



Attribute To The Inner Self Of The Characters In *Wuthering Heights*

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Abstract

The psychoanalytic reading expands the horizon of literary criticism and explores the state of mind of the characters as well as the author who created them. This article aims to explore the psychological insight into characters and the negative implications of psychological issues. Sigmund Freud was an Austrian psychoanalyst (1856-1939), is well-known for his theory of Id, Ego, and Superego which are the three components that determine the psychological behaviour of the characters. Known as the structural theory of personality, Freud's theory highlights the significance of innate psychological tensions in shaping actions. As individuals progress from childhood to adulthood, Freud believed that the conflict between their id, ego, and superego evolves. The id is described as the unconscious part of the mind driven by instincts and emotions, while the ego represents rational and realistic thinking. When one is active and awake, one relies on their ego or conscious mind. It is by this mind one expresses their desires, has rational thoughts, and makes decisions. The superego influences the way the conscious works, which is drawn from social orders and cultural codes. These are analyzed through the study of the psychological understanding of characters in the novel, *Wuthering Heights* by Emily Bronte published in 1847. As a critic, Margaret Willy writes, that Emily Bronte shows some surprisingly modern psychological insights in *Wuthering Heights*, showing that the novel is always viewed from a psychoanalytic standpoint and states it as "strikingly modern". In the psychological analysis, the character Heathcliff illustrates the symbol of the id who remains in the unconscious state of life, Catherine depicts the symbol of the id in her childhood and the symbol of ego in her adolescence, the character Edgar Linton represents the symbol of superego who is an educated gentleman with proper behaviour, morality, civilized and well-cultivated culturally. As a whole, *Wuthering Heights* reveals the themes of love, desire, revenge, loneliness, independent lifestyle, failure of love, and the cunningness of characters to attain their goal out of their id, ego and superego of characters.

Keywords: Psychoanalysis, Characterization, Inner Self, Id, Ego, Superego, Consciousness, Unconscious Mind

1. Introduction

Wuthering Heights is a significant contemporary novel for two main reasons. Firstly, its honest and accurate depiction of life during an early era offers a glimpse into history. Secondly, its literary prowess elevates it beyond mere entertainment and classifies it as high-quality literature. The portrayal of women, society, and class in the story provides insight into a time that may seem foreign to modern readers. However, while society has undoubtedly changed over the past two centuries, human nature remains constant. As such, contemporary readers can still connect with the feelings and emotions experienced by the main characters Heathcliff and Catherine, as well as the supporting cast. Through the portrayal of real and relatable characters with human emotions, *Wuthering Heights* transcends being just a sentimental romance novel. It is a vivid representation of life itself - an exploration of love and relationships. Numerous critics have praised Bronte's writing style, imagery, and diction in this novel, even going so far as to suggest that *Wuthering Heights* is poetry masquerading as prose.

The lyrical prose of *Wuthering Heights* maintains a distinct structure and style. It delves into the theme of paired relationships, including two households, two generations, and two sets of children. While some critics may view the second generation's storyline as simply repeating the first, this disregards the importance of the latter half of the book. Each of the primary plots within the two generations consists of 17 chapters. Therefore, to fully appreciate *Wuthering Heights*, one must pay attention to both halves, recognizing that the second is not a mere retelling but rather a renewal and rebirth.

Typically, these coordinates tend to contrast with one another. The most prominent ones are the two residences: Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange. Wuthering Heights boasts fierce, tempestuous moors and its occupants exude similar qualities. In contrast, Thrushcross Grange features tranquil, organized gardens and its residents reflect this serenity. Each household includes both a male and female character with a corresponding counterpart in the other home. By observing their thoughts, words, and actions, readers gain insight into these characters while also comparing them to their counterparts. This comparison highlights their differences and adds depth to their personalities. Ultimately, recognizing what one is not can reveal a lot about who they truly are.

The present article analyses *Wuthering Heights* through the lens of psychoanalysis. The researcher employs concepts and terminology from Sigmund Freud's theories to examine the characters in the novel which shows the complexity of understanding the characters. According to Freud, the human mind is divided into conscious and unconscious parts, and he proposed a three-part model consisting of the superego, id, and ego. The superego is considered separate from oneself, while the id represents one's unconscious desires and instincts that can conflict with the superego. The ego serves as a

mediator between these two aspects of the psyche, striving for balance and defending against repressed thoughts and desires within the unconscious mind.

