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***Wuthering Heights* by Emily Brontë:  
A Window into the Soul of an Adolescent Girl**

*Catherine Earnshaw's Journey to her Inner Child*

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## Introduction

“I *am* Heathcliff—he’s always, always in my mind...”<sup>1</sup>

This famous quote from the novel *Wuthering Heights* (1847) by Emily Brontë has been discussed many times in relation to the love of the main protagonists Catherine Earnshaw and Heathcliff, their social position and also the main motif of the book. It has been argued that it represents a true connection between two lovers. I use this simple sentence to decode the whole message of the novel. I claim that it is the key for understanding the relationships, the plot and also the frames of mind and behaviour of the individual characters in an untypical piece of romantic art. This sentence instructs us how to perceive the novel as a piece of romantic literature and also as an input into the society of that time because it places Catherine Earnshaw into the centre in a unique way.

To be able to display my thesis in detail I need to provide some basic information about the setting of the novel. Therefore, in the first part of this thesis I lay out the geographical and historical setting. I describe the significant notions connected to the novel, such as the social determinism displayed by class differences, the position of a woman in society or what it expected of her. Then I have a closer look at the setting in connection to the features significant for romanticism and its literature. These include the romantic hero, the notion of love, the nature, importance of opposites and different types of conflict.

In the second part of my thesis I deal with the main motifs and frames of mind which repeat in the novel and I show their correspondence to the setting. Firstly, I discuss the class differences in their realizations within the novel, e.g. the duty of responsibility, passion and sexuality, love and its forms, pain and pleasure and the need for power.

After the first two parts which provide the background I discuss the main characters in relation to the key sentence mentioned above. However, I do not deal with them equally. The key is that all the characters in *Wuthering Heights* can be

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<sup>1</sup> Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 73.

classified as a reflection of the soul of Catherine Earnshaw. From this point of view I describe the relationship of Catherine and Heathcliff, but also Catherine and Edgar and I show that they are reflections of two different parts of her soul—her nature and her social side. Isabelle is also a representation of Catherine's soul—her ideal of a woman, and so is Nelly Dean who represents her reason. The last character I analyse in detail is her daughter, young Cathy Linton, who is not only a revival of her mother and the image of the reunion of her mother's soul, but she represents her mother's new approach towards herself and society which forms a complete adult woman with a child within.

The goal of my thesis includes three important points. Firstly, I want to show the contrast of the traditional understanding of *Wuthering Heights* as a story of negative emotions, actions and states of mind and understanding the story while thinking outside the box where the negativity is seen as a necessary step towards harmony. Secondly, I want to illustrate that Brontë's search for lost childhood, which is so typical for her poems, is also present in *Wuthering Heights* and the search is successful. Last, but not least, I want to highlight the importance of the plot of *Wuthering Heights*. If we not only see it as a romantic novel about the conflict between an individual and society, but also as an inner journey of a young girl towards her true adult self who kept the positive energy of childhood (or in a broader sense a person of any age in search of his/her true identity), it has transcendental impact current at any time.



## **1. Historical and geographical setting**

According to Denis Dutton “we cannot understand the work of art without some notion of its origins, who created it, the context in which the creator worked, and so forth.”<sup>2</sup> Therefore I find it essential to display some of the main social problems of the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century (when Brontë lived) and where all her inspiration came from. First I lay out the basics about the social values with contrast to the position of women in society. Then the geographical background is discussed with emphasis on the difference between south and north and life in a city and in a village. In the last section of the first part I discuss the features and symbols of romantic literature which appear in Brontë’s work.

### **1.1 Social determinism and social classes**

Emily Brontë was born in 1818 and experienced the last years of the Georgian era ending by the death of William IV and the coronation of Queen Victoria in 1837. The Georgian era is known as the age of reason and realism. During the industrial revolution (1760-1820/40) society underwent many significant changes, starting with steam machinery in industry leading to urbanization and a new attitude to work, and domination of the middle class over the nobility.

With rapid industrial progress not only the way of life changed but also society and its values. Firstly, people started to feel the conflict between the new technology and modernization with old unbreakable traditions such as religion and folklore. Society needed to adapt completely to the new conditions and as many times before in history, art was one of the most powerful weapons in the fight for social change. Exactly like the Georgian versus the Victorian era, romantics showed qualities the realists overlooked. Artists displayed the opposition within society to remind their readers of it.

Britain was always famous for its strict social class system which in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century had a very pure image. There was the upper class, the aristocracy with money and power, the few per cent that ruled because of noble birth. On the other end of these social scissors stood the lower class, peasants and

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<sup>2</sup> Denis Dutton, “Artistic Crimes,” *The British Journal of Aesthetics* 19 (1979): 302-341.

workers with no money and no social importance. As urbanization forced people to move to the cities, the middle class in between those two started to form. Those were usually small businessmen with some amount of money but a quite difficult position within society. On one hand, they had the opportunity to earn money, on the other not even their wealth and efforts could change where they came from and their social acceptance. This given hierarchy was one of the main disputes the romantics felt. The criticism of the class system in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century is visible in the novel *Oliver Twist* (1837) by Charles Dickens, and it developed in the second half into novels such as *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (1890) by Oscar Wilde.

The main problem lay in the expectations of the individual classes and the strict rules for their members. Since the higher social class was a representation of intelligence and nobility, children were taught from a very young age how to behave to represent their families well. They knew exactly what is acceptable and what is not. One of the duties of the aristocracy was to attend social events and it was necessary to make the best impression of one's family. Therefore strong emotions and instinctive behaviour was uncomfortable and it became restricted (by mental training). Etiquette tied the people up so much that polite language and fake poses substituted natural behaviour.

Even though the industrial revolution also changed the educational system and children from the lower class had to go to school during the winter, work was still their main duty. Practical skills were much more needed than academic knowledge. Although people in the country did not have to be perfect in their behaviour, they still had to behave according to some rules, above all according to religion and its morality.

The Brontë family which belonged to the middle class experienced exactly this conflict. Patrick Brontë, Emily's father, was a protestant clergyman which brought him some respect among people. He was appreciated for building a Sunday school and for introducing a clean water supply after poisoning caused many deaths in the small village Haworth where they lived. Patrick Brontë studied a lot, especially after the death of his wife in 1821 and his children were to be silent in their room and not bother him. However, he and his sister-in-law,

Elizabeth Branwell, who took care of the children and the house, paid attention to children's education. They had the combination of high class education, but on the other hand they were strongly influenced by the religion as well as other people.

Even the Age of Enlightenment with its emphasis on logical thinking was under the influence of religion. Scientific inventions and theories such as Darwin's theory of evolution faced the traditional view of god's creation and mightiness. Those two perspectives challenged each other and combined into something which soon became a modern age during the beginning of 20<sup>th</sup> century.

Patrick Brontë raised his children in the protestant faith. However, since he spent most of his time serving society and reading, his children were influenced also by the Methodist church thanks to their maid Tabitha Aykroyd. She was a strong believer with lots of tales to tell. It might have been due to her that Brontë started to see the supernatural elements in nature and the superhuman within.

The Methodist teaching was not the only one to advise Brontë that there is more than what we see. She was strongly attached to the wild nature surrounding her and she spent hours watching the moors, experiencing the power of rain and wind, the delight of sunshine and the first warm air in spring. Her close relationship with nature is represented in her poems as well as in *Wuthering Heights* as I discuss in part three. She observed all the beauty and cruelty of nature which reflects in the human soul. Her strong connection to the natural world, worship of plants and rocks in her work is almost a Celtic one, as Stevie Davies shows. Brontë chose "to spend the Sabbath in outdoor communion with mother nature, rather than in church". "Nature was sacramental. Even the common grass under her feet could seem radiant and inspirational."<sup>3</sup>

When all these three influences—Protestantism, Methodist and the admiration of nature—combined in Brontë's head, it created a specific eclectic philosophy typical for a romantic artist.

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<sup>3</sup> Stevie Davies, *Emily Brontë* (Devon: Writers and their Work, 1998), 26-27.

## **1.2 The position of women in society**

Along with social class there was another strong influence and that was gender. This distinction comes from the inherent natures of woman and man. Men with their logical mind fight and discover the world whereas emotional and sensitive women stay home and take care of it or at least create the homely atmosphere.

Industrialization and work in factories put the two genders in a more or less equal position. Women and men worked the same hours, women did not just stay at home but were also earning money for the family. It took much longer to apply this equality in personal life. The romantic period was a mild start of the feminist movement and some of the pathfinders were among women writers who challenged the social perception of the woman's status as the submissive gender. Brontë as one of the first women writers to be published and valued started her interest in this field by breaking a few of the rules which were seen as fixed in her own life.

### **1.2.1 Marriage**

Through all the social classes, throughout the centuries, a good marriage was the highest goal for a young lady. Women took care of family life. Women of the higher class did not raise their children but they still had to give birth to them and represent the family, according to the Victorian ideal the Angel in the House. Women were supposed to be devoted to their children, submissive and loyal to their husbands. Women spent the first part of their lives dependent on their fathers, the second on their husbands. Never before did a woman have her own money, never was self-reliable. The social class of a woman was therefore fully dependent on the social class of the man, first father then husband. Although it was almost impossible to marry a man of higher class, women always tried to marry as best they could. A brilliant example of the hunt for the best catch is displayed in the work of Jane Austen.

It was also absolutely essential for social reasons for a woman to get married. Women who did not marry were considered a failure of their family. Their position within society was rather difficult. Not only were they gossiped about

and alone, but the most problematic thing was that they did not have resources to take care of themselves and they were dependent their whole life on their father or brother. Even though the industrial revolution offered jobs to women, it was usually for the lower classes. Once they belonged to the middle class, work was not considered proper.

Out of all the Brontë sisters only Charlotte got married and she died nine months later after. In contrast, Brontë was faithful to her work which was almost extreme at that time. She gave priority to herself and the life in nature and in her mind. She always preferred “the brave [to] the cowardly”<sup>4</sup> and with the same power animals fight for their lives Brontë fought for her independence.

### **1.2.2 Education**

Children from the lower social class went to school only during the winter and they were educated by the Church. The first financial help from the government came in 1833. Even though children had the opportunity to study some basics of reading, writing and mathematics, their main job was to work at their family farm or in a factory, usually textile. During the industrial revolution the working conditions for children were almost as cruel as for adults and they worked more than twelve hours a day. To be educated remained a privilege of the middle and upper class.

All children usually studied some basics of Latin and the Bible to get some of its morality, but that was more or less everything boys and girls had in common in their education. Men studied science and literature, philosophy and some practical skills which should prepare them for their future carriers. The education of men was based on the knowledge. On the other hand, women were mainly supposed to be good wives and therefore did not need to study books. Their main education was in arts such as singing, dancing, playing the piano and being pleasant companions. Women from the lower or middle class who took care of the house had to learn how to cook, sew and raise their children. These skills were usually taught by older women in the house.

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<sup>4</sup> Davies, *Emily Brontë*, 26.

