

Gender Portrayals in Aphorisms

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Received date: May 05,2016; Accepted date: June 20,2016; Published date: June 30, 2016

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Citation: Anokhina PS. Gender Portrayals in Aphorisms. Global Media Journal. 2016, S3:23.

Abstract

Historically, women and men are constantly in interaction and mutual influence. It does not go unnoticed. Studies have shown that women share with men the tendency to overestimate men's dignity and underestimate the dignity of women (and themselves). This is a direct consequence of the differences in social status: women take the views of more high-status groups - men. The society persistently records and demonstrates the humbled status of women by various means: through language, (many names do not have feminine gender, "convenient" words for the language handling are all in the masculine gender), through cliché, through state bureaucratic manifestations and other means. This scientific paper describes aphorisms that characterize females and males due to different types of marks. The aphorisms belong to the period from Classical Antiquity until the XX century. The aim of the paper is to find fixed types of marks and to describe collective portrayals in each time period that will represent the issue of gender stereotypes in a new perspective.

Key words:

Type of mark; Maxim; Repeated motive; Dynamics of marks; Signs of marks.

Introduction

The numerous gender linguistic researches describe gender as a cognitive phenomenon, i.e. a component of collective mind that can be seen in stereotypes fixed by language in the corpus of paroimia or as a component formed due to some associative experiments [1-6]. Also gender can be defined as a component of collective mind that can be shown in speech behavior[1,4,7-9].

The main aim of our paper is to introduce gender characteristics and that provokes the following dilemma – whether these sayings are based on stereotypes or they themselves form stereotypes. It will be also relevant to study

the classification of gender marks in its diachrony. Thisfact has specified the choice of the following language material – (Encyclopedia of Wisdom/Encyclopediya mudrosti, ROOSSA).

However, we admit that sayings might undergo some lexical and grammatical transformations due to its ranslation into the Russian language.

Nevertheless, their semantic core, i.e. one or another mark, without doubt belongs to the original language. It is not a social and cultural phenomenon, which needs to be pragmatically adapted in translation.

Our language material in most cases consists of maxims that we understand as types of aphorisms. Their main features are "rigidity, explicit addressness, i.e. conceptual information that is marked by subjectival meaning" [10].

Due to the information given above, we may conclude that maxims realize a marked situation and has provoked another approach to the material structure based on marks' classification by N.D. Aroutynova and E.M. Volf [6,11].

One should note that our material gives grounds to add some types of marks to the classification such asemotional-psychological, emotional-aesthetic and those that have two types of mark contaminated in one language unit, e.g. aesthetic+moral-ethic, psychological+moral-ethic, aesthetic+psychological.

Method

In this article, we adhere to a common understanding of social stereotypes as simplified, schematized, emotionally colored and extremely stable image of a particular social group or community [1]. Due tothis approach, the major methodological principles used in the paper are: comparative method, system analysis, structural and semantic analysis as well as contextual and interpretative analysis. Comparative method is based on synchronicity, tries to set different characteristics of each language separately and thus can overcome cross-language interference. Structural-semantic analysis is quite actual in our research because it allows to take into account not only formal characteristics of the analyzed sentences but semantic diversity due to the nature of the semantics of the sentence. With regard to contextual and

interpretive analysis, this type of analysis is used to describe the features of the verbalization of the phenomena of reality from the dictionary to the given discursive realizations.

Results and Discussion

Female Portrayal

We begin with female portrayal as women are in the center of attention among male authors (there are few examples by A. Christie in the example corpus, but even those are about females) as well as in its magnitude relation – more than 84% of maxims are devoted to females and in its qualitative relation – spectrum of marks (the same can be found in the corpus of paromia in Russian, English and German [5,12-14].

Classical Antiquity sayings are rather poor that is why there are few examples of the following marks. The example of common mark is taken from Ancient World part of Encyclopedia: "Song of a madman, babbling of a child and words of a woman cannot be stopped"[15]. Moral-ethic mark can be noticed in the following example: "There is no use in the earrings in the ears of donkey as well as there is no use in the woman with proud posture because she is cunning and not wise" (psychological mark), loquacious and blabbing (common mark) [15]. The mentioned example is interesting as the noted marks are not applicable to all females as these are not absolute characteristics.

