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**Emily Brontë's Confrontation with Power Structures in  
*Wuthering Heights***

Connections between Victorian Race, Class, and Gender

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Mastergradsoppgave i engelsk litteratur ved lektorutdanningen trinn 8–13 ENG–3983 May 2023



## **Abstract**

This thesis seeks to analyze how Emily Brontë portrayed the power structures of class, race, and gender in *Wuthering Heights* as interconnected and cyclical. It is important to see these power structures in connection, as they may cause further oppression together for the already oppressed. I argue that Brontë mocks the Victorian societal structures and their cyclical nature, and I show this through an analysis of the characterization of five of the most prominent characters of the novel: the older Catherine, Heathcliff, the younger Catherine, Linton, and Hareton. The thesis opens a discussion on whether the treatment we are subjected to causes our behavior, and I argue that Brontë viewed people more as a result of their surroundings than a result of their ancestry. These five characters are governed by how they are being treated in connection with the power structures, which causes abuse to go in cycles. I further argue that towards the end of the novel, we see the second generation gaining awareness of the cyclical nature of the power structures and an understanding of how we are products of our surroundings, which seemingly help them end the cycles of abuse.



## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all those who have contributed to the completion of this thesis. I would first and foremost like to thank my supervisor Emelie Jonsson for guiding me through the writing process. Without you, I would never have been able to finish. Your enthusiasm, insights, and feedback have been truly inspiring. I think it is only right to thank my friends and family who have helped me, tolerated me, and offered me their emotional support. Your support has been invaluable.



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# 1 Introduction

Throughout history, we have been interested in the societal structures of our present day and in asking questions about whether we are a result of our surroundings or the product of our ancestors. Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* serves as a commentary on Victorian societal structures, showing the overpowering influence one's surroundings can have. Though written in 1847, Brontë's canonical novel is still being adapted for film, TV, and theatre, and it has even inspired music, showing its lasting effect on people and its continued relevance even today. Brontë's carefully crafted story raises questions about the Victorian power structures, and though we may have come a long way since then, *Wuthering Heights* is a commentary on human nature and how the societal structures may govern people, their choices, and actions—a commentary that has been able to withstand the ravages of time.

In this thesis, I will explore how the power structures of class, race, and gender in *Wuthering Heights* can be seen as interconnected and cyclical. Brontë shows the power structures' interconnectedness and cyclical nature in the characterization of the two families central to its story: the Earnshaws residing at Wuthering Heights and the Lintons residing at Thrushcross Grange. The Lintons are of a higher class than the Earnshaws, each house is ruled by a patriarch exerting power over the women, and the Earnshaws' foster son, Heathcliff, is linked to racial otherness. I further argue that Brontë mocks the power structures of Victorian society and that she is, through her use of nature imagery, but also setting, supernatural elements, plot doubling, and language, showing and mocking the way these power structures move in cycles. I will, through an analysis of five of the most prominent characters—Heathcliff, the older Catherine<sup>1</sup>, Hareton, Linton, and the younger Catherine—argue that the actions of these people are, for a large part governed by how they have been treated as a result of the power structures of class, race, and gender.

There have been great scholarly analyses of *Wuthering Heights* in connection to either class (e.g., Eagleton, "Myths"), race (e.g., Michie; Meyer; Taylor), or gender (e.g., Newman, "The Situation"; Gilbert & Gubar; Pykett). Others have seen two of these power structures in connection, for example, analyzing class and gender together (e.g., Cory; Jacobs) or class and

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<sup>1</sup> Many critics distinguish between the two Catherines by using "Cathy" when referring to the older Catherine, and "Catherine" when referring to the younger (or the other way around). As Edgar would not call the older Catherine "Cathy," "probably because Heathcliff had a habit of doing so" (E. Brontë 184), I will not be doing it either, as I do not want to side with either Heathcliff or Edgar.

race together (e.g., Althubaiti). There has, however, not been much attention paid to all three power structures in connection with each other (e.g., Mardorossian) and how deeply interconnected these power structures are. Mardorossian's focus is on how race is connected to that of class and gender, and how to teach *Wuthering Heights* in this manner. She states that students should be encouraged to "rethink their facile comprehension of race as a black-white binary," by doing this, they will be able to see "the mobile relation among race, class, and gender" (Mardorossian 50). Her points mostly align with mine, but because her analysis is limited to that of race, the main focus will not be on Mardorossian's analysis. By analyzing the three power structures of class, race, and gender together, I will be connecting the isolated conversations these critics have had, showing Brontë's critique of Victorian societal structures.

In order to show how Brontë mocks the power structures in *Wuthering Heights* and their cyclical nature, I will, in the second chapter present the historical context for each of the power structures and present some of the previous criticism on the topic as well as where I stand in the discussion. The chapter is divided into three subsections: race, gender, and class. This chapter will serve as theoretical background for my character analyses, and will provide core concepts for each aspect of the power structure.

In the subsection on race, I will establish how Brontë may have related to different aspects of race, from distant debates about colonial slavery to the Irish heritage of her own father. I will then use critics like Susan Meyer, Terry Eagleton, Beverly Taylor, and Elsie Michie to discuss Heathcliff's racial background and his positioning as a racial "other." I also show how the power structure of race relates to and is connected to that of class and gender.

In the subsection on gender, I discuss the gender roles and expectations present in Victorian society and how Brontë's own position as a woman may have affected how she saw injustices towards women. Using critics like Meyer, Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, Naomi M. Jacobs, and feminist writer Hélène Cixous, I discuss how the connection between the older Catherine and Heathcliff relates to the three power structures, how Brontë uses laughter, especially the female laughter, to mock the power structures, and I also discuss the role of a patriarch.

Lastly, in the subsection on class, I will discuss the Brontës' ambiguous class position and how it may have shaped Brontë's views of class differences before I, using critics like Tara MacDonald, Eagleton, and Gilbert and Gubar, discuss the fluidity of class, the importance of class position in the Victorian society, and whether the cycles of abuse

in *Wuthering Heights* cease by the end. I also connect class to the structures of gender and race and discuss the importance of seeing the three in connection.

Through an analysis of five of the most prominent characters in the novel, I discuss how Brontë shows and mocks the power structures and cycles of abuse. In Chapter 3, I discuss the older Catherine's position in the power structures as a middle-class woman and how her characterization shows the interconnectedness between the power structures of class and gender and that of race. These power structures work together to suppress her, and Catherine ends up in a marriage that she tries to escape. I also discuss how her connection to Heathcliff shows the interconnectedness between race, class, and gender and how ultimately, the power structures end up killing her.

In Chapter 4, I discuss how the characterization of Heathcliff as a racial "other" emphasizes the fluidity of class and how he is positioned outside of the two families living at Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange. The degradation of Heathcliff drives him to degrade Hareton, which shows firsthand how the power structures are cyclical, and I discuss how his degradation may be the cause of his brutishness.

In the last chapter, I analyze how the second generation of the novel, the younger Catherine, Hareton, and Linton, are positioned in and relate to the power structures. I compare the first and the second generation, highlighting the cyclical nature of the power structures, which also opens a discussion on nature vs. nurture. I argue that the younger generation encompasses an understanding of the cycles of abuse that the older generation does not have, which may help them end the cycles. Brontë leaves us with a reminder to remain aware of the power structures' impact on people, because with awareness comes change.

## 2 Historical background and previous criticism

This chapter gives a closer look at the three power structures race, gender, and class. Each section first looks at the historical context of each of the power structures before I present previous criticism on each topic and show where I position myself in the discussion on race, gender, and class in *Wuthering Heights*. The chapter serves as a theoretical background on which I base my further analysis of each character.

### 2.1 Race

In order to understand the concept of race in *Wuthering Heights*, it is important to understand how the Brontës viewed race. You have to know the situation of slavery at the time Brontë wrote the novel, but also know her understanding of the situation and the way she would use racial imagery. The racial background of the Brontës may be important as well. Their father was Irish, and the attitudes people at the time had towards the Irish population were quite hostile. Brontë's own racial background, as will be discussed in more detail here, would have had an effect on how she viewed injustice towards people based on their racial background. In *Wuthering Heights*, it is quite evident that she did sympathize with those discriminated against because of their race.

The abolition of the slave trade happened in 1807, but slavery as institution in the British Empire was not abolished until 1833 (Rahbek 114). When *Wuthering Heights* was published in 1847, slavery as an institution had been abolished for just fourteen years. The Brontës would however not have had extensive knowledge about either slavery or the slave trade itself (Taylor 340). Taylor points out that they would have known about slavery as an economic fact, that sugar and mahogany were goods made from slave labor, and that there was a boycott against slave-grown sugar going on (340). She also mentions that the Brontës were likely to know about their father's views on the slave trade and that he was active in organizing abolitionist petitions. Barker talks about how the sisters would read *Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine*, and she states that the magazine "formed the tastes and fed the interests of the Brontës for many years" (149). Taylor explains that the magazine's views on slavery would be the same as that of colonial landowners, and they would portray the horrible details of slavery as being fabricated for political causes or deemed too shocking to be credible (Taylor 340). The sisters' views on slavery would have been affected by that. With this knowledge about slavery, Taylor states that they had a distant approach to it, not being faced

with “the everyday horrors of slavery,” and that the idea of slavery was “abstractly familiar as phenomena confined mostly to distant places and climes, or to earlier eras such as classical antiquity” (Taylor 340).

With the Brontës’ knowledge about slavery in mind, the imagery of slavery in their work does not necessarily “speak directly on the subject of chattel slavery”, as Taylor puts it (340). She claims that they are more indirect when referring “to the exploitation of slave labor and other power imbalances that supported the colonial enterprise” (340). When referring to slavery, it was largely based on classical antiquity. It was “largely abstracted from realities of physical violence” and slavery was talked about in a metaphorical manner to refer to the injustices of power structures (Taylor 340). So, instead of using imagery of slavery to highlight how unjust the slave trade was, they would use this kind of imagery to, as Taylor puts it, “critique relations in gender, economic, and class hierarchies perceived from the perspective of the disempowered” (Taylor 339–40). It is therefore important to look at class, race, and gender together. Taylor specifies that when mentioning skin color, the Brontës did not necessarily refer to the race of the specific person, but rather used it as a marker of their character (340). The description of someone being “darker” or “black” did not always refer to the race of the person, but rather the idea that blackness or darkness is connected to evil or the devil, while the “lighter” or the “white” is connected to the good or angelic figures. Taylor also points to the contrasting of the British whiteness as being “the standard” against which the darkness was measured, while the dark was connected to the foreign (340).

Emily Brontë’s father, Patrick Brontë, was born in Ireland in 1777, and moved to England in 1802 (Barker 1–2). The Irish were in large part differentiated from the English at the time his children were growing up. The Brontë sisters would therefore have been aware of their father being of Irish descent. Michie points this out, saying that they would have been “especially aware of the issues surrounding the treatment of the Irish” since Patrick had an Irish background (128). Around the time of the Irish potato famine, there was a lot of xenophobia against the Irish, and it would make sense for Bronte to sympathize with the Irish or other “outcasts.” Michie refers to L. Perry Curtis who describes a simianization of the Irish, and Michie states that “the English tendency to caricature the Irish and represent them as an alien people, which persisted from the Renaissance onwards, was intensified in the mid-nineteenth century” (126). He continues by describing how the English public, around the 1860s, had become familiar with the depictions of the Irish in various media, like cartoons or political commentary. Michie refers to an unknown satiric writer who describes the Irish using words like “creatures” of something between “gorillas” and “negros”, who belong to “a

tribe of Irish savages” (Michie 126). In his letters describing his travels to Ireland, Charles Kingsley used words like “human chimpanzees” and “white chimpanzees” about the Irish, stating that if these “chimpanzees” were black it would not be as bad (111–12). This shows the idea of the Irish as racially different from the English.

In *Wuthering Heights*, Heathcliff is treated differently than everyone else, and a lot of the time this is because of his race. He is described as being “a dirty, ragged, black-haired child” and a “gypsy brat,” who is “as dark almost as if it came from the devil.” Also, when referring to him, Nelly uses the pronoun “it” instead of “he” (E. Brontë 36–7). Mardorossian states that in *Wuthering Heights* a “[c]haracter’s racial attributes emerge not through their anchoring in ‘natural’ difference but through their association with tropes such as animality, dirt, and linguistic incompetence” (47), this is in large part how Heathcliff is differentiated from others. It is unknown where Heathcliff is from, other than that Mr. Earnshaw picked him up from the “streets of Liverpool” (E. Brontë 37). Several people have speculated where he may come from, and Gérin claims that Brontë intentionally left it out of the novel (Gérin 226). Gérin does however point out that since he was picked up in Liverpool, he may have been inspired by Emily’s brother Branwell’s account of immigrants starving on the streets of Liverpool. Eagleton argues that Heathcliff may have been Irish as there may have been quite a few Irish immigrants in Liverpool at the time Branwell visited (“Heathcliff” 3). He does however point out that Heathcliff may have been a “gypsy” or a Creole, and that it is hard to determine how black he is, as some of his blackness may be “grime and bile” (“Heathcliff” 3). Michie also points to the way Heathcliff is being described as a way Irish people often were portrayed. She refers to the 1834 Edinburgh Review that describes typical Irish traits: “a ‘desperate recklessness of the consequences of actions’ and ‘a spirit of revenge, not to be satiated except by blood’ (quoted in Michie 131). She compares this to the way Heathcliff wants to “have the privilege of flinging Joseph off the highest gable, and painting the house-front with Hindley’s blood!” (E. Brontë 49). The way Heathcliff is being described corresponds with the racial stereotypes of the time, but at the same time, the way he is being treated is viewed as an injustice. This shows that Brontë was against the racial injustices he is facing.

With the various ways Heathcliff is being portrayed, one may question whether Heathcliff has always been this way or whether he has become this brutish figure as a consequence of his treatment. There is plenty of uncertainty to Heathcliff’s background. Even though Heathcliff is portrayed as racially “other,” Brontë’s way of using racial imagery may not have been literal. I therefore argue that some of Heathcliff’s darkness is caused by ill-

treatment. I do not disagree with Eagleton, Michie and G erin that Heathcliff may have been of a different race than white British. I do, however, not take a stance whether Heathcliff is Irish, a Creole or a “gypsy.” I argue that Heathcliff’s way of being treated is what causes him to become the dark character that in the end holds the younger generation of the novel captive in his own house. The racial imagery used in the novel is therefore not always describing Heathcliff’s race, but rather his character. Michie also asks: “[d]oes Heathcliff become brutish because of Hindley’s neglect, as the Irish may have been chimpanzees by the English, or is he inherently savage?” (129). Eagleton also claims that when Catherine is let inside Thrushcross Grange, Heathcliff is left behind “to become a ‘wolfish, pitiless’ man” (“Myths” 108). These observations by scholars insinuate that the treatment of Heathcliff is what causes him to become hostile. Though Bront  does not excuse Heathcliff’s behavior, she shows what happens to Heathcliff as a result of his treatment, and after he succumbs to the power structures. It is also important to note that Heathcliff is described as a racial “other,” and a lot of the injustices he faces are because of this.

Because of Heathcliff’s position in the power structures as a racial “other”, he becomes oppressed, which results in him wanting revenge, thus keeping the cycles of abuse going. Meyer argues that there is a reversal of the colonization process in *Wuthering Heights*. As Heathcliff is held “captive” at Wuthering Heights, he holds Isabella, Nelly and the younger Catherine captive. Just as Heathcliff is not allowed to learn how to read, he forbids Hareton to learn to read. This extends even to Hareton not being able to read his own name above the door at the Heights, which in turn degrades him (Meyer 118). Though this gives the oppressed Heathcliff agency, being able to work against his oppressor, he only briefly achieves his revenge. He becomes master over both the Earnshaws’ and the Lintons’ properties, but once he dies, these properties go back to the two families. This shows the depressing reality that he cannot win.

When Catherine and Heathcliff are caught by the Lintons, Bront  satirizes the three power structures of race, class, and gender together. Mrs. Linton puts her glasses on, and the family examines Heathcliff. Isabella first seems to object to his ethnicity by “lispering”:  
“Frightful thing! Put him in the cellar, papa. He’s exactly like the son of the fortune-teller, that stole my tame pheasant. Isn’t he, Edgar?” (E. Bront  50). This not only tells us about some of the racial categories Heathcliff is put into, but when Catherine hears them, she laughs at them. Meyer points out that her laugh “alerts us to Emily Bront ’s satirical attitude toward the Lintons’ literal and moral myopia, as they peer through spectacles at Heathcliff, and toward their exploitative racial arrogance” (Meyer 99). Meyer further argues that through the

description of the Linton's "frightened and arrogant inspection of Heathcliff's dark face, Emily Brontë satirizes the British desire to contain and control the 'dark races' through a reductive and predictive reading of physiognomy" (Meyer 100). This type of myopia can also be connected to class, as the Lintons are not only looking down on the racially different Heathcliff, but also a Heathcliff who is a "thief" and a "villain," which can be connected to the lower classes (E. Brontë 50). The female laughter of Catherine can be connected to gender rebellion, which will be discussed further in the section on gender.

Catherine and Brontë are mocking Isabella, but also other novelists who lock away their "dark" characters. Unlike her sister, Charlotte, who locks away the "dark" Bertha Mason of *Jane Eyre* in the attic, Emily lets the "transgressive energies" roam freely (Meyer 103). Brontë does this by using several gothic elements and by giving Heathcliff, as a racial "other," a place in the novel (beyond just having him live in the attic). According to Meyer, Brontë explores what "would happen if the suppressed power of the 'savage' outsiders were unleashed" (100–1). Meyer further explains that Brontë creates a "metaphorical link between white women and people of nonwhite races as she explores energies of resistance to the existing social structure" (Meyer 101). Brontë is exploring not only how racial and gendered "energies of resistance" challenge the social structures but also that of class, and I argue that these energies are seen as a threat to society. People like Lockwood, who can be seen as representing society, are visibly scared of these "transgressive energies."

Even though there is an obvious racial discussion with Heathcliff, the question of race is as much connected to class position and gender. Taylor thinks of race as "an ambiguous category constituted by social class, money, and gender, and it represents skin color as an unstable index to race" (348). As mentioned, Gérin points to Heathcliff's ambiguous racial background as an intentional choice. Taylor echoes this, saying, "[i]f Heathcliff's race remains a mystery, the vicious effects of power tied to social class and money are abundantly evident" (Taylor 348). Further, Brantlinger states that "[r]ather than associating Heathcliff with a specific oppressed race, whether gypsy, African, or Irish, it perhaps makes more sense to associate him with all racially oppressed groups" (140). We can even see Heathcliff as representing all oppressed groups, like those of lower class status or women in the Victorian era, showing how these power structures are interconnected.



## 2.2 Gender

Emily Brontë was not at peace with the Victorian gender roles. As Jacobs observes, quoting Charlotte Brontë, “nothing moved Emily ‘more than any institution that the faithfulness and clemency, the long-suffering and loving kindness which are esteemed virtues in their daughters of eve, becomes foibles in the sons of Adam’” (205). This clearly shows Emily's disapproval of separate moral standards for men and women. Jacobs also claims that Emily's *Wuthering Heights* and Anne Brontë's *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* “[show] that those with social power inflict violence on the powerless, including children, women, and landless men” (Jacobs 205). This further shows that Emily disapproved of the power structures of Victorian England and saw them as interconnected. This section focuses on how the gendered expectations in the Victorian era would have affected Emily, and some of the previous criticism on gender in *Wuthering Heights*.

