

Treatment of the Supernatural in ^①Wuthering Heights

Part - A

(Atmosphere in the novel Wuthering Heights)

Kankariga Das
Machhwal College
Deeg

Earnest Dimmet in his book 'The Bronte Sisters' writes that 'Wuthering Heights' has "something troubling like a dream or, too often, a nightmare. But this is also its magic." Emily Bronte in her personal life had intense awareness of an unseen world as vividly present as the visible one, and this lends much of the mysterious, haunting quality ~~of~~ to Emily's poetry and ^{the only} novel. Most of the characters in the novel believe in the existence of Supernatural beings. Heathcliff declares "I have a strong faith in ghosts... I have a conviction that ~~can~~, and do, exist among us!" Heathcliff's calm assumption of the reality of the ^{spirits} Supernatural reflects the Supernatural atmosphere which pervades the whole of Wuthering Heights.

The atmosphere of Supernatural is created right in the very beginning of the novel. Lockwood's chance visit to Wuthering Heights as a stranger gives him the exposure to the supernatural atmosphere that rules in the inner and outer life of the house. His Compulsive stay in the bed room of Catherine due to bad weather creates occasion for the nightmarish dream which he experiences. The passive indifference shown to him by Heathcliff, the inclement weather that forces him to take lodging for the night, the reading of Catherine's diary, — ~~all these~~ the mysterious interrelationship of the inmates of the house — all these factors already fill him with a sense of fear and loneliness!

before the ^{actual} terrible experience. He dreams and in dream he is haunted by the apparition of Catherine calling him in a most melancholic sobbing voice "Let me in - let me in! I'm come home: I'd lost my way on the moor! -

... twenty years. I've been a wait for twenty years!" Later Heathcliff's entry into the room and his passionate utterances "Come in! come in! he sobbed "Cathy, do come oh - once more! Oh! my heart's darling hear me this time, Catherine, at last" make the horror of ~~Heath~~ Lockwood reach its climax.

Catherine, too, knows the potency of dreams and believes in the existence of spirits and their power to defy the grave. When she is delirious she vows that she will not lie in the churchyard alone, without Heathcliff: "they may bury me twelve feet deep; but I won't rest till you are with me. I never will!" She keeps her word as her spirit haunts Heathcliff for the remaining part of his life. Heathcliff confesses "she has disturbed me, night and day, through eighteen years - incessantly - remorselessly." Heathcliff feels the presence of her spirit even on the night of her death. Her ghost leads him to home and ever afterwards, till near the end of his life, he is haunted by the prospect of seeing her spirit, but always ending in disappointment.

However, as the death of Heathcliff approaches near, he does at last see her, often at frequent intervals and each time more vividly: "with glittering, restless ~~eyes~~ eyes

, and with eager interest that he stopped breathing during half a minute together." when Heathcliff finally dies Joseph and many other people see his ghost and Cathy's wandering every wild night together on the moors.

The pervasive presence of ghosts and spirits, which contributes so much to the wild ^{supernatural} atmosphere ~~and~~ of the novel, is far more than simple superstition. It is an integral part both of the author's belief in the reality of a world beyond this one and of the kind of spiritual relationship between Catherine and Heathcliff. For neither of the characters death means the ~~dead~~ end of existence. The dying Catherine longs for the release from her body into the timeless beyond: "...the thing that irks me most is this shattered prison, after all. I'm tired of being enclosed here. I'm wearying to escape into that glorious world, and to be always there." Even Heathcliff asserts his eagerness to have this spiritual bliss: "...death, and nothing that God or Satan could inflict; can ever part them, her restless spirit must compulsively haunt him, until he, through dying is freed to join her."

The dark tempestuous atmosphere of the novel also provides a suitable background to the treatment of supernatural in the novel. (The chronicles of the kingdom of Gondal, a realm ravaged by incessant insurrections and foreign wars, was a major literary influence on Emily both for her Gondal