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The Death of Empire: Imperialism and the Gothic in *Wuthering Heights*

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Index

Index 4
Abstract 5
Resumen 5
1. Imperialism and *Wuthering Heights* 6
2. The Gothic 16
Works Cited 33

Abstract

This project delves into the relationship between the novel *Wuthering Heights*, her author Emily Brontë and Imperialism. Drawing on her historical context and the several clues left in her novel, it tries to raise a discussion on the reasons why such a debate could be established and, furthermore, it advocates for a position in which it is asseverated that the text contests the Imperial bias of the time. In addition, not only does it talk about the content of the novel but about the genre and aesthetic chosen as well. As a way to culminate the project, a relationship between the Gothic and Imperialism is established. Or in other words, the final section closes elaborating on how they converge and why the particular shades of the cited genre seem an appropriate manner to follow the critical tone of the novel.

Key Words: Wuthering Heights, Emily Brontë, Imperialism & Gothic.

Resumen

Este proyecto busca profundizar en un aspecto concreto relacionado con la novela *Cumbres Borrascosas* y su autora Emily Brontë. Específicamente, busca establecer un debate sobre el papel del Imperialismo en su obra y, basándonos en su contexto histórico y las pistas que dejó atrás en su texto, aborda el desafío de hacer ver al lector el papel de Brontë como parte de la resistencia, como una figura que nadaba a contracorriente en un determinado momento que marcó el devenir de Gran Bretaña como nación. Como colofón final, el proyecto cierra el debate comentando el género y la estética escogida para llevar acabo la composición de la novela. En pocas palabras, establece un diálogo entre el marco Gótico en el que ésta se inscribe y cómo sirve de base para la crítica que la autora presenta en esta obra.

Palabras Clave: Cumbres Borrascosas, Emily Brontë, Imperialismo & Gótico.

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The Death of Empire: Imperialism and the Gothic in *Wuthering Heights*

If there has been a novel capable of surviving through the years without approaching the inevitable death to which most of the literary works are destined, that is Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*. Its critical attention dates back to the very year of publication (1847) and it cannot be said to have waned through the passing of time. The convergence of ideologies, institutions and particular "ghosts" that take place in this piece continues to attract commentary for its fertile soil in terms of literary criticism. Indeed, in this work, I attempt to explore this phenomenon and trace connections between the novel, its closure, Brontë's digressive tendencies and one of the most influential institutions known to have had an impact on 19th C literature: the British Empire. Furthermore, I consider that we might say that the specific way in which Brontë closes the novel could have been influenced by the imperial biases of the time and that, in addition, her use of the Gothic style adds another dimension to her critical tone.

1. Imperialism and *Wuthering Heights*

To begin with, it is true that *Wuthering Heights* "obeys most of the conventions of Victorian realism though (...) it gives [them] a twist," as Hillis Miller noted (42). And, perhaps, the most notorious difference to be found along this reverberating tale is the way Emily Brontë depicts reality. Little can be said about this emblematic literary figure that has not been already disclosed and my intentions are far from casting light at biographical events. However, there are some interesting facts that can help us to understand why critics claim her novel to "[emphasize] the ironic disjunctions between the different perspectives on the same events" (Gilbert & Gubar 249). In contrast with other women of the time, Emily Brontë did not have an upbringing as constrained as one might expect. Her father – a reverend married to a woman of some literary ability – instructed her in literature since infancy, and indeed, he had several books of poetry and a novel published himself (Gilbert & Gubar 250). The Brontë

family had an education and an understanding of actuality based on books and it is believed that they were fond of sharing and discussing their content together. These facts are traditionally seen as what prompted Emily's fertile imagination, which started blooming at an early age thanks to the communal building of the kingdom of Gondal, a literary construct written by Emily and Anne. Such a "mind of storm," as she herself would probably describe it, could not help feeling a fancy for Romanticism, a new movement spreading from Germany at the time and famous for its sentimental, metaphysical way of experiencing life. As Veronese notes, it is at studying the German Romantics that she starts to envision a new way of understanding philosophy and where her attraction for dichotomies arouses (47-48).

Indeed, Wuthering Heights can be said to be dominated by dichotomies. Brontë utilized binary patterns so as to structure the mirror-like oppositions of characters and places. Hillis Miller noted that the constant recurrence of these aimed at creating a reverberating effect that marked the heterogeneity of the text (52). In fact, he is far from being the only critic that addresses the slipperiness of Brontë's narration. Gilbert and Gubar commented on how it conceals "complex ontological depths, elaborate structures of allusion [and] fierce though shadowy moral ambitions" (249). It is in this sea of criticism and dichotomies where the reader can get lost. Nature and civilization, alive and dead, innocence and experience, good and evil, the Grange and the Heights, etc. All of these hold some significance within the text and, like Lockwood, the reader feels attracted to them in an attempt of solving the mystery that lies in the core of Brontë's narration. Moreover, following Hillis Miller, what is celebrated about *Wuthering Heights* is the "circumstantiality of this constant encounter with new signs," which keeps pushing the reader further, expecting to unveil that phantasmal layer that embodies a unitary explanation at last (60). Not only is this moment delayed but never comes. The so-celebrated and hated dichotomies keep being generated from one another, making the reader confused at the ontological mitosis. It may seem that there is no coherence at the core of the text; notwithstanding, the divisions engendered seem to stand as an emblem for the impossibility of reaching the center of *Wuthering Heights*. It is as if we could discuss the novel eternally moving from one character's perspective onto another attacking and defending each point of view with different arguments, thus, moving in concentric circles (note here the resistance to closure that the novel displays.) Having commented on Brontë's particular way of envisioning life, it does not seem unsound to relate both the binary complexity of the novel and Emily's partiality for a "multi-reality frame" in which

interpretations depend on the eyes of the gazer and universal truths are but utopic nonexistent constructions. Besides, this naturalistic and wide-open embracing of life is what brought many to consider her as "a ferocious pantheist/transcendentalist" (Gilbert & Gubar 254).

Nevertheless, the relative flexibility of the novel does not mean that it can be interpreted how one may prefer to. There seem to be certain topics that roam the moors around Wuthering Heights displaying a more notorious rekindlement than others. Every time the reader gets seized by the words: "I have just returned from a visit to my landlord" (Ch. I), there are certain dichotomies and sensations that come to mind before we have even given Lockwood time to settle down. Indeed, resurfacing Gilbert and Gubart again, it seems that the particular "heaven and hell" dichotomy is one of the most prominent elaborations of the novel. Critics have long discussed the issue, and the resemblance with Milton's "Paradise Lost" and Blake's *Songs of Innocence, and Songs of Experience* is commonly drawn (252-3). In fact, it is not uncommon to find Romantic works that make reference to politics or morality from a seemingly indirect perspective (i.e. Shelley's "The Mask of Anarchy"). Blake's so-famous mystical politics are often related to Brontë too since her romance has heavy political charges. It is in these issues where my work concentrates its efforts and where we can find several relatively unexplored links: namely, the position of *Wuthering Heights* in relation to Imperialism and the influence it exerts in its closure.

