

Humanism Versus Devilism: Religious Identities in Brontë's Wuthering Heights

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.47175/rielsj.v6i1.1130>

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ABSTRACT

Wuthering Heights by Emily Brontë is a Gothic masterpiece that intricately explores love, vengeance, class, and identity within the desolate Yorkshire moors. Religion emerges as a complex force shaped by the characters' moral, social, and psychological landscapes. Using Gothic Criticism and a comparative religious approach, this study examines how Christianity, Judaism, and Islam influence the novel's themes and conflicts. At the heart of this exploration is Heathcliff, a figure straddling humanity and Satanism. His defiance of divine authority and supernatural bond with Catherine position him as both a Gothic antihero and a theological enigma. Through characters like Heathcliff, Joseph, and Catherine, Brontë questions faith, free will, and morality, challenging Christian traditions. The study analyses religious elements in the novel, highlighting faith as both a source of comfort and control. The final chapter scrutinizes Heathcliff's ambiguous identity through scriptural references and Gypsy traditions, assessing his human and devilish aspects. By examining Gothic elements alongside religious themes, this research reveals the profound spiritual and existential dilemmas embedded in *Wuthering Heights*. Ultimately, it argues that religion is not merely a backdrop but a central force shaping character identities, conflicts, and resolutions in Brontë's dark and tumultuous narrative.

KEYWORDS

Wuthering Heights; devilish behavior; Gothic literature; Islamic theology; Satan in literature; religious identity

INTRODUCTION

Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*, published in 1847, offers a compelling depiction of the shifting social and economic conditions in early 19th-century rural England. Set against the backdrop of Yorkshire's remote and windswept moors, the novel captures a world shaped by isolation, economic struggles, and rigid class divisions. Juliet Barker highlights the Brontë family's intimate connection with this austere landscape, emphasizing how its customs and hardships fueled the novel's imaginative depth (Barker, 1994: 45). This distinctive setting plays a crucial role in shaping the interplay between nature and passion within the narrative.

Essays in *The Cambridge Companion to the Brontës* explore how traditional rural life intersected with contemporary intellectual movements, particularly through the novel's synthesis of Gothic and Romantic elements. As Briggs notes, this fusion reflects the broader societal transformations of the time (Briggs, 2002: 102). Furthermore, the Norton Critical Edition provides additional perspectives on how *Wuthering Heights* addresses the economic upheavals and evolving moral landscape of the Victorian era (Norton Critical Edition, 2003: 120).

Lucasta Miller's biography of the Brontë sisters further examines how their secluded upbringing and complex family dynamics influenced their literary expression. She suggests that these personal experiences contributed to the novel's subversion of social norms (Miller, 2002: 89). Similarly, Simon Ellis, in *The Brontë Myth*, argues that *Wuthering Heights* endures because it encapsulates the friction between a traditional rural existence and the rise of modernity (Ellis, 2002: 76). Collectively, these sources illustrate how the historical context of 19th-century England is intricately woven into the novel's fabric, shaping its themes and lasting significance. By considering these cultural and historical influences, scholars continue to uncover the profound relationship between environment and emotion, reaffirming the novel's relevance in literary studies.

Plot Overview

In 1801, Mr. Lockwood, a city citizen rents the mansion of Thrushcross Grange, an estate located in the countryside of Yorkshire. He visits his property owner, Heathcliff, who has a second mansion across the moors named *Wuthering Heights* that he considers it his house and lives in it. Disrupted by the unwelcoming behaviour of *Wuthering Heights*' inhabitants, who disregard social conventions, He returns the day after his visit just as snow begins to fall. Forced to spend the night in a bedroom, he encounters a ghost named Cathy. His screams summon Heathcliff, who strangely calls out for his lover's "Cathy's" spirit inviting her to join him.

In the following morning, the visitor "Lockwood" returns to Thrushcross Grange through the snow. Stricken with an illness, he remains bedridden and persuades Mrs. Dean, a servant, to tell him about Heathcliff's past. Having worked at *Wuthering Heights* since childhood, Mrs. Dean begins to recount Heathcliff's story, starting with his arrival at the manor when Mr. Earnshaw brought him back from his last trip to Liverpool. He discovered a homeless orphan lives in the streets and adopted him, naming him "Heathcliff" after his deceased son. The narrator, Mrs. Dean explains that all of Mr. Earnshaw's family, his wife, Cathy and Hindley, immediately despised Heathcliff as a result of his dark hair and perceived bad temper. Mr. Earnshaw's favouritism toward Heathcliff stirs Hindley's jealousy, leading to violent behaviour toward him. Despite this, Cathy and Heathcliff grow close, spending time together in the moors and cooperate in studying. After Hindley goes to college, he returns with a wife and inherits *Wuthering Heights*. As the new master, he forces Heathcliff into servitude, though Cathy continues to study with Heathcliff and play with him on the moors.

