

AN ANALYSIS OF EDGAR AND CATHERINE LINTON'S MARITAL CONFLICT
IN EMILY BRONTE'S WUTHERING HEIGHTS

A MASTER'S PROJECT
BY
PIMYADA KAEWPANYA

Presented in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the
Master of Arts Degree in English
at Srinakharinwirot University

October 2007

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Advisor: Supaporn Yimwilai, Ph.D.

This research was conducted to analyze the types, causes and results of the marital conflict of Edgar and Catherine Linton presented in Emily Bronte's Wuthering Heights. The analysis applied conflict theory and the concept of interpersonal communication. The findings indicated that three types of marital conflict were portrayed in Wuthering Heights; namely, irrational conflict, overt and covert conflict, leading to chronic conflict. Edgar's jealousy is an obvious example of irrational conflict. Besides, overt conflict is manifested through the arguments between Edgar and Catherine. Covert conflict involved the unspoken situations between them. Catherine and Edgar avoided interacting with each other, and then their conflict developed into chronic conflict. There were three dominant causes of their conflict, namely Catherine's marriage without affection, Edgar's jealousy, and failure of communication. In addition, Catherine's alienation and mental illness were consequences of their marital conflict. Due to the sense of being alienated, Catherine became an estranged, isolated and detached individual. This provoked her mental illness and contributed to her short life. Consequently, it can be explicitly perceived that marital conflicts destroyed their lives.

การวิเคราะห์ความขัดแย้งในชีวิตสมรสของเอ็ดการ์และแคทเธอรีน ลินตัน
จากบทประพันธ์ของ เอมิลี บรอนเต้ เรื่อง Wuthering Heights

บทคัดย่อ

ของ

พิมพ์ญาดา แก้วปัญญา

เสนอต่อบัณฑิตวิทยาลัย มหาวิทยาลัยศรีนครินทรวิโรฒ เพื่อเป็นส่วนหนึ่งของการศึกษา

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งานวิจัยนี้มีจุดมุ่งหมายเพื่อวิเคราะห์ ประเภท สาเหตุ และผลกระทบของความขัดแย้งในชีวิต
สมรสของเอ็ดการ์และแคทเธอรีน ลินตัน จากบทประพันธ์ของ เอมิลี บรอนเต้ เรื่อง Wuthering
Heights โดยใช้ทฤษฎีความขัดแย้งและแนวคิดด้านการสื่อสารระหว่างบุคคล ประกอบการวิเคราะห์
เนื้อเรื่อง ผลการศึกษาพบว่า ประเภทของความขัดแย้งที่เกิดขึ้นในชีวิตสมรสของทั้งคู่มีสามประการ
ดังนี้ 1) ความขัดแย้งภายในจิตใจ เห็นได้ชัดจากการที่เอ็ดการ์แสดงอาการหึงหวงแคทเธอรีน 2) ความ
ขัดแย้งเนื่องจากขาดปฏิสัมพันธ์ที่ดี สะท้อนให้เห็นจากการที่เอ็ดการ์และแคทเธอรีนมีปากเสียงกันแล้ว
ไม่ปรับความเข้าใจกัน และ 3) ความขัดแย้งเรื้อรัง ความขัดแย้งประเภทนี้เป็นผลสืบเนื่องมาจากความ
ขัดแย้งสองประการแรก ซึ่งไม่ได้รับการแก้ไขอย่างถูกต้องจนกลายเป็นความขัดแย้งที่ยากจะเยียวยา
ส่วนสาเหตุที่ก่อให้เกิดความขัดแย้งนั้นมี สามประการ ได้แก่ 1) การแต่งงานโดยปราศจากความรัก
อย่างแท้จริง 2) ความหึงหวงของเอ็ดการ์ และ 3) ความล้มเหลวในการสื่อสารของทั้งคู่ ซึ่งสาเหตุเหล่านี้
ส่งผลให้แคทเธอรีนเกิดความรู้สึกแปลกแยก บั่นทอนสุขภาพกายและสุขภาพจิตทำให้แคทเธอรีน
เสียชีวิตก่อนวัยอันควร ตลอดจนทำให้เอ็ดการ์ ต้องเลี้ยงดูบุตรสาวเพียงลำพัง จะเห็นได้ชัดว่า ความ
ขัดแย้งในชีวิตสมรสนั้นนอกจากทำลายสัมพันธ์ภาพที่ดีระหว่างคู่สมรสแล้ว ยังส่งผลกระทบร้ายแรงต่อ
ชีวิตอีกด้วย ดังนั้น การตระหนักถึงสาเหตุและผลกระทบของความขัดแย้งในชีวิตสมรส จะช่วยป้องกัน
ไม่ให้เกิดความสูญเสีย อย่างที่เอ็ดการ์ต้องสูญเสียแคทเธอรีนผู้เป็นที่รักยิ่งไป

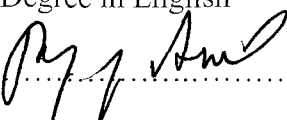
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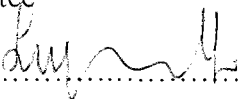
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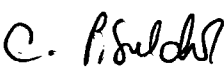
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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

Background

Marriage is one of several significant circumstances in human life. In marriage the most intimate union between human beings is established. Nonetheless, “even in the happiest marriages, conflict occurs” (Scanzoni 403). Marital conflict and disagreement are by-products of people living together. Especially in contemporary society, conflict has the potential for highly negative consequences; for example, violence in families and an increasing divorce rate leading to more single-parent families. Besides, marital conflict also gives rise to intense emotions, such as suicide attempts. Even when spouses share the same information, they often draw different conclusions, a sure path to conflict.

Conflict is inevitable in an intimate environment like marriage because those involved have different perceptions of the world. In fact, even the same person tends to view the same situation differently on different occasions, and so the probability that two people will agree on everything is very small indeed. Additionally, socio-emotional issues such as wanting more attention, affection, and empathy from husbands and either more or less sexual interest are significant aspects of conflict (Scanzoni 403). Therefore, conflict in marriage, whether about undesirable behavior, discrepancies in role expectations and performance, diverse values, dependence or independence imbalance, and communication deficits or anything else, may be settled amicably through negotiation or may lead to a breakup of the marital relationship.

According to Wolf, “life rarely runs smoothly and conflict is a natural part of social relationships” (48). The absence of conflict is not normal. Similarly, Mary Anne

Fitzpatrick states, "Marriage can be conceived of as a continuous confrontation between participants. Moreover, every marriage couple has disagreement about many things" (qtd. in Scanzoni 224). For many couples, "marital conflict does not end with verbal exchanges but spills over into physical violence" (Green 219). Additionally, Stienmetz and Straus, two sociologists, studied violence in the family and found that 56% of all couples will use physical force on each other at some time during their marriage. Another more intensive study by Richard Gelles indicates that violence is a significant phenomenon in family life (Green 220). "The level of daily family violence may be higher than reported and recorded cases indicated" (Green 225). In particular, "flirtation, as well as sleeping with another man, is a behavior that citizens of both genders seem most willing to tolerate as a reason for a man to physically assault his erotic partner" (Scanzoni 227). In addition, conflict can become uncontrollable. Even well-meaning individuals can fall into the social traps posed by interpersonal conflict, with negative implications for the quality and even continuation of relationships.

The most outstanding literary work illustrating marital conflict is Emily Bronte's only novel, Wuthering Heights (1847). It is a prime example of a woman's point of view during the nineteenth century, examining class, myth and gender. Although it did not gain the immediate success that Charlotte Bronte's Jane Eyre did, it attained later fame as one of the most intense novels written in the English language.

Wuthering Heights is a portrayal of romantic tragedy of Heathcliff, a waif from a street of Liverpool, and Catherine Earnshaw, a beautiful daughter of Wuthering Heights' owner, Mr. Earnshaw. They are devoted to each other, but Catherine marries Edgar Linton because of delusion. Heathcliff runs away from Wuthering Heights and returns three years later with an intention to take revenge on Edgar and Catherine. Catherine's

health deteriorates and she dies untimely after giving birth to Catherine Linton. After the death of Catherine, Heathcliff begins to behave more and more strangely and becomes incapable of concentrating on the world around him. Finally, he dies and fails to extirpate the Earnshaws and the Lintons.

There are numerous studies on Wuthering Heights from different perspectives. For instance, in “Diaries and Displacement in Wuthering Heights”, Rebecca Stinitz considered the concepts of materiality and temporality in Emily Bronte’s use of diaries. In addition, John Hagan’s “Control of Sympathy in Wuthering Heights” and Robert McKibben’s “The Image of the Book” indicated that Bronte’s use of sympathy was so well done that the reader continues to view Heathcliff and Catherine as victims, rather than immoral and corrupt villains. Furthermore, Q.D. Leavis in “A Fresh Approach to Wuthering Heights” stated that the novel described the relation of literature to the whole culture which produced it. Leavis also reported that Wuthering Heights was a responsible piece of work and Emily Bronte thought herself into the positions of the characters as an artist.

