

Moorland Sublimity and Ecological Desire in *Wuthering Heights*: An Affective Ecocritical Perspective

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DOI: <https://doi.org/10.51244/IJRSI.2026.1308000120>

Received: 21 August 2026; Accepted: 26 August 2026; Published: 08 September 2026

ABSTRACT

This paper offers an affective ecocritical reading of Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*, examining the Yorkshire moorland as an active material force in the formation of human subjectivity, desire, and narrative experience. It argues that the moors function not merely as a romantic or symbolic background but as an agential more-than-human entity that participates in the production of ecological desire. The study distinguishes ecological desire from romantic desire by demonstrating how Catherine Earnshaw's and Heathcliff's identities are shaped through sustained bodily, affective, and material interactions with the moorland. Methodologically, the paper adopts a qualitative, interpretive, and text-based approach that brings together Sara Ahmed's theory of affective economies, Maurice Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology, and Jane Bennett's material ecocriticism. Through these intersecting frameworks, the study examines affective "stickiness," embodied perception, material agency, and the assemblage of human and nonhuman actors in the novel. The findings demonstrate that repeated encounters with the moorland produce an embodied and affective consciousness that cannot be fully separated from the landscape. Catherine's enforced separation from the moors consequently becomes a form of ecological and phenomenological dislocation, while Heathcliff's later attempt to possess and master the landscape transforms ecological attachment into destructive power. The analysis further shows that weather, terrain, vegetation, and other material forces participate in the development of the narrative itself, challenging the conventional distinction between human agency and environmental background. The paper concludes that *Wuthering Heights* presents ecological desire as an irreducible relation between human bodies and more-than-human materiality, while revealing the destructive consequences of ecological separation and the attempt to dominate nonhuman agency.

Keywords: Affective Ecocriticism, Moorland Sublimity, Material Agency, Phenomenology, *Wuthering Heights*.

INTRODUCTION

Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* is the only novel she wrote in her lifetime that gives more than a gloomy love affair. This novel depicts the way in which emotions, bodies, and landscapes come together to produce desire and define who people are. The argument presented here is that the Yorkshire moors are central to a notion we have termed 'moorland sublimity.' The moors represent something more than a romantic background for desire. They are actually a direct force in defining the inner lives of Catherine Earnshaw and Heathcliff, mediated by emotions, bodies, and the agency of the land itself. This paper uses Sara Ahmed's theory of affective economies, where emotions are viewed as shared experiences rather than individual sentiments. Under this theory, the relationship between Heathcliff and the moorland can be seen as an example of 'ecological desire,' something separate entirely from romantic love. For this study, we are using the term 'ecological desire' rather than simply referring to a love of the landscape or a nostalgic recollection of childhood. Instead, ecological desire describes a long-lasting ecological relationship between a human subject and a more-than-human environment, and it is within this relationship that both human and environment are changed. Thus, whereas Romantic desire could be organized around the desire for another human being, here ecological desire is organized around the body's repeated encounters with the material environment. Through these encounters, the human subject of ecological desire is changed by the environment in which they dwell. Catherine's attachment to the moors is not simply a

romantic attachment to a place from her childhood. Rather, her repeated journeys through the landscape, her bodily familiarity with the moors in all weathers, and her sense of the moorland as a space of freedom, indicate a relation to place in which the landscape is not simply a background to human life but a constituent element of the human subject. Catherine's ecological desire is therefore relational rather than possessive. It is not a desire to own or represent nature, rather it is generated through Catherine's dwelling in the landscape, her bodily movement through it, her sensations of it and her responses to it.

