

## EMILY BRONTË'S TWO CHARACTERS: CATHERINE AND HEATHCLIFF

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### ABSTRACT

Undoubtedly the theme of love, particularly the love between Catherine and Heathcliff is dominant in *Wuthering Heights*. There is a deep love between the two characters, which goes far beyond the normal, romantic love, a love that has a spiritual quality. This is a story of passion, desire and suffering. It is a story of love that has its roots in Emily Brontë's unconscious which comprises and reflects that deep level of the mind and its emotions of the dark and the light, of the positive and negative, of the good and evil.

My intent is to analyze firstly the innocent love between the two characters when they were children of twelve years of age. Their love blossoms spontaneously and appears to be like a torch of light in the darkness, like a breeze in the midst of tempestuous cold winds of Yorkshire. However the accident at Thrushcross Grange separates the two children and with it their love is affected. The love that was nothing but an innocent union at the beginning, now transforms into an experience of limitation. Love becomes conditioned.

Heathcliff leaves with no trace but reappears after three years, very much transformed. He is now a wealthy and educated man. The love between him and Catherine is now of a consuming intensity, of passion rather than tender and committed love. Catherine who in the meantime has married Edgar Linton and is living at Grange, understands that the only way to go back to the Heights and be reunited with Heathcliff is through her death. The unfolding of the events, the reasons behind these events and their significance are analyzed.

### INTRODUCTION

What is *Wuthering Heights* about? What is the main theme in this novel? These have been questions often asked. Frequently people who read *Wuthering Heights* once or more than once, say that they cannot remember but only two characters, Heathcliff and Catherine. From this point of view the substance of this novel belongs to these two characters and the chief interest lies in the relationship between Heathcliff and Catherine. If were to separate Catherine from the Heathcliff

and analyze her character we might think of her as an off-putting and manipulating young woman, a character of absolute monotonousness. The same can be said about Heathcliff: without Catherine we might consider him a surly man “an unreclaimed creature without refinement” as Catherine interprets his character. However, through a complete relinquishment to her creative spirit Emily Brontë brought into being this pair of characters, this bewildering mixture of human and divine to make visible for her readers what love comprises.

Her novel comes from a deep level of the unconscious. One side of it represents the presence of the two opposites in regard with existence: the good and the evil, the light and the dark. Before creating *Wuthering Heights*, Emily made known precisely the thought process of her story in the poem *My Comforter*:

*So stood I, in Heaven's glorious sun  
And in the glare of Hell.  
My spirit drank a mingled tone  
Of seraph's song and demon's moan...<sup>(1)</sup>*

She clearly tells us about the existence of the two opposites, of Heaven and Hell and the creation of Catherine and Heathcliff and their love represents exactly this point. In her *Striving towards Wholeness*, Barbara Hannah thinks of Emily of the human who “suffered almost unbearably from the “mingled tone” of Heaven and Hell” that her “soul bore the intolerable pain of opposites. *Wuthering Heights* it actually expressed what it bore.”<sup>(2)</sup> This middle way represents neither more nor less how she witnessed good and evil. To Emily they were felt sacramental: the good and the bad were a mixture much like nature which comprises rain and sunshine, day and night, winter (coldness) and summer (heat).

Living in a time of rationality when only the outer reality was the only one true, Emily Brontë possessed a creative spirit owing her inspiration to something different from her conscious mind. The different world was present inward not because she was determined to see it, but because she became aware of a degree of emotion which she could not define, and which emerged strongly in her: the reality of love and that of vindictiveness. She refused to attend and consent to what seemed normal, acceptable and with this sentiment she created the two characters of Catherine and Heathcliff.

Her sister, Charlotte herself had noticed this unusual spirit Emily had. In the Editor's Preface of the new edition [1850] of *Wuthering Heights*, Charlotte wrote:

The writer who possesses the creative gift owns something of which he is not always master-something that, at times, strangely wills and works for itself. He may lay down rules and devise principles, and to rules and principles it will perhaps for years lie in subjection; and then, haply without warning of revolt, there comes a time when it will no longer consent to "harrow the valleys, or be bound with a band in the furrow"-when it "laughs at the multitude of the city, and regards not the crying of the driver"-when, refusing absolutely to make ropes out of sea-sand any longer it sits to work on statue hewing, and you have a Pluto or a Jove, a Tisiphone or a Psyche, a Mermaid or a Madonna, as Fate or Inspiration direct.<sup>(3)</sup>

This young remarkable woman could look into the depths of her soul and discover another world, different from that she was offered, different from what she had been trained to see.