For Brontë these two sources of knowledge—studying books and experiencing nature—combined. Her father’s will was to have children educated in the name of God, but they also learned by experience when playing in their fantasy kingdom Gondal. Thanks to her aunt, Elizabeth Branwell, Brontë experienced schooling in Belgium where she gained important insight into a different culture and arts. Brontë mixed both points of view—the feminine emotional one and the masculine logical one. She was a patient reader of romantic artists such as George Gordon Byron, Percy Bysshe Shelley or Sir Walter Scott, as well as she was a perfect observer of nature when she spent her afternoons looking out of the window, watching the moors.

This combination of the knowledge of society not only from her own experience but also from books together with the human emotions created a wonderful mosaic of the background for Brontë’s novel.

### **1.2.3 Employment**

The industrial revolution of the beginning of the 19<sup>th</sup> century brought a lot of new opportunities, but only for men. Their possibilities came directly from their education discussed in the previous section. Women from lower classes worked in factories or as servants and maids in the houses of wealthy men. The major field of employment was in “service” which also included being a governess or teaching at a dame school, providing nursing and education for wealthier children. It was said that “you had to have at least one servant”<sup>5</sup> to be considered middle class.

When Brontë’s father and brother died, the choice of jobs the sisters could do was very limited in comparison to their knowledge and skills. As Constantin Heger, Brontë’s teacher in Belgium, stated: “Emily had a head for logic, a capacity of argument, unusual in a man, and rare indeed in a woman.”<sup>6</sup> Nowadays those qualities are nothing special, but in the 19<sup>th</sup> century she “was just a cantankerous, outspoken female with a useless gift.”<sup>7</sup> Jobs which required these characteristics,

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<sup>5</sup> “Life in 19th Century Britain,” accessed April 27, 2016, <http://www.localhistories.org/19thcent.html>

<sup>6</sup> Davies, *Emily Brontë*, 17.

<sup>7</sup> Davies, *Emily Brontë*, 20.

such as scientist, philosopher, sailor, were inaccessible to a woman. But not for Emily Brontë.

By the time she came back from Belgium and had the experience she needed, she started to project her logic and sensibility into writing. Women writers were still seen as inferior to men. No wonder that when the Brontë sisters published their novels, Charlotte decided that they should stay under male pen names, Charlotte as Currer Bell, Anne as Acton Bell and Emily as Ellis Bell. She believed that “when a man becomes an author, it is probably merely a change of employment to him ... a woman’s principal work in life is hardly left to her own choice; nor can she drop the domestic charges devolving on her as an individual, for the existence of the most splendid talents that were ever bestowed.”<sup>8</sup> However, Brontë managed the domestic duties along with writing easily. Despite the judging eyes around, she worked hard to earn her success and was not ashamed to be a modern woman who not only “made all the bread for the family”<sup>9</sup> but also fulfilled the status she casually claimed for herself of a “poet, pioneer, explorer, mountaineer, philosopher, musician, author.”<sup>10</sup>

### 1.3 Geographical determinism

Society in the 19<sup>th</sup> century was separated according to the geographical layout of a country. Multiculturalism was unknown and people were not able to travel or explore the world outside of their own district. The place they were born in was usually the place they died in and as an important part of their lives the landscape surrounding them also shaped their nature and behaviour along with childhood experiences and social background. Although there are many features by which the British natural setting could be divided into, the best illustration are the differences between the south and the north which are seen also in the biography of Emily’s sister Charlotte by Elizabeth Gaskell<sup>11</sup>, who was “a native of the south

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<sup>8</sup> Angela Smith, *York Notes on Emily Brontë* (Singapore: York Press, 1980), 5.

<sup>9</sup> Smith, *York Notes on Emily Brontë*, 5.

<sup>10</sup> Davies, *Emily Brontë*, 38.

<sup>11</sup> Biography: *Life of Charlotte Brontë* (1857).

of England [and] felt she had to describe ... what Yorkshire people were like, almost as if she were describing a foreigner country.”<sup>12</sup>

The main difference between the south and north of Britain was the industrial change visible in the scenery and the way of life it determined. The south, especially London, the capital, was a representation of the aristocratic class full of historical buildings, galleries and parks. When considering the wealth and prestige of London, it is easy to understand why it was the symbol of social change. It was the place to gain wealth and start a new life (this phenomenon is represented in *Wuthering Heights* by Heathcliff and later by Isabelle). Londoners of middle and higher class usually owned a summer house in Devon or Cornwall where they spent their holidays. The fresh air combined with juicy fruit and breath-taking sea-sides was their mild variation of wild nature.

The further north one goes, the rougher the nature gets. To conserve the green south, all the industrial factories built during the revolution were placed north into the land which was inhospitable for farming. Cities in the north, such as Manchester, York or Nottingham were full of buildings with smoking chimneys accompanied by small houses for workers. Except in big industrial cities, people usually lived in small villages or even in separate houses on the moors far away from each other and were at the mercy of the dangerous nature. They had to be self-reliant to survive, had to pay attention to the weather and seasonal changes and they carried a deep respect for it. Therefore superstitions and supernatural elements were much more common. The north was like a foreign country for people from the south not only because of the differences in scenery, but also due to the fact that the first railways were built as late as the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

The house of the Brontë family was located on a hill next to a churchyard in Haworth near Leeds. Because of the placement of their house, not many people passed by and after returning home to write, Brontë rarely went to the centre either. She was separated just as if she lived in one of the houses on the moors which are such a strong symbol in her novel. She experienced that seclusion

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<sup>12</sup> Smith, *York Notes on Emily Brontë*, 9.



means more time spent with her family and was fascinated by the nature of a human soul—the brutal behaviour of her brother Branwell, the disrespect with which society treated him, the grief her father felt after the death of his wife, the loss of her mother and two older sisters and finally her close relationship with Anne. “The glimpses of Emily’s and Anne’s intuned relationship, conspiratorially murmuring to one another rather than addressing others, suggests a bonding common in identical twins.”<sup>13</sup>

#### **1.4 Romantic literature and its features**

All aspects effecting Brontë’s life mentioned above correspond with the features of romantic literature. As many times in history, social criticism against the industrial way of life ruled by logic in the first half of 19<sup>th</sup> century was visible especially in the arts. Artists looked into the very nature of the human soul with the idea that beauty and all their answers can be found within. In this part of my thesis I discuss the main features of romantic literature in general—the attitude towards nature, the conflict and opposites which are inseparable from emotions leading to melodrama, and the typical romantic hero.

##### **1.4.1 Nature as our teacher and assigner of the nature within**

In romanticism nature serves a double purpose. Firstly, it is a symbolic language accessible to everyone that is able to describe all emotions and frames of mind and speaks to all readers, viewers and listeners equally. When speaking in the language of nature artists did not have to create complicated systems of metaphors and risk being misunderstood. Simply put, nature directly gives us the emotion which is needed as seen in one of Brontë’s many poems: “In summer’s mellow midnight / A cloudless moon shone through / Our open parlour window / And rosetrees wet with dew –”<sup>14</sup>. Romantic art expresses “the growing love for wild and melancholy aspects of nature”<sup>15</sup> not only around us but also within.

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<sup>13</sup> Davies, *Emily Brontë*, 25.

<sup>14</sup> Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, 314.

<sup>15</sup> Mario Praz, *The Romantic Agony*, trans. Angus Davidson (Channel islands: Oxford University Press, 1970), 31.

Secondly, the bond between a human being and nature was emphasized as an opposite to the overly industrial and strict society. Praz says that the “passions implanted by nature in man are the work of God”<sup>16</sup> which helps us understand the importance of nature in the romantic’s mind. Nature was presented as a sacred mother of all being and therefore the main source of knowledge and wisdom. E. g. Jean Jacques Rousseau, Ralph Waldo Emerson in his essay “Nature” (1836) or Henry David Thoreau in his novel *Walden* (1854) were sure that all we need to know is hidden in nature and there is no need for books, education or social system. There are two major factors influencing a child’s growth: the geographical background and the way it is raised by its parents. If we consider these two facts, it is understandable why romantics thought that children should be raised in unity with their own nature. The naturally raised soul will, however, come into conflict with social rules that were constructed to restrict natural behaviour. And right here we come across the next reoccurring symbol of romantic art: opposition.

#### **1.4.2 Conflict, opposites, and emotions**

The symbol of two opposites comes from the very nature of romanticism. As Praz argues to label some work “romantic” puts it immediately into opposition with the label “classic” and since romanticism is “the education of sensibility”<sup>17</sup> it contrasts with the age of reason. The aim of the desired social change was to make social values compatible with natural behaviour, which, put more broadly, means that one extreme brings up the other to create harmony. This harmony, union, is a general principle inside the artist<sup>18</sup>.

We could presume that the main conflict in romantic literature is between society and an individual visible in the behaviour of characters and the responses of others (outer conflict). However, I would like to pay special attention to the inner conflict within a human soul, specifically what goes on in one’s head. This inner fight is the source of outer conflict and is essential to my understanding of *Wuthering Heights*. All conflicts in our thoughts are projected into the world

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<sup>16</sup> Praz, *The Romantic Agony*, 117.

<sup>17</sup> Praz, *The Romantic Agony*, xii.

<sup>18</sup> Praz, *The Romantic Agony*, 28.

surrounding us, we can find many small opposites as symbols of the bigger ones in romantic literature, such as the play of light and shadow, between the poor and the rich, the healthy and the ill. Inner conflict is visible through emotions and behaviour of an individual and romantics were aware of this fact, therefore romantic art is very emotive.

But why did romantics need to show emotions and opposites? The answer is simple: it brings out human sensibility, it evokes the feelings which were so restricted but missed, it makes people realize they do not just have to accept what they are told. This was highlighted through the questioning of very basic qualities society tried to set. Let us take for example the notion of beauty. According to Praz, in romanticism “beauty was enhanced by exactly those qualities which seem to deny it,”<sup>19</sup> such as cruelty or death. Before, beauty was only connected to lovely things, positive and optimistic, now the readers needed to re-evaluate the meanings society gave them, ask questions and try to search within their own feelings. Why is death not beautiful? Is beauty the same for everyone? What the reader experiences is basically full awareness and awareness is the first step towards a change.

Speaking about extremes basically means living them and vice versa. One of the most important representatives of the Romantic Movement, George Gordon Byron, believed that “the great object of life is sensation to feel that [one] exists, even through pain”<sup>20</sup>. Exaggerated emotions lead in some pieces of art to melodrama, visible for example in Nathaniel Hawthorne’s *The Scarlet Letter* (1850) where the protagonist is punished by society but even when she is forgiven, she still punishes herself to express the strong feeling of guilt. In Brontë’s case the most melodramatic features are, according to Stevie Davies included in the Gondal saga, but they also appear in *Wuthering Heights*.

### **1.4.3 Gothic literature and the supernatural**

During the preceding centuries where logic lacked explanations, people simply created them by using irrational tools such as faith and religion, emotions and

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<sup>19</sup> Praz, *The Romantic Agony*, 43.

<sup>20</sup> Praz, *The Romantic Agony*, 91.

imagination. Due to emotional restriction and orientation towards rationality these beliefs were slowly substituted by physical laws and other scientific theories. No wonder that artists who lived in the irrational world and tried to bring people back into their souls used all sorts of unexplainable scenes and motifs beyond the boundaries of reason. Not only did they attract the reader's attention, but they also forced him to set his reason aside and let himself be taken in by what he reads, experience the emotions and use his/her imagination.

