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Thematic Exploration of Love and Revenge in Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights*



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Abstract: *This research study primarily scrutinizes the underlying motifs viz., love and revenge, subjecting there interpretation to the thematic technique of qualitative methodology, analyzing these cardinal motifs recurring in the novel Wuthering Heights. This research study employs a quantitative thematic analysis technique with an objective to identify, classify and interpret recurring motifs of love and revenge within the novel. Albeit, this novel encompasses a repertoire of subjects and themes: relationships, family problems, and marriage. Nevertheless, this technique has meticulously summarized and unified a plethora of notions, giving impetus to its essence. Research findings reveal the plot vividly revolves around Heathcliff's revenge emerging from the pathetic and unsuccessful love of Catherine, sabotaging the peace between two houses, influencing the interpersonal conflicts and the tragic progression and transformation of the novel.*

Keywords: *Wuthering Heights, love, revenge, hatred, tragic narrative*

Introduction

Wuthering Heights is a magnum opus prose work created by Emily Bronte which has achieved many appreciations for its natural qualities and unique subjects: gothic effects, pattering of natural human behaviors, skillful diction, and romantic portrayal (Aljabar, 2022).

Bronte's novel has categorically depicted the love triangle between many characters, the love between Heathcliff, Catherine and Edgar Linton, while the second one is about Hareton, Cathy and young Linton respectively. First one holds a deep undercurrent of hate, revenge. Heathcliff loses Catherine yet Edgar is accepted by her instead because of his status and civilized

qualities. As a result, including Catherine's acts and death, Heathcliff own sorrow, grumble, and childhood mistreatments a severe lust for revenge grows up in Heathcliff's character. Heathcliff is the central figure of the novel. His character is shown as sympathetic at the start of the novel but becomes hateful because of his revenge, evil deed, and demolishment torturing on other innocent characters like young Catherine, Hareton and young Linton. (Quaduri & Khalil, 2022)

When Heathcliff is brought to *Wuthering Heights* for the first time by Mr. Earnshaw he is introduced as a poor, strange orphan child with a malignity. He seems unfamiliar to everyone in

the house and the waves of despise or hate goes through the family.

However, a friendly and sympathetic relationship develops between him and Catherine but Hindley hates him and doesn't compromise to share his familial love with the stranger, later after his father's death he starts to torture Heathcliff (Patel, 2021).

The story and plot not only revolves around romantic love and peaceful relationship but the plot also focus on the theme of revenge. The conflicts breaks out when Catherine decides to marry a rich person Edgar Linton. The failure and childhood torments of Heathcliff leads to his revenge that makes the story's plot more powerful. Undoubtedly love and revenge are prominent themes of *Wuthering Heights*. However these two terms are interdependently patterned which makes the novels plot interesting.

Mr. Lockwood and Nelly Dean are the primary narrator of the story. Lockwood is introduced as a renter of Thrushcross Grange, nearby manor where Heathcliff lives in 1801. It was winter and Lockwood had to spend the night in *Wuthering Heights* due to snowstorm. Heathcliff makes his curiosity increased and in the same night Lockwood had nightmares of Catherine's ghost who wails, cries and tries to come in through the windows (Rehman, 2026).

Lockwood asks Nelly Dean, the housekeeper, to tell the tragic story of the house. Then she comes towards the tragic tale of both Thrushcross Grange and *Wuthering Heights*. She recounts by telling that she was a young girl here. Mr. Earnshaw, an owner of the house, once goes to Liverpool in returns bring an orphan, poor and dirty child. Mr. Earnshaw named him Heathcliff. He suggests keeping the child in his house makes him his son and as a brother of his children. In starting both Catherine and her brother dislikes him. But soon with passage of time Catherine holds sympathetic feelings for Heathcliff and a deep friendship develops between them. They grow up and played together. But on the other side Hindley could not accept his father decision of making a dirty stranger to be part of his family. Not only

Hindley but also some other members of the house seems irritated of Heathcliff and treats him like a stranger. Mr. Earnshaw sends his son away for studies. After three years Hindley came back with his wife, Frances, which was surprising for all since he was just twenty years. Hindley had already revengeful feelings for Heathcliff but now he was also the only owner of *Wuthering Heights* (Alhaj, 2023).

