RACE DISCOURSE IN *WUTHERING HEIGHTS*

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Abstract

This article explores how Emily Brontë, in *Wuthering Heights*, uses the discourse of race and slavery, or emancipation from slavery, to further a political project of freeing the underprivileged, Heathcliff, the excluded, demonised, and homeless slave, from the grip of the rich. He tries all the time to reconstruct his own position and the social ranks as a whole, to identify his own social position within a class hierarchy. Heathcliff begins his life at the very bottom of this hierarchy but he concludes it with a great shift, situating himself at the top of it. It reveals how an outsider, a faceless, homeless, placeless, and accursed slave of a goblin is excluded as someone who has no social or biological place in the existing social structure, and which makes him determined to carve his own place as equal, and renders himself free in a world of exploitation and inequality. This study explains that *Wuthering Heights* is among the nineteenth-century novels that contributed to a shift of cultural authority in Britain from the upper to the middle class, even to lower-middle-class. It focuses on how Catherine's authoritative white and middle-class subject is defeated by the lower-class Heathcliff. Heathcliff becomes a capitalist himself, an expropriator, thereby turning the ruling class's weapons of property accumulation and acquisitive marriage against them, by turning them into a yeoman class, as represented, for example, by Hareton. Indeed Heathcliff has succeeded in his attempts, all the time, to break down a cultural myth, the superiority of the white, and build from it a whole new construct of new relationships which he sees more racially fair and fit.

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Emily Brontë's novel *Wuthering Heights* (1847) somehow embodies the race discourse strongly advocated by Heathcliff and slightly propped up by Catherine. It is embodied in Heathcliff's dramatic and vengeful reactions against his beloved Catherine who literally and figuratively constructs him as a slave. Though Heathcliff is not a black man in colour, he is constructed as one and he spends all his life trying to shed off his blackness and to prove his

power and independence as an equal "black man" to Catherine, and to the other whites around him. This is of course a cultural endeavour which reflects the entire nineteenth-century racism in which people as a whole are constructed or stigmatised by class and interestingly by race and colour. Emily Brontë's metaphorical, though rather sporadic, use of race and slave discourse in *Wuthering Heights* is therefore striking and answers many questions in the novel. Susan Meyer, in her *Imperialism at Home*, is struck by both Charlotte and Emily Brontë's repeated allusions to bondage and slavery in their novels, and wonders, why would the Brontës write novels "permeated with the imagery of slavery, and suggesting the possibility of a slave uprising in 1846 after the emancipation of the British slaves had already taken place?" (Meyer 71)[1] Indeed Meyer expresses this opinion with reference to Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* in particular, about which she speculates: "perhaps the eight years since emancipation provided enough historical distance for Brontë to make a serious and public, although implicit, critique of British slavery and British imperialism in the West Indies" (Meyer 71).[2] Emily Brontë is making a serious and implicit critique of British slavery and British imperialism not only at home but abroad and throughout the colonies, including their presence in America. Terry Eagleton, likewise and in a similar context, talks of a great hunger strike of a slave prisoner who wants his freedom from his white masters.[3]

The whole of *Wuthering Heights* is a form of dramatisation of difference and the racial strategies by which Heathcliff seeks to contain his enslavement. Heathcliff uses multiple discursive strategies to contend with the difficulty of determining his racial and social identity. This study explores how the novel seems to employ a straightforward race discourse to clarify, uphold, and unify the discourse of the under-privileged, the excluded, and the marginalised, to achieve independence and power and to challenge the nineteenth-century flexible and socially-made racial superiority of the whites, and to somehow allow for their discursive displacements as signs of revisions of political projects and hierarchical social ranks which assign them to diverse human qualities. This study explores how *Wuthering Heights*, like so many other nineteenth-century novels, contributed to a shift of cultural authority in Britain from the upper to the middle class and to a change of attitude which reflected the bourgeois ideology and myth which Richard Dyer explores in his study of the representation of white people in Western culture, in his book *White*, where he posits, "white people create the dominant images of the world and don't quite see that they thus construct the world in their own image" (Dyer 9). *Wuthering Heights* reflects how a "slave" succeeds not only in turning this image upside down but also tearing it to pieces.

In using such racial imagery of white people, Dyer, as if reflecting

the Bronte's white iconoclasm, suggests that in the West whiteness is often taken to be the "default" race, a norm that does not require consideration. Dyer's re-orientation of ethnicity has been the result of a proliferation of works addressing the production, representation, deconstruction, and transformation of white culture in literature and history as advanced well before him by writers and critics as Edward Said in his *Orientalism*, and later by Toni Morrison in his *Playing in the Dark*, where they both argue that white Western culture defined itself in contrast to its non-white others. "This function," Dyer suggests, "is indeed characteristic of white culture, but it is not the whole story and may reinforce the notion that whiteness is only racial when it is 'marked' by the presence of the truly raced, that is, the non-white subject" (Dyer 14).[4] The main contention in this article is that Emily Brontë uses the discourse of race and slavery, or emancipation from slavery, to further her political project of freeing the underprivileged, Heathcliff, the excluded, the faceless, the demonised, and homeless slave, from the grip and domination of the rich, Catherine and her class. Heathcliff tries all the time to revise and reconstruct his own position and the social ranks as a whole, to identify his own social position within a class hierarchy. We know how the story begins with Heathcliff at the very bottom of this hierarchy but it concludes with a great shift, situating him at the top of this hierarchy. This explains what has been already stated that *Wuthering Heights* is among the nineteenth-century novels that contributed to a shift of cultural authority in Britain from the upper to the middle class, even to a lower-middle-class, as what Heathcliff might be classified.[5] Indeed the discussion here focuses on how Catherine's authoritative white and middle-class subject is defeated by the lower-class Heathcliff, but who later achieves higher class position like her, if not better than her, though this is done tragically, even through death. Heathcliff's climb to a higher class functions as the central aim of the entire narrative as embedded in his own freedom, ownership of land and property, and even in his marriage from (or revenge against) the woman, the ruling-power class, he despises.

As Ann Laura Stoler argues, the entire nineteenth-century racism, class, or slavery "was not built on the sure-footed classifications of science but on a potent set of cultural and affective criteria whose malleability was a key to the flexible scale along which economic privileges could be cordoned off and social entitlements reassigned" (Stoler, 1995, 45-6).[6] That is why Heathcliff challenges this science and this sure-footed culture of the rich that classes him inferior, and irretrievably undermines it by dramatising his class differences and by employing various racial and social strategies by which he seeks to contain, if not destroy, it. Indeed Heathcliff collapses all social and racial differences between him and Catherine and the other rich classes in the novel, thereby conforming to what Stoler has argued in relation to

Michel Foucault's notions of race and culture. Stoler emphasises the intricate interrelations of race and culture in Foucault's thought by saying that Europe's "discourse of bourgeois selves was founded on what Foucault would call a particular 'grid of intelligibility,' a hierarchy of distinctions in perception and practice that conflated, substituted, and collapsed the categories of racial, class and sexualized Others strategically and at different times" (Stoler 11). Similarly, Robert Young, in *Colonial Desire*, argues that the "the modern anthropological sense of culture was created alongside, and indeed was developed as a part of, high culture. Both were concocted by a Western culture no longer able to contain its own inner dissensions by projecting them outwards into a racialized hierarchy of other cultures" (Young 52). This cultural difference and social degradation or exclusion is indeed the real drive of the entire narrative of *Wuthering Heights*.

