**THE PORTRAYAL OF MARRIAGE LIFE AND GENDER ROLE IN DICKINSON’S SELECTED POEMS**

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| **ARTICLE INFO** |  |
| Diterima :  10 Juli 2024  Disetujui :  10 Agustus 2024  Dipublikasikan :  20 September 2024 | **Abstrak:**  *Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis gambaran kehidupan pernikahan dan peran gender yang tercermin dalam puisi-puisi pilihan Emily Dickinson yang berjudul “Aku menyerahkan diriku kepada-Nya”, “Aku istri, aku sudah menyelesaikannya”, “Dia bangkit hingga tuntutannya dijatuhkan, “ Gelar dewa adalah milikku!”, dan “Aku akan menjadi seorang istri saat fajar”. Penelitian ini menggunakan teori feminis yang berfokus pada feminisme liberal yang dirumuskan oleh Marry Wollstonecraft. Sedangkan pendekatan penelitian ini berorientasi pada konteks karena menganalisis konteks kehidupan pernikahan dan peran gender yang secara implisit diceritakan dalam puisi-puisi terpilih. Temuan dalam penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa dalam kehidupan perkawinan dan peran gender yang tercermin dalam puisi-puisi pilihan Emily Dickinson menggambarkan permasalahan dalam kehidupan pernikahan dimana prinsip utama feminisme adalah bahwa perempuan telah berada di bawah laki-laki sejak awal perjumpaan manusia. Puisi-puisi ini menyajikan eksplorasi tajam tentang kompleksitas dan tantangan yang bisa muncul dalam sebuah pernikahan.*  **Abstract:**  *This research aims to analyze the depiction of married life and gender roles as reflected in selected Emily Dickinson’s poems entitled “I gave myself to Him”, “I'm wife I've finished that”, “She rose to his requirements dropped, “Title divine is mine!”, and “A wife at daybreak I shall be”. This research uses feminist theory which focuses on the liberal feminism that is formulated by Marry Wollstonecraft. While the approach of this research applies context oriented due to it analyze the context of marriage life and gender role that are implicitly told in those selected poems. The findings in this research points out that in marital life and gender roles as reflected in Emily Dickinson's selected poems describes problems in married life where the main principle of feminism is that women have been subordinate to men since the beginning of human encounters. These poems present sharp exploration of the complexities and challenges that can arise in a marriage.* |
| **Kata Kunci:**  *Feminism, Liberal Feminism,Gender Roles, Biographical Approach.*  . |
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Marriage is a holy occasion that is seen as a representation of the transfer of parental responsibilities to the husband, who will serves as the head household. As Kazemi-pour (2009) states that marriage may be viewed as a developmental job that requires a person to consider who to marry and how to achieve it at different stages of life. It means, in undergoing new life as a couple in household, people should prepare both of physically and mentally, because the cultural framework and customs of the community, which begin in the home and go outward, have an impact on this mental occupation in human traits like personality. It is supported by Kaufman (2005), rather than focusing on biological distinctions, gender can also be determined by how society views men and women. In marriage life woman’s life will be totally different than man. Therefore, gender role is really be attention in this case.

In line with paragraph above Yılmaz et al., (2009) argues that gender manifests itself in various ways in the social, professional, and educational spheres of the lives of men and women. The obligations that come with being a woman and a man are shaped by gender roles. Based on the conventional view of marriage, women shoulder the responsibility of caring for the home and becoming mothers, while men work and provide financial support for the family. As Eagly et al., (2020), states that the fact affirmed that engagement in business has led to a shift in conventional gender roles, equal distribution of household responsibilities has not been attained, and women continue to labor both at home and at work.

However, it is noted that power belongs to man in general as while woman's journey in this process involves becoming a mother, having a son, and engaging in the corporate world (Zheng, 2016). It is anticipated out of marriage is also determined by this division of social status. When analyzing the marital expectation in the context of gender roles, differences rather than parallels become apparent. Hence the hierarchies and disadvantages in the marital process are determined by these inequalities in gender roles.

