

Feminist and Gender Studies in the Selected novels of Thomas Mann

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Abstract

Thomas Mann was born on June 6, 1875 in Lubeck was the best known German writer of the early twentieth century. Thomas Mann was famous from the time he published his first novel in 1901. Mann's cultivated manners and elegant clothing betrayed his patrician origins, and he wrote with the stylistic virtuosity of a nineteenth century realist, but his works captured the anxious spirit of modern times, full as they were of gender confusion, artistic crisis, physical decline, and moral decay. He was well known in literary circles and popular among general readers, but he was not yet the iconic figure that became known as the living embodiment of German national culture. His novels are based on the Gender studies as Homosexuality, sexuality etc. In Mann's novel he doesn't emphasizes on the female character. In his major works the male protagonist is only a centre figure. Thomas Mann himself was passionately attracted to young men through out of his life, same he shows in his novels. Though Thomas Mann was a married man and he have six children's. Thomas Mann reveals that while he was writing some of his novels he was preoccupied by questions of sexuality in modern society and the status of his own masculinity. During this period the sixth and the last of Mann's children was born, and on more than one occasion the successful author and respectable Pater families professes his love for his wife, Katia, and his gratitude for her support and understanding.

Keywords- *Feminism, Homosexuality, Heterosexuality*

When we read or hear the term Feminism and Gender studies, it comes in our mind that it is a type of studies which deals with the female protagonist only. But according to Thomas Mann his each and

every work is regarded to only male protagonist. Although female characters are the soul mode of his works yet he gives more stress on the male protagonist.

Gender studies are one of the most important elements in Mann's novels as well as in his personal life too. His famous novella *Death in Venice* which is published in 1912 was a sever struggle between Gender studies. Throughout the novel Mann describes the condition of his male protagonist Gustav Von Achenbach who was a famous writer. He was bushed from his work and went for the vacation."He travels to Venice, where he takes a room in the hotel Des Bains. There Tazio, a polish teenager, attracts his attention". Achenbach remains rapt by the boy's attractiveness until he collapses and dies. Katia Mann wife of Thomas Mann recall that Mann included other facts from the vacation into his novella as well the aging homosexual on the ship to Venice. In *Death in Venice* Mann related the Greek mythology to the protagonist. "The sunrise is likened to the sun- God Helios driving his fiery chariot through the sky, and Achenbach dreams of Dionysus, the Greek God of wine and Sexual abandon."

The vast majority of German intellectuals were caught up in the enthusiasm that swept across the nation during the first months of war, and Thomas Mann was no exception. As several of his move recent critics and biographers have argued, the war tolerable Mann to east of doubts about his anxious doubts about his anxious sexuality and to grip a less complicated form of masculine strength and national pride. Mann place repeated stress on Friedrich's risky misogyny. He gambles that Friedrich's aggression toward women may have been caused by the fact that he devotes so much of his time in the army, surrounded only by men. The sensual attraction to pale boys and flaxen beasts remains vital to Mann's artistic and latent thought, but so does the sarcastic self-awareness that forbids complete credentials with either, and, indeed, renovates this seeming stipulation into an artistic and.

In Thomas Mann's major work of time of war journalism, he adjusts the image of giving birth to a delicate and less warlike understanding of German identity. To a certain extent, Mann endures his division between German masculinity and French effeminacy in this work. He mocks French civilization as phony, lax, sentimental, "Feminine and deceitful", while praising Nietzsche as the personification of German virtue. Mann's description of German national identity as the multicultural mother of Europe allowances him an outlook from which he stands a continued critique of the internal flaws of the western European. By relating their morals on others, including the Germans. Hence it is not true that the revolutionary ideologies of freedom, impartiality and mortality have made France a more compassionate nation. On the contrary, Mann argues, France's sense of being on a task makes it very violent and belligerent. A similar conceit feels Britain's credence in its purpose to rule the world even as it deeds and misuses occupied peoples. Even Bismarck was guilty of leading Germany toward a new era of German development and imperialism. As an solution to the ills of modern patriotism

and imperialism, Mann suggests an “unpolitical” focus on German Bildung and a multicultural honesty to foreign influence. To interpret this conversation into gendered terms, Mann describes the Germans in the contemplation both as a manly force that fights the flatteries of French coquettishness, and as a maternal realm that fears penetration by an aggressive French civilization and tolerates difference, even to the point of including a closeted homosexual mixed race like Thomas Mann as its most typical representative.

Mann’s reworking of the genre differs significantly from this pattern, when he introduced the protagonist of *The Magic Mountain* Hans Castorp his another very famous novel. He has weathered some early childhood trauma, cholera his future profession, and is about to enter the working world after a brief visit to his ailing cousin. The planned three weeks vacation turns into a seven-year, during which Castorp loses all sense of time and forgets his plans to become a ship’s engineer. Instead of finding a wife and starting his career, Castorp has an affair with a married woman who reminds him of a boy and drifts into a world of feverish speculation divorced from the concerns of the flatlands.

Mann thus subverts an intrinsically patriarchal genre about the solicitation of male heterosexual identity into a story about ambiguous desires and inconclusive debates. Flirtation with same sex desire itself is not unusual in the German Bildungsroman. Goethe’s Wilhelm Meister, for instance, recalls his fondness for a fisher boy with whom he had exchanged “the most passionate kiss” in his youth. As Robert Tobin argues, however, successful Bildung requires that the hero discipline his wayward desires into socially acceptable heterosexuality. In fact, the eighteenth and nineteenth century heterosexual males who formed homosocial bonds in the public sphere were profoundly homophobic as well as misogynistic. Strict borders needed to be maintained between men and women, between mandatory heterosexuality and forbidden homosexuality. Mann’s first novel both reflects this nineteenth century norm and diagnoses its demise; the successive patriarch of the Buddenbrook family attempt to solidify their social and economic standing through a series of strategic marriages, but find it increasingly difficult to maintain the facade of successful bourgeois masculinity. In the end, Hanno Buddenbrook represents everything a man was not supposed to be: sickly, hypersensitive, effeminate, and probably homosexual.

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