



THE REPRESENTATION OF GENDER AND MARRIAGE INSTITUTION IN WUTHERING HEIGHTS BY EMILY BRONTE

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Abstract:

The nineteenth century is sharply noted as a time of identifying gender roles without hesitation. During the economic development of industrialisation, men started to leave the house to work. This time created a vacuum in the house that underlined the importance of women staying at home. Society started to consider women as the "angels of the house" and started to prevent women from getting the needed education, skill, and talent to compete with men. This study examined this area to analyse and evaluate every aspect of the marriage institution and gender role in Victorian society in light of the novel Wuthering Heights. Patriarchal society created many barriers to the improvement of the working careers and cultural places of women in the Victorian era. However, Emily Bronte went beyond social norms and created a specific place for a new type of woman. This project study examines the institution of marriage through gender in a novel and concludes that the institution of marriage reinforces gender.

Key Words: Gender, Marriage, Wuthering Heights, Victorian Era, Patriarchal Society

Introduction:

Feminism is a school of thought that believes in women's equality in every aspect of life, whether political, economic, or social. Primarily, feminism is a response to Western traditions that have tried to suppress and confine women only in their house and kitchen, along with taking care of their children and husbands. At the time of Emily and Charlotte Bronte, English society started restricting women to their houses after the Industrial Revolution, when men started going to the factories. Women were forced to become the "angel of the house".

Feminist theory is a strong response to those who started opposing the interests and rights of women. In Western history, public life was reserved only for men, while women were confined to the private or domestic sphere. Participating in public life, studying, and owning property were forbidden for women in mediaeval Europe. Even at the end of the 19th century, in some places in Europe like Germany, a husband could sell his wife and French women were compelled to cover their heads in public. Also, women were not allowed to vote even in Europe and the United States in the early twentieth century. Feminism considers males and females equal in intellectual, economic, political, or social terms.

It was forbidden for a woman to participate in business without having any male representatives such as legal agents, husbands, brothers, fathers, or sons. Marriage was the highest goal of the life of a woman who could not even control their children without the support of their husbands. In such a condition, it was the feminist theory that started to support the struggle of a woman to get a proper education and gain self-confidence and respect to work more efficiently. Furthermore, the conditions of women have not entirely changed in some parts of the globe. However, there is some evidence of protest against the circumscribed status of women in an organised way in the third century BCE from the end of Rome; however, this protest was an exception in that period. Later, women started to find their voice through economic and structural equality. From that aspect, feminists worked on expanding choices for women in developing their talents and interests to fulfil their responsibilities and enjoy their rights in society.

Primarily, philosophers from the Renaissance onward did not emphasise a coherent movement or philosophy regarding natural rights, equality, liberty, and reformist rhetoric about women. The feminists started to voice a theory to create a systematic connection in the larger context of the individual that can help increase understanding of an experience through an analytical and systematic approach.

A comprehensive account of the subordination of women came into notice concerning the essence and origin of feminist theory. Primarily, the theory is a prerequisite when it comes to liberating women. It was not possible for philosophers and literary workers to free women without freeing the thoughts and mentality of rigid and stubborn patriarchal ideology. On those grounds, it is effective for writers and poets to voice the deprived women and identify the underlying causes behind their subordination. Women's oppression is not the only concern for the movement in favour of women, along with the development of theory, as it also works on identifying the process of liberation of women from both the causes and consequences of women's oppression and subordination.

