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Happy Ending or Punishment?: The Influence of Fairy Tales in
Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*.

Author

Ainoa Porcar Martí

Supervisor

Maite Escudero Alías

FACULTY OF ARTS

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ABSTRACT: This essay explores the alleged influence of traditional fairy tales in Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* (1847), analyzing two aspects that could support such a statement. Firstly, it shows how Emily Brontë was familiar with fairy tales and how she could be influenced by their magical taint. Secondly, I will explore the use of different elements and patterns used in *Wuthering Heights*, which appear in specific fairy tales such as *Cinderella* and *Beauty and the Beast*, in order to illustrate the similarities and differences with respect to Brontë's novel. Finally, this dissertation puts forward how Brontë was able to launch a critique on her contemporary society, precisely using gothic and supernatural elements, which resemble the use of fantasy in the above-mentioned fairy tales.

RESUMEN: Este trabajo investiga la supuesta influencia de los cuentos tradicionales en la novela de Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights* (1847). Para ello, se van a analizar varios aspectos. En primer lugar, se muestra la familiaridad de Emily Brontë con los cuentos de hadas y cómo su escritura pudo estar bajo la influencia de este ambiente mágico. En segundo lugar, se estudia el uso de diferentes elementos y estructuras utilizados en *Wuthering Heights* que pueden apreciarse en dos cuentos específicos: *Cinderella* y *Beauty and the Beast*, con el fin de mostrar algunas similitudes y diferencias con respecto a la novela de Brontë. Por último, este trabajo acentúa la capacidad de Brontë de lanzar una crítica hacia la sociedad de su tiempo, precisamente gracias a la inclusión de elementos góticos y sobrenaturales, los cuáles se asemejan al uso de la fantasía en los cuentos mencionados.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Emily Jane Brontë (1818-1848) was an English poet and novelist. She belongs to the period known as Victorian Fiction and she is the author of her single novel *Wuthering Heights* (1847), an extraordinary piece of romantic fiction. She lived a secluded life in Haworth, Yorkshire, with lack of experience and friends outside her close circle (Bradner). Many authors have wondered how she was able to write such a great novel, full of feelings such as passion, hate and revenge. As Hoeveler states: “literary works are not produced in vacuums but are reflections of the author’s life, culture, and ideological beliefs” (7). Therefore, despite living a secluded life, it is well known that she had a very imaginative mind and that she was working on several poems before writing her masterpiece. An important one created in 1845 was the *Gondal Cycle of Poems* that could serve as a possible inspiration for her in order to write the novel, due to its “powerful treatment of certain themes which are also very prominent in *Wuthering Heights*” (Bradner 129). As Bradner puts it, these poems “show the early preoccupation of Emily’s mind with emotional situations later used in her novel” (130). One common feature between these poems and the novel lies on their dramatic nature.

Some critics such as Piciucco highlight that Emily’s imaginary world echoes the main themes of traditional fairy tales. They have showed her familiarity with the world of fairy tales and folk ballads. According to Phyllis, fairy-tale imagery was frequently used during the nineteenth-century by English novelists such as the Brontës and Charles Dickens. However, it is impossible to know to what extent these patterns and motifs may have influenced the structure of the novel. In the same way, Phyllis supports the idea that Emily Brontë would be interested in fantasy and romance. Indeed, many authors have analysed the novel from the perspective of the fairy tale. In this vein, Piciucco states that this novel could be read as a “popular legend, a myth, a ballad, an

epos, as well as a fairy tale” (222). As mentioned earlier, Brontë lived in the region of Haworth, where she heard about local tales. On the other hand, her love for reading and her knowledge of German could explain her possible knowledge about fairy tales. The use of fairy tale could be an essential key in order to understand the psyche of the characters in an easier way. As a romantic novel, *Wuthering Heights* enhances the importance of feelings and emotions foregrounding that “the conscious or unconscious use of fairy-tale motifs in fiction could reveal aspects of a character’s psychological and emotional development” (Phyllis 125). This theory is also supported by Von Franz who claimed: “Dr. Jung once said that it is in fairy tales that one can best study the comparative anatomy of the psyche” (11). Furthermore, as Bradner states, Emily could have started writing the story as a tale rather than as a novel. As he puts it, “she may have thought at first of composing a tale of tragic intensity which should involve Linton, Heathcliff, and Cathy in a swift and violent catastrophe on the return of the deserted lover” (144). Apart from the presence of tragic elements, which may, more often than not, end up being restored by a social order, there is in this novel a pervasive use of fantasy that can serve as a way of escaping from reality (Phyllis).