One evening, Cathy and Heathcliff secretly visit Thrushcross Grange to observe the Linton children, Edgar and Isabella, curious about their wealth and refined lifestyle. Cathy is bitten by a dog, and they are caught. The inhabitants of that house "The Lintons" take Cathy in but fire Heathcliff, rejecting him for his lower social class and "gipsy" heritage. Cathy returns after five weeks, with an adaptation of the manners and appearance of an upper-class woman. She grows distant from Heathcliff as she becomes closer to Edgar. Despite confessing her profound love and admiration for Heathcliff to Nelly, Cathy agrees to marry Edgar. Heathcliff overhears part of their conversation and, humiliated, leaves. His vanishing devastates Cathy. Three years later, after Cathy's marriage to Edgar, Heathcliff returns, transformed into a mysterious, wealthy and handsome person. Heathcliff's return is driven by a desire for revenge. Hindley's wife "Francis" has passed away, leaving him to take care and raise their son "Hareton". Hindley becomes an abusive alcoholic, and Heathcliff manipulates him through gambling to gain control of *Wuthering Heights*. He also turns Hareton against Hindley, winning his favour.

Heathcliff visits Cathy at Thrushcross Grange, and the two rekindle their bond, admitting their love for one another, though Cathy remains loyal to Edgar. Tensions rise when the Lintons' daughter, Isabella, starts a one-sided infatuation with Heathcliff, but he exploits the feelings she has to revenge from Edgar, marrying Isabella and cruelly mistreating her. Cathy begins to lose her sanity when Edgar forbids her from seeing Heathcliff. Cathy who is pregnant with Edgar's child, falls into despair and dies after giving birth to her first daughter, Catherine.

After Cathy's tragic death, Isabella elopes with Heathcliff's child, Linton, to London, while Edgar raises his daughter, Catherine at Thrushcross Grange. Hindley, engrossed in debts, dies, leaving Heathcliff to raise Hareton at Wuthering Heights. Heathcliff continues his vengeance even after Hindley's death, forcing Hareton into a life of servitude, just as Hindley had done to Heathcliff in his youth. As a child, Catherine meets Hareton one day while they are on the moors. She initially likes him but soon rejects him when she learns that he is both a servant and her real cousin. When little Catherine nears thirteen, her aunt, Isabella dies, then Linton comes to live with them at Thrushcross Grange. Heathcliff, however, insists on raising Linton and moves him to Wuthering Heights. Linton is weak and spoiled, and Heathcliff uses him to force Edgar's hand, making Linton marry Catherine. After the marriage, Linton dies, and Catherine cares for him as he fades.

After Linton's death, Catherine and Hareton, once enemies, form a bond. For eighteen years, Heathcliff, haunted by Cathy's memory, loses his will to live then he dies early; that they find him lying beside an open window as rain pours in. He never fully achieves his yearns that to avenge from everyone mistreated him. Catherine and Hareton regain their respective estates, Thrushcross Grange and Wuthering Heights. As Mr. Lockwood discovers, now they are free from the past, in love, and planning to marry on the New Year's Day.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Hate and Revenge

Heathcliff's hatred burns as intensely as his love once did for Cathy, driving nearly all his actions with a thirst for vengeance. Throughout the story, he seeks revenge on everyone he believes mistreated him: Hindley (and his son) for abusing him, and the Lintons sons (Edgar and Isabella) for taking his lover, Cathy, away from him. Curiously, despite his deep and obsessive passion for Cathy, Heathcliff shows little kindness to her daughter, Catherine. Instead, embodying the archetype of a classic villain, he abducts her, coerces her into marrying his frail son, and treats her with cruelty overall.

Social Class

Wuthering Heights deeply reflects the Victorian era's preoccupation with class, which extended beyond wealth to factors like birth, income sources, and family ties. The characters illustrate how these elements shaped social standing, which people generally accepted as fixed.