1. Gender and Marriage:

1.1 An Overview of the Nineteenth Century:

The nineteenth century is well-known for accelerated and profound changes in technology, urbanisation, industrialisation, and scientific discoveries. At the same time, it helps in creating significant changes in literacy levels and education. The realities of daily life started to change, and education got a new opportunity to flourish. For example, the implication of the General Education Act of 1870 changed every aspect of the education system that started to offer compulsory

schooling to children in Britain. This fact creates an overall change regarding the ability of people to read more than ever. Change and history came to notice as the impact of language and memorable conflicts. For example, words such as blue stocking, bloomer, balaclava, and cardigan derive from different conflicts and battles in this period (Alexander et al., 2020). Independence, education, and female dress were the central themes of many battles and conflicts in this era. The changing nature of travel and communication also started to change with time when it came to improving long-distance geographical mobility. In 1825, introducing the first passengers to travel by train helped create a huge change in the language aspects by providing words such as railway, platform, tunnel, and railway porter. At the same time, railway novels also came to notice. Steam engines caught attention in the field of creating better dimensions and revolution in the field of using ships. It has also been identified that enthusiastic comments on the journey from Edinburgh to London have also changed with the hands of a steamship. Transformation patterns were also noticed in cases such as using electric telegraphs, equivalent to the present-day internet. The introduction of the telephone also changed the state of communication.

1.2 Feminist Theory:

Feminism revolves around the consequences of struggle and concrete accomplishment when categorising the “waves” as reaching the peak of a phase. Classification of the waves in feminism-related movements helps people to acknowledge the contribution and the form of feminism and the nucleus of the movement. Most importantly, the historical development of the feminist-related movement is separated into different periods, including a relative absence of mobilisation and thoughts regarding feminism, along with strong criticism and activism regarding the feminist approach. A high public profile was one of the most important parts of the feminist movement through the characterised tidal water and motion. The ongoing cycle of final subsides, with eventual cresting and gradual swelling, has also been noticed.

The resurgence of feminism and the wave of analogy developed in the 1960s. However, the first wave of feminism came to notice in the middle and last part of the nineteenth century, with the right for voting to vote for women until the 1920s. It is the age of finding the first wave of feminism in the UK through political activism, high-profile analyses, and a prolific approach towards feminism. Women's rights were the only concern of the first wave of the feminist movement from historical aspects and terms. It has also been identified that the French Revolution of 1789 also has a keen relationship with the improvement in supporting women of this age. Moreover, the first systematic and substantial feminist treatise was noticed in “Vindication of the Rights of Women” by Mary Wollstonecraft, and this book was published in 1792 in England. A principal concern of achieving equality for women came to the notice compared to men.

The second wave of feminism is identified in the women's movement between the 1960s and 1970s. This aspect revolves around the tranquility of suburban life in American popular culture. Primarily, the root of the movement was the influence of college-educated mothers in forcing their daughters in a new direction. It is worth noting that the crucial principles in this era include justice and equality. Most importantly, the civil rights movement influenced the great-granddaughters of the participants of the first wave of feminism by influencing them to protest against the Vietnam War. The feminist liberalism movement started in North America and spread to Western countries. Hence, the catalyst related to the movement is Betty Friedan's 1963 book. This movement wanted to help the homemakers, mothers, and everyday women. It was all about getting justice in both the private and public environment. For example, workplace harassment, domestic violence, reproductive rights, and rape are the issues that were exposed as systematic racism in society.

Reproductive rights and sexuality are the unified goal of this movement, along with social equality. The Equal Rights Amendment was the crucial concern of the movement that was ratified. However, the approval of the contraceptive pill influenced women to get more control over their reproductive rights (Borella et al., 2018). For example, after the approval from the Food and Drug Administration in 1960, around 6 million women started using this pill within 5 years. Outlawing marital rape and the right of women to have credit cards along with them to apply for mortgages is another evidence of the success of the feminist movement through the second wave. The most important legislative victories for feminists include the Equal Pay Act of 1963.

The waves of feminism only differ in the timeline and the movement's way without changing the movement's core, which is to gain a better life for women. Fulfilling the desires and expectations of women as equal to men is the most crucial concern of the feminist movement. There is no clarity regarding the starting time of the third-wave feminism and the end of the ongoing approach of the feminist movement. The emergence of the riot girl groups created a different dimension regarding starting the third wave of feminism in the 1990s. Early third-wave activism was all about fighting sexual harassment in the workplace. At the same time, the movement's concern revolved around improving women's power in the workplace.

