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خوانشی از *بلندی های بادگیر* امیلی برونته بر اساس روانکاوی فروید

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چکیده:

تلاش برای ارائه معنایی دقیق و منطقی از رمان *بلندی های بادگیر* اثر امیلی برونته، از زمان چاپ آن در سال ۱۸۴۸، چالشی روزافزون بوده است. تفسیرهای فراوان، اما متناقض موجود، که هر کدام از آنها با استفاده از عنصری خاص از رمان، سعی در استنتاج تفسیری تازه نموده اند، ضرورت چنین تحقیقی را به هنگام می نمایاند. این تحقیق بر راههای کسب معنایی واقعی تر و منطقی تر از رمان پرداخته است. پژوهش حاضر این امر را می نمایاند که برای حل معما و واشکافی نشانه های رمز گونه رمان، بررسی افکار خودآگاه و ناخودآگاه نویسنده، که در درون متن نهفته شده، الزامی می باشد. شیوه تحقیق استفاده شده، نقد روانکاوانه فروید معروف به سیره نفسیه می باشد. نظریات فروید به این خاطر بکار گرفته شده است که در دهه های اخیر شاهد مراجعت روزافزون نظریه پردازان به فروید، به ویژه در زمینه سیره نفسیه بوده ایم. یافته های این پژوهش، بر اهمیت چند موضوع دلالت دارد: نخست اینکه، امیلی برونته در محیطی کاملا بازدارنده بزرگ شده و او به گونه ای وسواسی اقدام به خلق عوالم خیالی می کند که در آنها برخی از الگوها مکرراً تکرار می گردد. دوم اینکه، تقریبا همه شخصیت های رمان، تحت تاثیر فقدان مادر، نه تنها متحمل فرایندهای اندوه‌گینی، مالیخولیا و هیستری می شوند، بلکه از مشکلات درونی نیز رنج می برند. سوم اینکه، در *بلندی های بادگیر*، مذهب، تمدن، و قواعد مرسوم رمان نویسی عهد ویکتوریای انگلستان به طعنه طرد شده اند. نتیجه کلی که می توان از این پژوهش استخراج کرد، این است که امیلی برونته انسانی روان رنجور بوده است که وسواس های فکری ضمیر ناخودآگاهش—یعنی علاقه روانکاوانه به مادر و عداوت با پدر—در رمان *بلندی های بادگیر* فرا افکنده شده اند. در نهایت، این تحقیق، جهت رسیدن به معنای واقعی متن، بطور کلی به کاربرد دیدگاه روانکاوانه و مخصوصا سیره نفسیه توصیه می کند.

کلید واژه ها: امیلی برونته، *بلندی های بادگیر*، روان رنجوری، عقده ادیپ، وسواس، فرافکنی، نماد پدر، جا به جایی

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Since the publication of *Wuthering Heights* in 1847, literary critics have taken widely different views about the novel's meaning. Unorthodox in its views, it has inspired a remarkable diversity of interpretations. Marxist critics like Terry Eagleton and Susan Meyer have noted that the novel reflects the economic realities of a range of class positions, pointing to the class differences that set in motion the primary conflicts of the novel (*Myths* 105-7; "Reverse" 163-4). Since the 1970s, feminist criticism has revolutionized the reading of the novel and done wonders for the reputation of Emily Brontë. Feminist approaches of critics such as Sandra Gilbert, Susan Gubar and Margaret Homans have tended to see Emily Brontë as a revolutionary feminist who protested against society's sexism by railing against patriarchal constraints and advocating the ascendancy of the psychological self (*Madwoman*, 248-308; *Women,*104-162). These critics' main goal is to show that *Wuthering Heights* is the taming of the masculine world of savage by feminine domesticity (Armstrong, "Emily Brontë" 98-106). Another major area of interpretation of Emily Brontë has been broadly psychoanalytic including critics like Bernard Paris and Marianne Thormählen. These critics have examined various psychological terms—like merger, separation and egoistic behavior —to unlock the mysteries of the novel (*Imagined*, 240-61; "Lunatic", 183-97). While all of these standpoints are useful and valid, yet it seems that Charlotte was right in declaring that critics have failed to do *Wuthering Heights* justice and the difficulty of finding a true interpretation of the novel is yet to be overcome (Charlotte, "Biographical" 363).

