

**Discussion of Gender, Race and Class in
*Wuthering Heights***

Dissertation

Submitted to

School of Languages

Doon University, Dehradun in Partial
Fulfilment of the Requirements for the
Award of the Degree of

B.A English (Honours)

by

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2022

Declaration

I declare that the work presented in the Dissertation entitled 'Discussion of gender, race and class in *Wuthering Heights*' being submitted to the Department

of English, School of Languages, Doon University, Dehradun for the award of Bachelor in English is my original research work. The Dissertation embodies the results of investigations, observations, and experiments carried out by me. I have neither plagiarized any part of the dissertation nor have submitted same work for the award of any other degree/diploma anywhere.

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Certificate

This is to certify that the Dissertation entitled 'Discussion of gender, race and class in *Wuthering Heights*' submitted by Sanjana Sharma has been done under my supervision. It is also certified that the work in this Dissertation embodies original research and hard work of the candidate. The assistance and support

received during the course of investigation and all the sources of literature have been fully acknowledged.

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Acknowledgement

The following dissertation has been one of the first research work undertaken by me in the academic field. It has not been easeful but a period of intense research and learning for me. It has given me opportunity for not only exploring various aspects related to my topic of research but also helped me push my limits and gain insight to my capabilities. I would like to show my gratitude to all those who helped me throughout this process. I owe my deepest gratitude to my

supervisor, Dr. Chetana Pokhriyal, who have been the constant source of inspiration as a guide and mentor. She helped me explore my own thoughts and provided me necessary information for making my research more fruitful. She encouraged me when I would lose hope and has been a dependable guide throughout. I would like to thank my family for their emotional and moral support which helped me in the completion of this work. Lastly, I would like to thank my friends for always being there to support and guide me. This dissertation has been possible due to continuous discussions and learning with my classmates.

Abstract

This research work aims to discuss the gender, class and race system that was prevalent in the nineteenth century through the celebrated classic *Wuthering Heights* by Emily Bronte and to see the work through the lens of Racism, Marxism and Feminist. Gender issues have become a major topic to discuss in present times. My study aims to conduct a study to discuss these themes and to see whether these obstinate gender roles and social hierarchy are still prevalent in today's times and, if not, then how the world has changed since then. I plan to use gender theories to discuss gender roles. It also discusses the class and

hierarchy system and how the lower class is portrayed with respect to the upper class. The treatment of those of the lower class and different races gives rise to the hatred and vengeance in the novel. This study explores the broader view of gender, race and class and discusses how it affects an individual as well as the society.

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Chapter One

Introduction

Naomi Alderman once said “Gender is a shell game. What is a man? Whatever a woman isn’t. What is a woman? Whatever a man is not. Tap on it and it’s hollow. Look under the shells: it’s not there.” Gender roles have existed since ancient times and are still followed blindly. Gender roles are certain ways that a certain sex or gender is expected to behave. But certain writers and artists were ahead of their time and challenged those gender roles, like Shakespeare in his most celebrated play *Macbeth*. According to the ideal way of characterization in the tragedies, women must be caring, loving, dependable and affectionate and should not have big dreams but unlike these qualities Lady Macbeth was an ambitious, strong and independent lady. She is so ambitious that she wants herself to be born as a man and achieve her dreams. The other writer who not only breaks these stereotypical gender roles but also gives the reader a view of social and class hierarchy in the nineteenth century is Emily Bronte. Emily Jane Bronte born on 30 July 1818 in Thornton, Yorkshire was an English poet and novelist. She wrote under the pseudonym of Ellis Bell and was the third living child of Patrick Bronte and Maria Branwell. All her siblings including herself were educated at home. She started writing from a young age and had written only one novel which emerged as a classic in English Literature. She spent most of her time in isolation which made her mysterious in nature and was said to be shy yet free spirited. Emily taught in a school when she was twenty, but due to her ill health, returned back to her home. Later in 1842, Emily and Charlotte started to attend the girls’ academy run by Constantine Heger.

Constantin Heger on Emily wrote:

She should have been a man – a great navigator. Her powerful reason would have deduced new spheres of discovery from the knowledge of the old; and her strong imperious will would never have been daunted by opposition or difficulty, never have given way but with life. She had a head for logic, and a capability of argument unusual in a man and rarer indeed in a woman... impairing this gift was her stubborn tenacity of will which rendered her obtuse to all reasoning where her own wishes, or her own sense of right, was concerned. (Heger)

Her other two sisters also wrote under the pen names Currer Bell and Acton Bell believing that male names would help them in easy publication. Emily had written around 200 poems and a novel. Charlotte Bronte, her sister, also contributed many classics to English Literature including *Jane Eyre*, *The Professor* and *Shirley*. Her other sister, Anne, wrote the book *Agnes Grey*.

