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**Funkce prostoru a času v románu Emily Brontëové Na Větrné hůrce**  
Diplomová práce

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**Aspects of Space and Time in Emily Brontë's Wuthering Heights**  
Diploma Thesis

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## Zadání diplomové práce

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### **Cíl, metody, literatura, předpoklady:**

Práce se zaměří na prostředí a časovou strukturu románu. Zmapuje především funkci, typické rysy prostředí a jeho provázanost s postavami románu. Na základě analýzy textu románu se bude též věnovat funkci času ve vývoji děje a hlavních postav. The thesis focuses on the setting and temporal structure of the novel. Predominantly it elaborates functions and typical features of the setting and its interconnection with the characters. Furthermore, it analyses the role of time in the development of the plot and the characters.

Brontë, Emily. Wuthering Heights. London: Penguin, 1994. Print. Allott, Miriam, ed. Emily Brontë: Wuthering Heights: a casebook. London: The Macmillan Company, 1970. 11-36. Print. Atkinson, David, et al., eds. Cultural Geography: A Critical Dictionary of Key Ideas. London: I. B. Tauris, 2005. Print. Emberson, Ian M. "The Broken Tree: Symbol And Actuality." Bronte Studies 36.4 (2011): 336-343. Academic Search Complete. Web. 27 Jan. 2015. Fegan, Melissa. Wuthering Heights: Character Studies. London: Continuum, 2008. EBSCOhost. Web. 5 Mar. 2014. Flintoff, Everard. "The Geography Of Wuthering Heights." Bronte Studies 31.1 (2006): 37-52. Academic Search Complete. Web. 27 Jan. 2015. Heywood, Christopher. "A Yorkshire Background For Wuthering Heights." Modern Language Review 88.4 (1993): 817-830. Academic Search Complete. Web. 27 Jan. 2015. Romieu, Emilie, and Romieu, Georges. Život sester Brontëových. Trans. Naděžda Melniková-Papoušková. Praha: Orbis, 1930. Print. Tytler, Graeme. "Thematic Functions Of Fire In Wuthering Heights." Bronte Studies 38.2 (2013): 126-136. Academic Search Complete. Web. 27 Jan. 2015. Tytler, Graeme. "The Workings Of Memory In Wuthering Heights." Bronte Studies 37.1 (2012): 11-18. Academic Search Complete. Web. 27 Jan. 2015. Williams, Anne. "Natural Supernaturalism In Wuthering Heights." Studies In Philology 82.1 (1985): 104. Academic Search Complete. Web. 27 Jan. 2015.

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## **Prohlášení**

Prohlašuji, že jsem tuto bakalářskou práci vypracoval pod vedením vedoucí bakalářské práce samostatně a uvedl všechny použité prameny a literaturu.

V Hradci Králové dne

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## **Anotace**

Soudek, T. (2017). *Funkce prostoru a času v románu Emily Brontëové Na Větrné hůrce*. Diplomová práce. Pedagogická fakulta Univerzity Hradec Králové.

Práce se zaměřuje na prostředí a časovou strukturu románu. Zkoumá reálnou předlohu pro umístění románu. Dále mapuje funkci, typické rysy prostředí a jeho provázanost s postavami a tématy románu. Na základě analýzy textu románu se též věnuje funkci času ve vývoji děje a hlavních postav. Veškeré poznatky získává na základě interpretace zvolených motivů, které se pojí právě s prostorem a časem. Na základě zjištěných poznatků se práce snaží zaujmout stanovisko k mnohoznačnému konci románu.

Klíčová slova: Emily Brontëová, Na Větrné hůrce, kulturní geografie, analýza, prostředí, časová struktura

## **Annotation**

Soudek, T. (2017). *Aspects of Space and Time in Emily Brontë's Wuthering Heights*. Diploma Thesis. Faculty of Education, University of Hradec Králové.

The thesis focuses on the setting and temporal structure of the novel. It researches the real model used for creating the setting. Next, it elaborates functions and typical features of the setting and its interconnection with the characters and themes. Furthermore, it analyses the role of time in the development of the plot and the characters. All findings are obtained by interpreting selected motifs which are always connected with space and time. On the basis of discovered findings, the thesis tries to take a standpoint towards the ending of the novel.

Key words: Emily Brontë, Wuthering Heights, cultural geography, analysis, setting, time structure

## **Prohlášení**

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## **Introduction**

The novel *Wuthering Heights* provoked a strong wave of criticism in the period closely following its first publication date in 1847 and it has remained the attention of both readers and researchers up to the present, which is proven by a large number of studies concerning themselves with various aspects of the novel. Ambiguity and polarity belong among those significant aspects. One of the most famous and most frequently quoted theories about *Wuthering Heights* is Lord Cecil's theory of two opposite principles which dominate two different families in the novel (Melani 2011). It is concerned with the polarity of the novel and it also draws conclusions about the ambiguous ending of the novel stating that the ending is harmonic, which, however, has been challenged by other researchers. This theory inspired the author of the thesis. Therefore, the aim of the thesis is to search specific indications of the opposite principles in the text and to assess how harmonic the ending of the novel is on the basis of discovered indications.

The diploma thesis follows the author's bachelor thesis which was focused on a general introduction of various aspects of the novel. One of its chapters described the function of the setting in a general way. The diploma thesis is derived from this chapter; however, it deepens, expands, and elaborates on its conclusions. The setting involves two basic aspects. Firstly, it is space. Secondly, it is time. Therefore, all the indications of the opposite principles used for interpreting the ending of the story are always related to space or time. In other words, the setting is analyzed in the thesis to decide how harmonic the ending of the novel is.

The major part of the thesis concentrates predominantly on spatial aspects. It explores the geographical background of the novel. It examines how and why Emily Brontë searched inspiration in the real world and, consequently, it attempts to state what parallels and differences between the real model countryside and the setting say about an overall meaning of the novel. Next, the most significant themes of the novel are introduced. These themes are important for the aims of the

thesis because they often illustrated on various levels the contrariety which is studied. To make conclusions about the themes including conclusions about the ending of the novel, some motifs present in the text are analysed and their meaning is interpreted. The selected motifs differ greatly; however, they are always somehow linked with space. Some of them, for example the character of the depicted landscape, the shape of buildings, or the state of the weather, were chosen because they are frequently used in literature so their function is simple to be discovered. On the contrary, other motifs, for example an element of fire or windows and doors, are used specifically by Brontë, which means that their interpretation may be more subjective. Nevertheless, all the motifs have the ability to contribute to better understanding of the novel and to make the conclusions about the ending more accurate.

The topic of the second part of the thesis is time which is an integral part of the setting. Temporal aspects are distinctive characteristics of the text therefore the thesis researches them from two points of view. Firstly, it examines the structure of the text. It describes the way how the story is presented to a reader within the course of time and it tries to answer the question what the purpose of the particular text structure is. Secondly, the thesis focuses on the development of the story in time. Both approaches provide findings which help make conclusions about the ending of the novel.

A few technical comments should be made in the end. Firstly, it is essential to mention the way the characters are referred to. With regard to the fact that the family relations among the characters are very complicated, and women in the novel often change their surname, which is confusing, it seems logical to refer to the characters only by their first name. The problem occurs in the case of two women who share the same name Catherine. To avoid misunderstanding, the older woman, who represents the second generation, is referred to as Catherine, while her daughter, who belongs to the third generation of the characters, is called Cathy in the thesis.

Secondly, one of the secondary sources is the book *Život sester Brontëových* by Emilie and Georges Romieu. Since the surname in the in-text

citations refers to both authors of the book, a plural form of a verb follows in the text. Thus, the phrase “Romieu state” is not a mistake because the subject “Romieu” refers to both authors sharing the same name so the plural form of the verb follows.

Finally, the only primary source is the novel *Wuthering Heights* by Emily Brontë. Since the thesis repeatedly cites parts of the novel, an acronym is used to simplify the in-text citations from the primary source. Therefore, all extracts from *Wuthering Heights* in the text of the thesis are referred to by the acronym “WH”.

## 1 Space

The first big chapter of the thesis is dedicated to the spatial aspects of the novel. The setting is elaborated in a detailed way. Therefore, the aim of the chapter is to reveal the function of the setting for the novel. Firstly, an interconnection of the real world of Brontë and the fictional world depicted in the text is analysed. The question how much the author was inspired by the real countryside, how much credibly she reflected it or to what extent she modified it, and with what intention she did it is elaborated. Secondly, the most distinctive themes which are linked to the setting and which are most frequently mentioned in the secondary literature are examined. Some of these themes are more general and commonly used by many authors. Examples of such themes are the weather, the landscape and buildings. Other themes are more specific and typical of Brontë's literature – for example windows, doors, walls, or trees.

All the themes are interpreted with regard to main motifs of the novel. It is especially with regard to one of the most famous and dominant theories which states that the main motif of *Wuthering Heights* is a temporary clash of two opposite principles which stabilise in final harmony. The thesis also aims to verify this conclusion about the ambiguous ending of the novel.

### 1.1 Geographical Background

The following chapter attempts to reveal links between the setting of the novel and its real model because it is presumable that living conditions of an author always influence to a certain extent his or her literary work.

Authors often project their homeland into the setting of their stories because they have a close emotional attachment to it and they know a wide variety of specific details about it. Authors' birthplace or a place where they grow up and spend the majority of their lives forms their identity. It influences their experience. It forms their ideals, moral values and attitudes. It determines what actions they take during their life, what goals they follow, what interests they have. Their close social relationships to people in their surrounding as well as an overall pressure of the society has a significant impact on how they feel and on

what they think or believe in. Cultural geography as a scientific discipline whose scope of study aims at the issues connected with relations between space and a human identity states that “[s]patiality is widely recognised as a key dimension in the formation of social identities: identities are understood to be generated in relation to specific places, both territorial and social” (Martin 2005, p. 98). With regard to the degree how spatiality influences an identity it can be hardly questioned that authors either intentionally or subconsciously project their state of mind formed by the surrounding conditions into their literary works. This statement is especially relevant to Emily Brontë, which is caused by her untraditional childhood and her introvert nature in her adulthood.

Emily Brontë lived in a small town Haworth which is located in the northern part of England in the middle of the wild nature of Yorkshire moors. A depressing and harsh character of this town and its environs, described by Romieu (1930, p. 103), provided a good inspiration for the setting which creates a gloomy atmosphere in the novel. This statement was proved by the first impression of the narrator, Lockwood, who commented on the environment where the plot was situated in the way that it is “[a] perfect misanthropist's heaven” because it is “completely removed from the stir of society“ (WH, p. 19).

