

Abstract

Images of Women in Samuel Selvon's Fiction

Najmie Khan

The status of women is an issue of rising importance in the world today. Increasingly, people are questioning the traditionally inferior role which women hold in most societies.

Many images of women in fiction are male constructed myths of the female, otherwise known as stereotypes. These stereotypes, when accepted as truths, serve to perpetuate the traditional perception of woman.

Literature plays a major role in the perpetuation of an ideology and consequently the stereotypes connected with it. Recognition that the prevailing value system encourages biological differences as a validation of gender differences, is the first step in deconstructing the present value system.

Samuel Selvon's depiction of both male and female characters emphasizes the urgent need for the adoption of a new ideology, a new value system which allows individual growth rather than encourages sexual domination.

Selvon advocates the need for the growth of individual consciousness as a step in the creation of a value system which discards destructive elements while preserving positive elements necessary for the construction of a new ideology in which a sense of individuality and self is fostered.