In middle- and upper-class families in the Victorian era, there was a division between the private life and the public life, often referred to as the domestic and the private sphere. Brontë herself was very much a part of the domestic sphere. Even though she for a shorter period of six months worked as a schoolteacher, she quit this job and moved back home (Gérin 84). The two spheres had very clear sets of expectations and they were strongly connected to gender. The private, or domestic, sphere was tied to femininity, while the public sphere was connected to masculinity. Men were the ones who would work outside of the home, and they represented the family in the outside world. Gorham states that this was the “sphere of business, politics and professional life”, while the private sphere was the sphere of “love, the emotions and domesticity” (4). The public sphere was a harsh environment, and therefore, the private sphere, the family and the women were supposed to be a “place of renewal for men” (Gorham 4). Gorham further describes how the Victorians would talk about men being “hardened” by the outside world, and women would therefore become hardened if they were exposed to the public life (6). It would therefore be even more important to uphold the idea of women staying in the domestic sphere.

In addition to women being assigned to the domestic sphere, there were certain expectations to how a Victorian woman should behave. According to Gorham, the ideal Victorian woman can be described as being:

willing to be dependent on men and submissive to them, and she would have a preference for a life restricted to the confines of home. She would be innocent, pure, gentle and self-sacrificing. Possessing no ambitious strivings, she would be free of any

trace of anger or hostility. More emotional than man, she was also more capable of self-renunciation. The characteristics of the ideal Victorian woman can be summed up in one word: she was feminine. (4–5)

Additionally, the idea of women being “the angel of the house”, as Coventry Patmore wrote about in his poem with the same name, was a prominent idea for the Victorians (Gorham 4).

At home Emily would partake in the domestic work. Pykett points out that even though Emily was an “atypical and extraordinary woman” because of her role as an author, her life could also be seen as a “typical nineteenth-century woman's life: private, domestic, hidden from history” (Pykett 2). Emily and her sister Anne wrote a diary entry together about their daily lives at Haworth Parsonage. They write about how their brother Branwell had “went down to MrDriver’s” bringing news back home, Emily writes of how she and Anne “have been peeling apples for Charlotte to make an apple pudding,” and how they “have not done [their] music exercise” yet (Wise & Symington 124). She also writes about their father coming in with a letter, which he gives to Branwell to read to the others. Pykett states that the dairy entry

neatly illustrates the separate masculine and feminine spheres of Victorian family life. The sisters occupy a private, domestic space, weaving their stories and fitting their lessons (or avoiding them) amidst shared domestic chores, while father and son occupy themselves with pursuits more suitable to their superior masculine status, communicating with the world beyond the doorstep, participating in political discussion and bringing news of the wider world to the women in the kitchen. (Pykett 6).

In the Victorian era, women were not supposed to be writers, and as a writer Brontë challenged what it meant to be a woman in this time period. This may be one of the reasons Emily and her sisters Charlotte and Anne published their works under the male pseudonyms Currer, Ellis and Acton Bell. The attitudes towards women writers comes to show in both letters and magazines. When Charlotte, Emily’s sister, sent her poetry to poet Robert Southey for feedback, the answer she received was that “[l]iterature cannot be the business of a woman’s life, and it ought not to be. The more she is engaged in their proper duties, the less leisure will she have for it, even as an accomplishment and a recreation” (Wise & Symington 155). George Henry Lewes writes “A Gentle Hint to Writing Women” published in *The*

*Leader* in 1850, where he states that “[m]y idea of a perfect woman is one who can write but won’t” (189). These examples clearly show the negative attitude towards women who write.

As two people who are oppressed, there is a connection between the older Catherine and Heathcliff. The older Catherine is oppressed for being a woman, while Heathcliff for being a racial “other.” As mentioned in the section on race, Brontë connected the white woman to people of nonwhite races. Meyer claims that “since the gender positioning of British women writers required them to negotiate an association with ‘inferior races,’ their feminist impulses to question gender hierarchies often provoked an interrogation of race hierarchies” (Meyer 11). Meyer further talks about the “mutual marginality” between Heathcliff and the older Catherine. By the end when Heathcliff dies, they become the same person again:

although the reminder at the novel’s close that under the tombstones Catherine and Heathcliff’s bodies are disintegrating together to some extent does recall the novel’s early exploration of the two characters’ mutual marginality. It is as if the metaphor linking white women with people of the ‘dark races’ has taken on a life of its own as Emily Brontë deploys it in *Wuthering Heights*, moving beyond its initial function in the debilitating effects of the social constraint on British women. (Meyer 124).

This shows how Catherine and Heathcliff are one, they are the same person. The women’s problem is the race problem, which is the class problem.

As mentioned in the section on race, Catherine laughs at the Lintons for wanting to lock Heathcliff up, but Catherine’s female laughter can also be connected to gender rebellion, or a mockery of the treatment of women. The idea of Catherine and Heathcliff being one person therefore suggests that as Catherine is laughing at the fact that they want to lock Heathcliff up, she is also laughing at the suppression of women. In feminist writer Hélène Cixous’ retelling of the myth of the Medusa, she focuses on Medusa as a beautiful woman who is laughing. Medusa is not silenced, because she is laughing at the men who tries to silence her. Just as Meyer describes Catherine’s laughter at the Lintons as a laugh mocking their near-sightedness on the racial topic, I argue that like the Medusa who is laughing at the feminine being silenced, Catherine and Brontë are laughing at the racial, class, and gendered near-sightedness in the Victorian society. Just like this retelling, Brontë also mocks the patriarchy for silencing women. She mocks not only the silencing of the poor and dirty

character, but also the racially different one. Catharine's laughter is the only type of rebellion suitable for a woman, because she is otherwise silenced.

While the portrayal of women's oppression does quiet down in the second half of the novel, and after the older Catherine's death, it is still present. Meyer points out that in the first half of the novel, Heathcliff does show some resistance towards women's roles in the Victorian society—he is trying to get Catherine out of her oppressed situation at Thrushcross Grange. Towards the end of the novel, however, he is the one oppressing women (Meyer 107), which shows how the cycles of abuse work. Meyer points out that the problem of women's oppression subsides, to the advantage of “exploring Heathcliff's situation” (123). I argue that though the second half of the novel does look closer at what the power structures has done to Heathcliff, we can still see the oppression of women in the portrayal of especially the younger Catherine.

Heathcliff avenges the power structures, and as a result he becomes a patriarch incapable of fighting against women's oppression. The image of Catherine and Heathcliff as the same person is prominent in the novel. Jacobs points out that after Catherine dies, Heathcliff is “incapable of any ‘feminine’ or soft emotion,” and he “describes Cathy as his soul, and her death as the death of his soul” (216). Just like Heathcliff's femininity dies with Catherine, his concern for women as oppressed also dies. Heathcliff becomes incapable of fighting for the cause of women without Catherine, as she is his femininity. Gilbert and Gubar state that for Heathcliff “to kill patriarchy, he must first pretend to be a patriarch” (Gilbert & Gubar 297). They further state that Heathcliff “pursues a murderous revenge against patriarchy” (Gilbert & Gubar 296). Though I do not agree with them that he pretends to be a patriarch to revenge the patriarchy, I argue that he lashes out at the power structures that oppressed him in the first place. Because he is suppressed by the power structures, mainly class and race, he wants to fight back. In gaining the power to fight back, Heathcliff succumbs to the power structures and becomes a patriarch. Being a patriarch and fighting against the patriarchy is not possible, so his issue with women's oppression subsides.

Even though Heathcliff takes on the role of a patriarch, his background keeps him from truly being at the top of the power structures, and from becoming a true patriarch. Gilbert and Gubar states that the patriarch “needs words, not muscles” (281). They state that Edgar “does not need a strong, conventionally masculine body, because his mastery is contained in books, wills, testaments, leases, titles, rent-rolls, documents, languages, all the paraphernalia by which patriarchal culture is transmitted from one generation to the next” (Gilbert & Gubar 281). Heathcliff, who does have physical strength, is not entitled to any

inheritance, and will therefore never truly be a patriarch. Gilbert and Gubar argue that Heathcliff is aware of “the true male power Edgar’s ‘soft’ exterior conceals” (281) as he mocks Edgar saying “Cathy, this lamb of yours threatens like a bull” (E. Brontë 114).

## 2.3 Class

Patrick Brontë was, as mentioned, not only Irish, but he was also from a working-class family. After moving to England, he was able to work his way up, and put his working-class background behind himself. Michie describes his upward mobility as Patrick being born “in Ireland to an uneducated working-class family” and then he worked his way to become “a university-educated clergyman living comfortably in England” (128). In his own writing, Patrick Brontë did not speak of the racial differences; he focused more on the upward mobility he experienced (Michie 131). Michie also points to Patrick changing his name from *Prunty* to *Brontë* as a completion of his transformation from Irish to British (131). Eagleton claims that this changing of names “boasts of aristocratic Cambridge friendships and cryptic hints of noble ancestry”, which shows how “calculatedly he cut his roots” (“Myths” 9).

When it comes to the Brontë sisters’ position in society, Eagleton claims that it was ambiguous. The sisters were daughters of a clergyman who came from poverty, and the family “strove ... to maintain reasonably 'genteel' standards” (“Myths” 8). Further, he writes that “they were educated women, trapped in an almost intolerable deadlock between culture and economics—between imaginative aspiration and the cold truth of a society which could use them merely as 'higher' servants” (“Myths” 8). Gérin claims that the sisters had to work as they were not married, and therefore they were dependent on “their father’s precarious health and ability to keep his curacy and to provide a home for them” (71). Their brother had even less of an opportunity to work, as it was easier to get work as governesses with their position (Gérin 71).

Even though the Brontës were of the middle class, Eagleton points out that they would have “seen a good deal of destitution on their own doorstep” (“Myths” 3). They lived in a time of “some of the fiercest class-struggles in English society” (“Myths” 3). Therefore, the sisters would not have been oblivious to the struggles of the working-class. Furthermore, Eagleton describes the relationship between the classes owning land and the classes working the land as being both fluid and complex. Even though the landowners would not often marry into the worker families, it could happen if these families had worked their way up, for example through buying land (“Myths” 5).

In *Wuthering Heights*, the narrator Lockwood several times tries to pinpoint people's class position. I argue that Brontë, through the characterization of especially Hareton and Heathcliff, mocks the power structure of class and shows how the fluidity of class and class appearance. MacDonald states that in the works of the Brontës there is often a confusion when trying to identify the station of the characters. She suggests that this is because their novels often contain "socially ambiguous characters," but also because the Brontës have an interest in "the superficial nature of class" (489). She talks of how Lockwood struggles to identify the younger Catherine's, Heathcliff's and Hareton's class position, but that he is especially confused by Hareton. MacDonald points out that Hareton's "appearance and speech contrast with his bearing, causing a confusing mix of class signifiers" (MacDonald 490). Trying to figure out their position, Lockwood is left looking a bit ridiculous, and I argue that his obsession trying to establish their station reflects and mocks how the Victorian reader and society may have the same need.

Both class and race are quite fluid in the novel, and it may be hard to distinguish what is a sign of someone's actual class or race, and what is put there by society. This can even be connected to that of gender, as women of the middle class who were forced to work outside of the domestic sphere (like Brontë's brief time working as a teacher), could have been more looked down upon as they were more visibly outside of their proper sphere (MacDonald 486). MacDonald states that the Brontës' novels "all trace a tension between an understanding of class as something innate and as a largely superficial or fluid construct; between the power of free will and the impenetrability of social structures; and between the experience of lived reality and fictional conventions (486).

Having social power justifies violence inflicted on those lower down in the power structures, and in *Wuthering Heights*, Brontë mocks and shows the cycles of abuse in the power structures. The way especially Hareton and Heathcliff is treated reinforces the power structures, not just pertaining class, but for Heathcliff also the darkness he inhibits, making him darker than what he initially would have been. Eagleton points out that "the novel says quite explicitly that Hindley's systematic degradation of Heathcliff 'was enough to make a fiend of a saint'; and we should not therefore be surprised that what it does, more precisely, is to produce a pitiless capitalist landlord out of an oppressed child" ("Myths" 111). I agree with Eagleton and argue that Brontë mocks how the power structures breaks people down, causing them to keep the cycle of abuse going. Heathcliff is absorbed by the power structures, and as a result he starts abusing people.

Catherine's decision to marry Edgar instead of Heathcliff can be seen as a fulfillment of her entrapment within the power structures. It may however be wrong to claim that Catherine has a choice in the matter, as Edgar Linton is the sensible choice for a woman of her position. We can see the importance of considering class, race, and gender together in how Eagleton talks about Catherine's "choice." He states that "[i]n a crucial act of self-betrayal and bad faith, Catherine rejects Heathcliff as a suitor because he is socially inferior to Linton; and it is from this that the train of destruction follows" ("Myths" 101). Although I agree with Eagleton in that Catherine's marriage to Edgar is "the pivotal event of the novel" and "the decisive catalyst of the tragedy" ("Myths" 101), it is wrong to accuse Catherine of self-betrayal and bad faith, as a woman of her class position would not be able to make a choice between Heathcliff and Edgar. Edgar is her only sensible option, and her "choice" is a survival tactic within the power structures. By focusing on only class, Eagleton fails to see the way Catherine is restricted by the gender expectations at the time. Likewise, by only focusing on gender or race, we might forget the importance of class. Gilbert and Gubar point out how the way Catherine talks about her love for Edgar is a sign of her "indoctrination". Catherine says that she loves "the ground under his feet, and the air over his head, and everything he touches, and every word he says" (E. Brontë 79), which Gilbert and Gubar call "a bitter parody of a genteel romantic declaration" (277). I agree with this and argue that Catherine says this because it is expected of her. Gilbert and Gubar do however point to Catherine's reflections of how it would degrade her to marry Heathcliff as a part of her indoctrination, and though this may be true, it is not the indoctrination that keeps Catherine from marrying Heathcliff, but rather the power structures. Catherine has no choice; the power structures make that choice for her.

There is a danger that class refinement may be emasculating, and Brontë shows this especially in the portrayal of Linton Heathcliff. In Linton's case, his emasculation leads to powerlessness. Even though his upbringing prepares him for a life higher up in the power structures, he becomes entitled, and he is characterized with attributes typically thought of as feminine. His class refinement, instead of giving him more power, causes him to become powerless. Eagleton states that "[t]he culture which Catherine imparts to Hareton in teaching him to read promises equality rather than oppression, and an unemasculating refinement of physical energy" ("Myths" 118). Hareton's refinement can be seen as a fusion between Heathcliff, who is seen as a masculine person, and Edgar, who is not a traditionally masculine man. Edgar's refined character does not necessarily equal powerlessness as, although less

masculine, he as already discussed, does not need the muscle and physical strength because he has inherited “words,” which is what a master or a patriarch need (Gilbert & Gubar 281).

Even though the inhabitants of Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange are somewhat of the same class, there are some differences between the two houses and their inhabitants. The two houses reflect this class difference and Heathcliff’s choice of staying at Wuthering Heights is telling of the positions of the two houses. Wuthering Heights holds a lower class position than Thrushcross Grange. Wuthering Heights is more practical and functional, while Thrushcross Grange is elevated and more aesthetic. Gilbert and Gubar uses Lévi-Strauss’ ideas of “the raw” and “the cooked” when explaining the differences between the two houses:

Wuthering Heights ... is close to being naked or ‘raw’ in Lévi-Strauss’ sense—its floors uncarpeted, most of its inhabitants barely literate, even the meat on its shelves open to inspection—Thrushcross Grange is clothed and ‘cooked’: carpeted in crimson, bookish, feeding on cakes and tea and negus. It follows from this, then, that where Wuthering Heights is functional, even its dogs working sheepdogs or hunters, Thrushcross Grange (though guarded by bulldogs) appears to be decorative or aesthetic, the home of lapdogs as well as ladies. And finally, therefore, Wuthering Heights in its stripped functional rawness is essentially anti-hierarchical and egalitarian ..., while Thrushcross Grange reproduces the hierarchical chain of being that Western culture traditionally proposes. (Gilbert and Gubar 273–4).

Though the power structures at Wuthering Heights are very much visible, the descriptions of the place hints at Wuthering Heights representing a more egalitarian society. When Nelly is asked why Heathcliff decides to stay at Wuthering Heights which is “so much inferior” to Thrushcross Grange, Nelly points to Heathcliff’s greed and him wanting to earn more money as the reason (E. Brontë 34). Heathcliff’s choice of living at Wuthering Heights is, however, more likely connected to the fact that he never *really* wanted to be a part of the power structures. I argue that he succumbs to the power structures, and his choice of staying at Wuthering Heights aligns with his former thoughts on the power structures. His goal was never to become rich for the sake of having wealth. Heathcliff is driven by wanting revenge, and he wants to have the descendants of the Lintons and the Earnshaws working for his descendants. The description of Wuthering Heights as functional rather than aesthetic challenges the ideas of social structures, while Thrushcross Grange upholds these ideas. It



would therefore be wrong for Heathcliff, who originally did not agree with these ideas, to live at Thrushcross Grange.

Even though the cycles of abuse seem to come to a halt by the end of the novel, the presence of Heathcliff and Catherine remains, and their fight against the power structures does continue. An end to the intergenerational trauma and abuse is not so easily attained, but because of the second generation's ability to forgive and their awareness of the cycles of abuse, we are closer to a resolution by the end of the novel. Jacobs states that

Cathy and Hareton promise to escape the destructive dynamic of the previous generation, for they each possess strength and tenderness, light and dark, all the qualities polarized in their parents and in the novel. The slap that Cathy gives Hareton for not attending to his lessons is a love-tap, a playful remnant of the blows he has given her in the past, and that diminution of force suggests the waning of the violence that had inhabited the house they will soon abandon. The novel's concluding image of fluttering moths and soft winds around the graves of those who had perpetrated the violence of the past, then, underlines the resolution of that violence, which occurs with the reunion of Catherine and Heathcliff and the new union of the younger lovers. (216).

The younger Catherine and Hareton have a seemingly harmonious relationship, but I argue that Heathcliff's and the older Catherine's rebellion continue through their presence as ghosts haunting the moors, and through the older Catherine's rebellious eyes that are passed on to the younger Catherine and Hareton.

### 3 Catherine Earnshaw—the young girl, “half savage and hardy, and free”

Catherine, along with Heathcliff, is one of the characters we see throughout the whole novel—either alive or as a ghost. This section will analyze how Catherine as a character shows the interconnectedness of class and gender, and how those power structures work to further oppress her. These two power structures also remain connected to that of race. In a quest to secure her future, Catherine marries Edgar Linton, which in turn traps Catherine in a marriage where she keeps longing for her childhood home, Wuthering Heights, and her childhood love, Heathcliff. I argue that Brontë is mocking these power structures through the characterization of Catherine—including her laugh and her appearance as a ghost. Her choice of marrying Edgar Linton causes Catherine to want to escape her marriage, and her duty as a woman, but also makes her want to go back to her old class position. In turn the characterization of Catherine shows how class and gender are connected to race, through the depiction of Catherine and Heathcliff as the same person.

