

Portraying Role of Gender with the Context of Literature

¹Yelagonda Anjaneyulu

¹Research Scholar, Sri Satya Sai University of Technology and Medical Science, Sehore, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh

²Dr. Babina Bohra

²Research Supervisor, Sri Satya Sai University of Technology and Medical Science, Sehore, Bhopal, Madhya Pradesh

ABSTRACT

After a long voyage of making the world better by establishing new laws, developing new objects and modifying ancient concepts and thoughts. Women were still suffering every second and they were still striving for their rights. There is a larger range of women writing now than in previous age. They differ in class, ethnicity, color, age, and cultural and linguistic origins. It is difficult to describe feminism precisely as there are debates among feminists. This article analyses the roles of women and men in society from an interdisciplinary point of view. The author analyses how it creates societal roles throughout varied cultures, and determines women and men's own sense of identity in literary contexts.

Keywords: Feminism, Modernism, Women, Thoughts, Criticism

I. INTRODUCTION

One of the most pivotal eras in British history, the 19th century was also a time of great transformation for women, a trend that continued into the 20th. Literature, society, and women's rights all advanced over the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. However, this revolution for gender parity was kicked off by the suffragette movement. Although the feminist movement has evolved greatly over the years, the term "feminism" may still bring up negative connotations for certain people.

Attempts by British women to gain equal rights with males in school, employment, and other spheres of life began in the early 19th century. Also, the traditional role of women as wives, mothers, and homemakers has evolved with time, as seen by Martin Luther's famous quote: "Women should remain at home, sit quiet, maintain house, and bore and bring up children." For a woman who doesn't require a man to be happy or to do what she wants for a living, the old adage that "a woman is, or at least should be, a kind, polite, and a joyful companion in life, the honor and ornament of the house, and prone to tenderness" is just plain sexist.

The social phenomenon of feminism is widely recognized as a challenge to patriarchal dominance, both within and beyond the home. To affirm the development of a new class of authors as intellectual women, the feminism intellectual movement alters patriarchal means of expression through speech and writing. Feminism is a political movement that advocates for women's equal participation in all spheres of society, including but not limited to electoral politics, the classroom, the workplace, and the boardroom. Feminism, as an ideology, conceptualizes women's ability to make males feel like they're missing something. Feminism

is based on the principle that women should have the same rights as men in all spheres of society, both theoretical and practical.

II. THE WOMAN IN MODERNISM

The senselessness and isolation of the time were taken up by modernists, along with concerns of class and gender. It was a reaction to the widespread despair at the period, when people felt they could do nothing since nothing was stable or certain. It rejected the simple and embraced disruption, as articulated by Virginia Woolf in 1910. Since gender has always been a hot topic in both society and literature, it stands to reason that this problem would play a significant role in the modernist's exploration of identity. For as long as there have been societies, males have looked down on women and their abilities (Marsden). Literature had portrayed women as feminine, weak, obedient, and ignorant; as a result, women were viewed and treated more as accessories to men than as people or spiritual creatures. The vast majority of writers carried on with the false belief that women were inherently inferior to males.

Males defined women for hundreds of years, and society was geared toward and focused on men. This association of women with disorder, barbarism, chaos, irrationality, and the excluded "other" was first the product of male philosophers and social theorists. Women were only objects to be used for domestic duties, procreation, and sexual gratification in James Branch Cabell's view. As the "eternal comedy of the society" for Hegel, and "the implacable opponent of civilization" for Freud, womankind is often portrayed negatively in philosophical writings. Men were stereotyped as being more interested in theory, logic, and order since they are seen as antithetical to feminine qualities.

Since modernism had such an impact on culture at large, it played an important role in establishing norms for how men and women should be depicted in literary works. The impact of modernism on 20th century authors like Fitzgerald, Hemingway, and Faulkner cannot be overstated. Equally, those male writers failed to challenge long-held stereotypes about women. They were not afraid to blur gender stereotypes and portray female characters from a feminist perspective, even if the womanly woman stereotype was present in all of their works. Gender roles evolved gradually in both literature and society. However, the feminine myth is powerful, and it continues to influence how women are portrayed in literature long after those early victories were won.

