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Wicked Gentlemen
A Comparison of
Heathcliff in Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*
and Huntingdon in Anne Brontë's *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*

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Abstract

This thesis investigates similarities and differences between Emily Brontë's Heathcliff and Anne Brontë's Huntingdon. Moreover, their conduct is compared to eighteenth- and nineteenth-century masculinities. Neither of the two characters corresponds with ideal masculine behaviour. As the novels progress they become increasingly depraved. But the causes to their wickedness are not self-evident. However this thesis argues that the gentlemen's experiences and environments produce their selfish and offensive conduct. The analysis entails examinations of Heathcliff's and Huntingdon's respective manliness, personality, childhood and relationships with other people. Furthermore, to highlight their unpleasant behaviour, they are compared to other male characters in the novels. This investigation concludes that Heathcliff's decadence originates in the mistreatments he endures as a child, while Huntingdon's fear of losing his status among his friends causes his debauchery. Moreover, Heathcliff's anger is released by Catherine Earnshaw's treachery, whereas Mrs Huntingdon's righteousness serves to intensify Huntingdon's dissipation.

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Introduction

The Brontë sisters have repeatedly been linked together not only because of their kinship, but due to the similarities in their writings. The pseudonyms of Currer, Ellis and Acton Bell mystified the sisters' identities. Moreover, Ellis' and Acton's publisher, Thomas Newby, intentionally confused the authorship of their novels, to derive benefit from the success of Currer Bell (Allott 1-3, 11). Reviews in *The Brontës: The Critical Heritage*¹ show that several contemporary critics perceived a resemblance in the Brontës' works (Allott 206-7, 218, 227, 254). An unsigned review from 1848 comments on the similarity of the sisters' novels, "[t]he three Bells [...] ring in a chime so harmonious as to prove that they have issued from the same mould" (*Athenaeum* July 1848, 251). Although most of the contemporary reviewers discerned similarities between the Brontës' writings, the novels written by Charlotte Brontë, and *Jane Eyre* in particular, received most recognition (Allott 2).

The novels in focus for this study, Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* and Anne Brontë's *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*², were both seen as coarse books (Allott 234, 261, 270). E.P. Whipple commented in 1848 that the novels were similar in terms of "prominence given to the brutal element of human nature" (Whipple 261). Reviewers especially remarked on the depictions of disagreeable men: Heathcliff is "a creature in whom every evil passion seems to have reached a gigantic excess" (Unsigned review, *Atlas* January 1848, 232), whereas Arthur Huntingdon is described as "drunken, vicious, and tyrannical" (Unsigned review, *Examiner* July 1848, 255). Heathcliff in *Wuthering Heights* and Mr Huntingdon in *The Tenant* are extraordinarily unsavoury male characters.³

Both Heathcliff and Huntingdon are egocentric and evil male characters. They both lack ideal gentlemanly manners and cause anguish to the people in their environments. Their personal traits and behaviour are undoubtedly similar. They are, however, separated in terms of social

¹ This volume, edited by Miriam Allott, brings together contemporary criticism on the Brontë sisters' works. In this thesis the volume is used as background information to the general reception of *Wuthering Heights* and *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*. When it is possible reviews are ascribed to the critics who produced them, in the text and in the Works Cited list. However many of the collected reviews were written anonymously. The anonymous reviews are referred to as 'unsigned review' together with the periodical in which they were published and when they were published. In Works Cited the anonymous reviews are listed under 'unsigned review'. Allott is used as reference entry when referring to the editor's introduction to the volume and when several reviews are referred to at the same time.

² Hereafter referred to as *The Tenant*.

³ The decision to exclude an analysis of Charlotte Brontë's famous *Jane Eyre* from this investigation is based on the thesis' area of interest. The focus of this thesis is unpleasant qualities in male characters. Despite his faults, Mr Rochester is not in the same league in terms of depravity as Heathcliff and Huntingdon. Thus, Rochester is not a suitable character to analyse in the present investigation.

class. Terry Eagleton argues, in his Marxist study of the Brontës' novels, that Heathcliff, as an orphan, cannot really be fitted into a specific social rank, although his appearance suggests membership in the working class (102). Contrastingly, Huntingdon is born into the upper layers of society. Regardless of their social belonging, Heathcliff and Huntingdon are equally frustrated and they take out their frustrations on people in their surroundings. However, their dissatisfactions stem from different sources. Heathcliff is mistreated as a child and seeks revenge and restitution as an adult. Idleness makes Huntingdon jaded and his hunt for amusement hurts those around him. Their frustrations naturally have consequences, which are dissimilar from one perspective but exactly the same from another outlook. In his pursuit of retribution, Heathcliff attains wealth and the status of a gentleman. Thus, Heathcliff shakes off the label of orphan and climbs in terms of social rank, whereas Huntingdon's position in the social hierarchy stays the same throughout his life. However, even if the men's social rank is high, they both lose respect as a result of their actions. Their inconsiderate and malevolent manners degrade them morally. Ironically, these repulsive men and their selfish behaviour contribute to the fascination of the novels.

The aim of the present investigation is to compare Emily Brontë's and Anne Brontë's main male characters, in *Wuthering Heights* and *The Tenant*, respectively, with one another and with then prevailing masculine forms. Moreover, this thesis argues that Heathcliff and Huntingdon develop into unsavoury men as a result of their respective environments and experiences. In order to highlight Heathcliff's and Huntingdon's conduct as well as investigate underlying causes to this, the thesis will investigate the men's childhoods, personalities and relationships with other people. In addition, Heathcliff's enemy Edgar Linton and Helen Huntingdon's second husband Gilbert Markham will be contrasted with Heathcliff and Huntingdon, to accentuate the latter men's deplorable behaviour.

The Brontës lived and wrote during a time when Christianity presumably affected views on personal traits. Marianne Thormählen, who has written both books and articles on the Brontës and their works, points towards a discussion between Huntingdon and Helen, which suggests that God gives you your life and certain qualities come with it (1993, 835): "If God meant me to be religious, why didn't He give me a proper organ of veneration?" (Thormählen 1993, 835; *The Tenant* 205). To this Helen replies, "[o]f him, to whom less is given, less will be required; but our utmost exertions are required of us all" (Thormählen 1993, 835; *The Tenant*

205). The couple's discussion connects with a belief within phrenology⁴ that God gives people unequally developed skills. This did not mean that those with less moral ability could not be good Christians; everybody ought to do the best of their gift (Thormählen 1993, 835). Thus, in the early and mid-nineteenth century personal characteristics would most likely not be considered to be influenced by environment and experience to the same extent that such factors presumably have in today's general opinion.

In their study of how childhood adversity can affect a person's traits as an adult, Rosenman and Rodgers write in 1996 that within psychiatry personality is established as a phenomenon shaped by both genes and environment (483). John Tosh has done extensive research on eighteenth- and nineteenth-century masculinities in Britain and he asserts that masculinity is shaped during a male's younger years and it is affected by peer recognition (51). This thesis will use those modern ideas concerning the assessment of personality. Specifically, one's environment and experiences greatly influence one's personality. It is of course impossible to execute a study of Heathcliff's and Huntingdon's genetic heredity. But, their individual environments and experiences will be considered when analysing their personalities.

The two Brontë novels take place during a turbulent time in English history: "The period from 1783 to 1867 was one of formative changes in the structure of the English economy, the shape of English society and the framework of government" (Briggs 1). Indeed, one very costly involvement for Britain was the war against Napoleonic France, from 1793 to 1815 (Colley 150). The Industrial Revolution influenced the social structure in that the middle classes were able to improve their living standards. Moreover, numerous reforms were made in the first half of the nineteenth century with the intention to equate injustices in the country (Oreström 56-8). In other words, Britain was going through major changes around the turn of the eighteenth century. This time of transformation seems also to have affected the concept of masculinity. Michèle Cohen investigates the notion of masculinity in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century Britain. She discerns a shift in ideal masculine qualities during this period. Cohen's ideas will be used to give a perspective on late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century masculinity and this will also be compared to the men in *Wuthering Heights* and *The Tenant*. Moreover, a historical context will be brought in from works by Asa Briggs, Linda Colley, Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall as well as Bengt Oreström.

⁴ Phrenology is "the detailed study of the shape and size of the cranium as a supposed indication of character and mental abilities" (*Concise OED*).

Masculinity in a Historical Context

The Brontës' *noms de plume* mystified their actual sex. Before the Bells' identities became known, many reviewers speculated or assumed that the authors were men. Several commentators construed the novels' so-called coarseness as indications of male authorship. For instance, no doubts are shown concerning the writer of *Wuthering Heights*' sex in this unsigned review from 1848: "A person may be unmannered from want of delicacy of perception, or cultivation, or ill-mannered intentionally. The author of *Wuthering Heights* is both. *His* rudeness is chiefly real but partly assumed" (*American Review* June 1848, 236, emphasis added). The assumption that the author must be uncouth to be able to create an offensive novel seems to go hand in hand with the supposition that the writer is a man. The idea that women did not write disagreeable novels is clearly seen in an unsigned review on *The Tenant*: "[N]one but a man could have known so intimately each vile, dark fold of the civilized brute's corrupted nature; none but a man could make so daring an exhibition as this book presents to us" (*Sharpe's London Magazine* August 1848, 265). Evidently, women could describe male degeneracy and they could do it so convincingly that they were categorized as men themselves.

The main narratives in *Wuthering Heights* and *The Tenant* take place when Heathcliff and Huntingdon are around thirty years of age. However, Heathcliff and Huntingdon are men of different periods. In *Wuthering Heights*, the turn of the eighteenth century is the central time. Mr Lockwood begins his tale in 1801, when Heathcliff probably is in his mid-thirties. In *The Tenant*, the problems of Helen's and Arthur's marriage take place in the 1820s. Gilbert Markham writes to his friend Halford in 1847, although Helen's first encounter with Mr Huntingdon takes place in 1821 when he is in his late twenties. This means that the two novels are set apart with around twenty-five years.

Consequently, to be able to compare the behaviours of Heathcliff and Huntingdon it is necessary to begin with an examination of what masculinity meant in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Tosh points out that there is a difference between masculinities and manliness. The former concept is a twentieth-century term, and its plurality signifies that there is an indefinite set of masculinities. Today's concept of masculinities can take different shapes and it is chiefly connected with the achievement of personal goals. Contrastingly, manliness is uncountable and it is always used in the singular form. As the term was commonly used in the nineteenth century, it points towards a conception of one model for

manhood. Manliness was something that a man gained through approval from society. However, one's manliness was measured against the prevailing norm in one's social class and religion, where there was one standard (Tosh 2-3). The terms masculinity and manliness will, however, be used interchangeably in this discussion. R.W. Connell, who has written several books on gender, discusses hegemonic masculinity which is a term used for the dominant masculinity in a culture, at a certain point in time (77). Cohen uses the same term and argues that the hegemonic masculinity in eighteenth-century Britain was shaped by politeness, but in the nineteenth century it was replaced with chivalry (312-5). The different types of masculinities will be investigated further down. At present it is sufficient to be aware of the idea of a dominant manliness.

