

THE NEED FOR MATERIAL GAIN: BRONTË'S CRITICISM OF VICTORIAN
CULTURE IN *WUTHERING HEIGHTS*

by

Brianna Leigh Goble

Senior Honors Thesis

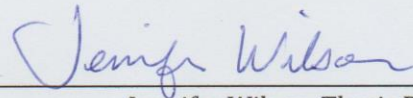
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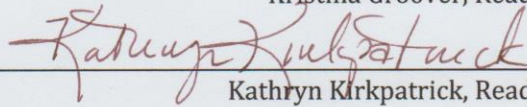
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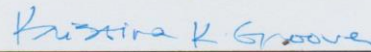
Jennifer Wilson, Thesis Director



Kristina Groover, Reader



Kathryn Kirkpatrick, Reader



Kristina Groover, Departmental Honors Director

Emily Brontë's world of *Wuthering Heights* is full of grotesque imagery and characters that reveal unpleasant truths about human nature. Brontë's characters are rarely driven by morality and often make decisions that harm others. When the novel first came in, many critics were appalled by its content and horrified at the debased nature of the characters. *The North American Review* thought that the novel "was an attempt to corrupt the virtue of the sturdy descendants of the Puritans" (Sale 278), while the *Examiner* exclaimed that the book "as a whole...is wild, confused, disjointed, and improbable; and the people who make up the drama, which is tragic enough in its consequences, are savages ruder than those who lived before the days of Homer" (Sale 281). Finally, the *Leader* writes "the great public . . . would *not* be amused with these strange wild pictures of incult humanity, painted as if by lurid torchlight, though painted with unmistakable power—the very power only heightening their repulsiveness" (Sale 284). Critics were not impressed with the lack of moral characters and were appalled with their savage behavior. They were used to novels by Dickens or Austen featuring realistically drawn lives of heroes and heroines who often were morally and religiously good.

Brontë, however, was not trying to write a conventionally formed Victorian Era work such as the social problem novel or bildungsroman. Instead, *Wuthering Heights* invites readers into a world where the hero is cowardly, the heroine is driven by selfish desires, and the main focus is on a man out for revenge. While the action of the novel takes place at the end of the eighteenth century, Brontë is clearly commenting on her own age as evidenced by references to current game laws (Small 330) and Branwell Brontë's 1845 visit to Liverpool when it was overrun with refugees from the Irish Famine (Small 331). Brontë wanted *Wuthering Heights* to be a critique of the new Victorian Era's ideals and culture that greatly contrasted the values of her youth. Born in 1818, Brontë herself transitioned from childhood to adulthood at the time of

Queen Victoria's accession to the throne. She experienced the new customs and expectations that came out of the nineteenth century and how they conflicted with her own valuation of nature and family. She saw no need for superfluous materialistic possessions as her family taught her there was more to life than that. In the nineteenth century, however, came the rise of capitalism and incessant desire for materialistic gain. Brontë, who was not raised with those values, became disgusted with the selfishness and reliance on money that came with the growth of the century. *Wuthering Heights* was her way of showing her repulsion for what the nineteenth century produced. Through the characterization of Cathy, Heathcliff, and Edgar as well as the portrayal of their relationships, Brontë criticizes reliance on material gain and marriage as a vehicle for social mobility brought about by the market-driven economy. Brontë particularly satirizes status-driven marriage as seen in the union of Edgar and Cathy. By using marriage to gain the rank and luxury of the privileged classes while simultaneously expecting to maintain her childhood freedom, Cathy creates a love triangle that perpetuates viciousness. Only in death when material gain no longer matters can the characters achieve happiness and, in a way, their own form of heaven; the only exception occurs in the instance of Hareton and Catherine for whom which happiness is achieved because they safely negotiate the path to adulthood without exposure to the materialistic drives of the century.

Brontë's novel shows the ugly side of the Victorian Era where capitalism possessed so many individuals. In *Wuthering Heights*, the gentleman is no longer seen as heroic, but lazy and cowardly, while the man who lusts after revenge manages to get what he wants without being stopped. The women are portrayed as spoiled and selfish as Brontë portrays the vulgarity of wealth. In the nineteenth century, capitalism and consumerism controlled English society. While wealthy families were once seen as respectable and noble, they were now seen as lazy and

selfish. Middle class people were quickly becoming more prominent members of society and aristocratic stagnancy was critiqued. According to Richard Altick, Victorian society complained that “[the upper-class] had abdicated their social responsibilities” and “these social parasites whiled their days. . . in their well-guarded preserves. . .lounging. . .in town houses resplendent with the kind of ostentatious bad taste that only unlimited money can buy” (21). The upper-class families had grown content with their large fortunes and were willing to abdicate their social duties. Money had taken over society and it was greed that was put above moral values and hard work.

Even though old wealth was critiqued, societal mores used material gain to measure happiness, and those that could not afford material gain did not matter. Presumably, “every human being on earth prized nothing but material values. Nor was any account taken of the happiness of those who did not belong to the greatest number” (Altick 118). Utilitarian philosophy believed that everyone valued material gain and those minorities that did not align with the majority interest did not matter. Laissez-faire economics played a part in the growth of a new selfish society as well. Through this policy, the government “had no right to interfere in the individual’s economic relations with others” (Altick 128). The premise of this style of governance was that “the competition generated by every man’s effort to serve his self-interest...automatically controlled prices. Thus the free market was self-regulating; it neither required nor could tolerate outside interference” (Altick 129). Without government regulations, however, the market magnified inequalities. During Victorian Era, everyone seemingly had the same goal which was to become wealthy. In reality, not everyone could compete equally and some suffered not only from reduced means, but also from the stigma their culture placed on financial failure as well as the rise of the working class.

Brontë introduces Heathcliff as an orphaned casualty of the nineteenth century rush to profit and urbanization. When Heathcliff is first introduced as a child, he is “a dirty, ragged, black-haired child...and repeated over and over again some gibberish that nobody could understand” (Brontë 37). The family questions Mr. Earnshaw about where he obtained Heathcliff and Nelly can only make out that Mr. Earnshaw saw “it starving, and houseless, and as good as dumb, in the streets of Liverpool” (Brontë 37). While it is revealed that Mr. Earnshaw finds Heathcliff in the streets of Liverpool, it is never explicitly stated what Heathcliff’s ethnicity is or his background, although critics have speculated widely about his possible pasts. Given the time period and the Brontë children’s fascination with writing political history in their juvenilia, Heathcliff could be African-American due to the fact that he was found near Liverpool and that he is often described with dark skin. Nelly makes mention of his dark appearance when she tells Heathcliff that “A good heart will help you to a bonny face . . . [even] if you were a regular black” (Brontë 57). According to Melissa Fegan, “the Brontë children set their Angrian stories in West Africa” (Fegan 72). Since there were slave colonies at the time in that region, it is possible that Heathcliff had been transported to Liverpool, a place where slaves were traded, only to be picked up by Mr. Earnshaw (Brontë 331). Brontë wrote at a time when “many of the social and political structures that constitute the capitalist, patriarchal state were threatened by various kinds of militance and social movements” (Cory 27). Brontë could thus have wanted to disturb norms by having one of the main figures be of another ethnicity, another way of critiquing the Victorian Era. Other scholars have argued that Heathcliff is more generally an example of the impact of British colonialism. Matthew Beaumont argues that “Heathcliff is associated with various victims of British colonialism... [a] symptomatic effect. His own supposedly barbaric origins serve starkly to expose, by comparison, the barbarism of his civilised new environment”

