

Degree – ii (English Honours)

Paper – iv

Book – Wuthering Heights

Lecture – 2

The Mystery of the Bond between Heathcliff and Cathy

To Nelly, Cathy appears as a spoilt, selfish, little termagant in her response to the situation: I had little faith in her principle, and still less sympathy for her feelings. Yet again from the quality of the language, the reader perceives behind all this is the awakening of that wild force, now imprisoned, that united her and Heathcliff in their childhood. As Cathy tears her pillow with her teeth and scatters the feathers, she is a child again, reliving their days on the moors; as she struggles to open the window so that she may feel the wind on her face, she knows herself exiled and outcast in her present life, and she cries in despair:

“Why am I so changed? Why does my blood rush into a hell of tumult at a few words? I am sure I should be myself were I once among the heather on those hills,”

Heathcliff’s comment to Nelly on Cathy’s sickness have the same echoes of his knowledge of her exile from a dimension of living unknown to Edgar --- of her frightful isolation at the Grange and its killing insufficiency: “as well plant an oak in a flower- pot and expect it to thrive.”

Cathy's Betrayal of Her True Self

It is her betrayal of her true self that they both recognise in their final frenzied meeting. However, much Cathy may pretend that is Heathcliff who is breaking her heart and killing her, she is forced to accept the justice of his agonized mixture of anger and despair:

“you loved me --- then what right had you to leave me for the poor fancy you felt for Linton? Because misery and degradation and death and nothing can God or Satan could inflict would have parted us, you of your own will, did it.”

In his fit of wild passion at the news of her death he prays that she may not rest as long as he lives:

“Be with me always--- take any form --- drive me mad! only do not leave me in this abyss, where I cannot find you! I cannot live without my live! I cannot live without my soul.”

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