Social hierarchy

To get an idea of the social class system during the time concerned, an approximate rule of thumb is required. In his study of gentlemen in Victorian literature, Robin Gilmour attempts to place the concept of gentleman within the social structure of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Britain:

In the traditional social hierarchy, the gentleman ranked beneath the baronet, the knight and the squire, but above the yeoman; and between the gentry and the aristocracy, [...] bound together by a common interest in the land and a similar way of life [...] Moreover the rank of gentleman was the point of entry for those seeking to penetrate gentry society (5)

Consequently the gentry “were constantly being replenished and revitalised by the arrival of new families from office, trade, finance, farming and the professions” (Mingay quoted in Gilmour 5). Historically, a gentleman belonged to the gentry. Nevertheless, Gilmour points out that all aristocrats were gentlemen, but a gentleman was not necessarily an aristocrat. Gentlemanliness developed a connotation of good character that made the label desirable to the higher ranks. However, prosperous middle-class members hoped to be called gentlemen and thus emphasised the word's origin in the gentry. If the concept was based on morals rather than ancestry the title was obtainable. Unlike in the aristocracy, membership in the gentry did not require a certain heritage (Gilmour 4-6).

In their investigation of British middle-class life from 1780 to 1850, Leonore Davidoff and Catherine Hall say that the person who possessed land had a significant status (20). Briggs correspondingly declares, “[t]he gentry maintained estates in a style appropriate to their social

position, and were at the same time proud of their independence and conscious of their corporate existence as the backbone of the ‘landed interest’” (11). It was the gentry’s ownership of land, which granted them their high status (Briggs 11). However, there was a great difference between an aristocratic owner of land and a middle-class owner of land. The former could “expect to live from rents and the emoluments of office” while the second had to “actively seek an income” (Davidoff and Hall 20). In other words, a middle-class man was constantly at risk of ruin and needed to work hard because his situation in life was sensitive to recession.

Heathcliff and Arthur Huntingdon do not belong to the same group in society. Nevertheless, the discrepancy between their positions in the social hierarchy is not crystal clear. Firstly, they do not exist in the same book; they are not even created by the same author. Secondly, in *Wuthering Heights*, Heathcliff’s ambiguous background and his mysteriously obtained wealth complicate his social standing. However, it is safe to say that Huntingdon’s position is at all times above Heathcliff’s status. Huntingdon’s rank stays the same throughout his life. Although he does not have a formal title, his family is sufficiently rich to not have to work for a living. Huntingdon is through his birth and wealth entitled to be called gentleman and must be considered to belong to the higher echelons of the gentry. As Gilmour points out, the aristocracy and the gentry could have similar lifestyles. This means that they often moved in the same circles, they socialized. For instance, in *The Tenant*, Arthur’s friend Lord Lowborough is an aristocrat.

Unlike Huntingdon’s social position, Heathcliff’s rank is not static throughout *Wuthering Heights*. He actually advances in terms of social status as the novel proceeds. Eagleton claims that, as an orphan, Heathcliff does not really possess a specific social rank, except for the status of human being (102). He is an intruder in a family who have not desired him to live with them. Indeed, “Mrs. Earnshaw was ready to fling it [Heathcliff] out of doors: she did fly up, asking how [Mr. Earnshaw] could fashion to bring that gipsy brat into the house, when they had their own bairns to feed and fend for” (45). Heathcliff is an unwelcome addition to the family, but Mr Earnshaw makes sure that he is treated in a humane way. Eagleton declares that the Earnshaws are gentlemen who still have to work for a living. Yet, they appreciate the freedom of working their own land (105). Thus, at best, Heathcliff can as a foster child obtain the same status as the Earnshaw family.

Nevertheless, in consequence of old Mr Earnshaw's passing Heathcliff loses his status as a family member. In the novel, housekeeper Nelly says, "Hindley became tyrannical. [...] He drove [Heathcliff] from their company to the servants, deprived him of the instructions of the curate, and insisted that he should labour out of doors instead; compelling him to do so as hard as any other lad on the farm" (52). Thus, Heathcliff is degraded to the level of a worker. After his absence Heathcliff returns as a rich man and cunningly obtains both Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange. This possession of land and estate actually enables him to rise above the rank he initially had as a member of the Earnshaw household. As the master of Wuthering Heights he is his own man and has the authority of a landowner. Significantly, when he returns, Nelly starts calling him formally Mr Heathcliff and his appearance is that of a gentleman. Mr Lockwood's first impression of Heathcliff's social standing affirms this: "Mr. Heathcliff [...] is a dark-skinned gipsy in aspect, in dress and manners a gentleman: that is, as much a gentleman as many a country squire" (21). Thus, Heathcliff looks like a gentleman and can behave as one when he is inclined to. However, that is not to say that he has achieved a comparable status to that of Arthur Huntingdon in *The Tenant*.

Reshaping the masculine ideal

In Britain, the Regency period separates the Georgian times from the Victorian period.⁵ Tosh claims that "no greater contrast could be imagined than that between the uninhibited 'Georgian' libertine and his sober frock-coated 'Victorian' grandson" (62). This statement indicates that manliness underwent a transformation from carelessness in Georgian times into seriousness in the Victorian period. Such a change could be claimed to go from one extreme to the other. Clearly, such a great alteration cannot have happened over night. The Regency can be seen as a transition period between the Georgian and the Victorian values. Davidoff and Hall say that in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries the provincial middle class was formed. There was an increasing desire to become independent among the middle classes; this was at least partly caused by the influence of the French Revolution. The war with France affected the economy in that some trades thrived while others became superfluous. The gap between the lower and the higher middle classes increased as prices rose (Davidoff and Hall 18-9). Another revolution, which affected the view of the social order, was

⁵ The House of Hanover's succession to the British throne in 1714 is the official start of the Georgian Era (Oreström 105). In 1810 George III's mental health worsened and his son, the Prince of Wales and future George IV, was appointed regent in 1811 (Briggs 155-6). The Prince Regent succeeded the throne in 1820 and ruled up until 1830 (Oreström 105). Thus, the formal Regency period stretches from 1811 to 1820. The Victorian period refers to Queen Victoria's reign from 1837 to 1901 (Oreström 63, 105).

the industrial, which, according to Briggs, can be dated as early as the 1780s and 1790s (17). The upper class' authority and privileges were questioned around the turn of the eighteenth century, due to the defeat in America in 1783 and the Napoleonic wars stretching from 1793 to 1815 (Colley 150-1).

The threat of economic difficulties might have been the fundamental origin to the social classes' difference in male behaviour. Tosh refers to Hunt who argues that the middle-class man was a domestic man during the eighteenth century, because he feared the damages the city could bring with it in terms of spending too much money on various pleasures (64). Within the gentry there was, however, a division between two kinds of masculine behaviour. One group of males lived up to the idea of a sophisticated and industrious gentleman, whilst others were rough and mostly cared about their own enjoyment (Tosh 64-5).

As was touched upon earlier, the fighting in France and America drew to the middle classes' attention the unfairness of how Britain was ruled, with the upper class pulling all the strings. The pressure from the wars along with the criticism from the middle classes caused a chaotic reaction in the upper class. George III was openly labelled insane, more than twenty Members of Parliament were also seemingly mad and as many as nineteen Members committed suicide between 1790 and 1820. There seemed to be an inclination among some elite males to turn to gambling and duelling, instead of dealing with the imminent threat of usurpation (Colley 151-2). According to Davidoff and Hall, upper-class men were notorious for their extravagant habits in the late eighteenth century. They could spend their time on laid-back occupations such as hunting and socializing. For some upper-class men this carefree lifestyle led to a careless attitude towards money and they became obsessed with gambling. Middle-class men despised the upper crust's recklessness with money. Since their economic situation was not necessarily stable, they valued thrift (Davidoff and Hall 20-1). An anonymous critic wrote that the aristocracy

placed on an eminence among the people, instead of supporting the dignity of their station, are become a shame and disgrace to it. Our young noblemen are jockies, whoremasters, and spendthrifts, while those advanced in years are repairing the waste of their youth, by a shameful plunder of the public. (quoted in Colley 154)

To avoid a revolution, like the one in France, the British upper class needed to show that they were actually worthy of the power that they possessed (Colley 155). *The Tenant's* Arthur

Huntingdon could be an illustration of an upper-class man likely to be loathed by less fortunate citizens. He gambles, drinks, wastes money and is promiscuous. In *Wuthering Heights* Hindley Earnshaw behaves in a similar manner. Ironically, Hindley's gambling addiction enables Heathcliff to obtain both land and estate. The oppressed becomes the oppressor through his newly established wealth.

There was an overall influence of French culture in the British elite during the eighteenth century. It was fashionable to speak French and the style of clothes bore unmistakable similarities with the trends in France (Colley 164-6). Moreover, it was common for young upper-class males to go on a so-called grand tour in Europe to acquire proper and polite manners. As was mentioned above, Cohen argues that politeness was the ideal gentlemanly characteristic in the eighteenth century. However, in the 1760s the French form of masculinity and its politeness began to receive criticism for being effeminate (Cohen 322). The French army was ridiculed and disdained after the British victory; it was said that the French had used female soldiers in battle (Davidoff and Hall 19). Furthermore, the foreign influences in the British upper class started to annoy the less privileged population who considered it to be unpatriotic. A change was required owing to the critique against effeminacy and the foreign lifestyle along with the disapproval of the wars and the ruling of the country: "Out of necessity, therefore, as well as for reasons of prudence and patriotic choice, members of the ruling order were encouraged to seek out new forms of cultural expression that were unquestionably British" (Colley 167). In *Wuthering Heights* Heathcliff's rough manners are opposed to, his rival, Edgar Linton's soft personality. Nelly draws attention to their different natures: "The contrast resembled what you see in exchanging a bleak, hilly, coal country for a beautiful fertile valley" (71). The first portrayal, of course, describes Heathcliff and the second Linton. Edgar is polite and kind, but he is also frail and slightly timid. His characteristics are reminiscent of the French influenced and polite gentleman.

Cohen refers to Carter who asserts that there is a concurrence among historians about a new definition of the concept of 'gentleman' emerging in the beginning of the nineteenth century. The new outlook on gentlemanliness affected the concept of manliness. Cohen emphasises that the background to this alteration in meaning is not clear-cut (312). Nonetheless, the aspects discussed above, concerning the wars and the critique posed against the behaviour of the elite, must have, at any rate, been fractions of a trigger to the shift in meaning. Gilmour observes that "[t]he history of English manners is cyclical, periods of middle-class sobriety

and restraint alternating with periods of upper-class licence” (11). It seems reasonable that a period of frivolousness is counterbalanced with a time of seriousness and vice versa. In order to prove that they were decent gentlemen some upper-class men became extremely absorbed in their work while others turned to religion (Colley 188-9).

