Locked Up: Reading Catherine as the Hysterical Woman

The Victorian illness of "hysteria" had different roots that led to its popularity as a diagnosis. *The Oxford English Dictionary* defines "hysteria" as "a functional disturbance of the nervous system…usually attended with emotional disturbances." The dictionary also notes that "women [are] much more liable than men to this disorder," and connects that to the "original" idea that hysteria was "due to a disturbance of the uterus and its functions." The Latin etymology, as pointed out by nineteenth century Victorian historian and author Rachel Maines, translates "hysteria" as "womb disease" (1). Throughout the Victorian Age, hysteria was associated with femininity. The French physician Auguste Fabre wrote in 1883 that "all women are hysterical and… every woman carries with her the seeds of hysteria" (Showalter 287). Feminist critic Elaine Showalter, in her article "Hysteria, Feminism, and Gender," explains that hysteria was linked with femininity because "women have been seen as disadvantaged in mastering Oedipal tasks and thus disposed to hysterical behaviors" (287). By Oedipal, she if referencing the Freudian idea that a child can feel attracted to his or her opposite sex parent, such as Oedipus unknowingly marrying his mother in *Oedipus Rex.* Showalter states "hysteria is caused by women's oppressive social roles rather than by their bodies or psyches" (287). In other words, women can be hysterical because the mental disorder is connected to their reproductive systems; therefore, men can't be hysterical. This conclusion serves to associate women with emotion that drives illnesses such as hysteria.

This reason for hysteria seems to be the case for Catherine Earnshaw Linton in Emily Brontë's Victorian novel *Wuthering Heights*, a character who causes her own hysteria after she is torn between the socially acceptable life she can live with wealthy and handsome neighbor Egdar and the one she wishes she could have with brutish childhood friend Heathcliff. Growing up at her family home Wuthering Heights, Catherine admits to loving Heathcliff; but, because he is an unmannered gypsy with no money to his name, it would not be wise for her to marry him. Instead, Catherine accepts neighbor Edgar Linton's proposal to be his wife because it is the proper thing to do to get married and have children to create the perfect domestic space. However, the oppressiveness of Edgar's Victorian expectations of her as his wife overwhelm her, and she tries to look to Heathcliff as a sort of escape from these pressures in a life she doesn't want. But rather than choosing between the two men, she wills herself to fall apart to become an "hysteric."

Author Susan Gorsky, in her article "'I'll Cry Myself Sick': Illness in *Wuthering Heights,*" explains that "many doctors," who would have been exclusively male at the time, "linked women's illnesses to their reproductive processes" (175). Women were believed to be "more vulnerable to physical and nervous (emotional) illness" such as fevers and the like, and Victorians went so far as to think that girls in "robust health" were unfeminine (Gorsky 175). Society idealized delicacy, and women often fell ill to disorders such as anorexia nervosa or fainting in order to be perceived as feminine and beautiful. Madness was alluring. As writer and critic Alison Lurie says in her book *The Language of Clothes*, "For many Romantics actual illness was sexually exciting" (256). It brought brightness to the eyes and flush to the cheeks,

which mimicked sexual arousal. She also states that in the nineteenth century, "physical slightness and fragility were admired, and what was now called 'rude health,'" or good health, "was considered coarse and lower class" (216). Women wanted to look small and frail and "only truly safe and happy under the protection of some man" (Lurie 215). The Victorians idealized female delicacy and fragility to the point of glamorizing and normalizing illness and affliction as a beauty standard. Allison Lurie explains, "in an emergency, the proper thing to do was faint, relying on the protection of the nearest gentleman" (218-219).

Women made themselves sick, physically and mentally, through this attitude towards beauty. If a doctor believed that a woman was suffering from debility of the mind, it was common to "shut her up" in the hopes of fixing her (Bachman). While confinement torments Catherine Earnshaw Linton, she is responsible for her confinement as a result of her desire to stray from the social norm of marrying a wealthy man and becoming a devoted wife and mother. Being shut up and socially separated and confined because of her wild temperament made her hysterical. Catherine has always been stuck between two worlds: the path she is expected to follow of dainty, polite womanhood and her wild, headstrong nature in which she lets erotic desire and emotional anger guide her. In one life she can choose Edgar, along with money, fine clothes, and a high social standing. The other life that comes with her "soul" Heathcliff is one of passion and alteration from the socially acceptable path she should follow in the domestic sphere. Heathcliff is dangerous for her because he is not the traditional Victorian man; he is described in his childhood "as dark almost as if it came from the devil," and also as a "gypsy" (E.

