

# **Evil and Revenge in Emile Bronte's *Wuthering Heights* and Saad Kassim Al-Asady's *Niran***

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**الشر والانتقام في رواية مرتفعات ويذرغ لايميلي برونتي  
ورواية نيران لسعد قاسم الاسدي**

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## Abstract

The paper studies human nature in Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights* (1847) and Saad Kassim Al-Asady's *Niran* (2014). It focuses on the idea of evil which people inflict on each other and the inclination for revenge in retaliation, two connected phenomena that are universal in their natures, unlimited to place or time, through studying two novels written in different ages and completely different cultures: the West and the East. The two novels try to emphasize that evil and the urge to revenge are unleashed in the hearts and minds of people by the wrong of man to another man. In this context Heathcliff, the protagonist of *Wuthering Heights*, lives in a burning fire driving him to revenge and turning him into a sheer devil ready to destroy the whole world because of the cruel and unjust treatment inflicted by Hindley upon him, and worse by Catherine's betrayal of his love. In a similar way, in Saad al-Asady's *Niran*, the protagonist, Niran, is the victim of the brutality of her father and the seduction of a young man who rapes her and runs away. The paper is psychologically focused examining whether evil is inborn or acquired.

**Keywords:** Evil, Heathcliff, Human Nature, Niran, psychology, Revenge, *Wuthering Heights*

## Introduction

Evil is a complex phenomenon that has been studied by remarkable thinkers who express various opinions about it. Plato, in his Republic, emphasizes that the human psyche is divided into three parts. The first includes sensual desires. The second is the spirit or will. The third is the intellect that guides the first two parts. When a man cannot develop his intellect or spirit, his desires will dominate his life, which may induce evil behavior. In trying to get something he desires; he may behave badly. This may push him to act wickedly when he becomes disappointed about not getting that object. The most dangerous point is that he may behave "nefariously when he feels envy at someone having what he desires" (Plato, 1989, Book IV).

Thomas Hobbes argues in his Theory of Evil that people try to please themselves by having power over others. They live in a state of competition justifying their evil actions for this purpose. This state of competition leads to distrust of one another, which causes, in its turn, more conflicts. Human beings live a restless life that becomes a war against all (Hobbes, Chapter XIII).

According to Jean-Jacques Rousseau's Theory of Evil, human beings are created "naturally good." Human beings do not hurt other human beings unless they are corrupted by society. Rousseau argues that people become evil because the experiences they had with society have made them so (Rousseau 1754). Civilization and the changes in the way of living make people change their habits from living isolated. They depend on nature of living close to other families. This change in the way of living would bring jealousy and envy because people used to compare themselves with others. Hence, people start to have conflicts with, and distrust in, each other. Property worsens this state of life as people start fighting to protect property or to acquire more property (Addis 2010).

Freud argues that two instincts dominate human beings and can urge people to commit evil: Eros and death. Eros can help individuals to create families, races, people, and nations, in other words, to build civilization. The Death instinct aims at dissolving the individual. Eros can control death, diverting it towards the external world by aggressiveness and destructiveness. Instead of destroying himself, the individual will destroy something else (Freud 1961).

From a psychoanalytic perspective, childhood experiences within the family may dominate the whole life of human beings. These experiences become a psychological storage that shapes human behavior throughout different stages of life. It is destructive behavior since people are overwhelmed by psychological issues. Childhood experiences can lead children to develop several complexes, such as sibling rivalry and inferiority complex (Tyson 2015).

Tyson notes that crisis helps guilty desires, fears, or wounds, to come to the surface and past experiences overwhelm one's mind and dominate one's behavior (Tyson 2015).

For Roy W. Perrett, evil is "understood to be a very special moral category" that involves "a special kind of intentional wrongdoing" (Perrett 2002: 304). He classifies the features of evil into firstly, "the wrongdoing must flow from a particular kind of character." Secondly, there is a kind of motivation for this wrongdoing. Thirdly, the agent finds pleasure in these actions. Finally, the agent fails to show "the morally appropriate reactive attitudes (guilt, shame, regret, etc.)" (Perrett 2002: 304).

## Evil and the Fires of Revenge in Bronte's *Wuthering Heights*

Emily Bronte (1818-1848) led an isolated and unhappy life, in which she came to understand the "abyss of Evil" and fathomed its depth (Bataille 2012: 7), an understanding which she reflects in her only novel, *Wuthering Heights* (1847). Evil permeates through all the parts of the novel; and though most characters and the narrator believe that evil is inherent in the individuals of certain human races (i.e., the gypsies), the incidents show that evil is acquired by the individuals from society itself because of its injustice and cruelty.