From the very beginning of the novel Heathcliff, the "gipsy boy", is constructed in a subtly racist discourse as belonging to a filthy, wild-looking and dreadfully primitive class, which later makes Catherine dreadfully and bewilderingly unable to marry him though she is irretrievably in love with him. When Heathcliff, a lost orphan child, is brought to Wuthering Heights by Mr. Earnshaw from the rough streets of Liverpool, he is racially constructed as a "black man": Nelly/Ellen Dean, the narrator says:

> I had a peep at a *dirty, ragged, black-haired child*; big enough both to walk and talk: indeed, its face looked older than Catherine's; yet, when it was set on its feet, it only stared round, and repeated over and over again *some gibberish that nobody could understand*. I was frightened, and Mrs. Earnshaw was ready to fling it out of doors: she did fly up, asking how he could fashion to bring that *gipsy brat* into the house, when they had their own bairns to feed and fend for? What he meant to do with it, and whether he were mad? The master tried to explain the matter; but he was really half dead with fatigue, and all that I could make out, amongst her scolding, was a tale of his *seeing it starving, and houseless, and as good as dumb*, in the streets of Liverpool, where he picked it up and inquired for *its owner. Not a soul knew to whom it belonged*, he said; and … he thought it better to take it home with him at once, than run into vain expenses there: because he was determined he would not leave it as he found it. Well, the conclusion was, that my mistress grumbled herself calm; and Mr. Earnshaw told me to wash it, and give it clean things, and let it sleep with the children.[7] (Italics mine)

This passage is very important to testify how Heathcliff is seen, though a first impression, by the Earnshaws as a dirty "black boy", a gipsy child who speaks in incomprehensible gibberish that nobody can understand, and who is nearly thrown away as a dirty animal. He is seen as a dumb, homeless,

faceless, lost, and starving slave whose owner may have lost or abandoned him. That is why Mr. Earnshaw feels sorry for it/him and brings it/him home with him as "a gift of God" for his family, although he thinks "it's as dark as if it came from the devil" (29). And that is why this creature of a devil needs a lot of washing and cleansing to be human like the rest of the family. This explains Mrs. Earnshaw's grumbling in anger, and Cathy "spitting at the stupid little thing" in disgust, for her father has promised to bring her "a whip", but interestingly instead brings her Heathcliff, who later functions as a terrible physical and spiritual whiplash.

To enhance this racial narrative in the novel, Terry Eagleton suggests that Heathcliff may have come from Ireland, as one of the "three hundred thousand of those Irish emigrants," who in 1847 "had washed up in the port of Liverpool." Eagleton supports his argument by referring to a London journal which portrayed them, "and their famished children in particular, as looking like starving scarecrows dressed in rags with an animal growth of black hair obscuring their features" (Eagleton, 2005: 124). Eagleton goes on to say that Emily's brother, Branwell Brontë, "had himself taken a trip to Liverpool, where he might well have witnessed such scenes. The Great Famine was yet to break out at the time of Branwell's visit, but there would no doubt have been a good many semi-destitute Irish hanging around the city, most of them Irish-speaking" (Eagleton, 2005: 125). This of course may explain the gibberish language that Heathcliff speaks and no one understands as a sign of imperial rejection of the language of the colonies—Ireland was then part of the British Empire. Eagleton also argues that this colonial view of Heathcliff explains the way he is described as being "picked up starving off the streets of Liverpool by old Earnshaw," and that he is seen as "a dirty, ragged, black-haired child." "The novel will later portray him as savage, lunatic, violent, subversive and uncouth—all stereotypical nineteenth-century British images of the Irish" (Eagleton, 2005: 125). To develop this colonial dimension of the novel further, Eagleton links Heathcliff's possible "Irishness" with the Brontë sisters who "certainly were." Their grandfather Patrick came from Ireland to Cambridge University and became a parson in Yorkshire, and "the Irish family name Brunty was Frenchified to Brontë, and Patrick liked to boast of aristocratic friendships cultivated at Cambridge. Like Heathcliff, he transformed himself from humble outsider to English gentleman, though with rather more success than Emily's creation" (Eagleton, 2005: 127).

Heathcliff then quickly becomes, or rather constructed as, the black sheep of the family, the submissive servant, "lamb," and slave of the house, whose position is always at the stables. He is seen as "a sullen, patient child," a "hardened" boy who is used to "ill-treatment" as a slave; "he would stand Hindley's blows without winking or shedding a tear," and constantly he "bred

bad feeling in the house" to the extent that Hindley begins to "regard his father as an oppressor," while Heathcliff as "a usurper of his parent's affections and privileges" (30). That is why from the beginning Heathcliff grows "bitter with brooding over these injuries" although Nelly admits that he "was not insolent to his benefactor;" "he was simply insensible" (31). Hindley always constructs him within racial discourse as inferior, animal or devil-like creature: "Off, dog!" he calls him when changing horses with him, "'Take my colt, gipsy, then!' said young Earnshaw. 'And I pray that he may break your neck: take him, and be damned, you beggarly interloper! and wheedle my father out of all he has: only afterwards show him what you are, imp of Satan'" (31). Of course this shows not only Hindley's racial attitude towards Heathcliff but also Heathcliff's own determination to take what he wants, to be patient, as an early warning of revenge against society which classed him as such, an "imp of Satan". It also foreshadows the materialistic aspect of the novel about which Hindley is worried that his father is going to lose everything for Heathcliff. At the end of the novel Nelly, like nearly everyone else, still sees him, now old Heathcliff, in the same picture of an imp, a ghoul who has swallowed up everything:

> 'Is *he a ghoul or a vampire?*' I mused. I had read of such hideous *incarnate demons*. And then I set myself to reflect how I had tended him in infancy, and watched him grow to youth, and followed him almost through his whole course…. 'But where did he come from, *the little dark thing*, harboured by a good man to his bane?' muttered Superstition, as I dozed into unconsciousness. And I began, half dreaming, to weary myself with imagining some fit parentage for him; and, repeating my waking meditations, I tracked his existence over again, with grim variations; at last, picturing his death and funeral: of which, all I can remember is being exceedingly vexed at having the task of dictating an inscription for his monument, and consulting the sexton about it; and, as *he had no surname*, and we could not tell his age, we were obliged to content ourselves with the single word, 'Heathcliff.' (273)

