



THE QUESTION OF SURVIVAL: AN ECOCRITICAL STUDY OF EMILY BRONTE'S *WUTHERING HEIGHTS*

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Abstract

Human actions toward nature have largely been driven by selfish interests and overconsumption. The constant exploitation of the natural world has led to serious ecological problems such as global warming, environmental pollution, and the destruction of ecosystems and many more. These environmental issues raise serious questions about the survival of both nature and humanity. Literary scholars can play important role in addressing these environmental problems and offering alternative ways of thinking. In this regard, the researcher dissects the novel *Wuthering Heights* through the lens of ecocriticism, focusing on the concepts of ecocentrism and anthropocentrism. By examining the character of Heathcliff and his symbolic relationship with other characters, the study highlights the historical bond between nature and human beings. It also shows the impacts of humanity's different sort of relationships with nature by analyzing how Heathcliff, as a symbol of nature, is treated by different characters in the novel. The outcome of the study is deeper understanding of how these two ecocritical terms; anthropocentrism and ecocentrism offer two different paths for humanity. Anthropocentrism allows the exploitation of nature that leads to the ecological retribution and eventually, to the ecological apocalypse, whereas ecocentrism offers a way towards harmony, life, and survival.

Keywords: *Ecocriticism, Anthropocentrism, Exploitation, Ecological Retributions, Ecological Apocalypse, Wuthering Heights, Nature, Wildlife, Survival*

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1. Introduction

Gone are the times when the nature was favorable: The air was clean; the oceans were clear; forests were lush and green. But now, human race seems to be at a point, where its actions have been destroying the nature cruelly. Today, the air has become vaporized garbage, the oceans have turned toxic, forests are disappearing at an alarming rate, and other serious issues have emerged like global warming, climate change, pollution, and floods that threaten the very survival of all living things on the planet earth. In response to this escalating crisis, a literary theory known as ecocriticism emerged in the twentieth century, aiming to address and solve these environmental issues, and restore morally and ethically correct relationship between human beings and nature by using literature as medium.

Historically, humans have oscillated between two types of relationships with nature; ecocentrism and anthropocentrism. Eco-centric approach, also known as nature-centered approach, is an approach that prioritizes and values the nature, considering the intrinsic value of all living things. In such relationship, humans are considered part of the nature rather than its masters. In contrast, anthropocentric or human-centered view places human desires and needs above those of the environment. It sees nature as a tool meant to fulfill humans' needs and desires, placing them at the center of all priorities. This perspective often leads to the exploitation and destruction of nature without any moral obligation. According to Leopold (1949), "a thing is right when it tends to preserve the integrity, stability, and beauty of the biotic community. It is wrong when it tends otherwise" (224-225). Ecocentrism preserves the integrity of nature while anthropocentrism tends otherwise therefore, it leads to ecological retributions because nature turns against human beings when it is exploited. As stated by Engels (1973) "Let us not, however, flatter ourselves overmuch on account of our human conquest over nature. For each such conquest takes its revenge on us" (291) and eventually, it may lead to the ecological apocalypse; the total destruction and the end of the nature as well as human beings because the devastation of nature will lead to the annihilation of human species on this planet. Freya Mathews (1991) states, "the unit of survival is an organism-in-its-environment. If the environment fails to survive, so does the individual" (p. 74).

Now both, the problem and the solution lie within our mind. As Milton (1667) states: "the mind is its own place, and in itself can make a heaven of hell, a hell of heaven" (p. 07), so Literary scholars can become part of the solution by trying to re-establish the ecocentric bond between nature and human beings, through literary works.

Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Height* (1847) coincides with the advent of industrial revolution, that promoted urbanization and the exploitation of nature. It appears as if she has written the novel in order to give voice to the nature. The tragic story of Mr. Heathcliff perfectly mirrors the tragic tale of nature. After enjoying the love and compassion of Mr. Earnshaw, Heathcliff becomes the victim of Hindley's ruthless treatment. Catherine, the only solace for him in troubled times, is also lured by Edgar Linton. Feeling deceived and dejected, Heathcliff disappears. He returns as a wealthy man, and like a fierce storm, destroys everyone who treated him badly. Hindley, Linton, Isabella, Catherine – no one can escape his wrath. His tale is a metaphor for human's treatment of nature: if handled with love and care, it provides conducive environment to promote love like the love between Heathcliff and Catherine; if treated otherwise, nature takes revenge and brings death and destruction to human beings as Heathcliff destroys the inhabitant of Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange.

1.1. Research Questions

1. How does Earnshaw-Heathcliff relation symbolize eco-centric relation in the novel *Wuthering Heights*?
2. How does Hindley and Linton's treatment of Heathcliff symbolize anthropocentrism in the novel *Wuthering Heights*?
3. Why is an eco-centric relationship essential to the survival of both nature and humanity?

1.2. Research Objectives

1. To investigate how Earnshaw-Heathcliff relation symbolize an eco-centric relation in the novel *Wuthering Heights*.
2. To explore how Hindley and Linton's treatment of Heathcliff symbolize anthropocentrism in *Wuthering Heights*.
3. To examine why an eco-centric relationship is essential to the survival of both nature and humanity.

2.Literature Review

Since its publication in 1947, Emily Bronte's wuthering heights has been interpreted through different perspectives by many scholars. Similarly, the ecocritical theory has been used by numerous scholars to dissect different literary works in different ways. The researcher highlights the important aspects of the selected text dissected by different scholars and the theoretical framework used by many scholars in different ways over different texts. So that readers may be able to know the actual essence of the study.

2.1. Relevant to the Text

One of the scholars, Adam (2017) examines the role of setting in Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights*, arguing that the novel's contrasting settings, Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange, directly shape the behaviors and moral dispositions of their inhabitants. The author says that the stormy moors and wild background of Wuthering Heights reflect the cruelty and passion of characters like Heathcliff, while the sheltered, refined Thrushcross Grange fosters the civility of the Lintons. For instance, Adam highlights that Heathcliff's dark, immoral attitude mirrors the bleakness of Wuthering Heights. On the other hand, Edgar Linton's gentleness aligns with the Grange's elegance.