Due to this research focuses on the issue of marriage life and gender roles in conducting this research, it applied the theory of feminism. Feminist theory posits that women have been systematically marginalized and subordinated to men throughout human history, a phenomenon rooted in the dominance of masculine discourse and Western philosophical traditions. This historical subordination has led to women being relegated to a subordinate position, unable to reclaim their own identities unless they engage in a process of self-reflection, investigation, and reclamation through their own experiences and ideas. To achieve this, women must challenge and reject the gendered norms and attitudes imposed upon them by men, and instead, forge their own distinct identities. This process of self-discovery and empowerment can lead to the creation of female subjects who are socialized to support and maintain the dominant system, perpetuating the cycle of oppression. Based on the explanation above and looking at the problems previously described, regarding married life and gender roles in Emily Dickinson's poetry, the researcher decided to conduct this research.

**METHOD**

In this research, using a context-oriented approach, due to this research focusess on examining the form of the issue phenomenon in married life and gender roles that occur in selected Dickinson poems, in accordance with the problems and research objectives mentioned in the previous chapter. A context-oriented approach is the focus of this research. One theoretical approach to literature is a context-oriented approach.

Theoretical approaches to literature are methods of interpreting literature from various perspectives such as text, reader, author, and context. According to Klarer (2004:78), contextual approaches attempt to place literary texts against the backdrop of historical, social, or political developments while also attempting to classify texts according to genres and historical periods. The context approaches are also influenced by the various movements. This context can be history, social and political background, literary genre, nationality, or gender, depending on the movement (Klarer, 2004:94).

Using this approach, the researcher attempts to locate, discuss, and present and social context. The researcher selects ideologies and ideological conflicts that appear in the literary work based on the social context. The researcher elaborates on social aspects when the author of a literary work is alive.

**FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

Which in this case is intended to understand the concepts of marriage life and gender roles as reflected in the five selected Dickinson poems. In this study, researcher conducted an analysis using feminism theory which focused on liberal feminism by Mary Wolstonecraft. This section contains a description based on data findings. In this discussion, the researcher carried out an analysis based on theory. Which focuses on analysis of married life and gender roles.

