

Wuthering Heights, written by Emily Brontë, can be classified as a Romantic novel, because it contains many tenets of Romanticism. Romanticism was the initial literary reaction to changes in society caused by the industrial revolution: it was an attempt to organize the chaos of the clash between the agrarian and the industrial ways of life. Romanticism was developing in a time in which all of society's rules, limits, and restraints on how each person should act were being questioned, tried, and twisted. Wuthering Heights is a Romantic novel which uses a tale of hopeless love to describe the clash of two cultures-Neo-Classicism and Romanticism.

One of the most significant tenets of Romanticism is the love of the past. The first instance in which the reader finds an intimate love of the past is when Nelly remarks how she wished Heathcliff had never been introduced to the family, because his presence at Wuthering Heights upsets the established order: "he bred dad feeling" (42). Another instance is when Heathcliff realizes that his one love, Catherine, has fallen in love with Edgar. He shows love of the past by pointing out to her how little time she has spent with him compared to the time she spends with Edgar. After Catherine's death, both Heathcliff and Edgar wish her back even if they must return to fighting each other for her love. The Romantics had a love of the past, because it is stable and predictable: all possible scenarios have already happened.

Mr. Earnshaw's act of taking care of Heathcliff contains many aspects of Romanticism. A key tenet in this act is Mr. Earnshaw's will to enter into the mind of a child. Mr. Earnshaw tries to do this when he takes Heathcliff home. Mr. Earnshaw sees a humble child in need of help. He is not concerned with the constraints of society, which is another tenet of Romanticism, but rather the welfare of the child. Brontë gives Mr. Earnshaw's benevolence relatively high moral value, also a trait common to Romantic works. Mr. Earnshaw cares for the child despite its dark appearance, because he believes in the instinctive goodness of humanity, which is also a characteristic of Romanticism. Mr. Earnshaw's act of caring for Heathcliff is very Romantic, in that he throws aside all constraints to help the humility he loves and the child that holds it.

The accurate observation of nature is another tenet of Romanticism, which is present in Wuthering Heights. Brontë describes nature with great detail and full of life. She depicts the "excessive slant of a few stunted firs" (10). She pictures the "range of gaunt thorns" which stretch for nourishment from the sun (10). Emily Brontë sees "the power of the north wind" flowing through Wuthering Heights (10). In the end, "the grass [is] as green as showers and sun could make it" (309). Emily Brontë's love and vividness in her descriptions of nature help confirm that Wuthering Heights is a Romantic novel despite its being written during the Victorian era.

Nature is not only described with detail but also as being imbued with mysticism, symbolism, and religious significance. The heath is the major symbol in Wuthering Heights which has these characteristics. When Heathcliff and Catherine are young, they often go out at night onto the heath to enjoy the freedom and beauty of nature. The moor serves them as a religious sanctuary from the harshly exaggerated world they live in: Mr. Earnshaw tells his own daughter, "'thou 'rt worse than thy brother. Go, say thy prayers, child, and ask God's pardon'" (46). Much later, in a symbolic replay, Cathy says to Linton, "'this [the moors] is something like your paradise'" after she spends the day on the heath with Heathcliff to avoid scorn (249). Nature, specifically the heath, is shown as being a religious haven for those, like Linton, Catherine, and Heathcliff, who wish to contemplate or hide.

The Romantics especially the Graveyard School had an elegiac interest in mutability, mourning, and melancholy. Emily Brontë also had an interest in stressing and manipulating these qualities of man. Throughout his life, Heathcliff is the one character who not only realizes the mutability of life but also makes some of his decisions based on it: "'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!" (64). Beginning with Frances's death up until his own death, Hindley can be best described as mournful over the loss of his once peaceful life. He becomes a gambling drunk who eats himself up with self pity and with anger. Catherine is very melancholic throughout the book, but this trait increases after Heathcliff leaves: she has sprites of anger in which she violently lashes out at the servants and at Edgar. Once, she "nip[s]" Nelly who is only following her master's orders (73). The fits are so powerful that the doctor recommends to everyone else at Thrushcross Grange that she should not be crossed. The mutability of life is shown through the cycling of life throughout the book: Mr. Earnshaw is replaced by Hindley, next Heathcliff, then Hareton, and then no one. These Romantic characteristics of mutability, mourning, and melancholy are the keystones to the plot of *Wuthering Heights*, in that, almost all of the major events happen, because one of these traits is held by a character.

