WUTHERING HEIGHTS: A FEMINIST PSYCHOANALYTIC PERSPECTIVE ON SYMBIOTIC RELATIONSHIP, "MIRROR STAGE – RELATED" IDENTITY LOSS AND ENTERING THE "SYMBOLIC ORDER"

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Abstract: In Wuthering Heights, Emily Brontë addresses feminist issues that reflect the social background of nineteenth-century British society. The purpose of this paper is to interweave feminist and psychoanalytic perspectives by analyzing the relationship between the main characters (Catherine and Heathcliff) as a displaced version of the symbiotic relationship between mother and child. As opposed to first generation psychoanalytic literary criticism which focused on the individual author, this article illustrates a later generation method of psychoanalysing characters before proceeding to their authors. Moreover, the study within this paper also combines American feminist criticism with a French perspective which applies Jacques Lacan's psychoanalytic theory according to which girls do not enter the "Symbolic Order" in the same manner in which boys do. Such differences between man and woman are identifiable in the characters Lockwood and Catherine. The former is indirect in his dealings with nature, whereas the latter prefers nature/reality to substitutions. Nevertheless, Cathy – Catherine's daughter – chooses to enter marriage and, subsequently, the patriarchal order. The choice of Catherine to refuse the "Law of the Father" is in contrast with that of Cathy who learns to survive/live and, eventually, perhaps even prosper within that order. Moreover, these two possible choices for women within Victorian society are suggestive of Emily Brontë herself oscillating between the two options and, thus, relating to patriarchal institutions in a quite ambivalent and indecisive manner. Furthermore, both Brontë and her female characters' spiritual/emotional/mental confusion can be connected with the theme of Lacanian "mirror stage –related" identity loss.

Keywords: psychoanalysis, characters, relating, feminist perspective, patriarchal order

The purpose of this paper is to interweave feminist and psychoanalytic perspectives by analyzing the relationship between the main characters of *Wuthering Heights* – Catherine and Heathcliff – as a displaced version of the symbiotic relationship between mother and child. The method of psychoanalysing characters before proceeding to their authors is an elaborate technique and it is representative of conventional psychoanalytic criticism. Moreover, to this method, the article adds the Lacanian psychoanalytic perspective that deals with "infantile" aspects (coming from the Latin word "infans" which means "not speaking"). This perspective provides an approach to *Wuthering Heights* which is not conventional/Freudian, but – instead – is based on a combination of Jacques Lacan's poststructuralist revisions of Freud and standard feminist readings of the novel.1

1. A Conventional Psychoanalytic Approach: "Symbiotic Relationship" and "Mirror Stage – Related" Identity Loss

From a psychoanalytic angle, *Wuthering Heights* may be considered a tragedy of duality in which the heroine is annihilated by her own dualistic nature.2 The characters may

1 Cf. Macovski, M., 'Voicing a Silent History: *Wuthering Heights* as Dialogic Text I', in *Wuthering Heights*, Edited by P. Stoneman, The Macmillan Press LTD, 1993, pages 100-10

2 Cf. Cuțitaru , C. L., 'Repression of the Self: Emily Brontë', in *The Victorian Novel: a Course in the 19th Century English Novel*, 'Al. I. Cuza' University Press, 2004, pages 57-9

be associated with Freudian concepts: "Heathcliff is associated by critics with Freud's *id*, since he is a personification of *nature* and *instinct* from the very beginning (his origins are unknown, he is a gypsy boy, he is impulsive), whereas Linton appears to be a personification of society and reason (he is balanced, he is an aristocrat, he has gentle manners), being connected to Freud's *super-ego*."3 However, the central issues to the novel *Wuthering Heights* are conflicts about separation and union with the other which spring from the primary relation between mother and child.4

The analysis of this article is based on the process of psychological birth of the infant described by Margaret Mahler who divides the physical process of separation from the mother's body into three phases: the "normal autistic" and "normal symbiotic" (in which the child feels that he is one with the mother and is not aware of boundaries) and the "separation-individuation" phase which is a second birth – a psychological one. Margaret Mahler divides the latter phase into four sub-phases: "differentiation", "practising", "rapprochement", "consolidation of individuality and emotional object constancy". During the third one, "the toddler wants to be united with, and at the same time separate from mother"5, which leads to whining and sad moods and, during the fourth sub-phase, the mother is clearly perceived as a separate person.