When presenting supernatural symbols we also fully experience the duality of never-ending fight between good and evil which might be a parallel to the situation within society: the principle of a deity supervising human behaviour as the opposite of social supervision, so criticized by romantics. Good energy was usually present in nature and loving gods, whereas evil brought up Satan. Milton compares him to a "fallen beauty" and finds the "heroic energy"<sup>21</sup> coming from his figure extremely tempting. For the first time in centuries satanic energy was something to think about, read about, talk about. It was just a part of the world, just as good is—it was its opposite, and only together did they create harmony. This was a completely new perspective and it is essential for understanding the third part of my thesis.

From this point of view it is understandable why romantic writers were also fascinated by satanic energy within the human soul. His features were used to create powerful characters, creatures and monsters beyond the reach of reason. And some writers, such as Mary Shelley or Emily Brontë, claimed that sometimes people are the worst monsters. One of Brontë's habits was to write and paint inside her books. One of the notes in Dr Butler's *Classical Geography* says "in dark capitals"<sup>22</sup>: SATURN—SATAN—SATURN. As a patient scholar who studied works by all the symbolic writers of romanticism and a close observer of human behaviour, Brontë was aware of the dark side of the human soul which can sometimes take over the good side, for example Heathcliff in *Wuthering Heights*.

Using the conflict between good and evil writers pushed their readers to feel what is right and what is not and they taught their readers to rely on their emotions

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<sup>21</sup> Praz, *The Romantic Agony*, 76.

<sup>22</sup> Davies, *Emily Brontë*, 33.

rather than their mind. Praz believes that imagination is “a way to infinity”<sup>23</sup>. Living through emotions without rational explanations brings us closer to our nature and the nature around. In some ways the horror of the unknown (rationally unexplainable) works as a purification of perception. It shows that not only the material world is important but also the inner one.

### 1.5 The romantic hero and his muses

All features of romantic literature described above mirror in the character of a romantic hero. Prototypically, a romantic hero was a man, however, I will show (in the third part of my thesis) that this tradition was slowly changing and *Wuthering Heights* is a perfect example. For now let us imagine the romantic hero typically as a man.

The character of a romantic hero was established by Lord Byron and therefore is also called a Byronic hero. This man is very charming and his charm comes mainly from his secret past which is the key to his conflicted soul. The inner conflict and pain are visible in his face about which Byron said that it bears “the rare Satanic smile, the traces of obscured nobility ... worthy of a better fate”<sup>24</sup>. Part of his charm is given by the fact that he displays some feminine qualities such as emotiveness, caring and sensitivity which make him love like no other man—wildly, truly and forever. It would not be a proper romantic soul if there were not any opposites in his behaviour. Therefore some of his features are almost animal-like. He can be cruel and rough just as nature can be, he is full of “the quality of a kind of fallen angel.”<sup>25</sup> Unlike other men he prioritizes his passion before his reason and this makes him dangerous for women who are attracted to him as moths to a lantern.

Sometimes a Romantic hero is called a “Fatal Man”<sup>26</sup> and he corresponds with the character of his muse, the “Persecuted maiden”<sup>27</sup>. A description of this lady who is usually a “pitiful little lamb among greedy wolves, in a disorderly house”<sup>28</sup>

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<sup>23</sup> Praz, *The Romantic Agony*, 33.

<sup>24</sup> Praz, *The Romantic Agony*, 86.

<sup>25</sup> Praz, *The Romantic Agony*, 86.

<sup>26</sup> Praz, *The Romantic Agony*, 89, 465.

<sup>27</sup> Praz, *The Romantic Agony*, 473.

<sup>28</sup> Praz, *The Romantic Agony*, 182.

shows her passivity. She is a beautiful, sweet and quiet human soul with naive expectations and no opinions of her own. She falls platonically in love with the “Fatal Man” and suffers for it. She usually cannot change her destiny to marry another man and dies in a violent way. Her qualities are praised and she has a promise of a better life after her tragic existence.

In correspondence with society men in literature were mostly the active and the superior ones while women were the passive cause. Praz says that because “the literary tradition has been the monopoly of man . . . it is natural that women writers should slavishly adopt in their novels the masculine point of view.”<sup>29</sup> However, as I mentioned already, Brontë had a specific place among women writers thanks to her dual perspective and therefore she is the one who started to change characters. If we consider the character of the “Persecuted maiden” as a society’s creation, its values and rules, expectations and orders, we might already see that she is not her true self. Brontë realized that and also knew that women are not only some passive background, but that they can be as powerful and thoughtful as men. Therefore she changed the character of the “Fatal Man” into a character of the “Fatal Woman”<sup>30</sup>—the real, natural soul.

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<sup>29</sup> Praz, *The Romantic Agony*, 132.

<sup>30</sup> Praz, *The Romantic Agony*, 465.

## 2. The main motifs of the novel

When defining the term romantic, Mario Praz says that it “is not the content which decides whether a work should be labelled “romantic” or not, but the spirit”<sup>31</sup>. Brontë creates her own spirit by combining two very different points of view—the one of a romantic writer influenced by Shelley and Byron and the second of an educated observer with a logical mind. As discussed earlier, two opposites—her two points of view—combined into harmony is in itself a romantic idea. It shows that everything mirrors and unifies in desired harmony.

The method Brontë uses to create this unique spirit of her novel is by working with imagination and she “intends her novel to appeal to the reader’s imagination; she uses language as a poet does.”<sup>32</sup> Imagination is being awakened by picturesque descriptions of nature and humans and reoccurring symbolism and motifs which are discussed in this part.

### 2.1 Motifs of responsibility towards the social position and gender

Brontë’s experience was that the roles of women and men were strictly dictated and dependent on social status. Therefore her novel examines the struggle of social position and natural behaviour given by gender. From a traditional perspective, women’s behaviour is emotive whereas men’s is rational. Also the higher class is restricted in their emotions whereas the lower class expresses them spontaneously.

The social classes within *Wuthering Heights* can be divided into three groups. The first corresponds to the higher class and is represented by the Lintons—Edgar and Isabelle. The second group is the lower class with characters in the according position—servants Nelly and Joseph. The last group is a combination of both that Catherine and Heathcliff fall into. Let us have a closer look at the characters representing the individual categories.

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<sup>31</sup> Praz, *The Romantic Agony*, 30.

<sup>32</sup> Smith, *York Notes on Emily Brontë*, 59.

### 2.1.1 Higher class characters

Catherine said that the Lintons “are spoiled children, and fancy the world was made for their accommodation.”<sup>33</sup> This is especially true for Isabella who was like a doll living at Grange with all its luxury and glamour. She is a representation of feminine qualities and manners of the higher class. That leaves her in position of a perfect “Persecuted maiden” and “a model of the stereotypical young lady patriarchal education is designed to produce”<sup>34</sup>. She is so virtuous that she even warns Heathcliff that Hindley wants to kill him even though she hates him.

She is used to being taken care of as Nelly correctly remarks when she visits her on Heights. It was Nelly whom she wrote about the terrible distance between the two worlds of Grange and Heights. “It is to amuse myself that I dwell on such subjects as the lack of external comforts; they never occupy my thoughts, except at the moment when I miss them”<sup>35</sup>, she says.

Although she is well behaved her feminine emotiveness sometimes spills out, for example when she falls in love with Heathcliff. She “has been taught to believe in coercive literary conventions [and] is victimized by the genre of romance”<sup>36</sup>. Her running away is a rebellious move which helps her evolve into her strong self when, after months of torture, she finds a way to escape the Heights. She again transgresses social norms when she abandons her husband and runs into a better place (also geographically)—she escapes to London, the cheerful south. Maybe it is due to her strong patriarchal brother, Edgar, that she wants to break these social rules. Edgar even gives her “a solemn warning, that if she were so insane as to encourage that worthless suitor (Heathcliff), it would dissolve all bonds of relationship between herself and him.”<sup>37</sup>

Edgar Linton as a man of the higher class represents wealth, responsibility and the restriction of emotions. His education only extends to reason which is visible in his love of books. He is very reasonable and even Heathcliff is aware of his

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<sup>33</sup> Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, 87.

<sup>34</sup> Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000), 287.

<sup>35</sup> Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, 120.

<sup>36</sup> Gilbert and Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic*, 288.

<sup>37</sup> Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, 105.



amazing sense of responsibility when he says to Nelly that Edgar has “nothing but common humanity and a sense of duty to fall back upon.”<sup>38</sup> He lives in “the world of conventional morality”<sup>39</sup>. He follows the social rules and does what is expected of his position.

His wife is his polar opposite—an unchained, emotional woman. There is a great difference in temperament between them as Catherine herself realizes when she says to him: “your veins are full of ice-water—but mine are boiling, and the sight of such chillness makes them dance.”<sup>40</sup> But Edgar expresses his love by providing a home, food and money for the family. His love is what society expects it to be. This is visible after their fight with Catherine about seeing Heathcliff when he “shut himself up among books ... with a continual vague expectation that Catherine ... would come of her own accord to ask pardon” and he “was ready to choke for her absence, and pride alone held him from running to cast himself at her feet”<sup>41</sup>.

### **2.1.2 Lower class characters**

The lower class is represented by Nelly and Joseph, the two servants. They represent education by nature, experience, superstitions and religion. They display the domestic life with the main concern being survival. Their behaviour is not so restricted, they say what they need to say, they are focused on the present and try to keep life going for themselves as well as their masters.

Joseph is the prototype of a rough worker which is supported by his strong accent. As many people of the lower class he is very religious and superstitious. His rough nature combined with strict religion is visible for example when he tries to teach Catherine and Heathcliff from the Bible. He does not really take part in the events at the Heights and he fulfils his duties.

Nelly, on the contrary, always tries to manage not only the household but also the relationships and wants to know what is going on with her masters. Angela Smith

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<sup>38</sup> Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, 131.

<sup>39</sup> Smith, *York Notes on Emily Brontë*, 55.

<sup>40</sup> Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, 104.

<sup>41</sup> Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, 106.

says that the “most important aspect of [Nelly’s] character is her ordinariness.”<sup>42</sup> She provides us with the whole story from a point of view of an ever-present observer. Gilbert and Gubar describe her as “a wall” which is “related to both sides”<sup>43</sup>. Even though she is the narrator and we learn about all other characters from her point of view (which can be limited), she is also a character in the story. Although we do not know her from other’s words except Lockwood’s, we might get to know her through her own description of herself and also her reactions to the events in the story.

The most important feature of her character in connection to her social position is the strong sense of responsibility towards her social position and respect to the hierarchy society has set. We can see it in the way she always calls Edgar “mister” or “master”. But she never calls Heathcliff like that due to the fact that he belongs to her social class even though he is rich. We learn that she is “a poor man’s daughter”<sup>44</sup> with exceptional education which created, along with her character, a strong sense of what is right and wrong. She always keeps her own opinion and therefore manages to stay “unperturbed by the violence of the emotions”<sup>45</sup> which fly around. Through her point of view she shares with the reader the “wild passions become rooted in the normality of domestic life”<sup>46</sup>.

