

The Moors in Treacherous Love: Whose Fault? —**Re-reading on *Wuthering Heights***

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Abstract

*This paper deals with the puzzles in *Wuthering Heights* which, Emily Bronte created with her genius pen and confuses her readers of her days till modern times.*

Key Words: treacherous love, the window, civilization, sky and earth

Introduction

Love in *Wuthering Heights*, whether of the old generation or the younger one, can be briefly defined as a "triangle affair": Heathcliff--Catherine Earnshaw--Edgar Linton; Hareton Earnshaw--Catherine Linton--Linton Heathcliff. The former ends in death, not necessarily a tragedy though. While the latter ends with the union of Cathy and Hareton moving out of *Wuthering Heights*. In these two triangular relationships, on the surface there is treachery in each one. Whose fault is it? It seems to be a very hard job to blame anyone of them, for they have their own excuses for every deeds they conduct. Emily, a genius writer, creates a new puzzle that confuses her readers of her days till those in modern times.

From the Wild Heights to the Civilized Grange: Insider or Outsider?

Lockwood is forced by a storm to spend his night at *Wuthering Heights*. He dreams a ghost child at the window, wailing, "let me in! Let me in!"; "I'm come home: I'd lost my way on the moor!" (WH Ch3, 31), and "As it spoke, I discerned, obscurely, a child's face looking through the window" (WH Ch.3, 31). He has this dream because he happens to lie in the late Catherine's closet bed with a window in it and he has pulled the paneled sides together before going to sleep. (WH Ch.3, 24). Lockwood knows nothing but fear. So he treats the ghost girl in a very cruel way: "I pulled its wrist on to the broken pane, and rubbed it to and fro till the blood ran down and soaked the bedclothes..." (WH Ch3, 31). "The peculiar cruelty of Lockwood's dream lies not only in the idea of bloody hurt wrought on a child, but more especially in the dreamer's lack of emotional motivation for dreaming it: the cruelty in the gratuitous of the dream act" (Ghent 190).

Lockwood is a complete onlooker over the dramatic story happening between *Wuthering Heights* and Grange. It's not as simple as to cover his dream with one word of superstition, especially when Heathcliff comes to the window and bursts into an uncontrollable passion of tears: "'Come in! Come in!' he sobbed. 'Cathy, do come. Oh, do ONCE more! Oh! my heart's darling! Hear me this time, Catherine, at last!'" (WH Ch3, 35).

The window, for Heathcliff and Catherine, serves as the breakthrough for wildness, separation and reunion in another world.

After the death of their father, the harmony of the Earnshaw is destroyed completely. For Catherine Earnshaw, the happiest thing is to stay with Heathcliff: to run wildly on the moor, to hide at the attic or get punished by Joseph and Hindley. When they cannot find the legal way out, they will slip from the window. The intimacy between them remains tight until they peep through the window of Grange at the decent life of the physical substance. *Wuthering Heights* and Thrushcross Grange are one opposite in the novel, like other opposites between Heathcliff and Edgar Linton, Hindley and Linton, Isabella and Catherine, Hareton and Linton Heathcliff.

In *Wuthering Heights*, all furniture bears the feature of coarseness in contrast to the refinement of Grange. The window in *Wuthering Heights* is "narrow" and "deeply set in the wall, and the corners defended with large, jutting stones." (WH Ch1, 6). While the window of Grange is different: "... the light came from thence; they had not put up the shutters, and the curtains were only half closed..." (WH Ch7, 57). Heathcliff deserts the grand and returns to savage *Wuthering Heights*, while Catherine is kept there for five weeks. When she returns, she is completely a strange person to Heathcliff.

So the window may symbolize the medium to separate the "insider" and "outsider" of the wildness or civilization..

While young, Catherine is an "insider" in the wild *Wuthering Heights*, wishing to fly out into the wilderness. When growing up and being married, she becomes an "insider" in the restricted civilized room within Grange, who is eager for the wilderness from outside. When in death, she becomes a ghostly child waif on the moor. Her restlessness cannot find an outlet until she is completely mad. Her soul is uneasy until Heathcliff comes to join her underneath the earth of the moor.

