Top Withens in winter

WUTHERING HEIGHTS PACKET
ADVANCED PLACEMENT LITERATURE AND COMPOSITION
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Bronte Falls
OVERVIEW OF EMILY BRONTË

Emily Brontë has become mythologized both as an individual and as one of the Brontë sisters. She has been cast as Absolute Individual, as Tormented Genius, and as Free Spirit Communing with Nature; the trio of sisters–Charlotte, Emily, and Anne–have been fashioned into Romantic Rebels, as well as Solitary Geniuses. Their lives have been sentimentalized, their psyches psychoanalyzed, and their home life demonized. In truth, their lives and home were strange and often unhappy. Their father was a withdrawn man who dined alone in his own room; their Aunt Branwell, who raised them after the early death of their mother, also dined alone in her room. The two oldest sisters died as children. For three years Emily supposedly spoke only to family members and servants. Their brother Branwell, an alcoholic and a drug addict, put the family through the hell of his ravings and threats of committing suicide or murdering their father, his physical and mental degradation, his bouts of delirium tremens, and, finally, his death.

As children, Charlotte, Branwell, Emily, and Anne had one another and books as companions; in their isolation, they created an imaginary kingdom called Angria and filled notebooks describing its turbulent history and character. Around 1831, thirteen-year old Emily and eleven-year old Anne broke from the Angrian fantasies which Branwell and Charlotte had dominated to create the alternate history of Gondal. Emily maintained her interest in Gondal and continued to spin out the fantasy with pleasure till the end of her life. Nothing of the Gondal history remains except Emily's poems, the references in the journal fragments by Anne and Emily, the birthday papers of 1841 and 1845, and Anne's list of the names of characters and locations.

Little is known directly of Emily Brontë. All that survives of Emily's own words about herself is two brief letters, two diary papers written when she was thirteen and sixteen, and two birthday papers, written when she was twenty-three and twenty-seven. Almost everything that is known about her comes from the writings of others, primarily Charlotte. Even Charlotte's novel, *Shirley*, has been used as a biographical source because Charlotte created Shirley, as she told her biographer and friend Elizabeth Gaskell, to be "what Emily Brontë would have been had she been placed in health and prosperity."

Often *Wuthering Heights* is used to construct a biography of Emily's life, personality, and beliefs. Edward Chitharn equates Emily, the well-read housekeeper of the family home, with Nelly based on the similarity of their roles and the similarity of their names, "Nelly" being short for "Ellen" which is similar to Emily's pseudonym "Ellis." The supposed anorexia of Catherine, who stops eating after Edgar's ultimatum, and of Heathcliff, who stops eating at the end, is used as proof of Emily's anorexia; support for this interpretation is found in the tendency of all four Brontë siblings not to eat when upset. Alternately, Emily's supposed anorexia is used to explain aspects of the novel. Katherine Frank characterizes Emily as a constantly hungry anorexic who denies her constant hunger; "Even more importantly." Frank asks, "how was this physical hunger related to a more pervasive hunger in her life--hunger for power and experience, for love and happiness, fame and fortune and fulfilment?" One expression of these hungers is the intense focus on food, hunger, and starvation in *Wuthering Heights*. Furthermore, the kitchen is the main setting, and most of the passionate or violent scenes occur there.

Similarly, Emily's poems are used to interpret her novel, particularly those poems discussing isolation, rebellion, and freedom. Readings of *Wuthering Heights* as a mystical novel, a religious novel, or a visionary novel call on "No coward soul is mine," one of her best poems. The well known "Riches I hold in light esteem" is cited to explain her choice of a reclusive lifestyle, as is"A Chainless Life." The fact that many of these poems were written as part of the Gondal chronicles and are dramatic speeches of Gondal characters is blithely ignored or explained away. (In 1844 Emily went through her poems, destroying some, revising others, and writing new poems; she collected them and clearly labeled the Gondal poems.)

The poems and *Wuthering Heights* have also been connected. The editor of her poems, C.W. Hatfield, sees the same mind at work in both, and Charles Morgan perceives in them "the same unreality of this world, the same greater reality of another,... and a unique imagination."
THE ENGLISH GOTHIC NOVEL: A BRIEF OVERVIEW

The English Gothic novel began with Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto* (1765), which was enormously popular and quickly imitated by other novelists and soon became a recognizable genre. To most modern readers, however, *The Castle of Otranto* is dull reading; except for the villain Manfred, the characters are insipid and flat; the action moves at a fast clip with no emphasis or suspense, despite the supernatural manifestations and a young maiden's flight through dark vaults. But contemporary readers found the novel electrifyingly original and thrillingly suspenseful, with its remote setting, its use of the supernatural, and its medieval trappings, all of which have been so frequently imitated and so poorly imitated that they have become stereotypes. The genre takes its name from *Otranto's* medieval—or Gothic—setting; early Gothic novelists tended to set their novels in remote times like the Middle Ages and in remote places like Italy (Matthew Lewis's *The Monk*, 1796) or the Middle East (William Beckford’s *Vathek*, 1786).

What makes a work Gothic is a combination of at least some of these elements:

- a castle, ruined or intact, haunted or not (the castle plays such a key role that it has been called the main character of the Gothic novel),
- ruined buildings which are sinister or which arouse a pleasing melancholy,
- dungeons, underground passages, crypts, and catacombs which, in modern houses, become spooky basements or attics,
- labyrinths, dark corridors, and winding stairs,
- shadows, a beam of moonlight in the blackness, a flickering candle, or the only source of light failing (a candle blown out or, today, an electric failure),
- extreme landscapes, like rugged mountains, thick forests, or icy wastes, and extreme weather,
- omens and ancestral curses,
- magic, supernatural manifestations, or the suggestion of the supernatural,
- a passion-driven, willful villain-hero or villain,
- a curious heroine with a tendency to faint and a need to be rescued—frequently,
- a hero whose true identity is revealed by the end of the novel,
- horrifying (or terrifying) events or the threat of such happenings.

The Gothic creates feelings of gloom, mystery, and suspense and tends to the dramatic and the sensational, like incest, diabolism, necrophilia, and nameless terrors. It crosses boundaries, daylight and the dark side, life and death, consciousness and unconsciousness. Sometimes covertly, sometimes explicitly, it presents transgression, taboos, and fears—fears of violation, of imprisonment, of social chaos, and of emotional collapse. Most of us immediately
recognize the Gothic (even if we don't know the name) when we encounter it in novels, poetry, plays, movies, and TV series. For some of us—and I include myself—safely experiencing dread or horror is thrilling and enjoyable.

Elements of the Gothic have made their way into mainstream writing. They are found in Sir Walter Scott's novels, Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, and Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* and in Romantic poetry like Samuel Coleridge's "Christabel," Lord Byron's "The Giaour," and John Keats's "The Eve of St. Agnes." A tendency to the macabre and bizarre which appears in writers like William Faulkner, Truman Capote, and Flannery O'Connor has been called Southern Gothic.

**THE GOTHIC AND WUTHERING HEIGHTS**

Whether or not *Wuthering Heights* should be classified as a Gothic novel (certainly it is not merely a Gothic novel), it undeniably contains Gothic elements.

In true Gothic fashion, boundaries are trespassed, specifically love crossing the boundary between life and death and Heathcliff's transgressing social class and family ties. Brontë follows Walpole and Radcliffe in portraying the tyrannies of the father and the cruelties of the patriarchal family and in reconstituting the family on non-patriarchal lines, even though no counterbalancing matriarch or matriarchal family is presented. Brontë has incorporated the Gothic trappings of imprisonment and escape, flight, the persecuted heroine, the heroine wooed by a dangerous and a good suitor, ghosts, necrophilia, a mysterious foundling, and revenge. The weather-buffeted Wuthering Heights is the traditional castle, and Catherine resembles Ann Radcliffe's heroines in her appreciation of nature. Like the conventional Gothic hero-villain, Heathcliff is a mysterious figure who destroys the beautiful woman he pursues and who usurps inheritances, and with typical Gothic excess he batters his head against a tree. There is the hint of necrophilia in Heathcliff's viewings of Catherine's corpse and his plans to be buried next to her and a hint of incest in their being raised as brother and sister or, as a few critics have suggested, in Heathcliff's being Catherine's illegitimate half-brother.
Inspirations for Wuthering Heights

Nobody knows exactly where Emily Brontë found the inspiration for Wuthering Heights but there are some stories that she may have heard which could be sources.

The History of Law Hill

From "Emily Brontë" by Katherine Frank. Law Hill was a school where Emily taught for a short time. It is also an interesting note that there was a servant called Earnshaw at the school during Emily's time.

Walterclough Hall [about a mile away from Law Hill] had belonged to the Walker family since the seventeenth century; by the 1720s, its inhabitants numbered one John Walker, his wife, four children, two married and two maiden sisters. Walker farmed his land and was also a prosperous woollen manufacturer. Though he had two sons of his own, he adopted and favoured his nephew, a rascal named Jack Sharp. Walker trained Sharp to take over the thriving family woollen business, which in due course Sharp did and, along with it, Walterclough Hall as well. By the time John Walker died in 1771, Jack Sharp was in full possession of the Walker estate. But not legally. After a good deal of protracted negotiation and bad feeling on all sides, John Walker's rightful heir, his son, also named John Walker, managed to oust Sharp from Walterclough Hall. Before vacating it, Sharp in retaliation first destroyed most of the Hall's fixtures and heirlooms, and then carried off whatever he could of its furniture, plate, silver and linen, leaving a virtually empty and badly damaged house behind him. Sharp proceeded to build his own home, Law Hill, as close as he legally could to John Walker's seat. Sharp named his new house after the hill from which, it must have seemed to the Walkers, it mockingly looked down on Walterclough Hall.

But Sharp's carefully nursed wrath at the Walkers was not yet appeased. He apprenticed a Walker cousin named Sam Stead, the son of one of old Mr Walker's sisters, to his woollen business. Sam Stead was as dubious a character as his so-called benefactor but far less clever. He was also given to drinking and gambling, and was thus putty in Jack Sharp's hands. In a short time and with no apparent motive other than causing further pain and injury to the Walkers, Jack Sharp worked Sam Stead's complete degradation with drink and gaming.
The Story of Hugh Brunty

From "A Brontë Companion" by F B Pinion. This story relates to Emily's grandfather, Hugh Brunty, and may have been told to the Brontë children by their father.

Hugh's grandfather had a farm near the banks of the Boyne. He was a cattle-dealer and often crosses the Irish Sea from Drogheda to sell cattle in Liverpool. On one of his return voyages, a strange child was found in the hold. It proved to be a very young boy – dark, dirty and almost naked. There was no doctor on the vessel, and only one woman, Mrs Brunty. As nobody would take care of him, and there was no foundling hospital nearer than Dublin, she decided to adopt him. From his gypsy complexion, the boy was thought to be Welsh, and called 'Welsh' by the Bruntrys. He grew up to be sullen, envious, and cunning, and attached himself to Mr Brunty who took him, instead of his own sons, to fairs and markets to listen to farmers' conversations and gain the information needed to drive hard bargains. Welsh was taken to Liverpool for the same reason, and in time Mr Brunty became prosperous; the more attached he became to Welsh; however, the more his children disliked the interloper. Ultimately, Welsh gained almost complete management in business matters. When his master died suddenly on board ship after selling the largest consignment of cattle that ever crossed the Irish Sea, he professed to know nothing of the proceeds or the documents relating to the sale.

The Bruntrys were well-educated, knew very little about farming or dealing, and were unable to support themselves. Welsh arranged a meeting at which he proposed to tell them how they could be rehabilitated. He appeared dressed as he had never been before, in black broadcloth and fine linen, white as his prominent teeth. He would continue dealing and supplying the family needs provided Mary, the youngest sister, married him. The proposal was indignantly rejected. As he left, Welsh shouted "Mary shall be my wife, and I'll scatter the rest of you like chaff from this house, which shall be my home!" The Bruntrys had friends and three of the brothers obtained good positions, two in England. They were able to send home enough money to pay the rent of the farm and maintain their mother and sisters.

Welsh did not return to cattle-dealing; he became a sub-agent for an absentee landlord, with responsibility for collecting rents, including the Bruntrys'. He could exploit his cunning to the satisfaction of his master and overlord but, as he could never get the better of the Bruntrys, who continued to pay their rent regularly even when it had increased, he decided to change his tactics and employed an unprincipled woman to impress on Mary how much he had done and spent to save her family from eviction. Forged receipts were shown. Finally Mary was induced to meet Welsh one night in a plantation in company with the go-between in order that she might express her gratitude. Her fate was sealed. Marriage to Welsh was preferable to scandal. He had no difficulty in bribing his agent into making him the tenant of a farm.

Years later the agent was assassinated after a bout of heartless evictions and Welsh's house was burnt to the ground. He was so poor that he could no longer retain the favor of the new agent and soon lost his sub-agency. As he and Mary were childless, they offered to adopt one of his nephews. So it was that Hugh Brunty, whose father lived in the south of Ireland, was allowed to be taken by the pair from his comfortable home on the condition that his father should never visit or communicate with him, and that he should never be told where his parents lived. Hugh was five or six at the time. Four nights were spent on the road, partly to save the cost of lodgings, more particularly (so the story goes) that the boy should be unable to recall his way home. From the outset he was treated harshly, and even brutally. He received none of the education Welsh had promised his parents but had to work on the farm. Welsh's right-hand man was a tall, gaunt, rather primitive and hypocritical peasant (rather like Joseph in Wuthering Heights); he had a habit of invoking 'the Blessed Virgin and all the saints'. Hugh's best friend was the farm dog, Keeper (the name of Emily's favorite dog). Aunt Mary was sorry for him and told him the story of her husband's villainies. The discovery that his uncle was not a Brunty afforded Hugh great relief.

The story of his escape at the age of fifteen and how he swam naked down the Boyne to a rendezvous with an enemy of Welsh, a neighboring farmer, who was waiting with a suit of clothes to assist him, is romantic. He settled in the north of Ireland, eventually...
becoming overseer of some lime kilns. One of his friends was a red-haired youth named McClory. During a Christmas holiday, he stayed at McClory's home and soon fell in love with his beautiful sister Alice. Their marriage was opposed by her family on religious grounds, and preparations were made for her wedding to a Catholic farmer. All was ready for the ceremony when it was discovered that the bride was missing. Soon it was heard that she had been seen galloping with a tall gentleman towards Banbridge; later a boy rode up on his horse to say that she had just been married to Hugh Brunty at the Protestant Church of Magherally (this was 1776). The clergyman who took the service thought the bride the most beautiful woman he had ever seen. Their first home was the cottage at Emdale in the parish of Drumballyroney.

Branwell Brontë

We can also see similarities between Hindley Earnshaw and Emily's brother, Branwell. Branwell was talented and educated, and had high hopes of success in the arts. In fact, he traveled to London (or possibly intended to) to apply for the Royal Academy in 1835 but his high hopes disappeared as he moved from job to job, and scandal to scandal. He wasted his life in drinking and drug-taking and was going through some of his worst situations when Emily was writing her novel. It is likely that she based much of the degradation of Hindley on the decline of her brother.

