THE COMPLEXITY OF CHARACTERIZATION IN Emily Bronte's *WUTHERING HEIGHTS:* FOCUS ON HEATHCLIFF AND CATHERINE EARNSHAW

(N.B: *All quotations in the article, on the novel, come from the 1971 edition).*

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ABSTRACT

The essay first introduces few critics' views on Wuthering Heights ranging from quite negative reception of the novel to those that find the work an open-ended masterpiece. We then go on to examine its two key characters, Heathcliff and Catherine, pointing out first what seem to be their down-to-this earth personalities as exhibited in their youth. The discussion extends to examining Heathcliff as a symbol of nature and his dogs. The essay then examines the metamorphosis of Catherine and Heathcliff into spiritual symbols whose meanings extend into examination of very many facets of life. This is followed by their assumption of a peculiar "religion" of their own and their "journey to heaven" at their death. We conclude the essay with few critics' views on why critics should never "tie up" the novel with a fixed 'single meaning' to it instead of leaving it as it is: open-ended.

Keywords: Primitive passion, supernatural, gothic fiction, horror, timeless spirits, metaphysical.

INTRODUCTION

Right from the 19th Century, after its publication, many critics found this novel exceptionally intriguing. A reviewer, writing about it in "The Spectator" of 18th December, 1847 states –

> The success (of the novel) is not equal to the abilities of the writer; chiefly because the incidents are too coarse and disagreeable to be attractive, the very best being improbable, with a moral taint about them, and the villainy not leading to results sufficient to justify the elaborate pains taken in depicting it. The execution, however, is good: grant the writer all that is requisite as regards matter, and the delineation is forcible and truthful.

Another anonymous reviewer in "The Examiner" (8th January, 1848) says –

> This is a strange book. It is not without evidences of considerable power: but, as a whole, it is wild, confused, disjointed, and improbable; and the people who make up the drama, which is tragic enough in its consequences, are savages ruder than those who lived before the days of Homer. With the exception of Heathcliff, the story is confined to the family of Earnshaw, who intermarry with the Lintons; and the scene of their exploits is a rude old-fashioned house, at the top of one of the high moors or fells in the north of England…. If this book be, as we apprehend it is, the first work of the author, we hope that he will produce a second,—giving himself more time in its composition than in the present case, developing his incidents more carefully, eschewing exaggeration and obscurity, and looking steadily at human life, under all its moods, for those pictures of the passions that he may desire to sketch for our public benefit.

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Another anonymous reviewer in "The Douglas Jerrold's Weekly Newspaper" (15 January, 1848) says

> *Wuthering Heights* is a strange sort of book,—baffling all regular criticism; yet, it is impossible to begin and not finish it; and quite as impossible to lay it aside afterwards and say nothing about it. In the midst of the reader's perplexity the ideas predominant in his mind concerning this book are likely to be—brutal cruelty, and semi-savage love. What may be the moral which the author wishes the reader to deduce from his work, it is difficult to say; and we refrain from assigning any, because to speak honestly, we have discovered none but mere glimpses of hidden morals or secondary meanings…

Yet another reviewer in "The Atlas" Magazine (22nd January, 1848) says -

> *Wuthering Heights* is a strange, inartistic story. There are evidences in every chapter of a sort of rugged power—an unconscious strength—which the possessor seems never to think of turning to the best advantage. The general effect is inexpressibly painful. We know nothing in the whole range of our fictitious literature which presents such shocking pictures of the worst forms of humanity… *Wuthering Heights* casts a gloom over the mind not easily to be dispelled. It does not soften; it harasses, it exenterates….

Still yet another anonymous, dissatisfied reviewer in "The New Monthly Magazine" (January, 1848) says -

> *Wuthering Heights*, by Ellis Bell, is a terrific story, associated with an equally fearful and repulsive spot. It should have been called *Withering Heights*, for anything from which the mind and body would more instinctively shrink, than the mansion and its tenants cannot be imagined. …Our novel reading experience does not enable us to refer to anything to be compared with the personages we are introduced to at this desolate spot – a perfect misanthropist's heaven.

These reviews and many more were found in Emily's desk after her death and are reproduced at ***www.wuthering-heights.co.uk***

James, Louis (1988) acknowledges *Wuthering Heights* did not receive the acclaim it ought to have got immediately after publication. In fact, later, as critics and literary scholars began to appreciate the complexity of the novel genre and the impossibility of getting one conclusive definition, the poetic and dramatic qualities of *Wuthering Heights* started getting strongly appreciated. James (1988: 161-62) finds its well-knit structure, spanning over forty years, a compelling reading, what with its gripping and involved plotting of destructive passion, revenge, symbolism and dramatic reversals. Baker, A.E (1957: 15) puts the initial "rejection" of *Wuthering Heights* in another light: the Elizabethan age and the early Victorian age had not quite shed the strong influence drama and poetry had imprinted on readership; appetite for new writers (novel genre)was to grow with time as the twentieth century began to redefine what could constitute a novel. Moreover, Emily Bronte was a well accomplished poet; no wonder that her novel took on powerful symbolism and surrealism in many areas, as cited in some areas of this article.

The overall view Kettle gives us, therefore, (1960: 139ff), we think, may not be satisfactorily conclusive either. He correctly advises examining *Wuthering Heights* by eschewing biased views and "much nonsense" written in the past about Emily as a "ghost-like figure". Then he emphasizes "The story of *Wuthering Heights* is concerned not with love in the abstract but with the passions of living people, with property ownership, the attraction of social comforts, the arrangement of marriages, the importance of education, the validity of religion, the relations of the rich and poor…". This is true, but it again smacks of branding the novel Marxist asking the reader to see Bronte as mainly concerned with empirical, dialectical concerns. It certainly is a genuine theme as we shall see later, but, Almeida (2011: 64) makes us think twice before accepting one conclusive view, even his. He opines that

> It is as if (Bronte) could tear up all that we know human beings by, and fill these unrecognizable transparences with such a gust of life that they transcend reality. Here, then, is the rarest of all power. Bronte embodies curiosity and creates curiosity in countless ways; she transgresses her own role as a woman and an author; she refuses to conform to the strict constraints of any literary genre, and she creates a world which simultaneously offends, frightens, and compels readers. *Wuthering Heights*, with its numerous representations of curiosity and endless avenues for interpretation, is and will continue to be an attractive text for curious inquirers.

It is in this light that this essay intends to examine Heathcliff and Catherine as part of Bronte's complex characterization. Below, therefore, we examine the novel under the following headings:

1. **The creation of Heathcliff**
2. **So, is Heathcliff really capable of love as he claims?**
3. **Heathcliff and Catherine Earnshhaw: a philosophical and moral enigma**
4. **Concluding remarks**

The Creation of Heathcliff

a) Hindley's contribution

What begins as an innocent act of old Mr Earnshaw's philanthropy, rescuing Heathcliff from a destitute life on the streets of Liverpool, turns soon into a family burden: his generosity is certainly questionable given his overprotective stance of Heathcliff, practically grooming the young brat's hate, revenge and destructive ambition as future ammunition to destroy especially Mr Earnshaw's heir, Hindley. Apart from young Catherine who befriends this upstart, Heathciff is shown at every turn that he is most unwelcome in the family. Earnshaw's austerity against especially Hindley, therefore, sets the mood of revenge so that after the old man is dead, the now heir, Hindley, ensures Heathcliff is made aware he does not belong to the family: he must be a servant and behave and act as one (Kettle: 1960; Gillman: 1994). This is worsened by his seclusion from even any form of play and association with Catherine who, ironically, also worsens Heathcliff's hatred for Hindley by her little escapades with him and often staying with him hidden in her bedroom. The hated boy grows taciturn and dangerous with pent up anger. Moreover, Bronte's description of his features, stature and mannerisms warns the reader he is dealing with a dangerous character: when Old Mr Earnshaw brings him, he is introduced as a tramp used to scavenge for life on the callous streets of Liverpool; he calls him "a gypsy brat… dark, almost as if he came from the devil"; Hindley calls him "a fiend", "a hellish villain", "a vagabond", an "imp of Satan". For 'causing' the attack of Catherine by a bulldog at the Grange (because it is unanimously believed he is cause of all mischief in a home), Edgar calls him the "vulgar, young ruffian…worse than a brute" that must never be allowed further company with the beautiful, queenly lady Catherine (WH: 107). Nelly herself keeps pinching him cruelly and calls him an ***it*** in spite of some motherly feelings for the brat later on. Even the tone she uses describing him (*WH*: 77-81) makes us believe she knows the Heights is breeding a storm in the family, for Heathcliff "bred bad feelings in the house". Later, Edgar warns daughter Cathy she is dealing with "a most diabolical man". To the newly wed Isabella, Heathcliff soon turns a "fierce, pitiless, wolfish" husband (and she wonders, appealing to Nelly) "Is this a man? Is he a human being or a devil?" She does not take long to prove he is inhuman when he almost kills her and she has to escape from the Heights for good.