**Table 4.1**

**Marriage Life and Gender Role Reflected in Dickinson’s Selected Poems**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| No | Data | Stanza |
|  | **Marriage Life and Gender Role in “*I Gave Myself To Him”* Poem** |  |
| 1. | *I gave myself to him*  *And took himself for pay*  *The solemn contract of a life*  *Was ratified this way* | Stanza 1 |
| 2. | *The wealth might disappoint*  *Myself a poorer prove*  *Than this great purchaser suspect*  *The daily own of Love* | Stanza 2 |
| 3. | *Depreciate the vision*  *But til the merchant buy*  *Still fable in the isles of spice*  *The subtle cargoes lie* | Stanza 3 |
| 4. | *At least-’tis Mutual-Risk- Some-found it-Mutual Gain- Sweet Debt of Life-Each Night to owe- Insolvent-every Noon-* | Stanza 4 |
|  | **Marriage Llife in *“I'm Wife I've Finished That”* Poem** |  |
| 5. | *I’m “wife” – I’ve finished that –*  *That other state –*  *I’m Czar – I’m “Woman” now –*  *It’s safer so –* | Stanza 1 |
| 6. | *How odd the Girl’s life looks*  *Behind this soft Eclipse –*  *I think that Earth feels so*  *To folks in Heaven – now –* | Stanza 2 |
| 7. | *This being comfort – then*  *That other kind – was pain –*  *But why compare?*  *I’m “Wife”! Stop there!* | Stanza 3 |
|  | **Marriage Life in *“She Rose To His Requirements Dropped”* Poem** |  |
| 8. | *She rose to His Requirement—dropt*  *The Playthings of Her Life*  *To take the honorable Work*  *Of Woman, and of Wife—* | Stanza 1 |
| 9. | *If ought She missed in Her new Day,*  *Of Amplitude, or Awe—*  *Or first Prospective—Or the Gold*  *In using, wear away,* | Stanza 2 |
| 10. | *It lay unmentioned—as the Sea*  *Develop Pearl, and Weed,*  *But only to Himself—be known*  *The Fathoms they abide—* | Stanza 3 |
|  | **Marriage Life in *“Title Divine Is Mine!”* Poem** |  |
| 11. | *Title divine – is mine!*  *The Wife – without the Sign!*  *Acute Degree – conferred on me –*  *Empress of Calvary!*  *Royal – all but the Crown!*  *Betrothed – without the swoon*  *God sends us Women –*  *When you – hold – Garnet to Garnet –*  *Gold – to Gold –*  *Born – Bridalled – Shrouded –*  *In a Day –*  *Tri Victory*  *"My Husband" – women say –*  *Stroking the Melody –*  *Is this – the way?* | Stanza 1 |
|  | **Marriage Life in *“A Wife At Daybreak I Shall Be”* Poem** |  |
| 12. | *A Wife — at daybreak I shall be — Sunrise — Hast thou a Flag for me? At Midnight, I am but a Maid, How short it takes to make a Bride — Then — Midnight, I have passed from thee Unto the East, and Victory —* | Stanza 1 |
| 13. | *Midnight — Good Night! I hear them call, The Angels bustle in the Hall — Softly my Future climbs the Stair, I fumble at my Childhood’s prayer So soon to be a Child no more — Eternity, I’m coming — Sire, Savior — I’ve seen the face — before!* | Stanza 2 |

**A. Marriage Life And Gender Role in “*I Gave Myself to Him” Poem***

*I gave myself to him*

*And took himself for pay*

*The solemn contract of a life*

*Was ratified this way*

*The wealth might disappoint*

*Myself a poorer prove*

*Than this great purchaser suspect*

*The daily own of Love*

*Depreciate the vision*

*But til the merchant buy*

*Still fable in the isles of spice*

*The subtle cargoes lie*

*At least-’tis Mutual-Risk-*

*Some-found it-Mutual Gain-*

*Sweet Debt of Life-Each Night to owe-*

*Insolvent-every Noon-*

Emily Dickinson's poem "I gave myself to him" reflects the societal norms and gender roles prevalent during the 19th century in America. The poem portrays marriage as a commercial transaction where a woman exchanges herself for financial security, with the husband serving as the "purchaser." The speaker describes the solemn contract of marriage, where the woman gives herself to the man, and he provides support in return. This arrangement is depicted as a mutual risk, where both parties are aware of the potential for disappointment and dissatisfaction, but some couples find mutual gain in their partnership.

The poem highlights the subjugation of women in marriage, where they are expected to be submissive and meet their husband's demands. The speaker notes that the husband "took himself, for pay," implying that he did not make the same sacrifices as the wife. This dynamic reinforces the patriarchal society's expectations of women, where they are seen as commodities to be exchanged for financial security and domestic stability. The poem also touches on the theme of disillusionment, where the passion and romance of the early stages of marriage fade with time, leaving only the mundane routine and responsibilities.

Dickinson's use of language and imagery reinforces these themes. The poem's economic metaphors, such as "Wealth might disappoint," "Daily Own of Love," and "Mutual Risk," underscore the transactional nature of marriage. The speaker's resignation to her role and the fatalistic tone suggest a sense of inevitability, as if women are trapped in this societal construct. The poem also hints at the loss of personal identity and autonomy that women often experienced in marriage, where they were expected to prioritize their husband's needs over their own.

