

# Wuthering heights reading log

[Literature](#), [British Literature](#)



Alex Plager Britten Wuthering Heights Assignment Round 2 Reading Log: The two men in Catherine's life represent one of many sets of doubles within the novel. Both of these men contrast one another, and fight for power, influence, love and attention in her life. Because both Edgar and Heathcliff both represent contrasting forces in the novel, they are unable to work together or act amiably towards one another. The goal of each one is to remove the other from Cathy's life. After Catherine's death, Heathcliff attempts to sneakily remove the lock of Edgar's hair enclosed in the locket about her neck and replace it with his own.

In " open[ing] the trinket, and cast[ing] out its contents," (145) Heathcliff believes that he has won this battle with Edgar. Symbolically, this action represents Heathcliff casting Edgar out of Catherine's life and heart, and filling the space with himself. Heathcliff walks out of the room believing that Catherine's body will be put to rest with only his lock of hair on her, meaning that he will be with her for the remainder of her physical existence on this world. However, Nelly steps in and intertwines Edgar's hair with Heathcliff's.

Both Edgar and Heathcliff live their lives believing that Catherine is holding a lock of only their own hair in her coffin, thinking that they are the only one who will be with her in death. However, Nelly's actions represent the fact that despite the two men's efforts of trying to win Catherine to themselves wholly, even in death, that Catherine holds both of them in her heart, and that neither one cannot be completely cast out. As Catherine is discussing the nature of her love for both Edgar and Heathcliff, she reveals a doubling within her personality.

She says, " Nelly, I am Heathcliff," (70) and continues on to say that any separation between them " is impracticable. " This revelation reveals a lot regarding their relationship, and how the two of them seem inseparable throughout the novel. It explains why Catherine allows Heathcliff to repeatedly come back into her life even though the sheer mention of his name perturbs Edgar's composure. The double that is Catherine/Heathcliff explains why Heathcliff is constantly a part of Catherine's life.

For Catherine, Heathcliff is less of a separate person, a different entity, but more of a projection of her personality. Heathcliff represents the wild, naturalistic aspect of her personality, which has been suppressed by her change into a civil, upper-class person. As such, this suppressed personality returns in waves, exhibited both in her fits, and Heathcliff's unrelenting visits, refusing to be put out like the fire Edgar regards it to be. The reoccurring theme of doubles is at its strongest within chapter 15 as Lockwood begins narrating the story to the reader from Nelly's perspective.

To clarify, the events have already been recounted to Lockwood through Nelly, and now he is narrating the story after she has told it to him, through her perspective, " She is, on the whole, a very fair narrator, and I don't think I could improve her style" (134). Needless to say, the reader is experiencing the story not secondhand, but thirdhand. Also, Nelly has already been revealed to be an unreliable narrator, as well as Lockwood. Combining the two is certain to have a profound effect on the story itself. The narration of the story has already had a tone of gossip about it, especially since Nelly called herself as a " gossip" (53).

Now the 'he said she said' essence of the story takes its strongest form, as we, the readers, are hearing about it 'through the grapevine.' Bronte uses this doubling of narration to emphasize the removal of the reader from the events in the story. The shadow of doubt the novel has been shrouded in is now a level deeper and darker than it has been up to this point in the novel. Nelly's biased narration of events, whose memory is blurred by time, is now coupled with Lockwood's own character flaws of misjudging characters and is subjected to his own bias as he recounts the already recounted tale.

Within the novel, the relationships between servants and masters are anything but traditional ones. One would expect a servant to respect their master, and keep their tongue in check, however Nelly Dean seems exempt from these expectations, causing the reader to question who is the true master and servant within the household. On page 102, "[Catherine] rang the bell till it broke with a twang," however, rather than rushing in as most servants should given the franticness of the bell ringing, Nelly "enter[s] leisurely." This singular event provides a plethora of insight into the relationship between master and servant.

The reader is able to discern that, since it is Nelly recounting the story, she would have no knowledge of the events happening in the room prior to her calling unless she was not already within earshot. Therefore, Nelly already knows the nature of the confrontation going on between Edgar and Nelly, and how it is of importance. Yet still, Nelly "leisurely" enters the room, flaunting her knowledge that Catherine needs her on a level beyond that of which a master typically needs a servant, and also spiting her by deliberately taking longer to arrive.

