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Representation of Male Dominance in the Character of Heathcliff in E. Bronte' Wuthering Heights: A Critical Discourse Analysis

Abstract

The present paper is the discursive interpretation of dominance and barbarity in Bronte's Wuthering Heights. The researcher's main aim of the study is to explore the issues under consideration through Critical Discourse analysis (CDA). It is the best way to address power relations and dominance. Fairclough's (1989) CDA approach is the basic tool for the analysis of any kind of discourse/text, i.e., spoken or written. CDA is suitable for the analysis of texts which deals with power relations, hegemony and dominance, as well as violence. The research examines the relationship between cognitive, textual as well as Socio-cultural levels of discourse. Fairclough's (1989) framework of CDA has been used in the current research study so as to maintain diverse methods for analyzing ideological processes and power relations in the text. Research on Heathcliff and other characters is also recommended from the perspective of feminism, stylistic or marxism.

Key Words: Emile Bronte, Critical Discourse Analysis, Wuthering Heights, Fairclough's Tree Dimensional Model (TDM)

Introduction

The main point of the research study is to explore dominance and brutality in society, which the producer of the discourse presented in the novel under study through the use of language as it is the fact that each and every society has different kinds of people living there, and so have different social issues among them. So, one of the big cause of their distinction is their place and class in society. Through these social differences, the research critically represents power and violence in different discourses. The study carries out a Critical Discourse Analysis to explore the issues under study. It examines the relationship between cognitive, textual as well as Socio-cultural levels of discourse so as to expose the hidden connections between the pre-established frames and representation in the procedure of text production. Fairclough's (1989) framework of CDA is used in the current research study so as to maintain diverse methods for analyzing ideological processes and power relations in discourses. Overall, the research discursively constructs that CDA is a well-organized device in deciphering any iniquitous as well as authoritative power exercises in the text.

The role of CDA is to combine an ideological commitment to a formal linguistic interpretative framework. It is important to establish the definitions of power, discourse and ideology. Wodak (1997) defines discourse in these words as "studies real and often extended, instances of social interaction which take a (partially) linguistic form" (p. 173). The main concerns of CDA are to bring change and emancipation as Van Dijk (1998a) asserts that the notion of change is a kind of Discourse Analytical study which primarily examines "the way social power abuse, dominance and inequality are enacted, reproduced and resisted by text and talk in the social, political context" (p. 1).

The Novel Wuthering Heights

The novel under-study was published in 1847. It discursively embodies the vast duplicity and innate barbarism of the superior class civilization. Emily Bronte discursively portrayed identification of the character of Heathcliff with the symbolic representation as to the cannibal in taking revenge. The story

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revolves around two houses as well as an outsider. The novel has been divided into two parts. The first part of the story deals with the love affair of Catherin Earnshaw (Cathy) and the outsider Heathcliff, while the second part of the novel deals with the love affair of Catherin, i.e. the daughter of Cathy and Hareton. The story also has two narrators that are Mr Lockwood and Nelly.

Emile Bronte

Emily Bronte was born on July 30, 1818, in West Riding of Yorkshire, England. Her mother's name was Maria Branwell, and her father, Patrick Brontë, belonged to Ireland. Her parents were living in the village named Thornton on the outer edge of Bradford.

[Hope \(1886\)](#) summarizes up Emily's character in her *Queens of Literature of the Victorian Era* as "a peculiar mixture of timidity and Spartan-like courage" (168). She further says that Bronte was painfully shy, but she was too brave.

"She liked few persons, but those few with a passion of self-sacrificing tenderness and devotion. To other people's failings, she was understanding and forgiving, but over herself, she kept a continual and most austere watch, never allowing herself to deviate for one instant from what she considered her duty" (as cited in Wikipedia).

Literature Review

The study discursively shows social issues such as power, violence, as well as dominance. The present study is concerned with power relationships, discourse and ideology, supremacy, as well as a social and cultural approach to the discourse.

[Farhat \(2003\)](#) analysis internet News discourses through Critical Discourse Analysis. Her research investigates the connection between cognitive, textual, and social-cultural stages of internet News discourse so as to explore the hidden connections between the pre-established frames and representation in the process of the production of News.

