

# The Portrayal of Heathcliff's Character in "Wuthering Heights"

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**Abstract:** Heathcliff is a fictional character in Emily Brontë's novel *Wuthering Heights*. Owing to the novel's enduring fame and popularity, he is often regarded as an archetype of the tortured romantic hero whose all-consuming passions destroy both him and those around him. His complicated, mesmerizing, consumable, and altogether bizarre nature makes him a rare character, with components of both the hero and villain. Thus, this paper attempts to delineate the "The Portrayal of Heathcliff's Character in 'Wuthering Heights'". The significance of this paper lies on the The Portrayal of Heathcliff's Character. The study follows the Descriptive Analytical Method. It begins by an introduction forming a background to the study; followed by a summary of the plot, a literature review, a discussion and a conclusion. The findings of this paper revealed that, both Heathcliff and Edgar eventually die of broken hearts, unable to reconcile themselves to Catherine's death. As if to bring the story full circle, Brontë presents us finally with the possibility of true love and happiness within a relationship that between the two cousins, Cathy and Hareton "one loving and desiring to esteem, and the other loving and desiring to be esteemed." There is no grand passion here, but no violence, either. The novel is a stark warning against the former, and, in Hareton and Cathy's reasoned and gentle love, it promotes the latter as the only sane way to live. In this way, the study recommends that, *Wuthering Heights* can be seen to be not so much a "love story" but, rather, an investigation into romantic love, comprising a discourse on social conventions, blind passion, violence, jealousy, and revenge, together with the notion of good versus evil.

**Keywords:** Heathcliff, Romantic Love, religious hypocrisy, morality, social classes and gender inequality.

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## 1. INTRODUCTION

*Wuthering Heights* is a novel of revenge and romantic love. It tells the stories of two families: the Earnshaws who live at the Heights, at the edge of the moors, and the genteel and refined Lintons who live at Thrushcross Grange. When Mr. Earnshaw brings home a foundling to live in the family, complex feelings of jealousy and rivalry as well as a soulful alliance between Heathcliff and Catherine develop. Believing that he has been rejected by Catherine, Heathcliff leaves to make his fortune. When he returns, Catherine is married to Edgar Linton, but she still feels deeply attached to Heathcliff. Disaster follows for the two families as Heathcliff takes revenge on them all. Only the second generation, young Cathy and Hareton Earnshaw, survive to go beyond this destructive passion in their mutual love. Structurally the novel is rich and complex. There are two generations of characters, and the themes and relationships of the first generation are reflected in the second but with differences that increase our understanding. Brontë's use of point of view leads to many questions about the narrators who control the unraveling of events. It is as if the main characters are seen through a series of mirrors, each causing a certain amount of distortion. Without an omniscient voice controlling sympathies, the reader must get inside the characters' minds, the one telling the story as well as the one about whom the story is being told. Probing this complex web of relationships and motives leads to intense psychological analysis, and in this way the novel mirrors life itself. Learning occurs in pieces and is always subject to revision. The themes of *Wuthering Heights* should appeal to the teenage student. The various power relationships involved with romantic love and vengeance depicted in the novel are also a part of the high school students' social milieu. Teachers who make relevant connections between the themes and characters of the novel and the students' own preoccupations will find this novel opens up discussion of many of the students' concerns.