As was touched upon earlier, Cohen claims that the politeness based on French values in the eighteenth century was gradually replaced by the nationalistic chivalry in the nineteenth century: “The ancient Briton was configured as the antithesis of his polite, Frenchified, and effeminate eighteenth-century heirs” (325). The main difference between the two ideals was that politeness was always on the verge of effeminacy while chivalry presented a more masculine code: “Chivalry [...] was always associated with [...] manliness, bravery, loyalty, courtesy, truthfulness, purity, honor, and a strong sense of protection toward the weak and oppressed” (Cohen 326). Moreover, chivalry entailed love for women, arms and adventure. Whereas politeness was a façade used to gain esteem, chivalry demanded sincerity (Cohen 326). Tosh affirms that throughout the nineteenth century, “assertiveness, courage, independence and straightforwardness were the common currency of manliness, on which a highly varied superstructure was built by different classes and denominations” (5). These characteristics are strikingly similar to Cohen’s description of chivalry cited above. Thus, the chivalrous manhood must be considered to have been the dominant ideal during the nineteenth century. *The Tenant’s* Gilbert Markham shows chivalrous tendencies. His abrupt pursuit of Helen’s heart displays his passion for love. This contrasts with Arthur Huntingdon’s habit of leaving his wife, who he ought to protect according to the chivalric code.

Manly occupations

Fox-hunting became increasingly popular after 1750, when a new and quicker fox-hound was bred. This was an excellent opportunity for upper-class males to enjoy themselves while at the same time executing a respectable task. Foxes were considered vermin as they were a threat to farmers’ poultry. By killing off these pests the gentlemen could not be accused of sloth. Moreover, fox-hunting was quick and dangerous and could be seen as a preparation or a simulation of a military battle (Colley 170-2). Tosh notices that after the victory in the Napoleonic Wars military manliness was declining as an ideal. However, through hunting the fantasy picture of brave soldiers was kept (65). Thus, hunting was a manly pastime for wealthy landowners (Colley 170-2). In *The Tenant*, Huntingdon and his set of upper-class

friends hunt for pleasure. In fact, Helen observes that when it is off season Huntingdon becomes increasingly destructive as he has nothing to occupy himself with: “Happily, it will soon be the shooting season, and then, if the weather permit, he will find occupation enough in the pursuit and destruction [...] instead of lying under the acacia tree pulling [the] poor [dog’s] ears” (226). Clearly, inactivity makes Arthur restless and probably more inclined to carouse.

In her article on *The Tenant* Juliet McMaster discusses a transformation in social behaviour going from early to mid-nineteenth century: “The Victorians were fond of defining themselves by contrasting their values with those of the Regency and George IV” (353). McMaster cites parts of Thackeray’s seemingly sardonic speech on George IV, from 1860. The talk emphasises the masculine frivolousness of the Georgian period:

In this quarter of a century, what a silent revolution has been working! [...] That gentleman of the grand old school, when he was in the 10th Hussars, and dined at the prince’s table, would fall under it night after night. Night after night, that gentleman sat [...] over the dice. If, in the petulance of play or drink, that gentleman spoke a sharp word to his neighbour, he and the other would infallibly go out and try to shoot each other the next morning. (Thackeray quoted in McMaster 353)

Davidoff and Hall concur and add that men in noble circles openly socialized with prostitutes (21). This kind of behaviour was deemed masculine and correct early in the nineteenth century, but the general public in mid-Victorian times did not approve of such conduct (McMaster 353). Similarly, in mid-nineteenth century it was not allowed to be sexually active before marriage. Contrastingly, for the libertines of the eighteenth century it was socially accepted to be experimenting sexually before matrimony. Young upper-class males were pressured by their peers to lose their virginities. Thus, although the libertine lifestyle became increasingly unacceptable, the pressure and trend among males did not cease. Sexual conquest was a sign of masculinity (Tosh 67). Throughout the nineteenth century it was believed that brutality and roughness lay in men’s nature (Cohen 313). Consequently, the variation of male manners was manoeuvred by a change in the public opinion, the ‘silent revolution’ as Thackeray called it. When the expectations were that men ought to behave boorish, they did. When in the Victorian period it was required of men to control their roughness, they did, if they desired to be regarded as gentlemen.

Tosh says that the Victorian period was a time of domesticity. Before that there were divided opinions of how much time a man should spend at home. The fear of becoming effeminate in the company of women held men at a distance from home. Moreover, the household was the women's responsibility to uphold and men should not intrude in the management of it. Besides, spending much time at home would mean less time in the company of other males which was highly valued: "Passing time with male companions was the traditional leisure occupation of men at all levels of society, whether in the informal conviviality of an alehouse or in more elaborate craft associations and fraternities" (Tosh 70-1). But, this homosociality did not just entail social enjoyment it gave opportunities for business contacts too. Men were torn between the demands of the home versus their need to socialize with other males. Despite the tension between the home and the public, men's need to socialize with someone like-minded was accepted by society (Tosh 70-1). As has been indicated above, McMaster holds that the male roughness, such as drinking, gambling and swearing, of the Georgian era and the Regency was not deemed as improper. Contrastingly, such crude behaviour was not accepted in the Victorian period (353). Thus, homosociality could take different shapes; it could involve business networking, friendly socializing or revelry and gambling.

Manliness in *Wuthering Heights* and *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*

As has been discussed above, a transformation can be seen regarding masculine behaviour going from Georgian into Victorian times. In her feminist reading of *The Tenant* Priti Joshi points out, "in the early decades of the [nineteenth] century, masculine identity was in flux, unstable, and recreating itself" (916). This means that both *Wuthering Heights* and *The Tenant* are set in a turbulent epoch; during this period new norms for appropriate masculine manners were created. Such a change must have been gradual and the transitional period between the old traditions and the new rules must have been a confusing time. The discrepancy between politeness and chivalry, which Cohen discusses, is quite large. The first is borderline feminine whilst the second could be seen as a macho type of masculinity. It must have been difficult for men to decide whether to adhere to the old ways or to embrace the new. Presumably, this was not a conscious choice, but rather an outcome based on one's environment and personal preference. Hence, the uncertainty concerning a masculine ideal might be reflected in the two Brontë novels.

In *Wuthering Heights*, Edgar Linton, as opposed to Heathcliff, corresponds well with the polite Frenchified eighteenth-century gentleman. This can be demonstrated with his reaction

to Heathcliff's impudent visits to his wife. Edgar has had enough of Heathcliff's insolence and he firmly asks him to leave and not to return ever again. To this demand Heathcliff gives a mocking reply, which points towards Edgar's lack of masculinity: "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" (107). Heathcliff's ridicule of Edgar is exactly on the mark. Housekeeper Nelly has been instructed by Edgar to call for assistance and she says that Mr Linton "had no intention of hazarding a personal encounter" (107). It may be that Edgar knows that he does not stand a chance in a fight against Heathcliff. Yet, for a gentleman the tradition of duelling was an honourable and accepted way to solve quarrels (Gilmour 27). It was first in the 1840s that the practice had almost entirely faded away (Tosh 74). Although neither Edgar nor Heathcliff is formally challenging the other, the dispute can only be solved with some kind of confrontation, unless one is prepared to surrender voluntarily. But, giving up also entails losing face. Linton's scheme to bring in backup can be compared to cheating. Nelly's role in his plan is, however, noticed and stopped by Mrs Linton. To her husband Cathy exclaims, "[f]air means! [...] If you have not courage to attack him, make an apology, or allow yourself to be beaten. It will correct you of feigning more valour than you possess" (107). In the end Edgar actually punches Heathcliff, but it is when the latter is caught off guard. After that Heathcliff decides it best to leave without his revenge in order to escape Edgar's men.

The dispute suggests that Edgar is an effeminate gentleman, who is by no means prepared to battle for his honour. According to Gilmour, "[t]he testing-ground for one's courage, and therefore the justification for the whole bizarre code, was the gentleman's readiness to defend his honour with his life" (28). Clearly, Edgar is not brave, or perhaps foolish, enough to fight Heathcliff man to man. Cohen observes that the concept of politeness often collided with the idea of manliness. Since the two notions more or less opposed each other, politeness was perceived as a sign of effeminacy (313). F.A.C Wilson discusses androgynous elements in *Wuthering Heights* and calls Edgar girlish (51). When Mr Linton avoids a one-on-one combat with Heathcliff he reinforces the idea of an eighteenth-century polite gentleman. Heathcliff, on the other hand, is confident in his own physical strength and uses this and his fearlessness to control others.

In comparison with Edgar Linton, neither Heathcliff, nor *The Tenant's* Arthur Huntingdon, can be called polite. Neither of the two belongs in the typically eighteenth-century idea of a

gentleman category. However, they cannot be called nineteenth-century chivalrous men either. It is clear that Heathcliff is prepared to fight in order to get his way. But all fighting was not considered gallant. As pointed out by Cohen, chivalry involved protection of those who were defenceless (326). To that category women and children were traditionally counted and it was them that men ought to protect (Davidoff and Hall 28). Such noble ambitions do not fit in with Heathcliff's and Huntingdon's personalities.

In *Wuthering Heights*, Heathcliff's acts of violence are often directed towards those who do not stand a chance against him. As a drunkard Hindley Earnshaw cannot match Heathcliff's strength. Although Hindley challenges his enemy with knife and pistol, Heathcliff counters with more than self-defence: "The ruffian kicked and trampled on [Hindley], and dashed his head against the flags" (156). Furthermore, Mr Lockwood sees how the young Catherine shrinks away from her father-in-law Heathcliff: "Heathcliff lifted his hand, and the speaker sprang to a safer distance, obviously acquainted with its weight" (41). Catherine is not the only woman who suffers from Heathcliff's brutality. Heathcliff hurls a knife towards his wife Isabella, which cuts her deep right beneath one ear. Nelly's account of Mrs Heathcliff's appearance, after she has managed to escape from Heathcliff and *Wuthering Heights*, adds that she is both bruised and scratched in the face, suggesting that she has been beaten repeatedly. Judith E. Pike investigates violence in *Wuthering Heights* and she claims that the rough journey from the Heights has caused Mrs Heathcliff's injuries (378). The cuts might be explained away by her tumultuous trip. But bruises normally do not get their bluish colour until a day after the hit, making them barely visible or even indiscernible the same day. According to Tosh, the courts were shaken by the violence inflicted on women by their husbands (66). As chivalry stood for protection of the weak, domestic violence was certainly not considered gentlemanly behaviour. The Divorce Act was passed in 1857. Before that, only cases of extreme cruelty could possibly give a wife the right to a legal separation from her husband, but a divorce would be virtually impossible. The chances for Isabella to legally separate from Heathcliff would thus be inconceivable (Pike 369). This implies that if Heathcliff does not hit Isabella too forcibly he can get away with it, which he also does.

