

# Emily Brontë's 'Sense of Place' as Portrayed in Her Literary Works.

Pabasara Ponnampereuma  
Department of English Language  
Teaching  
University of Kelaniya  
p.ponnampereuma95@gmail.com

**Abstract**— *'Sense of Place' is a theory that defines the emotional attachment individuals develop with specific locations, encompassing both positive and negative feelings. It can be directly applied to the analysis of the Victorian writer Emily Brontë's portrayals of her house in Yorkshire moors where she grew up. It is reported that she loved her house, and it provided her with a constant back drop for her imaginative thinking and creative writing. It is assumed that the landscape seen through its windows and the sounds heard while being inside it frequently inspired most of the locational portrayals in her poetry and fiction. In consideration of Emily Brontë's romantic attachment to her home, the present study intends to explore her own sense of place as portrayed in her works. Accordingly, it pursues the research questions, "How is Emily Brontë's sense of place portrayed in her works, 'Wuthering Heights', 'Remembrance' and 'Fall, leaves, fall?' The methodology involves a thematic analysis of her biography by Edward Chitham, 'A Life of Emily Brontë' under the three themes, 'Emily Brontë's sensitivity towards nature and the environment,' 'Emily Brontë's emotional intensity,' and 'her imaginary encounters with recurring patterns of the orphans and abandoned characters.' The findings of the present study foreground that Emily Brontë's was heavily influenced by her romantic perception of the beauty of nature and her identification of the therapeutic power of nature as portrayed through her characters. According to her, nature tends to improve the quality of relationships among humans while showing the ways in which their deterioration starts due to the imbalance of their emotions including the sense of being abandoned.*

**Keywords**— *Emily Brontë, Fall leaves fall, Remembrance, Sense of place, Wuthering Heights.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

Reference [7] 'Sense of Place' describes the atmosphere of a place and the quality of its environment, which gives a certain unique sense of well-being which makes the person return there often. Reference [4] points out Emily Brontë depicted Heathcliff and Cathy as inhabitants of the moors who created an ingrained bond with the landscape around

them. Their attachment towards each other has been growing strongly. Subsequently, their love has delved through the moors. Simultaneously, Emily's self has been embedded in the characters of the novel through reflecting their behavioral patterns and their interactions with other characters. Reference [2] mentioned that Brontë was able to write a fantastic gothic novel, *Wuthering Heights* because of her interest in the moors since childhood. She used to listen to her housekeeper's folktales related to the moors and she was well – acquainted with both folktales and fairy tales. *Wuthering Heights* has become famous all over the world because of the writer's depiction of irresistible love between a couple who was not able to realize their love when they were alive and yearning for a reunion after death. Simultaneously, her poem, *Remembrance* also connotated the love which inspired in the same context as above. In the novel, *Wuthering Heights*, Heathcliff yearned for Catherine's love after her death. Similarly, the narrator of the poem, *Remembrance*, wishes her lover to be with her after his death. Accordingly, it elucidates Emily's re-creation of the same story in two different contexts. On the other hand, her poem, *Fall leaves fall* connotated the idea that the abandoned lover is in deep sorrow who meticulously expressed worried emotions through nature.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### A. Brontë's life

Reference [5] Brontë's life and the works are integrated a combination of her sharp intelligence and the volatile range of the emotions, and she pursued her abandoned self and the intense feelings through the manner of poetry and novel. Moreover, Brontë's home was 'Haworth Parsonage' which was a four-square house, facing the gales from high moors and brooding over churchyard tombs below. Reference [5] further explained Brontë loved her house as much as any of the family members because it provided a constant back drop for her reading, writing and thinking. Brontë loved looking outside of the window. She could see the church yard and the church tower. Brontë loved the west wind which blew across from these moors from Lancashire. That is the environment that Brontë have been surrounded with. In such a context, Brontë created her fictional characters to live through the moors. Reference [4] "the inhabitants of the moors, most notably

Heathcliff and Cathy, developed such an ingrained bond with the landscape around them that the landscape becomes more representative of their self". In that manner, she used to create her own sense of place with dark and deep moorlands which she could see from outside of her window including the life that she had spent inside of the parsonage with less interaction with the outside world. Mostly, she enjoyed her life with her family members. Consequently, Brontë's participation in play acting and daily walks in the moorlands specifically influenced both of her poetry and novel. In addition, Reference [5] mentions that Brontë's poetry suggests her sensitivity towards the nature and the around. Her capacity for the sensitivity towards nature can be reflected as follows,

When there was a period of high wind, Emily had written the poem with the title, loud without wind was roaring. In those poetry lines, Emily recalls her childhood with the moments when Emily and Anne rose at dawn in order to run across the moors near Haworth [5].