## 2. DISCUSSION

There are various interesting aspects to be observed in Emily Brontë's renowned novel, *Wuthering Heights*. Among these are the notions of destruction and sympathy, as damaging attitudes and commiserative feelings pervade the story in the shape of its characters. One of these characters is Heathcliff and it has sometimes been argued how he is one of the most obscene characters to enter the world of English fiction. Throughout the course of the novel he proves himself to be an embodiment of malignancy and wickedness, as he wreaks destruction and misery upon himself and those around him. However, despite Heathcliff's eventual meanness and maleficent intentions, his introduction to the novel portrays him as an innocent, empathetic character. Hence, the revelation of a poor past, of a past with no carers, of a past of loneliness and sorrow, serves to awaken the reader's sympathy with him which is in turn reinforced by the initial indifferent and cruel reception he receives from several of his new family members. To discuss the concept of the 'The Portrayal of Heathcliff's Character in "Wuthering Heights"' as depicted in *Wuthering Heights*. To show the artistic quality of the novel by discussing the underlying themes. To explain how characters, motifs, symbols and images are embodied to enhance the central theme of the story 'Romantic Love in *Wuthering Heights*' as shown in the contrast of the material and the spiritual part of the 'love'. The study follows the Descriptive Analytical Method. It begins by an introduction forming a background to the study; followed by a summary of the plot, a literature review, a discussion and a conclusion. Heathcliff is the conflicted villain/hero of the novel. Mr. Earnshaw finds him on the street and brings him home to *Wuthering Heights*, where he and Catherine become soul mates. He is the ultimate outsider, with his dark "gypsy" looks and mysterious background. Though he eventually comes to own *Wuthering Heights*, he never seems as fully home in the house as he does on the moors. His love for Catherine is gigantic and untamed and matters to him more than anything else, but it is never easy it leads him to control and belittle and manipulate nearly everyone around him. Despite his many horrible deeds, Heathcliff is not a straight-out bad guy; he is a poor orphan who finds material success but not what he really wants the love of Catherine. From a literary perspective, Heathcliff swerves from being a traditional hero of any typical tragedy and becomes the personification of the Byronic hero ( accredited to the writer Lord Byron, George Gordon), a hero who is wronged by circumstances. There is no character in *Wuthering Heights* who is either completely loveable or completely odious. Rather, as Phyllis Bentley has observed: Emily shows to her characters exactly that clear-eyed compassion which she shows when she declines to judge the hare and the deer for timidity, or mock the wolf for his wolfishness. [1] She portrays with absolute fidelity the weakness of the Lintons, the appalling insensate hardness of Heathcliff, the egoism of Cathy and the fatal consequences of all these qualities, yet she views these characters as she does the deer, the wolf and the hare; that is, with regret for their defects, but with understanding and compassion. She deprecates their faults, but does not blame them for their innate qualities or for the development of these qualities beneath the street of fear or shame; she lets them be heard in their own defense; she knows that Edgar, though a coward, was kind, that Heathcliff, though cruel, was bitterly oppressed. He deviates from the stereotypical qualities of a traditional hero and comes out to be an anti-hero with an unsettling and troubled past, tumultuous emotions, a high level of intelligence, a loathing for rules and social constraints, a thirst for revenge and most importantly the capacity to love up to the end degree; the characteristics required by the character to be classified as a Byronic hero. "Heathcliff's enduring appeal is approximately that of Edmund, Lago, Richard III, the intermittent Macbeth: the villain who impresses by way of his energy, his cleverness, his peculiar sort of courage; and by his asides, inviting, as they do, the audience's or reader's collaboration in wickedness. Brontë is perfectly accurate in having her villain tell us, by way of Mrs. Dean and Lockwood, that brutality does not always disgust; and that there are those persons- often of weak, cringing, undeveloped characters- who innately admire it, provided they themselves are not injured." [2] Heathcliff is presented as an embodiment of dark powers. This aspect of his character is stressed throughout the novel. Mr. Earnshaw introduces him as a dark man "almost as if it came from the devil." Hindley calls Heathcliff a "fiend" and a "hellish villain." The mild Edgar Linton describes him to young Cathy as "a most diabolical man." When his own son shrinks from him, Heathcliff exclaims, "You would imagine I was the devil himself -- to excite such horror." But it is Isabella who leaves the reader with the strongest impression of Heathcliff's darkness. In a letter to Nelly, Isabella wonders if Heathcliff is a man or a devil. To her Heathcliff appears "diabolical," an "incarnate goblin," "a monster and not a human being," "only half man: not so much, and the rest fiend." Even, Cathy, who loves him, describes him to Isabella as "a fierce, pitiless, wolfish man." Heathcliff's beginnings are questionable. The "gypsy brat" old Mr. Earnshaw brings home with him has no name, social status, nor possessions. He is a foundling who can be seen as either a "gift" or a "threat." Earnshaw's daughter Catherine is the only one at *Wuthering Heights* besides old Earnshaw who cares about Heathcliff. Hindley, Catherine's brother, sees the child as a rival for his father's affections and his own position as heir; he, therefore, hates and torments him. The housekeeper