This ecological desire is developed through the 'stickiness' of affect, where the emotional, physical contact developed over prolonged exposure to the moorland inoculates, or makes, a certain individual. The relationship developed by Catherine and Heathcliff with the moorland, under this theory, is nothing short of an example of ecological desire. This is developed through the theory developed by phenomenologist Maurice Merleau-Ponty, where bodily interaction, weather, and topography all interact to create a direct, immediate relationship between body, memory, and landscape. Another critical theory useful here is Jane Bennett's notion of 'thing-power,' where the moorland is something more than a symbol for human emotions. The moorland is actually active, playing its part through 'thing-power,' where it impacts, affects, and acts upon Heathcliff. By combining this critical methodology, it appears that the moorland within *Wuthering Heights* is anything but passive, having its part within the development of ecological desire. The separation, or uprooting, of Catherine Earnshaws' ecological desire, or emotional/physical desire for the moorland, leads towards Heathcliff's disastrous return. This demonstrates how ecological separation leads towards personal, individual separation, along with destroying their natural environment. This discussion will argue that the notion of sublimity offered by the moorland demonstrates how ecological desire-or emotional, physical desire-cannot be reconciled by romantic desire. The discussion also claims that its separation leads toward a corrupted return by Heathcliff, resulting in a dysfunctional ecological awareness, which heads towards endangering human, as well as more-than-human futures.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Scholarship on *Wuthering Heights* converges on four broad and intersecting categories: ecocritical studies of attachment to place, eco-feminist and Eco-Gothic approaches to female vulnerability in the landscape, psychoanalytic explanations for identity structure, and supernatural approaches to the nature agency opposition. Though each of these approaches offers something meaningful to the larger tradition of scholarship on the novel, the critical conversation is fragmented and treats each category as separate and distinct.

Contemporary ecocriticism, Mona Gad Ali (2025), states that space and place are differentiated, where the "space" is only denoted by the "place" after experience with the latter (Ali 129). Through her ecological readings, for instance, when Catherine speaks about the "eternal rocks beneath" (Ali 141) and finally when sheathes of heather grow over some of the graves, it is obvious how a feature like the moors is embedded within character identity through affect. While Ali discusses ecological signification with rigorous links to ecological ethics, her readings are largely symbolic, with little direct historical concern for the moors themselves or their translation to political agendas. On the contrary, Basirizadeh et al. (2020) analyze the moors from a socio-historical perspective, viewing nature as "indifferent and punishing", impervious to life, destroying life and how the line between moors and civilization is one that marks alienation in social relations, making "impossible for Catherine to follow her heart and marry Heathcliff" (Basirizadeh et al. 1630). While Basirizadeh et al. (2020)'s ecological concerns through socio-history are more encompassing, their ecological framework is still largely bounded by a nature-civilization split, thereby neglecting ambivalence and psychically supernatural elements like gender.

Eco-Gothic and ecofeminist approaches redirect focus to the idea of gendered vulnerability in relation to the landscape. Suzanne Roberts (2008) suggests that the pastoral enters the realm of the Gothic in relation to the female presence, placing women in the position of experiencing "weird death, threat of death, or something equally terrible" (Roberts i). While her approach highlights the ideological removal of women from pastoral spaces, it also tends to universalize the female experience of danger and forgets the corrective power of younger Cathy's actions. Affective ecocriticism, based on the theory of Sara Ahmed, describes the moors less as a symbol than as an affective substance that is "sticky" with the traces of multiple interacting human and non-human

actors. While this approach highlights female agency and female ecological embodiment, its reliance on metaphor tends to neglect questions of political economy.

Psychoanalytic critique provides an alternative lexicon of interpretation for the intense emotional and relational subtext of the novel. Hamidat Nessrine's (2021) psychoanalytic reading of the novel as informed by Freudian psychoanalysis specifically identifies an "instinctive affinity" and an early reception of Heathcliff as an "object instead of a human being," resulting in an unstable and indivisible identity with no foundational linkage with anything social and secure (Nessrine 41-46). The reading finally accounts for compulsion to repetition, affect-violence, and fragmentation, but effectively isolates matter and gender as structure, limiting the terms of meaning to preclude dialogue with ecocritical approaches to meaning. However, the nexus of psychoanalysis and ecocriticism discloses an important moment of interpretative failure: the moors function as an internalized psychological object rather than as a symbolic space. The illness of Catherine upon her return to the moors indicates an identity not one of nostalgia but disarticulation, and this points to the inseparability of psychological and ecological discourses.