If the relationship with the mother during these phases is a satisfactory one, then, at the end of the psychological birth, the child is able to feel safe in the world and live a fairly normal life. In the opposite case (when the separation-individuation process is not successful), the child feels frustrated and believes that his mother is wicked and neglectful, which may lead to certain kind of problems later in life. This feeling of frustration is reflected in the scene in which Catherine expresses her anger caused by Nelly's "betrayal": Catherine discovers that Nelly has hidden her illness from Edgar and accuses the surrogate mother of being a traitor, an enemy, a "witch".6

It is worth mentioning the connection between Emily Brontë's personal life and certain aspects of the novel: Brontë's mother died shortly after her third birthday, which is why the Heathcliff-Catherine relationship can be regarded as a displaced version of the symbiotic relationship between mother and child.7 This appears evident in a confession Catherine makes to Nelly: "If all else perished, and *he* remained, *I* should still continue to be […] Nelly, *I* am Heathcliff!"8 When Catherine realises that Heathcliff has left and may not return, she misses him and cries like a baby for its mother: "she remained, calling at intervals, and then listening, and then crying outright. She beat Hareton, or any child, at a good passionate fit of crying."9

Catherine's second breakdown occurs when Edgar asks her to choose between him and Heathcliff once and for all. Catherine cannot stand any type of separation, which is why she refuses to be separated from either of those two men. Feeling her union with "the other" threatened, she tries to protect herself emotionally by establishing boundaries between herself and the rest. She attempts to assert her individuality and gain the self-sufficiency that she

3 *ibid*., page 58

4 Cf. 'The Absent Mother in *Wuthering Heights*', in *Wuthering Heights*, Edited by L. H. Peterson, Bedford Books of St. Martin Press, 1922, pages 315-29

5 Wion, P., K., 'The Absent Mother in *Wuthering Heights*', in *Wuthering Heights*, Edited by L. H. Peterson, Bedford Books of St. Martin Press, 1922, page 317

6 Cf. *ibid.*, page 321

7 Cf. *ibid.*, page 318

8 Brontë, E., *Wuthering Heights*, Penguin, 1994, page 81

9*ibid.*, page 83

never had.10 At this stage, Catherine cries like a child separated from its mother, her state of mind reflecting that of a baby in the "rapprochement" sub-phase when it experiences sad moods caused by the realisation of separation from the other. She also wishes to be home (at the Heights):11 "Oh, if I were but in my own bed in the old house!" […] "I was a child; my father was just buried, and my misery arose from the separation that Hindley had ordered between me and Heathcliff."12

In the same scene, "Catherine's confusion about her reflection in the mirror is also connected with the theme of […] loss of identity".13 This breakdown and its unusual manifestation suggest a deep disturbance in Catherine's sense of identity, such as would be traceable to difficulties in the separation-individuation process. In addition, Lacan's theory (according to which mirroring may be said to play a great role in the child's construction of its sense of self) can be invoked to support these statements. This perspective is supported by another episode in the novel in which Lockwood finds names scratched on the windowledge in Catherine's room. These names indicate the conflicting elements of Catherine's identity.14 However, only in death is Catherine able to merge totally with the other: Heathcliff's and Catherine's spirits are reunited and their bodies decompose together. Therefore, Emily Brontë understands (instinctually) that the return to symbiotic oneness is not possible in life.15