However, before wavering into deep waters, it is necessary to understand what lays near the shore. Much has been commented on Brontë's feminist tendencies and, certainly, their unequivocal trace can be seen through the novel. This imprint is very much related to the Blakean concepts of Heaven and Hell, to which Emily adds her gendered emphasis. As Gilbert and Gubar marked, the novel has been long discussed in terms of this dichotomy (253). Logically, the novelist's intention of emphasizing the issue seems quite clear in some excerpts like:

> If I were in heaven, Nelly, I should be extremely miserable…. I dreamt once that I was there [and] that heaven did not seem to be my home, and I broke my heart with weeping to come back to earth; and the angels were so angry that they flung me out into the middle of the heath on top of Wuthering Heights, where I woke sobbing for joy. (Ch. IX)

These references are constantly strengthened through other comments (e.g. the Heights as hell and the Grange as heaven) and, also, expanded by designating Heathcliff as a "devil," an

issue that we will explore later on. In any case, concentrating on the expressed here above by Catherine, one cannot but recall the Blakean motiv that Gilbert and Gubar explain thoroughly well (255). The reason why Catherine is so weary of her "confinement" – as Nelly puts it (Ch. XIII) – and the reason for despising heaven is the very concept of it. Blake was famous for his description of hell as a metaphorical redux of energy and knowledge, of experience. Furthermore, not only did he see hell as something potentially positive but despised the hierarchical rigidness traditionally associated with heaven. In the novel, we can observe how Catherine falls from experience into innocence. She is made to refuse the "hellish" infancy she shared with Heathcliff, based on an empirical experience[1], in favor of a more "civilized" life – marked by her first stay at Thrushcross Grange, where she is converted into a "decent lady."

Moreover, prior to her refinement, Cathy's behavior might have been even more problematic for a contextual reader. Von Sneidern is quite acute at pointing out the explicit way on which Nelly marks Catherine's self-assertive attitude, commenting on the way she imposes over the other kids at play both dialectically and physically (178). Interestingly enough, what is remarkable as well is on whom she imposes. Von Sneidern also notes the problematic presence of the Other in *Wuthering Heights* and the merging role that it plays in relation to Catherine. In this case, Heathcliff's and Catherine's relationship seems very much to resemble the one imagined by anti-Abolitionist supporters who mystified a supposedly existing bond of loyalty and affection between master and slave (178). Indeed, she is quite accurate at expressing the anxieties that a contextual reader could find at revisiting an uncomfortable issue of their recent history (in the British Empire, slavery had been effectively abolished in the 1830s) and of their present. However, it is not only the uneasy or despicable presence of the Other, but its enslaver. The one in a position of absolute power, the one who – as Nelly assures – has the agency to move Heathcliff, is not his father, not a patriarch, but a woman!

The truth is that, back on reality, on the grey pavements of British industrial cities, things were carried out differently. The education imposed on women, though more "democratic" than years past, was still based on Rousseau's prefects expressed on *Émile*. Women's role in society was culturally understood as rightfully subdued and they experienced severe restrictions to private property or access to power of any kind. In any

[1] Remember the emphasis made on his dirtiness from his first appearance (Ch. IV) and the constant associations with land, play or toil.

case, attendance to school was encouraged since, although they were not seen as potential profitable members of the masculine community, they were seen as an object of indoctrination. Right from the beginning of the 19th C, the British Empire – exhausted from oversea military conflicts and the straightforward opposition of Abolitionist and anti-imperialist supporters – devised a means of exerting power on the structural base of society, where camouflaged as positive investment, education could be used as a way to spread pro-imperial propaganda. It is through this conduct how the British Empire was able to generate a discourse upheld by general public opinion and based on British alleged superiority of morals and order. As von Sneidern suggests, it seems possible that a mystification of the Anglo-Saxon origins helped to fed the discourse (174), being used by Empire as a way to propel popular patriotism and justify the current expansionist success by means of racial difference. But taking the issue further, as Hooti and Mousaabad argue, Imperialism is not only based on dominating economy from the metropolis but on gaining the agency to represent culture and the Other as whatever fits imperial needs (61).

It is in this sense where Imperial discourse – a single, unified, patriarchal and racist one – clashes with Brontë's, one of digression, multiple perspectives, female agency and humanization of the Other. The constructedness of the Victorian culture of domesticity, very much associated with femininity, is destroyed by a character like Catherine. The Western single-story perspective is, if not opposed, at least contextualized by Heathcliff's human depiction. The universal truths, the facts, the Utilitarian philosophy[2] so acclaimed by its educational system denied by a rain of dichotomies and a narrative frame in which we do not know on whose perspective to dwell and what to trust. Nevertheless, it would be unrealistic to invoke the figure of Emily Brontë while re-shaping her to our contextual needs, interests or ideologies. The truth be told, Brontë's representation of the Other is as problematic as fertile and as complex as interesting.

It has been argued that *Wuthering Heights* could be read as a convergence of several historical movements and institutions considered to be of moral and economic transcendence at the time it was written. Some critics, like von Sneidern, interpret these to be white supremacy, racism and slavery (174). The clashing of these can be seen in the relationships that Hindley, Cathy and Heathcliff maintain. After Mr. Earnshaw's death, Hindley's despotic reign sinks Heathcliff into abjectness. Having been raised as part of the family, he is

[2] Already present in Brontë's context, but to be exploited to its maxims on the following decades (1860s).

ultimately denied a role inside the nucleus of it by his father's first-born. Accused of not being the best influence for Cathy, Heathcliff is compelled to avoid her company and pay his sustenance by abusive hard work. Moreover, von Sneidern accuses Hindley of paralleling the racist and enslaving discourse of Emily's context (176), but I would like to establish another complementary connection to her arguments. According to Gilmour, in the mid Victorian period, the concept of gentleman was very much at discussion. Although it was a problematic term, the new capital made available for a wider range of the population due to the industrial revolution made the concept of gentlemanliness more interesting for the masses, since it was considered increasingly attainable. In any case, the depiction of a classic gentleman was supposed to be that of a morally superior individual who was engendered thanks to a mixture of social and breeding qualities. With the passing of time, the social component was given more importance (Ch. I). In this sense, we could discuss that Mr. Earnshaw is the first instance of gentleman that we see in the novel. A middle-aged man who has a considerable fortune, who can afford to live independently and that displays no clear fault of character (at first sight.)[3] Following this line, Hindley would represent the corruption of the ideal of the gentleman, a clear representation of the preoccupations of the time concerning the breeding of a gentleman and the hereditariness of the rank. Indeed, there is a lot of controversy in this issue, and one of the most interesting facts for us would be that of manual work. There was an anxious debate on whether the gentleman should be exempt of manual labor or if it would be immoral to dwell on the toil of others (7). In this sense, we could interpret Hindley's degradation of Heathcliff as a statement of his, underscoring Heathcliff's aspirations to reach a rank their father had seem so ready to set at his disposal. Interestingly enough, von Sneidern notes that Hindley's spitefulness and corruption of morals seems to cost him dearly and she mentions the absence of any "productive labor" by his part (176), which would help us to establish a connection between both theoretical frames.

If Brontë's ideals on morality and exploitation of the Other are not seen clearly by this point, they are surely to be made more clear here onwards. Similarly to Catherine's imposition of "femininity," Heathcliff is made to understand his role in society. Returning to one of the most emblematic speeches of the novel, Catherine states:

[3] Much has been commented on the moral implications that seem to oblige him at the time of adopting Heathcliff. It may be related to a possible biological link between both families that Mr. Earnshaw tries to hide.

> I've no more business to marry Edgar Linton than I have to be in heaven; and if the wicked man in there had not brought Heathcliff so low, I shouldn't have thought of it. It would degrade me to marry Heathcliff (Ch. IX).

Linking the concerns we are debating now with the Blakean ideas of heaven and hell formerly commented, we can see how Catherine clearly understands that – although Heathcliff represents the "hellish" intellectual insobriety she displays – she has to choose the option imposed by the Imperial discourse since the "wicked man's" (Hindley) derision of him has made him unfitting for her. Furthermore, Heathcliff will ultimately come to understand it himself. After he is banished from the Heights and earns his way up the social ladder again, he confronts the fact that although some characters like Nelly – and Lockwood later – confirm that he *passes* as a gentleman, that is all that he will be able to accomplish. This impotency is what pushes him to seek for revenge on those who alienated Catherine from him, as well as on her for choosing the "easy" solution, or in her words for: "[aiding] Heathcliff to rise, and [placing] him out of my brother's power" (Ch. IX). What Catherine seems to attempt is to lumber Heathcliff with the opportunity of redeeming himself. However, using Homi Bhabha's ideas (*The Location of Culture* 1994), Heathcliff has been able to mimic the colonial discourse but at trying to bridge the ultimate gap between the social stratums he comes across a racial "glass ceiling" that supposes an un-encompassable status difference between him and Catherine. Emily Brontë makes an effort so as to depict a humanized representative of the Other who has passions and is capable of feeling love but – despite the resemblance – he is rejected by those who support racist discourses.