When examining characters in *Wuthering Heights* through a Freudian lens, it is important to uncover their hidden thoughts and struggles that influence both events and other characters. However, the most crucial step is to first analyze the hidden motives within their conscious and unconscious minds. This will provide a more comprehensive understanding of the characters and allow for judgement of their motivations. Looking beyond their actions and words, one must consider the conflict between their conscious and unconscious minds. This conflict is reflected in their conscious mind processes. Thus, viewing characters in this manner reveals their true intentions and motives, which may not even be known to them.

2. Literature Review

In her book, *A Fresh Approach to Wuthering Heights*, Mrs. Leavis emphasizes the importance of the “truly human centrality” of the novel. It explores various themes and techniques that contribute to its unique quality, such as its narration style and structural design. These elements work together to create a cohesive form and content in this work of fiction. However, in this analysis, the focus on the sociological aspects has overshadowed the deeply human storyline that delves into the destructive nature of all-consuming love between characters. This individualistic portrayal of love also reflects larger social changes depicted in this realistic novel.

C. P. Sanger’s *The Structure of Wuthering Heights* has been extensively quoted in the last fifty years and is widely recognized as a valuable piece of literary analysis. Rather than focusing on the novel’s literary value, Sanger provides a well-founded argument for why *Wuthering Heights* stands out from other nineteenth-century fiction. It defies traditional Victorian literature and continues to captivate critics to this day, with its multifaceted interpretations enduring the test of time.

According to Peter Barry in *Beginning Theory*, Freud developed a three-part psyche model rather than a two-part one later in his career, dividing it into the ego, the superego, and the id, roughly corresponding to consciousness, conscience, and the unconscious.

3. Historical Background

The geographical and historical setting of *Wuthering Heights* lends power and weight to its poetry and drama. It is this authentic backdrop that adds to the seamless nature of Emily’s artistic accomplishment, for there are both literary and social reasons for including a real-life social concern. By placing the story in the recent past, the author follows in the footsteps of other writers in that decade. This trend towards nostalgic fiction arose from a collective feeling of insecurity amongst authors and readers alike, caused by the rapid changes brought about by the Industrial Revolution. The magnitude of these changes has likely never been paralleled before, making the shift from the traditional way of life at *Wuthering Heights* to the new Victorian comforts at the Grange a poignant symbol of societal transformation. This novel serves as a perfect representation of this theme at a structural level.

The realm of being, encompassing both physical and spiritual aspects, is rich in strong emotions and means of expression. Emily excelled as a landscape painter, infusing her depictions of the moors with great charm and accuracy. The novel *Wuthering Heights* could also be described as a philosophical work. Despite an atmosphere of misfortune and despair throughout the story, its heart lies in the enduring love between Heathcliff and Catherine. The action takes place from 1778 to 1802, a period that saw England’s first Industrial Revolution and Europe’s tumultuous French Revolution and Napoleonic wars. However, these historical events are not directly referenced in the novel.

4. Etymology of the title *Wuthering Heights*

The title of the book suggests a deep exploration of its characters and story. The word “Wuthering” combines words like “weather” and “wither”, evoking the harsh, cold, and unpredictable climate of Yorkshire. This is further emphasized by the unsheltered moorland hillside, where a solitary farmhouse stands as a symbol of isolation and strength. The name “Wuthering Heights” is both onomatopoeic and poetic, capturing the intense imagery and sensations within the book. These same qualities can be found in Emily Bronte’s writing style throughout the novel, revealing her unique voice and portrayal of wildness and violence.