Her "messenger of Hope" could "offer" her "eternal liberty" in return of the "short life" of rationality. Thanks to this messenger Emily's creative spirit offers us a turbulent (wuthering) story of love, a distinguished but isolated (heights) atmosphere at the same time, which in any case has startled and fascinated its readers time and again.

The form of the book which was, at times, criticized from literary point of view, makes a great deal of sense psychologically. It begins almost thirty years after the beginning of the narration and only a few months before the end of the story. M. Lockwood meets Heathcliff when everything was in his hands, when everything belonged to him. Cathy, who is in fact the rightful owner of the Grange, is a prisoner at Wuthering Heights. Hareton, who is the rightful owner of Wuthering Heights, is degraded by Heathcliff to the rank of a ploughman. At the beginning of the novel, the image that goes past our eyes is nothing but ghastly. Soon we hear Ellen's account and so we learn how the story originated. We are presented Heathcliff and Catherine as children and their love, pure and immaculate that kind of love that had been blessed by heaven.

Old Mr. Earnshaw finds in the streets of Liverpool a little destitute boy, who is "as dark as the devil" and brings him home as "a gift of God" Although we do not know exactly to what extent the life at the farm was peaceful, Heathcliff's presence does shatter the relative harmony. However, together with Heathcliff's arrival the love story begins. Nelly says of Catherine's affection towards this child-" the gift of God". "Miss Cathy and he were now very thick" <sup>(4)</sup> Nelly says. Later, at Mr. Earnshaw's death the two children's attachment to each other grows even stronger "the little souls were comforting each other...together" <sup>(5)</sup> Nelly declares, after she goes to see them in their rooms.

Later on, after the funeral and after Frances' arrival at the farm, the two children are often together. They play and work in the fields, "they both promised fair to grow up as rude as savages" Nelly reports. While savage means rough and wild it can also mean being in a state of natural impulse, being in an unspoiled wholesome frame of mind. What else can be wholesome but somebody or something that is free? Savage can be equaled to boundless, acts of freedom without restraints. Catherine and Heathcliff run out together into the moors, and it is here where they find the locus of liberty, of free rein. They prefer to roam the moors all day and the time spent together is a bliss. They are close to Heaven there and what grows between them is nothing but the divinity, the immaculateness. They enjoy the beauty of freedom, "they forget everything the minute they were together again".<sup>(6)</sup>

They forget whatever is around them when they are together because the innocent love that these two children have for each other, represents actually that kind of love which resembles that of a mother or a father on whom they can rely to keep them safe. It holds them gently, regardless of what is happening in their lives. They do not know why they love each other. They know that being together means non-bondage and safety, means being in unison. The two children are not like adults who try to rationalize love. They do not try to break love in its components and judge the elements that they find. For them love is not a choice but a natural necessity, it is the truth. They do not think of the meaning of love or why they are in love; they are simply in an innocent state of true love merged with the luminous and unlimited nature.

Though Emily gives us, through their love, that part of herself that she knew it existed inside her heart, that part that represents openness and lack of fear, she immediately goes to the next chapter only to tell us that love is frail that love can be lost, that love is weaker and fear is stronger. Within her mind and not heart, Emily discovers fear-the negative emotion-and projects it on the future of her love story. Within her mind Emily finds a hidden personality, one that has its own goal, its own logic, demanding a picture of how things *should* be and according to it the novel is created.

One night the children do not come back from the moors. Ellen waits up and a bit later she meets Heathcliff as he comes home alone. He tells her that they had peered through the windows of Thrushcross Grange and seen the spoilt Linton children squabbling over a lapdog. They laughed (no doubt their laughter was loud and sound) and the Lintons heard them. They set dogs on them and a bulldog caught Catherine's ankle. She fainted and a servant carried her into the house where she was recognized by Edgar Linton as the little girl from Wuthering Heights, Heathcliff as the "lad who looks an out-and -outer". For them he is the unwanted, wicked boy, a dangerous creature, an out-and-outer, indeed. Although, out-and-outer is a slang term for rascal it is no coincidence that Emily chose this word to describe Heathcliff. He indeed represents what is absent and away from

what is supposed to be conventional or rational. Definitely, he cannot be a part of the Linton's world.