According to Kirkpatrick, “Emily Bronte’s reputation might appear at first sight disproportionate to her meager output: one novel and 193 poems. Their quality, however, is unique, so visionary and powerful as to rank her undisputedly among the writers of genius” (301). The nature of her poetry and her one novel—Wuthering Heights—was profoundly metaphysical, nourished by the visions that she undoubtedly experienced. Moreover, Charles Percy Sanger who investigated Wuthering Heights’ structure suggested that the most obvious thing about the structure of the story which deals with three generations was the symmetry of the pedigree. The extreme care in realizing the

ages of the characters at the time of each incident demonstrated the vividness of Bronte's imagination (qtd. in Vogler 25).

Arnold Kettle stated that the story of Wuthering Heights concerned several aspects; for instance, love, passions of living people, property ownership, the attraction of social comforts, the arrangement of marriages, the importance of education, the validity of religion, and the relation of rich and poor. "Wuthering Heights is a vision of what life in 1847 was like. The center and core of the book is the story of Catherine and Heathcliff" (qtd. in Vogler 33).

In spite of the fact that a number of researchers have studied Wuthering Heights in various perspectives, the researcher has not found any research conducted in depth on the marital conflict presented in Wuthering Heights. This aspect is worthy of study because it may help readers to understand the relations among marital conflict, literature and society in the Nineteenth Century. In this study, the researcher attempts to answer the following questions:

1. What are the types of marital conflict of Edgar and Catherine Linton's marriage in Emily Bronte Wuthering Heights?
2. What are the causes of marital conflict in their marriage?
3. What are the results of their marital conflict?

Purposes of the study

The purposes of this study are:

1. To explore the types of marital conflict of Edgar and Catherine Linton in Emily Bronte's Wuthering Heights.
2. To analyze the causes of Edgar and Catherine Linton's marital conflict.

3. To investigate the results of their marital conflict.

Scope of the study

This study concentrates on the marital conflict of Edgar and Catherine Linton in Emily Bronte's Wuthering Heights.

Procedures of the study

This research was conducted in accordance with the following procedures:

1. Accumulation of information:

1.1 Study of conflict theory

1.2 Study of the perspective of jealousy

1.3 Study of the concept of interpersonal communication

1.4 Study of the research on marital conflict

1.5 Study of the research on Wuthering Heights

2. Literature review.

3. Information analysis: Analysis of the marital conflict of Edgar and Catherine Linton by applying conflict theory, the perspective of jealousy, and the concept of interpersonal communication.

3.1 The types of marital conflict in Wuthering Heights

3.2 The causes of marital conflict in Wuthering Heights

3.3 The results of marital conflict towards Edgar and Catherine Linton.

4. Conclusion and suggestions for further studies.

Significance of the study

1. The study will assist readers in understanding the causes of marital conflict portrayed in Wuthering Heights.
2. The study will help readers to perceive and appreciate Wuthering Heights.
3. The study will encourage readers to appreciate the value of literature in the Nineteenth Century.
4. The study can be applied to investigate the contemporary situation of marital conflict.
5. The study can be employed as a guideline to explore marital conflict in other writings.

Definition of terms

1. Conflict refers to “contending or fighting that occurs when the behavior of one partner blocks the goals of the other” (Bahr 121).
2. Marital conflict refers to “the incompatibility or antagonism of ideas, desires and actions between the two parties” (Milardo 81).

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

This chapter is divided into three parts. The first part presents conflict theory. The second part concerns the related literature on marital conflict. The final part discusses the related literature on Wuthering Heights.

Conflict Theory

Conflict is “any situation in which our wants, needs, or intentions are incompatible with the wants, needs, or intentions of another person” (Wolf 48). Conflict is a part of every relationship. In even the best relationships, there are inevitably some periods of conflict. On a broader social level, conflict theory calls attention to power, more specifically unequal power. It explains behavior patterns in terms of the unequal distribution of power. Furthermore, conflict theorists examine how one group exercises power over another group. Conflict theorists also maintain that “the economic system produces a superstructure of ideology, which is a set of values that supports and justifies the superior power position of the dominant group” (Wolf 48).

According to “Marital Conflict” by Robert Bacal, the sources of marital conflict can be classified into four types. The first type is rational conflict: conflicts that arise over realistic differences of opinion about some concrete issue. The number one source of argument or disagreement for young couples is money. How you spend your money becomes a critical point in many marriages. The second type is irrational conflict: conflicts based on the eccentricity of an individual. They are conflicts over something that is internal; something you cannot touch, for example jealousy and possessiveness.

The irrational conflict is based on the personal quirk of an individual that has trouble trusting or believing in the relationship. The third type is overt and covert conflict. Overt conflict is open conflict that both parties are aware of and face directly. Overt conflict is very obvious; it is argument. On the other hand, covert conflict is hidden or concealed conflict. It is the thing that goes on between a couple that is unspoken. Affairs can be covert conflicts. They can run right below the surface and create a continual stress and discord in the marriage, but it is not something actually brought up and talked about. Covert conflicts are the most devastating conflicts in a marriage because people do not bring them out in the open and deal with them. The last type of conflict is acute and chronic conflict. Acute conflicts are those short-lived explosive arguments, spats, disagreements that people confront and solve. In contrast, chronic conflicts are never resolved and constitute a continuing burden on a relationship (Bacal 3). Additionally, "Situational Stresses" by Jarzy Krupinski, Elizabeth Marshall and Valerie Yule found that the stresses which set off conflict are not isolated. Among the other clusters of marital problems found by Krupinski and his colleagues were interpersonal alienation, shown by lack of communication and quarreling, and complete avoidance, characterized by either partner's walking away from the relationship (qtd. in Green 214).

In fact, there are numerous sources of marital conflict; for instance, gender, loyalty, money, power, sex, privacy, children and a failure of communication. According to Betcher and Macauley, men and women see the world through different eyes. Whereas many women are more comfortable with giving and developing satisfying interpersonal relationships, men are happy when they are attaining work goals and receiving support in achieving success. Men and women also argue over autonomy and interdependence: he wants to make decisions, whereas she thinks that decisions should be mutual (qtd. In

Benokraitis 256).

In addition, men and women have very different definitions of loyalty. Although many women today share stereotypically male values about competition and success, they still tend to prize loyalty to family relationships over work and, whereas men may have strong family and friendship ties, their loyalties focus more on the career, the profession, or the organization. Moreover, men see themselves as loyal to their family if they are good providers and faithful to their wife. In contrast, women define loyalty as emotional closeness and understanding.

Another potential source of marital conflict which has many dimensions is power. Related to this, there may be conflict about who sets the rules. There are also differences in the ways partners exercise power. The person with less power might use manipulation (such as flattery), supplication (such as crying or acting helpless), or disengagement (such as sulking, or not speaking). The more powerful person is more likely to bully (through threats, insults, ridicule, or violence). In an egalitarian relationship, the couple is more likely to resolve conflict through bargaining, by using reasoning, negotiation, or compromise.

Failure of communication can be another cause of marital conflict. According to Stinnett et al, "much interaction between marriage partners is designed to send or request information and to contribute to the well-being of the other. Unfortunately, sometimes the intent of communication is to hurt the other partner" (145). "Marital communication often involves one partner asking something of the other or attempting to influence the behavior of the other spouse. Some of the specific motivations for communication in marriage might be categorized as follows: (1) I value you, (2) value me, (3) I want to share thoughts and feelings with you, (4) I want to hurt you, and (5) I want to control this

situation” (Stinnett et al 147).

Three major communication styles commonly used to respond to a partner’s grievance or to state a grievance of one’s own are nonassertive communication, aggressive communication, and assertive communication. Nonassertive communication involves not stating feelings, wants, ideas, and needs and instead withholding and suppressing them. Nonassertive people fail to speak up for what they want, allowing events to happen to them. Nonassertive communication tends to be associated with three communication problems; namely, making the assumption of mind reading, allowing the partner to define the situation and gunnysacking. “A gunnysack is a deadly weapon that implies storing up grievances against someone and then dumping the whole sack of anger on that person when he or she piles on the “last straw” (Galvin and Bernard 258). “Nonassertive communicators often engage in gunnysacking. They carry around a mental gunnysack into which they quietly stuff grievances while avoiding discussing those grievances with the other person. Furthermore, nonassertive communicators frequently have the feeling like if the partner truly loved them, the partner would know what the nonassertive person wants and would fill those needs” (Satir qtd. in Wolf 359). Communication is handicapped when people overgeneralize or make inaccurate assumptions. There are four inaccurate assumptions that interfere with clear communication: assuming the other person necessarily shares feelings and attitudes, assuming that what has happened in the past or what is happening in the present cannot change, assuming that one knows the thoughts and feelings of another without ever checking the accuracy of these assumptions, and assuming that another necessarily knows one’s inner feelings and expectations.

Accordingly, nonassertive communicators often allow the partner to define the situation. When a person defines the situation as one in which the nonassertive partner is to blame, often the nonassertive partner does not speak up and object. By not speaking up, nonassertive communicators allow the impression to remain that they have caused the problem.

