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Taming the Beast: Heathcliff as Dog in *Wuthering Heights*

by

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I. Introduction

In 2018, a cartoon created by artist Lalo Alcazar went viral on the internet. In it, an American woman wears a look of outrage on her face as she peers into a cage holding a scared looking puppy. She exclaims, “Oh my God! This cruelty must stop!” Behind her is another cage, this one holding four children labeled ‘USA Migrant Child Detention.’ The children stare with puppy-dog eyes waiting for acknowledgment from this woman who is never going to turn around. This cartoon recalls a passage in Charles Reznikoff’s *Holocaust* (1975) in which an SS officer kills a woman’s baby in front of her eyes, and then turns around and feeds a lump of sugar to a stray dog. Why do people have more pity for dogs, yet turn a blind eye to humanity’s own destruction? Perhaps this is why Emily Brontë was a misanthrope. Brontë spent little of her time socializing with anyone who was not family, and desired instead to be with her animals on the moors; her affinity was for the natural world. She scorned the wicked nature of human beings, a scorn deeply prevalent in her novel, *Wuthering Heights*. In Deborah Denenholz Morse’s book, *Victorian Animal Dreams*, she writes of the influences that Brontë had at the time she was writing: “Brontë’s Victorian text is also very much a book of its times, influenced by the work of Darwin and other progressive scientists...Brontë accepted the predatory realities of the natural world, and recognized man as animal, implicated in Nature’s creative and destructive courses” (182). As a result of Darwin’s work, people in England became more intrigued by the animals which they had—up until then—been using for hauling, hunting, wearing. At this time, the bourgeoisie began domesticating dogs and cats, making them extensions of their own family. Artists depicted dogs in human clothing, dogs were trained to act as sympathetic listeners to their masters, and children gained siblings in the forms of four-legged friends. But Brontë pierced through the pretense of this anthropomorphizing of animals. As Ivan Kreilkamp writes, she

seemed to “scorn a too-easy sentimental domestication, the creation of helpless ‘petted things’” (67). For Brontë, domestication meant suffocation. How could any good come from trying to make innocent species more like us? Brontë scoffed at the lifestyle of the sophisticated, knowing that neither man nor animal could benefit from the constraints of societal norms. In this paper, an analysis of *Wuthering Heights*’ characters, namely Heathcliff, will demonstrate how each sentient being has qualities of both man and animal, yet one’s most objectionable behavior is more a reflection of the humans who influenced this behavior and less a reflection of the loyal, helpless animal found within.

In an essay titled “The Cat”¹, Brontë blames humans for a cat’s poor characteristics, solidifying the accusation by stating that surely cats were innocent in Paradise. In light of Brontë’s view of the cat as corrupted by humankind, we can read *Wuthering Heights* as a more extensive polemic on the nature/nurture debate as well as a comment on social conformity. If we fail to see man as animal and vice versa, there will continue to be a divide, and fair treatment of any living species becomes unfathomable. Brontë saw the harm in creating “petted things” because it was an attempt at removing the animal from itself. As a misanthrope, Brontë felt that man was not all good, but evil could be suppressed if treated appropriately. Heathcliff’s uncanny comparisons to a dog throughout the novel are analyzed within this paper, but I am interested not simply in an analysis of Heathcliff as canine, but rather in Heathcliff’s animality which is completely undermined by his humanity because he became accustomed to violence due to his consistent abandonment from the domestic space. In contrast, siblings Edgar and Isabella Linton are so forced into their conventional bourgeois lifestyle that they are weak and easily malleable by more powerful characters. *Wuthering Heights* is a polemic on the destructive nature of

¹ Written during her time in Brussels, Belgium, which I go into in detail later in the thesis.

humankind, in its violent ways and its vitriol for the helpless, the wounded, the different, the animal. It was eighteenth-century German idealist philosopher Immanuel Kant who worried about cruelty to animals leading to cruelty to man, but Brontë extends this conversation into talk of domestication and social structure in humans leading to the cruelty to animals. Brontë is reaching out to the reader who can “most strongly feel the pain of the animal on the operating table, most powerfully respond to the force of that ‘bloody spectacle’ (Krielkamp 67).” She wants her readers to become the suffering animal in *Wuthering Heights*, because that is the only way that progress can eventually be made. The novel is an exercise testing how far empathy can go, even for someone like Heathcliff, whose revolting dialogue throughout the novel makes this task challenging. Brontë urges her audience to see Heathcliff as a sufferer. His malicious acts do not need to be excused or even forgiven, but they do need to be understood. If this can be achieved, then the audience will be more cognizant of the detrimental effects of negative treatment toward any sentient being. In *The Divided Self*, Masao Miyoshi describes the ending of the novel as indeterminate, noting that it “never can finally choose order over disorder, civilization over eros, self-control over ecstasy (161), and he is right; but Brontë wanted the reading to *surpass* the ending of the novel so that disorder, eros, and ecstasy stop dominating and destroying the world. This paper will first briefly examine the ways in which human/animal distinctions have been addressed by notable philosophers of the past and present before turning to a discussion of the ways in which Emily and her sister, Charlotte, attempted to erase these distinctions in writings they completed in Belgium. The paper concludes with an analysis of the novel, *Wuthering Heights*, as it constitutes Brontë’s polemic on the danger inherent in the human/animal distinction.

II. From Aristotle to Dayan: The Human/Animal Distinction

The field of animal studies has grown significantly over centuries, evolving from Aristotle's original idea that the animal and the human are completely separate beings. In order to examine the ways in which Brontë's novel contradicts and complements philosophers' findings, we need a brief look into the views of major philosophers, both past and present. Aristotle (384-322 BC) believed that plants and animals were useful for human beings' personal gain, whether for food or for clothing. What separated humans from animals was an animal's lack of rationality. This led to his belief that animals could not be political and that humans were therefore superior. In *Politics*, Aristotle explains this difference in rationality:

The gift of speech...evidently proves that man is a more social animal than the bees, or any of the herding cattle: for nature, as we say, does nothing in vain, and man is the only animal who enjoys it. Voice indeed, as being the token of pleasure and pain, is imparted to others also, and thus much their nature is capable of, to perceive pleasure and pain, and to impart these sensations to others; but it is by speech that we are enabled to express what is useful for us, and what is hurtful, and of course what is just and what is unjust: for in this particular man differs from other animals, that he alone has a perception of good and evil, of just and unjust, and it is a participation of these common sentiments which forms a family and a city. (22)

Aristotle focuses specifically on the distinction between voice and speech. An animal's ability to have an audible voice only, with no capability of speech, yields it only capable of perceiving pleasure and pain. It is human beings, who, because of the gift of speech, are capable of understanding morals, usefulness, and good and evil. Aristotle's model does not take into account or explain an animal's ability to adapt to its surroundings, be obedient toward its owner, and know how to "ask" for something such as food or a walk simply with their body language. Aristotle also mentions that a human being's ability to speak is what helps form a family and a city. This directly excludes animals from the family, going against what the Victorians were trying to do centuries later. The Victorians saw animals as family members, using them to

sympathize with and comfort the members of the household, as well as treated the animal like a child of their own. Aristotle's exclusion of animals from society correlates with the treatment of Heathcliff in the novel, *Wuthering Heights*. In the novel, Heathcliff is excluded from both the Earnshaw family and the city. When he is found, he is a waif, wandering the streets of Liverpool where he is seemingly invisible. Mr. Earnshaw attempts to give him a new life, yet he is once again abandoned and ignored when he arrives at their home and is unable to successfully become a part of society.

If applying Aristotle's discourse on voice and speech to Heathcliff's introduction, his initial inability to speak anything more than gibberish and his apparent similarity to a beast deem him nonhuman, and thus, he becomes a resource used solely for the benefit of the others in the house. Hindley quickly banishes Heathcliff to the fields, making use of him the only way he deems appropriate: as a servant, due to Hindley's refusal to see Heathcliff as an equal. This treatment, in turn, creates a monster. In *Thinking Through Animals*, Matthew Calarco discusses the problem with the belief that one who is not as rational as humans and who lacks the ability to express itself the way we do is nonhuman. Calarco writes, "If we characterize what is quintessentially human as having language, rationality, or moral agency, then those human beings who lack such capacities will typically be seen as less than human rather than differently human" (40-41). In other words, through Aristotle's description of the difference between human and animal, people with varying aptitudes would be considered sub-human, a highly problematic assumption.

