

## THE COMPLEXITY OF CHARACTERIZATION IN Emily Bronte's *WUTHERING HEIGHTS*: FOCUS ON HEATHCLIFF AND CATHERINE EARNSHAW

(N.B: All quotations in the article, on the novel, come from the 1971 edition).

Author: **Aringo-Bizimaana Peter**

PhD Candidate (Literature),

Uganda Christian University, Mukono – UGANDA

P.O.Box 4, MUKONO (UGANDA)

(with) Fifteen years university teaching experience in Language-Literature (Teacher Education).

[apbizimaana@kab.ac.ug](mailto:apbizimaana@kab.ac.ug)

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### ABSTRACT

The essay first introduces few critics' views on *Wuthering Heights* ranging from quite negative reception of the novel to those that find the work an open-ended masterpiece. We then go on to examine its two key characters, Heathcliff and Catherine, pointing out first what seem to be their down-to-earth personalities as exhibited in their youth. The discussion extends to examining Heathcliff as a symbol of nature and his dogs. The essay then examines the metamorphosis of Catherine and Heathcliff into spiritual symbols whose meanings extend into examination of very many facets of life. This is followed by their assumption of a peculiar "religion" of their own and their "journey to heaven" at their death. We conclude the essay with few critics' views on why critics should never "tie up" the novel with a fixed 'single meaning' to it instead of leaving it as it is: open-ended.

**Keywords:** Primitive passion, supernatural, gothic fiction, horror, timeless spirits, metaphysical.