5. Discussion & Justification

The article aims to explore the psychological depth of *Wuthering Heights*’ characters. This has sparked a heated debate over the novel’s plot construction and narrative style, which can be divided into two distinct halves with a sharp shift occurring after chapter seventeen. In the second half, new characters are introduced and the plot unfolds in six movements. The first sets the scene, while the second focuses on the older generation’s childhood and adulthood. Then, aside from Heathcliff, other characters take a backseat as the third movement delves into the younger generation’s upbringing and maturity. In the fifth movement, Catherine enters the story and two sets of lovers – Heathcliff and Catherine in death, and Hareton and Cathy in reality – find union. The final movement ties up loose ends for a peaceful conclusion. Emily Bronte intentionally employs two narrators – Lockwood and Nelly Dean – to add credibility to her tale by confirming to one another: ‘This is true; I was there; and this is what happened.’

The narration begins with Lockwood, who focuses on the present before Nelly takes over and recounts past events. Emily Bronte’s use of this method has both positives and negatives. On one hand, it can be confusing and stretch believability. But on the other, it creates a sense of suspense, excitement and drama through its limitations. Bronte expertly weaves in

themes of revenge, love, societal norms and female entrapment through a meta-narrative approach. The stories Nelly tells are based on what she has heard from others, adding her own experiences to Lockwood's retelling for us as readers. This complexity could potentially distance the reader from the novel, but Bronte cleverly disguises this by using dialogue heavily in Nelly's account. As a result, we feel like the events are taking place in the here and now rather than in the past. Nelly's dialogue-driven narrative allows us to form our own opinions and interpretations of characters and events without her biases influencing us. This gives us space to delve deeply into the themes presented and make more accurate judgements about the characters and their actions. We are also able to explore their psychology on a deeper level, building suspense as we gradually uncover their thoughts.

Using Freudian theory, the researcher delves into the inner selves of characters to analyze their personalities. One such character, Heathcliff, exemplifies Freud's id - driven by emotions and selfishness. He shows no remorse in using violence and manipulation to get what he wants, even at the expense of his child. On the other hand, the ego, described by Freud as the rational part of our mind, works to make sense of the irrational instincts of the id. In contrast to its initial publication in 1847 when it received minimal critical acclaim and popularity due to Victorian society's resistance towards violent characters and harsh realities, Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights* is now praised both critically and popularly by audiences who are more understanding and accepting of such themes in literature.

According to Freud, the human id is present at birth and is driven by basic needs such as food, shelter, and clothing. Its main goal is to seek pleasure and fulfil its desires. This can be seen in *Wuthering Heights* through Heathcliff's actions, from manipulating Isabella Linton into marriage to claiming Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange for himself and seeking revenge. However, the id operates independently of reason or moral code. This is evident when Heathcliff acts solely on his desire for revenge, disregarding moral values and laws. The id is a part of the unconscious mind fueled by sexual energy, which can lead to destructive consequences for both society and individuals. Heathcliff's ultimate fate of death can be attributed to his inability to control his id. Ultimately, the id represents repressed or suppressed desires that have turned into maladaptive behaviours in Heathcliff's case.

Regarding Heathcliff, he was often found sleeping while Catherine had the opposite experience, waking up from a state of id and transitioning into a phase of ego. Once she entered this stage, she never returned to id again. During her childhood and early adolescence, she was drawn to Heathcliff's charm. However, upon her return from Thrushcross Grange, she had a change of heart and decided not to marry him. Instead, she chose to marry Edgar Linton - a kind and gentle young man from an upper-class family with refined manners. Catherine was in a dilemma; on one hand, she desired the higher social status that only Linton could provide her with, saying "he will be rich, and I shall like to be the greatest woman of the neighbourhood...proud of having such a husband" (78). On the other hand, she confided in Nelly that her love for Heathcliff stemmed from their souls' perfect resemblance rather than his physical appearance: "... he shall never know how I love him; and that is not because he's handsome, Nelly, but because he's more myself than I am" (80).

Catherine could not escape a cynical point of view as she considered culture, society, and class. She was familiar with two different lives through her relationships with two men. She ultimately decided to conform to societal norms. The ego is a combination of the conscious and unconscious mind, driven by the reality principle and personal needs. As the id desires become fulfilled within the constraints of reality, they develop into ego and adapt to societal expectations such as laws and morality. Catherine carefully contemplated her options before choosing Edgar, even though she felt torn between him and Heathcliff. In her own words, "Whatever our souls are made of, his and mine are the same...he's always in my mind...as my being" (84). Daniel Hack in his *Revenge Stories of Modern Life* states, "She thus shows what Freud calls the perversity of the infant ...her suitors or makes him suffer" (277). Anyway, no matter how deeply she loves Heathcliff, she chooses the social position. to choose Edgar.