Catherine shows her need for power from an early age. Nelly describes how Catherine liked to exert power over other people around herself, including Nelly, saying that “[i]n play, she liked exceedingly to act the little mistress; using her hands freely, and commanding her companions: she did so to me, but I would not bear slapping and ordering; and so I let her know” (E. Brontë 42). Even though Nelly is below Catherine in social class, as she is their servant, she feels that Catherine’s commands are unacceptable. Nelly’s feelings about Catherine’s treatment of her show Catherine’s unreasonableness, though Catherine does act according to the expectations of their power relation. Further, Catherine is quite early on presented as requesting a whip from her father when he returns from Liverpool. Gilbert and Gubar point out that the wishes the Earnshaw children have for their father tells us a lot about them. They claim that by “requesting their heart’s desires” they “reveal their true selves” (263). Gilbert and Gubar point out that Catherine’s wish for a whip “seems like a powerless younger daughter’s yearning for power” (264). The fact that Catherine asks for a whip has clear connotations to that of a slave owner, who holds power over their subjects. This shows how Catherine from an early age has a need to turn her powerlessness as a younger sister and daughter into power for herself.

The powerlessness Catherine is facing may be connected to the expectations of her as a young girl and woman. Catherine is expected to play the role of a meek young woman; however, she is described as a wild girl with a temper. There is a change in her behavior and

appearance after Catherine stays for five weeks at Thrushcross Grange. Nelly relates that before, Catherine would have been “a wild, hatless little savage jumping into the house,” and she would have been “rushing to squeeze [them] all breathless” (E. Brontë 53). What meets the inhabitants at Wuthering Heights when Catherine comes back is “a very dignified person, with brown ringlets falling from the cover of a feathered beaver, and a long cloth habit, which she was obliged to hold up with both hands that she might sail in” (E. Brontë 53). It is clear that the stay has changed Catherine. From being a girl who had her hands free to hug people around her, expressing her feelings freely, she is now constrained by the dress of womanhood, having to physically hold her clothes up. Her new role as a young woman of a higher class ties her hand to what she can and cannot do.

Catherine’s stay at Thrushcross Grange also shows how class, race and gender work together. When the returning Catherine takes her gloves off, she “display[s] fingers wonderfully whitened with doing nothing and staying indoors” (E. Brontë 54). She has, through the power of staying indoors and doing nothing, become a lady of a higher rank. Part of this elevation is her literal whiteness which to the Victorian British suggests that she is non-foreign, and therefore somehow better than someone of a non-British, or non-white, complexion. It is, however, not just her literal whiteness that causes her to be better than the one she used to be, but also the fact that she has been doing what a real lady should do: stay indoors, in the domestic sphere. As Taylor comments, Catherine’s “unladylike tan fades” when she stays away from the Heights (348). The fading of her tan also reflects how she as a lady of the upper class does not have to be outside to labor for her living. Because of her rank or fortune/money, she is able to stay away from the sun, thus whitening her complexion. One can tie her unladylike tan back to Frances’ comment about Catherine having to “mind and not grow wild again here” (E. Brontë 53). She has to stay away from Heathcliff because he is the one who can dirty her complexion again.

In order to climb the power structures and become powerful, Catherine hides her true self: she convinces the Lintons that she is a proper young lady. After five weeks at Thrushcross Grange, according to Nelly, Catherine’s “ankle was thoroughly cured, and her *manners much improved*” (E. Brontë 53, emphasis added). As Nelly points out, Catherine “had no temptation to show her rough side in their company, and had the sense to be ashamed of being rude” (E. Brontë 67). Even after coming back from Thrushcross Grange, Catherine is still described as acting up, but she now tries to cover up her “unruly nature” (E. Brontë 67). She has had a taste of Thrushcross Grange, and she wants to still be a part of it. Nelly points out that Catherine may not have intended to mislead anyone, but she does so unknowingly.

She points out that this “led her to adopt a double character without exactly intending to deceive any one” (E. Brontë 67). By acting the way the Lintons expect a young woman like Catherine to act, she is able to adapt to become “the greatest woman of the neighbourhood,” which Catherine later on claims she has a wish for (E. Brontë 78). She is able to in a way convince the Lintons of her agreeableness, and she is able to gain “the heart and soul” of Edgar Linton (E. Brontë 67).

Does Catherine marry Edgar to give herself more power or does she do it because this is what society tells her to do? In Catherine’s own words, one of the reasons she wants to marry Edgar Linton is that “he will be rich, and I shall like to be the greatest woman of the neighbourhood” (E. Brontë 78). When Edgar proposes to Catherine, she has a discussion with Nelly about whether it was right of her to accept his proposal or not. Nelly asks her “And now, say how you love him?” to which she replies that “I love the ground under his feet, and the air over his head, and everything he touches, and every word he says. I love all his looks, and all his actions, and him entirely and altogether” (E. Brontë 79). Gilbert and Gubar claim that her answer shows how she is indoctrinated to think this way. Her declaration of love is “a bitter parody of a genteel romantic declaration which shows how effective her education has been” (Gilbert & Gubar 277). According to society, Catherine “must marry Edgar because there is no one else for her to marry and a lady must marry” (Gilbert & Gubar 277). To marry Heathcliff would be to “degrade” herself according to both Catherine and society. This is what her education has taught her. At the same time, as already discussed, she has been wanting power since she was a little girl.

Aside from her indoctrination, Catherine knows that marrying Heathcliff would leave them both to become beggars, but she believes that by marrying Edgar, she can help Heathcliff “to rise, and place him out of [her] brother’s power” (E. Brontë 82). The question therefore remains: does Catherine choose to marry Edgar to help Heathcliff, a selfless, but also a childish act, as she does not understand that this could never be the case. Nelly even points out that “that’s the worst motive you’ve given yet for being the wife of young Linton,” to which Catherine claims “It is not, ... it is the best” (E. Brontë 82). The power structures are the reason for Heathcliff’s position in the first place. They are the reason Catherine and he cannot get married. Because of the power structures, Catherine should get married. Because of the power structures, Catherine has a need to gain power; the power structures are the cause of her motivation. As mentioned earlier, her choice of marrying Edgar is the “pivotal event of the novel” and after this choice the “train of destruction follows” (“Myths” 101).

Catherine is torn between not wanting to marry Linton and wanting to do it because of the climbing of the power structure. By marrying Edgar, as Nelly points out, Catherine will climb into a higher class: “you will escape from a disorderly, comfortless home into a wealthy, respectable one” (E. Brontë 79). Catherine on the other hand, is still doubting whether it was wrong or right to accept his proposal. She states that the obstacle is “Here! and here!,” pointing to her forehead and her heart before she continues: “in whichever place the soul lives. In my soul and in my heart, I’m convinced I’m wrong!” (E. Brontë 79–80). Catherine feels with her whole being that she is wrong in marrying Edgar, and she even goes on to explain a dream she had, where she was sent to heaven, but that felt wrong, and she compares this dream to how wrong it feels to marry Edgar:

I was only going to say that heaven did not seem to be my home; and I broke my heart with weeping to come back to earth; and the angels were so angry that they flung me out into the middle of the heath on the top of Wuthering Heights; where I woke sobbing for joy. That will do to explain my secret, as well as the other. I’ve no more business to marry Edgar Linton than I have to be in heaven; and if the wicked man in there had not brought Heathcliff so low, I shouldn’t have thought of it. (E. Brontë 81).

Here she is highlighting the fact that it is the degradation of Heathcliff that causes her to not be able to marry him. It is a claim that implies that she would have been able to marry Heathcliff before the degradation. Therefore, the power structures are the cause of Catherine’s marriage to Edgar.

The way Catherine describes her love for Heathcliff compared to her love for Linton, can be connected to how Thrushcross Grange and Wuthering Heights is described. Catherine states: “My love for Linton is like the foliage in the woods: time will change it, I’m well aware, as winter changes the trees. My love for Heathcliff resembles the eternal rocks beneath: a source of little visible delight, but necessary” (E. Brontë 82–3). It is interesting to note how just like Wuthering Heights, Heathcliff is described as being practical. The heavy rocks resemble the muscles of the working class, which in many ways are little visible, yet essential to society. Just like Heathcliff is necessary to Catherine, Linton on the other hand is, like Thrushcross Grange, appealing to the eye. She compares him to the foliage in the woods, which gets replaced each year. This description illustrates how the essential parts of society are irreplaceable, while other parts come and go. Catherine knows that Edgar can be replaced:

not only her love for him, but his class is mere decoration, and (unlike the leaves) he is not actually important.

The idea of Catherine and Heathcliff being the same person is present throughout the novel. When discussing marrying Linton with Nelly, Catherine talks about how she and Heathcliff are the same person: “he’s more myself than I am. Whatever our souls are made of, his and mine are the same; and Linton’s is as different as a moonbeam from lightning, or frost from fire” (E. Brontë 81). This reflects how different Edgar is from not only Heathcliff, but also from Catherine herself. Catherine’s imagery, like the scene at the window of Thrushcross Grange, places Edgar on one side of the glass and Catherine and Heathcliff on the other. Famously, in this scene, Catherine even goes to the length of stating that “I am Heathcliff!” (E. Brontë 82). To further build on Catherine and Heathcliff’s connection, she states that

My great miseries in this world have been Heathcliff’s miseries, and I watched and felt each from the beginning: my great thought in living is himself. If all else perished, and he remained, I should still continue to be; and if all else remained, and he were annihilated, the universe would turn to a mighty stranger: I should not seem a part of it. (E. Brontë 82–3).

Right after Catherine’s passing, there is a less obvious but telling hint of her identity with Heathcliff. Nelly reflects on whether Catherine ever got her peace, saying that her corpse “asserted its own tranquillity, which seemed a pledge of equal quiet to its former inhabitants” (E. Brontë 167). Brontë’s editor, Pauline Nestor, comments that even though the modern editions of *Wuthering Heights* have tended to be printed with the singular “inhabitant,” the first edition (1847) and Charlotte’s 1850 amended edition use “inhabitants.” Nestor claims that the use of the noun as plural “is richly suggestive of the shared identity of Catherine and Heathcliff” (E. Brontë 167n2).

Catherine and Heathcliff are the same person, who complete each other. One thing this means is that she is his femininity, and he is her masculinity. As already discussed, Jacobs makes this argument about Catherine’s and Heathcliff’s interconnectedness:

Her years as Mrs. Linton before Heathcliff’s return pass in a sort of somnolence, a most un-Cathylite acquiescence and calm, as she acts out the ideal of a flower-like woman without desires or passions. At Heathcliff’s reappearance, her “male” traits of

anger, desire, and the power to harm resurface, as if evoked by the presence of her “other half.” (Jacobs 215–16).

Jacobs further argues that Catherine’s anger at Edgar comes from his inability to complete her, as he is one of the most androgynous men in the novel. She therefore has to stay incomplete (Jacobs 216). When Catherine is with Heathcliff, she is described as having typical masculine traits. Heathcliff enables Catherine to fight for herself. It is with Heathcliff Catherine is able to act against what she as a woman is confined to. She needs him to act up. Their shared identity is connected to their position in the power structures: on the one side, a woman in an in-between class position; on the other side, a racial other pushed to a lower class.

Catherine’s nature as a wild savage girl may have been the reason for wanting power. She has the nature to want to oppose what she is “supposed” to do. As she is dying, she wishes that she “were a girl again, half savage and hardy, and free; and laughing at injuries, not maddening under them!” (E. Brontë 125). It is also at this time that she starts craving the wind. She is longing for her “own bed in the old house,” and to the wind she would hear there. She goes on to tell Nelly “Do let me feel it—it comes straight down the moor—do let me have one breath!” (E. Brontë 124). Nelly lets Catherine have one breath of fresh air but closes the window again quickly. After a while, Catherine states that she is feeling “changed,” and she claims that “I’m sure I should be myself were I once among the heather on those hills” (E. Brontë 125–6). Again, Catherine orders Nelly to open the window: ““Open the window again wide: fasten it open! Quick, why don’t you move?’ ‘Because I won’t give you your death of cold,’ I answered. ‘You won’t give me a chance of life, you mean,’ she said sullenly” (E. Brontë 126). It becomes apparent that the wind represents life to Catherine. Society, represented through Nelly, does not want Catherine to have the life she so desires to have. The wind can be connected to the moors and wildness Catherine had when she was a little girl running on the moors with Heathcliff. One could even say that the wind is connected to Heathcliff, as he is, as the heath, described as “an arid wilderness of furze and whinstone” (E. Brontë 102). This wildness is something a woman should have grown out of by this time, but Catherine, who still wants the wildness, is restricted by society from having it. She points out that she feels changed. She is not the little girl anymore, but she claims that being back on the moors would help her get better. If Catherine were to get her freedom, she knows she would feel better.

Nelly tries to contain Catherine inside the house and inside the domestic sphere. It is however clear that confinement to the four walls of the house is something to fight against. When Nelly refuses to open the window for Catherine, Catherine decides to do so herself:

“However, I’m not helpless yet; I’ll open it myself.” And sliding from the bed before I could hinder her, she crossed the room, walking very uncertainly, threw it back, and bent out, careless of the frosty air that cut about her shoulders as keen as a knife. I entreated, and finally attempted to force her to retire. (E. Brontë 126).

Catherine is still able to fight for herself, albeit with less power than before. Catherine is forcing her way outside of the house, while Nelly is trying to keep her inside. When Edgar comes inside the room, and sees the window open, he immediately orders Nelly to close it: “Shut the window, Ellen!” (E. Brontë 127). This also shows how, even though they both try to keep Catherine inside of the house, Nelly does not have enough power to stop Catherine from opening the window and getting a taste of the wind—her freedom—from the moors. Edgar, on the other hand, has the power to decide whether the window should be open or not. As her husband, he is the one who holds power over Catherine, telling her what she can and cannot do, and containing her to the house.

Catherine becomes delirious as she is dying and sees visions that represent her regrets about becoming entangled in the power structures. In her delirium, she starts thinking that she is back at Wuthering Heights, in her old room. She sees herself in the mirror and is scared: “Who is it? I hope it will not come out when you are gone! Oh! Nelly, the room is haunted! I’m afraid of being alone!” (E. Brontë 123). Bersani claims that “*Wuthering Heights* represents the danger of being haunted by alien versions of the self” (208). He points to this scene where Catherine is “terrorized by her own image in the mirror” as an example of this (Bersani 208). Gilbert and Gubar, on the other hand, claims that the face Catherine sees is “neither gothic nor alien—though she is alienated from it—but hideously familiar” (283). This, they claim, is proof that her madness may actually be sanity. Therefore, the person she is scared of is the person she has become, the housewife Catherine Linton, and that is scary to her (Gilbert & Gubar 283). Catherine does not get calmer after Nelly points out that she is seeing herself in the mirror, then Nelly tells her that “you see yourself in it, and *there am I too* by your side” (E. Brontë 124, emphasis added). Catherine is not only seeing the one she has become, but she is also seeing Nelly. The person who, to her, represents being confined to her



house, and stifled in trying to escape. Nelly does not give Catherine “a chance of life” (E. Brontë 126). This is what scares Catherine.

It is telling that Catherine yearns for Wuthering Heights when she is dying. As already mentioned, Gilbert and Gubar argue that Wuthering Heights is anti-hierarchical. Wuthering Heights is of a lower class status than Thrushcross Grange; still, Catherine is longing for her old home, where she was allowed to be the wild girl she used to be. Catherine is not only trying to escape the higher class, and the class expectations that comes with being of a higher class, but she is also trying to escape the prison of the domestic sphere. She wants to taste the wind, which is her freedom from the prison of class and gender expectations. Catherine wants to be as wild as the wind, which makes her rebel against society as represented by Nelly and Edgar. What is interesting to note is that Edgar later on states: “Catherine, last spring at this time, I was longing to have you under this roof; now, I wish you were a mile or two up those hills: the air blows so sweetly, I feel that it would cure you” (E. Brontë 135). Here he is acknowledging that Catherine would in fact feel better if she were not confined to Thrushcross Grange. He might even be unconsciously acknowledging that she would be better off not married to him.

From a very young age Catherine is told not to act out. When her father does not bring home the whip she had wished for, she “showed her humour by grinning and spitting at the stupid little thing [Heathcliff]; earning for her pains a sound blow from her father, to teach her cleaner manners” (E. Brontë 37). This scene illustrates how Catherine is silenced by her father when she protests against Heathcliff. While Mr. Earnshaw protects Heathcliff, he is also the father in power, and uses violence to show Catherine she is not. Her father’s violence is justified by the power he holds over Catherine. She is silenced and she is not allowed to act out and protest. At a different point, Catherine has been sick, and has therefore been calm the entire day. Her father asks her “‘Why canst thou not always be a good lass, Cathy?’ And she turned her face up to his, and laughed, and answered, ‘Why cannot you always be a good man, father?’ But as soon as she saw him vexed again, she kissed his hand, and said she would sing him to sleep” (E. Brontë 43). At this point Catherine is asking the same question back to her father, but she can right away sense that he does not like it.

Catherine is laughing at her father when she is asked to behave. She is essentially mocking him for asking her to behave, and pointing out that he should behave as well. If Catherine is asked to behave, should not her father have to behave as well? This type of reprimand does not work well for Catherine.

After behaving as badly as possible all day, she sometimes came fondling to make it up at night. “Nay, Cathy,” the old man would say, “I cannot love thee, thou’rt worse than thy brother. Go, say thy prayers, child, and ask God’s pardon. I doubt thy mother and I must rue that we ever reared thee!” That made her cry, at first; and then being repulsed continually hardened her, and she laughed if I told her to say she was sorry for her faults, and beg to be forgiven. (E. Brontë 43).

At first, she is sad, but then she becomes hardened by the way her father treats her. She starts laughing at Nelly for telling her to say she is sorry, which is indication that she starts believing there is nothing to be sorry for. Catherine mocks how she is told to behave. The only thing she can do is, like the Medusa, to laugh.

For both Heathcliff and Catherine, the degradation becomes bearable when they can laugh at it or get revenge. They make a promise between each other to “grow up as rude as savages” (E. Brontë 46). They want to stay out of the power structures. Nelly states that Hindley stops caring how Heathcliff and Catherine behave, and only Joseph’s reminders make Hindley punish the two. Catherine and Heathcliff, on the other hand have stopped caring about the punishment they get. Nelly explains that “it was one of their chief amusements to run away to the moors in the morning and remain there all day, and the after punishment grew a mere thing to laugh at” (E. Brontë 46). Their laughter is a way for them to cope with their treatment, but they are not only laughing at the treatment they get. They are mocking how Hindley treats them, which points to a mocking of how the patriarch treats women, as well as the “darker races”. This is what Heathcliff and Catherine decide they do not want to be a part of.

Catherine and Heathcliff are able to endure their powerlessness by getting revenge. As Nelly describes, this is the way they can bear the pain of being punished and degraded:

The curate might set as many chapters as he pleased for Catherine to get by heart, and Joseph might thrash Heathcliff till his arm ached; they forgot everything the minute they were together again: at least the minute they had contrived some naughty plan of revenge; and many a time I’ve cried to myself to watch them growing more reckless daily, and I not daring to speak a syllable, for fear of losing the small power I still retained over the unfriended creatures. (E. Brontë 46).

This clearly shows the cycles of abuse, from oppression to violence. It also suggests the start of Heathcliff's obsession with getting his revenge on Hindley. In addition, this is the time in Catherine's life she is longing for as she is dying. In her delirium she says: "I wish I were a girl again, half savage and hardy, and free; and *laughing* at injuries, not maddening under them!" (E. Brontë 125). She is with Heathcliff, and is therefore able to laugh at her treatment, while in her situation at Thrushcross Grange, she is not able to laugh. She is not able to bear the degradation, she is literally "maddening under" it.

