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Heathcliff
**The Black Dog that Became a Bourgeois Gentleman – the
Combined Issue of Race and Social Class in Wuthering Heights**

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Abstract

This thesis will illustrate how the issues of race and social class in Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* are main focuses for how Heathcliff is perceived and how they influence his actions. The importance lies in how both issues are main reasons for how Heathcliff is treated. He is not treated primarily because of his social class nor his race, but a mixture of both. The analysis will be done by analysing the text with a postcolonial theorization of imperialism. It will also include the study by Terry Eagleton *Myths of Power: A Marxist study on Wuthering Heights* and Maja-Lisa von Sneidern's article "Wuthering Heights and the Liverpool Slave Trade".

Eagleton states that because of Heathcliff's unknown origin he has no natural social or biological standing and it is these factors that lead to the conflicts in the novel. Eagleton bases his study on a Marxist and capitalistic perspective. He does not consider the racial aspect of Heathcliff's situation as a main factor. By contrast, von Sneidern's study focuses on Heathcliff's undisputed racial otherness and states that the relationship between Catherine and Heathcliff is a mistress-bondsman one. In her analysis, Von Sneidern treats Heathcliff like a slave and only mentions the racial aspects of every situation and conflict in the novel. She does not consider social class as a main factor for the situations and conflicts.

This thesis will show how and why both social class and race are important to consider when analysing this novel, with Eagleton's and von Sneidern's studies representing some of the studies that have been made on these issues.

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Introduction

Emily Brontë's novel *Wuthering Heights* is greatly discussed, both today and when it was first published. At first it was considered "coarse and loathsome, strange and repellent" as Anita Levy writes in her book *Other Women – the Writing of Class, Race, and Gender, 1832-1898* (75). Today it is considered a classic of world literature. The complex characters and what they represent, as well as the narration style, have been the focus of many articles and analyses. Some of these analyses include feminist, cultural, psychoanalytic and Marxist criticism as well as articles discussing the settings, narration style, imagery, metaphors and the issue of race. However, the focus of this thesis will be on the combined issue of social class and race concerning the character Heathcliff. Similar studies have been made concerning Heathcliff's social class and race but these issues has not been included in the same analysis or article. This thesis will combine the two issues and show how both are relevant when analysing Heathcliff. Two writers that have done studies on Heathcliff and his social class and race are, among others, Terry Eagleton and Maja-Lisa von Sneidern. Eagleton focuses on social class and von Sneidern on race. This thesis will include these two studies because they are both extremes since they do not include both issues as main focuses, as this thesis intend to do. Eagleton focuses mainly on the issue of Heathcliff's social class and does not mention race as a main factor for his situation. Von Sneidern, on the other hand, focuses mainly on race and does not include social class as a main factor. Therefore they are good representations of studies that analyse the novel concerning social class respectively race.

The study by Terry Eagleton is *Myths of Power: A Marxist Study on Wuthering Heights*. He claims that because Heathcliff's origin is unknown he has no natural social standing – neither social nor biological (397). The social standing Heathcliff gains is created by Mr Earnshaw. He disrupts the social structure of the Earnshaw family resulting in conflicts – especially between Heathcliff and Hindley (397). Catherine, on the other hand, sees

Heathcliff's lack of social "belongness" (Eagleton 398) as some sort of social freedom since she herself does not want to live up to the social standards her social class demands of her (398). When Catherine decides to marry according to her social class, and because Heathcliff does not belong to one, she marries Edgar Linton. This results in further conflicts based on social structures, social standing and social classes (398, 399). Eagleton's theory is based on the social relationships created by social class and the structures of them from a Marxist perspective on capitalism. Eagleton emphasizes the aggressive capitalism that Heathcliff represents, but not so much what it resulted in. The fact that Heathcliff's race plays a part in what happens to him is something Eagleton mentions as a part of his social background but not as a main factor for what Heathcliff endures (398). Eagleton points out that the adult Heathcliff "is the atomic capitalist to whom relational bonds are nothing" (402). It can be argued that because Eagleton disregards Heathcliff's race as a main factor for what happens to him, his analysis is not comprehensive.

The other analysis this thesis includes is by Maja-Lisa von Sneidern; "Wuthering Heights and the Liverpool Slave Trade". She claims that the fact that Heathcliff is a man of "racial otherness" (172) cannot be argued and that the relationship between Catherine and Heathcliff is not based on love but instead more of a "mistress-bondsman" (178) relationship. She explains Heathcliff's actions after Catherine's death as the ones by a rebelling slave (180). She focuses only on the racial aspect of every situation and conflict that arises and that *Wuthering Heights* deals with the problem of race in Britain during the 19th century. She does, however, bring up some aspects of social class but in a racial sense, naming the inhabitants of the Heights and the Grange as Anglo-Saxons, yeoman and gentry (174). However, I argue that not all foreigners were brought to Britain in slavery, making von Sneidern's claim that Heathcliff cannot be anything other than a slave not as obvious as she portrays it in her article. Her focus lies more on what is said in the novel contrary to Eagleton, who focuses on the

situations that arise due to the social structure. The focus of her analysis lies on similar passages as Eagleton, but picks up the racial aspects of them instead. While Eagleton sees Heathcliff's actions after Catherine's death as ones made by a capitalist, von Sneidern views them as a slave that lost his mistress and rebels (von Sneidern 180).

