

Gender Roles and Identity

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Both Phillip Ross' novel *As For Me and My House* and Sharron Pollock's "Blood Relations" address the ideological gender roles Mrs. Bentley and Miss Lizzie are up against and how they resist and comply to them. Miss Lizzie refuses for as long as she needs to because carrying out a facade of female compliance allows for a bit of rebellion and Mrs. Bentley's marriage to Phillip, who is not entirely playing his [role](#), allows for a small amount of freedom to arrange things closer to her own desires. In this essay I will focus on the relationships the main characters of "Blood Relations" and *As For Me and My House* have with other characters. Both Pollock and Ross are able to point out the restraints in women's lives because of their gender by having the main characters be in charge of telling their stories. These techniques create ambiguity as well as addressing the ideological gender roles Mrs. Bentley and Miss Lizzie are up against. They are not stories of liberation but of how these two women navigate within these roles and stereotypes. Miss Lizzie refuses to do things for as long as she is able while carrying out a facade of female compliance regarding her father while at the same time getting her way and Mrs. Bentley's marriage to a man who is not entirely playing his role allows for a small amount of freedom to arrange things closer to her own desires. Ross and Pollock have put their main characters in charge of their stories. The structure of the stories reflects the impossible position the main characters are in. Mrs. Bentley is able

to share how she feels about her role of a wife to a small town preacher through her writing. The diary format allows a glimpse into her character as she "builds a false front of [her] own, live [he...

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...rmine the motivation and the why's or how's of the story and reflect on why there was no complete transformation in the main characters lives but just an exchange of one role for another.

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