Psychological mark can be found in the lexeme that unites the following concept with a marked lexeme: "True beauty of a woman is in gentleness of her character, and charm is in gentleness of her speech"[11]. Then there is a maxim by Publius Ovidius Naso (the 1st century BC): "Women have different characters"[11]. Among noted above marks in the 1st century BC there are also a psychological-pragmatic mark: "Woman can only keep a secret that she does not know" by Lucius Annaeus Seneca (older) and an emotional-psychological mark: "Woman either loves or hates; she knows no medium" by Publius Syrus . "To rage is so typical of women" by Quintus Horatius Flaccus.

The predicates "to love", "to rage" have a sememe of time duration, that is why they can be seen as predicates of quality, though their opposition (there is a thin line between love and hate) implicating its time boundedness, i.e. their relation to predicates of condition – the predicates that can also express emotions.

Thereby a common portrayal of a female of that period says she is loquacious which basically means talkative, she cannot keep a secret and has two sides of emotions, she can be / cannot be wise and cunning.

Female Portrayal in Medieval Times

During next several centuries, there were not any sayings about females. There is an emotional-psychological mark by Sir Thomas More in the XV century AC: "Women naturally detest those who their husbands love" (Ibid., p. 254).

As it is seen from above the saying is not about women, it is about wives.

We cannot say that the spectrum of marks is full in the XVI century. A psychological mark given by a woman is presented in language as a synecdoche pars pro to: "Offence of a woman is more powerful than love, especially if that woman is noble and proud in her heart" by Marguerite de Navarre. This saying describes a definite circle of females. Normative mark is represented by a gnome: "As our experience shows a woman's health and beauty cannot go separately". (We cannot show a rhyme in the translation into English).

Acommon mark is given in the same form by a gnome: "Charm of a woman is to be new and is to be able to change eternally". Aesthetic and psychological marks are in the following saying by a gnome: "A woman is often beautiful, but has no soul" (Again there is no rhyme in English version here).

It is worth mentioning that the author considers changeability to be a positive mark as it states a positive common mark of a female – to be charming. Though in his prose he does not give a flattering aesthetic mark (he refers to some wise man): "A wise man says that half of women' beauty is a tailors' merit".

So the Renaissance introduces rather a contradictory female portrayal. On the one side the beauty of a female is a consequence of her health, but on the other side it is a merit of her tailor; married females hate some definite people, though there are some noble and proud females. Most beautiful women do not have a soul, so we can obviously suggest an opposite implicature – ugly women do have a soul. It should be noted that we speak about soul qualities not mental ones, which might be a base for a popular opposition in the Russian language for example. Women do not have any character; they are openhearted and principled, though silly and primitive. Jonathan Swift compares women with horses; he thinks that being intelligent for a woman is a drawback.

We find it is important to note that the mentioned portrayal belongs to females of a definite circle or class, the one authors usually belong to.

Female Portrayal in the XVII-XVIII centuries

The XVII century also has poor feedbacks on women. As a rule, these are some negative characteristics and one of them — a psychological mark — is absolutely opposite to the mark of Classical Antiquity period. "Most females do not have characters: they are either blondes or brunettes". (Is not he the one who first made a popular joke?) But this mark is somehow neutral in comparison with a psychological-pragmatic mark given by Jonathan Swift: "Woman does not need much brain; it is enough for a parrot to say at least few words" [11]. The one who benefits here (that is a pragmatic side of the mark) is a male. On the contrary female benefits in Moliere's saying: "Women only like when money is spend on them" [15,16].

Both positive and negative marks are seen in the following saying: "Woman is too openhearted and principled to follow the mind" (Addison, p. 291). Jonathan Swift stands on his

ground: "Horse has its power in mouth and tail. The same can be said about women" [15] an example of a common mark.

The XVIII century spectrum of marks becomes wider; other qualities are shown in a psychological mark for example: "The way aged women being selfish reflects how selfish they were in their youth"[16], and the feature of being intelligent is explicit (though it is not typical for all the women): "Witty woman once told me something which may well be the genuine secret of her sex: that in choosing a lover each one of her kind takes more account of how other women regard him than of how she regards him herself"[16]. (Such sayings characterize female with a help of gender relations, which is already an independent object of description).

We may note that female always benefits in a psychological-pragmatic mark as the following sayings fully characterize her, i.e. positive [12], negative [17] and neutral [16]: (1) "Nature has given women so much power that the law has very wisely given them little" [15]. "Women handle worst troubles better than those because of who women cry".