Nelly refers to him as the "cuckoo" and constantly puts Heathcliff in his place by reminding him that he is an outsider. Naturally, the treatment that he receives at Wuthering Heights has an effect on Heathcliff. The cruelty meted out to him leads to his cultivating a great resentment towards his tormentors. As an adult, he deliberately resolves to free himself from the humiliation of oppression by attaining the status of an oppressor. He plans to avenge himself on Hindley and the Lintons by two methods. He will oppress and exploit their children, Hareton Earnshaw and Linton Heathcliff, in precisely the same way that Hindley and Edgar oppressed and exploited him. Heathcliff also plans to seize their lands and possessions. Catherine Earnshaw, and her beloved Heathcliff, highlighting the destructive nature of love and the effect it has on their lives. Brontë grew up on the Yorkshire Moors with her two sisters, a brother, and her father, a local minister. Though the children lived a very strict and sheltered life, they had a lot of freedom to play in the moors, time which Brontë and her sisters used to make up complex role-playing games, taking place in imaginary worlds. Brontë was said to have a strong character, in that she was the most stubborn of the sisters, always trying to get her way, and even going as far as to hold her breath when she did not (Wuthering Heights, n.d.). In many ways, Emily Brontë had a very distinct resemblance to Catherine Earnshaw; both girls loved and needed the freedom and nature of the moor, Brontë leaving school after a few months after being overcome with homesickness. Additionally, both Catherine and Brontë were known for being stubborn to the point of self-harm [3]. These connections highlight that the novel Wuthering Heights was deeply personal to Brontë, and contained many references to her own life, including the village of Haworth, where she grew up being isolated on the Yorkshire Moors, inspiring the setting for her novel. Similarly, the early death of her mother is also reflected in the lack of mother figures in Wuthering Heights. [4] Contrary to the passionate themes expressed in her book, Brontë's father was a very strict, religious man, who educated his children at home under firm supervision. Therefore, it was extremely unexpected for a woman like Brontë, who passed away before ever being in a relationship at the young age of 30, to write such a passionate and violent story. In fact, most people assumed a story of this style must have been written by Terry Eagleton asserts in Myths of Power that Heathcliff is "robbed of liberty in two antithetical ways: exploited as a servant on the one hand, allowed to run wild on the other" [5]. Heathcliff is no longer given tuition, and must work outdoors, where he and Catherine spend their time together. Neither the waif nor the female offspring is going to inherit anything so they are both disregarded by Hindley. However, the freedom to roam the moors is a welcome consequence of the punishment for Heathcliff. According to Eagleton, he "offers Catherine a friendship which opens fresh possibilities of freedom within the internal system of the Heights", the place where they live, which means a social mobility for Catherine "down that. This is a situation she thrives on, and they enjoy a free, careless friendship which, Eagleton continues, "crystallises under the pressures of economic and cultural violence". Arnold Kettle sums up Catherine and Heathcliff's relationship in his essay "Emily Brontë: Wuthering Heights" as they in their revolt ... discover their deep and passionate need of each other. He, the outcast slummy, turns to the lively, spirited, fearless girl who alone offers him human understanding and comradeship. And she, born into the world of Wuthering Heights, senses that to achieve a full humanity, to be true to herself as a human being, she must associate herself totally with him in his rebellion against the tyranny of the Earnshaws and all that tyranny involves. [6] It can be noticed again and again how Heathcliff is constructed in a racial discourse as a man of fiend-like black eyes, eyeing other people like "devil's spies", and who should change his nature from being fiendish into angelic, from being a vicious dog that enjoys humiliation and kicks from others and wanting revenge on these sufferings into a more civilised man. This again confirms how Heathcliff is always reduced to the status of faceless, homeless, placeless, and stateless existence, and how he has been transformed into Homo Sacer, to quote Slavoj Žižek, though in a different context, or the accursed man, for he has never been treated as fully human and always deprived of his rights of equality [7] It is this racial embarrassment and hostility that the cultivated race and class of the Earnshaws and the Lintons that they have narrated throughout the novel; the whites have constantly narrated their own whiteness in revenge against the blackness of Heathcliff. And he, in the same token, parades his own dark primitivism in defiance of their racial whiteness and takes appropriate revenge later. Heathcliff tries all his life to prove that it is wrong to say and act accordingly that "black people can be reduced (in white culture) to their bodies and thus to race," while, as Dyer argues, "white people are something else that is realised in and yet is not reducible to the corporeal, or racial" [8]. Wuthering Heights is a novel of its historical period, presenting events that symbolise on an individual level the great change in the economic system. Bourgeoisie values tempt Catherine to choose the genteel Edgar over Heathcliff the class-less orphan whom she is very passionate about and identify with. The self-betrayal this choice involves causes Heathcliff to depart and leaves Catherine to marry, although with a broken heart. Heathcliff responds by becoming worse than his oppressors, and takes revenge on everyone having transformed into an exploitative capitalist. The reason for the intense companionship between Catherine and Heathcliff is found in their common fate of lacking sufficient mothering. They therefore seek to merge with each other, which is seen in their united rebellion and strong