In most parts of the novel, evil runs rampant, casting dark shadows over the future lives of its characters. From the beginning of the novel, the social milieu reveals two contradictory forces which are destined to clash soon: good and evil. Mr. Earnshaw, *Wuthering Heights*' owner, brings home an orphan gypsy child named Heathcliff, found hungry and shivering in a street of Liverpool. This act shows Mr. Earnshaw's kindness and good-heartedness but for his wife, it is an act of madness. She cannot understand why a sane man of family brings home a child of an unknown origin and make him live inside his house as if he were a member of his family. The readers are told that she cries angrily once her eyes fall on the poor child: "She [Mrs. Earnshaw] did fly up, asking how he could fashion to bring that gipsy brat into the house, when they had their own brains to feed and fend for? What he meant to do with it, and whether he were mad?" (*WH* 29) (References to *Wuthering Heights* will be abbreviated as *WH* followed by page number(s).) With this negative attitude toward the new child, it is natural to expect that Heathcliff will meet only antagonism and aggressiveness from Mrs. Earnshaw and her children. In an inimical environment where he lives in an abject condition, Heathcliff's psychology will certainly be affected and, as a child, he must learn to adjust himself to the social environment, bearing degradation and persecution.

It seems that almost all the characters in *Wuthering Heights*, except for Mr. Earnshaw, who dies early in the novel, hate Heathcliff because they think him an evil child. This negative thought is based on racial discrimination. They are white people; Heathcliff is a gypsy. They pre-perceive that the gypsy is evil by his nature; evil is an integral part of his character, therefore; he will bring only mischief and calamity to them. As a result, they treat him, not as a human being, but as an evil creature that should be feared, secluded, and mistreated. Hindley, Mr. Earnshaw's son, looks at Heathcliff as "his replacement" (Hassan 2008: 180). This can be seen, from the point of view psychoanalytic theory, as sibling rivalry. Hindley keeps hating Heathcliff the whole novel, making use of any chance to express his feelings towards him (Hassan 2008: 180). Hindley describes Heathcliff as an 'imp of Satan' (*WH* 31); Young Cathy, Edgar Linton's daughter, argues that he looks 'like the devil, and envious like him' (*WH* 237); and to Isabella Linton, Heathcliff is 'a lying fiend, a monster, and not a human being!' (*WH* 124). Catherine Earnshaw, who comes to have a deep love relationship with Heathcliff later, calls him as 'a fierce, pitiless, wolfish man' (*WH*, 83). With such antagonistic views, it is no wonder that they agree that Heathcliff does not fit their social order, hence they mistreat and degrade him. In this respect, Critic Jennifer Lodine-Chaffey in her essay "Heathcliff's Abject State in Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*" says that Heathcliff is treated as a man of abject character with "animalistic and demonic nature" (Lodine-Chaffey 2013: 209). The objection of Heathcliff becomes a representation of the human fears of the different others.

Heathcliff's childhood experience in Mr. Earnshaw's house is filled with events that shape his character. Mr. Earnshaw has treated him kindly as a son and defended him against the inimical surrounding world, a kindness that arouses the jealousy, hatred and ill-treatment of Mr. Earnshaw's son Hindley who sees "Heathcliff

as a usurper of his parents' affections and his privileges" (WH 30). The critic, Thomas Vargish, in his essay "Revenge and *Wuthering Heights*" (1971), indicates that the realm of childhood in *Wuthering Heights* and the kind treatment of Mr. Earnshaw towards Heathcliff develop "Hindley's resentment and awaken a Heathcliff who will feel later his degradation acutely" (9-10). One example of Hindley's cruelty to Heathcliff is that, once, he hits Heathcliff with a big stone on his chest just because he wants to ride a horse which Hindley prefers. At this stage, Heathcliff proves himself a stoic; a very patient child, bearing Hindley's cruelty and persecution without complaining or shedding tears. One reason for his patience is the great love that arises between him and Catherine Earnshaw. This love compensates for all the abuses he receives, especially when he finds it reciprocal. Catherine loves him as deeply as he does. His capacity for love shows, of course, that he is not evil by nature, and he might have grown a very decent, good-willed man if he had been given the chance, i.e., if he had been treated kindly by the others. Anyhow, his great love for Catherine springs from the burning fires of suffering from childhood abuse. He is ready to bear degradation and torment if he is close to her. The happiest hours of his day are those he spends with Catherine wandering on the moors. At those hours, he forgets Hindley's torture and physical abuse.