The first time we meet Catherine Earnshaw, she is a ghost in Lockwood's dream. Her spectral appearance in *Wuthering Heights* scares the sensible Lockwood just like Bertha's laughter, in *Jane Eyre*, echoes in the halls of Thornfield Hall and scares its sensible residents. The female hero in this story is not a sensible young woman like Charlotte's Jane Eyre, but rather a wild spooky spirit. By portraying Catherine in this way, Brontë is showing how the world, and the sensible Lockwood is scared of these "transgressive energies," as Meyer puts it (103). Emily Brontë takes the wild and scary woman that Charlotte locks up in the attic and lets her live among the "normal" people. Both of these women are portrayed with an eerie appearance, but unlike Bertha Mason—a racial "other," who is only known by her "eccentric murmurs" and her laugh repeated in a "low, syllabic tone" (C. Brontë 126), which Jane is told belongs to the servant Grace Poole—Catherine is right away given a name. Bertha Mason's mocking laugh is concealed by a fake name. Even before Lockwood sees Catherine, he has already repeatedly read her name. She is not a character who gets locked away, but rather a rebellious young woman, who freely laughs at the injustices in society.

Lockwood, the normal, middle-class man is scared of a woman like Catherine. He states that "if the little fiend had got in at the window, she probably would have strangled me! ... She must have been a changeling – wicked little soul!" (E. Brontë 27). This shows how he sees her as a threat to himself: he is scared for his life. In his fear, Lockwood cuts her hands: "I pulled its wrists on to the broken pane, and rubbed it to and fro till the blood ran down and soaked the bed-clothes: still it wailed, 'Let me in!'" (E. Brontë 25). Catherine is the opposite of the meek character a woman of the time should be. Brontë portraying her as a ghost illustrates how a woman of this sort is seen as a threat to society, and even to life itself. The cutting of her hands shows how society, represented by Lockwood, tries to cut the hands off of these types of women. Catherine is also still there, even after all the years that have passed. She becomes a reminder to the younger generation that they cannot escape the oppression of the patriarchy.

When Heathcliff and Catherine are spying on Isabella and Edgar, faced with their class difference, they also resort to laughter and mockery. Heathcliff remarks that if Catherine and he had been in the Linton children's situation they should have "thought [themselves] in heaven!" but the Linton children are standing in opposite sides of the room, crying (E. Brontë 48). Heathcliff points to the children's ungratefulness, and asks "Shouldn't they have been happy?" (E. Brontë 48). The two children had been fighting for who would get to play with their dog, and Heathcliff remarks: "The idiots! That was their pleasure! to quarrel who should hold a heap of warm hair, and each begin to cry because both, after struggling to get it, refused to take it. We laughed outright at the petted things; we did despise them!" (E. Brontë 48). Catherine and Heathcliff are laughing at them, as they are people who would fight over something as trivial as a dog. In the eyes of the Earnshaw children, the Lintons are fighting over the wrong things. They are laughing at the upper class and at what they care about. To further point out the difference between Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange, the Linton children have a dog they keep as a pet, whereas the dogs they keep at the Heights are "not kept for a pet" (E. Brontë 6).

The behavior Catherine and Heathcliff laugh at is the same behavior that Catherine ends up imitating—and also ends up, in part, hiding from Heathcliff. As Nelly explains, Catherine does not try to behave properly at Wuthering Heights: "at home she had small inclination to practise politeness that would only be laughed at, and restrain an unruly nature when it would bring her neither credit nor praise" (E. Brontë 67). It is clear that Frances, Hindley's wife, appreciates Catherine's good behavior, as she that Catherine has to "mind and not grow wild again here" (E. Brontë 53). It is fair to believe that the person at Wuthering Heights who would laugh at Catherine's new behavior is Heathcliff. His laugh strongly insinuates a mocking of the higher classes for their "proper" behavior. Catherine's indoctrination has come so far that even though she used to laugh at the upper classes with Heathcliff, she now knows that this is the type of behavior that will gain her power. She has become the woman they used to laugh at. One can further question who or what is it that can influence Catherine to grow wild again, in Frances's opinion. Is it the lower-class status of Wuthering Heights, or is it the influence of her other half, Heathcliff?

The mother figures at Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange are quite sparse. Frances, Hindley's wife, dies after giving birth to the heir Hareton. She has, in Gilbert and Gubar's words "fulfilled her painful function in the book and in the world" (276). Isabella runs off a few months before giving birth to her son Linton Heathcliff. She is never present in the story as a mother, as she also dies a little more than twelve years after Linton is born, still

living away from Wuthering Heights. Catherine's function in the book, and the world, is not just giving birth to her daughter Catherine. Even though Catherine also dies right after giving birth, highlighting how the women of the novel are there for one main reason, to keep the story going, this is not the last time we see Catherine. She comes back as a ghost to scare the world through her encounter with Lockwood. Her ghostly appearance is there as a reminder of her treatment. Also, Catherine is the only one of the middle generation women who does not fulfill her duty successfully. She gives birth to a daughter, but they need a son, an heir. Her daughter is the one who in the end enables Heathcliff to get his revenge. In addition, by giving birth to a daughter, Catherine is able to fulfill her old wish to help Heathcliff "out of [her] brother's power" (E. Brontë 82).

Each time Heathcliff leaves Catherine, she is left in a weaker state than before. The first time Heathcliff leaves her is when he has overheard Catherine telling Nelly that it would degrade her to marry Heathcliff. Catherine spends the entire evening outside, and a "storm came rattling over the Heights" (E. Brontë 85). She does however not want to come inside, she is standing outside getting "thoroughly drenched for her obstinacy in refusing to take shelter, and standing bonnetless and shawless to catch as much water as she could with her hair and clothes" (E. Brontë 85). Her refusing to come inside gives her a fever, which weakens her. After Heathcliff's return, he is seen "embrac[ing]" Isabella, which results in a fight between Heathcliff and Edgar, where Edgar asks Catherine to choose between him and Heathcliff. Catherine now complains that "[a] thousand smiths' hammers are beating in my head!" (E. Brontë 116). Heathcliff is holding Catherine as she is dying and Edgar comes back from church, and after a brawl Catherine then becomes limp in Heathcliff's arms, and never recovers enough to "miss Heathcliff, or know Edgar" (E. Brontë 166). Though this seems like a final triumph for Heathcliff, Catherine's "senses never returned: she recognised nobody from the time [Heathcliff] left her" (E. Brontë 169). Each time the power structures make Heathcliff leave her, she loses parts of herself, and loses her will to fight. This shows how the two are connected, and the interconnectedness of the power structures. What drives her to her death is being separated from her other half, and therefore the power structures kill her.

In the end, Catherine claims that Heathcliff has killed her, but he disagrees, asking her:

*Why did you betray your own heart, Cathy? I have not one word of comfort. You deserve this. You have killed yourself. Yes, you may kiss me, and cry; and wring out my kisses and tears: they'll blight you—they'll damn you. You loved me—then what right had you to leave me? What right—answer me—for the poor fancy you felt*

for Linton? Because misery and degradation, and death, and nothing that God or Satan could inflict would have parted us, *you*, of your own will, did it. I have not broken your heart—*you* have broken it; and in breaking it, you have broken mine. (E. Brontë 162–3).

Heathcliff is blaming Catherine for becoming part of the power structures, which in turn causes her death. Though Heathcliff also has become absorbed by the power structures, he, somewhat unreasonably, blames Catherine for killing him. This may be connected to the fact that Heathcliff succumbs to the power structures only after Catherine becomes a part of them. Catherine answers him saying, “If I’ve done wrong, I’m dying for it. It is enough! You left me too: but I won’t upbraid you! I forgive you. Forgive me!” (E. Brontë 163). She is stating that Heathcliff also became part of the power structures, and that she will not blame him for it. Like Catherine, who never really had a choice when deciding who to marry, she sees that Heathcliff would not be able to fight against becoming part of the power structures.

## 4 Heathcliff—the “dirty, ragged, black-haired child”

Through the characterization of Heathcliff, it becomes clear that Brontë viewed class as something fluid and constructed and that she saw the cruelty in the injustices those lower down in the power structure faced. This section focuses on how Heathcliff’s character shows the interconnectedness between the power structures class and race and how they are connected to that of gender. I will analyze how the characterization of Heathcliff – including his ambiguous class position and the depiction of him as animalistic and as various demonic and supernatural characters – places him outside the two main families of the novel and at the bottom of the power structures. Heathcliff’s character is shaped by how Earnshaw and Hindley treat him. He is degraded and mistreated, which results in him becoming a ruthless tyrant and master of Wuthering Heights; this shows the cycles of abuse. I argue that Heathcliff is not inherently evil but becomes brutish as a result of his treatment. I also analyze how the contrasting of Heathcliff and Edgar shows Heathcliff’s inferiority which further highlights how he will never truly be at the top of the power structures. I further analyze Catherine and Heathcliff depicted as one person and how Catherine’s and Heathcliff’s deaths show how they are not able to exist outside of the power structures in life, and the only way for them to exist outside of them is in death – making them haunt the Yorkshire moors.

Heathcliff’s characterization positions him outside the two families at Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange and at the bottom of the power structures. When Earnshaw comes home with him, Earnshaw explains that he saw “it starving, and houseless, and as good as dumb, in the streets of Liverpool, where he picked it up and inquired for its owner” (E. Brontë 37). As mentioned earlier, when Nelly tells this story, she uses the pronoun “it.” Though this pronoun can be used about children, the context indicates that he is more animal than human. The fact that Earnshaw is looking for “its owner” also has strong connotations to property and slavery. Since the owner is not found, it could also suggest that Heathcliff does not belong anywhere. We do not know anything about where he comes from other than from the streets of Liverpool, which further highlights that he does not “belong” with the two families. He has no place he truly belongs and no one who knows him. He is described as a “gipsy” (E. Brontë 87) or a “vagabond” (E. Brontë 59), which places him among a nomadic people, a people traveling around, having no place to which they truly belong. According to Gérin, this is an intentional choice to show Heathcliff’s lack of belonging. Even Joseph, as a servant, positions himself above Heathcliff by remarking that Heathcliff is “piked out fro’ th’ rubbidge!” (E. Brontë 86). Finally, Heathcliff’s language positions him outside of England, or

at least as a racial other. When he first arrives at Wuthering Heights, he repeats “over and over again some gibberish that nobody could understand” (E. Brontë 36–7). This strongly suggests that English is not his native language. His “otherness” is further highlighted by the servant at Thrushcross Grange describing him as someone “who looks like an out-and-outer!” (E. Brontë 49).

Heathcliff is characterized as a dark and brutish figure, and Brontë uses monstrous metaphors to describe him, making the sensible people around him scared of him. He is described as being “only half man: not so much, and the rest fiend” (E. Brontë 181). The darkness Heathcliff inhabits becomes increasingly more present throughout the story. When Heathcliff first comes to Wuthering Heights, Nelly admits: “I was frightened, and Mrs. Earnshaw was ready to fling it out of doors” (E. Brontë 37). Nelly and Mrs. Earnshaw are scared of him just at the sight of him. At the start, Earnshaw describes him as being “as dark almost as if it came from the devil” (E. Brontë 36–7), but as the story progresses, Isabella starts asking, “is he a devil?” (E. Brontë 136). Isabella even asks Nelly to “explain, if you can, *what* I have married” (E. Brontë 136, emphasis added). Nelly, who raised Heathcliff, even starts thinking that he must be something else than a human:

“Is he a ghoul or a vampire?” I mused. I had read of such hideous incarnate demons. And then I set myself to reflect how I had tended him in infancy, and watched him grow to youth, and followed him almost through his whole course; and what absurd nonsense it was to yield to that sense of horror. “But where did he come from, the little dark thing, harboured by a good man to his bane?” muttered Superstition, as I dozed into unconsciousness. (E. Brontë 330).

As Catherine’s ghost-form scares the sensible Lockwood, Heathcliff scares Nelly and Isabella. And just as Medusa scared the patriarchy, Heathcliff is a threat to society. He is further described as having “sharp cannibal teeth” (E. Brontë 178), which Brantlinger claims is “a gothic metaphor that associates him with the ‘dark races’ of the world” (141). Heathcliff is also described as having a “mouth [that] watered to tear you with his teeth” (E. Brontë 181). Brantlinger further claims that the terms “vampire,” “ghoul,” and “cannibal” are “monstrous metaphors for Heathcliff’s ‘savage’ rage, passion, and behavior” (141). These terms are used to show how frightened these sensible people are of Heathcliff. After marrying Isabella, Heathcliff tries to come in contact with Catherine at Thrushcross Grange, and he claims that “every night I’ll haunt the place,” which mirrors Catherine haunting



Lockwood and how both Catherine and Heathcliff end up haunting the moors, scaring everyone passing (E. Brontë 151).

Heathcliff remains as a presence throughout the story, his darkness becoming more and more a part of him. He starts out, like Bertha Mason in Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, as a dark and animalistic character, with speech resembling Bertha's "eccentric murmurs" (C. Brontë 130). But unlike Bertha, and like Catherine's ghostly form, Heathcliff is given space to roam freely. Meyer has observed this difference between the two novels: "Unlike *Jane Eyre*, in which dangerous energies are tamed or suppressed in the novel's ending, as Bertha Rochester leaps to her death, *Wuthering Heights* relentlessly pursues its exploration of the 'fearful' and 'disturbing' energies of social transgression" (103). Bertha is killed off, but Heathcliff is given space in the novel to its very end. Even though Heathcliff and Bertha Mason are described as animalistic and are referred to as "it," which dehumanizes them and makes us less likely to sympathize with them, we see Heathcliff's treatment. The story is centered around Catherine and Heathcliff, unlike Bertha, who is not given much space in *Jane Eyre*. *Jane Eyre*'s narration makes us sympathize with Jane, not with Bertha. Bertha is very much ostracized in Jane's story. The narration in *Wuthering Heights* could be compared to Jean Rhys' *Wide Sargasso Sea*, where we get the story of Bertha's background, making the reader sympathize with her. In *Wuthering Heights*, the "foreign" Bertha is given space and room to roam through Catherine and Heathcliff.

As the story progresses, Heathcliff becomes less human, which can be connected to his degradation and his leaving Catherine. When the Lintons catch Heathcliff and Catherine at Thrushcross Grange, Mr. Linton remarks, "Don't be afraid, it is but a boy—yet 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?" (E. Brontë 50). At this point, Heathcliff is only a villain in features, but Mr. Linton's comment insinuates that he will start acting out. Later on, in Isabella's letter to Nelly, she asks, "Is Mr. Heathcliff a man?" (E. Brontë 136), which shows how he has become less human. As observed, even Nelly starts questioning whether he is human; though she attributes it to "Superstition," his actions have still caused her to think this way about him (E. Brontë 330). Nelly saw him grow up, and this is what she uses to counter Superstition. Nelly's feelings about Heathcliff show that there has been a change in Heathcliff's character; he has *become* less human.

Because of Mr. Earnshaw's early good treatment of Heathcliff, Heathcliff starts believing that he can be at the top of the power structures. He is favored by Mr. Earnshaw, over Hindley and in some ways even over Catherine, and placed at the top of the power

structures—within the family, at least. Earnshaw’s own relation to the power structures is complex. His treatment of Heathcliff shows the compassion to take in a homeless, racial other. But while welcoming Heathcliff into Wuthering Heights as if he were a son, Earnshaw is quite hard on his daughter, Catherine. He tries to protect the domestic sphere, preventing her from acting out, and instilling the ideas of patriarchy in her. Heathcliff does however not try to exert power over Catherine, like he does with Hindley, showing how he does not internalize the power structures exactly as he sees them in Earnshaw.

Heathcliff’s willingness to participate in the power structures while Earnshaw is living shows that he wants to be a part of the family and believes he can. He is willing to use his power to remain at the top of the power structure in the family. But just as he is not Earnshaw’s legal son, Heathcliff is not actually at the top of the power structures. Earnshaw is the only one who treats him this way. Not until after Earnshaw dies does Heathcliff see how degraded he can actually be. Even as a boy, Heathcliff has the strength to stand against becoming a part of the power structures. Not until he loses Catherine to the power structures does he succumb to them. It is under Hindley’s power that Heathcliff becomes an opposer to the power structures, and it is not until Earnshaw dies that Heathcliff and Catherine give each other the promise to “grow up as rude as savages,” promising each other to remain outside of the power structures (E. Brontë 46).

Through his early conflicts with Hindley, Heathcliff shows that he knows how to use his power and that mistreatment makes him want even more power. When Mr. Earnshaw is still alive, Heathcliff has some power over Hindley, and he learns how to use it to his advantage. Mr. Earnshaw gives Heathcliff and Hindley one horse each, and Heathcliff picks the best horse. After his horse falls lame, Heathcliff orders Hindley to switch horses and states: “and if you won’t I shall tell your father of the three thrashings you’ve given me this week, and show him my arm, which is black to the shoulder... you will have to: and if I speak of these blows, you’ll get them again with interest” (E. Brontë 39). The situation is navigated with full control and awareness of power. Newman points out that “[t]his scene is indicative of Heathcliff’s adult character, when he will pursue his own aims regardless of other people’s opposition or threats” (“Common Features” 191). At this point, Heathcliff does not seem to care about revenge. Nelly can easily convince him to not blame Hindley for the bruises after fighting over the horse. She remarks that “he minded little what tale was told since he had what he wanted” (E. Brontë 40). Nelly relates that: “[h]e complained so seldom, indeed, of such stirs as these, that I really thought him not vindictive: I was deceived completely, as you will hear” (E. Brontë 40). It is not clear whether Nelly is right in stating that Heathcliff is not

vengeful as a child, however, there is a clear development in him becoming more vengeful as he grows older.

Heathcliff's characteristics of hardness and strength show his uncompromising nature even when he is a boy. He takes all the blows from Hindley as if he deserves them. Nelly mentions that he may have been hardened by ill-treatment:

He seemed a sullen, patient child; hardened, perhaps, to ill-treatment: he would stand Hindley's blows without winking or shedding a tear, and my pinches moved him only to draw in a breath and open his eyes, as if he had hurt himself by accident, and nobody was to blame. This endurance made old Earnshaw furious, when he discovered his son persecuting the poor fatherless child, as he called him. (E. Brontë 38).

Nelly comes to respect Heathcliff's strength. Though she had initially sympathized with Hindley, who had "learned to regard his father as an oppressor" and who saw Heathcliff as "a usurper of his parent's affections and his privileges," her attitude changes when Heathcliff becomes sick with the measles (E. Brontë 38). She sees that the sick Heathcliff is "as uncomplaining as a lamb; though hardness, not gentleness, made him give little trouble" (E. Brontë 38). When met with hardship at this point in time, Heathcliff does not seem to lash out on people around him, he rather fights against it inwardly, for example by laughing.

The way Hindley treats Heathcliff after Earnshaw's death shows the power a patriarch has. Hindley degrades Heathcliff to what Hindley states is "his right place" (E. Brontë 22). Heathcliff goes from being favored by the old patriarch to being deeply degraded by the new. Hindley "drove him [Heathcliff] from their company to the servants, deprived him of the instructions of the curate, and insisted that he should labour out of doors instead; compelling him to do so as hard as any other lad on the farm" (E. Brontë 46). Further, Catherine writes in her journal:

Poor Heathcliff! Hindley calls him a vagabond, and won't let him sit with us, nor eat with us any more; and, he says, he and I must not play together, and threatens to turn him out of the house if we break his orders. He has been blaming our father (how dared he?) for treating H. too liberally; and swears he will reduce him to his right place. (E. Brontë 22).