(Beaumont 138). This theory of juxtaposition makes sense as Heathcliff has moments where he is viewed as a gentlemen, and others when he is not. People from the colonies were considered “uncivilized,” and thus Heathcliff appears to be regarded pejoratively as a colonial when he first arrives at the Heights. Brontë, however, complicates the idea of what constitutes a brutal environment, which could doubly signify the colonies as well as the roughly mannered household at the Heights, showing that developed Western societies also feature uncivilized and inhumane behavior. Finally, critics have reasoned that Heathcliff’s violent nature is indicative of someone who is oppressed. As Heathcliff grows, he gains his oppressor’s (Hindley’s) qualities. Heathcliff’s mistreatment of Catherine and Hareton is actually him trying to vindicate the past, which in his opinion, contained unjustified wrongs. It has been shown that “victims of oppression tend to take on the characteristics of their oppressors” (De Grazia 81). If that is the case, then Heathcliff acts in an animalistic manner because that is the treatment to which he has become accustomed. He is only projecting onto others what was projected onto him because he is a victim of abuse.

Brontë initially attempts to get readers to sympathize with Heathcliff by leaving his origins ambiguous and constantly degrading and abusing him. When he is first brought into the home, no one except Earnshaw wants him. Mrs. Earnshaw is repulsed, and Cathy and Hindley enjoy tormenting him. Even Nelly refers to Heathcliff as “it” (Brontë 37). Philip Drew believes that “until [Heathcliff] is sixteen the balance of sympathy is with him, since he has been treated so ill” (47). Mr. Earnshaw alone attempts to work with Heathcliff and educate him so that he will fit more with the family. When Earnshaw dies, Hindley takes over and degrades Heathcliff to the point that Heathcliff loses the knowledge of good treatment he had gained. As Nelly remarks, “[Heathcliff] had...lost the benefit of his early education...his childhood sense of superiority,

instilled into him by the favours of old Mr. Earnshaw, was faded away" (Brontë 67). Heathcliff loses his curiosity for learning, and with it, he loses his self-worth. Even though Hindley's oppression brings Heathcliff nearer to Cathy, he has nothing else to live for.

When Cathy becomes closer to Edgar than with him, Heathcliff no longer sees himself equal to the Earnshaw children, but comes to regard himself as a lesser being. Heathcliff tells Nelly that he wishes he "had light hair and a fair skin, and was dressed and behaved as well, and had a chance of being as rich as [Edgar] will be" (Brontë 56). Heathcliff is not ignorant, and he sees the drastic difference between his life and Edgar's life. In this passage, Heathcliff voices what he believes is valuable in society, having light skin and blond hair as well as riches. Heathcliff is the opposite of Edgar as he is dark-skinned with black hair and no wealth whatsoever. Heathcliff's use of the word "chance" is interesting as it implies that only a few will have the opportunity and ability to be rich like the Lintons. Heathcliff speaks his doubts as he knows he does not stand a chance against Edgar. He cannot compete with him in knowledge or prestige because he has lost what Mr. Earnshaw has given him, so he can only wish that he might reach Edgar's financial status one day.

As possessive of Cathy as he may be, Heathcliff's intentions are never fully clear in that it is never known if what he does is for Cathy or for selfish gain. At times it appears that he wants to be part of the upper class to impress Cathy because he knows that she wants a person of high status. When Cathy is dying, Heathcliff confronts her over her betrayal. He tells her "you loved me—then what *right* had you to leave me? What right . . . for the poor fancy you felt for Linton? Because misery and degradation, and death, and nothing that God or Satan could inflict would have parted us" (Brontë 159). Heathcliff feels betrayed by Cathy, and in the scene above, he tries to make her feel guilty. He wants her to apologize because she is the one who has hurt

him. Heathcliff believes that he has done no wrong because he has always truly loved Cathy. He accuses Cathy of breaking his heart because she did not have enough faith in their relationship. He points out her selfish nature and her weakness over fearing the unknown, saying she has no right to leave him. He believes with all of his being that nothing should separate them now, just as nothing had separated them in their childhood. He wants to keep his grasp on her because he is afraid of losing her love. He likes to think that deep down Cathy still has feelings for him, and by making her feel guilty, he hopes to encourage those feelings to resurface because he does not want to be alone. Heathcliff refuses to see any of his own faults. Instead, he believes that it was her selfish desires that cause them to hurt each other, and he tells her that since she has broken her heart, she has broken his (Brontë 159). In this passage, it is almost like Heathcliff blames Cathy for driving him to do the greedy things he does. It is his feelings for Cathy that drive him to become so possessive.

In this description of Heathcliff's self-justification, Brontë mirrors a cultural narrative in which consumer consumption drives male social class aspirations. Heathcliff is an example of what happens when consumer consumption possesses a male of a lower class. When Heathcliff realizes that he cannot compete with Edgar Linton, he takes matters into his own hands and finds a way to raise his status. Cathy and Edgar can rely on their family inheritance for their income. Heathcliff, however, is degraded in the family and thus has no way to earn money. In order to be with Cathy, Heathcliff must become someone of the higher class. He leaves Wuthering Heights and only returns when he has reaped enough income, through unknown means, to effect this end. He realizes what a difference money can make to his desolate life. Through Heathcliff, Brontë portrays what many men in the lower social classes probably felt during the nineteenth century. In order to compete in the marketplace and have a place in society, men knew they must be

members of a higher class and there was a new social structure that allowed for class mobility. The lure of social mobility pushed these men to be possessive and greedy. They saw what needed to be done in order to be considered valuable in society and therefore were willing to do whatever it took to change their lives for what they believed was the better.

At other times, it appears that Heathcliff does raise his status for Cathy, but also to get his revenge on those who have wronged him. He becomes possessed by the greed for material gain because it is the only way he will be able to get the resources to carry out his revenge. He tells Cathy his reason for him staying at the Heights is “a wish to install himself in quarters at walking distance from the Grange, and an attachment to the house where [they] lived together” (Brontë 98). However, knowing Heathcliff’s questionable character, what Heathcliff tells Cathy might be a lie and that he is actually there to get revenge on Hindley. After Hindley dies, Heathcliff takes the Heights for himself and degrades Hareton much like Hindley degraded him. He has had a plan all along, but he does not tell Cathy the truth for fear of her judgment and involvement. After Edgar dies, Heathcliff’s plans for revenge continue as he uses his son, Linton, to take the Grange by marrying Catherine. Heathcliff would not have been able to do all of this without having the influence of wealth. Readers see Heathcliff’s struggles to fit into a class that was not welcoming to him. As he ages, he somehow manages to raise his status to the point that he is considered a rich and important man. No matter what Heathcliff’s true intentions are, they would not be possible without the capitalistic society that allows him to garner profits for his own benefit, yet it was allowing everyone else to do so as well.