Another tenet of Romanticism is to contain attacks on wrongs in the established order whether the attacks are political, social, economic, or educational. Mr. Earnshaw challenges all of these established limits or orders. By helping out the gypsy boy, he was breaking the political norm by aiding a member of an outcast faction—the gypsies. By bringing the boy to his home and showing benevolence towards it, Mr. Earnshaw breaks society's idea that the upper class should not help the lower classes, but rather treat them with contempt. In that day and age, it was considered acceptably to help out a friend of the same class by giving him a job or even a place to stay, but to pay for his living was a total disregard for the economic constraints of an agrarian society which could not afford to help a foundling. Before the industrial revolution, only the upper and upper middle classes received an education; Mr. Earnshaw's will to give a low class boy an education broke the established order of the enlightened. When Mr. Earnshaw initially gave Heathcliff a position equal to his son Mr. Earnshaw broke all the rules of his culture and his social class.

The Romantic authors also used local dialects and color to set a more realistic portrayal of the events depicted. Joseph is the most obvious portrayer of this tenet: "'Hahsomdiver, t' maister 'ull play t' devil to-morn, and he'll do weel'" (86). If Heathcliff had not been helped by Mr. Earnshaw, his speech and manner may have been close to that of Joseph for Joseph is a peasant like what Heathcliff would have become. Another use of dialect and color among the characters is Lockwood's speech and manner. He speaks like the arrogant society that he comes from: "here we have the whole establishment of domestics, I suppose," "the clown [Hareton] at my elbow" (10, 19).

In the novel many characters love the commonplace, the rural, and the rustic. Catherine and Heathcliff both love the moor, because it is wild and free like themselves. Emily Brontë also shows the common rustic way of life that the nobility lead: Herenton drinks "'his tea out of a basin'" and eats "'his bread with unwashed hands'" (19). In the Romantic age, writers wanted to depict the reality and commonality of life whether it be rich or poor.

Another characteristic of Romanticism is stressing the relatively greater importance (over the rational) of the imaginative, emotional, intuitive, free, individual, and particular (rather than general). When Heathcliff and Catherine were young, Emily Brontë depicts them in a positive light because of their wild imagination and fervent emotions which she finds to be good: they both share the disgust towards the selfishness that the established social order had already placed on Edgar and Isabella Linton, as they display it over the want of a puppy.

A Romantic work also contains characters who are introverted and reclusive. In *Wuthering Heights*, there are many characters having these qualities. After he is hardened by mistreatment by Hindley and Joseph as a child, Heathcliff becomes an introvert; he only cares about himself. He shows this early on by forcing Hindley to switch colts with him after his once handsome colt fell lame (43). As time goes on, he stays selfish, so much so, that he does not care who else he hurts as long as he gets his revenge on Hindley. As Catherine slowly dies, she also becomes more and more concerned about herself:

"You and Edgar have broken my heart, Heathcliff! And you both come to bewail the deed to me, as if you were the people to be pitied! I shall not pity you, not I. You have killed me-and thriven on it, I think. How strong you are. How many years do you mean to live on after I am gone?" (155)

She wants to hurt both Heathcliff and Edgar by making their happiness more dependent on her life and then by letting herself die. She increases the dependency by showing the violent love that she has for the both of them: "Heathcliff had knelt on one knee to embrace her; he attempted to rise, but she seized his hair, and kept him down" (155). After Francis's death, Hindley becomes rather reclusive and does nothing except gamble his life away and "curse his solitude" (81). Although Linton's being treated poorly does add to his problems, his whining about his health in front of company shows him to be very self centered: "' I am tired. . . It is too hot for walking, let us rest here. And in the morning, I often feel sick'" (249). Joseph is a very reclusive person, because he feels that everyone in Wuthering Heights is wicked. He is a "wearisome self-righteous Pharisee" (45). As time passes, many of the characters become more introverted and reclusive except for the newest generation-Hareton and Cathy.