The second style of communication is aggressive communication which expresses feelings, ideas, and needs in a way that attempt to dominate, control, and even humiliates the partner” (Phelps and Austin qtd. in Wolf 360). Communication theorists have identified four forms that aggressive communication typically takes: blaming, demeaning, making threats and giving orders, and coercive escalation. Blaming means “aggressive communicators blame the partner for problems in the relationship and for their own misbehavior” (Stets qtd. in Wolf 361). Demeaning means shows a lack of respect for the other person and usually takes the form of name-calling, for example, “selfish”, “lazy”. Aggressive, demeaning statements are often used to control the other person’s behavior. Giving orders and making threats means “attempts to control by giving orders, telling the partner what to do, and making threats that are aggressive” (Morton qtd. in Wolf 361). Statements that begin with, “You better not...,” “You should...,” and “I am warning you...” are typically aggressive in a relationship between equals. Besides, coercive escalation refers to "a string of attacks followed by counterattacks. Hatford and his colleagues compared happily married couples to unhappily married couples and discovered that unhappy marriages were likely to be characterized by coercive escalation" (Hatford qtd. in Wolf 362). Aggressive communicators attempt to impose their definition of the situation on the partner. Furthermore, aggressive communicators often combine ordering, blaming, and

demeaning into one message.

The last communication style which people commonly apply is assertive communication. "Assertive communication states feelings and wants directly, with honesty, and without depreciating other people" (Morton et al. qtd. in Wolf 363). Assertive communicators use "I" statements, own feelings and take responsibility for their words and actions. Assertive communicators also recognize that they cannot force change on the partner, even though change is strongly desired, and they tend to make requests.

Experts in marriage and family therapists suggest that marital and family problems are primarily due to a lack of communication. In a study by Karlsson, communication of role expectation was associated with marital satisfaction, suggesting that an important prerequisite for marital adjustment is that the partners' expectations are disclosed to each other. Karlsson also found that communication of intentions is positively related to marital satisfaction. Indubitably, a relationship exists between good communication and marital satisfaction. Generally, "low marital satisfaction results when the wife uses conflict engagement and the husband engages in withdrawal" (Kurdek qtd. in Davidson 400), as in Edgar and Catherine's case.

Besides gender, loyalty, power, and failure of communication, jealousy is another cause of marital conflict. Feeling jealous is not uncommon in love relationships. Jealousy has its basis in the obsession for an exclusive relationship rather than being based on a natural threat. A number of researchers have defined the term 'jealousy. To illustrate, David Knox defined jealousy as "a set of emotional feelings that results when an individual perceives that the love relationship he or she has with a person is being threatened" (55). Additionally, Bringle and Buunk defined jealousy as "any

aversive emotional reaction that occurs as a result of a partner's outside relationship, whether real, imagined, or considered likely to occur." Jealousy is more likely to arise in a romantic relationship than between friends. It usually occurs when we imagine our partner is involved in another sexual relationship. According to Brehm, "all we may need to become jealous is the barest hint that our partner is sexually interested in someone else" (Miracle 487).

According to a survey in Psychology Today done by Salovey and Rodin (1985), "jealousy is the thoughts that arise when an actual or desired relationship is threatened." We are most jealous when a person flirting with our partner has traits we ourselves want (or we fantasize that they do). Maybe we imagine that our partner will find them more desirable than us. The survey found a correlation between jealousy and self-esteem; the more often a person is jealous, the lower is his or her self-esteem. Similarly, "jealousy is not a compliment; it is a demonstration of lack of trust and low self-esteem" (Carroll 225). We imagine that the partner sees in the other person all those traits we believe that we lack. Baker indicated that men whose real or imagined jealousy is aroused by a third party are more likely than women to confront their rival or their own partner with demands, ultimatums, anger and violence. In contrast, "women tend to blame themselves when there is a conflict over jealousy, and avoid confrontations when jealous. They tend to respond to jealousy by increasing their efforts to be attractive to their partners rather than by seeking revenge or retribution" (Miracle 490).

Generally, "whenever one's partner is involved with a third party, feelings of jealousy are likely to occur" (Westheimer 214). Jealousy may be caused by external or internal factors. An external factor is the behavior of the partner that elicits jealousy. Other behaviors of the partner that create jealousy include the partner expressing

appreciation of and interest in someone else, having a close friend of the opposite sex, and involvement in a love or sexual relationship with someone else. Jealousy also may be caused by internal factors that exist independently of the partner behavior. For example, jealousy may arise because an individual has learned to be distrustful in previous situations. People who feel inadequate in looks or personality may doubt their ability to get another person to love them and be faithful to them, so they are continually jealous of others whom they fear may take their partner away. DeSteno and Salovey states that “some researchers believe that sexual jealousy is related to the individuals’ beliefs concerning the connection between sexual cheating and emotional infidelity” (qtd. in Miracle 488).

Psychologists Gregory White and Paul Mullen propose a model for understanding jealousy. They see jealousy as a constellation including thoughts, emotions, and actions. According to their research two situations activate jealousy. One is a situation in which there is a threat to our self-esteem. For example, in a good relationship, our romantic partner helps us feel good about ourselves—makes us feel attractive or fun to be with. If a rival appears and our partner shows interest, we may think things like “He finds her more attractive than me” or “She finds him more fun to be with than me.” We then feel less attractive or less fun to be with—that is our self-esteem is threatened (qtd. in Hyde 374). The second situation that activates jealousy is a threat to the relationship. If a rival appears, we may fear that our partner will separate from us and form a new relationship with the rival. Jealousy is activated because of our negative thoughts and feelings about the loss of a relationship that has been good for us and the loss of all the pleasant things that go along with that relationship, such as companionship and sex.

Two other psychologists, Gordon Clanton and Lynn Smith believe that we have a choice in coping with our own jealousy. We can react in an insecure, defensive manner, or we can react in a secure, constructive way. Additionally, in Hansen's study of jealousy among spouses, the most jealous are those who feel that they could not get anyone else if their partner becomes attracted to someone else (55). Although many people think that their jealousy shows that they really care for a person, in fact it shows a lack of trust in the partner. Moreover, "Intense feelings of jealousy do not prove that it is 'true love. Instead, those feelings may reflect your own insecurities and sensitivities" (Miracle 490).

Conflict can be handled in one of five common ways, reflecting different degrees of passive, aggressive, assertive, or cooperative behavior namely, avoiding, accommodating, competing, compromising, and collaborating. Avoiding is both passive and uncooperative behavior of a partner or both parties. There is no attempt to resolve the conflict or to address each other's needs and concerns. "Avoidance may be all right as a temporary measure until there is time to discuss a conflict or the means of dealing with it. However, conflicts that go unresolved over a long period often damage a relationship" (Byer 69). Accommodating behavior is cooperative, but passive. One person gives up the satisfaction of her or his needs in order to accommodate the conflicting needs of the other. If one partner is frequently accommodating the needs of the other, this is likely to lead to resentment, loss of self-esteem, and even loss of respect by the other partner. Competing takes place when both partners are aggressively trying to fulfill their own needs, but cooperating little to ensure the need fulfillment of each other. Compromising requires a moderate degree of both cooperativeness and assertiveness by each person. A mutually acceptable solution to the conflict is found, partially satisfying each person's needs. The last way to manage conflict effectively is collaborating. It

means working together to satisfy the needs of both partners through a maximum use of both cooperation and assertiveness.

According to Vuchinich, “families use four techniques for ending conflict or to stop the sequence of opposition statements namely submission, compromise, standoff and withdrawal” (qtd. in Benokraitis 258). Regarding the first, one person submits or gives in and the conflict ends when one person agrees with or goes along with the other. With compromise, the partners find a middle ground between their opposing positions, which they can both accept. In a standoff, disputants drop the conflict without any kind of resolution. They tacitly agree to disagree and move on to other activities. No one wins or loses; the conflict ends in a draw” (qtd. in Benokraitis 258). Besides, Withdrawal means one party refuses to talk or leaves the room. Withdrawal can convey contempt, as in leaving in a huff, or it may be a tacit refusal to engage in conversation. One type of conflict sequence, the demand-withdraw sequence, illustrates how the withdrawal technique may be employed in a relationship. The demand-withdraw sequence refers to “instances wherein one person approaches the partner on an issue and the partner attempts to avoid discussion of the issue” (Vangelisti 425). The “demand” and “withdrawal” roles may shift, depending on the conflict issue. Whereas, women tend to demand and men withdraw when the wife seeks change this sequence is reversed when discussing an issue in which the husband seeks change” (Klintob and Smith qtd. in Vangelisti 425).

Related Research on Marital Conflict

In Jennifer L. Flatley’s “Relationship between Interpersonal Conflict and Marital Dissolution on Intimate Relationships,” young adults’ commitment to relationships, psychological intimacy in relationships, and social problem-solving ability in these young

adults in relationship to characteristics of their family of origin were examined.