Much of what is known of Emily Brontë's later life can be understood in terms of the psychological strategies that she developed in order to deal with the loss of her mother. As a result, there are many scenes in the novel that suggest the painful effects of the loss of the mother at a tender age and the powerful primal bond between child and mother that not even death can erase. One such scene is the one in which Hindley mistreats her son and Nelly puts him to sleep by humming a song about a mother who, from her grave, hears her children cry.16

As one can notice in the scene previously described, Nelly is an important mother figure in the novel. Apparently, Emily Brontë tried to experience motherhood through her character – Nelly.17 Nelly becomes the substitute mother. She makes her role as surrogate mother explicit in the cases of Hareton and the younger Catherine, but is also a substitute mother of Catherine and Heathcliff. These four characters' ability to be happy in life is influenced by Nelly's type of motherly care. According to Margaret Mahler, the child who is looked after by a "good enough" mother emerges from the process of psychological birth feeling safe in the world, whereas the child who does not undergo this process successfully, perceives the mother as a frustrating, bad, neglectful one and, later on in life, deals with serious problems. Judging from this perspective, Nelly is a "good enough" mother to the younger Catherine (who enjoys a "normal" emotional development that leads to a happy

10 Cf. Wion, P., K., 'The Absent Mother in *Wuthering Heights*', in *Wuthering Heights,* Edited by L. H. Peterson, Bedford Books of St. Martin Press, 1922, page 321
11 Cf. *ibid.*, page 322
12 Brontë, E., *Wuthering Heights*, Penguin, 1994, pages 115-6
13 Wion, *op. cit.*, page 323
14 Cf. *ibid.*, page 324
15 Cf. *ibid.*, page 324
16 Cf. *ibid.*, page 318
17 Cf. *ibid.*, pages 319, 328

marriage to Hareton), but does not succeed in being a good mother to Heathcliff and the elder Catherine, which leads to the unhappy end of their lives.18

Therefore, the psychoanalytic perspective is meant to discover a connection between the essential aspects in the novel and Brontë's personal life. Emily Brontë's separation-individuation process was interrupted by her mother's death, which led to fantasies of oneness later on in her life. Such fantasies can be identified in Catherine's belief that she is (one with) Heathcliff (who represents a mother figure since he "usurps" the role of the mother – Mrs. Earnshaw who opposes his entrance in the family and seems to die as a result of his appearance in the novel). It is safe to assume that another reality-reflecting aspect in the novel is Nelly's portrayal as a "bad" stepmother (taking into consideration the fact that Brontë was raised by this type of mother figure). *Wuthering Heights* is essentially about a mother's absence (considering that four mothers die prematurely in the novel) and a daughter's uncertain movement into independent being which seems to almost dramatise what Lacan calls the mirror-stage (that can be identified in the scene in which Catherine does not recognise her own reflection in the mirror.19

2. A Feminist Perspective Based on Jacques Lacan's Psychoanalytic Theory

There are various feminist perspectives (usually classified as American, British and French) that can be applied to *Wuthering Heights*. Some feminist analysts regard diversity as a weak point (as a flaw) which makes this type of criticism vulnerable to the attacks of male critics and writers. However, others view it as a characteristic that underlines the uniqueness of feminist criticism. Furthermore, there is a tendency of feminist literary critics to employ methods and concepts that belong to related ideologies (such as Marxist aesthetics and structuralism) and many feminist analysts borrow "tools" belonging to the psychoanalytic perspective. Therefore, it is useful to combine elements of American feminist criticism with those of French feminism in order to apply Jacques Lacan's psychoanalytic theory to *Wuthering Heights*.20

According to this theory, girls do not enter language (and what Lacan calls the "Law of the Father" or the "Symbolic Order") in the way that boys do. There are differences between man and woman caused by the different ways in which they relate to language (the "Symbolic Order"). These differences can be identified in Lockwood and Catherine."Turning first to Lockwood, […] he – like a Lacanian Everyman – inevitably and endlessly prefers substitutions to the real thing. The minute a seaside 'beauty' returns his glance, she is no longer desirable; a few weeks later, though, and a substitute object of desire *is*: Cathy, who knows nothing of his feelings".21

