Catherine’s Double Character
In Wuthering Heights

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**Introduction**

*Wuthering Heights* is a novel written by Emily Brontë in 1847. It centers on the relationship between two families, the Earnshaws and the Lintons. The character of Catherine Earnshaw has been discussed by many critics over the years. Catherine is introduced for the reader as a ghost trying to break into the house of Wuthering Heights. The story is told by two narrators, the first and last chapters by Lockwood and the middle part by the servant Ellen Dean. Lockwood is the first person to come across Catherine Earnshaw when he reads her diary and then goes to sleep. Suddenly, he wakes up by someone scratching at the window. After he sees Catherine as a ghost it becomes clear that the novel contains supernatural elements.

To understand why I have chosen to analyze Catherine and her ‘double character’ one needs to know what I mean by double. There are two sides to several issues in the novel, for example, the two houses, Wuthering Heights standing for nature and wilderness and Thrushcross Grange for culture and a more civilized way of living. Catherine is double in the way that she is torn between two men and whether to stay with her childhood love Heathcliff or become an adult and marry civilized Edgar Linton. In psychoanalysis one could say that both of them are parts of Catherine. Catherine is the ego, Heathcliff the id and Edgar the superego.

The focus of this essay will be on Catherine and her double nature, since she has difficulties in deciding which side she is on in terms of nature or culture. The importance of knowledge is present as well when it comes to learning to read (for Hareton) and Catherine’s thoughts of Heathcliff not being educated enough to talk to her. Her ‘double character’, as Ellen Dean calls it, occurs when she behaves in different ways surrounded by different people. For example, she behaves in a gentler manner when she is with the Lintons, while she is wilder when she is with the Earnshaws. Her choice to marry Edgar is something she handles well
until Heathcliff returns, which leads to her going mad. This could be because she realizes that her relationship with Heathcliff can never be the same as it was when they were children and inseparable.

The purpose of this essay is to study Catherine and her choices from a psychoanalytical perspective, for example by an analysis of her dream when she reflects on her childhood. I have two questions: first, how is her double character described in the novel? And second, has she found peace in death or is she still divided between her two choices? I will argue that her double character is the reason why she does not find peace in death.

This essay is divided into four sections in the analysis. First, I have used Freud’s ideas of the mind being divided into three parts, which has been applied to Catherine in my psychoanalysis of her. Then there is a section on culture and nature which is about her being torn between men. In the third section there will be a discussion of her character and how she is depicted in the novel. To finish the essay there is a section with a discussion of supernatural elements, that is Catherine being a ghost, and whether or not she has found peace in death.
1 Psychoanalysis of Catherine

Catherine could be said to be double, in psychological terms, because Edgar and Heathcliff can be seen as two parts of her. Both men have a connection to her, and she is torn between them as well as culture and nature. The ‘doubleness’ occurs in the text, mostly when Ellen explains that Catherine has adopted a double character (52). This is the first time the reader learns directly of her doubleness. In agreement with Ellen, when reading the novel, it becomes obvious that Catherine’s behavior shifts whether at the Heights or at the Grange, especially when she acts violently towards Edgar after she has argued with Heathcliff. That is an example of how she could not conceal her wilder behavior one time.

Psychoanalysts have different focuses, mostly on the unconscious mind and how to interpret dreams. Freud saw the mind as consisting of three parts; the id, the ego and the superego. Catherine could be said to be the ego, since it stands for the ‘I’. Heathcliff is the unconscious id and Edgar the civilized superego according to Linda Gold, author of the article “Catherine Earnshaw: Mother and Daughter”. To study the character of Catherine, one could look at the most obvious part of psychoanalysis, that of dream-interpretation. However, this will be described later on.