The novel depicts a rigid society based on class. The Lintons belonged to the professional middle class, while the Earnshaws ranked slightly below them. Mrs. Dean represented the lower-middle class, performing non-manual labour, as servants were considered above manual labourers. Heathcliff, an orphan was found by Mr. Earnshaw in during a trip to Liverpool, initially occupied the lowest social tier in this hierarchy, but Mr. Earnshaw's favouritism defied these societal conventions.

Cathy's decision to marry Edgar rather than Heathcliff is also rooted in class. Even after Heathcliff returns as a wealthy, educated, and refined man, he remains excluded from societal acceptance. Class distinctions similarly drive Heathcliff's treatment of Hindley's son, Hareton. He subjects Hareton to the same degradation he once endured from Hindley, reversing the class-based power dynamic in an act of revenge. ("*Wuthering Heights: Themes, Symbols, and Literary Devices*").

Aspects of Religion

Religious connotations in *Wuthering Heights* require careful repeated readings to uncover their full depth. Religion permeates *Wuthering Heights*, both overtly through characters like Joseph and subtly in the moral dilemmas faced by others. These varying dimensions highlight the novel's exploration of faith as a multifaceted force shaping personal and social dynamics.

Interpretations of Events that Contains Religious Ideas:

1. Religion as the major atmosphere in *Wuthering Heights*: The Earnshaw family is a religious family that faith is an essential element required in shaping their personalities. The atmosphere there is restricted with the Bible's teachings, observant rituals, and morality. It is considered to be one of the Gothic elements depicted in *Wuthering Heights* to play a major role at that rural place.
2. Religion as a source of control: Religion as a source of control emerges prominently in Chapter 5, particularly during Mr. Earnshaw's final days. Joseph's use of religious rhetoric to manipulate Mr. Earnshaw illustrates how faith can be weaponized to exert authority in the household. He worries Mr. Earnshaw about his deeds, including his soul's concerns that Mr. Earnshaw must repent from all his sins and gets back to the right way of God, of course he will help Mr. Earnshaw to do so in exchange of increasing Joseph's rank in the house. "*Constantly "sermonizing," he is relentless in "worrying [Mr. Earnshaw] about his soul's concerns." He encourages Mr. Earnshaw to disapprove of Hindley, Heathcliff, and Cathy in order to gain more influence over the master of the estate*" ("*Wuthering Heights Chapter 5 Summary*")
3. Religion as a source of comfort: after Mr. Earnshaw's death, Catherine and Heathcliff suddenly turn to be pious people praying for God and comforting each other, that God will never leave them. Nelly describes the scene in the sentence "*The little souls were comforting each other with better thoughts that I could have hit on: no person in the world ever pictured heaven so beautifully as they did in their innocent talk*" (Brontë, 2004: 53) The cosy incident explains the other aspect of religion which gives relief to its believers.
4. God's plans are better than human's: another aspect in this long narrative work is the concept of resigning to God with characters like Nelly, Joseph and Edgar. The blindly trust that God's plan is the most perfect plan to them is exposed in many situations and incidents, one event is when Catherine died and Nelly goes to tell Heathcliff saying that Catherine may she is "*going to heaven*" hoping where everyone may "*join her*" if they leave their "*evil ways*" (Brontë, 2004: 205). The other happens during Nelly's speech to Edgar, in her sentence "*resign her to God*" (Brontë, 2004: 316) which presents the idea of fully trust in God and his future plans to human.

In addition, she ended her sentence that good people always finally rewarded, that promise is achieved at the end of *Wuthering Heights* when Little Catherine gets her redemption after she suffered from Heathcliff's oppression, and when Hareton -the rightful and truly heir of *Wuthering Heights*- becomes the master of the household. This supports the idea of God's kindness and plans in both life and afterlife.

5. Punishment: another dimension of doctrine, not only kindness and forgiveness that religion has, but also a punishment for those who breaks the divine law, as the Bible says, “*He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned.*” (Holy Bible, Mark. 16:16)

Same meaning of the verse in Nelly's speech “*it is for God to punish wicked people*” (Brontë, 2004: 74) Only God can torture people for their sins in afterlife, also has the ability to punish people on earth.

