**WRITER Emily Bronte**

**TITLE Wuthering Heights**

**DATE OF PUBLICATION 1992**

**THEME** The devastating aspect of love, nature vs civilization (Heathcliff vs Edgar, Wuthering Heights vs Thrushcross Grange), revenge and repetition (several generations), gothic and the supernatural (ghosts), childhood

**PLOT** Plot is often defined in terms of:

Exposition: Lockwood is staying at Thrushcross Grange, his landlord is Heathcliff (he doesn’t really like the man). When he visits Wuthering Heights (the house of Heathcliff), he discovers that there live other people with him. Those people are (jr) Catherine (which he thinks to be the housemaid) and Hareton. He asks his housekeeper Nelly Dean about the story behind these fascinating people. She tells him all about her life as the housekeeper of the family Earnshaw, Linton and Heathcliff. As a young girl, she works as a servant at Wuthering Heights for the owner of the manor, Mr. Earnshaw, and his family. One day, Mr. Earnshaw goes to Liverpool and returns home with an orphan boy whom he will raise with his own children. At first, the Earnshaw children—a boy named Hindley and his younger sister Catherine—detest the dark-skinned Heathcliff. But Catherine quickly comes to love him, and the two soon grow inseparable, spending their days playing on the moors. After his wife’s death, Mr. Earnshaw grows to prefer Heathcliff to his own son, and when Hindley continues his cruelty to Heathcliff, Mr. Earnshaw sends Hindley away to college, keeping Heathcliff nearby. Three years later, Mr. Earnshaw dies, and Hindley inherits Wuthering Heights. He returns with a wife, Frances, and immediately seeks revenge on Heathcliff.  One night Catherine and Heathcliff wander to Thrushcross Grange, hoping to tease Edgar and Isabella Linton, the cowardly, snobbish children who live there. Catherine is bitten by a dog and is forced to stay at the Grange to recuperate for five weeks, during which time Mrs. Linton works to make her a proper young lady. By the time Catherine returns, she has become infatuated with Edgar, and her relationship with Heathcliff grows more complicated.When Frances dies after giving birth to a baby boy named Hareton, Hindley descends into the depths of alcoholism, and behaves even more cruelly and abusively toward Heathcliff.

Complication: Eventually, Catherine’s chooses Edgar over Heathcliff. Heathcliff runs away from Wuthering Heights, staying away for three years, and returning shortly after Catherine and Edgar’s marriage.

Climax: Basically all the revenge of Heathcliff:

* After the death of Hindley, he inherits Wuthering Heights and Hareton
* By marrying Isabella Linton, he also places himself in line to inherit Thruscross Grange, he treats Isabella very poorly and runs away with her, gets her pregnant
* Catherine dies (not revenge) but very tragic
* He neglects the upbringing of Hareton
* When Linton (son of Isabella and Heathcliff) comes to live with him, he treats him very poorly
* He holds Nelly and (jr) Catherine prisoner at Wuthering Heights, till Catherine marries Linton so he will also own Thruscross Grange
* He forces (jr) Catherine to live with him at Wuthering Heights and treats her like a maid

Resolution: Heathcliff dies and (jr) Catherine and Hareton plan to marry.

Write a summary of the plot elements (events) or find one on the Internet (make sure you check whether it is accurate and if not, add your own information).

**CHARACTERS**

Characters can be described in terms of traits, dialogue, actions, attire, opinions etc.

Who is/are the main characters?

**Heathcliff:**

An orphan brought to live at Wuthering Heights by Mr. Earnshaw, Heathcliff falls into an intense, unbreakable love with Mr. Earnshaw’s daughter Catherine. After Mr. Earnshaw dies, his resentful son Hindley abuses Heathcliff and treats him as a servant. Because of her desire for social prominence, Catherine marries Edgar Linton instead of Heathcliff. Heathcliff’s humiliation and misery prompt him to spend most of the rest of his life seeking revenge on Hindley, his beloved Catherine, and their respective children (Hareton and young Catherine). A powerful, fierce, and often cruel man, Heathcliff acquires a fortune and uses his extraordinary powers of will to acquire both Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange, the estate of Edgar Linton.

**Catherine:**

The daughter of Mr. Earnshaw and his wife, Catherine falls powerfully in love with Heathcliff, the orphan Mr. Earnshaw brings home from Liverpool. Catherine loves Heathcliff so intensely that she claims they are the same person. However, her desire for social advancement motivates her to marry Edgar Linton instead. Catherine is free-spirited, beautiful, spoiled, and often arrogant. She is given to fits of temper, and she is torn between her wild passion for Heathcliff and her social ambition. She brings misery to both of the men who love her.

**Edgar Linton:**

Well-bred but rather spoiled as a boy, Edgar Linton grows into a tender, constant, but cowardly man. He is almost the ideal gentleman: Catherine accurately describes him as “handsome,” “pleasant to be with,” “cheerful,” and “rich.” However, this full assortment of gentlemanly characteristics, along with his civilized virtues, proves useless in Edgar’s clashes with his foil, Heathcliff, who gains power over his wife, sister, and daughter.