However, during her narration of this scene, the reader can see building emotion within Nelly just within the paragraph this quote is taken from. It is clear that Nelly's "temper of a saint" is strung tight by Catherine's "senseless, wicked rages!" (102) And as a result of this emotion that she is not entirely able to control, Nelly's narration of this particular scene may be more unreliable than usual, as she might be tempted to exaggerate Catherine's behavior in order to justify her anger with her to Lockwood more, so that he may agree with her, or so that she may feel that he does.

Diction Log: 1: "Will you say, twenty years hence, 'That's the grave of Catherine Earnshaw. I loved her long ago...' " (137) Synonyms: Linton Catherine's choice of calling herself Linton reveals much about how she views herself in terms of her identity. During her time as Catherine Earnshaw, Cathy identifies herself as being Heathcliff's lover, but after her marriage to Edgar, her public identity changes to Catherine Linton, signifying her position as Edgar's lover.

Telling Heathcliff that her grave will be that of Catherine Earnshaw is telling Heathcliff that she rejects her identity of Catherine Linton, and that she will be his in death, as she should have been in life. The continued musing on her death in this scene foreshadows her impending death, and this line serves to both comfort Heathcliff, and also ignite further heartbreak in regards to her death as Heathcliff both derives pleasure and anguish knowing that Catherine was his, yet was never with her. 2: "... while her cheeks, at once blanched and livid, assumed the aspect of death.

Linton looked terrified. " Synonyms: Edgar, her husband In referring to Edgar as Linton, there would normally be ambiguity in doing so because, <https://assignbuster.com/wuthering-heights-reading-log/>

technically, Catherine is also "Linton." But addressing him as solely Linton reflects both Edgar's feelings of her not being 'his' anymore and signifies the distance that he feels is growing between the two of them. The reader also knows that Bronte is referring to Edgar because the reader understands that Catherine is not truly a Linton, and not entirely Edgar's.

Bronte's word choice symbolizes a growing emotional distance between Edgar and Catherine, terrifying Edgar not only for the sake of her safety, but also for their relationship. Since Bronte's word choice reflects Nelly's disposition, it is also made known to the reader that Nelly sees this growing distance, and development of Catherine's character. 3: "Thought I hate him as much as ever, he did me a good turn a short time ago that will make my conscience tender of breaking his neck." (75) Synonyms: fond, delicate

Of the possible synonyms that could replace the word tender in this context, "tender" conveys the meaning of what Edgar is saying best. Edgar is saying to Catherine that despite his anger towards Heathcliff, he is refraining from retaliating violently because his conscience prevents him from doing so because he feels that he owes Heathcliff a favor. The word "tender," while typically used to describe something fragile that tends to break, is effective because it contrasts sharply with the action of "breaking his neck. 4: "... In fact, that his health and strength were being sacrificed to preserve a mere ruin of humanity, he knew no limits in gratitude and joy when Catherine's life was declared out of danger; and hour after hour he would sit beside her, tracing the gradual return to bodily health, and flattering his too sanguine hopes with the illusion that her mind would settle back to its right balance

also, and she would soon be entirely herself. " (115) Synonyms: happy, optimistic

If one of the listed synonyms were used in lieu of " sanguine" the only meaning to the sentence would be the implication and foreshadowing made by Nelly that Edgar had his hopes too high, and that Catherine would never truly return to health. However, the use of " sanguine" adds a certain connotation to the quotation. While " sanguine" has no direct link to blood, through definition or synonymously, the root of it is linked to blood. Bronte's use of this word in particular serves multiple purposes.

The first further emphasizes how high Edgar's hopes are for Catherine's healing. They are so strong they can be smelt, and tasted and have substance to them, the qualities of which are all likened to blood. Also, describing these hopes as sanguine serves to illustrate to the reader how much effort Edgar has put into helping Catherine, conveying that he has almost literally put blood, sweat, and tears into their relationship and her well-being. 5: "'Ah! you are come, are you, Edgar Linton? she said, with angry animation. " (110) Synonyms: liveliness, fervor This quote is taken from a scene in which Catherine is having one of her frequent fits. The verb animate is traditionally used to describe an inanimate object coming into motion. During her fits, Catherine is often likened to an inanimate object due to her habit of fainting, or becoming immobile. During this particular one, she had been relatively stoic, limp, and puppet like, as she had been starving herself and appeared " haggard" (110).

