

Cathy's Subversive 'Black Art' in Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*

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Abstract

In this article, I argue that, in Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* (1847), the 'witch' motif is used to explore the novel's depiction of nineteenth-century anxieties surrounding threats to patriarchy and of expectations around women's domesticity and role in society. I show how Cathy Heathcliff (née Linton), who is called a 'witch' by various men in the novel, appropriates the role of witch, drawing on vestiges of medieval superstition to resist the patriarchal order, to gain authority, and to assert her position at the Heights when she is dispossessed of her patrimony and physically and emotionally abused by Heathcliff, and is verbally attacked by his servant Joseph. I posit that the narrative's references to the use of 'witchcraft' in relation to Cathy are integral to its engagement with debates concerning the role of women in male-controlled social contexts, the subversion of male domination, and the empowerment of women.

Key words

Emily Brontë; *Wuthering Heights*; Gothic; patriarchy; domesticity; witch; magic

Introduction

In Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* (1847), Cathy¹ is subjected to indignity, the loss of her patrimony, and verbal, physical, and emotional abuse. However, she comes to resist her apparent fate, displaying remarkable resilience in the face of subjugation and misery. In one scene, she tells the old servant Joseph that she has 'progressed in the Black Art' and threatens him with black magic (Brontë [1847] 2003, 15).² Her assertion that she is a witch, which she employs as a strategy to claim agency and thereby to empower herself, is surprising. Consequently, it invites closer scrutiny of Brontë's use of the term 'witch' in the novel in general and in relation to Cathy's ploy in particular.

The noun 'witch' and the verb forms 'witched' or 'bewitched' recur at various points in the novel, in different contexts and with varying associations, depending on the speaker. In this article, I posit that Brontë's mid-nineteenth-century Gothic novel draws on the term, with its medieval associations of mysterious magic and of gendered power and persecution, to interrogate Victorian fears surrounding female power in the patriarchal society of nineteenth-century Britain, expectations around women's domesticity and role in society, and aspects of the changing balance in gender relations. I substantiate my argument by looking closely at Lockwood's and Joseph's responses to Cathy's claim that she practises witchcraft. I look at Lockwood's first impression of Cathy by exploring his comments about her behaviour towards him and the other inhabitants of the Heights, highlighting that he regards her conduct as being contrary to nineteenth-century societal expectations pertaining to domesticity and femininity. I also consider Heathcliff's verbally and physically violent responses to Cathy's questioning of his patriarchal authority. I then explore Joseph's accusations that Cathy is idle and 'wicked', 'bewitching' Hareton and posing a moral risk to decent men. Lastly, I consider Cathy's response to Joseph's accusation, illustrating how she defies the male oppression she

is subject to at the Heights by asserting that she is indeed a witch. By drawing attention to these aspects, I interrogate ways in which Brontë's novel uses the motif of medieval views of power in society, gender, and magic to examine nineteenth-century perspectives on power in society and gender.

Cathy's failure to act as a gracious lady of the house

In his role as narrator, Lockwood is the first character in the narrative to refer to Cathy as a 'little witch', while he notes the 'mock malignity' she puts into her 'beautiful eyes' (*WH*, 15) when she threatens Joseph with her 'Black Art'. His usage of the term 'witch' is secular and even complimentary – he uses the word at a moment in the text when he is still ignorant of Cathy's identity, personality, and position at the Heights, and he appears to derive pleasure from Joseph's being horrified by Cathy's claim, because the dour old Yorkshireman has been singularly unhelpful to him. However, as Lockwood notes in his diary, Cathy's refusal to behave in keeping with nineteenth-century societal expectations regarding polite feminine behaviour and the rules of hospitality shock him. While he is attracted to her beauty, he is repelled by her manner:

She was slender, and apparently scarcely past girlhood: an admirable form, and the most exquisite little face that I have ever had the pleasure of beholding: small features, very fair; flaxen ringlets, or rather golden, hanging loose on her delicate neck; and eyes – had they been agreeable in expression, they would have been irresistible – fortunately for my susceptible heart, the only sentiment they evinced hovered between scorn and a kind of desperation, singularly *unnatural* to be detected there. (*WH*, 11, my emphasis)