Brontë 36, 37). As an adult, Catherine, after choosing Edgar as her husband, still longs for a life with Heathcliff and for her fond memories growing up with him at Wuthering Heights, which makes her feel confined and trapped in the genteel domestic space she has chosen by marrying Edgar and living in Thrushcross Grange. Although Catherine attempts to follow the "right path" by donning the clothing of a rich wife and acting the part, ultimately her inner wildness comes out, and Catherine makes herself hysterical.

The photographs of Hugh Diamond, one of the first British photographers and Superintendent of the Female Department at the Surrey County Asylum, is now famous for his photographs of some of his female patients. He believed that he could diagnose someone's illness based on her face or appearance, part of a science called physiognomy. In his photographs, he features women in the asylum that often have confused or even depressed facial expressions; however, some pictures show women who look like any Victorian woman you'd see walking down the street. The difference is mainly what these women are wearing. For example, one woman is wearing a dark colored patterned dress with the waistline at the natural waist and a higher collar, the typical fashion for the time period of the 1850's. She has her hair pulled back in a bonnet and is sitting with her hands folded in her lap. A different picture shows a woman in a very loose bodiced, light-colored dress that looks disheveled and dirty. It has a loose collar that exposes her neck, and she is wearing a big shawl around her shoulders. She loos forlornly and begrudgingly at the camera, and her hair is messy and hangs around her face. The first woman was wearing fashion of the day, and it looks like her picture could have been taken anywhere. But

the second woman's clothing sets her a part from the average Victorian woman, and certain features like her shawl and disheveled hair associate her with mental illness. Because of her clothing, she can easily be labeled as a madwoman, separated from society and confined, just like Catherine.

As a child, Catherine is very headstrong, and though a girl, loves to run around and play on the moors. In the Victorian Age children were expected to be little versions of their parents, represented in the way that they dressed like adults. Girls were Victorian wives and mothers in training, so it is not proper for Catherine to be playing outside in this more masculine activity. Her father often scolds her for this, saying "Nay Cathy…, I cannot love thee, thou'rt worse than thy brother. Go, say thy prayers…. I doubt thy mother and I must rue that we ever reared thee!" (E. Brontë 43). He asks, "Why cannot you always be a good lass, Cathy?" (43). The Wuthering Heights housekeeper and Catherine's nurse Nelly further remarks that Catherine "ha[s] ways with her such as [she] never saw a child take up before," testing the Earnshaws' patience so that they "ha[ve] not a minute's security that she wouldn't be in mischief" (42). However, Catherine also has goodness in her, "always singing" with "the sweetest smile" (42). When Catherine starts to grow up and change her appearance to look more feminine and higher class with fashionable clothes, she is "the queen of the country-side," but despite the feminine expectations that her clothing represents trying to define her, her wild and more masculine emotions such as anger and lust often best her and turn her into a "haughty, headstrong creature" (E. Brontë 66).

There are multiple places in Brontë's novel where this war of two worlds within Catherine occupies her. The first notable scene takes place after she and Heathcliff travel the two miles from Wuthering Heights to Thrushcross Grange to spy on the neighboring Linton children. Catherine and Heathcliff get caught, and Catherine is seized by one of the Lintons' dogs and has to stay at the Grange for her chewed ankle to heal. At this point she is twelve years old, and after five weeks of convalescence, she returns to Wuthering Heights. It is during these same five weeks that much changes: Mr. Earnshaw dies, and Catherine's older brother Hindley and his wife take over as owners of the property. Moreover, Heathcliff hardens against Catherine and her sudden interest in the Lintons and, specifically, Edgar.

When Catherine arrives home from the Grange, Hindley, helping her down from her horse, remarks that she is "quite a beauty" and she "look[s] like a lady now" (E. Brontë 53). Hindley's new wife Frances is worried about upsetting Catherine's curls, saying, "let me untie your hat," while Nelly helps Catherine inside. Here, it's made clear that Catherine is wearing a "grand plaid silk frock" or outer dress, "white trousers," and polished shoes (53). She is very careful not to get herself dirty, staying away from the dogs that run over to her "lest they should fawn upon her splendid garments," and not giving Nelly a hug since she is covered in flour from baking (53). Catherine also fears soiling her dress when she reunites with Heathcliff, grabbing his dirty hands and laughing at his filthy appearance before gazing "concernedly at the dusky fingers she held in her own, and also at her dress, which she feared had gained no embellishment from its contact with his" (55). Before Catherine was exposed to proper Victorian womanhood at the Grange, she

and Heathcliff loved to "run away to the moors in the morning and remain there all day," playing outside and getting dirty (E. Brontë 46). However, now she has spent her days reading and sewing and conversing with the Lintons, and she has become pure, on her way to being a proper Victorian lady. The idea of dirtying not only her dress but her reputation and manners by associating closely with Heathcliff does not suit her anymore; it would "degrade [her] to marry Heathcliff now" (81). Her opinion and her emotions have changed from masculine to feminine; she is now thinking of her future, other people's opinions of her, and how to best look and act like a lady.