Bronte, therefore, gives her 'hero' a very bad beginning in life, which is one of the issues that confuse readers: we rightly tend to sympathize with him because he grows hated, hardened, and then betrayed by his best friend, Catherine. Kettle (1960) and Eagleton (2005) have pointed out, Heathcliff, on one level, carries a very strong comment on (and hatred for) the Victorian callousness of the rich – symbolized in Hindley and Edgar – who are typical examples of this inhuman treatment of the unfortunate in the Victorian era. Kettle (1960: 140), therefore, is not exaggerating when he says *Wuthering Heights* is in the category of *Oliver Twist*: the crass selfishness, callousness and hard cruelty of Hindley are as odious as the satanic pride in the revenge scheme that Heathcliff forges to destroy his enemies. But, according to Kettle, Bronte decides to add a symbolic twist to this phenomenological theme (like others we are to discuss later): she associates injustice to the poor with Catherine's betrayal of Heathcliff, despising him and opting to marry Edgar as part of the craze of the Victorian capitalism era, women also wanting to belong to the moneyed and the gentry. Before marrying Edgar, Catherine makes this very clear to Nelly: she can never marry Heathcliff because he is not rich, not educated, and has no culture and class; it would make them miserable for life (*WH*: 118ff). Most ironically, this episode completely poisons the hitherto cordial Heathcliff- Catherine relationship: it is a most degrading betrayal he cannot bear, particularly when added to the tyrannical treatment he has been subjected to by Hindley and the scorn and derision from a callous Edgar. So, he must revenge.

b) Heathcliff's mysterious metamorphosis

For especially Catherine's betrayal of him, Heathcliff mysteriously disappears from the Heights to an unknown country where he is said to educate and enrich himself to turn up later with a gentlemanly

figure, as Nelly narrates to us. It is important to note this habit of Heathcliff's: he keeps disappearing from other people; at the Heights, he is rarely with family, sneaking away into his chamber only to emerge and disappear from the house. At the height of his clash with Catherine and, especially, after her death, Heathcliff becomes one with the moors and the heath: slinking away every night, and Nelly worryingly tells us the family rarely see him at home. We shall come back to this in section (3) below, but, it is noteworthy here seeing this return as almost an apparition, arriving amid storm and thunder, as we are to see below [section (c)]. He causes immediate consternation and a clash: Nelly ceases to see a clean, well dressed gentleman but (as she warns Catherine) "*a bird of bad omen*" (*WH*: 142), in fact "*an evil beast"* (146). Soon other epithets follow – *villain, monster, black guard*, et c. AmaMustafa *et al* (2017:350) have compared the stone-hearted nature of Heathcliff and Hindley to that of Edmund, Iago, Richard III and Macbeth in Shakespeare and to many other villains in literature. This is because, like them, Heathcliff also turns a detestable anti-hero when his evil nature is viewed with our positivistic logic: a destroyer of innocence, good society norms. So, nothing stereotypical about him, because he comes to us straight from an unsettling and troubled past, is pushed to develop tumultuous emotions, yet has a high level of intelligence suddenly sharpened by his three years absence from Wuthering Heights, has a most frightening loathing for rules and social constraints, has a terrifying knack for constantly fuelling his thirst for revenge and, most importantly, he has the capacity to combine a consuming love with a satanic hate (Kettle: 1960; Madewell: 1981; Homans: 1978; Gillman: 1994; Eagleton: 2005; Melnick: 2004); *et al*. Indeed to Heathcliff and Hindley, hatred and brutality don't disgust at all. For instance, in hating Catherine for despising and rejecting him, in planning to destroy Edgar for taking his "bride", in blackmailing a peevish, weak and infatuated Isabella just to get at Edgar (and later claim the Grange's land and property), in hating and cruelly treating his own son, Linton, just as he hates Hareton whom he disinherits after ruining Hindley with mortgaged house and property, Heathcliff indeed displays the ingenious planning of an Iago; he uses his victims' weaknesses in a sadistic-masochistic fashion to get what he wants. The way he gloats over his plans and accomplishments is certainly villainous, very happy to put into practice and celebrate the various negative qualities and epithets Bronte gives him.

So, on the face level and simple character analysis, this is the Heathcliff many students of literature might draw from the novel. But, Bronte turns this character into far more themes and aspects of life than this. For instance, Bronte adds a twist to Heathcliff's character by introducing a most puzzling paradox: the incredible "passionate love" he and Catherine share. Bronte gives him a spiritual claim many critics have found as one of the key sources of complexity in the novel. And this is what we are going to examine below.

So, is Heathcliff really capable of loving as he claims?

a) *Heathcliff not merely a character*

First of all, let us first accept one critic's explanation that Bronte did not intend readers to see Heathcliff as merely a character in the novel. Gleyzer (2014: 18-23) claims the reader, right from the beginning, has been prepared to view Heathcliff and Catherine as part of the novel's unsettling setting. Many other critics support this view by affirming he cannot be considered a symbol without connecting him to nature in the novel (Gillman:1994; Madewell: 1981; Melnick: 2004; Kettle: 1960; Cunha Gready: 2015; Almeida: 2011; *et al*). This is because wild nature must be seen as Bronte's extension of the gothic structure of this novel, particularly in giving the story its tragic mood and characterization. Almeida (2011: 52) affirms that, from the gothic novel, Bronte borrows the idea of 'curiosities' that often included collapsing castles, ghosts, madness, wilderness, sadism , Satanism, the supernatural, communing with the dead, et c because the element of curiosity in such things attracts strong attention and marveling at. The setting of *Wuthering Heights* is such an element of curiosity. Bronte's introduction of this setting is the first to trigger warning signs of some tragic drama to follow. From the novel we note

> 'Wuthering Heights' (is a prompt to the reader to note that it is) a significant provincial adjective, descriptive of the atmospheric tumult to which its station is exposed in stormy weather. Pure, bracing ventilation they must have up there at all times, indeed: one may guess the power of the north wind, blowing over the edge, by the excessive slant of a few stunted firs at the end of the house; and by a range of gaunt thorns all stretching their limbs one way, as if craving alms of the sun… the narrow windows

> are deeply set in the wall, and the corners defended with large jutting stones…(And, as Lockwood observes, the place swarms with) a swarm of squealing puppies; and other dogs haunted other recesses… Mr Heathcliff forms a singular contrast to his abode and style of living… dark skinned gypsy, in aspect, in dress, and manners a gentleman…handsome (but) rather morose… (and a suspect of) underbred pride... I know, by instinct, his reserve springs from an aversion to showy displays of feeling – manifestations of mutual kindness. He'll love and hate, equally under cover, and esteem it a species of impertinence - (*WH:* 46-47).