reactions to being separated. Catherine's betrayal of Heathcliff is seen in terms of her self-preservation drive, hosted by the ego, dominating her behaviour. She chooses comfort and sophistication as well as social status over true love, which she tries to repress. Heathcliff also acts according to this drive when he transforms into a capitalist, betraying his former down-to-earth values to become a worthy suitor for Catherine. Catherine and Heathcliff both become dominated by the death-drive when they cannot be together. Catherine soon turns this destructive force inwards and wills herself to get ill. She dies psychotic. Heathcliff acts like a crueler version of his oppressors in his new role as he takes revenge on the Lintons and the Earnshaws over many years. His childhood experiences also result in abandonment neurosis which entails negative aggression. In psychoanalytic terms, he now seeks a substitute intimacy through being violent before his 31 frustration results in the same fate as Catherine suffered. His psychotic symptoms include visions of Catherine and the intense wish to be re-joined with her in death. *Wuthering Heights* is a richly imaginative and thematically complex novel. It has been made into a film four times, the first being the 1939 version starring Merle Oberon and Laurence Olivier. The clash of the elements: Unlike other Victorian novels about the evils of city and town life, *Wuthering Heights* is set in the remote moorland region Emily Brontë knew well. *Wuthering Heights* is a closed world that doesn't welcome the intrusion of strangers. The wild beauty of the countryside and the extreme weather form an important backdrop to the conflicts and passions of the characters. Rocky moors and green meadows, storm and calmness underline the clashes of lovers, families and social classes. Love, both romantic and fraternal, is explored throughout the novel. The love between Catherine and Heathcliff goes beyond passion to a form of spirituality lasting beyond death and the material world, which inquires into the human need to transcend and adds supernatural elements to the story. A more brotherly and earthly form of love is scrutinized in the form of a number of family issues: the effects of the abuse of children and how the children try to defend themselves, the use of illness as a method of control over other people, addictions to alcohol and gambling as a form of escape from depression, perhaps like that of Emily's own brother. The Victorian family: The history of the Earnshaws is a penetrating insight into the psychology of a poorly functioning family existing in isolation from the rest of society. This setting, together with the neighbouring, more elegant and educated Thrushcross Grange, displays a portrayal of the patriarchal Victorian family in which the father is all-powerful and has total control over the family resources, while the women and children are economically vulnerable and powerless. Victorian society: In the portrayal of Heathcliff we see a number of beliefs which were current in the nineteenth century. Dark-skinned and often called a 'gypsy', his character shows traits that were popularly associated with the lower classes and black people, namely that they were criminal and filthy, irrational, and superstitious. The importance of education can be seen in Heathcliff withholding it from Hareton as Hindley had withheld it from him, as well as in Hareton's change under Cathy's patient tuition. The two houses, Thrushcross Grange and *Wuthering Heights*, represent opposite poles of order and civilization versus chaos and ignorance. Intense suffering and revenge are also major themes in the novel. Heathcliff finds some peace of mind and the long-awaited encounter with Catherine only when he abandons his plans of revenge, which extend throughout the novel. The intense suffering that led him to his extreme cruelty brings to the surface the complexity of the origin and co-existence of good and evil in human nature. Heathcliff is a fictional character in Emily Brontë's novel *Wuthering Heights*. Owing to the novel's enduring fame and popularity, he is often regarded as an archetype of the tortured romantic hero whose all-consuming passions destroy both him and those around him. He is better known for being a romantic hero due to his youthful love for Catherine Earnshaw, than for his final years of vengeance in the second half of the novel, during which he grows into a bitter, haunted man, and for a number of incidents in his early life that suggest that he was an upset and sometimes malicious individual from the beginning. His complicated, mesmerizing, consumable, and altogether bizarre nature makes him a rare character, with components of both the hero and villain. Emily Brontë, born in 1818, was the daughter of a clergyman. Alongside her sisters Charlotte and Anne she would grow to be a key part of one of the most famous families in literature. At the young age of three Emily lost her mother to cancer. Later in their lives at school the Brontë sisters suffered to the cold and lack of food, and eventually a typhoid epidemic swept through their school leaving them recovering from the death of two of their siblings. Their father was incredibly strict and made the girls sit in a room together in silence. Emily and Charlotte would escape into their writing, together they created a fictional world called Gondal. Links have been made between the harsh and isolated Yorkshire landscape and the raw elemental writing of Emily Brontë. Many also stress the importance of the time in which *Wuthering Heights* was written, a time when women were still being held back by sexist societal views. All of the Brontë sister's novels were published under male pseudonyms. Some even go as far as to theorise that Cathy was created to represent all the pent-up desires and characteristics of Emily Brontë. It's important not to read *Wuthering Heights* with a one-sided view. You'll miss so much substance from the book if you just see Heathcliff as a dark romantic man, or Cathy as solely a selfish heartless being. There is so much depth to almost every aspect of the novel. For instance, Heathcliff is 'mass of



