



Exploring *Wuthering Heights* from an Eco-critical Point of View

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Abstract: This research paper examines the interaction between humans and nature in the novel *Wuthering Heights* from the perspective of eco-criticism. This paper also attempts to reveal how nature is presented, what kind of human attitude the characters demonstrate and how the interconnection between nature and individuals is portrayed in the novel. Since literature openly expresses issues related to human creations, it can be seen as a part of the environment that has been artistically and culturally constructed. This article shows how crucial nature is to the formation of the identities of the characters in the novel. This has something to do with the need for humanity to become more ecologically conscious. Eco-criticism aims to reveal a theoretical framework for exploring the connections between the natural environment and literature. *Wuthering Heights* is a complex and timeless literary work that embodies the ecological concept of returning to nature. The researcher wants to analyze the characters' emotional and physical aspects from an eco-critical perspective. The four main characters of the novel mostly reflect the clash between humans and nature. Eco-criticism stands for the harmonious coexistence of people and nature as well as the impact of ecosystems on the inhabitants. The novel provides us with insightful information about the role that nature plays in shaping human nature. It also seeks to make clear how important nature is as a central theme in the book.

Keywords: Human, Nature, Eco-criticism, *Wuthering Heights*.

Introduction: The term "eco-criticism" refers to the observation and investigation of the connection between literature and the natural world. Eco-criticism claims that there is nature everywhere inside and outside of literature. In the novel *Wuthering Heights* Emily Bronte portrays the peaceful coexistence of humans and nature. Emily Bronte wrote *Wuthering Heights* which was published in 1847. The book combines destined love, mystery, and passion. The book's greatest defining aspect is nature, which plays just as much of a role as any other character in creating a unique environment for the events.

This paper first shows how Thrushcross Grange Mansion and its people reflect enlightenment and civilization while *Wuthering Heights* Mansion and its residents represent wildness and nature. Second, it shows how the inhabitants of the various ecosystems in the story relate to one another and how this influences their personalities. Later in the narrative, it demonstrates how civilization and environment coexist and clash. This paper's overall goal is to show how the habitats and inhabitants of *Wuthering Heights* interact. A pioneering book, *Wuthering Heights* exposes the altering interactions between humans and nature. Both ecological theory and culture hold that people and culture are inextricably linked. The word "eco-criticism" is used to describe a number of critical perspectives that look at how the human/nonhuman connection with nature is portrayed in literature, frequently from the viewpoint of worries about humans' detrimental impacts on the ecology. The significance of nature in *Wuthering Heights* has been adequately discussed. However, detractors frequently downplay the value of nature by focusing on human conduct. Feminist scholars have recognized Emily's creative center as being based around this idea. Feminist scholars are among the many critics who have looked at the nature of *Wuthering Heights*. *Wuthering Heights* occupies a special position in English literature. It is widely regarded as a literary masterpiece of the highest imaginative standard. But it has turned out to be exceedingly difficult to interpret.

Literature Review: According to Halsey, one of the main goals of his publication "Deleuze and Environmental Damage: Violence of the Text" is to provide a micro political account of the development of ideas like "Nature," "sustainability," and "environmental harm." Due to the varied ways in which these notions have been expressed, envisioned, and applied throughout time, the law's conception of what is permissible in connection to Nature—and, consequently, what it judges to be ecologically criminal—is strongly correlated with those definitions [1].

Jeya Shivani argues in her essay "A Study of *Wuthering Heights* from the Perspective of Eco-criticism" that

"in this piece, nature is portrayed as brutal and fatal. Lockwood learns this in the beginning chapter when the snow keeps him from returning home after seeing his landlord. Due to the perilous moor and the difficulties associated with going through it at night, the poor and irritable residents of *Wuthering Heights* do not want him to leave. Emily Bronte has a special affection for the

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moors, and while she describes them as dangerous, she also pictures them in a loving way. They are an area where the wind always blows and freedom can be found for Catherine and Heathcliff. When Catherine is at her lowest, she longs to return to the moors and stay in her own apartment so she can take in the breeze from the desolate, lonely landscapes”[2].

In her paper, Anwesha Ghosh shows how Bronte conveys the conflict between nature and civilization by using two antagonistic realms and their contradictory inhabitants. She claims that despite Edgar and Isabella's efforts to educate and civilize Heathcliff and Catherine, they are not receptive to their way of life. They were characterized by her as "raw and uncivilized"[3].

Serpil Oppermann provides a full explanation of eco-criticism in her article to adequately capture the trend: "Eco-criticism is a modern critical movement that seeks to connect literary theory and criticism with contemporary ecological challenges. By concentrating on literary studies of how nature is portrayed in literary texts and literary constructions of the environmental problem in eco-literary discourses, it seeks to connect literary criticism with environmental issues (Obermann,46)”[4].