This is a wind-battered dwelling, with even the flora suffering stunted growth; inhabitants are imprisoned, so to say, within this concrete-like edifice as if permanently sheltering from buffeting wintry winds. The small window-openings and the warren of rooms seem to imply gloom that is worsened by the terror of guard dogs, some out and others 'in other recesses' of the dwelling and then the inscrutable, mummified feelings of the owner of the Heights. Bronte accompanies all this, as the novel progresses, with more havoc nature is doing to people and the environment, especially the wild moors surrounding and separating the Heights from the Grange. The novel soon shows Heathcliff to be the only character haunting this intervening stretch between the two houses. Like a ghost, he prowls at night especially when Catherine's ghost or haunting presence rekindles his passionate love. So, he may be the destructive force of the novel, but, ironically, he, too, is undergoing a spiritual twisting and stunting like the firs and the gaunt thorns of his Heights and other plants of the moors. Nobody is spared by this nature. Cunha Gready (2015: 21) calls it the strongest symbol in the whole text with a character of its own –

> Inside and around sceneries and characters the wildness and loneliness of the moors imposes itself, as if constantly scorning the frail civilizing forces that strive to cope with the predominant instinctual and natural powers… (Even the unnatural architecture and strength of the house depict) unwelcoming haunted appearance… The moors of that barren region also comes about as a symbol of the threat posed by nature and transfers its symbolism to the threat posed by the love of Catherine and Heathcliff, set against the interdicting forces of convention and civilized society.

Already two paradoxes are established: the would- be well-known benevolence of nature to humans for good, healthy living is now a terrifying violence-and- death-carrying force. Symbolically, the beauty and morals human nature is supposed to carry have also turned controversially amoral. In fact, as Cunha continues,

> Nature seems to pose a menace to most characters in the novel. Several characters… die when confronted with the insalubrious atmosphere of the place: Hindley's wife Frances, Catherine, Heathcliff's son, all the Linton family (with the exception of Catherine's daughter). (Paradoxically), the moors are the only allies to Catherine and Heathcliff, the liberating haven that place them out of the hell of the civilized relations, good Christian values and social well behaved norms. In the moors, they are sheltered from the civilized forces that set them apart…

b) He is the destructive nature

It is noteworthy why, of all the characters, he is the only one spared death from nature; he dies of self-starvation and excessive stress. But, as the destroyer of other people, he must survive them and then prove to himself how his monstrous revenge scheme and the so-called love for Catherine have become a self-destructive force: he is another face of destructive nature; he is the nature of Bronte's imagination whose explosive emotions and those of his Catherine turn into the explosive storms and unpredictable weather of the setting (Madewell (1981), Homans (1978), Gillman (1994), Melnick (2004), Cunha: 2015; *et al*). We note, therefore, that when old Earnshaw brings Heathcliff into Wuthering Heights, a stormy atmosphere ensues that night and continues throughout the novel. The physical looks and unknown origin of this gypsy ring alarm bells in the whole household – this ironic 'gift of God' as Mr Earnshaw calls *it*, ironically sets up turbulence in the family at once; *it* is 'as dark almost as if *it* came from the devil', an allusion to the ever hanging dark clouds over the setting; *it* is 'dirty, ragged, black-haired …; *it* only stared round, and repeated over and over again some gibberish that nobody could understand'. A rabidly angry Mrs Earnshaw sees some catastrophe beyond the physical 'gipsy brat looks"; no child wants to sleep with or even come near *it*. For mistreating *it,* Mrs Dean is sent out of the house; *it* has a queer, curious name (Heathcliff) a name of Mr Earnshaw's dead son, and, like a pagan ritual introduced in the family, the name must serve both as Christian and surname…(*WH*: 77-80). And

the introduction of this strange *thing* "bred bad feelings in the house" (*WH:* 79).Therefore the gloom and disquiet this *thing* brings into this family becomes an extended metaphor for the gloom and violence nature is raining on the setting. It is also very significant to note that he is referred to as *it* and *thing* to differentiate this *"creature*" from humans (Thompson 1985: 29). Implications are that even his feelings and emotions will carry the paradox that *thingfied* existence connects with him: as Isabella asks Nelly - is he a man or a devil? Actually Bronte's description of him makes him a monstrosity, a curiosity; we shall come back to this concept later. For now, let us see how Heathcliff connects with nature.

For instance, when Mr Earnshaw is about to die, "a high wind blustered round the house, and roared in the chimney: it sounded wild and stormy", and everyone was forced to keep within the house (*WH*: 84). When Lockwood experiences a horrific nightmare in Catherine Earnshaw's former room, two episodes are immediately connected to his explosive dreams: we know Catherine is dead; later we learn her death was a result of her own stormy personality, exposing herself to winter cold over night with an open window because Edgar and Heathcliff have wronged her and she wants to punish them by killing herself. The death is accompanied by stormy winds, mad-like and wailing as she herself has been wailing lamenting the loss of Heathcliff's love. Then, Linton is born in winter and throughout his miserable life, coldness bashes him daily with a constant cold and cough that degenerate into tubercular severity and a tragically early death. Just before Mr and Mrs Linton die, sudden violent weather rattles above the Heights "in full fury (with) a violent wind and thunder" and a tree is split at the corner of the house and "a huge bow fell across the roof" knocking off part of the chimney, "sending a clatter of stones and soot into the kitchen". But, most telling about this thunderous splitting of a tree is the return of Heathcliff, "*a bird of bad omen*" (*WH*: 142) and certainly a tragic split of families is going to begin: Catherine has betrayed him by marrying Edgar; he must retaliate and *"devour"* Isabella (*WH*: 145) and bring her brother Edgar into his revenge scheme. Nelly, too, sees another catastrophe: Heathcliff has taken abode at the Heights and has maintained a constant visit to the Grange. She tells Lockwood, "I felt that God had forsaken the stray sheep there to its own wicked wanderings, and an *evil beast prowled* between it and the fold, awaiting his time to spring and destroy" (*WH*: 145). Then, more to the weather, it heralds Edgar's coming death: it is winter; a stormy, cold wind rages on as Edgar lies dying, and as his daughter Cathy lies curled up in terror in some dingy room at the Heights imprisoned by Heathclifff, waiting to be forcibly married off to the ever-sick and soon to die Linton. Heathcliff's violence has now completely accomplished dominion over the Heights and the Heights and the Grange.

And because he is a connecting thread in the patterning of episodes in the novel, we connect such stormy scenes to episodes detailing his sadism-masochism practices such as his most un-fatherly and cruel treatment of his ever sick son, Linton, constantly wishing him dead. He turns the novel into a repetition of his own past under Hindley's tyranny by turning Hindley's son, Hareton, into another face of the earlier 'wretched Heathcliff', dispossessing and turning him into an illiterate servant, a mere tool of cruel revenge. Heathcliff is actually emptying his own villainy into the young boy: he drills him into "Devil talk" and the boy proudly calls the new 'father' Devil Daddy; he has been taught to hate the curate and his own father; and he now knows how to swear at those Heathcliff tells him to (*WH*: 148-49).
So, throughout the novel the weather-setting motif keeps us focused on especially the paradoxical nature of Heathcliff's feelings, actions and plans as the controlling force of the whole novel drama. Nature, therefore, becomes another narrator and commentator almost eclipsing the chief narrator, Nelly, because it goes beyond the physical description and enters the elemental nature of Heathcliff. The inner structuring of the novel, therefore, is not a simple mesh to unravel and we have to grab every hint given us to get to know this enigma, Heathcliff.

c) *Heathcliff and his dogs: animal nomenclature*

Then Bronte gradually leads us to view Heathcliff as a being that shares his nature with animals, especially his dogs. At the start of the novel, Lockwood is confronted by a bitch which *growls,* "her white teeth watering for a *snatch* (and producing) a long *guttural gnarl*". In anger, Heathcliff "in unison (with the dogs) *growled*" too at Lockwood to warn him against familiarization with his pets, just as another half dozen fierce *fiends* emerge from hidden *dens* within the Heights' dens below (*WH*: 48-9). Minutes later, Heathcliff introduces a *"bear"* (Hareton) to Lockwood: instead of answering

Lockwood's greeting like a human being, Hareton g*rowled* out his answer (*WH*: 56) and just before that Lockwood had inwardly thought Hareton a "*boor"* (*WH*: 55); Heathcliff calls him also an "unnatural cub"; just like his "whelp" (Linton) according to Heathcliff and, according to Nelly, "a faint hearted creature" right from birth.