The results indicated that those individuals who experienced their parents' marital conflict were more likely to doubt their ability to solve problems and become easily frustrated when attempting to solve a problem. Additionally, young adults who experienced marital dissolution reported similar levels of relationship satisfaction, commitment, and intimacy compared to those from intact families. Furthermore, individuals who experienced their parents' marital dissolution reported similar level of conflict in their own relationship compare to those from intact homes. For adult children of divorce, the process of divorce may not negatively impact later relationships, nor does it seem to affect their ability to solve every day problems, but the degree of experienced conflict seems to make a difference.

In "Spillover Effects of Inter-parental Conflict Styles: Parenting Behaviors as Linking Mechanisms," Melody Gaye Stone used self-report questionnaires to examine the linkages among youth perceptions of covert and overt inter-parental conflict styles, disrupting behaviors, and youth problems behavior. The results indicated that covert and overt inter-parental conflict styles were associated with youth problem behavior not only directly but also indirectly through youth perceptions of disrupted parenting. The strongest and most consistent linkages involved intra-parental inconsistency. Intra-parental inconsistency transmitted part of the effect of both covert and overt inter-parental conflict styles to youths, who exhibited problems such as anxiety, depression, aggression, and disruptive behaviors in the context of marital conflict.

In addition, according to "The Effect of Marital Conflict on Parenting," Katherine Moore Kitmann stated that marital conflict affects children both directly and indirectly through disruptions in parenting. She used observational ratings to compare

family interactions after a pleasant versus conflictual marital discussion. It was hypothesized that parenting would be more disrupted after a conflictual marital exchange. Participants were 40 intact families of six-to-eight-year-old boys. Compared to family interactions after a pleasant discussion, family interactions after a conflictual marital discussion involved less democratic parenting, more unbalanced alliances, and more father withdrawal. These effects were moderated by families' pre-existing problems of parent dysphoria, child exposure to conflict at home, and marital dissatisfaction. Observational measures of family interactions were especially important in the prediction of child internalizing problems, whereas families' pre-existing problems were more important in the prediction of child externalizing.

Related Research on Wuthering Heights

Wuthering Heights has been studied in various aspects. For instance, in "The Construction and Deconstruction of the Female Subject in Mid-Victorian Fiction," Rihani Zalfa examined the way in which imperialism operated on middle-class Victorian women in the mid-Victorian age. She analyzed the process of imperialism which functioned on three levels: public, psychological and private through three medium—the state, the individual, and the family. She argued that the construction of the female subject was conditioned by its material conditions, because materialism was a viable imperialistic dynamic used to reduce woman to the level of basic survival where the state controlled the generative power of their minds, and where the individual was consumed with a pervasive sense of confinement.

In another study, "Prototypes of Human Sorrow: Grief and the Nineteenth Century English Novel", Nancy K. Levy investigated the meaning and function of

emotion in four novels: Emily Bronte's Wuthering Heights (1847), Wilkie Collins' The Woman in White (1859), George Eliot's Middlemarch (1871-1872), and Thomas Hardy's The Return of the Native, focused on a single emotion "grief" to determine what its representation in fiction taught us about the purpose of emotions in general. Comparing the grief in each of the four novels, it appeared that in its first phase it was universally experienced as an acute, primordial response to loss.

Furthermore, in "Regret: Martial, Marital, Mortal," Ingrid Marie Geerken studied the linguistic and narrative structure of regret in nineteenth-century British novels, including "Wuthering Heights." She studied three kinds of regret: martial (regret over the act of killing), marital (regret over the act of marrying), and mortal (regret over the death of a loved one). She claimed that in each case, fear, rage, and intense grief motivated the experience of regret. In "Reading Feeling: Sympathy and the Compensations of the Victorian Marriage Plot," Rachel Karol Ablow scrutinized particular ideologies of marriage, gender, and power by seeking both to model and to compensate for the sympathetic relationship of husbands and wives in four novels: Charles Dickens's David Copperfield (1849-50), Wilkie Collins's The Woman in White (1860), George Eliot's The Mill on the Floss (1860), and Emily Bronte's Wuthering Heights (1848). Ablow stated that each of these texts defined the relationship between readers and texts as a way to evade the epistemological and political questions that it associated with real-life marriages.

Research focusing on "the marital conflict in Emily Bronte's Wuthering Heights" does not appear to have been conducted. The researcher, therefore, proposes to conduct a study concentrating on this aspect.

CHAPTER 3

AN ANALYSIS OF MARITAL CONFLICT IN EMILY BRONTE'S WUTHERING HEIGHTS

The analysis in this chapter is divided into two parts. The first part illustrates the influential causes of Edgar and Catherine's marital conflict, and also discusses the types of their marital conflict. The second part demonstrates the results of marital conflict of Edgar and Catherine Linton. In so doing, conflict theory and the concept of interpersonal communication are applied.

The influential causes and the types of marital conflict of Edgar and Catherine Linton

In Emily Bronte's Wuthering Heights, there are three dominant causes of the conflict in Catherine and Edgar Linton's marriage. The first contributing cause is marriage without affection, the second is Edgar's jealousy and the third is failure of communication.

The first cause of their marital conflict has its roots in the background of their relationship. Edgar first meets Catherine Earnshaw when she is twelve. At that time she and Heathcliff escape from the wash-house to go for a ramble, and get a glimpse of Thrushcross Grange to see how the Lintons pass their Sunday evenings. Catherine is caught by the Lintons' bulldog, and she stays there for five weeks. She returns to Wuthering Heights on Christmas day, and the next day the Lintons are invited to Wuthering Heights. After that, Catherine and the Lintons continue their relationship and Catherine becomes the favorite of Edgar Linton. As Nelly Dean, the housekeeper of

Thrushcross Grange narrates: “She imposed unwittingly on the old lady and gentleman, by her ingenious cordiality; gained the admiration of Isabella, and the heart and soul of her brother” (68). Obviously, the circumstance can be considered as the beginning point of Edgar’s affection for Catherine. Nonetheless, Edgar seldom musters courage to visit Wuthering Heights openly. He has a feeling of extreme fear of Hindley, Catherine’s brother. Meanwhile, Catherine and Heathcliff still develop their intimacy, as Nelly narrates: “She had a wondrous constancy to old attachments: even Heathcliff kept his hold on her affections unalterably; and young Linton, with all his superiority, found it difficult to make an equally deep impression” (68). Evidently, it can be perceived that Edgar realizes all the time that Catherine and Heathcliff are fond of each other. Edgar becomes jealous of Heathcliff, seeing him as a rival.

Subsequently, one afternoon when Hindley is absent, Edgar visits Wuthering Heights and proposes to Catherine. Although Catherine consents to Edgar’s proposal, she still consults Nelly in order to be certain that she has chosen the right person. When Nelly asks Catherine why she loves Edgar, she replies that she loves him not only because he is handsome, young and cheerful, but because he is also pleasant to be with and he loves her. Moreover, he will be rich and she will become the greatest lady of the neighborhood. Catherine also avows that:

I love the ground under his feet, and the air over his head, and everything he touches, and every word he says. I love all his looks, and all his actions, and him entirely and all together (78).

Derek Traversi states that “it is perfectly natural that Catherine should be attracted to Linton. Courtesy, charm and urbanity are all qualities worthy to be admired”

(qtd. in Vogler 55). However, Bronte denotes that the relationship between Catherine and Edgar is only a passionate love which is sometimes called romantic love or infatuation. According to Hatfield and Walster, during the passionate stage, “the loved person is idealized—any faults she or he might possess are overlooked. Everything about the loved person is sexually exciting, even characteristics that may later be viewed as undesirable” (qtd. in Byer and Louis 84). Similarly, Catherine’s utterance manifests intense feelings of emotional excitement and absorption in Edgar. Additionally, Catherine desires social fulfillment and she is sufficiently attracted by the agreeable aspects of life in the society of the Lintons. Thus, it can be said that Catherine desires to get married to Edgar because of his prosperity and physical attractiveness, but not because of true affection.

Wuthering Heights also reflects women’s status in the nineteenth century; women were dependent on men. According to Kimberly M. Radek, “middle-and upper-class women could help, in some cases, with a family business, but generally, the economy and society dictated that women should work in the home, taking care of the hearth whether directly or through the management of servants. Women’s sole purpose was to marry and reproduce” (4). Moreover, “women lived in the inferior status to men, and confined in their traditional roles as mothers and wives within the domestic sphere” (Boonyabancha 1). It can be said that women were expected to remain in the realm of the private sphere and maintain a smooth family atmosphere. The husband was responsible for his wife and bound by law to protect her. According to Greg, “in the early Victorian Britain virtually no middle class women were gainfully employed. For those who were forced to gain a livelihood for themselves—the unmarried—the role of governess was the only available opportunity and it was low paid, demeaning and without social respect” (qtd. in Smelser 62). Furthermore, Smelser states that in the nineteenth century “both the

status and income of a family depended on work. The productive work was the preserve of men, and women were excluded from it... , the time of the other sex (men) is absorbed in business; the day is thrown idle on women's hands" (62). According to Stewart P. Lea "traditionally, upper and middle class wives were not employed outside the home, and their role focused primarily on housework and child care" (119). Since women were deprived of the liberty to earn or inherit money because of the convention of primogeniture, marriage was their safety net from a life of poverty and despair. Thus, young females in their restricted world continued to dream of romantic love and marriage, and a single woman felt that her only alternative was to marry a man with good fortune.