In this way, the present essay aligns with the hypothesis that Emily Brontë used fantasy, romantic and gothic elements in order to subvert the dominant Victorian values of decorum and the subsequent constrained gender roles. According to Phyllis, fairy tales would have offered an escapist path from the narrowness of the Victorian times, where women taking an active role would have been seen as a threat. Thus, the main aim of this essay is to analyze the use of some recurrent elements and patterns that appear in both *Wuthering Heights* and two traditional fairy tales that, according to Phyllis, “would have been available to the Brontë sisters” (125). These tales are *Beauty and the Beast*, written by Madame Le Prince De Beaumont and published in 1756, and

Cinderella, by the Grimm Brothers, first published in 1812 and translated into English in 1823 respectively. The former has been chosen because of the explicit thematic similarities between Heathcliff and Catherine's impossible love in the novel and Beauty and the Beast's happy ending in the case of the fairy tale. Taking into account the different contexts and purpose of both texts, there is a sense in which the romantic tinge of Heathcliff and Catherine's relation is more threatening than the relation between a beautiful woman and a beast. In the latter case, the selection of the Grimm Brother's version of *Cinderella* obeys to the resemblance of certain elements, such as Catherine's foot bleeding in *Wuthering Heights*, which is highly symbolic for her transformation from childhood into womanhood. Something similar happens to Cinderella, when the Prince looks for a woman's foot in which the showcase can fit it and therefore, mark the threshold from singlehood to marriage and happiness. As will be seen in what follows, a detailed analysis of the main differences and similarities between the novel and the above mentioned tales will be carried out in order to elucidate the extent to which Emily's work stands out as a hybrid literary work, being peppered by fairy tale elements.

2. WUTHERING HEIGHTS AND BEAUTY AND THE BEAST

According to Popkin and Williams, *Wuthering Heights* could be considered as an evocation of *Beauty and the Beast*'s story. The resemblance between *Wuthering Heights* and *Beauty and the Beast* by Jeanne-Marie Le Prince De Beaumont (1756) are corroborated by the terms of Wardetzky's theory, which asserts that the novel could be in many ways "a dramatized version of the famous fairy tale" (227). The first element that links the fairy tale to *Wuthering Heights* is the way the beginning of the story is described. It starts with Nelly's formulaic fairy-tale beginning with the main role of the

father introducing the magic object, which will become the center of the action and will be crucial to the development of the story. Gose suggests that traditionally, in fairy tales, it is the family who sets the first problems for the development of the story. According to Phyllis, the role of the father is an important factor as “the father’s role in relation to his daughter is significant” (128). In both stories it is the father the figure who helps to link the couples, very much like Heathcliff in the second generation as “father” making Cathy and Hareton meet. As Nussbaum states, the novel starts with an act of charity in which Mr. Earnshaw, in his journey to Liverpool, requests to his children: “What shall I bring you?” (Brontë 25). Catherine asks for a whip whereas Hindley prefers a fiddle. In the case of Catherine, her choice is not very usual from what is expected for a little girl, even though she is linked with horses.

Similarly, in *Beauty and the Beast*, the father is a merchant and he also makes a trip. His daughters soon begged him to buy expensive and materialistic things. When the father asked Beauty: “What will you have, Beauty?” (Le Prince de Beaumont 4), she demands a rose, as it was a kind of rarity in the surroundings. According to Picciuco, the fact that she asks for a rose is related to the wish she has for love. Thus, the items chosen somehow show signs of their personalities. Indeed, the importance of these items for the stories make us think about them as magic objects, so the use of gothic and romantic elements in *Wuthering Heights* could be related to the use of fantastic ones in the fairy tale. Both items will become the cause of the beginning of troubles but also the meeting point for the couples. In *Beauty and the Beast*, what seemed a simple act of charity became a big deal as the father has to die or make a change with one of his daughters: “Here, Beauty”, said he, “take these roses, but little do you think how dear they are like to cost your unhappy father” (Le Prince de Beaumont 7). In Brontë’s novel, Mr. Earnshaw brings Heathcliff home and he becomes part of the family but not

without causing the disruption of the family harmony. On the one hand, the rose in *Beauty and the Beast* is seen as the key element in order to link Beauty and Beast. It is Beauty's desire and, as such, is described by the Beast as "my roses, which I value beyond any thing in the universe" (Le Prince de Beaumont 6). In this way, when the father steals the rose, he makes Beauty leave her home and go to Beast's castle in order to save his life. On the other hand, Mr. Earnshaw arrives home with nothing but Heathcliff. He is described as a demon child who will disturb the family, being a troublemaker with Catherine: "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 dark almost as if it came from the devil" (Brontë 25).