Later, as Lockwood lends himself a lantern to light himself away from the Heights through the snow-filled moor to the Grange, another diabolical being, Joseph, at the Heath calls out "two hairy *monsters*", *Gnasher* and *Wolf,* which knock Lockwood down, going for his throat as Heathcliff and Hareton let out a *guffaw* of sadism-masochism. The "*malignant masters*", however, help the visitor escape being torn to pieces. We soon learn the names of the other "malignant masters" of the Heath as *Throttler, Gnasher, Grimalkin, Juno*, etc, names suggesting violence. Later in the novel, we watch Heathcliff and Catherine *gnashing their teeth* under immense pressure of stressed love. His untamed nature, therefore, links him to "wolf" as a symbol of evil. He will even *"howl*" like a wolf and his dogs and as the stormy winds are doing when the racking passion for Catherine grips him. Nelly finds him the *"evil beast"* (WH: 125) *prowling* the night under this love passion; he has turned a "*crazed and vicious dog";* Isabella throws away the wedding ring in fire because she cannot stand "*the brute beast*", the "*fierce, pitiless, wolfish*" husband. (*WH:* 142). When Hindley dies, Heathcliff sees not a corpse but a "*beast… changed into carrion*" (*WH*: 154). Heathcliff is not squeamish at all and will hang Isabella's pet dog (*WH:* 168) as she elopes with him; they do not want any encumbrances on their honeymoon. As Isabella starts to understand her home, she is constantly under the threat of the hated Hareton whom she calls the "shaggy-haired hermit…the hungry *wolf*...the *hellish…growling fiend"* (*WH*: 175), and so on and so forth.

In fact, the novel is full of such naming as it evokes cannibalism to add to the canine appetites above. The following are some of those frequently used to imply animalism: "creature", Heathcliff's "cannibal teeth" (*WH*: 212), Isabella's "tigress" nature when she applies her "talons" on Catherine and it is feared she will equally "devour" her husband (*WH*: 145); Nelly running away from Hareton the "goblin", etc. There is, therefore, an unmistakable allusion to the violent savage world of the cave man because, like Heathcliff, the "scoundrel, hypocrite, black villain, black guard and moral poison" (*WH:* 163) poisoning relationships and causing family disintegration in the novel, there are other creatures who have aped his *modus Vivendi, operandi*. Therefore, Bronte's extended metaphor of animalism goes even far beyond a consideration of Heathcliff. As cited at the beginning, this is Bronte the poet at work.

So, as some critics have pointed out (Madewell: 1981; Gillman: 1994; Homans: 1978;Almeida: 2011;Thompson: 1985; Miho: 1998; *et al),* there is a behavioral pattern intricately linking nature in the setting with perverse human and animal nature. The onomatopoeic words, the nomenclature and descriptive epithets and metonyms Bronte uses for the characters make them take on a beastly semblance. The descriptive words she uses betray poetic effects and poetic sounds to swell the text meaning far beyond human characterization. For Miho (1998: 76), Heathcliff is undoubtedly the beast of the novel, the "fierce monster who literally 'growls' at other people" since he has taken on the "pre-civilized form of savagery". He is the predator following every spoor for a kill. Gillman also (1994: 16-17) takes Heathcliff out of ordinary humans and places him into the intricate symbolic structure of the novel as one with

> The destructive force of nature, embodying wilderness and storms of the outside world, bringing ruin and disaster to those caught unprotected from his blast. Simultaneously, he is allied with the supernatural realm, defying the natural order and human comprehension… (He) exists as himself, and yet symbolizes the extremities of the human spectrum of emotions. As a human being, he feels pain and anguish at his separation (with Catherine); in his anger and torment he embodies the wilderness of the moors, his passions being reflected in its elemental storms. He brings this rage within the walls of Wuthering Heights (and the Grange), and with it comes destruction… (Hence) the constant reference to death and the supernatural… death and violence…

d) Caherine and Heathcliff: spirits in the novel

At the same time, the gnomic nature of Wuthering heights household also loudly announces the presence of the supernatural because it is haunted by Catherine's ghost as Lockwood finds out, as if

imprinting her presence there forever. In growing terror, Lockwood is struck by the repetitive scribbling of her name on the room paint; her name is now the new paint. Soon the name assumes an attacking apparition: in the darkness of the room, Lockwood's eyes open as suddenly as they had closed and "a glare of white letters started from the dark, as vivid as specters – the air swarmed the Catherines … rousing (him) to dispel the obstructive name… " (*WH*: 61-62). This horror soon forms the nightmare he gets where she confronts him in form of a child crying out to be let in the room from a bitter winter night and, out of terror, he turns savage and rubs the child's frail arm against a broken window pane to draw blood (*WH*: 66-67). Earlier on, Nelly's enigmatic explanation for the mysterious appearance of the place is not helpful either – "She did not know… she had only lived there a year or two, and they had so many *queer goings on*…" (*WH*: 61). So, from the start of the novel, Gillman (1994: 13) observes "there is a shift from the physical, tangible level of nature to the realm of the supernatural. It is this real that defies human understanding or explanation, and like nature itself, exists beyond classifications or divisions. It is the unknown, unconscious realm of non differentiation… a realm of death, spirit and for Catherine, madness…" since the Heights has become her sanctity. The novel shows her living at the Grange but constantly wishing to return to her room at the Heights, and so, her spirit occupies quite a vast space: in the Heights and the Grange, and the moorland in between, stretching to the Grimmerton Kirk chapel where the ancestors of the Lintons are buried, and from where, later after her death, her own ghost emerges to roam the night to find Heathcliff's: two ghosts in love. This seems to be the chief paradox of the novel.

This foregrounding, therefore, helps the reader to later understand why Heathcliff seems to be like a walking ghost in the novel. As Almeida observes (2011: 59), his absence from houses is quite striking; far less frequently out than in. His absence from the Heights for three years certainly becomes a brooding and planning period, like stormy clouds gathering tons of moisture ready to explode on the novel's setting; and indeed when he returns, stormy scenes at the Grange start culminating in Catherine's death. Within his Heights, as Nelly narrates, he is rarely seen seated with family. When he returns from his especially mysterious nightly walks, he disappears into his den-room. The terror he strikes into especially Linton is a permanent in-built fear the *creature* has implanted into his *whelp son*. We follow his movements and the tormenting episodes he goes through in the open and when hidden in his room. After all, Bronte has warned us through Lockwood that, at the Heights, we are dealing with most inscrutable *presences and goings on*. Soon as Lockwood mentions a supplicating child of his nightmare, Heathcliff

> got on the bed and wrenched open the lattice, bursting, as he pulled at it, into an uncontrollable passion of tears. '*Come in! come in!' he sobbed. 'Cathy, do come. Oh do… once more! Oh! My heart's darling! Hear me this time – Catherine, at last*!' The spectre showed a spectre's ordinary caprice: it gave no sign of being; but the snow and wind whirled wildly through, even reaching my station, and blowing out the light. There was such anguish in the gush of grief that accompanied this raving… I drew off… (*WH*: 70).

Lockwood is stunned into incomprehension at this most unexpected turn of events. But Bronte tips the reader that, before this, there have been many more 'unsatisfying appearances/apparitions and some communing with Catherine'. Two spirits are presented in a most unnatural communion; the anguish overwhelming him is a daily experience, torment.

