

SUBJECT : ENGLISH

B.A.(HONS.) PART-II, PAPER-IV

TOPIC- WUTHERING HEIGHTS

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PLOT CONSTRUCTION / SUMMARY OF THE NOVEL, “WUTHERING HEIGHTS”

The novel is a successor to the Gothic Romances. The plot of the internal action unfolds the story in three movements and is marked by a peculiar symmetry. The central figure of this somber and highly imaginative story is Heathcliff, a gypsy of unknown parentage, which is picked up by Mr. Earnshaw in the streets of Liverpool and brought home and reared by him as one of his own children. Bullied and humiliated after the elder Earnshaw's death by Earnshaw's son Hindley, Heathcliff's passionate and ferocious nature finds its compliments in Earnshaw's daughter, Catherine, and he falls passionately in love

with her. Overhearing her say that it would degrade her to marry him, he leaves the house.

On returning three years later he finds Catherine married to insignificant Edgar Linton. Being possessed of money, he is welcomed by Hindley, a coarsed natured gambler who is now married. Heathcliff's vindictive nature henceforth has full play. His violent love for Catherine brings her to her grave at the birth of her daughter Cathy. He marries Edgar's sister Isabella, not loving her, and cruelly maltreats her. He gets Hindley and his son Hareton completely in his power, brutalizing the latter in revenge for Hindley's treatment of himself when a child. Later he lures young Cathy to his house and forces a marriage between her and his own sickly and repulsive son, with a view to getting Linton's property eventually into his power.

After his son's death, affection springs up between Cathy and Hareton, and Cathy sets about the latter's education. Heathcliff's nature has now worn itself out. He longs for the death that will reunite him with Catherine. His attempt to destroy the house of Earnshaw and Linton fails in the end from the lack of resolution and at his death Hareton and Cathy are left to be happy together.

In fact, Heathcliff is not evil, he represents a source of dynamic energy which has been denied a creative outlet through love. In certain rare and precious movements, recorded in her poems Emily Bronte makes it clear that she discerned a reality that gave the lie to human judgments on good and evil. At best good and evil correspond to intellectual concepts; at worst, they are rationalized prejudices- truth lies beyond them. Wuthering Heights is perhaps, less a novel than a psychological drama in which the characters are the personified powers that stormed and despaired in Emily Bronte's own being.
