Emily Bronte’nin uğultulu Tepeler ve Nabizade Nazım’ın Zehra’sının Psikanalitik Okuması

Yusuf Ziyaettin Turan*

Öz


Anahtar Kelimeler: Nabizade Nazım, Emily Bronte, Zehra, Uğultulu Tepeler, Psikanaliz

Submitted/Geliş : 10.06.2023
Accepted/Kabul : 21.07.2023
http://dx.doi.org/10.53723/cosohis.34

*A ORCID: https://orcid.org/0000-0001-9551-3594; Uşak Üniversitesi, Fen-Edebiyat Fakültesi Batı Dilleri Ve Edebiyatları Bölümü İngiliz Dili Ve Edebiyatı Anabilim Dalı, Öğretim Üyesi Doç. Dr. yzturan@gmail.com
A Psychoanalytic Reading of Emily Bronte’s Wuthering Heights & Nabizade Nazım’s Zehra

Abstract

In this paper, Emily Bronte’s Wuthering Heights (1847) from English Literature and Nabizade Nazım’s Zehra (1894) from Turkish Literature are studied in the frame of psychoanalytic criticism. Psychoanalytic criticism derives mainly from the psychoanalytical studies and theories of Austrian neurologist Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) and then developed in the field of literature by the following literary critics in the beginning of the 20th century. According to psychoanalytical criticism, works of literature, like dreams, should be examined in detail to reveal hidden meanings. In addition to the first studies depending on author’s biography based studies, then, focusing on the background motivations of characters’ unusual behaviours in literary works has also become a contemporary trend in psychoanalytical criticism. So, following the character based method in psychoanalysis, in this paper, Emily Bronte’s Wuthering Heights and Nabizade Nazım’s Zehra are discussed in terms of their main characters’ unconscious motivations underlying their unusual behaviours. In the conclusion part, it is observed that the main characters of both Wuthering Heights and Zehra have neurotic symptoms which underly their revengeful behaviours depending on not answering their unconscious wishes. As a result, it is seen that the main characters of the both novels become selfish and loser characters in the end.

Keywords: Nabizade Nazım, Emily Bronte, Zehra, Wuthering Heights, Psychoanalysis
Introduction

Psychology is a scientific discipline that deals with the emotions, minds and behaviours of humans and animals. Today, modern psychology is defined as a field of study that scientifically examines behaviour and the processes underlying that behaviour (Cüceoğlu, 2004: 35). On the other hand, psychological criticism, as a distinctive movement, emerged at the beginning of 19th century and "deals with a work of literature primarily as an expression, in fictional form, of the state of mind and the structure of personality of the individual author" (Abrams, 1999: 247). In 1920s, psychoanalysis was founded by the Austrian neurologist Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) (Abrams, 1999: 248). He worked on the human psyche and initially used this method for medical treatment, particularly for neuroses. In other words, "psychoanalysis is a medical technique, a method of therapy for the treatment of mentally ill or distressed patients that helps them understand the source of their symptoms" (Booker, 1996: 27). Freud further dealt with dreams, in which, he claims, hidden and suppressed feelings and thoughts are released freely. Later, depending on Freud's views on the human psyche, psychoanalytic criticism began to be used in literature as well as in many other arts (Abrams, 1999: 248). The basic premise of psychoanalytic criticism in literature depends on the assumption that literary works, like dreams, have many reflections of thoughts and feelings that are secret and hidden in the unconscious mind of their authors. Later in 1950s, author-centered psychoanalytical criticism turned to character analysis, which means "studying the various aspects of characters' minds found in an author's canon" (Bressler, 2007: 158). In other words, it is the endeavour to grasp the causes of characters' extreme behaviours, which lie secret and hidden in the deeper side of their unconscious mind. Strictly speaking, "psychoanalytic literary criticism, therefore, contributes to the analysis and interpretation of manners, thoughts and hidden feelings of characters, which provides readers with insights into the hidden messages of authors" (Üstün Kaya, 2021: 1082). Hence, depending on this assumption, in this paper, Emily Bronte's Wuthering Heights and Nabizade Nazım's Zehra, which are produced in different national literatures but in close periods, are studied in terms of the motivations that lie behind the behaviours of the main characters. Before discussing the two novels in terms of psychoanalytic perspective, a short mention of psychoanalytic criticism and Sigmund Freud, its major representative, will be mentioned as follows.