In the next sections below, we shall deal with this extraordinary communion, the rabid love passion, making one of the most bizarre themes of this novel. The scene above alone tells us we are dealing with some supernatural experience. And nature is personified like the silent witness following and even influencing actions and lives of characters. It is the pathetic fallacy technique that allows the reader to also interpret the minds, emotions, actions and even intentions of especially the main characters since nature and characters are so intricately interwoven.

Heathcliff and Catherine: a philosophical and moral enigma

a) Uncommon rebellious spirits: monsters of the gothic novel

Right from their childhood, they are closely connected by a liking for each other, which slowly grows into a love they eventually have to define because it later takes on a bizarre paradox. But, it is initially Hindley's cruelty against Heathcliff and his setting rules for Catherine to prevent any contact with

Heathcliff which, ironically, strengthens the ties of these two through a common trait: a rebellious nature so that Catherine will still allow Heathcliff into her room and she even devises all sorts of ways of disobeying the brother. She never hides her hatred for Hindley for the physical, social and psychological torture subjected to especially Heathcliff. Bronte, therefore, introduces into the novel a rebellious female far from what a Victorian woman would be like: docile and submissive, nor is a rebellious and monstrous Heathcliff what Victorian childhood manners would advocate, accept. To Gleyzer (2014), on one level, this is Bronte's symbolic depiction of generational change in Victorian era: the weak, the upstarts and the poor of the age are not only worming their way up, they are also using craft and force to replace the hitherto capitalist gentry, and women are also beginning to assert themselves. This is why the young women in the novel show mettle far different from the old Mrs Earnshaw and the silent Mrs Linton. So,

> Brontë makes her female characters different in their approaches to life, death and survival, showing that the initial roles society place on them can be changed and mutated, that these female characters are not defined by them but can instead define these very roles. This initial treatment of the Gothic theme through victimization is merely the first layer of course, because Brontë uses this cultural perception of women and the already established marginalized roles in fiction to twist them around and show something new. Just as she does the same with the settings of her novel, which become singular in their positioning of what the new Gothic could really represent (Gleyzer, 22).

Inhabitants of the Heights and the Grange and the hinterland live in terror of the treacherous moors, as Lockwood shows us at the start of the novel, but Heathcliff and Catherine will sneak out of the Heights and brave the wintry winds and cold to go to the Grange just for the sake of curiosity, to find out what is doing in that attractive house with inviting lights and implied riches and warmth. This bravado builds up gradually and soon readers find themselves confronted by one of Bronte's innovations into her gothic narrative: brutality and monstrosity even in a woman. The narrator tells us Catherine grows into a headstrong woman with a tomboy exuberance that is almost masculine. But it is her unbreakable bonding with Heathcliff that sets the two beings apart from the rest of the characters, and Catherine unconsciously turns an extension of Heathcliff's being. When, therefore, she backbites him to Nelly that she cannot marry him because he is poor, uncouth and uneducated, each one's brutality and monstrosity is suddenly set loose. For rabid anger and disappointment at this betrayal, Heathcliff disappears from Wuthering Heights and a stage for confrontation is set: his three year 'self-exile' looks an incubation period to distill extra inhuman emotions of malice and revenge, so that when he returns and finds Catherine a Mrs Linton, what was originally revenge against only Hindley spreads to Catherine and Edgar. Heathcliff's visit to the Grange, therefore, becomes, typically, a natural hunt to reclaim his love, but ends up triggering the tragic moment that forces Catherine to fatally poison her relationship with both men. Cathy naively imagines Edgar would be prevailed upon to receive what he calls a "plow-boy" rival in his own house (*WH*: 134) and she thinks Heathcliff would be impressed and revive the old but now ambiguous love. This is a stance that convinces readers Catherine does not know why she has married, as Nelly indeed tells her (*WH*: 118-19); nor does she understand how to keep a marriage, leave alone liking it. Beginning to entrust Nelly with her secrets, she shocks us when she reels off to her controversial and even shocking, unnatural and unwomanly statements:

> Nelly, do you never dream dreams?... I have dreamt dreams in my life that have stayed with me ever after, and changed my ideas; they've gone through and through me like wine through water, and altered the color of my mind… If I were in heaven, Nelly, I should be extremely miserable… But it is not for that I once dreamt; once I was there (because I went and came back, for) 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 up sobbing for joy… I have no business to marry Linton than I have to be in heaven: and if the wicked man (Hindley) had not brought Heathcliff so low, I shouldn't have thought of it. It would degrade me to marry Heathcliff… so he shall never know how I love him; and that, not because he is handsome, Nelly, but because 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 moonbean from lightning, or frost from fire… Every Linton on the face of the earth might melt into nothing, before I could consent to forsake Heathcliff! Oh, that's not what I intend – that's not what I mean! … Edgar must shake off his antipathy and tolerate him, at least. He will when he learns my true feelings towards him. (*WH*: 120-122)

We have quoted extensively these controversial statements so that we see straightaway how complex this woman is to understand in a single grasp. Her way of talking apparently contains no logic, no

coherence; she is under some spell and talking in a stream of consciousness manner, and certainly at cross purposes with Nelly. She does not belong to this world. Her ideas of marriage are not only controversial and unorthodox but they also carry a cause of strife in a home and in oneself. Her controversial ideas about family making, heaven, religion and the supernatural sound a revolutionary overhauling of ideas cherished by millions in society. She is what Almeida calls (2011: 53) one of the curiosities of the "Female Gothic" novel that

> Represented women and the domestic sphere in curious, new ways which reordered the power structure in society. They outwardly conformed to society's expectations and carried out their designated roles as daughters, wives and mothers, while subtly undermining the patriarchal structure. Gothic women were commonly portrayed as innocent, morally pure and blameless. Such a heroine represents a curiosity because she embodies a subversive ambition, which leads her to violate her prescribed roles in society and seek greater power. In order to suggest the power of the domestic sphere of the female, the female Gothic "ironically inverted the 'separate spheres' ideology by valorizing the private female world of the home while they fictively destroyed the public/juridical masculine world.

Whereas to us such women turn failures as home protectors (because they turn men into henpecks and teach disobedience), to Bronte, this new way of looking at woman-position in society has a much deeper element attached.

b) Catherine cannot love in an earthly way: Two spirits walking in the novel

Almeida (2011: 54) tells us

> Bronte's domestic model does not have to do with familial love, kindness, or selflessness, but rather it represents a place of intense spirituality and freedom. The antithesis, represented by Thrushcross Grange, is a place of stifled passion, material possession and conformity… (So, the tradition of the Female Gothic) provided Bronte with a unique opportunity to define for herself and for her readers a new kind of Gothic heroine… (and) in order to speak to women about themselves in a new way.

This explains why Catherine's first appearance in the novel is in a form of a ghost and why, when she is old enough to marry, she bombards the reader with the most controversial statements a woman meant to obey social norms would not make. This is what makes her a Brontean *curiosity*. But, another paradox attached to her is her implied sexual allure (her apparent grasping attachment to Edgar and Heathcliff prove this) and then her ambition to help Heathcliff materially using Edgar's benevolence and his money with her supervision. To her, this is how she can then keep the two men in love with her! This 'secret' planning of hers is bound to clash with the vanity of the Grange's nobility and respectability and Heathcliff's own possessiveness and hatred for Edgar. In fact, this is how the tragedy of the novel takes root and progresses: she has totally misunderstood and underrated Heathcliff's ability to hate with demonic determination; nor does she foresee the drastic change Edgar soon undergoes, regarding her as a betrayer and an adulterous wife: her so-called platonic love for Heathcliff does not impress him at all. Edgar has read her admiration for a recreated, handsome and masculine Heathcliff. Her 'moonbean' Edgar cannot compare with the new 'lightning' Heathcliff , or 'frost' Edgar from Heathcliff 'fire'. She will even go all the way to belittle him before Heathcliff when Edgar attempts a forced expulsion of Heathcliff from the Grange. Catherine turns bitterly sarcastic, wild, unwomanly: "Fair play, Edgar… If you have not the courage to attack him, make an apology, or allow yourself to be beaten. It will correct you of feigning more valor than you possess… Edgar … I wish Heathcliff may flog you sick…" (*WH*: 153). Turning Edgar into a henpeck is what Heathcliff relishes; he sarcastically compliments her, – "*Cathy, I compliment you on your taste: and that is the slavering shivering thing you preferred to me! I would not strike him with my fist, but I'd kick him with my foot, and experience considerable satisfaction. Is he weeping or is he going to faint for fear…*" (*WH*: 154).

