

Wuthering Heights

Casablanca

How Many Miles to Babylon

Introduction

- I can certainly attest to the accuracy of this statement with regard to the three texts I have studied which include; "Wuthering Heights" ("WH"), "Casablanca" ("CB") and "How Many Miles to Babylon" ("HMMB").
- I can certainly concur that this statement is indeed an accurate analysis of a proportion of elements that contribute to the essence of various themes
- In all three texts the reader gains valuable insight into the general vision and view point/ cultural context primarily through- characterisation, key moments/scenes, relationships, emotion, crisis, plot portrayal...
- Certain key moments in all three texts have a correlate under various aspects of this statement.
- Key moments are fundamental to the development of theme, character, plot and tone/ Key moments prove critical in shaping our understanding of...
- There are significant aberrations in these texts regarding morality, ethics and attitudes depicted in my study of the comparative when compared with principles of the 21st century.

- General Vision and viewpoint is conveyed through plot, themes, characterisation and language in which the story is told.
- Polarises our way of thinking/mindset/morality
- All three texts explore the pain and suffering of an individual and how this may result in one embittered by life. Also depicts the journey in which these characters try to suppress their bitterness e.g. Heathcliff tries to suppress his astringent hatred
- Antagonises a concept

Wuthering Heights:

- In "WH" Emily Brontë examines raw and natural human emotion along with society's inability to accept its purities especially within contrasting social classes through the juxtaposition of both Heathcliff and Edgar Linton and their respective relationships with Catherine Earnshaw.
- The story revolves around several complex characters who must endure indescribable pain and suffering in their quest for love.
- Not allowing true emotions to bloom, Brontë argues, will lead to resentment, hatred and eventually chaos.
- Raw and real human emotion has been expressed and felt for the entirety of human existence. Happiness, sadness, love and hatred are found within each of us and lay the groundwork for personality and disposition. Oftentimes society limits what is an acceptable amount of emotion to express through this unwritten law of social normalities. In the nineteenth century it was especially important to consistently keep composure in order to maintain a status that was deemed respectable. The desire for both strict level headedness as well as the unwillingness to accept others who weren't born or raised respectably often limited the amount of happiness one could attain due to the fact that people were marrying and associating themselves with what society wanted, not what themselves wanted.
- The general vision and view point is predominantly negative and remains so until Heathcliff's death, where the reader is offered an iota of hope, a subtle hint of positivity

- The story of the first generation of characters is saturated with violence, cruelty, death and alienation. It involves intense emotions of love and grief, the very intensity which leads to death and destruction. If the novel had ended with the first generation the GV&V would remain statically bleak. It is as if the passions which influenced the first generation have burned themselves out, leaving only harmony.
- The language and descriptions of the harsh brutal landscape of the moors prepares the reader for the stark vision and viewpoint that emerges from this novel
- The novel explores the consequences of how treating an individual with great cruelty can impact on generations to come. The pain, both physical and mental inflicted on Heathcliff from a young age causes him to become inured to the cruelties of life but also elicits his desire to seek revenge.
- Commits a string of morally reprehensible acts, each more terrible than the other.
- Ensure Hindley gambles and drinks away his inheritance
- Encourages Isabella's infatuation with him so that he can treat her appallingly later on.
- Purposefully deprives Hareton of education etc.. and treats him worse than a dog
- Tricks young Cathy into visiting the heights and forces her to marry Linton.
- Heathcliff defies being understood and it's difficult to resist seeing what Brontë wants or expects us to see in him. The novel teases with the possibility that Heathcliff is something other than what he seems, that his cruelty is merely an expression of his frustrated love for Cathy or his sinister behaviours serve to conceal the heart of a romantic hero. The author does the same thing to the reader as Heathcliff does to Isabella, testing how many times we can be shocked by Heathcliff's gratuitous violence and still masochistically insist on seeing him as a romantic hero.

- Sits at the crux of the basic plot
- Once he loses Cathy Heathcliff's "*raison d'être*" becomes seeking revenge on Earnshaws and Lintons.
- Considering the Historical contexts Heathcliff seems to embody the anxieties that the book's upper and middle class audience had about working classes. It is easy to sympathise with him when he is a powerless child tyrannised by his childhood tormentor Hindley, but he becomes a villain when he acquires power and returns to "WH" with money and the trappings of a gentleman. This fear is made tangible of the lower class escaping their miserable circumstances by acquiring political, social and cultural or economic power.
- Surrenders with reticence to the influence of hatred/evil/malevolence
- Brutal confines which imprisoned or trapped and scarred women of nineteenth century/ women of war and Georgian society. Cathy's transition from a rebellious, audacious little girl to a woman tortured by her own mind, forced against her instinct, restricted by self imposed limitations (as well as those of society's) and deeply afflicted by Georgian propriety/conformity. She has metamorphosed into a completely different person.
- WH begins with the story of Heathcliff, an orphan originating from the poverty stricken county of Liverpool, grows up tyrannised by Hindley. Divisive barrier established for which he blames Hindley. Unworthy of companionship, develops a proscribed relationship with Cathy. A usurper of his father's affections.
- The manipulative clutch of society corrupts her childhood innocence.
- Catherine and Hareton's relationship is the principle illustration of novel's changing vision and view point. At the end, all is calm and harmonious instead of the previous stormy, hostile atmosphere.