As such, the use of the word " animation" most properly fits the prior depictions of her within the scene as it fits the theme of her descriptions. 6: "

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Isabella and he had had an hour's interview, during which he tried to elicit from her some sentiment of proper horror for Heathcliff's advances; but he could make nothing of her evasive replies, and was obliged to close the examination unsatisfactorily, adding, however, that if she were so insane as to encourage that worthless suitor, it would dissolve all bonds of relationship between herself and him. (103) Synonyms: conversation, audience, exchange The use of the word interview enhances the meaning of the quote in that it provides a certain depiction of the exchange between Edgar and Isabella. Bronte's choice of the word interview conveys that it was not an amicable, two-sided conversation. While the interaction may not quite have been an interrogation, it was more aggressive than a mutual conversation would have been, as Edgar was obviously distressed regarding Heathcliff's relationship with her. : " Isabella and he had had an hour's interview, during which he tried to elicit from her some sentiment of proper horror for Heathcliff's advances; but he could make nothing of her evasive replies, and was obliged to close the examination unsatisfactorily, adding, however, that if she were so insane as to encourage that worthless suitor, it would dissolve all bonds of relationship between herself and him. " (103) Synonyms: inquiry, interrogation Continuing from the same quote as above, Nelly continues to reveal the nature of the exchange between Isabella and Edgar.

Choosing to regard it as an examination furthers the imagery of an uncomfortable interaction between siblings. The use of the word examination is more effective than " inquiry" or " interrogation" would be because of the tone that Bronte gives the nature of the conversation between them. Edgar is not an overly aggressive individual, and to interrogate his sister would be



out of character for him. However, an examination suits Edgar's passivity because it conjures an image of a jealous lover trying to elicit information from their significant other, which is much like what Edgar is trying to do. 8: "Cheer up, you shan't be hurt!

Your type is not a lamb, it's a sucking leveret. " (99) Synonyms: mouse, turtle I opted not to choose direct synonyms for leveret, which are rabbit, and hare, because these words do not change the nature of Catherine's insult. Bronte's diction here is likely due in large part to colloquialism of the time. However, the nature of Catherine's insult is rooted more in the fact that she is belittling Edgar as having the courage of a small animal more prone to flight, rather than to fight. Catherine chooses to call Edgar a leveret because of his predisposition to avoid and run from conflict, rather than to face it directly. A turtle retreats into its shell, whereas a rabbit will tuck its tail and run, exactly like Catherine is accusing Edgar of doing in this quote. This insult is particularly effective because Catherine is calling Edgar's manhood into question, which is not only uncharacteristic of a woman of the time, but she is also doing so in front of Heathcliff, effectively making a direct challenge to Edgar on both her and Heathcliff's behalf. Literary Criticism: " Will you forget me--will you be happy when I am in the earth? Will you say, twenty years hence, 'That's the grave of Catherine Earnshaw.

I loved her long ago, and was wretched to lose her; but it is past. '" (137) The goal of psychoanalysis is to interpret a character's (un)conscious desires by identifying Freudian concepts. An example of one of these such concepts is a Freudian slip, and one lies within the quote. Consciously or not, Catherine has called herself Catherine Earnshaw, despite her status as Edgar's wife,

making her both legally and socially known as Catherine Linton. However, she has revealed in this Freudian slip that she does not emotionally identify herself as Catherine Linton, but as an Earnshaw.

This is important because much of the conflict up to this point has stemmed from Heathcliff's anger at Edgar taking Catherine from him, and in his struggle to win her back from him. Within this quote, Catherine subtly tells Heathcliff that she will die Catherine Earnshaw, meaning that she is rejecting the Linton name, thus ultimately meaning that emotionally, she is Heathcliff's. " Well, if I cannot keep Heathcliff for my friend, if Edgar will be mean and jealous, I'll try to break their hearts by breaking my own.

That will be a prompt way of finishing all, when I am pushed to extremity! " (101) Within this scene, Catherine is venting to Nelly regarding her feelings regarding the conflict between Heathcliff and Edgar. In the quote, it is visible that Catherine is exhausted by their constant fighting, and the toll that it has been taking on her. Out of context, the claim the Catherine makes concerning her ability to " break their hearts" seems conceited, however, from a feminist perspective, this statement is substantial.

For a novel written in this time, it would be rather uncommon for a woman to be depicted as having power over a man, much less two of them. While Catherine does appear to be selfish, and conceited in this quote, she is depicted as essentially having control over the two men, in that she has the ability to "[finish] all," establishing the force that Catherine is able to exert in both of the relationships. In relation to the meaning of the work as a whole, this quote associates the ideas of emotional exile and acceptance. 3x3: Revenge consumes wholly Pain prevents transcendence

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