Rob Roy

_The Brontës read many books and antecedents for Heathcliff can be seen in many Byronic figures. But Juliet Barker in "The Brontës" points out that "Rob Roy" by Walter Scott could have been a particular inspiration for Wuthering Heights._

The powerful combination of religious cant and Yorkshire dialect, which Emily was later to use as her model for Joseph in _Wuthering Heights_, was probably derived as much from...Andrew Fairservice in Walter Scott's _Rob Roy_, as from personal observation of Haworth Methodists.

Chapter 8

Echoes of his novel _Rob Roy_, for instance, are to be found throughout the book. In _Wuthering Heights_, one is irresistibly reminded of _Rob Roy_'s setting in the wilds of Northumberland, among the uncouth and quarrelsome squirearchical Osbaldistones, who spend their time drinking and gambling. The spirited and willful Catherine has strong similarities with Diana Vernon, who is equally out of place among her boorish relations. Heathcliff, whose unusual name recalls that of the surly Thorncliff, mimics Rashleigh Osbaldiston in his sinister hold over the Earnshaws and Lintons, and his attempts to seize their inheritances.

Frequently Asked Questions on Wuthering Heights

Where did Heathcliff go? (And where did he get his money?)

When Heathcliff fled from Wuthering Heights in 1780, he had little education and no money. He returns three years later having acquired both. How did this come about? Education can be bought or self-taught so the real question is where he found his money. Ellen's suggestions are that he went abroad:

_It was a deep voice, and foreign in tone; yet there was something in the manner of pronouncing my name which made it sound familiar._

and that he was in the army:

_Have you been for a soldier? and His upright carriage suggested the idea of his having been in the army._
However, without education and contacts (and only 16 at the beginning), he would have found it difficult to rise in the ranks and there would have been little money except from plunder. Nor does Heathcliff confirm this although it would be a respectable explanation.

Alternative explanations for his remarkable rise are that he was involved in the slave trade (which did not end in Britain until 1807) and, alternately, just simple criminality. In my view, the slave trade would seem the best explanation. It would explain his reticence in revealing his past, his foreign pronunciation, and fit his character. (Heathcliff does mention slavery in chapter 11 - "The tyrant grinds down his slaves and they don't turn against him; they crush those beneath them." - but this cannot be taken as proof of his past.)

**How could Emily Brontë write Wuthering Heights?**

Many commentators, especially Emily's contemporaries, found it hard to believe that a reserved clergyman's daughter with little experience of the world could have written such a unique, brutal and immoral (as they saw it) novel. At the time, many assumed that the author was a man (because the Brontës had written under ambiguous pseudonyms) and many still believe that Branwell was the true author. But we must not forget the power of imagination. Bram Stoker did not have to visit Romania or get involved with the supernatural to write *Dracula*. Walking alone on the moors or sitting bored in the parsonage on a rainy day, Emily's mind could have drifted to all sorts of possible places. We know that the sisters had access to a large collection of books including Walter Scott and Byron, and the juvenile writings that they produced show an ability to delve deep into fantasy and imagination. In fact, it seems more likely that a person with a limited social life and travel prospects would have fled to the extremes of *Wuthering Heights* than a conventional love story like *Jane Eyre*.

**Was Catherine and Heathcliff's love incestuous?**

Many questions have been raised about the love between Catherine and Heathcliff – in particular, whether it was incestuous. There are two reasons why it was probably not.

First, Catherine and Heathcliff were not blood siblings. We don't know if Heathcliff was officially adopted by Mr Earnshaw; the fact that he did not automatically inherit Wuthering Heights when Hindley died suggests not. Secondly, there is no actual evidence in the book that the two of them ever had sex. Heathcliff ran away when he was sixteen and Catherine fifteen. It seems unlikely that they would have had sex before then. He returns when he is nineteen but Catherine is already married to Edgar and there are only four or five months before she dies (excluding the two months that he was absent with Isabella). As Catherine was also ill for much of this time, it seems highly improbably that anything would have happened then.

I personally take the view that their love was closer to that of identical twins rather than simple lovers: two people who are so close spiritually that they find it impossible to live without the other.

**Was Heathcliff the father of Cathy?**

Some people have speculated that young Cathy was really Heathcliff's child rather than Edgar's but I think this unlikely. First of all, Cathy is blonde. Heathcliff and Catherine were both dark-haired so it seems genetically unlikely although not impossible. Secondly the dates do not support it.

Cathy was born on 20 March 1784, a "puny, seven-months' child" so she was conceived around the middle to end of August 1783. Heathcliff returned in September 1783 and Catherine clearly shows surprise when he reappears. As noted above, there does not seem to be any evidence that Catherine ever slept with Heathcliff so we can be reasonably certain that Cathy was Edgar's.
Was Cathy's marriage to Linton legal?

At first glance, it would seem that Cathy's marriage to Linton was illegal in several ways. First, she was kidnapped by Heathcliff and effectively forced to agree to marry. Secondly, the suggestions are that it was held in Wuthering Heights, not a proper place of worship. And presumably the banns weren't displayed.

No doubt the marriage was illegal and, in modern times would have been thrown out of court. But we are talking about an isolated rural area in the 18th century when the local magistrate was effectively the law. We know that Heathcliff had a crooked lawyer in his pay and no doubt he could find a clergyman willing to turn a blind eye for money. I don't know that much about 18th century law but I assume that a marriage needed to be in a place of worship so the clergyman would have pretended that it happened there. If anyone disagreed, it was Cathy's word against Heathcliff, Linton, Hareton, the lawyer and the clergyman so she had little chance to object. When Edgar died, remember, Heathcliff would have presumably become the magistrate so he had things pretty well tied up.

Wuthering Heights  A sixteenth century farmhouse, the grandest building in the neighbourhood except for Thrushcross Grange. The home of the Earnshaws and, later on, owned by Heathcliff.

Position

Wuthering Heights ("Wuthering" is a local word, meaning wild, exposed, storm-blown, see Pronunciations) is in a very exposed position on the moors, a four mile (6.5 kilometer) walk from Thrushcross Grange. The nearest town or village is Gimmerton which has the doctor and parson.

The farm sits on the northern side of a hilltop also known as Wuthering Heights (or "the Heights"). This hill prevents it from seeing Thrushcross Grange. The road from the farm into Gimmerton valley is steep and winding.
The farm is surrounded by a wall with a barred gate secured by a chain. A pathway leads to the main door with gooseberry bushes bordering it.

There is a barn nearby with a round window (possibly a pitching window) which is within speaking distance of the main door. The barn has a fairly large porch (big enough to shelter twelve sheep).

There are also some stables with a porch and a shed behind the barn which can be used for milking cows.

From the farmhouse entrance, the yard is visible. You can get to the inside by passing through a wash-house and a paved area containing a coal shed, pump and pigeon cot.
Ground Floor

The farmhouse has a few stunted trees at the end of the house and a range of thorns, permanently bent by the wind. The trees are firs, one of which damages the kitchen chimney stack during high winds. They are close to the house for one of them breaks Lockwood's window in chapter 2, and Cathy escapes via the trees.

It has narrow windows, deeply set in the walls, protected by shutters. The building's corners are defended by large, jutting stones. There are at least two chimney stacks, one in the east which is the kitchen's.

Sitting-Room (The 'House')

The entrance to the sitting-room has grotesque carving over the front and around the main door. The door has griffins and 'boys' (cherubs?) carved above with the date 1500 and the name 'Hareton Earnshaw'. This leads directly into the family sitting-room, big enough to hold a fifteen-man band. (In other farms, it generally was the sitting-room and kitchen but Wuthering Heights had a separate kitchen.) There is a large fireplace. Opposite is a vast oak dresser which reaches to the roof (which is not underdrawn). This dresser has a collection of large pewter dishes with silver jugs and tankards, and space at the bottom for dogs and children to shelter in. Above the fireplace are some old guns and horse pistols. There are three gaudily-painted canisters on the mantlepiece.

The floor of the sitting room is of smooth, white stone. There are some high-backed, primitive chairs painted green and one or two heavy black ones in the shadows. It has a side door leading down to a cellar.

Kitchen

The kitchen has a hearth nearly enclosed by two benches shaped as circular segments. There is a ladder that goes through a trap in the roof, believed by Lockwood to lead to the garret where Joseph sleeps (although he sleeps above the first floor). The kitchen has windows which face east or south east to allow in light in the morning.

Other Rooms

There is a small spare room which Hindley considered turning into a parlour but it is not clear whether this was on the ground or first floor.

The stairs are probably in or close to the kitchen (Lockwood gets to it from upstairs without disturbing the dog in the sitting-room). They are open since Hindley looks down from above and drops Hareton over the banisters.

First Floor

The main bedroom during Heathcliff's ownership of Wuthering Heights was described thus: "There was a carpet—a good one, but the pattern was obliterated by dust; a fireplace hung with cut-paper, dropping to pieces; a handsome oak-bedstead with ample crimson curtains of rather expensive material and modern make; but they had evidently experienced rough usage: the vallances hung in festoons, wrenched from their rings, and the iron rod supporting them was bent in an arc on one side, causing the drapery to trail upon the floor. The chairs were also damaged, many of them severely; and deep indentations deformed the panels of the walls."

Another room, Catherine's, consists of a chair, clothes-press and a large oak case with squares cut near the top resembling coach windows. It has
panelled sides which slide back to reveal a couch. It is against a window whose ledge acts as a table. A fir tree is outside, close enough for its branches to touch the latticed window (in 1801 One room upstairs is turned into a parlour for Linton and also used as such by Cathy.

Roofspace

Joseph's room is in the attic (garrets), reached via a ladder. There is enough room for at least four people (the young Cathy, Heathcliff and a plough boy were treated to a service with Joseph).

There are (at least) two garrets, one of which Heathcliff was locked in as a child (and may well have been his room). They have skylights and the young Catherine was able to climb from one garret to the other via the skylights.

Thrushcross Grange

_The most important building in the neighbourhood._
_The home of the Lintons and, later on, owned by Heathcliff._
_He rented it out and the leasing of it by Mr Lockwood begins the book._
Any serious discussion of *Wuthering Heights* must consider the complex point of view that Brontë chose. Lockwood tells the entire story, but except for his experiences as the renter of Thrushcross Grange and his response to Nelly, he repeats what Nellie tells him; occasionally she is narrating what others have told her, e.g., Isabella's experiences at Wuthering Heights or the servant Zilla's view of events. Consequently, at times we are three steps removed from events. Contrary to what might be expected with such narrative distance from events, we do not feel emotionally distant from the characters or events. Indeed, most readers are swept along by the impetuosity and tempestuous behavior of Heathcliff and Catherine, even if occasionally confused by the time shifts and the duplication of names. Brontë's ability to sweep the reader while distancing the narration reveals her mastery of her material and her genius as a writer.
story—what kind of people are they? what values do they represent? how reliable are they or, alternately, under what conditions are they reliable? As you read the novel, consider the following possibilities:

- Lockwood and Nelly are opposites in almost every way. (1) Lockwood is a sophisticated, educated, affluent gentleman; he is an outsider, a city man. Nelly is a shrewd, self-educated servant; a local Yorkshirewoman, she has never traveled beyond the Wuthering Heights-Thrushcross Grange-Gimmerton area. Nelly, thus, belongs to Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange in a way that the outsider Lockwood (or Heathcliff) never does. (2) Lockwood’s illness contrasts with her good health. (3) Just as the narrative is divided between a male and a female narrator, so throughout the book the major characters are balanced male and female, including the servants Joseph and Nelly or Joseph and Zillah. This balancing of male and female and the lovers seeking union suggests that at a psychological level the Jungian animus and anima are struggling for integration in one personality.
- Does Lockwood represent the point of view of the ordinary reader (that is, us). If so, do his reactions invalidate our everyday assumptions and judgments? This reading assumes that his reactions are insensitive and unintelligent. Or do he and Nelly serve as a bridge from our usual reality to the chaotic reality of Wuthering Heights? By enabling us to identify with normal responses and socially acceptable values, do they help make the fantastic behavior believable if not understandable?
- Does the sentimental Lockwood contrast with the pragmatic Nelly? It has been suggested that the original purpose of the novel was the education and edification of Lockwood in the nature of passion-love, but of course the novel completely outgrew this limited aim.

Nelly—as the main narrator, as a participant, and as precipitator of key events—requires more attention than Lockwood.

- To what extent do we accept Nelly's point of view? Is her conventionality necessarily wrong or limited? Is it a valid point of view, though one perhaps which cannot understand or accommodate the wild behavior she encounters? Does she represent normalcy? Is she a norm against which to judge the behavior of the other characters? Or does she contribute, whether unintentionally, semi-consciously, or deliberately, to the disasters which engulf her employers? To what extent is Nelly admirable? Is she superior to the other servants, as she suggests, or is she deluded by vanity?
- Is Nelly's alliance or identification with any one character, one family, or one set of values consistent, or does she switch sides, depending on circumstances and her emotional response? Does she sympathize with the children she raised or helped to raise, a group consisting of Heathcliff, Catherine, Hareton, and Cathy? If Nelly's loyalties do keep shifting, does this fact reflect the difficulty of making moral judgments in this novel?
- Is her interpretation of some characters or kinds of events more reliable than of others? Is she, for instance, more authoritative when she speaks of more conventional or ordinary events or behavior than of the extreme, often outrageous behavior of Heathcliff or Catherine? Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick notes that although Heathcliff talks about himself to Nelly with honesty and openness, she persists on seeing him as a secretive, alienated, diabolical schemer. Is Sedgwick's insight valid? If so, what does it reveal about Nelly? Another question might be, why do so many people confide in or turn to Nelly?