(2) "No woman ever admits the beauty of another" (3) "Nature is like a woman who likes to dress" (1): "Nature says to a woman: "Be beautiful if you can, wise if you want to, but be respected, that is essential". This quote unites the features of maxim: a subject-estimating modality – "that is essential", anallocution – "you", a maxim – imperative mood. Also it is important to emphasize a metaphorical vision of the author that correlates with similar quotes of Antiquity: "Women are intelligent by their nature (compare with "women can be wise if they want as nature has already shared this feature with them"), men are intelligent by the help of books".

We can see a general mark in the following metaphorical saying: "Dress is a preface to woman, though sometimes dress is a whole book".

A predicate "to love" is seen as an emotional-psychological mark. "Only women are able to love both God and a human", there is also a metaphorical way: "Woman is all heart, even her head": a head is a center of mind and a heart is a center of emotions and that proves the mentioned above mark.

One of the first found marks is a moral-ethic one: "Not without reason we pay attention to a woman's faithfulness! Public good and public evil depend on the behavior of women". This mark can be also accompanied with a psychological one: "Oh, woman! What a weak and cunning creature!". An aesthetic mark can also go with a moral-ethic mark and the degree of the aesthetic explicitly depends on the moral-ethic explicitly: "The more beautiful woman the more honest she has to be as only her honesty can antagonize the harm of her beauty". These two marks can also be interchangeable which can be seen as a feature of the mentioned above dependence: "Beauty is virtue; a beautiful woman cannot have any drawbacks".

There is an example of an aesthetic mark: "For the night shows stars and women in a better light". It is possible to see that mark together with a psychological one: "Our eyes see a beautiful woman and our heart sees a kind one; a beautiful

woman is a beautiful belonging and a kind woman is a treasure". This aphorism is worth noting as there is an implicitly about incompatibility of beauty and kindness in females and also shows Napoleon's unfavorable attitude to women.

An emotional-pragmatic mark has the following features: the saying itself shows a beneficent subject (either a woman or somebody else) — it is a pragmatic feature. Predicates are the verbs of emotions: "When a woman sulks, do not look for sense in her words". An emotional feature is in the metaphor at the end of an aphorism: "When women talk about other women, they praise mind of beautiful women and beauty of smart women, a peacock's voice and a nightingale's feathers".

A collective portrayal of the XVIII century women is rather contradictory as well. On one hand they are very sensible and on the other hand they are very emotional, they are able to handle the difficulties though they cry over trifles, they are though beautiful vs kind weak cunning, (similar contradistinction as in Renaissance), at the same time all beautiful women are virtuous and insincere (as they never praise the beauty of other women). There are also some potential qualities of women that are required by society honesty and faithfulness must depend on their beauty (can we assume an implicature from here that all ugly women are honest?)

Female Portrayal in the XIX century

The XIX century has the biggest variety of marks and they describe absolutly different features. A general mark is usually given through a female behavior: "When a good woman gets married, she promises happiness and a bad one expects happiness". "It takes a thoroughly good woman to do a thoroughly stupid thing". "The history of women is the history of the worst form of tyranny the world has ever known. The tyranny of the weak over the strong". He also gives this mark through a woman's behavior with others (we guess men) -"Oh! Wicked women bother one. Good women bore one. That is the difference between them". "Woman is sacred; the woman one loves is holy". A general mark can also represent a quality that is immanent to a woman - "Femininity is the quality I admire most in women". Another metaphor by him: "A woman is the sphinx without a secret" and a famous saying "Women are a decorative sex".

Within quite a long break after (the XVI century), a normative mark is represented: "Woman is an unfortunate man". On the contrary there are some perfect females: "The perfect woman indulges in literature just as she indulges in a small sin: as an experiment, in passing, looking around to see if anybody notices it". "Women are considered deep - why? Because one can never discover any bottom to them. Women are not even shallow". A general mark here is accompanied by a moral-ethic one in the following saying: "Science stings prudency of true women". We assume there is an opposing implicature: true women are prudish – and fake women are not (probably when they are fond of science). There is a negative characteristic by G.E. Lessing: "A woman was meant to be a peak of creation by nature, but nature chose wrong

clay which was too soft". A psychological mark is given in the last part of the aphorism.

