

Nelly, i am heathcliff

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



" Nelly, I am Heathcliff" - With this unusually leading statement, Catherine Earnshaw is able to profess her love for Heathcliff, the outcast and rugged villain of the novel Wuthering Heights. However, not only is this just a declaration of love, this statement also allows Emily Brontë to open a door to a world of much wider and deeper issues. She raises the idea of how there can be no place for one's true and authentic self in this over-civilised, bourgeois nineteenth century world, and depicts both Cathy and Heathcliff as being outside society to demonstrate this concept. The statement also implies that Cathy is more than just in love with Heathcliff, they are in fact so close that their very souls have become entwined allowing them to become part of each other. This notion is carefully charted by Brontë during the course of the novel. From the very beginning of the novel there is an ecstatic chemistry between Cathy and Heathcliff that fails to waver throughout the story. During their numerous, playful adventures and ramblings on the moors surrounding Wuthering Heights, they are at ease with their natural personalities and over a short period of time develop a unique and steady bond. Nelly Dean illustrates them as being " very thick" , so much so that the mischievous duo have to be parted by Mr. Earnshaw to keep them from becoming a nuisance. It becomes evident that the pair is somehow outside this plush, clichéd nineteenth century society when they both express their disdain for the Linton children while watching them in violent dispute over a puppy through a window at Thrushcross Grange. Viewing their argument as being petty and stupid they " laughed at the petted things" , suggesting that they would not wish to be a part of their civilised world. We get an indication that Cathy and Heathcliff are one in the same when Hindley punishes

Heathcliff for retaliating to and insult aimed at him by young Edgar Linton by tossing a dish of hot apple sauce at him. Hindley smuggles him upstairs out of sight and subsequently administers him with a sound beating. Cathy is distraught at this action exclaiming, " I hate him to be flogged! I can't eat my dinner" . Evidently, she shares his feelings and it is almost as if she can feel his physical pain. However, we observe her to betray this personality when she is with Edgar Linton. When in his presence " she was full of ambition", and adopted " a double character without exactly intending to deceive anyone". She takes care not to act like Heathcliff around him and gives in to civilisation in the conventional sense. Eventually, she turns her back on her true, authentic self and announces her intent to wed Edgar Linton. She implies that her love for Heathcliff is timeless and exists on a different plane than her more conventional feelings of love for Linton. If this is so, then she is free to act as she sees fit in this material, social plane and believes that marrying Linton will not affect her relationship with Heathcliff. She tells Nelly that it would be impossible for her to abandon Heathcliff as " he's more myself than I am. Whatever our souls are made of, his and mine are the same, and Linton's is as different as a moonbeam from lightning". She makes the point that her very existence depends on Heathcliff and that she is more than just a part of him - " Nelly, I am Heathcliff". Cathy's betrayal of her own true, undeniable nature ultimately destroys not only her but also Heathcliff, the other half of her soul. Cathy is so much in love that she " surrenders her identity for Heathcliff's, her world for his, she becomes the incarnation or embodiment of the man she loves, his reflection, his double." Yet again we see how Heathcliff's troubles affect Cathy when she falls ill due to the

ongoing quarrel between Linton and Heathcliff who has only just returned to Wuthering Heights after a long absence. While dangerously ill with a fever, Cathy's delusional world releases her back into her authentic childhood and she gains an almost supernatural status as she vows to remain with Heathcliff, even when she is dead, - " they may bury me deep, and throw the church down over me; but I won't rest till you are with me...I never will!". She dies yearning for her authentic self, the self that she has betrayed. Before she dies she predicts Heathcliff's behaviour for the rest of the novel - " will you be happy when I am in the earth...Will you say twenty years hence ' I loved her long ago?'" In fact Heathcliff does the opposite of what she says to prove to her that he is not like the others and eventually, after obtaining all the property and status he possibly can, he too wills his own death.

Evidently, even in death, she remains a part of him and this becomes obvious through Heathcliff's mental anguish towards the end of the novel. Young Cathy is a constant reminder to Heathcliff of her mother and they even have the same features. The idea that their love can transcend time is underlined as Heathcliff feels as though she is haunting him - " She has disturbed me day and night through 18 years" Eventually, he comes to resemble Cathy in that he too is observed to have given in to the temptations of civilisation. He no longer enjoys revenge as through it, he has allowed civilised life to consume him. In death he and Cathy are re-united and he is buried next to her on the moors, allowing them to decay into each other and become one forever. In conclusion, Cathy's famous statement indeed proves time and time again to be valid in the novel. It is not just a case of being in love with Heathcliff but she truly is him. She feels what he

feels and even in death she remains with him urging him to turn back to his natural self so they can be together again.