Joshi remarks that Gilbert Markham's attack on Mr Lawrence, Helen's brother, is the only act of physical violence in *The Tenant* (913). Granted, Huntingdon never explicitly beats his wife, but he has aggressive tendencies. When Huntingdon is bored he amuses himself with striking his pet dog. In a contribution to a study of portrayals of men in literature Daniel Duffy

concludes that Huntingdon's treatment of animals mirrors his treatment of people (101). Indeed, at times Huntingdon shows utter indifference as to his dog's as well as his wife's well-being. On one occasion, Arthur gets frustrated when the slapped dog refuses to come to him and he therefore throws a heavy book at it. The book hits Helen too and she asks if it actually was aimed at her on purpose. Huntingdon's reply reads, "'No – but I see you've got a taste of it,' said he, looking at my [Helen's] hand, that had also been struck, and was rather severely grazed" (212). Even though the book was not intended for Helen, Huntingdon does not seem to mind that it did strike her. In fact, his response almost sounds like a warning not to annoy him lest he feels like taking it out on her. Even if a book is a far less hazardous object to fling at someone than a knife is, the carelessness of Heathcliff's and Huntingdon's deeds is comparable. They simply do not care if their acts should harm someone, in these specific instances their wives. The absence of outspoken beating in the Huntingdon marriage serves to intensify and draw attention to the mental abuse that Arthur exposes Helen to. This can be seen in the way he slyly manipulates her. After a small argument between the two, Arthur tells his wife, "[I]f *you* don't value me, I must turn to somebody that will" (162). Accordingly, he openly flirts with the unprincipled Annabella to make Helen feel insecure.

In *The Tenant* Gilbert Markham corresponds with a different type of early nineteenth-century male than Huntingdon. Markham calls his father a gentleman farmer and admits that he has been more or less forced to follow in his footsteps (11). Gwen Hyman places Markham in opposition to Huntingdon and calls Markham an ambitious yeoman (451). A yeoman was "a man holding a small landed estate" (*Concise OED*). Although the definition of yeoman correctly describes Markham's financial standing, it overlooks his social position. According to Gilmour the yeoman is ranked beneath the gentleman (5). Yet, Markham represents a combination of a gentleman and a yeoman, which makes him a borderline case. Eagleton observes that Markham is more gentleman than he is a farmer. Markham is seldom labouring, but often socializing with family and neighbours (129). Thus, Markham is a yeoman, but with gentlemanly habits. The original Earnshaw family's circumstances in *Wuthering Heights* are similar to Gilbert's. But Gilbert has aspirations that the family at the Heights do not. As Eagleton points out, the Earnshaws are satisfied with their situation in life as owners and workers of their own land (105).

As was mentioned before, early in the nineteenth century the gap between masters and their employees increased. Those who did own land thrived as prices rose, while the introduction

of the threshing machine posed a threat to labourers' employments. The new technology demanded a higher knowledge in literacy and numeracy. Landowners saw a chance to improve their rank in society with greater knowledge and religious devotion (Davidoff and Hall 18-22, 257-8). Gilbert Markham fits nicely into the idea of a landowner who has higher aspirations than preceding generations. He acknowledges, "ambition urged me to higher aims" (11). Gilbert is a domestic man, an honest Christian and a keen reader. All of these attributes make him a gentleman farmer with hopes of upgrading his status further. As Samuel Smiles wrote in the 1850s as guidance to young men, "[r]iches and rank have no necessary connection with genuine gentlemanly qualities. The poor man may be a true gentleman, - in spirit and in daily life. [...] The poor man with a rich spirit is in all ways superior to the rich man with a poor spirit" (415). Although Markham cannot be called poor, he is not wealthy either which means that he must rely on a good character to be called a gentleman. Hyman notes, "[i]f *Tenant's* Gilbert embodies the upwardly mobile middle-class man, Huntingdon's role is to demonstrate that his position cannot be won by labor" (455-6). Men in Huntingdon's position wished to highlight that a gentleman did not need to work, so that men in Markham's situation could not call themselves gentlemen.

Thus, what really distinguishes Markham from Huntingdon is the fact that the latter is not required to work. In fact, Huntingdon must be unproductive in order to prove his belonging in the gentry (Hyman 456). In other words, at the same time as skilful labour might bring Markham a greater income, it reinforces the fact that he needs to work which ultimately means that he is not a gentleman by birth. Irrespective of Markham's degree of gentlemanliness his character is highly esteemed by some reviewers. An unsigned review from 1848 calls Gilbert a hero (*Examiner* July 1848, 255). Yet, most of the contemporary critics reveal a hesitation to calling Markham an honourable man: "Gilbert, the hero, seems to be a favourite with the author, and to be intended as a specimen of manly character; but he would serve as the ruffian of any other novelist" (Whipple 261-2). The behaviour of Huntingdon and gang overshadows Markham's bad qualities, making him appear nobler than he is. Although Gilbert is not the direct opposite of Huntingdon, he comes across as the more decent of the two. Despite his faults Gilbert possesses some of the features connected with the nineteenth-century chivalry, which Huntingdon and Heathcliff lack.

Despite Markham's bad qualities he cannot be called an immoral character. Although his dreadful attack on Lawrence is shocking, it is not a habitual behaviour. Gilbert's isolated case

of violence is mild, compared to the immoral Huntingdon's never-ending vice and non-stop revelry that is steadily on the increase. Furthermore, in Gilbert's defence, his crime can in one sense be seen as an act of honouring Helen. Gilbert believes that Lawrence has a disgraceful relationship with Helen and cannot bear the thought of how that dishonours her. Cohen points out that chivalry entailed protection of women. Moreover, "the chivalric code associated the love of women with the love not just of arms but of hazardous enterprise and adventure" (320). Therefore, love does not rule out violence in chivalry. Rather chivalry encourages fighting for love, which Gilbert chooses to do. Gilbert's honourable violence strongly contrasts with Heathcliff's aggressiveness, towards women, children and weaker men, in *Wuthering Heights*. Heathcliff's only cause for fighting is so he can demonstrate his superior power.

Personality

Both Heathcliff and Huntingdon are tempted to use their superiority over others to prove their power and they seem to enjoy doing so too. Nevertheless, they have different motives for upsetting others. Heathcliff craves retribution for the mistreatments he has endured whereas Huntingdon is simply bored. After Heathcliff's return in *Wuthering Heights*, he firmly tells his friend Cathy that he seeks revenge: "[I]f you fancy I'll suffer unrevenged, I'll convince you of the contrary in a very little while!" (105). Heathcliff is amazed himself by the pleasure he derives from intimidating and hurting others: "It's odd what savage feeling I have to anything that seems afraid of me! Had I been born where laws are less strict and tastes less dainty, I should treat myself to a slow vivisection of those two, as an evening's amusement" (227).

In *The Tenant*, Helen remarks early on in the marriage that Huntingdon is "as restless and hard to amuse as a spoilt child" (225). Huntingdon does not have the patience to read, study or play an instrument. Instead, he wants easy solutions to cure his boredom and thus takes pleasure in laughing at other people's expense. McMaster points to Arthur's utter inability to be serious: "An unscrupulous woman's maneuvers, a friend's broken heart, his fiancée's distress – everything equally moves [Huntingdon] to mindless giggles" (359). Huntingdon's laughter seems to stem from a fear of being bored; he continuously creates enjoyments to escape the potential tediousness of everyday life.

Comparing Huntingdon's drinking feasts with Heathcliff's exceptionally rural life in *Wuthering Heights* shows that they are dissimilar in many aspects. Unlike Huntingdon, Heathcliff does not really have any like-minded people to socialize with except Cathy. Although they are childhood friends their bond develops into a love-hate relationship. Thormählen asserts that Catherine and Heathcliff "have no tenderness or compassion for anybody, not even for each other" (1997, 184). In *The Tenant* Huntingdon detests the solitude of his own company. He happily stays away for months with his friends, while Helen's short absences to tend to their son are absurdly difficult for him to endure. Contrastingly, Heathcliff is a loner who withdraws from most people. Nelly says that he "was too gloomy to seek companionship with any people" (172). After Catherine's burial Heathcliff secludes himself even more than before. Mrs Heathcliff, Isabella, tells Nelly that he "has been a stranger in the house [...] he has not eaten a meal with us for nearly a week. He has just come home at dawn, and gone upstairs to his chamber; locking himself in – as if anybody dreamt of coveting his company!" (153). Heathcliff clearly wishes to be left alone; he takes the precaution of locking the door. When it comes to companionship, Heathcliff's behaviour is the unswerving opposite of Arthur Huntingdon's need for human contact.

Yet, when death is approaching both Huntingdon and Heathcliff seek company. Helen writes, "Arthur will not let me go: that strange whim still increases, as his strength declines – the fancy to have me always by his side" (442). Throughout his life Huntingdon has been unconcerned with religion. But as his death draws near he seems anxious about his destiny. He imagines that Helen's purity can save him from hell and demands that she stay with him and pray for him: "I wish to God I could take you with me now! [...] you should plead for me" (446). Huntingdon selfishly and morbidly wants Helen to die with him, so that he can get a free ticket into heaven. *Wuthering Heights'* Heathcliff is subtler about his desires to have someone by his side. The housekeeper says that he "bid [her] come and sit in the house: he wanted somebody with him" (276). After a refusal from Nelly, "he added, half-sneeringly [to the young Catherine]: 'Will *you* come, chuck? I'll not hurt you'" (277). Whilst *The Tenants'* Huntingdon is afraid that he will end up alone in hell, Heathcliff does not have such fears: "No minister need come; nor need anything be said over me – I tell you I have nearly attained *my* heaven; and that of others is altogether unvalued and uncoveted by me" (276). Thormählen believes that anywhere is Heathcliff's heaven, as long as he is united with his childhood friend Catherine (1997, 195). Indeed, that would mean that Heathcliff does not

wish to be a hermit, but that unlike Arthur he does not settle for anybody's company. But this does not explain Heathcliff's unexpected wish to have somebody by his side before he dies.

Many of the contemporary reviewers of the two novels judged both Heathcliff and Huntingdon to be a disgrace to *mankind*: “[Heathcliff] is an incarnation of evil qualities; implacable hate, ingratitude, cruelty, falsehood, selfishness, and revenge” (Unsigned review, *Examiner* January 1848, 220). Huntingdon is charged with “licentiousness, drunkenness, and downright blackguardism” (Unsigned review, *Spectator* July 1848, 250). It is no use attempting to contradict these statements, as the characters hardly give proof of anything suggesting the contrary. However, since they are both successful at courting women, they presumably have some appealing qualities. Nevertheless, such attractive radiations need not be based on any form of kindness. Both Helen Huntingdon and Isabella Earnshaw try to justify their feelings towards the gentlemen with a belief in their supposed inner goodness. Helen tells her aunt, Mrs Maxwell, in defence of Mr Huntingdon's character that he has a “natural goodness” (149). As a rhetoric question posed to Nelly, Isabella incorporates, “Mr. Heathcliff is not a fiend: he has an honourable soul, and a true one” (98). Mrs Maxwell and housekeeper Nelly firmly warn their protégées against Huntingdon and Heathcliff, respectively. Despite receiving explicit warnings the girls willingly walk down the aisle with the said gentlemen. These rather naïve decisions can be clarified with the same explanation. The girls are simply blinded by the men's charm. Both Heathcliff and Huntingdon have charm based on bodily appearance and manipulative skills.

In *Wuthering Heights*, returning from his absence, in the mid-1780s, Heathcliff's looks are significantly changed, if we are to believe the housekeeper: “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” (92). Nelly's comparison with the effeminate Edgar Linton intensifies the image of Heathcliff as muscular and exceptionally masculine man. What is more, everything connected with the military was seen as something very masculine before and during the Napoleonic Wars (Tosh 65). Undoubtedly, Heathcliff's appearance and posture ooze masculinity.