The same, though more general, mark can be seen in H. Heine's saying: "I will not say that women have no character; rather, they have a new one every day".

Most aphorisms about women mental abilities are negative: "Some women are smarter than others only because they admit their stupidity"; he also notices some connection between brain and beauty: "Beautiful women are very stupid when they get old and that is all because they were too beautiful when they were young". Again this is another opinion about beautiful women being stupid. Nietzsche's saying: "If a woman has scientific premises then there is something wrong with her sex identity". Hence an implicature -scientific skills are only for men. "Women think about nothing or about something else". Nevertheless he can be positive in his marks, see the following maxim: "You now know what a woman's curiosity is. Almost as great as a man's!".

Honore de Balzac considered women to be intelligent in some specific situations and that palatalizes negative marks in the previous sayings: "All women are intelligent in love". "One should never trust a woman who tells one her real age. A woman who would tell one that would tell one anything". There is another negative mark based on the paradox of the following maxim: "Women have a wonderful instinct about things. They can discover everything except the obvious".

There are three groups of psychological-pragmatic mark and they are formed due to beneficent subjects: "Women create history though history remembers men". The biggest group is the one where a female is a beneficent subject: "When woman is too old to be loved by man, she appeals to God". "Brigands demand your money or your life; women require both". "If woman is courageous, she is happy". Women can be courageous only in some specific situations or when they have some specific purpose for that, that's why we consider this quality to be a psychological-pragmatic mark. "Women can forgive everything except being not treated well". "Women are so highly educated... that nothing should surprise them nowadays, except happy marriages". So, women are dangerous though beautiful women are not as dangerous as the ones who are intelligent (a paraphrase: beautiful – intelligent). "As pretty women are used to the fact that men make court to them and smart women flatter men ant thus have more admirers". The third group contains saying that shows beneficent subjects - some other people; in a linguistic sense it can be some paradoxes: "One can trust woman as she does not remember anything important" or a metaphor: "Women usually have all trump cards but they always lose the last bet".

A moral-ethic mark has a number of modality variants, for instance, an assertive modality: "Behind all their personal vanity, women themselves always have an impersonal contempt for woman". Another negative marking: "Woman is only sincere when she does not lie without a reason". And a sarcastic negative mark by Oscar Wilde: "Woman's first duty in life is to her dressmaker. As for the second duty it is not discovered yet". In the XVI century Lope de Vega's said almost

the same about women and her dressmakers. Again there is a negative marking in the form of phraseological unit: "Woman with a past has no future".

A moral-ethic mark is a key one in the sayings that contain a prescriptive modality: "The first commandment of a woman is no to be a concubine so a man has to make a surrender of himself in marriage". There is the same potential mark in the saying with a conditional modality: "If a woman possesses manly virtues one should run away from her; and if she does not possess them she runs away from herself".

As for emotional-psychological marking, there goes the same as above noted criteria and also the specific transitive character of predicates' lexemes that describes emotions and psychological features: "A woman's hatred, in fact, is love with another direction". "Your beloved woman is charming even when she is strict and that cannot be found in other women". (The part of this aphorism can be transformed into an explicit predicative construction: beloved women can be strict, but ...). "Aristocracy is proud of what women consider a reproach age! Yet both cherish the same illusion that they do not change". There is a psychological mark that can be considered as negative. It is based on homonymy in the word 'change'. The following saying introduces an interaction between hatred and charm which is equivalent to the mentioned above connection between beauty and honesty: "Woman learns how to hate in proportion as she forgets how to charm"...

"We women, as someone says, love with our ears, just as you men love with your eyes". Note an aesthetic marking by Oscar Wilde: "There are no beautiful women – only ugly ones and those who wear a good make-up". The basis of an emotional-pragmatic mark contains different language features [18]. For instance, it is a combination of lexemeemotions and lexeme-utility subjects: "Before a woman was seen as a source of happiness which does not require any physical satisfaction; now she is a source of physical satisfaction and happiness is not required any longer" [15] "When there is neither love nor hatred in the game, woman's play is mediocre". A pragmatic situation can come along with stylistic devices - emotions 'nominees - such as a metaphor for example: "A married woman is a slave you must know how to seat upon a throne". Or a hyperbole: "It is easier for a woman to kiss a devil than to say that somebody is beautiful".