Mr. Earnshaw's death marks the demise of the protector; leaving Heathcliff vulnerable to Hindley's persecution, as Hindley becomes the new master of *Wuthering Heights*. One of Hindley's first actions is that he tries to separate Heathcliff from Catherine. He " 'swears he will reduce [Heathcliff] to his right place'" (WH 17). Thus, he orders Heathcliff to go and live in the stable with the animals and treats him as a servant. He deliberately ridicules and degrades Heathcliff in front of Catherine and tries to bring her closer to the young Edgar Linton, their handsome neighbor. In this respect, he hosts a Christmas party and invites Edgar and his

sister, Isabella, to attend it. During the party, Edgar provokes Heathcliff when he comments on his hair to make fun of him. In his anger, Heathcliff throws hot applesauce on his face and leaves him crying. Hindley is furious: he beats and locks Heathcliff in an attic. It is at this time that evil starts to control Heathcliff's mind, which is seized by the desire for revenge upon his persecutor. He tells Nelly Dean, the narrator:

- I'm trying to settle how I shall pay Hindley back. I don't care how long I wait, if I can only do it at last. I hope he will not die before I do!
- 'For shame, Heathcliff!' said I. 'It is for God to punish wicked people; we should learn to forgive.'
- 'No, God won't have the satisfaction that I shall,' he returned. 'I only wish I knew the best way! Let me alone, and I'll plan it out: while I'm thinking of that I don't feel pain' (*WH* 49).

Hindley's attempt at separating the two lovers reflects his unkindness and "social and intellectual meanness" (Vargish 1971: 10) as the attachment between Heathcliff and Catherine is the only bond that connects him to humanity and keeps him quiet and committed to the austere social life, despite all its injustice. One feels that losing his beloved will turn Heathcliff into a savage creature that will destroy everybody around him. For it is Catherine who stands between him and revenge. She helps keep him quiet and peaceful; and one feels if she abandons him, the evil garnered at his heart will be unleashed to destroy all his enemies. She can be compared to a dam that keeps the powerful waves of water from flooding and destroying what stands in its path. However, Catherine, in a whim, decides to marry Edgar Linton. In a conversation with Nelly Dean, which Heathcliff has overheard, she says it will degrade her to marry Heathcliff because of his poverty; therefore, she will marry Edgar, the wealthy and civilized gentleman. Unfortunately, Heathcliff

does not wait to hear Catherine say she loves Heathcliff more deeply than anybody in the world, and she is united with him inseparably because his love lives deep in her soul, but she must marry Edgar so that Hindley may not hurt Heathcliff. He leaves Wuthering Heights in humiliation and anger, controlled by evil, believing that Catherine has betrayed his love and broken the bond between them. Thus, the stoic and loving young man has been transformed into an evil avenger by social injustice and inclemency.

Heathcliff reappears three years later, a different man; he is more elegant and has much money, which no one knows how he has collected, but elegance and wealth cannot hide the savageness lurking in his face. He returns a man seized by evil, with a comprehensive plan of revenge against his enemies: Hindley, Edgar, Isabella, and Catherine herself. His intention of evil is described by a critic as “the revolt of the man accursed, whom fate has banished from his kingdom” (Bataille 2012: 9). Another critic describes it as a revolt that “springs not from a love of evil itself, but from the thwarting of the natural processes of love” (Watson 1949: 92). Heathcliff’s plan of revenge starts with his attempt at devastating his main persecutor, Hindley. His revenge plan is violent and destructive. His primary purpose is to put Hindley under his control and usurp Wuthering Heights, before crushing him completely. Thus, he encourages Hindley to gamble and drink heavily, and Hindley starts to be addicted to alcohol and to lose his money until he becomes bankrupt and is obliged to borrow money, and Heathcliff is generous to lend him the amounts he wants. Finally, Heathcliff gets Wuthering Heights in exchange for the money he has lent to Hindley, who becomes under his full control. He humiliates Hindley and keeps his son, Hareton, illiterate. Worse, he teaches the child to curse and disrespect his father. Hindley dies, later, in disgrace.