Likewise, Catherine imagines that marrying Edgar shall be the gateway for improving her standard of living. She also sees herself fundamentally connected to Heathcliff and doesn't believe that her marriage to Edgar will in anyway weaken their primary tie. Catherine believes that Edgar is devoted to her and he will allow her to maintain the relationship with Heathcliff. As a result, Catherine accepts his marriage proposal, despite her true affection for Heathcliff. Presumably, Catherine gets married to Edgar for economic reasons not because of love and her decision leads to marital conflict. Some time later, Catherine tells Nelly that she has made a wrong decision, feels guilty and also confesses:

My love for Linton is like the foliage in the woods: time will change it..., my love for Heathcliff resembles the eternal rocks beneath: a source of little visible delight, but necessary...., Nelly, I am Heathcliff! He is always in my mind: not as a pleasure, any more than I am always a pleasure to myself, but as my own being (81).

Evidently, the above episode supports the notion that Catherine doesn't love Edgar and in fact adores Heathcliff. F. H. Langman states that "through her feeling for Heathcliff, Catherine discovers her own identity, her place in the world. The essential quality of their relationship is not its intensity, but its perfect, its final, sincerity" (qtd. in Everitt 76). Moreover, "Catherine loves Heathcliff as if they are one person, yearning always for the missing part of themselves. This affinity is so great that they seem to share heart, soul and even the whole existence" (Suzanne E. Jacobs qtd. in Bronte viii).

Catherine also says that if Heathcliff had not been of low status, she would never have accepted Linton's proposal: "It would degrade me to marry Heathcliff now" (80).

Through this statement, Bronte shows that Catherine desires to marry Edgar in order to upgrade her standard of living. On the contrary, if she marries Heathcliff, her life will go down hill. Heathcliff hears this expression, so he runs away from Wuthering Heights. After that day, nobody receives any news from him. Catherine is seriously ill and Kenneth insists that everybody who is involved with her should do nothing to contradict her because she is unable to have a heavy cross to bear: "...and it was nothing less than murder in her eyes for anyone to presume to stand up and contradict her" (87). After Catherine recovers from illness, she gets married to Edgar. They share a splendid time together for three years. As Nelly says, "she seems almost over-fond of Mr. Linton..., Mr. Edgar had a deep rooted fear of ruffling her humor..., I may assert that they were really in possession of deep and growing happiness" (89).

Nonetheless, Edgar and Catherine Linton's marvelous time together is ended by the reappearance of Heathcliff on a pleasant evening in September. Heathcliff realizes that Catherine has married Edgar and resides at Thrushcross Grange; hence he visits her on that day. It can be said that Heathcliff's visit is the beginning point of the marital

conflict between Edgar and Catherine because the feeling of jealousy can be aroused when a partner is sexually interested in someone else.

According to Robert Bacal's study on marital conflict, three types of marital conflict appear in Wuthering Heights. The first type is irrational conflict: conflicts based on the eccentricity of an individual. They are conflicts over something that is internal, for example, jealousy and possessiveness. This notion can be obviously seen in the following conversation between Catherine and Edgar when Heathcliff appears: "Oh, Edgar darling! Heathcliff's come back—he is! Well, well, don't strangle me for that! He never struck me as such a marvelous treasure..., I know you don't like him..., yet for my sake, you must be friends now" (91). From this conversation, we learn that Edgar is frustrated and Heathcliff's appearance clearly stirs Edgar's feeling of jealousy.

Presumably Edgar realizes that Catherine and Heathcliff have been in love with each other since they were young. Furthermore, Edgar is worried that Heathcliff will separate Catherine from him; as Hyde states, "if a rival appears, we may feel that our partner will separate from us and form a new relationship with the rival" (374). The aforesaid statement pinpoints that Heathcliff's reappearance and Catherine's great pleasure to see him again awaken Edgar's jealousy. Therefore, jealousy can be seen as the second cause of Edgar and Catherine's marital conflict.

Edgar also notices Catherine's delight when Heathcliff returns. It can be said that this fact arouses Edgar's jealousy, as well, when Catherine expresses her appreciation of Heathcliff. Edgar avoids talking to Catherine and pretends to be ill in order to hint that he is bitterly disappointed with her behavior and the return of Heathcliff is a frustration for him. Catherine herself says: "Edgar is sulky, because I'm glad of a thing that does not interest him: He always contrives to be sick at least cross! I gave a few sentences of

commendation to Heathcliff, and he, either for a headache or a pang of envy, began to cry" (94). According to Pines, "the external component of jealousy is clearly visible and is expressed in some kind of behavior: talking openly about the problem, screaming, crying, making a point of ignoring the issue, leaving or becoming violent" (96). Edgar's case depicts jealousy through ignoring the issue and crying. Moreover, Heathcliff is more attractive than Edgar; therefore, Edgar feels low self-esteem. Pines also states that people who feel inadequate in looks or personality may doubt their ability to get another person to love them and be faithful to them, so they are continually jealous of others whom they fear may take their partner away.

Bronte demonstrates jealousy through Edgar's character. The scene that vividly exemplifies his jealousy is when Heathcliff visits Thrushcross Grange. Ellen Dean informs Edgar that Heathcliff endeavors to deceive Isabella by first causing her embarrassment and then embracing her. Ellen also implies that Catherine witnesses the situation and Catherine cannot bear seeing Heathcliff express his affection to Isabella. Undoubtedly Ellen's statement is prejudicial to the relationship of Edgar and Catherine because it evokes Edgar's jealousy. As mentioned in chapter two, men whose jealousy is activated by a third party are more likely to confront their rival or own partner with demands, ultimatums, anger and violence. This notion can be clearly seen in Edgar's behavior. After Edgar listens to Ellen, he hastens into the hearth, and delivers an ultimatum to Heathcliff as follows:

I have been so far forbearing with you sir...., and Catherine wishing to keep up your acquaintance, I acquiesced foolishly. Your presence is a moral poison that would contaminate the most virtuous. For that cause, and to

prevent worse consequences, I shall deny you hereafter admission into this house, and give notice now that I require your instant departure (107).

Edgar also strikes Heathcliff directly on the throat and his fist chokes Heathcliff. Likewise, Catherine is compelled to make her choice, whether to stop the relationship with Heathcliff or end her marriage to Edgar. According to Dr. Gail Saltz, a psychiatrist, jealousy is a way to exert control in a relationship. For instance, many men will try to prevent their wives from seeing or talking to certain people, just as Edgar asks Catherine: “Will you now stop seeing Heathcliff, or will you stop seeing me? It is impossible for you to be my friend and his at the same time, and I absolutely require to know which you choose” (110). Evidently, this statement indicates Edgar’s jealousy as the main cause of his marital conflict. Edgar not only forbids Heathcliff to visit Thrushcross Grange, but also prohibits Catherine from socializing with Heathcliff.

In summary, Edgar’s jealousy can be affirmed as the second cause of his marital conflict. Heathcliff’s reappearance is a threat to Edgar’s self-esteem because Heathcliff is younger and more handsome than he is. In addition, Edgar realizes that Heathcliff is always on Catherine’s mind; thus, he decides to cease their relationship. Although Edgar loves Catherine with all his heart, nevertheless, he unknowingly shows his jealousy instead of affection to her.

Apart from, first, marriage without love and, second, jealousy, the third cause that distinctly depicts Edgar and Catherine Linton’s marital conflict is failure of communication. Communication plays an extremely significant role in any marital relationship. Stinnett et al. claim that much interaction between marriage partners is designed to send or request information and to contribute to the well-being of the other.

On the other hand, it can be said that a communication deficit leads to unhappiness in a marriage. Ernest Burgess, one of the pioneers of family sociology, describes the family as a unit of interacting persons: “the family lives as long as interaction is taking place and dies when it ceases” (qtd. in Benokraitis 225). One necessary foundation for marital success is open communication because it is essential for human growth and development. Besides, denying conflict over a long period can destroy a marriage. In general, every couple communicates with specific purposes: for instance, I value you, value me, I want to share thoughts and feelings with you, I want to hurt you and I want to control this situation.

In Wuthering Heights, several consequences demonstrate that failure of communication causes marital conflict in Edgar and Catherine Linton’s marriage. To illustrate, as I have suggested, Edgar initially notices that Catherine is overjoyed when Heathcliff returns after three years and she attempts to direct Edgar to have a cordial relationship with Heathcliff: “I know you don’t like him..., yet for my sake, you must be friends now” (91). The word “must” in this expression shows that Catherine desires to control the situation by demanding her husband to be friendly with a rival and explicitly indicates that overt and covert conflicts are important parts of Edgar and Catherine’s marital conflict. Arguments vividly represent overt conflict, while covert conflicts are the unspoken things going on between the couple. These well illustrate the severe lack of communication in this couple. Affairs can become covert conflicts. Covert conflicts are the most devastating conflicts in a marriage because the individual does not bring them out in the open and deal with them. Therefore, overt and covert conflicts can be claimed as the second type of Catherine and Edgar’s marital conflict.