In *The Tenant*, Huntingdon's appearance is so attractive to Helen that she cannot resist sketching it. She admits that she finds his physiognomy fascinating. In her diary Helen writes, “my eyes rested on the face of [Annabella's] principal auditor, and derived an equal or

superior delight from the contemplation of his speaking countenance [...] that eye and brow lighted up with keen enthusiasm, and that sweet smile passing and appearing like gleams of sunshine on an April day” (165). Undoubtedly, Helen is attracted by Huntingdon’s exterior; her poetic depiction of his smile shows what pleasure his physical appearance gives her. She even allows him to kiss her before they have announced their engagement (chapter 19). In relation to this incident, Thormählen holds that “[a] man able to make intelligent and beautiful young women commit indiscretions [...] must possess sensual magnetism as well as good looks” (1993, 833). Consequently, there are strong indications of Huntingdon’s physical attractiveness.

Although it is obvious that Isabella and Helen find the men physically attractive, it is not their only allure. The conniving ability, which both Heathcliff and Huntingdon possess, serves to hide actual intentions and true personality. Huntingdon succeeds to convince Helen of her good influence on him in *The Tenant*:

[Y]ou, dear Helen, taught me other views and nobler aims. And the very idea of having you to care for under my roof would force me to moderate my expenses and live like a Christian – not to speak of all the prudence and virtue you would instil into my mind by your wise counsels and sweet, attractive goodness. (174)

According to McMaster, it was the Victorian females’ duty to be morally good for themselves as well as their male family members. In *The Tenant*, most of the female characters are exceptionally good Victorians, while most of the male characters represent the rakish Regency norm. Initially, Helen plays along with this moral game and has a wish to be the one who transforms Arthur (McMaster 354-5). Indeed, Helen is a virtuous Christian, while her husband behaves like a rascal who only wants to have fun. Their respective behaviour corresponds with different ideals; Helen’s seriousness is the image of Victorianism, whereas Huntingdon’s frivolousness corresponds with the laid-back Regency. Arthur’s devious assurance that she will reform him induces her to marry him. McMaster correspondingly says that Huntingdon “knows how to control his women by nicely calculated shows of reformation” (355).

Isabella is likewise easily persuaded to elope with Heathcliff in *Wuthering Heights*. When Heathcliff has been informed of Isabella’s tender feelings towards him, he takes advantage of the situation. Nelly observes his impudent flirtation with Isabella when he believes they are

unseen. Watson states that Isabella “felt only the physical attraction of a dark, handsome, well-dressed newcomer to her small circle of acquaintances. Too late she discovered that she was to be only a tool, used briefly and then cast aside to be worn away by rust” (quoted in Pike 353). Heathcliff singles Isabella out, when she already is spellbound, and makes her feel special. Indeed, he acknowledges it himself, “[she] picture[ed] in me a hero of romance, and expecting unlimited indulgences from my chivalrous devotion” (135). After an impertinent embrace Heathcliff can just reel Isabella in.

Ultimately, both Heathcliff and Huntingdon make themselves irresistible to the young and inexperienced girls. They have the benefit of good and masculine looks and they slyly use that advantage to get what they want. Helen says that she must be “infatuated” with Huntingdon and Isabella is described with the same word (*The Tenant* 163, *Wuthering Heights* 97). As the word ‘infatuated’ implies, the girls are not able to act sensibly because they find the men irresistible. Reason is deserted due to their obsessions. At least Helen suspects that her estimation of Huntingdon might be overly positive, but Isabella shows no such doubts concerning her estimation of Heathcliff. Nevertheless, both of the girls fall into the trap of the men’s false charm. It goes to show that Heathcliff and Huntingdon are skilful manipulators with strong sex appeal.

Childhood and Adolescence

As was discussed earlier, Heathcliff and Huntingdon come from diverse backgrounds. Their respective upbringings can give explanations to their individual personalities. Smiles believed that one’s young years determined one’s character as an adult: “It is indeed scarcely possible to over-estimate the importance of training the young to virtuous habits. In them they are the easiest formed, and when formed they last for life; like letters cut on the bark of a tree, they grow and widen with age” (405). Smiles’ idea from the 1850s, corresponds with how Heathcliff’s and Huntingdon’s early years appear to have influenced their conduct as adults.

In *Wuthering Heights* Mr Lockwood’s curiosity concerning Heathcliff’s background is the springboard for housekeeper Nelly’s tale. Lockwood observes that Heathcliff is “a rough fellow [...] He must have had some ups and downs in life to make him such a churl” (43-4). Mr Lockwood evidently believes that Heathcliff’s roughness must be a consequence of experienced hardships. Thus, Lockwood’s reflection can be seen as an intimation of underlying causes to Heathcliff’s somewhat rude manners. In *The Tenant* Helen initially

excuses Huntingdon's thoughtlessness, as she calls it, with an assumption that he must have had a bad upbringing: "I have been well brought up, and had good examples always before me, which he, most likely has not" (149). As strangers, unaccustomed to the ways of Heathcliff and Huntingdon, Lockwood and Helen are willing to overlook and pardon the gentlemen's faults. Both of them assume that the men's bad behaviour must stem from their particular experiences. Their logic implies that an ill-mannered person has become coarse because of tough conditions.

Wuthering Heights' Nelly does not comprehend how the late Mr Earnshaw could be so attached to Heathcliff, as the latter does not express or show gratefulness to the former: "He was not insolent to his benefactor, he was simply insensible" (47). Thormählen mentions that a number of critics have proposed that Heathcliff is Mr Earnshaw's illegitimate son, which "would explain Mr Earnshaw's seemingly incomprehensible partiality for the gypsy-dark foundling" (1997, 185). Indeed, this is a plausible explanation to Mr Earnshaw's incredible generosity towards Heathcliff. It could also explain why Heathcliff takes his membership in the family for granted, to the extent that he does not show appreciation towards Mr Earnshaw. However, if Mr Earnshaw in fact is Heathcliff's biological father and both of them are aware of it, Heathcliff would reasonably not fall in love with his half-sister Cathy. Consequently, Mr Earnshaw may well be Heathcliff's father, but it is improbable that Heathcliff knows that. Thormählen also deems it unlikely that Heathcliff is aware of a hypothetical kinship with the Earnshaws (1997, 185). Heathcliff's indifference towards his patron is probably not ingratitude. It seems rather to be a sign of his ignorance of socially preferred behaviour.

It is probable that Heathcliff has been mistreated before he arrives to the Heights, since he was "a dirty, ragged" boy and Mr Earnshaw found him "starving, and houseless, and as good as dumb, in the streets of Liverpool" (45). Whether Mr Earnshaw is lying about the circumstances of the discovery of Heathcliff or not, the child's outer appearance, at any rate, suggests that he was uncared for. Either Heathcliff was a destitute orphan or whoever was his guardian did not, or was not able to, take care of him properly. Nelly's portrayal of Heathcliff, as "a sullen, patient child; hardened, perhaps to ill-treatment", supports the argument that Heathcliff has been neglected prior to his arrival at the Heights (46). It can therefore be deduced that Heathcliff has not learnt how to act refined. No one has taught him how to show gratitude, thus he does not know how or why he ought to.

In theory Heathcliff gets a chance, in his new family situation, to acquire social rules, but in reality he does not. Nelly admits that both she and Hindley hated Heathcliff and that they were mean to him (46). Their cruelty intensifies Mr Earnshaw's protection, which, in turn, actually deepens Hindley's hostility. Hindley saw "Heathcliff as a usurper of his parent's affections and his privileges" (46). It is not surprising that a child is hesitant to share his father's affection and capital with a total stranger: "As heir to the Heights, Hindley understandably feels his social role subverted by this irrational, unpredictable intrusion" (Eagleton 103). Unavoidably Hindley is Heathcliff's most persistent rival.

Hindley's hatred and jealousy towards Heathcliff manifest itself in violence. Heathcliff does not seem to be much affected by it, until he sees a chance to use it to his advantage: "'You must exchange horses with me: I don't like mine; and if you won't I shall tell your father of the three thrashings you've given me this week, and show him my arm, which is black to the shoulder'" (47). Heathcliff has tolerated Hindley's bullying in order to use it against him when the time is right. Thormählen argues that this incident along with Heathcliff's grumpiness and alleged ingratitude towards Mr Earnshaw serve to efface feelings of sympathy for him (184). Yet, Heathcliff's seemingly indifference to his own well-being contradicts this argument. Nelly comments that he does not show any signs of pain when he is harmed (chapter IX). Again, this can be a sign that he has been abused before and knows that complaining will not help him. Bearing this in mind, Heathcliff does deserve compassion. Moreover, Nelly acknowledges that Hindley's treatment of Heathcliff "was enough to make a fiend of a saint" (67). Thus, it is safe to say that Heathcliff is treated cruelly and it has consequences. Eagleton asserts that it is only natural that this mistreatment, "produce[s] a pitiless capitalist landlord out of an oppressed child" (111). Indeed, the cruelty Heathcliff endures plants a desire to take revenge, especially when his attempts to be good are crushed.

When Nelly offers to help Heathcliff look more refined he is first hesitant, probably afraid that he will be rebuffed. But "having screwed up his courage, exclaimed abruptly: 'Nelly, make me decent. I'm going to be good'" (59). Despite the risk of being ridiculed or worse, Heathcliff makes an effort to be more sophisticated. Unfortunately, his good intentions are both scorned and checked by Hindley and his appearance mocked by Edgar (chapter VII). Wilson mentions that Heathcliff both as a child and an adult lacks patience (52). Granted, after being humiliated Heathcliff grasps the first object at hand and flings it at Edgar. But it is not unexpected that Heathcliff reacts irrational when he is being taunted by both of his

enemies at the same time. Consequently, Heathcliff cannot accept the punishment he receives for his outburst: “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’ll plan it out: while I’m thinking of that I don’t feel pain” (64). Evidently, Hindley triggers Heathcliff’s anger and plans for revenge. Heathcliff chooses to turn his hurt into hate so as to escape from the pain.

In *The Tenant*, very little is revealed concerning Huntingdon’s childhood; there are hardly any straightforward facts given about his past. Helen gives information regarding his background that appears to be plausible, yet speculative. She believes that Arthur

had a bad, selfish, miserly father, who to gratify his own sordid passions, restricted him in the most innocent enjoyments of childhood and youth, and so disgusted him with every kind of restraint; - and a foolish mother who indulged him to the top of his bent, deceiving her husband for him, and doing her utmost to encourage those germs of folly and vice it was her duty to suppress (177)

If Helen’s assumption is accurate, Huntingdon’s parents must at least be partly blamed for their son’s bad behaviour. Duffy interprets Helen’s theory as an attack on the mother’s failure. She has supposedly supported Huntingdon’s rough masculinity (103-4). However, it appears as if both parents are responsible. The father’s believed strictness and the mother’s indulgence are strong opposites. This inconsistency could have made any child confused and it would not be strange if such a child would grow up to be a befuddled adult.