Discussion: The mansion known as Wuthering Heights is located in a remote region of northern Europe on a moor and other undeveloped open space. Heathcliff and Catherine were both raised in this home. Both of them are uncultivated failures in their lives, much like this moor terrain. With their love and passion, neither Edgar nor Isabella could pierce their existence, bodies, or minds. Like them, the house is impeccably clean. The outdoors of the house and its surroundings are the main focus of the novel's eco-centered reading. It makes use of the concepts of symbiosis, the co-existing system, and negative energy, or entropy, which tends to degrade and disorganize the system. As a result, the house exists as a standalone entropic system with no symbiotic relationship to the larger biosphere. The house takes in the smell of its own deterioration. As a result, it might also apply to those who lived there. Before Heathcliff and Catherine met the Linton family and traveled to Thrushcross Grange, they had little knowledge of the wider world or civilization. Williams opines that “Thrushcross Grange represents civilization, and Wuthering Heights does not reveal the harsh, forgiving aspects of nature” (Williams, 104)[5]. Thrushcross Grange, which sits directly across from Wuthering Heights and is located four miles away, is the only neighboring property. Thrushcross Grange represents culture in this instance, whereas Wuthering Heights represents nature. If there is wild longing in Wuthering Heights, there is civility in Thrushcross Grange. There was only nature, and the house was helpless in the face of its ferocious green zeal. Hindley and Edgar were killed by Heathcliff because of his desire to be untamed and brutal. The reason why Cathy claims to be Heathcliff and he thinks that Cathy is his soul is because they both had sexual desire. Both the mansion and the surrounding area contribute to Heathcliff's paranormal experiences. The term "heathcliff" refers to a rock that is situated on a moor or in an uncultivated environment. It may be claimed that Heathcliff is akin to this land in that it is challenging to farm or produce but is full of desire due to its untapped illumination if I am allowed to view the rock as a symbol of the penis. Heathcliff is like a light that failed a flame that is incapable of burning anything, or a stream that has dried up. It becomes a black hole, a vortex into which its energies are dragged and destroyed, obliterating Hindley and Isabella, Catherine, Linton, and later Heathcliff, due to its egocentric seclusion from one flow of life energy. Both Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange are impacted by the moor's curse. The nighttime visits of Catherine's non-human ghost let this malevolent energy flourish. The never-ending night's darkness is detrimental to life. The adverse influence of this gloomy atmosphere that hangs over the homes below the sky left Thrushcross Grange desolate and devoid of any forebears. Only Hareton and the young Cathy remain in Wuthering Heights under the menacing shadow of Cathy and Heathcliff's ardent but unfulfilled longing.

Whether or not his love was acknowledged, Heathcliff's mystery will always remain since he was born and died on a heath. He looked for Catherine both when she was still alive and after she had passed away. They met in the space between life and death. Their zeal forces them to overcome obstacles in life. They had a physical and spiritual connection. Because of this, Cathy swiftly departed from this world to meet him in a place where no one could stop them from meeting. Because their love was so unique, much like nature, they frequently turned to one another. The only monarch without a crown, Heathcliff ruled both the female characters and the heath. Heathcliff continuously ran into Cathy and dug a hole for her in an attempt to physically awaken her.

Sherry B. Ortner's "Is Female To Male as Nature Is To Culture?" explores how close women are to nature, and it is the first book from an eco-feminist perspective to address the link between women and nature. Both are victims of patriarchy: patriarchy dominates women in our civilized society in order to satiate their demands, just as it dominates nature in order to advance human civilization. Both environmental degradation and the exploitation of women are acceptable. If Cathy were the embodiment of nature, she would be the object of savage lust from both Edgar and Heathcliff. And the outcome of this devotion is her death. She was going through double grief. She couldn't pinpoint just where she belonged. She was physically with Edgar, but her mental partner was Heathcliff. It might not occur if Heathcliff did not return after their wedding. In this book, there is more psychological than physical violence. Both Catherine and Isabella fell in love with that horrible, mentally ill man. He never felt Isabella's warmth and always turned her down. The entropy, or his illogical longing, is what breaks Cathy and makes her decide to be divorced.

In Wuthering Heights, the lines between passion and reason, nature and culture, and mind and body are all hazy. Thrushcross Grange, Edgar and Isabella represent culture; while Wuthering Heights and Cathy and Heathcliff represent nature, when these

two got married, nature and culture clashed but nature won out. The roles are often reversed in heteronormative settings, with reason typically being associated with masculinity and emotion with femininity. Heathcliff lacks masculinity because of his passionate love for Cathy and his willingness to do everything for her. But Cathy married Edgar because she missed Heathcliff and wanted to experience the refined, cultured society. The Heathcliff's Desire myth makes sense in light of the mind-body contradiction. Heathcliff mated with Cathy using his body even though she is dead and bodyless and was only present with her mind rather than spirit. Primitivism has taken over civilization.