Moreover, the question of the depiction of the Other is complex itself. There are critics who, following von Sneidern, consider Brontë's treatment of the protagonists' romance as a possessive fetishist relationship based on the dichotomy "master vs. slave" and the attraction for pushing the boundaries of material possessions to include human beings, which would appear as both exciting and consuming for enslavers (177-179). Catherine, who seems to acknowledge the "nurture" above "nature" issues relating to the racial and gentlemanly questions (von Sneidern 177), is not much better than those who degraded Heathcliff, since she is unconsciously objectifying him. Due to the insidiousness of their romance, – to which the question of dominance could be considered to be related to Brontë's attempt of expressing feminism in inter-sexual relations – Catherine is one of the windows through which we can gape at Heathcliff's most human and inhuman behaviours. It is

through her, and Nelly Dean's inextinguishable clarifications, that Brontë attains a round human-like depiction of the Other – although not free from the "white veil."

It is in this point where the conflict arises, since Heathcliff might be far from the flat stereotyped common denominator of his époque but he is not exempt of certain incongruences. If it is true that Brontë tried to denounce the moral implications of racism, it is not less so that her representative of the Other displays some of the most odious characteristics associated to them by anti-Abolitionists. Heathcliff can be said to display humility, love and innocence but also rage, treachery, abuse and fierceness among others. Following Achebe's claims on Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* – that seem quite appropriate for our discussion – we could say that Emily Brontë does a disservice to the Other with her representation of Heathcliff. If Conrad was accused of silencing the Other and emphasizing physical differences, Brontë could be accused of making the Other cross certain lines that, in her context, could fuel racist discourses. The price of her denunciation could be said to be too dear since, although the novel seems to express that evil and disorder can spring from any human being independently of class and racial differences (von Sneidern 177), Heathcliff's problematic representation would be closer to that of an antihero; thus, falling into the mystification of the Other. Taking into consideration that the whole of her novel can be said to be a myth (Gilbert and Gubar 252), the question of whether the depiction she ultimately provides is positive or negative is subjected to debate, and possibly inconclusive even if Brontë embarked on it herself.

This lack of certitude, in fact, is what brings us to the following issue, the absence of a definitive closure. After Heathcliff's mistreatment turns into a firm will of revenge and experiments with the abuse of power, erasing and constructing the identities of those under his "protection," the second generation comes to the forefront. As von Sneidern stated: "the pleasure Heathcliff enjoys from his property, both real and human, lies not in its acquisition, nor in its belonging to him, but in its degradation, its demolition, its destruction" (183). Hence, in connection to the ideas previously commented, what he seems to enjoy is the very nature of Imperialism: using circumstantial vantages to expropriate the agency of the "natives" in terms of self-representation and ability to fend for themselves. Heathcliff experiments with the "poisonous" agency that human property provides, paralleling thus other characters like Hindley or Catherine. It is under these precepts that he creates both Linton Heathcliff and Hareton. The former is the manifestation of Brontë's contextual prejudices and preoccupations about miscegenation and represents the ideas associated to it:

corruption, weakness, decease, etc (von Sneidern 185). By this point of the novel, the depiction of the Other cannot be said to be really positive. However, one might argue that a simple exercise of memory would be resourceful so as to remember that Heathcliff's psychotic desires spring from having experienced the reversal of roles himself, thus, pointing at the circumstantiality of the qualities associated to the Other by anti-Abolitionists. In the same way, Linton's defects can be said to be subordinated to the nurture – if it can be called thus – that he has received; again, rising a quite commented dichotomy of her time: nurture vs. nature. In the same way, Hareton, one who supposedly has the racial advantage of whiteness, is moulded in Heathcliff's likeness and presents similar flaws.

Nevertheless, the curious point that might struck an avid reader comes at the very end of the novel. As many have noted, *Wuthering Heights* ends with a conventional marriage that remains uncontaminated by the Other's blood (von Sneidern 174-175 & Veronese 54). Veronese goes as far as to comment that the second Catherine's supposedly status of "child of storm" that has been modulated – once again, by education – finds a counterbalance in the opposite case, that of Hareton (54). Thus, one cannot but wonder where are the fiery Blakean and feminist tendencies that Brontë displayed throughout the novel. Furthermore, the more "scary" idea – although possibly comforting to her context – is that, those positive qualities observed in the Other are real, but that are somehow more acceptable or desirable when held inside white skin. It is in here where Emily Brontë, willingly or not, drops from her Coleridge-like "artistic trance" to come across reality, that she is a woman writing in the 1840s. The wheel of fate has turned and turned until it has come to the verge of passing through the very same spot it started. The Earnshaw union, a classic white gentry's marriage in possession of land, parallels that of the beginning of the novel. The dichotomies, feminism and racial inclusion are dropped – or rather pushed aside? Paying attention, one may realize that Brontë's phantasmal narration can be called thus not for the eerie tone imprinted on it but for the specific way on which it does not conclude. Digression is not solved, nor effectively contested by opposed discourses, it is eliminated. Emily Brontë decides to "kill" all the digressive characters, curiously enough, all who present some hint of modernity. Paralleling Shakespearean tragedies in which the Early Modern English context does not allow characters like Hamlet to find a way out of the *cul-de-sac* they are immersed in, Brontë's characters approach a slow inevitable death, aiming perhaps at symbolizing the impossibility of finding a space for their discourses in Victorian England. The moors around Wuthering Heights are not populated by ghosts themselves – as that poor boy who "sees" Heathcliff and

Catherine might think, according to Nelly (Ch. XXXIV) – but for the ectoplasm, the spiritual residues that they have left behind: their ideas. Indeed, these digressive ideas are far from being effectively dismissed at the end of the novel, which is why some critics like Hillis Miller consider Lockwood's words: "and wondered how any one could ever imagine unquiet slumbers for the sleepers in that quiet earth," (Ch. XXXIV) as a proof of his inadequacy as a reader of signs (59). However, Lockwood might be more of an adequate reader as the modern critic might think. *Wuthering Heights* leaves more questions pending of closure than answered. Questions that, indeed, remain in discussion today – both in and out the *Wuthering Heights* universe – and that do not seem to disturb Catherine and Hareton: to what extent can a woman be a feminist without being damaged? How do different perspectives coexist? Who is the Other? These are the phantasmal sons and daughters of Emily Brontë and although some critics notice that the jugging game she plays with family names might indicate a recurrence in the circle (Veronese 54), she decides to put an end in this specific point of the story for several reasons. The most important one, perhaps, is the difficulty to transcend material circumstances, the difficulty to realize the critically derided visions of an author. Emily Brontë, like so many others, is limited and entrapped by the discourse of Imperialism and her narrative is not a reformulation of society, but more similar to her perspective on the consequences of living in the one she was part of. Therefore, it is not so difficult to imagine why Lockwood is not so bad a narrator, since like many others – including the divided criticism that *Wuthering Heights* gave rise to – he is one of those readers of signs that cannot comprehend the whole story, all the dichotomies, Catherine's "hellish" heaven, Heathcliff's pathos and the irresolute ending of the novel. Not only does Lockwood portray acutely and ironically the deficiencies of the Victorian reader but he is a symbol for our incapacity to go beyond our time, our frame. Remember that, at the end of the day, Lockwood is a modern man from the city and what he wants to get from the country is isolation and distraction. He wants a tale, and Nelly gives him one that, perhaps, is too much for him – as well as it was for Brontë's readers, who saw in its stark violence a particular Catherine Linton in their windowpanes. As to Brontë, one cannot assure that she revisited the moors of *Wuthering Heights* night after night, in a never-ending ghostly, disturbing, uncanny slumber; but it is certain that the immortal presence of death visited her thorough the contaminated water that suffered filtrations from the churchyard's cemetery (Gaskell 47-48) and that, not much later, she passed away from disease, consumed, like her eternal creations Catherine and Heathcliff, whose haunting success she lived not long enough to contemplate.