In addition, Lockwood is equally indirect in his dealings with nature. "The elder Catherine is an opposite sort of character":22 she prefers "the real thing" (nature) to substitutions (writing or talking about nature, which is figurative rendering of nature). However, her daughter, the second Cathy, chooses to enter the patriarchal order of language

18 Cf. Homans, M., 'The Name of the Mother in *Wuthering Heights*', in *Wuthering Heights*, Edited by L. H. Peterson, Bedford Books of St. Martin Press, 1922, page 357

19 Cf. Peterson, L., H., 'What Is Psychoanalytic Criticism?', in *Wuthering Heights*, Edited by L. H. Peterson, Bedford Books of St. Martin Press, 1992, pages 311-2

20 Cf. Peterson, L., H., "What Is Feminist Criticism?", in *Wuthering Heights*, Edited by L. H. Peterson, Bedford Books of St. Martin Press, 1922, pages 336-7

21*ibid.*, page 336

22 Peterson, *loc. cit.*

and institutions. Therefore, Brontë creates in Catherine a woman who refuses to enter the Lacanian Symbolic Order, whereas in Cathy she creates a woman who chooses to enter and learn to use that order.23

This raises an interesting question: "where does Brontë situate herself in relation to these two women?". The answer is that Brontë "must reluctantly cast her lot with the second Cathy; for, being an author, there would be little gain in allying herself with the first".24 Therefore, in analyzing the novel, the focus must be on the different ways in which man and woman relate to nature (reality/"the real thing") and language, while pointing out the two possible choices that a woman can make: the choice of Catherine and that of her daughter – Cathy (which are suggestive of Brontë's own relation to language, or rather, the ambivalence of her relation to language).25

It is worth mentioning that "in virtually all of the founding texts of our culture we can find a version of this myth: the death or absence of the mother sorrowfully but fortunately makes possible the construction of language and of culture". Moreover, "women are identified with nature and matter (as when Clytemnestra [in Aeschylus' *Oresteia*] is merely the fertile ground for her husband's 'seed', or when Milton calls the planet Earth 'great Mother'). As a result, women are also identified with the literal, the absent referent in language".26 Therefore, the quest to name and possess the real ("the real thing") is the cause of the acts of figuration that constitute literature.

Jacques Lacan's explanation of the cultural myth already mentioned is that "the preoedipal infant communicates with the mother's presence without mediation, in a language that we might call literal".27 Then, the father intervenes and the son becomes aware of the existence of the phallus which becomes a sign of sexual difference (a sign that makes the son understand that he is different from the mother). At this point, the child has to reluctantly renounce communicative intimacy with his mother in order to enter the "Law of the Father" or the symbolic order which becomes "the prohibition of incest and the sign system of figurative language that depends on difference and the absence of the referent".28

Because the son dislikes having to renounce communicative intimacy with his mother, he spends his life searching for this type of bond and, therefore, heterosexual desire rises from the search for substitutes for the mother. However, this desire is a specifically male desire and daughters do not experience it. Women remain the literal because a daughter is never encouraged to abandon her mother in the way that a son is. Furthermore, according to Nancy Chodorow, the daughter does not completely lose pre-symbolic communication (related to the intimate bond with her mother) beyond the pre-oedipal stage, which is why she is able to speak two languages: the symbolic/figurative language that she shares with her brother and the literal/pre-symbolic language that she keeps from her pre-oedipal period.29

Emily Brontë writes about her own relation to language (or the ambivalence of this relation) by writing about her main female characters' relation to language. The choice of a male narrator (Lockwood) as well as the use of a pseudonym (Ellis Bell) allows Emily Brontë

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23 Cf. *ibid.*, pages 336-7

24*ibid.*, page 337

25 Cf. Homans, M.,"The Name of the Mother in *Wuthering Heights*", in *Wuthering Heights*, Edited by L. H. Peterson, Bedford Books of St. Martin Press, 1922, pages 341-58