René Descartes (1596-1650) believed that the distinction between animals and humans was in the animal's inability to use language to make their thoughts understood. Since animals are lacking in mind and a sense of self, "experimenting on them (for which Descartes is

notorious) and killing them for food pose no ethical problems” (13). These ideas, particularly the ethics issue in regard to experimentation, seem archaic now, but the argument about the relationships among language, mind, and self can be applied to the novel. In *Wuthering Heights*, the sense of self is convoluted for Heathcliff. He has no clues about his identity, so he can only speculate about his origins. The beratement from others around him about his appearance, and Catherine’s confession that she cannot marry him because it would degrade her, do give him a sense of self, though quite a negative one. As a result of this treatment, Heathcliff becomes the vicious and violent character he is towards those who have wronged him. A dog’s loyalty to its owner is proof that there is a sense of self and a working mind within, and this loyalty is present in Heathcliff’s attachment to Catherine, just as Brontë’s own dog, Keeper, remained forever loyal to his mistress.²

Immanuel Kant’s (1724-1804) views are similar to his predecessors in that, for Kant, animals cannot be fully akin to humans since they lack rationality and self-consciousness.

However, he does stray from Descartes with his belief that cruelty to animals is not acceptable:

His chief concern here is not with what violence toward animals does to animals themselves; rather, his worry is that mistreatment of animals might lead to the mistreatment of other human beings. Hence, Kant argues for the necessity of cultivating “tender feelings toward dumb animals” that will ultimately assist us in “developing humane feelings toward mankind.” (14)

In other words, improper treatment toward animals might lead a human being to feel comfortable treating another of its kind the same way. The animal, here referred to as “dumb,” is too helpless to be able to express itself after suffering at the hands of the human being, and therefore possibly compels the human to feel less guilt which could lead to a repeat of these heinous actions. Kant believed that if humans treated animals tenderly, it would help create more harmony between

² Emily’s mastiff, Keeper, attended her funeral and subsequently spent the remainder of his life near her empty bedside. He was eternally loyal to her while she lived and after she passed.

human beings. It seems Brontë aligned her views with this, as mentioned previously in the Introduction. Mistreatment can be defined in a number of ways, and Brontë included the over-domestication of both man and animal in the definition of mistreatment in order to show the destructive nature of domesticity.

Charles Darwin (1809-1882), whose writings became popular at the same time Brontë was writing *Wuthering Heights*, deviated from the idea that man and animal were completely separate. He argued that “it is only human arrogance that would allow us to think we have non-animal, non-natural origins...and he stresses that there is ‘no fundamental difference between man and the higher mammals in their mental faculties’” (15). This was a breakthrough in the human/animal debate and eventually led to the passing of the Cruelty to Animals Act in 1876. As Keridiana Chez puts it in her introduction to *Victorian Dogs, Victorian Men*, “In the course of one generation, dogs would no longer be used to draw heavy carts or run on treadmills. Instead, dogs now posed for portraits, wore boots, rode on carriages, and left *cartes de visite* at their neighbors’ homes” (1). Attitudes toward dogs were certainly changing, but Brontë’s novel suggests skepticism. Chez continues, “Shifting from ‘cruel’ to ‘humane’ treatment, the bourgeoisie appropriated the dog to perform the emotional work of connecting couples, families, and society” (2). Upon learning that animals were just like them, the immediate response from bourgeois families was to welcome dogs into the home and force them to mend their families. Such force stripped dogs of their natural identity, imprisoning them into human conventions that they had long been free from.

Jumping ahead to more present times, pro-animal theorists such as Gary Francione believe that all like beings should be treated equally: “The principle also implies that no argument is actually needed for extending ethical consideration to animals; they and all other

beings who have interests deserve ethical consideration as a matter of principle” (Calarco 17). If this was the mindset of the Earnshaws (minus Mr. Earnshaw himself) in *Wuthering Heights*, readers would have read a very different novel. Regardless of who he was, Heathcliff would have been treated equally to Hindley and Catherine. Peter Singer, another pro-animal philosopher, adds to this by speaking of sentience, contending that “all sentient animals—whether human or nonhuman—are equal” (19). Singer includes humans in the ambiguous category of “animal” and requires that all are treated the same way. These views of modern-day animal philosophers correlate with Brontë’s purpose for writing her novel well over a century earlier. If humans and animals are treated the same, it must be in a way that will benefit society. Neglect, abandonment, and violence must be completely unacceptable. As seen in examples such as those mentioned in the Introduction (Lalo Alcaarez’s cartoon and the SS officer in *Holocaust*), the imbalance in treatment costs people their lives and humanity.

In Colin Dayan’s 2018 book, *With Dogs at the Edge of Life*, she writes of the current state of the world: “Humans threaten all forms of life, including their own, and, with preconceptions as damaging as they are delusional, they wreak havoc...In a country wracked by economic collapse, ingrained racism, and political paralysis, where else is there to go, except into the eyes of dogs?” (121). Her belief that humans are threatening is akin to Brontë’s belief that humans destroy. So why do both believe we should look at the world through a dog’s point-of-view? To evoke pity, sympathy, understanding, and hopefully, change. If we look at the world through their eyes, perhaps we can see the problems within ourselves. Dayan discusses at length a 2013 documentary from filmmaker Andrea Luka Zimmerman titled *Taskafa, Stories from the Street* in which Zimmerman effectively forces the viewer to see the equivocality between human and dog. The “rationality” distinction made by Aristotle, Descartes, and Kant centuries before

seems completely antiquated as street dogs of Istanbul are portrayed as more rational than the people amongst them. Zimmerman herself notes, “It was the dogs...they are first of all *themselves*; creatures of presence, with and amongst people, in busy streets. Exploring the fate of such animals is perhaps a reminder of the violence of modernity, where all that did not belong to its idea was banished from sight” (124). A dog’s ability to be itself is a result of its freedom from an all-too constraining society that human beings are forced into. Despite walking among us, dogs have full autonomy to be themselves, and as Zimmerman shows through her documentary, this self is a very caring, tender, and loyal one. Zimmerman criticizes the unfortunate demise of some of these street dogs as a look into the self-inflicting wounds we have created in our modern society – those who do not conform are forced to be destroyed. In *Wuthering Heights*, Heathcliff, too, is his own autonomous self for the entirety of the novel. It is a self that was molded by being outcast from society. He is a reminder of what happens when those who do not belong are banished. Catherine, who fought between the two worlds of human and animal, died as a result of being incapable of solving this societal “disease.” Catherine’s inability to conform to the expectation of her happiness as Edgar Linton’s wife forced her death, because her true desire did not belong in the society. Thus, only in death was Catherine able to find happiness, as she was able to be with Heathcliff once he died as well.

One person who was interviewed for the documentary, says that tourists who come to the city seeking “elegance...the stray dog...destroys the whole dream, like seeing a disabled child” (128). People come from all over the world to see a beautiful city and the presence of stray dogs complicates that image. Strays are a reminder of the abandoned, dirty, and neglected beings in the world, which, to these tourists, takes away from their attempt to see the city through rose-colored glasses. Similarly, the Lintons in *Wuthering Heights*, are a poster family for elegance;

they saw Heathcliff and felt disgusted and helpless at being unable to save him, so they abandoned any desire to do so. But as the interviewee says of the titular dog, Taskafa, a much-loved stray who passed away from old age, “[He] becomes the model of right behavior. Even when gone, he sets the conditions for a powerful, implacable consciousness that survives outside the skin” (128). Had Heathcliff been treated more fairly, could he too have been a model of good behavior? Could he have influenced the families to be better people? Could he have made a positive influence in their lives? In essays written by Emily and Charlotte about the behaviors of cats and dogs, both sisters prove Heathcliff’s fate would be much different had his treatment been fair and just.