Bastug and Kurspahic (2012) assert that the main theme of the novel is "Under bad circumstances, love turns into selfishness and hatred". They further assert that the novel has crossed limits of violence and cruelty. It depicts the strongest hatred than love. The mal-treatment done with Heathcliff turned him brutal and violent.

Similarly, [Wolff \(2001\)](#) puts that one of the foundational themes of *Wuthering Heights* is Conflict. The main cause of the conflict is the division of society into classes, i.e. lower and upper. The character of Lintons represents the higher class, while the character of Heathcliff represents the lower class. The partition of the social classes is mainly based on economic, social differences and cultural difference, which affects the behaviour and measures of each individual.

Research Methodology

The researcher has adopted a qualitative method of analysis. The aim of the research is to analyze and interpret the discursively constructed dominance, barbarity and violence in the novel. The critical analysis of the selected text is conducted through Fairclough's CDA framework to illustrate the hidden idea of violence and brutality in the novel. The current research paper is carried out within [Fairclough's \(1989\)](#) Three Dimensional Framework to explore the issues at three stages of the framework, i.e. description, interpretation and explanation. Halliday's analytical tools of Systemic Functional Grammar is used for investigating the linguistic choices at the stages of description and interpretation, while at the stage of explanation, the linguistic choices are explained in the light of the social context.

As the representative of the Lancaster School in the field of Critical Discourse Analysis, [Fairclough \(1992\)](#) Socio-cultural study connects Discourse Study with Social theory because it studies the language change and changes in culture and society as well. [Fairclough \(1995\)](#) considers CDA as an inter-disciplinary as well as problem-oriented, which investigates the power relations as well as ideological implications through the interpretation of the use of language. [Fairclough \(1995\)](#) says that CDA is concerned with establishing a relationship between features of the discourse process as well as characteristics of texts and broader social and cultural practice.

The concept 'critical' in Critical Discourse Analysis has double meanings. In the first place, it refers to the examination of social difference, while in the second place, this type of investigation differs

from the conventional analysis. Similarly, CDA aims at the investigation of how texts are produced and ideologically wrought by relationships of power. [Fairclough's \(1989\)](#) framework is divided into three stages. The stage of description is concerned with formal features of the text such as vocabulary, grammar and structure. In this stage, the linguistic features of the selected text are to be examined. [Fairclough \(1989\)](#) says, "interpretation is concerned with the relationship between text and interaction with seeing the text as the product of a process of production, and as a recourse in the process of interpretation" (p.26). He says that the stage of explanation is concerned with the "relationship between interaction and social context with the social determinants of the process of production and interpretation, and their social effects" (ibid).

Analysis

This section deals with the critical analysis of the text. The selected passages are analyzed through [Fairclough's \(1989\)](#) approach to Critical Discourse Analysis. His Three Dimensional Model is suitable for analyzing the passage linguistically as well as through the use of language. His model consists tree levels i.e. (a) Description (b) Interpretation and (c) Explanation. These three stages of analysis cope with formal characteristics, the connection of the text with social practice, and the link between social context and interaction, respectively.

Discursive Manifestation of Natural Barbarity and Disgust

The passage discursively demonstrates the innate barbarity, inhumanity and dominance in the discourse. The below passage is a discourse between the two ladies Nelly and Isabella, who speak about the violent treatment of Heathcliff towards his wife, Isabella. The passage linguistically as well as ideologically constructs Heathcliff's violent attitude and his innate barbarity.

Passage 1

"1. Don't put faith in a single word he speaks. 2. He's a lying fiend, a monster, and not a human being ... 3. The single pleasure I can imagine is to die or see him dead" (*Wuthering Heights*, 1994).

Description

The formal properties are to deal with in this very section of the analysis. The analysis has conducted through Fairclough's TDM. His framework consists of ten main and sub-questions (see pages 110-111 of [Fairclough's \(1989\)](#) framework) the researcher has to apply for the analytical process of the text.