A combination of aesthetic and moral-ethic marks has its own peculiarities, e.g. a metaphor with definite allusions: "Woman is at once apple and serpent". We assume this is an obvious allusion to Genesis: "When the woman saw that the fruit of the tree...pleasing to her eye" - hence an aesthetic mark. And before that "Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast" — a moral-ethic mark. So woman is seen as both an object and a tool of seduction, she is both a seducer and a tempter.

And a few words on marks in the XIX century. A theological mark: "As long as woman can look ten years younger than her own daughter, she is perfectly satisfied". A moral-ethic mark is implicit here – he means woman's vanity. And a metaphorical saying by H. Heine: "Now I am aware of the most terrible thing

– that they (women – S.A.) are not snakes at all; a snake can shed its skin". Oscar Wilde's emotional mark is not absolute, it is rather relative or even indirect: "She wore too much rouge last night, and not quite enough clothes. That is always a sign of despair in a woman". This saying is also noteworthy as it somehow concretizes a common mark by Chamfort on a woman's dress as her preface.

A pragmatic mark is about other people being beneficent in an aphorism: "One should never trust a woman who tells her real age. A woman who would tell one that would tell one anything". And there is an emotional-pragmatic mark where an emotional part is based on a metaphorical peculiarity of the whole saying: "Twenty years of romance makes a woman look like a ruin; but twenty years of marriage make her something like a public building". And a utilitarian mark: "One should never give a woman something that she can't wear in the evening".

We can conclude that a collective portrayal of women in the XIX century has the following positive sides - women are history creators; they are modest, perfect, courageous; educated; virtuous; feminine; beautiful and very pretty; they are a source of happiness; they are can be self-sacrificing ("a more consummate narrative of female power is difficult to imagine"[19]. And negative features - women are dangerous; they remember trifles and never notice the obvious; most of them lie and can be insincere; they are bad actresses; they demand everything from men: both a wallet and money, i.e. tyrants as Oscar Wilde said; seducers and tempters; artificial both in behavior and appearance. Woman's vanity can be considered as positive (due to a pragmatic mark) as well as negative (due to a moral-ethic mark). Coquetry and heterogeneity belong to a neutral type of marking. A relative type is represented by fear of God and strictness (for some definite circle of women).

A Collective Portrayal of Women in the XX century

In comparison with the XIX century, the spectrum of characteristics in the XX century is less.

Few examples of a normative mark are found: "Woman is either a thing or personality"; a common mark: "Woman's great strength lies in being late or absent"; a teleological mark: "The maternal instinct leads a woman to prefer tenth share in a first-rate man to the exclusive possession of a third-rate one"; a pragmatic mark: "Any woman can fool a man if she wants to"; she is also an author of another aphorism with the same mark and we suppose that it was one of those sayings that possibly started jokes about blondes: "These blondes, sir, they are responsible for a lot of trouble".

A psychological mark is very often found: "Women are unable to wait"; "A woman may have a witty tongue or a stinging pen but she will never laugh at her own individual shortcomings"; "Woman is inclined to be a slave and to enslave"; "Woman who loves will forgive everything and will never forget anything". Another aphorism that describes the woman's ability to be enslaved: "There are three things in the world that women do not understand; and they are Liberty, Equality and Fraternity". "Women have a unique ability to

create illusions; they are not what they seem to be". "There is not such a woman who can say 'goodbye' in less than thirty words". "A woman has the intellectual temperature of the medium in which she lives: vehement revolutionary or dauntless conservative, according to the circumstances. A reactionary she can never be"[20].

An emotional-psychological mark is introduced with a help of metaphor and differs from a psychological mark: "Woman is not furniture, she is a flower" [20].

So we can conclude that a collective portrayal of the XX century female is positive only in the word 'flower' by E. M. Remarque; and positive rather that negative when woman's cunning is mentioned. A positive/negative portrayal is due to the fact that women cannot wait and forgive everything when they love. We think that negative features prevail here: women do not have sense of humor, they can be both a tyrant and a slave, they are not very intelligent, and they speak too much and in most cases behave like fools.

Male Portrayal

Briefly speaking about male the features are not very numerous in Antiquity as well as in other time periods. There are few sayings that represent a common mark: "Women are intelligent by their nature, men are intelligent by the help of books"; a psychological mark: "What do women have to do if we, men, are more thoughtless?; "We, men, hate arrogance"—here is an implicature that men are not arrogant. An example of a psychological-pragmatic mark: "Women have to cry and men have to remember". A pragmatic component of the saying is seen through a specific type of an aphorism — sentential (maxim) — which recommends a proper behavior and men are definitely beneficial here.