The purpose of this thesis is to prove that in order to analyse the character Heathcliff concerning race and social class, one needs to consider both and to show the result of it. It will also show how race and social class determine how Heathcliff is treated and how that influences Heathcliff's actions. I will additionally, to some extent, question what Eagleton and von Sneidern state about social class and race. Because Eagleton's and von Sneidern's studies are extremes considering that they do not mention both issues as main factors, they represent some of the studies that have been made. Showing how both social class and race determine how Heathcliff is perceived and treated will be done through analysing the parts that Eagleton and von Sneidern bring up in their analyses of the novel and what they derive from them. However, this analysis will be done with a postcolonial theorization of imperialism because of the time when the novel was written and set. During that era social class was in focus for how a person was treated and perceived. With colonisation, foreigners were brought to Britain and with that another aspect to take into consideration – a person's race. Since the colonised were perceived as to belong to the lower – or lowest – social class, they were treated as such. Therefore it is interesting to combine these two factors – social class and race – as one issue when analysing the character Heathcliff.

The focus of this thesis lies on Heathcliff, as stated earlier. How Heathcliff is presented, how the other characters react due to his presence and the impact Heathcliff has on each character's life, and settings are some of the main focus points of this analysis. Since all characters react differently to Heathcliff but because of the same reasons – that is Heathcliff's race and social class – it is important to include characterisation as one of the main focus

points. How the characters react depends on which issue they react mostly upon, the issue of race or the issue of social class. For instance, Hindley Earnshaw reacts mostly upon Heathcliff's social class and the Lintons on his race but all reactions derive from both issues of social class and race. The settings in the novel represent different aspects of British society that are important in order to fully understand the postcolonial aspect of the analysis. For example how the Grange and the Heights represent different social classes due to their inhabitants and what happens in the houses. What they represent, and why, will be evident in the theoretical background.

One of the difficulties of this analysis is the narrative. It is too important to ignore but plays such a great part in the story that it is too big to include in this analyse as one of the main focuses. I will however keep it in mind and consider what James Hafley and J. Hillis Miller state about it.¹ I will consider the narration as unreliable altogether.

The basic outline for this thesis is this introduction followed by the theoretical framework where the relevance of postcolonial theorization of imperialism to my analysis will be explained. I am aware that the ideas of Marx was not as widespread as they are today and will therefore not consider the Marxist influences in the novel as conscious choices but as a way of analysing the novel. In this analysis Heathcliff will be referred to as "the colonised" since it is not evident in the novel where Heathcliff is from but that he is an outsider to the Earnshaw family. I choose the word "colonised" since I will approach the novel with a postcolonial

¹ Hafley writes in his article "The Villain in Wuthering Heights" that Nelly is the true villain (199) and an unreliable narrator. Since she is the one narrating the story she decides how the reader is supposed to perceive Heathcliff and the other characters. Hafley states that Lockwood, although being the other narrator, is innocent (201). Hillis Miller, on the other hand, states that the whole narration is unreliable considering the story being so vast and full of hidden meanings (43) and that Lockwood, too, is an unreliable narrator. This because he has to decipher all the confusing information that he tries to put in order (43).

theorization of imperialism. I will not refer to him as a colonised from a certain colony because Britain had a lot of colonies during this era. After the theoretical framework my analysis will follow, divided into three parts considering how the book is structured, focusing on Heathcliff. First the beginning of the novel, where the reader is introduced to the story by Lockwood, and the period before Heathcliff disappears for three years. Second the part concerning adult Heathcliff before Catherine's death. Third the part after Catherine's death leading up to where Nelly's narration ends. I choose not to include the part after where Nelly's narration ends since it does not contribute with anything that further will strengthen my claim. The analysis will follow this structural order because it is the way the novel is constructed and I want to follow it. The conclusion will include the main points of both Eagleton and von Sneidern and what I have derived from my analysis.

Theoretical Framework

The idea of analysing *Wuthering Heights* with an imperialistic perspective is not a new one. Susan Meyer uses a reversed imperialistic perspective in her text *Your Father Was Emperor of China and Your Mother an Indian Queen: Reverse Imperialism in Wuthering Heights*. She takes into consideration the impact British imperialism had on British society (98) and the fact that Mr Earnshaw got Heathcliff from Liverpool, which was Britain's biggest slave trading city. While she brings up Eagleton's text and what he claims about the economic social structure, she argues that the main issue of *Wuthering Heights* is British imperialism. However, as Leela Gandhi writes in her book *Postcolonial Theory*, imperialism and postcolonial theory cannot be mentioned without mentioning the other.

Gandhi states that "postcoloniality effectively reveals the story of an ambivalent and symbiotic *relationship* between coloniser and colonised" (11). This relationship moulded the behaviour of both coloniser and colonised. The colonised state of mind does not disappear

with the colonisers. However, since they are dependent on each other they both will dissolve if the relationship ends (Gandhi 11, 17). For example; Heathcliff's situation at the Heights dissolves when Mr Earnshaw dies and therefore the dependent relationship between Heathcliff and Mr Earnshaw is manifested. This means that both the coloniser and the colonised are affected by colonisation in different ways. That relationship will be presented by the metaphorical use of the Heights, the Grange, and their inhabitants. I see it as the Heights represents a bourgeois area in Great Britain inhabited by the Earnshaws that are introduced to a colonised – represented by Heathcliff. The Grange represents an upper class area inhabited by the Lintons that is not “contaminated” (von Sneidern 180) by a racial other (172). Mr Earnshaw is the only character to be considered a coloniser in the novel. He leaves the Heights and comes back with Heathcliff. Although Mr Earnshaw does not leave the country, he travelled to Liverpool where Mr Earnshaw found Heathcliff. Gandhi states that it is not agreed within the postcolonial theory which one of the colonised and colonisers are the real victims of colonisation (2). It is arguable that both Heathcliff and everyone that comes in contact with him are victims. Heathcliff's lack of belonging affects the people around him and he was mistreated, the mistreatment lead to his destructive choices and therefore both colonised and colonisers are victims of their own ideas about the other.

