

An Interpretation of Emily Bronte's Gothic Complex in *Wuthering Heights*

FU Haijuan^{[a],*}

^[a]Shandong International University, Weihai, China.

*Corresponding author.

Received 17 November 2012; accepted 6 January 2013

Abstract

This thesis, adopting gothic criticism, attempts to analyze Emily Bronte's gothic complex in *Wuthering Heights* since it is the unique novel Emily has created and it is the mature embodiment of Emily Bronte's literary thoughts. This thesis tries to have a detailed and close interpretation of Emily's gothic complex in terms of the descriptions of the natural circumstances and settings, the portrayals of the main characters, and the profound love between the two protagonists. Meanwhile, this thesis also points out that Emily not only inherits gothic tradition, but also develops it. Then this thesis attempts to analyze the reasons of Emily's gothic complex from the social background and from her life experience.

Key words: *Wuthering Heights*; Emily Bronte; Gothic novel; Gothic complex

.....
FU Haijuan (2013). An Interpretation of Emily Bronte's Gothic Complex in *Wuthering Heights*. *Studies in Literature and Language*, 6(3), 53-59. Available from: <http://www.cscanada.net/index.php/sll/article/view/j.sll.1923156320130603.Z001>
DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.3968/j.sll.1923156320130603.Z001>
.....

INTRODUCTION

.....
Emily Bronte is a Victorian writer and she is considered to be one of the greatest novelists in English literature although in her lifetime she published only one novel—*Wuthering Heights*. And the novel is regarded as “a piece of exquisite work in world literature” (Sun Dongmei, 2001, p.2). The novel has experienced many ups and downs—from being criticized and ignored to being regarded as one of the best novels in the world, ever

since it was published in 1847. In 1948, the English writer William S. Maugham highly praised the novel as “one of the ten great novels in the world” (qtd. in Yang, 1983, p.408). Similarly, in May of 2002, in Norway, this remarkable novel was applauded again as one of a hundred classics of world literature in all times. And it is considered that Emily's novel has no equals in mode as well as in manner of writing. However, at the very beginning, when the novel was just published, Victorian readers found the book full of morbid psychologies and it made them feel terrible. Therefore, they thought that the book should be renamed as *Withering Heights*. From this, the readers can draw the conclusion that the book was criticized and deserted at that time. As time goes by, more and more people are showing their interests in this novel and especially after entering into the twentieth century, different scholars have tried to analyze the novel from different points of view, such as feminine consciousness, love and equality, archetypal criticism and Freudian psychoanalysis. However, after one problem about the novel is solved, another one arises and new problems come out now and then. Therefore, *Wuthering Heights* remains a riddle, and it is considered that the novel is a mysterious work. Meanwhile, Emily Bronte is regarded as the “Sphinx” in English literature (Pu, 2002, p.1).

In recent years, some experts and critics tend to analyze the work from the viewpoint of gothic novels. For example, in Xiao Minghan's *Gothic Tradition in English and American Literature*, written in 2001, in Pu Ruoxi's *Wuthering Heights and Gothic Tradition*, written in 2002, and in Lin Bin's *Female Gothic Studies in the West and Feminist Theories of Gender and Genre*, written in 2005, they all treat *Wuthering Heights* from the viewpoint of gothic novels.

This thesis attempts to investigate Emily Bronte's gothic complex in *Wuthering Heights* from the origins and features of gothic novel, and then tries to analyze

the reasons why she has such gothic complex from both the social background during that time and her personal experiences.

1. THE FEATURES OF GOTHIC NOVEL

Gothic novel is quite different from other novels and it has its special features. The following paragraphs will discuss its origins and features in detail.

1.1 The Origins of Gothic Novel

Gothic novel is one of the most fabulous types of novels in western literature which is prevalent from the end of the eighteenth century to the beginning of the nineteenth century, especially in England. "The gothic novel is a liberating phenomenon, which expands the range of possibilities for novelistic expression" (qtd. in Chen, 1986, p.260), and it is a kind of novel full of terrible and ghost-like things. "Gothic novel emphasizes the grotesque, mysterious, and desolate" (Shao, 2002, p.11).