Heathcliff, then, turns to avenge himself on Edgar Linton. For this purpose, he exploits Catherine's love for him, which revives immediately after seeing him, to arouse her husband's jealousy and discomfort. What makes it worse for Edgar is that his sister, Isabella, falls in love with Heathcliff. She obstinately refuses to listen to Catherine's warning and insists on her relationship with Heathcliff. Catherine asks Heathcliff about his real intention, and he frankly confesses that he seeks revenge. Edgar is furious, and a quarrel takes place during one of Heathcliff's visits to Catherine in Thrushcross Grange, Linton's house, a quarrel in which Edgar seeks the help of his armed servants. Later, Heathcliff and Isabella run away together and get married. It becomes clear that Heathcliff, who is completely taken by evil, intends to humiliate Edgar and bring him down. Edgar is disappointed by his wife, who does not hide her love for Heathcliff, and by his sister, who elopes with him. But Heathcliff's final aim is to bring Edgar Linton down after he places his hand on Linton's house, Thrushcross Grange.

Heathcliff, who gives himself completely to the evil impulses inside him, is brutal in his treatment of Isabella; he scorns and mistreats her though she has never done any wrong to him. This is only to hurt and degrade her brother. This treatment exposes his sadistic nature, which he enjoys, torturing others. He is so controlled by evil that he turns himself into a fiend that has no pity in his violent practices. He admits to Nelly Dean: "I have no pity! I have no pity! The worms writhe, the more I yearn to crush out their entrails! It is a moral teething, and I grind with greater energy, in proportion to the increase of pain" (*WH* 125). Later, he describes his tormenting of others "as an evening's amusement" (*WH* 223). Isabella is puzzled by his true nature. In a letter to Nelly Dean, she enquires: "Is Heathcliff a man? If so, is he mad? And if not, is he a devil?" (*WH* 112); later, she describes him as "a monster... not a human being" (*WH* 124).

Vargish notices that “Heathcliff’s deterioration lies in the aesthetics of his brutality” (1971: 12), a brutality which clearly appears in his torture of his wife. This brutality becomes his instrument to avenge himself upon Edgar for taking Catherine from him. The controlling evil inside him, which ignites the burning fire of revenge, makes him a savage animal ready to devour his enemies. When Hindley is wounded in a quarrel with Heathcliff, Isabella thinks that Heathcliff will eat Hindley’s flesh. The literary critic, Matthew Beaumont, sees that this quarrel exposes Heathcliff’s cannibalistic nature (Beaumont 2010: 147). Heathcliff’s evil goes so far that in a conversation with Nelly, he emphasizes that he is not reluctant in “painting the house-front with Hindley’s blood!” (WH 39).

Heathcliff accomplishes complete revenge when all his enemies die one after the other. Catherine, who loses control over Heathcliff after his marriage to Isabella and over Edgar, who is angry at her for her preference of Heathcliff, falls ill, and after giving birth to a baby girl (Cathy) she dies. Her husband, Edgar, dies in grief six months after her. Hindley dies addicted to drinking and gambling and deeply in debt. Isabella dies soon after giving birth to a baby boy (Linton). When everything is settled with old enemies, Heathcliff’s vengeance turns to the second generation, the children of his foes. Starting with Hindley’s son, Hareton, he plans to degrade him in the same way Hindley has subjected and tortured him. Since Hindley has not sent him to school and deprived him of getting an education, Heathcliff decides to leave Hareton ignorant. Because Hindley has treated Heathcliff as a servant, Heathcliff decides to take Hareton as a servant too. He tells him that “Now, my bonny lad, you are mine. And we’ll see if one tree won’t grow as crooked as another, with the same wind to twist it!” (WH 153). In this way, Heathcliff to exact revenge on Hindley for all the mistreatment he endured during his childhood and early youth.

Isabella and Heathcliff's son, the ailing Linton, also does not escape from his father's revenge. He is ill-treated for no reason except his resemblance to his mother, Isabella. He is weak like the Lintons in general. His cruelty to the boy leads to his premature death. Young Cathy, Edgar's daughter, is also victimized by Heathcliff. He imprisons her at Wuthering Heights and beats her severely, pushing her to marry his son, the sick Linton. He wants to put his hand on Thrushcross Grange through this marriage, as he has put his hand on Wuthering Heights. He is proud to tell Nelly that "I know how to chastise children, you see" (WH 224). Vargish finds that the attempts to recreate experiences of the past may become part of exciting obsession. Heathcliff finds himself really obsessed by the idea of recreational excitement in the torment of the second generation. They become materials "for the distorted recreation of his own destiny" (Vargish 1971:13). Knoepfmacher argues in his essay on "Lockwood's Unreliability" that the novel blends the opposites: it starts with Hindley as the oppressor and Heathcliff the oppressed. At the end of the novel, Heathcliff becomes the oppressor of Hindley's son, Hareton. In the same way, victims and tyrants become alike. Other examples are clear here. Catherine, who loves Heathcliff and says, "I am Heathcliff," her daughter, Young Cathy, hates Heathcliff (Bloom 2008: 52). Heathcliff's death at the end of the novel, however, promises a forthcoming period of peace, harmony, and union between Hareton and Cathy.

