

PSYCHOMATIC AND REVENGE ELEMENTS IN WUTHERING HEIGHTS

Karabasappa Channappa Nandihally
Assistant Professor Of English

Government First Grade College, U.G.&P.G.Centre
Dental College Road, Vidyanagar, Davanagere.

ABSTRACT

To understand the psychomatic and revenge elements of Wuthering Heights, you must be familiar with the plot of the novel, especially where it concerns Heathcliff, Catherine Earnshaw, and Edgar Linton. Let's briefly recount the plot Nelly Dean, a servant at the Earnshaw's home, Wuthering Heights, and the nearby home of the Lintons, Thrushcross Grange, narrates much of the tale. She starts her story with Heathcliff, an orphan who lives with the Earnshaws. To make a long story shorter, he falls in love with the daughter of the family, the wild Catherine. Catherine does not marry Heathcliff, deciding instead on the social position she can obtain by marrying Edgar Linton of Thrushcross Grange. Heathcliff, partly out of revenge, marries Edgar's sister Isabella. Both marriages fail: Catherine dies bearing Edgar's daughter Cathy, and Isabella flees to London, where she has Heathcliff's son, Linton.

Eventually Linton and Cathy meet up and have their own relationship, but that is outside of this psychological interpretation of the book, so we'll leave the summary there. It is a poor conclusion, is it not?' he observed, having brooded awhile on the scene he had just witnessed: 'an absurd termination to my violent exertions? I get levers and mattocks to demolish the two houses, and train myself to be capable of working like Hercules, and when everything is ready and in my power, I find the will to lift a slate off either roof has vanished! My old enemies have not beaten me; now would be the precise time to revenge myself on their representatives: I could do it; and none could hinder me. But where is the use? I don't care for striking: I can't take the trouble to raise my hand! That sounds as if I had been laboring the whole time only to exhibit a fine trait of magnanimity. It is far from being the case: I have lost the faculty of enjoying their destruction, and I am too idle to destroy for nothing.

In literary analysis, one of the tools used to determine meaning is psychological interpretation. This type of analysis takes the theories of well-known psychoanalysts, most often Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung, and applies them to the characters or author of a literary work. Doing this gives readers a better understanding of the characters and their motivations. This lesson will focus on the psychological interpretations of Wuthering Heights. Sigmund Freud was an Austrian psychoanalyst who lived from 1856-1939. He is most known for the importance of repressed memories, sexual drives, and dreams on psychological behavior. Freud's work still influences how we as a culture view world events, literature, and everyday life.

Freud described the id as the unconscious part of the brain that runs on instinct and feelings. The character of Heathcliff represents Freud's id. He is driven by emotions and is completely selfish. He uses violence and

blackmail to get what he wants, and feels no remorse about using anyone (even his own child) to get his way. The ego, according to Freud, is the part of our mind that is realistic and rational. The ego works to take the irrational emotions felt by the id and making them both attainable and Although *Wuthering Heights* received neither critical praise nor any local popularity during its initial publication, the reading public has changed substantially since 1847, and now both critical and popular opinion praise Emily Brontë's singular work of fiction. Victorian society would not accept the violent characters and harsh realities of *Wuthering Heights*, but subsequent audiences are both more understanding and accepting of the use of unsavory aspects of human life in literature.

The first person to praise publicly *Wuthering Heights* was Charlotte Brontë, Emily's sister, who wrote a preface and introduction for the second publication of the novel in 1850 and became the novel's first and foremost critic. Yet Charlotte herself was not entirely convinced of all its merits. Commenting upon the advisability of creating characters such as Heathcliff, Charlotte states, "I scarcely think it is [advisable]." Charlotte's comments may be a direct concession and appeal to Victorian audiences to accept and respect *Wuthering Heights* without having to accept completely everything within the text. In addition to having difficulty with the content, the Victorian audience's view of women could not allow anyone of that period to accept that *Wuthering Heights* was the creation of a female After its initial publication, both critical and popular audiences ended up embracing *Wuthering Heights*, and it remains one of the classic works still read and studied.

Wuthering Heights is an important contemporary novel for two reasons: Its honest and accurate portrayal of life during an early era provides a glimpse of history, and the literary merit it possesses in and of itself enables the text to rise above entertainment and rank as quality literature. The portrayal of women, society, and class bear witness to a time that's foreign to contemporary readers. But even though society is different today than it was two centuries ago, people remain the same, and contemporary readers can still relate to the feelings and emotions of the central characters Heathcliff and Catherine as well as those of the supporting characters. Because Brontë's characters are real, they are human subjects with human emotions; therefore, *Wuthering Heights* is not just a sentimental romance novel. It is a presentation of life, an essay on love, and a glimpse at relationships. Many critics, praising Brontë's style, imagery, and word choice, contend that *Wuthering Heights* is actually poetry masquerading as prose.

This lyrical prose has a distinct structure and style. Significantly, *Wuthering Heights* is about ordered pairs: two households, two generations, and two pairs of children. Some critics dismiss the plot of the second-generation characters as being a simple retelling of the first story; however, in doing so, they are dismissing the entire second half of the book. Each of the two main story lines of the two generations comprises 17 chapters. Clearly, in order to appreciate fully *Wuthering Heights*, attention must be paid to the second half, particularly noting that the second half is not just a retelling but rather a revising — a form of renewal and rebirth.