There are two more questions that can be raised about the reliability of Lockwood and Nelly. The first is, did Lockwood change any of Nellie's story? This is, it seems to me, a futile question. I see no way we can answer this question, for there are no internal or external conversations or events which would enable us to assess his narrative integrity. The same principle would apply to Nellie, if we wonder whether she deliberately lied to Lockwood or remembered events incorrectly. However, it is entirely another matter if we ask whether Nellie or if Lockwood misunderstood or misinterpreted the conversations and actions each narrates. In this case, we can compare the narrator's interpretation of characters and events with the conversations and behavior of the characters, consider the values the narrator holds and those held or expressed by the characters and their behavior, and also look at the pattern of the novel in its entirety for clues in order to evaluate the narrator's reliability.
Once upon a time, it seems, an English clergyman born Brunt or Brantly, self-baptized the more romantic Brontë, brought home to his four children a box of twelve wooden soldiers. The children lived in isolation in a parsonage high on the Yorkshire moors, which is to say, at the edge of the world; each was possessed of an extraordinarily fecund imagination; the wooden soldiers soon acquired life and identities (among them the Duke of Wellington and Bonaparte). The way by which a masterpiece as unanticipated as *Wuthering Heights* comes to be written, involving, as it did, the gradual evolution from such early childish games to more complex games of written language (serial stories transcribed by the children in minute italic handwriting meant to resemble print; secret plays, or "bed plays," written at bedtime; the transcribing of the ambitious Gondal and Angria sagas, which were to be viable for nearly fifteen years) is so compelling a tale, so irresistible a legend, one is tempted to see in it a miniature history of the imagination's triumph, in the most socially restricted of environments. No poet or novelist would wish to reduce his mature works to the status of mere games, or even to acknowledge an explicit kinship with the prodigies of the child's dreaming mind; but it is clear that the play of the imagination has much to do with childish origins, and may, in truth, be inseparable from it. As Henry James has observed, in a somewhat peevish aside regarding the "romantic tradition" and the "public ecstasies" surrounding the Brontë sisters, "Literature is an objective, a projected result; it is life that is the unconscious, the agitated, the struggling, floundering cause." Certainly this is true, but its dogma is too blunt, too assured, to inspire absolute confidence. The unconscious energies feed the objective project; life fuels art, in disguised forms, though art is, of course, a highly conscious activity. Literature is far more than a game of words, a game ingeniously constructed of words, but the imagination is expansive enough to accommodate both the child's fantasies and the stratagems of the adult. Out of that long-lost box of wooden soldiers, or its forgotten equivalent, we have all sprung.

It is not simply in contrast to its origins that *Wuthering Heights* strikes us as so unique, so unanticipated. This great novel, though not inordinately long, and, contrary to general assumption, not inordinately complicated, manages to be a number of things: a romance that brilliantly challenges the basic presumptions of the "romantic"; a "gothic" that evolves—with an absolutely inevitable grace—into its temperamental opposite; a parable of innocence and loss, and childhood's necessary defeat; and a work of consummate skill on its primary level, that is, the level of language. Above all, it is a history: its first statement is the date 1801; and one of its final statements involves New Year's Day (of 1803). It seeks both to dramatize and to explain how the ancient stock of the Earnshaws are restored to their rights (the somber house of Wuthering Heights, built in 1500), and, at the same time, how and why the last of the Earnshaws, Hareton, will be leaving the Heights to live, with his cousin-bride, at Thrushcross Grange. One generation has given way to the next: the primitive energies of childhood have given way to the intelligent compromises of adulthood. The history of the Earnshaws and the Lintons begins to seem a history, writ small, albeit with exquisite detail, of civilization itself.
As a historical novel, published in 1847, "narrated" by Lockwood in 1801-1802, and encompassing an interior story that begins in the late summer of 1771, *Wuthering Heights* is expansive enough to present two overlapping and starkly contrasting tales: the first, and more famous, a somewhat lurid tragedy of betrayal erected upon a fantasy of childhood (or incestuous) romance; the second, a story of education, maturing, and accommodation to the exigencies of time. Both stories partake of the slightly fabulous, especially the first (in which, with fairy-tale inevitability, a "gypsy" foundling, named for a dead son, usurps a father's love); both seem to progress less as a consequence of individual and personal desire than of the abstract (and predetermined) evolution of "Nature" into "Society." The great theme of *Wuthering Heights*, perversely overlooked by many of its admiring critics, as well as by its detractors, is precisely this inevitability: how present-day harmony, in September of 1802, has come about. Far from being a rhizosodical ode to primitive dark energies, populated by savages (whether noble or otherwise), the novel is, in fact, as its elaborate structure makes clear, an assured demonstration of the finite and tragically self-consuming nature of "passion." Romantic and gothic elements cannot survive in the sunlit world of sanity (as Lockwood jealously observes, the second Catherine and her fiancé Hareton look as if, together, "they would brave Satan and all his legions"); the new generation will settle in the more commodious Thrushcross Grange, opening, as it does, in symbolic and literal terms, onto the rest of the world. The curious spell or curse has lifted from the principals of the drama, and will continue to hold sway—so local rumor will have it, doubtless for centuries—only on the moors, where the redoubtable Heathcliff and a woman yet walk, on every rainy night. ("Idle tales," says Mrs. Dean, "and so say I.") The citybred Lockwood concurs, and we are invited, however ambiguously, to concur, in the history's closing remark, as Lockwood wonders how any one could ever imagine unquiet slumbers for the sleepers in that quiet earth.

A novel's strategy reveals itself in structure and process, not in isolated passages or speeches, however striking. Any complex work that aspires to a statement about something larger than the experiences it depicts must be understood as a proposition on two levels: that of the immediate, or present time (the shared fiction of the "immediate" as it is evidently experienced by both participant and reader, simultaneously), and that of the historical (in which the fiction of the simultaneous experience of participant and reader is dissolved, and the reader emerges, idealy, at least, with a god's-eye view of the novelist's design). The playful braiding of narrators and magisterial creator that is so pronounced a characteristic of Nabokov's novels is perhaps more willfully ingenious than the "Chinese box" narration of Emily Brontë (which, one should hasten to say, she chose to employ, as a felicitous convention, and did not invent), but scarcely more effective. As much as any Modernist work, *Wuthering Heights* demands to be reread: the first three chapters (charting the disingenuous Lockwood's introduction to the surly enigmatic inhabitants of *Wuthering Heights*, both living and dead) yield the author's intention only upon a second reading. And this has not only to do with the time-honored device of withheld information, but with the reader's literal interpretation of Lockwood's experience: for Lockwood is himself a "reader," albeit a most confused one, in these initial chapters.

It is on the level of visceral immediacy, as a fictional "world" is evoked through the employment of language, that a novel lives or dies, or struggles along in a sort of twilit sleep; it is on this higher level, where structure and design are grasped, and all novels make claim to be "histories" (the eager demands of how and why, as well as what, accommodated), that it acquires a more cultural or generalized value. Emily Brontë's sense of the parable residing beneath her melodramatic tale guides us throughout: for we are allowed to know, despite the passionate and painfully convincing nostalgia for the Heights, the moors, and childhood, evinced by Catherine and Heathcliff, that their values, and hence their world (the Heights) are doomed. We acquiesce rather to the lyricism of the text, than to its actual claims: the triumph of the second Catherine and Hareton (the "second" Heathcliff), not only in their union but in their proposed move away from the ancient home of the Earnshaws, is a triumph that quite refutes traditional readings of the novel that dwell upon its dark, brooding, unconscious, and even savage energies. Meaning in literature cannot of course reside solely in the apprehension of design, for one might argue that "meaning" is present in every paragraph, every sentence, every word; but for the novelist such elements as scenes of a dramatic nature, description, historical background, summary of action, etc., are subordinate to the larger, grander, more spacious structure. If *Wuthering Heights* is the title of this phase of "our" collective history, ending on New Year's Day of 1803, *Thrushcross Grange* will be the title of the next.

Who will inherit the earth's riches? Who will inherit a stable, rather than a self-consuming, love? What endures, for mankind's sake, is not the violent and narcissistic love of Catherine and Heathcliff (who identify with each other, as fatal twins, rather than individuals), but the easier, more friendly, and altogether more plausible love of the second Catherine and Hareton Earnshaw. How ironic, then, that Brontë's brilliantly imagined dialectic, arguing for the inevitable exorcism of the old demons of childhood, and professing an attitude toward time and change that might even be called optimistic, should have been, and continues to be, misread. That professional critics identify subject matter in process with an ambitious novel's design is one of the curiosities of literary history, and bears an uncomfortable resemblance to the myopic activities of the self-appointed censor, who judges a book by a certain word, on page 58 or 339, and has no need to trouble himself with the rest. *Wuthering Heights* is no less orderly and ritualistic a work than a representative Greek tragedy, or a novel of Jane Austen's, though its author's concerns are with disorderly and even chaotic elements. One of the wonders of the novel is its astonishing magnanimity, for all the cliches of Emily Brontë's "narrowness." Where else might we find a tough-minded lyricism evoking the mystical
value of Nature, contiguous with a vision of the possibilities of erotic experience very like that of the Decadents, or of Sade himself? Where else might we find passionate soliloquies and self-lacerations, of a Dostoyevskian quality, housed in utterly homely, and fastidiously rendered, surroundings? Both Brontë and Melville draw upon Shakespeare for the speeches of certain of their principals (Heathcliff being, in the remarkable concluding pages of the novel, as succinctly eloquent as Edmund, Iago, Macbeth), but it is Brontë's novel that avoids the unnatural strain of allegory, and gives a local habitation to outsized passions.

_Wuthering Heights_ is erected upon not only the accumulated tensions and part-formed characters of adolescent fantasy (adumbrated in the Gondal sagas) but upon the very theme of adolescent, or even childish, or infantile, fantasy. In the famous and unfailingly moving early scene in which Catherine Earnshaw tries to get into Lockwood's chamber (more specifically her old oak-paneled bed, in which, nearly a quarter of a century earlier, she and the child Heathcliff customarily slept together), it is significant that she identifies herself as _Catherine Linton_ though she is in fact a child; and that she informs Lockwood that she had lost her way on the moor, for twenty years. As Catherine Linton, married, and even pregnant, she has never been anything other than a child: this is the pathos of her situation, and not the fact that she wrongly, or even rightly, chose to marry Edgar Linton over Heathcliff. Brontë's emotions are clearly caught up with these child's predilections, as the evidence of her poetry reveals, but the greatness of her genius as a novelist allows her a magnanimity, an imaginative elasticity, that challenges the very premises (which aspire to philosophical detachment) of the Romantic exaltation of the child and childhood's innocence.

The highly passionate relationship between Catherine and Heathcliff, forged in their embittered and savage childhood, has been variously interpreted: it is a doomed "gothic" romance, whose depth of feeling makes the inane Lockwood and his narrative-mate Mrs. Dean appear all the more shallow; it is curiously chaste, for all its emotional outpourings, and as finally "innocent" as any love between sister and brother; then again, it is rude, lurid, unhallowed, intensely erotic, and suggestive of an incestuous bond—indeed, Heathcliff is named for a dead brother of Catherine's, and he, Hindley, and Catherine have slept together as children. (The reasons for Mr. Earnshaw's adoption of the gypsy waif, the goblin, the parentless demon, the dark-skinned "cuckoo," are never made plausible within the story; but it is perhaps instructive to learn that Emily Brontë's great-great-grandfather Hugh Brunty had adopted a black-haired foundling from Liverpool—who in turn adopted their own grandfather, the younger Hugh. So the vertiginous interrelations and mirror-selves of the novel's central household have, for all their fairy-tale implausibility, an ancestral authenticity.)

So famous are certain speeches in _Wuthering Heights_ proclaiming Catherine's bond with Heathcliff ("Nelly, I am Heathcliff—he's always, always in my mind");¹ and Heathcliff's with Catherine (Oh, God! it is unutterable! I cannot live without my life! I cannot live without my soul!")² that they scarcely require reference, at any length: the peculiarity in the lovers' feeling for each other being their intense and unshakable identification, which is an identification with the moors, and with Nature itself, that seems to preclude any human, let alone sexual" bond. They do not behave like adulterous lovers, but speak freely of their relationship before Catherine's husband, Edgar; and they embrace, desperately and fatally, in the presence of the ubiquitous and somewhat voyeuristic Mrs. Dean. (Mrs. Dean is even present, in a sense, when, many years later, Heathcliff bribes the sexton to unearth Catherine's coffin, so that he can embrace her mummified corpse, and dream of dissolving with her, and being more happy still.) So intense an identification between lover and beloved has nothing to do with the dramatic relationship of opposites, who yearn to come together in order to be complete: it is the at-one-ness of the mystic with his God, the peaceful solitude of the unborn babe in the womb. That Heathcliff's prolonged love for the dead Catherine shades by degrees into actual madness is signaled by his breakdown at the novel's conclusion, when the "monomania" for his idol becomes a monomania for death. She, the beloved, implored to return to haunt him, has returned in a terrifying and malevolent way, and will not give him peace. ". . . For what is not connected with her to me? and what does not recall her? I cannot look down to this floor, but her features are shaped in the flags! In every cloud, in every tree-filling the air at night, and caught by glimpses in every object by day—I am surrounded with her image! The most ordinary faces of men and women—my own features—mock me with a resemblance."³ So Heathcliff tries to explain the frightening "change" that is upon him, when he sees that he and Catherine have been duplicated, in a sense, and supplanted, by the second Catherine and young Hareton. The old energies of the child's untrammeled life have passed over into the ghoulish energies of death, to which Heathcliff succumbs by degrees. "I have to remind myself to breathe—almost to remind my heart to beat!" Heathcliff, that most physical of beings, declares. "And it is like bending back a stiff spring; it is by compulsion that I do the slightest act not prompted by one thought, and by compulsion, that I notice anything alive, or dead, which is not associated with one universal idea.... I am swallowed up in the anticipation of its fulfillment."²

So far as the romantic plot is concerned, it is Catherine's decision to enter into a misguided engagement with Edgar Linton that precipitates the tragedy: more specifically, a melodramatic accident by which Heathcliff overhears part of Catherine's declaration to Mrs. Dean, but creeps away in shame before he can hear her avowal of abiding love for him. In truth, however, the "tragedy" has very little to do with Catherine's conscious will, but seems to have sprung from a phenomenon so impersonal as the passage of time itself. How
exquisite, because irremediable, the anguish of "growing up"! Brontë's first-generation lovers would share a kingdom on the moors as timeless, and as phantasmal, as any imagined by Poe. In place of Poe's androgynous male lovers we have the immature Heathcliff (only twenty years old when Catherine dies); in place of the vampire Ligeia, or the amenorrheic Lady Madeleine, is the tomboyish Catherine, whose life has become a terrifying "blank" since the onset of puberty. No more poignant words have been written on the baffled anguish of the child-self, propelled into an unwanted maturity, and accursed by a centripetal force as pitiless as the north wind that blows upon the Heights. Catherine, though pregnant, and soon to give birth, has absolutely no consciousness of the life in her womb, which belongs to the unimagined future and will become, in fact, the "second" Catherine: she is all self, only self, so arrested in childhood that she cannot recognize her own altered face in the mirror. Brontë's genius consists in giving an unforgettable voice to this seductive and deathly centripetal force we all carry within us:

I thought . . . that I was enclosed in the oak-panelled bed at home; and my heart ached with some great grief which, just waking, I could not recollect. I pondered, and worried myself to discover what it could be, and, most strangely, the whole past seven years of my life grew a blank! I did not recall that they had been at all. I was a child; my father was just buried, and my misery arose from the separation that Hindley had ordered between me and Heathcliff. I was laid alone, for the first time, and, rousing from a dismal doze after a night of weeping, I lifted my hand to push the panels aside.... I cannot say why I felt so wildly wretched ... I wish I were a girl again, half savage, and hardy, and free; and laughing at injuries, not maddening under them! Why am I so changed? Why does my blood rush into a hell of tumult at a few words? I'm sure I should be myself were I once among the heather on those hills.5

Why the presumably robust Catherine Earnshaw's life should end, in a sense, at the age of twelve; why, as a married woman of nineteen, she should know herself irrevocably "changed"—the novel does not presume to explain. This is the substance of tragedy, the hell of tumult that is character and fate combined. Her passion for Heathcliff notwithstanding, Catherine's identification is with the frozen and peopleless void of an irrecoverable past, and not with anything human. The feathers she pulls out of her pillow are of course the feathers of dead, wild birds, moorcocks and lapwings: they compel her to think not of the exuberance of childhood, but of death, and even premature death, which is associated with her companion Heathcliff. (Since Heathcliff had set a trap over the lapwing's nest, the mother dared not return, and "we saw its nest in the winter, full of little skeletons.")