Heathcliff is sent home and Catherine remains.

She returns from the Grange at Christmas. Now she is no longer the unfeminine, wick girl; she is transformed into a young lady, and her manners are "much improved".

...instead of a wild, hatless little savage jumping into the house and rushing to squeeze us all breathless, there lighted from a handsome black pony a very dignified person, with brown ringlets falling from the cover of a feathered beaver, and a long cloth habit which she was obliged to hold up with both hands that she might sail in. <sup>(7)</sup>

The bliss of innocent divine love ceases, it is lost in an unknown abyss. To Catherine the unrestricted, the wholesomeness seems to convert into the limited, into no acceptance. The paradise the little "savages" enjoyed is replaced by the world of vanity. Heathcliff is filthy and unkempt, and Catherine laughs at his sullenness: "If you wash your face, and brush your hair it will be all right. But you are so dirty!" <sup>(8)</sup>

Yet, that is not all right with Heathcliff. He cannot see why there are conditions now. Cannot they return to the state of bliss the two of them enjoyed before together? He cannot see why he is not accepted exactly as he was before. Why are there demandings? Why should he be forced by Catherine to be the way she wants him to be? Demanding specific expressions of affection will only make it more difficult for him to respond to her.

You needn't have touched me! he answered, following her eye and snatching away his hand.  
' I shall be as dirty as I please, and I like to be dirty , and I will be dirty. <sup>(9)</sup>

This is Heathcliff's answer to the conditions now imposed by his old friend, his only ally. It looks as if Catherine tries to control him so that good things happen to him. This control actually comes out of fear. It is a defense, an attempt to protect herself and Heathcliff as well, a justification on her part with the meaning of: do what others do in order to be accepted. But, he naturally resists control and power struggle ensues, resulting in more hurt. Everyone has turned against Heathcliff.

Mrs. Linton begged that her darlings might be kept carefully apart from that naughty swearing boy" <sup>(10)</sup> "Heathcliff, you may come forward, cried Mr. Hindley, .... You may come and wish Miss Catherine welcome, like the other servants. <sup>(11)</sup>

Heathcliff understands that life is not perfect, that it is frayed and unfinished. He has known this truth since he was the ragged little child roaming the dirty streets of Liverpool- *the pool of life*. He knows that life is not the way he wants it to be, it is mean and imperfect, however like a caterpillar in the sac of transformation, he struggles. Though, the surrender does not happen all at once. "I shall not stand to be laughed at, I shall not bear it!"<sup>(12)</sup> he says. He will want to go on being a free child of God, whatever black or dirty he is. For God does not choose the clean and fair and good-mannered men.

Though it is hard, he in the end surrenders to his first stance, and he asks for Ellen's help: "Nelly make me decent, I'm going to be good."<sup>(13)</sup> "good" meaning here, to obey conformity.

Ellen supports Heathcliff and tries to boost the poor lad's morale. She can see what is good in him in comparison with the young Linton. Heathcliff does not have "light hair and fair skin" like Linton. He is not well dressed or well-behaved and above all he is not rich. Owing to these reasons, Heathcliff aches deep in his heart. However, Ellen doesn't consider him a poltroon, a chicken-hearted man as Edgar is. When Heathcliff confesses he suffers because he cannot belong to the society of Linton, Ellen quickly refutes:

And cry for mamma at every turn... and trembled if a country lad heaved his fist against you, and sat at home all day for a shower of rain. Oh, Heathcliff, you are showing a poor spirit!<sup>(14)</sup>

He hurts because of the conditions for being accepted wholly by Catherine and the rest of the society are hard to pass. Catherine has changed into a young lovely lady:

Why, Cathy, you are quite a beauty" Hindley says of her "... you look like a lady now-Isabella Linton is not to be compared with her, is she, Frances?"<sup>(15)</sup>

he remarks. Nevertheless, Catherine still retains her "natural advantages" and there is worry that she might "grow wild again" in other words she would renounce of her curls and beautiful clothes, be whole again and let her hair blow freely in the strong winds, and freely roam the moors with Heathcliff again.