In short, *Wuthering Heights* shows how society creates an evil ruthless creature out of an innocent child. By its cruelty and harshness, it kills what is good in him and sets evil to rage free by igniting the burning fires of revenge that lead to the destruction of some people and the agony of many others.

## Evil and the Urges for Revenge in Saad Kassim Al-Asady's *Niran*

Saad Kassim Al-Asady is an Iraqi novelist who was born in Baghdad 1952. He has a Ph.D. degree in English Novel from the College of Arts, University of Baghdad. He is a professor of English literature and was a teaching staff member in the College of Languages. Most of his novels revolve around the academic, political, and social problems in the Iraqi society. He published *Niran* (Fires) (2014), *Ghouyüm Dakina* (Dark Clouds) (2015), *Rihla Ila Dhiffat Al-Lail Al-Baeeda* (A Journey to the Distant Side of Night) (2016), *Baqaya Nahar* (Last Rays of Sunshine) (2017), *Ashbah wa Malak* (Ghosts and an Angel) (2019), *Shawari' Moqfira* (Deserted Streets) (2020), *Raheel* (Departure) (2022), and *Dhilal fi Al-Hajeer* (Shadows in the Desert) (2023).

Like *Wuthering Heights*, *Niran* shows how social evils can change an innocent human being into a devil whose inner urges for revenge make her incapable of distinguishing between the good and evil people around her, hence she blows here and there at random like a blind woman driven by uncontrollable impulses to inflict torture and harm on others. The novel reveals that man is made by society. Society can lead an individual to be good, but to the same degree, it can also implant evil within them, turning them into antisocial characters or even a misanthrope. The main theme of the novel is the struggle between Good and Evil. The novel seems to say that even if Evil is powerful, Good will be the winner at the end. This struggle has its moral dimension because people who follow the way of Evil will lose the ethical values that ordinary people follow. They become ungrateful, forgetting, and even harming the people who have helped them (Salim 2015).

*Niran* (Fires) is a teaching staff member at the Department of English, College of Languages, University of Baghdad. At the beginning, she appears as a simple-dressed, quiet, and harmless woman. She arouses the sympathy of the head of

English Department, Professor Amjed from the beginning of her transference to the Department from University of Diyala (Diyala is a governorate in central-eastern Iraq). In a flashback, he remembers how Niran was confused and shy at that meeting when she asked him to give her an acceptance letter. But what struck him then is Niran's physical appearance that fits her name: she has a fiery glance at the attendants (*Niran:101*) as if she were trying to choose on whom she throws her burning fire... her lips are colored by a fiery red lipstick as if she wants to burn them (*Niran:102*) (All quotations from *Niran* are translated into English by me (the researcher)). Significantly, this connection between Niran and fire, in name and appearance, foreshadows the fire of revenge that burns inside her and that will appear soon, though it is hidden at present under the guise of simplicity and helplessness. This hint at the fire of revenge is reinforced by an allusion to *Moby Dick*. When she introduces herself saying "I am Niran" (*Niran:101*). Professor Amjed, at once, remembers the opening sentence of Herman Melville's *Moby Dick* where the narrator of Melville's novel introduces himself saying, 'I am Ishmael' (*Niran:102*). *Moby Dick* talks about a sailor who seeks revenge upon a shark that has cut his leg. Critic Saeed Hasson Hussein emphasizes the significance of this reference to *Moby Dick*; which he considers as foreshadowing, as it prepares the reader for the real character of Niran (S. H. Hussein 2016). When Professor Amjed asks Niran in that meeting about the reason behind her decision to transfer her place of work, she says she has received a letter threatening her with murder.

