

Social outsiders are often treated in a cruel and unjust way essay sample

[Literature](#), [Novel](#)



Outsiders is a big theme in both novels *Wuthering Heights* and *The Color Purple*. *Wuthering Heights* is described as a gothic novel and outsider is a key figure in the Gothic novel. An outsider lives beyond the bounds of conventional society or on the borderlands of it, he or she is seen as a suspicious and threatening entity, someone who must be excluded for the safety of society at large. Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* explores outsiders in three different ways. The first and obvious example is of Heathcliff, the character that was an outsider until his death. The second is of Isabella Linton, whom has been taken from Thrushcross Grange to become an outsider in *Wuthering Heights*. Finally but not least the third main outsider is Hareton, where Brontë here explores how a character being an outsider could transform into an insider.

From the moment Heathcliff was introduced to the Earnshaw family, as an orphan that was found in the streets of Liverpool, Heathcliff was claimed to be an outsider and treated as one. In her description of Heathcliff, Nelly Dean, narrating Heathcliff's story to Mr. Lockwood the new tenant of Thrushcross grange, she refers to him with the personal pronoun "it". This is deliberately done to emphasize how much Heathcliff was unwanted in the house, to the point where "Mrs. Earnshaw was ready to fling it out of doors", and Heathcliff was also degraded him to the status of a thing. In his first night the poor child was not accepted by the two children to sleep, or even share their rooms. Nelly, not being any kinder let Heathcliff sleeps on the landing of the stairs.

During the remaining life of Mr. Earnshaw, Heathcliff was treated as an outsider by Hindley and named the “ gypsy”, but he enjoyed the protection of the old master. When Mr. Earnshaw died, Hindley became the master of the house and because of his hatred of Heathcliff; he started the process of degrading him. Hindley “ drove him from their company to the servants, depriving him of the instructions of the curate, and insisted that he should labour out of doors instead”. This goes on to show that outsiders to Hindley are just like servants “ compelling him to do so, as hard as any other lad on the farm.”

During this stage Heathcliff was close to Catherine Earnshaw and she “ taught him what she learnt, and worked or played with him in the fields.” When Heathcliff and Catherine were at Thrushcross Grange they laughed together at the spoilt behaviour of the Linton children, and at this point they are social outsiders together to Thrushcross Grange. The residence of the Grange lunched their “ bull-dog” at them, which caught Catherine’s ankle. Although Catherine suffers physically, being attacked by the dog, the Lintons realise their mistakes, and take Catherine in to attend on her, because Catherine is no social outsider to them, they have seen her at church. Heathcliff on the other hand is kicked off. In this point we see clearly how cruelly and unjust outsider are treated.

Mr. Linton described him as a “ little Lascar, or an American or Spanish castaway”. This shows that even Heathcliff is their neighbour, Mr. Linton still thinks of him worse because he was just found in the streets instead of being born in Wuthering heights. Heathcliff was convicted of robbery, even though

he was just amusing himself with Catherine. Isabella Linton describes him as a “son of the fortune-teller, that stole my tame pheasant.” And is still carried on by the servants whom describe him to the master as “foulmouthed thief” and murder, even though he has no proof, he just made those assumptions because Heathcliff to him is “out-and-outer” or an outsider. If it wasn’t for Catherine not being an outsider, Heathcliff would of had suffered the fate of the “gallows” which is death.

After Catherine returns from the Grange, she counters on Heathcliff and unconsciously treats him as an outsider, because compared to living in the Grange she sees him as one. Catherine insults Heathcliff although she then goes on describes how she loves him by saying “it would degrade me to marry Heathcliff now”. “now” in this quote shows that Catherine sees Heathcliff from a different vantage point. Before that she treats him infernally describing him as “so dirty” in their first meeting after the Grange incident. She even states that “I’m used to Edgar and Isabella Linton”, which could hint that she might share the same view of the Linton’s on Heathcliff. The effect of that is that Catherine started to share her days greater with the Lintons and much less with Heathcliff, and she hints to him that she does not want his company anymore, “” And should I always be sitting with you,” she demanded growing more irritated.”