Heathcliff and Catherine have a destructive love that affects the small world of *Wuthering Heights*. It controls them as much as it controls their actions. When Catherine passes away, Heathcliff becomes consumed by their love, leading to inevitable events in the second part of the novel. He meets the same tragic end as his beloved. *Wuthering Heights* is essentially a tale of passion and self-deception. Catherine and Heathcliff try to justify their impossible love, but ultimately, it is its purpose and cannot survive in a changing world. They are both passionate, poetic, and spiritual individuals. The turmoil caused by their separations and deaths reveals their unique views on life and their strong emotions for each other. Heathcliff catalyzes the chaos that ensues from his intense bond with Catherine. Together, they form an unparalleled duo, seemingly without reason for their unruly behaviour. This behaviour grows alongside their physical and mental maturity, ultimately creating an imbalance in *Wuthering Heights* beyond human control until Lockwood enters the picture after Catherine's death.

As Catherine and Heathcliff's behaviour becomes more inward, their actions take on a pivotal role in the story's structure. Childhood mischief transforms into unchecked and increasingly serious events that ultimately end in tragedy. Their detachment from normal human response takes on an almost existentialist quality. They approach civilized life with a savage and unnatural demeanour, beyond mere unconscious childhood cruelty. Their shared attitude is driven by a brutish rationality that only grows during adulthood, at times appearing thoroughly horrid. As their union progresses, it becomes clear that their spiritual connection is abnormal. Despite Catherine's occasional disregard for him, Heathcliff remains fixated on her with a passionate intensity that consumes him entirely. This kind of romantic love transcends description through words and dwells in a lover's soul. The bond between these two is characterized by a "violent soul," where love and hatred coexist without the need for verbal expression. Emotions are expressed through explosive actions that occur simultaneously with thoughts and feelings.

Heathcliff and Catherine embrace the supernatural terrors without hesitation. In their malevolent bond, they derive strength from these experiences. However, when they are apart, their physical torment subsides and their inner selves fall

dormant. Despite his composed demeanour, Heathcliff bears a troubled expression during these periods. As the narrative unfolds, the disorder in the Heights community reaches a breaking point which ultimately leads to Heathcliff's decisive departure. The suffering intensifies as they are unable to alter their predetermined destinies. The turmoil within the Heights community affects everyone and everything it touches.

Edgar Linton, known as the superego, embodies the expectations of proper behaviour and morality set by teachers, family, and society. He is refined and well-mannered, a result of his upbringing in a cultured household. The character of Edgar can also be inferred from the setting of his family's home; it is clear that he is an educated gentleman who conducts himself appropriately in all aspects of life. It was no surprise that Edgar "compelled" Catherine to choose between him and Heathcliff, as Freud believed that the superego holds the highest position in one's structure. Living in social structures, the individual is exposed to societal customs and values that shape their moral compass. This gradually forms the superego with two significant components: the ego-ideal and conscience. The former dictates one's behaviour, communication, and actions to align with impeccable standards, while the latter prevents unacceptable and harmful behaviour by prompting appropriate actions. Acting by one's ideal standards brings a sense of pride, while going against one's conscience leads to feelings of shame. Therefore, it is evident that the superego represents the moral aspect of one's personality. As for its influence, it is governed by the principle of perfection, reflecting the dominant human nature principles. Like the ego, the superego also belongs to an elevated position - consciousness. Referring to Edgar Linton in *Wuthering Heights*, Linton was considered the embodiment of superego.