On top of that, the house where Brontë spent the majority of her life was inhospitable, too. Romieu state that it was a grey stone building with a graveyard in a close proximity, and that it resembled a prison or a fortress (1930, p. 14). Regardless of the inhospitableness of Brontë's home and its wild surroundings, they both occupied an important position in the heart of Emily Brontë, who always had a strong feeling of sadness and unhappiness in case that she was staying off her home (Abrams 1993, p. 1266). This attachment to the native countryside was formed in the childhood of Brontë. Since nobody paid attention to small Brontë siblings in their family, Romieu claim that they found a substitutive home in the middle of wild moors, where they were able to spend whole days (1930, p. 15). Consequently, the close attachment between Emily Brontë and the moors influenced the setting of her novel. Furthermore, in comparison with her sisters, she took a deep pleasure in walking through wild

moors of the North of England even in her adulthood. Allott says that “she experienced a special need for the freedom of the wild moorland country surrounding her home” (1970, p. 12) and adds that “she clearly preferred her remote and sometimes almost hermit-like existence” (1970, p. 13). It is obvious from specific parts of the text that *Wuthering Heights* bears traces of Emily Brontë’s fancy for the wilderness of the moors not only in its general setting but also in the importance which the main characters attribute to the moors. The main characters escape from their troubles at home to the wild countryside as well as Brontë ran away from the society to the loneliness of the moorland where she found comfort in the wild nature. Namely, when Catherine and Heathcliff were persecuted by her brother Hindley, they sought solace in the moors, and similarly after Heathcliff’s conflict with Catherine’s husband Edgar, she expressed her desire to return to the moors, which symbolized a relatively carefree period of her life in her childhood:

I wish I were out of doors! I wish I were a girl again, half savage and hardy, and free; and laughing at injuries, not maddening under them! Why am I so changed? Why does my blood rush into a hell of tumult at a few words? I'm sure I should be myself were I once among the heather on those hills. (WH, p. 116)

This extract shows the evidence that the novel was influenced by the remote way of life of its author because it epitomises the intense relationship of Brontë towards the moors. Since links between Brontë’s life experience and the motifs and themes of the novel are easy to be exposed, an inspiration drawn from the countryside surrounding her home and its overall strong influence on the atmosphere of the novel are obvious. Nevertheless, if the fact that the setting is depicted in various details and that spatial arrangement of individual locations is well elaborated is considered, the conclusion that the author was inspired by the countryside of Yorkshire moors near Haworth seems to be too general. To illustrate, Flintoff states: “For the individual descriptions both of the buildings in the book and their locations are so precise and so mutually consistent one with another that it has seemed Emily Brontë must have had some real place in mind“ (2016, p. 37). For this reason, long-lasting research has been done since the novel

was published up to the present. A lot of researchers have tried to find particular real places which were exact models used by Brontë while she was creating the setting. Regarding the very limited area near her hometown where she spent her entire life, it should be relatively simple to identify her model places because all the possible sources of inspiration are limited with her restricted knowledge of the real countryside. Nonetheless, the research has shown that this assumption is false.

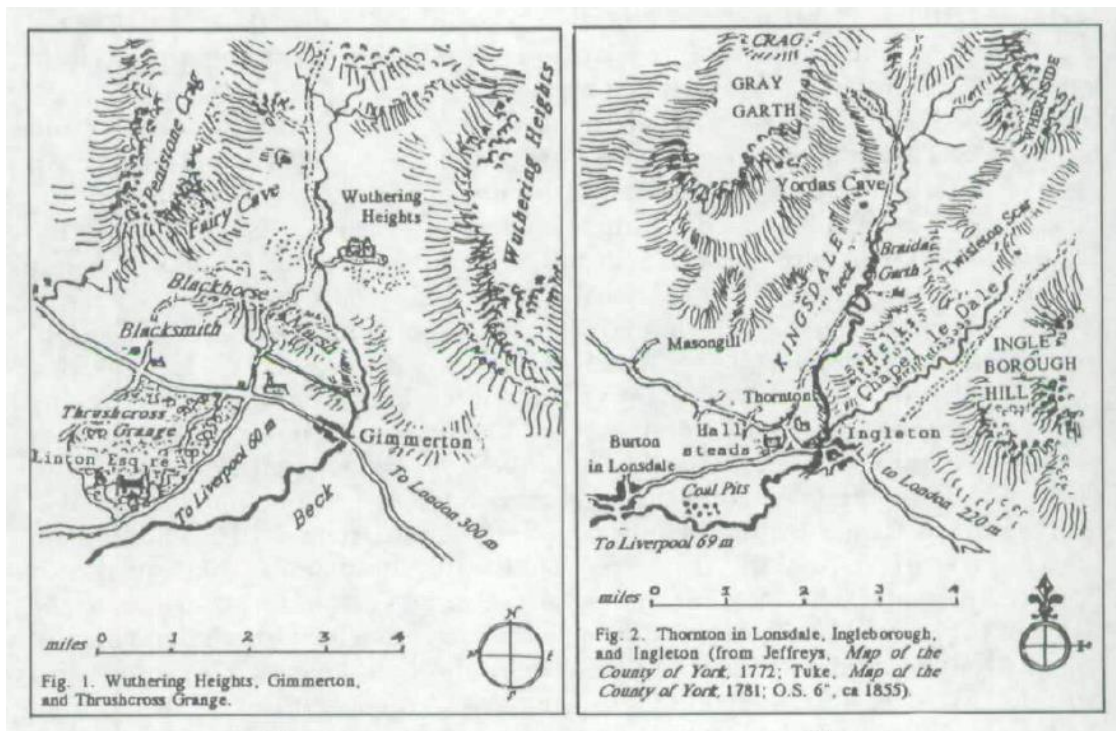
It is unquestionable that the setting of the novel is situated in Yorkshire moors in the North of England. A lot of hints included in the text prove it. In the first place, Brontë describes the moorland very similar to her homeland. Next, she uses topographical and personal names which are typical of that particular area. Moreover, she informs the reader that the setting is located north of London and approximately 60 miles away from Liverpool. Finally, she states that the furniture of *Wuthering Heights* belongs to a “northern farmer” (WH, p. 21). Nonetheless, Yorkshire moors extend on a large area and a closer identification starts to be more demanding.

In general, the ruins of an old farmhouse Top Withens situated on a hill near Haworth are regarded as the model of the building *Wuthering Heights* which is one of two main places in the novel; however, Mudrová suggests that only an isolated location on the top of the hill and a blustery atmosphere could possibly inspire Brontë, while the shape of the building is dissimilar to *Wuthering Heights* (2010, p. 150). On the other hand, the native house where Brontë grew up was strikingly similar to the shape of the solid farmhouse called *Wuthering Heights*. Their similarity is visible from the description of *Wuthering Heights* which provokes a projection of a prison or a fortress in the mind of a reader in the same way as the house of Brontë does: “The narrow windows are deeply set in the wall, and the corners defended with large jutting stones” (WH, p. 20). Thus, it seems that Brontë used different models for the depiction of the countryside and the buildings. She presumably chose a location for the setting and then she replaced original buildings with other ones which are physically located somewhere else. This makes any attempts to identify their models much more complicated.



Firstly, if only buildings themselves are taken into consideration, it has to be mentioned again that there is a striking similarity between the appearance of Brontë's native house and Wuthering Heights. Nevertheless, they are similar in numerous details but their global contours differ therefore her native house could not be an exact model for Wuthering Heights. It suggests that Brontë combined features of more model buildings to create fictive ones present in the novel. Flintoff's opinion that Wuthering Heights is an embodiment of a typical Halifax farmhouse rather than an exact model of a specific building is in accordance with this conclusion (2016, p. 46).

Secondly, if the original location for the setting is researched, it is obvious that the shape of the countryside in a close proximity to Haworth differs from the depiction of the setting in the novel. While the imaginary landscape consists of two big hills separated by a valley where a small village lies, the real countryside around Haworth looks differently. Only the above mentioned hill with Top Withens really reminds with its windy weather conditions of Wuthering Heights. For this reason, researchers have tried to discover another part of Yorkshire moors which Brontë drew her inspiration from. Heywood claims that she was inspired by the Dales area between Skipton and Cowan Bridge which is over 30 kilometres distant from Haworth. This valley corresponds with the imaginary one not only in a general landscape character but also in various details including the layout of roads, brooks, hills and known buildings. To illustrate the similarity, the author of the theory encloses a comparison of a fictional map based on careful reading of the description of the setting and a map of the area created on the basis of historical sources (Picture 1). The theory, however, raises doubts about how Brontë could depict the landscape in such a detailed way if she could see the area in person only once and it happened on her way home from the school in Cowan Bridge in the age of 7. The author explains this question as follows: Brontë used beside her personal experience also historical, social and topographical literary sources which she provably studied (1993). All these facts give evidence about the variety of sources which inspired her as well as about the carefulness which she applied during the process of creating the setting.



Picture 1: Comparison of the Dales area and the setting (Heywood 1993, p. 826)

Last but not least, it is necessary to mention that the setting contains a minimum of factual mistakes. Despite the setting was completely invented by Brontë, researchers who study it in detail are able to create detailed maps which are based on the description of the setting in the text and which do not include any inconsistencies. The exception represents Flintoff who indicates a problematic point in the range of vision between two main locations. It is impossible to see Wuthering Heights from Thrushcross Grange and vice versa although both buildings stand on the top of hills and they are only about 6 miles distant from each other. However, this issue can be explained through a terrain unevenness which lies somewhere between both buildings (2016, pp. 43-44). Thus, in spite of this minor inconsistency mentioned, it is obvious that the setting was created very systematically, carefully and deliberately.

To conclude, science shows that the environment with specific living conditions significantly influences and forms an identity of its inhabitants. This influence had a multiplied effect on Brontë's character because she had a very

close personal and emotional relation to the countryside near her birthplace where she spent her entire life. Therefore this countryside left a deep imprint on the setting of the novel. That is the reason why the novel “is used to construct a biography of Emily's life, personality, and beliefs“ (Melani 2011). However, the research of the links between her homeland and the setting gives also evidence about the way how the novel was being created. It shows how she masterfully combined her personal experience, memories, affections with exact sources of information – with maps, contemporary historical sources and real buildings and locations. What is of the highest importance is the fact that she intentionally and precisely elaborated every detail of the setting.

## **1.2 Setting and Motifs**

As stated in the previous chapter, it is not possible to completely and surely identify all the real models of the setting because Brontë was inspired by a variety of diverse influences. However, the extent of effort invested into the research of the setting and the sophisticated elaborateness of the setting suggest that the detailed depiction of the setting has its function. Therefore the aim of the following subchapter is to clarify the purpose and possibilities of the setting analysis.

It is important to realize that Brontë pursued a specific goal when she decided to elaborate the setting so precisely. Heywood proposes what the goal is. He claims that “*Wuthering Heights* emerges as an invocation of history and society contained in the landscape as a whole” (1993, p. 828). Thus, she used a variety of different sources to create a complex and authentic reflection of the society at the particular place rather than an exact copy of one place. It means that she selected various details from various sources of inspiration and projected these details into the setting. That offers space for interpreting of her intentions.

Firstly, it provides an opportunity to search links between characteristic features of the setting and their possible real models. Consequently, it allows one to speculate about the reasons why Brontë either included or omitted particular details in the setting in comparison with real models and what ideas these details

were supposed to express within the novel. To illustrate, *Wuthering Heights* resembles a typical farmhouse of Halifax area, as already mentioned above. However, Flintoff points out that it has a relatively opulent doorway with sculpted decorations typical of more luxurious buildings than farmhouses which are usually not decorated in such a way. He explains that Brontë intended to show a pride of the Earnshaw family while she still maintained their subordinate social and economic position compared to the Linton family (2016, pp. 48-49). So she did not use a particular real model for *Wuthering Heights* but she designed her own fictive building inspired by more factors because she could assign that building a specific function, which is the expression of a social position of its owner.

Secondly, although actual links between real models and the setting often cannot be traced, it is still possible to interpret functions of various details in the setting. There are a lot of details which appear repeatedly in the text. To demonstrate, the weather, the character of the landscape, animals, windows and doors, fire, dreams, violence can be found in the text. All these details can be termed motifs which are characterised as “a recurring word, phrase, image, object or idea running throughout the text. Motifs, each of which stand for a complex range of feelings, associations and values, are part of the structure of the novel, providing continuity and coherence” (Turnbull 2016). Since motifs stand for a range of feelings, associations and values, they have a symbolic function. It means that they provide information which exceeds their literal sense. Authors use motifs to express more general key ideas of their literary texts. Saleh states that *Wuthering Heights* can be called “prose-poetry” because the text is well elaborate and rich in metaphors (2007, p. 123). Therefore, motifs should be noticed in the text, interpreted and their function within the text should be recognized in order to reach deeper understanding of the literary text.

