

Wuthering heights by emily bronte narrative essay

[Literature](#), [British Literature](#)



Wuthering Heights by Emily Bronte is a strange and powerful book of family loss, love, vengeance, and good versus evil. According to Janet James, Wuthering Heights, in essence, is a battle of nature versus nurture (James 2). As this classic begins, the evil villain in the book—Heathcliff—appear to be following the path of the good-hearted hero. His true characteristics, however, slowly unravel—showing his tenacity for evil against many of the characters in this multi-generational novel. The affects that Heathcliff has on Catherine and many other family members in Wuthering Heights create our flawed character.

Yet, Heathcliff is the fuel that drives every other character as they act and react to Heathcliff and his evil ways. In Wuthering Heights Mr. Earnshaw brings home an orphan named Heathcliff that he quickly adopts into the family. This apparent noble gesture of family love for an individual without a real family or home opens the floodgates of drama. The Earnshaw family winds up initiating a war that spreads over several generations. According to Hubbard, Nelly Dean is a servant who was raised in Wuthering Heights. Nelly tells the history of Heathcliff and, thus, narrates much of the story. Hubbard 1) Heathcliff is raised in the family. He eventually falls in love with Catherine, one of the Earnshaw children, a pseudo-step-sister to Heathcliff. Mr. Earnshaw eventually dies and the family members attempt to ruin Heathcliff's life due to years of bitter resentment. Yet, the courtship between Heathcliff and Catherine continues to unfold as the warring within this intense saga develops. A key turning point occurs when Catherine dies during childbirth. Heathcliff reacts to years of vengeance, vows his own revenge on the very family that he has grown up in.

Heathcliff, then, attempts to gain control of the family legacy. As we look at our central character, Heathcliff, his initiation into the family has him cast as a protagonist. However, as the fate of good versus evil begins to gather thematic weight, we find a shift in Heathcliff. In fact, the shift is so dramatic that Heathcliff becomes the story's antagonist. The entire structure of *Wuthering Heights* revolves around Heathcliff. As in many classics, love is an overriding subplot that weaves together the multi-generational conflict that evolves.

Love, in the end, seems to be the demise of the evil characters. Heathcliff and many of his surrogate family members are unable to share their love for one another. It's a case of honor for the bloodline of the Earnshaws that creates the war. Graphic bloodletting results as many characters—Heathcliff, our supposed protagonist included—sink to killing as the only means to alleviate the family drama. Characters choose to use lies and deceit to meet their unbridled need for passion, lust, and selfish gain.

Wuthering Heights, although its main protagonist is an orphaned child, cradles its main character into a large family with a special purpose. This adoption creates animosity between step-siblings and spouses.

Estrangement and bitter revenge is a subplot linking this graphic and upsetting intense novel. As the battles between individuals progress in the novel, the undercurrents of physical and mental pain—sometimes horrific pain—create intense situations as characters constantly juggle with a decision: Is the fight for a worthy cause? Heathcliff, in *Wuthering Heights*, winds up becoming loved and hated.

He is, in effect, the hero and villain of this grand classic novel. His character creates dramatic intensity. Here, is an example of one of the Earnshaw's discussions with Heathcliff. Hindley said, " and I pray that he may break your neck: take him, and be damned, you beggarly interloper. " (p. 61) His drama slowly evolves into an evil being. He pushes his hatred at everyone except Catherine. Heathcliff gets to a point of dependency on Catherine. As long as he has Catherine, he can deal with anything. Heathcliff is, in effect, the story of Wuthering Heights.

Thus, when Catherine dies, Heathcliff loses his co-dependent love and releases years of build-up rage and aggression. The emotions and actions of other characters in this epic novel all seem to stem from Heathcliff. His magnetic personality is the catalyst toward other character interaction and plot development. Catherine, for example, is torn emotionally and spiritually over Heathcliff because of the feelings other family members have regarding Heathcliff. In the end, it has been viewed as a death she desired. It was the only way to find relief to a life of bitter entanglements.

The following quote comes from Catherine describing her feelings about Heathcliff to Edgar: " Oh Edgar, Edgar! " she panted, flinging her arms around his neck. " Oh, Edgar darling! Heathcliff's come back. " (p. 114) As Heathcliff and Catherine develop their relationship fairly early. In chapter 10, we see that Catherine has grown bored of Edgar. Her interest in Heathcliff abhors Edgar and thus a bitter jealousy between Heathcliff and Edgar ensues. Since Edgar is Catherine's wife, the intensity of this jealousy from Edgar brings secret joy to Heathcliff.