Their first meeting does not seem to be one of harmony and innocence, even though they both have been yearning to see each other. Their first meeting is far from being one of those they used to enjoy together before the Grange accident. They both suffer individually, alone far from each other." Did she say she was grieved?" Heathcliff asks Ellen and at her affirmative reply he continues:" Well, I cried last night,... and I had more reason to cry than she."<sup>(16)</sup>

Although Ellen considers her” an unfeeling child” and “indifferent” Catherine proves to be the opposite when she sits at table for dinner. She clearly shows how dearly she misses her old playmate:

She lifted a mouthful to her lips; then, set it down again: her cheeks flushed, and the tears gushed over them. She slipped her fork to the floor, and hastily dived under the cloth to conceal her emotion.<sup>(17)</sup>

It is not easy to submit to something more powerful than what people are. The pain of resistance is greater than one can bear. Catherine indeed feels wretched now because hers and Heathcliff’s affinity is not what it was before. She is still aware of their similarity, and yet the tone and environment have changed.

Truth will not let anyone hide from each other. The Christmas evening dance gives Catherine the chance to come closer to Heathcliff who is in the garret confined by the young Mr.Earnshaw.

Catherine called him. He stubbornly declined to answer for a while-she persevered, and finally persuaded him to hold communion with her through the boards.

I let the poor things converse unmolested, till I supposed the songs were going to cease...: then I clambered up to the ladder to warn her.

Instead of finding her outside, I heard her voice within. The little monkey had crept by the skylight of one garret, along the roof, into the skylight of the other, and it was with the utmost difficulty I could coax her out again. When she did come, Heathcliff was with her.<sup>(18)</sup>

Even though Heathcliff does answer to Catherine’s call, instead of surrendering to Love, he chooses to dance with the Pain and Revenge. Down in the kitchen, a contemplative Heathcliff opts for vindictiveness instead of seeing the miracle of love. An eye for an eye is his answer. He sits there in the kitchen and faces his anger, an anger that is devastating for it seeks revenge. Perhaps the nature of love is that it brings everything that is not love to the surface. It has to bring pain and hate and revenge to the surface so that it can become pure, flawless and free of attack later.

It seems that from now on, Heathcliff is preoccupied with how to revenge on Hindley, he is devoured by whatever is the opposite of miracle of love. Although God does not choose only the fair and the clean ones as his children, He does not choose either those who want pain for a brother. Ellen tries wisely to persuade him to give away all those thoughts of hate and revenge against Hindley.” It is for God to punish wicked people; we should learn to forgive.” However, Heathcliff

distances himself from the miracle of love by sticking stubbornly to the negative feeling of revenge that abounds in his heart.

Heathcliff represents the symbol of the free soul, expressed in a limited body. He is not able to apprehend the hampered society to which Linton belongs. Catherine, after living with the Lintons, shows now the very resemblance to those who have nothing in common with Heathcliff. She has now the same traits the people belonging to a limited world have. From here his lack of love and understanding towards the people who make up this narrow world.

Heathcliff is like the little child who just wants to be loved, the child who was deprived of love while growing on the streets of Liverpool. He feels crucified again and again because somehow he understands that Catherine, who becomes the most attractive girl in the neighborhood, courted by the rich and handsome Edgar who is in love with her, will not accept the reality of loving an imperfect person. The child in Heathcliff understands this but he also understands that he needs to change something in order that Catherine sees him perfect. Deep in his mind he sees there is a possibility that one day the sun will rise above the horizon for him, too. But instead of seeing a beautiful flower reaching for the light, he decides to struggle on the brink of the abyss in order to be tall enough for Catherine's expectations. And so later he leaves and does not come back but after three years.

Heathcliff has been so brutalized by Hindley that he becomes repulsive, even though Catherine still spends much time with him. Every so often though, her attitude is just the contrary. When one day Edgar comes to the farm and Heathcliff decides to stay too, she is irritated by his decision and she complains that he is dull company.

Being a "rush of a lass" at heart, Catherine tells Ellen she loves Edgar for his looks, wealth and youth. Catherine explains to Nelly she could not marry Heathcliff as he had been degraded by Hindley but she felt that her soul and Heathcliff's were the same. Unfortunately, Heathcliff who creeps out of the room just that moment cannot hear her last words. He takes himself into the unknown, he disappears for several years only to come back as a new Heathcliff. From the dirty ignorant ploughboy he returns as a tall man well dressed, evidently educated, with money and moreover, he looks intelligent. Nelly is astounded at "his transformation" for he no longer retains the "marks of his former degradation. Catherine handles Heathcliff's return brilliantly and we are presented with the possibility that Catherine maintains the relationship with both men. Both Heathcliff and Edgar are so fascinated by Catherine that they will endure anything for her sake.