### 2.1.3 Characters in between classes

The two main characters, Heathcliff and Catherine, are not typical examples of their social categories. While Catherine was born into a higher class and failed to mind her manners due to her strong nature, Heathcliff was destined to live and stay in the lower class but refused and raised above his class thanks to his strong nature.<sup>47</sup>

Catherine fits Praz’s description of a woman as “the active principle”<sup>48</sup> for “she is never docile, never submissive, never ladylike”<sup>49</sup> as Isabella and the ideal Angel

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<sup>42</sup> Smith, *York Notes on Emily Brontë*, 42.

<sup>43</sup> Gilbert and Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic*, 290.

<sup>44</sup> Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, 55.

<sup>45</sup> Smith, *York Notes on Emily Brontë*, 43.

<sup>46</sup> Smith, *York Notes on Emily Brontë*, 43.

<sup>47</sup> The position of young Cathy, Linton and Hareton should also belong into this category, but because they are closely discussed in part 2.3. I do not include them now.

<sup>48</sup> Praz, *The Romantic Agony*, 292.

in the House. Even though she was raised as a woman of higher class, she is always a woman above all, her emotions and nature are stronger than her education and manners.

However, she learnt that to fit in “a lady must marry”<sup>50</sup> and so she married Edgar to please society. The marriage, however, brought out her wild side even more. She failed to follow society’s expectations of a perfect wife as she remarks when speaking to Nelly about her dream of being in heaven where she explains that she did not feel like belonging there, nor to Edgar.<sup>51</sup> She remained “faithful to all her early affections”<sup>52</sup> namely her love of nature, passion and Heathcliff.

Heathcliff’s early childhood is unknown to the reader and we can just assume it was terrible. Even though Mr. Earnshaw tries to educate him and give him a proper background, Heathcliff soon loses interest in books and learning and lives by his instincts without any social restrictions. As a man he is not spontaneous and impulsive, his actions are well-considered and planned. From “his childhood he never forgot an injury, and the systematic and materialistic way in which he goes about contriving his revenge” “is chilling”<sup>53</sup>. Helen Small says that he is a “Byronic hero to challenge Byron himself.”<sup>54</sup> He does not feel any responsibility towards anybody. Nothing can stop him, he does not hesitate to blame the world and others for his misfortune starting with Hindley when he is a child and continuing with blaming Edgar for Catherine illness. Although he managed to get wealthy, his manners have not changed and he stayed savage and raw as the moors.

## **2.2 Passions and sexuality**

In part 1.4.2 I used Praz’s words that romanticism is “education of sensibility” and now I add his following ones: “especially of erotic sensibility”<sup>55</sup>. Sexual

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<sup>49</sup> Gilbert and Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic*, 265.

<sup>50</sup> Gilbert and Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic*, 277.

<sup>51</sup> Smith, *York Notes on Emily Brontë*, 50.

<sup>52</sup> Smith, *York Notes on Emily Brontë*, 49.

<sup>53</sup> Smith, *York Notes on Emily Brontë*, 53.

<sup>54</sup> Helen Small, introduction to *Wuthering Heights*, by Emily Brontë (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), vii.

<sup>55</sup> Praz, *The Romantic Agony*, xii.

instinct is the most powerful and all our actions can be seen as an expression of it. It is our personality expressing itself in emotions and passions.

Praz says that the term romantic “describes not only the scene but the particular emotion aroused in the person who contemplates it”<sup>56</sup> and therefore I discuss the frames of mind in connection to the characters and specific events.

### **2.2.1 Love and its forms**

Love is the main motif of romanticism. It is a direct realization of the sexual instinct discussed above. Brontë managed to display several types of love, speaking in the broader sense of the natural need coming from the sexual instinct of being loved and loving back.

#### **2.2.1.1 Self-love and acceptance**

Romantics believed in individualism, an inner life and soul and a higher power. This higher power could also be called unconditional love. Its purest form is projected into the individual as self-love and self-love comes from accepting the true nature of one-self. However, in a romantic society where most of the natural expressions were considered wrong, it was nearly impossible to love one-self. The story of *Wuthering Heights* is an example of what can happen when self-love and acceptance fail. Brontë was highly aware of the results of not accepting herself. It is a romantic story (understand romantic as regarding love), but if we dig deeper it is a story about self-love and acceptance. I discuss this closely in part three.

#### **2.2.1.2 Un-selfish love for others**

I agree with Mario Praz when he says that as a romantic writer Brontë “feels admiration for the passionate energy—particularly if this energy has fatal results”<sup>57</sup>. *Wuthering Heights* is known for examining all the kinds of love that are “wrong”. However, Brontë first presented the reader with the positive forms of love to contrast it with the following falsehood.

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<sup>56</sup> Praz, *The Romantic Agony*, 32.

<sup>57</sup> Praz, *The Romantic Agony*, 217.

Firstly, it is the love between father and child that Mr. Earnshaw represents. When he takes little Heathcliff from the streets of Liverpool, it can be seen as a manifestation of humanity, but it is also love towards life itself because children were the perfect representation of nature. In that case, Mr. Earnshaw not only saves a child from probable death, but he also shows to his family, that nature is more important than social position. His intentions are visible in the way he raises him as his own, giving him an education and creating a safe background for him.

Then we are introduced to the true love between two children. In a romantic society children were seen as naïve, natural, un-selfish creatures living in the present and not yet spoiled by society. The child's love for life and others blooms between Catherine and Heathcliff when they explore the moors together. Moors represent their individual inner worlds of wild emotion and adventures as well as their passionate relationship with no restrictions.

The last, but the most powerful bond there is, is the love of a mother to her child. It is not that surprising that we do not know much about the mothers (Catherine's, Heathcliff's, Isabella's and Edgar's) or that the relationship is not discussed in detail (between Isabella and Linton). Brontë was deeply touched by the loss of her mother in her early childhood and it was one of the motifs she very often discussed in her work. The question was how important is a mother to a child and if she can be substituted. Maybe it was for that reason that Brontë created a mother-like character for all—Nelly Dean who is “a nurse, a nurturer, a foster mother” and “general mother”<sup>58</sup>. When Catherine was young she needed a mother to talk to and she spoke about her private matters with Nelly. After agreeing to marry Edgar, she visits her and asks for her opinion. She says: before “I tell you whether it was a consent, or denial—you tell me which it ought to have been”<sup>59</sup>. Even though Nelly is usually quite distant with her emotions, the true mother-to-child-like bond is visible in her relationship with Hareton. When she tells Lockwood about leaving Heights to move to Grange she mentions that Hareton “was ever more than all the world to her, and she to him”<sup>60</sup>.

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<sup>58</sup> Gilbert and Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic*, 291.

<sup>59</sup> Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, 68.

<sup>60</sup> Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, 79.

### 2.2.1.3 Socially acceptable love—marriage

When the true nature of love meets social values, it crashes and creates a mess of feelings and expectations. After laying out the true nature of love, Brontë shows the reader what happens when the need for social acceptance (or rebellion against it) is stronger. It is visible in different types of marriages<sup>61</sup> for which both sides have a different motive than love.

The first marriage is the one between Catherine and Edgar. Edgar's motive is the need to maintain tradition and be faithful to his legacy. He takes care of Catherine but in return expects her to behave properly (socially acceptably) as a wife. Catherine has at least two motives. Firstly, she is flattered by all the attention she gets from Edgar and his family. That goes hand in hand with the luxury and comfort she feels at Grange. Secondly, she finds out that this marriage would fulfil society's expectations. She realizes that it is socially disadvantageous to marry Heathcliff. If "Heathcliff and I ever got married, we should be beggars"<sup>62</sup> she tells Nelly and she continues her speech by explaining that if she marries "Linton, [she] can aid Heathcliff to rise, and place him out of [her] brother's power"<sup>63</sup> and help him.

The second type of marriage between Isabella and Heathcliff is the exact opposite of traditional. When they first meet, Isabella starts to feel the need for adventure and she assumes that what she feels is true love. "Mr. Heathcliff is not a fiend; he has an honourable soul, and a true one"<sup>64</sup> she tells Catherine. Her marriage to Heathcliff is a rebellion against society because she "patently chooses her own fate, refusing to listen to Catherine's warnings against Heathcliff and carefully evading her brother's vigilance"<sup>65</sup> and this approach was not expected of a woman in her position. Her husband has a very different motive. It is the same one he has for every action after losing Catherine—revenge. Catherine is well aware of it when she tells Isabella that "he couldn't love a Linton; and yet he'd be quite

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<sup>61</sup> I am going to use the word marriage for socially acceptable love, because it nicely shows that the formal connection of two people is not always love.

<sup>62</sup> Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, 72.

<sup>63</sup> Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, 72.

<sup>64</sup> Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, 91.

<sup>65</sup> Gilbert and Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic*, 287.

capable of marrying your fortune and expectations.”<sup>66</sup> Heathcliff confirms it when he thanks her for informing him about Isabella’s feelings. “I swear I’ll make the most of it,”<sup>67</sup> he adds.

The last type of marriage also includes Heathcliff’s revenge. It is the forced marriage between young Cathy and Linton. Heathcliff does not hide his intention and he tells Nelly about it the first time he meets her and Cathy on the moors. He goes even further and makes himself a benefactor: “the two cousins may fall in love, and get married. I’m actioning generously to your master; his young chit has no expectations, and should she second my wishes, she’ll be provided for, at once, as joint successor with Linton.”<sup>68</sup> The cousins loved each other the way children do, but Heathcliff’s anger turned Linton into a sobbing creature with no character which Cathy realizes when she says that he behaves like “he was compelled to perform”<sup>69</sup> a task. When writing a letter to Edgar asking him to let Cathy visit him, Linton explains that they “have done nothing to deserve”<sup>70</sup> the separation, but later it applies also to their marriage. Heathcliff managed to transform the true love between children into something horrifying—yet socially acceptable.

### **2.2.2 The bridge between pain and pleasure**

In conclusion of the two important things discussed above—romanticism as an age of sensibility and socially restricted emotions which are expressions of sensibility—we can easily understand that the more our emotions are restricted, the more insensitive we become. Praz said that to feel alive we need to feel something and if we cannot feel anything, we push harder and harder. That brings us to the very thin borderline between pain and pleasure, which was so questioned by romantics.

These two opposites are so close to each other, especially when we realize that by causing pain to others we can feel pleasure. This is one of the strongest motifs of *Wuthering Heights* connected mainly to Heathcliff. His pain was born long before the story started, but it was reborn when Catherine chose Edgar. He was heart-

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<sup>66</sup> Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, 91.

<sup>67</sup> Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, 99-100.

<sup>68</sup> Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, 189.

<sup>69</sup> Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, 232.

<sup>70</sup> Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, 228.

broken and therefore unable to feel pleasure, only pain. He found a magic trick to transform his pain into pleasure by causing pain to others. “You are welcome to torture me to death for your amusement, only, allow me to amuse myself a little in the same style”<sup>71</sup>, he said to Catherine.

Another manifestation of the close connection between pain and pleasure is sin. Praz says that “sin is the normal state of nature, virtue the artificial reaction of human reason”<sup>72</sup>. Sin spotted by society (human reason) creates a feeling of not being virtuous and that feeling is shame. So when Catherine starts feeling ashamed of her love for Heathcliff, her shame triggers his later revenge, causes her to marry Edgar and becomes the catalyst of the whole process of her becoming of age. Angela Smith says that *Wuthering Heights* “is one of the most brutal revenge narratives.”<sup>73</sup> Since Heathcliff is a symbol of wild nature, sin is natural for him, therefore shame is as artificial as virtue. When he finds out that Catherine let herself be taken by society and its restrictions, he chooses to show her that there is no reason for shame. In this way we can look at the main villain in a different light. He has to become a part of society and play his game of revenge to change it from the inside.

