

Journeys End in Loneliness

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acts as a cautionary depicting emotionally unstable women as destructive and impulsive. Eleanor, the main character, represents the archetype of the fragile female; this literary figure tends to appear naïve, physically and mentally sensitive, and helpless. Eleanor and Mrs. Montague, another one of the inhabitants of Hill House, seem like children, acting on emotional whims and superstition. The men of the novel, on the other hand, act on scientific curiosity and indifference. They even belittle the emotional outbursts of the women. The characterization perpetuates the idea that women who do not act out emotionally are healthy, reliable women. Theodora, the woman who keeps her emotions under control, lives at the end of the novel, while Eleanor, the emotional, disturbed woman, commits suicide by running her car into a tree. These established stereotypes and result in doctors performing harmful procedures on them.

Eleanor is characterized as a weak, fearful woman who is overwhelmed by her own emotions. She does not experience any character growth throughout the novel. This shows that the author did not intend for her to overcome her situation through emotional maturity. Her options were limited to either acting on her emotions or to stay in place.

with her arguing with her brother-in-law over the car she helped pay for. This represents

he

[her sister] drives it

Eleanor

have a job, an active social life, or any particular interaction with society outside of her home.

This is not due to wanting to be apart from society. Eleanor is physically sensitive and socially inept, leading to her taking on the archetype of the fragile female. Because Eleanor has these traits, she is perceived as inadequate to interact with those outside of her house and make a position for herself in society. Physical and social weakness can make a woman seem like a child that needs protection rather than a person learning how to be self-reliant and mature.

decision to go to Hill House is hindered by opposition from both her brother-in-law and her sister. Carrie and her husband both tell Eleanor that she is not allowed to use the car, treating her as a young child rather than an adult woman. Carrie even addresses her relationship with her

were strictly limited to those of wife and mother. Freidan most frequently used the word

-created the identity crisis she documented

-existence, non-

(75). Mrs. Montague ties her power as a woman purely to her maternal instincts, almost

. Where women have genuine mental health concerns because of their gender, Mrs. Montague is a harmful representation of a woman who wants to utilize her feminine qualities in vain because of her ignorance.

Theodora is the docile woman who keeps her emotions in check. She earns respect and gets to return home at the end of the novel. When Eleanor and Theodora discover h of them are

making very little of a fuss, actually. One of these times, she thought, one of us is going to put

When Eleanor is struggling to keep her emotions and mentality under control, Theodora joins in with Luke and the doctor in talking down to her.

impulses as child-like and unreasonable, making light of her feelings. When Eleanor voices her fears and thoughts, they each respond by teasing her.

They do not embrace or give over to the dark parts of their fears and impulses, setting them apart from Eleanor. They conform to their part of society and enforce those rules, leaving Eleanor as an outlier.

violence. Eleanor has become so restless that the group decides she must go home. This devastates Eleanor so much she runs her car into a tree in order to never leave Hill House. This is an example of the fear of women acting out and needing

ates of psychiatric

(50). Women were considered unconventional if they acted out in any way, be it overactive sex drive, substance abuse, unsatisfied marriage, aggression, lesbianism, and domestic negligence. The remedy for these behaviors was found in either lobotomy, where an incision is

, according to Walter

t would have made a finicky housekeepers

A loss of cognitive skills would result in the ability to household chores and speaking skills being impaired.

hate seeing myself dissolve and slip

frantic and driven

long and even a second goes on and on and I could stand any of it if I could only surrender (Jackson 118). A woman losing the ability to make decisions and stand to be in her own mind is compromised because the goal is to suppress women to societal norms.

leads to destroying their ability to be completely active in their own lives.

Eleanor acts as a representation of what women were meant to represent and a warning of what would happen if they stepped out of line. Eleanor is given over to the darkness of her own mind and commits suicide, showing women as the unstable and reckless female that needs to be

meaning and direction in the world outside themselves, but their inability to relate to and communicate with others and their fears of unfamiliar environments create panic and paranoia that descend upon them when they venture beyond the dubious safety of their domestic

conventions. Because of this, there

and

behaviors. The goal for feminine health and independence in light of that is to leave the narrative

Reference Page

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