

The War between the Natural Impulse and the Pressure of Society in Wuthering Heights

Posted on September 21, 2018

Introduction

Wuthering Heights is a masterpiece written by Emily Bronte. This is a story of revenge and love between the main characters, Heathcliff and Catherine. This fiction novel raises many interesting debates about multiple cultural and ethical issues. Here, the war of the self will be discussed. A deep insight into the nature of characters has been shared in this book. They are influenced by the norms of society, and how their decisions are shaped accordingly is described beautifully. Here is a debate about the war between the natural impulse and the pressure of society in Wuthering Heights.

Discussion

The battle between culture and human nature is clear in the Novel Wuthering Heights. This serves as part of the main theme. Two residential settings are discussed in this novel. One of them is Wuthering Heights, which is taken as a symbol of passion, life, and wildness in nature. Another setting is Thrush Cross Grange, which shows civility, culture, and life (Bronte, 1847).

The appearance of this novel is also shown in the same way that Wuthering Heights has a mysterious and dark environment. Heathcliff is shown as a member of the Earnshaw Family, and he is symbolised as a force of wild nature that poses a danger to society. Cathy is an actual member of this family and has a lovely and charming personality. However, her manner is rarely civilised compared to what she pretends. This shows that with respect to nature, Cathy is a wild girl who plays with Heathcliff in the Moors. Edgar is a member of Lintons, and he calls her Catherine, while Heathcliff addresses her as Cathy. Linton is a civilised and well-bred man. He is shown in this novel as a tender and constant-natured person (Bronte, 1847).

Both the families of Earnshaw and Linton have a precarious rank in a society where most of the population belongs to the middle class. This family held the position of aristocrats, so it was a sensitive matter for them to behave in a gentle and formal manner. However, people living in the gentry had no titles, and it was a matter that often changed depending on the views of the neighbourhood.

Depending on status and class, Catherine decides to marry Edgar, who belongs to a firm status in society, and his family suffers great pains to maintain this status. Lockwood's status is not strong at this time, and this has an impact on Heathcliff's social behaviour as he changes his path from an

adopted common labourer to a gentleman. However, status-conscious people still regarded him as a nobleman only in terms of manners and dress (Bronte, 1847).

In this novel, there is a constant battle between culture and nature. The characters are passionate about their status in society, so they overlook their inner nature in this battle. Heathcliff is depicted as a different character at this stage of the novel. He speaks for a long time at a point in chapter six of the novel where the change in his speaking is depicted. His talk is really emotional and expressive at this point. The speech context is literary and shows less artificial behaviour than Lockwood.

The main conflict between nature and culture is depicted at this point when Heathcliff is angry at Edgar's whiny and cowardly nature, saying that he will not exchange a thousand lives for Edgar. A clear devotion of Heathcliff is shown for Cat, by which he is impressed by the luxurious life but does not want to give up his freedom for it. His character is brave, and he admires Catherine for her bravery (Bronte, 1847).

This novel is a depiction of two sides that are opposite. It is like a window where, inside a beautiful room with civilised and mannered children, while on the outside, there are two wild children. The mirror in the window shows a reflection of completely opposite pictures on both sides. This novel shows the corruption of culture through nature, and in some points, it is the other way around. This story is presented in a way that the sympathy of the reader does not fade for the wild characters because they are true depictions of human nature. The civilised characters are portrayed in a way that their actions are often silly and weak. This is a clear depiction of families at the start of the 19th century, where culture was always given priority over nature.

Even the place is portrayed in a violent and aggressive manner, as are the people living in Wuthering Heights. The problems of both egocentric and wild-natured people are discussed in this novel. Wild people follow their nature, while egocentric individuals focus more on maintaining a standard in society by following the culture. Many events and dialogues in this novel are thought-provoking (Bronte, 1847).

Conclusion

Everyone is born a free man, but many chains in a society bind him to his nature and will. One of those chains is a culture that expects certain behaviours, and an individual cannot express themselves truly. This great dilemma is described in the novel Wuthering Heights, in which the main characters go through a war of self. There is a constant conflicting situation between two Nobel houses and wild natural impulses where good conquers evil. This shows that culture can never prevail for a long time unless it is backed by nature.

References

Bronte, Emily. Wuthering Heights. 1847.