Therefore, as we have discussed, it seems quite clear that Emily Brontë was influenced by the current discourses of her time. Although *Wuthering Heights* might not be usually regarded as an imperial novel, it has several elements – both at the level of character and plot – that let us discern the deceivingly dim presence of Empire. Independently of the position that we hold in the debate about Brontë's depiction of the Other and feminism, it is evident that – for better or worse – the looming shadow of Imperialism influences the author and the ideologies that she expressed; hence, conditioning the narration and its closure.

2. The Gothic

Once we have commented on the relationship between Imperialism and *Wuthering Heights*, it seems easier to proceed with the second part of this project, the one that attains the Gothic. In this part, not only do I attempt to put in manifest some of the elements that make a Gothic novel out of Brontë's text but to elaborate an argument on the reasons why this specific genre is a magnificent choice so as to contest Imperialism – be it a conscious decision by her part or not.

However, making reference to the well-established tradition of analysing *Wuthering Heights* in relation to doors and windows – and how these mark the different worlds, perspectives and changes inside the novel – I see myself obliged to resort to Hillis Miller's approach once again since, although having taken a look through many different windows, it is obvious that we have still not found an explanation to account for all the happenings around the Heights and the Grange. Firstly, let it be reminded that such a titanic feat is not our objective. Secondly, let it be noted that although our frame might be lacking in total and perfect roundness its broader purpose makes it quite an interesting way of approaching the novel and, perhaps, slightly less thwarted than others. Therefore, in our exploration of the windows that let us take an insight into Heathcliff's pain or catch a glimpse of Catherine's ghost, we have seen the lugubrious shadow of an Imperial époque in which repression, dismay, fear, death, life and power were all eating at the same table, touching elbows with one another. Now, in order to understand why Emily's sombre dab on the microcosm of *Wuthering Heights* makes the Gothic and Imperialism conflate in her canvas, we will have to revisit certain parts of the text, re-read it and look through some of the windows we have already paid attention to. This time, nonetheless, we will have to search for the darker hues

that might have passed as unnoticed due to obscurity and try to shed light at the rusty chains that tie them together.

Having said this, let us proceed to the first window we shall revisit. Previously, we commented on how the cult of domesticity and Emily Brontë's feminist tendencies interacted with one another, generating a certain impact on her novel. Perhaps, a proper way to start this part of the project would be to expand on those notions and explain how they interacted with the Gothic. It is fairly obvious that, although being one of the most commented canonical writers, Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* suffered an uncanny absence from 19th C literary history. Critics like Rena-Dozier took notice of the fact and, trying to explore the case and delve into the issues for such a bizarre abstention, indulged in a trip that took them farther into the recesses of Victorian Britain. In her "Gothic Criticism: *Wuthering Heights* and Nineteenth-Century Literary History" (2010) Rena-Dozier marks, like many others have been doing, the repulsion or, in the best of cases, bafflement distilled from many reviewers. Among all these, I found interesting the following one, published in 1848 by an anonymous contributor and subsequently found in Emily's desk after her death:

> "In Wuthering Heights the reader is shocked, disgusted, almost sickened by details of cruelty, inhumanity, and the most diabolical hate and vengeance, and anon come passages of powerful testimony to the supreme power of love—even over demons in the human form. The women in the book are of a strange fiendish-angelic nature, tantalising, and terrible, and the men are indescribable out of the book itself. Yet, towards the close of the story occurs the following pretty, soft picture, which comes like the rainbow after a storm…"
>
> (Douglas Jerrold's Weekly Newspaper, 15 January 1848)

There is roughly any comment in this review that hit us by surprise, having embarked on such an intellectual journey as we have. However, it is interesting to note that, between the exaltations of love, hate and its relation to humanity, a tension between the civilized and the uncivilized can be perceived.

Indeed, drawing on Hillis Miller, we have already mentioned the tendency towards establishing dichotomies that Brontë's novel displays – as well as much of her poetry. What makes this case useful in particular is that the one here above mentioned forms part of one of the most candent oppositions that Imperial Britain left behind: the domestic vs. the wild, the civilized vs. the uncivilized, home vs. the world, light vs. darkness or safe vs. dangerous. It is

not unusual to see how these type of distinctions pervade the whole corpus of texts pertaining to the 19th C. The distinction formed between these concepts was based in the tenets of English morality, Christian behaviour and Imperialism. The culture of domesticity was at its prime and the association of "proper womanhood" with homestead and a meek nature nearly impossible to dissociate. In opposition to this, the 19th C was the time of discovery and exploration. It was the time of Melville and his *Typee* (1846) and *Omoo* (1847), or in other words, the time of the adventure novel and any kind of narrative that included exotic locations where the common man could not set foot unless he was committed to the precarious conditions of most of the sailors. And I use the word common man – and not woman – to make a point, the pronounced distinction between the domestic/feminine and the adventurous/masculine. In other words, in order to leave the country and explore the world, men needed women to take care of their homesteads.

Once we have arrived to this conclusion, it seems fairly natural for the 19th C to flaunt an obstinate number of domestic novels. A country proud of its cultural links with the institution of the family and in midst of a frantic fight in terms of gender roles, or – as this process has been commonly addressed throughout history – the "woman question." Indeed, like we have been commenting, this phenomenon cannot be distinctively separated from Imperialism. The accelerated industrialization of England, propelled by the expansion of capitalism and fueled by the wealth provided thanks to the exploitation of the overseas territories, changed the stratification of British society and thus, its social and familial life. As Sudesh Vaid marks,

> "[t]he special character of the production process was division of labour, specialization, and concentration of economic production outside the home. When capitalism entered the phase of industrialization the family, to a great extent, ceased to be a unit of economic production. Socially, what took place at this juncture, was a demarcation of the home from the work-place." (63)

Subsequently, she points that both education and medicine were alienated from home so as to be accordingly specialized, in consonance with labour. Hence, we are lumbered with a curious situation. The role of women was crucial in the debate of what the core of the nation represents or must pursue. The stabilization of the economy and of a social model necessarily passed through the solidification of the family unit as a bi-parental force in which the husband worked – producing for the country – and the wife procured taking care of the

homestead, thus, maintaining the essence of English proper civility and "superiority" above other countries (especially the ones adhered to the Empire), leaving the children's education to the state, which would imbue them with a cultural, economic and colonial imagery aligned with the interests of the nation; thus, closing the circle. In this re-shaping of Britain, the image of Queen Victoria, as critics like Ian Ward notice (530) was key to the process. In order to fix the image of women as the generators or purveyors of civility, the ones that could make a dull and grim den become home, her image was extoled as an embodied idyll for the sheer force of the state and the feminine civility of womanhood. The practical implications for such a case seem obvious when we remember the colonial ambition that gave essence to the British Empire. This powerful image was meant to be the light that led the way in Victorian England and, certainly, drawing on the perspective that two centuries of experience grant us, we could say that it did have an impact. However, the role of those women that, like Emily, were not keen to follow the established model was uncertain and generated quite a debate. The "woman problem" was a critical issue that would reshape the nation in ways still unimaginable for those that, like the Suffragettes, fought for a different way of envisioning social organization. Yet by the end of the 1840s, "Victorian Britain was saturated with images, lithographs, engravings and prints, of the happiest of all its families" (531). Among all the fierce controversy regarding gender roles, it seems that the images that related womanhood to the domestic sphere were more numerous than ever. Therefore, the context in which *Wuthering Heights* was written suggests a fierce battleground in terms of the meaning of domesticity, its relation to womanhood and whether it should have existed at all.