Likewise, Bevin (2018) also explores that how location shapes the characters in *Wuthering Heights*. Focusing on exile, confinement, and the connection between characters and the landscape of Wuthering Heights. She argues that the characters, in the novel, are separated from society, forming their own isolated community. Some try to break free, while others become trapped by social and gender restrictions. The moors, which cause their exile, also become their home, making it impossible for them to separate themselves from the land. She concludes that because of these ideas, the landscape becomes a part of the characters' identities. They cannot leave the moors, return to society, or see themselves as separate from the land. The moors shape who they are and define their existence.

Romero-Perez (2021) dissects Emily's *Wuthering Heights* through Plumwood's master model in ecofeminism. She explains how male mastery and societal structures subordinate women and marginalized figures, linking them to nature and placing them in roles of reproduction and physicality. She points out that male can easily dismantle the binaries because he has access to reason and knowledge as evident in the character Heathcliff, while female cannot easily escape the power structure as Catherine becomes entrapped by the logic of expectation from her marriage with Edgar Linton.

Contrarily, Oza (2023), eulogizes Emily Bronte that she has successfully portrayed the female characters who are strong and self-aware about their rights and continue to challenge the restrictive norms of Victorian patriarchy. He says that Catherine Earnshaw is a feminist role model, she rebels against father and meets Heathcliff against her brother's will. Likewise, Cathy Linton grows from an obedient girl into a confident woman, choosing love and happiness with Hareton over societal approval.

Furthermore, Pedersen (2023) explores how *Wuthering Heights* portrays power structures related to class, race, and gender as interconnected and cyclical. The researcher argues that Bronte critiques Victorian social systems by showing how oppression repeats

across generations. Through an analysis of the characterization of five main characters: Catherine, Heathcliff, the younger Catherine, Linton, and Hareton, the thesis highlights how mistreatment, on the basis of class, race and gender, shapes behavior, with characters like Heathcliff responding to the harsh treatment with cruelty. The researcher concludes that the younger generation, like Catherine and Hareton, gains awareness of the power structure and understanding of the fact that they are the products of their surroundings, which help them break the cycles of abuse.

2.2. Relevant to the Theory

Abbasi and Pourkaramali (2014) analyze Samuel Taylor Coleridge's *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner* through ecocritical lens, arguing that the poem critiques humanity's exploitation of nature and colonialism. They interpret the Mariner's killing of the albatross as a violent disruption of ecological harmony, symbolizing European imperialism's destruction of native lands and cultures.

Similarly, Mishra (2016) explores ecocriticism as a literary approach that connects literature with environmental concerns, emphasizing humanity's relationship with nature. Mishra stresses that literature can inspire eco-consciousness, urging readers to respect nature. Though the article broadly covers key concepts, it lacks depth in analyzing specific texts. Overall, it offers a clear introduction to ecocriticism, linking literary analysis to urgent environmental challenges.

Moreover, Sree (2018) analyzes Amitav Ghosh's *The Hungry Tide* through an eco-critical lens, focusing on the fragile ecosystem of the Sundarbans and its impact on human lives. The study highlights the tension between environmental conservation efforts and the survival struggles of marginalized communities, such as refugees resettled in the region. Sree argues that Ghosh critiques policies prioritizing wildlife including, tigers and dolphins over displaced people, exemplified through characters like Piya, a scientist, and Fokir, a local fisherman, whose differing views on nature reflect broader ethical dilemmas.

Furthermore, Jonah (2020) explores the exploitation of nature in Conrad's *The Heart of Darkness*. He explains that the Age of Enlightenment brought many challenges that the modern world still faces today, one of which is the depletion of nature caused by its cruel exploitation. This period emphasized reason, a trait believed to be unique to human beings, making them appear superior to all non-human entities. This human-centered view, which places humans at the core of existence, gave them the power to dominate and exploit not only the non-human world but also other marginalized human groups, as reflected in the novel *Heart of Darkness*.

In the same way, Pervaiz and Ahmad (2021) use the theory of ecocriticism to explore the relationship between humans and nature in Paulo Coelho's novel *The Alchemist*. They argue that nature and human beings are deeply interconnected, and that human life is nearly meaningless without nature. Their study highlights the important role nature plays in human life and success. They suggest that nature holds a supreme position, and that we, as human beings, depend on it for our survival and progress. When we appreciate and protect nature, it responds positively in return. They conclude that in a harmonious relationship with nature, all elements of the environment work together to help a person achieve their goals.

The novel has not been interpreted from the perspective of ecocritical terms: ecocentrism and anthropocentrism. The study investigates how Heathcliff's relationship with different characters in *Wuthering Heights* symbolizes different kinds of relationships of human beings with the nature. The study helps to identify the appropriate relationship between nature and humanity for the survival of both.

3. Methodology

The researcher has adopted a qualitative method for this study. This means that non-numerical data has been used. Through careful analysis, the researcher has applied ecocritical terms such as anthropocentrism and ecocentrism to the novel *Wuthering Heights*. By closely reading, the researcher aims to help readers understand the anthropocentric as well as ecocentric relationships between nature and human beings and their impacts on both nature and human beings. In this regard, the study focuses on the characters Mr. Earnshaw, Heathcliff, Catherine, Hindley, and Edgar Linton, along with other minor supporting characters.

3.1. Theoretical Framework

The researcher aims to analyze *Wuthering Heights* by using ecocriticism, specially focusing on the ecocentric and anthropocentric relationships between the characters in the novel. Ecocriticism is the combination of two terms; ecology and criticism. Ecology is derived from oikos, meaning home or house and logos, meaning study. Haeckel (1869) defines ecology as "the study of the relationships between organisms and their environment" (p. 45). Similarly, the word criticism means judgement and literary criticism is the process of making judgement about literary works. Rueckert (1978) defines ecocriticism as "application of ecology and ecological concepts to study literature because ecology has greatest relevance to the present and future of world." (as cited in Glotfelty, 1996, p. xx). Similarly, Buell says (1995) "Ecocriticism might succinctly be defined as

study of the relation between literature and environment conducted in a spirit of commitment to environmentalist praxis''. (p. 430).