Supposing that there is some truth in Helen’s interpretation of Huntingdon’s rearing, her critique of his parents can be linked to Gilbert Markham’s upbringing. Although Arthur and Gilbert are set apart in terms of social class, their relationships with their mothers seem to some degree similar. Gilbert admits that his mother and sister spoil him and the vicar reprimands Mrs Markham for being too indulgent towards her sons (36, 19). Tosh mentions that in the eighteenth century mothers were often judged as being overly indulgent and should therefore not be in charge of the upbringing of their sons for too long. This belief changed and in the 1830s women were seen as morally superior to men and were thus granted the responsibility of raising boys (48). In other words, indulgence was deemed improper by both eighteenth- as well as nineteenth-century standards. Mrs Markham’s seemingly lax discipline corresponds with Helen’s estimation of Arthur’s mother’s deficient motherhood. According to

prevailing ideals for upbringing, these fictional mothers ought to teach their sons honourable behaviour and not pamper them into egotistical adults.

Although both Huntingdon and Markham seem to have been coddled by their mothers, they have, as has been discussed earlier, dissimilar personalities. Yet, Duffy argues that before Gilbert has been influenced by Helen's high sense of moral, his manliness is "perilously close to that of Arthur and his companions" (108). If Helen indeed has such a great impact on Gilbert's personality, he could have developed into an unpleasant man if he had not followed her guidance. However, unlike Arthur, Gilbert is not encouraged by peers to behave badly. Thus, the gentlemen's upbringing might have likenesses, but after growing up their experiences are highly dissimilar. Whereas Gilbert is required to take responsibility for the family's farm and economy, as an adult Huntingdon can continue overindulging in anything he likes.

To conclude, neither Heathcliff's, nor Huntingdon's, childhood can be considered exemplary. Although Heathcliff gains financial support as a foster child, he is both physically and mentally abused at the Heights. This treatment makes Heathcliff a hardened man and his pain is converted into hatred. The few clues that are given concerning Arthur's childhood, in *The Tenant*, suggest that his father was too strict and his mother excessively indulgent; in which case Huntingdon would not have received good guidance from either of his parents. As a probable consequence of a mother's indulgence the child becomes a selfish and irresponsible adult. Accordingly, Heathcliff's sufferings seem to trigger his anger while Huntingdon's recklessness could be an outcome of a deficient upbringing.

Relationships

In *The Tenant*, Huntingdon and his circle of friends seem to break all kinds of social codes prescribed to male manners. Indeed, one contemporary reviewer declares that Huntingdon is "a sensual brute of the most intolerable kind, and [he] treats [Helen] with every indignity, insult, and ill-usage which can be conceived, short of actual personal violence" (Unsigned review, *Rambler* September 1848, 267). However, as is pointed out by several critics, there was a group of upper-class men, during the Regency, who did behave in a crude way. They indulged in drinking, gambling and 'wenching' (Davidoff and Hall 21, 110). Consequently, Huntingdon and his company's conduct would not have been as uncommon or eyebrow-raising as for instance Helen and her aunt give the impression of it being. Helen's aunt, Mrs

Maxwell, does not mince her words when she describes Huntingdon and his set of friends to Helen:

Well my dear, ask your uncle what sort of company he keeps, and if he is not banded with a set of loose, profligate young men, whom he calls his friends – his jolly companions, and whose chief delight is to wallow in vice, and vie each other who can run fastest and farthest down the headlong road, to the place prepared for the devil and his angels. (150)

Mrs Maxwell tells her niece that her uncle can confirm the accuracy of her judgment. This is a rather bold proposition to make, since Mr Maxwell has confessed to Helen that he was a “sad wild fellow himself, when he was young” (136). Consequently, the uncle cannot judge Huntingdon too harshly as he has been behaving unrefined himself in younger days. Accordingly, Mr Maxwell does not really have any objections to his niece marrying Huntingdon. After all, as Mr Maxwell points out, “he’s a pretty tidy fortune” (136).

Yet, Eagleton claims that “Arthur is little more than a stereotype of the traditional wicked aristocrat” (133). Similarly, Hyman says that Huntingdon’s “behaviour is almost stereotypically outrageous” (452). This suggests that the depiction of Huntingdon and his friends’ behaviour must be an exaggeration of reality. After receiving critique for *The Tenant’s* ‘coarseness’ Anne Brontë wrote a preface to the second edition of the novel:

I wished to tell the truth, for truth always conveys its own moral to those who are able to receive it. [...] [W]hen we have to do with vice and vicious characters, I maintain it is better to depict them as they really are than as they would wish to appear. [...] [T]he case is an extreme one, as I trusted none would fail to perceive; but I know that such characters do exist (Anne Brontë 3-4)

This suggests that Anne Brontë did not consider the novel to be portraying an unrealistic picture of male behaviour. Some of Anne’s contemporary critics give indications of this too. One unsigned review described Huntingdon’s gang as “a set of drunken savages, such as we do not remember to have heard of as having been tolerated for many years, within the pale of society” (*Examiner* July 1848, 256). This statement indicates that the expectations of male manners changed during the first half of the nineteenth century. Another critic confesses, “the scenes which occur after the drinking bouts of these choice spirits are described with a disgustingly truthful minuteness” (Unsigned review, *Sharpe’s London Magazine* August 1848, 264). Thus, even though Huntingdon and his companions behave extraordinarily badly, it does not mean that there is no correspondence with such behaviour in real life. Albeit, their conduct would be unacceptable in mid-nineteenth century, but Gilbert Markham clearly states

that his narrative is a thing of the past. McMaster cites Gérin who reflects that the 1820s is the right point in time for these men who “are nothing less than a set of Regency rakes” (357).

Hyman says that in the beginning of the nineteenth century it was no longer necessary for gentlemen like Huntingdon to work. In consequence of the Industrial Revolution and socio-political changes the new professional classes took over the requirement of a gentleman to manage his own affairs, he had the capital to hire people to do it for him. Consequently, a sign of gentlemanliness was unproductiveness (Hyman 454-5). Similarly, McMaster claims that the men in Huntingdon’s gang behave badly to fulfil some kind of social obligation (354). Peer pressure certainly permeates their so-called friendship. Huntingdon readily talks about his friend Lord Lowborough’s destiny, as if it is some kind of amusing anecdote:

He kept his oath about gambling [...], though Grimsby did his utmost to tempt him to break it; but now he had got hold of another habit that bothered him nearly as much, for he soon discovered that the demon of drink was as black as the demon of play, and nearly as hard to get rid of – especially as his kind friends did all they could to second the promptings of his own insatiable cravings. (189)

Clearly, Huntingdon and his like-minded do everything they can to prevent Lowborough from reforming. Their lack of support and downright hindering of Lowborough’s ambition to transform is necessary to be able to keep their own good spirits. It is remarkable that the rascals actually care if someone leaves their group. Huntingdon points out that Lord Lowborough attended the gatherings, but did not partake in the activities and “cast a cloud over all” (192). The lord’s presence makes them feel uncomfortable, since it is a reminder of their own bad behaviour. Moreover, they might sense that their time will soon be up. The temperance movement in the 1820s and 1830s saw alcohol as immoral and harmful (Hyman 453). This gradual development could have been an indication, for carousing men, of the Victorian seriousness that was to come. In Huntingdon’s gang the exclusion of members who do not act according to the code, could be a way of ignoring the pressure from society to reform.

Yet, Huntingdon persuades the others to give Lowborough a chance: “[I] recommended them to let him be for a while, intimating that, with a little patience on our parts, he would soon come round again” (192). It seems that Huntingdon plays the negotiator because he is afraid that all of his friends will reform, and he will be left destitute. This, ironically, more or less

has happened by the time he is on his deathbed. However, in the group's prime the slightest disapproval of jollification is treated with suspicion. Hattersley calls Hargrave a "dastardly deserter" when that gentleman rejects the drinking room in favour of the ladies' company (274). If a person abandons their way of living, it is taken as an insult. Hyman points to the disappointed remarks that Huntingdon receives from his friends after the announcement of his engagement to Helen (458). These reactions are based on an anxiety of losing their idol, as Huntingdon presumably will adapt to the life of a married man. According to Hyman, Huntingdon would lose his status by reforming. The escapades with his friends are proofs of his gentlemanliness; Arthur can spend his time in any way he desires (456). However, this type of gentleman is not applicable to Cohen's definitions of polite versus chivalrous gentleman. The gentleman that Hyman refers to must be considered in terms of one's social position and not one's manners.

When it comes to Huntingdon's and Heathcliff's relationships with their sons, there is one common denominator. Namely, neither Heathcliff, nor Huntingdon, shows any signs of affection for their sons. On the contrary, Heathcliff almost appears disgusted by the very presence of his son Linton Heathcliff. Heathcliff's reaction to Linton's mere physical appearance is pure displeasure and sarcasm: "God! what a beauty! what a lovely, charming thing! [...] Haven't they reared it on snails and sour milk [...]? Oh, damn my soul! but that's worse than I expected – and the devil knows I was not sanguine!" (179). Whereas Heathcliff appears to dislike his son, Huntingdon initially feels jealous of the attention that is given to his son and not to him: "Helen, I shall positively hate that little wretch, if you worship it so madly! [...] As long as you have that ugly little creature to dote upon, you care not a farthing what becomes of me" (241). One nineteenth-century belief entailed that "women were born to be wives and mothers, and their spirit must be curbed to this end" (Colley 275). Davidoff and Hall point out that women were subordinate to their husbands: "[w]oman had been created for man, indeed for one man" (115). Thus, Huntingdon's complaint that his wife gives more attention to their son than to him can be connected with his role in marriage. Presumably, the woman's first priority would be to look after her husband, while the children's needs would come in second place. Nevertheless, Huntingdon and Heathcliff do not warm to their sons; they rather show an indifference to their well-being. Yet, as their relationships with their sons move forward coldness develops into damage.

In *Wuthering Heights* Heathcliff's harshness seems to hasten, if not in fact be the very cause, of Linton Heathcliff's early death. Both Edgar and Nelly believe in Linton's ability to recover from his illness, if he is allowed to stay at Thrushcross Grange (174). Naturally it is impossible to know whether young Linton would have survived at the Grange, but the brutality he must have experienced at the Heights cannot have been helpful to his recovery. One contemporary review articulates that the reviewers cannot understand why Heathcliff treats his own son so cruelly (Unsigned review, *Examiner* January 1848, 221). It is of course very disturbing that Heathcliff does not even care for his own flesh and blood. However, Linton Heathcliff is a mirror image of his uncle Edgar Linton: "A pale, delicate, effeminate boy, who might have been taken for [Edgar's] younger brother, so strong was the resemblance" (173). Heathcliff does not fail to notice this likeness; he rhetorically asks his son, "[w]here is *my* share in thee, puling chicken?" (179). Recognizing his enemy in his own son must be one reason to Heathcliff's disdain. Moreover, he sees an opportunity to engross Thrushcross Grange. Linton is nothing but a tool for Heathcliff, used to obtain more property and consequently revenge on Edgar. Heathcliff's only concern is to keep his son alive until he can trick and ultimately force Edgar's daughter Catherine to marry Linton.