As in Bronte's *Wuthering Heights*, where Mr. Earnshaw feels pity for an orphan child and decides to bring him home as a shelter from death, Professor Amjed feels sorry for Niran and decides to give her the letter of acceptance to save her from death. He says to other staff members, "She seems weak and powerless, let's accept her request" (*Niran:104*). The whole scene shows the writer's talent clearly: on the one

hand it gives strong hints at Niran's fiery nature and, on the other, it shows how Niran is given a new beginning that may help heal the wounds of the past away from threats and dangers and it depends on her making use of this opportunity.

The first explicit reference to Niran's inner trouble is made when she accuses Sarhan, a staff member in the College of Education, of attempting to rape her. Professor Amjed visits the College of Education to verify the truth, believing that Niran is a helpless victim. He sympathizes with her and puts the blame on Sarhan, though the head of the English department in the College of Education stresses that Sarhan is a man of high morality and virtue. Sarhan suffers acutely from the distrust of others who start to suspect his integrity and morality. He never feels relief until an investigation committee reveals that he is innocent and forbids Niran from entering the College of Education again. Professor Amjad comes to believe now that Niran may not be as helpless as she seems, but a woman suffering from an inner guilt that makes her a plaything of evil impulses, which drive her to inflict harm and torture on others. Critic Muzahim Hussein notes that some people exhibit goodness to achieve their goals, but they are full of evil (S. H. Hussein 2014).

Soon, Niran's next target becomes clear: it is Akram, her fellow in the Department of English. She whispers in the ears of her female colleagues that Akram is chasing her everywhere and he is fond of her. When Professor Amjed asks Akram about the truth, the latter denies the rumors and reiterates that he has always looked upon Niran as a colleague and no more than that. It becomes unequivocally clear to Professor Amjed that Niran is a psychopath and needs someone to help her. He asks her female colleagues to befriend her and know her real troubles, wondering, "what kind of a woman she is! what kind of a disease is this?" (*Niran*:152). When he meets Niran to hear her version of the case, she denies that she has spread the rumor, but then she says she knows that Akram is in love

with her from the way he looks at her, from his constant smiles and from his sweet speech with her. She adds that he is calling her up every day. When Akram later rejects her allegations, she claims that he tries to rape her, and though Professor Amjed advises her to keep herself away from Akram because he does not love her, she visits Akram's family with an elderly woman who says she is her mother demanding that Akram must marry her.

Niran's habit of loving men and then hating them represents the duality of desire and hatred inside her (Salim 2015). First, she makes an effort to force the man in question to love her. Once she discovers he does not share the same emotions with her, her desire for love changes into hatred; it becomes a desire for revenge. She incorporates all the evil inside her to see them tortured, punished, humiliated, and weak in front of their acquaintances. The best instance is when she presents a complaint against Akram to the Ministry of Higher Education accusing him of seducing her, she enjoys seeing the official in charge angry at Akram, censuring him and threatening that he will be fired from his job if he does not marry her. The reader is told that in one of the visits of Niran to the Ministry of Higher Education, she gets outside of it with feelings of ecstasy. She acts as someone who has achieved a great victory because all the people in the position have sympathized with her, and hence, she has mobilized them against Akram (*Niran* 2014). In this, she is like Heathcliff, who enjoys punishing and torturing people whom he thinks are his enemies. Abdulwahid Muslit argues in his introduction to the novel that Niran exposes her sadistic tendency through her pleasure in seeing others suffer (*Niran* 2014).

Akram suffers acutely because he does not know how to prove his innocence, and Niran continues her attacks against him. In his attempt to discover the reasons why she is so evil and so aggressive, he decides to go to the University of Diyala where Niran worked before coming to Baghdad. There, he discovers a similar

scenario of accusing an innocent instructor of attempting to rape her. And because of the trouble she has caused in the university, she has received a letter of threat, ordering her either to depart or else die.

Like Heathcliff whose evil acts of revenge have been determined by painful experiences in his past, Niran's horrible and devilish actions against the men around her spring from two essential experiences in the past. Again, like Heathcliff, who has received an ill-treatment from Hindley, Niran, on her side, has received cruel or even inhuman treatment from her father in her childhood and early youth. This treatment becomes like a nightmare that invades her mind even in moments of happiness. For instance, after achieving victory over Akram in the Ministry of Higher Education, she has been very happy, sitting on the bus and thinking of singing aloud this victory, when suddenly an image of the past jumps into her mind. She sees her father beating her severely with a heavy stick, ordering her not to sing (Niran 2014). It is a painful memory, which she tries to dismiss quickly. For her, the stick resembles a poisonous snake that is ready to bite her (Niran 2014). She stands powerless in front of it and has nothing to do but wail and beg (Niran 2014). Another instance of her father's cruelty is when he discovers her relationship with a young man named Falah, he beats and kicks her severely and prevents her from going to school so that she would not meet those young men again. Her mother supports the father in his harshness. The bad treatment breeds inside her a strong feeling of hatred that gradually develops into a desire for revenge:

