

Mystery At High Hedges

Examines gender bias from the perspective of readers, writers and publishers, with a focus on the top two bestselling genres in modern fiction. It is a linguistic, literary stylistic, and structurally formalist analysis of the male and female “sentences” in the genres that have the greatest gender divide: romances and mysteries. The analysis will search for the historical roots that solidified what many think of today as a “natural” division. Virginia Woolf called it the fabricated “feminine sentence,” and other linguists have also identified clear sexpreferential differences in AngloAmerican, Swedish and French novels. Do female mystery writers adopt a masculine voice when they write mysteries? Are femalemenned mysteries structurally or linguistically different from their male competitors’, and vice versa among male romance writers? The first part can be used as a textbook for gender stylistics, as it provides an indepth review of prior research. The second part is an analysis of the results of a survey on readers’ perception of gender in passages from literature. The last part is a linguistic and structural analysis of actual statistical differences between the novels in the two genres, considering the impact of the author’s gender.

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