In *The Tenant* Huntingdon and his friends attempt to teach little Arthur how to be a man, "to make a man of him" (350). Explicitly, Huntingdon tries to indoctrinate his son to be just like his father. The child "learnt to tiddle wine like papa, to swear like Mr Hattersley, and to have his own way like a man, and sent mamma to the devil when she tried to prevent him" (350). As a mere four-year-old boy Arthur is encouraged to drink, swear and rule over females. Huntingdon's scheme could possibly be a lack of concern for his son, or he firmly believes that he needs to train his son to be masculine. Tosh refers to Rosaldo who says that boys in the nineteenth century had "to be prepared for a more competitive and demanding arena" than girls (35). In other words, manliness was not seen as entirely innate, it had to be acquired. Thus, Huntingdon may think that he is doing his son a favour. Ironically, the Markhams' opinion of bringing up boys is comparable to Huntingdon's actual treatment of his son. Mrs Markham declares that "[t]he poor child will be the veriest milksop that ever was sopped" if he is not persuaded to drink alcohol (31). Unlike Helen, the Markham family are oblivious to the dangers of intoxication. Yet, their ignorance shows that Huntingdon might actually think he has more or less good intentions when he teaches his son to drink. However, it seems more likely that he does not care and he simply wants to hurt his wife through destroying their son. McMaster points out that Huntingdon's careless laughter makes Helen more serious and low-

spirited (358). Indeed, Mrs Huntingdon accuses her husband of luring his son with jokes and mirth. She regrets to say that little Arthur awards his father with affection and influence over him “which for very spite his father delights to rob [her] of, and, from motives of mere idle egotism, is pleased to win to himself; making no use of it but to torment [her], and ruin the child” (325-6). Huntingdon seems to appreciate his son’s affection, but not for the right reasons. He is pleased because it grieves Helen.

Both *Wuthering Heights* and *The Tenant* depict other kinds of relationships between men and children. Edgar Linton’s and Gilbert Markham’s gentle and honest approaches towards children are strongly contrasted against Heathcliff’s and Arthur Huntingdon’s coldness. *Wuthering Heights*’ Edgar loves his daughter dearly and Nelly affirms, “I don’t believe he ever did speak a harsh word to her. He took her education entirely on himself, and made it an amusement” (165). There is no doubt that Edgar wants the best for Catherine and tries to protect her from all harm. Yet, as Wilson observes, although Mr Linton is a caring father he brings up his daughter in isolation from other human contact (52). His overprotection might be caused by a fear that Heathcliff will try to hurt her if he gets the opportunity, which he actually does, eventually. In *The Tenant* Helen similarly overprotects little Arthur, as a result of her husband’s harmful fatherhood. Gilbert Markham stabilizes the situation through his calm and cheerful approach towards both mother and son. Duffy correspondingly believes that Gilbert’s “affection for little Arthur is genuine and beneficial” (109). Duffy does not specify how the relationship with Markham is good for the boy. However, in strong contrast to the destructive Huntingdon, Markham represents a nurturing father figure. When Gilbert has convinced Helen that he is a good man, he is able to introduce little Arthur to healthy activities outdoors. Markham observes that Arthur “was now much more hardy and active, than when he first entered the neighbourhood” (64). Arthur becomes a vigorous boy at least partly due to the loss of a drunken father and the gain of a sober role model.

As was discussed earlier, Heathcliff uses violence against his wife, but in *The Tenant* Huntingdon is never accused of beating his spouse. However, Heathcliff’s and Huntingdon’s marriages are unhappy and end in similar ways. It is noteworthy that both of them succeed in making their wives so miserable that the women decide to run away. Pike comments that women’s right to file for and receive divorce was a disputed issue in the late 1840s, when *Wuthering Heights* and *The Tenant* were written (357). It was established earlier that Isabella would most likely not be granted a legal separation from Heathcliff and the same goes for

Helen, especially since Huntingdon does not use physical violence to control her. Thus, Isabella's and Helen's only chance to escape from their husbands is to fly. In the nineteenth-century aristocracy and gentry it was customary for the husband to give his wife pin-money. When Isabella illegally separates from Heathcliff she will presumably lose her allowance (Pike 358). In *The Tenant*, Helen meets the same difficulty, when she succeeds to escape from her marriage. Therefore, she tries to save her pocket money and when she is free she intends to get by on her artistic talents. The women will undoubtedly face hardships without a husband by their side; at the very least leaving their marriages means losing financial security. Yet, both Mrs Heathcliff and Mrs Huntingdon prefer the unknown difficulties as single women, than the experienced sufferings in their marriages.

It is not strange that Heathcliff decides to leave the Heights, given that he overhears his soul mate's objections to marrying him. Nelly accurately and sternly tells the older Catherine, "[a]s soon as you become Mrs. Linton, [Heathcliff] loses friend, and love, and all!" (80). Thormählen suggests that Catherine is mentally instable and does not reason like a sensible human being. She therefore believes that she can remain united to Heathcliff regardless of her matrimony (1997, 186-7). If Catherine really is insane, she unknowingly extinguishes Heathcliff's hopes for a brighter future. Losing everything he has wished for so abruptly presumably changes Heathcliff's perception of life. The loss of love alters his aspirations; he is now able to focus fully on planning his revenge.

In his pursuit of retribution Heathcliff shows no sympathy, something that poor Isabella Linton learns the hard way. Wilson observes, "Heathcliff proceeds to demonstrate through his marriage what havoc the principle of pure masculinity can wreak on a feminine object who happens to fall within its grasp" (53). Indeed, Heathcliff's rage is directed at Isabella, but not because that was his initial intention. Rather, when he learns that Isabella has a crush on him, he asserts, "I swear to make the most of it" (105). Heathcliff sees an opportunity to use Isabella, to achieve his revenge, and he cannot resist taking it.

The Huntingdon marriage, in *The Tenant*, is torn apart as a result of incompatible views concerning the institution of marriage. Helen remarks that Huntingdon "is not a bad husband, but his notions of matrimonial duties and comforts are not my notions. [...] [H]is idea of a wife is a thing to love one devotedly and to stay at home - to wait upon her husband, and amuse him and minister to his comfort in every possible way, while he chooses to stay with

her” (244). Thus, Huntingdon appears to wish for a compliant and timid wife, who will adore him although he might not deserve it. In his investigation of disagreeable aspects of married life in nineteenth-century England A. James Hammerton asserts that problems between spouses in the upper classes were often a consequence of the gentlemen’s adulterous behaviour, their habit of hunting, gambling and drinking (107). Huntingdon is guilty of all of these charges and Helen, clearly, does not approve. Thormählen argues that Huntingdon’s destruction is hastened by his marriage to Helen. Explicitly, Helen does not allow him to control her soul and he cannot cope with that (1993, 836-7). Certainly, Helen’s piousness must be aggravating for a dissipated man like Huntingdon, who will never be able to live up to her high moral standards. It is therefore no surprise that he involves himself with an unscrupulous woman like Annabella. Ironically, she manages what Helen could not; namely, Annabella successfully convinces Arthur to drink less alcohol and be more temperate (chapter 35). Huntingdon listens to the guidance given by a woman who stands on equal footing with him in terms of ethics. Although Helen cannot be held responsible for Huntingdon’s vice, her righteousness unfortunately seems to spur Arthur’s decadence.

Unwittingly and unintentionally, both Catherine Earnshaw and Helen Huntingdon are catalysts for Heathcliff’s and Arthur’s disagreeable behaviour. Eagleton remarks that in *Wuthering Heights* Catherine chooses Edgar because of his social standing. Moreover, her rebuff of Heathcliff is the beginning of the devastation that is to follow (101). In *The Tenant*, the graver Helen becomes the more Huntingdon is inclined to defy her wishes. Helen’s reproaches are met with intimidations that she is tempting him to behave worse: “[I]f you bother me with another word, I’ll ring the bell and order six bottles of wine – and, by Heaven, I’ll drink them dry before I stir from this place!” (256). Both Helen and Catherine make the men feel insufficient. Helen reminds Huntingdon of his moral deficiency, while Heathcliff overhears Catherine admitting that “[i]t would degrade [her] to marry [him]” (80). Huntingdon’s and Heathcliff’s knowledge of the women’s true sentiments naturally has consequences.

Gradual Depravity

In both *Wuthering Heights* and *The Tenant* moral degradation is a central theme. Heathcliff’s and Huntingdon’s depravity is gradual, but more or less invariable. Once their degeneracy has begun it is virtually a steady slope downhill. It is noteworthy that neither of the gentlemen reforms or repents, but that they actually die without showing any signs of regret. Both

Heathcliff and Huntingdon are close to their deaths advised to atone for their prior conduct. In *Wuthering Heights* Nelly reminds Heathcliff that he has “lived a selfish, unchristian life” (276). However, Heathcliff asserts, “I’ve done no injustice, and I repent of nothing” (276). Correspondingly, in *The Tenant* a dialogue between husband and wife reveals Huntingdon’s true sentiment about his former misbehaviour: “‘I *can’t* repent; I only fear.’ ‘You only regret the past for its consequences to yourself?’ ‘Just so’” (446). Whereas Heathcliff does not feel that he has anything to ask forgiveness for, Huntingdon only regrets that his actions have caused, or will cause, sufferings to himself.

Heathcliff’s moral dilapidation in *Wuthering Heights* is contemporaneous with his rise in social status. According to Eagleton, “Heathcliff acquires culture as a weapon [...] buying up the expensive commodity of gentility in order punitively to re-enter the society from which he was punitively expelled” (104). Certainly, as a gentleman *Mr* Heathcliff has more authority and can demand more respect than the orphan Heathcliff ever could. Edgar remembers Heathcliff as “the gipsy – the ploughboy” and suggests the kitchen as an appropriate place to greet him at his return (91). However, taking in Heathcliff’s transformed appearance leaves Edgar stunned. Nelly says that her “master’s surprise equalled or exceeded [hers]: he remained for a minute at a loss how to address the ploughboy” (92). The question of how Heathcliff has become rich is never answered. But, as Eagleton points out, Heathcliff has bought his status to be able to come back and take his revenge. Heathcliff promptly demonstrates that wealth and high social rank do not necessarily equal kindness and forgiveness.

Heathcliff intrudes at the Grange, takes advantage of the inebriated Hindley and deceives and abuses Isabella; in other words, he cares for nobody but himself. However, Heathcliff’s revenge does not only hurt others, it harms him too. Thormählen concludes that Heathcliff’s and Edgar’s fight makes Catherine mentally ill and that she never recovers from it (1997, 187). Moreover, according to the doctor the hot-tempered girl “would not bear crossing much” (87). Heathcliff’s attachment to Isabella upsets Catherine immensely, which is likely to be one contributory factor to her so-called brain fever. After Catherine has passed away, Mrs Heathcliff scornfully comments that Heathcliff has nothing to live for anymore (156). But she is wrong, because Heathcliff has not yet satisfied his yearning for vengeance.

