**Wuthering Heights: Does anti-socialism affect a person’s life?**

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Anti- socialism is a condition in which a person chooses to seclude themselves because they are unable to put their emotions into words and open up to others. Thus, due to anti- social tendencies, the necessity for a person to have the company of other beings is ignored which may hurt an individual psychologically and cause them to suffer over a long period of time. In the novel, *Wuthering Heights,* these anti- social feelings are generated from the characters living in Wuthering Heights Manor and Thrushcross Grange which include s Catherine senior, Heathcliff, Hareton and Linton. Therefore, it will be shown that anti-socialism affects a person at a psychological level which can create a negative outlook on their entire perspective or sadly be the only form of security.

The character Heathcliff, displays many anti- social tendencies which results in immediate suffering and misunderstanding. Originally, Heathcliff suffers under the wrath of his step brother Hindley because he refuses to recognize him as a member of the family after his father chooses to adopt him. As a result, Hindley chooses to continuously torment Heathcliff by mocking his illegitimacy and forces him to work the fields. Similarly, after Hindley’s death, Heathcliff lives out his revenge by having his nephew Hareton to suffer in the same manner from his youth.

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| “He appeared to have bent his malevolence on making him a brute: he was never taught to read or write: never rebuked for any bad habit which did not annoy his keeper; never led a single step towards virtue, or guarded by a single precept against vice.” (p. 180-181) |

Due to Heathcliff’s past torment, he is unable to forget all the resentment he holds for Hindley. Thus, Heathcliff is immediately categorized as an *evil* character for living out his revenge despite suffering severe mental anguish. Therefore, although Heathcliff’s actions cannot be condoned, he is extremely misunderstood due to his traumatic past leading to acts of anti-socialism where he chooses to disregard and type of concern held for him from others. The result of his misunderstood actions leads him to be deeply hated by the younger Catherine for causing herself, Linton, and Hareton an unlimited amount of suffering. Heathcliff’s anti-social behavior also becomes imminent during the time Catherine begins seeking the companionship of Edgar Linton. Specifically after Catherine reveals to Nelly that she is unable to be with Heathcliff because it would degrade her, despite the fact that she loves him. As a result, Heathcliff immediately leaves the manor and returns many years later as a distinguished person.

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| “He had grown a tall, athletic, well-formed man; beside whom, my master seemed quite slender and youth- like. His upright carriage suggested the idea of his having been in the army. His countenance was much older in expression and decision of feature than Mr. Linton’s; it looked intelligent, and retained no marks of former degradation.” (P. 87) |

Due to Heathcliff’s choice to run away, he was unable to clear up the misunderstanding he heard from Catherine. Therefore, it is possible to assume that during this time, he depended solely on himself to become successful and a proper gentleman since he has only ever had poor people skills. His return to Wuthering Heights was therefore unwelcomed by some, and he continued on with the same twisted and misunderstood personality which was a result of his anti-socialism. As time progresses, and Catherine’s death has long ago occurred, Heathcliff continues to be haunted by images of Catherine. Heathcliff’s anti-social nature continues to destroy any moral thinking he once had as it continues to corrupt his manner of thinking. Heathcliff, after Linton’s death, chooses to uncover Catherine’s grave in order to see her once more and plan his eventual resting place beside her.

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| “’I got the sexton, who was digging Linton’s grave, to remove the earth off her coffin lid, and I opened it. I thought, once, I would have stayed there, when I saw her face again—it is hers yet—he had hard work to stir me; but he said it would change, if the air blew on it, and so I struck one side of the coffin loose’,… “’You were very wicked, Mr. Heathcliff!’” I exclaimed; “’were you not ashamed to disturb the dead?’” (p. 263-264) |

The result of Heathcliff’s anti-socialism led to corruption and sinful actions because he does not care over the consequences of his actions. Rather, due to his anti-socialism, he has ultimately chosen revenge against Hindley, even after his death, and for he to earn his eternal place next to Catherine despite as outrageous and disgusting as it seems. Due to his growing depravity along with age, Heathcliff becomes increasingly unsociable until the near moments of his death.

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| “ For some days after that evening, Mr. Heathcliff shunned meeting us at meals; yet he would not consent, formally, to exclude Hareton and Cathy. He had an aversion to yielding so completely to his feelings, choosing rather to absent himself; and eating once in twenty-four hours seemed sufficient sustenance for him.” (p. 297) |

In his last moments of life, Heathcliff chooses to seclude himself from those around him. Although it was he who caused Hareton to live as a servant and remain illiterate, Hareton still chose to respect him since he was his only father figure after the passing of Edgar. Therefore, due to Heathcliff’s anti-socialism and blindness to the compassion that Hareton still had for him, he suffered a lonely death. In conclusion, anti-socialism can cause not only misunderstandings between a person and their peers, but within a person’s psyche.