Of course she realizes she has power over them. But just at this time, Isabella Linton announces her love for Heathcliff. This "charming young lady of eighteen, infantile in manners, though possessed of keen wit, keen feeling and a keen temper, too, if irritated" loves Heathcliff more than Catherine ever loved Edgar. She believes that Heathcliff would love her too if only Catherine would let him. We have here, clearly, power struggle, an attempt to get one's needs met. Edgar warns Isabella that he will have nothing more to do with her if she encourages Heathcliff as a suitor. The power struggle surfaces on Catherine as well. She tries to seek control by making Isabella change her mind, by making Isabella understand that Heathcliff is

... unreclaimed creature, without refinement, without cultivation.... He's not a rough diamond- a pearl-containing oyster of a rustic; he's a fierce, pitiless, wolfish man...<sup>(19)</sup>.

Heathcliff's love for Catherine has remained constant. It is the apparent loss of Catherine's love that makes him to decide to marry Isabella. He also decides to marry her for her fortune and above all it fits perfectly into his plan to take revenge against Hindley and Edgar. Nevertheless, he does not intend at all to hurt Catherine.

I seek no revenge on you. That's not the plan. The tyrant grinds down his slaves and they don't turn against him. You are welcome to torture me to death for your amusement, only allow me to amuse myself a little in the same style, and refrain from insult as much as you are able."<sup>(20)</sup>

Heathcliff elopes with Isabella and he is absent for two months. There is no love that Heathcliff feels for Isabella; that is for sure. It is exactly the lack of love which comes from fear, the fear Heathcliff feels again and again since his childhood. When you see another as less than yourself, you are seeing through fear. And fear is blind. His fear makes him act in a hostile, revengeful way. Heathcliff might look successful, educated and rich but that is only a facade, for deep inside his soul he knows he is not but the "as dark as the devil" child and not the "gift of God". He still sees himself the rugged gypsy brat picked up from the pool of life, life which is to him no more than hell. For that reason Heathcliff's acts are hellish, as dark as the devil. His burden is so heavy that he doesn't know how to throw it away from his shoulders. The burden crushes him and so, being in pain he looks for an escape. For him the escape is inhuman cruelty: "I have no pity! I have no pity! The more the worms writhe, the more I yearn to crush out their entrails!"<sup>(21)</sup>

The vocabulary used to define him consistently relates him to the diabolic: "devil", "goblin", "a lying fiend, a monster and not a human being", a "goblin" a "ghoul" and "imp of Satan". His eyes are "the clouded windows of hell". He's not a rough diamond-a pearl-containing oyster of a rustic; he's a

fierce, pitiless, wolfish man”

To Lockwood however, Heathcliff is a magnetic man. He looks powerful and handsome but wrapped in melancholy. It is this melancholy that epitomizes him. This melancholy is exactly the lack of acceptance, from his part of who he is, the lack of the surrender of the old wounds. Heathcliff's armour must come off. However, he is not aware of the separateness which this armour brings to him. He is like a child who feels the tides of emotion as they come but who is not aware that these tides go away, too. Heathcliff is not able to mend the torn fabric of his soul. He is not aware that he needs to find compassion right in the middle of judgments, fears and expectations.

The problem which always follows Heathcliff is his failure to accept the reality of him being an imperfect person, a person who can love back without being able to meet excellence. What he presents us is his other side, the unpalatable side of his character, his savagery and brutality.

Different people seem to see different Heathcliffs; some see him as a mysterious enigma, some as a cruel, egoistic man. Still others see him as an intelligent man, and at times his responses to life captures the reader's sympathy.

First, there are some lacunae in the story of Heathcliff's origins. Mr. Earnshaw brings home a starving homeless child. This ignorance of his parentage generates an enigma of his nature. Earnshaw says : “... you must take e'en take it as a gift of God; though it's as as dark almost as if it came from the devil” It's an irony, perhaps that Catherine identifies herself with this Gift of God? Son of Devil? Abandoned child of gypsies?