Philip K. Wion has written a text with a psychoanalytical perspective called “The Absent Mother in Wuthering Heights”. He believes that the center of the novel depicts the mother/child relationship, and that Heathcliff and Catherine can be said to have that kind of relationship. “Emotionally, Heathcliff is the world to Catherine, just as the mother is the world to the symbiotic child” (Wion 366). He means that when Heathcliff leaves her for the first time she has her first breakdown, because it is almost like a separation from her mother. This would be a believable explanation, but it could also be because she feels like he is a part of her and how she is not complete without him.
The child goes through a phase called the “separation-individuation process” (Wion 366), meaning “separation from “oneness” and establishment of individuality” (Wion 365). This oneness occurs before the child has become aware of its separateness from his/her mother. It is also a fact that Catherine’s mother died shortly after Heathcliff came into the novel, and Wion speculates that he has thereby taken the place of Catherine’s mother. Emphasis is also on how her mother felt when her father came home with a boy, and how she disapproved of it. There is also the fact that many people of the older generation, Catherine’s as well as Edgar’s parents, die early in the novel. That does not leave any parental figures, except for Ellen Dean. However, Ellen is not a good mother to Catherine because she is not there for her.

To become an individual being is something Catherine has problems with. Her confusion is obvious even before the reader gets to know her, because of her writing three different surnames in her chamber. It is as if she cannot make up her mind about what to become. Instead of being satisfied with her life as a married woman, the picture of her childhood with Heathcliff comes up again when he returns. This recalls Freud’s terms ‘pleasure principle’ and ‘reality principle’, since the pleasure principle is “what governs us at birth and this principle pushes us towards the instant gratification of all our wishes. As we grow up and discover that we have to live with, and adapt to, the natural world and other people, the ‘reality principle’ comes into operation” (Rennison 31). If these two principles are in conflict it causes illness. Catherine may not have come to accept the reality principle, as she has not been able to adapt to society, that is, to the Grange. She tried by marrying Edgar, but as Heathcliff came back she was drawn back to the pleasure principle, that is to say, her childhood wishes. People are said to repress the feelings that are associated with the pleasure principle, “It is the id which is the driving force behind what Freud called the pleasure principle” (Rennison 38). That would help to understand why Heathcliff could be seen as the
id, a part of Catherine. He is her unconscious or pleasure principle, which Freud believed to be “dark and transgressive desires” (Rennison 31).

Freud also believed the id to be connected with our dreams. This makes one think of Heathcliff, her id, and how he is part of her dream. The superego is the voice of conscience. Then it is interesting what Freud said about society: “It demands the repression of our most basic urges” and “Civilisation and civilised behavior necessarily involves individual unhappiness” (Rennison 42). That would be the same as society’s repression of nature or to go further, how Catherine who is wilder in the beginning, is forced to change when she goes to live with Edgar; him being the superego forcing her to adapt to society, leading to her unhappiness.

In the beginning of her dream she says that she does not belong in heaven and that heaven is linked to Edgar and Thrushcross Grange. She is happy in the dream when she is thrown out of heaven. In a way she realizes that she does not belong in heaven which stands for Edgar, but instead belongs to Heathcliff and Wuthering Heights. This scene is crucial since Heathcliff is eavesdropping and only hears the part of her saying that it would degrade her to marry him. Therefore, by telling her dream, or her unconscious, she has lost them. And when Heathcliff runs away she has lost him and therefore represses him again. One could say that, by telling her dream out loud to Ellen, Catherine is leading her own life in the wrong direction. Ellen does nothing to stop her even though she must know how connected Catherine is to Heathcliff.

“I am Heathcliff” is the recurring theme of the novel, which is what Catherine says when she explains her dream to Ellen. In the dream she realizes how connected she is with him. In dream-interpretations one looks for a hidden meaning, “the latent dream behind the manifest dream” (Rennison 44). It is the unconscious that really tells the meaning of the dream, that is,
the latent dream. In Catherine’s dream this could be that she is realizing how much Heathcliff means to her and how unhappy she is without him. By coming to the Grange, which is connected with heaven in her dream, she is stuck in heaven fighting to get back to the Heights. She becomes unhappy by the enclosed environment she finds herself in. When Heathcliff, or the pleasure principle, comes back it is already too late for her to change her mind. Susan Rubinow Gorsky argues in “I’l Cry Myself Sick’: Illness in Wuthering Heights” that her pregnant body hinders their relationship as well “Married and pregnant, Catherine is doubly trapped in traditional roles that deny Heathcliff any significance in her life. His return reminds her of her other self, lost or hidden or even distorted by the shape of her pregnant body” (183).