3.2. Ecocentrism

Ecocentrism places the environment at the center of importance. It adopts a nature-centered approach, recognizing the intrinsic value of all living and non-living components of nature. This means valuing forests, rivers, animals, and ecosystems not just for their usefulness to humans but for their inherent values. According to Naess (1973): All life forms have equal rights to "live and blossom" independent of human needs. Similarly, Buell (1995) defines ecocentrism as "ecocentrism preaches the virtues of reverence, humility, responsibility, and care; it argues for low impact technology; it decries bigness and impersonality in all forms (but especially in the city); and demands a code of behavior that seeks permanence and stability based upon ecological principles of diversity and homeostasis" (p. 425).

3.3. Anthropocentrism

Anthropocentrism originates from the Greek terms "Anthropos," meaning human, and "ketron," meaning center, indicating a worldview that places humans at the center of existence. This perspective embodies a set of values and a worldview that prioritize human superiority over nature (White & Lynn, 1967). The notion of being anthropocentric implies that humans stand at the core of the natural world and that nature exists primarily to fulfill human needs by providing resources that can be exploited as needed (Halsey & White, 1998). Similarly, according to Callicott (1984) anthropocentrism confers intrinsic value on human beings and regards all other things, including other forms of life, as being only instrumentally valuable' (p. 299). In conclusion, Anthropocentrism denies the intrinsic value of nature and treats it as a tool for human benefit, without considering the harmful consequences of such exploitation.

3.4. Ecological Retribution

Ecological retributions, in other words, revenge of nature, refer to the harmful and violent reaction of nature to the exploitative and anthropocentric attitude of human beings. Today, humans are witnessing various forms of ecological retribution including, air pollution, rising global temperatures, floods, droughts, wildfires, melting down of glaciers, extinction of different species. These ecological retributions are the warnings to the humanity to stop exploiting the nature. Otherwise, they must be ready for the revenge of the nature. As Engels (1925) rightly stated, "Let us not, however, flatter ourselves

overmuch on account of our human conquest over nature. For each such conquest takes its revenge on us.”

3.5. Ecological Apocalypse

An ecological apocalypse refers to the catastrophic collapse of ecosystems and the natural world, resulting in large-scale destruction of life on the planet Earth, including plant and animal species, ultimately threatening the survival of humanity. It is the result of human's cruel and exploitative activities, such as pollution, deforestation, overconsumption of resources justified under the ideology of anthropocentrism that encourages the degradation and exploitation of nature for the benefits of human beings. The term “apocalypse” implies not just damage, but a total end or irreversible destruction of nature as well as human beings. During ecological apocalypse the environment reaches to a point beyond which recovery becomes nearly impossible it leads to a mass extinction, collapse of food system, shortage of water, extreme weather, rise of sea level, floods and death of human beings. As stated by Mathews (1991) “the unit of survival is an organism-in-its-environment. If the environment fails to survive, so does the individual” (p. 74).

4. Discussion and Analysis

4.1. Heathcliff as a Representative of Nature

In the course of the novel, *Wuthering Heights*, Heathcliff is portrayed in a manner that positions him as a representative of nature. His tragic story reflects the tragic tale of nature in the history of mankind. Throughout the novel, he is given traits and mannerisms that compel the reader to perceive him as nature itself. His relationship with other characters, and the way he is treated by them symbolizes the relationship between human beings and nature and also it shows humans' treatment of nature.

In the beginning of the novel, Mr. Earnshaw finds Heathcliff as a kid, “starving, and houseless...In the streets of Liverpool” (p.43). This shows the early condition of our planet earth that before the evolution of humans, Earth was not suitable for life and that it was characterized by extremely hot temperatures, volcanic activity, and a reducing atmosphere with little to no free oxygen. The arrival of Heathcliff into the Heights symbolizes the first interaction of humans and nature. He is introduced as a nameless foundling, with no hint of “where he came from, and who his parents were” (p.40). The writer also makes it clear that “not a single soul knew to whom it belonged” (p.43). It means he is free from human lineage, he does not belong to any established home, family, or civilized community, emphasizing his total detachment from human society. This isolation aligns him with nature, which is often viewed in literature as something outside

and separate from the realm of human ownership and understanding. Just as the natural world exists independent of human control, so does Heathcliff arrive as something fundamentally other: unknown, mysterious, and unpredictable. Mr. Earnshaw further clears this idea when he calls him a “gift of God” (p.42). This shows that Heathcliff is not a child of culture but rather, he is a child of nature; a special gift from god to the human beings.

Similarly, being a representative of nature, Heathcliff lives close to the wild surroundings of Wuthering Heights. The house in which, he lives is described by Lockwood as a place exposed to “atmospheric tumult” with “pure, bracing ventilation... at all times” (p.2), showing the rough and stormy environment just like Heathcliff’s personality. He lives a life of “complete exile from the world” (p.13), which means he is cut off from society and lives in isolation, much like untouched nature. His behavior is not polite or refined; he is savage, wild, and aggressive. Lockwood even calls him an “unmannerly wretch” (p.18), which shows how rude and harsh he seems to others. Even his dogs are wild and unwelcoming, just like him. As in the text he says, “guests are so exceedingly rare in this house that I and my dogs hardly know how to receive them.” (p.07). This shows that Heathcliff and his surroundings are both unwelcoming and untouched by human civilization, making him truly a symbol of raw, untamed nature.

4.2. Earnshaw-Heathcliff Ecocentric Relation

Ecocentrism is a nature-centered approach that asserts that nature must be valued for its intrinsic worth, independent of any utilitarian benefits it may provide to humans. By recognizing the rights of nature as a subject deserving protection, ecocentrism ensures that when nature is safeguarded, it flourishes, maintains balance, and becomes a hospitable environment for both humans and wildlife. In the text of *Wuthering Heights*, the relationship between Mr. Earnshaw and Heathcliff is ecocentric one. Mr. Earnshaw’s ecocentric approach is evident when he finds him as a starving, homeless child; he takes him into his house, gives shelter to him, treats him with care, and protects him from other characters, particularly Hindley. This ecocentric approach allows Heathcliff to thrive, develop, and form a deep bond with Catherine. As long as Mr. Earnshaw lives, Heathcliff grows happily in the wild moors with his beloved Catherine. Although Hindley treats him badly, Heathcliff does not complain or retaliate. When Mr. Earnshaw dies, Heathcliff loses this ecocentric care, but by then he has become strong enough to endure hardship. Together, he and Catherine console each other, remaining resilient despite their struggles.