In Wuthering Heights, when Edgar and Catherine argue about the affair between Heathcliff and Catherine, the argument results in a communication deficit. Both of them avoid interacting with each other. Their withdrawal then causes Catherine to become alienated from herself and her society, and it also leads to her maladjusted behavior. According to communication theory, directing, ordering, or commanding arouse rebellion: Edgar withdraws from communicating with Catherine. As a result, his action implies opposition to Catherine's intention. As Catherine informs Ellen: "I cannot rest, Ellen..., Edgar is sulky: he refused to open his mouth, except to utter pettish speeches; and he affirmed that I was cruel and selfish for wishing to talk when he was sick and sleepy" (93-94). It can be said that the demand-withdrawal pattern of conflict starts from this incident. Instead of complaining, Edgar becomes sullen and decreases intimacy to show his unhappiness. According to Cummings and Davies, "spouses may react to marital problems with indifference, withdrawal, and disengagement from the relationship" (18). Hence, it can be seen that Catherine's demand and Edgar's withdrawal lead to their marital conflict.

Klinetob and Smith state that "women tend to demand and men tend to withdraw when the wife seeks change; this sequence is reversed when discussing an issue in which the husband seeks change" (qtd. in Vangelisti 425). Thus, when Edgar asks Catherine to decide whom she wishes to share her life with, Heathcliff or himself, Catherine exclaims, "I require to be let alone! I demand it! Don't you see I can scarcely stand? Edgar, you—you leave me!" (110). This incident causes Catherine to stop talking to Edgar for almost a week. This is clear evidence that Catherine attempts to avoid interacting with Edgar, and she doesn't try to resolve the conflict between them. Afterwards, her reaction leads to negative consequences. According to Gottman, "confrontation of disagreement is

important to marital satisfaction over time, whereas avoidance of conflict is generally dysfunctional” (qtd. in Vangelisti 423). In addition, Byer and Shainburg affirm that “avoidance may be okay, but conflict that goes unresolved over a long period of time often destroys a relationship” (69). In Wuthering Heights, Catherine and Edgar devote less and less time to restoring their relationship; therefore, the never-resolved conflict gradually increases the gap between them. Evidently, the demand-withdrawal pattern of communication can be considered as a cause of marital conflict in Edgar and Catherine’s marriage.

Apart from the effect of the demand-withdrawal pattern of communication Bronte also makes use of aggressive communication to display marital conflict in Wuthering Heights. Aggressive communication demonstrates emotions, desires, ideas, and needs in a way that attempts to dominate, control, and even humiliate the partner. It can be said that aggressive communication underlines the third type of marital conflict outlined by Bacal, and that is chronic conflict. Chronic conflict is the never- resolved problems that constitute a continuing burden on a relationship (3). For instance, when Edgar is informed that Catherine’s health deteriorates, he hastens to see her. However, Catherine speaks to him in aggressive, condemnatory statements: “you are one of those things that are ever found when least wanted, and when you are wanted, never!” (118). In this sense, Catherine blames Edgar for his indifference, and she shouts at Edgar: “I don’t want you Edgar: I’m past wanting you. Return to your books. I’m glad you possess a consolation, for all you had in me is gone” (118). This extract explicitly reveals the sense of demeaning. It signifies that Catherine lacks respect for Edgar, and she intends to control Edgar’s behavior. Aggressive communicators often combine ordering, blaming, and demeaning into one message, as here. According to Scanzoni, “blaming lower self-

esteem, induce guilt feelings, reduce openness, arouse resentment and retaliation at one extreme” (389). Consequently, it can be assumed that aggressive communication also causes Edgar and Catherine’s marital conflict.

At other times, both Edgar and Catherine employ a nonassertive communication style with each other. According to Satir, “nonassertive communicators frequently have feelings like if the partner truly loved them, the partner would know what the nonassertive person wants, and would fill those needs” (qtd. in Wolf 359). Catherine needs Edgar’s attention, and requires him to ask for reconciliation after the argument. She assumes that Edgar realizes her thoughts and feelings. In fact, Edgar doesn’t and he thinks it is Catherine’s responsibility to ask for forgiveness, not his to ask for reconciliation. According to Holmes and Sachs in “Family Communication: Overcoming Obstacles,” it is difficult to read someone else’s mind. Family members need to hear about the thoughts, feelings and expectations of each other. Assumptions can create misinformation and result in more conflicts to be resolved now and later (3). As a result, Edgar expresses indifference instead of interest in Catherine, and this causes her to feel disappointed, become alienated from him, and then to exhibit maladjusted behavior. Therefore, failure of communication can be affirmed as a cause of Edgar and Catherine Linton’s marital conflict.

All in all, the demand-withdrawal pattern of communication, avoiding, aggressive, and nonassertive communication can be seen as destructive approaches that Edgar and Catherine display in their relationship, resulting in marital crisis. Catherine’s health gradually deteriorates and she dies after giving birth to a girl, young Catherine Linton.

The results of marital conflict

In Wuthering Heights, marital conflict has strong influences on Edgar and Catherine Linton's relationship. Catherine's alienation is the main result which is depicted through the deterioration of Catherine's physical health and her mental illness.

The term "alienation" derives from Latin usage. The verb 'alienare' can mean, "to cause a warm relationship with another to cool; to cause a separation to occur; to make oneself disliked" (Schacht 3). This Latin term is applicable in ordinary interpersonal context: a person could "alien" or "alienate" another who initially felt close to him. According to Schacht, to be alienated or estranged could originally only mean having become a stranger to something or somebody one was closely related to (8). "Alienation" also includes the continuous and unavoidable estrangement from persons, ideas and things which man experiences during his life. Therefore, it can be said that "no society, culture, historical period or any human being can be free from alienation" (Schacht 19).

According to Arnold Kaufmann, a person is alienated because his relation to something else has certain features which result in avoidable discontent or less satisfaction. Additionally, Lewis Feuer states that: "alienation is used to convey the emotional tone which accompanies any behavior in which the person is compelled to act self-destructively" (qtd. in Schacht 238). Kenneth Keniston indicates that "most usages of "alienation" share the assumption that some relationship or connection that once existed, desirable or good, has been lost" (qtd. In Schacht 238).

Furthermore, one can become estranged from one's family in order to find a new one; one becomes a stranger to some friends in order to make new ones. According to Schacht, "when a close relationship has given way to alienation, it can be replaced by

different moods and attitudes. There can be a total indifference toward the former partnership or union. The separation can be dismissed by a “so what” or “that’s life.” There can also be a hopeful or despairing longing for restoration of the close tie or a grief that those things have ended, a bleak feeling of isolation and emptiness. In some instances, the intimate tie can be followed by its opposite—by hostility, hate, violent opposition, and destructiveness” (239).

According to the theory of alienation, “the alienated people can be characterized as follows: Firstly, they lack power to control and manage their own life and activities, or it can be said that they feel powerlessness. Additionally, if they live a meaningless or purposeless life, then this may lead to an abnormal life that causes insanity or distrust of others. Moreover, the alienated people may feel estranged or remove themselves from culture and values in society, and have cultural estrangement. Besides, the alienated people may feel separated from the soul of themselves and have self estrangement. Finally they may sense the feeling of loneliness and exclusion from social relations with others and have social isolation” (Seeman qtd. in Geyer and David 268). All these characteristics of alienated people can be distinctly perceived in Catherine’s character.

In Wuthering Heights, Bronte implies that Catherine becomes alienated because of Edgar’s jealousy and failure of communication. Several incidents signify Catherine’s alienation. To exemplify, Catherine initially becomes alienated because of the argument between Edgar and Heathcliff. Catherine intends to persuade Edgar to have a cordial relationship with Heathcliff, but Edgar’s jealousy, including his hatred towards Heathcliff thwarts her. After Edgar has a quarrel with Heathcliff, Catherine feels almost distracted and unable to control her temper. Furthermore, she states that if Edgar comes to start an argument with her she will show him bitter recriminations. This episode illustrates that

Catherine is starting to lose self-control and also lacks power to control the situation.

It can be said that this is a symptom of Catherine's alienation. She says, "Well, if I cannot keep Heathcliff for my friend—if Edgar will be mean and jealous, I'll try to break their hearts by breaking my own. That will be a prompt way of finishing all, when I am pushed to extremity!" (109). Clearly, Catherine feels extremely frustrated over Edgar's jealousy and it causes her to feel estranged or alienated from him.

Another conspicuous situation that depicts Catherine's alienation is when Edgar delivers his ultimatum to her: "To get rid of me, answer my question, you must answer it. Will you give up Heathcliff hereafter or will you give up me" (110). In this case, Edgar's utterance indicates his distrust towards Catherine. An individual becomes estranged because of the lack of trust among surrounding people or institutions. The pressure on her and depression resulting from Edgar's ultimatum causes Catherine to display maladjusted behavior. As Ellen narrates: "In a few seconds, she stretched herself out stiff, and turned up her eyes, while her cheeks at once blanched and livid, assumed the aspect of death. Linton looked terrified" (110). This statement demonstrates that Catherine is unable to control herself and this symptom signifies self-alienation. Hence, it can be concluded that Edgar's jealousy, manifest in his ultimatum, explicitly influences Catherine's self-alienation.