Psychoanalysis & Sigmund Freud

Sigmund Freud was the founder of psychoanalysis in psychiatry. His The Interpretation of Dreams (1895) is a seminal work for psychoanalytic criticism because Freud's techniques for interpreting dreams seem highly convenient for the interpretation of literary works (Booker, 1996: 30). Hence, psychoanalytic criticism in literature developed from the concepts, methods and theories of psychoanalysis. As Kalecik states, psychoanalytic criticism has some changes in time and dynamic, economic and structural personality are its basic models (2017: 46). Sigmund Freud suggests that "the division of the psychical into what is conscious and what is unconscious is the fundamental premiss of psycho-analysis" (1989: 3). In this context, psychoanalysis is a method of enlightening problems that seem incomprehensible and insoluble by descending to the unconscious sources of actions, words and dreams and bringing conflicts and confusions to the surface, to the field of
consciousness (Alkan, 2018: 43-44). Besides, the largest part of the human psyche is unconscious, most human behaviour is directed by the unconscious, and sexuality is the source of many human behaviours and activities (Kalecik, 2017: 47). Hence, the unconscious has a vital role in enlightening both the unusual behaviour of human beings in real life and characters in fictional works.

In his structural personality model, Freud links his unique invention of the unconscious to the three stages of human development, forming his triple formulation. These layers, which are common to all people, are the id, ego and superego (Emre, 2006: 45-54). Freud places the id in a general context as instinctive energy charges that seek purely pleasure (Freud, 1989: 17). Furthermore, its "powerful forces include the sex and aggressive instincts. The id contains our basic psychic energy, or libido, and is expressed through the reduction of tension" (Shultz & Shultz, 2008: 432). The word "libido" is derived from the Latin word "lubere", which means to want. It is the name given to the energy of all tendencies connected to vital forces. The purpose of this energy can be people, ideas, objects or self-love. Libido, according to Sigmund Freud, is a force that stems from sexuality and combines love and productivity (Alkan, 2018: 100). Freud also states that the libido is a dynamic element of all emotional life and a power that enables every emotion to express itself (Özgü, 1994: 41). In other words, libido is related to "the form of energy through which life instincts are manifested" (Shultz & Shultz, 2008: 431). The ego, on the other hand, is governed by security concerns in a person's encounter with the outside world (Freud, 1962: 14). The superego watches over the ego, commands it, judges it, and threatens it with punishment. In brief, the id is the primitive part of the personality and wants to satisfy human instincts such as sexuality and aggression without considering the conditions of reality. The ego tries to satisfy the desires of the id under appropriate conditions. On the other hand, the superego is the mechanism that determines the appropriateness of behavior according to social conditions and moral principles, and controls the id and the ego (Alkan, 2018: 45). However, the reason for the basic contradictions and anxieties in humans is the ego when it is suppressed by "persistent dangers from the id, reality, and the superego. The inevitable result, when the ego becomes too severely stressed, is the development of anxiety and neurotic anxiety is a fear of being punished for expressing impulsive desire" (Shultz & Shultz, 2008: 433). Moreover, the weakness of the ego may lead to the occurrence of neurosis as well (Fodor & Gaynor, 1950: 122). So, most of the neurotic illnesses derive from the entrapment of the ego between the id and the superego.

Apart from the structure of personality, Freud’s other theory is the Oedipus complex. Freud states that boys and girls love their mothers more than their fathers until the age of four, but then a change occurs, and boys love their mothers and girls love their fathers more because they are not understood parents of their own sex (Freud, 2004: 149-151). In other words, children become sexually attached to the parent of the opposite sex and a rival to the parent of the same sex. Under normal conditions, children overcome this complex by identifying with the parent of the same sex (Shultz & Shultz, 2008: 435). Therefore, it is clear that in a child's sexual development, the Oedipus complex is a necessary process.