#### B. Brontë's Sense of Place.

Brontë's faculty of imagination is powerful. Reference [11] mentions the imaginative world that was created by Brontë was healthier than the reality. The life that she had spent in Yorkshire moors had been reflected in her works. On the other hand, Reference [9] mentions that Brontë was heavily influenced by the nature of rural Yorkshire that was surrounded by rolling hillsides and sweeping landscapes. Brontë had the powerful chains of the words which depicted the visualization of the open scenery of her surrounding, the moors, clouds, wind, sunlight, grey stones, mosses of heather. Her works have exposed the restless soul of Brontë herself. Reference [9] has further illustrated that her emotional intensity has been naturally shared with her eminent work of art, *Wuthering Heights*. The loss of her mother has remained as a subconscious trauma to Emily. Furthermore, the separation from the beloved was such a recurrent experience in Emily's childhood. Accordingly, it seems that her works have been integrated the same themes of separation and reunion more often. Reference [1] points out Brontë had a mysterious habit of creating fantasy worlds within which she repeated certain patterns. She used to put together all her obsessive thoughts in such a world. This world inhabited all her obsessive thoughts. Furthermore, Reference [6] mentions the creative writer is a neurotic individual, and the work of art is the expression of the unconscious mind of the individual. Reference [1] shows that both the exploration of the personal life of Brontë and the story of *Wuthering Heights* revealed Brontë as a neurotic woman who lived in an imaginative world where she was able to gratify her secret wishes. The unfortunate state of Brontë was further ignited her severe traumatic childhood experiences and the rigid social

circumstances of the Victorian society. Accordingly, the recurring themes of loss and separation and the recurring patterns of the orphaned and abandoned characters were showcased throughout Brontë's works. Reference [1] further mentions that Brontë's personal experiences, obsession with the fear of loss that she had experienced in her childhood had been depicted in her works.

### III. METHODOLOGY

The present research uses qualitative research design. Thematic analysis has been used to analyze Edward Chitham's *A Life of Emily Brontë (1987)*, a biography of the writer's life. Subsequently, the novel, *Wuthering Heights (2002)* and the poems, *Remembrance* and *Fall leaves fall* have further been analyzed using thematic analysis.

### IV. RESULTS AND EVALUATION

#### A. Brontë's the application of Sense of Place in 'Wuthering Heights'

##### 1. Emily Brontë's sensitivity towards nature and the environment

Brontë was heavily influenced by nature of rural Yorkshires that which was surrounded by rolling hillsides and the sweeping landscapes. The beauty and the serenity of nature had been depicted several occasions in the story. Yet, the most effective instances have been selected for the present study. Accordingly at the beginning of the novel, Brontë has introduced the principal location of the novel and its relation towards nature and the surrounding.

'Wuthering Heights' is the name of Mr. Heathcliff's dwelling. Wuthering being a significant provincial adjective, descriptive of the atmospheric tumult to which its station is exposed in stormy weather. Pure, bracing ventilation they must have always up there, indeed: one may guess the power of the north wind, blowing over the edge, by the excessive slant of a few stunted first at the end of the house [10].

Brontë has referred to the healing power of nature towards her characters in the novel. After Emily was healed thanks to the well-care of Mr. Linton. Emily was amazed to see the surroundings. She was fascinated by the nature of the moors. Emily is in a discussion with Mr. Linton. Both were amazed by nature which has been taken priority in their talk. Furthermore, nature has been acting as a backdrop of developing their relationships. As soon as Catherine was cured, she was happy to see nature. Simultaneously, it brings back her memories of *Wuthering Heights*.