contradictions', he's an utter brute, he beats animals and humans alike, he holds an obsession for Cathy that will keep him going on his course of destruction no matter who he hurts along the way. On the other hand you'll find like Frankenstein's monster, he is a noble savage, a victim of circumstance and still clearly displays genuine care and tenderness towards Catherine. Catherine on the other hand is incredibly mischievous at a younger age and never really sees the torment she inflicts upon others, and she inflicts such pain upon almost every other character in the novel. However she also has a deeper side, she holds a burning passion for Heathcliff and despite her circumstances doesn't show signs of snobbishness like her brother. Romantic love takes many forms in *Wuthering Heights*: the grand passion of Heathcliff and Catherine, the insipid sentimental languishing of Lockwood, the coupleism of Hindley and Frances, the tame indulgence of Edgar, the romantic infatuation of Isabella, the puppy love of Cathy and Linton, and the flirtatious sexual attraction of Cathy and Hareton. These lovers, with the possible exception of Hareton and Cathy, are ultimately self-centered and ignore the needs, feelings, and claims of others; what matters is the lovers' own feelings and needs. Nevertheless, it is the passion of Heathcliff and Catherine that most readers respond to and remember and that has made this novel one of the great love stories not merely of English literature but of European literature as well. Simone de Beauvoir cites Catherine's cry, "I am Heathcliff," in her discussion of romantic love, and movie adaptations of the novel include a Mexican and a French version. In addition, their love has passed into popular culture; Kate Bush and Pat Benetar both recorded "*Wuthering Heights*," a song which Bush wrote, and MTV showcased the lovers in a musical version. The love-relationship of Heathcliff and Catherine, but not that of the other lovers, has become an archetype; it expresses the passionate longing to be whole, to give oneself unreservedly to another and gain a whole self or sense of identity back, to be all-in-all for each other, so that nothing else in the world matters, and to be loved in this way forever. This type of passion-love can be summed up in the phrase more--and still more, for it is insatiable, unfulfillable, and unrelenting in its demands upon both lovers. Despite the generally accepted view that Heathcliff and Catherine are deeply in love with each other, the question of whether they really "love" each other has to be addressed. This question raises another; what kind of love--or feeling--is Emily Brontë depicting? Her sister Charlotte, for example, called Heathcliff's feelings "perverted passion and passionate perversity." Their love exists on a higher or spiritual plane; they are soul mates, two people who have an affinity for each other which draws them together irresistibly. Heathcliff repeatedly calls Catherine his soul. Such a love is not necessarily fortunate or happy. For C. Day Lewis, Heathcliff and Catherine "represent the essential isolation of the soul, the agony of two souls--or rather, of a single soul forever sundered and struggling to unite." Clifford Collins calls their love a life-force relationship, a principle that is not conditioned by anything but itself. It is a principle because the relationship is of an ideal nature; it does not exist in life, though as in many statements of an ideal this principle has implications of a profound living significance. Catherine's conventional feelings for Edgar Linton and his superficial appeal contrast with her profound love for Heathcliff, which is "an acceptance of identity below the level of consciousness." Their relationship expresses "the impersonal essence of personal existence," an essence which Collins calls the life-force. This fact explains why Catherine and Heathcliff several times describe their love in impersonal terms. Because such feelings cannot be fulfilled in an actual relationship, Brontë provides the relationship of Hareton and Cathy to integrate the principle into everyday life. Catherine and Heathcliff are rejecting the emptiness of the universe, social institutions, and their relationships with others by finding meaning in their relationship with each other, by a desperate assertion of identity based on the other. Catherine explains to Nelly: surely you and everybody have a notion that there is, or should be, an existence of yours beyond you. What were the use of my creation if I were entirely contained here? My great miseries in this world have been Heathcliff's miseries, and I watched and felt each from the beginning; my great thought in living is himself. If all else perished, and he remained, I should still continue to be; and, if all else remained, and he were annihilated, the Universe would turn to a mighty stranger. Dying, Catherine again confides to Nelly her feelings about the emptiness and torment of living in this world and her belief in a fulfilling alternative: "I'm tired, tired of being enclosed here. Their love is an attempt to break the boundaries of self and to fuse with another to transcend the inherent separateness of the human condition; fusion with another will by uniting two incomplete individuals create a whole and achieve new sense of identity, a complete and unified identity. This need for fusion motivates Heathcliff's determination to "absorb" Catherine's corpse into his and for them to "dissolve" into each other so thoroughly that Edgar will not be able to distinguish Catherine from him. Freud explained this urge as an inherent part of love: "At the height of being in love the boundary between ego and object threatens to melt away. Against all the evidence of his senses, a man who is in love declares 'I' and 'you' are one, and is prepared to behave as if it were a fact." Love has become a religion in *Wuthering Heights*, providing a shield against the fear of death and the annihilation of personal identity or consciousness. This use of love would explain the inexorable connection between love and death in the characters' speeches and actions. *Wuthering Heights* is filled with a religious urgency unprecedented in British novels--to imagine a