As well as Freud’s theories above, the study of dreams is important to understand, particularly the id, which is suppressed and forbidden to come into consciousness. Dreaming is basically the process of satisfying the id impulses. Freud claims that the latent
content of a dream that lies under the surface meaning (the manifest contest) should be studied in order to reveal the hidden wishes of id (Freud, 1971: 135). Depending on this, it should be underlined that the interpretation of dreams is particularly important for psychoanalytic criticism. Because the psychoanalytic critics can look for the kinds of symbols “that Freud tends to discuss in relation to dreams and other manifestations of the unconscious mind” (Booker, 1996: 33). Likewise, as dreams are interpreted, a work of literature can be studied attentively in order to reveal the hidden meanings and motivations lying beyond the surface meaning. Depending on this assumption, in the following part, Bronte’s Wuthering Heights and Nabizade Nazım’s Zehra will be studied comparatively in terms of the unconscious motivations of the main characters related to the psychoanalytical criticism. For this purpose, the main characters’ unusual behaviours will be discussed to reveal the latent contents and motivations underlying them. For this purpose, in the following part, a short summary of each novel will be stated before a psychoanalytic evaluation of the main characters of both novels.

A Psychoanalytic Reading Of Wuthering Heights & Zehra

Emily Bronte's novel Wuthering Heights tells the story of two families of the gentry living on the West Yorkshire moors. Mr. Earnshaw, the owner of the house Wuthering Heights, brings a gipsy like orphan boy home one day. The name of the boy is Heathcliff and he is raised with the Earnshaw children, Catherine and Hindley. Mr. Earnshaw loves Heathcliff more than Hindley and Heathcliff and Catherine become close friends and playmates. When Mr. Earnshaw dies, Hindley, because of his jealousy, behaves badly towards Heathcliff and makes him live like a servant boy at home. However, Heathcliff and Catherine continue their friendship happily at the moors until they meet Edgar and Isabel Linton at Thrushcross Grange, a two-mile distance place from Wuthering Heights. They begin to meet frequently, and one day Catherine tells Nelly, the servant woman, that she cannot marry Heathcliff but Edgar because of his social statue. Overhearing these words, Heathcliff runs away and vows to take revenge on whoever it hurts. In Heathcliff's absence for three years, Catherine marries Edgar. When Heathcliff returns, he is rich and begins to live at Wuthering Heights with his enemy Hindley and his son Hareton. Then, Heathcliff seduces and marries Isabella, Edgar’s sister. Soon after, Elizabeth gives birth to a girl, Cathy, and she dies suddenly. Heathcliff, filled with revenge, makes his sickly son, Linton, marry the younger Cathy in order to become the owner of both Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange when both Edgar and his son, Linton, die. However, Heathcliff is usually haunted by Catherine’s ghost just after her death, and he also wishes to die to reunion with Catherine. The novel ends when Hindley's son Hareton and Elizabeth’s daughter Cathy are to marry¹.

Different from the other novels written so far, Nabizade Nazım's novel Zehra (1894) is the first novel in which psychological elements were used in Turkish literature (Emre, 2006: 377) . It is about a family living in Istanbul after the Tanzimat reform era. The female protagonist, Zehra, marries her father's clerk, Suphi. After a while, tired of Zehra’s jealousy, Suphi marries again with the bondwoman of the house named Sırricemal and sets up a separate home for her. Zehra, who wants to take revenge, assigns a fallen Greek woman

named Ürani to seduce Suphi. At the end of the novel, Sirricemal commits suicide, Suphi, who killed Ürani, is exiled to Trablous, and Zehra suffers an attack and dies of illness.

As stated above, Heathcliff, the main character of *Wuthering Heights*, is a gipsy like orphan boy, brought home by Mr. Earnshaw, the owner of Wuthering Heights:

‘See here, wife! I was never so beaten with anything in my life: but you must e’en take it as a gift of God; though it’s as dark almost as if it came from the devil.’

We crowded round, and over Miss Cathy’s head I had a peep at a dirty, ragged, black-haired child; big enough both to walk and talk: indeed, its face looked older than Catherine’s; yet, when it was set on its feet, it only stared round, and repeated over and over again some gibberish, that nobody could understand. I was frightened, and Mrs. Earnshaw was ready to fling it out of doors: she did fly up, asking how he could fashion to bring that gipsy brat into the house, when they had their own bairns to feed and fend for? What he meant to do with it, and whether he were mad? The master tried to explain the matter; but he was really half dead with fatigue, and all that I could make out, amongst her scolding, was a tale of his seeing it starving, and houseless, and as good as dumb, in the streets of Liverpool, where he picked it up and inquired for its owner. Not a soul knew to whom it belonged (Bronte, 2000: 25).