1.3 Gender and Marriage Institution:

In the nineteenth century, also known as the Victorian period, came the sharply defined aspects regarding the roles of men and women in the form of working divisions. The primary reason for such a fact is that the female and male family members in European society used to work together in every aspect of life, including the family business. However, it was presented only before the occurrence of the nineteenth century. The primary reason for such a fact is that with the progress of technology and the working system, male members of the family started to go to their workplace and used to stay there for a longer time. In this concern, most of the female members of the family were forced to manage the entire task of livelihood in the home by themselves. From that context, the office, shop, and factory are the most important aspects in dividing the working nature of the men and women of the family. Separate spheres-related concepts started to be merged in this society, along with the natural characteristics of men and women.

The difference between the female and male gender was created based on the so-called natural characteristics of men and women. For example, while the moral superiority of women was considered a crucial aspect in the nineteenth century, it was all about the physical strength of the men who got priority in the field of work. Hence, male individuals were supposed to go to the factories and offices, while female family members stayed home and managed the household work. The nineteenth century created two separate spheres for women and men, in the form of helping the husbands stay fit and healthy in the household after returning from their labourer's jobs. This aspect also prepared women to create the sphere of protecting the home and the work of the male members simultaneously.

2. Gender and Marriage in Wuthering Heights:

2.1. Emily Brontë and her Contributions to Feminist Theory:

Feminist theory is about finding reality regarding the condition of women in society and the present situation of women when it comes to sexuality, power relations, gender roles, and politics. Promoting women's interests and rights are other crucial aspects of feminist theory that create an incredible legacy for women. As a feminist, Emily Brontë has stripped away the image of the "angel of the house" women from the Victorian period, which has challenged the conventional way of treating women in Victorian society. Moreover, her first and only novel, *Wuthering Heights*, has revealed her feminist approach towards society when it comes to freeing women in the male-chauvinist Victorian society.

Elements of Victorian patriarchal society, including the cultural, social, and personal overview regarding expectations of women, were the key concern of revolt in Emily Brontë's novels. The male chauvinist ideology of the Victorian age revolves around fixing women's limits in the household's boundaries, along with using their skills and integrity only to please and comfort their husbands (McCarthy & O'Sullivan, 2021, pp. 383-391). Achieving intellectual ability was the most important aspect regarding managing feminism and the approaches towards a theory of Emily Brontë when finding a deeper meaning in the background story. Oppression of women in the romantic period is also noticed and delivered in the novel. The strength of human beings and women is the most important aspect of the feminist view. It is worth considering that the theory of feminism is all about the systemic inequalities women face in life, and it is no different in the case of Emily Brontë when she presents her thoughts and feelings regarding the Victorian age.

The estimation of Emily Brontë as the pioneer of feminism is missing from real emancipation from the life of Catherine. Emily Brontë has successfully presented self-realisation through the life of the common people and women in Victorian society, portraying the importance of male domination. The journey of Catherine and Heathcliff presents the characteristics of the childhood of these two characters, affecting their perspectives and approaches regarding managing social status along with the dignity of work. Freedom and love are the key points in life absent from every character.

Liberty is seen in the character of Catherine; however, it lacks dignity and fails to present the growth of Catherine. It is entirely imaginary, and there is no match with the growth of Emily Brontë that has fascinated the readers with the conflict between independence and love. At the same time, the book presents a dramatic force appreciated in the present day, but it was not satisfactory in the beginning days. The novel has also shown the struggle between the self-esteem and love of people (Basirzadehet al., 2020, pp. 1623-1633). The emergence of feminism and reason was seen in this period, which revolved around finding a wealthy man to get married. Female empowerment, individuality, and gender equality are parts of going beyond social issues and male domination.