faith that might replace the old. Cathy's "secret" is blasphemous, and Emily Brontë's secret, in the novel, is the raging heresy that has become common in modern life: redemption, if it is possible, lies in personal desire, imaginative power, and love. Nobody else's heaven is good enough. Echoing Cathy, Heathcliff says late in the book, "I have nearly attained my heaven; and that of others is altogether unvalued and uncovered by me!" .The hope for salvation becomes a matter of eroticized private enterprise Catherine and Heathcliff have faith in their vocation of being in love with one another . They both believe that they have their being in the other, as Christians, Jews, and Moslems believe that they have their being in God. Look at the mystical passion of these two: devotion to shared experience and intimacy with the other; willingness to suffer anything, up to, and including, death, for the sake of this connection; ecstatic expression; mutilation of both social custom and the flesh; and mania for self-transcendence through the other. That passion is a way of overcoming the threat of death and the separateness of existence. Their calling is to be the other; and that calling, mad and destructive as it sometimes seems, is religious. The desire for transcendence takes the form of crossing boundaries and rejecting conventions; this is the source of the torment of being imprisoned in a body and in this life, the uncontrolled passion expressed in extreme and violent ways, the usurpation of property, the literal and figurative imprisonments, the necrophilia, the hints of incest and adultery, the ghosts of Catherine and Heathcliff—all, in other words, that has shocked readers from the novel's first publication. Each has replaced God for the other, and they anticipate being reunited in love after death, just as Christians anticipate being reunited with God after death. Nevertheless, Catherine and Heathcliff are inconsistent in their attitude toward death, which both unites and separates. After crying "Heathcliff! I only wish us never to be parted," Catherine goes on to say, "I'm wearying to escape into that glorious world," a wish which necessarily involves separation .Conventional religion is presented negatively in the novel. The abandoned church at Gimmerton is decaying; the minister stops visiting Wuthering Heights because of Hindley's degeneracy. Catherine and Heathcliff reject Joseph's religion, which is narrow, self-righteous, and punitive. Individuals who lack direction and commitment, who are emotionally unstable, or who are isolated and have few interests are especially vulnerable to addictions. An addictive love wants to break down the boundaries of identity and merge with the lover into one identity. Lacking inner resources, love addicts look outside themselves for meaning and purpose, usually in people similar to themselves. Even if the initial pleasure and sense of fulfillment or satisfaction does not last, the love-addict is driven by need and clings desperately to the relationship and the lover. Catherine, for example, calls her relationship "a source of little visible delight, but necessary." The loss of the lover, whether through rejection or death, causes the addict withdrawal symptoms, often extreme ones like illness, not eating, and faintness. The addict wants possession of the lover regardless of the consequences to the loved one; a healthy love, on the other hand, is capable of putting the needs of the beloved first. The chronology of Wuthering Heights is carefully planned, but the narrative time does not flow in an unbroken line from the past to the present. Rather it shifts between the present and the past and then back again several times. There are also shifts in point of view. The novel begins with Lockwood's recounting of his year at the Grange, then shifts to Nelly Dean's remembrances, and at times a third voice reports on an event at which Nelly was not present. *Wuthering Heights*, published in 1847 under the pen name of Ellis Bell, is considered one of the classic examples of Romantic literature. We know from biographies written about Emily Brontë and her siblings, that they were well versed in the literary trends of the times. All the Brontës were familiar with the major romantic poets and writers such as Sir Walter Scott, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, John Keats, Percy Bysshe Shelley, Mary W. Shelley, George Gordon, Lord Byron, William Blake, and William Wordsworth. Many romantic influences are woven into the fabric of *Wuthering Heights*. During the Romantic period (1789-1832) there was a return to the aesthetics, norms, and principles of medieval times. *Wuthering Heights* has been defined as romantic fiction written in the genre of the Gothic novel. As modern readers, we become overwhelmed by the complexities of the story. *Wuthering Heights* is a tale of two families, the Earnshaws and the Lintons. It is told through the voices of the faithful servant Ellen Dean and Heathcliff's tenant, Mr. Lockwood. The novel spans fifty years, and past and present are juxtaposed throughout. The story is set in an extreme landscape on the wild moors, weather-beaten by icy winds, storms and rain. Although not a ruined castle, Wuthering Heights has many Gothic characteristics. It is dark, lit with candles, and has hidden rooms, passages, oak paneled beds, stairwells and banisters. Characters are imprisoned or confined in Wuthering Heights. The ghost of Catherine Linton appears in the opening chapters and we are witness to dreams, visions and supernatural incidents. The story of the Earnshaws and Lintons spans three generations and is full of torture, tyranny and intolerable cruelty. It hinges on the soul consuming and obsessive love between Catherine Earnshaw/Linton and Heathcliff. Their passionate love leads them to various forms of physical and mental madness that transcends death. There is even a hint of necrophilia when Heathcliff opens Catherine's coffin years later. Brontë develops Heathcliff's persona around the myths and mysteries surrounding vagabond gypsies, another literary trend at the time. Heathcliff, the villain-hero, lacks ancestral origins. He is dark, mysterious, primitive and rebellious. Catherine Earnshaw