It’s clear that Heathcliff had no parents or relatives around when Mr. Earnshaw found him in a desperate situation. So, Heathcliff was an orphan boy and had no mother to stand by him. According to Freud, a little boy, before the latency period, wants a passionate relationship with his mother and sees his father as a nuisance between himself and his mother (Freud, 1991: 375). As an orphan child, Heathcliff is devoid of a mother’s care and passion. So, according to Freud’s Oedipus complex, he is in need of a mother’s love. When he comes to Wuthering Heights to live with the Earnshaw family, the servants and other members of the family, except Mr. Earnshaw, who dies soon, ignore Heathcliff. Then he finds only Catherine as a mother figure around him. The friendship between Heathcliff and Catherine soon turns into a passionate love affair, particularly for Heathcliff:

It would degrade me to marry Heathcliff now; so he shall never know how I love him: and that, not because he’s handsome, Nelly, but because he’s more myself than I am. Whatever our souls are made of, his and mine are the same; and Linton’s is as different as a moonbeam from lightning, or frost from fire.’ (Bronte, 2000: 57).

So, it is true that, though Catherine also loves Heathcliff, she behaves according to the norms of society. When her age is convenient for marriage, she prefers Edgar Linton instead of Heathcliff: “Nelly, I see now you think me a selfish wretch; but did it never strike you that if Heathcliff and I married, we should be beggars? whereas, if I marry Linton I can aid Heathcliff to rise, and place him out of my brother’s power.”(Bronte, 2000: 57-58). Hence,

---

2 See for details: İleri, 2001: 46-47.
Catherine does not love Edgar Linton but Heathcliff, she still wants Edgar Linton as her husband though. This situation can be explained with Freud’s superego, ego, and id concepts. Catherine listens to her superego and marries Edgar instead of Heathcliff, and so she denies the wish of her id. As stated previously, according to Freud’s theory on the human psyche, id represents the deeper and hidden feelings and wishes placed and suppressed in the unconscious side of the human mind. Besides, id works according to the pleasure principle. Freud also names these wishes, particularly the erotic ones, as cathexis. He further asserts that libido derives from cathexis and “all the libido is accumulated in the id” (Freud, 1989: 45). In this context, when Heathcliff is rejected by Catherine as a candidate for husband, his oath and wish to take revenge on anybody who makes him sad can be identified with the concept of neurosis. Because neurosis derives when the ego, the mediator between the id and superego, is compressed between the unacceptable wishes of the id and the superego representing the norms of society and conventions (İplikçi Özden, 2016: 209). This can be traced as follows:

And as to you, Catherine, I have a mind to speak a few words now, while we are at it. I want you to be aware that I know you have treated me infernally! Do you hear? And if you flatter yourself that I don’t perceive it, you are a fool; and if you think I can be consoled by sweet words, you are an idiot: and if you fancy I’ll suffer unreavenged, I’ll convince you of the contrary, in a very little while! Meantime, thank you for telling me your sister-in-law’s secret: I swear I’ll maket he most of it. And stand you aside!

‘What new phase of his character is this?’ exclaimed Mrs. Linton, in amazement. ‘I’ve treated you infernally and you’ll take your revenge! How will you take it, ungrateful brute? How have I treated you infernally?’ (Bronte, 2000: 81).

So, it is clear that Heathcliff’s fury exceeds the border of normal behaviour and can be classified as a kind of neurosis. Yet, his neurosis transforms into revenge at that moment. Then, he is determined to take revenge on anyone who inhibits his desire to consummate his love with Elizabeth.