With the creation of characters such as Catherine and Isabella, Emily Brontë became successful in presenting her strong thoughts along with her intellect and moral character. She withdrew herself from the society that failed to accept her with all the importance of love and marriage. Marriage does not have to involve love in this game, which is no different in the case of Catherine and Heathcliff.

The most important contribution of Emily Brontë to feminist theory is that she wrote novels under a male pseudonym when women were not supposed to write novels. Powerful quotes from the novel show her awe-inspiring approach toward society, where she talks about her will to become a girl again with a free, hardy, and half-savage nature. In the Victorian and Romantic ages, the Brontë sisters helped to shape feminist literature regarding behaviour and approaches towards women.

Emily Brontë is no different from her other sisters in presenting the theme of feminism and ideas regarding the oppression of women in a male-dominated society. Most importantly, in her only novel, Emily Brontë presents the reasons for the childish behaviour of Catherine, the protagonist from different aspects of patriarchal society. It has also been identified that the typical patriarchal society of the 19th century has affected the entire part of dictating the expectations and setting the behaviour regarding living and survival.

As a reserved and silent person, the record of the life of Emily Brontë is not large. The novel worked effectively in the process of darkening the mystery of the spiritual existence of Emily Brontë rather than solving it. Also, Emily's extremely measured life affected her approach towards life, and she used to suffer from homesickness in the classroom where she was teaching her sister, Charlotte. Emily worked as a teacher in Miss Patchett's school for six months; however, she resigned due to her homesickness. She learned school management and foreign languages with her sister Charlotte at the Pension Heger. It is worth noting that compared to Charlotte's decorous temperament, Emily's passionate nature used to attract people; however, they returned to their home in Haworth after the death of their aunt.

The Victorian age is a paradise for novel writers as it is also known as the age of novels interlinked with the genre of literature in this period. This age witnessed emerging problems in the daily life of common people due to the emergence of the Industrial Revolution, which introduced industrialisation and mass urbanisation. Unemployment injects vices and corruption into the thinking and practice of the people and creates annoying situations in society and culture. Writing novels was the most suitable way for the writers to express their personal experiences and the grief and sorrow of middle-class people. At this time, the middle class was emerging as the new rich. This aspect started to introduce problems regarding their identity and classification.

Along with that, this age is a time for depriving and oppressing women of society when it comes to going to work and getting equality. Inequality was the disease of society, and courageous writers such as Emily Brontë did not fail to state their thoughts and feelings regarding the changing world and the need to fight those situations. This aspect created dimensions for writing and talking about women's rights in this age's male-dominated society.

Emily Brontë is a renowned name for breaking conventions portraying the feminism theory in her only novel, *Wuthering Heights*, without fearing rejection. However, she was aware of the status quo of women in the Victorian age. That is why she did not forget to publish her only novel under a male pseudonym. The modern approach and serious outlook of Emily Brontë have not failed in raising consciousness among readers regarding the human mind and feminism.

Exploring inner reality is important in managing the approaches to the world in real life. Although Emily Brontë belonged to a simple family, she never failed to state her mind. All of her struggle to live as a governess and teacher presents

herself as a revolutionary from the beginning. The writings and thoughts of Emily Brontë became a part of the revolution itself. She did not think twice regarding the potential reaction of the readers to her first writing. Despite having brilliant storytelling, passion, and freshness, she faced criticism among the first readers due to her novel's brutal element of society.

Feminist theory is entangled in the writing of Emily Brontë, creating different dimensions of Catherine's character. The uncompromised nature of Emily Brontë has changed the process of voicing the women in this age. The novel had a large impact on the society of the Victorian age by presenting the untold story of women. Society of the Victorian age started to think about the priority of women after the publication of the novel. However, the book's absorption has not yet been completed in society, as discrimination is still present. Brontë raised her voice for the conditions of women even in novels.