To sum up, it is obvious that Brontë intentionally used a variety of motifs to illustrate central ideas of the novel. It is essential for deeper understanding of the text to notice and interpret them whether it is with respect to her sources of inspiration in the real world or irrespective of them.

### 1.3 Themes

The previous chapter states that motifs play an important role in the reader's ability to understand or interpret central ideas of a literary text. It implies that the text includes beside motifs also more general concepts which are called themes. They are characterised as "an idea, concept or issue - it is what we, as readers, interpret the story as being about. One of the ways in which a novelist might explore and draw attention to a theme is through the use of a recurring image or motif" (Turnbull 2016). This definition additionally supports the assumption that detecting of the function of motifs is the way to better understanding of the whole text. Nevertheless, before individual motifs can be examined and analysed in a detailed way, it is prerequisite to identify basic themes of the text and to reveal what disputable points are related to their interpretation, which is the aim of this chapter.

The key term if themes of the novel are discussed is contrast. *Wuthering Heights* is often called a dialectical novel because a clash of two opposite principles is presented at various levels of concreteness. Pálmadóttir argues that Brontë "constructs the themes of the novel around the concepts of life and death, love and loss, and man versus nature" (2012, p. 1), which shows both the contrasts and the wide range of the scope of the novel. Moreover, there can be even more thematic layers discovered in the text – for example power, religion, economic and social status, family.

To begin with, the text includes themes connected with personal issues of individuals. An ambiguous relationship between Catherine and Heathcliff shows an unusual connection of unlimited love with hatred and lust for revenge. Differences between Heathcliff and Edgar demonstrate the following contrasts: physical and mental power versus weakness, determination versus hesitation, passion versus apathy.

In the second place, issues concerning the whole society are described. Two families, the Lintons and the Earnshaws (with Heathcliff counted among them) represent two opposite poles of the economic and social status in the Victorian society. The Earnshaws standing in a low position of the social ladder

are dominated by their natural spontaneity while the Lintons representing nobility are controlled by social norms. Similarly, Heathcliff stands for innate abilities whereas Edgar's power originates in social prestige. For this reason, Allott suggests that one of the main themes is a "spiritual conflict between the fundamental passions and moral seriousness" (1970, p. 169). A matter of a family, childhood and upbringing is also closely related to the above mentioned issues. Some authors claim that the purpose of the story is to stress the importance of social values and norms via showing by way of Heathcliff's and Hindley's example how backward, brutal, uncultivated, and cold-hearted human beings would be without the positive influence of education and family support during childhood (Lewes 1970, p. 68, Fegan 2008, p. 53).

Next, some issues nearly surpass the human society. According to Pálmadóttir, Brontë creates an image of the heaven and the hell in her story. Pálmadóttir states: "The religious contradictions of animal nature in humanity, Satan in human form, versus the exaggerated angelic version, are very ambiguous concepts, but brilliantly addressed by Brontë" (2012, p. 22). Thus, Brontë describes a conflict between two contradictory principles which are meant to symbolise Cristian values. She creates an image of the hell in *Wuthering Heights* and an exaggerated corrupt image of the heaven in *Thrushcross Grange*. Consequently, she introduces a human embodiment of Satan in Heathcliff and a caricature of angels in Edgar (Pálmadóttir 2012, p. 10). Moreover, Pálmadóttir spots feministic features in the text as she adverts to "a reversed version of 'the fall' of Eve, with her female characters" (2012, p. 15). All dominant female characters are exposed to Satan's (Heathcliff's) temptation and they all succumb to it. Beside religious aspects, *Wuthering Heights* also has a philosophic overlap because it shows a duel between rationality and natural or even supernatural forces.

To summarize, all the individual topics from the various thematic layers can be generalized into the statement that the central theme of the novel is a dialectical conflict between two opposite principles, the reality and the metaphysical. "The metaphysical acknowledges nature as the ruling element

above all others” (Pálmadóttir 2012, p. 2). So it represents unrestrained natural energy which creates the basis of all living beings while the reality stands for a human rational extension which tries to regulate this energy. Van Ghent defines *Wuthering Heights* as a tension between “the raw, inhuman reality of anonymous natural energies, and the restrictive reality of civilized habits, manners, and codes” (2007, p. 18).

Allot explains in her introduction the theory of Lord Cecil who calls the opposites as principles of “storm” and “calm”. He claims that “‘storm’ and ‘calm’ are temporarily in conflict, but are ultimately shown to be component parts of a total harmony“ (1970, p. 20). This was one of the first attempts to discover the total meaning of the novel; however, his conclusion has remained one of the most disputed questions about the novel. Both principles, which were embodied by two families, coexisted in harmony at the beginning of the story. The balance of forces is disrupted by the arrival of Heathcliff who brought a strong influence of the storm principle. Nevertheless, it is issuable whether a harmonic unity of the opposite forces was reached or some controversy between them remained. Some authors agree with Cecil. To illustrate, Veit states that the external element – Heathcliff “is finally assimilated and equilibrium re-established” (1977, p. 112). On the other hand, there are clues present in the text which suggest the opposite. For example, the alleged roaming of Catherine’s and Heathcliff’s ghosts through the moors does not indicate that the end of the novel is fully harmonious. For this reason, the following subchapters, where the functions of various motifs are elaborated, also try to illuminate this disputed question. They attempt to reveal whether the setting suggests if the opposite forces were synthesized or one of them dominates.

### **1.3.1 Fire**

The purpose of this chapter is to show a thematic function of fire in the novel. The motif of fire in its various forms including predominantly fireplaces and candlelight appears repeatedly throughout the whole narrative. It might seem inappropriate to start the analysis of the setting with such a specific phenomenon

as fire which lies on the boundary of a motif and a symbol. However the choice of this phenomenon is intentional because this chapter also attempts to accentuate uncertainty and dubiousness of interpreting any motifs or symbols. Beside its historical appropriateness for the setting, an additional symbolic meaning of fire can be found although the author's intention to express this symbolic meaning remains always a point to be discussed because it can never be proved or disproved with an absolute certitude.

Tytler states that "fires and fireplaces are practically indispensable in the everyday life of the two northern households portrayed [...] irrespective of times of the year or even weather conditions" (2013, p. 130). This statement is based on frequent mentioning fireplaces by all narrators as they describe the setting and develop the plot during the whole course of the story. To illustrate, when Mr. Lockwood visits Wuthering Heights for the first time, one of his first impressions which he (among others) mentions while he is describing the old house is a "huge fireplace" (WH, p. 20) where he holds one of his first conversations with Heathcliff. It is the place where a lot of crucial conversations or conflicts inclusive of those between Heathcliff and Catherine before Heathcliff's running away from home or those between Cathy and Hareton before their final reconciliation happen. Similarly, one of the last dialogues between Mrs. Dean and Heathcliff is maintained at the same place shortly before his death. In all the examples mentioned as well as in other cases, some elements of fire, such as fireplaces, burning candles, chimneys, and light produced by fire are explicitly mentioned during the description of the scene. For this reason, this phenomenon deserves closer attention.

Firstly, it is important to mention the time period in which the story is situated. The story is told retrospectively between years 1801 and 1802. Thus, it in effect took place nearly a century before the process of electrification started. This fact is significant because it shows the role of fire for a household at that time. Fire was an only source of light and warm therefore people were fully dependent on it. This proposition was doubly valid for isolated households located in the middle of the wilderness where, moreover, adverse weather conditions often



prevailed. With regard to the fact that Brontë was with a high probability aware of this importance of fire from her own personal experience and that she situated the setting into solitary houses in the middle of wild moors, it leads to the conclusion that the frequent mentioning of fire has a clearly practical function. Either the author uses this phenomenon in her description of the setting subconsciously because it is an integral part of her life or she makes use of the objects connected with fire intentionally in order to increase the vividness of her narration by means of a detailed description of the setting.

Nevertheless, the motif of fire can be understood symbolically as well. For example, the oppositeness of Heathcliff's physical and mental state at the beginning and at the end of the novel seems to be reflected in the fireplace of Wuthering Heights. As already mentioned above, Mr. Lockwood meets Heathcliff, who is still on top of his strength at the moment and completely controls all actions in his house, next to a "huge fireplace" for the first time (WH, p. 20). Despite not being said explicitly in the text, the overall description of the scene implies that there is as usually a fire burning in the fireplace. On the contrary, there are only going out coals in the same place a few hours before Heathcliff's death when his state – partly insane and at the end of his physical power – resembles the dying out fire in the fireplace. On top of that, Mrs. Dean tries to "divert him from his reverie" and make him have a rest (WH, p. 275). To reach this goal, she attempts to make a fire in that particular fireplace again, which underlines the possible interconnection between Heathcliff and the elements of fire.

If the characteristics of all main protagonists are considered, it definitely is Heathcliff who most strikingly resembles an element of fire both with his appearance and behavior. His figure, which is described as "tall, athletic, well-formed" after his three-years-long disappearance, evokes an impression of the strength comparable to a natural element (WH, p. 92). Moreover, his "eyes full of black fire" directly refer to this element, which illustratively attests to his inner resemblance to fire (WH, p. 92). He is characterized as a man of "will and action" (Dallas 1970, p. 78) because his stubbornness, courage, determination,

and strong-mindedness allow him to pursue directly his goals. On this way, he mercilessly manipulates people and destroys their lives similarly to a huge fire which cannot be stopped until it burns everything that is in its way. It is also worth mentioning that the only character who is able to oppose Heathcliff is Cathy. She shares with him a lot of his fiery features like courage and determination. Also, it seems that Heathcliff's fire can be stopped only by another one which is not so fierce and destructive.

The two examples above suggest that characters' relation or attitude towards fire can reveal some of their character traits or their actual mental state. However, there is another symbolic function of fireplaces to be mentioned. Fireplaces generally have positive connotations in a language. They produce light and warmth therefore they usually represent the center of comfort and safety in a house. That is the reason why Hareton "could sit a whole evening staring into the fire, and dozing" (WH, p. 258). With regard to this fact, it may seem surprising that, according to Tytler, "fireplaces seem symbolically to mark stages in [Heathcliff's] problematic relationship with Catherine" (2013, p. 130). He proves it with a range of examples. When Heathcliff realized that Catherine prefers entertaining Edgar Linton to spending time with him in chapter 8, "he lounged to the fire, and sat down" (WH, p. 70). After he had had an argument with Catherine about his manipulative treatment of Isabelle in chapter 11, "[h]e stood on the hearth with folded arms, brooding on his evil thoughts" (WH, p. 106). Next, one of the most intensive and powerful dialogues between them when they both declare love for each other and unforgivable reproaches in chapter 15 was foreshadowed by a moment of silence when Heathcliff "walked to the fireplace, where he stood, silent, with his back towards us" (WH, p. 143). Fire has even a deeper symbolic meaning for their relationship in chapter 10. After Heathcliff's return to Wuthering Heights, excited Catherine asks him to visit them. Edgar Linton is logically not enthusiastic about this idea therefore she responds to his objections with the proposal that she will get two separate tables prepared – one for her and Heathcliff and the second one for Edgar and Isabelle. Consequently, she adds a question: "Or must I have a fire lighted elsewhere?"