Similarly, the role of the male characters also supports the idea of underlining some similarities between the novel and the fairy tale. The first feature in common between these two characters is their obscure origins. Both Beast and Heathcliff can be considered as princes. At the end of *Beauty and the Beast*, we know that Beast was a charmed prince under the appearance of a beast. On the other hand, the origins of Heathcliff are unknown; however, there is a remote possibility of being a prince, according to Nelly's narration:

You're fit for a prince in disguise. Who knows but your father was Emperor of China, and your mother an Indian queen, each of them able to buy up, with one week's income, Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange together? And you were kidnapped by wicked sailors and brought to England. Were I in your place, I would frame high notions of my birth. (Brontë 40)

As Piciucco states, this kind of origins in which the character is lost or abandoned is clearly related to fairy tales. Furthermore, as Gose supports, "like the beast of *Beauty*

and the Beast, Heathcliff has the potential of turning into a handsome prince once he has been accepted by the princess. As we know, however, by choosing Edgar Linton, Cathy fails the test, and leaves Heathcliff behind, untransformed” (5). Readers have to wait until the second generation in order to assist to the transformation of Hareton by Cathy and meet the happy ending.

Due to his obscure origins, Heathcliff is referred to as “it” and as a “demon”. From the very beginning, he is relegated to a servant status because of “his dark skin, his poverty, and his unknown origins” (Nussbaum 370). He becomes rude and full of revenge. Violence is related to his fitting into the category of the Gothic villain, as he is portrayed as the perfect Gothic villain. His personality combines some traits such as violence, mystery and sadism with demonic and supernatural characteristics. In other words: Heathcliff is related to a wolfish man. Piciucco states that “the werewolf of folklore is a half-wolf half-man fiend in stories with young protagonists” (223), as it is the case in *Wuthering Heights*, and “he generally appears as cruel, aggressive, greedy and wicked character with dark eyes” (223). Moreover, among other epithets, Heathcliff is described throughout the novel as “a mad dog” (Brontë 117), “an evil beast [...] waiting his time to spring and destroy” (78), “the brute beast” (124), “a savage beast being goaded to death with knives and spears” (122). According to Van Ghent, Heathcliff is seen as a “paternal ogre” (“On *Wuthering*” 12), with a “despotic, tyrannical and cruel attitude” (Piciucco 222), which would be defining traits of villains in fairy tales.

Significantly enough, Heathcliff is clearly related to the Beast in *Beauty and the Beast*, a man linked to a monster (Piciucco). Beast is described as monster and he is half-beast half-human, as he was transformed from human into beast by a charm. He is referred to as “such a frightful Beast” (Le Prince de Beaumont 6), “the ugly monster”

(7), “the monster” (8). While Catherine is a civilizing influence on Heathcliff, after the father’s death, Hindley brutalizes him, encouraging rough behavior, similar to the behavior of the Beast, who is dependent on the pity and love of Beauty. Therefore, we can say that both, Heathcliff and Beast can be seen as villains and heroes in the stories since they are not only kind of repulsive beasts and charming, but also seductive princes at the same time. Furthermore, both stories share an important element related to magic and the kind of charm that male characters undergo. The charm of a prince under the appearance of a Beast can only be broken by real love and its real demonstration of the woman (or both). In *Beauty and the Beast*, Beast is under a charm which makes him resemble a beast, but it is broken because Beauty is able to acknowledge her real love, ignoring social critique and appearances. However, Catherine cannot escape the confines of Victorian values and decorum and she is not able to choose with her heart, so the charm cannot be broken. According to Popkin, “Beauty learns to disregard the Beast’s outward appearance and to love him for his inner qualities” (117). Only after death, can Catherine come to the rescue of Heathcliff and in some magic way, break the charm of him. By being united in death, their souls remain together forever, appearing as ghosts “on every rainy night since his death” (Brontë 244).

Another common trait that the male characters share is their low self-esteem. Van Ghent (“The Window Figure”) underlines how Heathcliff tells Nelly that he wishes to be like Linton: “But, Nelly, if I knocked him down twenty times, that wouldn’t make him less handsome or me more so. I wish I had light hair and a fair skin, and was dressed and behaved as well, and had a chance of being as rich as he will be!” (Brontë 39). Heathcliff wants to become a prince in order to deserve the “princess”; similar to Beast, who tries to behave better for Beauty so that she accepts to marry him. He says to Beauty that he would stay only if his presence is not troublesome, asking her: “tell me,

do not you think me very ugly?” (Le Prince de Beaumont 11). “So I am, but then, besides my ugliness, I have no sense; I know very well, that I am a poor, silly, stupid creature [...] “my heart is good, but still I am a monster” (11).