Nelly even goes further to compare him to the son of an emperor and/or queen:

Who knows, but your father was Emperor of China, and your mother an Indian queen, each of them able to buy up, with one week's income, Wuthering Heights and Thruscross Grange together? <sup>(22)</sup>

Is he a human being or a creature from another realm? Physically, Heathcliff manifests features attributed to darkness, black eyes, dark skin. It is important to take into account what Catherine so memorably epitomizes him in the words: “Nelly, I *am* Heathcliff”

Catherine, in comparison with Isabella and Cathy Linton who have fair-hair and embody the feminine principles of gentleness and light, has brown hair and her darkness indicates her likeness to Heathcliff.

There is neither spiritual path, nor progress to soften the rough edges of Catherine's character. She, like Heathcliff, does not take responsibility for her anger and hysteria. Although, all emotional states are a necessary part in the journey of life, she has no courage to accept them and so to come more fully in her heart. The same can be said about Heathcliff. He too, is unable to accept all his

negative emotions in order to open his heart to real love, love that is separated entirely from the its opposite, aversion.

Both, Catherine and Heathcliff are facets of one another, not two separate people. Her whole being is bound up in Heathcliff and his in her. It is almost a mystical relationship. Sexuality which is an expression of love and communication is absent in Emily's novel. Nowhere in *Wuthering Heights* do we read any line that could show us this level of connection- sexuality. In fact, sexuality is about the level of admittance of sexual energy which brings new charisma and creates healing love. But instead of healing, we see hell because the lack of it is a block and this block represents a form of control and fear. These emotions dominate the two characters. They fail to see joining as something which can bring them out of fear and pain and withdrawal. Furthermore, in every act of forgiving and trust, joining can be created. In turn, joining can release them from the prison where both of them have been stuck. The night before her death Catherine does nothing but to blame Heathcliff and Edgar:

You and Edgar have broken my heart, Heathcliff! ... You have killed me-and thriven on it... I care nothing for your sufferings. Why shouldn't you suffer? I do! <sup>(23)</sup>

In her agony she wants Heathcliff to suffer just as she did, believing that his suffering would bring her comfort. However, she does nothing but to lash herself with the imaginary whip she had asked her father to bring to her in her childhood. She fails to forgive Heathcliff and in the act of condemning she fails to forgive herself.

The hidden sense of failure and pain and judgment does nothing but to distance Heathcliff from Catherine and the others. Forgiveness is not Heathcliff's forte nor is trust. Without them the state of being without conflict is not possible, love-the nature of Heaven- cannot be possible.

The very title of the novel-*Wuthering Heights*-reveals the old emotional slavery, the emotional disturbance the chaotic state of mind resulted from failure to forgive and furthermore to merge into grace of joy, a joy that gives breath to the suffocating existence at the farm, a joy that warms wintry blows of the north winds.

Although from the first page of the story, Emily announces that "this is certainly, a beautiful country" she quickly describes this special place, the special dwelling in England as Wuthering Heights. She explains the term wuthering as

being a significant provincial adjective, descriptive of the atmospheric tumult to which its station is exposed in stormy weather. Pure, bracing ventilation they must have up there at all times,

indeed: one may guess the power of north wind, blowing over the edge by the excessive slant of a few stunted firs at the end of the house; and by a range of gaunt thorns all stretching their limbs one way, as if craving alms of the sun. .... the narrow windows are deeply set in the wall, and the corners defended with large jutting stones.”<sup>(24)</sup>

The description of the place and house conveys the impression of a lonely place exposed to the wind and storm. The dull roaring sound of the north wind accompanies Catherine’s and Heathcliff’s emotions. Or better said, the wind is the bearer of the storm which suggests violence and passion. The wuthering accompanies the anguish of Emily’s main characters. It plays an important part in the creation of the novel, for the dull sound had accompanied Emily herself when roaming the Yorkshire moors.