### **2.2.3 The need for power**

Another instinct restricted by 19<sup>th</sup> century society is the natural need to have power over one’s own life. Gilbert and Gubar speak about *Wuthering Heights* as a “fall into heaven” and they say that Brontë’s “emphasis is more on the loss than the pursuit of power.”<sup>74</sup> I would argue that the first part of the novel (life of Catherine I.) is about loss of power over her own life whereas the second part (life of Catherine II.) is a “problem-solving”<sup>75</sup> journey of re-gaining it. To understand the events and relationships in the first part we need to realize that a very similar rule to the one of pain and pleasure applies. When one cannot have power over one’s own life, one tries to find it elsewhere and apply his need for power over others. This substitution gives at least a sense of having life under control.

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<sup>71</sup> Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, 100.

<sup>72</sup> Praz, *The Romantic Agony*, 55.

<sup>73</sup> Small, introduction, vii.

<sup>74</sup> Gilbert and Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic*, 255.

<sup>75</sup> Gilbert and Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic*, 256.



Brontë showed many different ways of experiencing power over others. The first type is the power a person gains with a certain social position. There are two main prototypes—Hindley, who was born into the position of power and his power is therefore patriarchal similar to Edgar’s, and Heathcliff who gained it by his own means. Hindley’s demonstration of power when he forbids Catherine to meet Heathcliff is one of the most important moments in the whole novel. Catherine realizes it when she says that her “misery arose from the separation that Hindley had ordered between me and Heathcliff”<sup>76</sup>. Hindley just wanted to demonstrate what he thought was his right, however, by this gesture he introduced Catherine to the world of conventions, social expectations and rules. It is the catalyst for Catherine’s shame. She realizes that her love for Heathcliff is limited by society due to their social position.

Heathcliff also realizes something through Catherine’s shame. While Catherine chooses to marry Edgar and to obey society, Heathcliff decides not to let society mock his nature. And his realization is the catalyst for his revenge which is usually seen as revenge on Catherine and all who did him wrong, however, in broader sense it is “the revenge of nature upon culture”<sup>77</sup>. He decides to “defeat on its own terms the [patriarchal] society that has defeated him” and “to kill patriarchy” “he must first pretend to be a patriarch”<sup>78</sup>. By fighting society, he took on the responsibility Catherine refused. While “she was being transformed into a lady” he “retained the ferocity of her primordial half-savage self”<sup>79</sup>. His revenge is slow and gradual, containing several small victories. The first one is when he earns money and shows that the way one is born is not finite. Then he wins over Hindley when saving Heights. However, the biggest challenge is his fight with Edgar over Catherine’s heart. Heathcliff tries to show her again that she does not have to obey society and can be herself.

Edgar symbolizes a perfect 19<sup>th</sup> century patriarch who “needs word, not muscles”. Born into his position as the oldest son and heir, older brother, husband, father and master he “rules his house from his library”<sup>80</sup>. The struggle between him

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<sup>76</sup> Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, 110.

<sup>77</sup> Gilbert and Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic*, 296.

<sup>78</sup> Gilbert and Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic*, 297.

<sup>79</sup> Gilbert and Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic*, 293.

<sup>80</sup> Gilbert and Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic*, 281.

(society) and Heathcliff (nature) takes several years and continues even after Catherine's death and is finished only by Heathcliff's victory in the marriage of Cathy and Linton.

### 2.3 Harmony and identity

After presenting us with the extremes of (positive and negative) passions, Brontë wrote the second part of the novel as a path to harmony. Harmony is a state where two opposites, two extremes, find balance and create a union.

*Wuthering Heights* is full of small harmonies such as Brontë's spirit from two points of view, as discussed above, however, the whole story only reaches harmony in the second part where the last couple—young Cathy and Hareton—makes up for the past. The path to complete harmony in *Wuthering Heights* takes several steps: harmony in a social position means finding one's own identity and getting power over one's life and harmony in demonstration of it lies in expressing emotions, accepting and loving one-self and others. We might say that harmony is knowing the true nature of one-self and working with it in society.

First, let us have a look at social position, identity and power over one's life. Cathy was raised as a higher-class daughter at the luxurious and comfortable Grange, whereas Hareton was placed in the position of a servant. Their background mirrors the past of Catherine and Heathcliff. What differs is the way they work with it. While Catherine chose to follow the calling of society, her daughter finds a way to atone for it with her true nature even though it takes several missteps. It is important to realize that Cathy is the bearer of harmony, she is the moving power and Hareton helps her fulfil her goal only after she helps him to gain power over his life—symbolically by teaching him to read. The control of their own lives supports their identity (natural soul) makes them strong enough to deal with the outside world—social labels do not stop them, they use them to grow.

Angela Smith says that they are “not passionate, though ... sensitive and loving”<sup>81</sup> which nicely shows that their souls had the opportunity to express themselves

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<sup>81</sup> Smith, *York Notes on Emily Brontë*, 60.

freely and therefore they did not need to push into extremes. Cathy was taught good manners, but she also had the opportunity to express her opinion and make her own decisions and take responsibility for them. Hareton, on the other hand, “never led a single step towards virtue”<sup>82</sup> meaning he was left to be as natural as possible, and was also responsible for his own actions. When Cathy taught him some manners and let him support her wild nature, their love was as easy and natural as the love between children mirrors the happiness of Catherine and Heathcliff as innocent children.

However, before Cathy’s and Hareton’s love had the opportunity to fully grow, Cathy had to learn how to be a woman and some of her lessons were her relationships with men. The first one was with her father. Although she was an “unwelcomed infant”<sup>83</sup> he soon found a way to love her. She loved him back and by this pure father-and-child relationship she also healed her parent’s relationship. Then she experienced a childish love for her cousin Linton when they lived together at Grange. This pure form of love was later transformed into a forced marriage. At that point Cathy got to know Heathcliff as a symbol of an adult man and it was time for her to mature. When reaching adulthood she succeeded to keep her identity unlike her mother. By marrying Linton and keeping her love for him even though the circumstances might turn her into a sobbing, starving creature, she slowly starts to defeat Heathcliff. Defeat here means showing him that his effort to fight society with nature is slowly becoming reality and therefore it is not an actual defeat, more like another victory for him. When Linton dies, Cathy’s strong will to have him as a brother heals all previous impure marriages. This opens her a way to Hareton, to teach him and make him her companion in final harmony.

The last important step is what her union with Hareton does to Heathcliff. He mentions several times that he would prefer Hareton to be his son because he is a perfect picture of himself, unlike Linton. This strange connection between them heals the relationship between Hindley and Heathcliff because Heathcliff is no longer able to hate Hareton for looking “for his father in his face” but finds Catherine’s instead. In addition, both Cathy and Hareton have Catherine’s eyes

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<sup>82</sup> Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, 174.

<sup>83</sup> Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, 145.

and their union “reminds Heathcliff specially of heaven he has lost”<sup>84</sup>. This mirror back to his childhood is just a sign of his final victory. He managed to restore what was taken from him and it is time for him to depart this world. When Cathy and Hareton are to be married, harmony is affirmed because it is again the family of Earnshaw just like in the beginning.

## **2.4 Symbols in *Wuthering Heights***

Repetition of symbols is a strong tool for a romantic writer. It plays with the reader’s subconscious mind and leaves him with a sense of atmosphere and emotions. There are several important symbols in *Wuthering Heights* usually discussed. I have decided to only speak in detail about three categories of them: books, reading and writing; the two houses; frames (windows and mirrors).

### **2.4.1 Books, reading, and writing**

Books represent the ability to read and therefore the education of society and society itself. The contrast between this and the natural way of learning by experience and exploring causes Catherine and Heathcliff problems when they are young and Joseph forces them to study the Bible. They are too wild to see the benefit of reading and they prefer the experience.

The ability to read also places people into a certain social position. Hareton is a peasant and servant, but when Cathy teaches him to read, he learns and grows. The power of books as a symbol of the rational mind is also visible when Edgar prefers to be with his books instead of being with his ill wife who he is angry at. For him, reading is a way of escaping his emotions. Catherine, on the other hand, falls deeply into her irrational mind and therefore refuses to read. But if we consider reading as a tool of a social position in a broader perspective, it can bring understanding and independence. When one is able to read and get information himself, he is not dependent on others. For example, only after Hareton learns to read he discovers that the Heights says *Hareton Earnshaw* and therefore indicates his origin. In that case being able to read and using this skill creatively is also a way of gaining power over one’s life.

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<sup>84</sup> Gilbert and Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic*, 300.

The creativity of reading is closely connected to another skill—writing. While reading can bring many interesting facts and ideas, writing can express them and so express the self. Brontë herself wrote into her book as mentioned earlier. In *Wuthering Heights* she used this harmony between getting and giving information to show it brings freedom if we use it equally. Isabella speaks about the conditions at Heights in her letters and young Cathy maintains her relationship with Linton in letters. Writing symbolizes the inner, sometimes even secret, world that nobody can take away from you.

#### **2.4.2 The two houses (Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange)**

The strongest symbols representing the two social classes and the conflict between nature and society are the two houses—Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange—whose appearance and nature of their inhabitants look “as if each in its self-assertion must absolutely deny the other’s being”<sup>85</sup>.

From geographical point of view the “Heights is exposed to the elements and the home of wild passions while the more civilised Grange is in a sheltered valley”<sup>86</sup>. Heights lies in the moors whereas Grange is in the middle of a beautifully maintained garden. The inner appearance mirrors the outer and while Grange is a “decorative and aesthetic”<sup>87</sup> “place full of light and softness and color”<sup>88</sup> Heights is “functional”, rough and rusty. The distance (geographical and social) is noted by Isabella’s words that between the “inhospitable hearth”—meaning Wuthering Heights—and her “delightful home, containing the only people [she] loved” “might as well be the Atlantic”<sup>89</sup>.

As for the inhabitants, there are two groups. I will start with characters are bound to one place. Understandably these are men who in patriarchal society assign the social position of their family. From this point of view the Heights is a home to Joseph, Hindley, Hareton and Heathcliff, all of them just as rough as the house; Grange to Edgar, the patriarch.

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<sup>85</sup> Gilbert and Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic*, 273.

<sup>86</sup> Smith, *York Notes on Emily Brontë*, 45.

<sup>87</sup> Gilbert and Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic*, 274.

<sup>88</sup> Gilbert and Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic*, 271.

<sup>89</sup> Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, 122.

The second group of characters are women (Nelly, Isabella, Catherine and young Cathy) who move between the houses. It was natural that after marriage women moved or stayed in the social position assigned by their husband and also physically moved to his house. However, Brontë illustrates that by changing the social category or place we live, we do not become someone else. Isabella was born to Grange and moved to Heights, but she could not “stomach the rough food of nature” there. On the contrary Catherine born to Heights, moved to Grange and was unable to “swallow the food of culture”<sup>90</sup> so they both starved along with their nature and soul.