26*ibid.*, page 341-2

27*ibid.*, page 342

28*ibid.*, page 343

29 Cf. *ibid.*, page 343-4

to write as a son. Lockwood (like a Lacanian Everyman) experiences the heterosexual desire that rises from his search for a mother substitute.30 At the start of the novel, Lockwood tells a story that can be considered a sort of parody of male romantic desire: "I was thrown into the company of a most fascinating creature: a real goddess in my eyes, as long as she took no notice of me. […] And what did I do? I confess it with shame – shrank icily […]"31

Afterward, Lockwood becomes interested in the first available object of desire that he meets at Wuthering Heights: the second Cathy. In addition, Nelly Dean notices that Lockwood smiles when she mentions Cathy and she is also surprised by the fact that he asks her to hang Cathy's picture over his fireplace. These details indicate that Lockwood has taken an interest in the beautiful and single lady, but, when Nelly Dean suggests that it would be possible for him and Cathy to become a couple, he (again) rejects the possibility of being with a woman he finds attractive and he – once more – starts making excuses: "You smile; but why do you look so lively and interested, when I talk about her? And why have you asked me to hang her picture over your fireplace? And why –"; "Stop, my good friend! I cried. It may be very possible that *I* should love her; but would she love me? I doubt it too much to venture my tranquility by running into temptation."32 Therefore, his specifically male desire is characterized by oscillations of approach and avoidance which are typical of the Lacanian son.

Also illustrative of the Lacanian Everyman's behaviour is the fact that Lockwood linguistically never wants to refer in a determinate way to nature.33 An example of placing the focus away from nature is the scene in which Nelly Dean describes a storm in terms of how it feels and sounds from the inside:

> Either one or the other split a tree off at the corner of the building: a huge bough fell across the roof, and knocked down a portion of the east chimney-stack, sending a clatter of stones and soot into the kitchen fire.34

Another interesting scene is the one in which Lockwood attempts to walk back to Thrushcross Grange from Wuthering Heights (where he has been delayed overnight by a snowstorm) but discovers that the snow has completely covered the moors and has erased the traces of the human marking of nature.35 In this episode, Lockwood attempts to distance himself from nature by turning it into a source of figurative language. Another example of this type of "figurative language" that has nature as its source is Nelly's comment on Cathy's choice between Linton and Heathcliff: "the contrast resembled what you see in exchanging a bleak, hilly coal country for a beautiful fertile valley".36 In this case, the narrator (Nelly Dean – a female servant to the "Symbolic Order") subordinates nature to the priority of human meaning. Another way of distancing nature is by using symbolic landscapes instead of representations of nature for its own sake. An example of that is the way Heathcliff describes Cathy's spirit replacing the landscape: "' […] in every cloud, in every tree – filling the air at

30 Cf. *ibid.*, page 344-5

31 Brontë, E., *Wuthering Heights*, Penguin Group, 1994, page 21

32*ibid.*, page 216

33 Cf. Homans, M.,"The Name of the Mother in *Wuthering Heights*", *in Wuthering Heights*, Edited by L. H. Peterson, Bedford Books of St. Martin Press, 1922, pages 345-6

34*ibid.*, page 83

35 Cf. Homans, *op. cit.*, pages 346-7

36 Brontë, E., *Wuthering Heights*, page 77 apud. Homans, M., "The Name of the Mother in *Wuthering Heights*", in *Wuthering Heights*, Edited by L. H. Peterson, Bedford Books of St. Martin Press, 1922, page 347

night, and caught by glimpses in every object, by day I am surrounded with her image! […]'".37 Therefore, the use of figures and symbolic landscapes that distance nature constitute the language use of a son.38

2.1. "Change" as the Equivalent of Entering the "Symbolic Order"/"Law of the Father"