III. The Belgian Essays

In 1842, Emily and Charlotte Brontë left their father's home in Yorkshire for the first time in their lives in order to attend a girl's boarding school in Brussels, Belgium. During their time at the school, the sisters wrote a number of essays ('*devoirs*') under the instruction of teacher, Constantin Heger. Among these essays were two by Emily titled "The Cat" and "The Butterfly" and one by Charlotte titled "Two Dogs." In "The Cat," Emily writes, "A cat is an animal who has more human feelings than almost any other being. We cannot sustain a comparison with the dog, it is infinitely too good; but the cat, although it differs in some physical points, is extremely like us in disposition" (*The Belgian Essays* 56). Emily saw the similarities in character between humans and an oft domesticated animal: the cat. Her connection between humans and cats is based on feeling, something philosophers centuries ago had used to *differentiate* the human/animal relationship. Emily argues that aside from obvious physical differences, our mind and character are very similar to that of a cat's, something she subtly extends into her writing of *Wuthering Heights*. Emily's misanthropy is apparent later in this *devoir* as she notes how those who feel that cats can only resemble the wicked due to their hypocrisy, cruelty, and ingratitude, are failing to realize their own hypocrisy. According to her, these traits are within everyone. She describes a cat who wants to retrieve something from its master's hand, but instead of snatching it violently, it "approaches with a caressing air," and once it has gotten what it wants, goes back to being a misanthrope. Showing the hypocrisy in humans, Emily writes the following:

"But," says some delicate lady, who has murdered half-dozen lapdogs through pure affection, "the cat is such a cruel beast, he is not content to kill his prey, he torments it before its death; you cannot make that accusation against us." More or less, Madame. Your husband, for example, likes hunting very much, but foxes being rare on his land, he would not have the means to pursue this amusement often, if he did not manage his supplies thus: once he has run an animal to its last

breath, he snatches it from the jaws of the hounds and saves it to suffer the same infliction two or three more times, ending finally in death. You yourself avoid a bloody spectacle because it wounds your weak nerves. But I have seen you embrace your child in transports, when he came to show you a beautiful butterfly crushed between his cruel little fingers; and at that moment, I really wanted to have a cat, with the tail of a half-devoured rat hanging from its mouth, to present as the image, the true copy, of your angel. (58)

Emily's description of this woman as delicate is similar to the ways in which she later describes the Linton family in *Wuthering Heights*. This delicate description is her way of saying a person is proper on the surface, and ignorant of their own animality within. The fact that this woman has killed small dogs through smothering affection proves the woman excused the deaths as unfortunate incidents instead of actual murder. Her inability to see her own likeness to the cat that 'torments' its prey is a result of her denial of her own tormenting of animals. Emily then explains how the husband's love for hunting proves that humans also torment their kill before death. In this gruesome image, a fox is being gnawed at by hounds, causing it to bleed and suffer. The delicate lady avoids such spectacles because the blood is an indication that the act is violent and harmful. By avoiding it, she does not have to acknowledge her husband's wrongdoings. As for her lapdogs, if she killed them through affection, there most likely was no blood present, making it easier for her to feign ignorance. Similarly, her son who crushes a butterfly in his hand, can be shown sympathy and affection by her because blood is not present in his hand. The lifeless creature is small and seemingly insignificant. In order to show the mirror image of the boy in the form of a cat, Emily wishes she could have a cat with a rat in its mouth, most likely bleeding from the attack. The presence of blood is the delicate lady's argument about torment, however in all four cases, the end result is still death. The only difference is that, in the deaths that are more violent, the blood makes a more poignant statement. Thus, the point Emily is trying to make is that both humans and animals are destructive beings, but destruction comes in

different forms. Instead of attempting to dismiss one's own destruction, the person needs to acknowledge it. Acknowledging destructive behavior is the only way to change the pattern.

Emily ends the *devoir* by blaming humankind for the evil traits of the cat by writing, "They know how to value our favors at their true price, because they guess the motives that prompt us to grant them, and if those motives might sometimes be good, undoubtedly they remember always that they owe all their misery and all their evil qualities to the great ancestor of humankind. For assuredly, the cat was not wicked in Paradise" (58). If this be her belief, while also maintaining that humans and cats are alike, then the wickedness inside of each being is due to their *human* nature, not their animality. In *The Belgian Essays*, editor Sue Lonoff discusses Emily's opposition to George Buffon's ideology that people should not care for ineducable creatures, like animals, and that humans are above animals in hierarchy. Emily's misanthropy, as Lonioff writes, "not only challenges the primacy of humans, it exposes their beastliness and folly" (67). Emily saw animals and humans as equals, but with this, also saw that humans were far from wholly good and thus, negatively influenced the animals they surrounded themselves with. In *Wuthering Heights* then, Heathcliff is, by adulthood, entirely animal, however it is an animal completely influenced by the heinous acts of the *humans* around him which has created this beast of a character.

The *devoir*, "The Butterfly" continues this misanthropic view, though it ends optimistically. In this essay, Emily's initially jaded view of living beings is noted in her line, "All appeared happy, but for me, it was only an appearance" (176). She goes on to call a singing nightingale a fool for singing so loudly, making it an easy target for hunters. She then extends her diatribe to all living things:

All creation is equally mad. Behold those flies playing above the brook; the swallows and fish diminish their number every minute. These will become, in

turn, the prey of some tyrant of the air or water; and man for his amusement or his needs will kill their murderers. Nature is an inexplicable problem; it exists on a principle of destruction. Every being must be the tireless instrument of death to others, or itself must cease to live, yet nonetheless we celebrate the day of our birth, and we praise God for having entered such a world. (176)

The most significant line here is that nature is the problem because it exists on the principle of destruction. In other words, every living thing is required to kill, or it will die. Inability to destroy is what leads to one's own demise. Destruction does not need to mean death, it can also be applied to other acts with harmful outcomes. People enjoy the thrill in being successful, but such success is often achieved by harming someone else in the process. A person who is unable to undermine others or be selfish at times for their own personal gain is arguably what stands in the way of that person being strong and prosperous. In *Wuthering Heights*, after suffering years of torment, Heathcliff turns to destruction in order to finally attempt to come out victorious. He manipulates those around him into getting what he feels he is entitled to after a childhood full of loss and degradation.

Catherine's own inability to destroy is what causes her death. She is incapable of destroying either of the two worlds she has created for herself: the conventional marriage with Edgar or the wild, ambiguous relationship with Heathcliff. In *Brontës and Nature*, Enid Duthie writes, "The theme of "The Butterfly" anticipates *Wuthering Heights* in its continuing somberness until the final note of optimism. It is in the bleak world of the struggle for existence that Catherine and Heathcliff live their tragic lives, once the brief happiness of their childhood is past" (231). Heathcliff and Catherine were unable to exist without one another, yet they were also unable to exist together because of society's constraints on their relationship. The *devoir* ends in a moment of revelation. At the moment the speaker crushes a caterpillar inside of a wilting flower, a butterfly flies past and the speaker makes a realization:

God is the god of justice and mercy; then surely, every grief that he inflicts on his creatures, be they human or animal, rational or irrational, every suffering of our unhappy nature is only a seed of that divine harvest which will be gathered when, Sin having spent its last drop of venom, Death having launched its final shaft, both will perish on the pyre of a universe in flames and leave their ancient victims to an eternal empire of happiness and glory. (266)

Every being, whether human or animal, must suffer. It is this suffering that eventually leads to perpetual happiness. In the novel, this happiness is found in Hareton and Cathy, though they still both had to suffer at the hands of Heathcliff until his death. If this realization be true, then an analysis of Heathcliff's suffering for much of his life may seem necessary to justify, since it led to happiness in the next generation. But stray from this and focus more on what this suffering means in the human/animal problem. If every living thing must suffer, then why does a distinction between human and animal exist? If we are all of the same fate, then there need not be a distinction made, since all beings in existence are part of this vicious cycle. If that be said, then Hindley's treatment of Heathcliff from an early age is unjustified because he should have been treated as an equal, and the suffering that each of them faced should be due to a circumstance outside of physical differences.