Sometimes retribution comes indirectly or on the hands of other people whom God sends to complete the earthly mission for him. Take an example, all of Hindley, Edgar and Catherine have harm Heathcliff in different ways, but at the end he gets his revenge from them in different ways:

- Hindley continuous the rest of his life as a labour to his former servant Heathcliff and beaten up by the same person, then he dies engrossed in debts, effected by alcohol leaving Hareton to be tortured by Heathcliff.
- Edgar on the other hand gets his punishment at first with Isabella's elopement which disgraced her family name, then by Heathcliff's dominance of Thrushcross Grange, his son Linton, and Little Catherine by law. Furthermore, by his last days without his own daughter and finally his tragic death leaving Little Catherine to be tortured by Heathcliff.
- Finally, Catherine's punishment comes in two forms: first is the earthly one where she suffers from illness physically and from Edgar's ignorance, “*Among his books! And I dying, I on the brink of the grave!*” (Brontë, 2004: 148) also she is tortured by Heathcliff's love whom she could not be with because of her marriage to Edgar. Heathcliff takes advantage starting an affair with Isabella which makes Catherine jealous “*We were quarrelling like cats about you*” (Brontë, 2004: 128)

Second form of the punishment is the afterlife, when her soul would not be in peace so she is still wandering on earth where she is trapped there. In addition, she dies unsatisfied about her situation, regretting on many things she has done to Heathcliff, and asking for forgiveness that she never had from him.

Concepts of Religion from Characters' Perspectives

The Earnshaws is a religious old-fashioned family such as the most rural families. At this family, it is too important to be a pious person to fit in. As it is exposed throughout *Wuthering Heights*, they go to church every Sunday according to the Christian traditions; they read the Bible, worship to God in misfortunes and pray every night before the dinner.

Every character has its own perspective about the idea of religion in general, so there will be individual analyses for them to investigate some main views such as:

- Identifying the major philosophy or adaptation of every single character.
- A determination of the characters' religious orientations.
- An examination of the swinging nature of the characters between faith and blasphemy.
- A specification of the role of the religion in shaping identities of the characters.
- Exposing the characters' interpretations to the religious doctrines.
- Stating examples of the multifaceted nature of religion.

Catherine Earnshaw

Catherine is a complicated character from a religious point of view. She is derived from a religiously constrained family that has influenced her to make her new view about faith.

On the contrary of Hindley and Joseph, she accepts Heathcliff to be her brother and more, to be her lover, which reflects the idea of acceptance that grows inside Catherine. Catherine says a sentence describing her relationship with Heathcliff which is “*Whatever our souls are made of, his and mine are the same*” (Brontë, 2004: 98)

Catherine's statement, “*I am Heathcliff*” (Brontë, 2004: 100), may suggest a belief in their shared spiritual origin. This interpretation underscores their inseparability and challenges traditional concepts of identity. For normal people there is a complicated series of actions help them to shape their personalities, which sometimes lead the good to be evil and vice versa, so certainly, if a human is split (theoretically) into two different entities, two versions would appear, one is good and the other is evil. That will reveal a question: which side of Heathcliff Catherine is? Is she the angelic -human- side or the devilish side?

The idea that 'everything happens for a reason' is a common theological theme across Christianity, Islam, and Judaism. This belief resonates in *Wuthering Heights*, where characters like Nelly and Joseph interpret events as divine plans, contrasting with Heathcliff's defiance of such notions.

In Judaism, it is mentioned in the Old Testament “*For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, saith the LORD, thoughts of peace, and not of evil, to give you an expected end*” (Jeremiah 11:29)

“*Declares the Lord, 'plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future.'*” *This verse or portions of it are very popular.*” (“Does Jeremiah 29:11 Apply to Us?”)

In Christianity, in the New Testament “*But I would ye should understand, brethren, that the things which happened unto me have fallen out rather unto the furtherance of the gospel*” (Philippians 1:12)

No matter the circumstances we face—no matter how challenging, upsetting, or intimidating they may be—we can trust that each passing day can be used by God for a greater purpose, and every event in our lives presents an opportunity to further the gospel. (“Philippians 1:12”)

Also, in Quran, in a verse addressing the Godly personality (Allah) “*With him are the keys of the unseen-no one knows them except*” (“*Surah Al-An'am, Ayat 59*”)

(وَعِنْدَهُ مَفَاتِحُ الْغَيْبِ لَا يَعْلَمُهَا إِلَّا هُوَ) (الأنعام 59)

With Him (Allah) are the keys to the unseen; no one knows them except Him. He is aware of all that exists on land and in the wide sea; not even a single small leaf falls without His fully knowledge. (Al-Hilali and Khan 70). This is an obvious announcement that everything is planned by God's will.