III. FEMINISM IN MODERN WRITING

Evidence of feminism in contemporary women's writing from the 20th century, as well as a study of their perspectives on cultural and psychological models of women's writing, may be substantial in the realm of fantasy. Feminist critique, by illuminating the cultural and psychological models of contemporary women writers, may also aid readers in moving beyond a woman's words. Anthropologists, sociologists, and social historians have lately produced hypotheses on women's culture. They are created as an alternative to traditional male norms. They're also after the fundamental and mostly autonomous character of the female cultural experience. Though its value as a theoretical formulation has been recognized, the idea of women's culture is still contested in the study of women's history. Historians make a distinction between what is and is not deemed feminine in terms of duties,

occupations, interests, and behaviors. The term "women's domain" was popular in the 19th century and reflected the Victorian ideal of gender roles that kept men and women apart. It was proposed by Edwin Ardners (1975) that women are a "muted group" that will eventually come to overlap the dominant (male) group. A conversation on the "wild zone" or "feminine space" ensued. The American perspective on female culture and female authors has been discussed by many critics. A lot of contemporary critics have weighed in on the topic of women's culture as well. Showalter argues that feminist critics should stop assuming that women simply copy or improve upon the works of their male contemporaries. The female cultural model has several benefits, one of which is that it demonstrates the two ways in which female customs may affect a person: positively, as a source of strength, and negatively, as a cause of helplessness. To put it another way, it may create its own memories and symbols. Understanding a woman's work requires some familiarity with the cultural form of women's writing.

Ultimately, Plath's development as a contemporary female writer reflects her desire to disengage from patriarchal norms and beliefs. Furthermore, she wrote from the perspective of a woman with the intention of exploring the centrality and autonomy of the female cultural experience. She utilized the first-person to discuss societal issues, many of which are relevant to the struggles and changes that contemporary women face.

IV. FEMINISTS' VOICE ON LITERATURE

There are numerous distinguishing characteristics of Victorian literature, which is also a product of its time period. It's multifaceted and convoluted, with dramatic shifts between the ideal and the actual. Numerous literary giants emerged as cultural forces during this time period. Novelists, poets, and essayists alike started to confront the world as it is now and produce more progressive work.

In this case, the fight for equality is another major motif in Jane Eyre's journey to feminism. The Victorian era was characterised by a belief that some individuals are born better than others, that those in authority look down on those lower in status, and that males are inherently better than women. Jane and other women like her experience discrimination because of this. Once Jane figures out how unjust things are, she refuses to stop fighting for her right to be treated fairly. It is an excellent representation of Jane's determination and tenacity in her fight for feminism and personal fulfillment.

As the title suggests, the book's central topic is genuine affection. In Jane Eyre, the search for love represents the inward battle for autonomy that permeates her whole existence. According to Jane Eyre, love is divine and transcends human metrics like wealth, social standing, and material possessions. She wants more than a solace-inducing real love because she endured a hapless childhood and a horrible adolescence. For the sake of love, she endures a great deal of pain. Meanwhile, she succeeds in her laborious search for it.

The literature of the Victorian era is an accurate reflection of life in the era. The strength, social honesty, comedy with compassion, and limitless creativity are timeless. Writings of all kinds are prepared to usher in the twenty-first century.

V. COMPARISON OF MALE AND FEMALE WRITERS ON THE TOPIC OF FEMINISM

The perspectives of male and female authors on sexism and women's rights varied little throughout the late 19th and 20th century. Charlotte Bront was one of several women authors who used a pen name rather than their own name because they were too afraid to publish on their own. Women at the turn of the nineteenth century were hesitant to publicly discuss their social issues, so they often wrote under male pseudonyms. This was done both because men's opinions were generally given more weight and because the authors hoped to shield themselves from the sexism and bias that existed at the time. At the time, feminism was handed on via books rather than spoken word. When individuals travelled, they carried books with them, making literature a significant form of communication on this issue.