This passage again supports the contention, how Heathcliff continues all his life to be seen as villain, demon, and nameless black man, although some critics have suggested that this picture is the invention of Nelly Dean, the narrator, who herself is the villain.[8] Nelly confirms this black and evil image whenever she mentions him: "Those deep black eyes! That smile, and ghastly paleness! It appeared to me, not Mr. Heathcliff, but a goblin" (273). But Heathcliff knows how they all see him and, for example, he mocks Nelly at the end of the novel as being nosy and wicked woman: "Last night I was on the threshold of hell. To-day, I am within sight of my heaven. I have my eyes on it: hardly three feet to sever me! And now you'd better go! You'll

neither see nor hear anything to frighten you, if you refrain from prying" (272). Indeed Nelly tells him face to face that he has erred all his life and led an evil life to be forgiven, and he replies in mockery: "I believe you think me a fiend … something too horrible to live under a decent roof." Then turning to young Catherine, in an attempt to remind us all, that there is one person who always loves and understands him, here and in the hereafter, and she is her mother: "Will *you* come, chuck? I'll not hurt you. No! to you I've made myself worse than the devil. Well, there is one who won't shrink from my company! By God! she's relentless. Oh, damn it! It's unutterably too much for flesh and blood to bear—even mine" (277). Even looking at his dead body, Heathcliff is mocked by both Nelly and Joseph as challenging and demonic, whose eyes and smiles are still frightening, "would not shut: they seemed to sneer at" us in exaltation, even in death: "Th' divil's harried off his soul," Joseph cries, "and he may hev his carcass into t' bargain, for aught I care! Ech! what a wicked un he looks, girning at death!' and the old sinner grinned in mockery" (278). Such satanic discourse continues till the very end when Mr. Lockwood comments that the spirits of Heathcliff and Catherine roam the moors and will go on living in and haunting Wuthering Heights for ever. Their ghosts continue "to inhabit it," although Nelly believes that "the dead are at peace," and "it is not right to speak of them with levity", to which Lockwood reaffirms that, "*They* are afraid of nothing.… Together, they would brave Satan and all his legions" (279).

Lockwood's first impression of Heathcliff from the very beginning of the novel embodies this stigmatisation of Heathcliff as a black man: "Mr. Heathcliff forms a singular contrast to his abode and style of living. He is a dark-skinned gipsy in aspect, in dress and manners a gentleman" (3). Nelly says it openly to Heathcliff earlier on in the novel that he is black, maybe a negro, a stigma which makes him resentful all his life: "A good heart will help you to a bonny face, my lad … if you were a regular black; and a bad one will turn the bonniest into something worse than ugly" (46). Thus she thinks of him as an ugly black boy, though she then re-corrects her racial remark by saying that after her good "washing, and combing" of him, he turns out "rather handsome", who is "fit for a prince in disguise." She goes on to mock him in her racial discourse, that maybe his "father was Emperor of China, and your mother an Indian queen, each of them able to buy up, with one week's income, Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange together? And you were kidnapped by wicked sailors and brought to England" (46). This is one form of race discourse which constructs Heathcliff as a black and slave boy, who has been brought from foreign lands, Oriental China or India,[9] or, as Eagleton argues, from Ireland. He seems to have been subject to slave trade, imported from foreign lands and to serve the white man, the Earnshaws of Yorkshire. This is the bottom line of

the revenge scheme fermented by Heathcliff along the years against such racial construction. And Heathcliff has succeeded in this emancipation endeavour, be it through Catherine, his real tragic love in life and in death. Heathcliff has always been "flogged" (47) like a slave by Hindley, and metaphorically by everyone else, as an outcast who, when he first comes to Wuthering Heights, he speaks in a foreign language, a gypsy inferior one which no one can understand. Hindley, for instance, earlier in their life, tells Joseph to keep Heathcliff in the attic (like crazed Bertha Mason of *Jane Eyre*) as a wild boy or in stables like an animal, for he causes them social embarrassment in front of their guests, the Lintons: "keep the fellow out of the room—send him into the garret till dinner is over. He'll be cramming his fingers in the tarts and stealing the fruit, if left alone with them a minute" (46). Thus Nelly, in her weirdness, advises Heathcliff to bear these humiliations through adopting mythic parentage: "Were I in your place, I would frame high notions of my birth; and the thoughts of what I was should give me courage and dignity to support the oppressions of a little farmer!" (46) This reveals that Heathcliff suffers a lot from such humiliation and degradation as being black, though not "a regular black" in the African sense.

When Catherine, moreover, returns after her stay in Thrushcross Grange and sees Heathcliff looking dirty, she uses the same label, black: "how very black and cross you look! and how—how funny and grim!" (43) But because Cathy loves him she does not mean it here in the negative sense; on the contrary, she wants to liberate him against her own brother's imprisonment of him, and therefore she "flew to embrace him," and "bestowed seven or eight kisses on his cheek within the second" (43). In the same scene he is described by Hindley and Edgar as a violent man, a "vagabond", a Samson with his dark "elegant locks" but which is "like a colt's mane" rather than a human being's hair (47). Nelly describes him again: "You are younger [than Edgar], and yet, I'll be bound, you are taller and twice as broad across the shoulders: you could knock him down in a twinkling" (45). Interestingly again, Cathy also begs her brother to free Heathcliff from his present prison; indeed the words "prisoner", "devil" and "monkey" are racially employed here to refer to Heathcliff (48-49). All this suggests that Heathcliff is hated for his negro-looking features, thereby reflecting an old Victorian formation of what is black or white, and which marks the impurity Victorians assigned to colonial whiteness, as Meyer argues (Meyer 67-8). Sue Thomas, in her essay on *Jane Eyre* also emphasises the same point about the grades of whiteness, and which can be applicable here: "in the racial formation of the British empire whiteness was not a homogenous category. There were hierarchies within whiteness, as well as hierarchies which placed various non-white peoples in relation to white peoples and to each other on civilizational scales" Thomas 12; quoted in

McKee 67). That is why and how Heathcliff's whiteness or blackness becomes the subject of speculation about his real race and identity throughout the novel: he tells Nelly, "if I knocked him [Hindley] down twenty times, that wouldn't make him less handsome or me more so. I wish I had light hair and a fair skin, and was dressed and behaved as well, and had a chance of being as rich as he will be!" (45) Nelly then confirms the same racial remarks when trying to lift up Heathcliff's spirits:

> Oh, Heathcliff, you are showing a poor spirit! Come to the glass, and I'll let you see what you should wish. Do you mark those two lines between your eyes; and those thick brows, that, instead of rising arched, sink in the middle; and that couple of *black fiends*, so deeply buried, who never open their windows boldly, but lurk glinting under them, like *devil's spies*? Wish and learn to smooth away the surly wrinkles, to raise your lids frankly, and *change the fiends to confident, innocent angels*, suspecting and doubting nothing, and always seeing friends where they are not sure of foes. Don't get the expression of a vicious cur that appears to know *the kicks it gets are its desert*, and yet hates all the world, as well as the kicker, for what it suffers. (45-46; italics mine)

It can be noticed again and again how Heathcliff is constructed in a racial discourse as a man of fiend-like black eyes, eyeing other people like "devil's spies", and who should change his nature from being fiendish into angelic, form being a vicious dog that enjoys humiliation and kicks from others and wanting revenge on these sufferings into a more civilised man. This again confirms how Heathcliff is always reduced to the status of faceless, homeless, placeless, and stateless existence, and how he has been transformed into *Homo Sacer*, to quote Slavoj Žižek, though in a different context, or the accursed man, for he has never been treated as fully human and always deprived of his rights of equality (Žižek 55).