This bleak, somber, deathly wisdom is as memorably expressed by Sylvia Plath in her poem "Wuthering Heights," with its characteristic images of a dissolving landscape opening upon the void. Plath, like the fictitious Catherine, suffered a stubborn and irrevocable loss in childhood, and her recognition of the precise nature of this loss is expressed in a depersonalized vocabulary. How seductive, how chill, how terrifying Brontë's beloved moor!

There is no life higher than the grassstops
Or the hearts of sheep, and the wind
Pours by like destiny, bending
Everything in one direction.
I can feel it trying
To funnel my heat away.
If I pay the roots of the heather
Too close attention, they will invite me
To whiten my bones among them.6

It is to the roots of the heather that Catherine has paid her fiercest attention.

The novel's second movement, less dramatically focused, but no less rich in observed and often witty detail, transcribes the gradual metamorphosis of the "gothic romance" into its approximate opposite. The abandoned and brutish child Hareton, once discovered in the act of hanging puppies from a chair-back, matures into a goodhearted youth who aids the second Catherine in planting flowers in a forbidden "garden"—and becomes her protector at the Heights. Where all marriages were blighted, and two most perversely (the
uncharitable Christianity, who presumably cannot die.

*How* this miraculous transformation comes about, *why* it must be grasped as inevitable, has to do with the novelist’s grasp of a cyclical timelessness beneath the melodramatic action. The rhythm of the narrative is syllogistic, by which I mean not only the strophe and antistrophe of the sudden cuts back to Lockwood in Mrs. Dean’s presence, and alone (musing in his diary) but also the subtle counterpoint between the poetic and theatrical speeches of the principal characters, and the life of the Heights with its harvests and apple-pickings and heartths that must be swept clean, its tenant farmers, its vividly observed and felt reality. The canny physicality of *Wuthering Heights* distinguishes it at once from the “gothic,” and from Shakespeare’s tragedies as well, where we are presented with an exorcism of evil and an implied (but often ritualistic) survival of good, but never really convinced that this survival is a genuine and not merely a thematic possibility.

Heathcliff, who is said never to read books, comments scornfully on the fact that his young bride Isabella had pictured in him a hero of romance. So wildly deluded was this sheltered daughter of Thrushcross Grange, she expected chivalrous devotion to her, and “unlimited indulgences.” Heathcliff’s mockery makes us aware of our own bookish expectations of him, for he is defiantly *not* a hero, and we are warned to avoid Isabella’s error in “forming a fabulous notion of my character.” Brontë’s wit in this passage is supreme, for she allows her “hero” to define himself in opposition to a gothic-romantic stereotype she suspects her readers (well into the twentieth century) cherish; and she allows him, by way of ridiculing poor masochistic Isabella, to ridicule such readers as well.

Are you sure you hate me? If I let you alone for half a day, won’t you come sighing and wheedling to me again? . . . The first thing she saw me do, on coming out of the Grange, was to hang up her little dog; and when she pleaded for it the first words I uttered were a wish that I had the hanging of every being belonging to her, except one: possibly she took that exception for herself. But no brutality disgusted her: I suppose she has an innate admiration of it, if only her precious person were secure from injury! Now, was it not the depth of absurdity—of genuine idiocy—for that pitiful, slavish, mean-minded brach to dream that I could love her? . . . I never, in all my life, met with such an abject thing as she is. She even disgraces the name of Linton; and I’ve sometimes relented, from pure lack of invention, in my experiments on what she could endure, and still creep shamefully cringing back!2

This, in Isabella’s presence; and naturally Isabella is pregnant. But then Heathcliff observes, in an aside, that he, too, is caught up in this relentless “moral teething,” and seems incapable of feeling pity for his victims or for himself. “The more the worms writhe, the more I yearn to crush out their entrails!” he says. “. . . And I grind with greater energy, in proportion to the increase of pain.” He observes elsewhere that the mere sight of cowering, weak, fearful persons awakens the desire in him to hurt; and an evening’s “slow vivisection” of his own son and his child-bride Catherine would amuse him. Even the elder Catherine, who recognizes her kinship with him, calls him a cruel, wolfish man; and she, of all the persons who know him, understands that he is beyond redemption—precisely because he is not a character in a romantic novel, or, indeed, answerable to any “fabulous notions” at all. (If he weakens at the novel’s end, it is only physically. His forthright judgment on his actions is: “. . . As to repenting of my injustices, I’ve done no injustice, and I repent of nothing—I’m too happy, and yet I’m not happy enough.”)

Heathcliff’s enduring appeal is approximately that of Edmund, Iago, Richard III, the intermittent Macbeth: the villain who impresses by way of his energy, his cleverness, his peculiar sort of courage; and by his asides, inviting, as they do, the audience’s or reader’s collaboration in wickedness. Brontë is perfectly accurate in having her villain tell us, by way of Mrs. Dean and Lockwood, that brutality does not always disgust; and that there are those persons—often of weak, cringing, undeveloped character—who “innately admire” it, provided they themselves are not injured. (Though, in Isabella’s case, it would seem that she has enjoyed, and even provoked, her husband’s “experimental” sadism.) Heathcliff presides over a veritable cornucopia of darksome episodes: he beats and kicks the fallen Hindley, he throws a knife at Isabella, he savagely slaps young Catherine, he doesn’t trouble to summon a doctor for his dying son, as he no longer has any use for him. Unfailingly cruel, yet sly enough to appear exasperated with his victims’ testing of his cruelty, Heathcliff arouses the reader to this peculiar collaborative bond by the sheer force of his language, and his wit: for is he not, with his beloved gone, the lifeforce gone wild? He has no opposition worthy of him; he has no natural mate remaining; he is characterless and depersonalized will—a masklike grinace that can never relax into a smile. (Significantly, Heathcliff is grinning as a corpse—“grinning at death” as old Joseph notes.) Very few readers of *Wuthering Heights* have cared to observe that there is no necessary or even probable connection between the devoted lover of Catherine, and the devoted hater of all the remaining world (including—and this most improbably—Catherine’s own daughter Catherine, who resembles her): for certain stereotypes persist so stubbornly they may very well be archetypes, evoking, as they do, an involuntary identification with energy, evil, will, *action*. The mass murderer who is really tenderhearted, the rapist
whose victims provoke him, the Fuhrer who is a vegetarian and in any case loves dogs... Our anxieties, which may well spring from childhood experiences, have much to do with denying the actual physicality of the outrages, whether those of Heathcliff or any villain, literary or historic, and supplanting for them, however magically, however pitiably, "spiritual" values. If Heathcliff grinds his victims beneath his feet like worms, is it not natural to imagine that they are worms, and deserve their suffering, is it not natural to imagine that they are not us? We feel only contempt for the potential sadist Linton, who sucks on sugar candy, and whose relationship with his child-wife parodies a normal love relationship (he asks her not to kiss him, because it makes him breathless). Consequently our temptation is to align ourselves with Heathcliff, as Brontë shrewdly understands. Heathcliff pricks the reader's Linton-like imagination in such passages:

I was embarrassed how to punish him, when I discovered his part in the business—he's such a cowweb, a pinch would annihilate him, but you'll see by his look that he has received his due! I brought him down one evening . . . and just set him in a chair, and never touched him afterwards. I sent Hareton out, and we had the room to ourselves. In two hours, I called Joseph to carry him up again; and, since then, my presence is as potent on his nerves as a ghost; and I fancy he sees me often, though I am not near. Hareton says he wakes and shrieks in the night by the hour together....

Yet the novel is saturated with gothic episodes and images, as many critics have noted, and the tone of motiveless cruelty that prevails, in the opening chapters, clearly has nothing to do with the mature Heathcliff's "plan for revenge." The presumably goodhearted and maternal Mrs. Dean tells Heathcliff that since he is taller than Edgar Linton, and twice as broad across the shoulders, he could "knock him down in a twinkling"—whereupon the boy's face brightens for a moment. The presumably genteel Lintons of Thrushcross Grange are not upset that their bulldog Skulker has caught a little girl by the ankle, and that she is bleeding badly; they evince alarmed surprise only when they learn that the child is Miss Earnshaw, of Wuthering Heights. (As for the child Heathcliff: ". . . The villain scowls so plainly in his face: would it not be a kindness to the country to hang him at once, before he shows his nature in acts, as well as features?" One of the most puzzling revelations in the early section is that, after Mr. Earnshaw has gone to the trouble of bringing the foundling home, his own wife's wish is to "flying it out of doors"; and Mrs. Dean places "it" on the landing with the hope that "it might be gone on the morrow"—though where the luckless creature might go in this wild landscape, one would be hard pressed to say. Clearly we are in a gothic world contiguous with Lear's, where daughters turn their fathers out into the storm, and blinded men are invited to sniff their way to safety.

This combative atmosphere is the natural and unspoiled Eden for which the dying Catherine yearns, however inhuman it is. For, like Heathcliff, she is an "exile" and "outcast" elsewhere: only the primitive and amoral child's world can accommodate her stunted character, until she is reborn and transmogrified in a Catherine part Earnshaw and part-Linton.

As for Heathcliff, with his diabolical brow and basilisk eyes, his cannibal teeth, his desperate passion for revenge, is he not a "romantic" incarnation of Iago or Vendice (of The Revenger's Tragedy), another Edmund fired to destroy an Edgar, a revenge-motive imposed upon a fairy tale of love and betrayal? He does not require Hindley to flog and beat him, in order to turn stoically wicked, since he has possessed an implacable will from the very first, having demonstrated no affection or gratitude for the elder Mr. Earnshaw, who had not only saved his life in Liverpool but (for reasons not at all clear in realistic terms) had loved him above his own children. Near the end of the novel Mrs. Dean wonders aloud if her master might be a ghoul or a vampire, since he has begun to prowl the moor at night, and she has read of "such hideous, incarnate demons." Her characteristic common sense wavers; she sinks into sleep, taxing herself with the rhetorical question: "But where did he come from, the little dark thing, harboured by a good man to his bane?"—a question that is presumably ours as well. From where does "evil" spring, after all, if not from "good"? And is it sired by "good"? And "harboured" by it? This particular demon is Heathcliff only: Heathcliff Heathcliff, possessing no other name: sired, it would seem, by himself, and never legally adopted by Mr. Earnshaw. (His headstone reads only "Heathcliff" and the date of his death: no one can think of an appropriate inscription for his monument.)

Yet if Heathcliff must enact the depersonalized role of a damned spirit, the "romantic" motif of the novel necessitates his having been a victim himself—not of Hindley or of the "ruling classes," but of his soul-mate Catherine. He is unkillable but may die from within, willing his own extinction, as his "soul's bliss kills his body, but does not satisfy itself." Just as the narcissistic self-laceration of the childlovers cannot yield to so social and communal a ritual as marriage, so, too, does the "romantic-gothic" mode consume itself, and retreat into history: for the fiction of Wuthering Heights must be that we have had Lockwood's diary put into our hands, many years after his transcription of events belonging to another century. We read his "reading" of Mrs. Dean's tale, parts of which seem remote and even legendary, Ghosts are by popular tradition trapped on an earthly plane, cursed by the need, which any compulsive-obsessive neurotic might understand, to cross and recross the same unyielding terrain, never advancing, never progressing, never attaining the freedom of
adulthood. Even Edgar, the wronged husband, the master of Thrushcross Grange, soliloquizes:

I've prayed often... for the approach of what is coming: and now I begin to shrink, and fear it. I thought the memory of the hour I came down that glen a bridegroom would be less sweet than the anticipation that I was soon, in a few months, or, possibly, weeks, to be carried up, and laid in its lonely hollow! Ellen, I've been very happy with my little Cathy... But I've been as happy musing by myself among those stones, under that old church, lying, through the long June evenings, on the green mound of her mother's grave, and wishing—yearning for the time when I might lie beneath it.††

Considering his late wife's vehement rejection of him, this is an extraordinary statement, and Edgar goes on to say that, to prevent Heathcliff's victimization of his daughter, he would "rather resign her to God, and lay her in the earth before me." Nothing is learned in the older generation; the ease of death is preferred to the combat of life. The wonder is that so strong-willed a personality as young Catherine can have sprung from such debilitated soil.

So with the perpetual childhood of myths, fairy tales, legends, and gothic romances, which, occupying a timeless "present," relate to no time at all. Being outsized and exemplary of passions, their characters cannot be human: they are frozen in a single attitude, they are an attitude, and can never develop. Only young Catherine undergoes a change of personality, and, in willfully altering her own fate, transforms the Heights itself. She alone resists Heathcliff; she nurses her invalid husband in his final sickness, and nearly succumbs to death herself. When Heathcliff somewhat uncharacteristically asks her how she feels, after Linton has died, she says: "He's safe, and I'm free.... I should feel well—but... you have left me so long to struggle against death alone, that I feel and see only death! I feel like death!" †³—a speech that allows us to see how very far Catherine has come, within a remarkably brief span of time.

In another sort of novel Heathcliff would assuredly have been drawn to his widowed daughter-in-law, if only for sexual, or exploitative purposes: but Wuthering Heights is fiercely chaste, and none of its characters gives any impression of being violated by a sexual idea. (The fact that Catherine is pregnant, and that her pregnancy is advanced, during the final tempestuous love scene between her and Heathcliff, is never commented upon by anyone: not even by the unequivocal Mrs. Dean, whose domain is the physical world and whose eye is presumably undimmed by romance. One must be forgiven for wondering if the pregnancy—the incontestably huge belly of Catherine Linton—is not acknowledged because it is so blatant a fact of physical life, so absolute a fact of her wifehood, which excludes Heathcliff; or because, given the Victorian strictures governing author as well as characters, it cannot be acknowledged. Perhaps there is simply no vocabulary to enclose it.)

Young Catherine, however, has not inherited her mother's predilection for the grave. She soon exhibits an altogether welcome instinct for self-knowledge and compromise—for the subtle stratagems of adult life—that have been, all along, absent in her elders. Where Heathcliff by his nature remains fixed and two-dimensional, a character in a bygone drama, until his final "change" draws him so unresistingly to death, Catherine's nature is bound up with, and enforced by, the cyclical motion of the seasons: her triumph over him is therefore inevitable. Once or twice she lapses to the self-absorbed manner of the elder Catherine, in seeking (futilely) to provoke two men into fighting over her; but she is too clever to persist. That she learns to accommodate Hareton's filial affection for his monstrous "father" indicates the scope and range of her new maturity—an attribute, it must be said, that genuinely surprises the reader. For suddenly it becomes possible at Wuthering Heights, as if for the first time in human history, that one generation will not be doomed to repeat the tragic errors of its parents. Suddenly, childhood is past; it retreats to a darkly romantic and altogether poignant legend, a "fiction" of surpassing beauty but belonging to a remote time.