(WH, pp. 91-92). Tytler suggests that Catherine implies with this question “the revival of her relationship with Heathcliff“ (2013, p. 131). To expand on this idea, fire seems to be an appropriate symbol of their love. There are English colloquial expressions (for example: fiery temper, ardent lover, fervent heart) which semantically interconnect passions with fire. This connection clearly describes the relationship between Catherine and Heathcliff because it is fiery, unrestrained, and vigorous on one hand and unpredictable, dangerous, and devastating on the other hand. Furthermore, all these adjectives which are typical of fire distinguish both lovers’ hot temper from the members of the Linton family who are calm.

To conclude, the interpretation of specific symbols can always be questioned. Firstly, it is dependent on every reader’s subjective perception of the novel. Secondly, fire was a natural part of life of the author therefore the contemporary function of fire in households should be remembered, which leads to the conclusion that fire does not necessarily have to have any intentional symbolic function. Nevertheless, the resemblance between Heathcliff, Catherine, or Cathy and the element of fire suggests that fire has a symbolic function. It is used to depict their character traits or to illustrate crucial points of the narration irrespective of the question whether it was used intentionally or subconsciously by the author.

### **1.3.2 Landscape**

One of the most important aspects of the setting is the shape and character of the landscape because it creates the overall background for all actions depicted in the text. Romieu state that the scenery, which is characterised by an inaccessible landscape covered with heather and a stormy weather, is an ideal place to fulfil a tragic story of the novel (1930, p. 119). However, the function of the setting is more important than just completing the story through evoking specific feelings in a reader and setting the mood of the story because Brontë used it to illustrate central ideas of the novel.

Wild moors in the north are the dominant and most frequently mentioned part of the setting. They symbolise wilderness and danger because they

mean a thread of the death to everyone who is not strong enough to resist their forces because he or she does not feature with the same inner natural power which rules the moors. Although Mr. Lockwood was severely humiliated, he prefers staying overnight in inhospitable Wuthering Heights during his second visit there to going home across the moors because they were “white ocean” (WH, p. 41) where he would have lost his way and would have frozen to death. Mr. Lockwood is a typical example of an educated, cultivated and conventional man of the Victorian society. He complies with all the social norms and affected politeness. However, he lacks the storm principle which would help him survive in the wild nature. On the contrary, Catherine and Heathcliff are continuously attracted by the moors. Nelly says that while they were children “it was one of their chief amusements to run away to the moors in the morning and remain there all day” (WH, p. 52). They sought refuge there when they tried to escape from Hindley’s anger, which seems to be a logical step because “[s]patial location is important [...] in providing a ‘position’ from which resistance can be made against power, inequality and other forms of perceived oppression” (Martin 2005, p. 98). Nevertheless, they can feel free and secure there because the energy which controls them is the same like the energy which dominates the moors. They are wild and unrestrained. An interconnection between Heathcliff’s boisterousness and his wild surroundings is expressed by the following quotation: “[H]e has come direct from the affluent heart of nature, and the hardly charm of her bleak hill-sides and savage moorlands rest upon the boy” (Skelton 1970, p. 73). It stresses Heathcliff’s connection with the moors where he always took refuge in case of need for the whole life. Thus, Brontë clearly linked the stormy behaviour of Heathcliff to the harsh nature of the moors. Therefore, his unrestrained passions should be understood as a result of an uncontrolled animal-like human nature.

The previous examples show how Brontë demonstrated a contrariety between main characters on their similarity or dissimilarity with the countryside they live in. Since cultural geography states that the landscape is “a physical form, a concrete materialisation of social relations” (Mitchel 2005, p. 50), it really can be used to depict both personal characteristics of individuals and social

relationships among them. There is a reciprocal relation between the landscape and people living in it. Their living standards, priorities and attitudes are not only influenced by living conditions determined by the countryside, but they are also reflected in the way how people treat the environment surrounding them. For this reason, an independent observer can make judgements about people on the basis of their surroundings, which is exactly what Mr. Lockwood does after his arrival to Wuthering Heights. He observes attentively every detail of the living place of his new hosts and infers conclusions about them from it. Although his conclusions are subjective and they prove often wrong, it suggests that the reader should be able to do the same thing.

“[W]hile landscape signifies the look of the land, it also signifies a specific way of looking at the land” (Mitchel 2005, p. 50). In other words, the attitudes of the inhabitants towards their land give evidence about their character therefore Brontë demonstrated differences between characters on their contrary attitudes towards the countryside. Whereas vital Cathy, who represents the passionate essence of the Earnshaws, imagines the moors as a “glorious jubilee” (WH, p. 210), which is described as:

[R]ocking in a rustling green tree, with a west wind blowing, and bright white clouds flitting rapidly above; and not only larks, but throistles, and blackbirds, and linnets, and cuckoos pouring out music on every side, and the moors seen at a distance, broken into cool dusky dells; but close by great swells of long grass undulating in waves to the breeze; and woods and sounding water, and the whole world awake and wild with joy. (WH, p. 210)

The imagination of Cathy’s cousin Linton, who personifies the rational calmness of the Lintons, is opposite because he prefers:

[L]ying from morning till evening on a bank of heath in the middle of the moors, with the bees humming dreamily about among the bloom, and the larks singing high up overhead, and the blue sky and bright sun shining steadily and cloudlessly. (WH, p. 210)

Additionally, Allot emphasizes that the relation of the characters to the moors is also used to express the development of the characters between the second and the third generation, which is another crucial element of the novel. The second generation, represented by Catherine and Heathcliff, loves

an unrestrained running through the moors; in contrast, the third generation, namely Cathy and Linton, admires the moors rather from a distance (1970, p. 197). Thus, a certain reduction of passion is noticeable in this change. This reduction is evident at the end of the story. Hareton and Cathy who represent the storm principle of the Earnshaw family continue living in the middle of the wild moors. However, they are not tempted to walk through them whole days long but they cultivate the nearest surrounding of their home instead. They still enjoy “late rambles” in the moors but Nelly describes them rather idyllic so there are no signs of ferocity (WH, p. 257). It intimates the final equilibrium between both opposite principles. There is also other evidence which supports the theory of the final harmony. Catherine and Heathcliff are finally reunited after they were buried next to each other in the moors. Nonetheless, they do not rest in peace because there are supposedly walking through the moors during stormy days. This fact might negate the conclusion that the harmony was reached because it shows that the wild natural element of their souls prevails even after their deaths. Nevertheless, their yearning for free and careless roaming together in the moors, which was not fulfilled during their lives, is accomplished after their deaths. It means that they stop negatively interfering into lives of other people and enjoy their yearned-for freedom, which resembles a kind of the harmony.

Until this point, only the moorland was taken into consideration; however, Flintoff points out that only the northern part of the setting comprises of the moors surrounded by impassable mountains while the countryside in the south is composed of meadows with flowers and protected gardens with trees so it is not so harsh, wild, inhospitable, and dangerous. It is more tender, more tranquil and safer (2016, p. 42). Traversi maintains that the main theme of *Wuthering Heights* is a “spiritual conflict” between “fundamental passions”, which are represented by the family of the Earnshaws, and “moral seriousness”, which is embodied by the Lintons (1970, p. 169). Thus, it seems that Brontë uses different characters of the countryside to show the principal differences between these two families. The fierce character of the landscape in the north is in accordance with the fierce passions of the owners of *Wuthering Heights* whereas the placid countryside

in the south correlates with the calm nature of the inhabitants of Thrushcross Grange. Nevertheless, even sharper contrasts can be spotted on the buildings themselves.

### **1.3.3 Houses**

There are two significant buildings which play an important role in the setting of the novel, Thrushcross Grange – the home of the Lintons and Wuthering Heights – the house of the Earnshaws. Both structures bear witness to their owners on various levels.

Thrushcross Grange is a big and graceful residence which perfectly reflects the high social status of its owners. It is described as “a splendid place carpeted with crimson, and crimson-covered chairs and tables, and a pure white ceiling bordered by gold, a shower of glass-drops hanging in silver chains from the center, and shimmering with little soft tapers” (WH, p. 53). Not only its size and its beautiful decorations but also the fact that a lot of anonymous servants takes care of the comfort of their masters shows that the Lintons are rich enough to afford it. Flintoff maintains that “Thrushcross Grange is in every way a house designed to impress others and so reinforce the status of its owners” (2016, p. 49). Wuthering Heights is different. It is small but sturdy. Mr. Lockwood describes it during his first visit. He says about it that it is built “strong: the narrow windows are deeply set in the wall, and the corners defended with large jutting stones” (WH, p. 20). He also notices the austerity of the rooms. The interior is “dark and raw” (Pálmadóttir 2012, p. 5). It nearly lacks any decorations. There even are no ceilings so the entire anatomy of the roof “lay bare to an inquiring eye, except where a frame of wood laden with oatcakes and clusters of legs of beef, mutton, and ham, concealed it” (WH, p. 20). He also mentions how simple and solid the furniture is: “The floor was of smooth, white stone; the chairs, high-backed, primitive structures, painted green: one or two heavy black ones lurking in the shade” (WH, p. 21). All these details show lower living standards of the inhabitants. Furthermore, there are only a few servants and the reader knows their names as well as the names of their masters, which suggests that the gap between

them is not so wide. Altogether, the difference in the social and economic status between both families is significant.

Nevertheless, the buildings have another function. Besides representing the social status, the houses of both families are symbols of the typical character traits of their inhabitants. For this reason, *Wuthering Heights*, which is old, untidy, unkempt, simple, and sturdy, “is associated with the primitive, bare, plain, forthright, earthy, fiery qualities“ of the Earnshaws (Fegan 2008, p. 48). It is striking that the only decoration which Mr. Lockwood mentions inside of the house are “sundry villainous old guns, and a couple of horse-pistols” which definitely evoke the feeling of danger (WH, p. 20). Next, the house stands on top of a hill so it is exposed to strong winds which often rage there. Mr. Lockwood stresses the inhospitableness of the weather conditions flowingly: “[One] may guess the power of the north wind blowing over the edge, by the excessive slant of a few stunted firs at the end of the house; and by a range of gaunt thorns all stretching their limbs one way, as if craving alms of the sun” (WH, p. 20). Since the house stands in an open area, there is nothing that could protect it and its inhabitants against raging of the natural elements. Therefore, it is obvious that the Earnshaws have an intimate relation to pure natural energies – both physically and mentally. Moreover, a closer inspection of the name *Wuthering Heights* is worthy doing. This name was derived from a windy climate which is typical of the countryside in the middle of wild moors. However, Pálmadóttir points out that the word “wuther” can be defined as “an attack, onset; a smart blow, or stroke” but also as “to tremble, shake, quiver.” She adds that “to tremble” is something that originates from within a person rather than being executed from exterior influences. Therefore, the turbulence is taking place inside as well as outside” (2012, p. 7). It suggests that the natural elements do not only rage around *Wuthering Heights* but the natural energies are also present inside. Thus, its inhabitants are dominated by pure natural energies which make them tremble internally. Therefore, it is possible to conclude that the source of all actions of the Earnshaws’ family is an inner uncontrolled natural energy. Although Heathcliff is not consanguineous with the Earnshaws, he is an extreme embodiment of their



storm principle. Thus, his uncontrollable character is reflected in his house, as well. Traversi states that “we might, indeed, describe Heathcliff as its human incarnation. Severe, gloomy and brutal” (1970, p. 167).

