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## Synopses

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## SYNOPSIS

Studies in *Wuthering Heights* by Emily Brontë

## THE CHARACTERS WITHOUT GOD

— Heathcliff and Catherine —

*Touichiro Ohta*

The gradual withdrawal of God from society was shown in post-medieval literature. The industrialization of society quickened the transformation of the world and began to take away the room for God in society. Some English people of the nineteenth century could not believe in God and fall into line with conventional Christian morals. Among these people without God were George Eliot, Emily Brontë, and Matthew Arnold. George Eliot had her own conception of God—"Religion of Humanity."

Emily Brontë, who was isolated from the world, exemplified the absence of God through the character delineation of Catherine and Heathcliff in her *Wuthering Heights*. Her world was not sociological, but spiritual. Behind her novel there was no society. Having no social and historical norm, Catherine and Heathcliff were as pure, wild, passionate, hardy as the moors, and they also were pagan. God was not within them, but far above them. Their paradise was not Heaven, but *Wuthering Heights* always exposed in stormy weather. In this novel *Wuthering Heights* was the setting without civilization, Christian morals and education, but Thrushcross Grange was Linton's region under the influence of Christian civilization, which put barriers of enmity and hatred between man and man, between man and God, and made people selfish, hypocritical, snobbish. God condemned them to separateness. Catherine and Heathcliff were united in their childhood, but when Catherine, who became a slave of vanity, was fascinated by

Edgar Linton's rich life and became his wife, Heathcliff's love for her changed into strong hatred. After this, Heathcliff became like a demon, and he burnt with revengeful thought and resolved to revenge himself on Catherine, Edgar Linton, Hindley. He also resisted everything of Edgar's world—his cultural life, his education, his religion. He destroyed Edgar's family, Christianity in this era. His revenge was fruitful as he planned, but he could not be satisfied with the result. Revenge did not calm the fever in his blood, but at the same time love and forgiveness began to bud out in him; at last death united him with Catherine, and death was not an end, but a liberation of Catherine and Heathcliff's spirit. Thus, Emily Brontë shows that love between Catherine and Heathcliff is a sort of their private, pure, humane religion.

## HEATHCLIFF AS A TRAGIC HERO

*Masago Akagi*

Heathcliff, the hero of *Wuthering Heights* has been discussed mainly as an assailant rather than a sufferer, and treated as if he were an omnipotent being or a devil with a fearful power of destruction. Such treatment of Heathcliff seems to be too partial and too abstract to understand the authoress's true intention of this work. The present thesis tries to show Heathcliff as a sufferer rather than an assailant, referring to the heroes of Greek tragedies.

From the beginning to the last, Heathcliff's life is a series of hard conflicts, bloody sufferings and unbearable patience, but Catherine's burning love for him has comforted and encouraged Heathcliff in the adversity. As a result, the more severely he is ill-treated and oppressed by Hindley and Linton, the more deepened becomes his love for Catherine. However, his passionate love for Catherine is deeply rooted in his inviolable and deepest love for human beings, which is shown, for instance, in his attitude towards Hareton and Cathy.

Heathcliff's violent revenge, which seems externally very cruel and devilish, means a revolt against the traditional and materialistic world represented by Hindley and Linton, in which human nature and individuality are always neglected and oppressed. His success in the revolt against the society, which always kept him away from Catherine, drives him further to his painful efforts to release his soul from his body. It is due to his strong belief in the immortality of Catherine's soul that he can stand the very penance of detaching his soul from his body. Finally he succeeds in breaking the hard wall between this world and the other world, where he was sure to find Catherine.

It may be given as a conclusion of this article that what is more

important in this novel is rather the vehemence and the grandeur of the tragic agony of Heathcliff than the external actions and events in his struggles against the other characters.

## THE CONCEPT OF SIN IN *WUTHERING HEIGHTS*

*Koichi Hamada*

*Wuthering Heights* is one of the most difficult novels to be properly discussed. This comes mainly from the ambiguity of Emily Brontë's moral attitude. By this ambiguity I do not mean anything vague or immature in her original idea of this novel. I think this ambiguity (if it is possible to say this novel is ambiguous,) comes from the dual attitude of the authoress toward the main characters such as Heathcliff and Catherine Earnshaw. *Wuthering Heights* is often called the novel of 'schism', which implies that the authoress wants to symbolize two quite contrary ideas in this one novel. I think it quite right to call *Wuthering Heights* the novel of schism or the novel of dualism.

There is the case of Heathcliff for example. He is the hero by whom Emily Brontë presents the fundamental theme of this novel, namely, criticism of conventional Christianity. However, what is most significant to the readers is that this symbolic hero is at the same time the victim of Emily Brontë's relentless ethical judgment.

In one of the most critical scenes in which Heathcliff curses the unexpected death of Catherine Earnshaw, he calls himself a 'murderer'. It is quite true that Heathcliff is a kind of a 'murderer' in the sense that he takes a bitter revenge on Earnshaw and Linton families, destroying the peaceful world of *Wuthering Heights*.