As the stylized gothic romance yields to something approaching "realism," the artfully fractured chronology begins to sort itself out, as if we are waking rapidly from a dream, and the present time of September 1802 is the authentic present, for both the diarist Lockwood and the inhabitants of Wuthering Heights. Mysteries are gradually dispelled; we have gained a more certain footing; as Lockwood makes his way to the Heights, he notes that "all that remained of day was a beamless, amber light along the west; but I could see every pebble on the path, and every blade of grass by that splendid moon." The shift from the gothic sensibility has been prepared from the very first, by Brontë's systematically detailed settings, which are rendered in careful prose by the narrators Lockwood and Mrs. Dean—the only characters we might reasonably expect to see the Heights, the Grange, and the moors. The romantic lovers consume themselves in feeling; they feel deeply enough but their feeling relates only to themselves, and excludes the rest of the world. But the narrators, and, through them, the reader, are privileged to see. (It is significant that the ghost-lovers of the older generation walk the moors on rainy nights, and that the lovers of the new generation walk by moonlight.)
For all that she has been demeaned as ordinary, unimaginative, and incapable of comprehending a "grand passion" of the operatic scale of Catherine's and Heathcliff's, the novel's central narrator, Ellen Dean, in her solitary fashion, remains unshakably faithful to the actual world in which romance burns itself out: the workaday world of "splendidly reflected" light and heat, and smooth white paving stone, and high-backed chairs, and immense pewter vessels and tankards, and kitchens cheerful with great fires. Never has the physical world been rendered with more precision, and more obvious sympathy, whether it is the primitive outer world of the moors, or the interiors of the houses; that curious and endlessly fascinating oak paneled bed, with "squares cut out near the top, resembling coach windows"; Miss Catherine Earnshaw's silken costume, when she returns from five weeks at the Grange; the pipes old Joseph smokes, with evident pleasure. "I smelt the rich scent of the heating spices." Mrs. Dean reports, "and admired the shining kitchen utensils, the polished clock, decked in holly, the silver mugs ranged on a tray ready to be filled with mule ale for supper; and, above all, the speckless purity of my particular care—the scoured and well-swept floor. I gave due inward applause to every object...."

It is this fidelity to the observed physical world, and Brontë's own inward applause, that makes the metamorphosis of the dark tale into its opposite so plausible, as well as so ceremonially appropriate. Though the grave is misjudged by certain persons as a place of fulfillment, the world is not after all phantasmal: it is by daylight that love survives. Long misread as a poetic and metaphysical work given a sort of sickly, fevered radiance by way of the "narrowness" of Emily Brontë's imagination, Wuthering Heights can be more accurately be seen as a work of mature and astonishing magnitude. The poetic and the "prosaic" are in exquisite harmony; the metaphysical is balanced by the physical. An anomaly, a sport, a freak in its own time, it can be seen by us, in ours, as brilliantly of that time—and contemporaneous with our own.

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**Victorian Suicide: Mad Crimes and Sad Histories**

Barbara T. Gates, Alumni Distinguished Professor of English, University of Delaware

Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*, set in 1771-1803 but published in 1847, alludes both to pre-1823 burial customs and to those of 1823. Brontë seems to have felt free to use both the laws in effect during the time of her story and those governing early Victorian times. In narrating the details surrounding Hindley Earnshaw's death (1784), for example, she draws upon the earlier statutes. Although the exact cause of Hindley's death is never determined, all who saw him at the end claim that he died in a state of drunkenness. Mr. Kenneth, who tells Nelly about the death, says that he "died true to his character, drunk as a lord" (p. 153). And Heathcliff, when Nelly asks if she may proceed with suitable arrangements for Hindley's funeral, retorts that "correctly . . . that fool's body should be buried at the cross-roads, without ceremony of any kind. I happened to leave him ten minutes, yesterday afternoon; and, in that interval, he fastened the two doors of the house against me, and he has spent the night in drinking himself to death deliberately!" (WH, 153)

The precise circumstances of Hindley's death, which are reported in considerable detail, have important implications for the course of Brontë's novel. For if Hindley did die drunk and debauched, as both Kenneth and Heathcliff indicate he did, in the eighteenth century he would automatically have been considered a suicide, exactly as Heathcliff suggests. Even more importantly, in that case his property could legally have been forfeited to the Crown, with nothing left for Hareton and hence nothing left for Heathcliff to employ as a tool in his revenge. It is probably for this reason that Heathcliff allows Nelly to perform proper burial rights for Hindley, thus relinquishing a more immediate revenge upon Hindley's dead body while gaining a long-term hold on the entire Earnshaw family.

Earlier, just before coming to the Heights, Nelly had consulted with Linton's lawyer about Hindley's death and had requested that the lawyer come to the Heights with her. His refusal is telling, for he advises that "Heathcliff be let alone, affirming that if the truth were known, Hareton would be found little else than a beggar"(WH, 153). The "truth" here may be that Heathcliff is Hareton's only hope because he is Hindley's creditor; or that the lawyer, probably Mr. Green, is already under Heathcliff's influence. But it may also be that Hindley's death as a suicide is better left ignored, primarily because of the possibility of forfeiture.

Catherine Earnshaw's death precedes her brother's by only half a year, and it too can be considered suicidal. There is little doubt that Catherine knows how to induce her own ill health, even though she does not intend suicide when she first embarks upon her fast in Chapter II. At this point, totally breaking her own body and heart is, for Catherine, still "a deed to be reserved for a forlorn hope" (WH, 101). What happens, however, is that Catherine's body only partially cooperates with her will, and Nelly's assumption that Catherine is in
total control of her situation is a tragic miscalculation. After only three days’ fast, Catherine is already past saving. When she realizes that neither Linton nor Heathcliff has become genuinely alarmed and then chooses not to die, she cannot reverse her headlong journey toward destruction.

The important scene before her mirror (WH, 106) already spells this doom for Catherine, as Q. D. Leavis has realized (Leavis, 146). Catherine is shocked when she sees her own reflection because she seems to understand what Yorkshire folklore dictates: that sick people should never look at themselves in a mirror. If they do, their souls may take flight from their weak bodies by being projected into the mirror, and this can cause their death. In accordance with this belief, immediately after she sees her reflection in the mirror, Catherine is convinced that she really will die. Leavis suggests that this realization replaces Catherine's fear of ghosts, anxiously expressed just before: "I hope it will not come out when you are gone! Oh! Nelly, the room is haunted!" (WH, 106). I believe, however, that the realization and the fear are even more closely related. For Catherine actually seems to consider herself to be the ghost once she recognizes that the face in the mirror is her own. " 'Myself,' she gasped, 'and the clock is striking twelve! It's true then; that's dreadful!' " (WH, 106). Catherine's utter horror here stems from her superstitious belief that suicides become restless ghosts. (See Cavendish, 555; and Gutch, 42, 48). She now assumes herself to be a suicide, and it is this aspect of Catherine's unnerving realization before the mirror that incites her subsequent raving about the ghosts at Gimmerton Kirkyard. [09/10]

After this scene, there is only one more meeting between Catherine and Heathcliff before her actual death. On that occasion their dialogue is filled with allusions to Catherine's suicide and her would-be haunting of Heathcliff. Catherine now feels that she will never be at peace; while Heathcliff repeatedly expresses regret over what he feels is Catherine's self-murder and his relationship to it. In desperation, Heathcliff can forgive Catherine her murder of him but not her own willed death, which she in turn blames on him. All this seemingly metaphorical talk of murder reflects suicide law. Any accomplice of a suicide was legally considered his/her murderer, (see Jacob, pp.3473-3475) so that, ironically, the protagonists' accusations of one another could, were they true, carry the weight of law, as well as of guilt.

Catherine is not, however, buried as a suicide. Nelly wonders "after the wayward and impatient existence she had led, whether she merited a haven of peace at last" (WH 137-38), but after looking at her in death, decides that she probably does. Instead, Catherine is interred in the corner of the Kirkyard under the wall, "to the surprise of the villagers" (WH, 140). Because the local people did not know of the means of Catherine's death, they might have expected that she would lie either in the chapel with the Lintons or by the tombs of the Earnshaws. Their wonderment is understandable when one recalls another folk belief about suicides. Particularly after the 1823 law, when suicides could legally be buried in churchyards, it became customary in parts of northern Britain for their bodies to be laid below the churchyard wall, so that no one would be likely to walk over their graves (see Westermarck, 255-256). The place of Catherine's burial would thus have had particular significance for the folk of Gimmerton, who would no doubt have inferred the nature of her death from the location of her grave.

Unquestionably the place of Catherine's burial determines Heathcliff's own choice of a burial site and consequently his own need not to become discovered as a suicide. Because of his reputation and his doubtful place in the Gimmerton community, it is far less likely that Heathcliff would be extended the kind of pity that had allowed for the churchyard burials of Hindley and Catherine. He knows this and knows too of the possibility of interment in the public highway and is therefore scrupulous about not appearing suicidal. This accounts for the long delay of his own death, which continues to trouble the novel's critics; recent examples include Mitchell, 1973. Unfortunately for Heathcliff's union with Catherine, Linton dies before Heathcliff does and is the one to be buried in the grave next to hers. Lawyer Green, now the tool of Heathcliff, does suggest that Linton be buried appropriately in the chapel. Linton's death is of natural causes and his family all lie there. But Green, though under Heathcliff's influence, [10/11] must abide by the stipulations of Linton's will, which states Linton's desire to be buried with Catherine. Nelly, for one, issues "loud protestations against any infringement of its directions" (WH, 226).

Less than a year elapses between Linton's death and Heathcliff’s, the year in which Heathcliff and Wuthering Heights are so intensely haunted by Catherine that even the prosaic Lockwood is influenced to dream of her. Toward the end of this time, Nelly observes how isolated and peculiar Heathcliff has become and warns him against taking his own life. As she notes, he undergoes his most dramatic set of changes from the time of his curious hunting accident, when "his gun burst" while he was "out on the hills by himself" (WH, 246). Finding himself still alive after the accident, Heathcliff forces himself to reach home, despite a heavy loss of blood. Detained by this accident, lie is brought into closer contact with Cathy and Hareton. Now, however, as his tormentings of them only serve to remind him of Catherine, he becomes affected by the strange tedium vitae that was considered the cause of so many nineteenth-century suicides.

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### I AM HEATHCLIFF

- How deep a chord Emily strikes with the relationship of Catherine and Heathcliff is shown by the use Simone de Beauvoir makes of it in writing of the French tradition of the *grandes amoureuses* or the the great female lovers. Catherine's affirmation "I am Heathcliff" is for de Beauvoir the cry of every woman in love. In her feminist, existentialist reading, the woman in love surrenders her identity for his identity and her world for his world; she becomes the incarnation or embodiment of the man she loves, his reflection, his double. The basis for this relationship lies in the roles society assigns to males and females.

  The male is the standard or norm, the One; he is the subject who is capable of choice, of acting, of taking responsibility, and of affecting his destiny. The female, who is measured against the standard of the male, becomes the Other, dependent on him; she is an object to be acted upon by man, the subject; she is given meaning and status by her relationship to him. She is taught to regard man as godlike and to worship him; the goal of her existence is to be associated with him, to love him and be loved by him, because this allows her to share in his male power and sovereignty. She achieves happiness when the man she loves accepts her as part of his identity. In reality, because no man is godlike, she is ultimately disappointed but refuses to acknowledged his fallibility; because no man can give her either his ability to act and choose or the character to accept responsibility for those actions and choices, she does not really achieve or even participate in his status as subject or standard. She remains dependent, Other. It comes as no surprise, then, to find that the woman in love, who is seldom the wife, at least in France and Italy, is the woman who waits.

- Catherine implies that their love is timeless and exists on some other plane than her feelings for Linton, which are conventionally romantic. If their love exists on a spiritual or at least a non-material plane, then she is presumably free to act as she pleases in the material, social plane; marrying Edgar will not affect her relationship with Heathcliff. By dying, she relinquishes her material, social self and all claims except those of their love, which will continue after death. Heathcliff, in contrast, wants physical togetherness; hence, his drive to see her corpse and his arrangements for their corpses to merge by decaying into each other.

- If identity rather than personal relationship is the issue or the nature of their relationship, then Catherine is free to have a
relationship with Edgar because Heathcliff's feelings and desires do not have to be taken into account. She needs to think only of herself, in effect.

- In Lord David Cecil's view, conflict arises between unlike characters, and the deepest attachments are based on characters' similarity or affinity as expressions of the same spiritual principle. Thus, Catherine loves Heathcliff because as children of the storm they are bound by their similar natures. This is why Catherine says she loves Heathcliff "because he's more myself than I am. Whatever our souls are made of, his and mine are the same.." As the expression of the principle of the storm, their love is, of course, neither sexual nor sensual.

- Because of the merging of their identities or, perhaps it would be more accurate to say, because of their intense desire to merge and refusal to accept their literal separateness, Catherine's betrayal of her own nature destroys not only her but threatens Heathcliff with destruction also.

- Is Catherine deluding herself with this speech? Louis Beverslius answers yes, Catherine is preoccupied, if not obsessed with the image of herself "as powerfully, even irresistibly, attracted to Heathcliff." Their bond is a negative one: they identify with one another in the face of a common enemy, they rebel against a particular way of life which both find intolerable. It is not enough, however, simply to reject a particular way of life; one cannot define oneself wholly in terms of what he despises. One must carve out for oneself an alternative which is more than a systematic repudiation of what he hates. A positive commitment is also necessary. The chief contrast between Catherine and Heathcliff consists in the fact that he is able to make such a commitment (together with everything it entails) while she is not. And, when the full measure of their characters has been taken, this marks them as radically dissimilar from one another, whatever their temporary 'affinities' appear to be. It requires only time for this radical dissimilarity to become explicit.

Their dissimilarities appear when she allies herself, however sporadically, with the Lintons and oscillates between identifying with them and with Heathcliff. When Heathcliff throws hot applesauce at Edgar and is banished, Catherine initially seems unconcerned and later goes off to be with Heathcliff. Her rebelliousness changes from the open defiance of throwing books into the kennel to covert silence and a double character. Catherine both knows Heathcliff and does not know him; she sees his avarice and vengefulness, but believes that he will not injure Isabella because she warned him off. Catherine's mistaken belief that she and Heathcliff still share an affinity moves her to distinguish in their last conversation between the real Heathcliff whom she is struggling with and the image of Heathcliff which she has held since childhood. It is with the false image that she has an affinity:

Oh, you see, Nelly! He would not relent a moment, to keep me out of hte grave! That is how I'm loved! Well, never mind! That is not my Heathcliff. I shall love mine yet; and take him with me–he's in my soul.