Consequently, these issues having penetrated social conscience, it is not uncommon for us to observe similar tendencies in literature. As Rena-Dozier builds on (758), British literary history is marked by a distinction between Gothic and domestic narratives. Indeed, she suggests that Brontë's novel – the culprit of harsh criticism against her and one of the few pieces that had a negative impact on her career – and its subsequent absence of 19th C literary history is based on the merging of both genres. And if we consider the case carefully, we might arrive to similar conclusions. As Rena-Dozier marks, the domestic is defined by "an assumption of omniscient, totalizing narratorial awareness and associated with civilization, cultivation and the feminine" (758). These traits are present in Wuthering Heights. They are displayed at their peak each time that Nelly cooks a porridge with such an ease and carefreeness that the reader may end up imagining himself/herself tasting it. They are showed off each time that Mr. Earnshaw sits about the fireplace leisurely or even, more

melodramatically, boasted when he passes away and we feel Catherine's tears sliding through the wet page. Yet if we trust our instinct or even just skim superficially the body of criticism that attains the novel, we will find opinions of a different shade. As we have commented here above, there were critics who opined that the shadows to be observed along the novel were insufficiently justified in moral terms so as to take such pains at the time of depicting them. There is pain, ambition, greed and violence – sheer violence – in *Wuthering Heights*, but also something else. The narrative frame of which we have talked about in the first part of this project – the multiplicity of voices and meanings in a never-ending, unreliable, reverberating tale – should be the most intriguing piece of the puzzle for an avid reader. If *Wuthering Heights* is indeed a domestic novel, why did Emily Brontë break the conventions of narrative awareness that served so good to the Jane Austens of her time? Curiously enough, Rena-Dozier also puts in manifest that "the Gothic is marked by a proliferation of narrative frames and voices, and represents the forces of violence, wildness and savagery" (758). We have already tried to connect some ideas related to the representation of reality and this narrative frame, but what most attracts our attention in here is not the fact that Brontë uses this technique to bring in some chaos into her novel but that Rena-Dozier links these type of frames with the Gothic.

It is obvious that, as we have been commenting, by this point the reader will have the sufficient information to infer that such a rigid, utilitarian, imperialist way of imagining society did not merge well with the expression of crude emotions. The reputation of the Gothic genre was not, by far, as good as nowadays. In fact, Rena-Dozier herself probed into the historical evidence that proves that, in its context – 19th C England – one of the most representative of the English genres and even the novel itself, its paladin, were not well-regarded among the critics. She tries to go further and brings historical commentary to the table:

> "If nineteenth-century historians of the novel agreed on anything, it was that the gothic novel was a disreputable and embarrassing moment in the story of the British novel's rise. J. Cordy Jeaffreson, in his *Novels and Novelists*, asserts that the novel in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century 'was perhaps in a more unhealthy state than it had ever been since it had ceased to offend with obscenity.'" (759)

While she mentions other critics like Saintsbury and Cross to validate her point, it becomes clearer that, if the Empire does not like the Gothic novel, there must necessarily exist a tool to contest it or to serve as a contraposition. This gadget is, as she makes clear too, the domestic novel. She comments on the critics' descriptions of the Gothic novel and points at how they believed the current state of the British novel as being "a hysteric in need of a slap across the face and a splash of cold water" (759). The Romantic extremes of emotion, the indescribable joy and the sultry dejection were too immoderate for public consumption and needed "'a castigation from good sense,'" as she puts forward using Cross's words (759).

Thus, the British triumph in the 19th C went along with the triumph of the domestic novel. If we consider it carefully, it seems perfectly logical that, in order to complete the spectrum of Imperial influence, propaganda deviates from sheer pro-imperial bias to give way to subtler and more culturally-inflected forms of influencing public opinion. Be it a direct attempt at hardening the tight grasp of Empire or just a social product of its pervading presence – in other words, a cultural reaction to a given context – the domestic novel brought home the concepts that balanced Imperialism so as to strengthen its base. Resuscitating Hooti and Mousaabad, we will remember that Neo-colonialism is based on the controlling of a given territory and its forms of representation so as to obtain a certain control of their resources, acquiescing a minor grade of agency (61-62). This is exactly what happens with the raise of the domestic novel. It deals with the decency, civility and familial prominence of British society and its greatest upheavals are just related to indecision and failure at the time of courtship. It exerts a "positive" influence on the reader and exorcises their natural impulses of violence, sexual obscenity and the like; or what is most important, it supports Imperialism not just by providing gallant heroes with fortunes made overseas as characters but by providing the readers (normally middle and high-class women with enough free time, or in other words, enough servants) with an opportunity to stay indoors and cultivate themselves with another British-made marketable commodity. The cult of domesticity is intellectually justified thanks to domestic literature, adding another dimension for the market to exploit. Hence, if the British Empire had to elect a hero to represent their interests around the world, they could not simply mention the John Smiths and James Brookes but they would have to elevate the Jane Austens as well. Furthermore, as Rena-Dozier notes, Cross himself praises Austen as "'the daughter of a humble clergyman'" (759) as a way to mark her contribution to the stabilization of British cultural excellence and social order.

Therefore, by the 19th C the Empire had successfully created an artificial separation between the outside world, which was dangerous and susceptible of being conquered and civilized, and the domestic sphere, which was key to the consumption of Empire-manufactured goods and the perpetuation of the Imperial model. In the same way, the panorama in literature was that of a clear scission between the Gothic and the domestic, being the last one the clear winner. Nonetheless, such an artificial cleavage radiated from a clear human purpose. The instability of this dichotomy was soon to be contested and, like it could not be otherwise, such a mind of storm like Emily Brontë's would not take such a thin line as a deterrent. As we have mentioned earlier, one of the "problems" of *Wuthering Heights* is its merging of the Gothic and the domestic. It is not very clear from the start whether we are going to read a purely domestic novel, where we will find love issues between the characters, or if we are going to read a text somewhat darker, its pages filled with possession, lust and ghosts. Certainly, the "gothification" of the domestic space seems one of Emily's clearest intentions. If but one thing remains clear at the end of the story, when we face the tombs of our three main characters, is that no matter how peaceful it may look, the domestic can be as frightening as the outside world. The maddening cocktail of psychological pain, brutal beatings, sharp rejection and death plague Wuthering Heights from the early pages and go on a pilgrimage towards Thrushcross Grange. Indeed, upon defending her, her sister Charlotte must had remembered how her own fiction would give birth to the concept of the madwoman in the attic, something deviant from the domestic point of view too. As Rena-Dozier explains, when Charlotte Brontë saw herself obliged to defend her sister and try to provide an explanation for her dark creation, her natural reaction was to make Emily more consonant with the domestic sphere. She portrayed her as a "cloistered innocent, so profoundly domestic that she seldom left the house" (Quoted as in Rena-Dozier, 762). However, once Charlotte passed away, the tables turned. Elizabeth Gaskell, in her now famous *Life of Charlotte Brontë*, applied the same strategy so as to canonize Charlotte. The only problem was that, in order to fix her as a domestic figure she needed a point of contrast. This point was to be Emily, and the result was curious at the least. As an example to demonstrate how the Gothic can infiltrate the domestic – and, according to our theses, disturb the carefully painted separation of Imperial Britain – we will refer to an anecdote that appears in Gaskell's text and which Rena-Dozier makes reference to:

> "The same tawny bulldog . . . called "Tartar" in "Shirley," was "Keeper" in Haworth parsonage; a gift to Emily. With the gift came the warning. Keeper

> was faithful to the depths of his nature as long as he was with friends; but he who struck him with a stick or whip, roused the relentless nature of the brute, who flew at his throat forthwith, and held him there till one or the other was at the point of death. Now Keeper's household fault was this. He loved to steal up-stairs, and stretch his square, tawny limbs, on the comfortable beds, covered over with delicate white counterpanes. but the cleanliness of the parsonage arrangements was perfect; and this habit of Keeper's was so objectionable, that Emily, in reply to Tabby's [the family servant's] remonstrance, declared that if her pet was found again transgressing, she herself, in defiance of warning and his well-known ferocity of nature, would beat him so severely that he would never offend again. In the gathering dusk of an autumn evening, Tabby came, half triumphantly, half tremblingly, but in great wrath, to tell Emily that Keeper was lying on the best bed, in drowsy voluptuousness. Charlotte saw Emily's whitening face, and set mouth, but dared not speak to interfere; no one dared when Emily's eyes glowed in that manner. . . . She went up-stairs, and Tabby and charlotte stood in the gloomy passage below, full of the dark shadows of coming night. Down-stairs came Emily, dragging after her the unwilling Keeper, his hind legs set in a heavy attitude of resistance, held by the "scuft of his neck," but growling low and savagely all the time. . . . She let him go, planted in a dark corner at the bottom of the stairs; no time was there to fetch stick or rod, for fear of the strangling clutch at her throat—her bare clenched fist struck against his fierce red eyes, before he had time to make his spring, and, in the language of the turf, she "punished him" till his eyes were swelled up, and the half-blind, stupefied beast was led to his accustomed lair, to have his swelled head fomented and cared for by the very Emily herself. The generous dog owed her no grudge; he loved her dearly ever after; he walked first among the mourners to her funeral; he slept moaning for nights at the door of her empty room, and never, so to speak, rejoiced, dog fashion, after her death." (Quoted as in Rena-Dozier, 764)

Indeed, as Rena-Dozier herself builds on, this is a remarkable story. Not only does it show at its worst the Gothic shades of the domestic but insists that punishment for the sake of violence is not the point of the story, but the relationship with loyalty that such a story inspires (764). If we trace our steps back to our discussion of the novel, we will find

Catherine's treatment of Heathcliff somewhat similar: the love and care tinted with harsh correctives, the fierceness of a supposedly white maiden but, most importantly, the intertwinement of love and pain. Furthermore, Rena-Dozier has a similar view and comments on how Emily embodies a kind of merging figure that represents Catherine and Hindley (765). In fact, following these ideas, she goes further and explains how this anecdote is propelled with a kind of eerie tone that Gothicizes her:

> "This dog, we are told, was a 'gift' to Emily Brontë, from whom we do not know, though we are understandably perplexed as to the wisdom of giving a ferocious dog to a young woman, a dog that moreover comes with a warning about its habits of throat-tearing in the event of discipline. This intruding presence has an unfortunate habit of disturbing the perfection of household arrangements, and at the insistence of a servant, the intruder is sentenced to punishment. This scene—which, let us remind ourselves, is merely a simple incident in which a dog is punished for sleeping on a bed—is drawn in deeply menacing and foreboding colors. Night is drawing in; there is a monster upstairs; while two women cower at the foot of the stairs, in 'the dark shadows of coming night,' a third woman ventures into the monster's lair to defeat it in single combat. And defeat it she does: though the monster threatens to leap at her throat, she beats it senseless with her bare fist. Order is restored, and to crown it all, the triumphant maiden then tenderly nurses her fallen enemy. Moreover, we are told, this event resulted in the animal's undying loyalty to its conqueror. The intruder has been rendered safe for domestic consumption." (765)

In just a few words, Charlotte's picture of Emily as a domestic nun becomes thwarted, or at the very least problematized by a story of wild ferocity and aggression. In quite an ironic turn of events, her defense of the domestic space simply makes it impossible to keep holding a dichotomy between the savage and the domestic, between the animal instincts of a dog and the civilized morality of a woman. Indeed, these are the twisted ethics and inverted roles that have been highlighted in post-colonial criticism at the time of critiquing Imperialism and its treatment of the Other. Even leaving the plot of the novel aside, one may find it incredibly easy to substitute the dog by a colonized subject of the Victorian age who is "broken down" with violence and "civilized" by an aggressor supposed to be his moral superior. And yet like Rena-Dozier would mark, "this bizarre story is told to illustrate Emily Brontë's fondness for

animals, and the loyalty they bore her" (765). As she follows on, this tale was used by Gaskell to contextualize Emily's pain at the time their cat died. However, "the story exceeds its frame, undermines its frame, leaving the reader with a profound unease about Emily Brontë, as well as her descriptions at the hands of Gaskell and Charlotte Brontë." In other words, Gaskell uses the story to prove how problematic was her figure at the time of making her fit in the feminine, domestic frame of the time and how fitting was Charlotte in comparison (765). Of course, Gaskell's aim was far from criticizing Emily, Charlotte or the Imperial frames that shaped their lives and how society viewed them. Matter of fact, as her contemporary and admirer, she tried to elevate Charlotte's figure by making her closer to the stereotyped female writer that was accepted in her context, ensuring the survival of her work as a historical feat of British literature.

Therefore, if at the time Emily Brontë wrote *Wuthering Heights* there was already so marked a distinction between the Gothic and the domestic, if the public image promoted by the Empire was that of domesticity and civility, if the critics who tried to save the figure of her sister as a canonical writer made her appealing to the domestic, why did she create so dark a picture of the private spaces of their beloved English countryside? What is the role of the Gothic in relation to Imperialism in her novel? The Gothic makes reference to the corrupt, to the decrepit, to the past that resists to let go and to the grandeur that humankind finds impossible to encompass. The Gothic approaches seductive wonders but also unforgivable sins and inhumane transgressions. In a world showered with violence, possession and illegitimate claims on foreign land, the infiltration of the Gothic into the domestic sphere was impossible to detain. As Tabish Khair argues, Terry Eagleton's concept of the Holy Terror seems quite accurate for our discussion. The figure of God as overwhelming and beyond humane rationality will serve us so as to approach the Gothic accordingly – let alone mention that Christianity was one of the main powers, and excuses, that prompted Colonialism and Imperialism. As Eagleton explains:

> "the word *sacer* can mean either blessed or cursed, holy or reviled; and there are kinds of terror in ancient civilization which are both creative and destructive, life-giving and death-dealing. The sacred is dangerous, to be kept in a cage rather than a glass case." (Quoted as in Khair, 155).

As he follows, Lewis's *The Monk* (1796) is widely considered as the first Gothic novel in English. In his novel, Lewis's monk loses his point of reference and does not know

how to use the powers that have been conferred to him, blurring the line between the angelic and the demonic (155). It is this type of transgression that is usually associated with the Gothic, and the refusal to acquiesce the ideological "makeover" performed over God's divinity is a key piece to its correct understanding. It is true that, "under the utilitarianism and voluntarism of Western Capitalism," Khair argues, "the narrower kind of Enlightenment rationality and the pragmatism of Protestantism [...] tended to reduce God to a thing of rationality, order, a being or concept that could be dealt with at a rather business-like level, even if the currency of that transaction was less cash and more ritual" (156). However, Gothic texts put in manifest His other face. Khair resources to Edmund Burke's conceptualization of the sublime in order to approach the issue:

> "[S]ublime objects are vast in dimensions, beautiful ones comparatively small; beauty should be smoot, and polished; the great [sublime] ought to be dark and gloomy [...] They are indeed ideas of very different nature, one [sublime] being founded on pain, the other on pleasure." (Quoted as in Khair, 157)

The figure of God represents that which goes beyond humanity, something beautiful and terrifying at the same time, someone or something capable of showing the most well-intentioned mercy and the crudest wrath. And furthermore, as he makes the point, if the Sublime is that which goes beyond the humane and thus, comes from "elsewhere," in such a context as 19th C Imperialism it should not strike us that the terror that comes from abroad is more often than not associated with the East, Africa or the margins of Europe (157). As we have commented earlier in the work, other 19th C texts such as Conrad's *Heart of Darkness* or Edgar Allan Poe's and Rudyard Kipling's stories include characters – or "threats" – coming from those trade and military routes of the European superpowers. In addition, he does not falter at mentioning Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* as having some Gothic elements too.

