

# Enduring love and wuthering heights



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Enduring Love and Wuthering Heights are both novels that confront several issues of violence, conflict, death and most prominently, love. Though the narrative styles are similar, with accounts and perspectives given through love letters or gossip, and pathetic fallacy dominates the settings and subsequent events, contrasts still cause these novels to be different, yet effective uniquely. In Enduring Love, Joe is conveyed as a logical character, referring to emotions and events scientifically, “ The force and the direction of the force define all consequent pathways” and he appreciates “ mathematical grace”.

This is contrary to Clarissa, his wife, a romantic obsessed with Keats and love letters, “ she has written me some beauties, passionately abstract in their exploration of the ways our love was different and superior to any that had ever existed. ” Like Catherine in Wuthering Heights, Clarissa has a fondness for writing and is poetic also in her speech, using oxymoron to describe her husband as “ the world’s most complicated simpleton”, and similarly, they both use vivid imagery to convey the superiority of their love, with Heathcliff repeatedly calling Cathy his ‘ soul’.

However, unlike Catherine, Clarissa does not bear the same arrogance and obsession with social class. Joe appears to have a touch of arrogance about him, suggesting “ I knew that if I had been the uncontested leader the tragedy would not have happened”, in reference to the balloon incident, which could hint towards a biased and unreliable account, yet he still describes himself as a “ clumsy, balding fellow” in relation to the “ beautiful woman” that is his wife. This suggests that he believes in practical and

logical areas, he is dominant, yet when it comes to love and feelings, he is not.

This idea is conveyed often through his inability to express himself emotionally. Despite being inarticulate with feelings, he still seems romantic at times, embracing the familiarity of the woman he has been with for 7 years, “ the size and feel of her hand, the warmth and tranquillity of her voice”. This just shows how settled and comfortable they are, “ there was nothing that threatened out free and intimate existence”. Heathcliff, the male protagonist in Wuthering Heights has very little in common with Joe, in both his spontaneous personality, and in his love with Cathy.

Although they assume the same position as the main male roles, we can instead draw more similarities between Jed Parry and Heathcliff. Despite contrasting appearances and entirely different morals (Heathcliff throws a bible into the stables whilst Jed worships the same book) they both become resentful as the object of their desire does not actively reciprocate the emotion and in both cases, it resorts in violence or revenge, particularly on the spouse of the loved.

Jed takes Clarissa hostage whilst Heathcliff threatens to fight Edgar Linton. Heathcliff also vow to take revenge on Catherine’s brother, who treated him so badly after Mr. Earnshaw’s death and in a way, acted as a barrier between his and Catherine’s happiness. He says “ I’m trying to settle how I shall pay Hindley back, I don’t care how long I have to wait, If I can only do it at last, I hope he will not die before I do”, displaying his vengeful side.

We can also compare the sympathy we feel at times for both characters, when they seem weak and pathetic due to their all-encompassing love, which at times, and especially with Heathcliff, shrouds their true terrible personality. A saying at the time was “ a reformed rake makes the best husband”, and although the reader may constantly justify Heathcliff as a Byronic hero, many critics, such as Charlotte Bronte argue that he is “ violent and destructive”. Parallels can be drawn also between the two strictly religious and evangelical characters of Joseph and Jed, both determined and deeply devoted to their religion.

John Logan, a respectable, fit and married doctor with two children shares the same ideas of how to salvage the situation as Joe, yet unlike him, he holds a “ flame of altruism”, and is as a result the only man to keep hold of the fated balloon. This character is reminiscent of Mr. Earnshaw, saving Heathcliff, a mere gipsy boy from the streets of Liverpool and bringing him into his family, treating him like a son. Joe mentions that part of his selfish will to live, letting go of the balloon, was the knowledge that it was not his child, and yet Logan acts as though it were, as did Mr.

Earnshaw. In both novels, pathetic fallacy is rife. The supposedly perfect day, where Joe welcomes Clarissa back with a romantic picnic, early summer in a park is memorable – but for all the wrong reasons. Nature hints at the impending doom, “ Each leaf seemed to grow with an internal light. We talked about the purity of this colour and how it cleared the mind” is shortly followed by a description of how the wind meant the “ branches creaked like rusted machinery”, and the atmosphere this creates suggests a natural premonition.

The wind is conveyed as a negative force, “ wind that roared”, “ the wind renewed its rage”, “ an airy whining, whooshing sound grew to full volume in half a minute”. These descriptions make the wind seem violent, unpredictable and an antagonist in the story. It alters the couple’s plan for a picnic where the view was best, as “ the wind was too strong by now” and then by its increasing fervour, destroys their plans entirely, as a forerunner to the “ ruthless gravity” which proceeds to take John Logan’s life.

Wuthering Heights is also no stranger to pathetic fallacy. Even by the title, ‘ Wuthering’ mean ‘ wild, exposed, storm blown’. 1 Lockwood’s traumatic night in Catherine’s old bedroom is due to the dark, snowy weather, shrouding his path back home, and when he dreams of Catherine’s ghost, it is whilst “ the blast wailed by, and rattled its dry cones against the panes” and the “ gusty wind and the driving of the snow” causes the fir tree to continue its incessant tapping.

It appears the wind holds a formidable presence in both novels, as there is a wild and windy storm as Mr. Earnshaw dies, and a thunderstorm as Heathcliff leaves The Heights. Being in such a weathered area on the Yorkshire moors, the atmosphere tends to be perpetually grim, and this shadows the unfortunate events. Both Enduring Love and Wuthering Heights use similar styles of narration, usually from the perspective of the narrator, recalling events.

Both stories begin at or near the end, especially in Wuthering Heights, with Lockwood arriving near Heathcliff’s demise. The narrator tends to be, however, partially unreliable or biased. Nelly’s strong feelings for the

characters may complicate her retelling of the story to Lockwood, whilst Joe's denial of all responsibility for the incident may suggest he is not reliable. Joe tells the reader, " what I describe is shaped by what Clarissa saw too" and what they had formulated through their " obsessive re-examination".

The stories may also be complicated through the length of time since they occurred for Nelly, and the shock of the event itself, Joe himself says that time seemed to out of sync during the ballooning accident. The telling of the stories differ as Wuthering Heights has a complex back and forth structure with events revisited from various perspectives whilst Enduring Love tends to be a chronological telling of events throughout, with the occasional perspective of Jed, who although lengthy in his writing to Joe, is unreliable due to his mental condition.

It is easy to see the recurring themes which link the two novels, of love and conflict, and these ideas are conveyed in similar ways, using pathetic fallacy and a technique of looking back of events whilst hinting to the reader the outcome, penetrating them with a sense of fateful premonition and suspense. The similarities in the storytelling show just how effective these methods are, due to the success and impact of both Enduring Love and Wuthering Heights.