In her essay "The Brontës" (2006), Margaret Homans argues that part of this difficulty is due to the novel's and accordingly Emily Brontë's belief that language cannot convey reality. She states that the novel's convoluted linguistic structure "fails

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readers' efforts to find clear meanings" (281). Homans believes that Emily herself
warns the readers about the "misleading and inadequate nature of linguistic and visual
signs" (280). She notes, for instance, how Lockwood misinterprets young Cathy as
Heathcliff's wife and then as Hareton's; or how Lockwood "mistakes a heap of dead
rabbits for pet cats" (281). Homans states that the novel withholds any certain
knowledge and accordingly "obstructs the readers' access" to the latent meaning
behind the vessels created by it.

In a similar way, Joseph Hillis Miller claims that the reader's difficulty in
Interpreting *Wuthering Heights* stems from the novel's own enigmatic structure. He
argues that the novel is like Wuthering Heights itself. The house that Lockwood
discovers in his two visits at Wuthering Heights has "various thresholds: the outer
gate, the door of the house, the door into the kitchen, [and] the stairs and halls leading
to an upstairs room". As he progresses into the house Lockwood finally finds the
"interior of the interior, the oaken closet with a bed in it which stands in a corner of
this inner room". Wuthering Heights, as Miller states, "is presented as a kind of
Chinese box of enclosures within enclosures." The novel, too, according to Miller,
with its intricate structure of flashbacks, time shifts, multiple perspectives, and
narrators within narrators leaves the reader wandering in search of a deeper
perspective (*Disappearance,* 165-6).

Akin to what Homans and Miller argue, Stevie Davies explains that part of this
difficulty is owing to Emily Brontë's conception of reality which he concludes to be
"intricately relativistic" (97). He draws attention to the architecture of Catherine's
bedroom, declaring that the "window-within-a-room-within-a-room" structure of the
bedroom is a parable of Emily Brontë's conception of reality (97). Davies continues

that Emily Brontë 's framed and fragmented presentation of reality mocks the reader in his/her attempt to come to any conclusions, asserting,

> the author never tells you what to think, or how to interpret the material which comes filtered through so many people's inset dreams, anecdotes, letters, hieroglyphs, diaries, snatches of song, reminiscences, inscriptions on houses and signposts. You have to draw deductions as you do in life itself, whose riddles and clues no authority can conclusively solve, and it is just to be hoped that you will be a little less idiotic than Lockwood […] in coming to your conclusions (97-8).

One might ask then what is the true interpretation of the novel? How can we make sense of the fragments Emily pieces together?

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This thesis aims to present an interpretation of *Wuthering Heights* by disclosing how the unconscious dimension of the author is operating within the text. There are two assumptions behind this thesis: First, that Emily's fiction can be studied from the framework of psychoanalysis when the realm of unconscious is taken into account; and second, that Emily creates a phantasy world, namingly *Wuthering Heights*, in which she fulfills some of her repressed desires.

The significance of this study lies in the fact that an analysis of the manifest elements of the novel will lead to the latent and unconscious detriments of its creator's psyche, and eventually to a closer interpretation of the text. It will demonstrate how the author's repressed impulses are projected and transferred onto the novel's characters, plot, imagery and structure. This analysis is significant in that it will generate and substantiate the idea that rejection of authority and psychoanalytic love of the mother forms the core of Emily Brontë's writings.

To discover a truer meaning of the text, this thesis offers a biographical analysis

of Emily Brontë 's life as well as a close reading of her fictional work *Wuthering Heights* (1847). In particular, I focus on the way that Emily grew up as a neurotic person to create such a phantasy world, while also attempting to determine which of the repressed materials she was unconsciously yearning to actualize in that world.