Lockwood is unsettled by the hostility and violence he sees and experiences at the Heights, where everyone, except Zillah, treats him with disdain. He sees Cathy's 'scorn' or hostility

towards him as ‘unnatural’ – as he repeatedly suggests in his narration, he perceives himself as being attractive and sophisticated (at least more so than Hareton, Joseph, and Heathcliff), and therefore deserving of distinguished notice and consideration, both as a personable man and as a guest. Contrary to his expectations, Cathy is neither an ‘amiable lady [who acts] as the presiding genius over [Heathcliff’s] home and heart’ (*WH*, 13), nor Hareton’s ‘beneficent fairy’ of a wife (*WH*, 14). He is confused and frustrated because he cannot work out Cathy’s place in the household, and nobody is prepared to enlighten him. He is equally bewildered by Cathy’s behaviour, which does not match his expectations surrounding the demeanour he expects from a middle-class woman.

Concerning nineteenth-century perspectives on the role of the lady of the house, Kathleen Rodems explains that, ideally, the lady of the home ‘complemented the patriarch by signifying beauty, grace and order. She was the center of the household, in charge of the servants and represented the ideal social decorum. [She] determined the domestic practices and charitable visiting’ (2007, 2). In Lockwood’s view, Cathy fails to ‘complement’ the ‘patriarch’, Heathcliff. She is not the ‘center of the household’ – in fact, she deliberately keeps herself apart. Moreover, she is not ‘in charge of the servants’, Joseph and Zillah, and does not treat Lockwood in any ‘charitable’ way. As a result, she fails to conform to the notion of the ideal woman and hostess that Lockwood subscribes to. Partly because Cathy does not behave as he believes a woman should, then, he soon starts to feel ‘out of place’ in the company of the unwelcoming and violent inhabitants of the Heights, whom he later ironically refers to as being ‘that pleasant family circle’ (*WH*, 14). In this sense, the novel illustrates a Gothic quality in that it explores the ‘dark side of individuals, cultures, and nations’ so as to ‘interrogate socially dictated and institutionally entrenched attitudes and laws relating to gender roles, identities and relations’ (Davison 2012, 124). In doing so, it indeed ‘depicts an unpleasant and often violent domestic reality [that is] completely at odds

with the Victorian ideal of the home as a refuge from the harshly competitive outside world' (Jacobs 1986, 205).

Cathy's existence as provocation to Heathcliff

At this point, Lockwood is still ignorant of the reasons for Cathy's fierce responses and her anger and resentment towards the other inhabitants of the Heights, even though she herself mentions the reason for her unhappiness and rage when he asks her to give him directions back to the Grange: she states that she cannot escort him there, as Heathcliff, owner of the Heights, and the other inhabitants, acting on Heathcliff's orders, 'wouldn't let [her] go to the end of the garden-wall' (*WH*, 16). Thus, she reveals that she is effectively imprisoned at the Heights. It is only by means of Nelly's narration, retold later in the novel, that Lockwood eventually comes to know something about Cathy's history, nature, and position at the Heights.

Through Nelly, Lockwood learns how Heathcliff forced Cathy to marry his son, her cousin Linton Heathcliff (*WH*, 270–75), born out of Isabella Linton's being foolishly 'bewitched' by Heathcliff (*WH*, 150). Their forced nuptials give Heathcliff access to Cathy's inheritance. Patricia Ingham explains that a married woman had no 'control over money previously hers or earned during [her] marriage unless a special legal settlement had been made before the marriage' (usually between the woman's father or guardian and prospective spouse), and that, '[i]f no such pre-nuptial agreement had been made, money from both sources became her husband's' (2006, 51). Because he knows that there is no clause in Edgar's will that excludes any husband whom Cathy might take from inheriting her patrimony (*WH*, 215), Heathcliff forces Cathy to marry his son to ensure that everything that Cathy owns and would inherit becomes Linton's and thus effectively his own (*WH*, 280–81).

Aside from depriving Cathy of her money and possessions, he imprisons her (*WH*, 270) and encourages Linton to mistrust and abuse her (*WH*, 274, 279–81). According to Jamie Crouse, the ‘instances of confinement’ in the novel point to ‘an issue of control’ (2008, 179). Heathcliff does indeed come to control Cathy in every respect: ultimately, he holds power over her resources, movements, and even her person.

Heathcliff’s physical power over Cathy is evident in another scene in which she is called a witch. As Nelly reveals to Lockwood, Heathcliff uses the term in a derogatory sense when he attacks Cathy for (rightly) accusing him of having stolen her (and Hareton’s) land and money as well as trying to rouse Hareton against him:

‘Accursed witch! this time she has provoked me, when I could not bear it; and I’ll make her repent it for ever!’

