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Faculty of Education

Department of English Language and Literature

Bachelor Thesis

**The Themes of Change and Development in The Tenant of Wildfell
Hall and Wuthering Heights**

Marie Vejběrová

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Thesis supervisor: Bernadette Higgins, M.A.

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Declaration:

I hereby declare that I have written this bachelor's thesis by myself and that all the sources used during writing were properly cited.

Prague, 8th December 2016

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Annotation:

The main goal of this thesis is to examine the themes of change and development in Anne Brontë's *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* and Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*. The theoretical part focuses on narrative structure and other literary tools used to develop the story. It also briefly lists features of Romanticism and Realism and how they relate to changes and development. Further, it explores the influence of societal structures and their impact on the potential to change. The practical part provides analyses of the behavior of particular characters from the standpoint of their ability to react to given circumstances. Included is also the comparison of both novels with emphasis on the difference in how changes are portrayed in both novels.

Keywords:

Anne Brontë, The Tenant of Wildfell Hall, Emily Brontë, Wuthering Heights, the theme of change, development

Anotace:

Hlavním cílem této práce je prozkoumat témata změny a vývoje v románech *Dvojí život Heleny Grahamové* Anne Brontëové a *Na Větrné hůrce* Emily Brontëové. Teoretická část se zaměřuje na strukturu narativu a jiné literární prostředky používané k rozvíjení příběhu. Tato část také stručně uvádí rysy romantismu a realismu a jejich vztah ke změnám a vývoji. Dále zkoumá vliv společenských struktur a jejich dopad na potenciál člověka se změnit. Praktická část poskytuje analýzu chování vybraných postav z hlediska jejich schopnosti reagovat na dané okolnosti. Zahrnuto je též srovnání obou románů s důrazem na rozdíly ve zobrazení změn.

Klíčová slova:

Anne Brontëová, Dvojí život Heleny Grahamové, Emily Brontëová, Na Větrné hůrce, téma změny, vývoj

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1 Introduction

This thesis inspects the themes of change and development as they are presented in *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* and in *Wuthering Heights*. Firstly, from the standpoint of novel structure, as it explores how static and dynamic characters fit within the development of the entire story and it also examines the connection between narrative structure and our perception of changes. Secondly, from the standpoint of societal concepts, such as social mobility and the role of a woman in society.

The Brontë sisters are the most well-known sibling writers in English literature. Although the works of Emily and Anne might not have reached the fame of those written by Charlotte, they should not be overlooked for they have a lot to offer to both readers and literary researchers. I first got intrigued by *Wuthering Heights* after watching its TV adaptation. Upon finally reading the book, I concluded that the filmmakers missed the point of Emily's masterpiece altogether. I chose to mention this because it reflects how misinterpreted and miscategorized *Wuthering Heights* has been and often still is. One needs to pay close attention to not miss the details that make this book stand out among others. One of the aims of my thesis is to point out the junctures in the story that reveal the unique properties of this book, particularly its complex and intriguing structure, and its attitude to change and development as determined by the nature of the society of that time.

When choosing the other book on which to build my comparison, I was advised to look into Anne's work. Among other reasons it was because the authors were sisters, which means they grew up in the same environment, at the same time, received the same education and upbringing and often consulted each other or their other siblings during the writing process. However, despite these common denominators and undeniable mutual influence, their books differ immensely in numerous aspects, although there are superficial similarities. Almost all elements the books have in common are handled differently by both writers, especially the way they relate to circumstances that influence the characters' potential to change. Anne's story mirrors her patient approach and optimism, for the protagonist's development is the ultimate key to his happy ending. Emily's story is almost a parallel to her "altogether unbending spirit". (*Biographical Notice*) Cathy and Heathcliff's inability to change and adapt to the world they live in destined them to certain doom. In both books, new generations

brought positive change and a fresh start. However, in *Wuthering Heights* it also brought back centuries old order Cathy and Heathcliff attempted to defy. Whether that is a good or a bad thing is debatable.

In the theoretical part I examine topics of literary theory concerning the methods of developing both plot and characters. Further I point out differences in how the development of characters is handled in Romanticism and Realism and I list other features of both movements that are vital in both analyzed books, as well as the projection of the author's attitude to change into their stories. The final part deals with societal structures and how they created certain life conditions that shaped the fate of the main heroines in both books. The Brontë sisters lived in an era that was not favorable to women, hence there is a strong correlation between the temporal setting and the fact that the main characters in both books are females. The clash between their responsibilities and personal desires were a source of conflict throughout their respective plotlines.

In the practical part I separately analyze both books in regard to all aspects of development and change. The main factors catalyzing or inhibiting changes are the setting of the books and the characters themselves. Further I analyze each book's narrative structure because it plays an important role in the reader's perception of changes.

The concluding chapter of the theoretical part then compares first the similarities and then the differences of both works, while pointing out that many of the listed similarities are merely superficial. The most striking difference proved to be how the authors treat the theme of change based on their attitude to it.

Theoretical part

In the following chapters I would like to present key pieces of literary theory regarding novel writing with focus on development. Further I will elaborate on elements of Romanticism and Realism that play an important role in my analyzing change and development. Lastly I will provide cultural and historical context for a woman's place in society and how the society's expectations can shape the minds of writers as well as their characters.

2 Development in narrative structure

Almost any element in storytelling can serve as a catalyst for any action and by extension change or development. Characters are influenced by a sum of factors that range from something seemingly as trivial as weather to more obvious agents like other characters. In the following chapters I would like to present some of the literary devices and structures used in the novels I will further analyze in the practical part.

2.1 Presenting a character in narrative

The simplest way of introducing a character to the reader is so called direct narrative statement (Scholes and Kellogg ch.5) where the author describes a character's looks or personality. It is a common device easily found in most novels. In some cases, a character is introduced to the reader through another character's eyes, such as Helen is through Gilbert's. Such method makes for effective dramatic irony, for when the reader is better informed than the narrating character, they can immediately recognize if the narrator's assessment is accurate or not.

The inward life of a character may be presented via interior monologue, characterized by Scholes and Kellogg as "unspoken soliloquy". (Scholes and Kellogg ch.5) When examining the historical development of interior monologue in literature, the starting point of which was love-struck Medea's struggle between loyalty and passion, Scholes and Kellogg point out that in Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, men and women, more specifically male and female characters, tend to act differently in situation of crisis. Males are inclined to solve the situation by assuming action and females are given space for monologues full of inner conflict. (Scholes and Kellogg ch.5)

2.2 Types of characters

Vital for developmental purposes is to distinguish between static and dynamic characters. By definition, static characters are those that remain virtually unchanged as far as their personality is concerned and dynamic are those that go through a development within the story. The easiest way of determining the dynamicity of a character is a comparison of their personality in the beginning and in the end of their storyline. Would they react differently in the same situation? Jane Austen's Emma Woodhouse laughed at Mr. Knightley's admonishments in the beginning but took them to heart and felt rightfully ashamed about them towards the end of the book.

It is important not to confuse this division with what E. M. Forster calls flat and round characters. (Forster 65) Flat characters that can be described in one sentence can be dynamic and round characters, on the contrary, can be nicely fleshed out and yet go through no development. Essentially, these main divisions are freely combinable. A so-called stock character who usually represents a stereotype would be a combination of a flat and non-developing character, such as Blanche Dubois - a Southern Belle - from Tennessee Williams' *A Streetcar Named Desire*.

The importance of static characters (even those that are simultaneously flat) in stories lies their potential to influence or catalyze development of events and other characters or to serve as a juxtaposition to dynamic elements.