However, as Nussbaum suggests, “there is no character but Heathcliff in this novel who really sacrifices his life for the life of another, none who acts against his own interests with sincere and uncompromised altruism” (374). In the same way, Beast sacrifices himself when he releases Beauty allowing her to go home in order to see her father. He is losing her but he sacrifices his own interest because he is in love with her. Heathcliff leaves Catherine in order to become a richer man who can deserve her. Despite this male altruist behavior, the female characters reject to marry them. In *Beauty and the Beast*, the Beast asks Beauty everyday if she would be his wife but her answer is no: “Beast, you make me very uneasy, I wish I could consent to marry you, but I am too sincere to make you believe that will ever happen; I shall always esteem you as a friend, endeavor to be satisfied with this” (Le Prince de Beaumont 13). To what Beast replies: “I know too well my own misfortune, but then I love you with the tenderest affection. However, I ought to think myself happy, that you will stay here; promise me never to leave me” (13). Similarly, in *Wuthering Heights* Catherine tells Nelly what she expects if she marries Heathcliff: “Nelly, I see now, you think me a selfish wretch; but did it never strike you that if Heathcliff and I married, we should be beggars?” (Brontë 58). Yet, despite the fact that the heroines are reluctant to marry them, both love them. In the case of Beauty, when Beast asks her about his ugliness, Beauty answers: “that is true, for I cannot tell a lie, but I believe you are a very good natured [...] among mankind, there are many that deserve that name more than you, and I prefer you, just as you are, to those, who, under a human form, hide a treacherous, corrupt, and ungrateful heart” (Le Prince de Beaumont 10-11). In the case of Catherine,

even though she decides to marry Edgar, she still thinks better of Heathcliff: “My love for Heathcliff resembles the eternal rocks beneath: a source of little visible delight, but necessary. Nelly, I *am* Heathcliff! He’s always in my mind: not as a pleasure, any more than I am always a pleasure to myself, but as my own being” (Brontë 59).

According to Phyllis, both the fairy tale and the novel “imply an active female nature” (136). Therefore, the use of these motifs helped Brontë to deal with the subject of criticism which could not be dealt overtly in those years (Phyllis). Heathcliff and the Beast are more similar than Beauty and Catherine, who have not very much in common, and thus, are described differently. On the one hand, Catherine is described as a cruel and selfish character; she is not able to make a sincere choice with her heart, as she cares more for commodity and social aspirations: “Why do you love him [Edgar], Miss Cathy? ‘Because he is handsome and pleasant to be with [...] and because he is young and cheerful [...] and because he loves me [...] and he will be rich, and I shall like to be the greatest woman of the neighbourhood” (Brontë 55). So, in some way Catherine chooses a passive role and she is transformed into a princess. According to Phyllis and, as happens in many fairy tales, this kind of wrong choice because of pride – Catherine decides to marry Edgar because marrying Heathcliff would “degrade her” (Brontë 59) –, is punished and her inability to choose right makes her die. As Catherine cannot accept Heathcliff, it is her daughter Cathy who fulfills the role of the heroine in the second generation, as Beauty does by transforming the beast.

On the other hand, Beauty is portrayed as a sweet and candid woman, requested for marriage by well-known men but she rejects them because she wants to find her real love, and finally she is able to see beyond appearances and love Beast forever. However, even though Catherine falls in love with Heathcliff, she is haunted by the values of society and she is not able to choose real love, so the charm cannot be broken

and romantic love is not achieved in life but only in death, all of which underlines the tragic tinge of the romantic love between Heathcliff and Catherine. Their bodies and souls reunite in death, beyond and outside social norms. By contrast, the love between Beauty and the Beast conforms to domesticity and points to its reproductive role in society, very much like the one between young Catherine and Hareton. Interestingly for our purposes, the fact that Heathcliff brutalizes Hareton in revenge – a situation similar to the evil spell imprisoning the Beast – makes these male characters alike. And yet, young Catherine tames Hareton by teaching him to write and read. Hareton's radical transformation from an illiterate beast to a cultivated man, conforming to civilized rules of education and improvement, resembles the very ending of *Beauty and the Beast*. As Nelly concludes:

Earnshaw was not to be civilised with a wish; and my young lady was no philosopher, and no paragon of patience; but both their minds tending to the same point – one loving and desiring to esteem, and the other loving and desiring to be esteemed – they contrived in the end to reach it. (Brontë 229)

Like in the fairy tale, the ability to distinguish a person's real qualities regardless outward appearance and to achieve the relationship of mature love symbolized by this process takes time. It cannot be accomplished by a "wish". Cathy and Beauty are able to complete the process, moving beyond dependent egoism into a mature relationship. In the case of the Beast, "he married Beauty, and lived with her many years, and their happiness, as it was founded on virtue, was complete" (Le Prince de Beaumont 18). As for *Wuthering Heights*, according to Meyer, the marriage between Cathy and Hareton brings an end to class inequality, as Hareton, the former servant, marries the once pampered and wealthy young Cathy. The novel introduces modern domesticity with the

union of Hareton and Cathy, who effectively become a nuclear family, cut off, as they are from generational ties.