Heathcliff and Catherine wind up sharing deep passionate love. But the secrecy of her unfaithfulness becomes well-known in the family. Plus, the wealth of the Earnshaw creates greed within Heathcliff. This foreshadows the fact that Heathcliff will go to almost no-end to get what he wants: the Earnshaw legacy. On an estranged level, we see that Heathcliff's mental stability becomes a question mark. The entire Earnshaw family, except for Catherine and Hareton, view Heathcliff as some sort of ruthless, cold-blooded creature. Some even consider him incarnate evil.

From the author's perspective, however, he is a man of turbulent emotions who feels that everyone else is evil due to that fact that society has excluded him. His short-temper and violent tendencies helps to create the character backdrop of a villain that can cause two generations of a wealthy family to be turned upside-down. Heathcliff creates his own laws which are the main reason why he is hated by almost every other character in the novel. However, his commitment to Catherine leads readers to offer him some credibility, or at least pitied on some levels.

This credibility is forever in question due to Heathcliff's inability to be forgiving of anyone. Through dialogue from Heathcliff, Emily Bronte creates the image of a character sinking out of control. Isabella writes of her anguish over the Earnshaw dilemma. She wrote, I do hate him--I am wretched--I have been a fool. " (p 163) Catherine, in Wuthering Heights, whose eventual demise comes by the hands of losing her own life, is set up by her personal struggles in her love-hate relationship with the arch nemesis, Heathcliff. She

builds walls that suffocate herself from her family, all at the extent of Heathcliff.

When other family members suspect his less-than-moral activities, Heathcliff simply stacks on the lies by jabbering on to cover up his deception. He continues to manipulate situations based on fast-talking. Again, his unfortunate orphanage and adoption into this glamorous family is his means of escaping victimization. Yet, ironically, he is, both, a victim and villain in the grand scheme of Emily Bronte's masterpiece. In the following, we listen to Hindley express his mental state of mind regarding Heathcliff. Hindley said, " Unless you overreach him; and he'll be my ruin.

Damn the hellish villian! " (p. 193) The tide turns as the lies intensify and the great network of these families begin to see the truth. Other characters begin to boast their concerns over troubling issues surrounding Heathcliff. This unraveling of the family adds intensity to each new scene. In other words, the world is wrong and only Catherine and Heathcliff are correct—at least that is how Heathcliff sees things in his mental instability. Comedy is another component that is woven into the threads of the evil characters in Wuthering Heights.

Most often, Bronte pokes fun at Heathcliff as the other family members and servants treat him unfairly and oftentimes with mockery. The grand theme of death and horror is apparent in Wuthering Heights. The characters evolve and revolve almost entirely around the characterization and altering behaviors of Heathcliff. The other character's true motives come to light: They yearn for the demise and death of Heathcliff. As timing is such a critical

component of Heathcliff's development as a character, the timing of the lies within the family reach a climax.

Before they can amend their ill-mannered plans to end Heathcliff, the damage is done and the family suffers. Bronte uses more empowering language to make her point with such artistry: The guest was now the master of Wuthering Heights. " (p. 204) In closing, this classic novel gained universal fame for its ability to weave the consequences of war and family and love and loss. And, it is done in climatic fashion. Betrayal and love and comedy are the components that keep the characters moving—especially our villain Heathcliff. There is one single link that connects Heathcliff with humanity.

That is his respect for Harton Earnshaw, the man who adopted Heathcliff into the family, initiating this lifelong journey. According to Vogler, respect for family also manifests in the story as the battle between siblings and loved ones becomes the necessary device to overcome loss and deception and overzealous pride (Vogler 16). There is no way to correct the death and horrific pain that was unleashed as the story of Heathcliff and the Earnshaws occurred. In fact, Heathcliff wound up spending almost his entire life acting out on revenge against this family.

As his life came to an end, Heathcliff was seeking spiritual aid. In fact, his dream was to be with Catherine again where he could spend eternity with the love of his life. Thus, as he brought about a slow death upon himself, he became happier the nearer and nearer he got to death. Yet, ironic as it may sound, Wuthering Heights is based on the love found by being forced into the

trenches of war, a war that goes beyond the physical pain of the battlefield and into the ache of the soul. In the end, deceit loses but not before causing rampant death and destruction among the link known as family.