The word "Goth" originally refers to the gothic tribe which belonged to the Germanic tribes that lived in North Europe. At that time, the gothic people were well known for their barbarous, robust and war-like characteristics. The word "gothic" did not mean anything else again in the following centuries. However, during the Renaissance time, many thinkers and artists began to use the word "gothic" to refer to a particular type of architecture which were mainly built during the Middle Ages (This period mainly took place from the twelfth century to the fifteenth century). The reason for this was that they thought those architectures were barbaric and were not the classical style that they admired. And the sharpest characteristic of those architectures had something to do with churches and monasteries. Almost all of those churches and monasteries during that time were built with pierce roof and narrow piers, and these buildings were decorated with depressing and funeral interiors. In the late half of the eighteenth century, to be exact, in 1764, a member of the English Parliament named Horace Walpole composed a novel which was named as *The Castle of Otranto* with the subtitle *A Gothic Story*. This novel is marked by mystery, violence and horror. And this marked the beginning of gothic novels. Similarly, a critic once said that, "it was Horace Walpole who introduced gothic novel to literature" (Li, 2005, p.3). The novel *The Castle of Otranto* was so popular that it was quickly imitated by other novelists after the appearance of it. Therefore, many gothic novelists and influential gothic novels appeared one after another, such as, *The Mysteries of Udolpho* by Ann Radcliff (1794), *The Monk* by Mathew George Lewis (1796), and *Frankenstein, or Modern Prometheus* by Mary Shelley (1818). These works became an inseparable part in western literature. Other works such as *The Old English Baron* (1778), *Recess or A Tale of Other Times* (1785), and *Kruitzner, the German's Tale* also played

an important role in the development of gothic novels. To some extent, the readers can find that from the late eighteenth century to the early nineteenth century, English novels were made up of gothic novels. When readers overlook the whole English society during that time, they may draw the conclusion that the appearance of gothic novels has something to do with the basis of English society, the basis of culture and thought, the influences of the Bible and the literary tradition. During that time, capitalists were developing quickly and steadily; under the influence of the enlightenment, bourgeoisie writers usually wrote novels in the way which reflected the features of both realism and rationalism. However, empiricism was prevalent then, and it had a sharp contrast with rationalism. Therefore, the conflicts between the two ideologies stimulate the appearance of gothic novels. The influence of the Bible on gothic novels can be seen from the theme, the portrayal of characters and the style of gothic novels. The last factor which is very important is the literary tradition, and this point can be learned from the connections between gothic novels and the old Greek and Roman literary tradition.

1.2 The Features of Gothic Novel

After reading gothic novels, readers are to find the following features. First, there are deserted castles on a lonely bleak mountain, either top or deep in an isolated valley or on an island—nobody can locate the place on the map or in the mind. For example, in William Beckford's *Vathek and Other Stories*, when the protagonist Vathek goes along a mountain and enters into a valley, ladders appear. By climbing the ladders, he enters into a supernatural place. Second, in gothic novels, there is always an unconventional secret in the castle. For example, in Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre*, Howard imprisons his crazy wife in an attic without being noticed by anyone until he is to get married with Jane Eyre. Third, super-natural things become natural in gothic novels. For example, in *Jane Eyre*, Jane hears Howard's cry although they live far away from each other. Fourth, the main character in gothic novels is usually a woman and she is always saved through a reunion with a loved one in the end. For example, in Ann Radcliff's *The Mysteries of Udolpho*, the protagonist, Emily, cannot escape her evil uncle's castle—Udolpho without the help of a suitor. Fifth, the male character is usually dark and gloomy, when referring to Heathcliff in *Wuthering Heights*, this point can be easily gained. And last, the atmosphere in gothic novels is depressing, and this can also be gained from *Wuthering Heights*. In *Wuthering Heights*, there are always heavy rains, roaring thunder and so on. To speak in a general way, a gothic novel usually contains a grotesque plot, which can be learned from the following three points. First, human being has some kind of relationship with ghost. Second, reality and super-natural things are usually mixed

together. Third, those who are dead may become alive again. And last, a gothic novel usually contains characters who act as tyranny, innocent young lady and apparition.