2.3 Plot as a narrative device

In his lectures, E. M. Forster defines plot as a combination of story and causality. (Forster 61) Story is a simple sequence of events and provided those events are tied by cause, they constitute a plot. Part of an author's means of encouraging the reader's imagination, or co-authorship even, is keeping the causality hidden at places. Scholes and Kellogg maintain that "all plots depend on tension and resolution". (Scholes and Kellogg ch.6) This principle is applicable especially to stories involving mysteries and misunderstandings, both of which occurs generously in the books analyzed in this thesis.

Next to mysteries, myth is also one of plot's crucial devices. Northrop Frye, a Canadian literary theorist, defines myth as "the imitation of actions near the conceivable limits of human desire". (Scholes and Kellogg ch.6) Scholes and Kellogg in

this context mention Canaanite seasonal myth and point out that Judeo-Christian myth of birth and death which means rebirth in the heavenly kingdom is a mere variation of it. (Scholes and Kellogg ch.6) The theme of heaven and hell is one of the most prominent and recurring themes in *Wuthering Heights*, in accordance with its heavily romanticist nature. The generational cycle, a rebirth of a sort, can be found in both books.

2.4 The Importance of point of view in terms of character development

Point of view is the most powerful of the author's means of developing the story for it controls and influences how the reader perceives and evaluates all aspects of the book, especially the development of characters.

Point of view in narrative art concerns the relationship of the narrator to the tale and the narrator to the audience. (Scholes and Kellogg ch.7) This inevitably results in literary irony, meaning there will either be a discrepancy in what the narrator knows and what the characters know or a discrepancy in how the narrator understands the characters' actions.

Two types of point of view relevant to this thesis are the eye-witness and what Scholes and Kellogg call the "histor". Historically, first person narration was not popular for the eye-witness was deemed paradoxically unreliable for two reasons. One, an eye-witness cannot be everywhere so they do not see the proverbial big picture and context. Two, by being a direct participant, they can lose objectivity. A histor, however, is a persona who collects information based on which they assemble the entirety of the story. (Scholes and Kellogg ch.7) Therefore, the author's choice of point of view depends on their intent. If they aim for the reader's empathy, an eye-witness, able to convey first-hand experience and thereby strong feelings, is a good choice. A histor can then help the reader gain a grasp on the situation or give them the impression of having a grasp of the situation, effectively manipulating them and thereby reinforcing the upcoming moment of surprise or unexpected revelation.

More complex narrative structures, like frame narrative, which is typical for epistolary novels, may obscure the point of view. Each time information is passed on, it is subjected to re-phrasing, re-interpretation or any other modification by the person relaying it. It can be useful or harmful, deliberate or unconscious; the narrator might

think they are helping you understand by providing context but they would in fact be explaining the situation the way they understand it and that does not necessarily need to be the correct way. Such a person relaying information is called an unreliable narrator. Further multiplication of narrators, such as in the case of *Wuthering Heights*, is called a Chinese box composition, where each box or a story is framed in a larger one.

Although the phenomenon of a complex narrative structure is present in both books, in each it serves a different purpose. In *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* it serves to increase suspense, making any development the more surprising and unexpected, and possibly to sweeten the eventual happy ending. One could argue that in *Wuthering Heights* it attempts to disorient the reader. Another explanation would be an aspect of the novel E. M. Forster calls “prophecy”. A prophecy is a specific tone of narration that deals with unearthly concepts such as religion or emotions so intense they are beyond the grasp of normal human beings. Cathy and Heathcliff’s clearly transcendental bond which neither of them is able to explain by words and which leaves all other characters equally at loss would fall into the second category.

3 Romanticism and Realism

With both novels in question being written at the decline of romanticism and the arrival of Realism, they inevitably contain a mix of elements of both movements.

3.1 Elements of Romanticism and Realism

Some features of Realism can be found in both books, such as not sugarcoated abusive relationships, realistic portrayal of everyday life without the use of poetic language, and complex ethical choices. *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* is more of a contrast to Romanticism, rejecting sentimentalist concepts and clearly favoring reason over unrealistic expectations. On the other hand, *Wuthering Heights* carries most characteristics that define Gothic novel, the most prominent genre of Romanticism in British prose. Typical for Gothic novel are for example mysterious houses in remote locations, dominance of feelings over reason, supernatural elements and passion or intense feelings occasionally turning into physical violence.

3.2 Romanticism's and Realism's stance towards character development

While elements of these two movements can be complementary, their stance towards character development differs. In his work *Poetics*, Aristotle asserts that plot is the most important element of a story, a point of view not shared by E. M. Forster who thought character to be more important than plot. (Forster 67) Romanticism tends to focus on the plot, which is often mysterious or at least unusual. Characters serve to drive the development of the story. (Szwab) In contrast, Realism accentuates characters who are given relatable features and attributes, while the plot of realistic novels remains more lifelike and ordinary. In Realism, the characters develop simultaneously with the plot, being affected and shaped by its events. (Szwab)

The lack of character development at the expense of developing the plot in Romanticism is also connected with using previously mentioned stock characters, sometimes called archetypal characters. Archetypal characters contain more myth and fiction in them and are less likely to undergo any notable development. Heathcliff is often wrongly categorized as a Byronic hero, who can be considered a stock character since he comes with a given set of stereotypical characteristics. Such a conviction is most likely a result of poor or shallow knowledge of the character. Features Heathcliff shares with a typical Byronic hero, such as being cunning, cynical, arrogant, having troubled, mysterious past and displaying self-destructive behavior will easily confuse the reader. Heathcliff's personality however is in direct contradiction to many other key characterization. Byronic heroes are "dedicated to pursuing matters of justice over matters of legality" and "loyal to themselves and their core beliefs and values". (Fleming) Heathcliff has no beliefs or values and we should not mistake his revenge plan for pursuing justice for he never "acts on behalf of greater goods". (Fleming)

Realism, on the contrary, uses typical characters that are based on realistic principles (Szwab) and unlike their romantic counterparts are able to develop. Gilbert Markham for instance is easily imaginable to have existed and changed through time in the exact same way it is described in the novel.

4 Societal structures and their impact on change and development

Every work of art is determined by its cultural and historical context. So to fully understand what meaning a novel held for its readers, how it was received and what its possible influence was on other artists, we must delve into its background, including but not limited to the author's life and personality. How much the author's biography should be considered while analyzing or interpreting a book is up for a lengthy debate; stances on this vary. For the purposes of this thesis however, it is vital for proving the concluding point.

Our opinions and we as people in general are formed by our upbringing, education and last but not least by the society we live in. Contrary to popular belief, and according to a reputable Czech pedagogue, Gustav Adolf Lindner, society's influence is the least focused and yet the most powerful. Lindner thereby asserts that unintentional influences are stronger than the deliberate ones. We should keep this in mind whether we assess the writer or their character. Some might dismiss this as simple blaming shortcomings and failures on society, this proverbial monster, but the fact remains that all people surrounding us are a part of that society; its role in our lives and our decision making cannot be underestimated.

4.1 Culturally rooted male prevalence

It is important to take a look at how the Brontë sisters fit into the society they lived in. The Victorian era was a very dynamic period for the Industrial Revolution brought great changes and opportunities for people. Victorian era saw the implementation of important and significant positive changes such as the Wills Act from 1837 that allowed people to decide who will inherit their property, making women potential heirs. "[...] every word importing the masculine gender only shall extend and be applied to a female as well as a male." (Wills Act 1837 section 1) New laws were introduced that would enable women to leave abusive marriages. They could for instance file for divorce on grounds of domestic violence, keep the money they earned, receive spousal support or, by 1886, even become the sole guardians of their children if their husbands died. (Simkin) However, these changes did not happen overnight and, from the perspective of the heroines of *The Tenant* and *Wuthering Heights*, they happened too late.