Being well aware of the status of women, she published her work under a male pseudonym. The feminist characteristics of Catherine are shown in every aspect of her presentation, along with the independent, little, plain, obscure, and rich persona as per society's expectations. The mixing of genders in the character of Catherine is the key concern in the case of feminist theory, and it is no different in the case of the novel, as she has also shown her potential for being equal in a male-dominated society.

It was not a smooth journey for Emily to talk about feminism and remain in readers' hearts. In the beginning days of the novel, critics refused to accept the novel as readable and identified the novel as clumsy in construction, too animal-like, and too savage. However, with time, Emily became the predecessor of excellent women writers with the voice of feminism. She was ready to tackle any situation, along with the brutal comments of a male-dominated society (Indrasari et al., 2020, pp. 214-218).

Emily spent a long time developing this solidly imagined novel with a deep intensity. Retrospective narrative of an onlooker is the main part of the narrating style of the story. The most important aspect of Emily Brontë's approach to life is quite similar to that of her sister, Charlotte. Strong-headedness and the progressive approach of the women characters have been identified in the novel.

3. Wuthering Heights and its Relation to Feminist Theory:

Forbidden love is the key concern of the novel *Wuthering Heights*, and it shows the oppression of women in this period. Most importantly, feminism is about questioning the male dominant roles in a society by working on evocative and powerful understanding regarding the necessary activities to free the female characters from the oppression. Emily Brontë wrote her novel at a time when a few writers dared to present and write their thoughts on patriarchal sexism and gender issues. Criticism regarding feminism is one of the most popular and awe-inspiring discoveries regarding the world of women and goals related to the uphill battle. The majority emotion of male superiority has always affected the thinking and approach of female novel characters.

The characters such as Catherine in the novel *Emily Brontë* have presented the oppressed situation of women when it comes to women's limitations in completing any task. It has also been identified that the novel was published under the male pseudonym Ellis Bell, rings the danger for women in stating their minds. The novel differs in every aspect, including the dramatic approach and the poet's poetic presentation. The novel's unusual structure also attracted the readers, along with the absenteeism from the authorial intrusion. All the mentioned aspects have only created a different dimension for womanhood and feminism that makes the work of Emily Brontë more relevant to society. The dimension of the story revolves around the end of the 18th century and reflects the story of a foundling, Heathcliff, between the two families, Linton and Earnshaw, in Yorkshire.

Although the novel is considered a Gothic romance novel, it can be criticised from a feminist lens by introducing the change in the authors' approach to dealing with the women characters. The novel became controversial in identifying the changes in society along with the development of the characters. Most importantly, the changes in society are shown in the character of Catherine and Heathcliff in the form of changing mentality and critical character. Women were expected to remain and behave according to societal expectations in the Victorian era.

Emily Brontë has successfully created characters as per the expectations of society as per their gender roles. Gender stereotypes and approaches regarding isolated lives in the darkness follow. Poverty, depression, and death are known to Emily Brontë, and her personal experience has helped her generate pure imaginary characters as per the social norms. The brutality of society and the expected behaviour for every job role are also presented and managed in the form of common thoughts.

Love is the most essential aspect when it comes to creating different approaches toward discouraging the unity of Catherine and Heathcliff. Complexity in love is the novel's central theme, and it includes the experience of Emily Brontë in her life with her family members. Gender is a critical space in the novel that has identified the importance of education for both women and men when it comes to highlighting the cultural wasteland of society. The thoughts of society have been defined in different aspects related to the area of conventional masculinity. The readers cannot go beyond the thoughts of Brontë while reading the novel, which is beautifully woven, and this aspect has created different approaches related to gaining power and respect in society.

The factors regarding indicative approaches related to Catherine's revenge at the end of Heathcliff have affected the entire aspect regarding early changes in the prospect of a good marriage. She went above her oppressed situation as a woman and failed to imprison her even in her status, and she married a man who could provide sufficient wealth. However, this approach has been presented sarcastically with the approach beyond the boundaries imposed on her from the end of society. She is a woman of free will, thought, and strong character. She took an interest in politics in the early years of her life. Most importantly, she is interested in self-teaching regarding reading newspapers and gaining knowledge about politics and grown men. Emily was also an isolated child with her other sisters, and she took solace in literature. Emily's vivid imagination has made her special in the form of a successful writing career and great approaches in her life. However, tuberculosis snatched her life and such a talent from the earth.