On the contrary, a large, cultivated, and luxurious residence Thrushcross Grange, which is the house of the Lintons, shows their decency and respectability. Their comfortable way of life is captured by young Heathcliff who scornfully says that the Lintons are “eating and drinking, and singing and laughing, and burning their eyes out before the fire” (WH, p. 53). Their carefree life in wealth and luxury resulting from their social status might resemble an idyll at the first glance. Nevertheless, Traversi suggests that there is arrogance and depravity hidden behind this facade (1970, pp. 167-168). Firstly, pride, selfishness and arrogance leading even to heartlessness are often related with a dominant social position. These features can be spotted, for example, in the behavior of small Edgar and Isabelle when they “nearly pulled in two between them” a little puppy (WH, p. 53). Secondly, both physical and mental weakness is typical of the Linton family. Thrushcross Grange is surrounded with a high firm wall which protects it as well as people living inside against any possible danger which could come from the outside world. They feel secure behind it therefore they just rarely abandon their stronghold. However, in case that they are exposed to outside forces by force of circumstances, they are not able to face them and protect themselves so they rather try to escape or they simply succumb. On top of that, the wall cuts them off the natural energy. As a consequence of that, they are very passive so they resign themselves to influencing actively their own fate. To illustrate, when Isabella marries Heathcliff and consequently manages to escape from Wuthering Heights, she has to move far away into an unknown place to flee from Heathcliff’s destructive power. Similarly, Edgar is not able to resist Heathcliff so he does not even venture to confront him.

To summarize, it is possible to say that both houses are contrary to each other and that they are in accordance with their owners. Wuthering Height is a place where destruction and chaos prevail. Nevertheless, this destructive power is fuelled with natural energy which is essential for the life in spite of bringing

often the death as well. Thruscross Grange is absolutely opposite. It represents a perfect order which lacks a source of energy. Therefore, it is an embodiment of passivity and impotence. In other words, although both places are distinguished by certain positive features, their negative elements totally dominate. For this reason, both houses symbolise two opposite extremes which are both purely negative.

Interesting events happen when these two counterparts start to interact. The first reaction is turbulent because a strong conflict between the opposites occurs. While Catherine and Heathcliff watch the Lintons in the living room through a window, they mock their stupidity and incapability. After they have been caught, the Lintons consider them to be primitive thieves or even murderers and despise them. Thus, this example shows that the first clash is as destructive as the extremes themselves. However, when Catherine spends a few weeks in the peace and order of Thruscross Grange, she returns home as a noble lady. Although her hot temper remains untouched, her excessive wildness is cultivated. Thruscross Grange is a place of correction for wild Catherin. Wuthering Heights has the similar effect on the lethargic Lintons. Thanks to her childish naivety, Isabella arrives in Wuthering Heights as Heathcliff's wife. Her first encounter with horrible conditions in the house and with hateful relationships among its inhabitants gives her a shock after which she nearly goes mad. Nevertheless, the experience of the cruel reality without the protection of a high wall and the intensity of emotions, even if they are mostly negative, cause her change. Courage and resistance arise in the originally spoiled and whiny girl, which results in her escape from Wuthering Heights. Similarly, later this place corrects pride of young Cathy.

To conclude, Wuthering Heights is the place of vigorous life and destructive chaos. On the contrary, Thruscross Grange is the centre of perfect order and absolute impotence. Although both places possess something positive, the negative elements dominate, which has a destructive effect on people living there. If both opposites come into contact, the conflict between the extremes takes its toll. Those who are not able to change themselves, who are not able to

internally integrate both opposite principles, are destroyed. Therefore, Catherine dies because her personality is split. Edgar dies because he is ruined by Heathcliff's energy which he cannot face. Heathcliff dies lost in a mental chaos. Nevertheless, the clash has a positive influence in the long view. The negative elements of both principles neutralize each other while the positive ones complement one another. The result is an impression of balance and consonance. Cathy loses her pride and superficiality under the influence of the storm principle. Hareton's neglected mind starts to be cultivated when he comes in touch with the order of Cathy's calm principle. Wuthering Heights surrounded by spring moors resembles a harmonic place which is full of life and energy. However, the energy is regulated by the order.

#### **1.3.4 Windows and Doors**

The previous chapter described how walls function as barriers which protect people but, on the other hand, they also prevent them from making progress. The similar task is fulfilled by windows, doors, gates. Nevertheless, they offer two logical states. They can be either opened or closed. Therefore, they are even more suitable for the symbolic expression of opposites which are characteristic of the novel.

In case that windows, doors and gates are closed, they represent an obstacle which physically imprisons characters in a specific area. This physical imprisonment has a psychological impact because they cannot pursue their desires. Saleh states that these obstacles "separate characters from each other and from their hopes or desires" (2007, p. 9). To illustrate, Mr. Lockwood comes to Wuthering Heights for the first time with an intention to get politely acquainted with the residents. However, he is not welcomed at all, which is apparent not only from the behavior of the residents but also from the gate which is closed: "The 'walk in' was uttered with closed teeth, and expressed the sentiment, 'Go to the Deuce:' even the gate over which he leant manifested no sympathizing movement to the words" (WH, p. 19). Another example is to be seen during Mr. Lockwood's nightmare in Wuthering Heights. Catherine's ghost begs him to open a window

because it prevents her from entering the house: “Let me in - let me in! [...] I'm come home: I'd lost my way on the moor! [...] I've been a waif for twenty years!” (WH, p. 36). She desperately wishes to enter the house but she cannot do so. The window divides the real and supernatural worlds and so stops her from reunion with Heathcliff.

On the contrary, open windows, doors, and gates logically signalize freedom, a free way to fulfill everyone's wishes. Saleh comments it: “Shut, they represent barriers between people, open, they suggest barriers removed” (2007, p. 9). This statement suggests that when the state of these objects is changed, it depicts a significant change in the plot. For example, whereas the gate and door were closed during the first Lockwood's visit of Wuthering Heights, they are fully opened when he returns after Heathcliff's death: “I had neither to climb the gate nor to knock - it yielded to my hand. [...] Both doors and lattices were open” (WH, p. 255). Another change of the circumstances in Wuthering Heights is depicted immediately after Heathcliff's death. Nelly finds his dead body because she has spotted “the master's window swinging open [...] with the lattice “flapping to and fro” (WH, p. 277). While the window separated him and Catherine when he was alive, his soul could freely escape through it after his death to reunite with Catherine in an afterlife. The open window suggests the return of the final harmony. Thus, both illustrations propose that it was Heathcliff who was unable to change himself, which resulted in his attempt to completely prevent from any natural development. After his death, this enforced blockade is released so both contrary principles can naturally get balanced, which is symbolically expressed through the act of opening windows, doors and gates.

Besides a barrier which either is or is not present, windows have another function. They also serve as bridges which connect different dimensions. Although they are not walk-through, they enable to touch a different world. Firstly, they connect the reality and the supernatural as the previous examples have already shown. Living Heathcliff and dead Catherine are symbolically separated by a pane of glass. Secondly, they function as shortcuts in the course of time. To explain, Luo states that windows offer “a view into a different world”

(2014). If a crucial change in the development of the plot is about to happen, main character can observe it through a window in advance. When small Catherine and Heathcliff stray to Thrushcross Grange, they peek inside through windows. “We crept through a broken hedge, groped our way up the path, and planted ourselves on a flower-plot under the drawing-room window. The light came from thence; they had not put up the shutters, and the curtains were only half closed. Both of us were able to look in by standing on the basement, and clinging to the ledge, and we saw - ah! it was beautiful - a splendid place” (WH, p. 53). They observe the luxury of the house which will influence Catherine’s character so crucially that it can be considered as one of the key moments of the novel. Heathcliff looks through the same windows after his return from exile, which again prefigures the beginning of storming events after a peaceful period. Thus, windows are also used for foreshadowing the future.

Doors, gates and especially windows have an ability to block somebody’s way or to release it and to enable a free passage. Therefore, Brontë takes advantage of this feature to illustrate the motifs. Whereas at the beginning of the plot, all obstacles are closed, they are opened at the end, which suggest a positive ending. The characters are not imprisoned in their houses and they are not bound by their own imperfections. All ways are opened, they can move, change, and develop. The calm and storm energy can flow and interact.

### **1.3.5 Animals**

There are also other living beings frequently mentioned in the novel besides people. Animals occur either metaphorically in the description of the characters or they really exist as a part of the setting. In both cases they have a similar function.

Firstly, animals are often used when the narrator describes the characters because it is an effective and comprehensible way how to illustrate dominant character traits of people. Every reader should be able to attribute general features to specific animals so the analogy between people and animals gives evidence about typical features of people. Saleh claims that “[m]ost the animal images in

the novel suggest the aggressive, violent nature of the characters they describe (2007, pp. 8-9). Therefore, they are used predominantly for description of Heathcliff who is referred as “a wolfish man” (WH, p. 98) or “a mad dog” (WH, p. 143), which says about him that he is aggressive, fierce, pitiless, unpredictable, and dangerous. However, Saleh also mentions other animals which are gentler. Nevertheless, they are usually referred to with contempt (2007, pp. 8-9). Edgar is called “a sucking leveret” (WH, p. 108) and “[a] lamb” (WH, p. 107), which precisely shows his subordinate position and his role of a helpless victim in comparison with Heathcliff who is perceived as a predatory wolf. Similarly, Linton is termed “[a] puling chicken” (WH, p. 179), which testifies to his fear of everything. Next, Hareton is called “[a] calf” (WH, p. 180), which suggests that he is physically strong but mentally backward.

Secondly, animals are integral parts of the setting because Brontë frequently mentions them when she depicts it. Although they are real and not just metaphorical, they still maintain the same symbolic descriptive function because they reflect their owners’ nature and the environment they come from. For this reason, Isabella’s dog of a gentle birth is named Fanny, which mirrors the noble origin of the Lintons and the placid atmosphere in Thrushcross Grange, while a few big and fierce dogs which live in Wuthering Heights have an unspecified origin, which reflects the lower social status of the Earnshaws. Also their names, despite only two of them being known – Gnasher and Wolf, insinuate that the living conditions in Wuthering Heights are wild. When Mr. Lockwood visits Wuthering Heights at the beginning of the novel, he is attacked twice by these dogs. Before the first attack, he describes how the dominant dog “was sneaking wolfishly to the back of [his] legs, her lip curled up, and her white teeth watering for a snatch” and how suddenly and easily she “broke into fury” (WH, p. 22). This can be considered to be a proper illustration of hostile and harsh living conditions which reign there. It shows how quickly an unprepared being can become a victim of wild forces which dominate there.

It is not accidental that Brontë describes predominantly dogs when she completes the setting with animals. She spent her entire life in a close proximity

with dogs. During her long walks through the moors, she was usually accompanied by dogs and she was strongly attached to them. Therefore, it is presumable that she had a good knowledge of their behaviour and a good understanding of the hierarchy in a pack. With regard to this fact, Wishard states that “throughout *Wuthering Heights*, the social culture of wolves and dogs is explored and developed” (2009, pp. 8-9). It is possible to seek characteristic features of a dog social hierarchy even in human relationships, especially in the relationships between Heathcliff and other characters. Heathcliff is perceived as an unhuman being, an animal, or a beast from the beginning. After he has been brought to *Wuthering Heights*, he is referred to with the pronoun “it” instead of “he”: “[W]hen it was set on its feet, it only stared round, and repeated over and over again some gibberish” (WH, p. 45). Moreover, the Earnshaws speculate about his “owner” and not parents (WH, p. 45). As already mentioned before, he is called “mad dog” and “wolfish man” also later in the novel. It inspires to the comparison of Heathcliff’s behaviour with the behaviour of dogs or wolves. An alpha earns and maintains his dominant position in a pack by physical force as well as Heathcliff does. He obeys the natural rules of a pack and fully ignores the rules of the human society. This fact shows that he is dominated by instincts, by the natural energy.

