

Abstract

Wuthering Heights has been acknowledged as one of the greatest novels in English. According to a recent online survey, this novel is ranked 7th on the list of books the nation (Britain) cannot live without. Many aspects of this novel have been discussed throughout the world, and various interpretations, arguments, and hypotheses have emerged since its publication. *Wuthering Heights* enjoys great popularity in China, especially in the Chinese academic circles, and we can find numerous Chinese critical reviews of this novel. What I will explore in this thesis is contemporary Chinese readers' interpretation of the love triangle in this novel, namely, the relationship between three main characters: Heathcliff, Catherine and Linton. Actually, the essence of this novel lies in the relationship between these three characters.

The general idea of Chinese readers' interpretation of this love triangle, which is generated from the critical reviews produced in the Chinese mainland for the past dozen of years, is unique. Compared with Western critics, contemporary Chinese critics put more emphasis on this love triangle. Contemporary Chinese critics applaud the relationship between Catherine and Heathcliff, in spite of the fact it involves extramarital affection.

Jonathan Culler, in his discussion about the interactive relationship between reader and literary work, points out that the reader always brings new conventions and expectation into his or her interpretation of a literary work. Based on this understanding, we can find that contemporary Chinese critics are trying to restore the

role of love in marriage through their interpretation of the love triangle in *Wuthering Heights*.

However, under the influence of traditional Chinese understanding, in real life priority is often given to marital stability over true love. And the stability of a marriage will be protected at all costs, while less attention will be paid to love and emotional affection. Due to this tradition carried on through thousands of years, it is not easy for contemporary Chinese critics to make their advocacy for true love freely. They turn to Western novels like *Wuthering Heights*, which allows them to present their idea about marriage and love with more freedom and boldness.