Unlike Heathcliff and Cathy, Emily Brontë learned that material gain was not important. Mr. Brontë and his wife struggled financially and had to rely on his small income, so they could not afford the luxuries of the upper-class (Barker). According to Winifred Gérin, Brontë’s father

had a major influence on her life. Mr. Brontë loved nature and in turn taught about the wonders of it. He "opened her eyes to the natural world. . .the things that had meant most to him in his lonely struggles after a better life, were not material possessions, but the companionship of nature" (Gérin 2). Emily grew up surrounded by her love for nature, her love for her family, and the security of her home. To be happy, the Brontës did not need material possessions, a truism they learned from their mother, a woman "who regarded poverty as a positive advantage in the pursuit of perfection" (3). To the Brontës, poverty was a part of life that they must go through in order to achieve happiness. Instead of valuing money, Brontë's family taught her to value nature. As a child, Emily Brontë appreciated the spiritual refuge of nature and this is shown in the sublime description of the moors surrounding the Heights. Brontë's world of *Wuthering Heights* romanticizes the moors where Heathcliff and Cathy spend their childhood playing all day.

The scarcities of Emily Brontë's life helped to build her independence, a trait portrayed in her female characters, specifically that of Cathy. Growing up, Brontë lacked female role models. It was not until Princess Victoria became a prominent figure in the nineteenth century that Brontë finally had a famous woman to admire (Gérin 21); however, "the independence and daring of her heroines was a reflex of her own nature" (Gérin 25). Brontë was a self-assured child. She loved playing outside and exploring the unknown natural world around her. While Charlotte was more hesitant, Emily Brontë embraced uncertainty and was adventurous. The idea of discovering something new excited her, and she found amusement in the outside world around her. Brontë sounds similar to young Cathy in the early stages of her life. They both are fond of immersing themselves in nature, being adventurous, and causing mischief. They are liberated by nature and enjoy playing in the moors around their homes. Brontë also modeled Cathy after her favorite childhood reading in the romance of Scott's novels and Byron's poetry (Gérin 27),

finding a “prototype for her ideal of womanhood in the heroines of the former and recognizing in them...parallel figures to her own, in their fight for independent existence” (Gérin 27). Through Scott and Byron, Brontë found women on a search for their own freedom from the men and the expectations surrounding them. She saw herself in these female characters and admired their desire for release from the burdens of society. Brontë’s own character, Cathy, is certainly self-sufficient, mischievous, and spiteful at times. She has a temper, which is not considered ladylike among proper women of the nineteenth century. Cathy is expected to be dependent, passive, and give up control to her husband, Edgar. She tries to live up to their, unrealistic expectations, for her, yet she never truly changes her ways. Cathy is based on much of Emily Brontë’s early childhood and adulthood (Gérin 53). When Cathy is a child, she basks in the simplicity of nature and her youthful exuberance. As a child, she is unaware of the expectations placed upon women and lives in ignorant bliss. As Cathy ages, she begins to understand what is expected of her and how she must conform to these expectations. She loses her naiveté and allows the material forces of the world to consume her. Cathy shifts from a child content with nature to an adult trying to survive in a greedy and possessive time period.

Despite her mainstream consumer tastes, Cathy is an inversion of the Victorian ideal of a proper, young woman who was expected to be passive and listen to her father or husband. In Victorian times, “femininity meant dependence, subordinate status, domesticity, and sexual modesty” (Steinbach 164). Women should depend on their husbands and focus on their duties in the house. They were not expected to be out in the world without a man, and they were expected to be submissive to men. Catherine Earnshaw, however, does not follow the characteristics of a proper, young woman as she is growing up. Cathy is independent and somewhat spoiled. She is not afraid to tell others how she feels, and she also expects to get her way with her father,

Heathcliff, Nelly, and Edgar. Nelly tells Lockwood that Cathy was not Earnshaw's favorite because she "was too mischievous and wayward" (Brontë 38). Nelly continues to explain that Cathy's "spirits were always at high-water mark, her tongue always going...a wild and wicked slip she was" (Brontë, 42). Cathy is a spoiled child, and she gets upset when she does not get her way. She does not like to be idle and quiet like women were expected to behave at the time. Even though Cathy is young, she should be assuming the manners of a sophisticated lady, learning to sit still and to behave with quiet observance. She does not, however, and even though the family punish her, she does not drastically change her ways. According to Colin Matthew, in the nineteenth century, "women and girls were the audience chiefly addressed in sermons and tracts, fiction, magazines, and advice books that prescribed womanly, submissive roles, while always dwelling on the importance of feminine qualities and the duties and dignity of motherhood" (Matthew 167). From a young age, middle class girls were groomed and lectured on what was expected of them in order to function in society. Everywhere girls turned, they were always being told what roles they should be fulfilling as well as what qualities they needed to be refined women. It was not only literature where these lessons were pushed, it was also in paintings as well (Matthew 167). Girls always knew their place in the nineteenth century, and that was as separate beings from men. They were destined to be wives, mothers, and maintain the house. Cathy is different in that she appears to ignore what is expected of her. She is independent and wild as a child and gives little to no thought of manners and expectations.

Cathy also is not a proper woman because she believes that through violence, she will get what she desires. When Cathy turns to physical assault, it is usually when she does not get what she wants. Her outbursts are childish and are usually done out of frustration. For example, when Cathy slaps Nelly, because she hates being told what to do. She loses her patience when she gets

mad and allows herself to be guided by selfish reasons. When she is younger, she hits and spits on Heathcliff when he first arrives because she is mad at her father for losing her promised present, a whip. As she gets older, she tries to mature into a proper woman, yet struggles. Nelly explains that “she took care not to act like [Heathcliff]; but at home she has small inclination to practice politeness that would only be laughed at” (Brontë 66). When she is around Edgar, Cathy tries to act like a woman of her stature because she knows that she needs to impress him. These mannerisms are what are expected of her as a young woman, yet she struggles with that role because deep down she cannot give up her spoiled ways. When she is home, she loses those fake qualities and reverts back to her old self. When Edgar is no longer around, Cathy has no reason to continue being proper because it does not matter. Cathy has no one to impress, and if she does not receive praise for her behavior, she will cease acting mannerly. Cathy sometimes cannot let go of her immature behavior even when the situation calls for her to do so. Cathy has a hard time pretending to be proper when Edgar is around. In one instance, she slaps Nelly in front of Edgar, thinking Edgar cannot see. When Edgar confronts her about what she has done, Cathy slaps him as well because he enrages her. Cathy has a vicious temper that she, like Heathcliff, has a hard time controlling. When her temper flares up, Cathy’s true dominant personality is revealed.