Yet, she knows what's in her heart. And she gets the confidence of the intimacy between her and Heathcliff, as she realizes that "she is Heathcliff and Heathcliff is she" (WH Ch9, 96). As to Edgar, she knows in her heart and soul, that it's wrong to marry him. She Tells Nelly, "Whatever our souls are made of, his and mine are the same; and Linton's as different as a moonbeam from lightning, or frost from fire." (WH Ch12, 96).

This torment clings to her until she finds her way out in death. When Catherine gets a feverish illness, she asks Nelly to open the window though it's quite cold. When she is in delirium, she opens the window and lean out into the winter wind, and calls across the moors to Heathcliff, "Heathcliff, if I dare you now, will you venture? ...I won't rest till you are with me. I never will!" (WH Ch12, 151). On the night after her burial, Heathcliff returns to the Heights through the window--for the door has been barred against him by Hindley.

Wade Thompson states:

In the brief life of Catherine, then, there is a complete reversal of roles. As a child she is an adult; even her sauciness is grounded in inner strength. As an adult she becomes a child, and the pain of living proves intolerable. "I wish I were a girl again," she cries pathetically, "half savage and hardy, and free; and laughing at injuries, not maddening under them." (Thompson 72).

Tragically, when Catherine becomes the "insider" of the civilized Grange, Heathcliff remains the "outsider". He doesn't realize this change until he hears Catherine say that marrying him will degrade her. So he tries to become the "insider" into the world of Grange, but at the wrong time, because now Catherine is eager to go out. So, for Heathcliff, the window becomes the passage through which he gets communication with the wilderness and the ghost of Catherine. It is also the channel by which he can execute his revenge, shutting the victims inside the windows. Lastly, it is the outlet of his soul flying out of his body: "My soul's bliss kills my body, but does not satisfy itself." (WH Ch34, 390).

Both Heathcliff and Catherine understand that they will not go to heaven. Catherine may cry for joy when she is back from the heaven to the earth. "In Heathcliff one looks in vain for Christian morals or virtues; he is a primitive, pagan soul..." (Watson, "Temptest" 89). Strangely, when he finds Catherine in Hareton and young Cathy, he has neither power nor intention to continue his revenge. After he returns everything back in the world, he chooses to die on the closet bed in Catharine's chamber, with the window open. Heathcliff, as Nelly describes, smiles when Nelly "hasped the window" (WH Ch34, 392). She tries to close his eyes but they refuse to shut. He "sneers"! (WH Ch34, 392).

When Catherine accepts Edgar's proposal, she and Nelly have a long talk about her love to Heathcliff and Edgar. Her love for Edgar is on the basis of his present condition: young, handsome, and rich, which is surpassing Heathcliff so much that to marry him would be a degradation of her. She intentionally to help Heathcliff through marriage to a rich man, only to find her in a greater trap. Since she loves Edgar differently, their marriage seems to be very fragile. Nelly understands the threat, she tells Lockwood, "Catherine seems to be almost-over-fond" of Mr. Linton and even to his sister she shows plenty of affection. They are both attentive to her comfort, certainly. "It is not the thorn bending the honeysuckles, but the honeysuckles embracing the thorn." (WH Ch10, 109).

The last peace in their marriage sees her staying with Edgar in a window: "...whose lattice lay back against the wall, and displayed, beyond the garden trees and the wild green park, the valley of Gimmerton..." (WH Ch10, 59). But it is soon broken by the returning of Heathcliff. Catherine is so excited to see Heathcliff again that she doesn't observe what Edgar feels. She innocently thinks she can both have the cake and eat it. But when she finds no solution, she gets divided and longs for the returning to her childhood.

This is the second time that Edgar is disturbed by Heathcliff. Both disturbances are accomplished through the window. Window is the most delicate part of the house; therefore, it is easy to be broken. Window, for Edgar, is a sign of treachery and disturbance. He is the outsider who will never enter into the internal world of Catherine and Heathcliff.