These are the earliest flowers at the Heights!" She exclaimed. They remind me of soft thaw winds, warm sunshine, and nearly melted snow. I only see two white spots on the whole range of moors the sky is blue, and the larks are singing. Catherine: last spring at this time, I was longing to have you under this roof now, I wish you were a mile or two up those hills; the air blows so sweetly, I feel that it would cure you [10]. Not only that, but the characters have also been healed because of nature. The presence of nature improves the quality of their relationships with each other. Catherine Linton was quarrelling with Linton Heathcliff on the moors. On the contrary, nature

acted as a facilitator to cure their moods. Nature makes both to be in a good and pleasant spirit. Every detail of nature is much appreciated. It seems that Brontë herself gives attention to every small detail of the nature.

He said the pleasantest manner of spending a hot July day was lying from morning till evening on a bank of heath in the middle of the moors, with bees humming dreamily about among the bloom, and the larks singing high up overhead blue sky and bright sun shining steadily and cloudlessly [10].

## 2. *Emily Brontë's emotional intensity*

Brontë is well known for the emotional intensity of her works. Her narrative is emotionally unique because not only does her character experience certain emotions, but the readers too are also able to deep dive in those emotions with the characters. Her usage of emotions is in different layers. Mr. Lockwood had been facilitated in a room in Wuthering Heights which had been announced to not to be used. Subsequently, Mr. Lockwood was compelled to experience a ghostly dream. He had encountered the ghost of Catherine, who emotionally lamented over mentioning she had been waiting for Heathcliff for over 20 years. The readers have experienced intense emotions of Catherine through Brontë. The readers might not be afraid yet feel sorry for the isolated spirit. Or else, the readers might feel shocked and the abandoned because no one has expected this gothic atmosphere in the middle of the romance story. This scenario has provided much evidence that Emily had a need to create love that had gone beyond the graveyard.

let me in – let me in! Who are you? .... ‘Catherine Linton,’ it replied shiveringly. I’m home; I’d lost my way on the moor!’ It’s twenty years’, mourned the voice, ‘twenty years, I have been a wait for twenty years [10].

Catherine Earnshaw used to hang out with Heathcliff on the moors. Suddenly, as she is encountered by Edgar Linton, she has forgotten Heathcliff. Simultaneously, she mentioned that it is risky to marry Heathcliff. Yet, she expressed her love towards Heathcliff. She mentioned the following to her servant, Ellen’. Her parole seemed to sound emotionless. If she loves Heathcliff to such an extent, she should accept Heathcliff with whatever circumstances that he has. She should not forget Heathcliff at the presence of Edgar Linton.

He shall never know how I love him; and that, not because he’s handsome, but because he’s more myself than I am. Whatever our souls are made of, his and mine are the same, Linton is different.” My love for Linton is like the foliage in the woods. My love for Heathcliff resembles the eternal rock beneath [10].

Brontë was able to depict the chaotic nature of Catherine who seemed to start loving her childhood friend after getting married to sophisticated Edgar Linton. Edgar was angry about the indecent behavior

of Heathcliff at his own home and requested Catherine to select between the two. Catherine was ashamed of herself. She knew Edgar was talking with a point that she was not able to bear. She got sick for a longer week, which caused damage to her emotional balance. Moreover, Isabella Linton is a woman who again lost her emotional balance due to her being a jealousy, desperate, helpless and frustrated wife of Heathcliff. She has written this letter to Nelly,

Is Mr. Heathcliff a man? If so, is he mad? And, if not, is he a devil? I shan’t tell my reasons for making this inquiry; but I beseech you to explain, if can, what I have married to that is [10].

Brontë shows the ways in which the person’s deterioration started due to the imbalance of the emotions. Emotions play a significant role in every person’s life. Furthermore, the death of Catherine Linton happened solely because of Heathcliff’s presence. Before Heathcliff came, the life of Edgar and Catherine was a happy one. After Heathcliff became a gentleman, Catherine had seen two capable lovers: Heathcliff and Edgar. She had emotionally drained. Catherine had showcased a wild and a passionate love towards Heathcliff. That’s why, when Heathcliff had come to visit Catherine at her sickbed, she could not resist kissing Heathcliff while forgetting Edgar Linton.

He neither spoke, nor lost his hold for some five minutes, during which period he bestowed more kisses than ever he gave in his life before. Edgar will not hurt us [10].

