

cultures that the authors are trying to portray. It also sheds light on the authors' views of the importance of males in families, and overall their internal ideas of gender roles and stereotypes. This is an unfortunate prejudice to be placed upon women, who are often just as influential as men in the control of their homes.

The authors portray females as generally more emotional than males in both books. *Girl With a Pearl Earring* emphasizes Griet's mother's distress a few days after Agnes, who is Griet's younger sister, dies. Griet's mother is so emotional about the situation that she refuses to allow herself to be happy. "Once my mother even laughed, before stopping herself with a shake of her head. 'God has punished us for taking for granted our good fortune,' she said. 'We must not forget that.'" (75) Griet's mother dramatically rejects happiness now that her daughter has died. Similarly, in *The Three Musketeers*, d'Artagnan's mother weeps when her son first ventures out into the world, leaving his family: "Mme. d'Artagnan was a woman, and still more, a mother. She wept abundantly." (15) Mme. d'Artagnan's weeping is emphasized by Dumas, showing her emotional weakness and unhappiness.

Griet's father does not display his emotion in relation to Agnes's death as outwardly as his wife does. Rather, he is generally detached from the world after that, and it is noted that few things make him happy other than descriptions of new paintings. His detachment versus his wife's breakdown is a clear example of the author's intent in stressing the woman's emotional vulnerability. D'Artagnan's father also does not outwardly show too much emotion when he parts with his son, in great contrast to d'Artagnan's mother. Dumas goes so far as to blatantly state that the reason that d'Artagnan's mother cries so much is that she is female. This is obviously gender-based, and the authors have applied masculinity to the emotionless male characters, and femininity to the females with outbreaks of emotion. There are two distinct behaviors here, and the authors emphasize the behaviors as well as their relation to the genders of the characters. The emphasis forces the reader to perceive the genders differently, and the authors are outwardly making this difference apparent. Importantly, this projects a negative image onto females, favoring the male personality that is portrayed.

Chevalier, in *Girl With a Pearl Earring*, and Dumas, in *The Three Musketeers*, both include gender bias that is likely deliberate, with the intent of making some point about the characters and the stereotypes that they exhibit. Still, the authors have internalized the stereotypes and include subtle references to them scattered throughout their writing. In both stories, women are generally viewed as weaker or less important than men. Women must try hard to attract men in the books, but the men have it easy when they want to control the women. Chevalier and Dumas imply that men are also more important than women in upholding the family name, and the family name generally represents the dominant male in the family. Even emotionally, women apparently have less fortitude than men do in regards to their children. There is no one rulebook to dictate that this is how society should be structured, but both authors emphasize this structure, and, at the same time, take it for granted. The stories take place in approximately the same time period in Europe, and the authors are basing their writings on real-world societal structure. The authors' use of these stereotypes, whether intentional or unintentional, affects the authors' writing and its interpretation, as well as the impact of the writing for those who read it. The authors reinforce the stereotypes when they include them in their writing, and the prevalence of the blatant gender differences in the books' characters reflects the state of society. If these books, written at completely different times in history, both emphasize these ideas so much, there is no reason to believe that the ideas do not exist in society today.