



## MODEL ESSAY

Love courses through Wuthering Heights. It drives the book – lending it power and interest – while contributing to our understanding of the nature of love and the effect it may have on those who give and receive it. Catherine's love for Heathcliff is a force opposing her love for Edgar. Yet this does not confuse the reader nor is it a cause for criticism. Instead, the gap between the two allows readers to question what is romantically dismissed as love, and forces them to consider the nature of love and the nature of human emotion. In doing so, readers contemplate the spirit of nature and its hand in the structure of human relationships and society.

Readers are 'withered' by the wild, passionate intensity of the love between Heathcliff and Catherine. The almost hysterical expressions of it – 'Nelly, I am Heathcliff. He's always, always in my mind,' or 'How can I live without my life? How can I live without my soul?' – express the most fundamental parts of human nature. Catherine's description of her love as 'the eternal rocks beneath' the surface of her life remains with readers throughout the novel. Catherine and Heathcliff's love is recognition of a deep, indivisible, irrepressible kinship that results in knowledge of themselves and each other. Appropriately amongst the dark, wild landscape of the moors, and in the buffeting of the winds from the north which gnarl the trees, Heathcliff and Catherine recognise the characteristics they share – their passion, likes and independence.

Yet their love manifests itself in good and evil ways. At once it is the food that they must have to survive: while it is a force so fierce that it consumes them. In loving one another, Heathcliff and Catherine confront reality, and gain an intense awareness of their own natures. 'Not always as a pleasure', their relationship brings out with intensity the rough features and tenderness of Catherine and Heathcliff. While their love allows them to realise their power, it is also debilitating. Heathcliff's suffering after Catherine's death is intense, and manifests itself in his deliberate persecution of all persons connected to him or Catherine. He is dogged by her ghost, and the memory of their love and relationship. Life without her is the sort of chaos Catherine envisages were her world not to contain Heathcliff. Indeed, life for Heathcliff turns into a preoccupation with death, when they may once more be united. Yet Catherine gains no sympathy in death from her lover. He curses her for leaving him, and his reaction to her death – in terms of human degradation – is more akin to that suffered by Hindley upon the death of Frances than that by Edgar.

His love of Catherine does not enoble Heathcliff – it accentuates certain aspects of his character. It sweeps away all pretence, exposing his raw human spirit.