Another thing that Gandhi states is that imperialism is often forgotten about when postcolonial theory is used, especially Marxist anti-imperialism (23). Postcolonial theory derives from Marxist theory, more specifically historical materialism (Kemp 11). From this perspective, Great Britain's spread around the world had economic and material factors and Great Britain's conquests are seen “as a symptom of an unwholesome alliance and power.” (Gandhi 25). The last statement derives from the white man's idea of him being superior to other races and therefore had the right to colonise other countries and educate the inferior races (Brantlinger 2). This idea is apparent in, for example, the Linton's way of treating

Heathcliff as one of a lower class just because he is of another race. Great Britain's spread around the world and the ongoing industrial revolution in the country resulted in a new bourgeoisie, influenced by Marxist anti-imperialistic tendencies. The new social class gained property that used to be old feudal estates owned by the noble class (Kemp 15) which led to new industries and labour forces. British people were "steeped in imperial propaganda" (Thompson 38) even outside the cities. Propaganda was meant to inspire people to support "the Empire" (39) and the colonisation when it in fact had the reverse result (39). British people saw the colonisation as a threat to British commerce since colonisation brought new and cheaper produce, cheaper labour and threatening the living and income of British merchants and farmers. The relationship between Britain and its colonies changed from the colonies "being a source of supply" (Kemp 16) to "a market for industrial products" (Kemp 16) because of the colonies having cheaper labour and products than Britain. Because Britain colonised as a consequence of poor economics and the colonies could provide the cheap labour and products Britain needed, British people saw the colonisation as a threat due to the rise in population. This is evident in the Linton's aggression towards Heathcliff, manifested in their dog Skulker. That passage will be explained in the analysis. The threat and the issues that followed also led to unemployment and harder to find housing. Due to this threat the issues of social class and race became a central problem among British people (Thompson 39, 40) which von Sneidern brings up in her analysis. In her study she brings up how the slave trade divided British people into groups that either supported slave trade, did not wantS anything to do with it and those who wanted to abolish it. That led to political conflicts (173). The group that supported slave trade saw it as a business opportunity and did not care about the treatment of slaves. The second group saw it as a nuisance and the third group fought for slaves's human rights (173).

I would argue, in the spirit of von Sneidern's discussion, that the group that supported slave trade and did not care about how slaves were treated is symbolised by Hindley Earnshaw's behaviour towards Heathcliff. Hindley degrading Heathcliff to a stable boy after Mr Earnshaw's death (Brontë 59) since there were no one left to protect Heathcliff, other than Catherine, is Hindley showing possession over Heathcliff as a slave owner. The Lintons represent the group that did not want anything to do with them. Calling him a gypsy (62) is their way of distancing themselves from him. They rejected Heathcliff because of his race and social class as a direct cause of their rejection of imperialism. The Lintons did it more so than the Earnshaws because they are of a higher social class. This is also a clear verification that people living in the countryside had become hostile against the result of imperialism. Because the Lintons possess more than the Earnshaws and therefore have more to protect (Eagleton, 401), a result is that they are suspicious against all that is foreign to them and could threaten their position. The impact of Marxist anti-imperialism on British people was that the idea of owning land and real estate was equivalent to high social class increased (Kemp 18). This led to misery and Marxist anti-imperialism played a destructive role (18). According to Marx this is only possible when foreign commerce exists (Kemp 18). This is signified by the destructive path Heathcliff takes in order to gain social status equivalent with Edgar Linton.

Andrew Thompson states in his book *The Empire Strikes Back?* that the "Imperial expansion, it is said, 'made Britishness a more racist consciousness'" (186). He also states that it was not the only reason but one out of many, but the one that led to a different kind of awareness of British identity (186). The arrival of colonials in Great Britain further parted the British from foreigners, apparent in for example schools and organized sports (186). They were treated differently although they achieved equally to the British much as Heathcliff is treated differently from Edgar Linton although Heathcliff gained social status during his three years of absence. Patrick Brantlinger argues in his book *Taming Cannibals: Race and the*

Victorians that “the natives” (65) could not be civilized because they could only “mimic” (65) the white man’s behaviour (65) and could therefore not attain the same social status as a British person. He also argues that the racial distinctions as a result of imperialism is often ignored when analysing British literature (3), which is the case in Eagleton’s analysis, although he analyses the novel from a Marxist perspective. The issue of racial distinctions are comparable with Heathcliff’s achievements after he comes back from wherever he was those three years he was absent. Although he gained money and manners like a British gentleman he was not considered to be a real gentleman, although he was accepted as one (Brontë 99, 100), yet another example of how race and social class is a combined issue in the novel. Brantlinger also argues that the issue of racism was not obvious in Britain until the late 1890’s when it became apparent that violence often followed it (Brantlinger 4). The violence that Brantlinger mentions is visible in the novel as well as through Hindley’s violence against Heathcliff when they are young: “‘Off, dog!’ cried Hindley, threatening him with an iron weight, used for weighing potatoes and hay ... Hindley threw it, hitting him on the breast, and down he fell ... “ (Brontë 54). It is also apparent in the Lintons’ suggestion that they should do the country a favour and hang him (Brontë 62).