Mr. Earnshaw’s deep care for Heathcliff represents the ecocentric bond between humans and nature, where nature is not just a resource but something sacred to protect.

When Earnshaw finds Heathcliff in Liverpool, he endures exhaustion and danger to bring him home, showing the same kind of self-sacrifice that the environmentalists practice in their relationship with the natural world. In one moment, Earnshaw collapses into a chair, laughing and groaning, saying he "would not have such another walk for the three kingdoms" (p.42). This shows how much effort he puts into saving Heathcliff, just as conservationists work hard and try their best to save and live in harmony with nature. Earnshaw doesn't see Heathcliff as a burden but as worth the struggle, much like how pre-industrial cultures valued nature as essential to survival. When Earnshaw presents Heathcliff to his family, he calls him a "gift of God" (p.42), proving that he sees Heathcliff as something precious and divine, not just an orphan boy. This mirrors the spiritual connection many old societies had with nature - worshipping rivers, forests, and animals as sacred. Indigenous cultures, for example, believed that nature was a living gift, not something to own or destroy. His care continues when he orders to "wash it, and gave it clean things, and let it sleep with the children" (p.43). The nurturing act shows a familial bond, not ownership. Earnshaw integrates Heathcliff into his home as an equal, much like ecocentric cultures view humans as part of nature's community, not its rulers. He names him "Heathcliff". It was the name of his deceased son. This act symbolizes Earnshaw's view of Heathcliff as a replacement for lost kinship. It reflects the idea that nature, Heathcliff is not something as an outsider, but part of human life. Similarly, he loves Heathcliff unconditionally, prioritizing him over his own children as in the text, the writer says, "He took to Heathcliff strangely, believing all he said (for that matter, he said precious little, and generally the truth), and petting him up far above Cathy" (p. 44). This preference suggests that Earnshaw values Heathcliff, the representative of nature, more than his own children (culture). Moreover, in the novel, the writer says;

If anyone attempted to impose upon, or domineer over, his favourite: he was painfully jealous lest a word should be spoken amiss to him; seeming to have got into his head the notion that, because he liked Heathcliff, all hated, and longed to do him an ill-turn. It was a disadvantage to the lad; for the kinder among us did not wish to fret the master, so we humored his partiality; and that humoring was rich nourishment to the child's pride and black tempers (p. 47).

The passage demonstrates that Mr. Earnshaw treats Heathcliff in a deeply ecocentric way, one in which nature holds greater importance than human concerns. It reveals how Earnshaw prioritizes Heathcliff's well-being above all else, even over his own biological children and societal expectations. His protective behavior parallels that of environmental stewards who defend nature against exploitation. Earnshaw instinctively shields Heathcliff from any perceived threat, demonstrating his unwavering belief in nature's intrinsic value. He interprets even minor criticism as hostility, revealing the depth

of his commitment to preservation. However, his excessive protection fosters resentment in other characters, particularly Hindley, who views Heathcliff as inferior and unworthy of such devotion. This mirrors the perspective of those who consider nature subordinate to human culture, believing that humanity, not the natural world, should be the center of all value and priority. The last part of the statement demonstrates that the love and care of Mr. Earnshaw nourishes Heathcliff's development, much like how an ecocentric relationship between nature and human beings allows the nature to flourish. Just as nature thrives under protection and care, Heathcliff grows stronger under Earnshaw's guardianship — highlighting the benefits of a worldview that places nature at its core.

In the course of the novel, the writer further utters, "Hindley's manifestations of scorn, while his father was near, roused the old man to a fury: he seized his stick to strike him, and shook with rage that he could not do it" (p. 48). This intense reaction demonstrates how far Earnshaw goes to protect Heathcliff. He is willing to punish his own son to defend Heathcliff. The passage mirrors how environmental stewards today demand strict consequences for those who harm ecosystems, showing that true ecological protection requires prioritizing nature's wellbeing above human interests and that those who exploit and destroy nature should be punished.

4.3. Impacts of Mr. Earnshaw's Ecocentrism

4.3.1. Development of Heathcliff's Character and Behavior

The ecocentric relationship between Mr. Earnshaw and Heathcliff produces clearly positive impacts that are evident in the character development and behavior of Heathcliff. the early part of the novel shows how Earnshaw's protective care and genuine affection shape Heathcliff into a surprisingly patient and tolerant individual, despite the harsh treatment he receives from others like Hindley. The text specifically notes that Heathcliff appears as "a sullen, patient child; hardened, perhaps, to ill-treatment: he would stand Hindley's blows without winking or shedding a tear" (p.44). This remarkable patience is further emphasized when he is described as a being "as uncomplaining as a lamb" (p.45), demonstrating an almost unnatural ability to endure suffering without protest. Importantly, the narrative observes that "he complained so seldom, indeed, of such stirs as these, that I really thought him not vindictive" (p.47), showing how little resentment he bears despite his difficult circumstances. These characteristics directly result from Earnshaw's ecocentric approach, his consistent protection and valuation of Heathcliff creates an environment where nature, represented by Heathcliff, can remain peaceful and non-aggressive. Historically, this mirrors how indigenous and traditional societies that maintained ecocentric relationships with their environments experienced greater harmony

with nature, demonstrating that when nature is protected and valued for itself rather than for what can be gained from it, the natural world responds with stability and peace rather than volatility or retaliation.

4.3.2. Inseparable bond between Heathcliff and Catherine

As a matter of fact, when humans protect the nature instead of harming it, wildlife flourishes. Ecocentrism discourages from exploiting the nature, teaches to protect forests, keep rivers clean, and avoid polluting the land and air. When trees are saved, animals have homes. When water stays pure, fish and birds can live safely. Without waste and destruction, nature becomes a peaceful place where animals can grow, reproduce, and live happily. Healthy forests mean more food and shelter for wildlife. Over time, this balance strengthens the bond between nature and wildlife, they both become inseparable, like one living system. Animals depend on forests, rivers, and clean air, while nature relies on wildlife to keep ecosystems in balance. Catherine, In the novel, is the representative of wildlife. Her inseparable bond with Heathcliff “Nelly, I am Heathcliff!” (p100). symbolizes the strong connection between nature and its wildlife. Mr. Earnshaw’s ecocentric care saves Heathcliff, brings him into his home, takes care of him and as a result Heathcliff develops deep love relationship with Catherine, same like when nature is protected it becomes safe haven for wildlife.