Yet, romantic and supernatural interpretations further muddy the ways in which Environmental Imagination develops in this text. According to Jordan Cymrot (2020), *Wuthering Heights* must be read through the lens of the romantic sublime, where nature itself becomes "an active, and often overpowering" to which men and women "give in" (Cymrot 41). This reading of Heathcliff's admission that "haunt me then.... be with me always" (Brontë 146) shows how the presence of the moors becomes a manifestation of agency and where boundaries between nature and supernatural blur and disappear. While this interpretive framework recognizes agency within landscape and emphasizes how *Wuthering Heights* breaks with realist narratives, it seldom interacts with gendered, classed, or materialized conditions under which encounters with the sublime occur. Materialist ecocriticism reading through Jane Bennett's theory of 'vibrant matter' moves supernatural politics to "lively powers" inscribed in 'vibrant matter' that exist independently of human intentions in nature, where 'lively powers' manifest in wind, heather, and stone, rather than supernatural politics of fantasy and fantasizing.

Another important role was played by the work of Samuel Blackburn in 2020, when he wrote about the difference between the terms "environment" and "setting." The environment was seen as an objective force that influences all the characters, while settings are the specific locations responsible for the psychological changes in each character, specifically. Hence, the role played by the moors was that of the environment, while the role played by Thrushcross Grange was that of the setting (Blackburn 40-51). This determinism demonstrated by Brontë indicates that characters tend to return to their origins determined by the character of the environment; the fact that the near-death experience of one character brings the realization that "I wish I were a girl again, half savage and hardy.....Why am I so changed?" (Brontë 110) indicates the inseparability between the character and the environment represented by the moors.

Among these approaches, there appear to be a number of significant points of divergence. There persists a siloed body of scholarship largely considering the ecological, psychic, and gendered aspects to be points of divergence. Ecocritical interpretation appears to largely defer to the non-art historical facts regarding the moors and agrarian or socioeconomic practices. There persists a tendency to treat the categories of gender, class, race, and the environment along singular tracks, resulting largely in an under analysis of the minor protagonists Nelly, Lockwood, Isabella, and Hareton and their own roles within the environment. Further, it appears that there has been little work done regarding how the attachments to the landscape implicated by aesthetic approaches will provide means to specific kinds of political and ethical engagements.

Research Gaps

Recent research has reinforced the ecological reading of *Wuthering Heights*. For example, Ali's (2025) detailed study of the ecological interconnections between self and place, between Catherine, Heathcliff and the moors is a significant addition to the existing body of work. Martin's (2025) essay on *Wuthering Heights* studied through the lens of affect, ecocriticism, anthropocentrism, vital materialism and Gothic climate narrative is also a recent publication that has reinforced the studies of weather, of storms, and of human-nature relations that are part of the narrative and psychological structures of *Wuthering Heights*. As a result, it is becoming increasingly difficult

to maintain a research gap on the grounds that nature has not been recognized as active enough, or that human identity has not been connected to landscape enough.

Recent ecocritical scholarship has established the importance of the moors in shaping identity, affect, and human–nature relations (Ali 125–54; Martin 273–92). However, the particular form of attachment produced through sustained bodily and affective engagement with the moorland has received comparatively less conceptual attention as a distinct form of desire. The more specific gap addressed by this study is therefore conceptual rather than merely thematic. Existing scholarship has examined the significance of place, weather, and human–environment relations in *Wuthering Heights* (Goodlad 107–38). Other work has also explored the intersection of ecological and erotic desire in the novel’s representation of Catherine and Heathcliff (Patnaik 30–42). Building on these approaches, this study develops “ecological desire” to describe an embodied and affective attachment to the more-than-human environment that is distinct from, though intertwined with, romantic desire and nostalgia. This study therefore develops “ecological desire” to describe a relational mode of attachment in which repeated sensory and bodily encounters with the more-than-human environment become constitutive of subjectivity without being reducible to romantic love or symbolic representation.

Research Objectives

The general goal of this research is the establishment of an affective ecocritical approach for the representation of *Wuthering Heights* in the context of the sublimity of the moorland environment and its effects on human–environment relationships. More specifically, this research aims at the synthesis of Sara Ahmed’s approach on affect with ecocriticism for the following purposes: the interpretation of the affective effects on the creation of ecological subjectivity within the context of the moors; the definition and conceptual framework for the definition of ecological desire in the context of the love for nature and the more-than-human nature world; the application of phenomenology for the interpretation of the bodily experience with the moorland environment and its effects on the characterization of its sublimity on an interpretive level beyond the metaphorical approach for the abovementioned definition involving the moorland environment agencies within the approach of material ecocriticism.