Going back to *Wuthering Heights*, one sign appeared revealing Catherine's nature that when she asked for a whip to be brought after her father's visit to Liverpool, but Mr. Earnshaw loses the whip on the way back; this incident is a very clear allusion to Catherine's savageness which will be disappeared when her father brings Heathcliff to *Wuthering Heights*. The whip Catherine requests as a gift from her father symbolizes her subtle challenge to patriarchal authority. Traditionally associated with dominance, the whip reflects her desire for agency in a male-dominated society.

From a psychoanalytic perspective, the whip could be interpreted as a masculine symbol, representing Catherine's longing for masculine authority.

“*Conversely, her father losing the whip might symbolize an unconscious male urge to dominate the feminine psyche by reaffirming his control*” (“Feminist Psychoanalytical Reading”).

Joseph

Joseph is a dogmatic and multifaceted religious character that follows Old Testament doctrines which states punishments for sins if the human seeks for forgiveness “*Breach for breach eye for eye tooth for tooth as he caused a blemish in man so shall it be done to him again*” (Holy Bible, Lev. 24:20). This verse is taken from the Old Testament law delivered to the Israelites by God through Moses. It forms part of a section emphasizing the principle of justice and retribution, commonly known as the "lex talionis," or the law of retaliation. (“Leviticus 24:20 Meaning”)

Joseph’s stern religiosity aligns with the Old Testament's depiction of a punitive God, as seen in verses emphasizing discipline and justice. This harsh perspective influences his treatment of Heathcliff and others in *Wuthering Heights*, reflecting a rigid interpretation of faith.

“*You shall consider in your heart that as a man chastens his own son, so Yahweh your God chastens you*” (Holy Bible, Deut. 8:5)

“*Behold, happy is the man whom God corrects him: therefore do not despise the chastening of the almighty*” (Holy Bible, Job. 5:17)

The God depicted in the Old Testament is often described as one of the most unpleasant figures in literature: jealous and openly proud of it, petty, unjust, and unforgiving; a controlling, vindictive force; violent in His actions, with a history of ethnic cleansing; displaying misogynistic, and racist tendencies, and committing acts of infanticide, genocide, and filicide. He is portrayed as pestilential, megalomaniacal, sadistic, and as a capriciously malevolent bully. (Dawkins)

Throughout *Wuthering Heights*, it has been obvious that Joseph is the first dimension of the Bible; he also has the features of clergyman who follows it such as rudeness, punishment, mercilessness etc.

First time Heathcliff arrived, Joseph did not accept him and has a lot of satisfaction during the time Heathcliff is being beaten, which is also a sign of concept in both Old Testament and Judaism that is they are ‘God's chosen people’ which they cannot accept anyone from another religion or nationality as a result he calls Heathcliff a devil, evil thing, son of devil etc.

Mariam Abdulla discusses that idea “*One such political and historical driver, which can shape a culture into one that holds attitudes and ideas that cause intolerance to religious minorities or suspicion of the “other,” is ethno- or religious nationalism*” (2018).

Hindley Earnshaw

Hindley represents the traditional moderate person who believes in God and Bible, but at the same time not very religious. At first, he has a little pious side when he did not and does not accept the gypsy boy Heathcliff calling him “*imp of Satan*” (Brontë, 2004: 47) punishing and whipping him for the mistakes. After college, Hindley remains the same moderate person with little preference of secularism.

Secularism can be discovered in his gambling, drinking, and his repeated attempts to kill Heathcliff who is a human being and a soul. However, the religious side can be found in his speech to Isabella “*Treachery and violence is just returned for treachery and violence*” (Brontë 216) which assures his faith in the Bible especially in the Old Testament verse “*eye for eye*” (Holy Bible, Lev. 24:20) so he combines between the Old Testament and secularism in his personality.

Nelly Dean

The narrator Nelly Dean in Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* embodies a pragmatic and compassionate approach to religion, contrasting sharply with Joseph's rigid and punitive faith. Her belief in God's mercy highlights a more humanistic interpretation of Christianity in *Wuthering Heights*. She returns to God in different circumstances, she remembers God every day and always comforts herself with God's kindness; this kind of a character resembles the average rural people in pastorals who mentions deity in every situation they are exposed to. They still on their faith even though they have sins. Many quotations from Nelly's speech reveal her spiritual nature like "All sinners would be miserable in heaven" (Brontë 97) "resign her to God" (Brontë, 2004: 316) "people who do their duty always finally rewarded" (Brontë, 2004: 316) etc...