Heathcliff's trouble increases because Hindley comes up with his more inflictions and makes him the servant of the house. However Catherine's affection and care stay for him who teaches him what she studies and most of their time they spend together.

One night they go to Thrushcross Grange where Linton's family lives Linton Children Edger and Isabella. They were playing in their room Heathcliff and Catherine try to teas them by watching at them through the window. They are seen and try to rush out but Catherine is got caught by Bulldog and bitten. They found that Catherine was Earnshaw's daughter so that makes Catherine to stay until her recovery at their house. They keep Catherine in good a care but treat Heathcliff as a servant and send him back. It takes five weeks in their house to be cured. The effective, luxurious and impressive house, the elegant children of Linton and Edger's special care highly impressed Catherine. She looks change when she returns home. Catherine is now infatuated with Edger which bears a new challenge for Heathcliff.

Hindley's wife gave birth to a son named Hareton but she dies due to tuberculosis. Hindley fell into trouble and start alcoholism. It leads more hatred and harshness to Heathcliff. Catherine is impressed by Edger status and well-mannered qualities and soon become engaged with him. Heathcliff runs away when he hears the conversation where she says that she would be degraded if she marries Heathcliff though her love for Heathcliff is eternal and not to be fulfilled in this world. After hearing conversation Heathcliff rushes out and disappears for three years. While looking for Heathcliff that night she becomes ill and went Thrushcross Grange again. Catherine and Edger got married. After three years Heathcliff comes

back with refined look, mysterious wealth and seemingly changed manner. Heathcliff apparent figure holds extreme revenge inside now and later bursts out in the shape of torments and everlasting revenge. Catherine glad to see him again but Edger feels unhappy. Heathcliff pays Hindley's gambling debts and soon control *Wuthering Heights*. Heathcliff continuation of coming to the Thrushcross Grange and meet Catherine disturbs both Catherine and Edger Linton. Edger tried to deny Heathcliff to call to the house and calls his menservants to deterring him but Catherine shows resentments on Edgar's act. Hindley's dies and Heathcliff becomes the owner of the *Wuthering Heights*. In another side Isabella escape with Heathcliff without knowing the evil intentions of getting revenge on Edger and grabbing the Thrushcross Grange. The dilemma and illness increases with time and highly effect Catherine at midnight Catherine give birth to Cathy prematurely and dies two hour later. Heathcliff comes and curses Catherine by saying that she ruined his life. He says that Catherine is responsible for his exploited life and cause to his pains. He begs Catherine's ghost to hunt him for the rest of his life (Tobick, 2010).

Thirteen years later, Cathy becomes curious and beautiful lady. Without knowing the world outside her finds Hareton unconsciously and meet him. On the other side secrete romantic relationship starts between young Catherine and Linton through letters. Linton pretends to be lover of Catherine and shows with his complains that she doesn't care for him. He wishes Catherine to nurse him not because he really lives Catherine but Heathcliff forces him to false his love for Catherine since Heathcliff wants to make Linton a part of Linton inheritance and seeks revenge on Edgar by taking Thrushcross Grange. Isabella also dies the child that had left treated very badly by Heathcliff. Once Linton got seriously ill and Heathcliff forces both Linton and Catherine to marry. Soon after his marriage he dies and now Heathcliff control both house Thrushcross Grange and *Wuthering Heights*. Now Cathy also lives like other servants in the house, as it shows in the start of the novel that Cathy gives a room for rent to

Lockwood. After six months when Lockwood's visit again, Hareton works in the Wuthering Heights as a servant who never sees any book, school or any education because of the Heathcliff's revenge. In these days Hareton is underestimate and mocked by Cathy for his ignorance and illiteracy. Heathcliff obsession increases with time, talks to Catherine's ghost and soon Heathcliff dies. Hareton and Linton plans to marry next year and finally they inherit Thrushcross Grange. At last ending with the story Lockwood's visits Heathcliff and Catherine graves (Hameed, 2023).