During these times, the middle class was on the rise but while middle-class men could work their way up society's ladder, the only paid work open to middle-class women was the position of a governess. The only son in the family, Branwell, had broader options and he attempted a career as a painter and as a writer. After failing at both, he worked as a tutor alongside one of his sisters. His failure aside, when taking his works to publishers, he did so under his own name. His sisters, fearing the publishers' bias towards female writers, submitted their works under male pseudonyms. What confirmed that their concern was not unfounded, was the fact that some critics, after the revelation of the authors' true identities, suddenly changed their opinions on some of the books, or - in Emily's case - refused to believe it was not written by a man. According to Kastan, to the surprise of some, the most susceptible to the societal pressure was perhaps Charlotte. She received a not-very-kindly worded letter of rejection from poet laureate Robert Southey who attempted to discourage her from pursuing a writing career with advising her, that "Literature cannot be the business of a woman's life and it ought not to be." (Kastan 277) She kept the letter with a note "Southey's Advice to be kept forever." (Kastan 277) Emily, on the other hand, was famous for having little-to-no regard for other people's opinions, save for consulting her writing with her siblings, perhaps. Gaskell even called her "impervious to influence", suggesting she was highly unlikely to change her opinion or be persuaded about anything by another person. Anne was meeker than Emily; Emily never complained because of her stubbornness (Gaskell 291), Anne never complained because she was so well-behaved. (Gaskell 136)

4.2 The portrait of an ideal wife

Even without these indicators, it is undisputable that the society of that time was inherently patriarchal. The essence of the perfect wife was captured by Coventry Patmore in his poem *The Angel of the House*. The prelude called *The Wife's Tragedy* begins as follows:

*Man must be pleased; but him to please
Is woman's pleasure; down the gulf
Of his condoled necessities
She casts her best, she flings herself. (Patmore)*

It emphasizes woman's sacrifice as her main task as a wife. About the crippling constraints of this, Virginia Woolf later wrote: "Had I not killed her she would have

killed me. She would have plucked the heart out of my writing,” (Showalter) suggesting that breaking free of this socially prescribed role is an act of preservation of one’s self.

The key qualities characterizing a perfect wife from this period could be summed up as submissiveness and femininity. While Helen is anything but blindly submissive, Cathy lacks on both accounts. These “shortcomings” are the source of many obstacles for both heroines.

The patriarchal nature of the then society comes into play in a considerably larger extent with female authors of this historical period and mainly female protagonists as main heroines. Some writers address this topic deliberately, others less so. However, the issue was (and still is) omnipresent and as such is difficult to avoid altogether. So although the struggle against male dominance might not always be the centerpoint of the plot, it may certainly act as a driving force behind the development of it. In a manner of speaking, society’s influence can be seen as a plot device, which is crucial since plot is one of the three main means of conveying a story, the other two being characters and the point of view (or the type of narration.)

Practical part

5 The Tenant of Wildfell Hall

5.1 How societal structures influence the potential to change

The Tenant of Wildfell Hall is the story of a woman, Helen, who got trapped in an abusive marriage. While she had been patiently tolerating her husband's behavior, the fear that their son would grow up to be like his father finally forced her to flee. Under the new name Graham, and with the help of her brother she moved to Wildfell Hall where she befriended Gilbert who knew nothing of her secret.

Helen's story is an example of how trapped a woman in a relatively good social position can be. She had a say in who she will marry but once she made her choice, which turned out to be a bad one, she had no way of extricating herself out of it. Life in an abusive marriage is a harsh punishment for a mistake made at a young age and with good intentions. However, this story is set in the first half of the 19th century so the laws at that time would not protect a woman in Helen's situation legally or in any other way. She had to take it upon herself to secure her own and her son's safety. This hard learned life lesson inevitably changed her in terms of disillusion and loss of naivety.

I am married now, and settled down as Mrs. Huntingdon of Grassdale Manor. I have had eight weeks' experience of matrimony. And do I regret the step I have taken? No, though I must confess, in my secret heart, that Arthur is not what I thought him at first, [...] (The Tenant 164)

Two years into her marriage she wrote in her diary:

I love him still; and he loves me, in his own way—but oh, how different from the love I could have given, and once had hoped to receive! (The Tenant 192)

And her faltering faith in him eventually turned into disdain;

[...] and Arthur (or Mr. Huntingdon, as I prefer calling him, for the other is my child's name) had the gratuitous insolence to come out in his dressing-gown to bid his 'friend' good-bye. (The Tenant 268)

The amount of acceptance Arthur Huntingdon received despite his blatant gambling, alcoholism and violent outbursts of anger make for a stark contrast to Helen's situation. While Helen got constantly gossiped about in an unflattering manner despite being innocent, Arthur's behavior is tolerated with no sanctions being imposed against him. Society's double standards are summed up in an utterance Helen consoles Lord

Lowborough with;

'[...] two years hence you will be as calm as I am now, and far, far happier, I trust, for you are a man, and free to act as you please.' (*The Tenant* 265)

Society's legal and moral mechanisms forced one character to change and allowed the other to not have to.

5.2 Character typology from the standpoint of change and development

As we established earlier, characters can be flat or round and static or dynamic. Helen, unlike stock characters, feels realistic - as a person one could imagine meeting in real life. She used her diary not as a simple chronicle for recording the events of her life, but primarily as an outlet in times when she had nobody else but a pen and a paper to turn to. This insight provides the reader with detailed descriptions of her thoughts and reasoning, thus presenting a well fleshed-out character. There are certain static elements in Helen's life present, of course. She is for example a deeply principled woman and no events of her life managed to change that. She does not seem to share Anne Brontë's depth of devoutness but she regularly attends church, unless her son's condition or safety prevents her, and she considers herself a Christian and it could be said that she honors principles summarized in the Ten Commandments. Helen has a firm code of behavior she abides by regardless of the direness of her situation. Her efforts to not act disrespectfully are only limited in situations where she is forced to defend the freedom or well-being of either herself or those she cares about. An early example is her repetitively telling an older suitor she will not marry him. She does not want to shame her aunt and uncle but has no choice but to be harsh, bordering on rude, to fend off the gentleman's ignorant tenacity. A similar situation, except much more escalated, occurs when she chooses leaving her abusive husband over being an obedient wife. Being highly principled is a steady quality of Helen's and although she is compelled by circumstances to adjust some of her attitudes, there is no significant development to this part of her personality. Her principles, even if they overlap with those of Christianity, primarily stem from her integrity and not her faith.

Overall, however, she is not a static character by any means. (At least within the story frame of her diary.) To conduct a foolproof test, we can compare her behavior in a similar situation from the beginning of her narration and from the end of the book.

When faced with her future husband's flirty courtship, she conducted herself in a very naive manner despite being aware of his vices. She fell in love.

'Nor do I, aunt; but if I hate the sins, I love the sinner, and would do much for his salvation, even supposing your suspicions to be mainly true, which I do not and will not believe.' (*The Tenant* 125)

She simply wanted to believe that given enough love and affection, he will abandon these habits for her. When her aunt commented on the bad company he keeps for friends, she simply replied: 'Then I will save him from them.' (*The Tenant* 125) That didn't happen, of course, which is why she appears, and is, so guarded upon her introduction to the reader. Helen from the end of the book is as kind as her young self; she is however way more mature and wise. This is noticeable when Gilbert observes the development in Helen's painting technique and style.