The outfits that Catherine starts to dress in after her return home consist of women's clothing that would have been in fashion in the 1840's. Although the book is supposedly set in the Romantic Period, about fifty years before the novel was published, this analysis will be looking at the clothing in *Wuthering Heights* through a Victorian lens because that is the time period during which the novel was written and the author lived. As fashion historian James Laver points out in his book *Costume and Fashion: A Concise History,* it was popular during the 1840's to live in the suburbs or countryside and not the city. The Earnshaw and Linton families owned large estates in the countryside, a few miles from the large city of Gimmerton. It is believed that this city and the moors on which Catherine lived are based on towns in West Yorkshire, England, and the Pennine Hills where the Brontë sisters grew up and wrote their novels. It is also believed that the ruined farmhouse Top Withens in West Yorkshire was the inspiration for Wuthering Heights. The Gandiva company, a modern German company that works to research and recreate

historical clothes, points out on their website that "checkered patterns in all kinds of variations began to come into fashion in the 1850s." This explains Catherine's "plaid silk frock" she shows up in when she returns to the Heights after her stay at the Grange, and sets the standard for the types of costumes she wears after that day and for the rest of the novel, continuing with the style influenced by the wealthy Lintons. The clothing of Catherine at this stage of her life and her sudden interest in her appearance is an example of the proper Victorian side of Catherine that is alluded to from the start but doesn't always win over the masculine, wild side.

In the years leading up to becoming Mrs. Linton, the clothing Catherine starts to wear is a representation of the Victorian ideals of womanhood she starts to align herself with. James Laver explains some of these characteristics that supported the ideal Victorian woman during the 1840's, including women being helpless, such as needing help for everything from dismounting from a horse to undressing (173). In the 1840's, the ideal woman was quiet and delicate, not doing anything except simple domestic tasks, and her idleness was reflected in restrictive clothing with many layers. Because of the low shoulder seams in women's clothing, the many layers of skirts, and the tight-laced corsets, women physically could not move a lot or be active, so she had to find tasks to do sitting down such as reading or sewing. She was modest, covering up in skirts flowing all the way to the ground, even to hide her ankles, and in bonnets, which covered the sides of the face. The ideal Victorian woman was also well-off, reflecting her family or her husband's money in the clothing that she wore, including multiple dresses in a single day. As Laver explains, there were three popular types of day dresses: a pelisse or peignoir, which was

either a robe worn indoors in the morning or a morning dress, the "round dress" for the afternoon, and a redingote, which was more decorative and would be worn for a promenade or other special occasion. Then, in the evening a woman would don, naturally, an evening dress, consisting of a heavily boned silk or velvet bodice that came to a point in the front and layers of skirts. The bodice was ornately designed, often with horizontal pleats made of lace, frills, or ribbon, a low neckline, and usually straight across off the shoulder or with a dip in the middle to be a little flirtatious. Despite having strict rules about the length of dresses and modesty, it was custom for evening dresses to be "décolleté," or to have a low neckline, as it was seen as formal. Queen Victoria herself upheld this rule; she "insisted that even old ladies must wear full décolleté to court, and bare shoulders" (Mansel 135). Officials were "posted at doors of the state apartments to remove any offending covers" (Mansel 135). It was popular during the 1840's to wear so much fabric that it made the woman look small, like Queen Victoria, who was petite and slender at the time. Women's shoes were heelless and flimsy, and outdoor wear usually consisted of a fringed shawl. These fashion guidelines are those that Catherine Linton would have adhered to, marrying the wealthy Edgar and becoming trapped in this world very different than that of the young Catherine living at Wuthering Heights and playing with Heathcliff.

The clothing young Catherine dons to try and become the expected domestic ideal attempts to restrain her both physically in the restrictive clothing of the Victorian era and emotionally in aligning her personality with that of a delicate domestic woman, and as a result of this confinement, Catherine's hysteria starts to

take hold. The tug-of-war between proper Victorian womanhood and more masculine, emotional wildness is constantly fighting inside of her, and although she has "no temptation to show her rough side" in the Lintons' company because she wants to hide her emotions from Edgar in order to look attractive and fragile, she starts to let this wild hysteria out (E. Brontë 67). In private, at the Heights, Catherine can be angry and lustful and loud and playful. But in front of the proper and domesticized Edgar, her masculine emotions become wrong, and must be labeled as hysteria because she is a woman, and women cannot have male emotions.