*She [Niran] was lying on the ground like a goat prepared for slaughter, she was groaning silently. Fire was scorching inside her, consuming her with inner rage, and filling her with a strong feeling of humiliation. It burned her heart with the flames of hatred that turned human feelings into mere ashes scattered by the wind of aversion and the desire for revenge (Niran 2014:229).*

Hatred rises and the fires of revenge become more scorching. Her father and mother turn into evil enemies that try to deprive her of her beloved, and for the first time she hears shrilling cries inside her urging her to retaliate; to defend her right in love, and not to remain passive but rather to fight and even kill them if it needed. These cries sound like “the howling of a beast inside her” (*Niran:307*), urging her: “fight them; kill them; defend your rights. Don’t show any mercy” (*Niran:307*). Though she tries to resist for a while, she soon submits to the inner calls for killing, believing them right. Hence, while her parents are asleep in their bedroom, she pours oil on the clothes, on the bed and on the floor and sets fire in the room, burning them to death. Niran watches them burned, crying for the neighbors to help. The neighbors can do nothing but console the young girl for the loss of her parents.

Deep in its effects on Niran is her second experience: that is Falah’s betrayal of her love. If the ill-treatment of her parents has pushed her to patricide, Falah’s betrayal enroots evil inside her, and the fires of revenge change her into a ruthless monster that is ready to destroy every man she thinks an enemy. Falah is a young man, who claims love for Niran and vows fidelity. He seems very nice, always praising her beauty and daily waiting for her near the school to accompany her home. She is still a sixteen-year-old girl, unaware of the world’s evil. Therefore, she falls easy prey to his evil intentions. He rapes her, promising her marriage, but he disappears. The literary critic Flayyh Al-Rikabi in his book *Interaction of Cultures in Arabic Novel*, describes Niran’s seduction as a crime that leaves deep marks on her psyche, for it is a humiliation of her dignity and a brutal aggression on her self-respect (Al-Rikabi 2015:158).

Hence, murdering her parents and Falah’s betrayal of Niran’s love represent turning points in her relationship with others. The murder lies heavy on her mind, and the stings of conscience make her live in an internal inferno that develops to

self-loathing, while Falah's infidelity is a great shock that opens her eyes to men's villainy and the evilness of their corrupt nature, which makes her frustrated and self-divided. Self-hatred and frustration led her first to develop a tendency to suicide. She throws herself from the roof of her uncle's house, an incident that leaves her with broken legs for some time. Then, she becomes very aggressive and violent with schoolmates, quarrelling with them all the time. She suspects and reacts violently at any provocation, especially the reference to Falah and his infidelity. But the most significant psychological development is her enmity to men. Niran starts to see Falah in all the men she meets. He has become the best evidence of men's ineradicable evils, for he uses sweet words and good appearance to dupe her and manipulate her sexually and emotionally, leaving her to suffer all her life. As a result, he turns in her mind into a symbol of men's villainy, evilness, and beastly nature, a monster that howls loudly inside her. The narrator says, "There is always this horrible sound that terrifies her. She thinks it is a ferocious beast hiding somewhere in her mind" (Niran 2014). With time, this sound becomes louder, invoking hot urges calling for revenge upon men:

*Men are criminals, all of them; even the one who claims goodness is a mere liar and trickster. There is no remedy for them at all. This is Falah, no one is equal to his nice words, no one. When you believed in him, he betrayed you and ran away, I swear by God there is no cure for their injustice and disloyalty but burning to death. Death only" (Niran 2014:230).*

Psychologically speaking, Niran, like Heathcliff in *Wuthering Heights*, is changed from a victim to a victimizer, from a destroyed woman to a destroyer of men. It is worth noting that all the evils of the past are presented through the working

of Niran's mind through the stream of consciousness technique, hence the writer succeeds in making the readers feel at first hand the burning fires inside Niran, her agony and bitterness at the evils of the society that has let her down. The evil society breeds evil inside her and by so doing makes a monster of her. Again, like Heathcliff, who is turned into a beast by the evils of the society and is pushed to destroy Hindley, Edgar, Isabella, and others, Niran is also turned into a beast and is pushed to kill and torment anyone she thinks an enemy to her. She burns her parents to death; she victimizes Sarhan, Akram, and the instructor in Diyala; and she hires some criminals to kill her colleague Suha just because she feels jealous of her, thinking that she has taken her place in Akram's heart. The list of her victims extends to include Professor Amjad, the man who has helped her and given her the letter of acceptance to come and work at the College of Languages and who defends and treats her as a daughter. She filed a false complaint against him, recruiting some weak students, accusing him of receiving bribes from them.