**Hindley:**

Catherine’s brother, and Mr. Earnshaw’s son. Hindley resents it when Heathcliff is brought to live at Wuthering Heights. After his father dies and he inherits the estate, Hindley begins to abuse the young Heathcliff, terminating his education and forcing him to work in the fields. When Hindley’s wife Frances dies shortly after giving birth to their son Hareton, he lapses into alcoholism and dissipation.

**Catherine jr:**

The first Catherine begins her life as Catherine Earnshaw and ends it as Catherine Linton; her daughter begins as Catherine Linton and, assuming that she marries Hareton after the end of the story, goes on to become Catherine Earnshaw. The mother and the daughter share not only a name, but also a tendency toward headstrong behavior, impetuousness, and occasional arrogance. However, Edgar’s influence seems to have tempered young Catherine’s character, and she is a gentler and more compassionate creature than her mother.

**Hareton:**

The son of Hindley and Frances Earnshaw, Hareton is Catherine’s nephew. After Hindley’s death, Heathcliff assumes custody of Hareton, and raises him as an uneducated field worker, just as Hindley had done to Heathcliff himself. Thus Heathcliff uses Hareton to seek revenge on Hindley. Illiterate and quick-tempered, Hareton is easily humiliated, but shows a good heart and a deep desire to improve himself. At the end of the novel, he marries young Catherine.

**Linton:**

Heathcliff’s son by Isabella. Weak, sniveling, demanding, and constantly ill, Linton is raised in London by his mother and does not meet his father until he is thirteen years old, when he goes to live with him after his mother’s death. Heathcliff despises Linton, treats him contemptuously, and, by forcing him to marry the young Catherine, uses him to cement his control over Thrushcross Grange after Edgar Linton’s death. Linton himself dies not long after this marriage.

**Earnshaw:**

Catherine and Hindley’s father. Mr. Earnshaw adopts Heathcliff and brings him to live at Wuthering Heights. Mr. Earnshaw prefers Heathcliff to Hindley but nevertheless bequeaths Wuthering Heights to Hindley when he dies.

**Isabella Linton:**

Edgar Linton’s sister, who falls in love with Heathcliff and marries him. She sees Heathcliff as a romantic figure, like a character in a novel. Ultimately, she ruins her life by falling in love with him. He never returns her feelings and treats her as a mere tool in his quest for revenge on the Linton family.

**Nelly Dean:**

Nelly Dean (known formally as Ellen Dean) serves as the chief narrator of *Wuthering Heights*. A sensible, intelligent, and compassionate woman, she grew up essentially alongside Hindley and Catherine Earnshaw and is deeply involved in the story she tells. She has strong feelings for the characters in her story, and these feelings complicate her narration.

**Lockwood:**

Lockwood’s narration forms a frame around Nelly’s; he serves as an intermediary between Nelly and the reader. A somewhat vain and presumptuous gentleman, he deals very clumsily with the inhabitants of Wuthering Heights. Lockwood comes from a more domesticated region of England, and he finds himself at a loss when he witnesses the strange household’s disregard for the social conventions that have always structured his world. As a narrator, his vanity and unfamiliarity with the story occasionally lead him to misunderstand events.

What do you know about them? Is there any character development?   
Write a character analysis for the main characters or find one on the Internet.

**SETTING**

Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange, 1770-1802

**POINT OF VIEW**

Point of view is the mode or perspective (prism) chosen by the author from which the story is presented. The **narrator** is the fictional ‘person’ ‘telling’ the story.

**First Person Point of View**

Lockwood and Nelly Dean.

**STYLE**

The manner of linguistic expression in verse or prose.

In other words, how the writer says whatever it is he says in terms of:

The English used in Wuthering Heights is kind of old fashioned and sometimes a bit hard to understand. The language is very formal and extensive.

Nelly's speech is animated, with lively images and vivid descriptions that reflect her presence at the scenes she describes. She also enjoys ratcheting up the drama, infusing her accounts with her own opinions and attitudes. But technically we are reading Lockwood's diary, and his style is intimate but more formal and composed than Nelly's.

Joseph speaks with a very thick Yorkshire accent, and it is also written that way. Hareton speaks also in a less eloquent English. The writing style for each character also (in some cases) depicts their social class.

Wuthering Heights is a Gothic novel, so you can expect the tone to be constantly mysterious and sinister. In this story, things never seem to stop getting grimmer. On the contrary, though, there are some small glimpses of hope. These brief flashes mostly occur in the years after Catherine's death (coincidence?). The characters and narrators also help configure the tone—for example, when Heathcliff's around, everything seems to get very ominous.

**Imagery:**

Lockwood uses a lot of imagery to describe the isolation from the world of Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange.

The name of Wuthering Heights itself is in fact a use of imagery.

The characters in Wuthering Heights are rooted firmly in the natural images of their environment (which is similar to their emotions). In contrast with the ‘atmospheric tumult’ at Wuthering Heights, Thrushcross Grange is surrounded by peace and calm. The rough, uncultivated images of the Wuthering Heights environment are associated in our minds with the passionate, inhuman and uncultured qualities of Heathcliff, Hindley and Hareton.