For instance, when they are courting, teenage Catherine keeps up a correspondence with Edgar Linton, and on one particular day when she is expecting his visit to the Heights, she has a "silk frock on" and has curled her hair (69). Heathcliff pokes fun at her appearance, while expressing his annoyance at Edgar's expected arrival, and Catherine gets very irritated with him, letting her wicked side show by calling him "dumb" and "a baby" for never talking about or doing anything interesting. Even after Edgar arrives, she "fail[s] to recover her equanimity since the little dispute with Heathcliff… whisper[ing] crossly" at Nelly for staying in the room and cleaning "when company are in the house" (71). In fact, she pinches Nelly, trying to hide the act from Edgar, but Nelly scolds her loudly with Catherine's "fingers tingling to repeat the act, and her ears red with rage" (71). Catherine, "irresistibly impelled by the naughty spirit within her, slap[s] [Nelly] on the cheek a stinging blow" before Edgar exclaims, "Catherine, love!" (71). Even though Catherine tries to restrain her temper and hide her masculine anger from Edgar, he attempts to leave the house after this encounter. However, Catherine threatens illness, saying "I

should be miserable, all night, and I won't be miserable for you!" She continues, "Well, go, if you please- get away! And now I'll cry- I'll cry myself sick!" (72). This moment is interesting because Catherine threatens to be sick if she does not get her way, and in this moment her untamed emotions become hysterical.

The second time in the novel that Catherine threatens to be sick to try and get her way is years later after she and Edgar are married, after she learns of Heathcliff's romantic relationship with Edgar's sister Isabella Linton. Heathcliff and Catherine get into quite an argument, Heathcliff calling Catherine jealous and Catherine blaming Heathcliff for courting Isabella just to destroy her and Edgar's tranquility. Nelly remarks that "the spirit which served [Catherine] was growing intractable; she could neither lay nor control it" (E. Brontë 113). After hearing of the dispute, Edgar blames Catherine for it all, saying "it is disgraceful that she should own [Heathcliff] for a friend…. Catherine shall linger no longer to argue with the low ruffian-- I have humoured her enough" (113). His use of this language, claiming he has "humored" Catherine's little friendship with Heathcliff and condemning it, shows that he is ultimately in charge of her, and he infantilizes her by controlling her life and with whom she socializes. In this way Edgar constricts Catherine, similar to the clothing that she is wearing. Edgar also outright condemns Heathcliff and shows his distaste for him, calling him a "low ruffian" and wanting to keep Catherine away from him. Seeing her husband and her best friend fight upsets Catherine to the point where she has to intervene.

Catherine locks the three of them in together to keep Edgar from calling on his "men" to help him fight Heathcliff, and says that she wishes "Heathcliff may flog

[Edgar] sick, for daring to think an evil thought of [her]" (115). Edgar calls for backup rather than taking Heathcliff on himself, showing himself to be less impulsive and more cautious than the rough and brutish character present at the Heights, where there is yelling and fighting and dog hanging. But in this instance, Catherine is the one who is prone to violence and anger, while Edgar is more calm and thoughtful, taking on the feminine role while Catherine expresses masculine anger and hatred.

After this very troubling experience, Catherine whisks Nelly away to her bedroom where she "throw[s] herself on the sofa" and exclaims that she has a headache after that excitement (116). She then instructs Nelly to "tell Isabella to shun" her and to say to Edgar that she is "in danger of being seriously ill," and she wishes it would prove true (116). She says she wants to "frighten him," because she is "in no way blameable in this matter" (116). Catherine tries to stir up all this drama with her loved ones, and wants them to think the problems that everyone else caused made her ill so the blame can be on them rather than her. She decides that if she "cannot keep Heathcliff for [a] friend- if Edgar will be mean and jealous," she will "try to break their hearts by breaking" her own (116). She can't control either man, so she manipulates her heart, one of the most precious pieces to a Victorian woman since so much of femininity was, and to an extent still is, associated with feminine emotions like love, delicacy, and piety.

As Edgar comes in to her bedroom and attempts to make Catherine choose between himself and Heathcliff, she enters into a state of hysterics, but instead of taking the side of either man she bids Edgar to leave her alone while ringing "the

bell till it broke with a twang,… dashing her head against the arm of the sofa, and grinding her teeth" (118). Catherine, in this frenzied state, is able to alter her appearance, "turn[ing] up her eyes, while her cheeks, at once blanched and livid, assumed the aspect of death" (118). She enters into a state of deliberate, calculated hysterics; she locks herself in her room and refuses to come down for meals for two days. The only power she has over the situation is her own health, because, as a woman, she cannot control the men. She is confined to the domestic sphere of the Grange, as well as being stuck in her role as Victorian woman, and because there is no way out, she crumbles helplessly. The hysteria of Catherine's mind is transfigured as illness in her physical body, thus hysteria and illness manifesting itself as the same thing.