At this level of Catherine-Edgar relationship, we may agree with Talarunga (2002) that Bronte wants to depict, typically (of even Cathy Linton later) what these women are struggling with - just women issues: trials of marriage problems, wishing to exert a precarious female influence, in vain, given a male dominated society with its Victorian male chauvinism. The male power over them is too powerful as can be gleaned from Isabella's conspiracy with Hindley to kill Heathcliff. Isabella is shown very capable of inflicting violence on even the "bear" Hareton and the despicable hypocrite, Joseph. But, the enormity of Hindley's suggestion disarms her: lifting a murderous arm against a man! She would rather escape from his hold as she does instead of continuing to live with a man she had adored against the

advice of the sister-in-law. When Catherine Linton is saddled with a sickly, dying Linton, it is the same male domination Bronte is said to dramatize. As for friendship with Hareton, she can live comfortably with him after she has educated him into some civilized creature from the savage Heathcliff has made him and also after Heathcliff's cruel hold on them is no more. So, the traces of love among the Earnshaws and the Lintons could flourish but for social, psychological and economic barriers suffocating the growth. And, of course, we bear in mind Bronte's other themes connected with violence and lovelessness in the world. Mustaq Ahmed (2017: 1-2) expresses this in another form:

> Bronte describes natural forces and events vividly while narrating the plot by means of Nelly Dean and Lockwood in order to display the connection between the inner and outer natural world… she wants to say something of her characters which is not only 'I love' or 'I hate,' but 'we, the whole human race' and 'you, the eternal powers' … using the extreme and sometimes contemptible behavior of the difference among characters (and) to convey significant lessons about the world and universe as a whole, rather than just the lives of the characters themselves.

Perhaps this may explain the queer Catherine-Heathcliff as one entity. Still readers get baffled by this philosophical insistence that she is no more female but a masculine Heathcliff. Before she falls sick and dies, she tries to express this mystery to Nelly but in halting breath, an indication of some awareness she lives in some kind of two worlds: an earthly one and some spirit one: she tells Nelly

> I cannot express it; but surely you and everybody have a notion that there is, or should be an existence of yours beyond you. What were the use of my creation if I were entirely contained here? My greatest 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 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. 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, Nelly. I ***am*** Heathcliff – he's always, always in my mind – not as a pleasure, any more than I am always a pleasure to myself – but as my own being – so, don't talk of our separation again – it is impracticable… (*WH*: 122).

This woman is certainly larger than the earthly life normal humans live; this 'secret' of hers takes her into some metaphysical world. Her own "use of living" is projected beyond here; her incorporation of the being of Heathcliff is another metaphysical conjoining alluding to their unique creation of a world we cannot share. We seem to have here a recreation of Adam and Eve story in her vision of a paradise beyond the misery of this earth and even the heavenly bliss we have learnt to associate with God, but which, for her, is not her type as even angels threw her back to curve her own bliss. This is one of the episodes in the novel indicating and betraying what Pourya and Tabriz (2014) call "the Freudian psychoanalysis, (an) outward manifestation of the artist's suppressed wishes … obsessive thoughts… the neurotic state of the writer" and the tendency to sound poetic. In fact Catherine (Bronte)is poetic: one notices quite a generous supply of poetic elements in the above quotation – the verbal and syntactical repetition and parallelism; the short, halting statements as if she is composing stanza lines; the overriding residual image of an envisioned universe in Catherine's mind; the hyperboles connected with Heathcliff as her universe that could cause a colossal destruction of her own universe, so that the symbiosis seems to be the very bliss she wants; the comparative metaphors of love that turn symbolic, contrasting Edgar and Heathcliff and the highly sensual and sensuous flow of feelings she pours into her 'reverie'- like speech, et c. The passage reminds us of another depiction she makes of who she and Heathcliff are: she loves him "not because he is handsome, but because he's more myself than I am. Whatever our souls are made of, his and mine are the same, and Linton is as different as a moonbeam from lightning or frost from fire" (*WH*: 121). The symbolism here is very religious indeed: Heathcliff is the spiritual light of her universe; he leads and she must follow; he is the bread of her life. But Linton, the supposed earthly support is, as she states above, a mortal to die and decompose, an unspiritual, extinguishable light.

Earlier on in various areas, we have connected Heathcliff and even Catherine to the symbolic violence and monstrous destructive power elements of nature/weather do to humans and the flora. But, Homans

(1978: 13) sees the introduction of elements of nature again into this spiritual aspect of the two 'love birds" as a

> Vehicle for abstract order. This strategy brings extremes into an arena of discussion and makes possible relations that might otherwise seem unthinkable… Comparisons that intend differentiation actually subvert differentiation, serving to bring two characters closer by furnishing the necessary common ground… Cathy means to use *rock* and *foliage, frost and fire,* to show herself and Nelly why she believes that her two loves will not impinge on each other (they fulfill two different natural realms); yet by bringing them into such a comparison she also lets the reader, if not herself, discover why such a separation of interests will certainly fail. The natural metaphor is a basis for an interaction that she misunderstands.

But Bronte brings in the comparison as a metaphor for the choice she made unthinkingly but which has proved true: there is no comparing the tenacity, manliness and masculinity of Heathcliff to the cry-baby and soft-kneed nature of Edgar. Whatever sensual current running through the comparison is supposed to also refer, principally, to the challenge Catherine lays before the two (as we are to see later): she is about to undertake "a rough journey" and dares Heathcliff to accompany her through the Calvary huddles, as she used to do when they romped through "the graves and ghosts" of Gimmerton Kirk (*WH*: 164). She knows very well only her hero of her youth would do this. He is her 'rock' on which she has built her faith and it will never be destroyed! The Biblical allusion again with another St Peter, the Rock, is glaring: there is another type of 'Church', faith, spiritual dependence she finds in Heathcliff. True, her paradoxical adulation of Heathcliff and diminution of Edgar surprises the reader with its double irony: demoting and deriding a husband's role and elevating the spiritual superiority of a man she knows very well to be a monster of no virtue at all. Deriding Heathcliff to a crazed and infatuated Isabella, Catherine vehemently says,

> (Nelly), tell her what Heathcliff is – an unreclaimed creature, without refinement, without cultivation; an arid wilderness of furze and whinstone . I'd as soon put that little canary into the park on a winter's day as recommend you to bestow your heart on him! 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… he'd crush you, like a sparrow's egg, Isabella… I know he couldn't love a Linton; and yet, he'd be quite capable of marrying your fortune and expectations. Avarice is growing with him a besetting sin. There's my picture; and I'm his friend -

What continues to confuse Isabella is what baffles us, too: why then does Catherine's love for Heathcliff grow to a maddening obsession, yet she knows his horrible sins as proof of his total lack of human feelings and love for anyone? Gillman (1994: 16) helps us to approach these paradoxes vis-à-vis how Bronte's art is structured on "contraries". The reader is fed on images of destruction and creation, hell and heaven, exile and reunion, death and rebirth, dejection and joy, paradise lost and paradise regained. Heathcliff himself is defined by opposition: the dark-skinned gypsy has nevertheless a gentlemanly look in dress and manners. But, as Gillian adds, this is true even of nature: it has its beauty and its destructive part. So, what Bronte is giving Catherine to tell us is another piece of poetry for the reader to tease out: he is the destructive force of nature, the symbol of evil that defies all natural order and human comprehension, but, at the same time, he is the symbol that expresses the inexpressible (1994: 16): how Catherine and Heathcliff imply and are each other and together, they can mould a spiritual bliss they want; they and only they have a clear vision of this. In Bronte, therefore, as Gillian concludes (1994: 22),

> The natural world and its components move beyond the mere level of signification (because it is poetic expression); they create entities which stand by themselves, on both the level of the tangible world and that of the spiritual realm, that "higher reality'. Catherine Earnshaw and Heathcliff dominate the first half of the novel, physically as themselves, and (later) symbolically in the passion and spirituality they embody. Constant reference is made throughout the novel to their natures, their psychological make-up, with few references to external appearance. This study of the physiognomy of both the natural world and the characters who inhabit it is seen as the art of judging character from features of face, external features of the country (and) characteristic (moral or otherwise) aspect.