Edgar's love for Catherine is in accordance with the social principle. He is the superior antithesis to Heathcliff in wealth, class and looking. So he gets peace in heart after Catherine's death and there is no ghost haunting around him. He loves Catherine in an earnest yet a somber way. His way of mourning her is to visit her tomb on the earth occasionally, no disturbing involves. When he is dying, he is happy that he can go to her: "I am going to her; and you, darling child, shall come to us!" (WH Ch28, 333).

From Civilized Grange to the Wild Heights: Fall or Rise?

The younger generation bear some characteristics of their parents, their birth are observed with the sadness in the first place. Frances and Catherine die on the day of the birth of Hareton and Cathy. Isabella is ill and lives only for twelve years after the birth of her son. They are forced into some results of the hatred among their parents. However, the younger generation choose to struggle differently, restraining their actions within the legal society, the result of which is that Hareton and Cathy get married and move out of Wuthering Heights.

Linton Heathcliff disappoints his father due to his illness, weakness, cowardice, and above all, his resemblance to Edgar Linton. Yet he inherits cruelty from Heathcliff. He may neglect everything for the sake of himself. While hearing the news of his uncle's death, he says, "I'm glad, for I shall be master of the Grange after him. Catherine always spoke of it as her house. It isn't hers! It's mine: papa says everything she has is mine." (WH Ch.28, 329). His cruelty also comes to Cathy, his wife. When Heathcliff is striking Cathy, he looks on, as if "watching a dog and horse being struck" (WH Ch.28, 330). Cathy's divaricating from Linton begins earlier when they are of quite intimacy and are planning their summer days. Linton's paradise is to "lie from morning till evening" while Cathy's is to "rock in a rustling green tree." (WH Ch24, 290). Both of them despise the paradise of each other.

Though trapped into the marriage, Cathy never stops rebelling against Heathcliff, Linton and Joseph.

Coincidentally, she manages to steal out "before the break of day." She "visited the empty chambers and examined their windows; and luckily, lighting on her mothers, she got easily out its lattice, and onto the ground by means of the fir tree close by." (WH Ch28, 334). Nature in Wuthering Heights is simultaneously of reality and superstition, so the reader may guess that it's her mother's spirit that protects her and guides her.

Hareton, being a victim of the hatred of the old generation, is deprived of both his physical and spiritual possessions. He grows up under the protection of Nelly and Joseph. Nelly nurses him at his young age. When she leaves for Grange, Joseph is loyal to Wuthering Heights though he may harshly condemn their faults. He and Nelly act as the central post for the two generations of Wuthering Heights and Grange.

Strangely, Hareton and Heathcliff find their attachment to each other. The first connection between them is accidental. When Hindley is too drunk to have his own consciousness, as to drop his own son from upstairs, it is Heathcliff who happens to catch him, though he repents when he makes it clear that the murderer is Hindley. Hareton, in turn, defends Heathcliff against any blame on him. He is the backbone in Wuthering Heights. Amazingly, it's in Hareton that Heathcliff finds himself and give up all the revenge. When Heathcliff dies, Hareton is the only person to mourn him:

...poor Hareton, the most wronged, is the only one who really suffered much. He sat by the corpse all night, weeping in bitter earnest. He pressed its hand and kissed the sarcastic savage face that everyone else shrank from contemplating; and bemoaned him with that strong grief which springs naturally from a generous heart, though it be tough as tempered steel. (WH Ch34, 393).

Hareton's identity is quite awkward at Wuthering Heights: neither master nor servant, as Graeme Tytler hints. Yet he also may serve as the solution to all the love and hate, good and evil, living and dead. He is the incarnated combination of both Heathcliff and Catherine, who weakens and eliminates Heathcliff's revengeful strength.