Though written by her sister Charlotte, the *devoir* "The Two Dogs" perfectly mirrors the unfair treatment of Heathcliff in contrast to the treatment of characters like Catherine. In "The Two Dogs," Catherine writes of a husband who brings home a puppy to his wife. Bijou, his wife, caresses the puppy and showers him with affection until the puppy grows older and becomes an ugly sheepdog. Her disgust at this creature causes her to banish it to the yard. Charlotte writes, "His degradation; detail his privations, the change in food and company. Philosophic reflections to be put in Clumsy's mouth; he can no longer be delicate; his ugliness has cost him dear" (60). Clumsy is directly comparable to Heathcliff, who was brought into the Earnshaw home in order to be treated more affectionately than he had been on the streets of Liverpool, but instead,

because of his appearance and obscurity, he is banished by all members of the household except for Mr. Earnshaw and Catherine (though his relationship with the latter is, of course, far more convoluted). With this comparison to Clumsy, who was once caressed and loved, one can imagine how *Wuthering Heights* may have been a completely different narrative had Heathcliff been treated kindly upon his arrival. In “The Two Dogs,” Bijou ends up receiving another dog from her husband—a well-bred dog named Zephyrette. She is “placed above all animals of her kind; her agility, playfulness—good heart” (60). But then, one night, robbers enter the home and Clumsy, with “the whole attitude and actions of a dog who hears a noise” is the one who fights them off. In contrast, Zephyrette *caresses* the burglars, while Clumsy, who was wounded in the act of defending his home, dies. Charlotte ends the *devoir* with the line, “Moral on the scheming flatterer and the man of merit.” Referring back to Emily’s “The Cat,” scheming flattery is a human characteristic, adopted by animals who become too domesticated. The too-domesticated become useful for strictly one purpose: sympathy and affection. Their natural instincts to protect are stripped of them. Since Clumsy was banished to the yard, he maintained his natural disposition and, in turn, it saved the entire family. What’s to be said here about the human/animal divide? That every domesticated living being needs both in order to survive and protect and maintain order, and therefore, both must be accepted. Emily took this advice herself, by teaching her dog, Keeper to “growl, bark, and jump on command” (Frank 136) in order to ensure he would still protect her and the house instead of simply being there for love.

IV. *Wuthering Heights* and the Animal

Wuthering Heights begins with Lockwood's arrival, where he is met by Heathcliff's dogs. Though the dogs live in the house and are thus assumed to be domesticated, Heathcliff notes to Lockwood, "You'd better let the dog alone...She's not accustomed to be spoiled—not kept for a pet" (6). Heathcliff was never allowed to be a domesticated being – Earnshaw's quick death and Hindley's hatred towards him forbade it. Therefore, he viewed pets as weak and purposeless. Heathcliff's dogs are meant to protect and keep watch (much like Brontë with Keeper), not be caressed by visitors. Heathcliff's warning to Lockwood is said in a "growl," proving his own role as undomesticated animal of the house. Despite Lockwood's struggle with the canines, Heathcliff shows no mercy, telling Lockwood that the dogs "won't meddle with those who touch nothing" and the blame falls on Lockwood for invading *their* space. The rejection of being touched stems from Heathcliff's own upbringing, when most touches were violent ones. The dogs in Heathcliff's home are products of himself: undomesticated animals who fiercely protect, and thereby reject all affection. The names of these dogs—Gnasher and Wolf—are mentioned by Joseph just a short while later when Lockwood is attacked by one of them. While naming pets is a sign of domestication, these names suggest the opposite. Gnasher and Wolf are suggestive of violent, wild, and untamed animals. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary*, a gnasher is literally a person who "engages in gnashing or grinding of the teeth, especially because of anger or anxiety" ("gnasher n1"), yet figuratively "a person who is excessively agitated or fretful about something" ("gnasher n1"). Such a definition shows the likeness between Heathcliff and his dogs, particularly when looking at Heathcliff's volatile history. From his introduction to the Earnshaw residence, Heathcliff is met with abandonment and violence. This constant refusal by those around him to acknowledge him as a being

deserving of rights led Heathcliff to a life filled with anger and pain. Similar to Gnasher, the *OED* defines a wolf as “a somewhat large canine animal...noted for its fierceness and rapacity” (“wolf n1”). Heathcliff’s rapacity, or greed, stems from years of never getting anything from others and needing to rely solely on himself for survival.

When Lockwood is trying to make conversation with Catherine, he asks which animal is her favorite and points to what he believes are cats. She, repulsed by his ignorance, responds, “A strange choice of favourites!” and he realizes that it is, in fact, a heap of dead rabbits. This discovery foreshadows Brontë’s polemic on pet-keeping, which Kreilkamp describes in *Minor Creatures* as “a grim underlying logic contained within the procedures of pet keeping: that is, that those animals we deny “favored” status—either unwanted particular animals or entire species—are at immediate risk of being turned into meat or mere flesh” (62). This was Heathcliff’s fate from childhood; having never been favored by anyone other than the late Earnshaw, he is unwanted by all except Catherine, though eventually even Catherine rejects him. His development into a violent and ruthless being is his way of avoiding becoming meat or flesh.

Lockwood’s remarks about the name of Heathcliff’s residence also foreshadow the untamed nature of the characters within its walls. *Wuthering Heights* is, as he puts it, descriptive of “the atmospheric tumult to which its station is exposed in stormy weather” and “the narrow windows are deeply set in the wall, and the corners defended with large, jutting stones” (4). Such a name banishes serenity and welcomes wildness and disorder. The narrow windows suggest that those inside feel trapped, imprisoned, and suffocated, much like a domesticated animal may feel as it yearns to be set free. The large, jutting stones are indicative of uneven, chaotic attempts to keep the dwelling together. Years before, Heathcliff was brought into this home that was then

disguised as a domestic residence, yet proved quite the contrary, particularly once Mr. Earnshaw passed away.

Mr. Earnshaw found Heathcliff while on business in Liverpool, bringing him home to his family in high spirits exclaiming to his wife, “See here, wife! I was never so beaten with anything in my life: but you must e’en take it as a gift of God; though it’s as dark almost as if it came from the devil” (37). Even though Earnshaw welcomed Heathcliff into their domestic space, he immediately mentioned the stark difference in appearance between Heathcliff and the rest of the family, even comparing him to something that would come from the devil instead of God. This confusion of whether Heathcliff was a gift or a curse led to a continued identity crisis for Heathcliff. In addition, though, this unnecessary mention of appearance made it easier for the rest of the family to reject Heathcliff. Kreilkamp writes, “The young Heathcliff...becomes an analog for the lost pet, needing hospitality and offering human characters the opportunity to demonstrate their sympathy and kindness or lack of those qualities” (57). Through this opportunity, though, we see how much the Earnshaws are lacking in their ability to treat Heathcliff with affection and equity, and thus, he becomes the hardened character we are presented with throughout the novel.

At first, Heathcliff acts as a creature of another species would, only speaking in gibberish that nobody can make sense of. He is immediately referred to as an “it” by Nelly Dean, making him nonhuman from first introduction. Despite Earnshaw’s altruistic act of trying to rescue Heathcliff from the streets of Liverpool, his wife wanted to fling “it” out the door, the children would not allow “it” in their rooms, and Nelly tried to leave “it” on the staircase landing in hopes that it would disappear. Much like the way Clumsy in Charlotte Brontë’s *devoir* “The Two Dogs” was treated, Heathcliff was banished and hardened by this early treatment. His christening

of the name Heathcliff foreshadowed the wild, abandoned life that lie ahead for him. Though perhaps affectionately named after a son who died in childhood, the *Oxford English Dictionary* defines a heath as “open uncultivated ground; an extensive tract of waste land; a wilderness” (“heath n1”). Therefore, from the moment he was given a name, he was to be regarded as an outside being, not meant to be welcomed into a domestic space. His namesake strips him of the ability to be properly educated and socially adept.