In the psychoanalytical analysis, defense mechanism and projection played a major factor where defense mechanism means that the character blames others instead of realizing their fault. Projection is another defense mechanism where Freud defines projection as attributing one's own traits and emotions to someone else (64). Catherine Earnshaw has experienced projection during her illness, especially, she tells Heathcliff: "You and Edgar have broken my heart. . . . You have killed me- and thriven on it" (166). Catherine tries to escape any guilt by blaming Edgar and Heathcliff for her suffering instead of acknowledging her fault and the consequences of her illness. Heathcliff answered as: "You know you lie to say I have killed you" (167). Her fault is what Heathcliff confronts here. He tells her: "nothing that God or Satan could inflict would have parted us, you, of your own will, did it. I have not broken your heart- you have broken it- and in breaking it, you have broken mine" (168). Heathcliff too reveals projection. Until the end of his life, Catherine was Heathcliff's only love. After her death, he tells Nelly: "it is unutterable! I cannot live without my life! I cannot live without my soul!" (175). As a result, Heathcliff begins to see Catherine everywhere and in everything after Catherine's death.

Essentially, Heathcliff's actions and behavior are influenced by projection. It is the reason for his torment and suffering after Catherine's death because he sees her everywhere and in every face, trying to project his desire for her on objects and people. The final thing that makes him stop seeking revenge is that he sees what he needs and desires with his beloved Catherine in the love between Catherine junior and Hareton.

6. Conclusion

The article argues that balancing id, ego, and superego becomes challenging when characters have unclear psychological characteristics. Brontë's portrayal demonstrates that social class mobility does not always follow a linear path. The decision of whether to marry is heavily influenced by one's social status, as seen through Catherine, who comes from a lower class and chooses to marry Edgar over Heathcliff. However, for Isabella, the opposite holds as she is drawn to Heathcliff despite his lower social standing. This results in her losing everything due to her infatuation. Thus, one must not solely rely on social class when analyzing characters; rather, it is important to understand their motivations and reasoning behind their choices. On the surface, *Wuthering Heights* appears to be a love story, but upon closer examination, it reveals itself as a symbolic and psychological novel. The strength of Brontë's writing lies in its ability to defy categorization and be interpreted from multiple perspectives due to its narrative told from different points of view.

The emotions of being out of place and longing stir up an impression of being an outsider in the storyline. The characters sense that they don't quite fit into their current surroundings and yearn for a more authentic version of themselves. The external circumstances push them beyond the confines of societal norms that dictate their behaviour and thoughts. This displacement causes a sense of unease, making them resistant to adapting to their changing environment. Their thoughts flow in a way that leads them to reflect on their inner psyche, which is closely intertwined with the outside societal norms. These norms are the driving force behind their inner consciousness and awareness.

In her narrative technique, Brontë substantially advances the art of fiction in the direction of modern, psychological novels which appeared in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Emily Brontë achieves a unique synthesis between past and future styles in literature by using two secretive and unreliable characters to narrate the story, both fully realised as actors in the concluding drama. Emily Brontë's masterpiece, *Wuthering Heights*, has been adapted into various forms including dramatic productions, a musical retelling, movies, and even a novel that fills in the gaps of Heathcliff's three missing years. Despite its initial cold reception, the novel has captured the hearts of both romantics and realists worldwide. One of its central themes is revenge, a common tool used in literature to create tension and distress in the plot. Through Heathcliff's disdain for other characters, *Wuthering Heights* adds conflict to the story. By examining the source of his hate and its impact on those around him, the novel delves into universal themes that can breed hatred. Hindley's cruel treatment towards Heathcliff during their childhood lays the foundation for their mutual scornful attitude.

Wuthering Heights is a creative portrayal of the theme of revenge, demonstrated through various symbols such as the siren-like rose, tortured hand, and vengeful snake. These elements connect to Catherine's love and Heathcliff's past, emphasizing the novel's central theme of seeking retribution. Catherine's alluring yet malevolent nature is symbolized

by the rose, while love and revenge are portrayed as the primary driving forces for the characters' actions in Emily Bronte's novel. Scholars generally agree that Heathcliff's actions stem from a deep desire for vengeance, while Edgar Linton is primarily motivated by his unwavering love for his wife.

In *Wuthering Heights*, the researcher delves into Emily Bronte's portrayal of the influence of her thoughts on her characters, particularly the heroine. Bronte uses Catherine Earnshaw as a reflection of her innermost self, highlighting how she embodies feminine consciousness in this character. Through psychological analysis, it becomes clear that Catherine Earnshaw represents the ego, Heathcliff the id, and Edgar Linton the superego in this novel. The author's skillful characterization brings these three personas to life in their respective roles.

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