Education, suffrage, marriage, and sexual mores were all areas in which views of women in society shifted throughout the Victorian era. The most dramatic and far-reaching shift occurred in the second half of the nineteenth century, when attitudes and practises around women's roles shifted dramatically. More doors opened up for women in the traditionally male-dominated workforce, women's access to higher education and better job options improved, and marriage and motherhood were no longer considered as women's only path to financial stability. Women of the 19th century epitomised the New Woman, as described by Greg Buzwell in his article *Daughters of decadence*; "she was freespirited and independent, educated, and uninterested in marriage and children." 26 In real life, the New Woman was a feminist working for women's suffrage; in fiction, she was a woman who prioritised her own goals while simultaneously reflecting the values of her day. She was no longer referred to as a submissive wife who was completely committed to her husband, but rather as an independent woman who did not need to defer to any man. Yet Buzwell thinks that female characters were often portrayed as "sexual predators or oversensitive ladies who cannot accept their essence as a sexual person."

In the years between the close of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth, a new literary movement called modernism gained prominence. The result was more sexually explicit writing and a more lifelike style. While there was a movement in sexual and gender norms before World War II, it wasn't until after the war those things really started to change. Beginning in the 1960s and continuing into the 1980s, the sexual revolution had far-reaching consequences, altering normative attitudes and practises towards sexuality and romantic partnerships. The sexual revolution paved the way for the acceptance of non-heterosexual partnerships, such as gay or polygamous ones. In addition, more people are open to the idea of flaunting their nudity in public, seeing pornographic material, or using birth control methods like abortion and contraception that have been legalised. The historical turn in Victorian study and the rise in the number of women authors both contributed to a flourishing literary scene during the age of the sexual revolution. After the women's movement and the fight for civil rights, most academic work began to contain discussions of gender and sexuality.

This literature sprang from feminist concerns, and its primary subjects were white, middle-class women. The works emphasised the need of reclaiming the literary past of women writers, with an emphasis on recovering the legacy of feminist activity and consciousness.

Pamela K. Gilbert writes in her book *Gender* that "reading women authors' opposition to patriarchy and on the depiction of female characters" was a major theme in the literature of this time period.

VI. CRITICISM OF FEMINISM LITERATURE

Women and female critics are not fair game in literary criticism. Feminist literary criticism is a type of literary criticism in which the critic approaches the work with an emphasis on the fact that both sexes play significant roles in the literary, cultural, and social contexts in which it is situated. This sex difference affects not just the author, reader, and character, but also the situational variables that shape the narrative being fabricated. Feminist literary criticism provides compelling evidence in support of the view that women can and should read and write and interpret literature in ways that are uniquely their own.

The fact that women have been around longer does not negate the fact that there is racial and cultural consistency. However, their perspectives on feminism are divergent. Feminists seek to educate the public about the harmful effects of ideology and racial behaviors that affect marginalized groups, such as women. Feminist research cannot be conducted inside a single theoretical framework; rather, it requires an array of approaches and methods. Feminist research looks at society as a whole, rather than at any specific demographic.

Feminist literary criticism, which may be seen as reading from a female perspective, argues that the field has moved beyond the need for a unifying theoretical framework and is now an influential theoretical and practical force. This strategy relies on a point of view that might keep readers aware of the fact that there exist gender inequalities in the literary world. All of social life may be seen as reflected in literature, and this can help to explain why literature exists. One cultural structure and process that comes to mind is the book. Feminism, in its dictionary definition, is a women's movement that seeks to achieve legal parity for the rights of both sexes.

Feminism is linked to theories and practices about the reproduction and reception of literature. The concept of femininity, then, is one that is culturally and psychologically constructed; women are not born "as" women but "become" women. Therefore, the conclusion is rejected by feminist organizations because it assumes women as negative constructions, women as subjugated creatures, and women who are enmeshed into a marginal, superior inferior, center dichotomy. The goal of feminism critique is to expose the fallacies in human conceptions of women.

VII. CONCLUSION

Women's growing frustration at being treated as second-class citizens inevitably gives rise to feminism. In the past, this movement has been known as women's liberation because it seeks to provide women full participation in all spheres of society, including the political, intellectual, artistic, and literary spheres. There has been a shift in tone and the inclusion of new topics like sexuality, homosexuality, and the value of freedom as the feminist movement as a whole has evolved over the ages. Women's yearning for autonomy, recognition, and freedom was first discussed in literary works in the 19th century. One of the fundamental contrasts in the evolution of literature is that, in the 20th century, when women finally

acquired the right to vote, became recognized in society, and were more equal to men, writers wrote about new issues more freely.

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