The one and only novel *Wuthering Heights* by Emily Bronte was published in 1847, before a year of Emily's death. The novel is a great Victorian classic. Although considered a classic now, *Wuthering Heights* was criticized severely by the critics for its gory display of scenes and portrayal of destructive emotions. The novel vividly displays scenes of physical cruelty, animal abuse, violence and other serious things. People regarded the book as a piece which challenges Victorian morality and broke societal norms. The *Atlas*, a weekly published newspaper in England during nineteenth century declared the book as

“strange, inartistic story”. Graham’s *Lady’s Magazine* quoted, “It is compound of vulgar depravity and unnatural horrors.” In spite of the criticism, *Wuthering Heights* emerged as one of the finest English classics to ever exist because of its intense plot and strong imagery. The novel is Gothic Fiction and has used imagery like isolated moors, strong winds and darkness to revive the genre. The story is told in the form of Frame Narration, story set within a story. Another similar book that is Gothic fiction narrated in the style of Frame Narration is *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley. The author has used vivid imagery of nature and has employed Pathetic Fallacy in the novel. This literary device stands for associating the feelings and emotions of the characters with the nature around them. For instance, when Cathy gets ill, it is reflected in the nature around her. She remarks, “There was no moon, and everything beneath lay in misty darkness” (Bronte 113) or when Heathcliff abandoned *Wuthering Heights*, the dwelling place, heartbroken, the weather was violent, “the storm came rattling over the Heights in full fury” (Bronte 78).

Gender, Class and Race

Gender could be defined as the traits of men and women that are socially constructed rather than based on biological differences. People generally as soon as they born, are assigned their genders on the basis of the sex they belong to. In other words, they are called a boy or a girl on the basis of their genitals.

Gender is not something based on one’s reproductive organs but is socially constructed on the basis of how one eats, talk or carries oneself. Gender roles are the codes that a person is expected to follow by the society. A man is expected to have anger, aggression and a dominant aura whereas society does not welcome these traits if they come from a woman. Women are always

expected to be the caring ones, supportive and submissive. A woman should not possess qualities that are men-like and are often treated as secondary to a man. These socially constructed, unbending gender roles are what help an individual construct a gender identity.

Our society was, and still is, plagued by the race system. Racism could arise because of differences in certain groups of people because of biological differences like colour, nationality, etc. There have been many anti racial movements like anti-apartheid and Black Lives Matter to eradicate racialization. One such writer who talked about the problems of race, especially in respect to black African people is Frantz Fanon. He is often called as “the most influential anticolonial thinker of his time.” His works such as *Wretched of the Earth* and *Black Skin White Masks* discuss the subjugation of black people and how they are perceived by the white people. This research aims to discuss the trauma that is caused by the racism and how does it affects an individual.

The novel is set at the time of Victorian Era, during the time of Industrial Revolution, which gave rise to many social hierarchical systems and racism. Class is a system of hierarchy based on education, property, work, etc. The class system was very much prevalent in the nineteenth century, which is clearly depicted in the novel. Many characters in the novel are discriminated against and subjugated because of their class in society. The other Victorian writers who talked about the similar issue in their books are Charles Dickens, Thomas Hardy, George Eliot etc. Karl Marx, a German philosopher and critic, provided a theory on the class conflicts between the upper class (capitalists) and working class in his book *The German Ideology*.

Literature Review

Before delving deep into the analysis on my subject, let's see what researches has already been conducted on the novel in the fields of race, class and gender. Apparently the most prominent research on Marxism on the novel is done by a popular Marxist and literary critic, Terry Eagleton in his work *Myths of Power: A Marxist Study of the Brontës* (1975). In this work Eagleton sympathises with Heathcliff as he states that he had been a victim of the capitalist society and he feels alienated at Heights. He also mentions the upward mobility of Catherine while choosing Edgar over Heathcliff. Virginia Woolf, the feminist writer wrote an essay on *Wuthering Heights* in 1916. In the book *Madwoman in the Attic* (1979) by Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, they interpret the novel through the feminist point of view and declares Heathcliff as a female in the sense that he is an outcast and has no societal power and influence. The same topic is discussed by Margret Homans where she talks about the mental confinement of the author in a household or in a female body which is reflected in the novel through confinement of characters in their dwelling place against their will and that characters are not only confined physically but also psychologically because of traditional gender roles. Their also had been various successful movie adaptations on the novel. Kate Bush, a famous singer and songwriter wrote and released her debut single "Wuthering Heights" on 20 January 1978 through EMI Records and the song charted to top in UK Charts, Bush becoming the first female to do so.