There seems to be a tendency at the time of relating Otherness with fear, and the sublime with the foreign. Indeed, as Khair points out,

> "apart from prophecies of doom and similar 'religious' texts, the Gothic novel is the genre in English literature that depends most heavily for dramatic tension on both displacement and terror. At the heart of the Gothic text there hides a fundamental ambiguity: nothing is as it appears to be on the surface, the holy is intertwined with the demonic, the space between the Beautiful (also

> as the 'moral' or the 'rational') and the Sublime (also as the 'amoral' or the 'non-rational') is measured and narrated in screams of terror" (155).

Emily needed her Dracula, she needed her monster – like Frankenstein – or in other words, she needed that deformed creature that attacked from the margins of society. This creation, to the lament of her contemporary critics, was Heathcliff. Nevertheless, we will not approach his character in the same way we did before in this project and we will not condone his acts as a way to understand his pains neither. Having done that already, we will focus on him from a different angle. We have painstakingly traversed a complex intellectual journey to try to demonstrate how Emily Brontë contested Imperialism and was ahead of her time. Perhaps, the most appropriate way to add another dimension to this analysis would be to approach Heathcliff's figure in the frame of terrorism.

In our actual context, if we think about a figure that creeps in from outside and attacks the heart of our civilization in an outburst we automatically think about terrorists. In the post 9/11 world – more even so after ISIS's attacks on Europe – the figure of the Eastern terrorist has become widespread on the Western collective imagination. Nonetheless, although the concept of terrorism might sound relatively contemporary, it actually has some antecedents related to our discussion. As Ian Ward explains, in Emily's context these were used as a rhetorical weapon too, not unlike in modern debates. The concept of Jacobin terror – associated to the failed conspiracy plot to assassinate James I and VI of Scotland in 1605 (the Gunpowder Plot) – was invoked "every time a woman composed a polemic in defense of female education, or the reform of laws relating to marital property, or against wife-beating" (532). He continues arguing that President Bush appealed to stand against an enemy who tried to bring terror into our homes after the attack on the World Trade Center (533) and, using an example that is closer to us in time, these claims are similar to Trump's ravings against ISIS and his use of it as a pretext to enforce harsher anti-immigration policies – let alone the targeting of Islamic communities. However, leaving aside our opinion on Interventionism in the Middle East, we will mostly agree that ISIS's or Al-Qaeda's attacks were grievous and rueful. When dealing with Heathcliff's actions, there is a certain Romantic appeal to the modern reader, something that Brontë's contemporaries could not appreciate in the same way. Yet the same idyll that Bush or Trump pledged trying to protect is the same that he takes down, the sacred homestead, the warmness of the hearth, is a spell broken down in the hands of Heathcliff. Nonetheless, it seems that the modern reader cannot help empathizing with him and even finding a certain appeal at his completing his revenge. The

reason for such a change of tastes is mainly historical; time confers a perspective that those who observe from the present would not even imagine, and those who attacked Heathcliff for his depravity in 1846 could be now relishing in the ironic turn of events that fate had prepared for those in the Heights and the Grange. This is so because, as Ward elaborates on, "[t]he terror of *Wuthering Heights*, and the terrorism, lies in the strategic destruction of the patriarchal order plotted and executed, with demonic precision, by the 'gypsy brat' Heathcliff and his sexually deviant accomplice, Cathy Earnshaw" (533), something that – from our current socio-political and historical frame – seems more in line, and thus pleasant, with our feminist, anti-imperialist conception of society.

It is by this attack on the prevalent power structures that Heathcliff comes to signify the major Victorian terrorist. Ironically, Heathcliff never uses a new weapon at all but the ones already at his disposal thanks to the British inheritance laws, which he wields quite skillfully and combines with precise dabs of violence and scorn, all cultivated at the heart of Wuthering Heights. We have already commented on Hindley's and Catherine's relationship with him, so there will be no need to remind the tenseness of their cohabitation. But even though there is a continuous tendency among the characters of the novel to relate Heathcliff with the realm of the animalistic or the demonic[4] we can say that his "highlights" would pass as unnoticed in Emily's England, given that most of the ill-breeding and cruelty exposed during the novel was, in one way or another, "normal" at the time – being "normal" an adjective that means that it happened often, independently of its immorality.

We can find certain similitudes between the hate discourses employed as a way to "counter" terrorism in the West and the way Heathcliff is observed by the other characters. In fact, Khair agrees with this line of thought, and puts forward the notion of Heathcliff's "otherness" as being negotiated by them (159). In more recent literature works, like Mark Ravenhill's *Shoot/Get Treasure/Repeat* (2007), we are accustomed to hear these discourses as a way to establish a debate around "otherness" and the Levinasian concept of the Neighbor. These tendencies are put in manifest directly through the characters, whose assumptions include: "We are the good people" (7) or "you are not a person" (12) when discussing the Western vs. Eastern dichotomy. In *Wuthering Heights* we find these type of resources as well. For instance, Khair catalogues Hindley's visceral hate as owing its force to "intrinsic racism," utilizing similar degrading techniques based on dehumanization, like in the example

[4] Mind, for instance, Mr. Earnshaw's "it's as dark almost as if it came from the devil." (Ch. IV)

above. However, what could be most interesting for us is the idea of equating physical difference with moral deformity (Khair 159). Similarly, other modern works, like Tim Crouch's *ENGLAND* (2007), use physical difference to emphasize an impossibility or difficulty of bridging cultural gaps, which are commonly intertwined with moral and economic struggles. In this play, the protagonist's life is saved by a heart transplant, the donor coming from an unspecified location in the Middle East. Interestingly enough, before disclosing the most candent moral brain teasers, the protagonist is made to throw some culturally insensitive jabs at the audience. Being more specific, in Act Two, the protagonist comments on the difficulty of having a conversation with one of the interlocutors due to her hijab. This episode seems useful to understand how Nelly herself shapes Heathcliff's figure for the reader using her language. While she does not attack him on the same plane than Hindley, she does manipulate his "otherness" to make him less appealing to our standards. If he complains but little he is not well-mannered but "hardened, perhaps, to ill treatment" (Ch. IV), and if he does not know English, he does not speak another language but "gibberish that nobody could understand" (Ch. IV). There is an ongoing reframing of him, being his "natural" character impossible to observe in our own, given that we are compelled to look through Nelly's prism – and later on, Lockwood's own influenced gaze, which in fact can only be utilized at the present, it can never recover Heathcliff's past. This constant pressure on the reader, in addition to Heathcliff's disposal both to display "hellish" and "heavenly" behavior, generates a reaction on them – that is, hardly no one can stand indifferent to such a character. Perhaps, the most problematic part is related to his treatment of Isabella, a woman who is made to bear the burdens of unsolicited revenge, having had no part in Heathcliff's fall in the first place. However, as Ward recounts, Heathcliff's violence is far from the demonic. It has a human root, that of experience and custom. From a contemporary point of view, Isabella's suffering of domestic violence seems more familiar to us, and – if we wanted to be specific – he warns us that it could even be termed "wife-torture," a practice not that uncommon in 18th and 19th C Britain (534), which, therefore, points at another example of the dualistic judgment applied at the time of inscribing Heathcliff's actions in a moral frame.