Hindley, the patriarch, also has the power to use violence against the residents of Wuthering Heights, and he has the power to delegate the abuse: “‘You forget you have a master here,’ says the tyrant. ‘I’ll demolish the first who puts me out of temper! I insist on perfect sobriety and silence. Oh, boy! was that you? Frances darling, pull his hair as you go by: I heard him snap his fingers’” (E. Brontë 21). As discussed earlier, Heathcliff can cope with this injustice by laughing and seeking revenge. Heathcliff and Catherine mock the patriarch and the power structures, and they decide to try and stay out of them.

Even though Heathcliff is at the bottom of the power structures, the treatment he is subjected to is still seen as an injustice by various characters. This shows Brontë’s views on injustices to those lower down in the power structures. Catherine writes: “I wish my father were back again. Hindley is a detestable substitute—his conduct to Heathcliff is atrocious—H. and I are going to rebel” (E. Brontë 20). Here she sees that the way Hindley treats Heathcliff is unfair, and the two decide to rebel because of this treatment. Even Nelly feels that she has treated Heathcliff unjustly: “Miss Cathy and he were now very thick; but Hindley hated him: and to say the truth I did the same; and we plagued and went on with him shamefully: for I wasn’t reasonable enough to feel my injustice, and the mistress never put in a word on his behalf when she saw him wronged” (E. Brontë 38). Nelly admits to having mistreated Heathcliff, because she was not “reasonable enough” to see that it was wrong, which shows her indoctrination. Even though Catherine knows that Heathcliff is mistreated, she is not able to stand up for him, which shows how much Catherine is subdued. As discussed, her father had already taught her not to act out. Even Heathcliff himself, as noted, seems to believe he deserves the treatment he gets. He would bear being hit by Hindley and pinched by Nelly (E. Brontë 38). It seems like Heathcliff is conditioned to think he deserves the treatment. Nelly sums up his attitude when she asks him not to “get the expression of a vicious cur that appears to know the kicks it gets are its desert, and yet hates all the world, as well as the kicker, for what it suffers” (E. Brontë 58).

Heathcliff is not always a savage who does not care about the civilized world. Before Hindley prevents his chances of remaining civilized, there are many points in time Heathcliff shows that he wishes to become educated and civilized. In the beginning, he tries to keep up with Catherine and is able to bear the degradation “because Cathy taught him what she learnt, and worked or played with him in the fields” (E. Brontë 46). However, later on, Nelly relates that:

His childhood's sense of superiority, instilled into him by the favours of old Mr. Earnshaw, was faded away. He struggled long to keep up an equality with Catherine in her studies, and yielded with poignant though silent regret: but he yielded completely; and there was no prevailing on him to take a step in the way of moving upward, when he found he must, necessarily, sink beneath his former level. (E. Brontë 68)

Heathcliff has, at this point, become so degraded that he has given up trying to keep his higher position in the power structures. It is, however, clear that he did wish to keep up with Catherine in her education, but “continual hard work, begun soon and concluded late, had extinguished any curiosity he once possessed in pursuit of knowledge, and any love for books or learning” (E. Brontë 68). Nelly also remarks that “he took a grim pleasure, apparently, in exciting the aversion rather than the esteem of his few acquaintance [*sic*]” (E. Brontë 68). This spells out how Heathcliff has gone from wanting to be a part of the power structures to resisting them. Also, it is quite telling how much Heathcliff wants an education when one of the things he takes away from Hindley's son, Hareton, is the chance to get an education. If we bring in the idea that a patriarch needs words, not muscle, then Heathcliff can never become the true patriarch of Wuthering Heights. This is also what he tries to prevent Hareton from becoming.

Heathcliff mocks the Lintons' greediness as he is spying on the Lintons with Catherine. He admires Thrushcross Grange but does not understand why the Linton children are crying: “Shouldn't they have been happy? We should have thought ourselves in heaven!” (E. Brontë 48). Even though Heathcliff compares Thrushcross Grange to heaven, he also points out that he would “not exchange, for a thousand lives, my condition here, for Edgar Linton's at Thrushcross Grange” (E. Brontë 49). Catherine and Heathcliff laugh at the two children crying: “seeking entertainment in yelling, and sobbing, and rolling on the ground, divided by the whole room” (E. Brontë 49), which points to a mocking of rich people crying in their beautiful and big houses. It is also important to note that when Heathcliff claims that they “should have thought [themselves] in heaven,” he says this as they are both outside of the power structures; they are physically separated by the glass (E. Brontë 48). It is at this point that Heathcliff starts losing Catherine to the power structures, as she is invited inside, but he is not. When he later becomes sucked into the power structures, he starts wanting more and more, becoming the rich person who never gets enough. Heathcliff recognizes that what the Lintons have is better than what he has, but he still does not want to switch places with them because he sees them as weak. After losing Catherine to the power structures, he also

succumbs to them. Even after he has gotten his revenge (Hindley has died, and Heathcliff is the owner of Wuthering Heights), he still keeps going. He revenges himself on the innocent younger generation, who has nothing to do with his initial degradation.

After Catherine returns from Thrushcross Grange, she views Heathcliff with eyes blurred by the power structures. Catherine has spent time with the Lintons, people of a higher class, and she now laughs at Heathcliff for being dirty, which shows how the power structures have affected her views of the world. Upon seeing Heathcliff, Catherine “burst into a laugh, exclaiming, ‘Why, how very black and cross you look! and how—how funny and grim! But that’s because I’m used to Edgar and Isabella Linton’” (E. Brontë 54). She contrasts Heathcliff to the Linton children, and Heathcliff is even darker than she remembers because of this. Michie notes that Catherine’s response teaches “Heathcliff not only to see himself as visibly different, but also to be dissatisfied with that difference” (133). The contrasts between Heathcliff and Catherine also become bigger:

Therefore, not to mention his clothes, which had seen three months’ service in mire and dust, and his thick uncombed hair, the surface of his face and hands was dismally beclouded. He might well skulk behind the settle, on beholding such a bright, graceful damsel enter the house, instead of a rough-headed counterpart of himself, as he expected (E. Brontë 54).

Heathcliff’s hands are “dismally beclouded” while Catherine’s are “wonderfully whitened” (E. Brontë 54). This difference between their hands “raises issues of class and gender difference (differences of who works and who does not, who is dirty and who is not), but associates those differences with skin color” (Michie 133). Catherine is aware of this difference between her as a “graceful damsel” and Heathcliff as a “rough-headed counterpart” (E. Brontë 54), and she even suggests he should wash his face and hands, because then “it will be all right: but you are so dirty” (E. Brontë 55). Catherine asking Heathcliff to clean himself up mirrors the time when Heathcliff first comes to Wuthering Heights and Earnshaw orders Nelly to clean him. He needs to be cleaned “to be human like the rest of the family” (Althubaiti 205). After she shakes hands with Heathcliff, Catherine is concerned about her dress, “which she feared had gained no embellishment from its contact with his” (E. Brontë 55). Heathcliff is offended and tells her, “‘You needn’t have touched me!’ he answered, following her eye and snatching away his hand. ‘I shall be as dirty as I please: and I like to be

dirty, and I will be dirty” (E. Brontë 55). It is as if Heathcliff tells Catherine that even though the power structures have cleansed her, he does not need cleaning.

After Heathcliff starts losing Catherine to the power structures, he starts falling prey to them as well. He has to start changing to fit into the new standard Catherine has set at Wuthering Heights. When at Thrushcross Grange, Mrs. Linton claims that Heathcliff is “quite unfit for a decent house!” (E. Brontë 50), and when the Linton siblings start coming over to Wuthering Heights, Mrs. Linton “begged that her darlings might be kept carefully apart from that ‘naughty swearing boy’” (E. Brontë 55). Nelly encourages Heathcliff to dress up for Catherine so they can “sit together, with the whole hearth to [themselves], and have a long chatter till bedtime.” However, Heathcliff refuses, and only the day after, he asks Nelly to “make me decent, I’m going to be good” (E. Brontë 56). This moment signals that Heathcliff is about to fall into the power structures.

Even after Heathcliff has left Wuthering Heights and has returned as a rich man, he is still not considered fit for “a decent house” (E. Brontë 50). Heathcliff visits Catherine at Thrushcross Grange, and she announces the news to Edgar: “‘Shall I tell him to come up?’ ‘Here,’ he said, ‘into the parlour?’ ‘Where else?’ she asked. He looked vexed, and suggested the kitchen as a more suitable place for him. Mrs. Linton eyed him with a droll expression—half angry, half laughing at his fastidiousness” (E. Brontë 95). Edgar is clear that the kitchen would be a better place for Heathcliff than the parlor, while we again can hear Catherine’s laugh, mocking Edgar and his suggestion of keeping the classes distinct from each other. Just like Joseph “accepts his lower status without apparent protest” (Duthie 277), Heathcliff is expected to do the same. Edgar further asks Catherine to “try to be glad, without being absurd. The whole household need not witness the sight of your welcoming a runaway servant as a brother” (E. Brontë 96). Again, Catherine is asked to behave properly and not be “absurd.” As a woman of a higher class, she should not show too much emotion, especially not to a man of a lower class than herself. This emphasizes the position Heathcliff has in the power structures, and how though seemingly being a gentleman, he is still not welcome into Thrushcross Grange.

Just as Heathcliff and Catherine were separated from the Linton siblings by the window glass in their childhood, Catherine mockingly suggests such an arrangement at Thrushcross Grange. Since Edgar wants Heathcliff to sit in the kitchen, Catherine remarks that she cannot sit there and orders Nelly to “[s]et two tables here...: one for your master and Miss Isabella, being gentry; the other for Heathcliff and myself, being of the lower orders. Will that please you, dear? Or must I have a fire lighted elsewhere?” (E. Brontë 95–6).

Catherine offers to sit at a table below her status to sit with her old playmate. She mockingly tries to “please” her husband by separating Heathcliff from him, and simultaneously, mocking his views by degrading herself for this “runaway servant.” This arrangement shows both Catherine’s and Heathcliff’s in-between class position, but it also shows how degraded Heathcliff is and how, even though he now has earned money, he is still “unfit for a decent house” (E. Brontë 50).

When Lockwood first meets Heathcliff, he has problems establishing where Heathcliff belongs in the class hierarchy. Lockwood also seems to have a need to understand this as well, showing that this is important to the “normal middle-class man.” This ambiguity manifests itself in Lockwood’s description of Wuthering Heights and Heathcliff:

the apartment and furniture would have been nothing extraordinary as belonging to a homely, northern farmer with a stubborn countenance, and stalwart limbs set out to advantage in knee-breeches and gaiters. Such an individual, seated in his armchair, his mug of ale frothing on the round table before him, is to be seen in any circuit of five or six miles among these hills, if you go at the right time, after dinner. But, Mr. Heathcliff forms a singular contrast to his abode and style of living. He is a dark-skinned gypsy in aspect, in dress and manners a gentleman – that is, as much a gentleman as many a country squire. (E. Brontë 5).

Even though Heathcliff here is described as a gentleman “in dress and manners,” he is still the “dark-skinned gypsy” who first comes to Wuthering Heights. Heathcliff now has money and can act a gentleman, but his looks are telling of where he comes from: according to Joseph, “piked out fro’ th’ rubbidge” (E. Brontë 86). Lockwood states that the way Heathcliff speaks “revealed a genuine bad nature” and he “I no longer felt inclined to call Heathcliff a capital fellow” (E. Brontë 12). Thus, even though Heathcliff has earned money and could be considered being at the top of the power structures, this description shows how Heathcliff can never truly be at the top.

To further build on the idea that Heathcliff can never truly become upper class or a true gentleman, he still has an appearance that hints at his past. Nelly describes Heathcliff after returning to Thrushcross Grange: he “retained no marks of former degradation. A half-civilised ferocity lurked yet in the depressed brows and eyes full of black fire, but it was subdued; and his manner was even dignified: quite divested of roughness, though too stern for grace” (E. Brontë 96). She points to him not showing any signs of “former degradation,” yet a



“half-civilised ferocity lurked” in his eyes. Even though Heathcliff has been able to rise above his former degradation, his darkness is still there. He is still the “dirty, ragged, black-haired child” who got picked up from the streets (E. Brontë 36). The idea of Heathcliff as a racial other still follows him. He has at this point learned to “subdue” these features, just like Catherine created a double-character when trying to fit in with the Lintons. They both have to subdue their true selves to fit into the power structures they have been sucked into. Nelly even questions Heathcliff’s honesty; she claims that “[h]onest people don’t hide their deeds. How has he been living? how has he got rich?” (E. Brontë 103), which builds further on the idea of Heathcliff not being able to become a true gentleman. This also shows how fluid social class is. This idea is further emphasized by Heathcliff’s rising above Isabella after their marriage. Nelly describes: “He was the only thing there that seemed decent; and I thought he never looked better. So much had circumstances altered their positions, that he would certainly have struck a stranger as a born and bred gentleman; and his wife as a thorough little slattern!” (E. Brontë 146). The fluidity of class is clear here: Isabella used to be on the other side of the glass from Heathcliff, but now it seems they have switched places.

Brontë mocks Isabella for believing Heathcliff is a Byronic hero. Isabella views Heathcliff as a Byronic hero and imagines him being kind and soft behind his rugged exterior. Even Heathcliff points this out after they have married, and he mocks his wife for it:

She abandoned them [the Lintons] under a delusion... picturing in me a hero of romance, and expecting unlimited indulgences from my chivalrous devotion. I can hardly regard her in the light of a rational creature, so obstinately has she persisted in forming a fabulous notion of my character and acting on the false impressions she cherished. (E. Brontë 149).

Even though Catherine, Edgar, and even Heathcliff inform Isabella about Heathcliff’s true character, she still wants to marry Heathcliff. Heathcliff calls her irrational for marrying him despite all the warnings. Nelly relates that Edgar “had sense to comprehend Heathcliff’s disposition: to know that, though his exterior was altered, his mind was unchangeable and unchanged” (E. Brontë 101). This builds further on the idea of Heathcliff being a gentleman only in appearance. Even though Heathcliff has earned money and now has power, he is still the same as before, now just with more power. According to Edgar, he has not changed, nor will he ever change. Isabella is not able to see this. Catherine tries to convince Isabella that Heathcliff is not the person she wants him to be: “It is deplorable ignorance of his character,

child, and nothing else, which makes that dream enter your head. Pray, don't imagine that he conceals depths of benevolence and affection beneath a stern exterior! He's not a rough diamond—a pearl-containing oyster of a rustic: he's a fierce, pitiless, wolfish man" (E. Brontë 103). Isabella becomes a parody of the Victorian reader who minimizes the deep generational trauma caused by the power structures, which causes Heathcliff's stern exterior to an overly romantic reading of his character.

Both Heathcliff and *Jane Eyre's* Rochester have traits typical of the Byronic hero. Rochester, as opposed to Heathcliff, does show "depths of benevolence and affection" (E. Brontë 103). Both may be viewed as a parody of the Byronic hero, but Rochester is also a fantasy of the taming of the Byronic hero. With Jane Eyre's help, he is able to open up and show the affection hiding behind his exterior. Everyone around Heathcliff knows he is no Byronic hero who wants to be tamed. Although the power structures have absorbed him, he is still fighting against them. A taming of his character would be giving up on the fight against the power structures.

Compared to Edgar, Heathcliff becomes an obvious dark character. As a boy, Heathcliff complains that he wished he was more like Edgar: "I wish I had light hair and a fair skin, and was dressed and behaved as well, and had a chance of being as rich as he will be!" (E. Brontë 57). Heathcliff clearly expresses that he does not have the same opportunities as Edgar to get rich, and he connects it to his appearance. Nelly tries to encourage him, saying:

Come to the glass, and I'll let you see what you should wish. Do you mark those two lines between your eyes; and those thick brows, that, instead of rising arched, sink in the middle; and that couple of black fiends, so deeply buried, who never open their windows boldly, but lurk glinting under them, like devil's spies? Wish and learn to smooth away the surly wrinkles, to raise your lids frankly, and change the fiends to confident, innocent angels, suspecting and doubting nothing, and always seeing friends where they are not sure of foes. (E. Brontë 57–8).

Nelly blames Heathcliff for not being more like Edgar, and she asks him to think of himself as better than he is. Heathcliff is obviously degraded and looked down upon by the other people in the novel. He is treated unjustly; still, Nelly tells him to see friends where his eyes are "not sure of foes." Heathcliff answers Nelly: "'In other words, I must wish for Edgar Linton's great blue eyes and even forehead,' he replied. 'I do—and that won't help me to

them” (E. Brontë 58). Heathcliff says that to view the world and its people as friends, he would have to have Edgar’s eyes; Heathcliff does not have this privilege.

Heathcliff’s reference to Edgar’s “even forehead” may have to do with his intellect (E. Brontë 58). Under Hindley’s power, Heathcliff is refused education and is sent to work in the fields. Being deprived of an education, he does not have the “words” Gilbert and Gubar claim a patriarch needs, and Heathcliff will never truly be a patriarch (281). Nelly describes the difference between Heathcliff and Edgar:

Doubtless Catherine marked the difference between her friends, as one came in and the other went out. The contrast resembled what you see in exchanging a bleak, hilly, coal country for a beautiful fertile valley; and his voice and greeting were as opposite as his aspect. He had a sweet, low manner of speaking, and pronounced his words as you do: that’s less gruff than we talk here, and softer. (E. Brontë 70).

Like Heathcliff, Nelly observes that Catherine undoubtedly would have seen the big difference between the two. This shows how Nelly tries to encourage Heathcliff to believe in himself without considering that the world is not built for Heathcliff to believe in himself. Nelly also points to how he speaks; Heathcliff, unlike Edgar and Lockwood, does not speak in a sweet and low manner. This sets Heathcliff apart from these two men of a higher class. Heathcliff has muscle, not words, and therefore he uses violence to gain his position.

It is when Heathcliff comes back after earning all his money that he becomes a tyrant. It is at this point that he has legitimate power. Jacobs points out that the Earnshaw children early on learn that “social power legitimizes violence” (214). Hindley beats Heathcliff, but Heathcliff, Jacobs points out, never “returns Hindley’s violence or, in fact, perpetrates violence until he himself has gained the legal and economic status of paterfamilias” (214). After Catherine betrays Heathcliff and breaks their promise to “remain savages,” Heathcliff also gives in. He is absorbed into the power structures, and once he has actual power over Wuthering Heights, he becomes a tyrant. After being away from Wuthering Heights, he has gained the financial power to realize his tyranny.

Heathcliff becomes a tyrant due to becoming a part of the power structures, but that does not mean he never contemplated violence before becoming a part of them. Catherine knows he is violent, and she tries to make him less violent. As Catherine is dying, she starts picking feathers out of her pillow, reflecting on all the different birds in the pillow, she starts questioning whether Heathcliff has kept his promise not to kill birds:

This feather was picked up from the heath, the bird was not shot: we saw its nest in the winter, full of little skeletons. Heathcliff set a trap over it, and the old ones dared not come. I made him promise he'd never shoot a lapwing after that, and he didn't. Yes, here are more! Did he shoot my lapwings, Nelly? Are they red, any of them? Let me look. (E. Brontë 122–3).