        This racial discourse continues all the time in the novel when Heathcliff is again described as a chimney sweep, a crazed or demented black man and monster, stereotypes which again reflect, as Thomas indicates, the ambiguities of Victorian racial identity multiplied because race was attributed to both bodies and cultures. As Charles Darwin and others claim, and as Nancy Stepan posits, Victorian scientists organised racialised body types into "a natural but static chain of excellence, whether on the basis of nervous organisation, skull shape or brain size. The hierarchy of races was believed to correspond to, and indeed to be the cause of, what most people took to be the natural scale of human achievement in the world, with the European on top and the African or aboriginal Australian invariably on the bottom" (Stepan 46). Robert Young again argues the same point, that once Victorian scientists attached racial difference to degrees of civilisation,

classes within Britain were also similarly classed: "[A]s the defining feature of whiteness, civilization merged with its quasi-synonym 'cultivation', and thus the scale of difference which separated the white from the other races was quickly extended so that culture became the defining feature of the upper and middle classes" (Young 95). In this manner, and as it happens to Heathcliff, culture acquires a new meaning, not only the racial difference but also the social one. As Eagleton and Williams in particular prove, culture achieves racial as well class differences or deep social divisions. For Eagleton, culture is "what most profoundly shapes our lives;" it is "what you are prepared to kill for;" "you can be burnt to death because of culture," and it "is the foundation of the world" (Eagleton, *After Theory*, 48, 58). Raymond Williams, before Eagleton, gives a more revealing definition of the term *culture*: "a whole way of life, material, intellectual and spiritual. It came also, as we know, to be a word which often provoked either hostility or embarrassment" (Williams iii).

It is this racial embarrassment and hostility that the cultivated race and class of the Earnshaws and the Lintons that they have narrated throughout the novel; the whites have constantly narrated their own whiteness in revenge against the blackness of Heathcliff. And he, in the same token, parades his own dark primitivism in defiance of their racial whiteness and takes appropriate revenge later. Heathcliff tries all his life to prove that it is wrong to say and act accordingly that "black people can be reduced (in white culture) to their bodies and thus to race," while, as Dyer argues, "white people are something else that is realised in and yet is not reducible to the corporeal, or racial" (Dyer 14). For Heathcliff whiteness and darkness—spiritual or physical—is relative and should not govern one's life; blacks have also minds and should not be defined by material and bodily properties. How he is described, for example, when he comes back after his three years absence from Wuthering Heights, proves this process of corporeal reduction and degradation: Nelly says, "I distinguished a tall man dressed in dark clothes, with dark face and hair," "the cheeks were sallow, and half covered with black whiskers" (75). Then Edgar repeats the same epithets, with surprise and not wanting his wife to see him: "What! the gipsy—the ploughboy?" Nelly, in mocking probably, says: "Hush! you must not call him by those names, master" (76). Then Edgar, in the same degrading look, tells his wife to receive Heathcliff in "the kitchen as a more suitable place for him" rather than in the parlour (77). Cathy, in anger at her husband's suggestions, tells Nelly: "Set two tables here, Ellen: one for your master and Miss Isabella, being gentry; the other for Heathcliff and myself, being of the lower orders. Will that please you, dear?" To which Edgar again answers in a typical racial attitude: you need not be so excited and welcome "a runaway servant as a brother." Nelly again describes him through the same prism of

black people, which Dyer describes above as "can be reduced (in white culture) to their bodies and thus to race":

> I was amazed, more than ever, to behold the transformation of Heathcliff. He had grown a tall, athletic, well-formed man; beside whom my master seemed quite slender and youth-like. His upright carriage suggested the idea of his having been in the army. His countenance was much older in expression and decision of feature than Mr. Linton's; it looked *intelligent*, and retained no marks of *former degradation*. A *half-civilised ferocity* lurked yet in the depressed *brows and eyes full of black fire*, but it was subdued; and his manner was even dignified: *quite divested of roughness*, though stern for grace. My master's surprise equalled or exceeded mine: he remained for a minute at a loss how to address the *ploughboy*, as he had called him. (77, Italics mine)

Of course we know that from this time on, though it is too late for her, Cathy begins to defend Heathcliff and look at him as exactly equal to her, not inferior, as she said before about him, and which prompted him to run away in anger against such degradation. This passage again explains Heathcliff's real feelings about being socially degraded and made a savage man, a demon, and a monster, with eyes full of black fire.

Before Heathcliff's disappearance and after the death of Mr. Earnshaw, he is also described by neighbours as a black gipsy: "'Miss Earnshaw scouring the country with a gipsy! And yet, my dear, the child is in mourning—surely it is—and she may be lamed for life!'" (40) Even Joseph, the stableman himself, describes Heathcliff in the same way: "It's bonny behaviour, lurking amang t' fields, after twelve o' t' night, wi' that fahl, flaysome divil of a gipsy, Heathcliff! They think *I'm* blind; but I'm noan: nowt ut t' soart!" (70) Cathy, earlier on, sees him as a dirty man, and he defends himself against her and Hindley: "I shall not stand to be laughed at. I shall not bear it!" (43) And Cathy tells him, "I did not mean to laugh at you" and "I could not hinder myself: Heathcliff, shake hands at least! What are you sulky for? It was only that you looked odd. If you wash your face and brush your hair, it will be all right: but you are so dirty!" Heathcliff replies to her in anger and resentment: "'You needn't have touched me!' he answered, following her eye and snatching away his hand. 'I shall be as dirty as I please: and I like to be dirty, and I will be dirty'" (43). Thus, when described as dark, villain, dirty and impure, Heathcliff knows himself to be spiritually pure and white. Although he is always seen as biologically black or gipsy, yet he knows that his darkness is mostly metaphorical, and this metaphorical implication is re-enforced by the material evidence they have always given of him. And these biological stigmas are only grades of his cultural, emotional, and intellectual development which are deemed primitive on

Victorian scales of civilisation and within Victorian racial discourse. Following Stoler's argument earlier on, Heathcliff's existence indeed seems a threat of contamination, which is conventionally assigned to Victorian blackness both in colonial locations and within Britain. When Heathcliff is always seen dirty then nearly all the whites in the novel seem to be quite susceptible to racial contamination, as they are all later changed by him (Stoler, 1997, 199).

This process of stereotyping Heathcliff as a villainous black man continues after Catherine's marriage from Edgar Linton, where Nelly, after seeing him with Isabella, constructs him as "Judas", "traitor", "hypocrite", "deliberate deceiver", "worthless friend" and a "sneaking rascal" (90). Then Cathy, being angry and jealous, though she should not be, warns Heathcliff that he is raising a "stir" in the family, and that Edgar "would not approve of his sister marrying" him. But Heathcliff is determined, though he is named a black villain again: "'God forbid that he should try!' answered the black villain. I detested him just then. 'God keep him meek and patient! Every day I grow madder after sending him to heaven!" (91) When she wants him to stop seeing Isabella, "he growled", as a vicious animal, "what is it to you?" "I have a right to kiss her, if she chooses; and you have no right to object. I am not *your* husband: *you* needn't be jealous of me!" And Catherine answers unconvincingly: "I'm not jealous *of* you," "I'm jealous *for* you. Clear your face: you sha'n't scowl at me! If you like Isabella, you shall marry her. But do you like her? Tell the truth, Heathcliff! There, you won't answer. I'm certain you don't." Then Heathcliff, beginning his revenge on her, says:

> Catherine, I have a mind to speak a few words now, while we are at it. I want you to be aware that I *know* you have treated me infernally— infernally! Do you hear? And if you flatter yourself that I don't perceive it, you are a fool; and if you think I can be consoled by sweet words, you are an idiot; and if you fancy I'll suffer unrevenged, I'll convince you of the contrary, in a very little while! Meantime, thank you for telling me your sister-in-law's secret: I swear I'll make the most of it. And stand you aside!" (91)

This passage reveals the real anger, agony, humiliation and degradation that Heathcliff feels after being abandoned by Catherine who opts for Edgar, and Heathcliff here is only responding in defense of his race, class and real love. Catherine exclaims in amazement and some hypocrisy: "I've treated you infernally—and you'll take your revenge! How will you take it, ungrateful brute? How have I treated you infernally?" Again she still calls him *brute*, and we understand why, but the real brutality for him is that she has left him due to his lower social order, his blackness and racial inferiority. That is why Heathcliff answers her, in anger, threat, and in irony:

I seek no revenge on you … That's not the plan. *The tyrant grinds down his slaves and they don't turn against him; they crush those beneath them.* You are welcome to torture me to death for your amusement, only allow me to amuse myself a little in the same style, and refrain from insult as much as you are able. Having levelled my palace, don't erect a hovel and complacently admire your own charity in giving me that for a home. If I imagined you really wished me to marry Isabel, I'd cut my throat!" (91-92, italics mine)

Of course we do not believe Heathcliff as he does not seek revenge, for he does threaten her, and he begins to take revenge from now. But we admire how he truly sees her as the tyrant, down-treading and trampling over him as her slave with which she can do as she pleases, for her own pleasure. He rightly thinks that she has destroyed his life, destroyed his palace of love by marrying Edgar, and he will not accept a hut instead in charity, by allowing his marriage from Isabella, though he is very sure that she does not want him to marry Isabella because she is still madly in love with him. This idea echoes what Eagleton argues about the "story of Catherine and Heathcliff" as "one of an absolute commitment and an absolute refusal," embodying thereby the "conflict between passion and society" (Eagleton, *The English Novel* 133). And certainly we do not believe her when she cries, "Oh, the evil is that I am not jealous"; "I won't repeat my offer of a wife: it is as bad as offering Satan a lost soul. Your bliss lies, like his, in inflicting misery" (92). Definitely, Heathcliff rejects this epithet as Satan and proves the erroneousness of such devilish discourse in which he is always racially constructed. She charges him of satanic stirring of trouble for her as a sign of his restlessness to leave her in peace, though Heathcliff knows as well as the reader that this is not true, and in saying this she deceives herself: "Quarrel with Edgar, if you please, Heathcliff, and deceive his sister: you'll hit on exactly the most efficient method of revenging yourself on me" (92). When Edgar hears this quarrel he blames his wife for allowing it to come from Heathcliff who, yet again, is described in a racial discourse: "what notion of propriety must you have to remain here, after the language which has been held to you by that blackguard? I suppose, because it is his ordinary talk you think nothing of it: you are habituated to his baseness, and, perhaps, imagine I can get used to it too!" (93) This is how Heathcliff is always seen as base and black, thereby emphasising the same degrading epithets given to him earlier on by Hindley, as a black servant/slave: "'Heathcliff, you may come forward,' cried Mr. Hindley … gratified to see what a forbidding young blackguard he would be compelled to present himself. 'You may come and wish Miss Catherine welcome, like the other servants'" (43).

Edgar tells him to his face that he will not tolerate him in his house as a low and degraded man: "I've been so far forbearing with you, sir … not

that I was ignorant of your miserable, degraded character," but because he knows that his "presence is a moral poison that would contaminate the most virtuous: for that cause, and to prevent worse consequences, I shall deny you hereafter admission into this house, and give notice now that I require your instant departure." This again confirms what has been mentioned earlier that Heathcliff's existence is always seen as a threat of contamination, a moral poison that may conventionally poison and kill all the whites around him like a plague—this is what happens in the novel though he was not the direct killer. But full of pride and bitterness, "Heathcliff measured the height and breadth of the speaker with an eye full of derision," answers, "Cathy, this lamb of yours threatens like a bull! … It is in danger of splitting its skull against my knuckles. By God! Mr. Linton, I'm mortally sorry that you are not worth knocking down!" (93) Cathy and Heathcliff know that her husband Edgar is a coward man who would not challenge his wife let alone Heathcliff, and meekly accepts this humiliation from Heathcliff; his wife mockingly says to him: "'Oh, heavens! In old days this would win you knighthood!' exclaimed Mrs. Linton. 'We are vanquished! we are vanquished! Heathcliff would as soon lift a finger at you as the king would march his army against a colony of mice. Cheer up! you shan't be hurt! Your type is not a lamb, it's a sucking leveret.'" (94) This is an interesting simile for Heathcliff, the king and lord of the army, who has conquered all, who makes his enemies as mice, and who constructs them in the same racial and degrading terminology they did him before. He mocks Cathy and congratulates her for her coward husband, and blames her for treating him as a slave instead of an equal lover whom she should have married: "I wish you joy of the milk-blooded coward, Cathy! … I compliment you on your taste. And that is the *slavering, shivering thing you preferred to me!* I would not strike him with my fist, but I'd kick him with my foot, and experience considerable satisfaction. Is he weeping, or is he going to faint for fear?" (94, italics mine) Sadly enough and bewilderingly for Cathy, she repeats the same thing to her husband: "'Oh, for mercy's sake!' interrupted the mistress, stamping her foot, 'for mercy's sake, let us hear no more of it now! Your cold blood cannot be worked into a fever: your veins are full of ice-water; but mine are boiling, and the sight of such chillness makes them dance'" (96).

This is the beginning of the terrible cycle of revenge against her and everyone else, undertaken by Heathcliff as the result of an age-long racial degradation of him as a black man and servant, and to prove to them that he is not. Degradation, of all types, is one of Heathcliff's main reasons for revenge against those whites, and one of the novel's main themes, as Eagleton suggests: "Catherine rejects Heathcliff as socially inferior and opts instead for the landowning Linton; but she hopes, even so, to maintain a Charlotte-like split between her inner and outer selves, the Romantic and the

realist, by gracing the social sphere as Mrs Edgar Linton while holding fast to her love for Heathcliff in some more inward dimension. Desire and social convention may thus be managed together" (Eagleton, *The English Novel* 133-34). This question of social inferiority, which drives her action and explains the split between her inner and outer selves, is made dramatically obvious and racially/socially stamped when Catherine admits to Nelly why she cannot marry Heathcliff:

> I've no more business to marry Edgar Linton than I have to be in heaven; and if the wicked man in there had not brought *Heathcliff so low*, I shouldn't have thought of it. *It would degrade me to marry Heathcliff now; so he shall never know how I love him*: and that, not because he's handsome, Nelly, but because *he's more myself than I am*. Whatever our souls are made of, his and mine are the same; and Linton's is as different as a moonbeam from lightning, or frost from fire. (65, italics mine)