The same tendency exists in the XVI and XVII centuries: "Men are born to rule (a pragmatic component), that is why they have to have some extra drops of intelligence (a psychological component)". "Most sorts of diversion in men, children and other animals (a psychological component) are an imitation of fighting (a pragmatic component)". Man remains pragmatic in the XVII century as well: "A man is in general better pleased when he has a good dinner upon his table, then when his wife talks Greek" The same pragmatism is in the following aphorism that introduces a normative mark: "Is life worth living? This is a question for an embryo, not for a man" [21].

Male portrayal of the XVI century is brief. Men are not arrogant though often thoughtless and intelligent as a result of some activities. Man of the XVII century is a ruler by definition; he is more intelligent than woman though rather primitive in his entertainment activities. As you see, most marks are positive here. The XIX century basically has no difference, except for a normative mark: "A true man is all about husband and rank". "No man like any government should admit his mistakes". (Perhaps that is why a man like a rule has to have some extra drops of intelligence). A psychological-pragmatic mark: "By persistently remaining single, a man converts himself into a permanent public temptation". "A man at the

age of fifty is more dangerous than at any other age as he has worthy experience and more often fortune". "If man says he is a master of the house (a pragmatic component), he is a liar (a psychological-pragmatic components)". "Men are so made (a psychological component) that they can resist sound argument, and yet yield to a glance (a pragmatic component)" An emotional-pragmatic mark of the next saying is based on the predicates' meanings and a situation of love: "Nothing conquers man's heart and soothers it as understanding that he is loved".

A moral-ethic mark that is given to some men is illustrated in the following saying: "Flattery is what handsome men need" [22].

So male portrayal of the XIX century is rather contradictory: he is successful in his career and family life, at definite age he is dangerous for a woman (that basically means he is successful), he falls for flattery (especially when he is handsome), and he is not emotionally secure though he is rationally stable.

It may seem odd, but the tendency to emphasize man's pragmatism is fading away in the XX century. An emotional-psychological mark prevails here: "Man is contradictory like a tide". As you see, a metaphor is an emotional component of this saying. Besides the corpus of examples has a normative marking: "He is not a gentleman, he is too well-dressed"; "He is not a man, he is just a cloud in trousers"; a moral-ethic mark: "Men, who are not afraid of women, are considered to be true cowards"; "Man is a vain creature" [23].

So for the first time negative marks prevail: men are vain, some of them like to dress up and some men are not manly. When we say 'some' we mean that as a rule men do not have such drawbacks and all positive marks found in the corpus of examples are implicit. Only one neutral characteristic is found, it is an emotional-psychological mark by A. Maurois.

Conclusion

In sum, a psychological marking is most universal and is widely used when it comes to women. That can be explained by the fact that psychological features play a significant role in interpersonal relations and even make them successful/unsuccessful. A psychological-pragmatic mark is a key one when we speak about men and that fact reflects the importance of interpersonal relations in non-private activities of men.

The repeated motives in the marks for female are talkativeness, long-windedness, passion for dressing up and tyranny in love. And there are frequently found such opposition pairs as 'beautiful-intelligent', 'character-changeability' and 'intelligent-foolish'. We may suggest that such stereotypes as talkativeness and long-windedness and mentioned above opposition pairs do not have roots in folklore. This or that aphorism is likely to be a source of stereotypes' usage in lingua-cultural society, in fact, these stereotypes can be found in different languages/nations. It is

very likely that a negative opinion about blondes by A. Christie is a cause of popular theme jokes.

As for stereotypes about men, some sayings just prove an axiom that men are superior (roots can be found in Genesis: compare 3:16).

Concerning marks' gradation in female portrayal, there is a time opposition. Antiquity and the XX century have a bigger number of negative characteristics. Marks of the XV-XIX centuries are more tolerant, negative and positive marks are represented in almost equal relation (considering neutral marks and marks of a mixed type). It is important to mention that there some cases when the same characteristic is oppositely marked by different authors (regardless of their gender). Male portrayal has a greater number of positive characteristics and its peculiar feature is in its implicit way of expressing.

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