The fact that to maintain the fiction of their affinity Catherine has to create two Heathcliffs, an inner and an outer one, suggests that total affinity does not exist and that complete merging of two identities is impossible.

- Catherine is similarly deluded about her childhood and has painted a false picture of the freedom of Wuthering Heights.

Catherine's assertion that Heathcliff is "more myself than I am" is generally read as an expression of elemental passion. But is it possible that she is using Heathcliff as a symbol of their childhood, when she had freedom of movement and none of the responsibilities and pressure of adulthood, when she was "half savage, and hardy and free."? Does Catherine become, in the words of Lyn Pykett, "the object of a competitive struggle between two men, each of whom wants her to conform to his own version of her"?
The Psychology of Loneliness in Wuthering Heights

by Eric P. Levy

As Walter Allen has observed, Wuthering Heights "is utterly unlike any other novel." (1) Historically, the most celebrated aspect of its uniqueness concerns the portrayal of character. According to E. M. Forster, "the emotions of Heathcliff and Catherine Earnshaw function differently to other emotions in fiction." (2) But the psychological strangeness of these two figures has undermined their intelligibility. Bernard Paris points out several critics who do not regard Heathcliff as "a mimetic character"—that is, one whose function is to represent a person. (3) Similarly, Joyce Carol Oates finds Catherine's unusual fixation on her own childhood inaccessible to analysis: "why, as a married woman of nineteen, she should know herself irrevocably 'changed'—the novel does not presume to explain." (4) Mr. Lockwood, the primary narrator of the novel, has also aroused perplexity. David Sonstream judges Lockwood's character to be incoherent because he "is alternately happy warrior and repressive milksop." (5) Dorothy Van Ghent sees Lockwood's famous nightmare of Catherine's ghost as somehow extraneous to its dreamer and the result of autonomous "powers of darkness." (6) Ruth Adams argues that the nightmare "contaminates" Lockwood with the violence proper to Wuthering Heights. (7)

The difficulty of explaining these three characters has led many critics to approach Emily Bronte's fiction with the aid of psychological theory. Freud is the theorist most frequently invoked (8) but there are several others, as evident for example in Paris's attempt to define Heathcliff in the nomenclature of Karen Horney as an "arrogant-vindictive personality" and in Pratt's Jungian linking of both Heathcliff and Catherine with the "[d]ying-god archetype." (9) Other critics found the explication of character on fundamental oppositions detected in the text and corresponding (in most cases) to the two households depicted in the novel, Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange. Even a short list of these polarities is impressively varied: "the land of storm" and "the home of calm" (Cecil), Hell and Heaven (Gilbert and Gubar), "the Sexual" and "the Spiritual" (Prentis), classless society and hierarchal society (Winnifreth), disappearing farm culture and emerging Victorian gentility (Q. D. Leavis), savagery and civilization (Reed), patriarchal society and negated feminine authority (Lavabre). (10)

Though each interpretation enhances our understanding of the novel, none has approached consensual acceptance. Indeed, in 1964 Mildred Christian could already observe that "[t]he contradictory judgments on Wuthering Heights are the most striking fact in its critical history." (11) More recently, both Miller and Baldridge have insisted that the novel lacks any central or formative principle by which its meaning can be comprehensively explicated. (12) Mid such boisterous disagreement, there remains the opportunity to combine the psychological and polarizing approaches in order to explain Heathcliff, Catherine, and Lockwood in terms of a distinctly Brontean psychology embedded in the text and founded on the fundamental polarities of their own experience.

The prominent role played by Catherine's ghost in the lives of both Heathcliff and Lockwood can serve as an introduction. As we shall see, the most important afterlife in the world of Emily... Bronte is the life after childhood—the persistence in adulthood of the attitude toward love acquired in childhood. Wuthering Heights explores two types of defective love in childhood, each barring the path to fulfilling love in adulthood. For reference purposes, they can be named descriptively as Unlove and Overlove. The Earnshaw family of Wuthering Heights is the representative household of Unlove where childhood is an experience of neglect, abuse, and rejection. In contrast, the Linton family of Thrushcross Grange is the representative household of Overlove with its tendency to overprotect and coddle children, treating them as "petted things." (13) In one family, the implied message transmitted to the child might be rendered as "You don't belong here"; in the other, "You're too weak ever to leave." The most devastating consequence of either type of defective love is that the adults emerging from it have difficulty separating the need for love from the fear of abandonment. Their need for love is exceeded only by their distrust of it. The distrust of the Unloved results from the expectation of rejection; that of the Overloved stems from an overwhelming dependence which, feeling itself too weak to survive rejection, can trust only a love unable to leave.

As we shall find later, certain characters in the novel, such as Hindley, Edgar, and Isabella, provisionally solve the conflict between the
learned that love entails.

To uncover this fantasy is to probe the Brontean notion of the unconscious, for it exploits the conscious misery inflicted by loneliness in order to prove that satisfactory love with another in real life is impossible: satisfaction must be sought exclusively in the fantasies that frustration in real life arouses. As a result of the distrust of love so painfully acquired in childhood, the only love these figures can accept in adulthood is one sustained by fantasy, because that is the only love that guarantees secure possession. But those in whom this need for fantasy resides are ignorant of its presence. They regard their loneliness as a tormenting affliction whereas, by encouraging fantasy, it actually fulfills their own deepest wish: the wish that love remain no more than wishing, for only in that way can inviolable intimacy be assured.

This preliminary paradox entails another that we shall also clarify in the course of our study. The obverse of the unconscious need to confine intimacy to fantasy is the need for conscious preoccupation with loneliness. The need for fantasy requires that the waking awareness of the subject it controls focus regularly on the pain of loneliness and the memory of loss. Otherwise, the need for the fantasy of intimacy might be displaced by genuine intimacy—in which case, the subject would be left defenseless in his relation with real love, just as in childhood when the need for the protection of fantasy was first unconsciously conceived. In different ways, both the Unloved and Overloved unwittingly exploit their own suffering of loneliness not only y to perpetuate the need for the fantasy of intimacy, as we have just noted, but also—and most ironically—to approximate the type of love which that fantasy concerns: an intimacy secure from loss, for it is based on the sharing, not of love, but rejection.

As a result of the Unlove that they were made to suffer, both Heathcliff and Catherine, by opposite means and in distinct circumstances, turn loneliness into a community of rejection over which they wield absolute control. Heathcliff does this by persecuting those he hates; Catherine, by persecuting those she loves. Yet, by thus avenging the pain of rejection, they simultaneously increase it; the more each mistreats others, the more estranged from them each becomes. Hence, cruelty to others ultimately becomes cruelty to themselves. But the meaning of their loneliness is transformed by this antagonism. Instead of suffering as the helpless victim of rejection, each now suffers as its unassailable source. Whereas loneliness formerly derived from humiliating rejection, it now expresses a complacent aloofness: neither needs those he or she hurts; instead, loneliness expresses contempt for company. But at the same that loneliness implies rejection of others, it also reinforces the sense of worthiness to be loved by another—a confidence, which, as rejection in childhood taught them, love inevitably, undermines. Only loneliness can make them feel worthy of love, because only through loneliness can each simultaneously avenge rejection and re-verse the personal debasement resulting from it.

The Overloved (or, more precisely, as we shall see, the type thereof represented by Lockwood) shows the same tendency to manipulate loneliness, but the loneliness manipulated is founded on a principle of exclusion contrary to that underpinning the isolation of the Unloved. Whereas the Unloved tries through cruelty to universalize rejection in order to exalt himself above it, the Overloved tries through the need for pity to monopolize rejection so that in his mind he becomes its most helpless victim. Both the Unloved and Overloved strive toward the same goal: a love secure from the threat of rejection. But each side employs a different, though unconscious, strategy for achieving this objective. The Unloved separates love from the threat of rejection by making loneliness confirm eligibility for intimacy. The Overloved (in the example to be examined) separates love from the threat of rejection by pursuing an intimacy that is no more than self-pity for his own loneliness. This reliance on pity is not displayed by the Unloved who learned in childhood that to expose one's vulnerability is to risk increasing it. Hence, the only pity the Unloved wants is cruelty. Aggravating the pain of loneliness is the only way to relieve it because through that suffering, as earlier suggested, the very meaning of isolation is changed.

Our inquiry into these matters can best begin with Heathcliff. The most bizarre example of his resistance to pity occurs during his agony in the garden of Thrushcross Grange, immediately after Catherine's death. Despite the intensity of his suffering, Heathcliff repulses Nelly's compassion: "he held a silent combat with his inward agony, defying, meanwhile, my sympathy with an unflinching, ferocious stare" (p. 203). Here Heathcliff struggles to control not so much his pain as the pity it would evoke. Indeed, a few moments later he yields unrestrainedly to his agony in a manner certain to increase it: "He dashed his head against the knotted trunk; and lifting up his eyes, howled, not like a man, but like a savage beast getting goaded to death with knives and spears" (pp. 204-05). But, as Nelly observes, the very excessiveness of Heathcliff's suffering makes it repellent to pity: "It hardly moved my compassion--it appalled me" (p. 205).

Her remark exposes the central paradox of Heathcliff's character: his own suffering puts him as far beyond the reach of pity as does the cruelty that he makes others suffer. He is as cruel to himself as he is to others. On the superficial level, banging his head against the tree expresses Heathcliff's grief at his loss and frustration at his helplessness to overcome it. But underneath these emotions is something far more significant: the will to intensify his own suffering. Heathcliff needs his suffering even more than he needs Catherine. This paradox
becomes especially vivid in the period following Catherine's death. For even after accepting the fact of her demise, Heathcliff still suffers like a "beast getting goaded to death"--but one goaded now by nothing more than anguished yearning to see her ghost: "It was a strange way of killing, not by inches, but by fractions of hair-breadths, to beguile me with the spectre of a hope, through eighteen years!" (p. 351).

To understand Heathcliff's pain-obsessed relationship with Catherine is to understand his psychological core and the role played by Unlove in forming it. His preoccupation with her ghost gives literal expression to the meaning her love came to have for him when she was still living. Indeed, Heathcliff himself draws the connection: "She showed herself, as she often was in life, a devil to me!" (p. 351). For Heathcliff, love has always been associated with the pain of absence, rejection, and disappointment. This pattern, of course, was initiated by the abusive regime of Hindley. But it was repeated by Catherine, when she wounded Heathcliff by deciding to marry Edgar.

But in the course of the novel, Heathcliff's relationship with the dead Catherine can be seen as an attempt to overcome all the defects in the relationship with the live one, even as it mirrors them. At the deepest level, his obsession with the ghost is motivated by the unconscious fantasy of finally turning the tables on love. This is the fundamental wish of the Unloved: to transform disappointment, rejection, and absence into their contraries by the sheer intensity of the pain they cause. The first evidence of this transformation appears in Heathcliff's account of his desperate effort to disinter Catherine's corpse on the night after her burial. The episode is remarkable for its attribution to Catherine of two opposite traits: pity and cruelty. Just as he is about to force open the coffin, Heathcliff suddenly senses her presence above him: "I relinquished my labour of agony, and turned consoled at once, unspeakably consoled" (p. 350). But a few minutes later--and, as we have just seen, for years afterward--the ghost's pitying presence becomes the instrument of cruelty: "I ought to have swept blood then, from the anguish of my yearning, from the fervour of my supplications to have but one glimpse! I had not one" (p. 351).

This paradoxical fusing of pity and cruelty makes sense when we recall the attitude toward pity created in Heathcliff by Unlove. Despite his emotional agony, pity is vehemently refused; for, as a result of his experience in childhood, Heathcliff has learned that to depend on another for emotional support is to risk increasing his own sense of helplessness. Hence, his unconscious wish as victim in his relationship with Catherine is to suffer so acutely that he becomes independent of pain. In this way, her cruelty ultimately approximates pity--but only if Heathcliff dies of it. At bottom, as we shall see, Heathcliff's yearning for Catherine becomes no more than the eroticization of his own wish for death, and death itself becomes the idealization of his relationship with Catherine.

These unconscious fantasies appear very clearly near the end of the novel. Though Heathcliff is now able to see the ghost, his suffering intensifies: "It's unutterably too much for flesh and blood to bear, even mine" (p. 410). But here, very obviously, cruelty is the purveyor of pity; for the more Heathcliff suffers, the more imminent seems the consolation of relief: "it has devoured my existence--I am swallowed in anticipation of its fulfillment" (p. 395). The ravenous intensity of Heathcliff's obsession with Catherine's ghost consumes his attention. He becomes oblivious to virtually everything--except his preoccupation with the ghost. He forgets to eat, and even has "to remind [himself] to breathe--almost to remind [his] heart to beat!" (p.395). The inevitable consequence of this condition is his own death, as Nelly one morning discovers: "I tried to close his eyes--to extinguish, if possible, that frightful, life-like gaze of exultation. They would not shut--they seemed to sneer at my attempts, and his parted lips, and sharp, white teeth sneered too! " (p. 411).

The meaning of Heathcliff's exultation in death can be clarified by the one occasion when he displays that same emotion in life: Hindley's funeral. At that time, Nelly observes "something like exultation in [Heathcliff's] aspect" (p. 230), and the reason for it is obvious: triumphant revenge against the pain and humiliation that Hindley made him suffer in childhood. This link between exultation and revenge implies that Heathcliff's own death also concerns revenge against pain and humiliation that he has been made to suffer. But this time, the victim of revenge is none other than himself--or, more precisely, as we shall see, his own life. By allowing obsession with the Ghost to usurp the awareness necessary to sustain his own life, Heathcliff avenges himself on the humiliating sense of neglect that life made him suffer. He makes death signify his rejection of life as unworthy of attention. His "life-like gaze" (p. 411) in death views the living with the same "sneer" of contempt with which Unlove once regarded him.

Yet, the undying antagonism between Heathcliff and life can be fully explained only in the context of the afterlife that his death implies. At the end of novel, we read that Heathcliff's ghost is spotted with Catherine's "on every rainy night since his death" (my emphasis, p. 412). As we shall see, the posthumous relation between Heathcliff and Catherine signifies not so much a supernatural reality as the deepest fantasy rooted in their hearts as a result of their experience with Unlove: to have a love that sneers at the need for love, to have a love based on the sharing of rejection.
The condition of "rainy night" associated with Heathcliff and Catherine's afterlife will clarify this fantasy. Near the beginning of the novel, Mr. Lockwood reads a crucial passage in Catherine's childhood diary: "we cannot be damper, or colder, in the rain than we are here" (p. 27). She is referring to one of many occasions (in this case, at nighttime) when Hindley expelled Heathcliff and Catherine from the warm hearth. In this diary entry, the nocturnal rain becomes a more attractive environment than the house in which she lives; for she writes that Heathcliff "proposes that we ... have a scamper on the moors. A pleasant suggestion" (p. 26). We see here the essence of the childhood love between Heathcliff and Catherine: it is a sharing of the state of exclusion from love—a state symbolized by the nocturnal rain. The love that bonds them under that desolate rain is their only escape from the abuse and rejection they suffer in their home, Wuthering Heights. Their love, in other words, is founded on rejection. That is the first principle on which their love depends. The connection between nocturnal rain and the sharing of separation from love is dramatically reinforced elsewhere in the novel. The death of Mr. Earnshaw, an event that exposes both Heathcliff and Catherine to the brutal regime of Hindley, their elder sibling, is marked by a violent nocturnal storm (p. 84), as is the sudden departure of Heathcliff after hearing of Catherine's plan to marry Edgar (p. 124)—a man whose love will eventually make Catherine rue the absence of Heathcliff.