2. MANIFESTATIONS OF EMILY'S GOTHIC COMPLEX

From what have been stated above, it is obvious that *Wuthering Heights* can be analyzed from the viewpoint of gothic novels and readers can also see that this novel shows Emily Brontë's gothic complex. In the following paragraphs, manifestations of Emily Brontë's gothic complex will be discussed from the descriptions of the natural circumstances and settings, from the portrayals of the main characters, and from the profound love between the two main characters—Heathcliff and Catherine.

2.1 Descriptions of Natural Circumstances and Settings

After reading *Wuthering Heights*, readers may remember clearly the wild and stormy weather there. From what have been stated above—both wild weather and ancient, deserted castles are elements of gothic novels, Emily's gothic complex can be got from the descriptions in this novel.

Wuthering Heights is the main place where the story happens and it is located in the wild and isolated high moorland of Yorkshire in North England. Outside the manor is the endless moor without vitality; wild wind and heavy snow are common here in winter; and the inside of it, "the narrow windows are deeply set in the wall, and the corners defended with large jutting stones" (Brontë, 1994, p.46). And "a quantity of grotesque carving lavished over the front...I detected the date '1500'" (Brontë, 1994, p.46). These descriptions make the readers feel that the place is grotesque and mysterious. The following paragraphs will explain this in detail.

At the very beginning, Mr. Lockwood tells the readers that, "*Wuthering Heights* is the name of Mr. Heathcliff's dwelling...descriptive of the atmospheric tumult to which stone is exposed in stormy weather" (Brontë, 1994, p.46). From this narration, readers can guess the power of the north wind there, and have a general idea about the weather in that place. Not only the weather, the interior design of the manor and the inside circumstances are also wild, dark and gloomy for "The floor was of smooth, white stone...and other dogs haunted other recesses" (Brontë, 1994, p.47). And there, "wild dogs prowl on the carved front and low-bowed lattices where straggling gooseberry bushes seen at a distance" (Brontë, 1994, p.56). Everything described here is depressing and gloomy. As the readers go on reading, they can also find gothic descriptions of the settings. First, the light in the bedroom where Catherine once lives is dusky. Second,

the bed of her looks like a coffin in the darkness. Third, when old Earnshaw died, "All day had been flooding with rain" (Brontë, 1994, p.62). Fourth, the day when Heathcliff runs away from *Wuthering Heights*, "It was a very dark evening for summer, the clouds appeared inclined to thunder" and "About midnight...sending a clatter of stones and soot into the kitchen fire" (Brontë, 1994, p.124-125). And last, when Heathcliff dies, "The following evening was very wet; indeed, it poured down, till day-down" (Brontë, 1994, p.364). The dark evening, the wild storm, the roaring thunder, and the heavy rain and snow—all these natural phenomena are so vividly described that they show the author's familiarity with gothic writing skills and show her gothic complex. These descriptions are not only grotesque, but also terrible. And such descriptions of the natural circumstances lay the dark and gloomy foundations of the whole novel. Meanwhile, the descriptions of the settings make the gloomy atmosphere filled in the novel. Throughout the novel, readers can find many other such kind of descriptions. For example, in chapter ten, Nelly states, "Four weeks' torture...the terrible intimation of Kenneth that I need not expect to be out of doors until spring" (Brontë, 1994, p.130); and "the wind shifted from south to north-east...and snow" (Brontë, 1994, p.206).