However, Heathcliff was immensely worried about the death of Catherine. He seemed to be pure with his expressions and emotions. He only loved Catherine. He did not love Isabella though he married her. The death of Catherine had made Heathcliff to be the demon of Wuthering Heights. He had become a mentally imbalanced person who wanted to take revenge on Edgar Linton. He wanted to make the reunion of her son, Linton Heathcliff and Catherine’s daughter, Catherine Linton. During the last days of Heathcliff, he had shown a strange behavior where he went to the moors and always his mind was haunted by Catherine. The following few lines were uttered by Heathcliff intensely.

You said I killed you, haunt me then, the murdered do haunt their murders. I believe ghosts have wandered on earth. Be with me always. Take any form, only do not leave me in this abyss, where I cannot live without my soul [10].

## 3. *The recurring patterns of the orphaned and abandoned characters*

At the beginning of the novel, Heathcliff arrived ‘Wuthering Heights’ as an orphaned boy who is without the parents. The young Heathcliff had been treated much unfairly by Hindley Earnshaw. Hindley Earnshaw had been the beast of the ‘Wuthering Heights.’ The same footsteps have been taken by Heathcliff. He had become the Master of Wuthering Heights, and he treated them badly for the young Hareton Earnshaw. Catherine Earnshaw had married Mr. Edgar

Linton. So, she became ‘Catherine Linton.’ Subsequently, their daughter had been named as ‘Catherine Linton.’ The names have been repeated. Then, the sons of Heathcliff and Isabella Linton had been named Linton Heathcliff.’ When the two kids were playing at Wuthering Heights, they were able to

find the goods of first Catherine and Heathcliff. It seemed that Emily was trying to share the emotional weight of her heart with her readers through repeated character cycles. There are three main characters as follows, Catherine, Heathcliff and Linton whose presence often had been appeared in the story. In addition, specifically the abandoned, helpless and parentless child and the man who becomes a beast due to the death of loved ones appeared repeatedly through the characters; Hindley Earnshaw, Heathcliff and Harethon Earnshaw.

When Catherine and Linton had thought of playing ball, they were able to find the hoops, battle doors and shuttlecocks which named C and H. So, Catherine mentioned that she 'wished to have C., because that stood for Catherine, and the H. might be stood for Heathcliff [10].

B. *Brontë's application of Sense of Place in 'Remembrance.'*

1. *Emily Brontë's sensitivity towards nature and the environment*

Nature plays a vital role because the narrator depicts her despair emotions while referring the nature. In that manner, the emotions of the narrator have been reflected through nature. The narrator is in utter despair due to the death of her lover. The narrator is still reminiscence of her dead lover who is lying beneath the deep snow. That's why, she mentions 'Cold in the earth—and the deep snow piled above thee, Far, far removed, cold in the dreary grave!' She mentions that she lives because of her memory of him. Their loving memories are with the environment, with the 'mountain, northern shore which is covered with fern leaves.' The readers can visualize the autumn period where the dead leaves have touched the earth and are covered with leaves. The intensity of the emotions of the narrator have been projected through the visuals of nature. The cold earth and the dead leaves provide the melancholy atmosphere that the narrator is currently living by. Moreover, the emotions of despair, disappointment, yearning, isolation and love are depicted with intensity.

Cold in the earth—and fifteen wild Decembers, From those brown hills, have melted into spring: Faithful, indeed, is the spirit that remembers. After such years of change [3].

2. *Emily Brontë's emotional intensity*

She survived for the past fifteen years without the presence of her lover. Yet, her soul is immensely grateful towards her lover. That's why she has mentioned that though the years have passed, her suffering without his presence continues. Moreover, her infidelity towards her dead lover is surprisingly marvelous because she confesses that other men has come her way, yet she rejects them all for the sake of her loyalty towards her dead lover. That's why, she