There is a geographical isolation particularly in the setting of *Wuthering Heights*. There is no perception of other people being anywhere close by. Then, the windows: their images suggest obstructions. The description of the house conveys isolation exposed to the wind and storm: “one may guess the power of the north wind”.<sup>(25)</sup>

What else can describe better the opposite of light and beauty, the opposite of love? All fit perfectly the fear and the darkness. This human emotion called fear is the opposite of love, the other human emotion, for there are only two voices at the fundamental level. Heathcliff, was called by many critics as an extremely enigmatic figure, who possessed resentment, brutality and dishonesty. Some may ask if he is a human being, a devil, or a demon. “Is he a ghoul or a vampire?” The devil-like description is imposed by the superstitious Nelly. When they were children, Hindley called Heathcliff “a limp of Satan”. Later in maturity Nelly is still obsessed with the superstitious fear of him. In Chapter 11, when she goes to visit Hindley one day and finds Heathcliff she runs away because she is “feeling as scared as if I had raised a goblin”<sup>(26)</sup> This image is in her mind and transmitted in her story to Mr. Lockwood. She is responsible for much of the hypothesis on his origin. Nelly is in fact, under the spell of meaningless superstitions. She fights her own dragons that frighten her. And these dragons are nothing but her own fear.

Heathcliff, too, rather than being a devil, a possessed soul, is a man who fights his own dragons of fear translated through his desire for revenge. Nevertheless this desire for revenge dissipates. He loses all the will for vindictiveness towards his old enemies some time before his own death. He tells Nelly that he feels “a strange change approaching”. He spends his time wandering about, he does not sleep or eat. He has a sense of joy:” I am too happy, and yet I’m not happy enough” he says. “My soul’s bliss kills my body, but does not satisfy itself.”<sup>(27)</sup> This strong man of about thirty seven dies after three days of starvation. This explanation of his death is not at least rational. Does he

leave as an enigma?

Heathcliff is just a human being, a man devoured by his fears that stop himself from opening his heart to love. He does love Catherine, but he makes up a prison in which he dwells and he feels himself condemned. He does not realize that fear condemns and love forgives, but much later, before his death. "I don't care for striking, I can't take the trouble to raise my hand.. - I have lost the faculty of enjoying their (his old enemies) destruction" <sup>(28)</sup> he says. Heathcliff realizes that escaping from the world goes along with giving up attack thoughts. The creator of this personage discerns somehow that leaving this realm of human existence is the end of fear, and fear is nothing but violence, revenge and pain. Heathcliff gives up attack thoughts. He knows he is not vulnerable anymore, because when in fear one attacks. One strikes because he believes he is vulnerable. Being vulnerable he entails the belief that he is weak in his own eyes.

There can be no doubt that Emily , although certain of joy of life and the beauty of earthly springs, the mortal body remains with all the suffering and fear and become one with the earth, and the soul returns to that from which it sprung-Eternity. Charlotte wrote about her sister:

She sank rapidly. She made haste to leave us. Yet, physically she perished, mentally she grew stronger than we had known her. Day by day, when I saw with what front she met suffering, I looked on her with an anguish of wonder and love. Day by day, when I saw with what a front she met suffering, I looked on her with an anguish of wonder and love. I have seen nothing like it; but, indeed, I have never seen her parallel in anything. Stronger than a man, simpler than a child, her nature stood alone.<sup>(29)</sup>

This is precisely what Emily foretells in a poem and later in *Wuthering Heights*. She says:

*Death that struck when I was most confiding  
In my certain Faith of Joy to be,  
Strike again, Time's withered branch dividing  
From the fresh root of Eternity.*<sup>(30)</sup>

In *Wuthering Heights* she says through Heathcliff: "... I have lost the faculty of enjoying their destruction, and I am too idle to destroy for nothing.... there is a strange approaching ..." <sup>(31)</sup>

To him destruction has no meaning because he knows his end is nearing and with it he'll find Eternity, the world in which there is neither hate nor revenge. He knows that in the end he'll be with Catherine and their love will be real, apart from the fear and judgments and pain they

experienced as mortals.

The most beautiful and authentic account of the belief in attaining deliverance is clearly indicated just before Catherine's death. She says to Nelly:

The thing that irks me most is this shattered prison, after all. I am tired, tired of being enclosed here. I'm wearing to escape into the glorious world and to be always there: not seeing it dimly through tears, and yearning for it through the walls of an aching heart; but really with it, and in it.<sup>(32)</sup>

There is always the human ego that says "No" to death, and yet Emily at a rather young stage of life, guesses that the curse against life draws to destruction and that the only thing which would truly end the pain is death. Above all Emily knows that there is a "glorious world that awaits for her and that in this" glorious world" there is rebirth, there is grace and joy. She has the vision which shows her the way through, allowing to see its purposes: love and ease and the genuine spirit. She is a child of God and she is called to greatness, to the world without conflict.