What I want to examine in this article is rather how Heathcliff falls a victim to Emily Brontë's ethical or moral judgment than how he deliberately *murdered* (destroyed) the people in *Wuthering Heights*. In a word, Emily Brontë wants her hero to become a powerful agent of her hatred or antagonism against the conventional Christian world, but she also wants him to be *murdered* (or punished) for his own

sin of sadistic violence against human beings.

In *Wuthering Heights* Emily Brontë indicates such a dual situation of a man who judges and is judged at the same time. Hence comes the criticism that she has the ambivalence toward her main characters, especially toward Heathcliff.

The reason why I want to discuss the problem of sin is that the first step toward such a dualism of Emily Brontë is to examine the concept of sin in this novel, referring to the relationship between this concept of sin and the ethical idea of Emily Brontë.

## EMILY BRONTË'S HETERODOXY

*Masaie Matsumura*

One is quite perplexed to find that such an astonishing novel as *Wuthering Heights* was written in the age of Dickens and Thackeray. It has a greater affinity, as Herbert Read has pointed out, with Poe and Baudelaire.

The story of *Wuthering Heights* begins with the appearance of a foundling. This reminds us of the conventional theme of the eighteenth-century novels, but there is no reminiscence of Fielding or Smollett in Emily Brontë's execution of the theme. Nor was she so social minded as to be interested in the orphan-theme, which frequently engaged the moral conscience of the Victorian writers.

We find Heathcliff has grown into a Gothic villain on his return after three years' absence. Obviously Emily Brontë was following the Gothic tradition in the making of some weird scenes, and Heathcliff is a dark hero as she perceived it. And there is, indeed, a close resemblance in some parts with E. T. A. Hoffmann's *Das Majorat* (*The Legacy*). But the resemblance goes no further than a trifle. *Wuthering Heights* as the setting is too full of actual life to retain anything preternatural.

The love between Catherine and Heathcliff is a transcendental one. There is no otherness; they are ordained to be one in their identification with the nature of *Wuthering Heights*. So Catherine's marriage to Edgar Linton means a betrayal not only to herself but also to nature. Heathcliff's violence of vengeance is too ruthless, but it is the violence of nature hampered of its natural course. Heathcliff swerves not a moment from his adherence to the kingdom of childhood, nor does Catherine cease to pine for reunion with him in this kingdom. So strong is the passion in their love that it defies all



means of restraints. And it is when he has worked out his passion to the bitter end that Heathcliff can gain the final bliss.

The ugliness and the destructive power of the world Emily Brontë images thus turn to be a path to a new life.

## NATURE AND EXPERIENCE IN EMERSON

— An Interpretation of "Nature" —

*Hideo Higuchi*

We are surrounded by things which we have never made and yet which are in a sense alive in a manner and structure quite different from our own. From time immemorial these things have inspired us with curiosity and awe. What are these things? Are these things really existent as things outside our imagination? If so, what relation have these things with ourselves?

The fact that Nature has been given different interpretations in different ages tells us that we have tried to grasp the implications of the nature of Nature as a symbol, that is to say, as an analogy between things and soul. This is the history of Nature.

To some thinkers Nature is completely apart from experience and extraneous which is occasionally superimposed upon nature and it shuts us off from nature because it forms a veil or screen. If, therefore, there be some way to go beyond the veil or screen, which lies between nature and experience, it will be just by way of transcending. This leads to the marriage of nature and spirit which Emerson tried to establish. But what is called transcendentalism is to Emerson no more than a kind of idealism which has nothing to do with any kind of analytical method. This is the reason why Brownell has found nothing logical in Emerson. Emerson is not logical but psychological in thinking, and through this process of thinking he expects to bridge the gap between matter and soul.

We see the absolute or God through the relative or nature which bears symbolic implications and utilities for our moral training. By projecting ourselves on nature we come to know the ultimate beauty, God, which is universally latent in Nature, through intuition or im-

agination. Nature lies between the absolute oneness of God and man and these three form a triangle relation which culminates in Emerson's motto, "Study Nature."

## ENGLISH EDUCATION AND ITS AGE LIMITATIONS

*Hajime Fukumoto*

General English education in Japan is given for eight years beginning with junior high school and running through the first two years of college. However, the results of the language education are not always satisfactory—the level of the achievement of the four skills is by no means as should be expected in each stage of education. A real cause of this problem has been revealed with the recent study of neurophysiology. Dr. Wilder Penfield warns that children before the age of nine are language specialists but after that age the human brain becomes stiff and rigid, losing “plasticity” in every way necessary for language learning. According to the conclusion by Lenneberg (on the cases of aphasia) the critical period of language acquisition begins at age two and ends at twelve, which age is mostly concerned with “a loss of adaptability for reorganization in the brain, particularly with respect to the topographical extent of neurophysiological processes.”

Thus the importance of early childhood language teaching cannot be emphasized too much, and should be put into practice in early formal education in Japan. Some experimental data are given on the comparison of language proficiency, especially reading (aloud) with understanding of the material in relation to time. The test was given to three younger pupils who had been abroad for a few years and to eight university students who had been taught English in the traditional method. The results show that all the three pupils are at least equal with, and even better than college students as far as the materials are limited to the beginning stage of learning.

Finally with some reference to bilingual education, academic achievement is discussed, also with favorable conclusion toward foreign language teaching in the earlier stages of learning.