In order to appreciate Emily Brontë 's unconscious desires and actualization of her unresolved conflicts in her phantasy world, a basic knowledge of her life as a creative dreamer and writer would be helpful. Felicia Gordon, in her *A Preface to the Brontës* (1989), gives perhaps the least biased and the most complete account of a complex woman who was alternately considered as a devout Evangelical, an agnostic, or even an atheist.

Emily was born in Yorkshire, July 1818, to Patrick Brontë, an Anglican clergyman and Maria Branwell Brontë. Becoming the curate of the church parsonage of Haworth, Patrick moved the family to Yorkshire. Emily had four siblings, Maria, Elizabeth, Charlotte, Ann and a brother, Patrick Branwell Brontë.

Emily's mother disappeared from the scene of life in 1821, leaving the children to be raised by their father. Gordon believes that Mr. Brontë had a crucial influence over the children's upbringing (16-17). His stories of Yorkshire life and his Irish forbears may have aroused some inspiration for Emily. Early in childhood, Emily, Charlotte and Branwell found endless entertainment in creative plays and often invented stories to be acted out. Fascinated by the toy soldiers, which were brought by Patrick Brontë upon his trip to Leeds, the children launched a new phantasy world which was conceived of an imaginary African kingdom called Angria. Probably "discontented with their inferior roles in Angria", Emily and Ann broke away from Charlotte and Branwell to set up a female governed imaginary realm called Gondal (Barnard, 45).

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Emily and Ann continued Gondal well into adulthood, recording their imaginings in both poetic and prose form. Though none of the prose about Gondal survives, much of Emily's poetry displays a shy person's desire for the resolve needed to face the world in which she felt uncomfortable. In her *Last Things: Emily Brontë's Poems* (2007), Janet Gezari claims that Gondal characters not infrequently seem to speak for Emily when they envision an unorthodox immortality, or apostrophize liberty (1-2). The poems, she argues, "are not the record, but the culmination of an experience that contains within it a reaction to the universe" (2).

Emily's creative dreaming and writing was not limited to her poems and much of her reputation rests upon her only novel *Wuthering Heights,* which according to some critics like Frank N. Magill and J. Hillis Miller developed out of her Gondal poems. Magill points to many Gondalian features, traceable through her poems and concludes that the novel grows directly from Gondal (259). Miller also comes to the same conclusion, noting that

> when Emily Brontë began to write *Wuthering Heights* she did not leave the world of the Gondal poems. She transposed into fictional form the vision of things which her poems express. Just as there is no real distinction between the Gondal poems and those which are direct expressions of Emily Brontë's own inner experience, so the same moral and metaphysical laws prevail in the novel as in the poems (*Disappearance,* 157).

Published in December 1847, *Wuthering Heights* baffled the critics with its seemingly unorthodox views. Melvin R. Watson points to this fact in his "Wuthering Heights and the Critics" (1949), arguing that since *Wuthering Heights* "did not conform to the accepted standards of Victorian novel writing", it was not well-received and many of the critics like Victor Sawdon Pritchett and Sheila Smith regarded the novel as morbid, violent, indelicate, and convention-defying work of

genius (245).

In "Unity With Nature in Wuthering Heights" (1946), Pritchett points to Emily's rejection of civilized society, contending that she is "not concerned with man and society, but with his unity with nature". That the novel owes nothing at all, he continues, to the general traditions of Victorian novel rests in the fact that the novel is naturally pagan and does not moralize (84-5). Such a charge is further leveled against the novel by Sheila Smith.

Smith believes that *Wuthering Heights* disregards orthodox morality by reflecting a "pagan world, centered on sexual passion […] which is constantly set against orthodox Christianity […] or the more lurid morality of Calvinistic sects such as Joseph's" (102). Smith assumes that by creating such a life, which transcends the restrictions of contemporary class prejudices, Emily rebuffs the "bourgeoisie morality of high Victorian society" which was often used as an instrument of repression (103).