The harmony is again restored when Cathy from Grange marries Hareton from Heights and both of the houses belong to them.

### **2.4.3 Frames (windows and mirrors)**

Frames are a very important symbol in *Wuthering Heights*. I have already mentioned that the whole story is in a frame of harmony, but there are many more small frames physically or metaphorically present. I chose to call them windows and mirrors depending on whether they are insights or reflections.

Let us start with windows. Windows allow us to look outside or inside. The reader first meets the symbol of a window when Lockwood sleeps at the Heights for the first time and is woken up by Catherine’s ghost knocking on the window. This experience is like a metaphorical window to the past—it evokes his interest in the whole story. When Catherine falls ill, Edgar tells Nelly to shut the window and at that moment it is like he shut her soul to keep her in his world of society.

Windows also serve as “openings into possibility”<sup>91</sup> and experience. When Catherine and Heathcliff first visit the Grange as children, they peek inside a whole new world. They watch the Lintons as if they were in a theatre and they are not fully aware of how easily they can become a part of this world. The view they get (of luxury and light and happiness) is just a small part of the whole experience inside. It is an illustration of the limits of one point of view reminding the reader

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<sup>90</sup> Gilbert and Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic*, 288.

<sup>91</sup> Gilbert and Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic*, 278.

that to create a whole picture it is necessary to include more than one. These limits are also visible in the prison-like impression of closed windows. For example when Isabella arrives at the Heights after her wedding, all doors and windows are shut and locked behind her.

Actual mirrors force us to look at ourselves, at our appearance. In *Wuthering Heights* we can go even deeper and speak about looking inside the soul. When Catherine sees herself in a reflection in a window, she is scared because she is looking at her story and is sent back in time to her childhood. The most powerful feature of a mirror and reflection is the psychological aspect where relationships mirror the inner self. The whole story can be interpreted as a mirror maze of one soul—Catherine Earnshaw. The mirror here is a “symbol of the cell in which Catherine has been imprisoned by herself and by society”<sup>92</sup>. We finally come to the point where I explain my thesis that the whole story is the story of Catherine’s journey to find her identity as a woman. Let us dive into part three.

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<sup>92</sup> Gilbert and Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic*, 284.

### 3. I'm Heathcliff—Catherine's journey

As mentioned in part two, from a psychological point of view the biggest mirror of all is the one where all relationships mirror the inner self of one person—in our case the character of Catherine Earnshaw. That brings me to the introduction where I have mentioned that the famous quote “I am Heathcliff—he’s always, always on my mind”<sup>93</sup> can be interpreted as a symbol of eternal love between the two main protagonists as well as the key to understanding the whole story of *Wuthering Heights* as a look into Catherine Earnshaw’s soul evoking the romantic symbol of a window once more. From this point of view Heathcliff literally *is* Catherine, as she *is* Edgar, she *is* Isabella and she *is* Nelly as well as she *is* young Cathy. All characters within the novel can be seen as her subparts.

This understanding of the story shows us different levels of perception. Firstly, it is a romantic story about the love and troubles of two families in the 19<sup>th</sup> century influenced by society and the place where they live. Secondly, this story about relationships represents the romantic struggle between nature and society, which is the most common point of view and is described in part two. And thirdly, the story is just a metaphor for inner struggle of different parts of one individual. Gilbert and Gubar would call this aspect of Brontë’s novel “palimpsestic” meaning a piece of art the “surface designs [of which] conceal or obscure deeper less accessible (and less socially acceptable) levels of meaning”<sup>94</sup>. On the third level of perception the main topic is no longer the fight between society and the individual, although it still is an important feature, but it is a story about the process of adolescence. It is a story of young lady’s struggle of a becoming a woman and finding her place in society while keeping her own identity. By creating a novel about a girl’s subconsciousness, Brontë questioned the position of 19<sup>th</sup> century women itself which she found “irrational and strange”<sup>95</sup> and which was extremely binding as seen in part one. As a romantic writer with desire to change society she used the symbol of a window to Catherine’s soul to persuade

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<sup>93</sup> Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, 73.

<sup>94</sup> Gilbert and Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic*, 73.

<sup>95</sup> Gilbert and Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic*, 84.



the reader “to look ... at a possible mode of being which [he] may not have considered before”<sup>96</sup>.

When examining the third level of perception of the novel, it is clear why the novel was not accepted well when it was first published in 1874. Brontë used the language of romantic literature, but also of modern psychology rather than a Victorian view of the world. No wonder it was considered raw and primitive. Brontë used romantic symbolism known to her contemporaries, but she used them to speak about a transcendental topic which could not be understood or accepted because 19<sup>th</sup> century did not pay any attention to the age of adolescence. Therefore Brontë’s work only started to be appreciated with time.

If we ask why Brontë chose to write about such a topic, we have to return to what we know about her life and personality. I have already mentioned that she was a great observer. Ralli speaks about her preferred isolation as she “refused all acquaintance beyond her family, and yet she was passionately interested in the fortunes of the people about her”<sup>97</sup>. She learnt about human nature by listening to stories and by observing her own inner states of mind and changes. She spent hours alone in her head and as we can imagine she must have been very self-aware, she had “a recognition of the demands and complexities of [her] own private being”<sup>98</sup>. From these close inspections of her soul and nature comes also the sense of the soul’s existence beyond this world. And I assume that is the message of her novel: that every person has the key to the higher power when observing his own soul.

To be able to understand this level of perception we have to think outside the box and abandon our traditional understanding that what is bad is either *bad* for us, is tragic or is a cause of sorrow and pity. Brontë was obsessed with nature and “wild animals because they were wild”<sup>99</sup>. She also loved human passion and instincts. As a supporter of nature over society she knew the key law of nature: to bring new life the old must die. People do not like following this rule and prefer to hold onto

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<sup>96</sup> Smith, *York Notes on Emily Brontë*, 61.

<sup>97</sup> Augustus Ralli, “Emily Brontë: The Problem of Personality,” *The North American review*, 221, no. 826 (1925): 497.

<sup>98</sup> Frederick Garber, “Self, Society, Value, and the Romantic Hero,” *Comparative Literature*, 19, no. 4 (1957): 321.

<sup>99</sup> Ralli, “Emily Brontë: The Problem of Personality,” 498.

all that they think is positive for them without realizing that sometimes you need to lose something in order to gain something even better. When speaking about *Wuthering Heights*, many readers, scholars and critics see it as a tragedy, a story of loss, deceit, sin and sorrow. Because those all are undoubtedly strong symbols, let us see them in the light of this law of nature and Brontë's power to think outside the box to be in union with nature. I invite you to imagine even loss and death as an opportunity for a new beginning, new start, new life. Let us see Catherine's journey to adulthood as a path of many decisions where sometimes she has to choose to lose to become a better person and find herself in the end.

### 3.1 Catherine Earnshaw

In part one I discussed the character of a "Fatal Man" which Brontë changed into a "Fatal Woman". Praz says that the character of a "Fatal Woman" was established later, however, Catherine Earnshaw is a perfect example because she is "morally responsible for all the evil in the novel"<sup>100</sup>. The word "morally" is very important because if we see other characters as her subparts, she is responsible for every single action in the story and therefore is an example a "Fatal Woman".

The age of adolescence is a very important bridge between childhood, when a human being does not think too much about society and his/her place in it and adulthood where the character and personality should be a union of nature and social education. Buchen speaks about adolescence as the "gap that appears between childhood and adulthood" which "reproduces the initial gap between the soul in heaven and the soul on earth"<sup>101</sup>. The "soul in heaven" is the soul before it is born into the physical body and becoming "the soul on earth". But as he mentions later, there is one stage where the "soul on earth" is actually quite similar to the "soul in heaven" and that is infancy and childhood. As children we do not question our soul (our nature). We listen to it, and cooperate with it. However, when the "gap" of adolescence appears, the physical changes of the

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<sup>100</sup> Smith, *York Notes on Emily Brontë*, 52.

<sup>101</sup> Irving H. Buchen, "Emily Brontë and the Metaphysics of Childhood and Love," *Nineteenth-century Fiction*, 22, no. 1 (1967): 66.

body start to change our consciousness. At that point the “soul in heaven” is separated and our mind, reason starts to take over.

If we consider childhood the harmonic state where body and soul are in union we can easily understand that childhood is the desired state as implied by Buchen. The loss of childhood in that sense is definitely a reason for sorrow if it means we lose the connection with our soul and from a physical point of view, we will never be children again. However, what if the childhood Brontë is in search of as well as her heroine Catherine is not the physical age but more a state of mind? Let us imagine again that the loss of childhood in a physical sense is just a challenge to find it in our mind, reuniting with our soul and adopting childhood as an outlook on the world and the decision to become a child forever.

The story of *Wuthering Heights* documents the whole process of becoming an adult with a child inside. First we need to understand when this process begins. Catherine’s entrance into puberty is shown when she first asks herself the metaphorical question: do I want to be myself (my soul) or do I want to be accepted by the society? As discussed in parts one and two, 19<sup>th</sup> century society did not support individualism and had very strong rules for what is right and what is wrong. Therefore by being herself (wild, cheerful, brave and tactless) she did not meet the requirements of society which saw women as Angels in the House. Gilbert and Gubar speak about the “mad double” which illustrates the inner struggle of being “the elected nun” or “the damned “witch””<sup>102</sup>. When trying to decide which one she wants to be, her “education in doubleness in ladylike decorum” causes the “fragmentation of her personality”<sup>103</sup>. Leo Bersani describes the conflict within the soul as “the danger of being haunted by alien versions of the self”<sup>104</sup> and in *Wuthering Heights* the characters represent the fragments, “alien versions” of her soul. If we recall what was mentioned in part 1.4.3 about supernatural elements in Gothic literature we cannot be all that surprised that these “alien versions” can come across as scary and dangerous as a ghost or other monster. In that sense Brontë uses the emotion of fear that builds inside the soul instead of actual monsters in the real world.

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<sup>102</sup> Gilbert and Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic*, 78.

<sup>103</sup> Gilbert and Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic*, 275.

<sup>104</sup> Gilbert and Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic*, 252.

To find her place in society and get to know herself, Catherine does not have any other possibility than to explore her own soul. This exploration consists of several stages. Firstly, she tries to meet the expectations of society by living only her social, educated side. Secondly, she finds out that her life is too empty when accommodating only this part of her character and forgetting her nature. Thirdly, she comes to the conclusion that it is time to change her approach towards adulthood and her adult self because she realizes she can remain a child in her mind. I will use the characters of the novel, relationships and events to illustrate this inner process and analyse the stages.

### **3.2 Catherine's connection to Heathcliff and Edgar**

The two main male characters represent not only nature and society as discussed in part two, but also the two options of Catherine's self-expression. Heathcliff is her "id", her true nature, her inner child which wants to enjoy life and is natural in its communication. On the other hand, Edgar is her educated and well-behaved side which wants to be appreciated by others.