The relationship between Heathcliff and Catherine thrives as long as vulnerability to the same domestic source of Unlove (i.e., Hindley) unites them. Entry into adulthood frees them from that environment, yet even greater discord follows. Each meets the other in mere oppugnancy. Heathcliff reproaches Catherine for abandoning him: "Catherine ... I know you have treated me infernally--infernally!" (p. 138). Catherine is just as convinced that Heathcliff has abandoned her: "You have killed me and thriven on it" (p. 195). Yet in the midst of this embittered opposition, each protests passionately that he or she loves the other—and only the other. It could not be otherwise. Even as a married couple, the result would have been the same. Without a third party on whom to blame the pain of rejection, Heathcliff and Catherine are doomed both to love and resent each other with equal intensity. For, as we have seen, their love is founded on a paradox: no love unless they share the pain of rejection. In childhood, Hindley inflicted that pain on them. In adulthood, they must inflict it on each other. That is what love formed by Unlove means for them. (14)

The "rainy night" image connected with their afterlife suggests that only death can restore the condition defining their love in childhood: joint escape from the pain of rejection. Whereas in childhood the source of rejection was located inside the home, in adulthood that source is eventually identified with life itself which, after Catherine's death, denies Heathcliff all hope of love: "The entire world is a dreadful membranda that she did exist, and that I have lost her!" (p. 394). The open window "flapping to and fro" (p. 410) near Heathcliff's corpse suggests that in death he escapes at last from the unpleasant confines of life and shares love once again with Catherine outside rain. (15) Indeed, the night of his death is marked by another tremendous downpour (p. 364).

The same syndrome finds different expression in Catherine. At bottom, her sickness in adulthood is the need to feel abused by love in order thus to replicate the environment of Unlove indispensable to the intimacy she and Heathcliff once enjoyed. Unable to understand the motive for her own actions, Catherine fulfills this need through fostering rivalry between Heathcliff and Edgar. First, she jilts Heathcliff by marrying Edgar, and then rejects Edgar for forbidding her to receive Heathcliff in the marital home. Finally, she accuses both men of hurting her: "You and Edgar have broken my heart, Heathcliff! And you both come to bewail the deed to me, as if you were the people to be pitied!" (p. 195).

From Catherine's distorted perspective, the Heathcliff whose love she seeks to restore is not the Heathcliff whom her actions wound: "That is not my Heathcliff. I shall love mine yet; and take him with me--he's in my soul" (p. 197). The suffering that she causes the living Heathcliff does not concern her; for the love she wants to revive exists only in the past: the close bond between herself and Heathcliff in the lonely childhood they endured. Death becomes the fantasy of the past resurrected, while the present with its self-imposed misery becomes both a goad to end her life and the means of simulating the circumbience of Unlove in which her love for Heathcliff flourished long ago. (16)

The great irony of Heathcliff's love for Catherine's ghost is that, during her adulthood, there is a kind of ghost inside Catherine--a part perpetuating the perspective of childhood, long after childhood is over. We see this clearly when a delirium precipitated by Edgar's ultimatum that she choose between himself and Heathcliff causes Catherine to forget temporarily her adult identity and to reenter the most traumatic moment of her childhood: "the whole last seven years of my life grew a blank! I did not recall that they had been at all. I was a child; my father was just buried, and my misery arose from the separation that Hindley had ordered between me, and Heathcliff" (p. 153). Yet when Catherine suddenly remembers that she is no longer that forlorn child but an adult married to Edgar, her "despair" (p. 153) instead of abating actually intensifies: "But, supposing at twelve years old, I had been wrenched from the Heights, and every early association, and my all in all, as Heathcliff was at that time, and been converted, at a stroke, into Mrs. Linton . . . the wife of a stranger; an exile, and outcast thenceforth, from what had been my world--You may fancy a glimpse of the abyss where I groveled!" (p. 153).
In contrast to Lockwood's nightmare (to be examined later) where the adult injures the ghostly child, here the part persisting from childhood causes the adult pain: Catherine allows regret for the loss of childhood to bleed her to death, as it were. The more she regrets, the more intolerable adulthood becomes: "I wish I were a girl again, half savage and hardy, and free . . . and laughing at injuries. Not maddening under them!" (p. 153). This scene dramatizes what might be called the suicide of adulthood, and it can be understood on two levels. The first is literal--or almost so. In her delirium, Catherine does indeed hasten her own death by opening her window for too long on a windy winter night while urging an imaginary Heathcliff to join her in the grave: "But Heathcliff. If I dare you now will you venture? . . . they may bury me twelve feet deep . . . but I won't rest till you are with me" (p. 154). But more profoundly, Catherine's suicide of adulthood signifies not an action so much as a persistent attitude: her refusal to identify with her adulthood.

The depth of this refusal becomes intelligible when we consider an earlier crisis in the delirium scene. Here, Catherine fails to recognize her own reflection: "Don't you see that face?" she enquired, gazing earnestly at the mirror" (p. 150). In fact, she recoils from her reflection with a terror as intense as that which grips Lockwood when he sees the child-ghost outside the window. Moreover, the part of Catherine here fearing her own reflection is associated, not with an adult at all, but with the same child-ghost that Lockwood sees on the other side of the window in his dream. Once Catherine recovers from the shock of terror, she sounds exactly like the ghost in Lockwood's dream who "wailed, 'Let me in!'" (p. 31). In Nelly's words, "our fiery Catherine was no better than a wailing child!" (p. 152). And like the ghost, she wails for reentry into the house of childhood: "Oh, if I were but in my own bed in the old house!" (p. 151).

Catherine knows herself only through regret for loss of childhood--the same emotion underneath Heathcliff's lust for revenge. But in Lockwood's famous dream we find the direct opposite: an overwhelming fear of returning to childhood, even as he regresses helplessly toward it. But before analyzing his dream, we must consider the context of its occurrence.

Near the beginning of the novel, Lockwood recounts a recent disappointment at a seaside resort where a young woman seemed to reciprocate his bashful attentions. Immediately, Lockwood shrank "icily into [himself] like a snail, at every glance retired colder and further; till, finally, the poor innocent was led to doubt her own senses, and . . . persuaded her mamma to decamp" (p. 7). However much Lockwood wants to respond to love, some reflex makes him withdraw every time the chance for love approaches: "By this curious turn of disposition I have gained the reputation of deliberate heartlessness, how undeserved, I alone can appreciate" (p. 7). As a result, Lockwood feels doomed to fulfill his mother's prediction that he "should never have a comfortable home" (p. 7). This reference to his mother hints strongly that the cause of Lockwood's adult loneliness is his experience with love in childhood. Indeed, right after the resort digression three incidents occur in which he visibly regresses to childhood.

Lockwood feels strangely drawn to his new landlord, Heathcliff and, despite the reluctant hospitality, persists in visiting him. During the first visit, while waiting in the parlor of Wuthering Heights for Heathcliff and Joseph to return from the cellar, Lockwood acts in a most unadult way, "winking and making faces" (p. 8) at the three large dogs near him. His regressive behaviour provokes the animals to attack, and Lockwood must cry out for rescue. A second attack occurs during Lockwood's next visit when, fed up with rude treatment, he suddenly snatches a lantern to illumine his path back to Thrushcross Grange, and is pinned by two ferocious dogs unleashed by Joseph. For a few moments, Lockwood loses his manhood entirely and thrashes on the ground in a helpless tantrum, while Heathcliff and Hareton scoff at his "rage and humiliation" (p. 21). Later, Lockwood is given Catherine's old bedroom to sleep in, and there has his dream of the child-ghost who wails piteously: "Let me in!" (p. 31).

Thus, his desperate struggle against that child-ghost culminates a series of regressions to childhood. Each involves a vivid polarity between heartless cruelty and piteous helplessness. In the resort incident (which Lockwood cites as an example of his uncontrollable reflex to withdraw from love), his apparently "deliberate heartlessness" (p. 7) is opposed to the girl's pitiful "confusion" (p. 7). In the two dog incidents, canine savagery is opposed to Lockwood's childish vulnerability; in the dream, the child-ghost's supplications are contrasted with Lockwood's fierce refusal.

Moreover, in the last three incidents of this series, the cruelty is explicitly directed against an intruder figure. The nightmare, of course, is a spectacular intruder dream with Catherine as the figure who must be repelled. In the two dog scenes, Lockwood is himself the intruder--one whose presence in the house is, at best, only warily tolerated. Indeed, he twice refers to his "intrusion" (p. 10, p. 35). By implication, the first incident in the series (Lockwood's reflex to withdraw from love) also concerns the attempt to repel an intruder, though to understand its nature we must remember the regression to childhood associated with all four incidents.

In both types of childhood presented in this novel, the intruder figure signifies, not the thief of property, but the thief of love. When Heathcliff, for example, is first brought into the home by Mr. Earnshaw, everyone there initially resents the intrusion on of the tiny
urchin, and Hindley never gets over his hostility at Heathcliff for being "a usurper of his parent's affections" (p. 47). Moreover, dogs often symbolize hostility toward this special kind of intruder. The locus classicus for such usage is Isabella's remark to Catherine: "You are a dog in the manger, Cathy, and desire no one to be loved but yourself!" (p. 126).

Once adulthood is reached, the mentalities formed in childhood by Unlove and Overlove have different ways of combating the threat of the intruder and fulfilling the desperate need for secure possession of love. The Unloved protects himself from further loss of love by becoming the thief who steals it from others through making them suffer rejection. His or her resulting sense of isolation, as we saw in detail with Heathcliff and Catherine, sustains the unconscious fantasy of eventually receiving love without threat to the vulnerability needing it. In contrast, Lockwood seeks protection from the thief of love through increasing his own fear of intrusion.

Lockwood takes elaborate precautions to avoid heartbreak, whereas Heathcliff--through a lifetime of yearning for Catherine--ensures that his will never mend. When Lockwood meets Catherine's daughter, Cathy, he warns himself against yielding to his attraction for her: "let me beware of the fascination that lurks in Catherine Heathcliff's brilliant eyes. I should be in a curious taking if I surrendered my heart to that young person, and the daughter turned out a second edition of the mother!" (p. 188). But Lockwood's reference to Cathy's mother is only an excuse: for, according to his own testimony, he always withdraws when his need for love is aroused. That is the intruder against which he must protect himself.

Lockwood's nightmare represents in symbolic form the emotional forces controlling a crucial aspect of his waking life: the insecurity caused by his own need for love. Part of Lockwood craves love; we can see this from his frustration after withdrawing from the resort girl. We see it expressed also in the ghost's petition to be let in: "I've been a waif for twenty years" (p. 31). But another part fears that to fall in love as an adult would be to revive the greatest fear of his childhood: the fear of one day being left like a waif without the protective love on which his weakness has come to depend. If he yields to love, he might become as helplessly dependent upon it as he was when a child. Even worse, if then he lost love, how would he ever get over the renewed need for it? Hence, Lockwood can feel secure in adulthood only by cruelly repressing the need for love that has haunted him ever since childhood. But by so doing, Lockwood attempts what might be called the suicide of childhood, as symbolized by his action of rubbing the child-ghost's wrists over the broken glass, "till the blood ran down and soaked the bedclothes" (p. 31). This suicide of childhood is the counterpart of the suicide of adulthood noted in Catherine. Paradoxically, in order to quell the fear of living like a waif that dominated his childhood, Lockwood lives like a kind of waif in adulthood, with no close emotional relationships and with not even (at least during his tenure at Thrushcross Grange) a permanent home of his own. (17)

Thus, at the deepest level, the child-ghost in Lockwood's nightmare is an image of his own loneliness. But what he fears most about loneliness is not the pain of being alone but the desperate need for love that loneliness intensifies. For, as we discovered, Lockwood unconsciously connects his need for love with the helpless dependence that would overwhelm his adult identity, if ever given the chance. (18)

Yet, in addition to warding off dependence on love, Lockwood's loneliness actually serves as substitute for it by allowing him to remain the primary object of his own solicitude. Nothing gets more attention than his own self-pity for what he won't let himself have. We have already heard him complain of the frustration caused by his withdrawal reflex, but he also deplores the boredom that his solitude must endure: "I'm frequently very dull at the Grange--take my books away, and I should be desperate!" (p. 364). But that boredom is the inevitable consequence of the loneliness Lockwood must maintain in his adult life in order to avoid the risk of love. In fact, the books connected with his boredom are invoked in his dream as the very means by which to repel the ghost symbolizing his need for love: "I... hurriedly piled the books up in a pyramid against it, and stopped my ears to exclude the lamentable prayer" (p. 31).

Lockwood's nightmare can be clarified further if we turn now to the dream immediately preceding it. Here Lockwood sits in church, enduring an interminable sermon delivered by Jabez Branderham. Finally, enraged by tedium, Lockwood rises to denounce the preacher, only to find himself assailed by "the whole assembly, exalting their pilgrim's staves" (p. 29). Unfortunately, Lockwood is the only member of the congregation without a staff, and so he tries to snatch Joseph's. A general fracas ensues: "Every man's hand was against his neighbour" (p. 29). The cacophony of "rappings and counter-rappings" (p. 29) awakens Lockwood who then hears a real noise, caused by a branch of a windblown fir-tree rapping against the windowpanes. The confusion in the dream where each man fights his fellow vividly symbolizes Lockwood's psychomachy or internal conflict. One part, as we have seen, protests against the regime of boredom, while another part enforces it.

The phallic implications of Lockwood's status as the only man without a staff have been stressed by many critics. (19) But the novel itself
suggests that a condition other than the Oedipal castration complex is implied, though we shall need a few moments to explain it. The
tale of rebellion against the tedium of enforced religious observance first appears immediately prior to this dream when, before falling
asleep, Lockwood reads in Catherine's childhood "diary" (p. 24) a description of the boring Sunday observance imposed at home on
herself and Heathcliff by Joseph at the instigation of Hindley: "The service lasted precisely three hours" (p. 25). Moreover, Lockwood
also reads that, when Catherine and Heathcliff later attempted to break the monotonous solemnity of Sunday evening by engaging in a
little play, Hindley instantly repressed them: "I insist on perfect sobriety and silence" (p. 25). But there is yet another antecedent to
Lockwood's dream of Branderham. Earlier that day, near the beginning of his impromptu visit to Wuthering Heights, Lockwood hears
Cathy threaten Joseph who has just criticized her "idleness": "I warn you to refrain from provoking me, or I'll ask your abduction as a
special favour" (p. 18). This emphasis on removal is echoed in Lockwood's declaration after enduring all he can take of Branderham's
sermon: "Drag him down, and crush him to atoms. that the place which knows him may know him no more!" (p. 29, my emphasis).