Furthermore, Catherine continues to display this symptom of self-alienation. She tells Nelly that she doesn't understand what caused her temporary derangement.

According to Fierlicht, partial self-alienation occurs when one cannot explain at all how one feels or wants something because the feeling or wish doesn't correspond to the view one has or desires to have for oneself. Catherine also manifests the sense of alienation through her statement: "I wish I were a girl again, half savage, hardy and free. I am sure I

should be myself were I once among the heather on those hills” (116). This excerpt obviously illustrates that Catherine is exceedingly nostalgic for her glorious childhood, because in the old days she was the beloved of everyone. In contrast, her present time causes her severe suffering. She encounters marital conflict and, as a result, it can be claimed that the marital conflict induces her alienation.

Apart from all this, various incidents indicate that Edgar’s indifference also contributes to Catherine feeling alienated. Initially, after Edgar has a quarrel with Heathcliff, he spends his time with books and doesn't pay attention to her. For her part, Catherine, despite requiring his affection and sympathy and also expecting reconciliation from him, avoids interacting with him. However, Edgar doesn't understand her expectation, thereby causing Catherine to feel alienated from him. According to Schacht’s “Alienation”, “a person may be said to have “alienated” another, or to have “alienated himself from” another, if he has done something to inspire feelings of antagonism or hostility in someone who formerly felt a positive attachment to him” (4). Likewise, although Catherine pretends to Edgar that she doesn't care, she, nonetheless, urges Nelly to compromise with him in order to draw his attention: “I wish you could dismiss that apathy out of that countenance and look rather more anxious about me” (109). In this case, neither Catherine nor Edgar understand the requirement of each other because of withdrawal.

The previously mentioned consequences also cause Catherine to start to live an abnormal life. She stays in her room, refuses food for three days and avoids socializing with other people. She feels lonely and assumes that nobody cares about her. As she murmurs: “Oh, I will die, since no one cares anything about me..., No I'll not die, he will be glad, he doesn't love me at all, he would never miss me!” (112). This statement

obviously shows that Catherine not only feels alienated from herself but also from Edgar. Therefore, it can be affirmed that Edgar's apathy causes Catherine to feel meaningless and to withdraw into abnormality.

Edgar's indifference also awakens in Catherine the sense of social-alienation, as illustrated in her words: "What's the apathetic been doing? Has he fallen into lethargy or is he dead?..., among his books! And I dying! I on the brink of the grave! My God, does he know how I'm altered?..., is he actually so utterly indifferent for my life?" (112). She is spiteful because of his indifference, especially since he doesn't ask for reconciliation. Afterwards, her mind strays to other associations. She murmurs various things to herself in a period of bewilderment, and then returns to normal behavior. According to the theory of alienation, insanity can be a symptom of alienation, and Lewis Fewer also states that alienation is used to convey the emotional tone which accompanies any behavior in which the person is compelled to act self-destructively. Accordingly, Catherine's abnormal and potentially self-destructive behavior is consequent on her feeling alienated from him and the others, which in turn results from his indifference towards her.

Additionally, Catherine also feels that the past pleasures in their relationship have vanished because of Edgar's indifference. When Edgar realizes that she is sick he hastens to see her and she says, "Ah! You're come, are you Edgar Linton? You are one of those things that are ever found when least wanted, and when you are wanted never!" (118). Edgar is no longer important for her and their relationship deteriorates into marital crisis when Edgar mentions Heathcliff: "Catherine, what have you done? Am I nothing to you any more? Do you love that wretch Heath...?" (118), and there is a destructive finality in her response:

Hush, this moment! You mention that name and I end the matter instantly, by a spring from the window. What you touch at present you may have; but my soul will be on the hilltop before you lay hands on me again. I don't want you, Edgar: I am past wanting you. Return to your books. I am glad you possess a consolation. for all you had in me is gone (118).

Kenneth Kenniston states that alienation shares the assumption that some relationships or connections that once existed, desirable or good, have been lost. Clearly, Edgar's indifference causes Catherine to feel alienated and leads to her mental and physical illness. She initially exhibits the symptom of mental illness when she has a quarrel with Edgar. Afterwards, she stops interacting with him for three days, and expects him to ask for reconciliation. However, Edgar doesn't appear because he is continually among his books. When Catherine asks Nelly what Edgar is doing, Nelly responds: "... , his studies occupy him rather more than they ought... , the master has no idea of your being deranged..." (112). This statement also arouses Catherine's mental illness because Edgar normally takes very good care of her, but this time he displays indifference. It causes her to feel disappointed with him, and Edgar's apathy seems to be an unbearable notion for her, as Ellen Dean narrates:

She could not bear the notion which I had put into her head of Mr.Linton's philosophical resignation... , she increased her feverish bewilderment to madness, and tore the pillow with her teeth... , she seemed to find childish diversion in pulling the feathers from the rents she had just made...,: her mind had strayed to other associations (113).

Here, it can be perceived that Catherine's maladjusted behavior is a result of the marital conflict. Furthermore, the ravings of Catherine evidently show her mental illness. As Ellen narrates: "..., I soon found her delirious strength much surpassed mine (she was delirious, I became convinced by her subsequent actions and ravings). There was no moon, and everything beneath lay in misty darkness: still she asserted she caught their shining" (116). Catherine's symptoms of mental illness reflect the destructive outcome of marital conflict, which also has consequences for her physical health. She is exceedingly weak during pregnancy, and she dies two hours after giving birth to a girl, young Catherine Linton.

It can be clearly seen that marital conflict is detrimental in a marriage. Edgar and Heathcliff lose their beloved woman and Catherine Linton doesn't even have a chance to see her mother. Edgar becomes a single father and brings up his daughter alone, and he dies when Catherine Linton is only sixteen years old. The death of Edgar signifies that he is in grief after the death of Catherine. Therefore, it can be said that nobody gains anything from conflict; in contrast everybody loses almost everything instead of maintaining a good relationship.

CHAPTER 4

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS FOR FUTHER STUDIES

This chapter aims to draw together the types, causes and results of Edgar and Catherine Linton's marital conflict in Emily Bronte's Wuthering Heights. Additionally, suggestions for further studies are provided.

According to the study, the researcher found that the marital conflict of Catherine and Edgar Linton can be classified into three types, namely irrational conflict, overt conflict and covert conflict, including chronic conflict. Irrational conflict is seen in Edgar's jealousy and possessiveness. Overt conflict is manifested through the arguments between Edgar and Catherine. Covert conflict involves the unspoken situations between them and is the most devastating because they suppress their feelings. Because they avoid interacting with each other their conflict becomes chronic. The chronic conflict causes a crisis in their marriage and leads Catherine to become alienated from herself and society, which in turn causes Catherine's maladjusted behavior and leads to her mental illness.

The influential causes of Edgar and Catherine's marital conflict can be stated as Catherine's marriage without affection to Edgar, Edgar's jealousy, and their failure of communication. Firstly, Catherine gets married to Edgar without affection, but for economic reasons. Catherine avoids interaction with Edgar when he requires an answer from her, demonstrating that she is not interested in her husband's feeling; this is the starting point of their marital conflict. Secondly, Edgar's jealousy has demonstrable negative consequences. Lastly, failure of communication is a cause of their marital conflict, manifest in the destructive approaches that they display to each other, namely

avoidance, demand-withdrawal, aggressive communication and nonassertive communication which lead to the mental and physical illness of Catherine. These signify that something in the couple's relationship is not functioning properly, and there is a need for change. Explicitly, Bronte illustrates that marriage without affection, the presence of jealousy, and failure of communication do not maintain love. On the contrary, they are detrimental.

Bronte clearly shows the results of the marital conflict through Catherine's alienation. She becomes an estranged, isolated and detached individual. She is unable to control her personal life. She feels like a stranger in her own house and she lacks a sense of belonging. The cold demeanor of Edgar increases her loneliness and isolation and she becomes estranged from her society. Finally, the most devastating consequence of the marital conflict is the deterioration of Catherine's mental and physical health, leading to her untimely death. Therefore, it can be seen that the marriage without affection, Edgar's jealousy, and the failure of communication are destructive to Catherine and Edgar's marriage.

Overall, this study not only enables us to understand the destructiveness of marital conflict, but also stimulates us to consider the marital conflict in our society. Nowadays, a number of marital conflicts result from husbands and wives trying to control their relationship in destructive ways, and then various problems follow. To demonstrate, the divorce rate in Thailand getting higher year by year and this causes children to live with single parent. Some of the children from a broken home become hooligans, and some addict to drugs. It is obvious that marital conflict not only causes marriage to dissolve, but also leads to some other serious problems in our society. Thus, every couple should be concerned about the constructive ways to deal with marital conflict as Charny states:

What really becomes important in family life is not the ability to stay out of trouble, but to get out of trouble, that is the ability to process conflicts and dilemmas and unfairness constructively (43).