Bronte's juxtaposition of these two forces (the ferocity of external force of nature and that of the internal spiritual one) is again very well captured by Isabella's rhetorical question: "Is Mr Heathcliff a man? If

so, is he mad? And if not, is he a devil?" (*WH:* 173). Typical of any of us critics of these two characters, she wants us to judge nature's external manifestations and conclude. But Bronte the poet reminds us that the only freedom these two ever got is exactly like the freedom of the wild moors from any impingement: when they are out on the symbolic expansive benevolence and yet explosive force of the wild moors, escaping the constraints and prison of Hindley's Heights which these youths see as prison of their bodies and minds. In the wild moors their minds are freed and their spirits unite in a new found freedom, but soon Edgar interferes with this again. So, the wild nature seen again when Catherine feels Heathcliff slipping away from him (which in Heathcliff seems even more excruciating) is a new attempt, a resurgence of a search at a reunion, coming with an even more ruthless ferocity than that of nature and Hindley. Catherine affirms this – "Who is to separate us? Every Linton on the face of the earth might melt into nothing, before I could consent to forsake Heathcliff… Nelly, I *am* Heathcliff…" (*WH:* 121-22). Heathcliff, too, though he has never forgiven Catherine for the betrayal of freedom and union they had achieved, can never see himself as a separate entity from her! His raving against her is not hate at all; it is an affirmation of the pain he feels when separation threatens their union: – "Then… Why did you betray your own heart, Cathy?...You loved me… then what ***right*** had you to leave me? (For) misery, and degradation, and death, and nothing that God or Satan could inflict would have parted us, you, of your own, did it" (*WH:* 197).

Bronte ends Catherine's earthly life on a moving, supernatural note: Catherine cannot stand the social distance she reads in Edgar's sulking and she has read self-blame in her betrayal of Heathcliff. With death approaching, she feels totally isolated, unloved; she cannot bear to think of Heathcliff's love for her totally lost. Her husband's remark and "solemn warning" haunts her, drives her mad because it is asking her to forever sever ties with Heathcliff: "*if she were insane as to encourage that worthless suitor, it would dissolve all bonds of relationship between herself and him"* (*WH:* 157). The dire warning has maddened her all the more. She wails, "Oh, I will die… since no one cares anything about me. I wish I had not (eaten)" (*WH*: 158). She resumes starving herself, locks herself away from company, and pines away racked by an extreme sense of desolation. She lapses into hallucinations; in one mad moment, tearing a feather pillow, she extracts a feather of a lapwing: examining it and commenting on their escapade to the moors with Heathcliff, she recalls him trapping mother-bird with all its young, and later how they found only skeletons (*WH:* 160).

> I made him promise he'd never shoot a lapwing… Did he shoot my lapwings, Nelly? (Then soon after), Nelly, the room is haunted! I'm afraid of being alone!... Oh, dear! I thought I was at home…lying in my chamber at Wuthering Heights… I dread sleeping, my dreams appall me… Oh, if I were but in my own bed in the old house… And that wind sounding in the firs by the lattice. Do let me feel it – it comes straight down the moor – do let me have one breath! [Nelly briefly allows in a draft of air… She lay still now, her face bathed in tears. Exhaustion of body had entirely subdued her spirit…] *WH*: 162-63.

Here the patterning of episodes in the novel is very significant indeed: the novel begins with Catherine as a ghost causing havoc in and outside her chamber, and soon, Heathcliff, responding to Lockwood's tale of his nightmare, goes 'wild like a savage', hysterically calling on her to come, at least "for once", please!(*WH*: 70). We now come full circle to their connection once more, not in physical form, but in a mysteriously spiritual union. In her hallucination and vision, poetry is at work: she has actually taken a spiritual flight to the Heights in her chamber where childhood frolicking with Heathcliff used to take place, another reminder of the freedom on the moors. The calming wind entering her room now is doubtlessly the spirit of love and belonging symbolizing Heathcliff who, this time, is the one entering the sanctuary of a reunion, coming to embrace her once more, a sensual and sensuous moment indeed. The mind rested after a brief sleep, she starts where she stopped and tells Nelly (*WH*: 162-63)

> Oh, I am burning! I wish I were out of doors… I wish I were a girl again, half savage and hardy, and free… and laughing at injuries, not maddening under them! Why am I changed? Why does my blood rush into a hell of tumult at a few words? I'm sure I should be myself were I once among the heather on those hills… Open the window again wide, fasten it open! Why don't you move?... You won't give me a chance of life, you mean…

Delirious again and strong, she determinedly disobeys entreaties of Nelly, forcibly opens wide the window, faces the "frosty air" of winter and revels in a vision of her being now into her chamber, in the "coffin-like" oak bed. She visualizes "a rough journey and a sad heart to travel it.." passing by the burial

grounds of the Lintons (Gimmerton Kirk) where (with Heathcliif) "*they've braved its ghosts often together, and dared each other to stand among the graves and ask them to come… But Heathcliff, if I dare you now, will you venture? If you do, I'll keep you. I'll not lie there by myself: they may bury me twelve feet deep, and throw the church down over me; but I won't rest till you are with me… I never will*! (*WH:* 165). At this oath of a new allegiance, she severs all connections with the Lintons; her corpse may be with their ancestors, but her soul is with Heathcliff. One cannot help recalling here the Biblical allusion to St Paul's death at the hands of tormentors: they may batter up my body but they will never touch my soul because it is elsewhere, far where none of them will ever reach. This is a spiritual elevation of the two travelers Bronte gives us.

c) The 'Holy Journey' that never ends

Catherine's invitation of Heathcliff to this journey is planned: her situation is one similar to King Lear's (Shakespeare): sanity in madness. No matter how much Edgar tries to 'love' and revive her, she is no more corporeal to him. She has already started climbing her Calvary, the spiritual journey has started: she has intentionally starved and exposed herself to wintry air and her delirium is spurred on by a brain fever, but her spirit talks sense. She tells Nelly that Heathcliff's present visit yet avoiding to get near her is meant only

> To keep me out of the grave! ***That*** is how I am loved! Well, never mind! That is not ***my*** Heathcliff . I shall love mine yet; and take him with me – he's in my soul. I am wearying to escape into that glorious world, and not to be always there; not seeing it dimly through tears, and yearning for it through the walls of an aching heart; but really with it, and in it… Heathcliff, dear! You should not be sullen now. Do come to me, Heathcliff" (*WH:* 196-97).

Heathcliff has been present, but talking with her almost at cross purposes. She had challenged him:

> You and Edgar have broken my heart…! And you both come to bewail the deed… I shall not pity you, not I! You have killed me…How many years do you mean to live after I am gone?... (Holding him down almost viciously)… I wish I could hold you…till we were both dead!... Will you be happy when I am in the earth?... I only wish us never to be parted! – and should any word of mine distress you hereafter, think I feel the same distress underground, and for my own sake, forgive me!" (*WH*: 195).