Therefore, Nelly represents New Testament teachings and Jesus' willing for peace and forgiveness, which is exposed through these verses:

"Blessed are the peacemakers: for they shall be called the children of God" (*Holy Bible*, Matt. 5:9)

"Forbearing one another, and forgiving one another, if any man have a quarrel against any: even as Christ forgave you, so also do ye" (*Holy Bible*, Col. 3:13)

In addition, she believes in redemptions for sins,

"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness" (*Holy Bible*, 1 John. 1:9).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Humanism versus Devilism

If a person gives a close attention to Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*, a question will be revealed inside the mind about the ambiguity surrounding Heathcliff's nature - as either human or devil -. His actions often blur the line between human morality and supernatural malevolence, leaving readers to grapple with his true identity which swings between two concepts **Humanism & Devilism**

Humanism: the capacity for goodness, mercy, and rational decision, which represents the moral agency that could be recognised in notions like divine justice and compassion. This perspective aligns with religious doctrines that promote redemption and the belief that even the most sinful individuals have the potential for moral transformation.

Terry Eagleton argues that Heathcliff's cruelty is not an indication of inherent evil but rather a reaction to the rigid class structures of Victorian England. According to Eagleton, Heathcliff is a product of oppression and social injustice, and his actions, though extreme, stem from his marginalized position in society rather than a fundamentally wicked nature. Eagleton asserts, "Heathcliff is less a supernatural figure than an outcast molded by the economic and social conditions that deny him integration into the world of property and privilege" (Eagleton, 2005: 109). This interpretation frames Heathcliff's vengeance as a response to systemic inequality rather than an innate inclination toward evil.

Devilism: the embodiment of satanic malevolence with devilish behaviours in human characters, which could be recognised in notions vengeance defiance against divine order. This concept draws from religious imagery, particularly from Christian and Islamic teachings, where Satan is depicted as a being who misleads others and later disowns them, much like Heathcliff's disavowal of responsibility for Catherine's suffering.

Isabella's pivotal question, "Is Mr. Heathcliff a man? If so is he mad? And if not is he a devil?" (Brontë, 2004: 167) encapsulates the Gothic ambiguity that permeates *Wuthering Heights*. This question does more than describe Heathcliff, it challenges the boundaries between humanity and monstrosity, morality and malevolence. Brontë's portrayal of

Heathcliff as both vengeful and vulnerable blurs these lines, leaving his true nature deliberately unresolved. For instance, his obsessive love for Catherine controls his cruelty, yet moments of regret, such as catching Hareton mid-fall, hint at an underlying humanity.

From a Gothic literary perspective, Heathcliff embodies the archetypal antihero, whose suffering transforms him into a figure of terror. His defiance of divine punishment— “*No, God won’t have the satisfaction that I shall*” (Brontë, 2004: 74)— aligns him with his rebelling against societal and moral conventions. However, his role also invites deeper existential questions: Is his "devilish" nature a product of his environment—abuse, rejection, and class oppression—or does it signify his existence as an incognito devil.

This ambiguity is heightened by Heathcliff’s supernatural connection to Catherine. His claim of seeing her ghost transcends natural law, aligning him with Gothic traditions where the otherworldly becomes a reflection of internal torment. Yet, these visions could also symbolize his profound guilt and unyielding love, blurring the distinction between the human and the demonic. Through Heathcliff, Brontë critiques Victorian society’s rigid moral dichotomies, suggesting that good and evil are often intertwined, shaped by both individual choice and external circumstances.

Here are some incidents expose the conflict between the devilism and humanism:

1 - First appearance of Heathcliff was like that he came from nowhere neither family nor money, he is all by his own, that resembles the way of Lucifer's (*Satan*) descendant the earth as an outcast as in Holy Bible:

“And I saw an angel coming down out of heaven, having the key to the Abyss and holding in his hand a great chain. ²He seized the dragon, that ancient serpent, who is the devil, or Satan, and bound him for a thousand years. ³He threw him into the Abyss, and locked and sealed it over him, to keep him from deceiving the nations anymore until the thousand years were ended. After that, he must be set free for a short time.” (“Revelation 20”)

Rejections of both Hindley and Joseph -who is the most pious person in *Wuthering Heights* - could be evidence that Heathcliff is an actual devil.