Cathy’s development when she becomes a prominent guest at the Grange is similar to Emily Brontë’s experience in school when she was forced to learn the mannerisms associated with women during the Victorian Era. When Emily Brontë first went off to boarding school, she was pulled into the world of proper etiquette, something she despised. Her professor, “Miss Wooler...wished the girls to acquire polished manners as much as book learning,” yet Emily Brontë, was not “convinced of the need for such graces which she despised in her heart of hearts” (Gérin 53). Brontë would rather have been running around the moors instead of feeling

trapped in a classroom, having to learn etiquette. She did not feel the need for such trivial mannerisms and considered them a waste of time. Her upbringing, stressing nature and spiritual independence, played a part in her hatred of learning etiquette. Something that had superfluous value did little for Brontë, and therefore she did not see the importance of it. Being forced into a place where she was expected to act a certain way made Brontë feel trapped and miserable.

While Charlotte saw the value of giving into what was expected of the female, Emily saw no need for it. Emily “was wholly opposed to the conventional patterns of a standard education; they sickened her, spiritually and physically” (Gérin 54). She was disgusted by the high value placed on external manners and appearance and she chose to fight materialism with her desire for independence. Emily missed the moors around her home and being able to run around freely while acting as she wished. Much like Cathy, Emily could not change who she was. Both women were attuned with nature and shared childhood hardships. They could not simply give up their values and behaviors because it was not “proper.” In fact, Brontë shows through Cathy that it is impossible to truly change into the women society expects them to be. She appears to be portraying the message that once someone has been possessed by the spirit of the natural world, there is no going back to the human-made material one. Cathy is someone who grows up surrounded by the moors and she enjoys spending all day in them. As she grows older, she is introduced to the pampered life of the Lintons and what is culturally expected of her as a woman. She tries to become a proper young lady, but like Brontë, she cannot give up the part of her that is accustomed to the nature surrounding the Heights. When Cathy is delusional in her illness, she says that she wishes she “were a girl again, half savage and hardy, and free, and laughing at injuries, not maddening under them” (Brontë 125). According to Cathy, being a girl means being wild and free. The phrase “half savage and hardy” implies that when Cathy was a child, she did

not have any civil expectations to meet, and she misses that freedom. She misses not having responsibilities and being able to live her life unrestrictedly. In the passage, it is also apparent how her attitude has changed. As a young girl, Cathy used to laugh at injuries because it was a part of being a child. As an adult, being ill is seen as a weakness, and it forces her to accept that she is an adult and has adult responsibilities as a woman. She can no longer be “half savage and hardy, and free” because women of the nineteenth century were not allowed that path. Those characteristics were seen as improper and unladylike. This passage reflects Cathy’s realization that she does not want to be tied down with responsibilities. She wants to be a child again, free of expectations and wild. Much like Brontë, Cathy feels trapped with the unrealistic expectations of women and she wishes she no longer carried the burden of the materialistic world.

Despite Cathy’s later regrets, in the early stages of her relationship with Edgar, they follow basic courting rules and appear to be a happy and loving couple at first. Brontë portrays the couple as an ideal Victorian one as Cathy appears to be a conventionally maturing young woman and Edgar is the doting husband. Shortly after marriage, the two appear to work well with each other and readers are given a false sense of hope and security that the two will finally be happy. When Cathy marries Edgar, she appears to develop into a more normative womanhood and appears to tame her childish behavior, a growth curve which is partly due to the fact that Cathy and Edgar become close as children. When Cathy is younger, she is forced to stay with the Lintons for five weeks. Through those weeks, Cathy is exposed to a proper, gentrified family. Even after Cathy comes back to the Heights, Mrs. Linton continues with her plan to “reform by trying to raise [Cathy’s] self-respect with fine clothes and flattery, which [Cathy takes] readily” (Brontë 52). Cathy becomes pampered while staying with the Lintons, and she becomes accustomed to the sophisticated life. She learns what is expected of her and it helps set the

foundation for her and Edgar's relationship. Cathy is so used to the company of Edgar and Isabella that when she returns home she realizes the inappropriateness of Heathcliff's behavior. Cathy and Edgar become closer as Edgar is as regular of a visitor at the Heights as Cathy is at the Grange. Cathy enjoys his company, and according to Nelly, "she imposed unwittingly on the old lady and gentleman by her ingenious cordiality: gained the admiration of Isabella, and the heart of and soul of her brother" (Brontë 66). Cathy and Edgar's relationship starts out gradually as Cathy's injury is the only reason she stays with the Lintons. Through the stay, she gets to know Isabella and Edgar, who both admire her for her wild spirit. Linton falls for Cathy first, as Cathy's affections for Linton take time to grow. When Cathy stays with the Lintons, she changes her character from a spoiled brat to a mannerly young lady. The Lintons adore Cathy, and Cathy is able to assert herself as a part of their family. They grow up together much as Cathy and Heathcliff do and are able to form a close relationship. Edgar is respectful of Cathy, and he waits to be summoned to the Heights before he imposes on the family. Edgar and Cathy also get along, and the only time they quarrel is after Cathy hits him. Edgar, however, cannot stay mad at her, and the episode allows them to move past their friendship and "confess themselves lovers" (Brontë 72). While Cathy and Edgar have different personalities, Cathy tries to be an ideal woman for Edgar and Edgar tries to look past Cathy's unladylike temper. They do appear to really adore and love each other in the early stages of their relationship, and the Lintons' pampering of Cathy also helps push the two together because Cathy enjoys the attention the family gives her. Unlike Heathcliff and Cathy's relationship, Edgar and Cathy's progresses at a slower pace, and the two are able to get to know each other. They start out with short visits that are chaperoned until they are finally able to declare their love and marry.

Cathy chooses Edgar rather than Heathcliff as her husband because she would rather have the comforts that come with being someone of the same social status. To be with Heathcliff would degrade her and she knows that. According to Susie Steinbach, in the Victorian Era, “marriage was women’s proper destiny, their calling, and their profession” (Steinbach 228). If a woman was not married, she was viewed with pity or seen as a spinster (Steinbach 228). Cathy is at the age where she needs to consider marriage, according to the unrealistic expectations of her day that dictated that her sole profession as a woman was to marry and have children. As Edgar is a man of her status and a suitor who has shown interest in her, it is important for Cathy to marry Edgar in order to fulfill her duty. Being with Edgar ensures that Cathy will be able to keep her social class. While Cathy is torn between the two men, she must consider her role as a young woman of her stature. She tells Nelly that “if the wicked man had not brought Heathcliff so low, I shouldn’t have thought of it. It would degrade me to marry Heathcliff now; so he shall never know how I love him” (Brontë 80). Cathy admits that she loves Heathcliff. Due to status, however, it would shame Cathy to marry him and she would rather secure her fortune. Cathy, through her spoiled nature, tries to have both men because she believes that as a married woman she will be able to help Heathcliff. She tells Nelly that if she and Heathcliff marry they will be beggars while “if [she marries] Linton [she] can aid Heathcliff to rise, and place him out of [Hindley’s] power” (Brontë 81). While Cathy does have good intentions of helping Heathcliff, they are also selfish in the fact that she is not willing to give up either man. She believes that money will solve her problems and that with money she will be able to keep both men as well as herself happy. Through Cathy’s confession, Brontë shows how material gain subverts happiness. Cathy’s desire for material gain is tragic in the sense that Cathy feels that she cannot choose

Heathcliff because of what he is, but it can also be seen as selfish because Cathy is too afraid to let go her status to be with her true choice.