Hareton's returning to Cathy is the wilderness back to civilization, under the guide of Cathy, Joseph and Nelly. He and Cathy share the capacity of "all kinds of selfless and disinterested services to others" (Tytler 51). Their relationship, different from the relationship between Cathy and Linton, is doomed to end happily. When there's nothing forbidding in their love, they may neglect the window and walk to the yard, to the world to search for their happiness.

"Together they would brave Satan and all his legions." (WH Ch34, 395).

Both the first generation and the second generation move between the Heights and the Grange. Sometimes they may meet through the normal way--the door. While other times they are connected through the window, passively or actively alike. What is implied here is that the violation of a strange civilization will doom the destruction. "The moors are outside of culture, outside of the land inheritance system, they can offer sustenance to Catherine and Hareton, just as they had to Cathy and Heathcliff, the generation before." (Torgerson 122). He observes that Cathy, unlike her mother Catherine, is an acculturated lady from birth (Torgerson 117). She behaves within the restraint of the culture. When she promises to marry Linton Heathcliff, she falls into the savage in the Heights. But she tries every means to keep her from further falling there and succeeds in rising and help Hareton rise into the civilization. And her way of struggling is clever: she tries to ally with Hareton to fight against Heathcliff to protect herself; she keeps reading at the Heights and teaches Hareton to read, which defies the convention there. Both Hareton and Cathy rise into the world they belong to, so they can align with nature and the culture. They don't care whether it's sunny, rainy, stormy or windy, for they're immersed into their life, and love to and from each other.

Sky and Earth: Is Haunting Ghost in Peace?

Nelly Dean, the narrator of the story, though a participant in all the events, is keeping her head calm partially because of her age, partially because of the fact that she's only a looker-on. Nature, in her description, is accordingly much sober and normal, regardless of the mood of all persons. Sometimes, nature serves as a contrast to the events.

Think of the few deaths. When Mr. Earnshaw dies quietly, it is "a high wind blustered round the house, and roared in the chimney: it sounded wild and stormy, yet it was not cold." (WH Ch5, 50). His death is the loss of all the balance before and after, in spite of the tranquility he may get in heaven.

Catherine is not afraid of death, neither. The night she dies is in a "warm and pleasant" weather (WH Ch15, 184), while she is in "completely bewildered and signed and moaned and knew nobody..." (WH Ch15, 185). The day following her death is "bright and cheerful outdoors." (WH Ch16, 194). "Except for Catherine, Nelly is the only character who realizes the depths of Heathcliff's suffering and has some idea of his motives for being so cruel" (Goldstone 177). So when she goes to Heathcliff and tells him the news of Catherine's death, she comments:

"Poor wretch!" I thought; "You have a heart and nerves the same as your brother-men! Why should you be anxious to conceal them? Your pride cannot blind God! You tempt Him to wring them, till He forces a cry of humiliation." (WH Ch15, 197).

The death of Heathcliff takes place on a wet night:

The following evening was very wet: indeed, it poured down till day-dawn; and, as I took my morning walk round the house, I observed the master's window swinging open, and the rain driving straight in. He cannot be in bed, I thought: those showers would drench him through. (WH Ch34, 392).

"Nature in Wuthering Heights is important because it provides the setting for the actor in the drama, and especially for the main protagonist. The most memorable description occurs not in the course of the narrative but in the course of dialogue." (Duthie 236). Sky and weather is of equal importance to the scene. The sun seldom shines on Catherine and Heathcliff. The moon is not a guardian anymore, but a cold on-looker.

When Heathcliff returns from his 3-year absence, there's the moon: "It got dusk, and the moon looked over the high wall of the court, causing undefined shadows to lurk in the shadow of the numerous projecting corners of the building." (WH Ch10, 110). The moon also shines on the happy Hareton and Cathy after the death of Heathcliff. When Lockwood revisits Wuthering Heights:

...I turned away and made my exit, rambling leisurely along with the glow of sinking sun behind, and the other glory of rising moon in front--one fading and the other brightening--as I quitted the park, and climbed the stony by-road branching off to Mr. Heathcliff's dwelling. Before I arrived in sight of it, all that remained of day was a beamless amber light along the west: but I could see every pebble on the path, and every blade of grass, by that splendid moon. (WH Ch32, 360).