Through childhood, Heathcliff is treated most harshly by Hindley, who feels threatened by the affection and attention given to Heathcliff by his father, Earnshaw. At one point, Hindley directly refers to Heathcliff as a dog, threatening him with an iron weight and crying “Off, dog!” (39). Another time, Hindley knocked Heathcliff to the ground, and in order to regain composure prior to entering the home again, Heathcliff chose to sit down on a bundle of hay to collect himself, acting like a barn animal. Despite Hindley’s blows, Heathcliff still had the affections of Earnshaw and Catherine, until the death of the former. Heathcliff’s bodily position as Earnshaw is dying shows his dog-like characteristics. Heathcliff, Catherine, and Earnshaw are together: “Miss Cathy has been sick, and that made her still; she leant against her father’s knee, and Heathcliff was lying on the floor with his head in her lap” (43). This is the last instance where Heathcliff acts as a domesticated dog, peacefully lying down with the only ones who show him any respect. As Terry Eagleton notes in *Myths of Power*, “Earnshaw pets and favours [Heathcliff], and in doing so creates fresh inequalities in the family hierarchy which becomes the source of Hindley’s hatred” (103). Once Earnshaw dies, Heathcliff loses any chance of fitting into the home. Since Hindley views Heathcliff as an interloper, he never feels it necessary to respect him. What he does not care to realize is the detrimental effect this will have as time goes on. Eagleton writes, “Heathcliff disturbs the Heights because he is simply superfluous...The

superfluity he embodies is that of a sheerly human demand for recognition; but since there is no space for such...it proves destructive rather than creative” (106). Hindley’s treatment of Heathcliff, stemming directly from insecurity and selfishness, creates this monster of a character who simply wanted to be recognized and seen as an equal.

Catherine and Heathcliff’s relationship is strengthened by their similarities. Since Catherine is the daughter, she does not have a chance to inherit, and once her father has died, she has no true ties to her family. Heathcliff, being unaware of his origins, has no place in the social structure either, and thus, “Both are allowed to run wild; both become the ‘outside’ of the domestic structure” (Eagleton 103). For Heathcliff, this freedom is natural to him because of his lack of a social role. For Catherine, however, it becomes more complicated: “The freedom which Cathy achieves with Heathcliff takes her down that system into consorting with a ‘gypsy’. Yet ‘down’ is also ‘outside’, just as gypsy signifies ‘lower class’ but also asocial vagrant, classless natural life-form...Catherine is taken outside the family and society into an opposing realm which can be adequately imagined only as ‘Nature’” (103). While a child, this is simply innocent freedom, but once she grows older, and particularly after the incident at the Linton’s, Catherine is unable to commit to this relationship with Nature. She becomes divided into two selves: one which conforms to society and one which yearns to associate with the classless world. This fight between the two selves is eventually what kills her.

The hypocrisy of domesticity is shown in the fight between Edgar and Isabella Linton, witnessed by Catherine and Heathcliff. Heathcliff recounts this experience to Nelly:

Isabella—I believe she is eleven, a year younger than Cathy—lay screaming at the farther end of the room, shrieking as if witches were running red-hot needles into her. Edgar stood on the hearth weeping silently, and in the middle of the table sat a little dog, shaking its paw and yelping; which from their mutual accusations, we understood they had nearly pulled in two between them. The idiots! That was their pleasure! To quarrel who should hold a heap of warm hair, and each began

to cry because both, after struggling to get it, refused to take it. We laughed outright at the petted things; we did despise them! (48)

Firstly, Heathcliff's description of Isabella's scream makes it seem as though she is being tormented or even possessed. This scream of torture proves that her troubles seem to be deeper than a simple argument over a dog. Perhaps the prim and proper life of the Lintons at Thrushcross Grange was suffocating and difficult to maintain. The dog in the center is symbolic of the neglected being who suffered at the hands of the selfish. As he shakes his paw demanding, or perhaps pleading, for attention, he is ignored by the two characters who fought so violently over him just moments prior. This adds to Brontë's discourse on the mistreatment of the animals which Victorians so sanctimoniously welcomed into their home. In *Minor Creatures*, Kreilkamp writes, "The innocent dog was a stock figure in antivivisection literature, as when activist Frances Power Cobbe quotes from a physiology handbook recommending the sedation of dogs in order to plunge them 'into a state of immobility which permits us to place them on an experimenting table without tying or muzzling them'" (61). The cruelty done to the dog that sits between the siblings shows that Edgar and Isabella display the same brutal affection that the woman in Brontë's *devoir*, "The Cat," did. Such acts are supposed to be permissible despite the utter pain the dog is in, because they were done in the name of affection.

It is not the dog, though, that Heathcliff and Catherine refer to as "petted things" whom they despise; it is the siblings. The petted are the privileged, spoiled, and weak (note Edgar crying helplessly as Isabella shrieks), not meant to be pitied, but ridiculed. The pitied in this novel are the wild and the helpless, like the dog and Heathcliff, whom he resembles more than he seems cognizant of. Much like this dog, "[Heathcliff's] body becomes an experimental object for investigation into pain and suffering" (57) and we are meant to pity both he and the innocent dog, because both were brought into a domestic space unwillingly.

Back at the Lintons, Heathcliff and Catherine's laughter gets them into trouble as the Linton children hear it and send their dog, Skulker, after them. Unable to escape in time, Skulker bites Catherine's ankle. To skulk is "to hide or conceal oneself, to keep out of sight, to avoid observation, especially with some sinister motive or in fear of being discovered" ("skulk v2a"). For the Lintons, the conventional Victorian neighbors to the Earnshaws, to have a dog with such a name is telling. Beneath their clean frocks lies the concealed nature of the animal within, seen in Isabella's shriek and Skulker's vicious bite. After being discovered, Catherine is sent inside to be healed while Heathcliff is banished to the garden because, as Mrs. Linton said, he is "quite unfit for a decent house" (50). Heathcliff is never welcomed into domestic spaces and this exclusion is based primarily on appearance alone. His dark complexion deems him unfit for civility. Catherine was just as guilty as Heathcliff for spying on the Linton home, yet because she was familiar (and fairer in complexion), the Lintons decide to take her into their home and mold her into an esteemed lady fit for society. Heathcliff, on the other hand, is punished. Therein lies the hypocrisy which relates to Krielkamp's comments on favoritism when it comes to pet-keeping. To the Lintons, Catherine is seen as a pet that they can welcome into their home and turn into a sympathetic, doting woman, while Heathcliff is unsavable, so he is excluded from any conditioning.

Once Catherine returns to Wuthering Heights as a "new" woman, Heathcliff becomes more aware of his differences as a result of a comment she makes, in jest, regarding his dirtiness. He tells Nelly Dean, "I must wish for Edgar's great blue eyes and even forehead" (57). This wish comes from his understanding that if he looks more like the "favorite," Catherine will accept him. Though Nelly is able to rid him of the shame he has of his background, his calmness quickly disintegrates. Hindley locks Heathcliff upstairs that night while the Earnshaws and

Lintons are having a party. That night, Nelly speaks with him and he tells her that he is trying to determine how to get revenge on Hindley for all he has done to him. Nelly tries to scold him for such thoughts, but it is too late. By Hindley making Heathcliff into “meat or mere flesh”, he has created a vengeful monster. From this moment on, Heathcliff’s animal is present, but it further develops into complete sadism: “It is no longer only the violence shown by men and animals in the struggle for survival; it is the more sinister violence motivated by the deliberate will to wound as well as to destroy; it has degenerated into sadism” (Duthie 232). This quality is presented in his animality and is a direct result of his treatment by a human.

Since Catherine and Heathcliff are practically one being, Catherine’s own animality is a reflection of her time spent with Heathcliff. Though Catherine was always welcome into the domestic space of Wuthering Heights, her relationship with Heathcliff caused her to embrace the wild, natural side of her existence. When Edgar becomes a prospect for marriage, she becomes confused about how to behave. Her confusion shows in her violence when Edgar comes over in Chapter 8 and she slaps Nelly Dean on the face: “Catherine, love! Catherine!”, interposed Linton, greatly shocked at the double fault of falsehood and violence which his idol had committed” (70). Edgar saw Catherine as his idol because of her transformation while staying at his family home in Thrushcross Grange, but that is not the real Catherine. The real Catherine is the one who spent her days on the moors with Heathcliff. Edgar, though, is too naïve to understand that, so her violence is legitimately terrifying for him. However, because Edgar is a “petted” Linton, he is weak in character and thus, unable to leave the powerful Catherine, even when she slaps him, too, moments later. Nelly compares Edgar to a pet, saying, “The soft thing looked askance through the window: he possessed the power to depart as much a cat possesses the power to leave a half-eaten mouse....[T]here will be no saving him: he’s doomed” (71).