In what follows, I would like to briefly explore how in both texts, some characters are considered as “special and magical by utilizing imagery of love and romance” (Martin and Kazyak 325). These authors believe that the main characters in love appear surrounded by different natural elements such as flowers, trees, fire, sunsets and the wind. In the novel we can appreciate the presence of these elements when the couples are together. This is obviously the case of Heathcliff and Catherine, but also of young Catherine with both Linton and Hareton. In this way, nature and magic are intertwined when it comes to love relationships. Similarly, in the fairy tale, the presence of the weather is very symbolic as it introduces feelings of happiness or distress. For instance, when the father is lost after his journey, the weather becomes more turbulent: “it rained and snowed terribly, the wind was so high, that it threw him twice off his horse, and night coming on” (Le Prince de Beaumont 4). Likewise, the presence of the weather in general and of the wind in particular becomes of utmost importance in *Wuthering Heights*, as they signal the characters’ moods and feelings. So it is when Heathcliff overhears the conversation between Catherine and Nelly in which Catherine refuses to marry him. Heathcliff’s departure sets out a terrible, windy and strong storm, reflecting his desperate mood:

It was a very dark evening for summer: the clouds appeared inclined to thunder [...] About midnight, while we still sat up, the storm came rattling over the Heights in full fury. There was a violent wind, as well as thunder, and either one or the other split a tree off at the corner of the building. (Brontë 60-61)

Remarkably, there is in *Wuthering Heights* a gothic and romantic description of the landscape that disturbs the linearity of domesticity. Heathcliff lives in a kind of sinister castle (the Heights is described as a “fortress”), in the middle of nature surrounded by forests which confuse travelers losing their way (Lockwood, the main narrator, is lost in his way from Thrushcross to the Heights, like the father of Beauty in the fairy tale). These wild elements suggest a supernatural power, which lies on the life of the main characters, bringing about an aura of violence and magic at the same time. There is a sense in which the protagonists are exposed to the landscape, to natural elements like the wind, the rain and the sun. On the Heights, the effects of the landscape and the weather are harder, more violent, wilder. The effects of nature at the Grange are softer, milder, like the behavior of its inhabitants. Something similar happens to Hareton whose transformation from wilderness into education is also appreciated in his role as the gardener of the Heights at the very end of the novel. Wild nature is tamed into domesticity, very much like his rough and violent character is changed into love and care towards young Catherine: “We were in April then: the weather was sweet and warm, the grass as green as showers and sun could make it, and the two dwarf apple trees, near the southern wall, in full bloom” (Brontë 236). Similarly, in *Beauty and the Beast* the atmosphere is attached to happiness and celebration after Beauty declares her sincere feelings of real love to Beast: “Beauty scarce had pronounced these words, when she saw the palace sparkle with light; and fireworks, instruments of music, everything seemed to give notice of some great event” (Le Prince de Beaumont 17). As can be seen, not only the behaviour of the characters but also nature show how domestication is endowed with a happy ending in life.

3. WUTHERING HEIGHTS AND CINDERELLA

According to Phyllis and Clarke, the collection of the Grimm brothers was published in 1812 and the first English translation appeared in 1823; therefore, it could have been easily available for Emily Brontë. Indeed, Iona and Peter Opie suggest that the influence of *Cinderella* (1812) in *Wuthering Heights* stands out as evident since both have motifs related to a magical transformation and a kind of royal romance. There are indeed several resemblances between the novel and *Cinderella* and, according to Clarke, the first important one is the “lost mother and cruel mother substitutes” (697). On the one hand, *Cinderella* has no mother and she is mistreated by her step-mother and step-sisters and the father does not seem to take care of her. Similarly, there is a total absence of mother figures in *Wuthering Heights*, with the exception of Nelly Dean, who acts as a surrogated mother. According to Piciucco, the fairy-tale elements would not be a conscious choice by Emily but a way of escape thanks to literature, expressing her fears and desires through the characters, as she also lost her mother when she was very young. As Thompson states, “the children in *Wuthering Heights*, are left to fend for themselves early in life without the love or protection of their mothers. As an example, Catherine is almost eight when her mother dies, and Cathy’s birth coincides with her mother’s death” (69). Both, *Wuthering Heights* and *Cinderella* reflect a society where children are subjected to cruelty and abuse, and children grow without their mother’s protection. In *Cinderella*, the King ordained a festival in which the King’s son might choose a bride. *Cinderella* wants to go but she is criticized and mocked by her step-mother and stepsisters: “in all your dust and dirt, you want to go to the festival! You that have no dress and no shoes! You want to dance!” (Grimm 2). This cruel treatment to *Cinderella* could be related to Heathcliff, Linton, Hareton, Catherine and young Cathy in *Wuthering Heights*, as they are all mistreated by adults in an environment of

