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LOVE AND REVENGE IN EMILY BRONTE'S *WUTHERING HEIGHTS*

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ABSTRACT

The famous 3 sister novelists of the Victorian age Charlotte, Emily and Anne Bronte were called 'Strong Sisterhood' of the age. Charlotte Bronte wrote famous novels like Jane Eyre, Shirley, Professor etc., but the second sister Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights* brought fame to the entire family. The purpose of this paper is to examine how the themes of love and revenge are explored in the novel. This paper concentrates the protagonist-turned villain Heathcliff's love for Catherine and his subsequent revengeful ideas towards Catherine, Hindly Earnshaw and Edgar Linton. Heathcliff used Isabella Linton, Hareton and his own son as mere tools to seek his revenge on those who wounded his heart and mind. The novel remains one of the most haunting love stories in world literature

Key words: Emily Bronte, love, revenge, Catherine, Heathcliff, pseudonym

INTRODUCTION

Wuthering Heights is a masterpiece of Emily Bronte. Emily Bronte was raised on the wild Yorkshire moors of England. Though she could not be able to reach the level of George Eliot and Jane Austen, she could make her name in the history of English novel with publication of *Wuthering Heights*. The novel was published in the year 1847 under the pseudonym of Ellis Bell. The novel was grand success as it: revived Romantic tradition. The novel carries the themes of Love and Revenge: The novel is known for its unity of theme. Two narrators, Nelly Dean and Lockwood tell the story of love and revenge in this unforgettable classic. Let us have a glance at the story in brief before exploring the themes of love and revenge.

PLOT

Mrs and Mr. Earnshaw owned a farm house called *Wuthering Heights* which is situated on a hill. They lived happily there with their children Hindley and Catherine. Four miles away from the *Wuthering Heights* lived the Linton family with two children Edgar and Isabella at a place called Thrush cross Grange which is situated in the valley.

Once Mr. Earnshaw went to a Liverpool slum on business and picked up an orphan and gave him the name Heathcliff. As this boy grew Catherine Earnshaw started making love to him. But her brother Hindley did not like it. He insisted that his sister Catherine should marry Edgar Linton. Meanwhile Mr. Earnshaw died leaving domestic responsibility at the hands of Hindley. Heathcliff was deeply hurt by Hindley's decision to

marry his sister Catherine to Edgar Linton. He went away from Wuthering Heights. After three years, he returned a rich man. Now Hindley welcomed Heathcliff. Catherine who was married to Edgar Winton once again started taking interest in Heathcliff. Again her brother Hindley opposed it. Thus torn between two conflicts, Catherine died in agony while giving birth to a daughter named Cathy or Catherine II.

The death of Catherine made a deep impact on the mind of Heathcliff and he decided to take revenge on Hindley. He succeeded to a large extent in ruining him and enticing him to gambling and bouts of drinks. Hindley lost everything in gambling including the Wuthering Heights. Heathcliff bought it happily. He became the master of Wuthering Heights and reduced Hindley and his son to the position of servants.

After this Heathcliff eloped with Isabella Linton. They had one son named Linton Heathcliff. Through that child Heathcliff wanted to acquire Linton's property. He got both properties i.e. Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange.

However, Heathcliff could not completely destroy the Linton and Earnshaw family because Hindley's son Hareton and Catherine's daughter Cathy were loving each other. So, they became the natural owners of the respective estates. At last Heathcliff died a defeated man. The end of Heathcliff shows the defeat of evil. This is the brief story of *Wuthering Heights*.

DISCUSSION

As the story of both love and revenge, the novel deals with the love story of Heathcliff and Catherine. But it is also the story of Heathcliff's revenge on his enemies. The love presented in the novel is extra ordinary in certain respects. There is a passionate love between Heathcliff and Catherine Earnshaw. It is powerful in its intensity. Here Heathcliff and Catherine think that they are inseparable parts of each other. Time cannot destroy the force of their love. Catherine dies still Heathcliff continues to love her. The intensity of their love is expressed in the following line uttered by Heathcliff :

"I cannot live without my life! I cannot live without my soul".