2.2 Portrayals of the Main Characters

The portrayals of the main characters—Heathcliff and Catherine also show Emily Brontë's gothic complex. Emily depicts Heathcliff as dark and destructive force and she endows Heathcliff the characteristics of the villain heroes in gothic novels. Heathcliff is a gipsy waif and no one knows who his real parents are. That is to say, he is a person of unknown parentage. And this point remains a riddle throughout the novel. As villain hero in gothic novels usually has unknown parentage or some other secrets which cannot be explained, Heathcliff has the feature of gothic hero. Heathcliff is a dark-shinned boy, and Mr. Earnshaw, who picks him up on the streets of Liverpool and brings him up in *Wuthering Heights*, once says to his wife that although the boy looks as if he comes from the devil, they should treat him as the gift of God. The author does not tell why Heathcliff is so attractive to Mr. Earnshaw, and this also makes Heathcliff a mysterious person who has the characteristic of villain hero—having unknown power to attract others and this is also a gothic depiction. Heathcliff is well treated when Mr. Earnshaw is alive and things go to the contrary when Mr. Earnshaw dies. He is maltreated by Hindley—the old Earnshaw's son, a person who is jealous of Earnshaw's fondness for Heathcliff. Even the maid Nelly often beats him severely. Perhaps the maltreatment is one of the reasons why Heathcliff has a distorted character when he is grown up and why he treats Hareton—the son of Hindley so brutally, and why he dislikes and scolds Nelly usually—he seeks revenge. Heathcliff falls in love

with Catherine—Hindley's younger sister, a charming girl who has similar characteristics with him. Though Catherine loves Heathcliff deeply, Heathcliff does not seem to realize this; so, when he overhears Catherine's words that if she marries him that would degrade her, he leaves *Wuthering Heights* secretly. Three years later, he comes back and behaves as a gentleman. No one knows where he has been. Meanwhile, he has a large sum of money, and still no one knows how he becomes such a wealthy man. He takes every means to seek revenge on those who he thinks have maltreated him and finally he becomes the landlord of both *Wuthering Heights* and *Thrushcross Grange*.

Throughout the above process, Heathcliff becomes more and more dark and cruel.

Heathcliff lures Isabella—Edgar's younger sister—through his handsome figure and his pleasant manner although he does not like her at all. He pretends that he loves Isabella so deeply that Isabella falls in love with him and decides to marry him. However, innocent Isabella does not know all of this is a trick and she is trapped into an unhappy marriage. Heathcliff hangs Isabella's beloved dog before they get married. And soon after their marriage, Isabella learns about his cruelty and has a quarrel with him. Heathcliff seizes, and thrusts her from the room, and mutters, "I have no pity! I have no pity! The more the worm's withes, the more I yearn to crush out their entails! It is a moral teething, and I grind with greater energy, in proportion to the increase of pain" (Brontë, 1994, p.189). Heathcliff's destructive nature destroys Isabella, and even he himself points out that his abuse of Isabella is purely sadistic. Emily depicts Heathcliff not only through his cruel behaviors but also from his authentic while ruthless words; this gives the readers a vivid impression of his brutality.

Heathcliff encourages Hindley to gamble and he plays cunning tricks in the games and this makes Hindley become a habitual gambler and spends all his time gambling in the casino. Finally, Hindley loses everything he owns to Heathcliff and dies. This shows Heathcliff's learned while cunning characteristics which are also the features of gothic villain heroes. Emily's gothic complex again is perceived from this process. When Hindley is dead, Heathcliff lifts little Hareton on to a table and mutters with peculiar enthusiasm, "now, my bonny lad, you are mine! And we'll see if one tree won't grow as crooked as another, with the same wind to twist it" (Brontë, 1994, p.222). Perhaps from the time, Heathcliff has already lost his mentality. He stops Hareton's education and encourages him to curse others and he uses all kinds of means to brutalize Hareton. Through this way, he destroys a talented boy. Meanwhile, Heathcliff manages to marry little Cathy to his own "peevish ailing" son—Linton by forcing Linton to write sweet letters to Cathy and kidnapping Cathy

(Brontë, 1994, p.56). Through this he can inherit Edgar Linton's property. Meanwhile, little Cathy, little Hareton, and little Linton all become the victims of Heathcliff's revenge. All these portrayals give a vivid description of a crazy, cruel and ferocious image of Heathcliff. Since the image of Heathcliff is so vivid that it seems that he is living among the readers. Emily successfully portrays a male character that is dark and gloomy and has the characteristics of the gothic villain heroes in gothic novels. In other words, the image of Heathcliff shows her gothic complex.