is not your typical Gothic heroine, swooning and in distress. She is far from what is expected of a daughter of landed gentry. For all her education and love of books, she is wild, selfish, self-willed and demonstrates both violent fits of temper and cruelty. Only Nelly Dean is able to put up with her. Catherine's and Hindley's father finds a starving orphan on one of his trips to Liverpool. He is named Heathcliff after a son who had died in childbirth. The Earnshaws view Heathcliff as an usurper. He is humiliated and forced to endure Hindley Earnshaw's jealous sadism. Catherine befriends him and they grow up together on the windswept moors. Their intimacy binds them together heart and soul. Heathcliff's entire existence revolves around his compulsive love for Catherine. When old Earnshaw dies, Hindley's physical and mental abuse of Heathcliff drains the poor creature of any compassionate humanity. Taking revenge becomes Heathcliff's main obsession and his plans take on diabolical proportions. Hindley loses his wife, Frances, to tuberculosis. He falls into alcoholism, gambling and despair. His little son, Hareton, is abused and neglected. One of Heathcliff's acts of vengeance is to acquire all property rights to Wuthering Heights and Hareton's inheritance. Once this is accomplished, he refuses to educate Hareton leaving him a brutal, illiterate, savage. The Linton family estate, Thrushcross Grange, and the Lintons are in stark contrast to Wuthering Heights and the Earnshaws. Catherine encounters the Lintons through an accident involving their dogs. She is attracted by the light and gaiety at Thrushcross Grange and the children, Isabella and Edgar Linton. It is inevitable that her association with the Lintons will lead to her marriage to Edgar. This solidifies her "gentile" social station in life but it maddens and infuriates her soulmate, Heathcliff. Brontë portrays Edgar and Isabella Linton as spoiled, but gentle, weak and naïve. Heathcliff takes advantage of this on several occasions. He becomes even more diabolical and ensnares Isabella into marriage only to degrade and violently abuse her. Forever torn between Heathcliff and Edgar, Catherine dies wailing and delirious giving birth to Edgar Linton's daughter, Cathy. Twelve years later, Heathcliff continues his insane revenge on Cathy whom he detests. His derangement further affects his treatment of his own son, born to Isabella, Linton Heathcliff. The births of Cathy Linton and Linton Heathcliff mark the next stage of the story. The decay and weakness of the Linton family is symbolized by the consumptive Edgar and his effeminate nephew, Linton. Linton's illness, selfishness and whining self-loathing fill us with disgust as well as pity. He plays upon Cathy's kind heart and uses his hypochondria to manipulate her. Heathcliff is callously cruel towards his dying son. Playing on Linton's bad character, Heathcliff cajoles, tricks and finally forces Cathy to marry Linton. Fearful of being tortured and tormented, the dying Linton signs all of his property, including Cathy's, over to his father. The final circle of revenge is completed. Heathcliff now owns all property rights to Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange, as well as any inheritance left to Cathy, Hareton and Linton. Heathcliff administers the same savage treatment to Cathy as he once experienced himself. However, Heathcliff does not anticipate the relationship that slowly develops between Hareton and Cathy which will eventually lead to their marriage. At first, appalled by his coarseness, primitive dialect and illiteracy, Cathy abhors Hareton. Nevertheless, stripped of land, money, inheritance and friends, she slowly accepts him and teaches him to read. Haunted by the images of Catherine Linton, Heathcliff is suddenly disarmed by Cathy's and Hareton's resemblance to her. His behavior changes abruptly and Heathcliff no longer takes enjoyment in Cathy's and Hareton's destruction. Catherine's ghostlike haunting makes him yearn to be with her in death. Heathcliff's final scenes of suffering and madness take on intense forms of erratic behavior. Open to several symbolic interpretations, the romantic tale ends in accordance with Gothic traditions. Peace finally descends on Wuthering Heights.

