

Women and honor



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Women and Honor Order No: 227436 No. of pages: 2 Premium 6530 Rich wrote “ Women and Honor” in an attempt to make herself more honest and outspoken and also to understand the demeaning negative power of lies, especially in relationships between women. In her piece of writing on “ Women and Honor: Some Notes on Lying,” Adrienne Rich says “ the biggest lie in a relationship comes when, asked point blank to say what you think or to address a question that may lead to a painful conversation, you evade answering.”

The main idea incorporated in this piece is about the stuff of revolution, transformation, and of hearts made whole cracking open blatant lies. What is clear about this is that women need a new path of ethics and morality. The problem that stands in the way is speech or language that prevents us from putting an end to our silences and “ liberating ourselves from our secrets.” Speaking on the subject of truth, Rich tells us that women tell lies in order to survive. They lie to most people they come across especially people who legally have power over us such as a husband or a lover. Lying is used as weapon of false power that is wielded to get our own way. In a culture that validates only male power, women use lying as a potent tool to gain control of different situations. In order to justify our lies we use phrases like –“ nobody’s business but my own” or “ my privacy” etc... Rich compares lying to living a life “ in the closet”, because it becomes more a necessity to lie to friends, family, bosses, colleagues or even clients. According to her, a liar leads a life of fear and loneliness which is self- destructive. It creates a kind of void within the woman and she tries to fill this barrenness by getting children. The lies she uses is more like a denial of the fear she feels.

A liar always resists confrontation because she lives a cowardly life- one that

has no truth in it. The author emphasizes that truth and honor are not things that just spring to life, they have to be created and nurtured between people. When truth prevails, the possibilities between people are endless and life becomes all the more interesting; but the liar loses sight of all these possibilities and continues to live in fear and loneliness.

Ever since this book had been published, it had encouraged other women to speak out on things which would otherwise have not come to light.

Graham Greene's narration shifts between the past -of the events leading to Pyle's death and the present reality that exists after the death of Pyle. The Quiet American is set against a backdrop of Vietnam during the latter part of the First Indo- China war. The story revolves around love of a young and beautiful Vietnamese girl and a British journalist around fifty years old.

Greene uses his protagonist Pyle as a CIA operative, to represent America with all its policies in Vietnam. Pyle is shown to have stolen the Vietnamese mistress of Fowler called Phuong.

Phuong had stayed with Fowler for both protection as well as safety and it was for the same reason she leaves him too. While Fowler takes her presence for granted, Pyle protects and cares for her like a delicate flower. Unlike Rich's " Women and Honor" where she blatantly speaks the truth, Greene does not say which point of view is the truth. The character of Phuong is neither well developed nor revealed. She always seems unable to show her innermost secrets and emotions. Her older sister is the one who makes all her important decisions.

Unlike Rich's " women and Honor" that drew a lot of positive attention, this novel by Greene which was published in 1956, drew great condemnation and was criticized as anti- American and destroying American idealism and

innocence.

References:

Adrienne Rich, " Women and Honor: Some Notes on Lying," *On Lies, Secrets, and Silence: Selected Prose 1966-1978* (New York: W. W. Norton, 1979) 187.