has mentioned that "Other desires and other hopes beset me, hopes which obscure, but cannot do thee wrong!". The narrator seemed to be hopeless and helpless without the presence of his lover because all her life's blessings have been received with the presence of her lover. In that manner, she believes that all her life's blessings were gone into the grave with him. Specifically, the following verse of the poem is echoed in Emily's novel, *Wuthering Heights*. The verse is, 'Down to that tomb already more than mine.' In the above novel, Catherine Earnshaw mentions that 'Heathcliff is more myself than I am' The above scenario showcased Emily's depiction of intensified passionate love which has become hopeless because of the death of her lover. Yet, she celebrates the unrequited love which is the most suffocating. She compares her lover to the tomb and deeply in love with his tomb. The narrator questioned how she loves another man after tasting the divine love of the man who lies beneath the soil. Her world is empty without him. She mentions that 'Once drinking deep of that divinest anguish, how could I seek the empty world again?' She compared the love that she shared with the man is like, drinking a divinest drink and she is in desperate state and questions how she will taste another mediocre drink because she knows the exact taste of the divine drink. She had become abandoned in this world without the presence of her lover. Surprisingly, the exact situation has been echoed in Heathcliff's response to the death of Catherine.

3. *The recurring patterns of the orphaned and abandoned characters*

In Brontë's novel, *Wuthering Heights*, the orphaned and the abandoned characters were recurrent occasionally. Similarly, in the present poem, the narrator is an abandoned lover who becomes isolated in the world without her lover beside.

C. *Brontë's application of Sense of Place in 'Fall leaves fall.'*

1. *Emily Brontë's sensitivity towards nature and the environment*

Brontë mentions that every leaf whispers a good thing to her. Yet, these leaves belong to a tree which puts down their own leaves during the season of the Autumn. Ironically, the above verse shows that the narrator is no longer happy. Yet, she mentions that she is happy to see the snow where the rose should grow. It seems that she does not have anything to be happy with. Nature itself facilitates the melancholic mood of the narrator. Her strong mind is depicted because she is ready to be happy when everything is dreary and dull. In that manner, nature has been used as an instrument to communicate the moods of the characters.

2. *Emily Brontë's emotional intensity*

Brontë meticulously uses the natural elements in order to highlight the emotional intensity of the characters. The title of the topic itself depicts the melancholy mood of the narrator. Though the season of the fall has left the narrator, which has returned towards her within an instant. The night melancholic hours rather than the happy and joyful hours in her life. The narrator is utterly sad. It seems she is abandoned. That might be the reason that she is able to celebrate the melancholic moments with so much power visual imagery. is longer than the daytime. The above factor connotes the idea that the narrator must go

through longer darker and

Fall, leaves, fall; die, flowers, away;

Lengthen night and shorten day;

Every leaf speaks bliss to me

Fluttering from the autumn tree.

I shall smile when wreaths of snow

Blossom where the rose should grow;

I shall sing when night's decay

Ushers in a drearier day [3].

### 3. *The recurring patterns of the orphaned and abandoned characters*

The narrator seemed to be lonely who feels life as monotonous and boring because the nights are longer and the day times are short. The narrator is not accompanied by anyone. No human is available to speak bliss to them. No human is available to smile at them. Instead of that, the narrator lives alone with nature. The narrator suffers from the feeling of getting abandoned as they are happy to welcome winter over the spring and sing along their dull and monotonous days.

## V. CONCLUSION

As Brontë had lived with nature, she had made her narrators of the poems to be with nature. Accordingly, one can understand the fact that Brontë's sense of place has been depicted through her works. Specifically, her sense of place has been limited to her surroundings, her emotions and Brontë as a lonely person how does she console herself at the presence of the nature. Nature has done the work of another human when it comes to the context of Brontë. Her life was limited to her love for nature. Specifically, towards moors. The emotions have been directly impacted by nature. She has depicted the abandoned character who is in search of love. Nature has played a significant role in recognizing the true emotions of the characters. Accordingly, Brontë's works are just repeated patterns of human relationships. Specifically, the lover is abandoned by the other lover. Therefore, he/she is in desperate search towards love. The above-mentioned scenarios were repeated in both the novel, *Wuthering Heights*, the poems, *Remembrance* and *Fall leaves fall*. Specifically, the abandoned, helpless and parentless child and the man who becomes a beast due to the death of loved ones appeared repeatedly through the characters. Nature has constantly enriched such emotional human relationships. In that manner, Brontë's sense of place contributed to the production of her works including shaping her writing career. Brontë represents the European culture in the Victorian society. Accordingly, the future recommendations can be made towards research on the reflection of sense of place in South Asian culture

including the ways in which the cultural, social and other political factors have been contributed on the flourishing of writer's perspective.

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