2 - One time precisely in chapter 9 after Francis’ death, Hindley throws his own son, Hareton, from upstairs and according to Nelly Dean, Heathcliff catches him instantly then immediately regrets that decision “*Had it been dark I daresay he would have tried to remedy the mistake by smashing Hareton’s skull on the steps*” (Brontë, 2004: 91). If the event were analysed carefully, a human instinct would be revealed in Heathcliff’s characterization though he has done a bunch of vicious deeds. Although Heathcliff refused the idea by revealing that he wants to get revenge in smashing Hareton’s head then mistakenly saved him, but it still an allusion about Heathcliff’s humanism characterization.

3 - Heathcliff’s speech to Nelly Dean about getting revenge when she says “*It is for God to punish wicked people*” (Brontë, 2004: 74) while his response is “*No, God won’t have the satisfaction that I shall,*” (Brontë, 2004: 74) is a clear avowal not only for Heathcliff’s defiance to God’s punishment, but also for his intention to become the punisher. It is an allusion to the devil who rebelled against God to become the controller, to decide who will be rescued or punished (“Revelation 20”).

4 - The most important event which attributes Heathcliff a devilish privilege happens during the last meeting between him and Catherine in chapter 15. In a deep dramatic conversation, Catherine accuses Heathcliff of killing her because of the things he has done (his escape, his affair with Isabella Linton, his elopement with Isabella....). As a result,

Heathcliff responds to her with that sentence “*Are you possessed with a devil to talk in that manner to me when you are dying?*” (Brontë, 2004: 196) and then states that Catherine has brought that to herself. Heathcliff’s sentence is a very strong one with a deep multifaceted meaning.

Going backward to the previous chapters, a phrase said by Catherine, which is “*I am Heathcliff*” (Brontë 100), is referring to that she and Heathcliff are the same soul in different bodies. From a metaphysical angle, perhaps Catherine is really “*possessed with the devil*” whose name 'Heathcliff' and perhaps the word “*devil*” with the definite article “*the*” refers to the devil whom she is talking to during this moment, as a result Heathcliff’s sentence possibly a sarcastic question that he already knows its answer .

Heathcliff mentions the Free will while Catherine is dying. In previous chapters, Heathcliff was the closest human to Catherine, when he suddenly disappeared after he heard Catherine describing the romantic affair and feelings toward Edgar and how Heathcliff is lower in social level than all of them. Therefore, he escapes; leaving Catherine to go to inspect him during a thunderstorm. Furthermore, she catches fever and gets sick. This event reveals how Heathcliff is honest about Free will. Catherine goes out without any pressure from anyone to do so, but at the same time if Heathcliff has stayed at home, she would not go out.

Returning to the major event, during Catherine’s struggle to fight death which happens because of her own actions according to Heathcliff. The idea is that all of what happens mainly because of Catherine’s own actions and partly Heathcliff. Heathcliff is a free human who can do whatever he wants under Freedom bounds, he can choose any single lonely woman to be his wife without concerns about married women. Therefore, it is Heathcliff’s right to start an affair with Isabella, indifferent about Catherine’s feelings because she is a married woman now. Catherine would not be in a situation with a husband spends all of his time in the library “*among his books*” if she had married someone vehemently loves her like Heathcliff.

In conclusion, While Heathcliff's actions contribute to Catherine's suffering, her decisions— such as marrying Edgar for social status—also play a significant role in her demise. This complexity highlights the interplay of personal agency and external influence.

The notion of Free Will and Heathcliff’s denial to irrelatively of what happened aligns with the Islamic conviction in Quran. “*They are like Satan when he lures someone to disbelieve. Then after they have done so he will say ‘on the judgment Day’ I have absolutely nothing to do with you, I truly fear Allah the lord of all worlds*” (“*Surah Al-Hashr, Ayat 16*”)

(كَمَثَلِ الشَّيْطَانِ إِذْ قَالَ لِلْإِنْسَانِ اكْفُرْ فَلَمَّا كَفَرَ قَالَ إِنِّي بَرِيءٌ مِّنكَ إِنِّي أَخَافُ اللَّهَ رَبَّ الْعَالَمِينَ 16) (الحشر 16)

Which explains how Satan the disowns human in the last moments of his life stating that he has no business with him because all the things that the human had done are by his own will, with his own hands. That is also a devilish characteristic in Heathcliff which supports the idea of him being a devil.