On the other hand, Suphi, the main character in Nabizade Nazım’s Zehra, is a handsome young man. His father has already passed away, but his mother, Munire is alive. So, like Heatcliff in Wuthering Heights, Suphi is a fatherless child too. When his father was alive, he placed Suphi in Asmaaltı as a clerk to an honest and wealthy merchant. This rich merchant is Zehra’s father, Şevket. Şevket talks to Suphi about his daughter’s jealous character. One day, Suphi sees Zehra and takes pity on her, thinking about the damage her jealousy has done to her. This encounter and relationship, which started with feelings of pity and compassion will soon change direction and turn into lust. One day, towards the evening, he suddenly notices Zehra, wandering around the garden. Zehra is dressed really stylishly and seductively. Suphi, who had pity for Zehra’s personality, instinctively confronts him with ‘seduction’ when he sees her ‘physical’ beauty. Like the ones deriving from Heathcliff’s cathexis stated above, Zehra’s body seducing Suphi shows us the ‘open to seduction’ aspect hidden in the depths of Suphi’s personality. When Suphi asks to marry Zehra, Mr. Şevket,
without hesitation, accepts Suphi’s offer for his daughter. Although Mr. Sevket expresses the negative characteristics of his daughter, Suphi’s eyes are stuck on Zehra’s physical body for once, and he is, like Heathcliff in *Wuthering Heights*, unable to behave logically. In other words, as Heathcliff is dominated by the feeling of revenge and behaves brutally, Suphi is controlled by sexual lust and cannot see both her bad temper and jealousy. Since her image, which he saw in the garden, has now become the only source that directs all his movements:

The body that he saw in the garden was trying to pull out the dried leaves of a rose. She tied her hair up freely at the back. She wore a pale orange loose robe. The sleeves of the robe do not cover her elbows and her white arms are obvious. The two bottoms of her robe in the bosom are open and her breasts are visible. Her tight robe is not able to cover her breasts (Nabizade Nazım, 2011: 14).

However, the comfortable and pleasant days of their marriage will not last long because Zehra, who is genetically prone to jealousy, estranges Suphi from herself step by step. Suphi’s mother, Munire, hires Sırrıcemal in charge of her son and daughter-in-law’s for domestic errands. The first striking feature of Sırrıcemal is the pleasantness of her physical appearance. After all, the narrator begins to describe Sırrıcemal’s physical features right after she is admitted to the house:

Her body is so large and she is the solid figure of the idea when someone thinks about what a woman is. You shouldn’t suppose her coarse because she is tall and has a stalwart body. Beside her hugeness, her body is so delicate and polite. Her waist is thin, her chest is wide, her shoulders are wide, her neck is long, her face is white, her eyebrows, eyelashes, her hair is thick and black, her colour is pinkish-white, her hands, feet, mouth are small, her walking is attractive, her dimples are dilapidated, in short, she is a stunner. (Nabizade Nazım, 2011: 31)

In the beginning, Suphi, who took pity on Zehra because of her jealousy, feels pity for Sırrıcemal, who is suffering at Zehra’s hands, and feels compassion for her. Suphi always sees the object of desire as a being that needs pity and mercy at the beginning and then approaches it with feelings of lust and love. As Heathcliff, in *Wuthering Heights*, behaves according to his unconscious wishes deriving from his cathexis and id, this time Suphi, in Zehra, listens to his inner voice, and his id tells him that he loves Sırrıcemal but is afraid of his wife. So, the love for Sırrıcemal is instinctive and can be related to the wish of his id and his ego will not rest until it is realized. On the other hand, the confession that he fears his wife is external and can be related to the superego. After all, when one’s ego has to choose between instinct and outer pressure, the result is, as it is for Heathcliff in *Wuthering Heights*, anxiety and neurosis. While Heathcliff’s neurosis turns into revenge, here Suphi unconsciously prefers to escape from the relality principle. He acts according to his instincts and keeps a separate house for Sırrıcemal so he can meet her more often but visit Zehra less often. Nevertheless, the conflict between the two women will lead to a third woman being included. Just as Sırrıcemal tries to separate Suphi from Zehra in order to strengthen her
own position, Zehra engages a third woman named Ürani to separate Suphi from Sırrıcemal. From now on, for Suphi, who finds himself in the middle of an irresistible sexuality and vulnerability to sensual desires, the whole world consists of Ürani’s physical lust. Different from the previous relations with Zehra and Sırrıcemal, Suphi doesn’t first feel pity for Ürani, but he directly indulges in a lustful relationship with her. So, from the beginning, like Heathcliff in *Wuthering Heights*, Suphi behaves according to the pleasure principle of his id and doesn’t pay attention to the social norms that is related to the superego. However, since her relationship with Suphi has been a plot from the beginning, Ürani leaves Suphi when he loses his fortune.