Theoretical Framework

Ahmed criticizes this emotion-as-feeling model in favor of one in which emotion is generated by orientations toward things “it is through emotions, or how we respond to objects and others, that surfaces or boundaries are made” (Ahmed 10). The Moor is thus a sticky object, accumulating emotions through encounters. On Hume’s idea of impression, Ahmed demonstrates how things leave traces on bodily surfaces; thus, the moor impresses itself on Catherine and Heathcliff, leaving traces on their surfaces. Emotion is generated through affective economies; emotions thus move like capital, accumulating on things. Immanence in imprisoning makes this moor anything but threatening or comforting until something touches it; thus, “it is the objects of emotion that circulate, rather than emotion as such” (Ahmed 11); thus, the moorland is involved in narrative, in consciousness, as the object on which emotions are gathered and move.

This is why Merleau-Ponty emphasizes the active, bodily nature of perception: “consciousness is in the first place not a matter of I think that but of I can” (Ponty 159). The intentional arc is a structuring of perception “which projects round about us our past, our future, our human setting, our physical, ideological and moral situation” (Ponty 157). The perception of the moors is always already filtered for Catherine by memory, escape, and society. The notion of operative intentionality is one of pre-reflective bodily awareness, where the bodily motion towards the world is automatic, as seen by the return of the characters to the moors, where their bodily striving overreaches their intentional aim. By motor intentionality, consciousness is “being-towards-thething through the intermediary of the body” (Ponty 160). In this way, the moors are known by incorporation, or by the facticity of the body.

Bennett criticizes the distinctions between “dull matter” and “vital life” in world-making by insisting on the agency of nonhuman materiality. The moorland is no longer a mere setting but rather a vibration full of its own dispositions to act and effects to accomplish. Thing-power describes this irreducible effectiveness of the moorland to act beyond human understanding, to act on other bodies in its presence as a living thing. To be an

actant (Latour), moorland changes paths, desires, and occurrences through performances that transform desired outcomes. Impersonal affects or material energy underscore this independence of possibility to act; to respond to other objects, we never understand a body without understanding its power to act. The moorland involves assemblages, “ad hoc groupings of diverse elements” (Bennett 23) with Catherine, Heathcliff, and landscape involved in “living, throbbing confederation” (Bennett 23) where neither object nor subject determines outcomes alone. Agency involves relationships between humans and nonhumans is found in confederacy rather than singular purposefulness. Conative bodies (Spinoza) strive to improve their power through engagement attempts of all involved and of the moorland itself to improve power through engagement with others.

Ecological desire is the product of the intersection of the affective, phenomenological, and material aspects. On the affective side, the moor is an attractive object to which desires accrue; the force of ‘I am Heathcliff’ is the orientation between human subjectivity and the landscape, not the human person. Ecologically, the moor is an intentional space that intertwines human movement through the landscape and the landscape as a space through which human movement takes place; the intentional arc expands the visual field to incorporate the temporal arc that crosses the landscape: memory, imagined futures, limitations imposed by the terrain. On the material side, the moor has the force of a thing and is an actant within the assemblage; weather, terrain, and the force of the landscape shape trajectories and exercise conative force. Ecological desire, in contrast to romantic desire, structures the relation to the landscape as vital, active and present that is an agent within the production of the desires that it also excites. The three perspectives are used for different analytical purposes. Ahmed’s theory of affective economies is primarily used to outline how in repeated encounters with the moorland emotional force accumulates and in which way the landscape becomes affectively “sticky.” In contrast to that, Merleau-Ponty’s phenomenology is used to explore how Catherine and Heathcliff in their experiences of the moors are bodily present. Their experiences are composed of their movements, of the weather, of distances, of textures and of orientations in space. Bennett’s material ecocriticism is used at a third level of analysis in this study. Here nonhuman materialities such as wind, stone, snow, heather, and plants are analyzed for the effects which they produce and which cannot be attributed to human intentions. Recent scholarship likewise emphasizes the active ecological and affective force of the moors and climate, particularly in relation to Catherine and Heathcliff (Martin 281; Shlaka 1357). On this basis, affect accounts for emotional accumulation, phenomenology accounts for embodied subject formation, and material ecocriticism accounts for distributed material agency. Ecological desire emerges at their intersection.