Overall, "I gave myself to him" serves as a critique of the societal norms that governed marriage and gender roles during Dickinson's time. The poem highlights the ways in which women were objectified and commodified within marriage, and how this dynamic perpetuated a culture of subjugation and oppression. Through her unique use of language and imagery, Dickinson offers a powerful commentary on the limitations and constraints placed on women in the 19th century.

**B. Marriage Life And Gender Role in *“I'm Wife I've Finished That”* Poem**

*I’m “wife” – I’ve finished that –*

*That other state –*

*I’m Czar – I’m “Woman” now –*

*It’s safer so –*

*How odd the Girl’s life looks*

*Behind this soft Eclipse –*

*I think that Earth feels so*

*To folks in Heaven – now –*

*This being comfort – then*

*That other kind – was pain –*

*But why compare?*

*I’m “Wife”! Stop there!*

The poem "I’m 'wife' – I’ve finished that –" by Emily Dickinson reflects the societal norms and gender roles prevalent during the 19th century in America. The poem portrays marriage as a transformative experience that changes a woman's identity and role in society. The speaker describes herself as having "finished" her previous state, implying that she has transitioned from a single woman to a married woman. This transformation is likened to becoming a "Czar," suggesting a shift from a position of powerlessness to one of authority.

The poem highlights the societal expectations placed on women in marriage, where they are expected to prioritize their husband's needs over their own. The speaker notes that it is "safer" to be a wife, implying that this role provides a sense of security and stability. The poem also touches on the theme of disillusionment, where the speaker reflects on the differences between her previous life as a single woman and her current life as a married woman. The speaker notes that her previous life was marked by "pain," while her current life is characterized by "comfort”. Dickinson’s use of language and imagery reinforces these themes. The poem's use of metaphors, such as comparing marriage to becoming a "Czar," underscores the transformative nature of marriage. The speaker's resignation to her role and the fatalistic tone suggest a sense of inevitability, as if women are trapped in this societal construct. The poem also hints at the loss of personal identity and autonomy that women often experienced in marriage, where they were expected to prioritize their husband's needs over their own.

Therefore, "I’m 'wife' – I’ve finished that –" serves as a critique of the societal norms that governed marriage and gender roles during Dickinson's time. The poem highlights the ways in which women were objectified and commodified within marriage, and how this dynamic perpetuated a culture of subjugation and oppression. Through her unique use of language and imagery, Dickinson offers a powerful commentary on the limitations and constraints placed on women in the 19th century.

The poem also reflects the societal expectations of women during the 19th century. Marriage was seen as a means of securing financial stability and social status, and women were often expected to prioritize these factors over their own personal desires and aspirations. The poem suggests that women were often trapped in this societal construct, where they were expected to be submissive and meet their husband's demands. The speaker's resignation to her role and the fatalistic tone suggest a sense of inevitability, as if women were trapped in this societal construct.

**C. Marriage And Gender Role in *“She Rose To His Requirements Dropped”* Poem**

*She rose to His Requirement—dropt*

*The Playthings of Her Life*

*To take the honorable Work*

*Of Woman, and of Wife—*

*If ought She missed in Her new Day,*

*Of Amplitude, or Awe—*

*Or first Prospective—Or the Gold*

*In using, wear away,*

*It lay unmentioned—as the Sea*

*Develop Pearl, and Weed,*

*But only to Himself—be known*

*The Fathoms they abide—*

Emily Dickinson’s poem “She rose to His Requirement—dropt” reflects the societal norms and gender roles prevalent during the 19th century in America. The poem portrays marriage as a transformative experience where a woman exchanges her previous life for a new role as a wife. The speaker describes the woman as having “dropt the Playthings of Her Life” to take on the “honorable Work of Woman, and of Wife.” This transformation is depicted as a significant change, where the woman must adapt to new expectations and responsibilities.