Heathcliff is a perfect example of the Byronic hero. He has ennui, or melancholy over the inevitable sadness of the world: Heathcliff is saddened with mistreatment and thinks that he can cure the sadness with revenge. Heathcliff is also a very solitary person after Catherine leaves him; he has no friends, he has nothing to love, and he searches for neither. Although he tries to make others, like Hindley and Isabella hate him, he is not a misanthrope. He tries to get along with Edgar until Edgar insults him by comparing Heathcliff's hair to a colt's mane (61). Heathcliff also tries to patch up the animosity between himself and Lockwood, by sending him a "brace of grouse" and visiting him for an hour a week later. Heathcliff has a strong sense of defiance and individuality. He has an inert spirit of defiance and independence as shown by his boundless energy and ability to rebel against Hindley without worrying about penalties. Heathcliff never gives in to Hindley, but rather vows for revenge, which shows he is slightly affected and offended. Heathcliff's spirit of defiance never desists even after his death: Nelly has trouble forcing his eyes shut (318). As a Byronic hero, Heathcliff must carry a guilt which alienates him from society. He bares the guilt of not being good enough to receive Catherine's full love: "I wish I had light hair and a fair skin, and was dressed and behaved as well, and had a chance of being as rich as he will be!" (59). Catherine's arrogance and stupidity keep her from solving that problem:

"if the wicked man in there [Hindley] had not brought Heathcliff so low I shouldn't have thought of it [marrying Edgar]. It would degrade me to marry Heathcliff now; so he shall never know how I love him." (82)

A Byronic hero has only two solaces. The first is in nature: Heathcliff finds peace in traveling the moors at night up until his death. The second is in his one love. Heathcliff breaks his vow to kill himself when he sees Catherine, because she cools his anger and misery that is eating him up. Heathcliff is a loner, because he knows that his guilt can only be satisfied by his one true love. Since he does not get his one true love, he becomes an evil, twisted, and vengeful man with misery in his heart. Upon his entrance into Wuthering Heights, Emily Brontë gives Heathcliff the characteristics of a typical protagonist, but as his character develops Heathcliff becomes the evil, lonely, and miserable Byronic hero.

In Wuthering Heights, there is a huge clash between the old and the new, the Neo-Classical age and the Romantic age. This clash is displayed through the apparent contrasts between Lockwood and Heathcliff and between Thrushcross Grange and Wuthering Heights. Thrushcross Grange and the characters from there are very Neo-Classical, while Wuthering Heights and those from there are very Romantic. Through the collision of the Neo-Classical and the Romantic philosophies, the reader must pullout the best from the chaos that results.

The Neo-Classical belief was that everything should have a civilized order and be polished, but the Romantics believed in the natural order: wildness and simplicity. Thrushcross Grange is a perfect example of Neo-Classicism: the house is

"beautiful-a splendid place" (51). Wuthering Heights lives by the natural order in which wild plants are deformed by the wind and grass grows up between the flags," because "cattle are the only hedge-cutters" (10). Wuthering Heights is a place where life and lives "grow wild" (55). Lockwood is rather civilized in that washes his hands to eat and knows the ins and outs of common courtesy. While Heathcliff is, in contrast, wild and simple, he knows common courtesy but feels that he has no need to extend them to anyone. The reader sides with the Romantic idea of following the natural order, because it is interesting and foreign.