He had his hand in her hair; Hareton attempted to release the locks, entreating him not to hurt her that once. His black eyes flashed, [and] he seemed ready to tear Catherine in pieces. (*WH*, 320)

Although he uses the term ‘witch’ to abuse her, possibly picking it up from a complaint made a minute earlier by Joseph, who accuses her of having ‘witched’ Hareton, Heathcliff uses it in a secular sense, as he never gives any indication that he believes in witchcraft. In this scene, then, Brontë appears to include the denigrating word to illustrate and criticise gender disparities in terms of power.

The scene also offers an example of the pattern of domestic violence at the Heights that goes beyond verbal abuse. As Jennifer Komorowski points out, ‘*Wuthering Heights* was published ... at a time when public debate about domestic violence was regularly in the news’ (2014, 3). Aşkin Haluk Yildirim explains:

The conflict between the sexes both in domestic and political spheres was perceived as a threat by Victorian men whose supremacy was challenged by women's emancipation. Though it was against the Victorian concept of [the] peaceful home, domestic and sexual violence was a serious problem during this period. (2012, 47)

This social ill was officially recorded when 'parliamentary debates [about the issue] leading up to the 1857 Matrimonial Causes Act unveiled the home as a site of violence and abuse' (Cohen 2017, 2). Through its references to domestic violence, specifically in relation to the abuse that Cathy suffers, Brontë's novel likewise expresses doubts surrounding the purported ideal of the 'peaceful home' and of the angel or 'lady in the house'. The novel exposes and repeatedly examines the 'dark ... underbelly of the middle-class domestic sphere', thereby 'giving the lie ... to the Victorians' idealised view of domesticity' (Davison 2012, 127).

In this context, Heathcliff regards Cathy as being a 'witch' who provokes his rage by daring to question his authority and therefore deserves the violence and suffering he inflicts on her. Because she is a woman, her recalcitrance enrages him (although he would not brook resistance from a man either) and, because she is physically weaker than he is, he can wreak revenge on her by physically abusing her.

Joseph as the arbiter of morality at the Heights

Cathy is repeatedly suspected and accused of being immoral and of being a witch by Joseph, the ancient servant at the Heights. At the beginning of his tale, Lockwood describes how the servant reprimands Cathy for being lazy:

'Aw woonder hagh yah can faishion tuh stand thear i' idleness un war, when all on 'em's goan aght! Bud yah're a nowt, and it's noa use talking – yah'll niver

mend uh yer ill ways, but goa raight tuh t' divil, like yer mother afore ye!' (*WH*, 15)

He objects to her 'idleness', which he attributes to her 'ill ways' or immorality. Drawing on the aphorism from Proverbs 16:27 that 'idle hands are the devil's workshop', Joseph, who is a fundamentalist Calvinist, asserts that she is wicked and useless and, in keeping with his understanding of the Calvinist doctrine of predestination, already preselected for damnation.

Aside from his biblical frame of reference, Joseph's remarks reveal that he shares some of Lockwood's expectations concerning the domestic role of women. As Morgan Richardson points out, 'the domestic space was fundamentally a housewife and mother's place of work – and hard, exhausting work, in the majority of cases' (2016, 11). Cathy's failure to do the household tasks that Joseph would like her to perform indicates that she resists some of his expectations regarding her position as woman at the Heights. Moreover, Joseph claims that Cathy will go 'tuh t' divil', like her deceased mother, Catherine. Cathy is one of many Gothic and Victorian 'protagonists whose mothers are dead or lost' (Dever 1998, xi), but Joseph would probably see this as a gain, rather than a loss, since he thoroughly despised Catherine. (He reveals this dislike when he refers to Catherine as being a 'slatternly' or dirty 'witch' who goes '[r]unning after t' lads, as usual' by meeting Linton in secret and chasing after 'that fahl, flaysome divil uf a gipsy, Heathcliff' out on the moors after midnight (*WH*, 87).)