Catherine goes into a fit after Edgar has told her that she cannot have both him and Heathcliff as her friends, and that she must choose between them. After that she locks herself up in her room for three whole days without anything to eat or drink, but when she tells Ellen that she is dying Ellen does not believe in her. This, saying that she is dying, could also be her convincing herself that she actually is dying as when she made herself sick in her childhood. She has convinced herself that nobody cares about what happens to her and therefore is faced with being on her own, which leads to her losing herself.

Her mind goes from not recognizing herself in the mirror to pulling feathers. Later on she goes back in time to her childhood on the moors when Heathcliff made the separation between the mother and children of birds. “Exhaustion of body had entirely subdued her spirit; our fiery Catherine was no better than a wailing child!” (97). Catherine’s confusion must come from her starving and thereby making herself weak, which is why her mind is wandering back and forth in time. Her state is similar to dreaming because she brings up her fears that have been in her unconscious mind. Ellen is called “an aged woman”, symbolized
like a witch. That is the same assumption that Hafley makes in his text about Ellen being the villain in the novel. This is what Catherine comes across as well. She may be on to the right track in her confusion, the truth about Ellen and how she acts is coming out. Catherine could be recognizing that Ellen has kept secrets; one of them could be that she did not say immediately that Heathcliff was listening to Catherine’s tale about her dream.

Catherine believes that her “misery arose from the separation Hindley had ordered between [her] and Heathcliff” (98). Her tale shows that she knows how Heathcliff’s disappearance interfered with her and also that Ellen could have prevented it. Ellen must have known how Catherine felt about Heathcliff and that it was not right of her to marry Edgar. The most important part of Catherine’s tale when she is mad is when she tells Ellen to open up the window in her room, that it will give her a “chance of life” (98). Catherine must believe that dying will give her peace. In death she will not have to decide whether to be with Edgar or Heathcliff. Gold has the idea that Catherine is the ego in a male world and that she has to identify with Heathcliff and Edgar in order for her to survive.

When she chooses Edgar she also represses her own self, her wild side and her childhood. When she says that “he’s more myself than I am” about Heathcliff she identifies with him; that the two of them are the same (63). Gold argues that “To Catherine, psychological security means having not only a partner, but having one that is wealthy and socially acceptable” (124). Perhaps, the choice of marrying Edgar is because she knows it to be accepted by society and because she will gain status. One could see it as Catherine’s wish for power, a wish she has always had, because of the fact that she wants everybody to obey her. Gilbert means that on Heathcliff’s return, Catherine has lost power because she cannot control him the way she did when they were young, and that it is her loss of power that makes her ill. The superego, Edgar, stands for society and what society values most. One can say that Edgar is
the ideal man. It would be worth speculating what may have happened if Catherine had chosen neither of them and had just kept them as her friends instead. If one would speculate in that way she may not have gotten ill in the first place, since both of them are so important to her.

2 Culture and Nature

Culture versus nature in *Wuthering Heights* has been the focus among many critics over the years. It has been established that the two houses of Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange could stand for nature and wilderness versus culture and civilization. These two sides of her could be said about Catherine’s grave as well with “Edgar on one side of Catherine and Heathcliff on the other each represents one aspect of her double nature” (Miller 370). The three of them are buried together with Catherine’s grave in the middle. In agreement with Miller, this is a picture that is very descriptive of her, being divided between the men and the houses in death as well as when she was living.