There is a real war between her inner feeling and her social status; he is very low but she loves him; she loves him but she cannot marry him; she marries Edgar but she lives with him spiritually; she is him. This is the real split within her self: "in my soul and in my heart, I'm convinced I'm wrong," (64) to marry Edgar. Cathy emphasises that no one in the world can separate her from Heathcliff though she will be married to Edgar: "Who is to separate us, pray?" "Every Linton on the face of the earth might melt into nothing before I could consent to forsake Heathcliff" (66). She confirms that "Oh, that's not what I intend—that's not what I mean! I shouldn't be Mrs. Linton were such a price demanded! He'll be as much to me as he has been all his lifetime. Edgar must shake off his antipathy, and tolerate him, at least." Again she stresses her reasons for such choice: "Nelly, I see now you think me a selfish wretch; but did it never strike you that if Heathcliff and I married, we should be beggars? Whereas, if I marry Linton, I can aid Heathcliff to rise, and place him out of my brother's power" (66). This is again a social/racial reasoning to raise Heathcliff socially and to free him from being a permanent slave to her brother. This enhances again the view that the basic conflict and motive force of the novel are social and racial in origin. This is embodied in Catherine's and Heathcliff's affinity in the (class) rebellion forced on them by the injustice of Hindley and his wife Frances. Heathcliff, the outcast slave, turns for help, freedom, and social levelling to the lively, spirited, and fearless Cathy who alone offers him human understanding and comradeship. Indeed she senses that to achieve a full humanity, to be true to herself as a human being, she must associate herself totally with Heathcliff in his rebellion against the enslavement, exclusion, and tyranny of the Earnshaws. That is why she emphasises this affinity and

endorsement of social differences when she declares that Heathcliff is her, is "white":

> What were the use of my creation, if I were entirely contained here? My great miseries in this world have been Heathcliff's miseries, and I watched and felt each from the beginning: my great thought in living is himself. 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! 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; and— (66)

Of course, when Heathcliff hears all this he runs away for three years, in anger and determination, to remake his own self as an equal man to her and to free himself from the slavery inflicted by her class. But where did he go and where did he get his money? No real answer is given though he may have been in the army or in some form of trade. When Heathcliff comes back, the same points of racial and slave imagery are again repeated when he demands from Cathy a real explanation of her marriage from Edgar:

> You teach me now how cruel you've been—cruel and false. *Why* did you despise me? *Why* did you betray your own heart, Cathy? I have not one word of comfort. You deserve this. You have killed yourself. Yes, you may kiss me, and cry; and wring out my kisses and tears: they'll blight you—they'll damn you. You loved me—then what *right* had you to leave me? What right—answer me—for the poor fancy you felt for Linton? Because misery and degradation, and death, and nothing that God or Satan could inflict would have parted us, *you*, of your own will, did it. I have not broken your heart—*you* have broken it; and in breaking it, you have broken mine. So much the worse for me that I am strong. Do I want to live? What kind of living will it be when you—oh, God! would *you* like to live with your soul in the grave? (132-33)

Of course this passage says it all: Heathcliff blames Cathy for leaving him and in doing so she makes him cruel, through her own cruelty. He blames her for despising him and looking at him as inferior to her socially though she is deeply in love with him. He tells that she has no right whatsoever to do that, and it is her ignorance of social and racial reasoning and her wild will which is responsible for this destitution. He truly believes that no degradation or no death is ever able to separate them, because she is his own soul as he is hers. He cries that even death is a blessing for her for,

after her, he will be living with no soul. She replies to him, in vain, that he is also responsible for this, for leaving her all these years. "If I've done wrong, I'm dying for it. It is enough! You left me too: but I won't upbraid you! I forgive you. Forgive me!" (133) But Heathcliff is very hurt and vengeful: "It is hard to forgive, and to look at those eyes, and feel those wasted hands…. Kiss me again; and don't let me see your eyes! I forgive what you have done to me. I love *my* murderer—but *yours*! How can I?" And earlier, she confirms to Nelly that Heathcliff "would not relent a moment to keep me out of the grave. *That* is how I'm loved! … I shall love mine yet; and take him with me: he's in my soul" And she adds, "the thing that irks me most is this shattered prison, after all. I'm tired of being enclosed here" (132). She feels that without Heathcliff she is in a dark prison, but for him he is in a darker one, after she dies. When Cathy dies he groans "in a sudden paroxysm of ungovernable passion":

> Why, she's a liar to the end! Where is she? Not *there*—not in heaven— not perished—where? Oh! you said you cared nothing for my sufferings! And I pray one prayer—I repeat it till my tongue stiffens— Catherine Earnshaw, may you not rest as long as I am living! You said I killed you—haunt me, then! 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! (137)

Heathcliff's wish is granted for him, to live, after Cathy, in utter desolation and bitterness. Nelly describes this scene and how Heathcliff takes it, again in a racial discourse: "He dashed his head against the knotted trunk; and, lifting up his eyes, howled, not like a man, but like a savage beast getting goaded to death with knives and spears. I observed several splashes of blood about the bark of the tree, and his hand and forehead were both stained" (137-8).

Indeed, the word *degradation* is mentioned seven times in the novel, as the cause of Heathcliff's tragedy. In addition to the ones mentioned above, in chapter six Nelly also tells that "Heathcliff bore his degradation pretty well at first, because Cathy taught him what she learnt, and worked or played with him in the fields" (37). And yet, as a sign of his animal-like behaviour and savagery, he is constantly reprimanded, punished, and flogged, a factor which makes him a real dissenter, and a loud resentful voice of this slave narrative. In chapter ten also Nelly describes Heathcliff as someone who looks no longer a slave, "His countenance … retained no marks of former degradation" (77). When judging his possible connection with Isabella Linton, Nelly repeats the same epithets of his degradation as being nobody: "Leaving aside the degradation of an alliance with a nameless man," Edgar

thinks that "his property, in default of heirs male, might pass into such a one's power," Heathcliff's. Edgar will never allow his sister to marry Heathcliff, for he believes that though "his exterior was altered, his mind was unchangeable and unchanged" (81). Heathcliff tells young Cathy later, when encouraging her to come and see his son Linton, she should not tell her father Edgar about her visits to them, for they have quarrelled in the past, for, "He thought me too poor to wed his sister … and was grieved that I got her: his pride was hurt, and he'll never forgive it" (179). Heathcliff hopes that young Cathy "will discover his [Edgar's] value, and send him to the devil. Now, if it had been Hareton!—Do you know that, twenty times a day, I covet Hareton, with all his degradation? I'd have loved the lad had he been some one else" (179). This reveals how Heathcliff inflicts the same degradation, inflicted upon him in the past, upon Hareton, Hindley's son as a sign of revenge. This practice of degradation upon Hareton, which stems from that of Heathcliff's, is also emphasised in Hareton's and Cathy's final plan of marriage after Linton's death, and which comes about through her: Hareton's "honest, warm, and intelligent nature shook off rapidly the clouds of ignorance and degradation in which it had been bred; and Catherine's sincere commendations acted as a spur to his industry" (266). The final place where the word *degradation* is mentioned is when Heathcliff evaluates Hareton and how he, in his final days, looks at him as "the ghost of my immortal love; of my wild endeavours to hold my right; my degradation, my pride, my happiness, and my anguish" (267-68).