The inhumanity of the characters is frequently conveyed by the use of animal imagery and demonic references. Catherine considers Heathcliff ‘a fierce, pitiless wolfish man’, who would crush Isabella ‘like a sparrow’s egg’. Isabella refers to Heathcliff as ‘a lying fiend! a monster, and not a human being’. On other occasions, she asks if he is a devil and calls him ‘a brute beast’. Nelly Dean, who had read about demons, asks in the final chapter: ‘Is he a ghoul, or a vampire’ and would have preferred to have seen him ‘gnash his teeth than smile’, in his unearthly manner; even after his death ‘his parted lips and sharp white teeth sneered’ at Nelly. There are also frequent references to dogs throughout the novel, which are associated with images of hostility and cruelty. The use of animal imagery shows us the breaking down of the barriers between animal and human. The rough, uncivilised atmosphere at Wuthering Heights and the luxurious, artificial atmosphere at Thrushcross Grange is the background to the contrasts between the characters and shows us the two alternative ways of living as is especially evident in the contrasts between Edgar and Heathcliff.

**Metaphors:**

For Heathcliff and Catherine the landscape (the moors) stands for freedom and the parkland for confinement. Heathcliff is often mirrored to the wild moors, but Catherine also (to show also her ‘wild’ side, her bad side).

Despite being a metaphor for freedom, it also confines the characters. Lockwood is trapped at the heights due to bad weather, which shows the power of nature.

Another metaphor is that in the end Wuthering Heights is abandoned for Thrushcross Grange, which seems to be implying that the world is moving towards a more cultured, industrialised world:The Industrial Revolution.

The landscape and the moors especially are also a metaphor for the love of Catherine and Heathcliff. Catherine makes this comparison herself: ‘ a source of little visible delight, but necessary’

The moors are also associated with the supernatural.

Most important is the metaphor about nature vs culturem where Heathcliff and Wuthering Heights stand for nature and Edgar and Thrushcross Grange stand for culture.

**Foreshadowing:**

Because the story is told after it happened, and Lockwood comes in at the end of the story (and also meets the ‘characters’) there is naturally a lot of foreshadowing. You already know from the start where Heathcliff, the young Catherine and Hareton will end. You also know Heathcliff will not change for the better, because he is still wretched when Lockwood meets him.

* **choice of words (diction)**
* **sentence structure and or length**
* **use of direct/indirect speech**
* **figurative language (imagery and metaphor)**
* **rhythm/sound patterns**
* **rhetorical devices   
   (e.g. irony, foreshadowing, hyperbole, motifs, repetition, understatement)**
* **tense**

**STRUCTURE**

Is the story written chronologically? No  
Is the narrator always the same? No, it changes between Lockwood and Nelly.  
Is point of view consistent? Yes.  
Is the narrator reliable? Yes  
Are there any typographical peculiarities? No

The book is written as a frametale: Lockwood tells his story, Nelly Dean then tells her story which we read because Lockwood wrote it down.

**GENRE/LITERARY PERIOD/BACKGROUND**

Is the work is typical for a genre or literary period? gothic novel, it also contains aspects of a romance, bildungsroman (coming-of-age narrative), and revenge tragedy, Victorian novel., Romanticism

What do you know about the writer?

Born to a clergyman from Yorkshire, Brontë left home at age six to join her sisters at a harsh boarding school. After two of them died, Emily and her sister Charlotte (author of [Jane Eyre](https://www.litcharts.com/lit/jane-eyre)) returned home, where, with their sister Anne and their brother Branwell, they created a complicated fantasy world; the children wrote a series of stories, plays, and poems, some of which they collected and published. Though Emily left home several more times, she always returned to the beloved moors of her childhood. She published Wuthering Heights the year before she died of tuberculosis.

**EVALUATION**

I actually loved the book, it's very dramatic and although there happens a lot, the writing never feels rushed. I also think Heathcliff is the perfect anti-hero, because although he causes so many problems and really mistreats people, you can never really blame him because through everything you feel his love for Catherine. I also really like that the story covers more generations.

**ASSOCIATIONS**

I just felt sorry for everyone that was involved because no-one was really to blame, but it worked out terribly awful for every single one of them.

**COMPARATIVE**

Is there any overlap between the different works of fiction on your list?   
Any correspondence as to themes, style, structure, setting, point of view etc.

I think that Frankenstein and Wuthering Heights share the most important theme: revenge. Both books are basically about the devastation that revenge can bring to someones life. Ofcourse both books also have other themes but this one plays a very big role in both of them. The important difference however, is that in Wuthering Heights there isn’t really someone to blame and in Frankenstein Frankenstein himself is the one to blame. (also both gothic novels) (also both frametales)

**CRITICAL RECEPTION**

When the book was first published in 1847, it was savaged by critics, who found it shocking and immoral. But after Emily's untimely death, the book was gradually revived by critics and is now regarded as one of the greatest novels ever written.

I really get that you can find it shocking, because it is. But the beauty of it is that it’s not really anyone’s personal fault and because of that you just feel empathy for everyone. The deeds are shocking but you can most often really relate to the person doing it.