The story reaches the climax with the intensity of final union of two lovers. It is interesting that the story does not end with marriage of lovers instead. Catherine marries Edgar Linton and dies after a few years. Heathcliff survives for her for many years but after Heathcliff's death the lover and the beloved are united spiritually in heaven.

The revenge in this story is as extra-ordinary as love. Heathcliff's revenge is not only to his enemies but also passes into their children. He is not satisfied with ruining the life of Hindley. He wants to ruin the life of his own son. As he hates Hindley he also hates Linton because he married Catherine who is his lover. But he does not harm Linton. In any way he plans to take revenge on him by harming his daughter Cathy or Catherine II. He was mad. He not only tries to ruin his enemies but also their children. Therefore the novel presents a story of extra-ordinary love and extra ordinary revenge.

The two themes of love and revenge are closely interwoven. They developed side by side in this novel as boy and girl. Heathcliff and Catherine are inseparable companions. They not only live in the same house but they are always loving together. When Catherine decided to marry Edgar Linton, she express her feelings about Heathcliff to Nelly. She says :

"My great miseries in this world have been Heathcliff's miseries and I watched and felt each from the beginning : my great thought in living is himself. If all else perished, and he remained, I should still continue to be: and if all else remained, and he were annihilated the universe would turn to a mighty stranger : I should not seen a part of it. My love for Linton is like the foliage in the woods : time will change it, I'm well aware, as winter changes the trees. My love for Heathcliff resembles the eternal rocks beneath : a source of little visible delight but necessary. Nelly, I am Heathcliff ! He's always, always in my mind, not as a pleasure, any more than I am always a pleasure to myself, but as my own being". (P. 103)

After the death of her father Catherine becomes neglected child. Hindley is so much absorbed in his wife. The result is that she begins to love Heathcliff. Hindley not only neglects his sister but also ill-treats Heathcliff.

He insults him and beats him and tortures him when he does small mistakes. Heathcliff was treated by Linton in an unkind and cruel manner. Heathcliff cannot tolerate this unjust and inhuman treatments. That is why he decided to take revenge on Hindley. Heathcliff reveals his vindictive nature after he has been brutally treated by Hindley. Heathcliff says :

"I'm trying to settle how I shall pay Hindley back. I don't care how long I wait, if I can, only do it at last. I hope he will not die before I do". (P. 85).

After Catherine's engagement, Heathcliff gives up the idea of marrying Catherine. He disappears from Wuthering Heights and returns after three years. In this mean time, Hindley's wife dies and he is taken to the bad habits. He becomes a drunkard and also gambler. Heathcliff finds this nature of Hindley as a golden opportunity to take revenge on Hindley by lending him money to pursue his evil way. Overburned with his sins Hindley dies. After Hindley's death Heathcliff's revenge passes on to his son (Hindley's) Hareton Earnshaw. Heathcliff stops his education and makes him an uneducated youngman. He becomes a form of labour. Heathcliff sees no fault when Hareton treads the evil ways. He grows into a cruel and barbarous young man. So with this systematic 'plan of action' to take revenge on Hindley, Heathcliff ruined the life of Hareton.

Heathcliff revenge is also extended to Edgar Linton. However, he doesn't get a chance to harm Linton directly but he makes a plan to ruin his daughter's life. He succeeds in marrying her to his ailing son Linton Heathcliff who is about to die. After the death of Linton, Heathcliff becomes the master of both Wuthering Heights and Thrush Cross Grange. But he could not carry his revengeful ideas as all enemies are dead.

CONCLUSION

Thus *Wuthering Heights* successfully carries out the themes of love and revenge. The lover in this novel turns out to be revengeful and destructive. The story begins with the development of love between Heathcliff and Catherine and ends with their spiritual union after their death. The revenge takes birth from Heathcliff's frustration in love and the cruel unjust treatments made out or meted out to him by the rich class. Thus it is the theme of love and revenge that constitute the story of *Wuthering Heights*.

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