In the novel, Catherine’s declaration, “He is more myself than I am. Whatever our souls are made of, his and mine are the same” (p. 97). demonstrates the interdependence of nature and wildlife. Her claim, that their souls are same, it shows how much they are close to each other. Their bond symbolically represents the strong connection between nature and its wildlife. As Heathcliff is to Catherine, so is nature to wildlife.

Moreover, In the text, Nelly observes “She was too fond of Heathcliff. The greatest punishment we could invent for her was to keep her separate from him” (p. 49). This reveals the strong connection that Catherine has developed with Heathcliff. Same is true for wildlife and nature. Just as forcefully separating Catherine from Heathcliff is a punishment for her, separating wildlife from its natural home is a form of exploitation and cruelty.

In addition, when Mr. Earnshaw dies, Heathcliff and Catherine lose their support and caring system. Now, they both are left with themselves. The ecocentric relationship of the old master makes them strong enough that they can now easily survive on their own. After his demise, Nelly is concerned about the children. She wants to console them but later she finds, “They both were calmer, and did not need me to console them. The little souls were comforting each other with better thoughts than I could have hit on” (p.52). It

is one of the positive impacts of ecocentrism. When nature is protected, it becomes hospitable for the wildlife and provides everything that is necessary for their survival. In return nature also becomes dependent on wildlife for maintaining the natural cycles. They both become inseparable and enough for each other. In nutshell, the strong connection between Heathcliff and Catherine represents the inseparable bond between nature and its wildlife that is established as a result of humanity's ecocentric behavior towards nature.

4.4. Hindley-Heathcliff Anthropocentric Relation

Anthropocentrism is an ideology that emphasizes that human beings are the most important and superior beings on the Earth, while all other parts of nature such as plants, animals, and the environment are seen as less significant and inferior. This idea suggests that only humans have the right to dominate and control everything else in the world. It puts humans at the center of importance and justifies their power over nature, treating it as something to be used rather than respected. Essentially, anthropocentrism means viewing humans as the highest priority and everything else as secondary. Same is the case with Hindley, he has superiority complex. He considers himself superior and the center of all affection. In the beginning of the novel, when Heathcliff is brought into the house "Hindley hated him" (p.44). His hatred for Heathcliff is evident when Mr. Lockwood discovers Catherine's diary, where she condemns Hindley's cruel behavior. Saying "Hindley is a detestable substitute—his conduct to Heathcliff is atrocious—H. and I are going to rebel" (p.22). This reveals Hindley's resentment towards Heathcliff.

Hindley's intense hatred for Heathcliff stems from his deep-seated sense of superiority and jealousy. When Mr. Earnshaw brings Heathcliff into the household, he treats him with love and affection more than his own son. This is understandable, as Heathcliff, an orphaned outsider, is in desperate need of care and compassion. However, Hindley cannot accept this. He hates Heathcliff and blames his father for "treating H. too liberally" (P.25). In the text, Lockwood says "the young master had learnt to regard his father as an oppressor rather than a friend, and Heathcliff as a usurper of his father's affection and his privileges" (p.45). This resentment grows over time, poisoning his thoughts, he starts thinking of his father as an unjust and Heathcliff as a usurper, who takes all the love of his father.

Consequently, his wounded pride and sense of superiority convince him that Heathcliff, an inferior outsider, has stolen what rightfully belongs to him. This belief fuels his cruelty, as he seeks to reassert his dominance by degrading and treating Heathcliff poorly. Catherine says "Poor Heathcliff! Hindley calls him a vagabond, and won't let him sit with us, nor eat with us anymore. He says he and I must not play together, and threatens to turn him out of the house if we break his orders" (p.25). Hindley doesn't just insult

Heathcliff but he isolates him, treating him like an unwelcome intruder rather than a member of the family. By forbidding Catherine from even playing with him, Hindley tries to strip Heathcliff of all dignity and connection, punishing him simply for existing. His threats to throw Heathcliff out completely show how far he's willing to go to maintain his own power and status. Hindley's bullying isn't just about anger, it is about control, proving that he is the master of the house and that Heathcliff will always be nothing in his eyes.

Moreover, the hatred of Hindley for Heathcliff grows even deeper after the death of Mr. Earnshaw. As Hindley returns to home from college, he takes control of the household completely that changes the whole story. It serves as an allegory for humanity's transition from ecocentrism to anthropocentrism. Before, Heathcliff had some protection under Mr. Earnshaw's care, even though Hindley always disliked him. But now, with no one to stop him, Hindley becomes a cruel and oppressive master. He sees himself as superior and treats Heathcliff as nothing more than a lowly outsider, unworthy of respect or kindness. This shift represents the idea of anthropocentrism, where humans believe they have the right to dominate and control others, especially those they consider beneath them. His anthropocentric behavior is described as:

Hindley became tyrannical. A few words from her, evincing a dislike to Heathcliff, were enough to rouse in him all his old hatred of the boy. He drove him from their company to the servants, deprived him of the instructions of the curate, and insisted that he should labour out of doors instead; compelling him to do so as hard as any other lad on the farm. (pp. 53–54)

Thus, Hindley's relationship with Heathcliff reflects humanity's anthropocentric attitude toward nature. Just as humans believe they are superior and that nature exists only to serve them, Hindley sees himself as more important than Heathcliff. He thinks he deserves all the love and attention, while Heathcliff, an outsider, deserves nothing. When Mr. Earnshaw is alive, Hindley hides his hatred, but deep down, he is jealous because he wants his father's love only for himself. He believes Heathcliff is inferior and unworthy. But once Earnshaw dies, Hindley takes control and treats Heathcliff cruelly, just like human beings exploit nature when they have power. His actions show the same selfish mindset, thinking he has the right to dominate and abuse Heathcliff.