The poems irradiate the societal expectations placed on women in marriage, where they are expected to prioritize their husband’s needs over their own. The speaker notes that the woman may miss certain aspects of her previous life, such as “Amplitude, or Awe,” but these are not explicitly mentioned. Instead, the poem focuses on the woman’s new role and the expectations that come with it. The lines “If ought She missed in Her new Day, / Of Amplitude, or Awe— / Or first Prospective—Or the Gold / In using, wear away” suggest that the woman may experience a loss of personal identity and autonomy in marriage.

Dickinson’s use of language and imagery reinforces these themes. The poem’s use of metaphors, such as comparing the woman’s life to the sea and its pearls, underscores the transformative nature of marriage. The speaker’s resignation to her role and the fatalistic tone suggest a sense of inevitability, as if women are trapped in this societal construct. The poem also hints at the loss of personal identity and autonomy that women often experienced in marriage, where they were expected to prioritize their husband’s needs over their own.

Overall, “She rose to His Requirement—dropt” serves as a critique of the societal norms that governed marriage and gender roles during Dickinson’s time. The poem highlights the ways in which women were objectified and commodities within marriage, and how this dynamic perpetuated a culture of subjugation and oppression. Through her unique use of language and imagery, Dickinson offers a powerful commentary on the limitations and constraints placed on women in the 19th century. The poem also reflects the societal expectations of women during the 19th century. Marriage was seen as a means of securing financial stability and social status, and women were often expected to prioritize these factors over their own personal desires and aspirations. The poem suggests that women were often trapped in this societal construct, where they were expected to be submissive and meet their husband’s demands. The speaker’s resignation to her role and the fatalistic tone suggest a sense of inevitability, as if women were trapped in this societal construct.

**D. Marriage Life And Gender Role in *“Title Divine Is Mine!”* Poem**

*Title divine – is mine!*

*The Wife – without the Sign!*

*Acute Degree – conferred on me –*

*Empress of Calvary!*

*Royal – all but the Crown!*

*Betrothed – without the swoon*

*God sends us Women –*

*When you – hold – Garnet to Garnet –*

*Gold – to Gold –*

*Born – Bridalled – Shrouded –*

*In a Day –*

*Tri Victory*

*"My Husband" – women say –*

*Stroking the Melody –*

*Is this – the way?*

Emily Dickinson's poem "Title Divine Is Mine!" explores the themes of marriage, gender roles, and societal expectations. The poem begins by asserting that the title of "divine" belongs to the speaker, implying that she has achieved a higher status through marriage. However, this status is not explicitly defined, leaving the reader to infer that it is tied to her role as a wife. This poem highlights the contrast between the speaker's new status and her previous life as a single woman. She notes that she is now "Empress of Calvary," suggesting that she has gained a sense of power and authority through marriage. However, this power is tempered by the fact that she is still "Royal – all but the Crown," implying that she is not fully equal to her husband.

In this poem emphasizes the idea that marriage is a transactional relationship, where women are given to men without the emotional or romantic attachment often associated with love. The line "Betrothed – without the swoon" suggests that women are expected to accept their marital roles without emotional fanfare. The speaker also notes that God sends women to men, implying that marriage is a divine institution. The metaphor of gemstones to describe the union between husband and wife. The lines "When you – hold – Garnet to Garnet – / Gold – to Gold –" suggest that the couple is united in a bond that is strong and enduring. However, this bond is also described as a "Day" that is fleeting and ephemeral, implying that marriage is a temporary arrangement.

The societal expectations placed on women in marriage. The speaker notes that women say "My Husband" with a sense of ownership and possession, implying that they have given up their own autonomy and identity to their husbands. The line "Is this – the way" suggests that the speaker is questioning the nature of marriage and the role of women within it.