The characters, Hareton and Linton also display many anti-social tendencies due to the way the way they are raised by Heathcliff. Specifically, when Hareton first meets Catherine they are able to get along with one another, however after Catherine discovers Hareton is illiterate; she immediately begins to mock him since his intelligence is on a much lower scale and thus, cannot be assumed as a proper companion for her.

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| “ ‘Is he all as he should be?’ Asked Miss Cathy seriously; ‘or is he simple: not right? I’ve questioned him twice now, and each time he looked so stupid I think he does not understand me. I can hardly understand him, I’m sure! … for he was conscious of being insulted, and embarrassed how to resent it..” (p. 202-203) |

As a result, Hareton feels ashamed upon his own lack of intelligence and chooses to avoid those around him while he secretly attempts to learn to read. In this case, anti-socialism played a major role upon Hareton, because it is during this time that he is able to reflect alone and chooses to try and improve himself for Catherine. Therefore, due to his choice to seclude himself, he realizes he must change for the better in order to remain friends with Catherine. However, in Linton’s instance of anti-socialism, they are usually a result of an inability to improve him. After Linton’s mother, Isabella, passes away, he is sent to live with Heathcliff. The short period of time where Linton lived with his mother begins his trek towards anti-socialism seeing that due to his ill condition, he is incapable of going out and making friends and other relations. However, as a result of moving to a house consisting of only himself, Heathcliff, and Hareton, Linton’s personality becomes increasingly timid and anti-social due to fear instilled by his father, Heathcliff. “Linton was white and trembling. He was not pretty then, Ellen: Oh No! he looked frightful! For his thin face and large eyes were wrought with an expression of frantic, powerless fury.” (p. 230) Upon living in this manor, Linton has no choice but to become anti-social due to his outright fear of Heathcliff. Linton has no means of escape from Heathcliff due to his bad health, and therefore his only means of survival are to obey Heathcliff’s commands or to try and avoid him completely. Therefore, anti-socialism can be used as a mechanism for change and as the only means of defense, being to seclude oneself.

The original Catherine can also be regarded as an anti-social character because she is unable to reveal her true thoughts and emotions to those around her and therefore, cannot connect with people on a personal level. The misunderstandings with the original Catherine usually have to do with her relationship with Heathcliff. For example, Catherine demonstrates her general anti-social attitude when handling her unusual love for Edgar after a dispute with Heathcliff. “’ Where are you going?’ demanded Catherine, advancing to the door… ‘Can I stay after you have struck me?’ asked Linton. Catherine was mute. ‘You’ve made me ashamed of you,’ he continued; ‘I’ll never come here again!’ (p.65) Catherine is unable to control her emotions, causing her to lash out against her fiancée showing her true nature. It is possible that Catherine’s violence is caused by her anti-socialism. Because Catherine has poor people skills, she is unable to handle difficult emotional situations, thus almost destroys any hope she has to marry Edgar. Due to Catherine’s anti-socialism, she does not realize when marrying Edgar that she does not truly love him. She is unable to comprehend that what she is doing is morally wrong because she has confused her emotions and believes that she does feel love for him. “’You love Mr. Edgar, because he is handsome, young, and cheerful, and rich, and loves you. The last however goes for nothing: you would love him without that, probably and wouldn’t, unless he possessed the four former attractions.’(p. 71)” Therefore, Catherine simply uses Edgar in order to gain wealth and status, and feels no remorse for using him in such a manner due to her twisted and cruel love caused by her anti-social lifestyle. Catherine’s sudden outbursts of rage and past actions continue to show her true anti- social nature when speaking about Heathcliff because she believes he is not fit to marry her. “You teach me how cruel you’ve been-cruel and false. Why did you despise me? … You loved me – then what right had you to leave me? What right- answer me- for the poor fancy you felt for Linton?” (p. 147) Catherine shows that she would choose her status and wealth over the love of her life making her lose the person she trusts the most. Therefore, by losing Heathcliff when marrying Edgar, she commits an extremely selfish act while at the same time losing the most social contact she has. As a result of her anti-socialism, she fails to realize the wickedness in her actions and possibly destroys the relationships she hopes for and holds with people around her. As a result of the anti-social tendencies Catherine possesses,

In both Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange, the residents both display reason to be anti-social. In regards to the characters Heathcliff, Catherine, Linton and Hareton, they suffer and live through many difficult emotional aspects causing them to become anti-social over time or unfortunately, choose it as a means of survival. Therefore, the anti-social personality expands and ultimately affects or destroys any hope for or relationships held with others and possibly damages their psyche.