The changes in relationships between these three characters mark the changes of how Catherine wants the world to see her. As a child she is free, loving her nature (Heathcliff), enjoying it without any restriction and not thinking about others' opinions. When entering adolescence she learns that she has also a social side (she meets Edgar). This contrast, these two completely opposite expressions of herself, raise another question she has to ask herself: is my nature (Heathcliff) good enough to serve my social needs and the requirements of society (is Heathcliff a promising husband)? She decides that he is not and the shame she feels about Heathcliff is the shame of her true nature. She learns that her natural behaviour is not good enough and so her "education in ladylike self-denial causes her dutifully to deny herself and decide to marry Edgar"<sup>105</sup>, metaphorically adopting and living her social side.

Influenced by her education, Catherine has created an ideal woman she tries to become. This ideal is represented by Isabella and is discussed later on. She assumes that the ideal of a woman is the exact opposite of her true nature

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<sup>105</sup> Gilbert and Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic*, 276.

(Heathcliff). Therefore when she decides she wants to become the ideal woman, she pushes her nature aside (Heathcliff runs away). For a moment it seems like her newly created self-presentation could work as Nelly speaks about her relationship with Edgar when soon after their wedding they “looked wondrously peaceful”<sup>106</sup>. However, once her nature re-appears (Heathcliff returns) even stronger to show he made “himself worthy of Catherine’s preference”<sup>107</sup>, she is again faced with the opposition of these two parts of her soul and she is reminded what she is missing when she only shows her social part. She misses the passion and joy of fulfilling her potential, being a free, natural child with connection to her soul. When she finally sees the emptiness of her current way of life, she asks Nelly about Edgar: “is he actually so utterly indifferent for my life?”<sup>108</sup> meaning that the social side of her character can never be the one that matters the most. This realization is the first step towards finding her own identity as an adult woman with a child inside.

However, it does not change anything on her belief that her social side and nature are not compatible. Because Catherine gave most of her attention to her social side, it grows stronger and tries to get rid of her nature completely: “He never struck me as such a marvellous treasure”<sup>109</sup>. By mocking her nature, her social side is mocking her “independent will” and identity and Catherine is being forced to choose between one or the other. “Will you give up Heathcliff hereafter, or will you give up me? It is impossible for you to be *my* friend and *his* at the same time; and I absolutely *require* to know which you choose,”<sup>110</sup> says Edgar to her.

Catherine is completely lost. She desires to be her true self (be a friend of Heathcliff’s) which is her only connection to her lost childhood but she also understands that she can never reach her feminine ideal if she keeps her rough nature. Luckily, she has another two strong advisors, to offer a different point of view and the opportunity to solve the struggle by showing it is not impossible to unite her nature with the ideal.

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<sup>106</sup> Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, 83.

<sup>107</sup> John Hagan, “Control of Sympathy in *Wuthering Heights*,” *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, 21, no. 4 (1967), 310.

<sup>108</sup> Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, 107.

<sup>109</sup> Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, 84.

<sup>110</sup> Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, 104.

### 3.3 Catherine's connection to Isabella and Nelly

While the male characters symbolize the two parts of Catherine's self-presentation, the two female characters are her thoughts and inner voice. Nelly is her voice of reason and Isabella is her desired self, the ideal of woman she has created from experience and education. In their reflections Catherine finds out that the two expressions of her personality (Heathcliff and Edgar) can be combined and she can find and keep the inner child while living in society. To understand how she reaches this realization, let us have a look at what she learns through Isabella.

At the moment Catherine decides to live her social side, she separates her ideal from her nature (Isabella and Heathcliff are the exact opposites of each other). Catherine supposes, as well as she does with Heathcliff and Edgar, that these two are not compatible. However, only two opposites put together can create harmony as we have learnt in part two. When these two meet because her nature returns to show her how much she needs it, her ideal (Isabella) falls in love with it. It is the inner process of another one of Catherine's realizations that she can live her nature but will have to let it consume the ideal which is her weakest point. She says to her nature (Heathcliff) that he will "hit on exactly the most efficient method of revenging [him]self on [her]"<sup>111</sup> by deceiving Isabella. By this realization she gives him the power to transform the ideal she has adopted because it does not fit her and it separates her from her true identity. At this moment we have to remember we are looking at the events in *Wuthering Heights* from our specific perspective. Catherine's following illness and madness is a process of letting go of her ideal by which she is also letting go of the safety of being accepted by society. She does not know how to be herself, but she knows she has to try it and fall before she can rise again. In this respect Isabella is the part of Catherine Heathcliff has to despise to create a space for a new self. He "tries to kill Isabella for trying to be a goddess, an angel, a lady"<sup>112</sup>. By allowing this, Catherine opens herself to a change of approach. This change between the old and new Catherine (meaning her consciousness and approach) represented by her death. From our point of view it is the death of the old dysfunctional scheme.

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<sup>111</sup> Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, 100.

<sup>112</sup> Gilbert and Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic*, 289.

Her death (the decision to change her approach) is the impulse for the ideal to go away because it is not needed anymore—nature is stronger. Catherine’s death frees Isabella from Heathcliff. “I had succeeded in rousing his rage a pitch above his malignity ... I experienced pleasure in being able to exasperate him: the sense of pleasure woke my instinct of self-preservation, so I fairly broke free”<sup>113</sup> she says and she departs (disappears) for she is no longer needed as the perfect example. We see here a very interesting opposition of two points of view. While in the story line we feel happy for Isabella who finally escaped her oppressor, in Catherine’s mind it is actually Heathcliff (her nature) who is the victor because he creates room for a new beginning, a renewed, more natural Catherine.

Before I move on to Catherine’s new approach (young Cathy), I also want to discuss Nelly’s role as Catherine’s reason in the story and explain why it is her who tells the story. The relationship between Catherine and her reason (Nelly) is quite complicated because she “must learn to repress her own impulses, must girdle her own energies”<sup>114</sup> to be able to listen to it. Her reason is very strong especially when she tries to forbid herself the struggle between the two ways of self-presentation (the two men). “Another encounter between you and the master would kill her altogether!”<sup>115</sup> says Nelly to Heathcliff illustrating reason’s attempt to stop the inner struggle. However, Catherine knows that to get her full self with the child within, this conflict must be experienced.

The position of Catherine’s reason as a narrator of the whole story is understandable once we realize that reason is the part of our personality that connects our states of mind and the events in our lives and stays untouched by emotions. Catherine’s reason is the same when she is a child, youngster, full woman or an old lady, it only carries more and more memories and re-creates mind-maps every time there is a new experience. We can imagine Nelly as an old Catherine’s reason who tells us the story of her journey to being a full woman. She shares her story “to create a moral meal, a didactic fare that will nourish future generations in docility”<sup>116</sup> and to show it is possible to find the inner child

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<sup>113</sup> Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, 153.

<sup>114</sup> Gilbert and Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic*, 294.

<sup>115</sup> Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, 131.

<sup>116</sup> Gilbert and Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic*, 291.

by not being afraid to change ourselves and our approaches and sometimes even give something up.

### 3.4 Catherine's connection to young Cathy

Praz mentioned that the "Fatal Woman" can "successfully incarnate"<sup>117</sup> which in Catherine's case is again a metaphor for her transformation of consciousness and change of approach. In Ralli's words "Catherine's unrestrained childhood, the passionate dispositions of the Earnshaw family, Heathcliff's rough caresses which bruise the arm of his dying love—all these are symbols of the ultimate recovery of the spirit"<sup>118</sup>. After trying to fit the ideal of a woman in society which completely denied her nature, she adopted a new approach (young Cathy) and was ready to finish the journey towards complete unity of an adult woman with the child within. Just before she dies, Catherine says: "I wish I were a girl again, half savage and hardy, and free ... and laughing at injuries, not maddening under them!"<sup>119</sup> We can interpret her words as a decision to change the old approach and adopt a new point of view (Cathy).

Gilbert and Gubar say that through the "analysis of Catherine II's success" Brontë shows "how society repudiated Catherine's originality"<sup>120</sup> and to show what they mean I would like to discuss the difference between the old approach (Catherine) and the new approach (young Cathy). We have already mapped the three steps that led to the transformation (death). Firstly, it was Catherine's realization that she cannot live without her nature because her life without it is not fulfilled. Secondly, it was the realization that it is possible to create an identity combining one's nature and social self, which means being and loving one-self and also being accepted (the love between Isabella and Heathcliff). Thirdly, it was the realization that she has to leave the ideal of a woman to be transformed by nature into what she really is (death and re-birth as young Cathy). Now, let us have a look what actually changed in Catherine's mind when I speak about her change of approach.

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<sup>117</sup> Praz, *The Romantic Agony*, 236.

<sup>118</sup> Ralli, "Emily Brontë: The Problem of Personality," 505.

<sup>119</sup> Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, 111.

<sup>120</sup> Gilbert and Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic*, 299.



Firstly, it is the relationship with her social side (Edgar). Catherine tried really hard to fit in. Cathy on the other hand accepts her social side as only a part of her soul thus keeps her independence. Although she loves her father (her social and educated part) she obeys her nature when it calls her to be at Heights (which she was forbidden to do). While Catherine had Edgar as a lover—she felt the infinity of his power over her life, because marriage is for life—her new approach puts him into a different position creating the relationship between father and daughter. Cathy knows Edgar will always be part of her life, but she also knows he has only limited power over her because she will marry someday. She lets him educate her, show her the world he knows, but she also keeps walking in the garden and later the moors to gain her own experiences. The relationship between Cathy and her social part is much milder because she is not consumed by it.

The next change is that Cathy uses her reason differently than Catherine. Not only does she use it to look at things from a detached point of view which can be very valuable, but she also uses it to keep in mind all the events and her own thoughts creating a foundation for her later decision. “I can’t forget your words, Ellen, they are always in my ear,”<sup>121</sup> she tells Nelly. The awareness of her reason is visible for example when she is being rude to Hareton because he cannot read (and her experience says it is necessary to be able to read), Nelly explains to her that he is no worse than she is. In this case reason (Nelly) happens to be more like intuition because it brings her closer to understanding how to combine her nature and education.

I should not forget to mention that the symbol of Hareton is also important for the final victory of the whole character of Catherine Earnshaw is also important—he represents the new approach towards her own nature. While Heathcliff was extremely strong and raw because Catherine saw him through the eyes of society, Hareton is nature which is open to cooperate with Catherine’s social side. He is the symbol of nature that was accepted, ready to work with social expectations. After the new nature (Hareton) is united with the self (Cathy), the old nature (Heathcliff) is no longer needed. That is what Heathcliff means when he speaks about the resemblance between young Cathy, Hareton and Catherine. The new

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<sup>121</sup> Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*, 203.

approach towards nature (Hareton) in connection with the new approach towards her whole being (Cathy) reminds him of Catherine as a child. Cathy and Hareton create the full personality of a strong woman respecting her nature in society (Cathy) and keeping her inner child (Hareton).

When Nelly speaks about young Cathy she says that she “is a good girl ... and people who do their duty are always finally rewarded.”<sup>122</sup> On the level of the story, she means duty to society, however, from our point of view, she speaks about duty in a metaphorical sense. It is the duty of Catherine towards herself, the duty of becoming a complete woman who is able to balance social expectations alongside her own childish nature. It is the duty of remaining herself when trying to fit the society. And as we have seen, Catherine has kept her duty and has been rewarded by freedom, identity, self-love and acceptance, which are visible in the outer world as harmony. The fragmentation is gone—in the end it is only Cathy (the new approach of thoughts and self-presentation) and Hareton (her true nature). The biggest reward of all is her reunion with her inner child she reached by observing her mind. She found the world of eternal childhood where being a child is not a physical state of the body an only approach towards life.