Nelly calls Catherine's hysteria "brain fever," as well as explaining she is always in a "half dream" of "strange ideas and illusions" (E. Brontë 134, 130). The local doctor Kenneth calls Catherine's illness "an alienation of intellect" (131). These terms, while not describing what Catherine suffered from but instead vaguely reference that something is wrong in her mind, all associate with the brain. As student Scott Perna says in his dissertation on the diagnosis of hysteria in the nineteenth century, "because of the nature of the diagnosis it could not be traced to a specific, definitive physiological cause," and thus it was not clear how to treat hysteria (1). Many doctors didn't think that mental illnesses were real because some symptoms women were suffering from the doctors had never heard before, such as distressing thoughts or dizziness not linked to anything. In order to "help" these women, doctors often shut them up in asylums, believing that confinement from the

rest of the world would fix them. Student Savannah Bachman explains in her thesis "Shutting Her Up: An Exploration of the Madwoman and Madhouse in Victorian Literature" how "after 1774, the law required two certificates of lunacy to confine an individual, each signed by a 'medical man'" (7). This paved the way for many false incarcerations, allowing husbands to lock their wives in madhouses over domestic disputes, such as Louisa Lowe as chronicled in her book, *The Bastilles of England,* published in 1880 after her release from an asylum. However, in Catherine's case, she shuts herself up, feeling exiled by her husband Edgar and the man she loves, Heathcliff. Rather than being treated as a child with no control over anything, as most women in the Victorian Age were, Catherine stands up for herself by controlling the only thing she can: her health. As such, she slowly starts to die in order to be loved.

One way that Catherine dons her image of illness is through the clothing that she wears and the altering of her appearance. As the hysteria starts to claim her and so she claims her hysteria, Catherine changes her clothes to reflect that. Lurie says that thin clothing subjected Victorian women to cold, which brought upon illness, notably the favorite Victorian diagnosis of consumption, or tuberculosis, so women wore thin clothing to look the part of fragility and immaturity. Lurie explains, "to some extent, fabric always stands for the skin of the person beneath it" (232). While Catherine is hiding in her room and wondering aloud if Edgar really loves her or would miss her if she died, her hair falls in "thick entangled locks from her wasted face," giving her an appearance of an unkempt madwoman (E. Brontë 121). Nelly is convinced that Catherine is acting "a part of her disorder," and does not have pity on

Catherine's many statements of her "dying" and "on the brink of the grave" since "no one cares anything about" her (121). Nelly calls her "deranged" and tells her that Edgar knows nothing about her state so that Catherine doesn't think she is getting her way. Catherine goes so far as to say, "If I were only sure it would kill him…, I'd kill myself directly!" (121). As Catherine's health deteriorates even further, Nelly explains that Catherine has been wearing a "loose, white dress, with a light shawl over her shoulders… as usual" with her "thick, long hair" that has been "partly removed at the beginning of her illness…simply combed in its natural tresses over her temples and neck" (157-58). This image creates a sense of "unearthly beauty" as Nelly describes it, angelic, yet also that of a ghost (158). Alison Lurie explains, "all white clothing has often suggested delicacy…, perhaps because it soils so easily, or perhaps because of its long association with infancy and early childhood" (185). White clothing aligns itself with "physical infirmity or weakness, especially when the material is fragile" (185). Catherine is wearing both white and loose or light materials, perfectly proving Lurie's point that thin white fabrics are associated with physical weakness and delicate fragility, just as the fabric is fragile and pure. "Ghostly thin white nightdresses" were worn by women to create a feeling of "romance" associated with "death," which is perhaps why, to emulate a ghost, a child will wear a thin white sheet over himself as a costume (Lurie 256). Catherine, fashioned in hauntingly thin fabrics and skirts, which mirror "the person beneath," takes this idea of "haunting" seriously, as seen in the rest of the novel.

Indeed, *Wuthering Heights* is perhaps known best in modern popular culture through its film adaptations and their Gothic elements of ghosts and haunting

spirits. Catherine seems entranced by the Gothic on her sick bed, telling Nelly how she's been "tormented" and "haunted" in her room. She talks of "how dreary [it is] to meet death, surrounded by [the] cold faces" of "the people *here,*" in her home, who used to love her but "have turned to enemies in a few hours" (E. Brontë 122). She says she sees a face in the wall, and that "the room is haunted," and she is afraid of being alone while Nelly tries to convince Catherine that the face she sees is her own in the mirror. Catherine starts to foresee the future, describing Nelly as an old woman with "grey hair and bent shoulders" (123). She sees her "narrow home out yonder," her "resting place where [she's] bound before Spring is over" in "the open air with a head-stone" (127). She also prophesies that her "soul will be on that hill-top before" Edgar lays hands on her again, while a "maniac's fury kindle[s] under her brows" (128, 129). The madwoman, helpless and sick, takes on this power of seeing the future; which, since Ancient Greece, has been a feminine role. For example, seers and oracles that interpreted messages from the gods were often female, and the three fates, who not only foresaw the future but controlled it, were women. Catherine's prophesies and talk of death serve to create this feeling of haunting and dread of the unknown in the reader, a goal that is reached in multiple scenes throughout the book.

