have him stay with her and have a family together.

Throughout the novel, Hester was being portray as a character that grew up in an environment full of males, act out of the ordinary, and did not want to be the outcast of her family, but she also had a feminine side. Hester show attributes towards being a female and a male. Even though she pulls pranks on Owen and Johnny with her brothers, she also has a caring side; she would not take the prank too far to hurt someone. She has an intelligent side because she came from the North country side, but she knows more about Gravesend Academy than Johnny and Owen.