Bronte deliberately pitted the social classes against one another in order to make her message apparent. She has discussed her thoughts on culture and nature as important components of existence using the same methodology. She describes to the reader the sense of freedom one feels following a lengthy stroll through heather. Bronte's upbringing as the daughter of a curate gave her experiences from a terrible childhood, when she was reared by her highly strict Aunt, as it is recounted in the prologue of *Wuthering Heights*. This might be the reason for her fervent depictions of nature. There is conflict between the two families. Earnshaws and Lintons both serve as icons of culture and civilization. This book presents a desolate and unsettling image of nature. After meeting with his landlord in the first chapter, Lockwood learns this when the snow makes it impossible for him to return home. The impoverished and irritated people of *Wuthering Heights* do not want him to leave because of the dangerous moor and the challenges of traversing it at night. Emily Bronte has a special affection for the moors, and while she describes them as dangerous, she also pictures them in a loving way. They are an area where the wind always blows and freedom can be found for Catherine and Heathcliff. When Catherine is at her lowest, she longs to go back to her old house on the moors and to her own room, where she may breathe the wind that comes from the dry, barren landscapes: "Oh, if only I were in my own bed in the old house, with that wind blowing beside the lattice, the woman wailed. Please give me one breath; it comes directly from the moor" (Bronte, 65)[6]. Nature is a type of force that punishes everyone who wants to change it or to take control of it as well as disregards its inhabitants. *Wuthering Heights*, a stone structure with tiny windows to contend with the severe winds, symbolizes the strength required to fight nature's wrath. The few trees that are there support mental health. A well-balanced gentleman who stays out of physical altercations and hides his genuine emotions is the epitome of civilization. This arrangement makes everything well-organized and in the right place. Even if the weather is ideal, a fire burns inside an opulent home to soothe a chilled spirit. The Lintons and their house, Thrushcross Grange, serve as literary allegories of culture and civilization. Mr. Linton told the culprit, who was grinning obnoxiously in his face, "Don't be alarmed; it's just a boy. Wouldn't it be kind to the nation to hang him as soon as possible, before he reveals his character by both his acts and his appearance?" (Bronte 95)[6]. The children of *Wuthering Heights*, according to Mr. Linton, who also believes that Catherine's brother Hindley treats his younger sister particularly carelessly, are raised in "full heathenism." Mrs. Linton gets alarmed at the idea of the girl walking the moors with "a gipsy." They might also be perceived as being outsiders to the society of gentlemen and more in tune with nature. Academics opine that a man's intelligence might be determined by his skin tone or skin structure. This episode demonstrates the impact prejudices against diversity and poverty had on members of higher social strata, the working class, and individuals whose skin tones differed from those of native Englishmen. Ellen is informed by Heathcliff that the kids at Thrushcross Grange act entitled and envious of one another. Heathcliff's love for Catherine was far more important to him than his pathological obsession with possessions. Everything had changed by the time Catherine left for The Grange. She is reluctant to hug Heathcliff or Ellen out of concern that she will smear her brand-new dress. Catherine is unable to follow her passion and wed Heathcliff because of civilization. She feels stuck in her marriage and will yearn for Heathcliff and the moors until she dies. Heathcliff suffers as a result of Catherine's deeds. Heathcliff spends three years away from the Heights while devising a horrific scheme of retaliation. This lessens Heathcliff and Catherine's desire for an unusual outlook on life. Social customs force Catherine to wed Edgar, but Heathcliff falls prey to his own passions and the desire to uphold his good name. This implied that she placed a higher importance on nature than on culture or society. *Wuthering Heights*'s environment and cast of characters personify nature. The people of *Wuthering Heights* share characteristics with their house. Society appears to be far more alluring than the natural environment thus far. Compared to the Earnshaws in the Heights, they seem to be less strong and sickly, as well as weaker. In light of her experience with Edgar Linton and Hindley's treatment of Heathcliff, she made this decision. Bronte paints a bad picture of Catherine by leading the reader to assume that she is motivated by pride and her desire to advance in status. These civilization and cultural activities have no positive impact in the book. Catherine desires a different outcome. She gets almost no benefit from being "the greatest woman in the neighborhood" (Bronte 120) [6]. Nature and society are combined to demonstrate how Catherine Linton's birth ushered in a new era of civilization. She tries to convince Linton to unlock the door by giving him everything she has, but he refuses, saying that since they are married, he already owns it. Instantaneously, she experiences Linton's actual self in a different light.