On her sick bed, Catherine describes a strong wind blowing outside, and she notices "that wind sounding in the firs by the lattice," longing to feel it (124). The association of the "wuthering" wind with haunting spirits occurs throughout the novel, first appearing in the opening chapters when Lockwood, one of the narrators, first arrives at Wuthering Heights, a house owned by Heathcliff, and spends a night

there. He is shown Catherine's childhood bedroom in which to sleep, and he tells of "the gusty wind… and the fir-bough repeat[ing] its teasing sound" outside his window that interrupts his nightmarish sleep (25). In one book published in 1886 called *Phantasms of the Living Volume 1,* the author Edmund Gurney describes this "passage from sleep to waking admits of many degrees; and a very interesting group of cases remain which cannot properly be classed as dreams, and yet do not appertain to seasons of complete normal wakefulness" (389). This phenomenon of a state between waking and sleeping in which dreams occur was called among Victorians "the borderland." It seems that this state is what the narrator Lockwood experiences during his one night at Wuthering Heights. Lockwood spends a snowy night at the Heights, and experiences a restless, feverish sleep with many strange dreams. During his borderland experience, Lockwood reaches outside of the window to silence the tapping, but rather than grabbing the branch his "fingers close on the fingers of a little, ice-cold hand!" (25). The hand clings to his while the ghost of Catherine Linton yells "Let me in- let me in!" (25). Alison Lurie explains that in the Victorian Age "even after life was over sexuality continued," as shown through literature's "passionate ghosts who haunt their living lovers like Catherine in *Wuthering Heights*" (257). Catherine, in her ghost form, has power over Lockwood because of her frightening state, yet she is powerless to help herself. In both death and life, Catherine is surrounded by ghosts-- ghosts of either her literal living body or ghosts of her former life as a wild child living in Wuthering Heights that died when she married Edgar.

After this talk of death and haunting by Catherine on her sick bed, she acts manic again, increasing "her feverish bewilderment to madness, and [tearing] the pillow with her teeth," desiring to open the window in the middle of winter (E. Brontë 122). Suddenly Catherine screams, believing herself to be "at home…lying in [her] chamber at Wuthering Heights" (124). She longs to be "in [her] own bed in the old house" rather than at Thrushcross Grange (124). This moment shows that, even though she has chosen this life with Edgar, ultimately she still longs for her earlier life with Heathcliff at the Heights. This scene combines both the physically manic side of the female hysterical archetype and the mental illness side. Catherine recounts visions she has had in this room since falling ill of being in "the oak-panelled bed at home," and when she realized she was actually in her room at the Grange she "felt so wildly wretched" (125). She continues to yearn for her girlhood home, saying, "I wish I were a girl again, half savage and hardy, and free…. Why am I so changed?" (125). She seems to have felt truly herself when she was a child growing up, before she had responsibilities and expectations to become a Victorian woman. She could be "savage," wild and masculine, which, to her, felt "free." She says she believes she could be herself again if she were to be "on those hills," and jumps from bed to throw open the window (126). Being outside, able to roam and play on the moors like a little kid, is where she feels most like herself. At this point Nelly, calling Catherine "delirious," plans to "reach something to wrap about her" so she won't be exposed to the "frosty air" (126). Catherine claims she can see the Heights from the Grange, despite the Heights being too far away to be in view, she claims to see her "room, with the candle in it, and the trees swaying before it,"

watching Joseph as he waits up for her and calling on Heathcliff to venture out to come and be with her (126). She says, "I won't rest till you are with me…. I never will!" (126). She has changed since moving from the Heights to the Grange; she has lost her masculinity and the freedom from femininity she had as a child at the wildness of the Heights, and along the way she has lost herself.

Catherine doesn't feel confined at Wuthering Heights, where she has autonomy over herself and can run and play on the moors, disobeying her father or her brother along with Heathcliff. Her rebellion is freeing instead of prohibited, and her hysteria is mostly allowed. The house and the people in it are more wild, more animalistic, and when she "wears" this house, she does not feel confined like she does at the Grange. In the Lintons' home, which feels foreign to her since she married into it, she is stuck, imprisoned, separated from the Heathcliff she longs for. She wears the house like she wears the clothes that are stiff, appropriate, and required. She is forced into a domestic space that she feels she does not belong in, and that confinement makes her hysterical.