Objective

The aim of my study is to analyse and discuss the novel *Wuthering Heights* in relation to the themes of race, class and gender and to have thorough

understanding of the same. My study aims to discuss as to how these tenets of society have changed in twenty first century, almost two centuries after the work was published and to see how the race and class system affects the mind of a victim. Although the themes that I have took in the novel has been discussed before, my study would see the modern-day view of these themes. How does the writer illustrate the class conflict in the selected work? Is the society still caught up in the same Victorian societal terms?

Research Methodology

My study aims to discuss the themes of gender, race and class in a nineteenth century novel *Wuthering Heights* by Emily Bronte and to review my understanding of the same. This work is qualitative in nature. The aim of the study is to see the work through Marxist point of view. It also aims to review the work through the lens of feminism and racism.

Chapter One lays the introduction of the entire thesis and is divided into various subdivisions. First part of the introduction gives a brief account of the novel and the author. Furthermore class, race and gender as a theme are described separately providing basic understanding of the same. Chapter Two gives a background of the Victorian era of the novel and its cultural and political tenets and values. It also includes the Marxist understanding of the novel followed by discussion of gender roles and racism on the same. Chapter Three is the conclusion of the entire study with the scope of further research on the topic.

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Chapter Two

Era of the novel

The novel *Wuthering Heights* was written at a time when queen Victoria was on the throne in England from 1837-1901. The society was in a shape of pyramid where the topmost power was held by aristocracy, gentry in middle while working class at the bottom. Gender was socially constructed and strictly followed. Men did all the work for earning money because they were considered rational and more intellectual than women hence, they did all the outside work and business. Women were generally limited to the household. There were strict codes on how a particular gender should behave. These gender roles helped to create an individual's social identity. Britishers considered themselves superior to anyone else, hence they carried themselves very mannerly. It was also the time of Industrial Revolution, a time of rapid growth in industrialization and science. The movement increased the number of middle-class section in Britain which effected the cultural norms, ethics and conventions of the society. People started to get more educated and informed. The scientific growth urged people to think intellectually which improved their cognitive skills. Literacy rate started to rise and by twentieth century, only three percent of the population was illiterate. Rapid industrialization and development took place which required more labours, hence eighty percent of the people were in the working class. The working class consisted of labours who worked on very low wages and were poor. The industrialization required a great number of labours, while working class was mostly poor their children took degrading jobs such as chimney sweepers, house servants and coal miners. These dangerous jobs seriously affected children's health which caused them respiratory problems and many

even died. The poverty of working class also forced them to sell their children to upper classes as slaves to serve in their domestic households. Charles Dickens, a prominent Victorian writer wrote mainly on the theme of class struggle and child slavery. His novel *Hard Times* criticized Victorian society and showed its loop-holes in a very subtle manner. George Bernard Shaw commented on the novel, “passionate revolt against the whole industrial order of the modern world.” Women either took the job of governess of children or to serve the ladies in upper class households. Those who were unable to make money became prostitutes to earn a living. Women were considered as property and only the nurturer of human race. They had no ownership of any lands or estates. If they were in line of any inheritance, all of their father’s property would be owned by their husbands.

Literature is the mirror of a society and its good and bad values are reflected in it. Emily Bronte lived at the time of Industrial Revolution and that is the reason she has used all these aspects in the novel *Wuthering Heights*. She has indirectly shown slavery, racism, traditional gender roles and exploitation of the working class in the novel with the marginalization of the women. The genre of the novel is Gothic Fiction which enabled women to write on things other than marriage. Emily challenged the norms of the Victorian society by talking about such dark and brooding themes that it was impossible to believe that the text was written by a woman at that time. Some even argued that it may be possible that her brother wrote the novel.

Marxist analysis of the selected work

Marxism is a social and economic theory written in the nineteenth century collectively by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. The theory opposes Capitalism

and favors Communism and Socialism. It deals with a basic part of a social structure, capital, which is divided into three parts: Land, Infrastructure and Money, which collectively are called Sources of Production. According to Marx, society is divided into two classes: the Bourgeoisie or the ones who own the means of production; and Proletariat, the working class. The Bourgeoisie are the capitalists or the ruling class who own the society's riches and hire the working class for the production whereas the working class are the ones who provide with their labor at the minimum possible wage. The existence of these two social groups lead to class conflict in the society. Marx claims that the working class has no share in owning the means of production and they are not compensated enough for their labor, hence they are exploited by the Bourgeoisie.