Catherine must choose between Edgar and Heathcliff. However, it is not only a choice of love, but a choice between the houses and between becoming a rich lady or a beggar. Therefore, her choice is also of which level of society she will belong to. In the article “Looking Oppositely: Emily Brontë’s Bible of Hell” Sandra Gilbert suggests that a lady at that time in history “must marry”, because marriage was very important during that period (390). This seems to be accurate to Catherine because she makes it clear that she wants to marry Edgar simply so that she can become the ‘greatest lady in the neighbourhood’, that is to say, that she is aware of the status it would give her to be married to Edgar. Since Heathcliff had run away Catherine had no other option than to accept Edgar’s proposal.
Catherine easily forgets people who are not around. Therefore, she and Edgar had a calm life together as newly married until the return of Heathcliff: “For Cathy, nature is dangerous because it is so totally identified with Heathcliff”, that is to say, she was repressing her wild side while at the Grange (Homans 17). Margaret Homans argues further in “Repression and Sublimation of Nature in Wuthering Heights” that when Catherine came back from being at Thrushcross Grange when she was younger she changed into a civilized girl and that she was repressing nature and her friendship to Heathcliff. “Heathcliff, the past, and nature were repressed together”, she forgot these aspects when she was away (17). Catherine made herself forget Heathcliff when she was a child and as an adult.

Words involving nature appear throughout the course of the novel, even though one does not get to know what has happened in Catherine’s past when she was out on the moors with Heathcliff. Homans mentions Catherine’s diary, the first medium used to introduce Catherine to the reader. It describes them being inside the house of Wuthering Heights rather than when they are outside. Even though it is said that they will go out on the moors there is no description of them being outdoors at all. There are several descriptions of the weather, on the night when Heathcliff left “the clouds appeared inclined to thunder” (66). As said on one of the first pages, ‘Wuthering Heights’ is “descriptive of the atmospheric tumult to which its station is exposed to stormy weather” (4), the title of the novel is therefore connected to nature. This is all related to what happens later on when Catherine remembers her childhood, and in her memory one learns what really happened on the moors. That is a memory she has repressed because of the connection it has to Heathcliff.

When Catherine describes herself and Heathcliff being lectured by Joseph they throw away their books. It could mean that as a child, Catherine was not as interested in the written word as she is later when she is with Edgar. Robert C. McKibben’s text is describing the
importance of the book in the novel. Books are more important for the Lintons, they “call forth attitudes which are fundamentally in opposition” (McKibben 60), that is, contrasts between houses. When Catherine’s interest in books starts, she becomes more distant from Heathcliff, one could say that her gain of knowledge leads to their separation. Much later when she is dying and learns that Edgar is in the library with his books instead of looking after her, she is very irritated and questions why he does so. Then one learns that Edgar is finding it difficult to handle Catherine’s wild temperament and locks himself up with the books, so in a sense he is escaping into an imaginary world instead of dealing with real life. In a sense Edgar who stands for culture and knowledge cannot handle his wife’s wild nature.

Heathcliff is associated with figurative language standing for nature, for example, he has been called a “savage beast” by Ellen (130). Catherine is aware of his wild side and warns Edgar’s sister, Isabella, of falling for Heathcliff. This could be Catherine being jealous, or perhaps she is speaking from her heart because she is the only one that has had a close relationship with him. Edgar, on the other hand, could be said to stand for culture since he is more educated and is often keeping himself occupied with books. He was afraid of coming to the Heights to visit Catherine when they were younger and he handles the confrontation between himself and Heathcliff by walking away instead of fighting. Edgar knows that it will not help to solve problems with violence, for example, he was shocked when Catherine slapped Ellen. Instead, he encourages Catherine to read. This is an example of Edgar standing for culture and Heathcliff for nature.

However, Catherine’s choice of marrying Edgar leads to her losing Heathcliff. The end of Catherine’s life could almost be the end of Heathcliff and Edgar’s lives as well. The three of them are so connected to each other. One could say that Catherine’s personality, or character, is split in two, that one part of her stands for Edgar and the other for Heathcliff. She cannot
function without both parts. There are such opposites in them, the strong versus the weak. However, they both love Catherine. She wonders how they can continue to live when they have both broken her heart. Both of them lead miserable lives after her death, Heathcliff only wants revenge and Edgar is sort of fading away even though he has their daughter to live for.