A reverse social outsider situation occurs in the case of Isabella Linton who has been delicately brought up. After eloping with Heathcliff and marrying him, Isabella became an outsider to her own home. Because she conceived Edgar and left him, Edgar became resolved not to help her return or even

invite her to the Grange. Edgar does not want any relationship with her from his statement " Hereafter she is only my sister in name; not because I disown her, but because she has disowned me." So basically Isabella once was one of the residents of Thrushcross Grange has been transformed to an outsider by eloping marrying an outsider, Heathcliff. She is also an outsider in her new home and suffers harsh and brutal life in her marriage. She was not welcomed to her new home as a just married wife, but rather like a stranger or an outsider. Young Hareton refuses to shake hands with her or even become acquainted to her. Hindley was not any more welcoming and his first speech was " What's your business here?" rather than a welcoming introduction. Heathcliff does not share with her their bedroom and she is left isolated in her new home.

Brontë uses Hareton as an example to show how an outsider could be healed through care, education, and most significantly love, something which never happened to Heathcliff. Hareton is the result of Heathcliff's revenge on Hindley. As it was done to him, Heathcliff degraded Hareton to be in the status of servants. He lacked education and gentleness, and was an isolated outsider. Young Catherine the daughter of Edgar Linton and Catherine Earnshaw could not accept that fact that an outsider such as Hareton could become her cousin, when they first met. She treats him as a servant and is quite cruel to him, " Mustn't he be made to do as I ask him?" When Catherine marries Linton and stays in Wuthering Heights she treats Hareton infernally, laughing at his lack of education, and not desiring his company even he sometimes tries to be nice to her. Because of this ill treatment

Hareton becomes uncivil and is described occasionally as a “clown”, even by Mr. Lockwood one of the narrators of the novel when he first meets him. When Catherine learns to love her cousin, Hareton transforms into an insider. She helps him to become literate and his manners improve. Importantly he becomes more accepted in society with the love and aid of Catherine Linton.

The color purple is set in another country at a very different time. The novel is set in South America, after the slave abolition act. Alice Walker, the author of the novel, presents the reader with the voice of the social outsider through Celie, the female protagonist of the novel. The novel opens with Celie’s voice, clearly that of a victim, isolated, with no one to turn to, except of God. “You better not never tell anybody but God. It’d kill your mammy.” This first sentence of the novel illustrates this.

Celie, in the time of the novel, is an outsider in every aspect. The reasons are told quite clearly by her husband Mr. - , “you black, you pore, you ugly, you a woman. Goddam, you nothing at all”. Each word here is delivered as an insult, growing in intensity, the crowning insult being that she is a woman. That is how black women were treated. Men at those times wanted women to be like their slaves, and this is reflected on Harpo, Mr.’s son when he tries to make Sophia, his wife, mind by beating her. The funny part is that Sophia is much stronger than him and wins most of the fights.

In this novel outsiders are often treated badly because of false impressions or false ideas on them. For example when Shug Avery became sick “nobody in this town wants to take the Queen Honeybee in.” Everyone is afraid of her

because they believe that Shug has the “nasty woman disease”. This false statement was led to be believed because everyone believed that Shug was a “slut, hussy, heifer and streetcleaner.” But still in the meantime the men love Shug because of her singing, but could not dare to take in a social outsider when she wanted help fearing of the shame that will fall on their family if they did.

Again Celie is an outsider in her new home. She spent her “wedding day running from the oldest boy”, who “laid my [Celie’s] head open.” She has a brutal wedding life, being constantly in torment from Mr.-, until Shug saves her from him.

Social outsiders were often black, and if you were a woman it would be worse. Sofia was brutally abused in prison because she punched the mayor and because she was a black woman. No one cared about the insult she received from the mayor’s wife, ordering her to be her maid. Blacks were treated infernally even with Mr.-. Mr.- is in good terms with the Sheriff because his son Bub is often on prison. Still because Mr.- is back he has a lower status “just long as Mr.- know he colored.” Another example of black infernality is Mary Agnes. She is raped by the warden because she was black, and no one could do anything about it.

Another example of outsider is the Olinka tribe in Africa. The white people living there treat the Olinka as if they were outsiders from a different world. They stole their lands and killed many of the people there. Tashi did not want to marry Adam because she feared when she goes to America she will be

treated infernally because she thinks she is an outsider to them, and that the scares on her face will be her source of embracement.

Both novels put emphasis on economic independence. Both novels find love as a powerful force and end with conquering and banishing the idea of outsiders, and the remaining character live in harmony learning from the mistakes of the older generation about treating outsiders cruelly. However, a lasting impression of both novels is a vivid sense of the cruelty and injustice suffered by social outsiders.