In this case, "Title Divine Is Mine!" is a powerful commentary on the societal norms and gender roles that governed marriage and gender roles during Dickinson's time. The poem highlights the ways in which women were objectified and commodified within marriage, and how this dynamic perpetuated a culture of subjugation and oppression. Through her unique use of language and imagery, Dickinson offers a powerful critique of the societal expectations placed on women during the 19th century, emphasizing the need for women to prioritize their own personal autonomy and identity over the societal expectations of marriage and domesticity

**E. Marriage Life And Gender Role in *“A Wife At Daybreak I Shall Be”* Poem**

*A Wife — at daybreak I shall be —*

*Sunrise — Hast thou a Flag for me?*

*At Midnight, I am but a Maid,*

*How short it takes to make a Bride —*

*Then — Midnight, I have passed from thee*

*Unto the East, and Victory —*

*Midnight — Good Night! I hear them call,*

*The Angels bustle in the Hall —*

*Softly my Future climbs the Stair,*

*I fumble at my Childhood’s prayer*

*So soon to be a Child no more —*

*Eternity, I’m coming — Sire,*

*Savior — I’ve seen the face — before!*

Emily Dickinson's poem "A Wife — at daybreak I shall be —" explores the themes of marriage, gender roles, and the transition from childhood to adulthood. The poem begins by describing the speaker's anticipation of her wedding day, asking if the sun has a flag for her to wave. The lines "At Midnight, I am but a Maid, / How short it takes to make a Bride —" highlight the rapid transformation from childhood to adulthood, emphasizing the brevity of this transition. In this poem describes the speaker's journey from her past life as a maid to her new life as a bride. The lines "Then — Midnight, I have passed from thee / Unto the East, and Victory —" suggest that the speaker has left her past behind and is now moving towards a new future. The use of the word "Victory" implies that the speaker has achieved a sense of triumph or accomplishment in her transition to adulthood.

This poem more introspective, with the speaker reflecting on her childhood and the prayers she used to say. The lines "So soon to be a Child no more — / Eternity, I’m coming — Sire, / Savior — I’ve seen the face — before" suggest that the speaker is aware of the fleeting nature of childhood and is preparing herself for the responsibilities that come with adulthood. The use of the word "Eternity" implies that the speaker is considering the long-term implications of her choices.

"A Wife — at daybreak I shall be —" is a poem about the transition from childhood to adulthood and the expectations placed on women in marriage. The speaker's use of imagery and metaphor emphasizes the rapidity of this transition and the sense of accomplishment that comes with it. However, the poem also touches on the idea that this transition is not without its challenges, as the speaker reflects on the loss of childhood innocence and the responsibilities that come with adulthood.

**CONCLUSIONS**

Based on the results of the discussion in the previous chapter, the conclusions in this chapter is that regarding married life reflected in Dickinson's selected poem, as represented in the poem entitled: I gave myself to Him, I'm wife I've finished that, She rose to his requirements dropped, Title divine is mine!, A wife at daybreak I shall be. Reflect the societal norms and gender roles prevalent during the 19th century in America. These poems portray marriage as a transactional relationship where a woman exchanges herself for financial security, with the husband serving as the "purchaser." The poems highlight the societal expectations placed on women in marriage, where they are expected to prioritize their husband's needs over their own, and conform to meet their husband's demands. The speakers in these poems express a sense of resignation and fatalism, suggesting that women are trapped in this societal construct.

The poems also touch on the theme of disillusionment, where the speakers reflect on the differences between their previous life as a single woman and their current life as a married woman. The speakers note that their new life is marked by a sense of comfort and security, but also by a loss of personal identity and autonomy. The poems use imagery and metaphor to describe the union between husband and wife, emphasizing the idea that marriage is a bond that is strong and enduring, but also potentially overwhelming and difficult to navigate.

These poems offer a powerful commentary on the societal norms and gender roles that governed marriage and gender roles during Dickinson's time. They highlight the ways in which women were objectified and commodified within marriage, and how this dynamic perpetuated a culture of subjugation and oppression. Through her unique use of language and imagery, Dickinson offers a powerful critique of the societal expectations placed on women during the 19th century, emphasizing the need for women to prioritize their own personal autonomy and identity over the societal expectations of marriage and domesticity.

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