"It was the portrait of a gentleman in the full prime of youthful manhood—handsome enough, and not badly executed; but if done by the same hand as the others, it was evidently some years before; for there was far more careful minuteness of detail, and less of that freshness of colouring and freedom of handling that delighted and surprised me in them." (*The Tenant* 46)

Gilbert's initial observation of this makes little sense. In the context of information from her diary however, it clearly mirrors her loss of youthful naivety, her maturing, gaining experience and eventually even freedom, for Gilbert observes that her more recent paintings are distinguished by more daring and liberal strokes of the brush and more vivid colors. (*The Tenant* 46)

Gilbert is a dynamic character who develops under Helen's influence. Were one to give the description of him at the beginning and at the end of the book, these two descriptions would differ substantially. In the beginning, despite being a good person at heart, he is self-assured and behaves arrogantly at times. During discussions, he takes the side of his mother, who is plagued by internalized misogyny, -

'[...]and when I marry, I shall expect to find more pleasure in making my wife happy and comfortable, than in being made so by her: I would rather give than receive.'

'Oh! that's all nonsense, my dear. It's mere boy's talk that! You'll soon tire of petting and humouring your wife, be she ever so charming, and then comes the trial.'

'Well, then, we must bear one another's burdens.'

'Then you must fall each into your proper place. You'll do your business, and she, if she's worthy of you, will do hers; but it's your business to please yourself, and hers to please you.' (*The Tenant* 53)

- and he takes personal offense at people – namely Helen – for disagreeing with him.

She laughingly turned round and held out her hand. I gave it a spiteful squeeze, for I was annoyed at the continual injustice she had done me from the very dawn of our acquaintance. Without knowing anything about my real disposition and principles, she was evidently prejudiced against me, and seemed bent upon showing me that her opinions respecting me, on every particular, fell far below those I entertained of myself. (The Tenant 36)

He expresses his indignation in the letters to his friend Halford. The fact that the reader can easily see how misplaced that resentment is despite the fact that those passages are narrated by Gilbert himself is an example of masterfully executed literary irony. The whole situation is made somewhat humorous by the fact that it was written by a female author. Gilbert's realizing and admitting his folly is an important turning point in his development. It goes hand in hand with the transformation of his view of the two of his potential love interests. Eliza Millward, whose simplicity and coquetry he once found charming and adorable, now seems crude to him. Instead, he is charmed by Helen's eloquence, intelligence and perhaps most importantly her ability to cause him to question himself, thereby evolving his intellect and broadening his horizons.

Where her opinions and sentiments tallied with mine, it was her extreme good sense, her exquisite taste and feeling, that delighted me; where they differed, it was still her uncompromising boldness in the avowal or defence of that difference, her earnestness and keenness, that piqued my fancy: and even when she angered me by her unkind words or looks, and her uncharitable conclusions respecting me, it only made me the more dissatisfied with myself for having so unfavourably impressed her, and the more desirous to vindicate my character and disposition in her eyes, and, if possible, to win her esteem. (The Tenant 58)

He feels enriched by her company and begins to consider this a fundamental quality for his future life partner. All of this signifies a notable shift in values. Considering the fact that from the artistic point of view, the overall message an author is trying to convey to their readers is arguably important above all other aspects of a novel, this change in Gilbert is arguably the centerpiece of the book's plot.

Helen's strong moral values, good manners and patience she developed over the course of her difficult marriage allow her to tolerate Gilbert's initially ignorant views. Instead of simply avoiding him after he had been disrespectful to her at times, she allows him to keep company first to her son and then her as well, so he must have intrigued her somehow. It can be argued that Gilbert simply might have been the least unacceptable acquaintance in Helen's new neighborhood and that she preferred his company to solitude. From the depth of her affection towards Gilbert as described by

Mr. Lawrence however, we can assume that Helen developed affectionate feelings for Gilbert despite herself. The conclusion we can draw from this is that the catalyst for Gilbert's development was affection and later even love.

Whereas Gilbert Markham, whom we see change from a slightly ignorant and possibly arrogant man into a humble and patient gentleman, is clearly a dynamic character, Helen's husband, Arthur Huntingdon, would be an example of a static character. His development or lack thereof will be described in more detail in the following chapter.

5.3 How point of view distorts our perception of change

There are two main elements of *The Tenant's* narrative structure that influence the reader's perception of the story. One of them is the frame narrative structure and the other, which is connected with it, is retrospective narrative. The story in Helen's diary is framed by Gilbert's letters to his friend Halford. When Gilbert reads Helen's story, things start falling into place and much of what has been previously told is explained.

Helen Graham is introduced to us by way of the direct narrative statement mentioned earlier, through the eyes of Gilbert when he first sees her in church. This outward point of view does not allow us to form a cognizant opinion on the character as it is unable to show us their mind and thoughts. So what the reader is left with are the narrator's, Gilbert's, views and opinions that are inaccurate at best. At least until he receives Helen's diary to read. Helen's diary can be viewed as unspoken soliloquy as described by Scholes and Kellogg because in her notes, she is not talking to anyone but herself. This assertion is based on Helen's explicit wish that nobody knows about her struggles and plans. In the same way as the traditional unspoken soliloquy does, these diary entries reveal Helen's thoughts and feelings, allowing the reader to empathize with her side of the story.

It is interesting to observe that Medea, who was presented by Scholes and Kellogg as the first example of unspoken soliloquy, was attributed with a rather passive and contemplative attitude. An active attitude – assuming action – has historically been more often attributed to male heroes. Much like Medea, Helen is a woman in a dire situation, she is trying to weigh her options to choose the best solution and she has no one to confide in.

Twenty Second: Night.—What have I done? and what will be the end of it? I cannot calmly reflect upon it; I cannot sleep. I must have recourse to my diary again; I will commit it to paper to-night, and see what I shall think of it to-morrow. (The Tenant 186)

She, however, without any deus ex machina entity's prodding, decides to act, ultimately combining these two aspects; the female one, culturally coded as passive, and the male one, culturally coded as active. This assertiveness disqualifies her as perfect wife, of course.

Her tenacity, a quality considered traditionally male by many, can come across as irritating and unreasonable at times, especially from Gilbert's point of view – for two reasons. One, he is unfamiliar with her background and personal story and two, he is a man. When Helen's husband falls ill, she has every reason to disregard her husband's failing health. It would be understandable and even justifiable to a certain degree. The reader has to marvel at Helen's ability to maintain the moral high ground. She is adamant in this regard to the point of being willing to sever all communication with Gilbert, whose company she admittedly enjoys, only not to tarnish the bond with her husband. That way, none of her potential enemies ready to slander her at any opportunity have any moral leverage. Her conscience remains clear; she would not have been able to enjoy her happy ending were it otherwise. To sum up, from the narrator's point of view, Helen seems to transform from a cold, uptight stranger into a thoughtful, amicable neighbor. After the revelation of her story, we learn her most notable development took place before she even met Gilbert. Within his narrative frame, she in fact simply lowered her guard when she deemed it safe enough for her and her son.

What also should not go unnoticed are superficial, seeming or temporary changes that occur throughout both books. Arthur Huntingdon gives the impression of being a charming young man who turns into a tyrannical drunkard. However, he has always been a capricious and weak willed person with no moral standards.

'And the cream of the jest,' continued Mr. Huntingdon, laughing, 'is, that the artful minx loves nothing about him but his title and pedigree, and "that delightful old family seat."'

'How do you know?' said I.

'She told me so herself; she said, "As for the man himself, I thoroughly despise him; but then, I suppose, it is time to be making my choice, and if I waited for some one capable of eliciting my esteem and affection, I should have to pass my life in single blessedness, for I detest you all!" Ha, ha! I suspect she was wrong there; but, however, it is evident she has no love for him, poor fellow.'