Discussion and Analysis

The novel "Wuthering Heights" primarily highlights the recurring motif of romantic love taking a myriad of forms: the unflinching and inextricable love of Heathcliff and Catherine, the secret love marriage of Hindley and Frances death, Edgar's love and his marriage proposal to Catherine lacking endurance, damning infatuation of Isabella, Cathy and Linton's love and Hareton captivating lure towards young Cathy. All these facets of relationships are categorically characterized by unique and common traits, culminating into characters' death and separation. Furthermore, some of them are self-centered, ignoring the deep-seated emotions of others. Contrary to the fact, Heathcliff's and Catherine go counter, revealing the fact that the motif of love dominates the text throughout the novel

This novels enshrines many kinds of love. The romantic love is the primary one, driving the story and the major conflict of the novel .The love between Heathcliff and Catherine was based on shared-perceptions which cannot be easily interpreted on the ground of social conventions. They themselves even don't know the prime essence of their love.

"They both promised fair to grow up as rude as savage" (Bronte, 1992)

"Nelly in a crystal clear way expresses that a savage is immature, showing natural imbalance — completely boundless and unrestraint. To maintain relationship, principles were compromised, feeling free in their actions and perceptions. They enjoyed natural liberty,

closeness to heaven and divinity”.

They forget everything the minute they were together. (Bronte, 1992)

“In the same vein, Smith categorically posits that passion having been their determined fate via they can auger unmatched happiness, hailing it as a societal norm. (Smith 177) They glorifies passion — a tool via even death can be overcome, sustaining love and enduring feelings for each other. They have their own approaches for love. (Smith, 1976)

“Heathcliff goes mad when he gets the news of Catherine’s death”:

Two words would comprehend my future-death and hell; existence after

Losing her, would be hell”. And in great torment he cries out, “Catherine

Earnshaw, may you not rest as long as I am living...Be with me always-

Take any form-drive me mad! Only do not leave me in the abyss, where I

Cannot find you! Oh God it is unutterable! I cannot live without my life! I

Cannot live without my soul!” (Bronte, 1992, p. 122)

Oldfield says that the conflict occurs in the novel due to the choice of emotions and reasons. (Oldfield, 1976). Catherine thinks that love is a complementary thing for life, not only for identity but also for the embodiment of that identity. She thinks that Heathcliff is herself with respect to her soul and Edgar draws and embodied herself for her wholeness. That’s why she establishes a conflicting approach and chooses Edgar for her marriage.

Catherine says: though everybody hated and despised each other, they could not avoid loving me’.(Bronte, 1992, p. 104)

Love demands not only that life but also the eternity which is beyond the limits of space and time. Love has been shown more than the ordinary life and even more important than life here. It has been related only to themselves by excluding the rest of the world.

According to Abraham Maslow all human has a set of needs and basic requirements that must be fulfilled reasonably and in a healthy way. These needs are love, safety, esteem, and healthy relationships. If they go undone it prompts to establish defensive strategies to fill up these gaps. Heathcliff was deprived of love and he was starving for safety. He is shown as abandoned by his family and picked up by Mr. Earnshaw which follows by a security and sympathy. He is brought home but he meets contempt and rejection at first. All the member of the family like him to be disappeared but he lives in the house because of Earnshaw's advice although he was not still secure. He suffers Hindley's excruciates and hostility. (Maslow, 1943). The idea of human motivation the term of Maslow's theory has evidenced. When the sole source of Heathcliff's sympathy parted him it becomes intolerable and motivates him to be cruel and take revenge. Hindley seems taking revenge from Heathcliff because he doesn't want to share his familial love with a stranger. Most of the actions take place in the novel as a result of revenge and it repeats. Hindley inflicts lot of torment over him and keep him away from education. He also makes it difficult for his sister to marry Heathcliff. Heathcliff does in the same way in the retribution by winning his property in gambling and keeping his son away from education.