When referring to the heroine, Catherine, Emily's gothic complex can also be learned from the portrayal of her. Catherine is no doubt a beauty. However, under her beautiful face conceals the wild spirit. To some extent, she has similar characteristics with young Heathcliff. Meanwhile, she has a vanity heart and she wants to be regarded as a graceful young lady by members in her community. She and Heathcliff soon grow inseparable and they spend their days playing on the moors. They rebel against Hindley's cruelty together. And only with Heathcliff can she behave as herself. However, an incident changes everything. When Catherine is bitten by the dog Skulker of Mr. Linton—landlord of *Thrushcross Grange*, she is forced to stay at *Thrushcross Grange* to recover from the bite. During those days, she is taught to behave as a lady. Five weeks later, when she returns back home, she behaves a little bit graceful, and she is praised by her brother. The praise makes her very proud and her vanity swells. Therefore, the relationship between her and Heathcliff becomes complicated. As Heathcliff is sensitive, he perceives the subtle change and becomes more sensitive. However, Catherine does not realize this and when one day she tells Nelly that, "it would degrade me to marry Heathcliff..." (Brontë, 1994, p.121), Heathcliff leaves her with a broken-heart. Although she knows she loves Heathcliff in her deep heart, she marries Edgar Linton considering her brother's encouragement and her vanity heart eventually. Therefore, it can also say that the tragedy of little Cathy and little Hareton is also due to Catherine's mistaken choice. The deep love in her inner heart and the betrayal of her soul show Catherine's conflicts. Emily Brontë purposely uses this way to show the conflicts and when Heathcliff returns, Catherine's conflicts come to the highest point. When she gets a high fever, she refuses to see the doctor. And it seems that only through this way can she feel a little better. Catherine thinks that if she dies, she would no longer suffer from the torture of the spirit. Finally, she dies. Catherine has dual personalities, which destroy both Heathcliff and her. In fact, at the very beginning of this novel, Mr. Lockwood finds a book of Catherine and in that book, there "was nothing but a name repeated in all kinds of characters...and then again to Catherine Linton" (Brontë, 1994, p.61). This shows Catherine's different identities and it also hints Catherine's different

characteristics. After her death, her soul wanders around the moor—at least Heathcliff thinks so, and this also gives a terrible feeling.

When referring to Isabella, the portrayal of her also shows Emily Brontë's gothic complex. Isabella is born in a rich family and she is taught to behave gracefully when she is still a young girl. As she lives in such a courteous family, she is innocent and naïve. Therefore, she is easily cheated by Heathcliff. Under Heathcliff's torture, she experiences both physical and mental sufferings. She becomes bad-tempered and finally dies. The tragedy of Isabella is typical of innocent young ladies in gothic novels.

2.3 Depiction of the Profound Love

The depiction of the love affair between Heathcliff and Catherine perfectly manifests Emily Brontë's gothic complex. Under Emily's writing, they two love each other so deeply, and the love between them is so profound that it seems only they themselves are capable of understanding it. The love Emily depicts is completely a crazy one. Heathcliff and Catherine grow up together and the love between them has a solid root. They become inseparable even when they are still young. They play on the moors without considering others' scold and critics. Although Catherine betrays her soul and marries Edgar Linton, she never forgets Heathcliff, and they still love each other. Catherine once tells Nelly that, Heathcliff shall never know how she loves him; and the reason she loves Heathcliff is not his handsome appearance, but his spirit. She says that Heathcliff is more herself than she is, and she also says that no matter what their souls are made of, his and hers are the same. And later she expresses her deep love for Heathcliff to Nelly:

I cannot express it; but surely you and everybody have a notion that there is, or should be an existence of yours beyond you. What was the use of my creation if I were entirely contained here? My great miseries in this world have been Heathcliff's miseries, and I watched and felt each from the beginning; my great thought in living is himself. If all else perished, and he were annihilated, the universe would turn to a mighty stranger. I should not seem such a part of it...My love for Heathcliff resembles the eternal rocks beneath—a source of little visible delight, but necessary. Nelly, I am Heathcliff—he's always, always in my mind—not as a pleasure, any more than I am always a pleasure to myself—but as my own being... (Brontë, 1994, p.122)

