

Eco criticism and Wuthering Heights

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Abstract

This study looks into the role of environment to make human nature and character in *WUTHERING HEIGHTS* by Emily Bronte, published in 1847, by Thomas Cautley Newby. The four major characters of this novel are very much alike to their habitats. The living persons of Wuthering Heights, the palace situated on the moor land, are having characteristics of a moor and on the other hand the persons living in Thruscross Grange are representing the as the symbol of enlightenment. These two habitats stand against each other. Cathy and Heathcliff are from Wuthering Heights and also uncultivated like the heath whereas Edgar and his sister tried to enlighten Cathy and Heathcliff with their knowledge and culture. But they could not. Cathy and Heathcliff came back to their uncivilized, wild and mysterious world.

Key Words: Ecocriticism, Civilization, Sterile, Passion, Culture, Symbiosis, Nature, Entropy

Ecocriticism is the study of the relationship between literature and the physical environment- stated by Cheryll Glotfelty. In a wider sense ecocriticism is the study of the relationship of the human and non-human, throughout human cultural history and entailing critical analysis of the term human itself. Theory in general tends to see our external world as

socially and linguistically constructed, as “always already” textualised discourse but ecocriticism calls this long standing theoretical orthodoxy into question. Ecocriticism claims that there is nature everywhere inside or or outside of literature.

“Wuthering Heights” published in mid-nineteenth century, considered to be one of the most passionate and heartfelt novels ever written, a tale of the relationship between Catherine and an orphaned boy Heathcliff, adopted by her father.

Wuthering Heights is a mansion, situated on a moor, uncultivated open land, in northern isolated part of Europe. Both Catherine and Heathcliff brought up in this house. Like this moor land both are them uncultivated, both failures in their lives. Neither Edgar nor Isabella could furrow in their mind, body or their existence, with their love and desire. The house is also sterile like them.

The ecocentered reading of the novel focuses outside of the house and its environs. it uses the ideas of negative energy, entropy, which tends to break down and disorganize the system and the symbiosis, the co-existing system. Thus the house, exist as an isolated entropic system has no symbiotic connection at all with the wider biosphere. The house breaths in the atmosphere of its own decay. Therefore it may also apply to the people who dwelled within it. The broader world, the civilization was unknown to them till they met Linton family and went to Thrushcross Grange.

The only companion to Wuthering Heights is Thrushcross Grange four miles away from it, which is the antithesis of it. A contrastive element issued here, like if Wuthering Heights is stands for nature then Thrushcross Grange for culture. If there is wild passion in Wuthering Heights then civilization is there in Thrushcross Grange. There was only nature

and the house could not escape from its greeny wild passion. A passion of being savage, being wild, which leads Heathcliff to destroy Hindley as well as Edgar. An asexual desire was there within Catherine and Heathcliff- that is why Cathy declares herself to be Heathcliff and Heathcliff declares Cathy as his soul. Both the heath and the house help Heathcliff to be haunted.

If we go to analysis the word 'heathcliff' then it would mean an rock of uncultivated soil or a rock situated on the moor, and if I have the liberty to consider the rock as a sign of penis, then it may say that like this land Heathcliff also unable to penetrate rather cultivate or production, but full of passion because of its untouched enlightenment. Like a flame that cannot burn anything, like a light that failed a stream which has ceased to flow. Its narcissistic aloofness from one flow of the life force turns it into a black hole which becomes a vortex into which its energies are sucked and destroyed- destroy Hindley and Isabella, Catherine, Linton and later on Heathcliff.

The moor is a curse, fall on both Wuthering Heights and Thruscross Grange. This negative force increases with the help of non human being the spirit of Catherine, who visits every night. Night is again dark, duration of evilness, works against of life. The negative force due to this dull environment which hovers above the houses under the sky makes the lives sterile and fragile of the novel and left Thruscross Grange empty, without any ancestor. Remains only Hareton and young cathy in Wuthering Heights under the dark cloud of unsatisfied passionate desire of Cathy and Heathcliff.

Heathcliff, born out of the heath and died in the heath, left behind the mystery of his love, whether it fulfilled or not. He searched for Catherine not only during her life time but also after her death. Somewhere they met between life and death. It must be their passion

which makes them overcome the limitation of life. They met spiritually physical. That's the reason of Cathy's leaving this world so early in order to meet him where no one could object or prevent them to meet. The space without any interference. Like nature their love was so original that they go repeatedly to each other. It is only Heathcliff the king without crown, ruled both on women characters and on the heath. Heathcliff drive into Cathy many a time dug her tomb in order to bring out her physically- shows his wild fearless fierce desire that can consume anything and everything like the nature itself.

From the angle of ecofeminism, starts with Sherry B. Ortner's '*Is Female To Male As Nature Is to Culture?*,' which talks about the relation between woman and nature, woman is near to nature. Both are victim of patriarchy, nature is dominated in the sake of human civilization and within this civilized society women dominated by patriarchy, in order to fulfill their desire. Legitimate the oppression of woman also legitimate environmental degradation. If we consider Cathy to be the nature then she is victim of Heathcliff and his wildly passion as well as of Edger. And this passion leads her to death. She was in the sufferance of duality. She could not make out her exact position of belonging. Physically she was with Edger but psychologically with Heathcliff. It might not happen if Heathcliff would not come back after her marriage. in this novel there is psychological violence than of physical violence. Both Isabella and Catherine both fell in love with that barbarous man and tortured psychologically. He never felt the warmth of Isabella and denied her every time. It is his wild desire, the entropy which breaks Cathy and bound her to break her marriage.

'Wuthering Heights' blurs the paradigm of mind-body, nature-culture and emotion-reason. Where nature = wuthering heights along with Cathy and Heathcliff , culture = thrushcross grange along with Edgar and Isabella; when they married nature met with culture

but culture failed to influence over nature and nature achieve victory. Generally emotion goes with femininity in heteronormative space and reason with masculinity but here the equation reversed. Heathcliff is not masculine as because he is preoccupied with emotion of his love towards Cathy and he went as far as he could. But Cathy married Edgar to taste the cultured, civilized society; also she needs a partner in the absence of Heathcliff. The mind-body equation fall fell under the trope of Heathcliff's desire. Heathcliff mate with Cathy with his body but she is dead and bodiless, she was there only with her mind rather spirit. The primitivism overwhelms the civilized.

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