4.5. Lintons' Anthropocentric Relation with Heathcliff

Lintons, the wealthy and refined family from Thrushcross Grange, embodies the civilized world's anthropocentrism towards nature, represented by Heathcliff. Unlike Hindley, who simply wants to dominate Heathcliff, Lintons' actions are more destructive. They don't just consider Heathcliff as inferior but also they take away the most important

thing from Heathcliff's life - Catherine. First, they transform Catherine from her wild, free spirited self into a proper society-lady, then Edgar Linton marries her. This mirrors how humans treat nature. They don't just use natural resources; they completely change and destroy them to suit their needs. Wild animals are taken from their habitats, sold, killed or tamed, and kept in captivity. Trees are cut down for urban expansion. Edgar Linton does the same to Catherine - he removes her from the natural environment at Wuthering Heights, changes her personality to fit into his world at the Grange, and in doing so, he breaks her connection to Heathcliff and her true self. His behavior shows the worst side of how humans treat nature. They don't just take what they need, they reshape everything to serve them, without considering the consequences. Just as animal habitats are destroyed for human development, Edgar destroys Heathcliff by using Catherine for his own benefit. It represents how civilized people believe that they have the right to control and use the nature and its wildlife, even when it causes great harm. The pain he causes to Heathcliff and Catherine reflects the damage humans do when they put themselves above everything else in nature.

Once Catherine and Heathcliff visit Thrushcross Grange, there, they are chased by the dogs of Lintons, and injure Catherine. After recognizing them, the Lintons' reaction to Heathcliff is completely different from how they treat Catherine – they look at him with disgust and treat him like something inferior. Isabella shows this when she says, "frightful thing! put him in the cellar papa. He's exactly the son of the fortune teller, that stole my tame pheasant" (p. 59). This proves that they see Heathcliff as inferior and dangerous, like an animal that needs to be locked away. Mrs. Linton also treats him as unworthy, saying "A wicked boy, at all events... and quite unfit for a decent house! did you notice his language, Linton? I'm shocked that my children should have heard it" (p. 59). These lines reveals that she sees Heathcliff as inferior and unworthy of living in a respectable home. She is upset that her children had to hear his rough language, which she finds rude and unacceptable. Her reaction highlights how she and her family consider themselves more refined and superior. They judge Heathcliff not just for his behavior, but because he does not fit into their idea of a proper, civilized human being. This reflects their anthropocentric mindset, where they place civilized humans at the center and view anyone who is closer to nature as less valuable. Instead of trying to understand Heathcliff, they treat him like an outsider, simply because he does not meet their standards which shows their anthropocentric arrogance.

When humans separate the wildlife from their natural homes and tame them, keep them as pets, or lock them in zoos for economic purpose, entertainment or personal benefit, they are interfering into the natural balance of life. Animals are meant to live freely in the wild nature, where they can follow their instincts, hunt, travel, and form bonds with others

of their kind. But when humans take control of their lives, these animals are forced to live in small spaces, follow human rules, and lose their natural behaviors. This is a form of exploitation, even if it seems harmless or is done with good intentions. Animals do not choose to be taken; they are removed from their environment which can effect both, the wildlife and their natural homes. In the text, the writer says;

Cathy stayed at Thrushcross Grange five weeks: till Christmas. By that time her ankle was thoroughly cured, and her manners much improved. The mistress visited her often in the interval, and commenced her plan of reform by trying to raise her self-respect with fine clothes and flattery; which she took readily; so that, instead of a wild, hatless little savage jumping into the house, and rushing to squeeze us all breathless, there lighted from a handsome black pony a very dignified person. (p.61)

The above passage reveals that how Catherine changes from a wild and free girl into a quiet and polished young lady. This change in Catherine is like what happens to wild animals when humans take them from nature. Just like Catherine is taken away from the moors and her natural way of life, animals are taken from forests, rivers, and mountains and placed in homes or zoos. They are given food and safety, but they lose their freedom and wildness, which is purely exploitation. Just as wildlife belong in the nature, not in cages, Catherine belongs to Heathcliff, not Edgar Linton. However, Linton's marriage with Catherine is nothing but a form of injustice and exploitation, not only with Catherine but also with Heathcliff.

4.6. Impacts of Anthropocentrism

4.6.1. Unwelcoming nature of Heathcliff

The anthropocentric behavior of Hindley and the Lintons have a deep impact on Heathcliff's personality. In the start of the novel, Mr. Lockwood visits Wuthering Heights, and finds Heathcliff cold, rude, and unfriendly. He does not greet him warmly or offer any kindness. Instead, he behaves like someone who hates visitors. Lockwood describes the house as a "perfect misanthropist's Heaven" (p. 01), meaning it is the perfect place for someone who dislikes people. He does not like guests in his house and lives in a complete exile from other people. Living in a such exile and lonely place he has forgotten how to receive guests. In the text, he confesses, "guests are so exceedingly rare in this house that I and my dogs, I am willing to own, hardly know how to receive them" (p.07). Later, Lockwood asks Nelly Dean a very important question: "He must have had some ups and downs in life to make him such a churl" (p. 40). The answer to this question can be found in the painful past of Heathcliff. When he was ill-treated by Hindley worse than a servant. And also Linton family changed Catherine, took her away from him, and caused him

heartbreak. These cruel actions, based on anthropocentrism, slowly turned Heathcliff into a man full of anger, distrust, and bitterness.

In the same way, when humans exploit nature, cutting down forests, polluting rivers, hunting animals, cage them, and damaging the environment then nature turns hostile. It responds with floods, droughts, climate change, and disasters. All these ecological problems show that nature, when constantly mistreated, can no longer remain calm and welcoming. It becomes dangerous, unwelcoming, unpredictable, and even deadly.

4.6.2. Heathcliff's Revenge on Hindley

Hindley's anthropocentric attitude toward Heathcliff has a major role in making him revengeful. He treats Heathcliff cruelly due to his strong sense of superiority and jealousy. From the start, he sees Heathcliff as an outsider who steals his father's affection. This resentment grows, especially, after the death of Mr. Earnshaw, when Hindley takes all the power and control and begins to degrade Heathcliff. He isolates him, treats him like a servant, and denies him dignity (see 4.4). This constant harsh treatment causes deep pain and anger in Heathcliff, which slowly turns into a strong desire for revenge. He says:

I'm 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. I only wish I knew the best way. Let me alone, and I'll plan it out. While I'm thinking of that I don't feel pain. (pp. 72–73)

These words show that the thought of revenge gives Heathcliff comfort. It becomes the only thing that helps him deal with the way he has been treated. Hindley's selfish and cruel attitude leaves a lasting wound on Heathcliff's heart that leads him into a cruel and revengeful.