In a capitalist society, the ruling class has economic power in their hands, which they use to protect their property and accumulate wealth, thus exploiting the working class. The working class provide the capitalists with their labor in exchange for the minimum wage possible and further use that money for their daily needs, whereas the capitalists generate profit by creating a huge gap between workers' wages and the investment required for production, hence accumulating wealth while workers become poorer. Furthermore, capitalists use their already accumulated wealth to invest in the product and deposit their gain into the accumulated profit making them richer than before, while working class gets poorer. Workers have no stake in the production process, so they become alienated to the product and from humanity altogether. Engels and Marx believe that only a revolution by the Proletariat where they take control of the means of production can eradicate this biased power dynamic and can sweep away

Capitalism so that total equality could prevail. For this shifting of power to take place by dismantling capitalist society, one should know about the division of the human establishment by Marx into two parts: Base and Superstructure, the former being the invisible part whereas latter is the visible one. Base includes the relationship between the conflict classes based on the economic value and production and include material things, whereas Superstructure includes the social framework. For example: art, education, religion, politics, laws and marriage. The ability of a person to sustain in a society is based upon the Base. Bourgeoisie extend power over Proletariat by two methods either by domination through force and oppression on working class or Hegemony which includes domination but with the consent of the oppressed class. This consent is not easily granted by the working class, but it is achieved by capitalists through creation of certain ideologies that favor capitalism that are made acceptable in the eyes of society.

Marxist criticism of literary theory wants to control literature as it is the best form of expression to dismantle capitalism and to counter hegemony. Marxists like Stalin encourage artists to use Marxism bent of mind while writing literary text. According to Marxism, every literary text must have an obligation to the cause of the working class which is why Stalin urged writers to write while keeping in mind the position of the working class. Many thought it to be the limitation of their freedom in expression. Terry Eagleton, a famous Marxist and literary critic remarked, “Marxist criticism is concerned with how novels get published and whether they mention the working class” (Eagleton).

Literature is a part of the superstructure. Eagleton described two methods in which Marxism can be deeply rooted in the social reality: one is through the

writer's perspective. Influenced by the writer, a literary text is a product of many ages. Class conflict is everywhere hence, the writer can form a narrative that would depict social realities in the work. For instance, in Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* the colonizers history is described and how the colonized people are oppressed by the colonizers or in *Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens, another Victorian writer where the class struggle is the main theme. The other method is through the reader's perspective. A reader from a Marxist bent of mind should analyze the social and power structure in the text, should look for the characters that suffered due to the class struggle and should reflect on the text's appropriation. The ideas that are in favour of capitalism are made acceptable and normal to the society and these ideas and ideologies become our reality and that is why Marxists urge people to do the opposite and uphold the cause of socialists to sweep away Bourgeoisie ideology.

After having the basic understanding of Marxism, let us see how this theory has crept into the novel *Wuthering Heights*. The novel was published in 1847, only a few years after the Industrial Revolution. The revolution gave rise to tremendous growth in foreign and domestic power of England. During this growth and development, power shifted from the hands of aristocrats to new business owners who exploited the working class. The age although began with growth and confidence ended up brutal to the common man. Emily herself was born at the time when the revolution was at its peak and she and her sister being a governess and teacher could add sense to the narrative as these were also considered low-class jobs.

In the novel, Heathcliff is the adopted son of Mr. Earnshaw, the master of Wuthering Heights. He is an orphan, gypsy boy whose origin is unknown and

hence was adopted by the Earnshaws. Heathcliff is not accepted by any person other than Catherine, his foster sister. He is alienated from the house and acts as a threat in established order of the place. He is continuously abused verbally, physically as well as mentally by Hindley, his foster brother because of his lower-class origin. Heathcliff is considered a property in the household and is treated like an object. He is been referred as a “vagabond”, “imp of satan”, and “devil” himself. He is reduced to a mere servant and is frequently beaten for being rough and wild, “He seemed a sullen, patient child; hardened, perhaps, to ill treatment: he would stand Hindley’s blows without winking or shedding a tear.” (Bronte 35). In the novel, he represents the Proletariat whereas Hindley and Lintons represents the Bourgeoisie. He is alienated in the house as no one matches in his skin colour, and he is a bit higher in rank than the servants. Terry Eagleton in his book *Myths of Power: A Marxist Study of the Brontes* (1975) says about Heathcliff, “a purely atomized individual outside the family and society in an opposing realm which can be adequately imagined only as a ‘Nature’.” The Lintons reside at Thrushcross Grange, which is a luxurious and civil estate unlike Heights and are the representation of upper-class people who does not pay any heed to the lower class’s misery but instead add to it. They don’t make their money, their servants do it for them hence they could be called capitalists. When Heathcliff and Catherine while rambling on the moors, reach Grange they are chased by their dogs. Catherine is turned in because of her social status while Heathcliff is mortified for his dark skin and dirtiness and is shooed away. Isabella Linton as soon as she sees him remarks, “Frightful thing! Put him in the cellar, Papa” (Bronte 46). After spending several days at Grange, Catherine returns at Heights being all pretty and lady-like, the result of living