While Edgar does end up married to Catherine, her love for him is forced, much like the force of keeping up appearances in society, while her love for Heathcliff is unhinged.

Catherine's reasoning for why she cannot marry Heathcliff further exemplifies her two selves, but also the damage Hindley has done to Heathcliff's character. She knows that she has no business marrying Edgar, because she is not fit for him, but she says that "if the wicked man in there had not brought Heathcliff so low, I shouldn't have thought of it. It would degrade me to marry Heathcliff now" (80). In other words, if Hindley had treated Heathcliff with respect and conditioned him into an upstanding man, Catherine could have married him. Her use of the word "now" proves that there was once a chance for the two of them to be together, but that was ruined by Hindley's treatment of Heathcliff. Now Heathcliff is far too animal for Catherine to marry. Catherine has long since struggled between the human and the animal within herself, but because she is a part of the domestic social structure, she knows what side of her prevails when it comes to marriage, a convention of the civilized. One of the most famous lines in the novel comes when Catherine exclaims, "Nelly, I *am* Heathcliff! He's always, always in my mind, not as a pleasure, any more than I am always a pleasure to myself, but as my own being" (82). Prior to Heathcliff's arrival, she was accustomed to being a domestic member of a civilized family, but once she was introduced to Heathcliff, she was able to explore a whole new world, outside of the domestic space. She became one with Heathcliff, which grew difficult once it was time for her to pick a suitor. Later, once Heathcliff has run away after hearing Catherine's comments, Hindley sees her and inquires about her sullen appearance, calling her a "drowned whelp," or a puppy, thus showing how much more she resembles Heathcliff than her own family. Catherine has abandoned her true self, "her engagement to Edgar is an act of self-contradiction, self-betrayal: She abandons the heath and the storm—the stuff of herself, which is her common nature with

Heathcliff' (Miyoshi 214-215). This seems to be Brontë's own argument against a person's ability to be their true self as a result of societal constraints.

Heathcliff's absence for three years shows the ways in which animals, pets, and humans are treated quite differently. Kreilkamp writes, "It is typical for a Victorian pet to be treated in certain respects like a person but also typical for an animal to be forgotten or replaced and allowed to disappear without recognition in a manner that would seem troubling in the case of a human being" (17). Despite Catherine's sadness at initially learning Heathcliff had taken off, no one is as alarmed as they would be had a member of the household done the same. Life went on and eventually, in the time he was gone, Catherine became engaged to Edgar. However, despite learning this information while he was away, Heathcliff still returned, showing his loyalty to Catherine. This loyalty resembles Brontë's dog, Keeper's, loyalty to her. The relationship she had with her dog was not a "petted" one – she was forceful with him just as Catherine and Heathcliff are forceful with one another (though their force is less physical and more emotional passion). In Katherine Frank's biography of Brontë, *A Chainless Soul*, Frank writes of an incident that has now become notorious: "[Keeper] was fond of lounging on snowy white bed counterpanes and only desisted when Emily pummeled his eyes until they bled, a punishment no one else could have inflicted without running the risk of a counter-attack" (136). This violent punishment by Brontë is shocking, but her reasoning behind doing so was not to harm Keeper, but to make him understand his wrongdoing. It was quite harsh, and definitely explains where some of the violence in *Wuthering Heights* stems from, but Brontë loved her dog and only wanted him to be better. Duthie's explanation of Brontë's views on force make her rationale more understanding:

It is only when force becomes violence deliberately employed for a destructive purpose that it develops into a source of evil. The difference, and it is an essential

one, is very evident in the career of Heathcliff...He shows indomitable courage in grappling with the bulldog which attacks Catherine, and bears no grudge against her for her favoured treatment by the Lintons. (231)

Keeper was eternally loyal to Brontë. After the violent episode, he never disobeyed her again and he was constantly by her side, not out of fear, but out of love and loyalty. In Elizabeth Gaskell's *The Life of Charlotte Brontë*, she writes of the aftermath of the incident, "The generous dog owed her no grudge, and loved her dearly ever after" (269). If Brontë had harmed Keeper in an attempt to inflict malicious pain on him, then her behavior could be deemed destructive and her actions inexcusable. However, her purpose was solely to discipline and create a better being.

Heathcliff's loyalty is forcefully for Catherine, no matter the decisions she makes. The incident with the bulldog at the Lintons mirrors a real incident that occurred when Brontë had to pull Keeper away from other dogs engaging in a fight and got bitten. Like Catherine, she did not scream, but instead ran inside the house and cauterized the bite with a hot iron (Frank 136). The similarities between the two prove the resemblances between Heathcliff and Keeper. Kreilkamp writes, "Keeper, we might finally say, *is* Heathcliff and vice versa (which means that Cathy is also in some sense Keeper)" (64). This is an essential comparison because we are meant to pity and admire Keeper for his loyalty to his owner, not loathe him for his, sometimes, disobedient ways. If we are to look at Keeper's devotion to Brontë, despite her physical force towards him at times, as commendable, then we must do the same for Heathcliff.

When Heathcliff returns from his three-year absence, he is, as Morse writes in *Victorian Animal Dreams*, "truly a wolf in sheep's clothing" (183). Though his loyalty to Catherine is venerable, his treatment of everyone else becomes all the more vicious. This is, once again, a result of his treatment from youth that has become engrained in him and is impossible to reverse. In *Pets and Domesticity*, Monica Flegel writes that nineteenth-century discourse on street waifs

and wild animals focused almost entirely upon “the dangerous proximity of street children to violent, savage animality, the implication being that without early intervention...such children will fulfill the promise of their early savagery with an adulthood of violence...a degeneration that...cannot be expelled through education or separation from adult elements” (163). Heathcliff, though removed from the streets of Liverpool, was still placed in a situation that disregarded him as worthy of rearing, and he was therefore left to suffer at the hands of violence with no intervention. What he did during the three years he was away is uncertain, though he did come back groomed and bearing money. Despite this, it is too late for him to be completely expunged of his rage that has been brewing since youth. This type of degeneration is Brontë’s worry that if those unfavorable “pets” are abandoned, more violence enters the future world. As a result, his allegiance to Catherine is almost as strong as his allegiance to exacting revenge on those who made him suffer in his youth.

Heathcliff’s first victim in his thirst for revenge is the naïve Isabella. Such a petted thing as she is, as noted earlier about her as a child, has rendered her easily manipulatable. Whether Catherine calls Heathcliff names out of true belief of what she is saying or jealousy is debatable, but when Isabella admits that she loves Heathcliff, Catherine remarks that he is “an unreclaimed creature, without refinement, without cultivation, an arid wilderness of furze and whinstone” (101-102). However, earlier, while speaking to Nelly Dean in private, she speaks of the bitter misery she has endured in Heathcliff’s absence and says, “If that creature knew how bitter, he’d be ashamed to cloud its removal with idle petulance” (99). Thus, it seems Catherine actually does view Heathcliff this way, and she is not wrong in doing so. Despite his look when he returns, Catherine knows he is still the same person from youth: wild, untamed, and free of social responsibility. Catherine goes on to describe Heathcliff as a “fierce, pitiless, wolfish man” who

would “crush [Isabella] like a sparrow’s eggs if he found [her] a troublesome charge” (102). Despite this description, Isabella does not budge. She is no match for such a character, as she is far too polished; however, much like Edgar staying by Catherine’s side even after being slapped by her, Isabella is stuck on the idea that Heathcliff is the one she should marry, and thus begins her own downfall. As Catherine argues with Isabella over Heathcliff, she calls Isabella a naughty fondling, or petted person and fool. Since Isabella ends up making the foolish decision to essentially become Heathcliff’s pet by running off with him, this description is fitting.

