

**EMILY BRONTË**  
**ÜVÖLTŐ SZELEK**  
**Wuthering Heights**

[Emily Bronte](#) (1818-1848) She was the daughter of an Irishman, perpetual curate of Haworth, Yorkshire. She and her sisters (Anne and Charlotte) were mainly educated at home, they read widely and wrote stories and poems. Emily was for a time in 1837 governess and in 1842 went to Brussels with Charlotte to study languages, but she returned by the end of the year and remained in Haworth for the rest of her brief life. Wuthering Heights was published in 1847. It was only after Emily's death that it became widely acknowledged as a masterpiece. Unlike Charlotte, Emily had no close friends, wrote few letters, her poems and prose works reveal a passionate personality inclined to mysticism.



János Pilinszky, one of the greatest 20<sup>th</sup> century Hungarian poet, on his trip to Yorkshire wrote a poem paying tribute to her unparalleled talent and life.

## Pilinszky János

### In memoriam N. N.\*

Te férfiaknál férfiabb,  
te bátraknál is bátrabb,  
legalább szégyelted magad  
megadni a halálnak?  
Az esztelenül gyönyörű  
és kőszivűre égett,  
hoggy roppant meg a súly alatt  
gyönyörű szüzességed?  
Valamikor, te nyomorúlt,  
még hitted a szerelmet!  
Most élősdiék seregét  
etetheti a tested.  
Kit nem vigasztalt senki se,  
most betömi a szádat,  
a magányosan zokogót  
a tömeges gyalázat.  
Elterülve a többiek  
földes-agyagos ágyán,  
közösködőn és mocskosan,  
velőtrázón paráznán  
soha se lettél volna több,  
mint férgek között féreg?  
S nem csupán itt, a föld alatt  
veszett el vad szemérmed?  
Te életfogytig lázadó,  
valóban ennyi volnál,  
nem több a csontig élvező,  
levetkező halottnál?  
Saját végeddel kérdelek:  
a göggel égő évek,  
az olthatatlan büszkeség,  
ha végül úgy se véd meg,  
az egész életünk mit ér?

Szólj, rovarok arája,  
ha öröklétre születünk,  
mért halunk meg hiába?

## Wuthering Heights

**The Plot.** The story is narrated by Lockwood and Mrs Dean who had witnessed the lives and destinies of the owners of Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange. Events are set in motion by the arrival of Heathcliff, picked up in the streets of Liverpool by Mr Earnshaw, he brings him home to bring him up as one of his children. Bullied and humiliated after Earnshaw's death by his son Hindley, Heathcliff finds consolation in his friendship with Catherine. Their friendship develops into an intense attachment, but Heathcliff, overhearing Catherine tell Nelly that she cannot marry him because it would degrade her, leaves the house. He returns three years later to find Catherine married to



Edgar Linton. Heathcliff is determined to take revenge on Hindley and Edgar Linton. On the one hand, he contributes to the total destruction of Hindley; on the other hand, he marries Edgar's sister Isabella only to treat her brutally. After a mutual confession in love with Heathcliff, Catherine dies in childbirth. Edgar Linton dies after trying in vain to prevent a friendship between Cathy and Heathcliff's son, Linton. Heathcliff forces Cathy to marry Linton in order to secure the Linton property. Linton dies very young. Affection is gradually developed between Cathy and Hareton whom she does her best to educate. Heathcliff, after revenging himself, longs to die hoping to be reunited with Catherine whose ghost has haunted him since she died.





Emily Brontë's masterpiece inevitably is one of the most popular novels in the world. Its popularity is due to the **exciting plot** as well as to the **deep psychological insight into human nature**, which is offered by the author. Although, it carries some traits of the Gothic novel (e.g. haunting ghost, mystery, the touch of the supernatural) the story reaches far beyond the Gothic tradition and represents in itself an early psychological novel. Brontë offers a sharp-sighted exploration of different attitudes to life as such through eternal characters and situations in a microworld that however, shows the amplitude of ancient tragedies.

There is a peculiar disparity between the style of the narrators and the world described. Brontë deliberately chose two narrators (Mr Lockwood and Mrs Dean), who represent **common sense set against the self-consuming passion** of the main characters. Instead of an omniscient narrator the account of the events is given by two persons who embody social convention or an everyday view of life, they only convey what they have seen or heard that is facts without interpretations (Mrs Dean's down-to-earth way of thinking is balanced with her deep concern in the destinies of her masters and mistresses.) **Convention and nonconformity** that is one of the subject matters of the novel is thus reflected both in the characters and the narration.

The events take place in **Wuthering Heights** and **Thrushcross Grange**, in two neighbouring places that are **symbolical** as it is indicated in their names. Wuthering Heights is the world of **exaggerated passions**, love and hatred, nonconformity, uncivilised manners and freedom, while Thrushcross Grange epitomises **convention, cool reasoning**, refinement, civilised behaviour, and self-control. The two different places with their typical dwellers represent the **different layers of human nature: irrational and rational, subconscious and conscious**. The Earnshaws, Catherine and Hindley together with Heathcliff belong to the passionate and irrational world; the Lintons represent social convention, common sense. Nevertheless, due to Catherine's choice, the two worlds become intertwined when she marries Edgar Linton though identifies herself with Heathcliff. '**I am Heathcliff - he's always in my mind-... as my own being.**' Marrying Linton, Catherine wants to enter another world, more conventional. However, she becomes torn between the two worlds: living in Thrushcross Grange she dreams about the Heights and feels confined. Her 'divided' feelings bring about mental illness and she dies without reconciliation. Catherine's ghost that haunts Wuthering Heights symbolises not only Heathcliff's mental disturbances but also her failure in joining the two worlds.

However, the two worlds - rational and irrational - are joined in almost every character, which is natural, as we are a mixture of the two different aspects. The difference stems from somewhere else: the question is which is the dominant feature in our attitude. Both common sense and passion can lead to destruction as it is shown in Edgar Linton's behaviour. On the one hand, he is a tender husband; on the other hand, he becomes a vindictive brother when he treats her sister cruelly just because she married Heathcliff. Linton's sister makes a wrong choice, too. Like Catherine, she becomes attracted by another world (Heathcliff) and falls prey to a bitter disillusion. Domestic happiness is unattainable in either marriages, Catherine and Heathcliff's passionate love leads to self-destruction, in Heathcliff's case even to brutality, which is a kind of self-punishment.

**The novel follows the destinies of two generations:** the first causes chaos, revenge and irrationality consumes their lives, it is embodied in Heathcliff's son who is sickly and dies young. The two worlds become reconciled in Cathy's and Hareton's love in the end.