with upper class. She dreads to touch Heathcliff and embarrasses him in front of everyone. "It was only that you looked odd. If you wash your face and brush your hair, it will be all right: but you are so dirty" (Bronte 50)! Catherine represents a major part of the Bourgeoisie in the novel. Her choice to marry Edgar represent her choice of upward mobility in the society. She says, "I shall like to be the greatest woman of the neighbourhood" (Bronte 72). For the sake of gaining upward mobility in social class, she abandons her true love and marries Edgar Linton. Later in the novel when Heathcliff returns as a wealthy gentleman, he gets much respect from everyone including Hindley, his former suppressor. There was no place for him to find the freedom so he becomes the oppressor. He manages to take ownership of the Heights by taking advantage of Hindley's drunkenness and gambling. He, by doing so reverses the power dynamic of the capitalist society by becoming the capitalist himself. His treatment to other people low in power and class could be seen in his behavior towards them. He treats Hareton, the son of Hindley and the real heir to Heights, the same way he was treated back when he was a child. The novel sets a perfect example of the fact of Capitalist society where the rich get richer and the poor get poorer. Heathcliff although acquires both Heights and Grange, he does not have any soul to rely on or to love. His suffering can be seen in following words, "only it will let you know why, with a reluctance to be always alone, his society is no benefit; rather an aggravation of the constant torment I suffer" (Bronte 288). Here he talks about how he gets no satisfaction in troubling Hareton anymore and how his companionship with young Cathy reminds him of himself and Catherine. Heathcliff's exploitation of Hindley by not granting him the right of education and treating him like a slave in his own house showcases

Heathcliff's hegemony over Hareton and other people around him. He spends all his days in misery missing the dead Catherine. His longing for Catherine could be seen in following words:

That, however, which you may suppose the most potent to arrest my imagination, is actually the least: for what is not connected with her to me? And what does not recall her? I cannot look down to this floor, but her features are shaped in the flags! In every cloud, in every tree-filling the air at night, and caught by glimpses in every object by day- I am surrounded with her image! The most ordinary faces of men and women is a dreadful collection of memoranda that she did exist, and that I have lost her. (Bronte 288)

Later he dies alone leaving all his property and possessions in the hands of Hareton. Hareton, who from his birth had no right to education and was degraded to a slave in his own house gets Heights and Grange both after marrying Catherine Linton.

Gender perspective of the selected work

It is clearly apparent that our society, from the start, has been divided based on the gender of a person. This division has oppressed women continuously throughout history by those at the top of a power structure, namely male gender.

A person as soon as he is born is given a gender on the basis of his genitals. Many people out there confuse sex of a person with its gender. Sex of a person is determined by his biological attributes which he is born with, whereas gender has a broad spectrum. Gender is fluid and a person could be He or She no matter

what the sex is. There are many people out there who do not stick to a gender and may be called male one day and female the next. These people call themselves non-binary or gender-neutral. Gender is a social construction where certain attributes are normalized for a given gender. There are certain gender roles set by the society that people are coaxed to follow. These gender roles are the social codes that govern how an individual should carry himself \ herself, creating gender identity of a person in the society. A man should be dominating, brave, self-dependent and ambitious while a woman should have none of these qualities. She must be caring, loving, submissive to the man and must refrain from being ambitious. A woman is and has always been treated as secondary to the man. In a very famous literary work *Paradise Lost* by John Milton writes, “He for God only, she for God in him” (Milton). That shows how the male writers and patriarchy as a whole believed that a female is born to please and serve a man, whereas a man is born to serve the God. Eve, the heroine of the epic, is portrayed vulnerable and cognitively inferior to Adam and not only in this text but there are many literary pieces of work especially written by males, where females are portrayed in a helpless situation and inferior to men. Not only women but men as well fall prey to these unbending and obstinate gender roles. Men are expected to be self-reliant, dominant and strong and often they are verbally abused and bullied if they show any sign of femininity. This concept is generally called toxic masculinity. These social norms of masculine culture set by the society are harmful for not only men but women and society altogether. Toxic masculinity limits men’s emotions and elevates other emotions like anger which further reinforces the oppression on women.