Like Heathcliff's death at the end of Bronte's novel that brings hope to the second generation of his victims, i.e., young Cathy and Hareton, Niran's suicide at the end of the novel represents hope of a life empty of hatred and revenge. Niran's death means that the strength of evil does not prevent its death.

## 4. Conclusion

Both Bronte's *Wuthering Heights* and Saad Kassim Al-Asady's *Niran* deal with evil: its causes and its consequences. They seem to blame the society for the evils of the individuals: it is the society that, by its cruelty, deception and injustice, implants evil inside man and ignites the fire of revenge inside him or her. Thus, Heathcliff in Bronte's novel and Niran in Saad Al-Asady's start as innocent harmless children who seek love and acceptance in social milieu, but they find only

ruthlessness, deception, and infidelity. This fact kills what is good inside them and arouses distrust and hatred in their psyche, which gradually develops into a strong desire for revenge.

Revenge is a form of evil. The avenger takes in her/his hands the responsibility of tormenting and killing the people he or she thinks are enemies, regardless of their innocence. By so doing, they render themselves into evil people whose minds are controlled by irresistible impulses to inflict harm on others; they change themselves from being victims to being victimizers. They become a plaything in the hands of evil, devil-like monsters that are ready to destroy everyone around them, even the people who love or sympathize with them. They blindly seek revenge, which becomes their sole goal in life. It is part of human psychology that the people who give themselves totally to revenge see nothing but the destruction of those who hurt them.

In a conversation between Professor Amjed and Akram, they agree that human nature is a composite of good and evil, and it is social circumstances that may lead to suppression the good in man's psyche and make evil prominent and dominant. This can be said to be true, for social circumstances erode the innocence within both Heathcliff and Niran and help evil to rise and control their later actions. But it is quite clear that however powerful the evil person may seem at the beginning, he or she must fall at the end. This is the destiny of Heathcliff and Niran, a destiny which the readers witness at the end of both Wuthering Heights and Niran.

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## الشر والانتقام في رواية مرتفعات ويدرغ لايميلي برونتي ورواية نيران لسعد قاسم الاسدي

### المستخلص

يدرس البحث الطبيعة البشرية في روايتي مرتفعات ويدرغ لايميلي برونتي (1847) ورواية نيران لسعد قاسم الاسدي (2014). ويركز البحث على فكرة ان الشر والانتقام، باعتبارهما ظاهرتين مترابطتين بطبيعتهما وبكونيتهما، لا تعدان محدودتين بمكان او زمان، عبر دراسة روايتين كتبتا في عصور واماكن مختلفة. إذ تناقش الروايتان كيف يطلق العنان للشر والانتقام في عقول الناس عبر خطأ يرتكبه الانسان لانسان آخر. وفي هذا السياق، يعيش هيثكليف، في رواية مرتفعات ويدرغ، في نيران مستعرة تقوده الى الانتقام وتحوله الى شيطان ويحطم العالم من حوله بسبب المعاملة الوحشية وغير العادلة لهندلي، وخيانة كاثرين للحب الذي جمعهما. وفي ذات الاسلوب، وفي رواية نيران لسعد قاسم الاسدي، نجد ان الشخصية الرئيسة نيران ضحية لوحشية والدها واغواءات شاب اغتصبها وفر هارباً. حولتها هذه العوامل الى امرأة أشبه بالشيطان التي تأخذ على عاتقها مسؤولية تدمير العالم من حولها. يعتمد البحث على النظرية النفسية ويحاول ان يظهر مفهومي برونتي والاسدي عن الشر ومحاولة استكشاف في ما ان الشر يولد مع الانسان او يكتسبه.

الكلمات المفتاحية: الشر، هيثكليف، الطبيعة البشرية، نيران، علم النفس، الانتقام،

مرتفعات ويدرغ