To summarize, animals are frequently used for depicting the nature of the characters. The most important motif is a dog which illustrates the clash between Victorian morality and natural instincts present in every human being. Heathcliff’s canine behaviour indicates that he is an embodiment of the natural storm principle.

### **1.3.6 Weather**

As already mentioned in the chapter dedicated to key buildings, the name of the whole novel *Wuthering Heights* corresponds to the name of the farmhouse where a significant part of the plot takes place. This name was derived from a windy climate which is typical of the countryside in the middle of wild moors which surround the house. Since the severe weather conditions gave name not

only to the most important part of the setting but also to the whole novel itself, it seems logical that the weather plays an important role in the novel. To be more specific, it has more symbolical functions.

Firstly, the weather shows contrasts between both families and among individual characters. It has already been mentioned how opposite the houses of both families are. Differences in weather conditions even emphasize and deepen the dissimilarity between the houses and their inhabitants. While Wuthering Heights is often directly exposed to strong winds and battering of storms, Thrushcross Grange is protected by high walls, trees in its garden and probably surrounding buildings in the village. Saleh states: "The most powerful forces that reside in the depths of human nature have no relation with the artificial world of civilization and gentility, but they do have a relation to the elemental forces at work in the natural world" (2007, p. 4). The intensity of natural forces outside underlines the intensity of the same natural forces within the characters. Especially, it underlines the fierceness and boisterousness of Heathcliff who is controlled and driven by the same energies which reign in his surroundings. Traversi states that "we might, indeed, describe Heathcliff as its human incarnation. Severe, gloomy and brutal" (1970, p. 167). Thus, a wild nature of the moors and a severe winter surrounding dreary old Wuthering Heights indicate at the beginning of the story that not only the elements like high winds or heavy rains but also a human being is going to rage there.

Secondary, the weather sets the mood of the plot. Brontë used it to create either optimistic or depressive atmosphere which always corresponds with the tension of the story. This is a useful feature because it helps a reader orientate himself or herself in the plot. Nice and pleasant weather usually suggests a placid passage of the story. On the contrary, conflicts and dramatic events are accompanied by storms and severe weather. Thus, the weather illustrates events which are happening or it foreshadows events which are just about to happen and it indicates whether events should be interpreted positively or negatively because it shows if restorative or destructive energies dominate at that very moment.



To illustrate, it is possible to observe the function of the weather from the beginning of the novel. Mr. Lockwood is trapped against his will in Wuthering Heights because of a snow storm. When he wants to leave, he can see only “dark night coming down prematurely, and sky and hills mingled in one bitter whirl of wind and suffocating snow” out of a window (WH, p. 28). The freezing effect of the storm perfectly corresponds with the cold-blooded attitude of the inhabitants towards him as well as it corresponds with the cold relationships among them. The total coldness dominates both outside and inside of Wuthering Heights. Moreover, the storm reaches its climax during the night when Mr. Lockwood meets Catherine’s ghost, which clearly proves that the natural forces, the storm principle – both in its literal and figurative meaning, prevail over rationality at this stage.

Similarly, there was a severe storm when Catherine and Heathcliff were separated by his escape from Wuthering Heights, which is one of the most important moments of the story because it is an actual cause of many tragic incidents in the future. After Heathcliff has accidentally found out that it would be degrading for Catherine to marry him, he dramatically leaves Wuthering Heights. The significance of this moment highlights a storm which is ranging for the whole nights:

About midnight, while we still sat up, the storm came rattling over the Heights in full fury. There was a violent wind, as well as thunder, and either one or the other split a tree off at the corner of the building. (WH, p. 83)

The importance of their separation for the whole story is even stressed by the splitting of a tree. Emberson claims that a tree is one of the oldest symbols in literature. It is “an obvious image of strength, continuity and the family” (2011, p. 336). The following example supports this statement. In old Germanic mythology, there is a huge tree, Yggdrasil, which stands in the centre of the world and holds the whole world together. Therefore, an image of a broken tree can be considered as a symbol which represents “separation, disunity, destruction and families at odds with other families or divided within themselves” (Emberson 2011, p. 336). The fact that all Brontë sisters used repeatedly the symbol of

a broken tree in their literature and visual arts suggests that Emily Brontë used it intentionally to stress an important point of the plot. The stroke of lightning which splits a tree symbolizes the separation of Heathcliff and Catherine which lasts until their deaths.

On the other hand, a misty and tranquil weather makes an impression of mysteriousness before Heathcliff's sudden return. The weather is nice and tranquil, which testifies that the calm principle is dominant at this moment. Nevertheless, the landscape is mysteriously shrouded in mist. It reflects Heathcliff's sudden return from the unknown and his enigmatic transformation. Moreover, no one knows what is going to happen next. No one knows what to expect. The whole situation resembles the calm before a storm:

Wuthering Heights rose above this silvery vapour; but our old house was invisible; it rather dips down on the other side. Both the room and its occupants, and the scene they gazed on, looked wondrously peaceful. (WH, p. 90)

The initial happy reunion of two lovers, which is underlined by a pleasant summer-like weather, leads to passionate quarrels, subsequently to the death of Catherine, and to an increase of hate between Heathcliff and Edgar. This sharp change in the story is accompanied by a turn in the weather:

In the evening the weather broke: the wind shifted from south to north-east, and brought rain first, and then sleet and snow. On the morrow one could hardly imagine that there had been three weeks of summer: the primroses and crocuses were hidden under wintry drifts; the larks were silent, the young leaves of the early trees smitten and blackened. (WH, p. 150)

The turn in weather distinctly underlines the fierce return of the dominant storm principle.

Finally, the extracts in the preceding paragraphs demonstrate the way how Brontë illustrated the plot with the weather. However, Allot mentions that Brontë also used it to foreshadow the future development of the characters, which has already been partially mentioned. To illustrate it in a wider detail, Cathy and Hareton are born in the nice weather, and this kind of the weather is dominant during their lives, while Catherine and Heathcliff, who are suffering most, are

often associated with storms, gales, and frost. In other words, in the second part of the novel when the third generation lived, the good weather predominates and creates a generally warmer atmosphere, whereas the second generation, which is in the centre of attention in the first part of the novel, is connected with the inclemency of the weather (1970, p. 198).

On the basis of the presupposition that the weather reflects the tension of the plot and foreshadows future events, it is possible to draw conclusions about the ambiguous end of the novel. When Heathcliff died, it was raining outside. Although "his face and throat were washed with rain," his eyes looked "keen and fierce" and "he seemed to smile" (WH, p. 277). It suggests that the strong natural energy which was trapped in his body finally reached its freedom. It was finally released with the end of his physical body and it could return back to the open space of the moors. This change causes the re-establishment of balance between two opposite principles, which is illustrated by the weather. The rain during his death does not bear features of a storm which always accompanied dramatic events but it evokes an impression of tranquillity although it is still connected with natural elements. This embraces the synthesis of both principles. Moreover, the very last sentence of the whole story describes Mr. Lockwood's look at graves of Edgar, Catherine and Heathcliff who rest next to each other:

I lingered round them, under that benign sky: watched the moths fluttering among the heath and harebells, listened to the soft wind breathing through the grass, and wondered how any one could ever imagine unquiet slumbers for the sleepers in that quiet earth (WH, p. 192).

The "benign sky" and the "soft wind in the grass" as well as the fact that two lifelong rivals and representatives of opposite life principles lie peacefully connected with Catherine insinuate that final harmony between them was reached.

To summarize, the weather is one of the most important and most dominant motifs in the novel because it fulfils various tasks which facilitate understanding and interpretation of the text. The weather helps depict the contrasts between both families and houses. It also sets and reflects the mood of the story and, finally, it foreshadows future actions. Since the weather conditions

are favourable and peaceful at the end of the story, it suggests an optimistic end of the novel.

### **1.3.7 Supernatural Worlds**

Up to now, only the real physical world including the landscape, the houses, the animals, and the weather was elaborated. However, besides the space and the time which are natural parts of our world, another dimension is also present in the novel. There is the supernatural level which goes beyond the boundaries of our rational world.

The novel is characteristic of its connection of opposites. Every aspect has its counterpart which is contrary but necessary at the same time because both elements complement one another. Namely, Williams enumerates “suffering and calm, tragedy and comedy, unrest and peace, mind and nature, natural and supernatural” which always form “delicate, ambiguous, complex balance” (1985, p. 127). Thus, since the real world is described in a detailed way, it is a logical consequence that it requires its irrational counterpart. Nevertheless, the existence of the supernatural is not presented as a given fact but it is only insinuated, which actually is its essential part. When Mr. Lockwood meets a ghost of dead Catherine, he himself is not sure if it is the reality or just a dream. Similarly, when people allegedly spot ghosts of Catherine and Heathcliff walking the moors at the end of the novel, there is no clear evidence proving that the ghosts really exist. Brontë keeps the plausibility of the novel with this approach. Nevertheless, the fact that the characters acknowledge that the supernatural could exist and that it influences them is sufficient for effective functioning as the counterpart of the natural.

All the contrasts between opposite principles have their specific function within the novel. Therefore, it begs the question: What is the purpose of the connection between our rational world and the supernatural. Firstly, hints suggesting the existence of the supernatural prove that Brontë created the novel under the influence of various literary tendencies. Thruscross Grange is a representative of the Victorian literature because it symbolises its values –

namely a rigid and sometimes ridiculous morality and quite a shallow interest in the material world. On the other hand, *Wuthering Heights* bears characteristic features of the Romantic literature. An open countryside stretching itself somewhere into an unknown distance, a simple life in the middle of the wilderness, a notion of history evoked by an old building, and behaviour of the characters who are often overwhelmed by their emotions, desires, and instincts are attributes of Romanticism which offers enough space for “the illusory, mythical and supernatural” (Sukdolová 2007, pp. 108-109). The characters live in a close proximity to the illusory world and they wish to become a part of it. Heathcliff and Catherine desire to reunite and walk the moors, which they finally succeed in after their death. Sukdolová concludes that this “[o]vercoming the boundaries between the real and illusory part of space would then be the symbolical parallel of overcoming the Victorian prejudice and convention” (2007, p. 109) because the natural element of the human personality is preserved whereas the conventional part is overcome.

Secondly, the above mentioned conclusion can be further developed. The clash between the natural and the supernatural can show what “primary laws of our nature” are (Williams 1985, p. 105) because a view into the supernatural world enables to observe which values disappear when the characters abandon the material world after their death and which values are so important that they are maintained in the afterlife. On the basis of this approach, Williams claims that the fact that Catherine is buried between her two lovers, Heathcliff and Edgar, is “a final hint that love is the final cause of this world” (1985, p. 126). Thus, it is possible to conclude that the function of the supernatural is to stress love as a key motif because it is so essential part of the human nature that it is not limited by the physical world.

#### **1.4 Summary**

The setting is well-elaborated. There are no doubts that it is significantly influenced by real places in the surrounding of Brontë’s birthplace, which is a logical conclusion because she spent there her almost whole life. However, the

setting is not an exact copy of an existing place but it a unique and authentic world created on the basis of various models. Every location, every building, and every detail has its own function because it intentionally expresses an additional symbolic meaning which has the ability to influence a reader's interpretation of the motifs.