This version of reality which challenges the class-ridden structure of the Victorian society, as Thomas Moser argues, had already been developed in Gondal saga. He believes the novel grows directly from Gondal. Moser states that Emily's "feminine longings" in Gondal poems are later echoed in the second generation of the novel, where it undergoes what Moser terms "feminization". He points to the reversal of roles happening in the ending of the novel where "Hareton allows Catherine to deprive him of his masculinity" and links his criticism of *Wuthering Heights* to the life of Emily. In Moser's words, the "feminization" of the poems and the novel, which exposes feminine longings for "freedom to feel and to act, is accompanied by a falling off in the work of art's artistry which accordingly portrays Emily as a "sexually deprived and frustrated old maid" (Ohmann, 911-2).

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We can see from this abbreviated account of Emily Brontës's writing career that she was obsessed with the idea of creating a phantasy world in which the patriarchy was ultimately abolished and the country was ruled by a female figure. As Brontë critics—like Gezari, Magill, and Moser, to name a few—have correspondingly argued, *Wuthering Heights*, growing out of Emily's earlier phantasy worlds—particularly Gondal poems—does not conform to the established conventions of Victorian novel writing and reveals Emily's feminine longings (*Last*, 1-2; *Cyclopedia*, 259; Ohmann, 911-2).

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My contention in this thesis is that approaching Emily Brontë's text through the paradigm of Freudian psychoanalysis opens it up to new interpretations. In her works, she seems to reveal her obsessional desire of rejecting the father figure and embracing the mother figure. In fact, many of her characters continue to suffer not only from the absence of their mothers but also from the cruelty of their fathers. Though this obsession has been touched upon by some critics like Laura Inman in "The Awful Event in *Wuthering Heights*"(2008) and Linda Gold in "Catherine Earnshaw: Mother and Daughter" (1985), its unconscious roots has seldom been broached by them.

When we turn to the existing criticism of *Wuthering Heights*, we find the literature abundant and its coherence striking. Different attitudes have been shown to the book and its author. In her "Emily Brontë in the Hands of Male Critics" (1971), Carol Ohmann gives a general review of how the novel has gained its recognition in its 120-history till 1970s. According to Ohmann, much of the literature produced in this time, including both criticism and appreciation, is affected by sexual prejudice (909). She believes that once the sex of the author was identified as a female, critical

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responses to it changed and the novel which was till then called "original" was placed in a familiar class "which was not in the central line of the literature" (908).

Another major review of the critical treatment of the novel has been done by Melvin R. Watson. Watson sheds light on certain themes which appear often enough "to provide a series of leitmotifs in this critical opera" (243). According to him, till 1920, all of the reviews "are no more than repetitions or variants of old themes" which either condemn or appreciate the novel (243). But since 1920, he maintains, we witness more "rational, sensible criticism" on the novel, which focuses on investigating various technical aspects of the book, as well as the question of the authorship, new literary comparisons and finally autobiographical interpretations which were partly influenced by Freudian psychology (245).

The autobiographical school of critics has shown diversity of reactions. Virginia Moore, for instance, tends to read the novel as a pure autobiography in which Emily "splits [her] personality to form not one but several characters". Thus, Moore concludes that Emily is "not only Heathcliff, but Catherine too, and a little of Ellen Dean" (260).

Watson examines other writers like Richard Chase who deal with more serious problems. According to Chase, *Wuthering Heights* was a rebellion against "the social customs of the day". He believes that Emily not only revolted against these customs, but also brought "the sexual and intellectual energy of the male" under women's control (260-1).

Such a diversity of opinions and reactions during the century after the publication of the novel proves how the novel in the first place advocates interpretations of widely varying emphasis and in the second place calls forth much more commentary. In the

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following years, each critic attempts to bring something to light by taking one element in the novel and extrapolating it to a total explanation. But, what is noticeable in such an attempt to present a rational explanation of the text is the lack of a study on the roots of such elements based on a Freudian psychoanalysis. Moreover, many of these critics have failed to note the influence of the unconscious on the creative work and accordingly have been unsuccessful to link such analysis to Emily' personal life. In effect, I am arguing for connecting the manifest content of the novel to the author's personal life in order to find a truer meaning and interpretation.