In the context of this juxtapositioning with both Catherine's diary entry and Cathy's rebuking of Joseph, Lockwood's Branderham dream
can be further explicated. In the dream, the staff is the universal attribute that all men in the congregation except Lockwood possess.
Without a staff, he is unable to defend himself or successfully assert his rights. This helplessness corresponds to the childhood situation
of Catherine and Heathcliff who, in the diary entry, were powerless to escape the regime of Hindley and his servant, Joseph.(20) But in
contrast to this childhood impotence, Cathy, who as a young woman is abducted by Heathcliff and temporarily imprisoned in Wuthering
Heights, manages to cow the offending Joseph and force him to retreat from the room. Her greater effectiveness is a function of her
emergent adulthood. In contrast, Lockwood's staffless status in the dream indicates a lack, not of maleness, but of manhood (the large,
"heavy-headed" [p. 27] appearance of Joseph's staff is significantly emphasized). On a crucial level, Lockwood is still a child, rebelling
vainly against the tedious regime of adulthood.(21) But as we learned from our analysis of his second nightmare, the intolerable boredom
of his adulthood derives precisely from the refusal to satisfy the need for love rendered problematic by his childhood.(22)

This interpretation of Lockwood's first dream is corroborated by the text. The image of the brandished staff occurs on two other
occasions. The first concerns the aged Mr. Earnshaw's reaction to Hindley's abuse of Heathcliff: "Mr. Earnshaw] seized his stick to strike
him, and shook with rage that he could not do it" (p. 50). Here, the staff signifies the father's fury, not so much at his son, as at his own
inability to punish him. The second image of the brandished staff concerns Joseph's visit to Thrushcross Grange in order to announce
Heathcliff's demand for custody of his son, Linton. To reinforce his authority, Joseph gives "a thud with his prop on the floor" (p. 249).
The tumult of rapping clubs in Lockwood's dream conflates these associations. On the one hand, through connection with the failure
of the adult, Mr. Earnshaw. to discipline his child, Hindley, the rapping suggests Lockwood's own difficulty as an adult in quelling the need
for love, which he links with the dependence of the child. On the other hand, through connection with the imperious demand of the adult,
Joseph, for possession of the child. Linton, the rapping suggests Lockwood's determination to master the childish impulse that threatens
to overwhelm his adult identity--even if it means treating his own need for love as cruelly as Heathcliff treats Linton, or as Lockwood
himself treats the ghost. Thus. the brandished staff attains in the fiction of Emily Bronte the force of an archetype whose recurrence in the
text signifies the pervasive influence of the mentalities of Overlove and Unlove connected with it.

We can understand now the strange affinity that Lockwood feels for Heathcliff: they share the same need for loneliness. The only love in
adulthood that they can completely trust is the one that loneliness makes them imagine; for such love is the only one over which they
have complete control. But each has his own way of exploiting isolation or, to adapt Lockwood's image, each approaches loneliness from
the opposite direction: "Mr. Heathcliff and I are such a suitable pair to divide the desolation between us" (p. 3). One displays the attitude
toward loneliness associated with the Unlove at Wuthering Heights; the other displays the attitude toward loneliness associated with the
Overlove at Thrushcross Grange.

As Unloved, Heathcliff imposes loneliness on others in revenge against the lack of love he himself was forced to endure. Yet, the deepest
motive of his cruelty is the need to increase his own isolation, since exclusion from others was the very condition on which his love for
Catherine originally depended. Through his obsession with her ghost, Heathcliff makes his loneliness in adulthood simulate the only
intimacy he knew in childhood: sharing with Catherine the state of banishment or expulsion from company. For their love, as we have
seen, was first formulated as the joint enduring of rejection. In contrast, Lockwood makes loneliness prove that, instead of actually
enjoying love, he will always remain separated from it, as if by a clear pane of glass. He can want, but never have; for what he lets
himself have he might eventually lose, and then be left alone with his renewed dependence. But while loneliness protects Lockwood from
the childish dependence that love would revive, it also gives him an Overlove more secure than any that real love in adulthood could
provide. For as long as he remains alone, he can pity his own suffering of isolation.(23) Loneliness thus provides him with an Overlove
more intimate than any other, for in it no one--not even the caregiver--gets between Lockwood and his need for indulgent attention.
Thus, both Heathcliff and Lockwood derive from loneliness a simulacrum of the type of love each requires. For Heathcliff, preoccupied with the ghost, loneliness enables the sharing of Unlove; for Lockwood, frustrated by self-imposed boredom and isolation, loneliness permits the perpetuation of Overlove. The opposition between Heathcliff and Lockwood--and, more especially, between the mentalities of Unlove and Overlove connected with them--can be further clarified by juxtaposing the two scenes in the novel involving a window-breaking and bloodletting struggle with a dreaded intruder: Lockwood's second nightmare and Heathcliff's nocturnal return from Catherine's grave.

In the latter scene, Hindley (intently observed by Isabella), frantically attempts to deny Heathcliff reentry into Wuthering Heights. When grappling with Heathcliff, who has just smashed his way through a window, Hindley falls "senseless with excessive pain" (p. 218), and does not regain consciousness for some time. Astonishingly, his insensate condition elicits one of the few gestures of pity ever displayed by Heathcliff, who terminates his retaliation in order to bind up Hindley's wound. Yet the brutal strength Heathcliff shows in this scene by breaking through the window and rendering Hindley helpless itself derives from Heathcliff's own pitiful helplessness in relation to the ghost. For, as we learn later, Heathcliff is focusing his at attention here, not on Hindley at all, but on the ghost whom he at this moment is desperately striving to see: "I remember, that accursed Earnshaw and my wife opposed my entrance. I remember stopping to kick the breath out of him, and then hurrying upstairs, to my room, and hers--I looked round impatiently--I felt her by me--I could almost see her, and yet I could not!" (p. 350-51). Ironically, the thrashing Heathcliff gives Hindley becomes an analogue of the "intolerable torture" (p. 351) that Catherine's invisibility inflicts on Heathcliff.

The most obvious difference between these related scenes concerns the power of the intruder each portrays. In Lockwood's nightmare, the intruder is pathetically weak and can do little more than bleed; in the forced entry scene, Heathcliff the intruder is ruthlessly strong and inflicts a bleeding wound on the occupant, Hindley. But, as noted, Heathcliff's strength here derives paradoxically from "the anguish of his yearning" (p. 351) to see the ghost. In this regard, he resembles the pitiful ghost in Lockwood's dream. In fact, a little later he utters fervid "supplications" (p. 351) to Catherine's ghost, much as the child-ghost in the nightmare wails its own supplications to Lockwood. These connections between Lockwood's dream and Heathcliff's forced entry into Wuthering Heights underscore a fundamental distinction between these two characters. Heathcliff's strength stems from his need for pity from the ghost; Lockwood's strength derives from his fear of the ghost: "Terror made me cruel" (p. 31).

To understand this distinction, we must first of all understand the difference between pity and fear. Aristotle, the first thinker to connect these emotions with the spectacle of human suffering, can help us here. According to his analysis of tragedy, the crucial difference between pity and fear concerns the degree to which the witness or audience identifies with the pain of the sufferer: "pity is aroused by undeserved misfortune, and fear by that of one like ourselves."(24) Hence, in Aristotle's view, pity requires more emotional distance than fear. If the pain pitied gets too close to its witness, it changes into fear.

In Emily Bronte's universe, the pain or misfortune corresponding to that found by Aristotle in Greek tragedy is the loss of love. The mentalities formed by Unlove and Overlove have different ways of responding to this threat. Overlove characters try to maintain a distance between themselves and the pain of separation, either through fostering extreme dependence on love (as in the overly protective upbringing provided by Isabella to Linton) or by resisting the need for love (as in the case of Lockwood) because of the risk of eventual loss. Appropriately, both these characters prominently display fear when threatened by the pain of separation. Lockwood does so in his nightmare when he repels the ghost representing the pain of separation threatened by his own need for love. Isabella, in the forced entry scene, is similarly "unnerved by terror" (p. 218) at the spectacle of Heathcliff's intrusion. Her overwhelming fear finds its deepest explanation in the fact that Heathcliff here is identified with the pain of separation, just as the ghost was in Lockwood's dream. He struggles successfully through the window, even though it is mullioned and defended, because he wants to re-enter the room that he and Catherine once shared in order to suffer the agony of loss more keenly--one might almost say more intimately.

Unlike those formed by Overlove, characters connected with Unlove do not need to maintain a distance between themselves and the pain of separation. In fact, as we have seen with Heathcliff and Catherine, they unite themselves with this pain, and seek their only fulfillment in love from it. Increasing the agony of loss guarantees relief from suffering; for the victim hopes eventually to enter a state beyond the reach of pain. This is the only solution for one whom Unlove has made afraid of exposing his need for pity. For how is the Unloved to ask for pity, when his pain has always made him feel that he deserves his suffering? To borrow a simile from Nelly, the pain he suffers makes the Unloved feel like "a vicious cur that appears to know t he kicks it gets are its desert, and yet hates all the world, as well as the kicker, for what it suffers" (pp. 71-72). The painful sense of rejection for which the Unloved needs pity makes him feel unworthy of receiving any kindness. To seek pity under these conditions would be to intensify the feeling of unfitness for it. Moreover, as noted earlier, to seek pity in such a hostile environment would only increase his vulnerability to further attack. Thus, the only pity the Unloved
can accept is the cruelty of his own pain.

A brief consideration of Hindley's role in the forced entry scene will clarify this paradox. His ostensible motive for barring Heathcliff's return is murder. Devastated by the death in childbirth of his wife, Frances, Hindley seeks to avenge his pain by killing Heathcliff—the figure whom he has always identified with the pain of love. In childhood, Hindley persecuted Heathcliff for becoming the favorite of his father, Mr. Earnshaw: "the young master [Hindley] had learnt to regard his father as an oppressor rather than a friend, and Heathcliff as a usurper of his parent's affections" (p. 47). When Heathcliff returns in adulthood to Wuthering Heights, Hindley soon loses all his property to his enemy through gambling. Without realizing it, Hindley succumbs to this financial folly in order to intensify the pain of loss. In the masochistic tradition of Unlove, Hindley's unconscious aim is to suffer until he reaches the breaking point where he can suffer no more. This is especially evident in Hindley's declaration to Isabella just before assaulting Heathcliff: "Nobody alive would regret me, or be ashamed, though I cut my throat this minute—and it's time to make an end!" (p. 215). Here, it is impossible to determine exactly what Hindley intends to do: kill Heathcliff or kill himself. This ambiguity is reinforced by the strange duality of the weapon that Hindley employs to gain his objective: "a curiously constructed pistol, having a double-edged spring knife attached to the barrel" (p. 170).

Yet, Hindley's failure to kill Heathcliff must be understood as a success. Even more than revenge against Heathcliff, Hindley wants pity for his own suffering—and this is exactly what he achieves. After succumbing to the onslaught of his opponent whom he himself has enraged, Hindley, now unconscious and wounded by his own weapon, is tended by Heathcliff, whose solicitous action, though rough and hasty, underscores the relief implicit in the extremity of pain. Thus, in their desperate struggle on either side of the window, Heathcliff and Hindley are mirror images of the same mentality of Unlove. The violent cruelty of each derives from preoccupation with the loss of love he himself has been made to suffer. On the surface in both cases, revenge for that loss of love seems to be the dominant motive, but actually the most profound one is the wish to end the pain by increasing its intensity.

In contrast, the characters formed by Overlove show greater diversity in satisfying the needs that love in childhood created. There are three ways for them to do so. The first, implied by the chronic dependence of Linton, is to insist on remaining the recipient of indulgent attention. The second is to become the donor who provides Overlove to someone else. This is path followed by both Edgar and Isabella. As a husband, Edgar satisfies his need for Overlove vicariously, first indulging his temperamental spouse, Catherine, and then by overprotecting his daughter, Cathy. Isabella, Edgar's sister, eventually satisfies her need for Overlove through her self-destructive infatuation with Heathcliff—a man who makes no secret of despising her: "she persisted in forming a fabulous notion of my character, and acting on false impressions she cherished" (p. 183). But there is an unconscious method to her madness. After the separation that inevitably follows their elopement and her own impregnation, Isabella establishes a home in London where she creates a world of extreme Overlove at whose center is her sickly son, Linton. The third way of perpetuating Overlove after childhood is to provide it to oneself through self-pity for the misery of loneliness. As we have found, this is the course unwittingly pursued by Lockwood.

### PSYCHOLOGICAL INTERPRETATIONS OF WUTHERING HEIGHTS

Psychological analyses of *Wuthering Heights* abound as critics apply modern psychological theories to the characters and their relationships.

#### A FREUDIAN INTERPRETATION

The most common psychological readings are Freudian interpretations. Typical of Freudian readings of the novel is Linda Gold's interpretation. She sees in the symbiosis of Catherine, Heathcliff, and Edgar the relationship of Freud's id, ego, and superego. At a psychological level, they merge into one personality with Heathcliff's image of the three of them buried (the unconscious) in what is essentially one coffin. Heathcliff, the id, expresses the most primitive drives (like sex), seeks pleasure, and avoids pain; the id is not affected by time and remains in the unconscious (appropriately, Heathcliff's origins are unknown, he is dark, he runs wild and is primitive as a child, and his three year absence remains a mystery). Catherine, the ego, relates to other people and society, tests the impulses of the id against reality, and controls the energetic id until there is a reasonable chance of its urges being fulfilled. Edgar, the superego, represents the rules of proper behavior and morality inculcated by teachers, family, and society; he is civilized and cultured. As conscience, he compels Catherine to choose between Heathcliff and himself.

In Freud's analysis, the ego must be male to deal successfully with the world; to survive, a female ego would have to live through males. This Catherine does by identifying egotistically with Heathcliff and Edgar, according to Gold. Catherine rejects Heathcliff because a realistic assessment of her future with him makes clear the material and social advantages of marrying Edgar and the degradation of yielding to her unconscious self. Her stay at Thrushcross Grange occurs at a crucial stage in her development; she is moving through puberty toward womanhood. She expects Edgar to accept Heathcliff in their household and to raise him from his degraded state; this would result in the integration of the disparate parts of her personality—id, ego, and superego—into one unified personality. Confronted by difficulties so volatile, Catherine attempts a compromise and accepts Heathcliff as an illegitimate son. Her attitude toward Edgar at this point is ambivalent: she is not ready to give in to him despite her appreciation of his advantages; she prefers Heathcliff, but she cannot accept him. As her self-pity grows, Catherine's personality splits into two parts. The first is a child, Catherine, who idealizes Heathcliff and identifies herself with him and Edgar, as a healthy child does at the prepubescent stage. The second is a woman, Catherine, who identifies with Isabella, Edgar's sister, and who wishes to escape the weight of her guilt and demands fulfillment of her needs through revenge. This second Catherine loose.