Emily Bronte deals with these themes of gender roles in the novel as she herself was the sufferer of the same. She wrote the novel under the pseudonym of Ellis Bell since it would be very hard for her to publish such a cruel and dark novel as a woman, as it was a male-dominated literary society at the time. It was not appropriate for a woman to write on such sensitive topics and challenge the Victorian norms at that time. She has portrayed Heathcliff as a Byronic hero in the novel. A Byronic hero is the one who is rebellious, arrogant, deprived of education and has some dark past related to them. These heroes are selfdestructive and are particularly attractive to the women around them. This term is associated with Lord Byron, a famous romantic poet and is often used in Gothic Fiction. Heathcliff is wild, aggressive and vindictive human who is in love with Catherine. He is defined as virile and masculine as a Victorian man should be, but the other important male character in the novel Edgar Linton is complete opposite of manhood. He is described as frail and effeminate and is on submissive side of his marriage with Catherine. During a fight with Edgar, Heathcliff comments on Edgar's fragility, "Cathy, this lamb of yours threatens like a bull" (Bronte 103)! Even Edgar is terrified of Catherine. He does not do anything to touch a nerve in Catherine's hot temper. Catherine on the other hand although a beautiful and feminine lady, her behavior is wild. Emily through this character breaks the social gender norms of an ideal Victorian woman. As Emily writes about her that depicts her androgyny in perfect words:

She put all of us past our patience fifty times and oftener in a day: from the hour she came down-stairs till the hour she went to bed, we had not a minute's security that she wouldn't be in mischief. Her spirits were always at

highwater mark, her tongue always going - singing, laughing, and plaguing everybody who would not do the same. A wild, wicked slip she was - but she had the bonniest eye, the sweetest smile, and lightest foot in the parish: and, after all, I believe she meant no harm.

(Bronte 39)

This illustrates both masculine as well as feminine qualities in her. Cathy is carefree, independent and adventurous having all the qualities that were associated with the men. She curses people and throw tantrums when she is not paid any heed. She is the dominant one in her marriage with Edgar. Her choice in marrying Edgar alludes to the fact that during Victorian times women were only respected on account of their “good” marriages and that only describes their position in society. Another character that goes through the same feature is Linton Heathcliff, son of Isabella and Heathcliff. He is a sick, peevish child who is effeminate just like his uncle. Whenever he feels angry or irritated, he cries and is so demanding that even his father and servants get sick of him. As Heathcliff says, “I’m bitterly disappointed with the whey-faced, whining wretch” (Bronte 186)! He could be described as fragile and pale with blue eyes and feminine just like his mother. He does not respond to young Cathy’s kindness and follows blindly whatever his father tells him to do. He is handsome but cruel man and often mistreats Cathy even after she takes care of him. For instance: When Cathy is locked in Heights, she asks help from Linton but he in return snatches Cathy’s Locket and gives it to his father who in turn smashes it.

There are other aspects of the novel as well which could be seen through the lens of Feminism. Before delving deep first let’s have a brief idea about

Feminism and some basic tenets of it. Feminism stands for advocacy and equality of women's rights with that of men. The realm of feminism is not fixed hence it incorporates new ideas and understanding based on the occurrences around the world involved with women. There are different forms of Feminism and one of them is Contemporary feminism. This branch of feminism involved informing women of their rights through social media and persuading men to join the quest for equality. Other branch of feminism is Liberal Feminism. This branch of feminism urged women to go into the job area that was dominated by men. This branch of feminism should exist for much longer as its aim is not yet fully achieved. On the other hand, Marxist Feminism deals with the double subjugation of women through capitalism as well as discrimination based on gender. Marxist Feminism aims to dismantle the patriarchal rule in employment and women to give fair chance in jobs. The most violent type of Feminism is Radical Feminism. It aims at abolishing patriarchy to free women from the oppressed and unjust society. The literary society was completely dominated by the male but the emergence of feminist theory surely calls this male domination into question. To women's contribution in literature and to analyze the existing works from female writers, feminist literary criticism was introduced. Virginia Woolf once said, "intellectual freedom depends on material things....and women have always been poor." Through this she is trying to explain the position of women in the society as a writer. She was one of the first feminist critics to write on the subject of gender inequality through her essay, "A Room of One's Own." In the essay she creates a fictional sister of Shakespeare and argues that if she was talented as Shakespeare himself would she be as great as him? She points out in the essay the difficulties faced by a female author like

