

Narrative Skill of Emily Bronte

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Emily Bronte displays a remarkable narrative skill. To narrate her story she has chosen the method of the first person singular. The principal narrator is Ellen Dean, who was house-keeper both at Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange. It is more natural for a house-keeper to describe the events occurring in the house where she is employed than for the author himself. It is not possible for an author to know everything about his characters and their doings.

Ellen Dean alone is the suitable person to narrate the story. Hindley, Catherine, Isabella and Linton of the elder generation die much earlier than the end of the story, and so its narration can't be entrusted to them. Since Heathcliff is the central character of the story, so he can't be a narrator. Besides the story does not end exactly with his death, but continues even after it.

Though Ellen Dean is the principal narrator, the entire story is not narrated by her. The first narrator is Mr. Lockwood. He describes his two successive visits to his landlord, Heathcliff. The entire Heathcliff family appears to be peculiar to him, and he wants to know more about them. So, he questions Ellen Dean, the house-keeper of Thrushcross Grange about them, and to satisfy his curiosity she relates the story of Wuthering Heights. Ellen Dean is gifted with a rare narrative skill. She

Can describe the entire scene so vividly that the reader can almost visualize them. She has the power of dramatically presenting scenes, situations and events. Her narrative frequently passes into the dramatic presentation of a scene. So that we can see the whole of it enacted before us as though on a stage.

The narrative of Ellen Deane, however, is supplemented by the narratives of other characters inside the story. There are scenes at which she is not present and whose information is given to her by characters involved in them. Thus she is at the Grange when Isabella is brought to the Heights by her husband after her marriage. That part of the story is related to her by Isabella herself. Again when Heathcliff takes young Catherine to the Heights after her father's death, Ellen Deane remains at the Grange. So it is from Heathcliff's housekeeper that she learns how Cathy is treated at the Heights and how her husband Linton Heathcliff dies.

Therefore, Emily Brontë's narrative method is as complicated as that employed by a modern novelist. Though Mrs Deane is the principal narrator, the narrative is often passed on to Mr. Lockwood, so that we may not forget the fact that Mrs. Deane is narrating to him the history of the two families where she was employed as a housekeeper.