'Then you ought to tell him so.'

'What! and spoil all her plans and prospects, poor girl? No, no: that would be a breach of confidence, wouldn't it, Helen? Ha, ha! Besides, it would break his heart.' And he laughed again. (*The Tenant* 161)

And despite making numerous promises that he will change his ways, he remained a despicable man until his very end, spouting insults in Helen's direction even as he lay on his death bed.

5.4 Projecting the author's view on changeability into the story

For this chapter, it is important to consider with what purpose writers write their works. Some works point out human vices, some aim to entertain the reader, some offer solutions to problems. To determine why Anne wrote *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, we need not guess.

She brooded over it till she believed it to be a duty to reproduce every detail (of course with fictitious characters, incidents, and situations) as a warning to others. She hated her work, but would pursue it. (Biographical Notice)

After the untimely death of Emily and Anne's mother Maria, Elizabeth Branwell, usually referred to simply as Aunt Branwell, moved in with the family to help care for the still young children (Kastan 275). Her strictness and piousness had an immense impact on Anne, who grew up to be a devout Christian. The combination of Anne's religiousness and her meek, well-meaning nature made the tone of most of her works educational and reform-oriented. Her novels might appear to ambitiously preach that if you do right by God and educate yourself, you shall find your deserved happy ending, but the reality is more complex.

What we must also take into account is her experience as a governess, the only career middle-class women were allowed to pursue. She saw first-hand the character flaws plaguing her wealthy employers and how grave an impact their bad habits had on the upbringing of their children. She was not ambitious enough to think she could amend society as a whole. However, she felt obligated to warrant caution and humbly stated that she could be fully contented if her story inspired one single person to improve their demeanor. (*The Tenant* 14)

In her book about the life of the Brontës, Elizabeth Gaskell describes an incident that had happened to Anne during her time with a family she worked for. The children she was supposed to teach were not very well behaved and on one occasion threw stones at

her. Anne, instead of snitching on the children to their parents, promised to keep it a secret as long as it never happens again. It proved effective and it gained her the children's trust. (Gaskell 136)

In the spirit of this approach, Helen Graham shows kindness and patience with repeat offenders on many occasions. Gilbert's transformation and young Arthur's growing up to be a good man best illustrates the author's intention to show that open-mindedness, education and abiding by moral principles lead to a good, happy ending.

Anne was evidently troubled by the reality of the topic she wrote about but in the true spirit of what Christianity meant to Anne, her story offers redemption and hope. It also makes sense she would want to create a character who overcame her powerlessness and became independent to be able to raise her child to be an upstanding human being.

6 Wuthering Heights

6.1 How societal structures influence the potential to change

It is difficult to capture what *Wuthering Heights* is about in a few short sentences. Purely in terms of events, the first part of the story follows the life of Cathy Earnshaw since the day she met Heathcliff till her untimely death. She formed a strong bond with Heathcliff but knowing she had no future with him as a husband, she married Edgar Linton. However, the codependent nature of her relationship with Heathcliff together with having to live the life of a proper aristocratic lady caused her immense emotional pain. As a result of this, she suffered physically as well and died shortly after giving birth to her child. The second part tells us about the youth of Cathy's daughter, Catherine. As a part of Heathcliff's revenge scheme she gets manipulated into marrying Heathcliff's son, who however dies soon. Although Catherine is nothing like her mother, she finds herself in a similar situation as Cathy once did. She has to reside at a place she hates because she has no property or fortune at her disposal. Being less stubborn and more accepting, she befriends Hareton, with whom she finds her happy ending after Heathcliff's death.

This story takes place decades before the one of *The Tenant* so aside from the laws mentioned in chapter 3.1 of the theoretical part, the Wills Act from 1837 also had not yet been introduced in Britain. (Sanger) This is a key piece of information, for Heathcliff's revenge plan relies on it and to a certain extent it is what created Cathy's

desperate situation. Prior to this Act, property could only be inherited by male descendant; after her father's death, her brother Hindley would inherit everything. Had Cathy stayed with Heathcliff, Hindley would never be willing to support his sister financially for he loathed Heathcliff and would never accept his as equal. This tied Cathy's hands; she had to marry well or marry someone Hindley approved of, preferably both. Cathy's hesitance when deciding who to marry was what drove Heathcliff away and in a manner of speaking it was the beginning of the end for Cathy.

A good marriage was not the only obstacle the society laid in Cathy's way to happiness. She was by nature the complete opposite of what was expected from a young lady; she was stubborn, fierce and independent. Everyone wanted her tamed and ladylike, even her servant Nelly because Cathy's sudden mood swings were often accompanied by hysterical tantrums and outbursts of crying. Cathy was admittedly often difficult but when she was the most desperate, coming to a terrifying realization she cannot give up Heathcliff, instead of offering sympathy and understanding, Nelly only scolded her and reminded her of her marital duties;

'If I can make any sense of your nonsense, Miss,' I said, 'it only goes to convince me that you are ignorant of the duties you undertake in marrying; or else that you are a wicked, unprincipled girl. But trouble me with no more secrets: I'll not promise to keep them.' (WH 83)

It is however no wonder she had no idea how to act ladylike. She grew up without a mother and there was no mother figure in her life or other woman of position that would serve as Cathy's role model. This is also due to Wuthering Heights' isolation, both geographical and social. The estate was difficult to reach by foot on days with good weather and nigh impossible on days when the weather was bad, which happened quite often. Therefore, social calls were very rare at Wuthering Heights and scarcely had a duration of longer than a day or two. She simply grew up the way she felt natural. Such isolation also left Cathy ignorant about what is expected from her and why. Therefore, the initially forced stay at the Lintons' she grew to enjoy must have caused major confusion in Cathy's mind.

As was mentioned earlier, men had many more opportunities to change their social status, especially by gaining wealth. Even Heathcliff, a social outcast, is a shining example of this. When he worked as a servant and lived in the stables, people wouldn't even look at him. When he re-appears, dressed like a gentleman and fairly rich, he is suddenly accepted as gentry, even though nobody even knows how he came by his

riches. Given his past with Heathcliff, Edgar only accepts him as a respectable visitor to please Cathy who wishes it so. Isabella on the other hand is positively charmed by him (even though she knew him from his servant years) and treats him as her equal. Everyone save for Cathy also addresses him as Mr. Heathcliff instead of simply Heathcliff. This goes to show that to win society's acceptance as a woman, you had to fit a prescribed stencil even if that meant completely changing who you are. To do it as a man, you were free to keep your vices, even detestable personality, for it fully sufficed to become rich.

To summarize, Cathy could not and would not change and adapt and it caused her to end up in an unhappy marriage and it devastated her soul and body. Heathcliff, despite not having been cornered by lack of wealth or constricted by society's expectations, lived a miserable life because he was never able to adapt to existing without Cathy, his other half. Young Catherine, with some persuasion from Nelly, used her good manners instilled in her by the Lintons to find happiness and by extension resolve her difficult situation.

6.2 Character typology from the standpoint of change and development

Despite the tumultuous events that happen throughout the book, the environment overall is very static and so are most of the characters.