1. Analysis

1.1 Beginning and Heathcliff’s Younger Years

The introduction of Heathcliff and his manners when Lockwood mentions the Grange is a verification of Heathcliff’s disapproval of the higher social class represented by the Grange. His disapproval is apparent in what he says when he interrupts Lockwood when Lockwood calls on Heathcliff to introduce himself as his new tenant of the Grange: “‘Thruscross Grange is my own, sir’ he interrupted wincing” (Brontë 25). Although he himself is of a property-owning member of the bourgeoisie he dislikes the higher social class. This is

because of what he experienced during his upbringing and what it represents to him. What happened to Heathcliff will be revealed later on in this analysis. The postcolonial theorization of imperialism is visible here; Heathcliff being a colonised person that gained a higher social status due to imperialism but resents what the high social status represents, in this case the Grange. With Heathcliff representing the property-owning bourgeoisie, the Heights represents the old feudal estates that used to belong to the noble class, as indicated by the engraving above the door, "1500" (Brontë 26). This proves that the Earnshaw family are new members of the new social class, gaining property from the upper class as a result of the industrial revolution. The contradiction between the Heights's interior and outside structure indicates this change of ownership. Inside it looks like it belongs to a northern farmer but outside it is still marked by the noble class due to the engraving. Lockwood's comment about Heathcliff not belonging in that environment but seem fit to inhabit the Grange (49) suggests that Heathcliff in fact has risen above the bourgeoisie: "The apartment and furniture would have been nothing extraordinary as belonging to a homely, northern farmer with a stubborn countenance ... But Mr Heathcliff forms a singular contrast to his abode and style of living" (Brontë 27). He has the money to belong to the higher social class which is something Heathcliff does not wish to do. This is visible in his wincing when the Grange is mentioned. He winces because the very thought of belonging to the Grange and the upper class it represents, is repelling to him.

The true nature of Heathcliff is represented by the vicious dog that is "not kept for a pet" (27). As the colonised often were referred to as 'animals' and 'savages' (Brantlinger 65) the dogs represent the savage nature of Heathcliff, he is a gentleman and cannot have such savage manners as the dog has. Therefore the dog acts as a savage in his stead. This behaviour is not compatible with Lockwood's idea that Heathcliff is fit to inhabit the Grange.

When Mr Earnshaw arrives back from Liverpool and introduces Heathcliff to the family he has not only changed the social structure of the family as Eagleton states (397), he has also brought the result of colonization to their home, as will be demonstrated shortly. The bourgeois Earnshaw family is confronted with someone of a different race that also lacks social status. Catherine's and Hindley's reactions represent the British society's reaction to the new arrivals from the colonies. Mr Earnshaw had promised both children presents when he arrived back from Liverpool. When they find out that they are lost and broken because Mr Earnshaw had to attend to Heathcliff, Hindley "blubbered aloud" and Catherine "showed her humour by grinning and spitting at the stupid little thing" (Brontë 52). Since the colonised have no natural place in the British society both Hindley and Catherine react as if the colonised do not belong there and blame him for the unfortunate events that caused their presents to break.²

The reaction Heathcliff causes in the family is because of both Heathcliff's race and lack of social class. The description Nelly gives of Heathcliff being "a sullen, patient child; hardened, perhaps, to ill-treatment" (Brontë 52) is according to von Sneidern a description of a child growing up as a slave and a description often used by Victorians to describe Africans (von Sneidern 176). She only applies a racial aspect of the description and does not mention his lack of social class. However, the description of Heathcliff can also be used about an orphan child growing up on the streets, begging and stealing to survive and because of that had to endure blows and ill-treatment that often occurred when living on the streets. In that case it is based on lack of social class as well as racial difference.

Mr Earnshaw's treatment of Heathcliff results in Heathcliff gaining social status within the family. This provokes Hindley since he is the oldest son and should be treated better than Heathcliff. This leads to a conflict between Heathcliff and Hindley. According to Nelly this is

² To read more about foreigners in Britain, see Andrew Thompson's *The Empire Strikes back?* 64-65

Heathcliff's own fault. This is not the case, though, since it is Mr Earnshaw's actions that lead to the conflict. This conflict originates in Heathcliff not having a natural social class and an unknown biological origin, as Eagleton states (397). Mr Earnshaw's solution to the conflict between Heathcliff and Hindley is to send Hindley away to college to further increase Hindley's social status through education.³ When Mr Earnshaw dies Heathcliff's social status within the Earnshaw family disappears as a colonised's social status would when the coloniser left. There is no one to maintain it as Mr Earnshaw was the head of the family. With Hindley arriving back from college and him now being the head of the family, Heathcliff's situation deteriorates. Hindley's degrading of Heathcliff to a mere stable boy is Hindley stripping Heathcliff off his social class which Heathcliff gained from Mr Earnshaw. Degrading Heathcliff to a stable boy is Hindley's way of placing Heathcliff below him in regards to social status. This symbolizes the British people's desire to put the foreigners below them in social status. Hindley does this because the notion of social class is more important to him than race since Heathcliff robbed Hindley of his social standing as the oldest and only son in the family. The representation of coloniser and colonised is visible in Hindley and Heathcliff and their relationship – Hindley in deciding what social class Heathcliff should have and what he is supposed to do and Heathcliff being dependent on Hindley.

One passage that both Eagleton and von Sneidern bring up in their analyses is Heathcliff's and Catherine's "adventure" (Eagleton 401) to Thrushcross Grange. Heathcliff indicates that he and Catherine wanted "a ramble at liberty" (Brontë 60) stating that both he and Catherine felt like prisoners under Hindley's rule, much like slaves under an owner. The fact that they went to spy on the Linton children to see if they spent their Sundays "shivering in corners" (60) suggests that they both think that all children got the same treatment as they did. This notion shows how restrictive Hindley's treatment of Catherine and Heathcliff is for

³ Read more about education, social status and race, see Patrick Brantlinger's *Taming Cannibals: Race and the Victorians*. 65-66.

