

Thesis:

In Sinclair Ross' *The Lamp at Noon*, the windy weather is one of the conflicts that Paul and Ellen must deal with, to the point where it is considered the main antagonist of the story. The wind contributes to the effectiveness of the story by worsening the many problems that Paul and Ellen already have to deal with, allowing the reader to get a better idea of the magnitude of the hardships they face. The wind also reflects the damage that the farmers had done to the land, symbolizing that nature is harsh and unforgiving even when mankind needs it to cooperate the most.

Paragraph 2:

- Controlling idea: The wind worsens Paul and Ellen's situations
 - Point: The wind amplifies the severity of a conflict, highlighting them so that the reader can truly understand the hardships Paul and Ellen have to face.
 - Proof:
 - It is evident that there is not enough food for Ellen and Paul to eat during this time. "At least we'll get enough to eat and wear when you're sweeping out his store." (pg 65) The fact that the wind covered tonight's dinner with dust makes the situation even worse
 - On top of all the other problems they face, the dust that brings in the wind also puts their son at risk of illness
 - Comment: If the weather were not so windy, these conflicts could not have been presented in such a dramatic way and would seem less difficult to solve. Thus, the wind is essential for
 - Point: Apart from physically conflicting them, the wind also emotionally conflicts Ellen, whose patience was slowly degraded by the wind and caused their argument to escalate.
 - Proof:
 - "remembering the words she had flung at him in her anger, unable to understand it was only the dust and wind that had driven her." (pg 64) (about an argument before the actual argument, but it is likely the same reason Ellen grew tired of Paul's reasons to stay on the farm in the argument that the reader reads)
 - Comment: Had the weather been a bit nicer, despite the other hardships that Paul and Ellen go through, perhaps they would have come to an agreement. Surely it would have turned out better for them at the end.

Paragraph 3:

- Controlling idea: The wind also symbolizes how unforgiving the environment is at a time of crisis and how much farmers had to pay the price.
 - Point: The wind in the story represents the damage done to the soil. After all the years of unsustainable and environmentally damaging farming practices on the land, Mother Nature has finally decided to strike back.
 - Proof:
 - We've learned that the reason the Dust Bowl was so severe was that it caused soil erosion. Years of farmers being on the land had caused the soil to loosen. When the Dust Bowl struck, it basically made the land unsuitable for any vegetation.

- Even Ellen knows this (maybe because she was a teacher): "Will you never see? It's the land itself - the soil. You've plowed and harrowed it until there's not a root or fibre left to hold it down. That's why the soil drifts - that's why in a year or two there'll be nothing left but the bare clay. If in the first place you farmers had taken care of your land - if you hadn't been so greedy for wheat every year -" (pg 66-67)
- Comment: It seems like the wind storm is Mother Nature's way of punishing farmers for causing so much damage to the soil. To add insult to injury, it struck at such an inconvenient time as the Great Depression as well.
- Point: The wind shows the harsh reality of nature: it is unwilling to give second chances for people who make mistakes, even for those who work hard to reverse their actions (much like the Depression).
- Proof:
 - Paul is always saying that the "Dry years" will be over and that the family will be headed towards a bright future. But even Ellen tries to put some sense into Paul by saying that the reason they are still struggling is that Paul had torn up the soil through constant plowing. "'The land's all right,' he repeated. 'The dry years won't last forever.' ... 'But it's not just dry years, Paul!' The little sob in her voice gave way suddenly to a ring of exasperation. 'Will you never see? It's the land itself - the soil.'"' (pg 66-67)
 - Paul's efforts to turn the eroded soil back into workable land is smothered by the inconvenience of the wind. While Sinclair presents Paul as a determined man to take back the soil, it doesn't take long for the environment to reverse his work. "suddenly the fields before him struck his eyes to comprehension. They lay black, naked. Beaten and mounded smooth with dust as if a sea in gentle swell had turned to stone." (pg 71)
- Comment: Farmers were one of the most hardworking class of people during the Depression, yet Mother Nature had decided to punish them the most and in Paul's case, didn't even give him a chance to change his actions.