Joseph's hatred for Catherine and fear of Cathy's influence, as well as his resultant belief that they are witches, hinges largely on their female sexuality. In the case of Cathy, he objects to the degree of influence that Cathy increasingly gains over her cousin Hareton after Heathcliff begins to avoid the other inhabitants of the Heights. Joseph goes to the 'Gimmerton fair with some cattle', and Hareton is compelled to stay inside the house because of a hunting accident (*WH*, 312). Cathy approaches Hareton when he is alone at home, except for Cathy and Nelly.

For Joseph, who is anxious about witches' influence over men, it would appear that Cathy waits until male authority at the Heights is at its weakest before she sets out to win her cousin's favour. When both her words and Nelly's backing fail to convince Hareton that she wants to be his friend, Cathy attempts to win him over in a different way: according to Nelly, she 'impress[es] on his cheek a gentle kiss' (*WH*, 314). Her kiss appears to work its magic, as she and Hareton soon become close allies.

Joseph is outraged and his anger boils over after Hareton uproots some of Joseph's currant trees at Cathy's request. He complains to Heathcliff that Cathy has stolen 't' sowl' of Hareton, because she is 'soa handsome, bud whet a body mud look at her baht winking' (*WH*, 319). He concludes: 'It's yon flaysome, graceless quean, ut's witched ahr lad, wi' her bold een, un' her forrard ways' (*WH*, 319). According to the Oxford English Dictionary, 'quean' can refer merely to 'a woman' but also to 'a bold or impudent woman' or even to 'a prostitute'. Joseph argues that Cathy can manipulate men because she is not only bold but also 'handsome' or attractive, as she can draw on her beauty to seduce men and thus gain power over them. Because he believes her to hold such influence over men, he sees her as being 'graceless', which refers not so much to her apparent lack of gracefulness (specifically in her failure to act in keeping with societal expectations relating to the role of the woman in the house) as to his belief that her immorality puts her beyond the redeeming power of God's grace or mercy. In this way, the servant equates beauty with both sexual deviance and eternal damnation. He suggests, then, that only *beautiful* women possess the ability to undercut the established order, specifically as a result of their sexuality, and that those who are not as attractive as Cathy, such as Nelly, are less of a threat to him and his position in society.

Joseph's objection to Catherine's and particularly Cathy's sexuality is in line with medieval anxieties surrounding witches. Lène Dresen-Coenders mentions that the medieval 'handbook

for exterminating witches', the *Malleus Maleficarum*, or *The Hammer of Witches* (1487), describes 'modern' witches as being women who 'freely consecrate themselves to the devil' and thereby become agents of evil (1987, 59). Late medieval debates about 'witches' thus centred on matters of authority within the cosmic order (rather than the use of magic as such). Witches were seen as possessing dangerous powers derived from the devil and posing a threat to the universal order. Dresen-Coenders adds that the authors of the *Malleus Maleficarum* and other theoreticians on witches especially feared 'the power women can exert' and notes that '[t]here is the continual danger [in medieval perspectives on witchcraft] that a man who has once been seduced will fall victim to a woman's secret greed and lust for power' (1987, 63). Michelle Sweeney also mentions that 'there was tremendous anxiety [in medieval societies] surrounding the notion that a woman could use the *seemingly* magical power of her sexuality to control men' (2000, 27, Sweeney's emphasis).

Gothic literature frequently draws on medieval motifs. As David Stevens points out, Gothic texts are often characterised by a 'self-conscious attempt by many gothic writers to hark back to medieval themes' (2000, 24). In *Wuthering Heights*, the surly retainer Joseph adds to the Gothic atmosphere of the novel and is used to voice some of the anxieties of a patriarchal past which had survived into the nineteenth century, notably questions about power in society, gender roles, and the magic and threat inherent in female sexuality. In his mind, all women are potentially evil, and may be witches, but beautiful ones are even more dangerous. To him, in his misogynistic religious fundamentalism, witches are real and are a serious threat to men's souls. Interestingly, in this Victorian Gothic narrative, vestiges of medieval fears and superstitions concerning witchcraft are thus invoked and linked to Joseph's religious fanaticism. In addition, because of its portrayal of Joseph's terror of female sexuality, Brontë's novel may be seen as forming part of the corpus of supposedly 'female'

Gothic works that ‘engender[] sexual difference in terms of a struggle for power and erotic tension’ (Milbank 1992, 199).