money and personal space in producing a literary work. Another important figure in feminist literary criticism is Simone De Beauvoir who wrote much prominent book, *The Second Sex* which includes her famous quote, “One is not born, but rather becomes a woman.” Here she discusses how women have always been secondary to men in almost every aspect and are given the title of “Other”. Kate Millets’ *Sexual Politics* is also one of the major works in feminist literary criticism. Elaine Showalter’s ‘Gyno criticism’ was a criticism that analyzed women’s work through the point of view of women. It aims to free the female identity from the male definitions. This term was used in the third wave of feminism.

In the novel, the plights of women could be seen at various levels. Catherine is chided very often for being wild and carefree. She is expected to behave lady-like and not to play in the dirt. She has to throw tantrums on her husband for going out with Heathcliff. Isabella Linton, although civil and sophisticated is taken hostage by Heathcliff. She is constantly abused and beaten by him. Her attempts to save her child from Heathcliff after her death also fails when Heathcliff takes Linton into his own custody against Isabella’s wishes and also how her brother denies accepting her back as his sister because she ran with his enemy. Due to this, she had to run away to some far, place alone, impregnated with Heathcliff’s child. The entrapment of Nelly Dean and young Cathy also shows the suppression of women. Young Cathy’s entrapment by Heathcliff just like her aunt Isabella and her forced marriage to Linton, shows the grievous state of women. Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar in their book *Madwoman in the Attic* argues that the novel is a bildungsroman as it shows the experiences from “innocence” to “experience”. Critics say that Catherine has

been a revolutionary character in the book. She as a woman challenged gender norms and was the wild enough to control Heathcliff.

Racism in the selected work

Racism alludes to the wrong practices where certain set of people are discriminated and prejudiced against just because they belong to certain religion or race. These social practices have been in the society from ages and they are still present. The sufferer is oppressed on the basis of his color, nationality, religion, customs and beliefs. The most marginalized society that has been prey to the racism is African-American society and the black people. The whites have subjugated them for years and have strengthened their control and power over them merely because they think that they are superior to Blacks. Racism hinders a person in his academic and employment opportunities, and it was found that white families were thirteen times richer than the Black ones. Racism also plays a huge role in an individual's mental health. There have been many anti-racism movements throughout history to liberate people from the shackles of race and prejudices. Many people all over the world believe that colored people are inferior to them just because they belong to different ethnicities and follow different set of practices and beliefs. These people cannot accept diversity at all. These people have very low acceptance of the differences in the society. Chinua Achebe talks about how a British writer portrays an image of Africa and its natives to the Western world. He complains that such a famous writer whom millions of people read portrays Africa as savage and uncivilized. He goes on to say that Conrad was a racist who used his literary power to demean Africa and its people. Conrad, in his novel *Heart of Darkness* portrays Africa in a very biased sense. He has not given any language to the natives in his book and only

given some broken words when they are being portrayed as cannibals. He argues that this type of portrayal of his nation would only demean his people and marginalize them at the hands of Westerners. Jean Paul Sartre in his preface to *Wretched of the Earth*, informs people that this piece of work was not written for westerners but for the colonized people. He aims to address them to gather up and fight against colonization and racism together.

Emily has portrayed racism behind a very mystic and passionate love story. Additionally, the novel was written before the abolishment of slavery in Britain, hence her own social experiences might be mixed as her school was near to a slave-selling place as Fowler says. In the novel, the place where Heathcliff is found by Mr. Earnshaw is Liverpool. The place used to be the most active in the slave trade. Emily, by mentioning Liverpool, could be alluding to the fact that Heathcliff could be a runaway slave. Also, his appearance made him an outsider in the society, “dirty, ragged, black-haired child”, or “though it’s as dark almost as if it came from the devil” (Bronte 34). Heathcliff description as black haired could sense the difference between the residents of the house and him. He is many a times called “it” in the novel as if he was an object and is compared to the devil itself because of his skin color. When Catherine and Heathcliff run to Thrushcross Grange, Catherine being bitten by a dog, is straightaway turned in whereas seeing Heathcliff’s appearance and dirty clothes, he is dismissed with insults. Furthermore, racism could be sensed in Mrs. Linton’s words, “yet the villain scowls so plainly in his face; would it not be a kindness to the country to hang him at once, before he shows his nature in acts as well as features” (Bronte 56)? This type of behavior made Heathcliff an alien and outsider among all other people and even Catherine, his beloved