The expression Catherine has made above shows her deep love for Heathcliff, and it is also the author—Emily Brontë's attitude towards love. That is, one should be capable of finding oneself from one's lover, and the two lovers are one to some extent. In other words, the author pursues a spiritual love. In the novel, Emily uses an extreme way to express the spiritual love; and from Heathcliff's behavior readers can have a better idea about this. When Heathcliff learns that Catherine is dead, "he cried with frightful vehemence, stamping his foot and

groaning in a sudden paroxysm of ungovernable passion", with the words "be with me always—take any form—drive me mad...oh, God! It is unutterable! I cannot live without my life! I cannot live without my soul" (Brontë, 1994, p.204). After that, he dashes his head against the knotted trunk and his hands and forehead bleed! From this it can be learned that Heathcliff also considers Catherine as his life and soul. She is his spirit! Now that Catherine is dead, Heathcliff loses his life and soul. As time goes by, Heathcliff becomes more and more obsessed with Catherine and without her existence, he feels like he is staying in the abyss. He wanders around the moors to find Catherine, even her ghost. Later, he refuses to eat and everything he sees reminds him of her. Before he dies, he tells Nelly how Catherine occupies his consciousness:

...for what is not connected with her to me? And what does not recall her? I cannot look down to this floor, but her features are shaped on the flags! In every cloud, in every tree—filling the air at night, and caught by glimpses in every object, by day I am surrounded with her image! The most ordinary faces of men, and women—my own features mock me with a resemblance. The entire world is a dreadful collection of memoranda that she did exist, and that I have lost her (Brontë, 1994, p.353)

Later, after spending nights walking on the moors, he dies lying in the bed that Catherine has once slept on. Although Heathcliff lives the life of a devil and dies "with an almost diabolical sneer" upon his "savage face" as if "he were grinning at death" (Brontë, 1994, p.365), his profound love to Catherine lessens his evil behaviors and leaves the readers the strong feeling of the astonishing and wild love. After Heathcliff's death, a little boy sees their apparitions roaming the moors—even when they die, their spirits are together, and nothing will separate their spirits. In fact, both Heathcliff and Catherine use different kinds of ways to torture themselves in order to set their spirits free, and gain the emancipation.

All these portrayals give the writing the features of gothic novels, and show Emily Brontë's gothic complex. Mr. Lockwood's dream—that Catherine's ghost tells him that she has wandered around the moors for nearly twenty years and they two fight violently when Catherine tries to enter into the room through the window; and Heathcliff's dig of Catherine's tomb in a stormy night to have a look at Catherine and lie beside her corpse also enhances the development of gothic action and makes the novel more shocking and exciting.

However, Emily does not merely inherit gothic traditions, she develops it. This can be learned from the subtle portrayals of the conflicts in the characters' deep heart. For example, when Catherine is forced to choose one from Linton and Heathcliff, she does not sleep for three days. And during these days, she imagines she is playing with Heathcliff in *Wuthering Heights* for a while, and then she imagines that she is forced to marry Linton and be called as Mrs. Linton. She cannot distinguish the imagination and the reality, and she is nearly mad. Such

descriptions cannot be found in the former gothic novels. Therefore, Emily does develop gothic traditions.

3. ORIGINS OF EMILY'S GOTHIC COMPLEX

Although there are a lot of factors that have influenced Emily Brontë and make her have the gothic complex, in the following paragraphs, the reasons of her gothic complex will be explained from two main aspects—the social background and her life experience.

3.1 The Influence of the Social Background

As Emily Brontë was born in 1818 and died in 1848, she belonged to the Victorian age (1832—1901). In the second half of the eighteenth century, the industrial revolution began, and years later, England became the workshop of the world. When entering into the nineteenth century, capitalists were developing quickly and steadily, and the society was prosperous. The industrial capitalists began to play a more important role in politics, and England became a completely capitalist country. However, the gap between the rich and the poor enlarged. The peasants lived an even harder life. Although the Brontë family lived far away from the big cities, they still experienced the poverty, and the social background did have some influence on Emily Brontë. The poor condition made Emily fall into a contradiction—the distance between the fine imagination and the terrible reality widened. In other words, this aggravated Emily's contradiction. Therefore, the social background influenced Emily's writing skills and made her have the gothic complex.