violence and revenge. For instance, Heathcliff is mocked because of his low status and dark origins, Catherine is mistreated by her brother Hindley, and young Cathy, Linton and Hareton are all brutalized by Heathcliff.

The unreliability of the narrators, Nelly Dean and Lockwood may also echo some of the actions carried out by Cinderella's step-mother and sisters, as Cinderella cannot really trust any of them. In a similar vein, Nelly and Lockwood are unreliable narrators who tell the story of a family romance and, accordingly, add elements, which may not be true depending on their thoughts or feelings towards the characters. Nelly Dean's version of the story is told from the perspective of an intradiegetic and homodiegetic narrator; she is an insider who has lived and served to both families, the Earnshaws and the Lintons. According to Bradner, she is "kind-hearted but placid in her feelings, independent of the family but united to it by ties of loyalty, exactly the person to tell the story of the fate of the Earnshaws" (145). Indeed, she belongs to a lower social class, she is the servant of the house but, at the same time, she plays an important role in the family. As Gose states: "although Nelly is not literally a mother, she would like to be, and takes pride in being a foster parent" (15). She acts depending on the situation, thus offering a rather subjective account of the events as well as manipulating and giving information accordingly; i.e. she hides information to prevent others from worrying, changes her opinion about Heathcliff just to please Edgar, the master of the Grange, etc. According to Gose, "Nelly is more at home in the Grange than at the Heights" (14, 15) and "she always likes to identify herself with the Lintons" (Hafley 202). What is more, Nelly embodies and reinforces Victorian domestic values and chooses Edgar over Heathcliff: while Heathcliff is a "bleak, hilly, coal country" (Brontë 49), Edgar is defined as "a beautiful fertile valley" (Brontë 49). She is mother of none of the characters, but she takes care of them and at the end, she refers to Hareton and

Cathy in this way: “You know, they both appear, in a measure my own children. I had long been proud of one, and now, I was sure the other would be a source of equal satisfaction” (Brontë 233).

However, several authors such as Gose and Hafley, have argued that she acts as a kind of step-mother, and as happens in *Cinderella*, she is not so much the beloved mother, but a witch that tries to convince Catherine to choose Edgar rather than Heathcliff. She is not reliable as she “speaks of herself as one of Cathy’s companion” (Hafley 203). Later on, Cathy becomes aware of Nelly’s evilness: “Ah! Nelly has played traitor” [...] “Nelly is my hidden enemy. You witch! So you do seek elf-bolts to hurt us!” (Brontë 93-94). Readers cannot totally trust her story as it is biased by her own interest in protecting domesticity. In turn, Nelly’s story is also described as a “fairy-tale romance”, as Lockwood, the heterodiegetic narrator, points out: “why not have up Mrs Dean to finish her tale?” (Brontë 65). Undoubtedly, the mix of fantasy, romance and supernatural powers in Nelly’s story lead Lockwood to define it as a fairy tale. On the other hand, Lockwood’s unreliability stems from his status as an outsider, since he comes from London and is estranged from the rural context of the North. When describing different events, he makes mistakes because of his unfamiliarity with what he witnesses. Similarly, in *Cinderella* the stepmother and sisters can be said to make a catalogue of mistakes in judging Cinderella because of their estrangement from her.

One of the main similarities between *Wuthering Heights* and *Cinderella* is the process of transformation the heroines undergo. According to Phyllis: “one of the most popular types of fairy tale is that in which a young girl is rescued from unpleasant circumstances by a handsome prince and is ‘transformed’ into a princess” (127). Catherine, like Cinderella, shares a kind of low social position, which is seen as an emblem of “unjust limitations placed on women” (Clarke 705). Thus, they have to