It is also worth noticing that all three of them are buried next to each other with Catherine’s grave in the middle, so the three of them come into one. So perhaps Catherine had her wish come true in the end because she did not have to choose one of them in death as she had to do when she was alive. Ellen did say to Catherine as she was ill that they should not leave the window open because she would catch “a death of cold”, but Catherine’s claim that it would rather give her “a chance of life” could be that she realized that she would not have to choose between Heathcliff and Edgar in death (98).

Marielle Seichepine argues in “Childhood and Innocence in Wuthering Heights” that the young generation in the second part of the novel develops in a different way than the old generation. Catherine’s daughter who is named after her is less selfish and “her relationship with Hareton eventually develops in a positive way and she gradually becomes able to move from narcissism, pride, and contempt towards generosity and interest in the other” (213). This is something Catherine herself was not able to; she could not accept the fact that Heathcliff was not as educated as herself and thought of him as being too uninteresting to hold a conversation with. This is an example of Catherine choosing culture over nature, in contrast to her daughter who taught Hareton to read, thus demonstrating that nature and culture do not have to be mutually exclusive. Catherine could have had more patience with Heathcliff instead of turning to Edgar.

Catherine did not have such an innocent childhood as one may think. In her state of illness she describes being on the moors with Heathcliff and how he separated the children of a bird from
their mother and that they later on found the skeletons of the children. This is a cruel picture of Heathcliff as a child and something that Catherine has not talked about before, because the reader never gets to know what has happened when they were outdoors. Catherine has repressed the memory, perhaps because it was such an evil game, nothing innocent children would do. Even though Heathcliff could be seen as evil, at least in this part of the novel, Catherine always defended him when they were children. In the end when she does not have long left to live, she wants him to stay with her. Even though he contributed to her death in a way, by marrying Isabella, Catherine still wants him to be with her. She is reaching out to her past, as well as nature, in the end.

3 Catherine's character

The previous section deals with culture and nature in *Wuthering Heights*. In this section I will look more closely at what the novel says about Catherine. She is introduced in the novel as a child. Already in the third chapter Lockwood finds Catherine’s diary and since it is her own words it gives the reader a chance of finding out truths about her without the narrator interfering. It says that Catherine and Heathcliff are given lessons by Joseph and how they both detest it. Catherine throws away the book and Heathcliff does the same. By doing this one can sense that Catherine has a wild temperament even before she is introduced by the second narrator, Ellen Dean, because of how she revolts by throwing away knowledge. This gives the reader a picture of a rather rebellious girl.

Heathcliff and Catherine are almost inseparable since he has come to live with them. They are equal in their wild temperament and they are both hard to control for Mr. Earnshaw, who lets them do as they please. When Mr. Earnshaw dies and Hindley returns with his wife, Catherine and Heathcliff’s freedom come to an end. Hindley tries to separate the two in several ways, by
not letting Heathcliff eat with them. He “swears he will reduce him to his right place”, which is to say, treat him like a servant (18).

From Ellen Dean, the second narrator, one learns about Catherine that “She was much too fond of Heathcliff. The greatest punishment we could invent for her was to keep her separate from him: yet she got chided more than any of us on his account” (33). To continue, as a child Catherine seems strong, “using her hands freely, and commanding her companions” (33). She is used to getting attention and her bad behavior could come from bad parenting, after she has lost her father she seem unwilling to accept her brother Hindley’s rules. By ordering the others she acts superior. Also, Ellen’s own opinion of Catherine is rather cruel because she, Ellen that is, is participating in trying to keep Catherine separate from Heathcliff.