Cathy’s strategy to gain agency

Cathy’s defiant reaction to Joseph’s accusation is unexpected: she appropriates the term ‘witch’ and uses it as a source of power. According to Andrew Abraham, ‘Brontë engages in simultaneous rebellion and submission, challenge and adherence, defiance and deference, towards her treatment of law and patriarchy in the novel, and this polarized treatment creates a continuous tension that is sustained throughout ... the novel’ (2004, 93). To draw attention to the richness of the novel’s engagement with these themes, I look at Cathy’s claiming the powers that Joseph attributes to her. Furthermore, I show that the representation of Cathy in Brontë’s novel corresponds to the dualistic portrayal of witches in early modern texts, where these female figures are depicted as being ‘outsider[s]’ and, through their ‘willingness ... to embrace the title of witch’, as possessing ‘a woman’s unique sense of self and her own anxieties about her role as mother and maintainer of the household’, and as being representative of ‘female power and value’ (Moran 2000, 125).

When Cathy has been completely deprived by Heathcliff’s (and even Joseph’s) patriarchal authority of any legal or social power and financial resources, she seizes the power offered by Joseph’s superstitious fear of witchcraft. As Lockwood reports, in response to Joseph’s taunts about her ‘idleness’ and immorality, Cathy calls the servant an ‘old hypocrite’ and claims indeed to be in league with the devil:

‘I warn you to refrain from provoking me, or I’ll ask your abduction as a special favour. Stop, look here, Joseph,’ she continued, taking a long, dark book from a shelf. ‘I’ll show you how far I’ve progressed in the Black Art – I shall soon be competent to make a clear house of it. The red cow didn’t die by chance; and

your rheumatism can hardly be reckoned among providential visitations!’ (*WH*, 15)

She cleverly draws on Joseph’s own superstitions to make him believe that she can actually hurt him. She uses a mysterious-looking book and coincidences such as the cow’s death and his own infirmities to claim agency. Although Joseph can read, he does not look at any book except his Bible and therefore cannot prove or disprove her agency in the events. Joseph calls out to God, however, asking ‘the Lord [to] deliver [them all] from evil’ (*WH*, 15). As Graeme Tytler points out, ‘one cannot help inferring from this curious isolation here of part of the Lord’s Prayer that Joseph’s utterance is indistinguishable from superstition’ (2007, 51). Cathy intelligently attributes the old servant’s exclamation to his own superstitious beliefs, when he refers to her as being ‘wicked’ and ‘evil’ (*WH*, 15), and she passionately lashes out at him, using his own religious terminology against him by calling him a ‘reprobate’ and ‘a castaway’. She threatens to use effigies of him and the other inhabitants of the Heights, as these objects are traditionally held to be witches’ tools to inflict physical harm from afar: ‘I’ll have you all modelled in wax and clay; and the first who passes the limits I fix, shall – I’ll not say what he shall be done to – but, you’ll see!’ (*WH*, 15). She sustains her claim that she is a witch and that she will use her craft to injure them, in a way that she would rather ‘not say’ or tell him about, strengthening his fear by leaving the terrors to come to his own imagination. Next, she invokes his fear of the evil eye by adding: ‘Go, I’m looking at you!’ (*WH*, 15).

Although Joseph’s terror is real, Cathy’s nominal appropriation of the role of witch goes unpunished. Lockwood, who witnesses the scene, is merely amused by what he believes to be her ‘mock malignity’ and simply admires the beauty of her eyes (*WH*, 15). This suggests the secularity of the nineteenth century – in medieval times, Cathy would not have dared to make such a claim, because she could indeed have ended up ‘sitting in flaming fagots’ (*WH*, 308),

as Nelly later jokingly suggests when she laughs at Joseph's continued lament that Hareton is bewitched.

Although he is sufficiently attracted by Cathy to take her side against the servant, Lockwood acknowledges Joseph's 'sincere horror' (*WH*, 15). Joseph's fear leads Judith Stuchiner to object to what she regards as being Cathy's 'shocking' strategy (2013, 194). Stuchiner argues that 'Joseph is certainly correct in his opinion that the household of *Wuthering Heights* is in moral jeopardy' and claims that the old servant 'quite reasonably' reprimands Cathy for her 'idleness' (2013, 193–4). She objects to how 'disrespectfully' Cathy speaks to the servant and claims that this scene demonstrates Cathy's 'outright meanness' to Joseph (Stuchiner 2013, 194). If Stuchiner's interpretation is to be accepted, then Lockwood may be wrong to dismiss Joseph's evident distress by concluding that Cathy's behaviour, which he ascribes merely to 'mock malignity', must have been 'prompted by a species of dreary fun' (*WH*, 15–16). In that case, Joseph may be seen as being a 'tragic' rather than a 'humorous and vindictive' figure in the narrative, in which 'almost all of the members of the gentry class are hell-bent on traveling down the "broad road to destruction,"' and then it may be 'the responsibility of Joseph ... to set them straight' (Stuchiner 2013, 191–2).

