



„Our Daughters Must Be Wives“

Marriageable Young Women in the Novels of Dickens, Eliot, and Hardy

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Content:

Victorian Society was permeated by the struggle for or against female emancipation, in which marriage – and hence marriageability – were key issues. In this heated public debate on the Woman Question novels were most influential. They presented an ideology to young women readers so that, by aspiring to imitate the role models offered, they would conform to the worldview of those in power – or be encouraged to rebel against it.

The study draws an extensive picture of the shifting debate as it was conducted in non-fictional texts and then compares the young fictional heroines in the novels of Dickens, Eliot, and Hardy to the ideals of femininity both with regard to the characteristics which constitute their marriageability, and with regard to the conditions under which the young women lived.

Inhalt:

Heiratsfähige junge Frauen in den Romanen von Charles Dickens, George Eliot und Thomas Hardy

Die viktorianische Gesellschaft wurde geprägt vom Kampf für oder gegen weibliche Emanzipation, in der Ehe – und daher Heiratsfähigkeit – Schlüsselbegriffe waren. Innerhalb dieser hitzigen öffentlichen Debatte um 'die Frauenfrage' war der Einfluss von Romanen groß. Sie boten den jungen Leserinnen eine Ideologie dar, sodass diese sich durch den Versuch, den angebotenen Rollenvorbildern nachzueifern, der Weltsicht der Machthaber fügten – oder ermutigt wurden, gegen sie zu rebellieren.

Die Studie zeichnet ein detailliertes Bild der sich verändernden Debatte, wie sie in Sachtexten geführt wurde, und vergleicht anschließend die jungen fiktionalen Heldinnen in den Romanen von Charles Dickens, George Eliot und Thomas Hardy sowohl unter dem Aspekt ihrer Heiratsfähigkeit, als auch den Bedingungen, unter denen die jungen Frauen lebten.