Even though Heathcliff is her friend she can easily forget him, as Ellen Dean say is part of her double character, and she says that it “led her to adopt a double character without exactly intending to deceive anyone” (52). This is important knowledge about Catherine because it shows how easily she forgets one man when another is present. By adapting to the environment she acts in a specific way when she is with the Lintons for example. Catherine herself does not seem to be aware of her double character. She is more herself when she is at her house, Wuthering Heights, and more civilized when she is with the Lintons. By being more herself, I mean that she is wilder, if one is to relate to her diary when she showed her wild temperament as well. In a sense, she is like a child, unaware of how she lets Heathcliff down when they are at home alone. Instead of telling him that Edgar is coming she makes an excuse for Heathcliff to leave her alone. Perhaps without intentions to harm him she lets him know that he is boring to have a conversation with and thereby degrades him.

Catherine wants to marry Edgar simply so that she can become “the greatest woman in the neighbourhood” (61). This could be put in contrast with marrying Heathcliff, which according
to her would lead them to be beggars (64). At the same time she says “Nelly, I am Heathcliff”, claiming to be one with him (61). Even though she wants to marry Edgar she cannot stand to be separated from Heathcliff. She wants to have them both, but at the same time it is impossible because Edgar would never accept it. Again, Catherine behaves like a child because in her mind Heathcliff will accept help from her when she is married to Edgar and this is how she would help Heathcliff to a higher status in society.

Ellen Dean is the one person Catherine can turn to when she is trying to figure out whether to marry Edgar Linton or not. However, Ellen does not tell Catherine during Catherine’s tale about her love for Edgar and how it would degrade her to marry Heathcliff, that Heathcliff is overhearing their conversation. Typically he does not stay to hear Catherine saying that she is Heathcliff. If he had stayed to hear Catherine, the whole novel would probably take a whole different turn.

When Catherine is home alone she firstly argues with Heathcliff. Later on when Edgar appears she has just let Heathcliff know how dull he is to have a conversation with. Obviously, she wants him to leave before Edgar comes to visit. Edgar’s appearance right after their argument makes it hard for Catherine to adjust and continue to be as polite as she always is when she is with the Lintons. This is when her true nature is revealed. Ellen’s refusal to leave Catherine and Edgar alone in the room leads Catherine to pinch Ellen on the arm, as she should not be cleaning the room when they have a guest. Here it is known that Ellen has been instructed by Hindley to not leave Catherine alone when Edgar is visiting them. Ellen warns Edgar that Catherine’s true nature is revealed when she pinched Ellen as well as shook her younger brother Hareton and slapped Edgar on the cheek as well. This time she forgets to adjust and therefore it is almost like her true nature shines through.
Indeed Catherine has a violent side that comes out when she cannot get people to do as she wishes. This is the first time Catherine threatens that she will make herself ill, “I’ll cry myself sick!” (56). This is the beginning of Catherine’s illness, which returns when she finds out that Heathcliff is gone. Still, Edgar stays with her, even though Ellen thinks that “He’s doomed, and flies to his fate!” (57). This shows that Edgar is weak because he stays with Catherine even though she had slapped him and then threatened to make herself sick. She is in control because she makes him stay with her by threatening him that she will be sick.

In an article by James Hafley, The Villain in Wuthering Heights, the author claims that Ellen Dean could be seen as a villain in the way she interferes with the characters. In the passage just mentioned when Catherine pinches Ellen, Hafley argues that “The superb tone of that speech, with the strong contrast between its first word (a servant’s) and its last (a relative’s), beautifully illustrates Nelly’s skill as an “inconvenience”’” (Hafley 206). Catherine’s comment on how servants should not clean a room when there is a guest there indicates that Catherine knows what is right, and also how Ellen interferes with the story by stating her opinion as well as the other characters state theirs. It becomes obvious for Catherine in her mad state that “Nelly has played traitor” (101).

