**“Doubles and repetition in Wuthering Heights”**

*“The ledge, where I placed my candle, had a few mildewed books piled up in one corner; and it was covered with writing scratched on the paint. This writing, however, was nothing but a name repeated in all kinds of characters, large and small—Catherine Earnshaw, here and there varied to Catherine Heathcliff, and then again to Catherine Linton. In vapid listlessness I leant my head against the window, and continued spelling over Catherine Earnshaw—Heathcliff—Linton, till my eyes closed; but they had not rested five minutes when a glare of white letters started from the dark, as vivid as spectres—the air swarmed with Catherines”*

Poor Lockwood, you seem almost as confused as the students studying Wuthering Heights by Emily Brontë. The book is thick with doubles, parallel events and repetition. Enough to make your mind spin, especially on your first attempt to find your way through all the similar names and surnames. Isn’t it? I am sure many of us students can relate to this tangling frustration.

However, other than an attempt to confuse you to pieces, Brontë had another motive behind this pairing up. Organizing. Yes, organizing. Not the overly compulsive kind, but the slightly brilliant kind. Wuthering Heights is structured by arranged pairs. Elements, characters, places and themes, all of them have a double somehow. By now, you should have figured out it’s not your double vision at work. Let’s break down what this mirrored structure does for the story!

Starting out with the pile of Catharine’s that are thrown at you when you open Wuthering Heights. As Emily Brontë herself put it: “*She burned too bright for this world.*”  The character Catherine seems to be simply too much for one character, and therefore splits up into three named characters. First, there is Catherine Earnshaw, who is truly, madly and deeply in love with Heathcliff. Her mirrored side, Catherine Linton, who denies this love and seems more moderate.

The young Catherine is both remarkably similar and at the same time strikingly different from her mother. She can be seen as the third Catherine: a mixture of passion and modesty. All these Catherines that show different sides of her character give you as a reader an incredible understanding of her personality. It is like making a new friend…. Almost. Stay with me here, because this was only one of the many doubles to come.

The second pair is one that is easy to spot. The two houses Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange seem as opposite as day and night. The two places represent opposing values and even worlds. You can guess the effect of this smart little detail: contrast. Yes, indeed, these houses complement each other by opposing each other.

To explore all of the sneaky doubles in the novel would be somewhat of a drag, but to emphasize the importance of this element in the story, let’s talk about the other characters that are paired up, and how the stark contrast I just mentioned will start to fade.

Another example of paired up characters is the pair that narrates Wuthering Heights. The novel has two dramatically different narrators, Mr Lockwood and Mrs Nelly. Like the relation between these two, the other correlations between paired elements seem to be quite complicated.

Every pair is neither completely opposed nor absolutely similar. the existing stark contrast between wild, wild wuthering heights and its inhabitants and the terrific, but slightly mundane Thrushcross Grange starts to fade when all these pairs start causing intermarriages and people move from place to place. At this point in the novel, you are absolutely allowed to be desperately confused and profoundly lost in Brontë’s house of mirrors. The effect of all this madness has to be the emphasizing and resolution of the main conflict. The differences between pairs and their scary similarities emphasize the fact that these are two different groups conflicting. The fading differences show this conflict is slowly resolved and the groups mix up to be a fairly normal set of people.  All's well that ends well, right?

Have you ever sworn to yourself “I’ll never become like my parents”? Well you are not alone. However, in wuthering heights the youngsters seem bound to follow their parent’s footsteps, leading to repetition all through the story. Repetition is another method Brontë works in organizing her novel. It might seem that nothing ever ends in the world of Heathcliff and Catherine. The way character names are ‘recycled’ for the new generation kind of gives it away. Actions are repeated and mistakes are made again and again. For example, Heathcliff’s humiliation of Hareton echoes Hindley’s degradation of Heathcliff. Likewise, the younger Catherine’s ridicule of Joseph’s evangelical advice repeats her mother’s. On shorter notice, Heathcliff tries to open Catherine’s grave twice, the second try being a repetition of his first attempt. In this replication actually lies one of the most important elements of this story. For the repetitive second generation turns the already dramatic, passionate conflict into a legendary saga of love gone wrong.

So to conclude on the book that shook our minds: the bewildering amount of double characters, pairs of places, people and events turned out to be an elaborate structure plan used to emphasize what really matters. Love, that is. Horrible, disastrous love. This love causes confused characters to split up into several personalities, arranges opposites to clash with each other, and even causes the past to repeat itself. All doubles unite! All repetitions….repeat? We have seen you trough, time to put you, all of you, to rest. And read the thorny Wuthering Heights again to grasp its true nature…. A stunning structured mess.[[1]](#footnote-1)

**Rationale**

For the following speech, I chose to discuss the use of doubles and repetition in the novel Wuthering Heights written by Emily Brontë. Because explaining detailed information about the contents of the book would be too much information to put in a speech. This way the audience would get uninterested and the speaker would lose attention. Because it was impossible to discuss a literary device without the audience having some kind of knowledge about Wuthering heights, I decided my intended audience should be students who have read or studied the novel themselves.

The contents of this speech include the structure of pairs and repetitions in the novel. This subject is interesting to students who have studied the novel, and lends itself well for a speech for it requires almost no complicated literary explanation. While putting this speech into words, I regarded two different objectives. The first was to use an informal, natural way of formulating. Considered the intended audience for this speech consist of students, and the text has to be spoken out and heard instead of read only, I found it appropriate to write more casually. The second objective I had in mind was the use of stylistic devices that could help make my speech into a more interesting and fluent discourse.

To grab my audience’s attention, the speech starts with a quote from Wuthering Heights, sparking the audience’s imagination and start an active thought process on the novel. To keep the audience interested I used some wisecracks, like “*It’s like making a new friend…. Almost* “and “*All doubles unite! All repetitions….repeat*?” these are intended to make the audience laugh and draw their attention back to the speaker. Because the audience shares some characteristics; all are students, all have read the novel; it was possible to bond with the audience through several remarks. Bonding with the audience is positive for the speaker and speech, for the audience will form positive affirmations with the spoken text. Examples of bonding remarks in the speech are “*Isn’t it? I am sure many of us students can relate to this tangling frustration*.” and “*Have you ever sworn to yourself “I’ll never become like my parents”?*”

To guide the audience through my speech, and to inform them on upcoming information, some sentences mention the destination on the text, like “ *Lets break down what this mirrored structure does for the story!*” another stylistic device used to increase the listening feature of the speech is allusion, which I used several times to increase the depth of the content. “*Truly, madly and deeply*” for example, is an aphorism often used in modern lyrics to express passionate love. Since my audience is young, this will enhance their understanding of the emotions Catharine feels.

Stylistic devices I used to make the text more appealing are Figurative speech, Parallelisms, Varied sentence length, and Anaphora. Figurative speech, *“(…) lost in Brontë’s house of mirrors.”* to create a vivid image in the listener’s mind. Parallelisms like “*neither completely opposed nor absolutely similar*” and varied sentence length like “*But other than an attempt to confuse you to pieces, Brontë had another motive behind this pairing up. Organizing.*” for an enriched and entertaining writing style. Some ideas are written in anaphora’s to stress their importance.

1. Word count: 1493 words [↑](#footnote-ref-1)