As the lender to the indebted Hindley, Heathcliff is entitled to his land and estate at that man's abrupt death. Yet Heathcliff is not content with being the owner of Wuthering Heights, he has plans to possess Thrushcross Grange too. Moreover, the temptation to ruin Hindley's offspring is far too great to resist. The imposed marriage between Catherine Linton and Linton Heathcliff eventually gives Heathcliff control of both estates. Yet, gradually Heathcliff's thirst for retribution becomes a pointless obsession, even for himself. Eagleton claims that by tyrannizing over others, Heathcliff is actually annihilating himself (104-5). He is simply unable to appreciate what he actually has achieved and he loses sight of what he once desired:

It is a poor conclusion, is it not? [...] [A]n absurd termination to my violent exertions? I get levers and mattocks to demolish the two houses, and train myself to be capable of working like Hercules, and, when everything is ready and in my power, I find the will to lift a slate off either roof has vanished! My old enemies have not beaten me; now would be the precise time to revenge myself on their representatives [...] But where is the use? [...] I have lost the faculty of enjoying their destruction, and I am too idle to destroy for nothing. (268)

Ever since Catherine's death Heathcliff has had no other purpose in life than to gain power and destroy his foes. Nelly remarks that both young Catherine's and Hareton's eyes bear a strong resemblance to Catherine Earnshaw's (267). This likeness seems to prevent Heathcliff from causing them harm. At one point, Heathcliff is about to strike young Catherine "when of a sudden his fingers relaxed; he shifted his grasp from her head to her arm, and gazed intently in her face. Then he drew his hand over her eyes" (266). When Heathcliff realizes that hurting Catherine and Hareton gives him no pleasure, it becomes meaningless for him to continue living. Cathy is dead and so is his hunger for causing devastation, thus he has nothing more to live for.

In *The Tenant*, Helen gradually starts to grasp Huntingdon's self-centred character. Initially she presumes that Arthur's "worst and only vice is thoughtlessness" (177). However, little by little Huntingdon shows that he is more than just thoughtless. In the early days of their acquaintance he transgresses the moral code for suitable distance between men and women by smothering Helen with kisses (168). Moreover, rumour has it that he has been involved with a married woman prior to his courtship of Helen (149). Arthur is also a spendthrift; he admits that he has squandered parts of his wealth (174). In regards to drinking alcohol, he claims that he is no tippler and never intends to be (194). As was mentioned earlier, Huntingdon's

carefree lifestyle connects with the Regency masculinity (McMaster 353-4). Furthermore, his sexual affairs are reminiscent of the behaviour of an eighteenth-century libertine. However, the libertinage lost the general public's acceptance in the nineteenth century (Tosh 67). This can be linked to Mrs Huntingdon's, and other female characters', disapproval of the men's conduct in *The Tenant*. Although Huntingdon's moral conduct can be criticized at this stage in the novel, he only acts in the same manner as his friends and probably many other young upper-class gentlemen. Yet, Mr Huntingdon does not abandon his old habits as he implies to Helen that he will with the help of her guidance (174). Their marriage rather has the opposite effect on Huntingdon's conduct.

Arthur can be seen as the leader of the revelry gang, indeed he seems to think so himself. When he is on the verge of entering matrimony he receives criticism from his friends, which he shares with Helen: "They say there'll be no more fun now, no more merry days and glorious nights [...] I was the very life and prop of the community, they do me the honour to say, and I have shamefully betrayed my trust" (184). Although the accusations might appear harmless, Huntingdon is clearly disturbed by his friends' dislike. He wants to keep his companions and maintain his role as chief carouser, which actually means that he betrays his wife and not his buddies. Correspondingly, Hyman concludes, "[m]arriage and fatherhood only drive Huntingdon further into the bottle. Adherence to the marital regime brings him closer to the social realm he must flout to maintain his status" (458). Hence, as a married man Huntingdon is required to drink more, swear louder and be more outrageously promiscuous, than before, in order to keep and prove his prominence within the group of carousers.

It is not long before the word alcoholism can be used to describe Huntingdon's consumption of alcoholic beverages. It should, however, be noted that in the early nineteenth century excessive alcohol intake was not seen as a disease: "Drunkenness was not particularly problematic – it was a sign of fellowship, part of the social contract" (Hyman 452). But this view clashes with the Victorian outlook on drunkenness. As a consequence of the temperance movement, in the 1820s and 1830s, excessive drinking was perceived as immoral by Victorians (Hyman 452-3). This means that Huntingdon's drinking is acceptable to Regency standards, but condemned by Victorian values. In other words, Helen and the other women's disapproval can be interpreted as a modern Victorian view on the outdated trends of the Regency.

As a married man Huntingdon has responsibilities, which he chooses to ignore and even ridicule. The sexual relationship with Lady Lowborough is evidence of Arthur's total disregard for the wedding vows he has taken. When Helen catches him kissing that lady's hand, he merely laughs at her dismay and calls the incident a joke (chapter 27). Huntingdon interprets Helen's indignation as jealousy and that adds to his pleasure. However, the reprimand he is forced to listen to makes him annoyed and sulky. Instead of taking care of his family, he sees it as a burden and abuses it. Huntingdon does not remorse his adultery, he is only sorry that Helen finds out. After the detection he mutters, "[i]f you had not seen me, [...] it would have done no harm" (235). However, the courtesy of at least wanting to conceal his indiscretions decreases in association with his increased alcohol addiction. Arthur and his mistress "are indiscreet, and almost flaunt their affair before the abused wife" (McMaster 359).

Huntingdon does not worry about tomorrow and he does not want to limit himself, he basically wants it all. He makes a lengthy explanation to Helen why he is not concerned about the future: "I'll sit down and satisfy my cravings of today, and leave tomorrow to shift for itself – who knows but what I may secure both this and that?" (206). However, it is Arthur's cravings and his utter inability to satisfy them that is his downfall. Indeed, the doctor asserts that Huntingdon's accident would not be fatal to a man with more temperate drinking habits (423-4). The fact is that not until Arthur is on his deathbed does he think about the consequences of his actions. But then he is not penitent, he only fears.

As Heathcliff's and Huntingdon's immorality increases their downfalls become inevitable. When Heathcliff no longer yearns revenge his life expires, while Huntingdon dies as a result of his cravings. Paradoxically, Heathcliff's moral degradation enables him to climb in terms of social rank. Huntingdon's position in the gentry, on the other hand, is stable. However, Arthur loses the respect of, at least, his wife as a consequence of his dissipation.

Conclusion

Although *Wuthering Heights* and *The Tenant* are not written by the same author and they are set in slightly different times, their similarities give rise to interesting analyses. The focus of this thesis has been to compare Emily Brontë's Heathcliff to Anne Brontë's Arthur Huntingdon with one another, and to contemporary masculine forms. It is apparent that both characters become morally depraved, but the causes to their decadence are not as

straightforward or self-evident. This thesis has aimed to demonstrate how Heathcliff's and Huntingdon's respective environments and experiences have caused their corruption.

The distinction Cohen makes between politeness and chivalry is a useful overview of masculine ideals in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Britain (312-329). These masculine codes along with other investigators' valuable contributions to the research of eighteenth- and nineteenth-century British manliness have functioned as background information to the interpretation of the novels. Unsurprisingly, Heathcliff and Huntingdon do not correspond with the ideals that Cohen describes. Both of the characters behave disrespectful to people in their surroundings and they repeatedly prioritize their own needs. Heathcliff uses physical violence and manipulation to attain his goal of revenge, whilst Huntingdon in his chase of enjoyment and social status pays no attention to who he is hurting in the course. Heathcliff's and Huntingdon's personalities are strongly opposed to other male characters in the novels. In *Wuthering Heights*, Edgar Linton's softness serves to intensify Heathcliff's brutality. Similarly, in *The Tenant*, Huntingdon's habit of carousing contrasts with Gilbert Markham's domesticated life. Even if Linton and Markham are not faultless men, Heathcliff's and Huntingdon's objectionable behaviour counteracts their flaws.

Whereas Heathcliff avoids most people's company, Arthur persistently surrounds himself with his companions. The friendship between Huntingdon and his friends involves a need to prove their gentlemanly status, peer pressure and an escape from tedium. Heathcliff's lack of friends is, of course, one reason to his seclusion. Conversely, the characters display similar demeanour in their approaches to women. The advantage of good looks facilitates their courtships. They both use manipulation to gain their future wives' trust and admiration. Furthermore, neither of the gentlemen shows affection to their sons. Heathcliff's feelings for Linton are anything but loving and he exploits him, to obtain revenge. Correspondingly, Huntingdon intentionally tries to lead little Arthur astray in order to hurt his wife.

The gentlemen's conduct as adults appears to have origins in their childhoods. Even if Heathcliff is not the nicest child, he is unduly bullied and punished. As Eagleton points out, it is not startling that Hindley's treatment turns Heathcliff into a callous landowner (111). In fact, to forget his pain young Heathcliff muses over how he will take his revenge. Consequently, Heathcliff converts his sufferings into hate. *The Tenant* provides significantly less information about Huntingdon's background. However, Helen's assumption about his

past suggests that his father has been too strict and his mother too indulgent. Assuming that Helen's supposition is correct, such an unbalanced upbringing must have confused Arthur. Moreover, as an adult Huntingdon acts spoiled, a likely consequence of a mother's leniency.

Although both Heathcliff and Huntingdon become increasingly disagreeable characters, their paths to depravity are dissimilar. In *Wuthering Heights*, Hindley's abuse triggers Heathcliff's wrath, which in turn is released by Catherine's betrayal. When she deserts him through her marriage to Edgar, Heathcliff's only remaining purpose in life is his revenge. Accordingly, when all enemies are dead and their offspring are the only reminders of his retribution, the will to destroy is gone. Ultimately, Heathcliff's hardships as a youngster creates a man so obsessed with revenge, that it eventually becomes his only ambition and therefore his fall into decadence.

Huntingdon's morals are questionable already when he is unattached. His drinking, extravagance and licentiousness as a single man are mild in comparison with his habits as a married man. Yet those early proclivities give an indication of his future degeneracy. Quite contrary to Arthur's vow to reform as a husband, he becomes more debauched. Helen's righteousness does not have a positive effect on his behaviour. Rather, Huntingdon's refusal to sacrifice his standing among his friends and his rejection of domesticity can be seen to increase in connection with his wife's distress and disapproval. Finally Huntingdon's unwholesome way of living disables his immune system and his passion for carousing becomes his death.

In conclusion, Heathcliff's hunt for revenge is his downfall, whereas Huntingdon's chase for enjoyment is his ruin. Heathcliff's hard childhood and Cathy's rebuff develop a frustration within Heathcliff, which he turns into anger. Arthur Huntingdon degenerates because his desire to demonstrate his status among his friends creates insatiable cravings, which seem to be reinforced by Helen's frustration. This thesis has demonstrated that even if these characters choose to be immoral, their choices are consequences of prior experiences. Nevertheless, the characters are still responsible for their actions, but they are not brutes without cause. Yet, the discussion of Heathcliff's and Huntingdon's corruption could be carried further with consideration given to the influence of narration. A narrator might be untrustworthy and subjective, which could affect the perception of characters. Another study could, perhaps, show that the gentlemen appear wickeder than they really are, due to biased narration.

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