

(WUTHERING HEIGHTS)
DEFENCE OF HEATHCLIFF

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Heathcliff is the central character of Wuthering Heights written by Emily Bronte. His name is suggestive of ^{his} nature. He is rough as heath and hard as cliff. He was brought to the Earnshaw family as a Gypsy orphan. Mr. Earnshaw went to Liverpool on business where he found a Gypsy child wandering about the streets. Taking pity on the child, he brought him home. In this way, Heathcliff was introduced into the Earnshaw family.

In the outset everyone in the family abhorred the child as he was dark-skinned Gypsy. But the master, Mr. Earnshaw was very fond of him. He liked him even more than his son, Hindley. After the death of Mr. Earnshaw, his son began to ill-treat him. He employed him as labourer on farm and made him work as a domestic servant. Excessive ill-treatment roused in Heathcliff a spirit of revenge which was never extinguished. Once after receiving the sword thrusting from Hindley, he began to contemplate how he could avenge on him. After Mr. Earnshaw's death, his daughter, Catherine became the soul friend of Heathcliff in the world. She kept his company and consoled him with affection. Heathcliff began to love her with rare intensity. But soon appeared a rival in Edgar Linton. Catherine decided to marry Linton for several reasons. He was young, handsome and wealthy, whereas Heathcliff

was a ferocious domestic servant.

Heathcliff also suffers a acute disappointment in love. After a long absence from Wuthering Heights he returned to take revenge on his enemies. He ruins Hindley and appropriates all his property. He gains absolute control over his son Hindley, and denies education and good society to him. Since Edgar Linton has married Catherine, he regards him also as his enemy and avenges himself on him. Being unable to harm him directly, he does everything possible to harm his daughter, Catherine.

Heathcliff is presented in the novel more as a beast than a man. He has the physical strength of a beast and is harmful like a wild animal. He is cruel, remorseless, vindictive and covetous. Only revenge satisfies his vengeful soul. He embodies Emily Bronte's idea of a man frustrated in love. But frustration in his case is overdone. It perverts his entire nature. It is unique that time has absolutely no effect on him. Things are forgotten with the passage of time, and even develops a tolerant attitude as he advances in years. But Heathcliff forgets nothing and forgives nobody. He sees something and strives himself to deal as a result of it. But in spite of his primitive nature, Heathcliff has certain appreciable qualities. He has an indomitable will and tireless energy. We can say that dynamism perverted from its proper is the tragedy of Heathcliff.