The Neo-Classical writers felt that one should be governed by rules, limits, and restraint; Romantic writers felt that man had complete liberty and infinite potential. During her five week stay at Thrushcross Grange, Catherine was taught to obey the rules and restraints of womanhood set on her by society. This idea of limiting oneself was very foreign to her, because she had complete freedom from the expected norms of society. When Catherine returned from Thrushcross Grange to Wuthering Heights, she felt foreign to the unrestrained and unregulated emotion found there. She displays this alienation by laughing at Heathcliff and how "'dirty'" he is even though she was the same way as a child (57). Lockwood felt that one should follow those rules and restraints placed on him by society, and he was distressed and offended when he was told that Heathcliff overstepped those limits by treating Isabella, Hareton, Hindley, and Edgar so poorly. Here the reader finds that the Neo-Classical idea of civilization with some rules and restraint is the way to live, because without them the anarchy and hate found at Wuthering Heights would ensue.

The Neo-Classical writers stressed and loved the rational, while the Romantic writers loved the irrational like emotion. At the Thrushcross Grange everything is done according to while at Wuthering Heights, the characters do as they please to express their emotion, whether it is Hindley waiting to express his hate by trying to kill Heathcliff, or Isabella extending her love to save Heathcliff from hate's death. Lockwood finds Heathcliff's desire to get on Hindley revenge and then commit suicide as vain, because no one will care whether Heathcliff dies or not except Hareton. Heathcliff, on-the-other-hand, felt that it would be the perfect revenge. Before his death, Heathcliff is very joyful in an irrational and unnatural way. After studying this conflict, the reader is at odds and would like to have rational emotion, but that is impossible as he can see from looking at Catherine's decision to marry Edgar.

The Neo-Classic philosophy stressed the uses of elevated diction and vanity of the nobility, or elite. The Romantic philosophy was that one should be humble and use the common language like the common man. At Thrushcross Grange, Mr. And Mrs. Linton show their vanity by requesting Catherine to revive from her sickness at their home. The result of their vanity is an unhappily married son and their own death. Although the Earnshaws are very wealthy, Mr. Earnshaw is too humble to show off his wealth by making his house look wealthy like Thrushcross Grange. Heathcliff also shows this view by not having many "domestics" like most of the elite might have (11). Like Mr. and Mrs. Linton, Lockwood has great vanity which he feels is at an acceptable level:

'she has thrown herself away upon that boor, from sheer ignorance that better individuals existed! A sad pity-I must beware how I cause her to regret her choice'. . . I knew, through experience that I was tolerably attractive. (19)

Mr. Heathcliff has been humbled by many years of servitude and mistreatment, thus making him a Romantic character. The people of the Neo-Classical era felt that some vanity was acceptable among the wealthy, while the Romantics felt that one must always be humble. The reader loves the humility of Romanticism because of the arrogance in man's despicable world which surrounds him.

Romanticism stressed the childlike virtues, unlike the Neoclassical stress of the adult-like virtues of behavior, manner, and propriety. Mr. Earnshaw's Romantic love for the child's virtues is displayed by his desire to protect the innocent gift from God "'though it's as dark as if it came from the devil'" (40). Mr. Earnshaw's Romantic love spreads with time to everyone at Wuthering Heights except for Hindley. Even Nelly begins to care about him: "the difference between him and

the others forced me to be less partial. Cathy and her brother harassed me terribly; he was as uncomplaining as a lamb" (42). Heathcliff also loves the childlike virtues that he finds in Hareton: Heathcliff would love him were it not for the fact that Hareton was Hindley's son. At Thrushcross Grange the atmosphere teaches a child maturity and manners and adult-like behavior: Catherine comes back very refined and "very dignified" (55). Mr. Lockwood is a prime example of one concerned with manners and behavior. He finds Heathcliff's lack of hospitality rude: "with this insult, my patience was at an end" (22). He also calls Hareton "a clown" because of his poor table manners (19). The reader learns to love the child, as the picture of the adult being overly concerned with petty manners sharpens.

Despite its being written in the Victorian era, *Wuthering Heights* is a very Romantic work. It contains many of the tenets of Romanticism and the development of the Byronic hero. The novel also teaches the reader to at least respect the Romantic ideals, if not to love them like Emily Brontë does. In the final analysis, this book is about persons trying to find peace through rebellion in a chaotic world.