Moving on, Ellen Dean accompanies Catherine to Thrushcross Grange when she is married to Edgar. There Ellen cries out when she sees Heathcliff and Isabella kissing, which leads Catherine to make the statement that “people might think you were the mistress!” (88). Ellen is also responsible for not letting Edgar know how ill Catherine is. Instead he is in his library unaware of his wife’s condition. However, Catherine confides in Ellen several times. This may have to do with the enclosed environment they all live in. Since they are so isolated in both houses one would imagine that the servants overhear conversations and gossip about it with each other, as Ellen does when she is telling the story to Lockwood. Ellen seems to be in
the middle of the action all the time. That as well as keeping information gives her an important role. However, Catherine in her madness calls her a witch, in a sense, because she describes her as “an aged woman” (96). Thereby she “movingly realizes something of Ellen’s evil” (Hafley 208). Catherine remembers several issues when she is mad, such as her childhood memory, as will be described later on.

To continue, one learns that Catherine had a calmer life before Heathcliff returned. Nobody dared to disobey her, since her doctor had told them that she should not be contradicted after her deadly fever. However, when Heathcliff is seen kissing Isabella, Catherine has an argument with him right afterwards. When Edgar interferes she encourages him to attack Heathcliff, thinking that violence would solve the problems. By calling them “one’s weak nature, and the other’s bad one” she means that Edgar is the weak one because he chose to run away after he struck Heathcliff on the throat (90). It is after their fight that Catherine again wishes herself ill. This is exactly what she did earlier when Edgar was visiting her when she was alone when she was younger. Her behavior is repeating itself, with violence and illness reflected in her character.

When Heathcliff first hears of Catherine’s illness he thinks it has to do with her being isolated at Thrushcross Grange, which he calls a “frightful isolation” (120). Because he has not seen her since Edgar and he had their quarrel he is not aware of her mental condition. When Catherine sees Heathcliff for the last time she accuses him and Edgar of having broken her heart. Now she wonders how he can continue living and being so strong when she herself is dying. Their reunion does not last for long; Ellen interferes in the plot once again when she calls for Edgar to come. Once again, this could be interpreted as part of Ellen’s villainy. This is because it seems like she has always interfered, even when Catherine was young, to separate Catherine from Heathcliff.
Nicholas Marsh mentions that Catherine goes back and forth, “Forgetting and remembering occur simultaneously as she changes between her two states” (Marsh 69). As she is ill she reflects on her childhood for a bit, and then she changes back to her life with Edgar Linton. That is to say, she forgets one person when she mentions the other. She did the same when she was a little girl when she adjusted to her company, whether at the Heights or at Thrushcross Grange. This is all part of her double nature.

Catherine’s last utterance is to Heathcliff, “Oh, don’t, don’t go. It is the last time! Edgar will not hurt us. Heathcliff, I shall die! I shall die!” (127). She has a double nature until the end, when she is still torn between Heathcliff and Edgar. She knows that she will die and just like when she was little, she cannot stand being separated from her Heathcliff, who is “more myself than I am” (63). Perhaps when she realizes that she is dying she wants to go back to Heathcliff, that is to say, she longs to go back to where she came from, Wuthering Heights and to be herself as when she was a child.

4 Catherine’s Death

The part in the beginning of the novel when Lockwood sees Catherine trying to come in through the window of Wuthering Heights one could interpret as if she still has not found peace. “Catherine’s anguished desire to be herself expresses a uniquely female suffering: nowhere does she exist as herself, whole and entire” (Gold 40). Meaning that she is still divided in the end, in the sense that she cannot have what she wants, that is to say, the wish of coming back to her childhood’s house. This is a supernatural part of the novel, but it is still important, as this is before Heathcliff is dead. Just after he found out that she was dead he said that he wanted her to haunt him.
To describe the character of Catherine Earnshaw is complicated. As mentioned before, the only true voice of her is given to the reader by the inscription in her chamber with her name repeated with three different surnames as well as her diary. She seems to be aware that her brother Hindley is trying to separate her and Heathcliff. Her explanation of her dream also includes how she would feel if they were to be separated. Therefore, the “separation-individuation process” Wion mentions would be accurate to the case of Catherine, because she has not developed into an individual.