Marriage and gender have a keen relationship in the novel with the approaches related to men's supremacy and women's agency. The author cannot present the thoughts and feelings regarding changing reality without identifying the gender and marriage situation in society. From that aspect, it is quite true in the case of the novel that proclamation regarding feminism is identified in the appreciation of the dominance of gender. For example, in this novel, the gender roles and the expected aspects of social culture are quite interesting.

However, it has also been identified that Catherine, Edgar, and Heathcliff are working on different dimensions with their approaches towards their gender role. The readers need to understand the different spheres of isolation for both male and female roles. Female emancipation is another crucial aspect that can help create strong and opposite forces against female characters. The nineteenth and eighteenth centuries were known for the domestic domain of women and for encouraging men to go outside to work while staying dedicated to economic and social business. Developing a different panorama is the most important aspect of separating characters and finding the masculine and feminine roles.

Themes regarding correspondence, passionate love, domestic violence, and revenge are the most important aspects of marriage and gender in Victorian society. The tragic and complex plot of the novel was written based on explicit and immersive approaches regarding masculine and feminine influence. Internal flights between the masculine and feminine sides have already started with Heathcliff's irrational and rational edge in the form of taking revenge on the people he wants. Domestic violence is a critical part of marriage in Victorian society that has implied masculinity.

In the case of the marriage, Heathcliff used to torture his wife, and the influence of gender is shown in every aspect of the novel, along with the actions and behaviour of Nelly. The reputation of the love and romantic relationship between Hareton and young Catherine has also created a better understanding of the love and comparison of the novel.

The Romantic atmosphere of the nineteenth century was present in every aspect of the story, including the passionate love and actions of the characters. It is no different in the case of the marriage theme of the novel, as Catherine chose a comfortable life with wealth instead of true love. This betrayal of Heathcliff creates a situation of revenge in this novel. Marrying Heathcliff was one of Isabella's biggest mistakes, as Heathcliff did that only to get revenge on Edgar's family. Heathcliff always wanted to become the heir to Grange, and he intended to earn money. The novel's love theme fades only through Catherine's decision to marry Edgar for all her life. Individualism is important in this novel in the form of proposals towards diversity.

All the marriages in the novel have ended badly and only scrutinised the destructive approaches of marriages in Victorian society due to providing importance only to wealth. Marriage in that society does not come from the heart and love. It was all about finding the wealthiest person for a woman to secure her future. Catherine only created a childish atmosphere around her that failed to identify her as the most reasonable and responsible person. She was not interested in any task regarding social approaches as she only found peace in finding a husband with wealth. Heathcliff was not her priority during the marriage, as he was penniless. However, the marriage of Catherine and Edgar became fruitless as she died while giving birth to a child.

Conclusion:

Feminism is the most important aspect of life that can help women and men maintain a balance. This theory talks about the historical development of women's conditions and ways of finding space for women to find real status in society. No society can maintain the balance of life by oppressing one of the most important parts of life. Women are the lifelines of human life that help maintain life's grandeur. Most importantly, Western traditions of creating boundaries for women along with caging them have created unrest among women such as Charlotte Brontë and Emily Brontë to voice deprived women in a cruel male-dominated society.

Different types of feminist theories, such as liberal feminism, Marxist feminism, ecofeminism, existentialist feminism, psychoanalytic feminism, and radical feminism, have also been identified and analysed in this study, which has created different dimensions in the field of feminism theory. Most importantly, different waves of the feminist movement are also important when working for women in society and creating differentiation for a better life. The resurgence of feminism was developed in the 1960s when activism regarding the political approaches in feminism started to be noticed.

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