

# Discussion Board Responses

## Grading Examples

# The Prompt

How does Washington Irving use male and female stereotypes in "Rip Van Winkle"?

In Irving's "Rip Van Winkle" both men and women are stereotyped. It is strange how the males in the story are. They are very helpful to everyone else and their problems, but when it comes to their own they seem as if it's no use. The men in the story are shown to be somewhat of a back wood and immature folk who sit around all day talking about the "old days" and drinking and smoking until the days end. Also the men are shown to all be hunters like Rip and his son are. Proving even more that they are in a kind of country style era. The women are pretty much just disgraced throughout the story. At least in my eyes they are. They are all stay at home wives that are married and take care of all the children all the daylong. The women are even portrayed as very nagging, and hot tempered. Seeming as if the author thinks all women are this style. The funniest thing to me that is in the story is that the dog of one of the women is afraid of her because of her vicious tongue. I think this shows that the author was just teasing with everyone about how he feels about men & women.

## Seven Points

Washington Irving uses both male and female stereotypes in “Rip Van Winkle”. Males are portrayed as lazy, but friendly people. Males in the story like to help with everyone else’s business but their own. This is portrayed through Rip Van Winkle, his son, and several of the neighbors Rip senior sits and talks with at the inn. Men are stereotyped to enjoy sitting around all day and talking about old news. Men are also stereotyped to be hunters like Rip, and to enjoy drinking. The women in this story that are highlighted are all married with children. They are typical housewives. Wives are portrayed as hot-headed and nagging. Dame Van Winkle constantly nags Rip to do farm work and other work around the house. Even the dog is afraid of her quick tongue. Women are also portrayed to be responsible because Dame Van Winkle takes care of her household, and her daughter takes Rip in to live with her.

## Eight Points

The men are portrayed as lazy and unproductive when it comes to doing things for their own wife's and family. The men were also known for their kindness. "Rip was ready to attend to any body's business but his own"pg(457) The men liked to sit around and gossip about old news papers instead of working around their farms. The women are portrayed as loud nagging wives. "his wife kept continually dinning in his ears about idleness. Morning, noon, and night, her tongue was incessantly going" pg. (457-458) Rips daughter after twenty years is a makeover of his late wife. She too is loud and bossy." the air of the mother, the tone in her voice, all awakened a train of recollections in his mind" pg (464)

## Nine Points

Irving blatantly stereotypes men and women in "Rip Van Winkle." First of all, it's obvious the men are lazy. The story's titular character fell asleep for 20 years! Irving speaks of all the men of Van Winkle's town being similarly lazy, but good natured and neighborly. They also seem to share a universal passion for hunting. Irving describes Van Winkle as follows: "If left to himself, he would have whistled life away, in perfect contentment." Earlier in the narrative, he describes Rip Van Winkle Jr. as wanting to be a mirror image of his father, and later in the story he fulfills that wish. Women; however, are portrayed as nagging shrews that cause their husbands nothing but grief. Irving says, "...his [Van Winkle] wife kept continually dinning in his ears about his idleness, his carelessness, and the ruin he was bringing on his family. Morning, noon, and night, her tongue was incessantly going, and every thing he said or did was sure to produce a torrent of household eloquence." Even the dog flees from Van Winkle's wife at the slightest provocation. It is as if Dame Van Winkle thrives on the pleasure she gets from tormenting her husband. Now, presumably, Irving took these stereotypes to these extremes for entertainment purposes, but that is all they are: stereotypes, not the true nature of all men and women.

## Ten Points