METHODOLOGY

The paper is using a qualitative, interpretive, and text-based approach, applying Affect Theory (Ahmed), Phenomenology (Merleau-Ponty), and Material Ecocriticism (Bennett) concurrently. Brontë’s *Wuthering Heights* (1858), published by Harper & Brothers, is the main text because of its significance to the topic, while purposive sampling of those text sections that best represent the description of landscapes, immersion, and the effect of these environments on subjectivities is also carried out. Secondary sources include influential theoretical texts, as well as peer-reviewed ecocriticism, eco-gothic, and posthuman studies that can be accessed from online academic publications. To that end, this paper observes impeccable academic integrity because all the citations that have been used in this paper are made in conformity with the MLA 9th Edition Guidelines.

DISCUSSION

Ecological Desire vs. Romantic Desire

Catherine’s story demonstrates an inherent conflict between two modes of longing. Ecological longing, organized by ties to the landscape and freedom there, differs profoundly from the romantic longing for connection to an individual and social acceptance. The role of affect in this process is clarified by Ahmed’s affect theory: emotions accrue from repeated encounters and become ‘stuck’ by proximity. Cathy’s childhood memories of escape to the moors embody an affective stickiness, rather than personal connection, to consciousness and the landscape rather than the person. Her statement, “I’d not exchange, for a thousand lives, my condition here for Edgar Linton’s at Thrushcross Grange” (Brontë 43), demonstrates an attachment to being rather than to romantic longing. Catherine’s language elsewhere in the novel complicates any attempt to reduce

her relation to the moors to nostalgia. In her dream of heaven, she recalls being thrown “into the middle of the heath on the top of Wuthering Heights,” where she awakens “sobbing for joy.” The significance of the scene lies not simply in Catherine’s preference for a rural environment but in the way the landscape operates as the place in which her sense of self is restored. The heath is associated with a bodily and affective state from which she does not experience herself as separate. At the same moment, Catherine describes Heathcliff as “more myself than I am,” creating an important conceptual overlap between romantic attachment and ecological belonging. While Catherine’s relationship with Heathcliff and her relationship with the moor are two very different relations, they are not mutually exclusive. Rather, through a network of human and environmental relations, the novel Catherine’s identity. While her relationship with Heathcliff is of an interpersonal nature and therefore is fundamentally different from her relationship with the moor, which is environmental and therefore bodily, both contribute to the formation of the self. Ecological readings of Catherine and Heathcliff, such as recently by Ali, highlight the interrelation between self and place, and therefore show that in the novel environmental relations are not merely decorative (Ali 139). Edgar’s marriage requires an embodied alienation from the moor to be indoors, with corseting enforced that obstructs one’s breath, and wild talk muted. On Merleau-Ponty’s philosophy, Catherine’s body has been trained in moorland habit dwelling in barefoot running, one acquires proprioceptive awareness of expansive horizons; in unlimited motion, one traces awareness in one’s consciousness. Compulsion on Catherine in Thrushcross Hall translates embodied consciousness in opposition. There is no tragedy in this text with regard to romantic transgression; instead, there is phenomenological disconnection, a consciousness shaped in ecological liberty cannot thrive in embodied oppression. While romantic desire may be transferred from one person to another, this is not possible with ecological desire. There is an irreparable loss in this moorland freedom relinquished.