Catherine said to Heathcliff when she was dying that “I shall not be at peace” meaning that she will not be at peace in death (124). When Heathcliff find out that she is dead he exclaims “Catherine Earnshaw may you not rest, as long as I am living! You said I killed you – haunt me, then!” (130). The fact that she appears as a ghost could be because she has not found peace. She is not one until all three of them; her, Edgar and Heathcliff are all dead. In the end of the second half of the novel when Heathcliff dies it seems like everything ends well. Her daughter is happy with Hareton, and Catherine herself has found peace. She is seen by a boy when she is walking around joined with Heathcliff, both of them as ghosts.

Catherine had a hard time growing up and learning how to develop into her own individual being. Therefore, she searched for a connection to Heathcliff and Edgar at the same time, in a sense to become one with the help of them. This she has finally found when all three of them are dead. This seems to confirm her statement that making herself die will give her “a chance of life”. Whenever Catherine met resistance she broke down with violence or with tears because that was the only way for her to deal with problems, by acting like a child. When she adapted to a certain environment, such as the Grange she behaved in a specific way when she was there, and in another way at the Heights. While living at the Grange she met no resistance from Edgar or his sister at first. It was not until her repressed desire, Heathcliff, came back
that trouble arose again. Perhaps she is more innocent than the reader may guess because she does not seem to know how her changing behavior affects those people around her. It is clear that she felt empathy for Heathcliff, because whenever he suffered, she suffered as well. That is evident because of Ellen’s saying that Catherine “got chided more than any of us on his account” (33). One could interpret that as her taking the blame on his account.

It is tragic that her ‘double character’ does not come into one. If say, there are two parts of her, the id that stands for Heathcliff and the superego for Edgar, then she has not learnt how to deal with both of them. She is split between two men, and also two houses, which leads to her illness and then to death. By Catherine’s marriage to Edgar she found herself in heaven, if we are to interpret her dream, or at Thrushcross Grange. However, Catherine did not think she belonged in heaven but by coming to live with Edgar she is locked up there with no way to get back to Wuthering Heights. The very first time she came to Thrushcross Grange, she was a little girl, and afterwards she was turned into a lady. It is almost like they projected their values on her, that of culture and being rich. When she came back to Wuthering Heights she was changed and Heathcliff was not educated enough to talk to her.

Catherine learnt how society and Edgar wanted her to be; like a lady, and she wanted to become “the greatest woman in the neighbourhood” (61). Because of her double character she did not realize how it hurt Heathcliff to face her new character. However, in her illness she realizes how Ellen has kept secrets from her and is in a way responsible of the separation between her and Heathcliff. All that has been hidden from her must have been in her unconscious mind waiting to come to her conscious level when she got mad. When Catherine is dying Wion argues of Heathcliff and Edgar that “her suffering will cause them pain and her death will be their destruction” (369). The three of them are in a way identified with each other and no one can live without Catherine who is the core.
**Conclusion**

To conclude, what has one learnt about Catherine? One simple answer could be that she is confused about whether to become a civilized lady or stay at the Heights. Sooner or later one must leave childhood behind to be able to develop into an individual. If she could have kept both Heathcliff and Edgar as her friends she may not have fallen into madness. Also, her parents dying when she was a young girl made her and Heathcliff behave as they wished, without rules, except those set by her brother Hindley. Growing up without any mother or father-figure or guidelines must have been difficult when she was to decide between men. Ellen was not a good help to her; even though she knew of Catherine’s wild nature and bad temperament, she did not warn Edgar.

Being at Thrushcross Grange made Catherine feel enclosed, at least after the return of Heathcliff when she realized that she had lost him. In a sense she lost herself, which is obvious by her madness when she does not even recognize herself in the mirror. The struggle of her character is that she cannot make up her mind between her two choices. She has not developed into an individual as she has not been able to keep both Heathcliff and Edgar, which lead to her death. By coming back as a ghost she seems to be stuck in the middle between her two choices, even in death. She does not find peace or happiness in life or in death. She is torn between them until Heathcliff is dead as well. So she does not find peace until all three of them are dead.
Works Cited


Miller, J.Hillis. “Repetition and the “Uncanny””. From the fourth edition of Wuthering Heights.