After her decision, Cathy and Heathcliff's relationship becomes a somewhat abusive one as they retain their selfish behavior and become more possessive of each other to the point that neither of them can truly be happy without the other. Cathy knows they are similar and she admits that it is a different type of love from Edgar's. What sets the men apart in her mind, however, is that Cathy knows that if she were to marry someone with her own character, it would bring disaster. She does not want to marry someone with her personality, yet she does not want to lose Heathcliff. To lose Heathcliff would mean she would lose a part of herself as she believes they are one. Mark Kinkead-Weekes argues that their love "has nothing to do with happiness, or fertile growth...it seems to be concerned with a breaking through beyond the self, metaphysical and impersonal" (87-88). Cathy does not want to be with Heathcliff to be in a mundane marital relationship. She wants something unchanging, a perpetuation of her childhood ideals. Cathy voices this yearning, asking, "what were the use of [her] creation, if [she] were entirely contained here? [Her] great miseries in this world have been Heathcliff's miseries, and [she] watched and felt each from the beginning: [her] great thought in living is himself" (Brontë 81). Cathy feels connected with Heathcliff in a way that transcends time and space. Through Heathcliff's and her shared miseries, she signifies that she will always feel a connection to Heathcliff. Also, the phrase "[her] great thought in living is himself" (Brontë 81) portrays that Cathy feels alive because of Heathcliff. She cannot think of life without thinking of him because she truly believes they are one and the same. To give up Heathcliff would be to give up her thoughts of living as well as her miseries. She would be confined to the Grange, which she does not see as her purpose. By holding onto Heathcliff, Cathy holds onto her childhood and her thoughts and

feelings connected to him. Heathcliff symbolizes Cathy's childhood because he is the embodiment of the Heights, the moors, and everything else before she had to grow into a proper young woman. When Cathy changes, Heathcliff feels betrayed because she seems to have forgotten about him and left him behind. No matter what, though, Cathy can never truly leave Heathcliff.

Cathy and Edgar are content in their marriage until Heathcliff returns and Cathy is not willing to choose one man over the other, causing a clash of her childhood and adulthood selves. Nelly mentions that the married couple was on their way to true happiness, but that pursuit ends "when circumstances caused each to feel that the one's interest was not the chief consideration in the other's thoughts" (Brontë 92). When Heathcliff reappears, Cathy's old feelings for him resurface and drive the choices she makes. She ignores Edgar's discomfort in favor of her own "interest" and continues to control the house despite the unhappiness of her husband. Knowing how Edgar feels about Heathcliff, she nevertheless begs him to be friends with his rival (Brontë 94) and brushes off Edgar's feelings as if they are no concern to her. Cathy explains that Edgar "is sulky because [she's] glad of a thing that does not interest him...and he affirmed I was cruel and selfish for wishing to talk when he was so sick and sleepy" (Brontë 97). Cathy is being selfish by expecting Edgar to react the same way she does. She, however, fails to acknowledge that she is acting in a self-centered way and instead tries to blame Edgar's unhappiness on him. She treats him like a child by calling his discomfort sulking and ignores that he is angry. She expects Edgar to do whatever she wants because she is so spoiled, and when Edgar does not do what she pleases, she becomes angry. Cathy struggles with giving and taking. She cannot have both men, yet she tries to anyway. Heathcliff reminds Cathy of her childhood, and therefore she wants to be with him as a reminder of simpler times. Edgar, however, reminds Cathy of her

adulthood as he represents status and the expectations that she must live up to. By holding onto both men, Cathy holds onto her childhood while also trying to maintain adulthood. She refuses to leave one behind which ultimately causes her to never fully mature. When she is first upset about Heathcliff running off, Edgar respects her “with sympathising silence” (Brontë 91). Yet, when Edgar is upset, Cathy merely blames Edgar for his own sulking and continues to have contact with Heathcliff. When Heathcliff returns, she sees her old self and wants to bring back that part of herself. Edgar, who was raised more traditionally, knows how he should behave and is appalled by what Cathy asks of him. He tries to tolerate Heathcliff for her, yet cannot bring himself to fully give in to her wishes. Edgar expects Cathy to be dependent and follow his orders, yet it is something Cathy cannot bring herself to do because that is not who she truly is. She is not meant to be the embodiment of the Victorian woman, rather a failed attempt at one that satirizes the unrealistic expectations of women.

Edgar Linton may appear as the ideal Victorian male at first because of his kind and moral nature. He dearly loves Cathy and is willing to do anything for her. Cathy also loves Edgar and Nelly tells Cathy that the reason she loves Edgar is because “he is handsome, and young, and cheerful, and rich, and loves you” (Brontë 78). The characteristics Nelly uses to describe Edgar are the ideal traits of a young hero. Edgar is also kind, patient, and his love for Cathy makes him want to please her. When Cathy begs Edgar to allow Heathcliff into the house, Edgar begrudgingly allows him in. He also forgives Cathy for hitting him, despite being appalled by her behavior. He hates to upset Cathy and tries to do anything he can to make her happy, even to the extent of his own happiness. Edgar “might have been the hero of another kind of novel” yet “his ‘heroism’ turns out to be a matter of character” (Kinkaid-Weekes 87). Edgar’s personality is heroic in that he is selfless and he is morally good. He does look out for his family and tries to

keep his daughter happy. He tries to live morally and has the intentions to protect his family from Heathcliff's desires.

As the novel continues, Brontë increasingly portrays the Victorian Hero as insufficient to stand up to the aggressive selfishness of his age. Edgar falters when it comes to defending his honor or his home. Edgar tries to be morally good; however, he does nothing to physically protect his family. When Cathy begs him to allow Heathcliff back into their lives, Edgar is angry, yet he does not deny Cathy's wishes. He gives in to her desires. When Heathcliff is in the kitchen with them, Edgar grows "pale with pure annoyance" and talks to Cathy "striving to preserve his ordinary tone and due measure of politeness" (Brontë 96). Even though Edgar is upset at the situation, he does nothing to get rid of Heathcliff. He expects Cathy to solve the problem, much to her annoyance. Edgar does not want to take charge of his home; he is too afraid of offending Cathy and he lets that fear determine his decisions. Cathy, on the other hand, does not fear Edgar because she "has such faith in Linton's love, that [she] believes [she] might kill him, and he wouldn't wish to retaliate" (Brontë 98). Edgar is cowardly in that he tries to be mannerly in situations where he needs to be dominant. Cathy is correct. Edgar would never retaliate against her because he is afraid of her. Instead, he pouts and sulks in hopes that Cathy will do something about Heathcliff. Cathy does nothing about Heathcliff, though, and Edgar allows Heathcliff to come into his home, even though as the Lintons' heir he has sole control over the Grange and, according to convention, he should take charge of its parameters.