Cathy has always been proud and selfish even as a child. Her father tolerated her antics and he took Heathcliff in and treated him as he did his own children, all of which contributed to Cathy thinking it is normal and acceptable. For as long as she was a child and had her father's protective hand over her, it didn't matter that she was the opposite of a lady and future wife. It was when the reality of the world hit her that her troubles started. The clash of her own private bubble and the real world came when she had to stay at the Lintons'. She was suddenly torn between two worlds – the wild, free one she shared with Heathcliff and the safe and proper one that Edgar represents and that everyone expects her to choose. Arguably, she seems confused at times, wanting both. Her too-late decision to choose Heathcliff over Edgar and how miserable she was after Heathcliff took that decision from her by leaving suggests that she might never have truly wanted the life the Lintons represented in the first place. She may have simply integrated the society's expectations as her own desires. This is supported by her claims

of feeling like a stranger in her own house;

'[...] But, supposing at twelve years old I had been wrenched from the Heights, and every early association, and my all in all, as Heathcliff was at that time, and been converted at a stroke into Mrs. Linton, the lady of Thrushcross Grange, and the wife of a stranger: an exile, and outcast, thenceforth, from what had been my world – [...]' (WH 125)

Gilbert and Gubar also suggest that Cathy's eventually being happy at the Grange was a result of "successful indoctrination about proper ladyhood". Evidence strongly supporting this would be Cathy's own words. When Nelly later asks her why she loves Edgar, her explanation sounds like learned cliché phrases rather than confessing true feelings and it sounds like she is trying to persuade herself more than anyone else. (Gilbert and Gubar 277)

By leaving, Heathcliff doomed Cathy to an unhappy life. She was utterly incapable of changing and thereby adapting to a life at Thrushcross Grange as a Linton. With Heathcliff's return, her sorrow at having both him and the moors at Wuthering Heights within her reach and yet unattainable grew so profound that she gradually lost her will to live;

'I wish I were out of doors! I wish I were a girl again, half savage and hardy, and free; and laughing at injuries, not maddening under them! Why am I so changed? why does my blood rush into a hell of tumult at a few words? I'm sure I should be myself were I once among the heather on those hills. Open the window again wide: fasten it open! Quick, why don't you move?'

'Because I won't give you your death of cold,' I answered.

'You won't give me a chance of life, you mean,' she said, sullenly. 'However, I'm not helpless yet; I'll open it myself.' (WH 126)

Heathcliff's development or lack thereof mirrors Cathy's to a considerable extent. His origin is obscure since nothing is known of his life before Mr. Earnshaw adopted him. His life seems to have started the moment he met Cathy. Prior to conceiving his revenge plan, his sole life objective was existing next to Cathy and fulfilling her wishes.

Heathcliff's character has been called demonic, ghoul-like and inhuman. (*Biographical Notice*) His own words contribute to this unearthly persona; on an occasion he tells Nelly that when he is thinking of revenge, he feels no pain.

'For shame, Heathcliff!' said I. 'It is for God to punish wicked people; we should learn to forgive.'

'No, God won't have the satisfaction that I shall,' he returned. 'I only wish I knew the best way! Let me alone, and I'll plan it out: while I'm thinking of that I don't feel pain.' (WH 61)

He truly feels like a spirit that was created to fulfill a given purpose and when he's denied this, it twists him into pure hatred, making revenge his new purpose. He is systematically bullied and abused – first by his peers as a child for being dark skinned and a bastard, then rather cruelly by Hindley and occasionally even by Cathy on an emotional level. He bears this abuse as if it has little effect on him, as long as he has Cathy. When she casts him away as well, he cannot bear it any longer and leaves to pursue his great revenge scheme. Despite the superficial changes he goes through, becoming wealthy and well-spoken, tricking people into thinking he is a gentleman, there is no true development to his character. He remains the same manipulative, selfish, cruel person he has always been. (As a proof of Heathcliff being calculating serves a story from his childhood with the Earnshaws. Mr. Earnshaw once bought horses for Heathcliff and Hindley. When Heathcliff's horse fell lame, he blackmailed Hindley into giving him his, threatening Hindley he will show Mr. Earnshaw the bruises Hindley's beatings caused him. (WH 39) This incident suggests that he was only willing to complain to Mr. Earnshaw, abusing his good will and weakness for his adoptive son, if he gained something out of it.) He only refocused his energy towards a different goal. A final proof of this is the fact that when his revenge plan is complete, his goal achieved, he simply returns to longing for Cathy to be by his side once again. The remnants of his will to live are fed by his memories of Cathy. The only instance that made Heathcliff look more human and relatable was when he developed emotional attachment to Hareton. However, this seeming affection was only a disguised longing for Catherine whom Hareton reminded him of;

'In the first place, his startling likeness to Catherine connected him fearfully with her. That, however, which you may suppose the most potent to arrest my imagination, is actually the least: for what is not connected with her to me? And what does not recall her?' (WH 323)

To Heathcliff, Hareton is simply a way of getting back at Hindley, nothing more than a tool in his great revenge plan. In his twistedness, he takes pleasure in dousing Hareton's natural intelligence and potential;

'He has satisfied my expectations. If he were a born fool I should not enjoy it half so much. But he's no fool; and I can sympathise with all his feelings, having felt them myself. I know what he suffers now, for instance, exactly: it is merely a beginning of what he shall suffer, though. And he'll never be able to emerge from his bathos of coarseness and ignorance. I've got him faster than his scoundrel of a father secured me, and lower; for he takes a pride in his

brutishness. I've taught him to scorn everything extra-animal as silly and weak. Don't you think Hindley would be proud of his son, if he could see him? [...] And the best of it is, Hareton is damnably fond of me! You'll own that I've outmatched Hindley there. If the dead villain could rise from his grave to abuse me for his offspring's wrongs, I should have the fun of seeing the said offspring fight him back again, indignant that he should dare to rail at the one friend he has in the world!' (WH 219)

Both Cathy and Heathcliff were like two halves of one. They resembled elements that are unchanging and unchangeable. For comparison, when attempting to put their feelings into words, they described their bond as follows;

'Nelly, I am Heathcliff! He's always, always in my mind: not as a pleasure, any more than I am always a pleasure to myself, but as my own being. So don't talk of our separation again: it is impracticable; [...]' (WH 82)

'The murdered do haunt their murderers, I believe. I know that ghosts have wandered on earth. Be with me always—take any form—drive me mad! only do not leave me in this abyss, where I cannot find you! Oh, God! it is unutterable! I cannot live without my life! I cannot live without my soul!' (WH 169)

Their fates were so intertwined that even their leaving this world, although nearly twenty years apart, bore peculiar similarities. Cathy waned away because she refused to eat which weakened her and shortly before he took his life, Heathcliff told Nelly;

'Nelly, there is a strange change approaching; I'm in its shadow at present. I take so little interest in my daily life that I hardly remember to eat and drink.' (WH 323)

Joseph, a servant at Wuthering Heights, is a proof that even flat and simultaneously non-developing characters have their place in literature and can serve a purpose in a novel. Joseph is a pious old man who hangs on to his Bible as if his life depended on it. And to a degree, this statement is not as hyperbolic as one might think. In such a harsh environment as at the Wuthering Heights, his sturdiness that protects him, or rather enables him to survive there, is significantly supported by his faith. The Wuthering Heights' masters came and went but Joseph was always there, steady and unchanging, almost like one of the ancient furnishings of the house. Being a hard worker and a strict, devout person, he can be said to symbolize traditional values of the society. And it is those traditional values, specifically society's insistence that everyone abides by them, at least considerably contribute to the tragic ending Cathy and Heathcliff's story.

Possibly the only dynamic characters in *Wuthering Heights* are young Catherine and Hareton who are a juxtaposition to Cathy and Heathcliff. To an untrained eye Catherine

and Hareton might seem like a reincarnation of Cathy and Heathcliff but upon a closer inspection the reader finds out it is not so. Both Catherine's grew up without a mother, Heathcliff had an adoptive father and Hareton grew up with Heathcliff as a truly twisted father figure. Moreover, contributing to the parallel view of the two couples is the similarity of their names which was obviously the author's intention to strengthen the contrast.