Be it as it may, it all comes to a point in which the plot of *Wuthering Heights* (by means of its characters and events) has cast down all the idylls of Victorian Britain. Using Ward, we could say that, "[t]aken together, it becomes clear that Heathcliff terrifies because he threatens to devastate the familial commonwealth into which he has been invited" (534). In other words, the sacred domesticity and its associated femininity (incarnated by Isabella)

have been taken down, and the patriarchal order that defined Imperial Britain overthrown by a tyrannical oppressor. Ironically, we have already commented Heathcliff's dubious origins. Resourcing to Von Sneidern, we talked about the possibility of him being a slave or being related to one. We have also discussed Hindley and his "bondage relationship with Heathcliff" (Von Sneidern, 176). We have also talked about his relationship with Catherine and commented on how this abusive relationship corrupts the concept of romantic love. Nevertheless, it seems that no matter how much must he suffer, Heathcliff cannot escape his ultimate role as the monster in disguise. This is so because, as Ian Ward puts it (making reference to Susan Meyer), Emily Brontë uses Heathcliff in resonance with "various contemporary images of colonial violence and revolution," he represents "the ultimate imperialist 'nightmare,' […] the former slave turned slave-master" (536). It is like the monster of Frankenstein turning against Frankenstein himself, Edgar Allan Poe's crow standing victorious over the fragile psyche of its foe or, in a terrific turn of events, Kunta Kinte forcing an African name upon his oppressor. Heathcliff represents "a primal force that attaches the romantic sublime in the purity of its rage and violence" (537). He is a figure that can inspire both hate and love, fear and tenderness, pain and pleasure; and his creator delights on his volatile nature and uses the changing tides to bring the readers to ports they dare not arrive at. Brontë uses the Gothic genre to frame British Imperialism in a picture of sheer terror, violence and moral depravity. The decadence associated with the Gothic is stylistically used as a way to create a cognitive metonymy, as if by putting both concepts together one would tint the other and thus, change our perception of it. The "slouching gait," the "ignoble look" and the "inward and outward repulsiveness" (Ch. VIII) of the Heathcliffs around the globe that Colonialism had harvested becomes imprinted with a certain moral relativity, a kind of self-condemnation for knowing that these traits are not genetic but acquired, and that both "hellish" and "heavenly" features can be displayed by anyone, be it the Hindleys, Catherines, Lintons, Nellies or, again, Heathcliffs of the world. It is obvious that Heathcliff cannot be placed as a hero. His figure is far more complex than a simple label for canonical roles. Indeed, characters who, like Isabella, romanticize him, try to reduce the Sublime to fit with our conception of the beautiful (Khair, 159). These simplifications also end up turning against the gazers, as if Emily herself was trying to force us into her vision of dichotomies, inside dichotomies, inside dichotomies, with never-ending complex nets of relationships, shades and minute contextualization. To put it in simple terms, the Sublime cannot be reduced and our own house – and by analogy, our country – can be extremely frightening.

It may not be clear who is who, or what is what in this novel, but it is clear that, as Von Sneidern marks (172), "[a]ccording to C.P. Sanger's chronology of Wuthering Heights, Mr. Earnshaw's walk to Liverpool occurred at the 'beginning of harvest' in 1771, the eve of the Somerset case and the Mansfield decision" (171). It was in this year that, James Somerset (a black slave) refused to return to his master Charles Stewart, who – by his turn – decided to have him imprisoned and sent to Jamaica to be sold. Being in English land at the moment, and having been baptized, his three godparents (John Marlow, Thomas Walkin and Elizabeth Cade) applied before the Court of King's Bench for a writ of habeas corpus. The legal battle extended to 1772 and included three hearings and multiple advocators and detractors. After failing to reach an out-of-court settlement, Lord Mansfield – also known as William Murray, a British jurist born in Scotland – declared James Somerset free due to the lack of any specific law that positively attested the existence of slavery in English land and therefore, ruled out Stewart's intention of removing him by force out of the country for further selling (Usherwood, 1981).

It is not clear whether Emily Brontë had this myriad of tales, ideas and analyses in mind when she wrote *Wuthering Heights*. Like in most literature projects, there is little "scientific evidence" that we can bring to table to demonstrate that such a vast list of coincidences cannot be a case of pure wanton. Science may be clearer than literature, especially when by literature we mean trying to retrace the trail of someone whose steps have faded away in time. Nevertheless, what seems clearer is that, intentionally or not, her Gothic picture of the countryside made an impact on Imperial Britain and that Heathcliff – demon, angel, freeman, slave or a little bit of them all– haunted the minds of those unprepared for the historical changes about to unfold. The mossy, cobwebbed recesses of Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange are not eerie in nature simply due to their dark shades. They are grim because they are not *that* imaginary, because the pain and violence spread over colonial lands is replicated at the heart of England, because – as Joseph Conrad would approach half a century later – darkness is not a skin color but a moral tint equally present in all men and women. *Wuthering Heights* is Gothic because it puts in manifest all the terror that a decrepit Imperial system represents in the so-called "age of reason." Because, indeed, resuscitating Khair:

> "The Gothic narrative had a point. Wonders take place 'elsewhere'; terror comes from 'elsewhere'. But terror, contrary to what some might claim 'here', is not born 'elsewhere'. Terror takes place when that which has been

> disowned, exorcized, banished, exiled, prevented entry, nevertheless crashes the barriers. The Devil tempts the most virtuous monk alive, Frankenstein's repudiated monster returns to stalk his creator, Count Dracula rises from his coffin, ghosts walk into the lives of the living, the gypsy-lascar-slave whose labour has contributed to the affluence of the Lintons and the Earnshaws arrives in Wuthering Heights—and is not allowed to be anything other than 'evil'. Deprived of love, acceptance, language, voice, turned into a 'hardened' child even in his forbearance, the very Devil in his difference, a museum specimen or a thief, what can Heathcliff be left with except the fetishization of power which, coming from him who came from 'elsewhere', and hence coming from 'elsewhere', can only evoke screams of terror from those who take their own empowerment for granted?" (161)

The global dangers associated with the Other might have seen comfortably foreign and "savage" in 19th C Britain. However, as Emily Brontë took pains to prove, they are as human, communal and ever-present as they could be. Perhaps, Heathcliff was not that different from James Somerset and even Charles Stewart himself. He was too round a figure to be admired, plenty of love and hate, ready to provide happiness and sadness to everyone around him and ready to offer a mirror for humanity to observe ourselves. One that, however, returned an imperfect image. It may be the reason why he was not acclaimed by the critics.

Therefore, having closed our discussion and examined our points, it seems that Emily Brontë's use of the Gothic corresponds with her avid condemnation of British Imperialism, its rigid lifestyle and its moral depravity. Throughout all this project, we have seen how, although the ending is rather contained instead of radically post-colonial, Brontë's work displays feminist, anti-patriarchal, anti-imperialist bias that interact and influence her novel. Adding onto this, her use of the Gothic style can be seen as pointing towards a further denunciation of the evils that afflicted her nation at the time she composed the novel. Building on Gothic aesthetics, she provides a harsher tone on her critique and associates Imperialism with pain and fear – at the same time that she overlays her characters with a dark shade that penetrates into the deepest recesses of the human mind, making her work one of the most important feats of British Literature and a classic that can hardly lose touch with modernity and its pathos. And indeed, it seems that, nearly two-hundred years later, her creation continues to be relevant, as we cannot avoid revisiting Wuthering Heights.

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