The stories of the two main female characters (Catherine and her daughter) are stories of female development and of daughters' relations to language: the first Cathy's story represents an uncompromising choice to remain with the mother outside the law, whereas the second Cathy's story represents the compromise that results when the daughter agrees to be incorporated within the law. It is evident that Cathy achieves the process of entering "the father's law" in the scene in which she (at the age of sixteen) takes a walk with Nelly and realises that she is about to face a "great change" which is the equivalent of becoming integrated into the "Symbolic Order". She fears the loss of her father and "foster" mother (Nelly), which would leave her alone and defenceless:39 "Oh, it *will* be something worse, she said. And what shall I do when papa and you leave?" 40 Moreover, Cathy also fears "the change" entailed by confronting Heathcliff because her father has told her of his vengeful spirit. By the end of the novel, the second Cathy embraces "change" and becomes incorporated within the "Law of the Father": she becomes an adult who obeys paternal authority, being happily engaged to be married (to Hareton).41

In contrast with her daughter, the first Cathy (as a child) omits representations of events in nature from her diary because they would be destructive to nature itself. However, later on, as an adolescent, Catherine is capable of producing striking examples of the symbolic use of nature: "My love for Linton is like the foliage in the woods. Time will change it, I'm well aware, as winter changes the trees. My love for Heathcliff resembles the eternal rocks beneath – a source of little visible delight, but necessary".42She experiences this "change" (equivalent to entering the "Symbolic Order")during her adolescence. Nevertheless, despite the "change" –at the end of her life, Catherine wishes to return to her childhood, to Heathcliff and to an unmediated merging with nature: "Oh, if I were but in my own bed in the old house! […] And that wind sounding in the firs by the lattice. Do let me feel it! – it comes straight down the moor – do let me have one breath! […] I was a child; […] I wish I were out of doors! […] Why am I so changed? […]I'm sure I should be myself were I once among the heather on those hills. Open the window again wide: fasten it open! Quick, why don't you move? […] You won't give me a chance of life." 43

This type of relation to nature (that Catherine enjoys) is also obvious in the episode from her childhood that she recounts in the same scene. The content of her story suggests that Catherine's defences are not *against* nature but *of* nature, which sets the heroine apart from characters such as Lockwood, Nelly Dean, or even Heathcliff who is often associated with the forces of nature (due to young Catherine's identification with him), but, in this episode,

37 Brontë, E., *Wuthering Heights*, Penguin Group, 1994, page 268

38 Cf. Homans, M.,"The Name of the Mother in *Wuthering Heights*", *in Wuthering Heights*, Edited by L. H. Peterson, Bedford Books of St. Martin Press, 1922, pages 348-9

39 Cf. *ibid.*, page 351

40 Brontë, E., *Wuthering Heights*, Penguin Group, 1994, page 197

41 Cf. Homans, *op. cit.*, page 352

42 Brontë, E., *Wuthering Heights*, page 87 apud. Homans, M., "The Name of the Mother in *Wuthering Heights*", in *Wuthering Heights*, Edited by L. H. Peterson, Bedford Books of St. Martin Press, 1922, page 352

43 Brontë, E., *Wuthering Heights*, Penguin Group, 1994, pages 115-6

becomes a victimiser of nature.44 She remembers a day on which she and Heathcliff were playing outdoors and her companion set a trap over a lapwing's nest which prevented the bird from returning to its little ones that are, eventually, found dead. In addition, Heathcliff's spiritual son, Hareton also enjoys killing birds. At one point in the novel, we are told that Hareton has gone hunting. We find out that he kills pheasants (instead of lapwings like Heathcliff did): "Hareton Earnshaw was off with his dogs – robbing our woods of pheasants."45 This reinforces the idea of man as a victimiser of nature. Both Catherine and her daughter are in love and permanently bound to men (Heathcliff and Hareton) that do not conceal their destructiveness towards nature.