Edgar is not controlling; he is mannerly and passive and shares more qualities with the eighteenth-century gentleman than the nineteenth-century one. In the Victorian Era, manliness, "an emphasis on independence, individualism, and personal integrity" (Steinbach 164), was valued. In the eighteenth century, "the most admirable form of masculinity had been

‘gentlemanly politeness,’” yet in the nineteenth century, such a gentleman was seen as “soft and lazy” (Steinbach 165). Another key difference is that in the nineteenth century, the middle class man was considered manly, as the middle orders of society were starting to grow and prosper, whereas the upper class were the ones who were seen as weak and sluggish since they did not work. Violence was another aspect that set gentlemen of the different eras apart. Violence was once seen as acceptable to the eighteenth-century gentleman, who might be expected to duel in defense of his honor. Now it was a trait seen in the poor, working class. Through Edgar, Brontë portrays a man struggling to fit changing times. Edgar is, in fact, lazy and soft as he does nothing to stop Heathcliff from taking over his home. He voices his distastes to Cathy, rather than handle the problem himself. He holds onto the eighteenth century “gentlemanly politeness” which makes him appear cowardly, and although his nonviolence is admirable, it is not appropriate to the threat posed to his marriage by Heathcliff.

Heathcliff, instead of Edgar, acts as the leading male as he appears to be the main focus of the novel. He is, unlike Edgar, a Byronic anti-hero and is described as a “beast,” “creature,” “goblin” and anything else that has to do with the supernatural or Hell (Brontë 49, 101-102, 107, 144). As he ages, Nelly describes that Heathcliff “acquired a slouching gait and ignoble look; his naturally reserved disposition was exaggerated into an almost idiotic excess of unsociable moroseness” (Brontë 67). These are not the characteristics of a hero but more so of a villain who has endured a tragic upbringing. Hindley takes Heathcliff’s potential to be a gentleman and crushes it by forcing him to act as a slave. When Heathcliff is degraded, he loses his education as well as anything he has learned about polite society. In a way, it is tragic what happens to Heathcliff, and the hatred that he experiences only molds him into what he becomes as an adult. When he is older, he matures into what appears to be a civilized man, yet there is still something

animal-like about him. His constant visits to the Grange worry Nelly to the point that she compares Heathcliff to a beast, waiting to destroy the contentment everyone has reached. (Brontë 107). Heathcliff leaves Yorkshire in order to raise his status so that he can be a man of high society and win Cathy over. After his plan fails, however, he is forced to continue his path for revenge over Hindley and Edgar. He believes that by gaining more money, he will make Cathy want him, but that dramatic change does not transpire. Heathcliff's actions reflect the Victorian century's obsession with capitalism (Garofalo 148). Heathcliff pursues gain in order to reach his goal, and he takes things away from others to do so. After Heathcliff returns, he takes over life in the Heights and the Grange. He raises Hareton after Hindley dies, as well as obtains the Heights for his own use. He marries Edgar's sister and has a son with her who eventually marries Cathy's daughter, giving Heathcliff's line ownership over the Grange. No matter what the characters do, they cannot escape Heathcliff. He is a constant presence in their lives and almost everyone falls victim to him. The only exceptions are Catherine and Hareton, yet they still do not entirely escape him. Heathcliff is manipulative and acts ruthlessly and unjustly.

Cathy and Heathcliff's "love" is borderline abusive as both do not know how to give and take or avoid hurting the other. Cathy marries Edgar despite having feelings for Heathcliff and Heathcliff marries Isabella to spite Cathy. They are both possessive, as they grow angry when the other is with someone else, and they would rather put their personal gain before each other. Cathy chooses money over Heathcliff as Heathcliff chooses revenge over Cathy. After Cathy's death, Heathcliff continues his quest for revenge as it is his only purpose, yet he longs for Cathy. Through their relationship, Brontë shows what happens when material gain is put above happiness. During the Victorian Era, capitalism is the driving force of society. Daniela Garofalo believes that Heathcliff "is both a troubling embodiment of capitalist forces and their necessary

support” and that by losing Cathy, “Heathcliff becomes an obsessive producer and consumer” (Garofalo 144-145). Heathcliff relies on Cathy’s presence, and when he loses her, he is at a loss. He then lets revenge consume him as he has nothing else to live for. While Cathy and Heathcliff clash upon first meeting, they grow to rely on each other and even, in some ways, become each other. Cathy tells Nelly that one of the reasons she cannot be with Heathcliff because he is her (Brontë 80). Cathy and Heathcliff are similar in personality. When they are children, Nelly says that “they both promised fair to grow up as rude as savages” and that “they forgot everything the minute they were together” (Brontë 46). Cathy teaches Heathcliff and they play together all day when they are young. Even when Cathy is gone, Heathcliff can feel her presence everywhere, thus never moving on from his greedy desire to possess her. He tries to hold onto Cathy and her memory as he is unable to let go and move on.

Only in death can Heathcliff and Cathy be truly be happy. In death, the material world does not matter because it has no purpose. In death, Cathy and Heathcliff can escape the burdens of the world around them. Brontë sends a clear message that in death, materialistic gain will truly not matter so it should not matter on earth. When Heathcliff realizes he is dying, he gives up his idea of revenge and becomes somewhat delusional. The idea of death appears to excite him as he believes he will once again be reunited with Cathy. Lockwood recalls this change, noting that Heathcliff looks at the wall yet as though he is seeing something beyond it and “it communicated...both pleasure and pain in exquisite extremes...the fancied object [is] not fixed, either” (Brontë 320). It is not certain what Heathcliff is so fascinated with, but based on the supernatural element of the novel, Heathcliff is staring at what he believes is Cathy’s ghost. His transfixed look signals that he is pained at the loss of her, yet he is happy that he will be able to be with her again soon. During the scene, Heathcliff also acts delirious, mumbling Cathy’s name