3.2 The Influence of Her Life Experience

Emily Brontë lived an eccentric, and closely guarded life. She was born in 1818 as the fourth child in Brontë family at Thornton, Yorkshire, north England, and two years later, the family moved to Haworth. That is a place just like where *Wuthering Heights* is located. The family lived in a small village which was located on an isolated and windswept moors. This wild and desolate expanse made up of Emily's daily environment, and she lived her entire life there.

When Emily was young, she and her sisters and younger brother played on the moors and she had a profound love of the moors. Such a primitive place influenced her young spirit a lot and made her love liberty. Emily is wild just like the weather there. Meanwhile, the place endowed her with the wild but exquisite imagination and characteristic. And this contributes to her creation of the setting of *Wuthering Heights* which is full of gothic features—wild, desolate and gloomy. Her mother died in 1821 when she was only three years old. As her father was a poor clergyman who was stern and had no interest in children, she and her other family members were brought up by her aunt—a religiosity. Perhaps this experience can tell the readers why in her novel Catherine's mother died

when she was very young and when Catherine gave birth to young Cathy, she also died—the lack of mother's love made Emily create such a plot. Meanwhile, her father was such a crabbed and silent person that in Emily's life she is short of father's love. Therefore, it will not be difficult for the readers to find out why Heathcliff acts so cruelly to his own son—Linton in *Wuthering Heights*. The lack of both father and mother's love made Emily grow up wild and independent.

In 1824, all the girls except Ann, Emily's younger sister, were sent to a charity school, an indeed prison where the poor children were badly treated. After their two eldest sisters died there, Emily and Charlotte were brought back home to be educated by their father. The death of her two sisters and the lack of communication with her father influenced Emily a lot. She was stricken by the death of her beloved sisters. Therefore, she became gloomy, just like the gloomy face of her father. However, she was innocent and imaginative—she and her sisters and younger brother played on the moors and read literatures at home and wrote tales, poems and fantasies—these all made her happy. Perhaps these were the only happy memories in her whole life. All these show Emily's contradictory characteristics and the contradictory characteristics make her more imaginative and exquisite; and this can be learned from *Wuthering Heights* which was created mainly from her imagination.

When Emily's aunt died, she and Charlotte worked as governesses in rich families to support their family for a certain time; and she once went to Brussels to work in a boarding-school together with Charlotte. However, because of their poor health, they were compelled to return home where they spent all their times to literary work.

All the above experiences influenced Emily deeply—Emily loves nature, and she yearns for true love, however, the cruelty of the reality destroyed all her hopes and fantasies. She felt gloomy and lonely. Just as her elder sister Charlotte once described, "Emily is clever, benevolent, but very stubborn" and "she is stronger than a man, simpler than a child, her nature stood alone" (Brontë, 1994, p.386). The happiness and adversity in her childhood, the hardships when she grew up and all the sufferings she experienced made her a mysterious writer with complicated characteristics.

What should be stated particularly is that in the process of Emily's study, she grew up with reading magazines which included gothic novels of Mary Shelley, Horace Walpole and James Watt. Therefore, it is easy to find the influence of gothic novels to her.

CONCLUSION

Emily Brontë has been described as "the finest woman poet in English literature" (Chen, 1986, p.262). However,

it is her only novel *Wuthering Heights* that she is chiefly famous for. From what have been discussed above, the general idea about the development of gothic novel can be learned, especially the idea about Emily Bronte's gothic complex in *Wuthering Heights*. Meanwhile, Emily Bronte not only inherits gothic tradition but also develops it. However, the novel is such an exquisite work and Emily Bronte is such a mysterious writer that the views on the work and the author are still at issue. The analysis of *Wuthering Heights* and its author remains an everlasting work.

REFERENCES

- Bronte, E. (1994). *Wuthering heights*. Beijing: Foreign Language Press.
- Chen Jia (1986). *A history of English literature*. Beijing: The Commercial Press.
- Ellis, M. (2000). *The history of gothic fiction*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.
- Gilbert, E. L. (1996). *Emily Bronte's Wuthering Heights*. Beijing: Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press.
- Shao Jindi (2002). *An Introduction to literature*. Shanghai: Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press.
- Winifred, G. (1971). *Emily Bronte*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.