Cathy does indeed fail to act in line with societal expectations surrounding the role of women and the treatment of servants in a middle-class family, given that the domestic household 'included relationships between the immediate family members, between the family and the servants and between the servants themselves', and a woman such as Cathy would have been expected to 'signify[] beauty, grace and order' and to be 'in charge of the servants and [to] represent[] the ideal of social decorum' (Rodems 2007, 1–2). However, the novel presents Cathy in a more sympathetic light, showing clearly her victimisation at the hands of Heathcliff's and Joseph's collusion in her incarceration and oppression. Stuchiner thus

chooses to overlook Joseph's own 'meanness' and the power he wields in the household, which undercut any reading of him as a touchstone of morality in the novel.

By pretending to be a witch, Cathy manages to empower herself. Lockwood believes that she is simply 'mock[ing]' the superstitious old servant and that there is no truth to what she tells him. However, her method is potent, because, unlike Lockwood, the servant thinks that she is telling the truth and that she is indeed a 'wicked' (*WH*, 15) witch. Cathy's appropriation of the 'Black Art' shows how superstitions that were initially encouraged and that then evolved to protect patriarchal power can be turned against that power.

Cathy's use of her female charm (even though this is *not* an instance of witchcraft or black magic, whatever Joseph may think) does indeed exert a kind of magic over Hareton. Her increasing influence over Hareton emboldens her even to challenge Heathcliff by accusing him of stealing her and Hareton's money and property. Thus, Joseph's anxieties appear to be valid to some degree, and Joseph does lose Hareton to what he believes to be Cathy's sorcery. When Heathcliff dies, male authority at the Heights is weakened even further and Cathy, assisted by Nelly, gains even more influence. Ownership of the Grange reverts to Cathy and that of the Heights to Hareton. Lockwood notices something of this increase in female power when he visits the region a second time and learns from Nelly that she will manage all affairs relating to the Grange until Cathy has learnt to deal with them herself, because there is no one else to assist her. (However, the novel suggests that it is the power of Cathy's and Hareton's ability to forgive and their affection for each other that ultimately alter the balance of power at the Heights (Myburgh 2017, 8), and not Cathy's 'Black Art' as such.)

Even if Cathy is not truly a witch in the medieval sense, the narrative draws on the remnants of medieval superstition in Joseph's anxieties (which serve the additional purpose of adding to the Gothic tenor of the novel), to suggest that Cathy may subvert the established order by

her refusal to adhere to the expectations that nineteenth-century Britain imposed on women – specifically by exploiting male fears concerning the power of women. Accordingly, the novel may rightly be said to ‘depict[] a community ... that is a microcosm of rebellion, a realm in which uprisings against figures in positions of power regularly occur, where the subordinate do not remain in their places, and where dominant modes of power are disparaged’ (Cory 2004, 6).

Conclusion

Drawing on Gothic fascination with the Middle Ages, and alluding to medieval anxieties relating to female power in society and magic, by invoking the motif of the witch, Brontë’s narrative examines nineteenth-century concerns relating to patriarchal authority, domesticity, and the position of women in society. Joseph’s horror of female power, as it is represented in relation to his quasi-medieval terror of witches, exposes and even ridicules some nineteenth-century debates concerning female power in society. At the same time, it raises serious questions about gender roles. In Gothic fashion, then, the novel represents a world in which a heroine such as Cathy ‘encounter[s] not only frightening violence but also adventurous freedom’ (Botting 1996, 7). Through the representation of Cathy’s apparently embracing the role of witch, Brontë’s text also explores the possibility of the subversion of patriarchy by means of its very own anxieties.

Notes

1. To avoid possible confusion between the two Catherine’s in the novel, I refer to Catherine Earnshaw Linton as ‘Catherine’ and to her daughter as ‘Cathy’.

2. Subsequent references to *Wuthering Heights* (Brontë [1847] 2003) are indicated by *WH* and the relevant page numbers.

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