So far, critical reception of *Wuthering Heights* in psychoanalytic field has increasingly risen and has given critics many diverse elements for interpretation. Researchers like Margaret Homans, Kelly Hughes, Laura Inman and Linda Gold have tended to concentrate on certain concepts like repression, death, rebellion, religion and etc. These critics have found many to talk about in these concepts, and were quick to explore the various meanings of the novel.

Margaret Homans, for instance, in her work "Repression and Sublimation of Nature in *Wuthering Heights*" (1978), opens a discussion on the significant issue of the function of repression and sublimation in *Wuthering Heights.* She contends that Emily "always seems to bend her vision away from nature", since Emily avoids the direct presentation of the natural context (9). She declares that such an absence of the literal nature necessarily signals the repression of the nature. According to Homans,

> writing creates an order of priority. Ordinarily, a word presents itself as coming first to the reader, putting its referent in second place. The only way to preserve the priority of something is not to have it named, so that what is primary is just that which is left out of the text, and surely these omissions of descriptions of events in nature are significant holes. [….] Both Brontë and her Cathy avoid description of nature or of events in nature because there is no way to name nature without making it secondary.

Primary nature neither needs to be nor can be referred to (11).

Homans maintains that the repression of nature is also accompanied by a pattern of entrapment existing within the novel. She notes that the use of images like locked windows, "body as a trap for the soul", or "entrapment of one character by the will of another" indicates that the condition of "the narrative as a whole is some kind of entrapment", too (11). Later, Homans distinguishes two separate versions of nature in the novel, "the primal or literal, which is unseen or evaded, and the figurative, which thrives on the textual surface of the novel (12). That the primal nature is textually shunned in *Wuthering Heights*, Homans believes, is due to the fact that Emily finds language inadequate for representing nature or event in nature. Furthermore, based on Freudian concept of sublimation, Homans concludes that there might be "a psychic path in Brontë between nature and some primal force" (16). Therefore, nature functions as an "ideational representative" of something which is intrinsically unnamable and threatening. This threatening force is to be feared and whatever is associated with it is to be repressed. Thus, Homans comes to the point that Emily is "repressing, not nature, but what nature has come to represent" (16).

A notable feature of Homans' article, and arguably a weakness, is the idea that the novel, as a text, is considered to lack whatever is associated with the unconscious. Based on the Freudian proposition of the sublimation, Homans regards *Wuthering Heights* as an activity in which the repressed is re-repressed. This causes Homans to overlook a key Freudian belief that a work of art is necessarily a resurfacing of repressed desires in a displaced, distorted, and a condensed form. She claims, "it is not Brontë's but her fictional characters' repressions that have so disastrously returned" (18).

Homans' article, excellent as it is, fails to ask crucial questions at this point to express who is behind these fictional characters; what the goal of the creation of such characters is; whether the creator is a mentally healthy being; why she wrote a novel; and what it is that is truly being repressed. This is one of the lacunae I intend to address in my thesis, by paying particular attention to the role of the creative writer in creating such a world of phantasy and also by analyzing the manifestations of such repressions within the novel.

In a thesis entitled "The Freedom of the Soulful Self: An Examination of the Tension Between the Self and Society Within Wuthering Heights" (2006), Kelly Hughes focuses on the conflicts that exist between the innate self against the socially approved self. Hughes' main assertion is that Emily advocates the point that true satisfaction will be solely acquired "through the individual's fulfillment of the innate desires of their soul, not through conformity to popular expectations" (3). She observes that *Wuthering Heights* is a metaphysical novel, in which the soulful connection between Heathcliff and Catherine happens "outside the restrictions of society, in the freedom of their soulful selves" (23). Hughes claims that Emily asserted that such a connection existed beyond death, and the body was regarded as a place of confinement and restriction on the soul. For instance, Hughes examines Catherine Earnshaw's death and concludes that through her death Emily advocated the belief that physical death and accordingly releasing of the soul would free the individual's soul "from the constraining societal binds" that the person was suffering from and would ultimately allow his or her soul the freedom it desired (22).

Hughes argues that such a common theme, which is reflected within all of Emily's literary works, emanates from her personal life. According to Hughes, the isolation of