them, they do not know any other way of living. Heathcliff's description of Linton's drawing room and its beauty as well as his comment "shouldn't they have been happy?"(60) suggest that he thinks that happiness is the result of money and high social class. However, the Linton children's actions propose otherwise – Isabella lying on the floor screaming and Edgar crying because they almost tore a puppy in half when arguing over it. Heathcliff's expression of how he does not want Edgar Linton's life at the Grange "for a thousand lives!" (61) is a clear manifestation of postcolonial theorization of imperialism. Heathcliff does not want what imperialism stands for. He does not want to strive for the high social status Edgar Linton possesses if it means he will act the same way Edgar does. The bulldog that is released is, according to Eagleton, a symbol of the brutality the higher social classes conceal together with their possessions (Eagleton 401). The Lintons' prejudice against Heathcliff is clear in Mr Linton's description of Heathcliff and is a strong verification of "British imperialism" (Meyer 97). Von Sneidern's analysis includes Heathcliff's origin, that Mr Linton compares Heathcliff to "a little Lascar, or an American or Spanish castaway" (von Sneidern 172). Since Heathcliff's origin is unclear throughout the novel, Linton's statement about it is arguably mere speculations. However, because they react with that statement instead of one that can be related more clearly to social class, it suggest that Heathcliff is of another race, suggesting that the issue of race is one of the central parts in this and that Mr Linton is more concerned about race than social class.

Whilst Eagleton analyses the Marxist imperialistic aspects of the passage, von Sneidern uses it to establish Heathcliff's "racial otherness" (von Sneidern, 172) in the beginning of her analysis. While both make a good point it is arguable that the passage is a clear example of how both social class and race influence reactions and treatment. Because the Lintons knew who Catherine was and where she came from, they treat her with kindness, caring for her injuries caused by the dog Skulker biting her ankle. In her case her social class is what

determines how she is treated, indicating that social class is another main point in this passage. In Heathcliff's situation it is his race and behaviour that determine the treatment. They treat him the way they do because they consider people from a different race as less worth than those of a lower social class. This is evident in what Isabella says about Heathcliff: "Frightful thing! Put him in the cellar, papa. He's exactly like the son of the fortune-teller, that stole my tame pheasant. Isn't he Edgar?" (Brontë 62). Heathcliff behaving as one of a lower class, cursing and using improper language and being of a different race, spawn the Lintons' anti-imperialistic behaviour. Even the young Isabella recognises Heathcliff as "the son of a fortune-teller" (62) which can be interpreted as she calling him a gypsy since they were usually fortune tellers. Also, Mrs Linton calls him a gypsy (62). The violence in the situation, with Skulker biting Catherine, is further evident in how Mr Linton suggests that they should take care of Heathcliff – hanging him and rid the world of him (62). Since the aspects of both social class and race are important in this passage it cannot be overlooked and has to be taken into consideration in an analysis.

After her accident at the Grange, Catherine stays to heal. I see it as her stay at the Grange embodies Catherine's transition from being a little girl wanting to be free of the demands her social status put upon her, to a representative young lady. Even her appearance changed with her "fingers wonderfully whitened with doing nothing" (Brontë, 64). The notion of her fingers is a clear mark of how social status and racial aspects are important to consider together.

Being white is a verification that you have enough money, to not do work outside, as someone else is doing that for you. With Heathcliff being a stable boy he works outside and is therefore dirtier and has a darker skin tone than Catherine. Frances expresses her fear that Catherine might get back her old manners living at the Heights suggesting that it is not a good place to live for a young lady of Catherine's stature and that the Grange is a better place than the Heights when it comes to social class. When Catherine meets Heathcliff again after her

five week of absence it is evident how different the two are in terms of social status, she being cleaner and having a lighter skin tone than him because he works outside. Because Catherine grew up with Heathcliff she does not view him as others do, judging him because of his social class or race. After her stay at the Grange she becomes aware of her social status and starts viewing Heathcliff as others do, further demonstrating how the idea of imperialism influenced people. Catherine being aware of the differences between her and Heathcliff made him aware of the differences between him and Edgar Linton, both in social standing and in racial attributes. He becomes jealous of Edgar and wishes that he “had light hair and a fair skin, and was dressed, and behaved as well, and had a chance of being as rich as he will be!” (Brontë 67). Heathcliff expresses the essence of Marxist imperialism; wanting to be of a higher social status and being rich. Heathcliff wants it in order to gain Catherine’s attention. Heathcliff’s new found awareness of his social status and race leads him to hate Edgar Linton and begin to think about how he “shall pay Hindley back” (70). It is Hindley’s actions that put Heathcliff in the low social class he now belongs to and with that took away Heathcliff’s chance of being with Catherine. Because of her choosing Edgar instead of him to marry, Heathcliff sees it as Catherine betrayed him and her true nature. This is seen in his “*Why* did you betray your own heart, Cathy!” (Brontë 150).

The fact that Hindley acts as a brute towards his son Hareton and Nelly is something that Heathcliff is delighted about. It shows Heathcliff that someone of a higher social status than himself can act worse than him, giving him some kind of hope that he can gain social status by behaving better than Hindley. Arguably, this symbolizes the aspiration the British bourgeoisie had towards riches and higher social status due to colonisation.

The description given of the teenager Heathcliff shows the development Heathcliff went through after Mr Earnshaw’s death:

“... he had, by that time, lost the benefit of his early education: continual hard work, begun soon and concluded late, had extinguished any curiosity he once possessed... Then personal appearance sympathised with mental deterioration; he acquired a slouching gait, and ignoble look...” (Brontë 76).