and a few sweet words to go with it. Up until this point, Heathcliff has been so caught up with revenge that he wants nothing else. When the thought of being able to reunite with Cathy again occurs, Heathcliff abandons what he has been so focused on because he realizes that it does not matter. He tells Nelly that he has “lost the faculty of enjoying [his oppressors’] destruction, and [he is] too idle to destroy for nothing” (Brontë 312) and that he “has a single wish, and [his] whole being and faculties are yearning to attain it” (Brontë 313). His money, the houses, and those who have suffered due to his schemes will not hold any value to him in death. When he sees that he is close to obtaining that goal, he focuses his sole being on fulfilling his desires. He has been tormented by her memories for years and he is ready to put those thoughts to an end and finally be at peace. He tells Nelly that he has “nearly attained [*his*] heaven, and that of others is altogether unvalued and uncoveted by [him]” (Brontë 322). Heathcliff’s version of heaven is in death with Cathy. Hindley, Isabella, Edgar, and Linton have all died before him, and Hareton has been reduced to an ignorant servant. Heathcliff has also gained both the Grange and the Heights; however, they do not hold any value any more because he is the only one alive. The revenge is not worth it to Heathcliff if he does not have anyone to compete against. Being so close to death, Heathcliff appears in a more humanized light. Heathcliff experiences a change at the conclusion of the novel. He is ready to move on and he finds peace. It is one of the only times in the novel that Heathcliff is shown to be content and somewhat happy and that is because he knows that he will finally be reunited with Cathy.

Cathy has her own form of heaven that also goes beyond materialistic possessions. In the delirium of her illness, Cathy has several flashbacks to her time as a child living in Wuthering Heights. She longs to be a child again and run among the moors away from her responsibilities. Her time out in the moors was the only way Cathy could truly be free, and as she ages, she loses

her connection with nature. Much like Brontë did, Cathy grows up surrounded by nature and basks in the comforts and adventures it provides. As she ages, she is forced to let go of her childhood and move on into adulthood. Cathy remarks that her ideal resting place is “not among the Lintons, mind, under the chapel roof, but in the open air, with a head-stone” (Brontë 127). It is ironic that Cathy, being a woman who enjoys the riches of life, wants a simple burial. She wants to be buried away from the public eye in her own secluded spot in nature where she can finally be free of the burdens of the world. While she is alive, she longs for her childhood when she did not have societal expectations and everything was simpler. In these early years, she and Heathcliff were happy and she had her family around her. Cathy did not become interested in material worth until after her father died and Hindley degraded Heathcliff. Even though the two grow apart, Cathy always wants to remain close with Heathcliff, and in her marriage with Edgar, she continues to long for Heathcliff. In her delusional state, Cathy says that “they may bury [her] twelve feet deep, and throw the church down over [her], but [she] won’t resist till [Heathcliff] is with [her]. [She] never will” (Brontë 125). Cathy, despite being angry with Heathcliff, only wants to be with him. She will not ever really be at peace until they are reunited. In the wild, she believes they can be free and together like they once were as children. Their social status will not matter and material worth will not either. Part of her anticipated happiness comes from being with Heathcliff while the other comes from being a child engrossed in nature.

Ironically, Hareton’s and Catherine’s union truly is the only happy relationship and the one that Brontë uses to show what happens when material gain is pushed aside in this life. Even though Hareton grows up with abusive Heathcliff and Catherine grows up without her mother, the two manage to make their own relationship work. Catherine, in particular, is driven by moral good as she never desires anything materialistic. She is happy in her youth with her father and

she never yearns for anything more. Catherine is morally good because she is raised in a loving and nurturing household by her gentle father. Nelly remarks that Catherine's spirit "was high though not rough, and qualified by a heart sensitive and lively to excess affections...her anger was never furious; her love never fierce: it was deep and tender" (Brontë 185). While Cathy was wilder in spirit, Catherine is not rough and is more tender-hearted. She is sensitive and cares more about others' feelings. She hates to upset those close to her, unlike Cathy who took her anger out on others. Edgar makes sure not to spoil her. Catherine is more mature and she does not possess the temper Cathy had. She is calmer and patient like her father. Edgar raises Catherine with his gentle nature, and therefore, she develops those values. Edgar is not harsh with Catherine; he never scolds her and he takes "her education entirely on himself and made it an amusement" (Brontë 185). Because Edgar loses Cathy right after Catherine is born, he must take on the role as a father and a mother to ensure that Catherine has the proper care and love. While a father is stereotypically thought to be the disciplinarian and the mother the caregiver, Edgar must be a balance of both; however, it is his tender heart and forgiving nature that she holds onto and in turn, tries to cause as little as possible trouble for her father. Nelly recalls that "if he reprov'd of [Catherine], even by a look, you would have thought it a heart-breaking business: I don't believe he ever did speak a harsh word to her" (Brontë 185). It is not in Edgar's nature to be a person of discipline. He was never good with being harsh with Cathy, and he is the same with his daughter. While his behavior may be seen as weak with Cathy, it is not with Catherine because of his role as a parent. He does not like to fuss at Catherine and instead would rather raise her to be passionate and forgiving. It is, in a sense, an ideal motherly way, but Brontë detaches the behavior from gender assumptions. He values his daughter and they grow together in a way that values moral good and a loving nature. Edgar shelters Catherine and never takes

her outside of the Grange because he wants to protect her from the evils of the world. He does not want her to know about Heathcliff and the Heights and be tainted by the horrifying people who reside there. He tries to keep his daughter obedient and innocent. While Edgar is not heroic in the manly sense, he does possess a strong, morally good character that he passes down to Catherine. If Edgar raised Catherine with more force, she would have grown up without the traits that make her a sensitive person. She is not mean-spirited in any way and is much different in personality than Cathy, instead taking after Edgar.

Even when her father dies, Catherine never changes her personality. She continues to be sensitive and kind, yet she shows no fear of Heathcliff. At first, Catherine falls for Heathcliff's charms and tells Edgar that "Mr. Heathcliff was quite cordial" and that Edgar "is the one to be blamed; [Heathcliff] is willing to let [Catherine and Linton] be friends" (Brontë 217). Edgar has kept Catherine sheltered for most of her life. He has never discussed Heathcliff, and she knows nothing of him. She keeps her innocence until she becomes close with Linton and visits the Heights herself. Due to her naïve nature, Cathy fails to realize that Heathcliff is using her for the sole purpose of obtaining the Grange. It is only when she confronts her father about it that she learns the truth. Edgar tells Cathy a summary of the evils Heathcliff has committed, and Catherine, "conversant with no bad deeds except her own slight acts of disobedience, injustice, and passion. . . was amazed at the blackness of spirit that could brood on and cover revenge for years, and deliberately prosecute its plans without a visitation of remorse" (Brontë 218). She is appalled that someone could act with such hatred without feeling regret for their actions. Catherine does not like to upset anyone. In fact, in the few times she disappoints her father she immediately feels guilty. She is quick to forgive and is full of passion. Catherine cannot think of acting with as much animosity as Heathcliff, and the truth hurts her. When she learns of

Heathcliff's true nature she becomes aware and loses some of her childhood innocence. She knows that there are humans who act with malice instead of love, and she knows she must be wary.