Moorland Consciousness Formation

The subjective life is constructed through three interlocking processes. First, there is affect accumulation, the repeated escape journeys into the moors lead to an amplification of emotional attachment to the landscape, each episode adding up, so the moor is rendered “sticky” along the lines discussed by Ahmed. The three years spent at Thrushcross represent an effective rift, as distance diminishes the attractive power of the moor. Second, corporeal habituation, “habit-body” is Merleau-Ponty’s term for the development of consciousness. Running barefoot on the moorland granite induces an irrevocable proprioceptive habituation, coping with the weather conditions trains the habituation of the forces of the atmosphere, and the expansive horizons habit the visual consciousness for the geological scale. This specific habit is irrevocable. When Catherine expresses, “I should be myself were I once among the heather on those hills” (Brontë 110), she states that her “true self” is not an essence but produced by the landscape of the moors. Third, material habituation, Bennett’s thing-power, illustrates how the nonhuman actively constitutes consciousness through its encounters. The matter of the moor, stone, heather, weather, botanical activity, habituates consciousness according to its rhythms, rather than waiting to be discovered by human consciousness. This is an ecologically ontological process: the moor shows how consciousness must necessarily respond to the nonhuman. The novel shows how this triple formation of consciousness is a unique process, one that is irreversible. This formed consciousness is impossible to reverse through domestication once it is produced by dwelling in the moors during childhood.

The novel therefore presents ecological dislocation as a significant dimension of Catherine’s crisis without establishing a simple causal equation between separation from the moors and death. During her delirium, Catherine explicitly links her changed condition to her separation from the world of her childhood. She remembers herself as having once been “Oh, I’m burning! I wish I were out of doors! I wish I were a girl again, half savage and hardy, and free” and insists, “I’m sure I should be myself were I once among the heather on those hills” (Brontë 110). Her repeated attempt to reopen the window and orient her body toward the outside further suggests that the landscape remains an important coordinate of embodied self-recognition. The ecological interpretation is therefore strongest when it treats Catherine’s illness as a condition of psychological, social, and bodily dislocation in which environmental separation is one important factor rather than as evidence of a deterministic phenomenological law. This more cautious reading is also consistent with recent scholarship that connects Catherine’s fragmentation to the disruption of human–nonhuman relations without reducing her death to a single environmental cause (Martin 281).

Heathcliff's Corrupted Ecology

Catherine signifies the phenomenological rupture, while Heathcliff signifies the destructive power of ecological mastery attempted upon the ecology itself. Linked to the moorland and the wild, his initial participation is in the moorland experience itself. Later, his experience gets redefined. Failing to realize his existence within the moorland materiality itself, his intention shifts to using it; that is, to make the land and the people his servants in his path of revenge against the earth itself, as the attained possession of both Heights and Grange marks the attempted ecological mastery of the landscape turned into his property, his will. Bennett proposes the notion of thing-power as an acknowledgement of the autonomy and agency of nonhuman entities. The corrupting influence of Heathcliff's character arises precisely from this failure to acknowledge autonomy.

Heathcliff is in relation to the environment through the logic of mastery and possession. This is most evident in the way in which he acquires property, which is in complete contrast to his previous ecological participatory relationship with the moors. As was stated before, ecological desire is relational rather than proprietary. Romero-Pérez's ecofeminist reading connects the novel's treatment of nature with structures of domination and the "master model" that shapes Catherine and Heathcliff's relations (Romero-Pérez 8–10). Therefore, Heathcliff's transformation from participant to proprietor is a distortion of ecological desire. For as Heathcliff gains more and more material power, he becomes increasingly alienated from the reciprocal relation that he had with the moors when he was a participant. The more that Heathcliff gains control of the world around him, the more he becomes alienated from the natural world. He gains control of Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange.

His use of moorland, architecture, and the bodies of other beings as mere objects typifies this failure to acknowledge autonomy and reduces living beings and land to objects to do with as he wishes. From one actor among several in an assemblage to the directing force of the landscape, Heathcliff sees sovereignty as an option for himself, and the text asks how much he fails to acknowledge his connections to the nonhuman world by ending with his belief in the existence of spirits.

Material Agency and Narrative Co-Authorship

The novel sets forth an important philosophical gesture, the happening of narrative as the result of collaboration between human intentionality and material forces. As Bennett describes thing-power, "the curious ability of inanimate things to animate, to act, to produce effects dramatic and subtle" (Bennett 6). Lockwood's entrapment by the November snow is made possible by the independent agency of the snowstorm, pushing Lockwood inside, thus setting into motion the process of storytelling by Nelly, and thus the mechanism by which the tale is conveyed to the reader. Without the agency of the snowstorm and the ensuing imprisonment, the framework of the story would not hold together. Snowstorm demonstrates the presence of actants, not as mere background but as agency leading to the efficacy of storytelling. Similarly, the violent tempests occur simultaneously with emotional disruption; the weather is not just a metaphor for the inner turmoil; rather, it is a material part of the process. The geological and botanical aspects build upon this material co-authorship. The crumbling stone griffins on the Heights represent centuries beyond control; Catherine measures her experiences using the phrase "eternal rocks beneath" (Brontë 72), denoting the stone composition on the moor as materializing passion. Most definitively, after the death of Heathcliff, "heath and bilberry plants" (Brontë 147) rise from the moor itself to cover his burial site.