Catherine's memory of the defenceless lapwings exposes, not nature's destructiveness to human meaning, but a boy's destructiveness towards nature. The heroine wishes to protect the vulnerable nature that Heathcliff takes pleasure in destroying. She makes him promise he would never shoot a lapwing and she, also, pities the young lapwings that die at the hands of Heathcliff. By separating the young lapwings from their parents, he represents and, therefore, symbolically controls his own painful loss. This type of behaviour turns him into a proponent of the "Law of the Father." Catherine has been suppressing this memory and this episode may be part of the scamper on the moors which she omits from her diary not only because she wants to protect nature from representation, but also because she suppresses the knowledge that she is powerless to defend nature from figurative and literal killing at the hand of androcentric law.46

2.2 Feminist Psychoanalytic Perspectives on "Motherhood"

It is in the same scene that Cathy envisions a powerful maternal presence in nature: "I see in you, Nelly, she continued dreamily, an aged woman: you have grey hair and bent shoulders. This bed is the fairy cave under Peniston Crag, and you are gathering elf-bolts to hurt our heifers; pretending, while I am near, that they are only locks of wool. That's what you'll come to fifty years hence: I know you are not so now."47 However, at this point, she is mad and dying, which indicates that the restoration of the mother's presence in nature can only be associated with madness.48

In the novel, there are two perspectives on motherhood in the novel: the extralegal perspective and the one within the "Law of the Father." Becoming a mother is a disadvantage within the "Law of the Father:" Nelly Dean (who, in reality, is a servant to the patrilineal family) subordinates Catherine to the child, and both to the continuity of the Linton family line. Moreover, once Catherine's daughter receives the name "Catherine", the first Catherine loses her name and becomes simply "the mother". The first Catherine's loss of name is the equivalent of her death within language and reminds the reader of the fact that the operation of the "Symbolic Order" requires the mother's absence/death.49

Within the "Law of the Father", motherhood is associated with powerlessness, but, "within Cathy's hallucinatory and extralegal understanding of maternity and childhood, the

44 Cf. Homans, M., "The Name of the Mother in *Wuthering Heights*", in *Wuthering Heights*, Edited by L. H. Peterson, Bedford Books of St. Martin Press, 1922, pages 354-5

45 Brontë, *op. cit.*, pages 209-10

46 Cf. Homans, *op. cit.*, pages 354-5

47 Brontë, E., *op. cit.*, page 114

48 Cf. Homans, *op. cit.*, page 355

49 Cf. *ibid.*, page 357

mother doubles the child".50 Catherine becomes a child by dying while giving birth. This is suggested by: Catherine's wish to be a child on the moors again, her movement (which resembles that of a child) at the moment of her death and her apparition in the form of a child during the night Lockwood spends at Wuthering Heights. Therefore, from an extralegal perspective, motherhood can be equated with a return to childhood, and both with power and life. Moreover, it is not childbirth that makes Catherine powerless and, then, causes her death. It is male interference in pregnancy's rhythms that kills Catherine: her final (and disturbing) meeting with Linton and Heathcliff (whose endless fights torment the heroine) are the real the cause of her death.51

Conclusions

All in all, the fact that the first Cathy dies and the novel ends with the second Cathy accepting the "Law of the Father" is enlightening in terms of Brontë's position in relation to these two types of relationships between woman, language and law.52 By means of the first Cathy, the authoress depicts a woman writer's allegiance to the literal and her refusal of figuration, but, by killing her, Emily Brontë merges her project with Lockwood's (with the son's) and with that of Nelly (as the female servant of patrilineage) who represses literal nature in favour of figuration. However, through the first Cathy, the readers are given a glimpse at a different view and a different allegiance by means of which the oppressive writing of nature and of the mother would be foregone. Moreover, both Brontë and her female characters' emotional confusion and ambivalent relation towards patriarchal institutions can be, at last, understood in connection with the theme of "symbiotic relationship" between mother and child and that of Lacanian "mirror stage –related" identity loss.

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50 Homans, *loc. cit.*
51 Cf. *ibid.*, page 357
52 Cf. *ibid.*, page 357