The vocabulary and language used in the passage are formal in nature because it contains the emotional and hateful discussion about a devilish and inhumane attitude of Heathcliff towards his wife, Isabella. This feature of the text explores question 2 of Fairclough's framework. The first sentence is imperative; the second is complex, while the third sentence is a simple declarative sentence having experiential, grammatical values (Explores Question five of the Framework). The first sentence of the passage is complex, having coordinate and subordinate clauses (Question Eight of the framework).

Ideologically important words, expressions or sentences areas: the word "Faith", the adjective phrase "lying fiend", the expression "a monster, and not ... being", as well as the whole sentence 3 (Question one of the framework). The pronouns having relational values used are "he" (Two times), "him", and "I" used exclusively in the discourse (see Question six). Metaphors, for attributing the characteristics which belong to something/someone to something/someone else, used in the passage are the words "fiend" and "monster" (see Question four). Conjuncting words "and" and "our" are used for connection clauses or phrases in sentences 2 and 3 (see Question eight). Similarly, the use of commas in sentence two also plays the role of connectors.

Interpretation as well as an explanation

The discourse presents a picture of the miserable conditions of Isabella from the side of her husband, Heathcliff. In this passage, the producer of the discourse has discursively laid bare the innermost malice and devility of the soul of Heathcliff, his barbarous nature and brutality. The main event

discursively discussed here is Heathcliff's diabolical as well as brutal nature through his appearance and conduct.

The abstract noun "faith" used in this passage is ideologically significant in the sense that someone has to beware of someone else's appearance as a good man. The word lexicographically means "strong belief in someone/something" (Merriam-Webster Dictionary online). Similarly, the phrase "lying fiend" is used metaphorically for attributing the characteristics of a fiend (devil spirit) to a person, i.e. Heathcliff. The narrator of the novel discursively represented him as a devil because of his inhuman and hateful attitude. The word 'fiend' also used for a little child who makes mischievous, and someone addresses him through the name as 'little fiend' to chide him in the social context.

Again, a metaphoric nominalization of "monster" is used for Heathcliff for his brutality as well as violence in treatment. The monster is a noun in Linguistics that lexicographically means a horrible and strange imaginary being, but here, the word can be taken for a powerful and dreadful person that causes various problems, and that cannot be dominated. From attributing this quality to Heathcliff, the producer of the discourse constructed him as a horrible and troublesome individual. The last sentence of the discourse linguistically represents Isabella's disgust and hatred for her husband Heathcliff as she yearns to die herself or to "see him dead". The bolded expression constructs Isabella's desire for his death which discursively depicts her helplessness and her powerlessness to prevent her husband from what he treats as well as creating problems.

Discursive Menifestation of Heathcliph's Rejection of Human Sentiments

The selected text is in the form of a conversation of someone to address the listener. The discourse constructs the speaker's arrogantly addressing of the listener who shows his resentment towards the human species. The conversation takes place between Heathcliff and Nelly.

Passage 2

"I have no pity! I have no pity! The more the worms writhe, the more I yearn to crush out their entrails...." (W.H, 1994).

Description

The discourse ideologically constructs Heathcliff's attitude towards human beings as he considers them as worms and wishes to "crush out their entrails". The conversation is formal and dominative as the powerful speak to a helpless Nelly. The discourse depicts his dominance and powerfulness. It has all its grammatical, relational and experiential valuse.

The ideologically significant words, sentences, clauses as well as phrases are: the words "**pity**", "writhe" and "yearn", the expression "I have no pity" and the phrase "crush out". The first sentences are neggative while the third one contains two clauses connected with the use of commas. Here, in this case the use of commas "," acts as logical connector. Pronouns which are used in the selected text are: the first person pronoun "I" occurred three times used exclusively and the possessive pronoun "their" used inclusively.

Interpretation and Explanation

The passage is a conversation between Heathcliff and Nelly. Heathcliff speaks to Nelly while Nelly's role is to listen to him. The very first sentences are in the form of address as the punctuational symbol "!" shows. The symbol can be taken both as a sign of exclamation and as a symbol for addressing somebody. Its role, here, is for the address which Heathcliff makes to address Nelly.