Heathcliff is desperate. "His eyes wide and wet… flashed fiercely on her"; as she throws herself into his embrace; it is a vice grip for both, and, to Nelly, he looked "*a creature* (not*) of my own species*…". When he speaks, it is really not anger or cruelty that explodes, but a feeling Catherine is right: she would haunt him in her grave; he would never have peace henceforth: "You have broken (your heart), and in breaking it, you have broken mine… Do I want to live? What kind of living will it be when you – Oh, God! Would ***you*** like to live with your soul in the grave? *WH*: 197).

In forgiving her and weeping bitterly, he knows the racking journey is going to kill him, too. It seems to be Bronte's intention that Catherine leaves behind a premature Cathy because the journey to the mother's new abode and settlement there must be for only two. As Madewell puts it (1981:67), Cathy "*is, in one sense, the resurrection of her mother. In another, she is… the phoenix we all keep within ourselves, enabling us to live out every moment and to overcome each and every partial death we call a "dream"… or "change*"… Young Cathy survives the wickedness of Heathcliff to complete another plot to compliment this spiritual journey of her mother and 'father', a journey we all partake in. The Cathy-Hareton marriage has this spiritual value for the themes of hope, reconciliation and a fight against evil. It is some spiritual cleansing of the Heights and Grange, of the world.

Catherine dies in a very blissful manner with a smile on her face (*WH*: 202). Then, for Heathcliff, all hell breaks loose. He sounds very pathetic and reminds us of Hamlet's ghost in Shakespeare: the fires of purgatory consume him daily. Lamenting to Nelly, he says

> She has disturbed me, night and day, through eighteen years – incessantly- remorselessly – and yester night, I was tranquil. I dreamt I was sleeping the last sleep, by that sleeper, with my heart stopped, and my cheek frozen against hers… (and if she had dissolved into earth or worse… I would have dissolved with her…) I was wild when she died and eternally, from dawn to dawn, praying her to return to me – her spirit – I have a strong faith in ghosts; I have a conviction that they can and do exist, among us! (*WH*: 353).

He is in no doubt he will be united with her and so he arranges with the sexton to have his body laid next to hers when he dies and ensure some small opening in their coffins to allow dust from the two coffins to mingle, like a spiritual fusion of their essences. He just cannot wait to join her, –

> For what is not connected with her to me? And what does not recall her? I cannot look down to this floor, but her features are shaped on the flags! In every cloud, in every tree, - filling the air at night, and caught by glimpses in every object, by day I am surrounded with features that mock me with a resemblance. The entire world is a dreadful collection of memoranda that she did exist, and that I have lost her! (*WH*: 335).

This recalls the prayer he recites earlier on, earnestly invoking her to wake up and torment him because she murdered him by rejecting him, and then bashing his head against a tree till he bleeds (*WH:* 204). It would seem, therefore, that having Isabella near him torments him all the more because she reminds him of Catherine. But he must join her; it is the only cure of the racking, maddening haunting. The conviction with which he narrates that horrifying, chilling experience of exhuming her body is convincing, showing how he cherishes and lives the moment as if the door of heaven had opened in that coffin to let him in. When he returns to the grave more and more times and spending nights out walking in the cold before he dies of self-starvation, the reader cannot help feeling convinced he is in a spiritual communication with Catherine. And he ensures he dies in her former room where he has often begged her to "come in" and rejoin him! It is a strange, ghostly marriage. As Taralunga TAMURA (2003) also puts it, there is no doubt

> the theme of love, particularly the love between Catherine and Heathcliff is dominant in *Wuthering Heights*. There is a deep love between the two characters, which goes far beyond the normal, romantic love, a love that has a spiritual quality. This is a story of passion, desire and suffering. It is a story of love that has its roots in Emily Brontë's unconscious which comprises and reflects that deep level of the mind and its emotions of the dark and the light, of the positive and negative, of the good and evil.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

The novel, therefore, presents us with mysticism and metaphysics. It cannot be appreciated without delving into this weird world of spirits' marriage. James (1988: 142) also enjoins examining the Heathcliff-Catherine relationship or "love" outside simplistic, experiential conclusions. He recognizes the "moral passion" of Heathcliff, but states, *"It is not easy to suggest with any precision the quality of feeling that binds Catherine and Heathcliff* (because it) *is not primarily a sexual relationship*". Nor is it "platonic passion". This is supported by Eagleton (2005: 96) who finds the relationship steeped in mythology deeper and richer than personal identity.

> It is a curiously sexless kind of desire, which can equally be seen in (two ways). For those to whom this is a regressive relationship, its sexless quality may be an unconscious defense against incest. Perhaps Heathcliff and Catherine are half-siblings, which might account for their profound persistent sense of affinity. Or perhaps the relationship seems impersonal and unconventional for just the opposite reason – that in its sense of equality and unswerving mutual commitment, it prefigures a future world in which men and women might shuck off the crippling constraints of gender. Perhaps those whose perception is clouded by the existing power structures can only see such social possibilities in mythical terms, or as a state of Nature beyond the social altogether… It seems difficult to speak of a Heathcliff-Catherine relationship in conventional ethical terms such as compassion, affection, friendship, even love… In the censorious eyes of the Grange, Catherine and Heathcliff are frozen in some mythological sphere, incapable of entering on the historical world…

Amal Mustapha *et al* (2013: 352) look at the Catherine-Heathcliff paradoxical inseparability as a kind of religion, a hope for salvation that persists more in Heathcliff after Catherine's death –

> The hope for salvation becomes a matter of eroticized private enterprise; Catherine and Heathcliff have faith in their vocation of being in love with one another. They both believe that they have their being in the other, as Christians, Jews, and Moslems believe that they have their being in God. Look at the mystical passion of these two: devotion to shared experience, his intimacy with the other; willingness to suffer anything, up to, and including, death, for the sake of this connection; ecstatic expression; mutilation of both social custom and the flesh; and mania for self-transcendence through the other. That passion is a way of overcoming the threat of death and the separateness of existence. Their calling is to be the other; and that calling, mad and destructive as it sometimes seems, is religious. The desire for transcendence takes the form of crossing boundaries and rejecting conventions; this is the source of the

> torment of being imprisoned in a body and in this life, the uncontrolled passion expressed in extreme and violent ways, the usurpation of property, the literal and figurative imprisonments, the necrophilia, the hints of incest and adultery, the ghosts of Catherine and Heathcliff – all, in other words, that has shocked readers from the novel's first publication. Each has replaced God for the other, and they anticipate being reunited in love after death, just as Christians anticipate being reunited with God after death.

With these comments, therefore, we could concur with Eagleton (2005), Kettle (1960), Amal Mustapha *et al* (2017), Madewell (1981), Homans (1978), Gillman (1994), Melnick (2004), *et al* that in using symbolism, Bronte was giving *Wuthering Heights* a much more profound meaning/implication than any single human mind can discuss, exhaust. So, indeed, as Mustaq Ahmed (2017: 1-2) concludes, the question about Heathcliff's or Catherine's ability to love does not count; the crucial issue is how we approach not only '*I love*' or '*I hate*,' and whether *'we, the whole human race'* and *'you, the eternal powers'* … help us answer the question, by especially examining "*the extreme and sometimes contemptible behavior of the difference among*" us (thereby conveying) "*significant lessons about the world and universe as a whole*". Ertugral (2007: 115) totally agrees: this is an open-ended novel because "*there is no definition of* (this) *novel, and we had better not make any concrete classification… It is an amalgam merging in itself all the distinct traditions and creating the novel genre anew in the nineteenth century. Fortunately, critics have not yet found a definition for this hybrid. I hope they will not be able to. I like the book to stand alone… I am afraid that anything defined loses meaning.*"

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