When Catherine is with Heathcliff, he becomes less cruel. Newman notes that this scene shows his cruelty (“Common Features” 193). Catherine cares about these lapwings because of her feminine traits of caring and nurturing, whereas Heathcliff only has the ability to be compassionate when he is with her. Catherine’s feminine traits in caring for the lapwings are showing here, and she is trying to help Heathcliff have the same features. She quite literally asks him and makes him promise not to kill. As the power structures separate Heathcliff and Catherine, Heathcliff becomes less capable of feminine emotions. As mentioned, each time Heathcliff leaves Catherine, he becomes less human, but he also becomes less humane each time he leaves her. After Catherine’s death, as Jacobs points out: Heathcliff is “incapable of any ‘feminine’ or soft emotion” (216). It is as if Catherine gives Heathcliff the ability to be compassionate.

Since Heathcliff and Catherine are seen as the same person, Heathcliff’s femininity can be seen as declining or dying as he is separated from Catherine. Each time Heathcliff leaves Catherine, he becomes less capable of feminine feelings (Jacobs 216). Jacobs states that “when he [Heathcliff] describes Cathy as his soul, and her death as the death of his soul, he is describing the death of a part of himself that he had needed her to act out, because that part had been projected onto her as they stepped into the simplified roles of adulthood” (Jacobs 216). We can see the first decline of his femininity after Catherine returns from Thrushcross Grange, and she has started to become absorbed by the power structures. Nelly relates: “Catherine and he were constant companions still at his seasons of respite from labour; but he had ceased to express his fondness for her in words, and recoiled with angry suspicion from her girlish caresses, as if conscious there could be no gratification in lavishing such marks of affection on him” (E. Brontë 68–9). Here it is evident that Heathcliff can no longer express his feelings freely. Catherine also starts thinking of Heathcliff as unemotional and even incapable of love. When discussing marrying Edgar with Nelly, Catherine questions Heathcliff’s ability to feel and tries to convince herself: “that Heathcliff has no notion of these things. He has not, has he? He does not know what being in love is!” (E. Brontë 81). Just as

Catherine slowly “dies” each time she is separated from Heathcliff, he slowly dies too. Unlike Catherine, whose physical strength weakens, Heathcliff slowly loses his humanity. Because of the power structures, mainly class and race, Heathcliff is suppressed and degraded, and he gets a need to rise above this, and as a result, he becomes a patriarch. This process shows how the power structures are cyclical. It also becomes more evident why the fight for women is suppressed after Catherine dies: Heathcliff cannot be a patriarch and fight the patriarchy simultaneously. Without Catherine there, as part of his humanity and femininity, he is lost to the power structures.

The way Heathcliff is described using animal imagery adds to the image of him being cruel. Duthie points out that after Heathcliff overhears Catherine’s decision to marry Edgar, “animal imagery is used with increasing frequency to describe Heathcliff” (231). Isabella refers to Heathcliff as “a tiger, or a venomous serpent” (E. Brontë 144), Catherine calls him a “fierce, pitiless, wolfish man” (E. Brontë 103), and Nelly describes him howling “not like a man, but like a savage beast” (E. Brontë 169). Duthie explains that this imagery “correspond to the violence which has developed in Heathcliff, and which governs his behaviour to others. It is no longer only the violence shown by men and animals in the struggle for survival; it is the more sinister violence motivated by the deliberate will to wound as well as destroy; it has degenerated into sadism” (Duthie 232). Heathcliff goes from wanting revenge for his mistreatment to wanting revenge against the power structures for losing Catherine to them, to succumbing to the power structures, and becoming an extreme example of how cruel the power structures make people. Duthie also points out that “[h]is sadism awakes similar reactions in his victims” (232). Even though his victims are not in a position to revenge themselves, Isabella, for example, when getting to hold the pistol Hindley wants to kill Heathcliff with Isabella admits that a “hideous notion” struck her: “how powerful I should be possessing such an instrument!” (E. Brontë 140). This shows that Heathcliff is not the only one who becomes crueler because of his mistreatment but that the abuse also goes in cycles.

Heathcliff starts taking his cruelty and violence out on the younger generation, even though they have nothing to do with his mistreatment. Duthie states that his “brutality is seen at its starkest when, after a lapse of years, he attacks the younger generation, who are innocent of offence against him” (Duthie 232). Nelly points out that she “could not picture a father treating a dying child as tyrannically and wickedly as I afterwards learned Heathcliff had treated him” (E. Brontë 259). This example highlights how cruel Heathcliff has become when he even treats his own son with such tyranny. Just as Hindley learned that Earnshaw could exert power over him, and as Heathcliff had to endure Hindley’s blows, Heathcliff’s son,

Linton, now has no choice but to endure the tyranny of Heathcliff, the patriarch. Nelly, Linton, and Catherine II are on the heath together, and Linton has fallen asleep when he is startled: “Linton here started from his slumber in bewildered terror, and asked if any one had called his name. ‘No,’ said Catherine; ‘unless in dreams. I cannot conceive how you manage to doze out of doors, in the morning.’ ‘I thought I heard my father,’ he gasped, glancing up to the frowning nab above us. ‘You are sure nobody spoke?’” (E. Brontë 263). Linton’s fear shows that he knows Heathcliff’s abilities and fears Heathcliff’s cruelty. He is absolutely terrified of Heathcliff and his actions. Catherine II asks Linton whether he would protect her against Heathcliff:

“You wouldn’t injure me, Linton, would you? You wouldn’t let any enemy hurt me, if you could prevent it? I’ll believe you are a coward, for yourself, but not a cowardly betrayer of your best friend.” “But my father threatened me,” gasped the boy, clasping his attenuated fingers, “and I dread him—I dread him! I dare not tell!” (E. Brontë 267).

Linton’s fear is telling of how Heathcliff’s cruelty scares Linton; he dreads his own father. Although the power structures have caused Heathcliff’s cruelty, it is important to note that Brontë does not excuse this cruelty. It becomes hard for a reader to do so when seeing how much Linton dreads his father.

Although Heathcliff is depicted as cruel, he did not always use to be such a cruel person. In the early stages of his cruelty, we can see him struggle with his natural impulse to do the right thing and getting the revenge he feels he deserves. Hindley is holding his son, Hareton, over the banister and drops him:

There was scarcely time to experience a thrill of horror before we saw that the little wretch was safe. Heathcliff arrived underneath just at the critical moment; by a *natural impulse* he arrested his descent, and setting him on his feet, looked up to discover the author of the accident. A miser who has parted with a lucky lottery ticket for five shillings, and finds next day he has lost in the bargain five thousand pounds, could not show a blanker countenance than he did on beholding the figure of Mr. Earnshaw above. It expressed, plainer than words could do, the intensest anguish at having made himself the instrument of thwarting his own revenge. Had it been dark, I daresay he would have tried to remedy the mistake by smashing Hareton’s skull on the

steps; but, we witnessed his salvation; and I was presently below with my precious charge pressed to my heart. (E. Brontë 75, emphasis added).

Heathcliff is set on getting revenge on Hindley for his mistreatment; therefore, his natural impulse to catch Hareton shows how he is not inherently bad. He becomes cruel because of mistreatment and degradation, but his natural instincts, to begin with, are not those of a cruel person. Heathcliff wants revenge on Hindley, and the moment Heathcliff understands what he has done, he regrets it. It is also telling that Nelly asserts that Heathcliff would have tried to kill Hareton only if it had been dark. She believes he would be willing to kill as long as nobody saw it, which may be insinuating that he would try to hide his cruelty.

The younger Catherine is aware of Heathcliff's reasons for mistreating people. She knows that his cruelty comes from him being hurt. Because of Heathcliff's degradation and the power structures separating him from the older Catherine, he becomes cruel. The younger Catherine tells him:

Mr. Heathcliff, *you* have *nobody* to love you; and, however miserable you make us, we shall still have the revenge of thinking that your cruelty arises from your greater misery. You *are* miserable, are you not? Lonely, like the devil, and envious like him? *Nobody* loves you—*nobody* will cry for you when you die! I wouldn't be you! (E. Brontë 288).

The fact that Catherine II knows that Heathcliff is hurting is what helps the younger generation get out of the cycles of abuse. Knowing that Heathcliff's cruelty comes from a place of hurting, the younger generation does not need revenge. Heathcliff is already hurting, and that is their revenge.

Because of the power structures, Catherine and Heathcliff cannot exist together in life, and their only option is to exist together in death. Catherine and Heathcliff promise each other to “remain savages,” and Catherine breaks this promise by marrying Edgar. Heathcliff, who already wants to avenge himself on Hindley, now also wants to avenge himself on Edgar for pulling Catherine out into the power structures. Catherine's reflection on how she and Heathcliff would have been beggars had they married shows how the power structures keep them from each other. Catherine—who connects Thrushcross Grange and Edgar to heaven—states after dreaming about being in heaven, “heaven did not seem to be my home; and I broke my heart with weeping to come back to earth” (E. Brontë 81). Heathcliff, who is

depicted as a devil, becomes the opposite of the heaven, that will never be Catherine's home. Before his death, Heathcliff arranges with the sexton to have Catherine's and his own coffin opened on the sides facing each other. Heathcliff states, "by the time Linton gets to us he'll not know which is which!" (E. Brontë 288). This shows how Catherine and Heathcliff are connected, and it becomes a picture of how class, gender, and race are connected through them. The two remain on earth together in the form of ghosts.

The country people are terrified of the ghosts of Catherine and Heathcliff. They claim to have seen them both after Heathcliff dies. They "would swear on the Bible that he walks":

there are those who speak to having met him near the church, and on the moor, and even within this house. Idle tales, you'll say, and so say I. Yet that old man by the kitchen fire affirms he has seen two on 'em looking out of his chamber window on every rainy night since his death. (E. Brontë 336).

The fact that Catherine and Heathcliff are roaming the moors in the rain connects them to nature and the wildness of the rain, which shows their rebellion. Nelly also talks about meeting a young boy who is visibly scared: "'What is the matter, my little man?' I asked. 'There's Heathcliff and a woman yonder, under t' nab,' he blubbered, 'un' I darnut pass' em'" (E. Brontë 336). The couple is still there after their death, with their eerie appearance scaring the country folks, and reminding them about their rebellion.



## 5 The second generation—Catherine, Linton and Hareton

This section focuses on how the characterization of the second generation of the novel, Catherine Linton, Hareton Earnshaw, and Linton Heathcliff, show their attitudes to and their position in the power structures of class, race, and gender. The three descendants of the Lintons, the Earnshaws, and Heathcliff, bear a resemblance to the first generation, but towards the end, they become more aware of the power structures, and understand the cycles of abuse better than the first generation. The younger Catherine possesses the same darkness as Catherine and Heathcliff, and their rebellious nature lives on through her. Hareton has, like Heathcliff, an ambiguous class position. Heathcliff degrades him, which results in him losing his original class position. As a result of his degradation, he becomes brutish. Linton has more resemblance to his mother's side of the family, the Lintons. He is characterized by typical feminine traits but also as a sickly and entitled child, which shows in how he positions himself above the rest of the inhabitants at Wuthering Heights. Linton also distinguishes himself from his father, Heathcliff, which distances him from both Heathcliff's brutishness and his position as a racial other.

Education continues to be important to this generation, and the imagery of the domestic sphere and the connection to nature continues into the second half of the novel. Even though the younger generation shows some negative attitudes toward people lower down in the power structures, they also show signs of becoming more accepting. I argue that this generation starts showing more compassion and understanding for other people. Even though we, by the end of the novel, start seeing signs of newer times and hope, the rebellion manifested in Heathcliff and Catherine remains.

The younger Catherine is a mix of the Lintons and the Earnshaws, and being raised by only her father, she resembles the Lintons more in the beginning. However, she, like her mother, has a temper. The younger Catherine is described as being:

a real beauty in face, with the Earnshaws' handsome dark eyes, but the Lintons' fair skin and small features, and yellow curling hair. Her spirit was high, though not rough, and qualified by a heart sensitive and lively to excess in its affections. That capacity for intense attachments reminded me of her mother: still she did not resemble her: for she could be soft and mild as a dove, and she had a gentle voice and pensive

expression: her anger was never furious; her love never fierce: it was deep and tender. (E. Brontë 189).

When the older Catherine is angry and lashes out at Nelly in front of Edgar, Nelly comments that “[s]he never had power to conceal her passion, it always set her whole complexion in a blaze” (E. Brontë 71). Nelly’s observations show that even though the younger Catherine shows some similarities to the older Catherine, she is meeker than her mother. Whereas the older Catherine shows more extreme emotions, the younger shows more female qualities a Victorian woman should have. Although the younger Catherine reminds Nelly of the older Catherine, the older Catherine’s features are somewhat subdued in the younger Catherine. The younger Catherine also struggles with her emotions and even becomes violent towards Linton. After a fight between the two, Linton states: “‘Hareton never touches me: he never struck me in his life. And I was better to-day: and there—’ his voice died in a whimper. ‘I didn’t strike you!’ muttered Cathy, chewing her lip to prevent another burst of emotion” (E. Brontë 239). Here we can see the younger Catherine trying to keep her emotions in check. Later on, Nelly comments that “the more hurt she gets, the more venomous she grows” (E. Brontë 297). Her treatment at Wuthering Heights causes her to show more and more of her nature, and less of her feminine qualities. The only other features the younger Catherine has from her mother are “a breadth of forehead, and a certain arch of the nostril that makes her appear rather haughty, whether she will or not” (E. Brontë 322). These features hint at the younger Catherine’s class position and that she will not be able to escape it. It is interesting to note that the younger Catherine’s eyes are the same as that of the older Catherine. Her skin and hair are the same as the Lintons’, but she has her mother’s rebellious eyes. Although her features are subdued, they are still there.

The older generation’s rebellion lives on through the eyes of the younger Catherine and Hareton. The younger Catherine and Hareton have the same eyes as the older Catherine: “perhaps you have never remarked that their eyes are precisely similar, and they are those of Catherine Earnshaw” (E. Brontë 322). As a patriarch, Heathcliff feels uncomfortable looking at them: “‘It is well you are out of my reach,’ he exclaimed. ‘What fiend possesses you to stare back at me, continually, with those infernal eyes? Down with them! And don’t remind me of your existence again. I thought I had cured you of laughing’” (E. Brontë 318). He cannot stand looking into the younger Catherine’s eyes as she has her mother’s eyes. Her eyes are a reminder of what he has lost and how he became sucked into the power structures. It is interesting to note how Heathcliff has now taken on the full role of patriarch and is restricting

the younger Catherine from acting out. It is even more interesting that he is trying to keep her from laughing, since laughter is what her mother once used to mock those who put Heathcliff down. Even Hareton is uncomfortable when the younger Catherine looks at him: “He could not stand a steady gaze from her eyes, though they were just his own” (E. Brontë 195). The younger Catherine and Hareton “have inherited the eyes of the revolutionary Cathy, and the implication is that Cathy’s disruptive qualities have not been put to rest” (Cory 24). One could say that Heathcliff and the older Catherine live on through the younger generation. So, in addition to haunting the moors, their features are there as a reminder of their rebellion.

From being a meek young woman, the younger Catherine starts changing as she starts going to Wuthering Heights. As a young girl, the younger Catherine is petted by her father. Nelly relates:

However, it must be acknowledged, she had faults to foil her gifts. A propensity to be saucy was one; and a perverse will, that indulged children invariably acquire, whether they be good tempered or cross. If a servant chanced to vex her, it was always—“I shall tell papa!” And if he reprovved her, even by a look, you would have thought it a heart-breaking business: I don’t believe he ever did speak a harsh word to her. (E. Brontë 189).

Like Heathcliff reflecting after watching Isabella and Edgar cry over a dog, Nelly here points out how people are shaped by the treatment they get. Nelly connects the younger Catherine’s attitudes to the way she is raised. Her nature resembles how Edgar would “cry for mamma at every turn... and trembled if a country lad heaved his fist against [him], and sat at home all day for a shower of rain” (E. Brontë 57). This contrasts the resilience Nelly admires in Heathcliff as a child, as Heathcliff would bear the blows from Hindley. The younger Catherine starts off as a calm and meek young girl but becomes more rebellious. Nelly reflects on this change: “She was a happy creature, and an angel, in those days. It’s a pity she could not be content” (E. Brontë 213). This change—that Catherine wanted, based on her lack of contentment—is evident when Nelly finds the younger Catherine at Wuthering Heights after running away from Nelly: “I entered, and beheld my stray lamb seated on the hearth, rocking herself in a little chair that had been her mother’s when a child. Her hat was hung against the wall, and she seemed *perfectly at home*, laughing and chattering, in the best spirits imaginable” (E. Brontë 193, emphasis added). Had the younger Catherine not had some of her

mother's features, or had she not started changing, she would have felt out of place at Wuthering Heights, just as the first generation of Lintons would have, as children.

At the novel's beginning, when we first meet the younger Catherine, she claims that she has advanced in the "black arts," mirroring the dark and spooky forms of the older Catherine and Heathcliff. She uses this darkness to mock Joseph:

"You scandalous old hypocrite!" she replied. "Are you not afraid of being carried away bodily, whenever you mention the devil's name? I warn you to refrain from provoking me, or I'll ask your abduction as a special favour! Stop! look here, Joseph," she continued, taking a long, dark book from a shelf; "I'll show you how far I've progressed in the Black Art: I shall soon be competent to make a clear house of it. The red cow didn't die by chance; and your rheumatism can hardly be reckoned among providential visitations! ... No, reprobate! you are a castaway—be off, or I'll hurt you seriously! I'll have you all modelled in wax and clay! and the first who passes the limits I fix shall—I'll not say what he shall be done to—but, you'll see! Go, I'm looking at you!" (E. Brontë 15).

Joseph is scared by her talk of black magic, and "trembling with sincere horror, [he] hurried out, praying, and ejaculating 'wicked' as he went" (E. Brontë 15). This shows how the younger Catherine, like her mother, is able to scare Joseph with her rebellious nature. Even Lockwood calls her a "little witch" (E. Brontë 15). Lockwood does not believe that Catherine is serious, as he points to her behavior as "prompted by a species of dreary fun," and he tells her that he presumes that because of her face, he is sure she "cannot help being good-hearted" (E. Brontë 15–6). Although the younger Catherine's beauty blinds Lockwood, it is interesting to note that her face is the face of the Lintons, and this face would not be scary or even capable of "black arts." Lockwood may, however, not have looked her closely enough in her eyes to see that she has her mother's eyes, which may also be why Lockwood does not believe her.

As Hindley degrades Heathcliff, Heathcliff degrades Hindley's son, Hareton. Therefore, when we first meet Hareton, his characterization resembles Heathcliff's as a young child. Lockwood tries to figure out his class position:

I began to doubt whether he were a servant or not: his dress and speech were both rude, entirely devoid of the superiority observable in Mr. and Mrs. Heathcliff; his

thick brown curls were rough and uncultivated, his whiskers encroached bearishly over his cheeks, and his hands were embrowned like those of a common labourer: still his bearing was free, almost haughty, and he showed none of a domestic's assiduity in attending on the lady of the house. In the absence of clear proofs of his condition, I deemed it best to abstain from noticing his curious conduct; and, five minutes afterwards, the entrance of Heathcliff relieved me, in some measure, from my uncomfortable state. (E. Brontë 11–2).