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<sup>122</sup> Praz, *The Romantic Agony*, 227.

## Conclusion

In the introduction I stated that the key for understanding the story of *Wuthering Heights* is hidden in the simple sentence “I am Heathcliff—he’s always, always in my mind...”<sup>123</sup> because it is a story of Catherine Earnshaw’s inner worlds where the characters represent the subparts of her soul. I have also said that it is not only a story of a girl’s adolescence, but also a journey to re-gaining lost childhood.

After providing the social and literal background in part one and discussing the states of mind and motifs from a traditional point of view in part two, I have contrasted the third part where I present a different level of perception of the novel. I have shown that by avoiding the traditional opinion that negative is negative we can view *Wuthering Heights* as a transcendental story that was ahead of its time. We have seen that Emily Brontë’s precise use of romantic symbolism allows the reader to fully involve his imagination and let the story work on a subconscious level.

Emily Brontë has created an archetypal story of the search for happiness and simplicity of life we feel as children. In *Wuthering Heights* she has encoded the key for finding it. The key is the ability to step outside our box (no matter if created by society, our families or by personal history), become a detached observer and face without fear the negative events in order to become stronger when it is needed to leave something behind. The key is not to take events too seriously and always try to find a different window or mirror to view the situation from different angle. By following these steps we can fully experience the transformation of consciousness Catherine Earnshaw has experienced.

I have shown that the message of *Wuthering Heights* lies far beyond the story itself and it is current at any time because there will always be people in search of their true identity. And that is what makes *Wuthering Heights* such an important work not only of romanticism, but also literature as a whole.

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<sup>123</sup> Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 73.

## Resumé

Ve své práci analyzuji román *Na Větrné hůrce* (1847) od Emily Brontëové. Moje práce vychází z teze, že často citovaná věta: “Já *jsem* Heathcliff – neustále, neustále je v mé mysli...”<sup>124</sup> je klíčem k pochopení celého příběhu. Jako cesty dospívající Catherine Earnshawové do dospělosti, jejímž cílem je zachování si vlastní identity a vnitřního dítěte, coby radostného, hravého a svobodného pohledu na svět. Aby bylo toto vnímání románu srozumitelné, uvádím v první části své práce základní informace o zázemí, ve kterém dílo vzniklo. Popisuji hodnoty patriarchální společnosti 19. století z hlediska společenského determinismu a to především toho třídního a genderového. Rozebírám zde postavení ženy v kontextu její závislosti na mužích (otci, manželovi či starším bratrovi), v podkapitolách se věnuji ženské pozici v manželství, možnostem vzdělání a zaměstnání. Vždy je zde také obsažena situace autorky románu a její osobní postoj.

V první části se věnuji také geografickému determinismu, především rozdílu mezi severem a jihem Velké Británie v 19. století. Právě místo života Brontëové zásadně ovlivnilo její pohled na svět, společnost a tvoření. Jedná se především o její vztah k přírodě, která jí byla velkou učitelkou a z níž čerpala pravidlo, které ve třetí části využívám k vysvětlení své teze. Je to základní pravidlo přírody: aby mohl jeden přežít, někdo jiný musí zemřít; aby se mohlo zrodit něco nového, něco jiného musí zemřít. Poslední velkou podkapitolou části první je náhled do světa romantické literatury a jejích motivů, rysů. Je to opět příroda jako učitel, dále tematiky střetu a opozice a jejich projevení v podobě emocí. V neposlední řadě zmiňuji také téma nadpřirozena v gotické literatuře. Důležitá je zde postava romantického hrdiny, jehož charakter vychází z pera jednoho z prvních romantiků, George Gordona Byrona, který byl Brontëové velkou inspirací.

Ve druhé části své práce jsem se zaměřila na hlavní motivy románu *Na Větrné hůrce*. Ty vychází z informací z první části aplikovaných na toto konkrétní dílo. Mluvím o formě společenského determinismu v rámci románu, uvádím příklady postavení jednotlivých postav. Největší důraz kladu na dva hlavní hrdiny,

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<sup>124</sup> Překlad K. Oakland, podle: Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2009), 73.

Catherine a Heathcliffa, kteří jsou směsicí obou společenských tříd, což považují za jeden ze základních kamenů celého příběhu. Velmi dobře je zde vidět autorčin vztah ke společnosti a přírodě. Dále se ve druhé části věnují vášním a sexualitě z hlediska sexuálního instinktu, který je prvotním hybatelem veškerého lidského jednání a chování a z romantického hlediska je tou nejpřirozenější částí nás samotných. Projevuje se ve formě citů a emocí, z nichž největší důraz kladu na projevy lásky. Rozlišuji lásku k sobě samému, nesobeckou lásku k druhým (například lásku matky, která je pro Brontëovou velkým tématem) a pak lásku ve formě přijatelné pro společnost, tedy různá manželství v románu a jejich pozadí.

Vzhledem k tomu, že se román *Na Větrné hůrce* většinou rozebírá z hlediska negativních emocí, jako jsou nenávist a pomsta, věnuji se v podkapitole druhé části také hranici mezi bolestí a rozkoší a potřebě ovládat druhé. Kontrastuji zde negativní potřebu po moci nad druhými s potřebou mít ve svých rukou vlastní život, která byla v 19. století značně potlačovaná. Rozebírám tuto potřebu jako základ pro vytvoření vlastní identity. Velmi podstatnou podkapitolou je část 2.3, kde vysvětluji nastolení harmonie v románu jako projev nalezení identity. Vysvětluji zde, že druhá část knihy (život mladé Cathy, dcery Catherine) lze chápat jako cestu k vyrovnání negativity z první části knihy. Rozebírám zde postavy Cathy a Haretona a jejich kroky, kterými nastolují harmonii v rodinách i samotném příběhu. V poslední podkapitole druhé části definuji některé ze silných symbolů užitých v románu. Jsou to například knihy, čtení a psaní, popisují rozdíly mezi dvěma domy (Větrnou hůrkou a Drozdovem) a jejich symboliku coby dvou oddělených společenských světů. Nakonec se věnuji symbolice rámců (rámců), konkrétně oken a zrcadel. Právě tato symbolika je zásadní pro pochopení třetí části, která se zabývá samotnou tezí, že věta: “Já *jsem* Heathcliff – neustále, neustále je v mé mysli...” je klíčem k největšímu z oken do světa zrcadel v Catherině duši.

Ve třetí části tedy ukazují, že celý příběh je vnitřním děním v Catherině duši a mysli a všechny postavy lze chápat jako části její osobnosti, její fragmenty, tudíž zrcadla jí samotné. Popisují zde, co jednotlivé postavy román reprezentují. Heathcliffa lze chápat jako její id, nejvyšší přirozenost, zatímco Edgar je její společenskou částí, která je připravena zapadnout do společnosti v podobě ideálu

ženy, který reprezentuje Isabella. Vysvětlují zde také, že Nelly je Catheriným rozumem, který celý zážitek vypráví retrospektivně, aby poučil čtenáře o cestě, kterou Catherine podstoupila od dětství do dospělosti. O cestě k vlastní identitě a znovunalezení vnitřního stavu dětství, který je přístupem ke světu a vychází z toho, co sama Catherine pojmenovala, a to, že se člověk nehroučí při ztrátách a neštěstích, ale poučí se z nich a zesílí. Zde se vracím k přírodnímu zákonu, že pro nový život musí starý skončit, jinými slovy, že pro nový přístup k životu plnému radosti musí Catherine transformovat své vědomí a přehodnotit, co se zatím naučila.

Celou prací ukazují, že příběh románu *Na Větrné hůrce* je příkladným romantickým dílem, co se symboliky týče, nicméně sahá za hranice své doby, protože jeho téma (hledání identity, vnitřního štěstí, sám sebe) je transcendentální a aplikovatelné na kteroukoliv dobu.

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## Annotation

Author: Květa Oakland

Department: Department of English and American Studies

Title of thesis: *Wuthering Heights* by Emily Brontë: Window into the Soul of an Adolescent Girl (Catherine Earnshaw's Journey to her Inner Child)

Supervisor: Mgr. Ema Jelínková, Ph.D.

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Key words: Emily Brontë, 19<sup>th</sup> century literature, romanticism, *Wuthering Heights*, identity search, childhood, nature as our teacher, Fatal Woman, Byronic hero, sexual instinct, harmony, social determinism

Abstract: My thesis concerns the understanding of the novel *Wuthering Heights* (1847) by Emily Brontë—an adolescent girl's journey towards adulthood. It covers the basic background it originates from: 19<sup>th</sup> century society, class and geographical determinism, the position of women, and the facts about Brontë's life which formed her unique writing style. It includes a part about the features of romantic literature such as its symbolism, the importance of opposition, the idea of nature as a teacher, the qualities of childhood, the supernatural and the Byronic hero. It provides a description of the main motifs in *Wuthering Heights* which are important for understanding it as Catherine's search for herself. It discusses the frames of mind of individual characters and repeated motifs. It pays special attention to sexual instinct as the origin of all human actions, self-acceptance and self-love, the loss and regain of identity and harmony. It discusses the idea that all characters can be seen as fragments of Catherine Earnshaw's soul and mind. It follows that the story is a window into her personality during the process of becoming an adult woman. The thesis follows the changes of her approach towards society and herself in reaction to the events of the story. It provides a different level of perception where negativity is seen as a necessary step towards the final success of finding identity and harmony.

## Anotace

Jméno autora: Květa Oakland

Katedra: Katedra anglistiky a amerikanistiky

Název práce: Román *Na Větrné hůrce* od Emily Brontëové: Okno do duše dospívající dívky

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Abstrakt: Ve své práci se zabývám pochopením románu *Na Větrné hůrce* (1847) od Emily Brontëové jako cesty dospívající dívky do dospělosti. Uvádím základní informace o pozadí vzniku díla – společnost 19. století, třídní determinismus, pozice ženy, geografický determinismus a fakta ze života autorky, která ovlivnila její unikátní styl. Dále rozebírám rysy romantické literatury jako je její symbolismus, důležitost protikladů, idea, že příroda je naší učitelkou, dětství, nadpřirozeno a Byronský hrdina. Popisuji hlavní motivy románu, které jsou podstatné pro pochopení příběhu jako Catherine Earnshawové cesty k sobě samotné. Mluvím o stavech mysli jednotlivých postav a motivech, které se v románu opakují. Důraz kladu na sexuální instinkt, který je hybatelem veškerého lidského jednání, sebezřetivost, sebelásku, ztrátu a znovunalezení identity a harmonie. Rozebírám zde myšlenku, že všechny postavy lze vnímat jako části Catheriny duše a mysli. V tom případě se příběh stává oknem do její osobnosti, která prochází procesem dospívání. Dále rozebírám změny v jejím přístupu k sobě samotné i společnosti z hlediska jednotlivých událostí příběhu. Nabízím jiný pohled na toto dílo, kde je vše negativní vnímáno jako nutný krok k úspěšnému nalezení vlastní identity a harmonie.