In chapter seventeen the waves of revenge come over the characters and affect each other. When Isabella is brought to the Grange she was sick and demented due to Heathcliff's mistreatments, she hysterically enters unlike the other days which she had once spent here. Heathcliff is also tried to shoot by Hindley but he rushes out safely. Some critics states that Hindley's death was suicide because he has attempt to shoot Heathcliff but failed and that is why he was afraid of Heathcliff lest Heathcliff had a chance to do it instead. Isabella also dreams revenge on Heathcliff and tells Ellen, *"I'd rather suffer less, if I might cause his suffering and he might know that I was the cause."*

Heathcliff's love of obsession and Catherine's support made it possible to endure the torments of Hindley and despises of his surroundings. Her

relationship motivated him and became a reason for his living. It was the time when there was nothing in Heathcliff's life except Catherine, the sole reason of his life, console, comfort and contentment. Therefore, he had endured everything.

When the obsessive love turns into revenge he attempts to ruin all of those who are associated to Catherine's life, even he doesn't grant a forgiveness to the young innocent Cathy and Hareton.

When he fails her he leaves the Grange and returns with full of changed-behaviors-rage, hate, revenge- overwhelms him.

He changed and become able to join Catherine's society-symbol so civilization he maintains his visit to the Grange despite Linton's deterrence. Although he knows the fact that he has already lost Catherine and it was not possible for them to be integrated in this world he maintains his revenge over each and every one. The irony behind the idea is that is for Catherine with full of obsession outweighs his rage and intensity of revenge. That is why he cannot fully forgive Catherine for marrying Edgar.

It means as far as her love existed in Heathcliff's mind his revenge cannot be completed and for Heathcliff revenge is more powerful than love. Heathcliff and Catherine both have been grown up together in the Heights and moors. Each and every object of nature the lands, grass, trees, houses, horses etc, refreshes the memories their intimacy, so that directly intensifies the pain of Heathcliff and his avenge.

It is evident that including Heathcliff and other characters, they feel relief through their inflictions-either hurting themselves or tormenting others. Catherine realizes the fact and tells Heathcliff that whatever she suffers is less than the miseries of Heathcliff's. They all suffer and their sufferings leads to seek revenge on each other.

Francis Bacon says: *"And if any man should do wrong, merely out of ill-nature, why, yet it is but like the thorn or briar, which prick and scratch, because they can do no other"* (Bacon, 1601)

The idea in the term of revenge is that revenge is like a thorn and briar, or a biting of dog which can only cause harm, torture, infliction and torments are the requisite nature of revenge.

Emily has shown and proved that there is no peace in revenge instead it involves many destructions, pains and agonies. Bacon states that the offender or those who inflicts wrongs, they commit blunders. On the other hand the retributor do commit another wrong while paying back. Heathcliff take on for making her jealous, Hindley takes revenge on Heathcliff to not share his family with him, Heathcliff torture Hindley for his mistreatments by winning his wealth in gambling and eventually all the characters discover nothing but pains. Catherine is lost by Heathcliff and she dies. Catherine says before her death that Heathcliff murdered her.

"You killed me, and thriven nit, I think" (Bronte, 1992,p. 158)

Heathcliff had a passionate love for Catherine, might be he could make her remorseful and regretted on her act which could be enough for Heathcliff somehow but she imputed Heathcliff to be her murdered.

CONCLUSION

Emily Bronte's Magnum opus literary masterpiece, *Wuthering Heights*, is tactically employing universal implications, providing a phenomenal knowledge in connection with human nature. Apparently, this novel is the story of two houses: *Wuthering Heights* and *Thrushcross Grange*. *Wuthering Heights* appears to be a vivid reflection of the unconscious mind of human being. *Thrushcross Grange*, has literally embodied the conscious mind of human beings. In addition, *Wuthering Heights* posits a precise distinction between the uncultured and cultured life of human beings. In this regard, *Wuthering Heights* represents the uncultured and civilized forms of life, primarily characterized by an absurd and treacherous atmosphere. This novel primarily dates back to Victorian era, reflecting all these recurring motifs common in this epoch. The novel literally offers an insight into the notions of spiritual love, unveiling the undisputable fact that love being the sincere passion of human beings is perfectly depicted in

Wuthering Heights.

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