- Heathcliff's power has waned to the extent that he no longer has the ability to thwart the developing happiness between Catherine and Hareton. The marriage of Hareton and Cathy on New Year's Day suggests that the conflicts in the novel have been reconciled, this resolution offers a consoling and optimistic vision which compensates for its earlier bleakness. However the spirit of Cathy and Heathcliff and their tragic wasted passion lives on and haunts the novel.
- treatment inadequately explains his desire
- We become conflicted in response to HC utter state of despair following Cathy's death- his repression of emotion, his attempts to replace his intense, undying love for Cathy through his malevolence has led to chaos after a lengthy time of remaining contemptuous, even indestructible.
- **Cruelty and hatred are as detrimental to the bearer/perpetrator as is to the victim.**
- **Novel moves from a bleak perspective on human relationships to one which sees hope for the future.**
- **Superficial desideratum for social/economic advancement**
- **sombre and grim V&V, optimistic ending counter balances stark vision.**
- **Catherine's rejection of Heathcliff on the grounds that it would "degrade" her to marry him has a profound effect on V&V**
- **Heathcliff responds to Cathy's act of betrayal with grim determination to bring low all those that prevented him from attaining happiness**

How Many Miles to Babylon?

- Alec Moore is a young man who tries to escape the responsibilities and limitations of the class into which he has been born by forging a relationship with Jerry, someone from the opposite side of the great social, religious and political divide.
- Alec finds himself confined to the world of his sparring parents; an ineffectual but genuine father and a cold manipulative mother. The awful tension between two people at war with one another and the effects of these hostilities on their son is convincingly captured in the first part of the novel.
- By her own admission, this may be due in part to Johnston's own experience of the break of her parents marriage when she was a child and her own divorce from her first husband
- As Alec faces his execution he makes it clear that it is the combination of expectations placed on him by social class and his mother's rejection of him that has led to his impending death.
- Alec's life has been marked by cowardice and indecision, ironically it is the one brave decision and decisive act that both saves him and laments his tragic fate. He runs away from social and personal isolation at home only to find that it follows him to the trenches of Flanders. His friendship with Jerry isolates the both of them though contrasts with the coldness of war.
- HMMB is not merely another post war comment on the futility of war because Johnston adds a new, specifically Irish dimension to the picture.
- In asserting his own humanity above his role as officer and gentleman, Alec raises himself above the horror of war and redeems himself.

- The tragedy remains however that his redemption costs him his life.
- Undiversified society
- In HMMB we are provided with a narrative which comes full circle and ends in death,
- **Like WH, this is a narrative,**
- **Alicia Moore acts in a milder but equally vindictive way as to Heathcliff,**
- **Like both Alec and Rick, Heathcliff is a figure both isolated and adrift from the rest of society.**
- **Like WH, class divisions are at the root of the pessimism and unhappiness in the novel.**

Casablanca

Portrayal of Rick and Ilsa's tortured reunion and separation - similar to Cathy and Heathcliff/HMMTB

- Casablanca is an unusual world war II movie in the it isn't overly propagandistic- it doesn't go overboard in preaching about the justness of the cause and the certainty of victory
- Casablanca captures this unique moment in America's part in the conflict- when America was fully at war though not yet fully indoctrinated by a war ideology.

- Throughout the film, the outcome of war is uncertain and Casablanca is a place of uncertainty and anxiety. This uncertainty lends the movie a genuine tension and renders the political activities of Laszlo and Rick all the more heroic.
- Casablanca is deeply intelligent as it functions on a political allegory of World War II and a timeless romance.
- Rick Blaine, the cynical owner of Rick's café Americain, often appears too jaded to be impressed or moved by anyone. As soon as we see this character in action there is a sense of underlying problems, difficulties or a traumatic past that has rendered him so insensitive, aloof and indifferent toward his unstable surroundings- desperate refugees flocking into Casablanca, the chaos within the town, the threat of war and violence/ a war being waged around him.
- He shows himself to be a mysterious and complicated man, terse, solitary and self involved however there is prospect that he is generous and perhaps a political partisan.
- He refuses to accept drinks from customers and treats his lover Yvonne without affection or respect.
- However another Rick lurks behind his façade of cynicism- political loyalties lie with the allies
- Louis says Rick is a sentimentalist and we learn that Rick was involved in political causes, supporting losing sides against Facist aggressors in Spain and Ethiopia.
- When Ilsa arrives in Casablanca we start to understand some of Rick's mysterious past. In a flashback to his time in Paris we see a younger, happier, lighter Rick or 'Richard'. As he

delights in romance with Ilsa, wandering around Paris, the epitome of love, a whirlwind of romance and rush. Drive through the city/boat down the seine/open champagne/dance

- Rick and Ilsa had planned to leave Paris after Nazi invasion however Ilsa stood him up in the train station upon departure (like Cathy/HC) and then we see how the optimistic, loving and humorous Rick metamorphoses into a pessimistic, cynical and rather miserable man that we see at the beginning of the film.
- Rick is not coldhearted, rather he suffers from a broken heart, initially upon Ilsa and Laszlo's arrival he reacts angrily and refuses to give them the letters of transit.
- By the end of the film he acts heroically, sacrificing both a future with Ilsa and his comfortable life in Casablanca, so that Laszlo can escape with Ilsa and continue his important political work.
- In effect we see 3 Rick's; In Paris he is a romantic innocent,(less haggard) in Casablanca he is a coldhearted, jaded capitalist and by the end of the film, a committed, self sacrificing idealist.
- We might suspect that Rick is Ilsa's great passion and that only circumstance and political necessity prevent their union however, unlike Cathy, the distinction isn't made clear.
- Her motives are always shadowy because she has possible, logical ulterior motives and she maintains a cold detachment which prevents her from being understood. Her letter to Rick in Paris exemplifies her ability to shield her true feelings- like HC/Cathy
- She doesn't seem to know what her own happiness would entail
- Difficulty of neutrality in love and war
- The inescapable past- "As time goes by"- you must remember this is the first line