Von Sneidern compares it to the description of Africans: “Whatever great personages this country might anciently have produced and concerning whom we have no information, they are now every where degenerated into a brutish, ignorant, idle, crafty, treacherous, bloody, thievish, mistrustful, and superstitious people” (von Sneidern 177). Since von Sneidern only focuses on the racial aspect, the aspect of social class does not get considered. When it comes to Heathcliff’s development, social class plays a crucial part. Since Heathcliff is degraded to a stable boy instead of Hindley’s equal, his social standing, as well as race, have everything to do with his development – from being curious and thinking he was of the same social status as Hindley, Heathcliff’s spirit seems broken. He acts differently and even his appearance changed. From being a confident child, curious about books and education, he now “acquired a slouching gait, and ignoble look” (Brontë 76) because he no longer gained any education and was mistreated by Hindley. Even Catherine distances herself from him. Heathcliff shows Catherine that he has counted the days she has spent with Edgar and that they are more than the days she has spent with him. The fact that she does not care as much about Heathcliff as she did before the stay at the Grange, further shows their awareness about each other’s social statuses and difference in race. Catherine now seeks the company of someone with higher social class than Heathcliff and with the same skin colour as herself which means that both social class and race are now important to Catherine.

Another passage that both Eagleton and von Sneidern analyse is when Edgar has proposed to Catherine and her issues with choosing between Edgar and Heathcliff. During her

talk with Nelly it is apparent that she does not like Edgar the way she likes Heathcliff which is visible with Nelly stating “and you love Edgar, and Edgar loves you. . . . where is the obstacle?” (Brontë 85) to which Catherine answers “*Here and here!*. . . , striking one hand on her forehead, and the other on her breast” (85) Marrying Heathcliff would “degrade her” (87). According to Eagleton this signifies Catherine’s awareness of her and Heathcliff’s social statuses and that Heathcliff “is socially inferior to Linton” (Eagleton 396) and is therefore not a good match for her (396). He also marks this event as the starting point of the “destruction” (396) that follows throughout the novel. Von Sneidern, on the other hand, marks this passage as further verification of Heathcliff’s and Catherine’s mistress-bondsman relationship and it would be “degrading” (von Sneidern 178) for Catherine to marry her slave (178). Von Sneidern sees Catherine’s declaration of her love towards Heathcliff as an expression of addiction as a mistress was addicted to her slave. However, it can be argued that Catherine’s issues, as mentioned before, have to do with the fact that it would be degrading for her to marry Heathcliff because of his social status and his race, not because he may be her slave. The anti-imperialistic way of thinking has got to Catherine due to her stay with the Lintons, because of their social class, but her feelings towards Heathcliff have not changed. This leads to her problem with choosing between Heathcliff and Edgar; should she be true to her heart and choose Heathcliff and with that choose an inferior way of living, or should she choose Edgar and make a socially and economically smart choice?

1.2 Adult Heathcliff

Edgar Linton’s fear of upsetting Catherine shows that he is aware of Catherine’s inadequate upbringing at the Heights together with Heathcliff resulting in bad manners for a young lady. It is not suitable to use bad language, run on the moor and not listen to your father/brother/husband. He does not want her to start acting that way at the Grange since it is not suitable and because he does not know how to manage such manners. This sets a clear

boundary between the Heights and the Grange concerning social class and behaviour and symbolises the British upper class' hesitation against the lower classes and the colonised.

The difference between Catherine and Edgar is further visible through the return of Heathcliff. Although Heathcliff has changed dramatically from his former self into a "tall, athletic, well-formed man" (Brontë 99), Edgar still refers to him as a "gipsy – the plough-boy" (98) and wants to seat him in the kitchen since "the kitchen ... a more suitable place for him" (98). What Edgar says about Heathcliff being a gypsy, suggests that he attempts to further distance himself from Heathcliff, and remind Catherine of what Heathcliff once was considered to be. Since Heathcliff now has gained social status and Catherine obviously shows a great deal of interest in his return by acting like a young girl again as she did at the Heights, Edgar does his best in reminding Catherine and Heathcliff of Heathcliff's former position: "... and Catherine, try to be glad, without being absurd! The whole household need not witness the sight of your welcoming a runaway servant as a brother" (98). Catherine's decision in seating herself and Heathcliff at the same table in the parlour and Edgar and Isabella at another when they drink tea, is her way of showing that she is nearer in social class of Heathcliff than Edgar and Isabella and that Heathcliff now belongs among them. Heathcliff's new found social status illustrates his skills in gaining social status, although it is not clear how he did it, and symbolizes the advancement of imperialism and that it is possible to change social class regardless of race. Although Edgar is reluctant to seat Heathcliff in the parlour he addresses Heathcliff as "sir" (99) suggesting that Edgar accepts Heathcliff's new found social status because of Catherine. Edgar's wish to please her is a sign of him behaving like a good husband associated with his social class.

Heathcliff's new found position catches the eye of Edgar's sister Isabella who, according to von Sneidern, mistakenly puts the "romanticized version of the Anglo-Saxon hero onto him" (179). This translates into Isabella mistaking Heathcliff to be one of her own,

considering race. However, with his new found social status she views him as an equal, socially wise, as well. Because of Isabella's social standing and her taking a liking in Heathcliff, it symbolizes how well Heathcliff has developed from an imperialistic perspective. Heathcliff judging Isabella by her looks is the reversed "colonizing gaze" (von Sneidern 181) that he had to endure from Mr and Mrs Linton at his and Catherine's "adventure" (Eagleton 401). Because of Heathcliff's gained social status he does not longer wish to be like Edgar Linton, but is repulsed by him (von Sneidern 181). Heathcliff's repulsion of Linton symbolizes the reversed imperialism that Mayer mentions (Meyer 116) and the advancement of imperialism into the higher social class with Heathcliff gaining land and property. Heathcliff's dislike of Edgar, and the social status he represents, is further evident with Heathcliff not wanting to strike Edgar down as he did before (Brontë 114).