These ordered pairs more often than not, are pairs of contrast. The most noticeable pair is that of the two houses: *Wuthering Heights* and *Thrushcross Grange*. *Wuthering Heights* has the wild, windy moors and its inhabitants possess the same characteristics. Opposite this are the calm, orderly parks of *Thrushcross Grange* and its inhabitants. Each household has a male and female with a counterpart at the other. Readers gain insight into these

characters not only by observing what they think, say, and do but also by comparing them to their counterparts, noticing how they do not think, speak, and act. Much is learned by recognizing what one is not.

Structurally, the narrative is also primarily told from a paired point of view. Lockwood frames the initial story, telling the beginning and ending chapters. Within the framework of his story, Nelly relates the majority of the action from her outsider's point of view. In essence, readers are eavesdropping rather than experiencing the action. And embedded within Nelly's narrative are chapters told primarily from another character's point of view that has been related to Nelly. This technique allows readers to experience more than would with any one narrator, enabling readers to gain an insider's perspective. The role of the outsider should not be overlooked because the setting of *Wuthering Heights* is one of complete isolation; therefore, only those with first- or second-hand experiences are able to relate them to others. The moors connecting *Wuthering Heights* and *Thrushcross Grange* serve a dual purpose — linking the two households while simultaneously separating them from the village and all others.

This isolated setting is important for Brontë's combination of realism and gothic symbolism. Brontë took conventions of the time and instead of merely recreating them in a work of her own, used them as a springboard to write an entirely original tale, creating characters who are simultaneously real and symbolic archetypes. Brontë uses these characters to explore themes of good versus evil, crime and punishment, passion versus rationality, revenge, selfishness, division and reconciliation, chaos and order, nature and culture, health and sickness, rebellion, and the nature of love. These themes are not independent of each other; rather, they mix, mingle, and intertwine as the story unfolds.

Wuthering Heights is also a social novel about class structure in society as well as a treatise on the role of women. Brontë illustrates how class mobility is not always moving in one direction. For Catherine, representing a lower class, social class plays a major role when deciding to get married. That is why she cannot marry Heathcliff and agrees, instead, to marry Edgar. For Isabella, however, just the opposite is true. She is drawn to the wild, mysterious man, regardless of the fact that he is beneath her social standing. Because of her infatuation, she loses everything that is dear to her. Readers must therefore look not only to social class when judging and analyzing characters; they must determine what decisions are made by members of a certain class and why these characters made the decisions they did. On the surface, *Wuthering Heights* is a love story. Delving deeper, readers find both a symbolic and psychological novel. (Contemporary audiences, for example, easily relate to issues of child abuse and alcoholism.) In fact, *Wuthering Heights* cannot be easily classified as any particular type of novel — that is the literary strength that Brontë's text possesses. The novel told from multiple points of view is easily read and interpreted from multiple perspectives, also.

Like other literary masterpieces, *Wuthering Heights* has spawned dramatic productions, a musical retelling, movies, and even a novel that fills in the gaps of Heathcliff's three missing years. Emily Brontë's novel has overcome its initial chilly reception to warm the hearts of romantics and realists worldwide.

Revenge in Wuthering Heights Novels often use the emotion of hate to create tension and distress in the plot. Wuthering Heights uses Heathcliff's disdain for the other characters to add conflict to the story. Wuthering Heights examines the source of Heathcliff's hate as well as its effects on the other characters throughout the story. Heathcliff's relationships with other characters also suggests the universal theme that breeds hatred. Hindley plants the seeds of hate into Heathcliff by treating him cruelly as a child to begin with. This past happening creates the mutual scornful attitude between Heathcliff and Hindley.

This shows that children who are taught to hate or breed hate are destined to spread hate as adults. As soon as Hindley's father dies, Heathcliff is taught the true meaning of hate by Hindley. As Heathcliff ages, his hate for Hindley grows inside of him, along with a need for revenge. Heathcliff's need for revenge allows him to formulate his diabolical plan for taking over both the Grange and the Heights, upon return from his three year sojourn. Heathcliff's ability to gamble the Heights away from Hindley foreshadows the unyielding power of Heathcliff's hate when fueled by revenge. Thus establishing hate as the source of Heathcliff's revenge. Heathcliff's loathing feelings against Hindley even last long after Hindley's death. Heathcliff has created a demonic reality in which his mistreatment of Hereton will enable him to gain revenge against Hindley. Heathcliff also maintains his revenge by becoming extremely possessive of the Heights. Heathcliff's vicious watch dogs ensure the security of the Heights because maintaining complete control of the Heights continues his revenge against Hindley. Since Edgar and Isabella were sources of oppression in Heathcliff's childhood, Heathcliff feels the need to plot for revenge against them. Heathcliff's reappearance is his first act of revenge, because he immediately makes Edgar jealous. Who have harmed, degraded, and humiliated him in her literary masterpiece "Wuthering Heights". Creatively, this art piece portrays a great deal of the tale's theme of revenge. Through the siren like rose, the tortured hand, and the vengeful spirit of a snake, this piece exhibits the nature of Catherine's love, Heathcliff's past, and his vengeful character; all of which directly relate to the theme of a sin called revenge. Catherine's beauty and malevolence is signified through the rose. The rose

A multitude of feelings and sentiments can move a man to action, but in Emily Brontë's Wuthering Heights, love and revenge are the only two passions powerful enough to compel the primary actors. There is consensus, in the academic community,¹ that the primary antagonist in the novel, Heathcliff is largely motivated by a wanton lust for vengeance, and it is obvious from even a cursory reading that Edgar Linton, one of the protagonists, is mostly compelled by a his seemingly endless love for his wife

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