choose a right man in order to ascend in hierarchy and society if they do not want to be excluded from a rigid society where “hierarchies of race, wealth, and occupation quite overtly structured opportunity” (Lewis and Ardizzone 130). In *Cinderella*, she decides to go to the ball and asks for help to the magical tree in order to undergo a process of change. From being full of cinder and dirty, the bird dresses her with a dress of gold and silver and a pair of shoes embroidered with silk and silver. As Phyllis puts it, “Grimm’s Cinderella asks to go to the ball, persists in her request (although she is turned down), and performs the impossible tasks demanded of her so that she may go” (127). However, the process of transformation of Catherine is different: she does not ask for it but she is forced to. As Gose states, “Cathy is transformed at Thrushcross Grange by a violent physical initiation” (11): “Run, Heathcliff, run!” she whispered. “They have let the bulldog loose, and he holds me!” [...] The man took Cathy up; she was sick, not from fear, I’m certain, but from pain [...] “how her foot bleeds!” [...] “she may be lamed for life!” (Brontë 34-35). According to Gose, “she is not lamed for life physically, but she does not recover her psychic freedom until death liberates her spirit” (12).

Catherine’s forced transformation is clearly reflected in her own nature; that is, how she moves from outdoors to being imprisoned in the heavenly world of the Lintons. As a young child, Catherine is described as a very active character, and her natural active behavior is restricted after her “foot bleeding” (Brontë 34). Just before being captured by the Lintons, Catherine’s foot is beaten by Skulker, the Linton’s dog: from this very moment her transformation begins, as it marks the stage from childhood to womanhood. This is where her link with nature is taken and she is castrated from nature: she is deprived of Heathcliff and she initiates a process of socialization and genderization that will end up killing her:

Cathy stayed at Thrushcross five weeks [...] and commenced her plan of reform by trying to raise her self-respect with fine clothes and flattery [...] so that, instead of a wild, hatless little savage jumping into the house, and rushing to squeeze us all breathless, there lighted from a handsome black pony a very dignified person. (Brontë 36)

As Phyllis states, “as in many fairy tales, pride and unwillingness to stoop for another’s sake are eventually punished (132-133). In *Cinderella*, both sisters are punished as they are related to domestic love, they want to be princesses and be surrounded by wealth, they do not know even the prince but they want to marry him. Thus, the stepmother advises her daughters to amputate their toes and heels respectively in order to suit the shoe. The two sisters choose domestic love over their health, because they are going to be princesses so they “will never have to go on foot” (Grimm 5). This is clearly related to Catherine, who chooses Linton because she is aware of her position: “he will be rich, and I shall like to be the greatest woman of the neighborhood” (Brontë 55). As Williams states, “Catherine disturbs her universe by violating a natural order whose ruling principle is love” (119).

Indeed, there is a kind of element that links both stories on the mistaken choice. In *Cinderella*, the prince is warned by some magic birds against his wrong decision: “there they go, there they go! There is blood on her shoe; the shoe is too small, - Not the right bride at all!” (Grimm 6). Similarly, Catherine’s conscience warns her that she is not acting according to her heart. She is not being honest to her real feelings: “in whichever place the soul lives, in my soul and in my heart, I’m convinced I’m wrong!” (Brontë 56). As Nussbaum states, she knows that she is wrong and she will not be happy in the heavenly world (Linton’s world) ascribed to Victorian values because

“heaven is not a place in which her soul could ever be happy” (Nussbaum 372). This is reflected in the novel when she has a dream:

If I were in heaven, Nelly, I should be extremely miserable.” [...] I dreamt once that I was there [...] heaven did not seem to be my home; and I broke my heart with weeping to come back to earth; and the angels were so angry that they flung me out into the middle of the heath on the top of Wuthering Heights; where I woke sobbing for joy. (Brontë 57)

Her place is at the Heights with Heathcliff. Catherine’s soul cannot live in the Christian heaven as it is the same as Heathcliff’s: “he’s more myself than I am” [...] “Whatever our souls are made of, his and mine are the same” (Brontë 57) while Linton’s soul “is as different as a moonbeam from lightning, or frost from fire” (57). As Nussbaum suggests, this kind of heaven becomes a hell for her with “an absence of real passion” (372).

According to Nussbaum, Brontë was obsessed with the “theme of personal liberty” (375), and the criticism of society, which is guilty of taken freedom, can be seen clearly in the novel. Catherine becomes bitter, rude and mad after her decision. She becomes a prisoner of gentility, which is not her natural state, and she goes through a hunger strike that leads her to death. According to Williams, “people flourish or die according to their natures” (115). Catherine is attached to nature, and she dies when she goes to the Grange, where she feels as if in a prison. This place is an entrapment for her, and we see her necessity of coming back to nature when she needs to breathe the wind coming from the moors: “I’m burning! I wish I were out of doors! I wish I were a girl again, half savage and hardy, and free” [...] Open the window again wide: fasten it

open! Quick, why don't you move? [...] You won't give me a chance of life, you mean" (Brontë 91).