After days in her sick bed waiting for Heathcliff to save her and Edgar to care for her, Catherine dies after giving birth to her daughter, Cathy. Her doctor, Mr. Kenneth, explains that she died from "consumption." According to *The Victorian Web,* the Victorian diagnosis of "consumption" was another term for what was later called tuberculosis. The novel includes no mention of Catherine being pregnant the entire time that she was confined to her sick bed, but, because she was not in this state for very long, it can be concluded that she was pregnant this whole time. It was not socially allowed in the Victorian Age to mention or make a show of pregnancy,

perhaps explaining why there was no mention of Catherine's being with child before the baby was born. In this way, pregnancy itself was a sort of confinement for Catherine; her physical body was stuck in this state of carrying a baby, and she was not free to talk about it. Livia Woods explains in her article on concealing pregnant bodies that the female body was "visible proof of sexuality" in a society "that tended to idealize women's lives as private, contained, and spiritual rather than public" (33).

However, certain religious groups and doctors did produce motherhood and pregnancy manuals offering advice to expectant mothers. One such doctor, John West, wrote a book in 1887 called *Maidenhood and Motherhood.* In this book he outlined appropriate clothing to wear while pregnant, describing that outer clothing should "be worn quite loosely" to prevent the immodesty of showing off a baby bump (West). Regarding underclothes, it was common for women to wear corsets throughout their entire pregnancy, with extra gores or boning to the structure of the corset to add more room for a growing belly. Combined with the popular Victorian style of a very low shoulder seam that restricted arm movement and layers of skirts to impede body movements, clothing offered a confinement or a shutting up of its own that mirrored pregnancy. Author Elizabeth Scovil in her 1896 book *Preparation for Motherhood* describes the literal period of confinement appropriate for a mother after she had just given birth. "She needs perfect quiet for several hours before she is permitted to see anyone," and is allowed five minutes to talk to her husband before she spends another nine days in bed (Scovel). It is paradoxical that a woman

was expected to become a maternal, domestic, and loving figure, yet was quieted and hidden from the world during her pregnancy.

Catherine's personality starts to change and her manic episodes and "brain fever" start to worsen during the portion of the book where she can be assumed pregnant, and knowing the assumed common reason for hysteria could help explain why. In the Victorian Age it was believed that hysteria was connected with the uterus, and doctors such as American C. Bigelow believed that "withdrawal" from "the health benefits of male emission" and lack of intercourse with women's husbands "causes pelvic congestion and thus hysteria in women" (Maines 54). The concept of hysteria was completely wrapped up in women's sexual lives, and it's believed that a common treatment for hysteria was genital massage. If hysteria was thought to be caused by "the inflamed and disconnected uterus" that was "suffocating or choking the patient," the presence of a fetus inside the uterus must have disrupted the pattern even more (Maines 8). Hysteria also had an effect on fashion; prior to the Victorian period, a popular style of sleeve during the Romantic Era was something called an "imbecile sleeve," consisting of a large ballooning of fabric stuck out with padding and hoops above the elbow. Combined with the low shoulder seam, Victorians created, essentially, a fashionable straight jacket.

After Catherine's hysteria takes over and she gives birth and dies, Edgar is a loving yet very protective father, never letting their daughter Cathy venture beyond a certain point out onto the moors and always making her go anywhere with Nelly, who acted as her nurse. Edgar always called Catherine by her full name and thus only calls his daughter Cathy, and so will I, to form "a distinction from the mother,

and yet, a connection with her" (E. Brontë 185). Nelly compares Catherine and Cathy often, describing young Cathy at twelve years old as "a real beauty in face- with the Earnshaws' handsome dark eyes, but the Lintons' fair skin, and small features, and yellow curling hair" (189). Cathy is a combination of both the Lintons and the Earnshaws, copying her mother's gentle beauty and eyes but resembling her father's soft features and light hair that Lockwood points out after viewing Edgar's portrait at the Grange. He describes how Edgar's portrait "exceedingly resemble[s] the young lady at the Heights" (E. Brontë 67). It's almost as if Cathy is finishing the story neither of her parents could, bringing an ending to their lives that closed so tragically and healing those wounds. Nelly describes Cathy as having a sweet and playful nature compared to her mother's headstrong stubbornness. Cathy has inherited the feminine qualities her mother possessed: her beauty, her eyes, and her vanity. Cathy also received the gentle parts of her father in his soft face, light colored hair, and love of family. She does not carry on the wild masculinity of the Earnshaws and the Heights.