Thus, degradation is the prime mover of Heathcliff's strategy of displacement; he was racially and socially displaced and exiled in the past by the white and rich class, and hence he succeeds in displacing them all. Heathcliff enters the narrative early in the novel as someone who possesses nothing as a servant or black gipsy and is not even given a last or family name, and is quickly enslaved and badly degraded after Mr. Earnshaw's death. For example, Catherine complains that "my father was just buried, and my misery arose from the separation that Hindley had ordered between me and Heathcliff" (102). Indeed Catherine is rejecting here an old Victorian masculine concept of freedom; for to be free, in the Victorian sense, according to critic Lauren Goodlad, is not "to escape to some autonomous realm outside power but, rather, to exercise one's own power" within the sphere of the family (Goodlad 545). The process of displacing these people, in revenge, begins with Heathcliff's departure and then coming back. He quickly displaces Hindley in the family structure. Through her marriage, Catherine is also thrown out of heaven, where she feels displaced and sees herself an exile at Thrushcross Grange, and wanders the moors for twenty years as a ghost: she has "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. You may fancy a glimpse of the abyss where I grovelled!" (102). Hareton is also slowly dispossessed of property, education, and social status, all coincidentally happened through Heathcliff. Isabella's elopement or marriage from Heathcliff is another form of displacement and exile: she cannot return to her beloved Thrushcross Grange and brother. Heathcliff's son, Linton, is displaced twice after his mother's death, being removed first to Thrushcross Grange and then to Wuthering Heights. Young Cathy is ultimately displaced from her home, Thrushcross Grange, and literally imprisoned, exiled, until she has accepted to marry Linton. That is why she rightly tells him: "Mr. Heathcliff *you* have *nobody* to love you; and, however miserable you make us, we shall still have the revenge of thinking that your cruelty arises from your greater misery. You *are* miserable, are you not? Lonely, like the devil, and envious like him? *Nobody* loves you—*nobody* will cry for you when you die!" (237) Indeed all these are examples of racial inclusion and exclusion operated against Heathcliff, and at the same time by him, in revenge, reveals what is meant to say here about racial discourse and its forms of exclusion or marginalisation throughout the novel.[10]

  The clash between black and white, and the politics of exclusion and inclusion, as a form of racial discourse, goes on all the time in *Wuthering Heights*. Heathcliff is again racially and ethnically excluded as a black man, which he resents a lot. After Cathy's death Heathcliff "has been a stranger in the house" and "whether the angels have fed him, or his kin beneath [the Devil], I cannot tell," his wife Isabella says, as the acting narrator of this small part of the novel. His behaviour becomes very weird, and "he has continued, praying like a Methodist: only the deity he implored is senseless dust and ashes; and God, when addressed, was curiously confounded with his own black father," the Devil again (142). Isabella repeats this ethnic exclusion of her husband by throwing her wedding ring into the fire, and accusing him again of being the devil himself, "that incarnate goblin" (140), and who has a "devilish nature;" and "Catherine had an awfully perverted taste to esteem him so dearly, knowing him so well." She goes on to say, "he's not a human being", though he "wept tears of blood for Catherine" (141). The bereaved Hindley calls him a traitor, a violent and "hellish villain," who has a "fiend's existence" (144). His wife goes on to call him, "a bear," "a lunatic," "tyrant", and a "viper" when he tries to enter Hindley's house, and "the villain" she wishes to get rid of: "what a blessing for me should he send Heathcliff to his right abode!" (144) But as "I sat nursing these reflections," Heathcliff's "black countenance looked blightingly through…. His hair and clothes were whitened with snow, and his sharp cannibal teeth, revealed by cold and wrath, gleamed through the dark" (145). This is his wife seeing him as a canine savage animal, who wants to attack

her and "her whiteness" from his dark, wild and "diabolical" (147) abode, as excluded from humanity outside. This again sums up what Dyer argues about the nature of whiteness, its racial designation of those people whose skin colour is not literally white, and how "white" skin presumes the absence of ethnicity. Whites rarely consider themselves racially marked: since "whites are everywhere in representation … they seem not to be represented to themselves as whites" (Dyer 3). This is a very interesting and paradoxical argument by Dyer: he gives whiteness its representational power, inoculating it against stereotypes by saying that whites are both infinite in variety yet representative of humanity per se: "At the level of racial representation, in other words, whites are not of a certain race, they're just the human race" (Ibid.). This again proves how Heathcliff rejects and undermines such British, European, or American (as the case in modern twenty-first century) imperialist ideology, that sets out to remake the world in their own image, and pass themselves off as "subjects without properties," making their own interests seem the natural order of things. Where others were "particular, marked, raced," the white man was "without properties, unmarked, universal, just human" (Ibid. 38). Indeed Dyer argues that this position of apparent colonial disinterest ("abstraction, distance, separation, objectivity") has been a more important ploy to the construction of whiteness than racial distinctions themselves (Ibid. 38-39).

That is why Heathcliff, throughout the novel, attempts to prove that whites are not really alone "the human race", and are capable of being racial. He seems to be operating within the parameters of what Dyer maintains about the "paradoxes of whiteness," and how it is "presented as an apparently attainable, flexible, varied category, while setting up an always movable criterion of inclusion, the ascribed whiteness of your skin" (Ibid. 57). But again, as Heathcliff dramatically testifies this element of inclusion and exclusion, within the open boundaries of whiteness lies its ultimate contradiction: "Whiteness as ideal can never be attained, not only because white skin can never be hue white, but because ideally white is absence: to be really, absolutely white is to be nothing" (Ibid. 78). That is also why Heathcliff always rejects his racial exclusion, and the racial mark in which he is inscribed, not only as white but also as human, as Isabella thinks, "he's only half man" (148). Heathcliff is then seen as "our [the white] mutual foe," who "seemed insensible to anything around him," and whose "reflections revealed their blackness through his features" (148). Even "white" Linton, Heathcliff's son, complains about his father's looks: "'Black hair and eyes!' mused Linton. 'I can't fancy him. Then I am not like him, am I?'" (169) And Nelly answers him "not much … not a morsel", stressing her white racial exclusion when "surveying with regret the white complexion and slim frame of my companion," who is exactly like his white mother. In this regard

Heathcliff's answer to his son's ignorance of his father is a very revealing site of clash between whiteness and blackness: "You are my son, then, I'll tell you; and your mother was a wicked slut to leave you in ignorance of the sort of father you possessed…. Though it is something to see you have not white blood" (171). This shows Heathcliff's resentment of those whites who always see him as black, although, according to Nelly, Linton's appearance does not suggest that he is of mixed blood, being fair-haired and with white skin. And to show his determination of bringing up his son the way he wants, Heathcliff mocks Nelly, and all her white allies, that he will "be very kind to him", and will look at every other white, in an act of revenge, as nobody, as they did him before, hence his immediate remark: "Hareton, you infernal calf, begone to your work" (171). This shows his degradation of those whites, who degraded him in the past, and Hareton is only a symbol, and that is why he enslaves him now as an animal in his fields. Therefore, he threatens them through Nelly,