Although Hareton originally is the heir to Wuthering Heights, he is degraded to the extent of now looking like a farm laborer. Lockwood is uncomfortable not knowing Hareton's class position, as he is with Heathcliff. Society and the middle-class man are represented in Lockwood, and his obsession with trying to establish people's class position shows how important class position is to society. It is clear that Heathcliff's revenge and the degradation of Hareton have been successful, as Lockwood even inwardly mocks Hareton for demanding respect from him: "'I've shown no disrespect,' was my reply, laughing internally at the dignity with which he announced himself" (E. Brontë 14).

As Heathcliff was described as a brutish young boy, so is Hareton, and both Hindley and Heathcliff have a part in making him more brutish. Hareton is described as being Catherine's "rude-bred kindred" (E. Brontë 196), and after seeing Hareton for the first time in a while, Nelly describes him as a "ruffianly child, strong in limb and dirty in garb, with a look of Catherine in his eyes and about his mouth" (E. Brontë 137). Here we can see Hareton as dirty and strong, resembling how Heathcliff was described when younger. Heathcliff is set on making Hareton brutish and raises him accordingly: Heathcliff "appeared to have bent his malevolence on making [Hareton] a brute: he was never taught to read or write; never rebuked for any bad habit which did not annoy his keeper; never led a single step towards virtue, or guarded by a single precept against vice" (E. Brontë 197). Even Hareton's father, Hindley, wants to make Hareton fiercer by giving him a haircut. Hindley asks: "Now, don't you think the lad would be handsomer cropped? It makes a dog fiercer, and I love something fierce—get me a scissors—something fierce and trim!" (E. Brontë 75). This example shows how Hindley forms Hareton and makes him more brutish. The neglect Hareton is subjected to makes him more brutish; there is, however, a difference between Hareton's brutishness and Heathcliff's.

Compared to Heathcliff and Hindley, Hareton does not seem as unfavorable. Nelly describes Hareton as a "well-made, athletic youth, good-looking in features, and stout and

healthy,” but wearing clothing fit for someone who spends his days working on a farm (E. Brontë 196). Further, she comments: “Still, I thought I could detect in his physiognomy a mind owning better qualities than his father ever possessed” (E. Brontë 196). Despite Hareton’s looks of being lower down in the power structures, Nelly is able to see that he is not as violent and evil as his father or even Heathcliff, who she never speaks of in the same manner as she does of Hareton. Hareton is often described as doing farm work, and at one point, he hangs “a litter of puppies from a chair-back in the doorway” (E. Brontë 183). Heathcliff is also seen hanging up Isabella’s “little dog” (E. Brontë 150). The way both Hareton and Heathcliff hang up these dogs shows their brutishness. There is, however, a difference between Heathcliff’s hanging of Isabella’s dog after their elopement and Hareton hanging a litter of puppies. As SurrIDGE comments, the “repeated details of life at the Heights – from the killing of rabbits for meat and skins to the plucking of birds for their feathers – suggest that Hareton’s act does not symbolize grand malignity but is part of everyday farm labour” (170). There is no denying that Hareton does show some brutishness, but beneath this brutishness, Nelly sees in him a better person than both Heathcliff and Hindley.

The low position of Heathcliff and Hareton is evident in how they feel they must change for the two Catherines. Zillah, the housekeeper at Wuthering Heights, tells Hareton that the younger Catherine will be sitting with them and that she is used to “see the Sabbath respected,” and Hareton “coloured up at the news, and cast his eyes over his hands and clothes. The train-oil and gunpowder were shoved out of sight in a minute. I saw he meant to give her his company; and I guessed, by his way, he wanted to be presentable” (E. Brontë 295). Hareton tries “to make himself agreeable” (E. Brontë 295), just like when Heathcliff too had to try and make himself agreeable after the older Catherine came back from Thrushcross Grange. This shows Hareton’s and Heathcliff’s inferiority to the two Catherines. The fact that Hareton so quickly tries to conceal his rough exterior hints at a desire to be accepted by Catherine and a wish to rise to her level.

Although Hareton does not speak gibberish, like Heathcliff, his language stands out from the rest of the people residing at Wuthering Heights, and he is positioned lower down in the power structures because of it. Like Heathcliff, Hareton is a “naughty swearing boy” (E. Brontë 55). When Nelly visits Wuthering Heights, she meets Hareton at the gate, and the swearing of Hareton saddens her. We later learn that the swearing was taught by Heathcliff: “from the stammering lips of the little fellow, a string of curses, which, whether he comprehended them or not, were delivered with practised emphasis, and distorted his baby features into a shocking expression of malignity” (E. Brontë 109). As a way of positioning

himself above Hareton, Linton points out the way Hareton speaks: “Where is the use of the devil in that sentence? ... Papa told you not to say any bad words, and you can’t open your mouth without one. Do try to behave like a gentleman, now do!” (E. Brontë 220). Linton, who speaks properly, can position himself above Hareton, who has been neglected and does not know how a gentleman speaks. Linton is far more refined than Hareton, who, in comparison, becomes even more brutish.

Linton is raised by his mother, Isabella, and presumably being even more petted than the younger Catherine is by her father, he is made entitled. He, therefore, positions himself at the top of the power structures. Linton is described as “[a] pale, delicate, effeminate boy, who might have been taken for my master’s [Edgar Linton’s] younger brother, so strong was the resemblance: but there was a sickly peevishness in his aspect that Edgar Linton never had” (E. Brontë 200). Besides the obvious connection in having his mother’s family name as his first name, he resembles the Lintons more than he resembles his father, Heathcliff. Linton fits the description of Isabella and Edgar perfectly: “they are spoiled children, and fancy the world was made for their accommodation; ... I think a smart chastisement might improve them all the same” (E. Brontë 98). This characterization shows Brontë’s belief that the treatment one receives determines one’s behavior and that spoiled children will think they are the center of the world. This is evident when Linton first arrives at Wuthering Heights, and he is unhappy with the food he receives there. Being served milk-porridge, he “stirred round the homely mess with a look of aversion, and affirmed he could not eat it” (E. Brontë 209). Joseph states that what Hareton used to eat should be good enough for Linton, but with no luck: Linton refuses to eat it. Joseph reflects: “His mother wer just soa—we wer a’most too mucky to sow t’ corn for makking her breed” (E. Brontë 209). This shows the class difference between the Lintons and the Earnshaws and how Linton positions himself at the top of the power structures and above Hareton.

Linton is characterized with typically feminine traits, which shows how he is refined in a different way than Hareton’s “physical energy” is “refined” (Eagleton, “Myths” 118). Linton is emasculated, and we see in Linton the weakness often seen depicted in women in the Victorian era. He is characterized as quite sickly, and though his whining nature positions him at the top of the power structures because only someone entitled to it can whine, one thing that connects him to the feminine is the characterization of him as weak. Zillah, the housekeeper at Wuthering Heights, describes Linton:

Linton learnt his lessons and spent his evenings in a small apartment they called the parlour: or else lay in bed all day: for he was constantly getting coughs, and colds, and aches, and pains of some sort. “And I never knew such a faint-hearted creature,” added the woman; “nor one so careful of hisseln. He will go on, if I leave the window open a bit late in the evening. Oh! it’s killing, a breath of night air!” (E. Brontë 211).

Linton’s days consist of staying inside, as he is not strong enough to work outside. Unlike the older Catherine, who yearns for the wind and orders the windows to be open, Linton does not want to feel the cold and orders the windows to be closed. Linton tries to keep inside of the domestic sphere. He feels uneasy when outside, but once indoors again—as when Heathcliff has ordered Linton to get the younger Catherine inside—this fear subsides: “The anguish he had exhibited on the moor subsided as soon as ever he entered Wuthering Heights; so I guessed he had been menaced with an awful visitation of wrath if he failed in decoying us there; and, that accomplished, he had no further immediate fears” (E. Brontë 272). Though this is an obvious example of Heathcliff’s power over his son, we could also see this as Linton feeling uneasy outside the domestic sphere. It is also interesting to note that Linton, like many of the novel’s women, and unlike Edgar who is also described as feminine, dies while still young.

Linton’s illness builds on his weakness: “Linton was white and trembling. He was not pretty then, Ellen: oh, no! he looked frightful; for his thin face and large eyes were wrought into an expression of frantic, powerless fury” (E. Brontë 251). Linton is powerless, and even though he still shows signs of being higher up in the power structures—such as how he shows his entitlement—his illness shows his powerlessness. This weakness can be connected to the type of weakness a woman in the Victorian era could be depicted as having. Hareton even tells him this explicitly: “If thou weren’t more a lass than a lad, I’d fell thee this minute, I would; pitiful lath of a crater!” (E. Brontë 220). As mentioned, he resembles the Lintons more than he does his father, Heathcliff. It appears Linton has not gotten the strength and resilience his father had as a child. His character shows that his treatment has made him entitled and that “the kinder he was treated, the more tedious and selfish he’d be” (E. Brontë 242). This again builds on the idea that the treatment one receives shapes people, as when Mr. Earnshaw favors Heathcliff, and he starts exerting power over Hindley.

Linton seems to need to distance himself from his father, Heathcliff, and his literal and figurative darkness. Before meeting his father for the first time, Linton asks Nelly if his father is anything like Edgar Linton, and Linton is not happy with the answer:



“Black hair and eyes!” mused Linton. “I can’t fancy him. Then I am not like him, am I?” “Not much,” I answered: not a morsel, I thought, surveying with regret the white complexion and slim frame of my companion, and his large languid eyes—his mother’s eyes, save that, unless a morbid touchiness kindled them a moment, they had not a vestige of her sparkling spirit. (E. Brontë 206).

With his black hair and eyes, Heathcliff is not someone Linton can associate himself with, which implies that Linton views Heathcliff as a racial other and, therefore, beneath him in the power structures. To Linton, Heathcliff’s dark complexion is foreign and something he cannot love. He does not feel that he and Heathcliff are similar and feels more connected to the Lintons. He not only looks more like them, but he is also more like them in character. It is interesting to note that Nelly misses Heathcliff’s features when looking at Linton. When Heathcliff was younger, Nelly told him that he needed to look more like Edgar. Now, she watches Linton’s pale complexion with regret, wishing he has Heathcliff’s dark features. Nelly further wishes Linton had the “sparkling spirit,” which we associate with Heathcliff and the older Catherine. This signals a turn in Nelly’s views of the power structures, and a sign of her becoming more open-minded.

The way Edgar has talked of Heathcliff to the younger Catherine, shows also he differentiates between Linton and his father. The younger Catherine states, “Papa is gone to fetch my cousin from London: my cousin is a gentleman’s son” (E. Brontë 196). We know Edgar’s feelings towards Heathcliff and that he does not consider him a gentleman. In Edgar’s eyes, Heathcliff is just a “runaway servant” (E. Brontë 96). Nevertheless, the younger Catherine has been told that Linton is the son of a gentleman, showing how Edgar gives Linton credit for being a gentleman’s son while not thinking Heathcliff is a gentleman. Edgar, too, thinks of Linton as higher up in the power structures than Heathcliff.

Both Nelly and Edgar try and hope to distinguish Linton from Heathcliff. Edgar is worried that Linton is no better than his father and does not want his daughter to marry him if that is the case. Edgar states: “I’d not care that Heathcliff gained his ends, and triumphed in robbing me of my last blessing! But should Linton be unworthy—only a feeble tool to his father—I cannot abandon her to him!” (E. Brontë 257). Edgar’s worry is not with Heathcliff getting his revenge or that Linton is similar to his father, but rather with his daughter being happy, and that Heathcliff is not using Linton as a tool for his revenge. Linton, therefore, tries to convince Edgar he is nothing like his father: “I believe an interview would convince you

that my father's character is not mine: he affirms I am more your nephew than his son; and though I have faults which render me unworthy of Catherine, she has excused them, and for her sake, you should also" (E. Brontë 258). From this we can see that even Heathcliff has stated that Linton is not much like him, and he shares this view with Nelly who states that Linton "does not resemble his father" (E. Brontë 256). Linton acknowledges that though he is not like his father, he still has faults, but the younger Catherine has excused these less favorable features, and Linton encourages Edgar to do the same. Though we see these sides of Linton, we are still made to sympathize more with him, because, unlike Heathcliff, who does not acknowledge his less favorable sides, Linton is aware of them.

The second generation has an awareness of the cycles of abuse, and they possess the ability to forgive. This helps them move forward and away from the cycles of abuse. The younger Catherine is, as mentioned, aware of Linton's bad sides. She tells Heathcliff: "I know he has a bad nature, ... he's your son. But I'm glad I've a better, to forgive it; and I know he loves me, and for that reason I love him" (E. Brontë 288). Catherine connects Linton's flawed nature to Heathcliff's, but she decides to love him despite this nature. Linton, too, is aware of his bad nature, which helps the second generation end the cycles of abuse. Linton relates:

Papa talks enough of my defects, and shows enough scorn of me, to make it natural I should doubt myself. I doubt whether I am not altogether as worthless as he calls me, frequently; and then I feel so cross and bitter, I hate everybody! I am worthless, and bad in temper, and bad in spirit, almost always; and, if you choose, you may say good-bye: you'll get rid of an annoyance. Only, Catherine, do me this justice: believe that if I might be as sweet, and as kind, and as good as you are, I would be; as willingly, and more so, than as happy and as healthy. And believe that your kindness has made me love you deeper than if I deserved your love: and though I couldn't, and cannot help showing my nature to you, I regret it and repent it; and shall regret and repent it till I die! (E. Brontë 253-4).

Linton knows his bad nature comes from the abuse his father has subjected him to, and he even wishes to be better. However, he believes it is impossible for him to become a better person. He has an awareness that the older generation seems to lack. The violence that has existed for generations does not end quickly, and despite Linton thinking he cannot change, he regrets and repents it, which is a step in the right direction.

Heathcliff has become part of the power structures by wanting revenge, and Heathcliff's way of treating Linton results in Linton wanting more power. Heathcliff states that he does not like Linton, and what makes him able to bear him is that he wants "the triumph of seeing my descendant fairly lord of their estates; my child hiring their children to till their fathers' lands for wages" (E. Brontë 208). While Heathcliff is degrading Hareton to the role of a farm laborer, he provides Linton with the upbringing worthy of a gentleman: "I've ordered Hareton to obey him: and in fact I've arranged everything with a view to preserve the superior and the gentleman in him, above his associates" (E. Brontë 208). Linton wishes to become the master of Thrushcross Grange, and it is Heathcliff who has instilled these ideas in Linton. Linton states that his uncle, Edgar, is dying and:

I'm glad, for I shall be master of the Grange after him. Catherine always spoke of it as her house. It isn't hers! It's mine: papa says everything she has is mine. All her nice books are mine; she offered to give me them, and her pretty birds, and her pony Minny, if I would get the key of our room, and let her out; but I told her she had nothing to give, they were all, all mine. (E. Brontë 280).

The way Linton speaks about younger Catherine's things is how a patriarch, and someone at the top of the power structures, would talk. It is clear that Heathcliff has successfully instilled these patriarchal ideas in his son and that Heathcliff will get his revenge on the Lintons.

Although Heathcliff, in the beginning, tries to fight for Catherine in her marriage to Edgar, his views as the patriarch are passed on to Linton. Heathcliff mocks Lockwood as he asks Heathcliff who "the favoured possessor of the beneficent fairy [the younger Catherine]" is (E. Brontë 14). Jacobs states: "That the 'favoured possessor' of a woman owns her is a fact of the law" (215). Even though Heathcliff fights for the older Catherine's rights before she marries Edgar, and the fact that he sarcastically answers Lockwood: "We neither of us have the privilege of owning your good fairy" (E. Brontë 14), he passes on the ideas of the patriarchy on to Linton: a husband owns his wife. In Linton's words, Heathcliff has taught Linton "not to be soft with Catherine: she's my wife, and it's shameful that she should wish to leave me" (E. Brontë 279). It is clear that Heathcliff has altered Linton's views. As discussed, Linton also claims to be the master of Thrushcross Grange, which clearly shows how he, as a man, sees himself as the master over not only his wife but also her property. After Linton's death, Catherine even states: "He's safe, and I'm free" (E. Brontë 294), showing how Catherine sees herself as having been possessed by Linton, but also how Linton now is free to

live outside of the power structures, not having to be a patriarch, and the only way for him to do so is in death.

Like the older Catherine, the younger Catherine is confined to the home and the domestic sphere. Up until she was thirteen, she

had not once been beyond the range of the park by herself. Mr. Linton would take her with him a mile or so outside, on rare occasions; but he trusted her to no one else.

Gimmerton was an unsubstantial name in her ears; the chapel, the only building she had approached or entered, except her own home. (E. Brontë 190).

This is a clear description of the domestic sphere. Edgar gives Nelly the order that “she must not wander out of the park, even under [Nelly’s] escort” (E. Brontë 191). Later on, when the younger Catherine is older and wants to go to Wuthering Heights to see Linton, Nelly states she will lock her in. Catherine answers her, saying: “‘I can get over the wall,’ she said laughing. ‘The Grange is not a prison, Ellen, and you are not my jailor. And besides, I’m almost seventeen: I’m a woman’” (E. Brontë 242). There is a certain irony to Catherine thinking that now, as a woman, she can do whatever she wants, as her mother, when entering womanhood becomes even more restricted. Nelly even restricts the younger Catherine from sending letters to Linton and contacting anyone outside Thrushcross Park. These are all examples of how, like the older Catherine who tries to breathe in the cold air by hanging out the windows, the younger Catherine is not allowed to have a taste of the outside world.

When the younger Catherine marries Linton and moves to Wuthering Heights, she is confined to the domestic sphere there as well. This causes Catherine to become hostile. When Lockwood first visits Wuthering Heights, he notices that the front gate is closed: “Being unable to remove the chain, I jumped over” (E. Brontë 9). In her letter to Nelly, Isabella reports that Joseph locks the outer gate “as if we lived in an ancient castle” (E. Brontë 137). It seems the reason for locking the gate is to keep people in rather than keeping people out, as Lockwood enters by jumping over the gate. Catherine relates to Lockwood that “They wouldn’t let me go to the end of the garden wall” (E. Brontë 16), and she is told she does not need her pony because “for what journeys you take, your own feet will serve you” (E. Brontë 291). After a while at Wuthering Heights, the younger Catherine becomes “irritable and restless” as she is “forbidden to move out of the garden, and it fretted her sadly to be confined to its narrow bounds as spring drew on” (E. Brontë 310). This shows how the treatment she, as a girl, receives affects her. Even Lockwood notices the effect it has had on her, as she is in

the kitchen doing domestic work: “Catherine was there, making herself useful in preparing some vegetables for the approaching meal; she looked more sulky and less spirited than when I had seen her first” (E. Brontë 299). Catherine is unhappy with her situation at Wuthering Heights; being confined to the domestic sphere causes her this unhappiness.

Through nature imagery, Brontë shows the younger Catherine’s rebellious side and how she wishes to escape the domestic sphere. The younger Catherine’s idea of a perfect day does not align with Linton’s idea of a perfect day, as Linton would prefer “lying from morning till evening on a bank of heath in the middle of the moors, with the bees humming dreamily about among the bloom, and the larks singing high up overhead, and the blue sky and bright sun shining steadily and cloudlessly” (E. Brontë 248). Catherine’s idea of a perfect day, on the other hand, is

rocking in a rustling green tree, with a west wind blowing, and bright white clouds flitting rapidly above; and not only larks, but throstles, and blackbirds, and linnets, and cuckoos pouring out music on every side, and the moors seen at a distance, broken into cool dusky dells; but close by great swells of long grass undulating in waves to the breeze; and woods and sounding water, and the whole world awake and wild with joy. (E. Brontë 248).