5 - Heathcliff’s ability of seeing ghosts is another argumentative point. Heathcliff’s belief in his encounter with ghosts may align with Gothic conventions, where the supernatural blurs reality. His visions could symbolize unresolved guilt or grief rather than literal devilish traits, adding complexity to his characterization. He believes that he can see Catherine’s ghost (soul) and hear her voice. By confession Heathcliff has “*strong faith in ghosts*” (Brontë, 2004: 355), There are two options in this condition: Either he has the gypsy’s ability of seeing the souls of the dead, which is an old belief exists in the traditions of his gypsy ancestors “*If certain rites are not respected the dead will come back or they*

will be unable to make their way to the Other World.” (Lecouteux 95). Or Heathcliff is an authentic demon devil sees the damn souls wandering on earth.

Another example when Heathcliff digs Catherine grave after 18 years, he sees her in the flesh as if she is died recently. Maybe he really does but an afterlife where the souls are raised again and that supports the devilism idea.

“There is one more entity the Gypsies believe in: the ghosts of the dead. These are not real spirits but embodiments of all the negative traits, like hostility, jealousy, selfishness, or cunning. Their role is to scare people so they will not break Gypsy laws. If a Gypsy discovers he was negotiating with an embodied ghost, he believes he is doomed and stops eating and sleeping”. (Dumireascu, 2010: 10)

6 - The horrifying way of Heathcliff’s death. His eyes were wide open and did not shut even when Nelly Dean tries to close. Joseph's remark about Heathcliff condition “*Th’devil has hurried of his soul*” (Brontë, 2004: 412) opens an argumentative discussion about Heathcliff’s ambiguous identity, whether he is a devil forms in a human body, which supports the devilism theory, or he is a normal human who had done numerous wicked acts in his life so the result that God took his life in a most harrowing manner, which supports the humanism theory. Or maybe Heathcliff has sold his soul to Satan in exchange for fortune and revenge.

CONCLUSION

After a deep analysis of the religious connotations of Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* and their impact on characters, various opinions are revealed from different angles that associate with the long narrative's inner themes and interpretations.

Key findings include:

1. Religious Themes as a Control Force to Character Development: Faith works as an operative force in the characterization of most of the characters in the narrative masterpiece. It is considered as both a source of comfort and control, significantly shaping the moral and psychological dimensions of the characters. Figures like Joseph embody a rigid, harsh interpretation of faith, while Nellie Dean presents a gentle, forgiving perspective rooted in the New Testament teachings.
2. Religion as a Reflection of Societal and Cultural Norms: The various perspectives of the characters mirrors Victorian societal tensions between strict dogmatism and emerging secularism.
3. Gothic and Religious Intersections: Gothic elements such as ghosts and supernatural events intertwine with the religious motifs, creating a complex atmosphere that is dominated the whole novel. The portrayal of Catherine's ghost and Heathcliff's belief in spirits reflects both Gothic conventions and spiritual undertones related to both, Gypsy traditions and religious beliefs.
4. Integration of Multiple Religious Traditions: The study connects Christian, Islamic, and Jewish doctrines to the events and the characters in *Wuthering Heights*, offering a comparative angle on themes like justice and forgiveness. These interfaith connections set universal perspectives for dealing with moral and existential dilemmas depicted in the narrative.
5. Punishment and Divine Justice: Religion in *Wuthering Heights* emphasis is punishment for sin. A single human cannot shrink from redemption for his former vicious deeds, as seen in Hindley, Edgar, and Catherine's ultimate downfalls. Heathcliff's vengeance acts represent the earthly form of retribution, while the characters' suffering aligns with the Biblical idea of divine justice.

6. Heathcliff's Dual Nature: Heathcliff's character sways between human vulnerability and devilish maliciousness. While his vengeful actions align with demonic traits, moments like saving Hareton hint at underlying humanity. His actions obscure the line between free will and divine retribution, which are both discussed in the study. Heathcliff's vision of Catherine's ghost blurs the truth of his true identity, which remains an ambiguous issue.

In conclusion, the study demonstrates that religion has an influential force of the character's identities and actions align with the Gothic atmosphere of *Wuthering Heights*. In exploring universal themes of love, revenge, and redemption, a merge with the integration of religious motifs from Christianity, Islam, and Judaism that enrich the narrative depth and underscores the enduring relevance of its existential questions. *Wuthering Heights* explores the human condition where faith is engrossed with the complexities of belief and morality in a challenging world.

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