This is a sharp comparison to his first impression on the Heights when he first visited it in a stormy evening and had to spend night there. Robin Gilmour observes that Lockwood is an emotional tourist coming to nurse his misanthropy and discovers emotional depths in him and others. He is the only connection between the Heights, the Grange and the outer world. He listens and witnesses partly the story of Heathcliff and Catherine, which increases the credibility of the narration. Like nature, he is a background of the drama, sharing their romance but never getting involved. (Gilmour 75).

The coldness of the sky is in consistency with both Heathcliff and Catherine's disaffinity with God. Many critics interpret the fall of Heathcliff and Catherine as the fall in Eden. Davies writes: "In a reversal characteristics of the author, the wilderness (into which our first parents and the Israelites in Exodus were ejected) is conceived as a home prior to Eden, back to which all allegiances yearn" (Davies, "Key Women Writers"). He also states that the wilderness of the moor is "the soul's origin and its quietus" (Davies, "Three distinct and unconnected tales" 90). The moor is to them "sanctuary, play-space but also the surface of the underworld" (Davies, "Three distinct and unconnected tales" 90). It's also the "burial Chamber" (Davies, "Three distinct and unconnected tales" 90), of the mothers. Heathcliff and Catherine root their feet and love in the earth together. Once she is uprooted out to the civilized house of Grange, she loses herself and her love. She is isolating herself into a complete strange atmosphere, though she does this for the interest of Heathcliff. Her physical treachery tortures her soul. She ever thinks that her love for Heathcliff resembles the eternal earth: a source of little visible delight, but necessary. She is also aware that her betrayal against Heathcliff will be someday punished. So she tells Nelly:

... heaven didn't seem to be my home; and I broke my heart with creeping to come back to earth; and the angels were so angry that they flung me out into the middle of the hearth on the top of the Wuthering Heights; where I woke sobbing for joy. That will do to explain my secret, as well as the other. I've no more business to marry Edgar Linton than I have to be heaven; ...(WH Ch9, 96).

In her delirium, she visions the moors: returning to her childhood, correcting all the faults.

Heathcliff bears a lot of similarities to Catherine, one of which is their longing for the earth. He is attached to the earth the same way he is attached to Catherine.

When Catherine died, Heathcliff takes revenge on those people of whom he thinks as the root of his wrench. Depriving Hindley of his land and property, which is the cause of his being extracted from the family and his separation from Catherine, is certainly effective and powerful. When Catherine is dead, the earth becomes the only barrier between him and her. So he digs open her tomb and uncovers her coffin. Because "she has disturbed me, night and day, through eighteen years--incessantly--remorselessly--till yester night; and yester night I was tranquil. I dreamt I was sleeping the last sleep by that sleeper, with my heart stopped and my cheek frozen against hers." (WH Ch29, 338).

The return of Catherine's ghost in Lockwood's dream may ascertain Heathcliff's obsession and guides his haunting soul. Eighteen years later, he finds the final destiny of his soul: death. Although he has no symptom of any decay in his physical body, he refuses to eat and drink and dies on Catherine's bed in which way he thinks he can find his peace. The novel ends with Lockwood's farewell to Wuthering Heights. He discovers the three headstones on the slope next to the moor. "the moths fluttering among the heath and harebells...soft wind breathing through the grass, and wondered how anyone could ever imagine unquiet slumbers for the sleepers in that quiet earth." (WH Ch34, 396).

All looks settled and quiet: the disorder of the mortal life regains its usual state. But beneath the earth, tumult is still lingering. The day before Catherine's burial, when Nelly twists the black hair of Heathcliff and the light hair of Edgar Linton together into Catherine's locket on her neck, she perhaps is not aware of the result of her "kindness": the turmoil will continue in another world. There is still a question left: Is the haunting ghost in real peace?

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