

Wuthering heights

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



The purpose of this paper is to assess the novel, " Wuthering Heights," by Emily Bronte, particularly within the context of the character, Catherine. Catherine plays a prominent role throughout " Wuthering Heights." For the most part, it is her love of Heathcliff which represents the crutch of the human struggle encountered by Catherine, as well as other characters throughout the story -- but especially Catherine. Curiously, relationships of that period were more often than not governed by social convention. The relationship between Catherine and Heathcliff is an exception to this... while, ultimately, one Thrushcroff Grange attracts Catherine, and thusly leads her to stray from her true nature. It is difficult to separate the character from the author, noting that the author's childhood was basically isolated and gloomy, and Catherine herself, is a truly private individual. It is this sense of privacy, in my opinion, that supersedes any other factor throughout the story. To understand this sense of inwardness, one must explore the novel itself. The story begins in the early 1800's (c. 1801) and one Mr. Lockwood removed from the narrative. The novel begins to take shape, only after some degree of reading, when we realize what is happening at Wuthering Heights in conjunction with Thrushcroff Grange. Soon afterwards, Nelly Dean makes her appearance, while she herself is somewhat unpreceptible. Overall, content and structure is rather fractured, although a so-called Satanic hero begins to emerge as a creature of darkness as well as rebellion and passion.

Conversely, pressures on Heathcliff are internal. Results of his life emanate from his orphan years in Liverpool and his horrific treatment at Wuthering Heights. The author underscores the violence and darkness of man... even to such a primal and universal degree that it is impossible to overcome. In the

beginning, Mr. Lockwood visits his landlord. He is a new tenant at Thrushcross Grange and finds himself to be most unwelcome. His treatment by the landlord, Mr. Heathcliff, the servants, and even the dogs is less than welcoming. Heathcliff is something of a paradox. He exhibits the manners of country squire, urbane and handsome although aloof and private. Wuthering Heights itself is basically an old farmhouse and its namesake comes from the weather which it has had to endure. Overall, I found this book to be extremely personal, and almost eccentric. By eccentric, I mean the views that are put forth are very private and even difficult to understand. I believe that one really has to assume an interest if he or she is to absorb the goings on throughout the novel. As indicated previously, inwardness, or privacy is the seminal theme in this novel. Lockwood is particularly interested in those residents of Wuthering Heights and repeatedly visits. One particular night, he is snowed in and forced to stay much to the chagrin of Heathcliff. It is during this time that he encounters other members of the household including Heathcliff's daughter-in-law who is young and pretty, although her looks are scornful and hateful. When it is bedtime, Lockwood is shown to a bedroom which appeared to not have been used and observes the names Catherine Earnshaw, Catherine Heathcliff, and Catherine Linton -- all scratched on a window seat. Looking through some blank pages of an old book, which are something like diary entries by the guests, he observes the handwriting of a young girl named Catherine who speaks of how Hindley mistreated Heathcliff and how Hindley tried to drive Heathcliff away. Similarly, he reads how Catherine and Heathcliff conspire to "rebel" against Hindley's unkindly actions. Rebellion is another theme which appears to

pervade this novel. At this point, the story becomes somewhat metaphoric, or dreamlike, as Lockwood falls asleep dreaming of a girl who is crying and tapping on a window begging to be led in after 20 years of wandering about. At this point, he awakens screaming and reports his dream to the landlord. Heathcliff shoves Lockwood aside and looks out into the storm calling to Catherine to come in. Meanwhile, at Thrushcroff Grange, we find Catherine happy to have a new friend, who, although hated by Hindley, takes the place of his father's affection. This is to say that Catherine attempted to make him a part of her father's affections. It is difficult to say exactly what motivates Catherine. However, it is clear that she does opt to make some choices in her life. For example, during one trip on the moors, Catherine and Heathcliff come to the Thrushcroff Grange where the Linton's reside. At this time Catherine is bitten by a watch dog and is taken in for medical treatment and rest with the Linton children named Isabella and Edgar. During this time of her recuperation, she begins to develop a liking for the Grange. She finds it to be serene and gentile, while in the meantime, Heathcliff is driven off by the family as if he were an animal. Once again, there appears to be much metaphor throughout this narrative, and the sense of abandonment and almost hellish, and certainly cold driving away of one from a place that is supposed to be warm is almost reminiscent of hell, or Hades. Shortly after, Hindley's wife dies as she was giving birth to Harton. As a result of this Hindley turned to alcohol as well as doing what he liked to do best... and that was tormenting Heathcliff. Heathcliff sinks deeper into his ugly nature; while Cathy flowers into a beautiful yet willful young lady. At one point, she tells Nelly that Edgar proposed to her and she was going to accept, although

reluctantly. Ultimately, she consents to marry Edgar. She knows that this is wrong. She knows that this is everything that goes against convention, yet she continues to rebel and when Heathcliff overhears her conversation, he leaves Wuthering Heights. Subsequently, we see both Nelly and Cathy searching for him. They search all night for him but are not able to find him. The following day, she falls ill with a fever but her recovery is very slow. Cathy allowed three years to pass before she marries Edgar, and all the while, no one hears from Heathcliff. After she marries Edgar, then Heathcliff appears on the scene. Again, he appears as the urbane well-dressed man of wealth, although no one really knows where he gets his money. Catherine is very happy to see him, while Edgar is not. He is taken on as a paying guest at Wuthering Heights by Hindley, who very quickly begins to gamble with Heathcliff, falling into debt with someone he comes to realize is a vile human being -- at least certainly, in his eyes. Isabella comes to realize that the man she has married is a Satanic person. When Heathcliff sees Catherine he knows that she is dying. He accuses her of having killed him and herself by betraying her true nature and her real love. Late that night, after Catherine has given birth to a daughter, Heathcliff beats his head against a tree calling upon his dead love to haunt him always. The plot gets increasingly entangled, in my opinion. In fact, it is difficult to keep up with whose doing what to who, why, and when. Neverthe-less, Isabella escapes to London where Heathcliff's son Linton is born. Linton is a sickly individual and soon after Isabella dies. For purposes of focus, I should like to attempt to focus on Catherine, throughout the mire of muddled characterization and plot. When Catherine Linton wins the love of the decent Harton, and Heathcliff grows

increasingly preoccupied with his desire to rejoin Cathy, the Satanic energy with which he may have employed towards the young lovers suddenly disappears. At the end he even stops eating until he is one day found dead at the very window seat where only lonely cries were once heard. Overall, the story is complex, which is an understatement. One can observe a genealogical table encompassing the Earnshaws and the Lintons including the Catherines, Hindley, Harton, et. al. What does motivate Catherine however? There are really two Catherines which one has to address. There is one who roams wildly over the moors with Heathcliff, as previously indicated. She appears carefree, and while on the other hand there is a sense of conflict associated with Cathy. When she tells Ellen that Heathcliff's return has led her closer to God and humanity, she turns around and describes him (Heathcliff) as a " pitiless, roughish man." Overall, the novel is filled with contractions and metaphors. There is a certain kind of Victorian romance and interest as well as a classical sense of thematic understanding which pervades the novel. Ultimately, Catherine appears to me as an enigma. She expresses this through her dichotomous actions, words and ideas. However, there does appear to be a kind of relaxation or reconciliation by the end of the novel.