Williams argues that "everything associated with *Wuthering Heights* is akin to the sublime: the natural setting and the passion of Catherine and Heathcliff – dangerous, destructive, mysterious, awe-inspiring" (125). The love between Catherine and Heathcliff is a passionate and impossible love, which ignores the restrictions imposed by society and, as Williams supports, also by nature, as "death apparently cannot separate them" (120). Their romantic love echoes unity, transcendence, eternity, immortality and this can be seen at the end of the book, where the reader becomes aware of how the couple is able to transcend human mortality, and both are seen as walking ghosts over the moors. Having failed to achieve the transformation of the fairy tale and after having rejected paradise, "Catherine and Heathcliff cannot find a heaven in the human world" (Gose 9). There is a triumph of death, even though if it is as a folk myth: "it is unthinkable that those two could fulfill the usual implications of sexual attraction, to settle down, rear children and live happily ever after in this world" (Williams 123), as it happens with the prince and Cinderella. Brontë had an advocacy of an idealized and transcendental vocation of romantic love, which can only take place out of society and aligned with nature. Such romantic love is defined by Martin and Kazyak as "rebellious, magical, defiant, and with the power to transform the world" (327). Therefore, there is a clear contrast in the end of both stories because in *Cinderella*, domestication is well assimilated: she is rescued of her bad circumstances and becomes a princess living happily in a world of social order. On the other hand, even though Catherine has chosen domestic love with Edgar, she is not happy because she is in love with Heathcliff, a romantic love which only can survive outside society, so domestication cannot be totally achieved.

4. CONCLUSION

As has been shown throughout this essay, Emily Brontë's familiarity with the world of fairy tales and folk ballads attests to an alleged influence of these elements on *Wuthering Heights*. Furthermore, it can be argued that the author may have used fantasy, romantic and gothic elements in order to subvert dominant Victorian values that constrained the freedom of the individual. On the one hand, under the influence of *Beauty and the Beast*, what we have in both stories is the obscure origins of the male characters, both seen simultaneously as beasts and princes, who are rescued by their heroines and domesticated in order to suit society and find happiness in marriage. Both stories share an important element related to magic and the kind of charm that the male characters undergo. The charm of a prince under the appearance of a beast can only be broken by real love and its subsequent demonstration. So, it is the heroine who transforms the beast into his human condition. Therefore, by choosing Edgar Linton, Catherine fails the test, and leaves Heathcliff behind, untransformed. We, as readers, have to wait until the second generation in order to witness young Cathy and Hareton, who undergo the process of change and, both as couple, are able to find happiness in a domesticated world. This is so because the predominant values in the Victorian period are restrictions of emotions and reason over passionate feelings. Only those who adapt to society survive and therefore, domestication is regarded with a happy ending in life. *Beauty and the Beast*, linked as it is to the Enlightenment tradition, reinforces the expected values of order, female submission and happiness only within marriage.

On the other hand, *Cinderella*, follows one of the most popular types of fairy tale in which a young girl is rescued from unpleasant circumstances by a handsome prince and is 'transformed' into a princess. Catherine, like Cinderella, shares a kind of low social position that can be seen as the epitome of women's subjugation to men.

Therefore, they have to choose a right man in order to ascend in hierarchy if they do not want to be excluded from the social realm. However, the process of Catherine's transformation is different: she does not ask for it but she is forced to it through a violent physical initiation that will mark her destiny – death. Like in many fairy tales, there is a punishment for villains and the sisters are punished (without feet) and gone blind for the rest of their days because of their wickedness and hypocrisy. Similarly, Catherine, who is wicked, betrays her real feelings, suffers from hysteria and a melancholic life, entrapped in a domestic marriage without happiness and lacking a real love. Heathcliff, as the main villain of the story also rebels and dies.

Emily Brontë, clearly influenced by the tenets of Romanticism, launched a critique upon those values that constrained individual desire and freedom. Her vision is reflected in the development of the main characters, as only Catherine and Heathcliff fight against society, the middle-class courtship and the marriage system, but it is so strong that they cannot break it and die. As Gose argues, “having failed to achieve the transformation of the fairy tale, having rejected (after being deprived of) the paradise of the hearth, Cathy and Heathcliff cannot find a heaven in the human world. Still wishing to keep personality but outside society, they are left with nature” (9). Unlike the transformations undergone by the main characters in the fairy tales, mainly through a tamed love which adjusts to social rules and expectations, the love between Catherine and Heathcliff is a passionate and impossible love, which ignores the restrictions imposed by society. Even though it seems that they have failed to achieve the transformation of the fairy tales, their triumph is one of freedom, passion and strong feelings over a reproductive marriage that would have tamed their inner and sincere selves.

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