While Catherine does lose some of her innocence, she learns from example. She knows that she should not act like Heathcliff because she would be just as unhappy and bitter as he. Heathcliff had been raised in a respectable home, but that is ruined when Hindley takes over and abuses him, crushing any compassion Heathcliff had learned. Catherine, unlike Heathcliff, is raised in a nurturing and loving home by her father. Edgar never beats Catherine and instead wants to do anything he can to help his daughter. It is unconditional love that gives Catherine the strength to stand up to Heathcliff because she does not need materialistic gain to be happy. She is stronger than Heathcliff because of her ability to love. She is one of the few who stands up to him and does not let him control her. She tells Heathcliff that he is not "a cruel man, but [he] is not a fiend; and [he] won't, from *mere* malice, destroy irrevocably all of [Catherine's] happiness" (Brontë 266). Catherine chooses to try to see the good in everyone. She does not believe someone is inherently evil. Even after she learns the truth about Heathcliff and he traps her in the Heights, Catherine refuses to see him as a cruel man. She believes he is only acting out of malice and that is his weakness. Catherine has strong morals, and it is why she is able to not fall into the clutches of Heathcliff. According to Marianne Thormählen, instead of hate, Catherine chooses to love and Heathcliff "cannot destroy her spirit: as long as she retains the ability to love" (Thormählen 139). If Catherine gave into hate and revenge, she would be no better than Heathcliff.

Instead of hating Heathcliff, Cathy uses her tender heart to help Hareton develop. Cathy does not seek revenge against Heathcliff. Instead, she appears to try to be understanding. Hareton

has grown up with Heathcliff who simply uses him for his revenge against Hindley. As Heathcliff is the only guardian figure Hareton can remember, he develops an odd attachment to him. He does not hate Heathcliff and even defends him when Catherine tries to cause trouble between the two men. Hareton is “reduced to a state of complete dependence on his father’s inveterate enemy; and lives in his own house as a servant...because of his friendlessness, and his ignorance that he has been wronged” (Brontë 184). The reason Hareton does not stand up to Heathcliff is because he does not realize Heathcliff needs him in order to fulfill his revenge. He fails to recognize that it is not Heathcliff’s house but his. To Hareton, Heathcliff is actually his caretaker and Hareton cares for him as he is his sole provider. Heathcliff is all Hareton has because he does not have any friends. He does not remember Nelly raising him because he was too young, and his father became an alcoholic after his mother died. Due to the ways he is raised, he does not understand compassion and lacks social skills. When Catherine mocks Hareton, Nelly is quick to lecture her, saying “[Hareton] was quick and as intelligent a child as ever you were; and I’m hurt that he should be despised now because that base Heathcliff has treated him so unjustly” (Brontë 242). Hareton is similar to Heathcliff in that he was stripped of his growing education only to be placed in a degrading servant position. He and Heathcliff both lose the knowledge they had previously gained as they are treated as lesser beings and are turned into savages. Heathcliff always had Nelly and Cathy around, while Hareton has no one but Heathcliff. He does not understand that he is treated with such hatred because of revenge.

Hareton has difficulty understanding right from wrong because he is never taught any better. Despite Heathcliff’s harsh treatment of him, Hareton refuses to acknowledge him as evil. Catherine eventually comes to the conclusion that “Earnshaw took the master’s reputation home to himself: and was attached by ties stronger than reason could break-chains, forged by habit,

which it would be cruel to attempt to loosen” (Brontë 310). Hareton defends Heathcliff because he has grown up with Heathcliff. His lack of knowledge makes him ignorant of other possibilities of a better life. He does not want to anger Heathcliff because he truly believes that Heathcliff has his best intentions in mind. He is loyal to Heathcliff, and his loyalty runs deeper than Nelly and Catherine can understand. Even though Heathcliff has a tendency to be mean to Hareton, Hareton does not blame Heathcliff because he feels it is his fault. He goes through each day doing exactly what is expected of him.

It is not until Catherine becomes a guest at the Heights that Hareton starts to change his ways because he wants to impress her and by doing so, attempts to learn compassion. Hareton, raised by Heathcliff, is degraded and uneducated. He appears mean at times, yet he does not seek revenge against anyone. Nelly reveals that “he had been content with daily labour and rough animal enjoyments till Catherine crossed his path” (Brontë 291). Even then Hareton does not turn to malice and hatred to win Catherine. He instead attempts to educate himself in hopes of her approval. He is innocent in this regard because even though he is in his twenties, he behaves in a childish manner. As Cathy grows to understand Hareton, Nelly explains that “she showed a good heart, thenceforth, in avoiding both complaints and expressions of antipathy concerning Heathcliff” (Brontë 310). She also shows regret that she tried to make Hareton dislike Heathcliff. Catherine tries to do what is best for Hareton. She understands that Hareton sees Heathcliff as a guardian figure and she tries not to cause trouble. By doing so, Cathy does not give in to Heathcliff’s hate, but rather fights it with her morals. Catherine and Hareton, despite starting off disliking each other, grow to develop feelings as Catherine teaches Hareton how to read.

Brontë shows through her criticism of Victorian culture that true happiness can only be obtained when materialistic desire and competition are pushed aside, either voluntarily or in the

transcendence of death or the naivety of childhood. Emily Brontë was a woman who transitioned from a childhood in the Romantic period to womanhood in the Victorian Era. She grew up surrounded by the changes of capitalism as well as the “angel in the house” stereotype that took form in the nineteenth-century. While she always held true to her values, the rest of society did not. Gone were the days of her own childhood simplicity and valuing of nature and what replaced it was a society greedy for material gain, willing to do anything to become richer. *Wuthering Heights* is a novel that encompasses Brontë’s feelings towards the changing century. Through her characters and themes, Brontë criticizes the Victorian period for its greediness and possessiveness. The characters of *Wuthering Heights* and their relationships reflect Brontë’s feelings towards the Victorian Era. Cathy and Brontë have similar childhoods where both girls were fond of the simplicity of nature. As Cathy grows, she turns from a simplistic girl to a woman consumed by the greed of the new era. Heathcliff, like Cathy, feels compelled to keep up with the century and allows himself to fall into the acquisitiveness of capitalism. Cathy and Heathcliff go from content children to corrupt and greedy adults. They give up what makes them happy in order to secure the objects of their possessiveness. Even though Edgar is a good morally, he is portrayed as cowardly due to his passive role in his marriage with Cathy. Brontë only allows her characters happiness if they are able to escape the clutches of greedy desire. Catherine and Hareton are able to live contently because they never feel the need for material gain. They are content with what they have and with each other as well. Brontë hated her age’s reliance on money. In order to keep the economy flowing, everyone was enjoined to consume, even if not out of necessity. Through the novel, Brontë uses her characters to embody nineteenth-century values and economies and their inevitable outcomes. The only way for these characters to obtain happiness was to completely give up material gain, or in death where material gain no

longer mattered. While many critics found the novel and characters horrific, Emily Brontë wanted to send a message that that was how she saw the Victorian Era.

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