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## The Narrative Structure and Atmosphere in Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights*

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### ABSTRACT

*Wuthering Heights*, the only novel of Emily Bronte published in 1847 before only one year Bronte died only when she was 30. Charlotte Bronte then altered the text, and set it to be published as a posthumous second edition in 1850. *Wuthering Heights* is the name of the farmhouse where the narrative opens up. The book's center topic is the vicious consequence of both envy and ruthlessness on the jealous or revengeful human beings and on their communities. The novelist has beautifully used the title of the novel to create a pleasing as well as gothic atmosphere. Both these elements are as important as the characters because these things are really worked upon as closely and minutely as the characters themselves.

**Keywords:** *Narration, Gothic Elements, Society.*

The narrative structure of *Wuthering Heights* shifts from person to person and thus it is rather a complex one. Although Lockwood and Nelly are the obvious narrators, others are intermingled throughout the novel such as- Heathcliff, Isabella, Cathy, even minor characters, who narrates a chapter or two. All these narrators provide insight into both characters and plot development. Due to all such narratives Moody Love remarks, "This novel has come to be recognized as one of the major imaginative creations of the century". Although some of the critics have censored this novel for being too much violent and expressive, still it has the charm and romance that make this novel a magnificent piece of art. It is one of the best works in the history of English Literature.

The novelist has beautifully used the title of the novel to create a pleasing as well as gothic atmosphere. Both these elements are as important as the characters because these things are really worked upon as closely and minutely as the characters themselves. We cannot underestimate importance of these two elements, even for a minute, in the novel.

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### Importance of Title

Wuthering Heights is the name of the farmhouse where the story unfolds. The story begins and ends at Wuthering Heights. In the opening scene, Mr. Lockwood visits the farmhouse. All the major incidents of the novel happen at Wuthering Heights, and is the principal place of the novel. Heathcliff was brought here by Earnshaw. Heathcliff, Catherine, Hindley, all grew up in Wuthering Heights. It is in this house that Heathcliff develops love for Catherine and hatred for Hindley. Thus, this is the foundation of the story and this builds at Wuthering Heights. It is a story of love and revenge. The first phase of this love story develops at the Wuthering Heights.

After three years of absence, Heathcliff returns to the Wuthering Heights. It is here that he works upon his plan to revenge Hindley. The Wuthering Heights also witnesses the prosperity and ruin of the Earnshaw family. Hindley is reduced to a miserable state at Hindley and it is here that he dies. After marrying Isabella Linton, Heathcliff brings her to Wuthering Heights. Similarly, after marriage, Catherine 2 was also brought by Linton to Wuthering Heights. She remains there till the end of the novel. The hero Heathcliff lives and dies at Wuthering Heights. The ghosts of the lovers also reunited at the end in Wuthering Heights. Thus, most of the events of the novel happen at the Wuthering Heights. Only three of the important events like- Death of Catherine 1, elopement of Isabella, and Death of Edgar Linton occur at Thrushcross Grange.

All the major characters of the novel are deeply attached to the Wuthering Heights. Catherine once tells Nelly that, "I dreamt that I am in heaven but miserable because heaven is not Wuthering Heights". She adds that, "Heaven was not my home, and I broke my heart with weeping to come back to the earth and to Wuthering Heights"

The blowing winds around Wuthering Heights are in harmony with the story and violent nature of the hero and heroine. Heathcliff who was the master of Wuthering Heights, finally becomes the master of Thrushcross Grange which is a symbol that Wuthering Heights is the place that dominates every other places in the novel. Thus, the Wuthering Heights is always the centre of the action. It is like a living character.

### Atmosphere: *Wuthering Heights* as a Gothic novel

Gothic Novel is a type of romantic fiction. It was largest in English literature around the late 18th century to the first two decades of the 19th century. The general views about gothic fiction are that, "Gothic fiction presents different, more exciting worlds..."

The characteristics of the Gothic novel are terror, mystery, the supernatural, decay, ruin, and madness, etc...since all these characteristics can be found in *Wuthering Heights*, we can call this novel an example of Gothic novel.

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*Wuthering Heights* was published in 1847, and thus it has many Gothic features, certainly not all, but undoubtedly many. Heathcliff is probably the most Gothic character of the novel. He was found wandering in the streets when he was young by Mr. Earnshaw. Now we are told where Heathcliff's parents were and from where exactly he has come. He is a passionate character, especially in his love for Catherine. When Catherine left her he hates her and at the end goes mad. Thus, this is one of the Gothic characteristic.

Another characteristic that we find is the decay. Here, Heathcliff swears to ruin Hindley entirely as he oaths:

“I am 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” [Wuthering Heights, pg.]

Thus, after taking revenge, he himself is also ruined as he has nothing by which he can enjoy happiness. This is another characteristic fulfilled in the course of the action of the novel.

The other element which is supernatural element happens to Mr. Lockwood, the tenant staying at Wuthering Heights. He wakes up from a nightmare and hears a noise outside. He breaks the window to stop it but instead his fingers in contact with the fingers of someone, as he says, “My fingers closed on the fingers of a little, ice cold hand”

Those fingers were of Catherine Linton, coming to haunt Heathcliff because he had told her before she died that, “You must come back and haunt me”

The other event of seeing Ghost is occurred at the end of the novel when a boy tells Mr. Lockwood that he had seen Heathcliff and Catherine walking along with each other. Both these ideas of haunting and ghosts are very much gothic.

Another feature of the Gothic novel is decaying graveyard and we find it in Wuthering Heights also. At the end of the novel, Mr. Lockwood passes by church where Heathcliff, Catherine and Edgar were buried. He mentioned that each tombstone has decayed differently. Thus, this is also a gothic feature. Hence, in conclusion, we may say that in this novel we can find lots of gothic imagery and therefore we can say that this is an example of a gothic novel.

Thus, this is how the novel is a wonderful example of how title and atmosphere can be used to create a brilliant piece of art. Emile Bronte has successfully managed to do this in her superb novel.

## The Narrative Structure and Atmosphere in Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*

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