Heathcliff finally gets his revenge when he returns to Wuthering Heights as a rich man. By this time, Hindley has become an alcoholic and is wasting his money on gambling. He has fallen into a deep sadness and no longer cares about the home or the family he once ruled over. Heathcliff sees that Hindley is weak, and he uses this to his advantage. He offers Hindley money, pretending to help him, but he knows Hindley will never be able to pay it back. Slowly, Heathcliff takes over Wuthering Heights. Nelly, who has watched everything happen, explains it clearly: "He had mortgaged every yard of land he owned, for cash to supply his mania for gaming: and he, Heathcliff, was the mortgagee...the guest was now the master of Wuthering Heights" (p. 232). It shows that Heathcliff snatches away the home and power of Hindley, in the same manner that he once had taken everything away from him. His actions are not just about owning property but to take revenge from Hindley for his cruel attitude towards him.

4.6.3. Heathcliff's Revenge on Linton Family

Heathcliff also takes revenge from the Linton family for their anthropocentric attitude toward him. They treat Heathcliff as something inferior and devil, and consider themselves as superior and civilized. Also, they turn Catherine into a civilized lady and then Edgar Linton marries her. This leads to separation of Heathcliff and Catherine which is very painful for him. (see 4.5). Due to this anthropocentric arrogance and exploitative nature of Linton family, Heathcliff becomes revengeful. He takes revenge on Lintons, first by marrying Isabella and then by forcefully getting the consent of Cathy to marry his son, Linton Heathcliff in order to take the control of Thrushcross Grange.

In order to take revenge on the Linton family, Heathcliff manipulates Isabella Linton into falling in love with him and then he marries her, not out of love, but just to hurt her brother, Edgar Linton. He knows that marrying Isabella will cause Edgar pain and shame, and that is exactly what he wants. After the marriage, Heathcliff shows his true nature and starts treating Isabella very badly. He abuses her both physically and emotionally. He insults her, controls her, and makes her feel trapped and worthless. Isabella herself realizes too late that Heathcliff never loved her and that it was just his plan to marry her and take revenge on her brother. She cries out in desperation, "Don't put faith in a single word he speaks. He is a lying fiend, a monster, and not a human being!... He says he has married me on purpose to obtain power over him; and he shan't obtain it, I'll die first" (p. 187–188). This shows how deeply Heathcliff hurt her and how he uses her only as a tool to take revenge on Edgar. His actions toward Isabella prove how far he is willing to go to destroy the Lintons and take away their happiness, just like they took Catherine from him.

Similarly, Heathcliff forces Cathy Linton, who is the daughter of Edgar Linton, to make her agree for a marriage with his son, Linton Heathcliff. Though they are cousins, neither of them wants this marriage. But, Heathcliff knows that after Cathy's father Edgar dies, she will inherit Thrushcross Grange. By making her marry his son, Heathcliff plans to take control of the estate that rightfully belongs to the Linton family. This is his way of getting revenge on them. In order to force Cathy to agree, he locks her in the house and refuses to let her leave until she consents to the marriage. In the novel, he warns her, "You shall not quit the place till it is fulfilled" (p. 338). It means he has imprisoned Cathy and refuses to release her until she agrees to the marriage. He is doing all this for revenge on Edgar. He wants him to suffer the same way he has suffered due his exploitative and arrogant attitude towards Heathcliff. He tells Cathy, "Miss Linton, I shall enjoy myself remarkably in thinking your father will be miserable: I shall not sleep for satisfaction" (p.

338). These lines demonstrate his vengefulness. It will be a moment of happiness and satisfaction for him to see Edgar Linton in agony and under his control.

Heathcliff's hatred and vengefulness is not natural but it is his furious response to how they treated him. They see him as inferior, abuse him physically and emotionally, beat him mercilessly, and worst of all, tear him apart from Catherine, the only person he ever loved. The constant cruelty turns him into a cruel and vengeful person. In the same way, when nature is mistreated it takes revenge which is called ecological retribution. Human beings exploit and degrade nature, acting as if nature exists only for their benefit. But just like Heathcliff, nature does not stay silent forever. When pushed too far, it strikes back with devastating consequences such as global warming, floods, and bad weather et cetera. Heathcliff's unwelcoming and vengeful attitude mirrors nature's retribution. Both are fierce responses to long term degradation and exploitation.

4.6.4. Ecological Apocalypse

Heathcliff's revenge in *Wuthering Heights* creates an apocalyptic downfall. In the beginning of the novel, he is treated badly by Hindley and Linton family which turn him vengeful. His revenge brings destruction, suffering, and death to almost everyone such as Hindley, Isabella, Linton, Catherine, and even to his own personality. It means he does not only destroy his enemies but also his beloved Catherine as well as himself. His vengeance leaves nothing but death and devastation behind.

The first target of Heathcliff's revenge is Hindley Earnshaw. After the death Hindley's wife, he becomes addicted of alcohol and starts wasting his money on gambling due to which, he loses almost all his wealth. when Heathcliff sees that Hindley is weak, he offers Hindley money, pretending to help him, but he knows Hindley will never be able to pay it back. Slowly, Heathcliff takes over Wuthering Heights which intensifies his suffering, ultimately leading to his tragic death.

Isabella Linton becomes another victim of Heathcliff's revenge. He marries her, not out of love, but to hurt her brother, Edgar, and gain access to Thrushcross Grange. Heathcliff treats Isabella cruelly, both mentally and physically. She eventually runs away, heartbroken and weak, which leads to her tragic death.

Moreover, Edgar Linton, also becomes a victim of Heathcliff's revenge. Heathcliff, first elopes his sister which breaks his heart. Similarly, He is Catherine's husband, and Heathcliff cannot bear this. He constantly torments Edgar by reminding him of his love for Catherine. Adding more, Heathcliff also forces Edgar's daughter to marry his son which furthers his suffering. These revenges of Heathcliff on Edgar lead to his death.