Although Catherine married into a higher social class it is evident in her delirium when she is sick that she does not belong at the Grange and the high social class it represents (Brontë 121). Eagleton views this as the contradiction between the bourgeoisie and the higher social class (Eagleton 399). Catherine's expression of wishing she was a girl again, "half savage and hardy, and free" (Brontë 123) suggests that she is longing to go back to her old social class were she had the sensation of being liberated from her duties her social class demands of her now. When Catherine falls ill Heathcliff expresses his doubt in Edgar's ability to nurse her back to health due to the differences in their social class and Edgar's lack of understanding of what Catherine needs (145). He does not see Edgar's "*duty and humanity ... pity and charity*" (145) as characteristics that will help Catherine albeit they are "central to English civilized domesticity" (von Sneidern 178). Heathcliff juxtaposes Edgar's limitations in aiding Catherine due to his social class to that Edgar "might as well plant an oak in a flower-pot, and expect it to thrive, as imagine he can restore her to the vigour in the soil of his shallow cares!" (Brontë 145). Edgar's "shallow cares" is an indication of the inability the

British upper class had to comprehend the needs of the lower social classes. Heathcliff views Catherine's illness as self-inflicted since she had a choice to marry him instead, evident by his statement about her betraying "her own heart" (Brontë 150) and the fact that she has "killed herself" (150) symbolizing her leaving her social status for economic gain. The death of Catherine hits Heathcliff very hard and his agony is obvious in his reaction when Nelly delivers the news: "He dashed his head against the knotted trunk; and, lifting up his eyes, howled, not like a man, but like a savage beast getting goaded to death with knives and spears" (155). This passage symbolizes Heathcliff's savage nature due to his race as well as showing his true feelings towards Catherine and that his savage nature never fully can be hidden. He may now be considered to be a gentleman – even by Edgar – but his inadequate upbringing due to his lack of social class cannot contain his emotions as was expected by the higher social class. It is also one of the situations that urged Heathcliff in his pursuit of gaining social status by using British imperialism against itself in order to get his vengeance for being deprived of a social class. It is because of imperialism that Heathcliff is where he is and can gain social status. This is something that is not acceptable by the Earnshaw family or the Linton family and because they represent the British and Heathcliff the colonised, he uses something that they created in order to get his revenge on both families.

1.3 After Catherine's Death

One of Heathcliff's methods to gain social status is to marry Isabella, which he manages to do. Her running away from the Grange arguably symbolizes the curiosity the British had about the colonies in the beginning that lead to colonisation. Isabella had a romanticised idea of Heathcliff which would be crushed once she got there. This is similar to the experience the British lived through once they got to the colonies. Expecting to be treated as superior, they were met with hostility. Her escaping from Heathcliff symbolizes the result of imperialism,

the British society's resistance. Heathcliff's treatment of her represents the imperialism's effect on the British society – the cruelty the colonisers inflicted upon the colonised now effecting British society. Nelly describes Isabella when she first arrives back at the Grange: "... a deep cut under one ear ... a white face scratched and bruised, and a frame hardly able to support itself through fatigue" (Brontë 157). This suggests that Heathcliff physically abused Isabella. Isabella's and Hindley's desire for vengeance on Heathcliff (161) but inability to make it happen proves that Heathcliff has now grown more powerful than them. This is the result of how Hindley's treatment of Heathcliff comes back in Heathcliff's ill-treatment of him, which is the result of how colonisation inflicts anti-imperialistic ideas within the British society (Thompson 39).

The decline of British society due to colonisation is evident in Isabella's statement about it being "preferable to be hated than loved" by Heathcliff (Brontë 165). Since Isabella blames Catherine's death on Heathcliff's love towards her, it suggests that it is better to be hated by the colonised instead of them wanting to be a part of the British society. This is because the including of the colonised in the British society leads to destruction and the dissolution of the social classes, symbolised by Catherine's death. The death of Hindley leaves Heathcliff as the caretaker of Hareton and gaining the Heights due to Hindley's drinking and gambling and his inability to pay the mortgages. Heathcliff also takes out vengeance by treating Hindley's son Hareton as Hindley once treated Heathcliff, reversing the social status and making Hareton – a white, bourgeois boy – into the colonised, or giving him a social position as one. This represents the further decline of British bourgeoisie and Heathcliff – successfully gaining earthly property as well as human – represents how postcolonial theorization of imperialism may appear. This is a demonstration of the effect colonisation had on the British society – the ability of the colonised to change social status despite of the colour of their skin.

Von Sneidern notes Heathcliff's lack of emotion when Hindley dies as Heathcliff treating his death as a "difficult work successfully executed" (von Sneidern 183). The passage that clearly marks Heathcliff's triumph explains how "The guest was now the master of Wuthering Heights" and that Hareton was "reduced to a state of complete dependence" (Brontë 171) as Heathcliff once was dependent on Hindley. The social structure is totally reversed. According to von Sneidern, Heathcliff "has attempted to form his ward into a bondsman" (von Sneidern 184) when in fact Heathcliff takes out vengeance on Hindley by degrading his son Hareton to a simple servant, the action representing reversed imperialism.

Von Sneidern brings up Heathcliff's and Isabella's son Linton Heathcliff as evidence "of the racist stereotypes and anxieties of the time" (185). She argues that it is because of him being a "mulatto" (185) that he is so sickly and exploits Miss Linton suggesting that the malicious nature of Heathcliff lives through Linton as well although he is also a part of Isabella. However, since Heathcliff views his son as his "property" (Brontë 186) he is the one that manipulates Linton and Miss Linton into marrying each other. Since they exchanged love letters Heathcliff understands that Miss Linton and Linton has feelings for each other and sees an opportunity to use this to his advantage. He does this by blaming Miss Linton for Linton's fading health: "As true as I live, he's dying for you – breaking his heart at your fickleness, not figuratively, but actually" (206). Heathcliff views Linton as another tool in gaining more property and further establishing his situation as a property owning bourgeoisie. Nelly's remark about how Heathcliff should "be kind to the boy" since he is "all you have akin in the wide world that you will ever know" (187) is her trying to remind Heathcliff of where he comes from and that the position he now holds is not his by nature. Arguably, this represents an attempt to put a colonised – who has gained social status – back in his place when he has too much social power. Nelly's attempt to hinder Miss Linton from marrying Linton

represents the British society's attempt to hinder the advancement of imperialism symbolised by Heathcliff since Nelly knows what he is after.