No doubt that Emily felt the existence of the Kingdom of Heaven within, perfectly protected by a wall. But to penetrate the wall into this Kingdom one has to leave the human realm governed by the ego(ego stands for edging God out) which is nothing but asphyxiating and stifling, a world where one feels stuck, with no choices. One has to transcend into the world that is comprised of light and joy and all good things.

It is thought-provoking to realize how different Emily's way of thinking was, in comparison with her contemporary reviewers who were shocked by the character Heathcliff, his passion and diabolical hate. Without doubt there are scenes that might shock and the most intense one is when Heathcliff violently clasps the pregnant Catherine to him. Heathcliff's love takes on a rather violent note. He grinds his teeth, gnashes, foams like a mad dog. Emily presents us the painful passion Heathcliff has for Catherine. Catherine is shown in her state of illness with an unearthly beauty, the beauty of the soul shortly before leaving to the other world. The paleness of her face though only causes pain to Heathcliff who in his long embrace during he "bestowed more kisses than ever he gave in his life before".<sup>(33)</sup> He is tormented by the agony of her leaving him. "O, Cathy! Oh, my life! how can I bear it?"<sup>(34)</sup> Cathy herself in her anguish pleads: "I wish us never to be parted." Heathcliff understands that both he and Catherine possessed the same heart that they were made of the same substance. He also knows that by deceiving him Catherine deceived herself. He very wisely says: "*Why* did you despise me? *Why* did you betray your own heart, Cathy?"<sup>(35)</sup> Her heart was to be given to him and to nobody else. They were meant to be together. So when he goes on castigating her he

shows no sign of forgiveness towards himself, either. "I have no word of comfort-you deserve this."<sup>(36)</sup> Sadly, until the moment of his death he carries the desperate, harsh burdensomeness of his own guilt that of not allowing the door of his heart ajar to compassion. The door towards love will open and close according to one's own decision. He understands much later that only forgiveness allows the door open. When he ceases to hate he is released from the chains of blaming-only shortly before his death.

Both Catherine and Heathcliff's torment, their agonized last moments of passionate embracing and kisses prepare young Cathy's arrival on this plane, the arrival of a new spirit who will know more about the existence of the door that leads to conciliation, compassion and love.

## CONCLUSION

The tall, dark, handsome man and the beautiful, wild-looking young woman in a desirous embrace, create a magnificent picture of the totality. Their traits showing ardour for their passion demonstrates the two poles present in the living world: positive side and negative side.

We are accustomed generally to stories which are told from a congruous point of view and in the case of love stories we prefer to read those fictional accounts depicting the feeling called love as a model, a representation of the human characteristic of morality, benevolence and tolerance. However, besides harmony and goodness and gentleness, human love includes fear translated into anguish, judgement and revenge.

Heathcliff created unconsciously his personal suffering by holding a negative attitude toward the the circumstances of his own life. He could not understand why life was difficult. He felt intensely the hurt and in order to "undo" it he tried to make somebody else "pay" for it. Even in adulthood Heathcliff remained the little agonizing little boy who went on protecting himself from being hurt by seeking revenge and justifying it. And in doing so he thought he would get even. His judgement affected the feeling of love he had for Catherine. His fear, his agony broke his own journey toward the miracle of love, which does not recognize pain, but joy only.

The character Heathcliff leaves us a strong impression after we finish reading the novel just because he embodies exactly those traits we also have: love means pain as well as joy. In the case of Catherine, stated badly, she causes much trouble. She marries Edgar for the wrong reasons, knowing that she should have married Heathcliff, and the motive for it could nothing but her desire to punish herself. Unconsciously she makes use of the whip to flagellate herself and consequently Heathcliff and Edgar. Even so the greatest moments in the novel belong, without doubt, to these two characters.

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- 20.Brontë p.151
- 21.Brontë p.189
- 22.Brontë p.97
- 23.Brontë p.195
- 24.Brontë p.46



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- 25.Brontë p.46
- 26.Brontë p.153
- 27.Brontë p.353
- 28.Brontë p.353
- 29.Brontë pp.34-35
- 30.Brontë p.224
- 31.Brontë p.353
- 32.Brontë p.196
- 33.Brontë p.194
- 34.Brontë p.194
- 35.Brontë p.197
- 36.Brontë p.197