In addition to Heathcliff’s fury and anxiety over Catherine’s denial of him for marriage, as stated above, his passion for Catherine doesn't leave him either, and he also craves for revenge to make his id satisfied. So, it can be claimed that his revenge is still dominant in him, and he acts accordingly. Heathcliff further plans to marry Isabella Linton, Edgar Linton’s sister, again to take revenge from both Edgar and Catherine and so to ease his neurosis and suppressed brutality. Hence, it is obvious that Heathcliff is a person who behaves according to his id and the hidden/suppressed desires inside of him. On the other hand, as stated above, his ego cannot respond to the wishes of his id because of the restrictions of the superego. Then, it turns into anxiety and neurosis. Heathcliff’s neurotic anxiety is seen as revenge as well as reckless behaviour. When Heathcliff comes back to Wuthering Heights after a three year absence, he goes and visits Elizabeth at Thrushcross Grange. Elizabeth is now Mrs. Linton. Her husband, Mr. Linton is not content with his return and doesn’t want him to walk around Thrushcross Grange. However, Heathcliff comes to visit Katherine when Mrs. Linton is absent from home. Heathcliff’s reckless behaviours can also be related to the pleasure principle of the id and libido. It is clear that Heathcliff ceaselessly follows up his libido which derives from his cathexis and neurosis. So, his behaviours towards other people are thoughtless, selfish and brutal. Likewise, Suphi, in Nabizade Nazım’s *Zehra*, lost his wives, family, mother, job, status, self, personality, in short, whatever he has in his hand as a human being because of his love affair with Ürani. When he is rejected by Ürani because he has nothing left in his hand, the overdoing turns into an understatement in Suphi’s eyes, namely, love to hate. In other words, like Heathcliff in *Wuthering Heights*, when Suphi’s ego cannot respond to the desires of his id because of the restrictions of the superego, the result is anxiety and neurosis. Like Heathcliff’s situation in *Wuthering Heights*, Suphi’s neurotic anxiety turns into revenge at the end of the story in *Zehra*. Suphi, having lost everything and been abandoned by Ürani, is forced to lead a miserable life. One day he decides to kill Ürani, follows her and attacks her when she goes out with another man. Hence, the result is, like Heathcliff’s in *Wuthering Heights*, Suphi’s exact revenge on the person who deprives him of his source of pleasure.

**Conclusion**

In this paper, the main characters of two different novels, Heathcliff is the main character of English Emily Bronte’s *Wuthering Heights*, and Suphi is the main character of Turkish Nabizade Nazım’s *Zehra*, are studied in terms of psychoanalytical criticism as a common denominator. A brief and final evaluation of the findings of the study can be stated here as
follows: First of all, both the main characters of the two novels want to behave according to the pleasure principle related to their ids and do not want to act according to their superegos related to the norms of society. In other words, both main characters of the two novels are willing to follow their wishes hidden and suppressed in their unconscious minds and to disregard the social norms. However, their egos cannot respond to these excessive wishes and are stuck between their ids and superegos. The result for both characters is anxiety and neurosis. Their neurotic anxiety, on the other hand, transforms into a kind of fury, self-interest and revenge. More clearly, they behave all the time selfishly and revengefully and do not care about the other people around them. For instance, Heathcliff wants to take revenge on anyone who inhibits his love for Catherine and he acts out according to his unconscious mind. His love for Catherine and his interest in other people around him turn into a plot of revenge in time. Even when he gets married to Isabella, Edgar’s sister, his main and only aim is to take revenge by getting the ownership of Thrushcross Grange from his rival when Edgar and Catherine Linton die. Likewise, Suphi in Zehra, wants to act out according to his wishes hidden and suppressed in his unconscious mind. Nevertheless his pity for the women around him turns into solely lust soon. He begins his relations with Zehra and Sırricemal with a feeling of sympathy for their obstacles and then it transforms into a sexual one soon after. Moreover, his relationship with Ürani, from beginning to end, is a lustful one and as it is for Heathcliff, when Suphi’s hidden wishes are not met, his anxiety turns into revenge as well. Accordingly, both Heathcliff in Wuthering Heights and Suphi in Zehra become losers in their lives because of their selfish and revengeful behaviours motivated by their hidden and suppressed wishes of their unconscious minds. Heathcliff dies as an unhappy and lonely person and Suphi falls as a penniless man and becomes a murderer.
Works Cited