Many individual themes including the landscape, the houses and their parts, the animals, and the weather suggest that the ending of the novel, in spite of maintaining its certain level of ambiguity, heads towards the final balance as it was proposed in the theory of the storm and calm principles.

## 2 Time

Up to this point, the thesis was predominantly engaged in three spatial dimensions; however, the fourth dimension, time, as an integral part of the real physical world, plays an important role in the text as well because the novel imitates the reality so it succumbs to the same physical rules. Moreover, not only the story but also the actual reading of the text takes place within a course of time, which provides an author with an additional space for creative working with a text. Therefore temporal aspects of the novel can be assessed from different points of view.

Shortly after its first publication in 1847, the novel caused a big excitement in the public opinion. Allot speaks about “a battle” among literary critics and similarly among ordinary readers (1970, p. 11). Although Brontë’s contemporary literary critics noticed her genius which manifested itself in a powerful and vivid style of writing, they strongly criticised her for a wicked subject matter which was not acceptable for the polished Victorian society and for both innovative and in that time unusual narrative strategy. The intensity of reactions which the novel provoked proves that it introduced new important elements into the literary history. Firstly, Brontë chose an unusual method of telling the plot. The narrators were two different characters of the novel and not the author herself. Allot states that this technique made it possible for Brontë to look at the story from different points of view and to skip information which was not necessary for the meaning of the novel (1970, pp. 17-19). Secondly, she used a complicated method of presenting individual passages which together create the story.

Literary theory distinguishes between “narrative” which is a presented content and “narration” which is an actual process of telling the content (Eagleton 2003, p. 92). The approaches towards time in literature are closely related to this division because the time can be considered to be “implied by the chronological happenings of the story” (it is involved in the narrative) or it can be viewed as “the time that reshapes that story in the telling” (it is a feature of the narration) (Martin 2016).

Regarding the first approach, the key terms are “story” or “fabula” representing “the raw events of a story” which “take place causally and chronologically” (Martin 2016). The story is an imitation of the reality. Therefore it develops chronologically within the course of time. The thesis uses Wake’s term “story-time” for referring to this conception of time (2013, p. 26). Nevertheless, while the story follows the same temporal rules as the reality, writing and reading of the text itself is limited because an author can always describe just one specific event in a particular piece of the whole text and he or she does not have to respect the physical temporal rules. He or she has to decide what will be presented first and what later. Thus, “the actual order of events in the text” (Eagleton 2003, p. 91), which can be “rearranged, dilated, and contracted to form the narrative we are reading,” is important (Martin 2016). This approach towards time is usually called “plot” or “narrative time” (Martin 2016); however, Wake’s term “text-time” is used for the purposes of the thesis (2013, p. 26). Narrative time or text-time might seem limiting; however, it opens additional space for creativity of an author who can use various narrative strategies to reach specific goals. Brontë created a complicated temporal structure of the novel with more storytellers and various time levels of the text-time. What are the effects and functions of this text structure is discussed in the first part of this chapter.

The elaborated structure of the novel also shows that time plays an important role in the novel. Some critics conclude that the conception of time and the development of the story within the course of time comprise a separate and important theme of the novel which contributes to a more objective interpretation of the novel – especially its ending. Hence, the story-time is elaborated in the second part of this chapter.

## **2.1 Text-time and Narrative Strategies**

As already mentioned above, *Wuthering Heights* has a very elaborate and complicated structure. Brontë used two storytellers, which enabled her to describe the story from different perspectives. Moreover, other characters often speak through their mouths because a significant part of the text is composed of diaries,



letters, or other forms of personal texts. Furthermore, the first chapter starts in 1801 after the storyteller, Mr. Lockwood, as well as the reader suddenly appeared in the middle of the story. Consequently, most of the story is told retrospectively until the ending which is set in 1802 is revealed. On top of that, despite the story being presented retrospectively, it is not revealed diachronically, which makes the overall structure of the text even more complicated and confusing.

Although Brontë's contemporary reviewers criticised her approach, she is appreciated for it nowadays. It demonstrates her talent; however, it cannot be considered only as a manifestation of her creativity or as an attempt to create an artistically attractive piece of work. The function of her narrative strategy is not only attracting readers' interest and maintaining their attention but it also serves as a tool for changing reader's opinion about the content of the text. Firstly, Peters states that a reader can be manipulated because "s/he is constantly evaluating and observing the events recounted in the text in light of both her/his future expectations and her/his recollection of the past" so if the order of events introduced to him or her is changed, his or her perception of the text changes, too (2005, p. 32).

Secondly, her approach makes it possible to highlight specific events in the whole context. If a story is presented chronologically, a reader is putting himself or herself in characters' place. Reading of such a text starts to be very fluent and comfortable but the reader stops thinking about the text and relations among particular events. On the other hand, "the (mis)-ordering of events a-chronologically will have the effect of disorientation and subsequently of focusing the attention on that event which is picked out of its chronological sequence" (Peters 2005, p. 36). To illustrate, Heathcliff is introduced in the first chapter as an adult man. Nevertheless, his strange hostile behavior immediately provokes curiosity about his past and reasons of his behavior. Similarly, Catherine appears as a ghost of a young girl for the first time in the text, which makes a reader wonder who she is and why she has been waiting for twenty years outside. Thus, an a-chronological order draws a reader's attention towards the main characters from the beginning of the novel.

To reach the above mentioned effects, Brontë often uses two different narrative techniques – flashbacks, which are also called “analepsis,” and flash-forwards which are usually termed “prolepsis” (Eagleton 2003, p. 92). Both techniques are analysed in the following subchapters.

### **2.1.1 Flashbacks**

As mentioned above, the present of the story develops between years 1801 and 1802; however, after first few introductory chapters, the majority of the novel is composed of events which preceded this period and which are actual causes of the current state. In other words, most of the story is told retrospectively, which significantly influences the way how readers perceive present events. “In order for the readers to be able to make sense of the characters’ mental turmoil, they revise the present through a filter of the past” (Afrasiabi 2016, p. 35). For example, Heathcliff is shown as an evil, cruel, and despicable person in the initial chapters. Nonetheless, when his difficult childhood is revealed to a reader who consequently can try to find reasons for his adult behaviour, the negative perception of him is softened because a reader can at least partially understand the hostility which seemed to be incomprehensible without the preceding context. In spite of this “softening” method, Heathcliff still remains a predominantly negative character.

Furthermore, the retrospective narration provides wider space for an active involvement of a storyteller in the story. It is not an omniscient person standing above the text and judging it from his or her superordinate position but it is an active participant of many described events. As a result of that, the storyteller brings his or her own point of view because he or she involves his or her own opinions, attitudes, misunderstandings, and other distortions, which changes the reader’s perception of the text afterwards. Moreover, the storyteller has the ability to intentionally or non-intentionally change the course of events, which also logically influences the way how he or she presents these events to a reader. This process is in progress from the beginning of the novel. When Mr. Lockwood learns the situation in Wuthering Heights at the beginning of the novel, he tries to

rationalise and explain to himself the strange hostile behaviour of local inhabitants. Nevertheless, he lacks the knowledge of the historical context at this moment, which limits him significantly. Therefore, it is obvious that his conclusions are very inaccurate and strongly subjective.

“I know, by instinct, his reserve springs from an aversion to showy displays of feeling - to manifestations of mutual kindness. He'll love and hate equally under cover, and esteem it a species of impertinence to be loved or hated again” (WH, p. 21).

Mr. Lockwood infers conclusions about Heathcliff from his own emotional state. It seems that Brontë wanted to make a reader aware of the fact that he or she should not accept uncritically what is told by a storyteller because it can be misrepresented by the storyteller's subjective point of view.

This trend is maintained by the dominant storyteller, Ellen Dean. Although her distortion is not so clearly observable, it appears in important moments of the story. She intentionally conceals the presence of Heathcliff in the room when Catherine confesses that Heathcliff's social status is not sufficient for her. As a result, Heathcliff leaves Wuthering Heights. She also conceals the real mental and physical state of Catherine from Edgar but she secretly allows Heathcliff to visit her, which importantly contributes to Catherine's death. Her irresponsible actions also cause that Isabella gets into Heathcliff's power. On top of that, Afrasiabi states that she describes the story from “an extremely ideological perspective” (2016, p. 39). Namely, she often condemns both Catherine and Heathcliff because she is not able to understand their passions. Her first characterisation of Heathcliff immediately says that he is “[r]ough as a saw-edge, and hard as whinstone” (WH, p. 43). Similarly, she has no sympathy for Catherine's inner splitting between Edgar and Heathcliff, which is declared by her reaction after Catherine has confided her intention to marry Edgar to her: “If I can make any sense of your nonsense, Miss,' I said, 'it only goes to convince me that you are ignorant of the duties you undertake in marrying; or else that you are a wicked, unprincipled girl” (WH, pp. 81-82).

Fegan claims that Ellen is “unable to acknowledge or accept the instinctual, passionate life, both of her own unconscious and that of the children

she mothers” (2008, p. 34). It is caused by the fact that she is, as well as Mr. Lockwood, a typical member of the Victorian society who stresses its values. Both storytellers are representatives of the calm principle. They talk very politely, even primly. They try to avoid conflicts. They give priority to rational, logical thinking. They suppress own emotions and have just little understanding for emotions of others. It causes tension and intensifies the clash between the calm and storm principles.

### **2.1.2 Flash-forwards**

Besides returning back in time, Brontë also uses an opposite technique. She anticipates events which will be explained or will assume importance later in the text because they will actually happen in the future. The effect of this technique is the ability to purposefully focus a reader’s attention on specific details and to signalise that those details will play an important role within the whole text. Brontë uses more ways how to reach this goal. The ability of the weather and windows to foreshadow the future has already been discussed in the chapter dedicated to space. However, the most distinctive instrument is a dream.

Description of dreams is quite a favourite method used by authors because it enables them to inject romantic supernatural elements which stand beyond the rational thinking into a realistic text in a plausible way.

There are two different kinds of dreams used in literature. The first type of a dream is just a description of reality so it makes a believable impression. The dream has the same function as it has in reality. It means that it reflects the state of mind of a dreamer. McSweeney suggests that the first dream of Mr. Lockwood in *Wuthering Heights* is a typical example of such a dream. He dreams about a journey through the moors to a chapel where he is attacked by other participants during a peculiar sermon. This dream is a mixture of events which he experienced shortly before he fell asleep. He walked through the moors. Consequently, he was attacked by dogs and humiliated by Heathcliff. He also read about a long religious ceremony in Catherine’s diary. On top of that, there is a sound of a branch striking into a window in his room projected into the dream. For these reasons, the dream

looks real. Hence, McSweeney states that the purpose of this dream is to increase credibility of the second dream, which follows, because the second one is of the second type. It is a literary device which makes it possible for an author to express any ideas although they might not be appropriate for the overall context. Thus, the purpose of the second dream is to introduce Catherine so impressively that it will attract a reader's attention and initiate his or her curiosity even though her introduction is confusing for a reader. Moreover, McSweeney points out that this dream is not trustworthy because Mr. Lockwood does not know enough information about Catherine at that moment so that his mind could have created such a dream. It would have been more reliable if it had happened to Heathcliff (2005, pp. 167-168).

Another example of a dream used as a literary device which anticipates the future is Catherine's dream about heaven. She explains Ellen that she could not bear being in heaven without Heathcliff and wished to return back on earth. Pálmadóttir states that it is "a hint of what her life will be if she marries Edgar and moves to Thrushcross Grange: it will never be her true home" (2012, p. 13). Although her dream foreshadows her tragic future, she disobeys her instincts and marries Edgar.