> Yes, Nell …when they had departed, my son is prospective owner of your place, and I should not wish him to die till I was certain of being his successor. Besides, he's *mine*, and I want the triumph of seeing *my* descendant fairly lord of their estates; my child hiring their children to till their fathers' lands for wages. That is the sole consideration which can make me endure the whelp: I despise him for himself, and hate him for the memories he revives! But that consideration is sufficient … I've ordered Hareton to obey him: and in fact I've arranged everything with a view to preserve the superior and the gentleman in him, above his associates. I do regret, however, that he so little deserves the trouble: if I wished any blessing in the world, it was to find him a worthy object of pride; and I'm bitterly disappointed with the whey-faced, whining wretch! (171-72)

This passage sums up again the argument about race discourse, inclusion and exclusion, and how vengeful and bitter Heathcliff really is. He wants his son to own and enslave the other whites, use and employ them as his peasants, and consequently Heathcliff's after his death. The weirdness of Heathcliff appears in how he himself looks at his own son also in this materialistic possessive sense, as a means of his triumph over the Earnshaws and the Lintons; how he really hates him as "the whelp", the little dog, and for his mother; how he sees him as a "pale, delicate, effeminate boy," and he waits for him to die to inherit him. What a father waiting to inherit his own son! But yet he will make him also enslave Hareton; he the master and gentleman, and Hareton, the salve and servant, he superior and Hareton and others inferior. Heathcliff's real resentment and revenge is revealed in how he has contradicting feelings towards his son, how he uses him to take

revenge, and yet he looks at him as being inferior, "whey-faced," "effeminate" wretch.

On the day of Hindley's death, Heathcliff "had the hypocrisy to represent a mourner", and "he lifted the unfortunate child on to the table and muttered, with peculiar gusto, 'Now, my bonny lad, you are *mine*! And we'll see if one tree won't grow as crooked as another, with the same wind to twist it!'" (153) This bitterness and revenge he expresses earlier when Hindley imprisons him, to which he says, "I'm trying to settle how I shall pay Hindley back. I don't care how long I wait, if I can only do it at last. I hope he will not die before I do!" Then Nelly tells him that it is wrong to be vengeful: "It is for God to punish wicked people; we should learn to forgive." He answers, typically of him: "No, God won't have the satisfaction that I shall.… I only wish I knew the best way! Let me alone, and I'll plan it out" (49). Towards the end of his life, Heathcliff becomes like "Hercules" with everything "ready and in my power." "My old enemies have not beaten me," and this is "the precise time to revenge myself on their representatives" (267). Even in death Heathcliff is vengeful and frightening: "I combed his black long hair from his forehead; I tried to close his eyes: to extinguish, if possible, that frightful, life-like gaze of exultation before any one else beheld it. They would not shut: they seemed to sneer at my attempts: and his parted lips and sharp white teeth sneered too!" (277). This refusal to be excluded from life is typical of Heathcliff, and symbolises his rise to gentlemanliness—and may be fall from it, and sums up the entire argument of race discourse as developed in the novel.

In conclusion, *Wuthering Heights* represents how imaginative art embodies the tensions and conflicts—racial, social, personal and spiritual—of nineteenth-century capitalist society. It reveals how Heathcliff, the outsider, the "slave", is excluded as someone who has no social or biological place in the existing social structure, and which makes him determined to carve his own place as equal, and renders himself free in a world of exploitation and inequality. That is why his love for Catherine has a non-social or pre-social entity, an escape from the conventional restrictions, racial exclusions, and material comforts of the upper classes. That is why also he becomes a capitalist himself, an expropriator, and a predator, thereby turning the ruling class's weapons of property accumulation and acquisitive marriage against them, by turning, or taming them, into the yeoman class, as represented, for example, by Hareton. Indeed Heathcliff has succeeded in his attempts, all the time, to break down a cultural myth, the superiority of the white, and build from it a whole new construct of new relationships which he sees more racially appropriate and fair. Heathcliff emphasises his critique of the whites to undermine their authority and to dislodge them from positions of power. But ultimately Heathcliff is not saying that all whiteness is bad, or

incapable of good, thereby seems to be conforming to what Ann Louise Keating has explored as the problematic tendency among some scholars to conflate whiteness and white people—a gesture which "implies that all human beings classified as 'white' automatically exhibit the traits associated with 'whiteness': they are, by nature, insidious, superior, empty, terrible, terrifying, and so on" (Keating 907).[11] Heathcliff, finally, sets out to reject and undermine the British Victorian imperialist white endeavour of inscribing him, "containing and representing" him, to use Edward Said's terminology, "by dominating frameworks" (Said 40), and imperialist race discourse, as belonging to an inferior Oriental culture compared to their superior white one. Thus, instead of constructing him as a devil and a faceless, homeless, placeless, and accursed slave of a goblin, Heathcliff proves that he is just a human being, and free, like everyone else.

Notes

1. See also Barbara Dennis, *The Victoria Novel: Cambridge Contexts in Literature* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000), pp. 10-37; also Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer in the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination, Second Edition* (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 2000).

2. See also Patricia McKee, "Racial Strategies in *Jane Eyre*," *Victorian Literature and Culture* 37, 1 (2009): 67-83.

3. See Terry Eagleton, *Heathcliff and the Great Hunger: Studies in Irish Culture* (London: Verso, 1995); also his, *Myths of Power: A Marxist Study of the Brontës* (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005); also his, *The English Novel: An Introduction* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2005), pp. 133-136.

4. This idea was also addressed by many critics as Stewart Hall in many of his works as, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora," *Identity, Community, Culture, Difference*, ed. Jonathan Rutherford (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1990), pp. 222-37; also his, "Ethnicity: Identity and Difference," *Radical America* 13 (June 1991): 9-20; and his, "New Ethnicities," *Stuart Hall: Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies*, eds., David Morley and Kuan-Hsing Chen (London and New York: Routledge, 1996), pp. 441-49. See also Toni Morrison, *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination* (New York: Vintage, 1993).

5. See Nancy Armstrong, *Desire and Domestic Fiction: A Political History of the Novel* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1987), pp. 9-10.

6. See also her, "Racial Histories and their Regimes of Truth," *Political Power and Social Theory* 11 (1997): 183–206.

7. Emily Brontë, *Wuthering Heights* (Beirut: York Press, 1987), p. 29. Further references to this edition will be quoted parenthetically in the body of this essay.

8. See James Hafley, "The Villain in *Wuthering Heights*," *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 13, 3 (1958): 199-215.

9. There is a suggestion contrary to this point which makes out Heathcliff's appearance as "not easily tied down to a particular country or race: if he looked clearly Indian, Ellen would be unlikely to suggest that he might be descended from the Chinese Emperor (she *was* well educated for a servant," see "Common questions about *Wuthering Heights*," http://www.wuthering-heights.co.uk/faq.htm#black. The writer of these comments states that the word "black" in the negative sense is mentioned in the novel only once, unlike what I am arguing here in this article; it is mentioned many times.
10. For a brief discussion of this notion of exclusion and inclusion, but in a different context, see Shaobo Xie, "Rethinking the Postcolonial and the Global: An Introduction," *Ariel: A Review of International English Literature* 40, 1 (January 2009): 7-11.
11. See also Henry A. Giroux, "Racial Politics and the Pedagogy of Whiteness," *Whiteness: A Critical Reader*, ed., Mike Hill (New York: New York University Press, 1997), 294-315.

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