They face a significant obstacle because Heathcliff and Joseph reject what they are doing. When they put flowers in Joseph's Garden, he is enraged, and Heathcliff disagrees with Catherine's choice to teach Hareton to read. One night, he unexpectedly dies, taking the last of nature with him. Although the novel's conclusion appears to be in favor of civilization, other ideas emerge when you take into account what happened to Heathcliff and Catherine I. These two defenders of nature find joy as they share their final moments of freedom in death. Given this, it is challenging to determine whether Bronte is in favor of nature or society. A biological explanation of "life history" that takes evolution into account includes an evolutionary description of human nature.

Life spans, rates of gestation and development, numbers and ages of offspring, types of mating, and parental care are all different amongst species. These traits are all a part of "human nature." In addition, humans have developed distinctive representational abilities, particularly those related to language, which enable them to communicate in non-genetic ways. According to the Darwinian view, cultural traits are identical to those that people receive through their DNA inheritance from their ancestors. Bronte was acquainted with a conventional view of human behavior, but she was not conversant with adaptation by natural selection. Consider these three instances of the term "human nature" to grasp the significance of this idea as a fundamental point of reference in the narrative. When she compliments Heathcliff, the older Catherine answers to her husband's irate amazement. Nelly Dean asserts that competitors' lack of appreciation for one another's positive traits is "human nature." When evil infiltrates *Wuthering Heights* under Heathcliff's control, Isabella observes how difficult it is "to preserve the common sympathies of human nature" (Bronte, 106). Human nature has been distorted and stunted by Heathcliff. Readers are immediately aware of the work's overwhelming wildness. Lockwood's account states: "Wuthering being a significant local term, evoking atmospheric turbulence to which its position is exposed in stormy weather, one may infer the power of the north wind blowing over the edge and as if appealing for charity from the sun" (Bronte, 1). Before the summer leaves begin to rustle, the valley and stream are both full of bubbling and delightful water, which is a wonderful sound of nature (Bronte, 22). Readers are presented with a ragged and chaotic image when it is received by the newspaper. Wonderful songs sung by nature may be heard around *Wuthering Heights* when spring approaches and the sun appears after several cloudy days. Residents of *Wuthering Heights* strictly adhere to the morning arrival for work and the evening departure. They are deeply rooted in the natural world. Shawn the senior, still alive, has relationships that are very fair and close. "We were all present, though, and it wasn't cold. Since the servants normally sat in the house at that time after concluding their duties, Joseph was reading his Bible at the table while I was crocheting" (Bronte, 25)[6]. They are both true children of nature, and what Heathcliff and little Catherine enjoy most is playing in nature. When they are upset or dispute with others, they will go to the woods to find comfort, enjoy nature's embrace, and converse with nature. They won't ever go hungry or get tired in nature. They live peacefully and comfortably in nature, enjoying the clean air and lovely natural flowers. They don't think about going back home when they are in the wild, and even if they were severely punished, they would still like it. According to Nelly Dean in the novel, trying to flee away to the moors in the morning and spending the entire day there became one of their favorite pastimes, and the punishment that followed "became to be a little thing to giggle about" (Bronte, 34)[6].

Conclusion: We can view *Wuthering Heights* in a new light owing to eco-criticism. The relationships between *Wuthering Heights*' principal characters show how people's attitudes toward nature have changed over time. Finally, under the guidance of the eco-ethic, they return to respecting nature and forging an amicable bond between people and nature. People abuse and mercilessly pillage the natural world as a result of the quick progress of knowledge and technology. After returning, Heathcliff, the embodiment of nature, exacts his irrational vengeance on Catherine and Edgar, the embodiment of civilization. People today have to deal with urgent ecological issues and consider how to live in harmony with the environment. People gradually come to realize they are neither its controllers nor proprietors. The only right and appropriate course of action is to use and develop nature in an ethical and responsible manner. Little Catherine, the novel's new representation of civilization, weds Hareton, the naturalist's voice, indicating the new connection between modern society and the natural world. People start to value nature and create healthy relationships with it. Bronte gives her characters characteristics that prompt readers to reflect on the story's topics. This can be used to show Emily Bronte's support for giving women the same rights to economic equality as men. Bronte does not avoid the unfavorable parts while writing about either nature or civilization

. Both nature and society have certain similarities, such as being beautiful but also often frigid and fragile. Society can also be compared to nature in that both are extremely harsh and cruel. I think Bronte is in favor of a hybrid of the two, as evidenced by the ways in which she presents Hareton Earnshaw and Catherine Linton. These changes show how nature and civilization work together to create a healthy society—or even a nice person—by showing how intertwined they are.

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