

Love Hate: Stories and Essays

"[those] Who love too much, hate in the like extreme"

Alexander Pope from *The Odyssey* of Homer

Love and hate are two of the most obvious contrasts in the world today. Those two emotions can seemingly take individuals over as human beings. If Emily Brontë's novel *Wuthering Heights*, it is ruling passions that overcome a life. Heathcliff's character is a perfect model of love and hate taken to the extremes. His deep and sincere love for Catherine versus his hatred for all others creates a struggle within him; these passions do rule a life.

Heathcliff and Catherine's love blossoms on the moors of Yorkshire, England, where the novel is set. Heathcliff's adoration for Catherine begins soon after his arrival from the streets of Liverpool and the kindred spirits spend days together playing on the moors of the rugged land of *Wuthering Heights*. The two rely heavily on each other and their fervent love is made only stronger with each passing obstacle including the death of Mr. Earnshaw and Hindley's cruelty to both of them. Heathcliff is degraded to a mere servant at the hands of Hindley. After Catherine's return from *Thrushcross Grange* where she is mentored to become a true lady, he insists that Nelly bring him to her when he returns. "Nelly, make me decent, I'm going to be good." His feelings for his beloved are so strong that when he overhears her say "it would degrade [her] to marry Heathcliff now" he is utterly broken-hearted and disappears for three years.

Immediately following his return to *Wuthering Heights*, he tries to convince Nelly to admit him into *Thrushcross Grange* where she is employed so that she can see his beloved again. He is received by a very delighted Catherine who states that she thinks she is dreaming and she is "not...able to believe that [she has] seen and touched and spoken to [him] once more." The friendship and love is clearly revived and the tensions start to build between the two families once again. The fiery love that the pair shares and the extent to which Heathcliff relies on Catherine will trouble him and those around him for the rest of his life.

In John Milton's epic poem *Paradise Lost* he states "...for now the though/ Both of lose happiness and lasting pain/ Torments him; round he throws his baleful eyes, that witnessed huge affliction and dismay/ Mixed with obdurate pride and steadfast hate." The intense hate has festered in not only Milton's Satan but also Heathcliff throughout his life, not unlike the character in the poem. With Catherine married to Edgar Linton, he has lost his opportunity of happiness and agony is all that is left. Throughout these years he has had an uncanny ability to remain hardened to all that is occurring around him and, like the devil in Milton's poem "Obdurate pride and steadfast hate" are those extremes that Heathcliff knows all too well. He outlines to Catherine his plan and that he has devised these years he has been away. He would first see her face one last time and "afterward settle [his] score with Hindley, and then prevent the law by doing execution on [himself]" Heathcliff's obsessive desire for vengeance that he feels towards Hindley for his pitiless treatment of him all those years consumes him. However, Heathcliff finds a much more effective method of relationship against Hindley. Instead of outright murdering him, he chooses to instead drive Hindley deeper into the "abyss" that he has created by encouraging his drinking and gambling. His vengeance will not come in the form of violence but rather in the form of money, land and power. Still, after Hindley's eventual death, Heathcliff continues his plight against the rest of those who remain at *Wuthering Heights*. One of the characters that are affected most deeply by Heathcliff's rage is Hareton Earnshaw, the son of Hindley. He is degraded, neglected and Heathcliff has taken all the land he should have inherited. The Linton's become the target of Heathcliff's wrath. Heathcliff begins to court Isabella Linton and after their marriage his demeanor changes. He begins to treat Isabella harshly, abusing her both verbally and physically on several occasions. Just preceding her leaving *Wuthering Heights* and Heathcliff she is attacked by him resulting in "a deep cut under one ear." In her letter to Nelly, Isabella claims that it was a mistake to marry him and she hates him and considers him to be a "fiend." Heathcliff seems to also instigate his unwavering hatefulness on the hearts of those around him. The "lasting pain" describing Satan in Milton's poem is a familiar one to Heathcliff and that pain will only be made strong with each passing even.

Milton's words in "paradise Lost" are becoming reality with "Regions of sorrow, doleful shades, where peace/ and rest can never dwell, hope never comes/ Thus comes to all, but torture without end." The event that destroys Heathcliff is found in Catherine Earnshaw's death. The magnitude of their deep and obsessive love for each other is observed in the quote "I wish I could hold you till we were both dead!" The devastation that Heathcliff experiences brings him deeper into mental anguish. Just prior to Catherine's death, the couple has a fierce exchange of words where Catherine claims that Heathcliff has broken her heart. She questions if he will be happy when she is gone. The heart-wrenching words from the only person he has never loved ruins Heathcliff and he cries, "Don't torture me till I'm as mad as yourself," Nelly finally describes Catherine's lifeless body to Heathcliff and his anger and devastation once again emerges. The remembers so spiteful words when he ageezingly utters, "you said I killed you- haunt me, then! ...Be with me always- take any form- drive me mad! Only do not leave me in this abyss where I cannot find you!" Heathcliff develops a unique monomania for Catherine. The obsessive nature he develops regarding the presence of her ghost lingers throughout the rest of the novel. He goes so far as to bribe the sexton to remove to adjectives of both his coffin and Catherine's coffin such that their skeletal remains can mingle in death. It is clear that for Heathcliff, his peace never comes, and his torture never ends just like Satan in Milton's poem. Even Heathcliff maintains that "[he] cannot live without [his] life...without his soul!" SO perhaps his peace will be found only through his own death.

Heathcliff's ruling passions consume his life. His overwhelming love for a woman he can no have, and the vehement disdain and "black tempers" he experiences for almost all other characters in the novel are his serious vices. The ruling passions of both love and hate can consume the life of one who cannot find moderation. Heathcliff loves Catherine to the very core of his being and he simply can no have her. The devastation leads to his utter hatred for all those around him and it is this persistent abhorrence that creates a burden for the rest of his life.

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