The word "pity" is linguistically considered as an abstract noun that means to sympathize with somebody or emotional attachment towards somebody. But here, the word is used in a reverse context as it is collocated with the negative "no". The producer of the discourse linguistically presented the meaning of pity as opposed to what it can be sensed. Similarly, the word "worms" has ideological significance in the sense that it is sarcastically used for human beings. It can also be considered as a metaphor for the attribution of insects qualities to human beings. Here, the word is used for the discursive embodiment of the elimination of human feelings for one's own species. The

producer of the discourse used it for a person who is not respected or not liked in society. Again, the expression "I yearn to crush out their entrails" discursively portrays the extreme abhorrence and embarrassment towards human beings.

Construction of Disgust and Hatred in Discourse

This passage is a discourse through a letter by Isabella written to Nelly which discursively depicts the devilish nature of Heathcliff towards his wife, Isabella.

Passage 3

"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 you can, what I have married." (W.H, 1994)

Description

The excerpt ideologically represents Heathcliff's innate nature depicted on the page of a letter written by his own wife, Isabella, to Nelly. The narration shows some kind of scepticism in her views as to whether he should be addressed as a normal man, a mad man or a devil. The letter is written in a formal manner. The discourse constructs Isabella's despair soon after her marriage with Heathcliff when she knows his vengeful nature. It has all its grammatical, relational and experiential values.

The significant words, phrases, clauses or sentences used in the abstract are the word 'a man' in the first sentence, the word 'mad' in the second sentence, 'devil' in the third sentence and the expression '... the reason for making this inquiry'. All the sentences are interrogative of whom sentence 1 starts with the auxiliary verb 'is', sentence 2 starts with the questioning conjunction 'if', and sentence 3 also starts with 'if' proceeded by the conjunction and. The last sentence is a complex one which also narrated in the same sense of questioning and contains its main, coordinate and subordinate clauses as well. The word 'devil' is used as a metaphor for Heathcliff as his wife Isabella attributes him with the qualities of a devil in his nature. Pronouns used in the excerpt are the third person pronoun 'he' (two occurrences), the first person pronoun 'I' (three occurrences), the possessive case pronoun 'my' and the second person pronoun you (two occurrences). All these pronouns are used exclusively in the whole passage.

The demonstrative pronoun 'this' used is the only mean for referring inside and outside of the text. Logical connectors in the excerpt are the 'and' and 'but' are used for joining two words, phrases, clauses or sentence.

Interpretation and Explanation

The selected excerpt is an epistolary exchange of notions that are expressed in a letter to Nelly. These expressions are made in the form of questions that show the producer of the letter's ideology about her husband, Heathcliff. In this passage, we can observe the influential manipulation of Heathcliff, of whom Isabella can not decide on which name to call him.

The use of the word 'man' is used here in the sense as to express her doubts about Heathcliff as whether he was a man or any kind of animal for what he showed. Isabella discursively constructs her idea about Heathcliff's inhuman attitude towards his wife own wife. The word gives its meaning as a human being having humanistic qualities and characteristics. But the word 'mad' gives the meaning of someone who acts abnormally having qualities like that of animals. We call a person a mad man who do not have normal qualities and characteristics in our social context.

Again, the word 'devil' constructs the evil nature of Heathcliff, who possesses in his nature. His attitude and his behaviour represent some kind of inhuman characteristics and dominance over helpless creatures like that of his wife, Isabella.

Conclusion

The paper is the discursive exploration of dominance in Bronte's Wuthering Heights. The researcher's main aim of the study was to explore the issue under consideration through the Critical Discourse Study. Critical Discourse Study proved to be the best way to explore power relations and violence.

The researcher found two main themes of the text selected for the novel. These themes are (1) Discursive Manifestation of Natural Barbarity and Disgust and (2) Discursive Manifestation of Heathcliff's Rejection of Human Feelings. The research has been conducted through Fairclough's framework of CDA as it structurally as well as ideologically analyzes texts. It is recommended for future researchers to conduct research on Heathcliff and other characters in the novel from the perspective of feminism, stylistics or marxism.

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