Like the older Catherine, the younger Catherine yearns for the wind. Linton, however, states he would not be able to breathe in her “heaven,” while Catherine states she would “be only half alive” in his (E. Brontë 248). As a woman living in a man’s world, Catherine is only half alive, as the patriarchy restricts her. In a world the two Catherines envision, the patriarch would not be able to breathe. Linton also wants to “lie in an ecstasy of peace,” while the younger Catherine wants “all to sparkle and dance in a glorious jubilee” (E. Brontë 248). These wishes hint at Linton not wanting change, while Catherine does. The younger Catherine does get a taste of these changes, as she sees the generational conflicts somewhat resolved. Linton, however, only gets to be “safe” in death.

It is clear that the second generation also has a wish and a curiosity to get an education and learn to read, but as part of his revenge, Heathcliff deprives Hareton of education and does not encourage the younger Catherine in her reading either. Edgar teaches Catherine to read: “He took her education entirely on himself, and made it an amusement” (E. Brontë 189). Heathcliff ensures education for Linton, but Hareton is, like Heathcliff, deprived of education. Hareton tells Nelly: “I was told the curate should have his —— teeth dashed down his ——

throat, if he stepped over the threshold—Heathcliff had promised that!” (E. Brontë 110). This works to degrade Hareton, making him inferior to Linton and Catherine. Heathcliff has gotten rid of all books at Wuthering Heights, depriving younger Catherine and Hareton of reading. The younger Catherine tells Lockwood: “Mr. Heathcliff never reads; so he took it into his head to destroy my books” (E. Brontë 301). Not only does this show Heathcliff’s cruelty, but also his decline into a villain, going from promising the older Catherine not to shoot her beloved lapwings, to taking away the one thing the younger Catherine holds dear, her books. One of the first times Lockwood visits Wuthering Heights, he witnesses Heathcliff telling the younger Catherine to “[p]ut your trash away, and find something to do” (E. Brontë 30). It becomes evident that Heathcliff not only deprives Hareton of literacy, but he also thinks the younger Catherine should rather work than read.

The younger Catherine mocks Hareton for not knowing how to read, but she keeps mocking him when he starts learning it, as it threatens her class position. The first time the younger Catherine discovers that Hareton cannot read, she and Linton laugh at him:

I heard Cathy inquiring of her unsociable attendant what was that inscription over the door? Hareton stared up, and scratched his head like a true clown. “It’s some damnable writing,” he answered. “I cannot read it.” “Can’t read it?” cried Catherine; “I can read it: it’s English. But I want to know why it is there.” Linton giggled: the first appearance of mirth he had exhibited. “He does not know his letters,” he said to his cousin. “Could you believe in the existence of such a colossal dunce?” (E. Brontë 220).

The younger Catherine questions whether Hareton is “all as he should be” (E. Brontë 220). Furthermore, when the younger Catherine tells Lockwood that Heathcliff had taken away her books, the younger Catherine starts lashing out at Hareton for taking the only books she had left and tells him: “you gathered them, as a magpie gathers silver spoons, for the mere love of stealing! They are of no use to you; or else you concealed them in the bad spirit that, as you cannot enjoy them, nobody else shall” (E. Brontë 301). The younger Catherine does not seem to understand that Hareton is capable of learning to read properly, which shows how she positions herself above him. Nelly tries to take Hareton’s side, stating that “Mr. Hareton is desirous of increasing his amount of knowledge” (E. Brontë 301). Because of the younger Catherine’s constant mocking, Hareton stops reading, “he burned his books, and dropped it”

(E. Brontë 311). Hareton is not only degraded by Heathcliff but also by the younger Catherine's mocking attitude to him.

The younger Catherine's mocking when Hareton tries to learn reading may be because she becomes protective of her class position. She states, "I don't wish to limit his acquirements: still, he has no right to appropriate what is mine, and make it ridiculous to me with his vile mistakes and mispronunciations!" (E. Brontë 302). The younger Catherine misunderstands Hareton's attempt at learning to read for him doing it deliberately to vex her. She sees it as him trying to imitate her class position. Hareton tries to give the books he has "borrowed" back to the younger Catherine, but she tells him: "I won't have them now, ... I shall connect them with you, and hate them" (E. Brontë 302). The younger Catherine does not want to read the same thing as Hareton reads; she tries to distinguish herself from him. The books Hareton has read have lost their value.

The way Hareton reacts to Catherine's mocking differs from that of Heathcliff and Linton's reaction to being ridiculed. Hareton has to bear the mocking he is subjected to. When Catherine accuses him of stealing her books out of malice, he "blushed crimson ... and stammered an indignant denial of her accusations" (E. Brontë 301). In this instance, Heathcliff would have used violence to answer the ridicule. Though the narration ridicules Linton, he is, after all, the one who comes out on top. He gets to marry the younger Catherine and becomes, for a brief moment, the master of Thrushcross Grange. Linton's way of answering the ridicule is by using words. He states: "that brute Hareton laughs at me! I hate him! indeed, I hate them all: they are odious beings" (E. Brontë 237). As we have seen, Hareton cannot speak for himself as Linton would, and he does not use violence like Heathcliff. Hareton "would neither open his mouth, nor look again," and he "clenched his fist, as if tempted to use it" (E Brontë 311). Hareton is degraded and has learned that he will be mocked if he does not try, but also if he tries. Hareton fails to speak up against his treatment, and he fails to use violence. Hareton does not have the words a patriarch needs, but Linton does, illustrating how they are at separate ends of the power structures.

The younger Catherine shows her aversion to Hareton in more ways than mocking him for wanting to read. As Catherine comes to sit with Hareton and Zillah, they both offer her their chair, but she refuses. Catherine "got a chair for herself, and placed it at a distance from both of us" (E. Brontë 296). This scene mirrors her mother's proposition of sitting at two separate tables: one for the "gentry" and one for people of "the lower orders" (E. Brontë 95). The younger Catherine decides to distance herself from Hareton and Zillah, which shows how she positions herself above them. However, the younger Catherine has an ambiguous view of

class differences. When Heathcliff tells her that Edgar would not let him marry Isabella because “[h]e thought me too poor to wed his sister,” she answers, “That’s wrong!” (E. Brontë 217). The younger Catherine also starts talking to Hareton differently once she starts thinking he is a servant, stating that “he never said Miss: he should have done, shouldn’t he, if he’s a servant?” (E. Brontë 195). This shows how the power structures are perpetuated in the second generation and that the younger Catherine views the practices connected to class differences as important. Catherine recognizes that it is wrong not to let someone marry because of their economic status, but she still does not see how she distances herself from people lower down in the power structures.

The younger Catherine’s relationship with Hareton is strained because they act based on the expectations of the power structures. As mentioned, after learning that Hareton is not the son of the house, the younger Catherine starts acting with hostility towards him. When Hareton shows an interest in her, touching one of her curls, the younger Catherine reacts with disgust saying: “I can’t endure you! I’ll go upstairs again, if you come near me” (E. Brontë 296). Before meeting the younger Catherine, Hareton had been “content with daily labour and rough animal enjoyments” (E. Brontë 303), and because of Catherine’s mocking, Hareton is pushed to seek higher pursuits. He wants approval from her and tries to learn how to read, but “his endeavours to raise himself had produced just the contrary result” (E. Brontë 303). The younger Catherine mocks Hareton for wanting to step up from his degraded position. Because of this, the two have the idea that they hate one another, and when fighting, Catherine accuses Hareton of hating her. Calling Catherine a liar, Hareton reminds her that he took her side in front of Heathcliff, even though he believed she despised him. Unaware that he had taken her part, Catherine states, “I was miserable and bitter at everybody; but now I thank you, and beg you to forgive me: what can I do besides?” (E. Brontë 313). Like Linton, she acknowledges that there is a connection between how she is made to feel and how she treats people. Catherine goes on to tell Hareton that “[w]hen I call you stupid, I don’t mean anything: I don’t mean that I despise you” (E. Brontë 313). Although “not meaning it” is no excuse for her behavior, this clearly shows how she acts the way expected of someone of her position in the power structures. We can also see Hareton struggling between acting in line with the expectations and following his feelings. Earlier on in the novel, when Hareton takes a letter that Catherine has received from Nelly away from her, Hareton states that he took it because “Mr Heathcliff should look at it first” (E. Brontë 300). Soon after, he gives it back to Catherine because he cannot keep “his softer feelings” down (E. Brontë 300). Hareton here tries to follow the patriarch’s lead but is unable to because his feelings guide his actions.



The younger Catherine creates the circumstances Hareton needs to thrive, and eventually, he comes out of the degradation he has been subjected to. Hareton's brutishness dissolves, and the younger generation breaks the cycle of abuse and is able to reverse it. As Nelly is reflecting on Hareton looking like a farm laborer, she comments: "Good things lost amid a wilderness of weeds, to be sure, whose rankness far over-topped their neglected growth; yet, notwithstanding, evidence of a wealthy soil, that might yield luxuriant crops under other and favourable circumstances" (E. Brontë 196). The fact that Hareton looks like a farm laborer, even though he originally was of a higher class, shows the fluidity of class and how class appearance does not always align with the class position. Nelly's comment also notes that the environment people are in influence one's character. Heathcliff does not provide Hareton with the right circumstances for him to thrive, but by the end of the novel, the younger Catherine provides it for him. The older Catherine tried to provide such circumstances for Heathcliff as they were growing up. Even though Heathcliff was refused an education when younger, the older Catherine "taught him what she learnt" (E. Brontë 46), and she tried to encourage him not to shoot lapwings. However, unlike Hareton, who wants to learn how to read when seeing the younger Catherine read, Heathcliff drifts more and more away from trying to keep his position. Hareton embraces the power structures while Heathcliff tries to stay away from them.

One of the reasons the younger Catherine can marry Hareton but the older Catherine cannot marry Heathcliff is their class position. The older Catherine claims that it is Heathcliff's degradation that causes them not to be able to marry, but Hareton is degraded as well, so what is the difference between the two? First, we know where Hareton comes from: He would have been the heir to Wuthering Heights, and he is not a racial other whose background is unknown, like Heathcliff's. Next, when Catherine is able to marry Hareton, there is no patriarch at either Wuthering Heights or Thrushcross Grange. The younger Catherine is the one in charge, without Hareton trying to interfere, and without a patriarch, the younger generation can go against the power structures. It is, however, not easy for Hareton to come to terms with it. Because of his degradation, Hareton is reluctant to forgive the younger Catherine as he thinks Catherine will be "ashamed of me every day of your life ... and the more ashamed, the more you know me; and I cannot bide it" (E. Brontë 314–15). Because of the younger Catherine's forgiving nature and increasing awareness of the cycles of abuse, she becomes more tolerant of people lower down in the power structures than the Lintons ever were. She is, therefore, able to look past Hareton's degradation. The younger Catherine

completes Hareton like the older Catherine was never able to complete Heathcliff. Hareton becomes feeling and is able to move away from his brutishness.

The younger generation's ability to forgive is evident in Hareton after Heathcliff's death. Hareton, the one who has been "most wronged," is "the only one who really suffered much" after Heathcliff dies (E. Brontë 335). Hareton

sat by the corpse all night, weeping in bitter earnest. He pressed its hand, and kissed the sarcastic, savage face that every one else shrank from contemplating; and bemoaned him with that strong grief which springs naturally from a generous heart, though it be tough as tempered steel. (E. Brontë 335).

This scene is telling of Hareton's forgiving nature. The fact that Hareton grieves Heathcliff says something about how Hareton understands where Heathcliff comes from. Hareton and Heathcliff have quite a similar background, but Hareton buries his oppressor "with a streaming face" (E. Brontë 336). He is able to see how Heathcliff's past has shaped his actions and how the power structures have destroyed Heathcliff. Because Hareton sees this, he is better able to end the cycles of abuse.

Towards the end of the novel, we can see the second generation replacing some of the black-currant trees and gooseberry bushes at Wuthering Heights with flowers from Thrushcross Grange, which becomes a symbol of newer times, and of the second generation moving forward. As Eagleton puts it, Heathcliff's death, "however tragic, is essential: the future lies with a fusion rather than a confrontation of interests between the gentry and bourgeoisie" ("Myths" 117). Eagleton further talks about how the flowers are of a "surplus value" ("Myths" 117); there no longer is an absolute need for the bushes for food. It is interesting to note Joseph's fury when learning the news of the removed bushes. He has remained loyal to the master at Wuthering Heights (whoever that may be) through sixty years, but now he threatens to leave (Duthie 227). Joseph's rage shows how his class position affects his view of what is of importance. The planting becomes a union of the practical bushes from Wuthering Heights, the rocks Heathcliff represents, and the decorative flowers from Thrushcross Grange, the foliage Edgar represents.

By comparing Lockwood's first and last visit to Wuthering Heights, we can see the change after Heathcliff's, the patriarch's, death. The first time Lockwood visits, he describes the gate at Wuthering Heights being locked: "Being unable to remove the chain, I jumped over, and, running up the flagged causeway bordered with straggling gooseberry-bushes,

knocked vainly for admittance” (E. Brontë 9). Lockwood notices the overgrown berry bushes, and, as discussed, he has to jump over the fence to enter the house. On his last visit, Lockwood paints a different picture:

I had neither to climb the gate nor to knock—it yielded to my hand. That is an improvement, I thought. And I noticed another, by the aid of my nostrils; a fragrance of stocks and wallflowers wafted on the air from amongst the homely fruit-trees. Both doors and lattices were open. (E. Brontë 307).

In addition to neither the doors nor the windows being closed, Lockwood notices the fusion between the flowers and the berry bushes. It is interesting to note how he sees this as an improvement, as it shows how class refinement is of importance to him. The practical of the lower class and the aesthetic of the higher class are connected, as in Hareton’s and the younger Catherine’s future marriage.

The novel’s ending hints at a more peaceful future. Hareton and the younger Catherine marry on New Year’s Day, symbolizing a new beginning (E. Brontë 336). As Flint observes, their union

is a triumph of civilised norms, of domesticity. Even so, it quietly challenges conventional power relations. It is Cathy who teaches Hareton to read, thus giving him the key to unlock literature: the very thing which, the novel demonstrates by its own existence, has the potential to unsettle norms, to pose questions rather than provide answers. (177).

The younger Catherine is the one who gives Hareton the “words” a patriarch needs. Though the ending can be read in various ways, and a peaceful union is not guaranteed, the awareness the second generation has developed gives hope that the cycles of abuse in these families are subdued. The sole act of the two marrying defeats Heathcliff’s actions to get revenge and have both the Earnshaws and the Lintons work for him. It is, after all, Catherine *Linton* and Hareton *Earnshaw*, the two families Heathcliff tried to rob of their power, who have the power over both Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange by the end. In the last sentences of the novel, Lockwood is looking at the three graves of the first generations, and he observes: “I lingered round them, under that benign sky: watched the moths fluttering among the heath and harebells, listened to the soft wind breathing through the grass, and wondered

how any one could ever imagine unquiet slumbers for the sleepers in that quiet earth” (E. Brontë 337). The nature imagery reflects tranquility, the kind of scenery the younger Catherine would not be happy in, and even the wind is soft. Lockwood does not understand that this quiet makes the dead uneasy, as this tranquility does not symbolize the change they want. Cory points out that Hareton is being “socialized into the middle-class value system and Catherine appears content with her domestic role” (22). Though they seem content with their new life, and contrary to what Lockwood can imagine, Heathcliff and Catherine are still there, haunting the moors as a reminder of the injustices of the power structures. The younger generation is able to forgive, but they will never forget the injustices of the power structures.

## 6 Conclusion

This thesis has attempted to analyze the interconnectedness of the power structures of race, gender, and class in *Wuthering Heights*, and to show how Brontë mocks the power structures and their cyclical nature. Through an analysis of the older Catherine, Heathcliff, the younger Catherine, Hareton, and Linton I have showed how these characters relate to and resist the power structures. I have argued that it is important to see these power structures in connection, as I have shown that the interconnectedness can lead to further oppression of the oppressed. Brontë shows, as I have argued, that the power structures have the power to make good people “lost amid a wilderness of weeds,” and unless given the right circumstances these people cannot thrive (E. Brontë 196). This shows Brontë’s inclination to think that our surroundings govern us more than our inherited traits do.

Though most of the characters in *Wuthering Heights* are not very likable, we are still made to sympathize with them. We see Heathcliff’s behavior as obviously cruel, and as the story progresses and he starts destroying his own family, it becomes increasingly harder to excuse his actions. Though Brontë does not excuse his behavior, she brilliantly shows how far people can be pushed by the power structures. The ill-treatment Heathcliff is subjected to cannot excuse anything, but it can explain why he becomes hostile and show the cyclical nature of the power structures. It may be easier to excuse the younger generation as all of them admit to their faults, which makes us more inclined to sympathize with them. Brontë’s critique of the power structures extends to her claiming that we are formed by the treatment we are subjected to. This is evident in the way Earnshaw makes Heathcliff think that he can be at the top of the power structures, in Hindley’s degradation of Heathcliff making him fight even harder, and in the Linton children, the younger Catherine, and Linton becoming entitled as a result of their spoiled upbringing. Instead of critiquing how people act, she critiques how we treat our children and each other. How the people at the top of the power structures treat the people lower down is of most importance, as greater power means greater influence to shape others.

By the end of the novel Lockwood paints a peaceful picture of moths fluttering in the soft wind, but when we close the book and put it away, what we are left with is not this peaceful picture. What lingers in our minds is the turbulent relationship of Catherine and Heathcliff, Heathcliff’s rampages against the power structures and the ghost of the older Catherine knocking at the window disturbing our peace. We are left with an initial sense of hope that the power structures may have an end to them, but as the older Catherine’s and

Heathcliff's ghosts haunt the Yorkshire moors, they haunt our minds long after we close the book. The sense of hope we may have had before closing the book may even be destroyed by their haunting. The picture Lockwood paints resembles Linton's perfect day and seeing only this day as beautiful and never celebrating the wild wind, we forget the struggles of those lower down in the power structures, resulting in no changes. We might truly want the peaceful picture Lockwood is painting to be the end, but with the haunting of Catherine and Heathcliff that is spoiled for us. We know the abusive power structures are lurking, and it would be naïve to believe that the cycles of abuse end with this generation.

Though the second generation may be overpowered by our thoughts of Catherine and Heathcliff, it does not mean that they are any less important to the story. Through them Brontë shows characteristics that may help these two families come out of the cycles of abuse. They have the ability to see their wrong doings and they become aware of the power structures. Their awareness helps them become forgiving. Seeing that they all are affected by how they have been treated helps them see that other people's actions are a result of their treatment. Though the thing we remember of this novel is the cruelty of the power structures, the younger generation gives us hope that the cruelty may at some point end.

As 21<sup>st</sup> century readers, we know that though the cycles of abuse may have ended within the two families of the second generation, it certainly did not stop as quickly in society as a whole. Though the character of the power structures has changed and become less rigid, this novel shows us that we should always question the existing structures, and that though we have come a far distance, we still see the effects of the intersectionality of race, class, and gender today. If we keep choosing to "lie in an ecstasy of peace" (E. Brontë 248), like Linton, we will never see the changes that need to be made. We need to keep being aware how people at the top of the power structures treat those lower down, because it is with awareness we see understanding, and with understanding we see change.

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