Both Catherine and Hareton inherited their parents' pride and stubbornness; Catherine from her mother and Hareton from his father. Since Nelly had to leave his side, Hareton's character was being purposefully twisted by Heathcliff who considered it part of his revenge plan. The reader gets to see Hareton as an uneducated brute who has the deepest contempt for pompous nobility like Catherine. Catherine, thanks to her snobbish upbringing by the Lintons, in return treats Hareton as a servant, to which he doesn't take kindly. Despite these views instilled in them by their upbringing, they find liking in each other and are able to swallow their pride. There are two catalysts triggering this development. Firstly, both of them seek a potentially enjoyable company of someone their own age since the only other inhabitants of the estate are Heathcliff and servants Joseph and Zillah. Secondly, it is Nelly's almost pleading urges that they behave companionably to each other. Nelly was Hareton's childhood caretaker and she practically raised Catherine which gives her a certain emotional leverage.

Nelly's character proves that even static characters can drive the plot and by intervening even catalyze development of other characters.

6.3 How point of view distorts our perception of change

Wuthering Heights has an incredibly complex narrative structure. On top of several layers of the Chinese box composition, the two main narrators are unreliable; Lockwood for being an insincere, arrogant man and Nelly for a range of possible reasons.

Nelly, although an eye-witness to most of what she conveys to Lockwood, is an example of a historian as defined by Scholes & Kellogg, as she collects information from numerous other characters to put together as much of the story as possible.

As E. M. Forster points out, what needs to be considered is the fact that often people are not telling the truth even to themselves, which only further complicates the matter. (Forster 87) Additionally, due to a narrator's tendency to improve the story, they filter it through their own understanding of events. (Scholes & Kellogg ch.7) There are theories

labelling Nelly as the true villain of the story (Hafley), suggesting she gives false information and manipulates other characters on purpose. However, one must take into account the fact that Nelly was trying to re-tell events from as long as thirty years ago. In accordance with implementing one's personal understanding of events they were part of, it is likely that upon encountering something as extraordinary and incomprehensible as Cathy and Heathcliff's bond, Nelly chose to interpret it as something less unusual.

She for instance chose to see Heathcliff's death as what E. M. Forster calls an equilibrium (Forster 94) – restoring balance and peace. While Lockwood treats this story as mere country gossip only serving his amusement, from Nelly's point of view, it looks like a string of unfortunate events driven by violence and maliciousness that are beyond Nelly's understanding. To her, the conclusion of young Catherine and Hareton's story signifies the end of evil chaos and a happy, romantic ending. Nelly's interpretation mirrors that of many readers who think *Wuthering Heights* belongs in one pile with Charlotte Brontë's or Jane Austen's works, while this book defies most stereotypes in a spectacular manner.

Were we to look at the development from Heathcliff's point of view, it feels like a lost fight, rather than an end of a tragedy.

'Afraid? No!' he replied. 'I have neither a fear, nor a presentiment, nor a hope of death. Why should I? [...] O God! It is a long fight; I wish it were over!' (WH 324)

That is not to say that he or Cathy attempted revolt of any kind. They did not grasp the big picture and how their small bubble was a bother to everyone around. To sum it up, what Nelly saw as a happy ending, Heathcliff saw as the end of everything worth living for. Nelly saw Hareton's cultivation and education by Catherine as a definite improvement, Heathcliff viewed it as spoiling Hareton's wild spirit and succumbing to everything he and Cathy stood against; becoming a Linton, in a manner of speaking. (Gilbert and Gubar 301) The reader is free to choose an interpretation or create their own.

6.4 Projecting the author's view on changeability into the story

Similarly to Anne's *The Tenant*, it is interesting to attempt to determine the reason why Emily wrote *Wuthering Heights*. In my reading, there are remarkable parallels between Emily and Cathy, including but not limited to their relationship to change. We of course cannot assume Emily's thoughts and opinions. We can however take into

account what her family has said about her. Charlotte described her as “a native and nursling of the moors” (p.130) which indicates the depth of Emily’s bond to the inhospitable moorlands. Some even go so far as to call Emily’s passion for her home’s moorlands a religion as she quickly started feeling homesick whenever she had to leave for a longer period of time. (Baker 68) This is not unlike Cathy and her missing the moors. Evidently it symbolized freedom for both of them. The call for freedom is tightly connected to how they approached changes. Charlotte had the following to say about Emily’s character;

“An interpreter ought always to have stood between her and the world. Her will was not very flexible, and it generally opposed her interest. Her temper was magnanimous, but warm and sudden; her spirit altogether unbending.” (Biographical Notice)

This together with Gaskell’s remarks on Emily being “impervious to influence” (Gaskell ch.8) strongly suggest that Emily was hardly open to the notion of changes in general. It is important to note that even those closest to her viewed her stubbornness in this regard as an undesirable quality which, again, makes for an interesting parallel to Cathy’s character. Although Emily was very nonconformist and therefore could be viewed as rebellious, hers was not an active rebellion. Unlike her sisters, she never directly addressed for example social questions or proposed changes that would solve anything.

When rumors that the Acton, Ellis and Currer Bell are in fact one person surfaced, Charlotte and Anne felt it necessary to correct this wrong assumption, so they travelled to London to prove it and spread the word. Emily stayed home. (Baker 80) She simply did not care what others thought of her. It was a chance to take active steps and perhaps change people’s view of female authors, gaining recognition for them. To sum up, she did not actively seek to change anything; she by simply living her life her way advocated that you should not have to change if you do not want to, and you certainly should not have to change on anybody else’s account. This stance makes for a stark contrast to the one of Anne.

7 Comparison

There are many features that *The Tenant* and *Wuthering Heights* have in common and that make them look similar. However, they are very different, opposite almost, especially in terms of their attitude to development and change and all the similarities

point to exactly that. To fully understand the extent of how extraordinarily different both books are, we must first look at those similarities and inspect them closely.

7.1 Similarities

The first feature that is common to both books is their provincial setting complete with an old house surrounded by mystery. Wildfell Hall, Helen's sanctuary provided to her by her brother, creates a parallel to *Wuthering Heights*. The names have the same initial letters and both semantically evoke an exciting feel of adventure connected with inhospitable natural conditions. Both places are also the source of the neighbors' gossip for its remoteness and inaccessibility.

Furthermore, the motif of a woman trapped in a difficult situation is prominent in both works. Both main heroines face uneasy decisions when they have been cornered. Partly it happened by their own wrong choices they made earlier and partly by circumstances, namely the law complicating their options of extricating themselves from their situations. Their choices and outcomes of those choices are determined by the heroines' willingness and capability to change and adapt to societal pressure. Connected with the difficult decisions is the trope of two suitors which is present in both novels as well.

Both novels are written in a so called frame composition. It serves to increase suspense, which is a key story development tool since part of an author's means of encouraging the reader's imagination, or co-authorship even, is keeping the causality hidden at places.

Another shared motif is satisfying conclusion of both stories with a happy ending to the romantic subplot, a characteristic so very typical for Jane Austen's or Charlotte Brontë's books. Both Gilbert with Helen and Hareton with Catherine eventually find their happiness after overcoming initial animosity between them.