As a matter of fact, there are various constructive ways to deal with conflict effectively. Benokraitis proposes “using the assertive communication; stating feelings, wishes, and desires clearly and directly with honesty and without depreciating another person. Additionally, one should focus on the problem and get inside the other person’s world and see things from the other person’s point of view. Moreover, check out your perceptions; maybe the perceptions are inaccurate, so ask the other person for his or her perceptions of the situation. Sometimes it is better to postpone the disagreement; however, do not put it off indefinitely. Finally, strive for closure as soon as possible after altercation, misunderstanding, or disagreement by resolving the issue” (264). Benokraitis also asserts that “marriages break down not because of conflict, but because people fail to communicate or avoid communication problems” (267). In this sense, how family members communicate during conflict determines whether the outcome is constructive or destructive. The ability to communicate well and manage conflict is a skill that can be learned by a couple. Couples who learn this will have a fifty percent lower rate of separation and divorce. The critical behaviors that couples have to master are getting control over negative behavior in the relationship. Furthermore, small changes make a big difference in relationships. The more that small differences are made in our own behavior, the more significant changes occur in a marital relationship.

Suggestions for further studies

This Master's Project highlights only on marital conflict; however, throughout the study it appears that Wuthering Heights deals not only with marital conflict, but also with passionate and companionate love among Edgar Linton, Catherine Earnshaw and Heathcliff. The death of these three characters signifies some significant details. Therefore, these aspects might be interesting to be explored. Besides, marital conflict should be studied in depth in some other literary works as follows:

1. This study will be helpful for further study on marital conflict in Maxine Hong Kingston's "The Kitchen God's Wife" in terms of causes and effects of marital conflict of the protagonist and how the protagonist deals with the conflict. Is the marital conflict portrayed in this novel different or similar to "Wuthering Heights"?

2. A comparative study of marital conflict in nineteenth-century literature and contemporary literature should be explored in order to reveal how marital conflict has changed from the old days.

3. A comparative study of marital conflict in contemporary literature written by male and female novelists should be studied in order to understand the different perspectives between women and men towards marital conflict.

4. Other literary works written by novelists from different countries and by Thai novelists such as Kritsana Asoksin's "Nam Soh Sai" (น้ำซอทราย) should be investigated to better understand marital conflict situations in Thailand, as well as other parts of the world.

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APPENDIX

APPENDIX A

Biography of Emily Bronte

Emily Bronte was a British novelist and poet. She was born in Thornton, Yorkshire, on July 30, 1818. Her father was Patrick Bronte, the rector of Haworth. Her mother was Maria Branwell, passed away in 1821. Bronte was the fifth of six children, following her sisters Maria (1813-1825), Elizabeth (1815-1825), Charlotte, Anne, Branwell (1817-1848) and Emily. After their mother's death, they spent most of their time in reading and composition. In 1835, she was at Roe Head School, Yorkshire, and returned to Haworth after a few months because of homesickness. In 1837, she spent six months as a governess at Law Hill near Halifax. In 1842, Emily and Charlotte Bronte went to Brussels to learn foreign languages and school management in order to facilitate their plan to keep school for girls. Bronte returned in the same year to Haworth where she stayed for the rest of her short life. She passed away because of tuberculosis at the age of 30, on December 19, 1848.

Wuthering Heights became widely acknowledged as a masterpiece after Emily's death. The book was written between October 1845 and June 1846, and then published by T.C. Newby in December 1847. Apart from Wuthering Heights, her only novel, Bronte was established as much of the most considerable poet of the three sisters and one of the most original poets of the century. Charlotte discovered Emily's poems, and projected a joint publication, which appeared in 1846. Furthermore, Bronte was remembered for her Gondal poetry. The Gondal Poems dealt with an orphan boy who passionately involved with a fair girl. This girl was superior in social status which is very similar to the situation of Heathcliff and Catherine Earnshaw in the novel.

APPENDIX B

The Synopsis of Wuthering Heights

Mr. Earnshaw, the owner of Wuthering Heights travels to Liverpool on a business trip. He meets a little boy who had apparently been abandoned on the street, then brings the child home. Mr. Earnshaw names the boy Heathcliff, and rears him together with his own children; Hindley and Catherine. Catherine gets along well with Heathcliff. In contrast, Hindley hates Heathcliff because he becomes a beloved son of Mr. Earnshaw, and he bullies Heathcliff whenever he can. Mr. Earnshaw sends Hindley to a college in order to reduce pressures at home. Subsequently, Mr. Earnshaw's health gradually deteriorates, and then he passes away. At that time, Hindley has already married Frances. He returns home for the funeral ceremony of Mr. Earnshaw and becomes the master of Wuthering Heights. He exercises his power in reducing Heathcliff to the level of a servant; however, Catherine and Heathcliff continue their intimate relationship. They often sneak out to the moors together and are never afraid of Hindley's punishments afterward.

One day, Catherine and Heathcliff wander around Thrushcross Grange, a more affluent house, where the Lintons live with their children, Edgar and Isabella. Catherine is caught by a bulldog and the Lintons bring her inside the Grange. From that day Catherine socializes with Edgar and Isabella and Hindley forbids Heathcliff to converse with her. This circumstance stimulates Heathcliff to hate Hindley more and more. Edgar Linton falls in love with Catherine and she accepts his proposal of marriage. Heathcliff hears a conversation between Catherine and Nelly Dean by chance, in which Catherine

says that if she marries Heathcliff, it will degrade her, so he runs away from Wuthering Heights.

Edgar Linton and Catherine get married and they are exceedingly happy. Three years later Heathcliff returns with air and manner of an attractive gentleman. Catherine is overjoyed to meet him again, whereas his appearance obviously disturbs Linton. Heathcliff stays at Wuthering Heights. The place falls into chaos after Frances delivers a son, Hareton, and she soon dies of tuberculosis. Then Hindley becomes an alcoholic and addicted to gambling. Heathcliff gradually gains financial control by paying Hindley's gambling debts. Heathcliff's relation with the Lintons becomes worse as Linton is extremely frustrated with the situation. He has a violent quarrel with Heathcliff. He is furious with Heathcliff and displeased by Catherine's behavior. Catherine shuts herself in her room for several days. In the meantime, Heathcliff elopes with Isabella and marries her in order to take revenge on Edgar Linton.

Catherine is ill, feverish and delirious though she is carefully tended by her husband once he realizes her condition. A few months later, she is pregnant and very delicate. Heathcliff and Isabella return to Wuthering Heights. Isabella has been mistreated by Heathcliff and is very disappointed with the marriage. Thus, she escapes from Wuthering Heights to live close to London, where she delivers a son, Linton Heathcliff. A few days later Heathcliff visits Catherine at Thrushcross Grange while Edgar is at church. Catherine and Heathcliff reveal their feeling for each other; both of them feel regret for what they have done. Catherine dies that night after giving birth to a daughter, Catherine Linton. Edgar and Heathcliff are extremely sorry to lose their beloved woman. Hindley dies six months after Catherine.

Edgar's daughter, Catherine Linton is brought up entirely within the confines of Thrushcross Grange. She is totally unaware of the existence of Wuthering Heights, Heathcliff and her cousin, Hareton, who live there. Isabella dies when Linton Heathcliff is about twelve years old and Edgar brings Linton Heathcliff to Thrushcross Grange. Catherine Linton is delighted to have a playmate; however, Heathcliff sends Joseph, a servant at Wuthering Heights, to take his son to Wuthering Heights. On the sixteenth birthday of Catherine Linton, she meets Heathcliff and he invites her to visit Wuthering Heights to see Linton. Heathcliff is eager to encourage the romance between his son and Catherine Linton in order to obtain Edgar's properties when he dies. Edgar prohibits Catherine Linton from visiting Wuthering Heights again. He also insists that Heathcliff is an evil man; nonetheless, Catherine begins a secret correspondence with Linton Heathcliff.

Edgar's health deteriorates and in the meantime Heathcliff asks Catherine Linton to return to Wuthering Heights because Linton is seriously ill. Catherine goes to Wuthering Heights, but Linton is increasingly ill. Hence, Heathcliff compels Catherine to marry Linton for fear that Linton will die before he accomplishes his scheme. Catherine marries Linton and escapes from Wuthering Heights in time to see Edgar before he dies. Heathcliff takes Catherine to Wuthering Heights after Edgar's funeral. Catherine takes care of Linton until he dies. After that she feels lonesome and Hareton becomes her friend. They gradually develop their relationship.

Heathcliff begins to behave more and more strangely and becomes incapable of concentrating on the world around him. Afterwards, he longs for death and reunion with Catherine. He is alienated from daily life, experiences visions and supernatural portents of reconciliation with his beloved Catherine. Finally, he dies and fails to extirpate the

Earnshaws and the Lintons. He leaves the younger generation, Catherine and Hareton Earnshaw, to achieve a richer life. They then plan to get married and move to Thrushcross Grange.

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