treated him as an outcast when she got involved with the Lintons. The oppressed life that Heathcliff leads in the novel can be seen as a proof of racist British society. His exclusion urges him to become a masochist animal that turns to take revenge on everyone who harmed him. Heathcliff is the central character and his trauma and suffering is very appropriately shown by Emily through anxiety and vindication. His alienation in the house can be seen in Nelly's statement to Lockwood, "it is strange people should be so greedy, when they are alone in the world" (Bronte 32). This feeling of alienation inside Heathcliff appeared after constant mental and physical abuse from Hindley and Catherine's betrayal of his love. Catherine's choice of marrying Edgar instead of Heathcliff planted hatred in Heathcliff's mind towards the Lintons. The choice of the husband was purely based on Heathcliff's low class and race origin and this urged Heathcliff to run away from the Heights. Catherine chose a white man instead of him because she thought that would make her "the greatest woman in the neighbourhood" (Bronte 72). The oppression and alienation that Heathcliff constantly feels put him into a state of trauma that he is not able to overcome throughout his life. He becomes revengeful to his oppressors and turns himself into one. He is hard on himself and whenever he is reminded of Catherine, he punishes himself. As noticed by Nelly Dean, "I observed several splashes of blood about the bark of the tree, and his hand and forehead were both stained" (Bronte 150). Towards the end of the novel, he is seen in a state of frenzy and despair. He has no one to communicate with, which makes him ramble alone at the moors. This idea has earlier been given by the writers that liberation does not end the trauma that comes from suppression. Although Heathcliff had become the wealthy owner of two places, and was not enslaved anymore his

trauma stays with him throughout his life. Even when we take the relationship of Catherine and Heathcliff, there was more of a mistress-slave relationship between the two rather than the love birds. “Heathcliff had knelt on one knee to embrace her; he attempted to rise, but she seized his hair, and kept him down” (Bronte 142). He becomes a victim of Catherine’s selfishness and racism, although he takes no revenge on her.

Heathcliff proves in the novel that it is not only the power in whites to oppress and be racist but it is a human nature and can be done by anyone. Racism is one of the most important theme in the novel. It shows how one personal conflicts arise because of racism, how an individual is alienated from the society and people around him and how it results in loss of identity and longterm trauma.

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Conclusion

The present study is an effort to find the theme of gender, class and race in Wuthering Heights. In this study, I have explored many incidents in the selected novel where the characters have inflicted misery on others because of their

difference in race, class and gender and then suffered themselves afterwards. In chapter one entitled “Introduction”, an effort has been made to introduce the title in a brief manner. There is also a brief background of the author and her work. In chapter two, description of the Victorian era has been given describing its basic social tenets and values. The background of the era is followed by Marxist analysis of the selected work.

The characters in the novel are subjugated because of the respective gender, class and race they belong to. They suffer a great amount of anxiety and trauma that comes with the marginalization and the oppression. This constant abuse and trauma resulted in the character’s dispersion state and eventually to the state of vengeance that caused him to destroy himself and those around him. He became a vindictive animal and tortured those who tortured him but even all this does not get him any satisfaction. This alludes to the fact that rich would be richer and although Heathcliff raised his social class for a short period of time dies poor and in misery.

Emily Bronte was ahead of her times to discuss such grave topics at the time when these were followed blindly. She understood how marginalized people stand in the society. The people of the era were said to be narrow minded and hypocritical. She illustrates very clearly the hypocrisy of the Victorian society. It was said to have the strictest norms and conventions to exist in England and people valued manners and morals more than anything else yet the same people violated those conventions privately. The upper class citizens in reality had no image similar to what they showed. They mostly used working classes as their slaves and oppressed them by not providing with the proper money and living conditions.

The aim of the study was to discuss how gender was perceived at the time of the novel and also how it affected an individual's mind because of the gender norms and stereotypes that existed. Things have been improved vastly but these stereotypes still exist here in today's society all over the world. There is much of gender inequality that is still present but slowly and steadily women are taking over and are contributing a larger part than they used to in earlier times. People are defying the concept of toxic masculinity and are taking pride in their gender and sexuality. Racism is getting weak and it can be seen in certain situations like Asia is growing, the president of USA was half black. Article 15 of Indian Constitution prohibits the discrimination of any citizen based on gender, race, caste, class and religion. Article 16, prohibits any discrimination against employment based on gender, sex, class and religion. My study gives new opportunity for research work in the field of gender, race and class. It helped in explaining how these themes affects personal relationships. The study of gender, race and class expanded and added to the canon of research on this novel.

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