Lastly, I want to mention the theme of generational cycle. It is commonly used to signify change, fresh air so to speak, a new start after resolving previous obstacles, a chance to start over. In *The Tenant*, the new generation is represented by Arthur Huntingdon Jr. and Helen Hattersley. Young Helen is the daughter of Helen Graham's friend Millicent and her husband Ralph Hattersley, who mended his ways after Helen had words with him regarding his treatment of Millicent. Although in *The Tenant*, it is only marginally mentioned in the epilogue, it draws a significant parallel to *Wuthering Heights*. Specifically in naming the children using names from the previous generation,

likely a deliberate step by the writers to emphasize the changes. *Wuthering Heights*' new generation, Catherine and Hareton, are the bearers of the most significant development in the book for they overcome the way they were raised in order to bury old grievances.

7.2 Differences

Most of the key differences between these two works are rooted in one of them carrying almost all features typical for Romanticism and only a few of Realism, and the other being the complete opposite. As was mentioned earlier, Romanticism tended to use characters to develop the plot while Realism, being more character-oriented, developed its characters with the plot. *Wuthering Heights*' characters' nature and behavior were the main source of conflict throughout the book, thereby driving the plot while remaining static themselves, save for Catherine and Hareton. Helen and Gilbert on the other hand arguably change and develop along with the plot, in accordance with the tendencies of Realism.

The Tenant overall shatters most romanticist concepts. It without embellishment portrays an abusive marriage that the heroine expected to be an idyllic story about saving a sinner from his sins. Furthermore, the dark, mysterious house the book features serves a practical function, which is to keep Helen's location secret. Its mysteriousness only reaches so far as to fuel the gossip surrounding the main heroine.

Wuthering Heights on the other hand is a representative example of a Gothic novel, a prominent romanticist genre. It features hints of supernatural elements and the violent nature of many characters contributes to the overall dark atmosphere. Another distinctly romanticist attribute is that the main characters act based on feelings and passions rather than reason. This is deducible despite the narrative structure; all the information given comes from intermediary characters, hence the reader has to infer the way characters feel simply from their direct speech. Gilbert's letters and Helen's diary on the contrary give us direct insight into their thoughts and feelings. From her eloquent thought processes, it is easy to see that Helen is fundamentally a very rational person trying to solve her situation in a constructive manner.

There is one peculiar juxtaposition regarding which movement the books each belong to; one of the few romanticist elements in *The Tenant* is the romantic subplot of Helen and Gilbert's relationship, written in an increasingly sentimental tone. And it is their

love that compels them to make compromises and drives their development. There is however nothing sentimental about Cathy and Heathcliff's relationship. Love in the healthy, traditional sense is selfless. Whatever bond they share, evidence indicates against the romantic nature of their relationship since both of them eventually use their mutual codependency to torment each other.

The most significant difference between the two books lies in their view of change. With her story, Anne preaches that change is possible and if you battle your vices, amend your behavior and lead an honorable life, you will be rewarded with happiness. She was trying to send a message that self-improvement is worth the effort. Ralph Hattersley managed to forsake his bad habits and started treating his wife with more respect and his reward was a happy marriage and Gilbert's development is viewed in a positive manner as well.

Emily's book sends no message and contains no such instructions. Her story only seems to prove that none of us are completely free to live the way we please, outside of our roles. Before the tempest that was Heathcliff entered the lives of the Earnshaws and the Lintons, everything followed age old, deep-rooted patriarchal patterns of impermeable social classes and firmly set social roles. Cathy and Heathcliff did not fit this pattern and failed at pioneering their own. Cathy and Heathcliff resemble natural elements rather than real people, and natural elements cannot be shaped or changed by anything as fleeting as society or other human beings. In her famous monologue, Cathy says;

"If all else perished, and he remained, I should still continue to be; and if all else remained, and he were annihilated, the universe would turn to a mighty stranger: I should not seem a part of it.—My love for Linton is like the foliage in the woods: time will change it, I'm well aware, as winter changes the trees. My love for Heathcliff resembles the eternal rocks beneath: a source of little visible delight, but necessary. Nelly, I am Heathcliff!" (WH 82)

Even a long time after Cathy's death, Heathcliff claimed she is still with him, in a spiritual manner;

"[...] and what does not recall her? I cannot look down to this floor, but her features are shaped in the flags! In every cloud, in every tree—filling the air at night, and caught by glimpses in every object by day—I am surrounded with her image! [...] Well, Hareton's aspect was the ghost of my immortal love [...]" (WH 323)

Simply put, the environment and society she and Heathcliff lived in would not allow them to exist the only way they knew how and their inability to adjust or change lead to

their gradual self-destruction.

In both cases, the new generation seems to represent solving a problem. And indeed in *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* noble goals of improving a person and ensuring the next generation grow up to be kind and honorable people are successfully achieved. The change that came with Catherine and Hareton signified the restoration of the same old societal patterns. This can of course be viewed as a good thing since it led to their happiness and enabled them to function in the society they lived in. From Heathcliff's point of view however it can be viewed as a loss to conformity and absolute freedom.

To sum up, while the events of *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* shift from one point to a different one, the storyline of *Wuthering Heights*, in terms of social balance, goes full circle and the initial status quo is restored at the end.

8 Conclusion

This thesis focuses on the portrayal of change and development. The analysis of character typology shows that even static characters can play an important role in the process of development, either working as catalysts, like Nelly, or providing a contrast to changing elements, like Joseph. The comparison of the use of complex narrative structures proves that similar literary means can be used to achieve an altogether different effect; *The Tenant's* frame narrative serves to gradually uncover the entire story while *Wuthering Heights's* frame narrative gives the reader an incomplete and inaccurate mosaic of events.

Both books also deal with similar topics but handle them differently. Anne Brontë, for instance, resolved the motif of a trapped woman by having her heroine assume action to free herself from her situation, whereas Emily had her main female protagonist be consumed by her unattainable desires. There is also a common motif of generational cycle. Both authors use repetition of names to create deliberate parallels between generations, thereby accentuating their juxtaposition. Arthur Huntingdon is a despicable human being whereas his son Arthur, thanks to his mother, never develops the bad habits that plagued his father. Cathy and Catherine are nothing alike and in accordance with that, both meet a different ending. Upon comparing these two seemingly identical courses of development, we may choose to view the latter in a negative manner, depending on our point of view.

Many of these differences can be attributed to the fact that each book contains an inverse ratio (in comparison with the other) of elements of Romanticism and Realism, movements that have a contrasting attitude towards character development.

An interesting dichotomy can be observed between formable and developing characters of *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* and those utterly unchangeable ones in *Wuthering Heights*. The adaptability of *The Tenant's* characters benefitted them. In the preface to her book, Anne Brontë directly stated that with her novel she wanted to provide instructions for self-improvement. To set an example, Anne had both the main male protagonist, Gilbert, and Helen's son Arthur benefit from Helen's strict but educational and loving influence and become better persons.

Emily, on the other hand, leaves the reader with an ambiguous message, depending on the reader's choice of point of view. Unlike Anne's, Emily's intentions for writing her

novel are not known, which is why it gives the impression of simply describing the status quo in terms of personal freedoms within the society at that time. Emily's heroine, Cathy, is unable to adapt to life as Mrs. Linton, a life without Heathcliff, and that causes the gradual decline of her health and eventually even death. Young Catherine, brought up by the Lintons and instilled with patriarchal values, represents the very opposite of her free-spirited and rebellious mother. With this in mind, Catherine's happy ending comes with a bitter aftertaste of the realization that happiness and the freedom to live your life in any other way than as dictated by the society were mutually exclusive at that time.

Both novels provide an insight into the workings of British society in the late 18th and early 19th century as well as into the minds of their authors. One offers an educational story and hope while the other arguably points out the hopelessness that comes with being different.

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