### 3. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, there is no doubt that Heathcliff is the arch-villain of Wuthering Heights. He is brought as an orphan to Wuthering Heights, a boy who is fully entitled to the reader's genuine sympathy, which decreases drastically as Heathcliff's character converts from sympathetic to repulsive, partly due to the harsh treatment and humiliation he receives from his neighbours but mostly because of his inherently cruel nature. Then, after his return in a state of complete vindictiveness, his inhuman actions towards his neighbours at Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange intensify the villainous aspect of his character. As has been demonstrated in this dissertation, Heathcliff devastates different characters in various ways. Hence, whereas he never lays hands on the older Catherine but mentally brings destruction to her character, he violently abuses her brother, Hindley. Much the same is the case with Edgar and Isabella: whereas Heathcliff does not physically brutalize Edgar but brings him to the brink of destruction through the ruination of his sister, wife and daughter, he absolutely devastates Isabella, in addition to implying his desire to torture her. Further, in contrast to Hareton who is bereft of humane treatment and rendered absolutely ignorant, Heathcliff bullies his son, Linton, and consistently instils terror within him. Finally, young Catherine is kidnapped and violently beaten by Heathcliff. Accordingly, after having brought misery and ruination to those nearest to him, Heathcliff gradually loses his sympathetic

aspect to give way to a more repellent demeanour, through which he progressively destroys himself. As has been outlined, whereas Drew and Charlotte Brontë acknowledge the fact that Heathcliff's deeds are inexcusable, Hagan and Shannon seek to provide explanations for his conduct, in an attempt to excuse it. Hence, they have been shown to belong to Drew's category of "modern critics, [who] usually choose to minimize or justify Heathcliff's consistent delight in malice in order to elevate him to the status of hero," an assessment which opposes that of Charlotte Brontë, but her evaluation "depends on a recognition of Heathcliff's superhuman villainy". Lastly, as the objective of this thesis has been to manifest the validity of the initial statement that Heathcliff is the prime evil of Wuthering Heights, that he is the bringer of destruction and misery, it is befitting to conclude it with Charlotte Brontë's contemplation concerning the legitimacy of his character: "Whether it is right or advisable to create beings like Heathcliff, I do not know: I scarcely think it is". In this study, a comprehensive and overall study of various causes is made. It is a systematic research of the causes of the tragedy of passion in its both aspects: love and violence, such as the two main characters' different personalities, women's low status and dark social system, Heathcliff's and Cathy's destructive natures and their being victims of fate beyond their control. Therefore, denial and repression have a great influence on the two major characters and accordingly affected their behavior and destiny. All of these elements determine that the love story in Wuthering Heights could only be ended in tragedy.

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