In the same way, Heathcliff's revengeful nature causes great pain to Catherine and plays a big role in her death. After returning to Wuthering Heights, Heathcliff becomes bitter and indifferent towards Catherine because she chooses Edgar Linton, as her husband over him. He wants to hurt, both Edgar and Catherine, therefore he decides to marry Isabella, the sister of Edgar Linton. This breaks Catherine's heart and makes her mentally and physically weak. She becomes very ill and suffers a lot seeing Heathcliff marrying someone else. she says to Heathcliff, "You and Edgar have broken my heart... You have killed me—and thriven on it, I think." (pp. 195-196). This shows how deeply she is hurt by Heathcliff's behavior and how it leads to her death.

Finally, his vengeance and obsession with Catherine lead to his tragic death. His sufferings, starting with the separation from Catherine and the cruel treatment he receives from others, turn him bitter and revengeful, which destroys not only others but also Catherine as well as him. After the death of Catherine, he finds no peace as he is constantly in pain and broken inside. As he says, "Oh, God! it is unutterable! I cannot live without my life! I cannot live without my soul!" (p. 207). It means that Catherine was everything to him, his life and soul, and without her, he feels empty and lifeless. In the end, he stops eating, becomes restless, and wanders in the moors. On the night of his death, he is found lying by the open window with a calm look on his face as if he has finally joined Catherine in death. His revenge not only destroys others but also leads to his own destruction.

Heathcliff's vengeance symbolically mirrors the ecological apocalypse. His revenge, caused by the cruel and selfish behavior of Hindley and the Linton family, destroys not only others but also himself. They treat him unfairly and without kindness, which turns him bitter and full of hate. In the same way, when humans have an anthropocentric relationship with nature and use it only for their own benefit, it leads to ecological retributions. These retributions cause an ecological apocalypse that brings death and destruction to everything, whether it is human beings, other living creatures, or nature itself. Heathcliff's revenge leads to suffering, destruction, and chaos. Similarly, when nature strikes back, it leads to disasters like floods, storms, and climate change, which harm both human beings and the environment itself.

4.7. Ecocentrism: The Key to Shared Survival

An ecocentric relationship means respecting and valuing nature as equal to human life. In this way of thinking, humans live in balance with the environment. They do not exploit the nature and take care of the land, animals, and natural resources, and only use what they truly need. In turn, nature provides enough for their need. This kind of relationship helps protect the nature and all living beings. When people live with respect for nature, it leads to a healthy and safe environment for everything.

In the novel, after all the deaths and chaos, Hareton and Cathy develop love relationship and then they get married. earlier, there is chaos and destruction. Hindley and Linton family's anthropocentric relationship with Heathcliff makes him revengeful and as a result he destroys his enemies as well as his beloved Catherine and also himself. It demonstrates that anthropocentrism brings death and destruction which is then replaced by an ecocentric relationship of Hareton and Cathy that brings peace and hope to Wuthering Heights.

Hareton, on the one side, represents nature. Even though he is the son of Hindley, his father ignores and neglects him after his mother dies. When Heathcliff takes control of Wuthering Heights, he raises Hareton in the same way he was raised; without love, care, and education. He grows up wild, rough, and uneducated, behaving more like a servant than the true heir of Wuthering Heights. He is described as, "He was never taught to read or write; never rebuked for any bad habit which did not annoy his keeper." (p. 243). Like Heathcliff, Hareton is shaped not by society, but by the harsh environment around him. This makes him a representative of nature.

On the other hand, Cathy, the daughter of Edgar and the last member of the Linton family, represents the civilized side of life. Like her father, she is gentle, well-mannered, and educated. She knows how to read and write, and she speaks politely.

The relationship between Cathy and Hareton is an ecocentric relationship. Cathy learns to respect, love, and care for Hareton, who represents nature. Even though he is rough and uneducated, she does not look down on him. Instead, she helps him read and treats him with kindness. As a result, Hareton also opens his heart to her, and they fall in love. Their bond is based on care, balance, and harmony. In the end, they get married, and their love brings a new beginning. The last generation, instead of fighting, chooses peace and understanding. Wuthering Heights, which was once full of pain and destruction, becomes a place of love and life. In a nutshell, an ecocentric relationship is the best and most beautiful way for both nature and humans to survive. When humans live with love, care, and respect for nature, nature gives back even more. It provides us with food, water, air, beauty, and peace. As the relationship of Cathy and Hareton heals the Wuthering Heights. In the same way, care for nature can heal the world. So, ecocentrism is not just about nature; it is also about love, harmony, and the survival of all living things, including nature itself.

5. Conclusion

The study focused on the character of Heathcliff, who represents nature. His interactions with Mr. Earnshaw, Hindley, and the Linton family show two different ways

of dealing with nature. Mr. Earnshaw treats Heathcliff with love and care. This is an example of an ecocentric relationship. On the other hand, Hindley and the Lintons treat Heathcliff with cruelty and pride. This is an example of an anthropocentric relationship. The narrative clearly displays that the ecocentric way brings peace and life, while the anthropocentric way leads to pain and destruction.

However, the story does not end in darkness. There is hope. At the end of the novel, a new generation appears. Cathy and Hareton slowly grow close to each other. Cathy comes from a refined background, and Hareton is rough and uneducated. But she helps him learn, and he opens his heart to her. Their relationship is based on kindness and balance. It shows a return to an ecocentric view of life. Their love brings peace back to Wuthering Heights. This teaches us that even after destruction, healing is possible if humans choose to respect and care for nature again.

To sum up, the tragic story of Heathcliff in the novel *Wuthering Heights* mirrors the tragic tale of nature. Through the lens of ecocriticism, it answers the question about survival. The two main ecocritical terms, called anthropocentrism and ecocentrism, are like two paths in front of human beings. Anthropocentrism leads to the destruction of both people and nature. On the other hand, ecocentrism helps both humans and nature to survive. So, the choice is in their hands. If people want to live in peace and save the planet for future generations, they must build a caring and respectful relationship with nature. If they continue with the selfish way, the result will be death, destruction, and apocalypse.

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