To conclude, flashbacks and flash-forwards help a reader understand the whole context of the story. He or she stops perceiving the text as a narration but he or she starts to take notice of causes and consequences beyond the story. Thus he or she begins to accept the story as a part of the reality which develops beyond the text. This position of the reader is useful at the end of the novel because the ending of the narration is ambiguous. However, the reader can draw conclusions from his knowledge of the background context. Therefore, the aim of the last chapter is to interpret the ending of the novel on the basis of the text-time and story-time.

## **2.2 Story-time**

As stated in the previous chapter, the text-time is a useful tool for interpreting and better understanding the text; however, many authors emphasize

the function of the story-time which does not take into consideration the formal structure of the text but its content. In other words, the story-time refers to the way how individual characters perceive the time, what attitude they adopt to the time, how they develop in the course of time, and what is the general development of the story within the time. *Wuthering Heights* bears noticeable features regarding these temporal aspects therefore many authors consider the time to be one of the themes of the novel. For this reason, the chapter focuses on the function of the story-time and it tries to capture what it expresses in the context of other themes and motifs and how it contributes to a more accurate interpretation of the ending of the novel.

The chapter is divided into two subchapters. The first one pursues the polarity of both families which is also expressed through their opposite approach towards the time. The second one traces the development of main characters in the course of time.

### **2.2.1 Polarity of Time**

It was already discussed before that two families represent two opposite principles. The Lintons stand for the calm principle while the Earnshaws together with Heathcliff represent the storm principle. Their divergence is also reflected in their different attitude towards the time.

Regularity and order is characteristic of the Lintons therefore they have a more intimate relation to the classical chronological perception of time. They accept natural development as it comes and they do not try to deny it or revolt against it. On the contrary, Heathcliff and Catherine behave in an opposite way. They try to go against the course of time or to exist even “almost outside time” (Gleckner 1959, p. 329). They refuse to accept the present as a result of a natural development because they deny any changes. They do not want to acknowledge that the past is the past and try to return to the period when they were happily united in their childhood. These various time perceptions are expressed in Catherine’s statement where she compares her temporary love to Edgar with her eternal love to Heathcliff: “My love for Linton is like the foliage in the woods:

Time will change it, I'm well aware, as winter changes the trees—my love for Heathcliff resembles the eternal rocks beneath” (WH, p. 81).

Gleckner suggests that their “wish for some kind of timeless experience, [...] the ecstasy of being unified with something eternal” is what motivates them to all their actions (1959, p. 339). Thanks to their strong inner energy which is regulated by their desire to oppose the course of time, it seems that they are successful at reaching this goal at the end of the story because they are finally reunited after their deaths. While their peaceful graves show that their deaths enabled the re-establishment of harmony in the time-bound and order-dominated world, they managed to escape before time into an eternal world where they can together wildly and without disturbance walk the moors again as they wished their whole lives. This state resembles a kind of turbulent harmony of the storm principle reached in the eternity.

### **2.2.2 Periodicity of Time**

The difference in time perception does not apply only to two families but it is also observable between the second generation (represented by Catherine and Heathcliff) and the third generation (represented by Cathy and Hareton). Whereas the second generation, as it was illustrated in the previous chapter, revolts against the time until it manages to escape from the scope of the time, the third generation respect the rules of the chronological time and accepts changes caused by a natural development. Nevertheless, Cathy and Hareton get married exactly on the New Year's Day which can be regarded as the beginning of a natural cycle. Therefore, Harris suggests that this event refers to the natural energy of the storm principle represented by Catherine and Heathcliff (1980, pp. 116-117). Thus, the third generation actually integrates both principles.

The previous comparison of both generations shows an important element which is connected with the time conception. There is periodicity, regular repeating of particular patterns, which is typical of the novel. The third generation bears very similar character traits and it gets into similar crucial situations as the generation of their parents. However, there is also an important shift because both

calm and storm principles, which are so sharply separated in the second generation, are mixed together in the third generation. Fegan illustrates this fact on a play with the names of the main characters. Cathy's full name is Catherine Linton so it integrates the storm principle of the Earnshaws inherited from her mother Catherine Earnshaw and the calm principle of the Lintons inherited from her father Edgar Linton. Linton's full name is Linton Heathcliff, which similarly expresses the connection of both principles (2008, p. 105).

Although both Cathy and Linton are the mixtures of both principles they are very different because Cathy inherited predominantly positive features of both principles while Linton mainly negative ones. He is very passive, vulnerable, and morally spoiled, which makes him very weak. Therefore, he is quite quickly eliminated from the story. However, he is replaced by Hareton who actually is the real successor of Heathcliff. Despite not being kindred, they are linked by a similar fate. Hareton as well as Heathcliff were born with good physical and mental talents which were neglected and remained undeveloped because of unfavourable external influences during their childhoods. Nevertheless, Hareton is saved in his adulthood because he possesses, unlike Heathcliff, an inner sense of order of the Earnshaw family, which protects him against the destructive power of the pure natural energy.

Cathy is a changed picture of Catherine similarly as Hareton of Heathcliff. Their mutual interconnection is even more distinctive because Cathy is born at the moment when her mother dies, which suggests that she is her mother's successor. Moreover, she has the same name, the same dark appearance, and the same character traits. She is brave and full of energy; however, she also inherited the patience of the Lintons, which distinguishes her from her mother.

The repetition occurs also in the plot because Cathy and Hareton's relationship develops into the same critical point as Catherine and Heathcliff's love; however, their solution completely differs, which is a consequence of changes in character traits between the second and third generation. Although Catherine deeply loves Heathcliff, she does not marry him because of his degrading social status. Heathcliff is never able to forgive her despite being in



love with her for the rest of his life. This situation results in destruction which lasts until their deaths end it. On the contrary, Cathy does not repeat her mother's mistake when she gets into a similar situation. Cathy does not abandon Hareton although he is in a worse position than Heathcliff used to be. Instead of marrying someone appropriate, she favours their mutual attraction to one another and decides to help Hareton develop his potential. Moreover, Hareton, unlike Heathcliff, is able to forgive Cathy that she initially humiliated him and treated him badly. Their different behaviour saves them before suffering which the second generation was exposed to.

The comparison between the second and the third generation shows that the repetition does not resemble the vicious circle but a kind of development is present. Afrasiabi describes this periodical development as a spiral periodicity which is similar to the development in a dialectical philosophy (2016, pp. 43-44). It suggests that the whole development heads towards the final harmonic point in the middle between two extremes.

### **2.3 Summary**

The temporal structure of the novel is as complicated as the setting. Brontë effectively uses two narrative techniques, flashbacks and flash-forwards, to highlight important ideas and phenomena because it makes a change apparent. It is the change that is one of the key aspects of the novel. There is a development between the second and third generation when their dominant features are mixed together. On the basis of their comparison, it becomes obvious that both calm and storm principles involve positives and negatives. While the characters bearing predominantly negative character traits are eliminated, the characters who managed to combine and harmonize mainly positive qualities of both principles prosper.

## Conclusion

The thesis focuses on the spatial and temporal aspects of *Wuthering Heights* with an attempt to assess how harmonic the ending of the novel is. Regarding the spatial aspects, it is unquestionable that living conditions determined by the surroundings of a living place influence indirectly every novel by forming the identity of their. It is especially true for Brontë because she was very closely emotionally attached to her birthplace where she spent the majority of her life. Therefore, it is logical that the systematically elaborated setting of the novel is strongly inspired by the landscape near the town Haworth. However, a thorough research shows that only one specific model for the setting does not exist. On the contrary, Brontë was inspired by various places and objects or even only by their noticeable parts which she combined in the setting so that she could assign a specific character to every location in the setting. It suggests that she intended the setting to express themes of the novel.

A contrast between two antipoles can be considered to be the central theme of the novel. The contrast is manifested on various levels – from specific differences in character traits among individual people, through society-wide problems concerning social and economic stratification, up to general attitudes to life bordering with the religion and philosophy. It is expressed among others through many motifs which have to be interpreted. Although the chapter about fire shows that it is difficult to determine the boundary between the primary function of the motifs, which is to create an authentic setting, and their symbolic meaning. Irrespective this fact, it is worthy to study the motifs because they are important for understanding the overall message of the novel.

Rather less dominant motifs are animals and supernatural beings. In spite of not having so much space in the text, they contribute to completing the atmosphere of the novel. By using analogy, animals illustratively epitomize the nature of main characters. Especially Heathcliff resembles a wild beast because he follows only his instincts and accepts only the rules of nature. Elements of the supernatural enrich the text with clues of romanticism, which increases the

intensity of the story and adds relativity because it is not clear exactly where the edge between the real and the supernatural lies.

The landscape, houses and the weather are dominant and to a certain extent connected motifs. All of them illustrate the oppositeness of both families so they are materialized depiction of a difference between two abstract principles which are characteristic of the families. A different interconnection with the wild countryside shows the difference in temperament between the families. The opulence or modesty of the houses is in accordance with the social status and the level of cultivation while the solidity of them corresponds with the physical and mental power of their inhabitants. All the motifs also demonstrate what happens if a clash between both principles occurs. Although the conflict itself usually is dramatic, negatives of both principles neutralize each other and disappear whereas positives complement each other. Thus, the result is a harmonic state when the order dominates but it does not suppress the flow of the life-giving and activating natural energy.

The weather as well as windows has another function. It enables a reader to glimpse future events so both these objects function as links between space and time. Time also plays an important role in the novel because besides the setting the novel has a complex temporal structure, which has its purpose. Temporal aspects manifest themselves through the text-time, which is the order of presenting the story to a reader, and story-time, which is the way how the story develops in the course of time. The text-time is very complex because Brontë used a lot of leaps in time, which has the effect that she could influence what a reader pays attention to and what he or she considers to be important. The attention is often intentionally focused on contrasts which, however, are changing and vanishing in the course of time. This transformation of contrasts is also expressed through the story-time which can be characterized by periodical repeating of specific motifs. Nevertheless, these motifs do not remain completely same but they develop in time. Thus, despite having to deal with similar issues, the third generation reacts in a different way than the second generation because it features modified character traits.

To conclude, contrasts exist in space, which is depicted in the setting, and in time, which is illustrated through the text-time and story-time. The setting shows the contrariety between the calm and storm principles and it simultaneously declares that both principles involve positives and negatives. The time illustrates the process of mixing and changing both principles. While their negative elements like passivity, impotence, hatred, or revengefulness disappear, the positive elements like order, loyalty, vitality, and passion. Together they represent important aspects of the novel because they highlight the development from chaos, destruction, and hatred towards prosperity, harmony, and love. Thus, the thesis concludes that the ambiguous ending of the novel really heads towards harmony. However, it is not harmony which would mean establishing absolute peace and calm because it would actually imply the negation of the storm principle so as a result, it would deny itself because the real harmony requires two counterparts which balance one another. The harmony presented in the novel can be described as peaceful coexistence of two opposite principles which lost their negative aspects due to common interaction but they maintained positive ones. Brontë not only acknowledges the existence but also emphasizes the importance of various opinions about and attitudes to the society, the religion, and life ideals. It was a brave and ground-breaking act in the period of the rigorous Victorian morality, strict social norms, and a single religious authority, which is one of the reasons why *Wuthering Heights* elicited stormy reactions after its publishing and why it has stayed in the centre of readers' and researchers' attention.

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