Cathy lives the life her mother never could, taking advantage of her father's wealth and her good fortune by living a simple and joyful childhood. However, she often asks to explore more of the moors, having the same curiosity and playfulness as her mother, and on her sixteenth birthday when her father is away mourning the anniversary of his wife's death, she pulls Nelly so far away from the Grange that they run into Heathcliff on the moors, who brings the pair back to the Heights where Cathy meets her cousin Hareton and sees her cousin Linton. When she spills the beans of her day trip to her father, he forbids her from ever going to the Heights

again, without telling her how he blames Heathcliff for her mother's death and why he could be dangerous to Cathy. When Nelly goes upstairs to "help her to undress," she finds Cathy crying in her room over her misfortune and the negative response her father gave her, since he usually gives her everything (223). She feels bad for Linton since "he expected to see [her] again," and they start up a secret letter correspondence for weeks before Nelly intercepts them. At this point masculine wildness and temper of Cathy's mother is very apparent in her, as she tries to justify her love for Linton until Nelly throws the letters into the fire. At this point Cathy screams, "I will have one, you cruel wretch!" and grabs some fragments of paper out of the burning fire "at the expense of her fingers" (227). She is so obsessed with her love affair and this piece of rebellion that connects her to the forbidden Wuthering Heights. That night she doesn't "dine," deciding to skip a meal in protest just like her mother, and this broken love affair leaves Cathy "frightened from her little romance…considerably sadder and duller since its abandonment" (229).

Cathy eventually achieves her desire to be with Linton, and on a visit to her cousin lover Linton, Heathcliff locks her in Wuthering Heights and forces her to marry Linton so that Heathcliff will have control of Thrushcross Grange. He keeps Cathy and Nelly there for five days before they both escape, running to the Grange just in time for Cathy to spend her father's last minutes with him before he dies. During her imprisonment, Cathy is defiant towards Heathcliff, grabbing at him for the keys with which he locked the house and yelling at him to let them go. She exclaims, "I'm not afraid of you!" and "I wouldn't eat or drink here, if I were starving!" after his offer of tea (E. Brontë 270). Heathcliff grabs her and slaps "both

sides of [her] head," showing his authority and power over the house (271). Cathy is forced to spend a week at the Heights, the wild, animalistic side of her family that she never knew. The house has the chance to claim her and change her, like her mother, into a masculine hysteric, but she belongs at the Grange with her father, surrounded by books and fine clothes and her loving family. The Heights brings about a different expectation of Victorian womanhood and the ideas Cathy grew up with. The hysterics present at Wuthering Heights brought on by Heathcliff and his passion for Catherine are not what Cathy is used to, and it is repelling and offensive to her. In the home where her mother felt so free and like herself, Cathy is trapped, horrified at the way its residents live and act.

Eventually actions are righted for Cathy, following years of living at the Heights with Heathcliff as her father-in-law. Linton dies shortly after Cathy moves in, and a year later Heathcliff passes. Living at the Heights, Cathy falls in love and marries her Earnshaw cousin Hareton, Catherine Earnshaw's brother's child. Nelly remarks how similar they both look, resembling Catherine. They both have her eyes, but "the present Catherine has no other likeness to her, except a breadth of forehead, and a certain arch of the nostril that makes her appear rather haughty" (E. Brontë 322). Hareton, on the other hand, at twenty-three, looks strikingly similar to Catherine, and in this way he and Cathy carry on both the Linton and Earnshaw names. The older generation has all died; although, there are sightings of two figures roaming the moors. Catherine and Heathcliff, finally together in death, carry their wildness, the hysteria, and freedom from confinement out on the moors with them. Cathy and Hareton have found their place at the Heights, combining the two

families, and can finally live a proper Victorian life. Cathy teaches Hareton how to read and they can enjoy literature and youth together, freed of the danger of Heathcliff and the hysteria of Catherine.

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Better gender analysis- masculine emotions of wildness at heights, versus the confined feminine space of the grange. She takes that masculine wildness and power and makes herself sick, channels it, feminizes it into hysteria, controls the household but ends up killing herself
Wildness becomes feminized once it becomes an illness
More precise with language- ex "emotional"
Explain more that WH is more wild and her hysteria is tolerated
Cathy can be this way at the heights
Class status and races mixing (nelly, Heathcliff)

I'm good at inductive writing- start small idea grow big, analysis

Notes from 2-14:
Steal one tiny moment from the novel and put it at the very beginning. "in order to understand all the nuances of this we have to know the cultural context of hysteria …"
French lieutenant's woman
Include diamond pictures