Heathcliff's expression about how Miss Linton should "accept" Linton "or remain a prisoner" (Brontë 238) is in my view a symbolisation of how the British society should accept the result of colonisation or remain a prisoner of its own society. This refers to the resistance the British society had against imperialism. Heathcliff's expression of disgust against Miss Linton and what she represents as well as his satisfaction in seeing Edgar miserable due to Miss Linton marrying Linton is an expression of how reversed imperialism resulted in the advancement of Marxist anti-imperialism. When Edgar dies it symbolises the end of the last of the British society that was not "contaminated" by the racial other (von Sneidern, 180) resulting in another victory for the Marxist anti-imperialistic advancement of Heathcliff. Heathcliff entering the Grange where "he had been ushered, as a guest" (Brontë 247) is Heathcliff establishing his progress as a property-owning, Marxist anti-imperialistic bourgeois. The stripping of Miss Linton's social status – by her having to take care of herself when she comes to live at the Heights after the marriage – is the final revenge on his former life.

Conclusion

The strong points in Eagleton's analysis derive from his Marxist perspective. With his restricted focus he only derives the social structure influenced by Marxism of the situations in the novel. His focus lies on certain situations such as Catherine's choice between Heathcliff and Edgar, the arrival of Heathcliff in the Earnshaw family, the death of Mr Earnshaw and what that resulted in for Heathcliff, the "adventure" Heathcliff and Catherine had at the Grange, Heathcliff's character, and his issues with both the Heights and the Grange and the

social classes they represent. His study mainly proves how important social class is in how Heathcliff is treated and the actions of the characters.

The strong points of von Sneidern's analysis derive from her racial point of view and her connecting it with a real life event such as the slave trade in Liverpool. Since her point of view is that the relationship between Catherine and Heathcliff is a mistress-bondsman one she too is restricted in her analysis. The fact that she does not mention the social class aspect as a main reason for how Heathcliff is perceived creates a very narrow way of looking at the situations she analyses.

While both present strong points, the fact that both social class and race play equally big parts in the novel is evidenced by how differently the Earnshaw family and the Linton family treat Heathcliff. Their treatment depends on the colonization and the anti-imperialism that followed. The Earnshaw family, and especially Hindley, treats Heathcliff depending on his social class which is evident in Hindley stripping Heathcliff of his social class, gained by Mr Earnshaw, degrading Heathcliff to a stable boy. The Linton family treats him depending on his race and with that puts him in a low social class. This is manifested in how Mr and Mrs Linton address Heathcliff when he first arrives to the grange during his and Catherine's "adventure".

The fact that the treatment of Heathcliff influences his actions towards the other characters is also clear. Heathcliff's love towards Catherine derives from her not judging him according to neither his social class nor his race after it became evident that he was going to live with them when they were young. The main reason for the Marxist anti-imperialistic advancement Heathcliff makes is Catherine's choice to marry Edgar. Edgar represents the high social class that Heathcliff cannot attain and when Catherine chooses Edgar over Heathcliff she chose social standing instead of following her heart. With her decision she symbolises all that he could not have because of his lack of social class and after her death,

Heathcliff seeks vengeance upon those who treated him badly. He, from his focalisation, justly blames those people for his troubled life and for not being able to have Catherine.

Hindley is one of those people. After Mr Earnshaw's death Hindley is the owner of the Heights and therefore the one who makes the decisions. His stripping Heathcliff of his social class making him a stable boy is one of the actions Heathcliff wishes to avenge. Another is the ill-treatment. Heathcliff's revenge comes in the form of him gaining social status outside the realm of the Heights and the Grange and attaining the Heights and Hareton. His final vengeance is his treatment of Hareton. Heathcliff treats Hareton the same way Hindley treated him, stripping Hareton of his natural social class, switching the social standing within the Heights.

Heathcliff's revenge on the Lintons is evidenced by him marrying Isabella and treating her in such a manner that she runs away as well as getting his son Linton to marry Edgar's and Catherine's daughter Catherine. His vengeance is completed in him gaining the Grange after Linton's death.

Because of Heathcliff's actions all the inhabitants of the Heights and the Grange suffer to some extent. The fact that his actions derive from the way he was treated by the ones that he later on hurt, is one of the things that makes this novel the great classic it is. The complex issues of social class and race together during that era control the novel. One cannot be the main focus of a study without considering the other and not losing important aspects of the story. So does an analysis considering both social class and race give a more complete analysis of *Wuthering Heights*? Yes. If race is not considered when analysing, for example, Heathcliff's and Catherine's adventure at the Grange, we would not understand why they are treated so differently by the Lintons. If social class is not considered when analysing the part where Catherine arrives back at the Heights when she is healed, we would not understand

why it was wonderful that her fingers had whitened. Therefore one cannot have a conclusive analysis of *Wuthering Heights* without considering both social class and race.

Further research on this topic and novel could be a comparison between *Wuthering Heights* and another novel of the same time to see if the combined issue of race and social class exist and is as evident as it is in this novel. If such issue exists, one could analyse and compare how they are presented and dealt with in the different stories. Another suggestion is to include the narrative and the two narrators and analyse how much they actually influence the story and the racial and social aspects.

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