When Heathcliff learns of Isabella’s affections, he “stared at the object of discourse, as one might do at a strange repulsive animal” (105), quite similar to the way that Cathy stares at Lockwood when he suggests that the heap of dead rabbits is her favorite animal. Heathcliff is repulsed at Isabella because he renders her useless...at first. He quickly realizes that marrying her would grant him power of Edgar’s estate, thus fueling his plan to get revenge on those who have hurt him. Nelly Dean sees what is happening and says, “I felt that God had forsaken the stray sheep there to its own wicked wanderings, and an evil beast prowled between it and the fold, waiting his time to spring and destroy” (107). According to the *OED*, a beast could simply be “a living animal” (“beast n1a”), however it could also be used to describe “the animal nature in humans” (“beast n1d”). Nelly Dean’s inclinations about Heathcliff were similar to the Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals’ (RSPCA) discourse on animal cruelty. The RSPCA published journals which included stories about people who were punished for their poor treatment of animals. One common story was “that of the fantasy reversal, in which young boys find themselves...made small and at the mercy of animals they have previously tortured” (Flegel 156). In the case of *Wuthering Heights*, Edgar is at Heathcliff’s mercy for having engaged in a relationship with Catherine. Isabella will be at Heathcliff’s mercy as a pawn in his

scheme, but also as payback for her comment in childhood to throw him in the cellar after the incident at their home. In line with Brontë's message, Flegel writes, "Both child and animal alike, in anti-cruelty rhetoric, represent wild subjects very much in need of taming" (157).

However, Brontë would remark that taming does not mean fully domesticating to the point of stripping a being of its identity, but rather being forceful, as she was with Keeper, in order to make the child or animal a strong, loyal, and fair being.

When Catherine learns of Heathcliff's plans, she continues with the derogatory name-calling. While pleading with him, she calls him an "ungrateful brute" (112), which by definition is an animal lacking in reason or understanding. It's worth noting that as Catherine notices this brutish character in Heathcliff, which she calls his "new phase," her health begins to deteriorate. When he was gone for three years, she reverted back to her domesticated self, but upon his return, old feelings returned to her and she was once again divided. This division began to harm her. In her delirious state, she tells Nelly Dean, "I wish I were a girl again, half savage and hardy and free; and laughing at injuries, not maddening under them! Why am I so changed?...I'm sure I should be myself were I once among the heather on those hills" (125). By saying "half savage," she acknowledges that half of her is also a girl of the social world, but it is the other half that she has identified with deeper once she gained access to it. She believes that the natural world would heal her of her delirium, and right after this, begs Nelly to open the window, but Nelly refuses, thus trapping her inside the world she never felt she belonged to. She later speaks aloud to Heathcliff saying, "I won't rest till you are with me," because she cannot be at peace until she is undivided.

Nelly discovers that Isabella has eloped with Heathcliff when she notices Isabella's dog, a spaniel named Fanny, "suspended by a handkerchief, and nearly at its last gasp" (128). This is

the first instance of Heathcliff physically harming another living being, and therefore foreshadows his mistreatment of Isabella herself. He hangs the pet, Fanny, because there is no use for that pet anymore since he is creating a new one out of Isabella. The fact that Nelly is able to save the dog, though, foreshadows that Isabella, too, will escape Heathcliff's brutish grasp on her life. Kreilkamp writes, "Brontë characterizes Heathcliff as at once subject and object of vivisection, as suffering animal and sadistic animal abuser...Heathcliff becomes inhuman both in his own animality and in his cruelty to animals" (66). Such traits are abominable, though it's important to note where it all stems from. If we are still to pity him, which we are, we as readers must become the suffering animal (Heathcliff) and empathize with the ways in which his pain has morphed into his destructive behavior. As Terry Eagleton writes in *Myths of Power*, "The novel says quite explicitly that Hindley's systematic degradation of Heathcliff "was enough to make a fiend of a saint," and we should not therefore be surprised that what it does, more precisely, is to produce a pitiless capitalist landlord out of an oppressed child" (111). The first step to gaining power is to take Isabella away from her domestic space and into the savage world of Wuthering Heights.

During her time at Wuthering Heights, Isabella pens a lengthy letter to Nelly Dean. In the letter, she questions both the house's and Heathcliff's qualities. First, she remarks on Wuthering Heights, inquiring, "How did you contrive to preserve the common sympathies of human nature when you resided here?" (135). Her question is similar to the description of Wuthering Heights that Lockwood gives at the start of the novel. With its prison-like windows, jutting stones, and cold atmosphere, Wuthering Heights did not welcome humanity, but rather, the uncivilized. In her letter, Isabella describes how difficult it was for her to get basic necessities like edible food and a place to sleep. She goes on to ask, "Is Mr. Heathcliff a man? If so, is he mad? And if not, is

he a devil" (135)? Mr. Heathcliff could have been a man, but due to maltreatment, he degenerated into a brutish animal. Isabella writes that she will not say why she is making such an inquiry, so the reader can only assume what kind of torment she has been forced to endure during her time at Wuthering Heights. Heathcliff has become a complete sadist, and it is all because he has been granted the power to be able to be one. Towards the end of the letter, Isabella mentions that a descendant of her own dog, Skulker, the same one who was responsible for biting Catherine (and, arguably, creating the division between Catherine and Heathcliff which led to his sadistic behavior), was living at Wuthering Heights and was obviously terrified of Heathcliff, for it unsuccessfully avoided him and Catherine heard a "prolonged, piteous yelping" coming from him. Interestingly enough, the dog's name was Throtter, and to throttle is "to asphyxiate a human or animal" ("throttle v1a"), the exact expected fate of Fanny, if not for Nelly saving her. This "rebirth" in the dog at Wuthering Heights could prove Isabella's inability to escape her own fate from Heathcliff or could be seen as a shield of her own abuse by him, as she is able to escape his advances, unlike Throtter. However, Isabella's status as a "petted thing" made her vulnerable to cruelty (Flegel 149).

When Nelly visits Wuthering Heights, Heathcliff describes, in detail, how he has never hidden his true, diabolical disposition from her. He mentions that Isabella saw him hang her dog and still chose to elope with him. He says, "No brutality disgusted her: I suppose she has an innate admiration of it...Now, was it not the depth of absurdity—of genuine idiotcy, for that pitiful, slavish, mean-minded brach to dream that I could love her?" (150) A brach is a type of hound, and Heathcliff goes on to explain how he experimented on her like she was an animal: "I've sometimes relented, from pure lack of invention, in my experiments on what she could endure, and still creep shamelessly cringing back!" (150). It is difficult to feel any type of pity

toward Heathcliff at this point, for he has admitted that he treats Isabella with even less respect than he himself was treated when he was a boy, at the hands of Hindley. From our knowledge, Hindley never conducted cruel experiments on him. However, in her letter, Isabella did ask if Heathcliff was mad and, at this point, it does seem he is. Nelly Dean responds to his comments by saying Isabella must believe he is mad and that's why she has not left. If he is mad, can we pity him? What has driven him to this madness? It seems his separation from Catherine and his inability to be with the other half of his soul has terrorized his mind. He has become an unthinkable monster because of his own torment. Eagleton writes, "Heathcliff is a self-tormentor, a man who is in hell because he can avenge himself on the system which has robbed him of his soul only by battling with it on its own hated terms" (112). Thus, the reader, the suffering animal, must forgive Heathcliff for the torment he is inflicting on others because of his own position in hell.

Soon after Nelly's visit to Wuthering Heights, Catherine's death becomes imminent, and some pity for Heathcliff may be engendered by his speeches to her. Heathcliff has asked Nelly to arrange a meeting between the two, and when he enters, he exclaims, "Oh, Cathy! Oh, my life! How can I bear it?" (156), mirroring the same sentiment as Catherine when she stated that she is Heathcliff. The two tormented souls go back and forth, and eventually Heathcliff flings himself at her, and Nelly describes the animal she is met with when she tries to assist them: "On my approaching hurriedly to ascertain if she had fainted, he gnashed at me, and foamed like a mad dog, and gathered her to him with greedy jealousy. I did not feel as if I were in the company of a creature of my own species: it appeared that he would not understand, though I spoke to him" (159). Here, Heathcliff shows his fierce loyalty and protection of Catherine, much like Keeper did for Brontë. This scene is also similar to the start of the novel, when Heathcliff tells

Lockwood that so long as he keeps his distance, the dogs will leave him alone. Here, he gnashes at Nelly for trying to touch something that he believes does not belong to her. It is what he says next though, that is most heartbreaking:

You teach me how cruel you've been—cruel and false. *Why* did you despise me? *Why* did you betray your own heart, Cathy? I have not one word of comfort. You deserve this. You have killed yourself. Yes, you may kiss me, and cry; and wring out my kisses and tears: they'll blight you—they'll damn you. You loved me—then what *right* had you to leave me? What right—answer me—for the poor fancy you felt for Linton? Because misery and degradation, and death, and nothing that God or Satan could inflict would have parted us, *you*, of your own will, did it. I have not broken your heart—you have broken it; and in breaking it, you have broken mine. (159)

The childhood treatment of Heathcliff is present in these agonizing statements and questions. He is directing this at Catherine, but it can be seen as a plea to the entire Earnshaw family, too. Mr. Earnshaw brought him home, with promise of a new beginning, and instead he was despised. Heathcliff is every rejected living, sentient being this world has ever created and disposed of. Here, Heathcliff is the children in the cage from the Lalo Alcaarez cartoon mentioned in the Introduction. Heathcliff is the torn baby. Heathcliff is the unfavored animal. He is the broken embodiment of the rejected. No sentient being should be left, like Catherine did to Heathcliff; rejected simply to be with a being more stable and attractive. Heathcliff blames Catherine for this horrible demise because she did it all of her own free will, just like all of humankind's destruction. It is all done by our own hand. Here, the reader, the suffering animal, can pity Heathcliff. In this emotional speech, he proves what it is to be that suffering animal whose entire being is defined by painful experiences.

Catherine dies not long after that. Heathcliff is not far away. Nelly notices him “leant against an old ash-tree, his hat off, and his hair soaked with the dew....He had been standing a long time in that position, for I saw a pair of ousels passing and repassing scarcely three feet

from him...regarding his proximity no more than that of a piece of timber” (164), yet they flew away when Nelly approached. Heathcliff was one with the natural world. Other living creatures that surrounded him regarded him as one of their own, a direct contrast to the greeting he is met with when he enters a domestic space. He cries out to Nelly, “I *cannot* live without my life! I *cannot* live without my soul!” and he then “howled, not like a man, but like a savage beast being goaded to death with knives and spears” (165). Without Catherine, Heathcliff is unable to exist. Despite her marriage to Edgar, she was still alive and accessible. Until her dying breath, Heathcliff remained loyal to her, but once she was gone, he was killed, too. Following the funeral, Heathcliff barely ate and spent each day at Catherine’s grave. This is very similar to the Victorian pet icon of loyalty. Kreilkamp writes, “In his extravagant mourning for Catherine, Heathcliff closely resembles a stock figure of Victorian magazine writing, the faithful dog whose loyalty exemplifies passionate attachment and presses against the boundary dividing everyday life and death” (62). Chez adds to this, writing, “The nineteenth century celebrated the undying attachment of man and dog with representations of the graveside dog: the faithful canine that refused to abandon its master even in death (13). Eerily enough and unbeknownst to Brontë, Keeper kept the same vigil for her when she passed away, attending her funeral and laying by her bedroom door, howling like Heathcliff did, for days. Isabella advises Heathcliff that, “If I were you, I’d go stretch myself over her grave and die like a faithful dog” (174). Though intending to be vicious with her statement, she is giving sound advice, as Heathcliff practically does do this. Despite his despicable treatment towards his wife, Heathcliff is devoted to his original “master” and soul, Catherine.

V. The Next Generation in *Wuthering Heights*

The next generation of children in the novel seems to be completely influenced by the negative forces around them. Hareton Earnshaw had been raised by Nelly Dean until she was forced to leave *Wuthering Heights*. From then on, he was raised by Hindley, who despised him, and Heathcliff, who, though never inflicting violence on him, did not educate or pay attention to his needs. Therefore, Hareton developed a disposition similar to the violent one he was surrounded by. Nelly, upon seeing him for the first time in awhile, noted that he was never physically mistreated by Heathcliff due to his “fearless nature,” quite akin to Heathcliff’s reactions to Hindley’s blows when he was a young child. Upon exiting the home, Nelly Dean “knocked over Hareton, who was hanging a litter of puppies from a chair-back in the doorway” (179). Taking after Heathcliff, who attempted to hang Fanny, Hareton is showing his own explorations into sadistic treatment of animals. When he was being cared for by Nelly, he was a weak, sensitive being, and now he is able to carry out tasks like this without batting an eye. Hareton was certainly an unfavored animal in the Earnshaw household, following the death of Frances, Hindley’s wife. As a result, Hareton was rejected and neglected, and became the destructive character he is here. Young Cathy, the daughter of Catherine and Edgar, calls him a “wicked creature” upon meeting him, because he called her a “saucy witch.” Cathy, who is being raised by her doting father and Nelly, is innocent and respectful, so such an insult is deeply hurtful to her. However, this nature of hers changes later in the novel.

Once Isabella dies, her son with Heathcliff, Linton, must come live with Edgar and Catherine. By christening him with the name Linton, though honoring her family name, she is automatically creating a petted thing like she and her brother had been. Sure enough, upon his arrival, Cathy “had resolved to make a pet of her little cousin” (197). Unfortunately, Heathcliff

intervenes and forces Linton to live with him at Wuthering Heights. For some time after that, Nelly raises Cathy as her own pet, calling her “a young greyhound” and a “happy creature and an angel,” but, taking after her mother, Cathy is unsatisfied and bored with this domesticated lifestyle and yearns to travel far beyond Thrushcross Grange to see what the rest of the world has to offer. When she gets her way and travels to Wuthering Heights to see Linton, she attempts once more to make a pet out of him, telling Nelly, “He’s a pretty little darling when he’s good. I’d make such a pet of him, if he were mine” (235). Cathy’s naivety that she can turn her cousin into a pet leads her to fall for Heathcliff’s offer to have them married, and to the reader, it seems that the vicious cycle is happening all over again. Soon after moving to Wuthering Heights, Cathy is subjected to the same awful treatment that her aunt, Isabella, was forced to take. Zillah, the servant there, described to Nelly, Cathy’s recent behavior, “I’ve been as stiff as herself; and she has no lover or like among us; and she does not deserve one; for, let them say the least word to her, and she’ll curl back without respect of any one. She’ll snap the master himself, and as good as dares him to thrash her; and the more hurt she gets, the more venomous she grows” (287). Venomous is a quality typically attributed to animals. While Cathy had previously been a civilized and cordial young lady, treated as a pet by Nelly and doted on by her father, she was quickly rejected from the domestic space by Heathcliff and Linton and therefore, the animal within her came out. This animal, much like Heathcliff’s, was created by the destructive forces around her.

Heathcliff’s and Linton’s deaths allow for the destruction of these disastrous families to finally come to an end. Cathy becomes well-acquainted with Hareton and is able to educate him by teaching him how to read. Eventually they marry, and Brontë’s ending to her *devoir*, “The Butterfly” begins to make more sense. The grief inflicted on Heathcliff from a young age

destroyed numerous people, and almost seeped into the next generation. The gross and inhumane neglect of one young, innocent, different-looking boy created a path of destruction that would last for decades. Luckily, the curse was eventually broken, and the reader can hope that Hareton and Cathy, both educated and docile by the end, change the fate of *Wuthering Heights*. But Catherine and Heathcliff's ghosts still haunt the moors, so that no one can forget the damage that can be inflicted upon individuals who are separated for petty differences.

It should not degrade anyone to marry another. It should not degrade anyone to respect another. The animal imagery in *Wuthering Heights* renders the reader a suffering animal. Much like Zimmerman does in her aforementioned documentary, Brontë forces readers to see the destruction of humanity through the story of a stray, a wild animal that became hardened and violent at the hands of his oppressors. The waif who walked the streets of Liverpool without a home or identity could have been transformed into a well-groomed young man with the help of the Earnshaw family, but they refused to see him as an equal. His unfavored status caused him to be no less abandoned than he was in Liverpool. Heathcliff should have been given the same treatment that Earnshaw and Catherine bestowed upon him by everyone else in the home. Had that been the case, Catherine may have been able to marry him, he may have developed a more positive identity within himself, and no one would have suffered. As children sit in detention camps simply wishing for a life better than the one they had, but not being able to get it because they are seen as sub-human by others more powerful, Brontë's message rings truer today than she could have ever imagined possible.

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