When we look at how nature works, we shouldn't think that it's like a person, telling us a story or trying to make a point. What's really happening is that the natural world just keeps on going, even after people have done all they can. For example, plants and trees grow over old graves, changing how they look and putting human suffering into a bigger picture of life and death that's beyond our control. Some scholars who study how people and nature interact have also pointed out that things like the weather and the environment play a big role in shaping the relationships between humans and the natural world. Recent ecocritical scholarship likewise emphasizes the active role of climate and material processes in shaping the novel's human-nature relations (Martin 273–92; Shlaka 1352–63). So, it's not that nature is "telling" us something, but rather that the natural world is a part of the story, even after people are done with it.

The Urban Body Meets Moorland Resistance

There is a strong connection between the urban/civilized body and the resistant moorland body. Lockwood is indicative of this urban body; this civilized man who is accustomed to patterns and rules in civilized social response and reaction. On the other hand, however, everything on this moor is constantly resisting his desires. He is forced indoors by the weather, attacked by dogs, and his attempts at contact with the locals are denied in any form or manner. His nightmare in Catherine's bedroom is evidence of this battle in his mind between his own moorland invaders as he becomes conscious of the existence of areas beyond the reach of reason. Edgar Linton is trying to bring civility to both Catherine and Thrushcross Grange. However, Catherine, knowing the moorland, is ultimately obstinate. This is not particularly effective for his plan of taming. He looks down upon the gipsy winds signaling his defiance against the power of the moorland. The moorland, however, is a presence to shatter his ordered world. Illness and death can be considered his ultimate dissatisfaction in his attempts at taming. Cathy and Hareton symbolize an alternative approach, that of reconciliation, not conquest. While Cathy is exposed to the complexities of the urban world, she also discovers a susceptibility to naturalness and the moors. Hareton is exposed to the destructive and degrading moorland traditions of living of Heathcliff and acquires urban knowledge and a bodily relationship with the moors, too. There is a move towards the idea of dwelling with the moorland situation and a recognition of necessary relationships with nonhuman entities, instead of mastering them. The next generation might be able to break free from the controlling ways of the past. The relationship between Cathy and Hareton shows a shift from trying to own or control things to learning from each other, finding common ground, and living together in harmony. Romero-Pérez similarly argues that education and the second generation offer a possible reconciliation of the opposing "master model" (Romero-Pérez 17). So, the ending doesn't just mean going back to the way things were, but rather a possible way for humans and the environment to coexist peacefully. This new generation can learn from the past and find a way to live in harmony with nature, rather than trying to control it. By doing so, they can create a better future for themselves and the environment.

CONCLUSION

The Yorkshire moors in Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* are more than just a pretty backdrop - they play a big role in shaping who the characters are, what they want, and how the story unfolds. Some recent studies have also highlighted how the landscape, weather, and physical surroundings in the novel are active players, not just passive scenery (Martin 273–92; Shlaka 1352–63). This study takes that idea a step further by exploring the concept of "ecological desire", which is a deep emotional connection to the natural world that's different from romantic love, nostalgia, or just liking a particular place. It's about how the characters' feelings and experiences are deeply tied to the land and environment around them. This reading shows that *Wuthering Heights*, through its moorland sublime, acknowledges an irreconcilable tension between romantic and ecological desire. This irreconcilability of romantic and ecological desire in *Wuthering Heights* appears less through symbolic mediation than through its conceptual understanding of the Yorkshire Moors' role within its narrative synthesis, not as a symbolic reservoir but rather as an affective system with its own agency apart from romance and human emotion. The subject formation between Catherine and Heathcliff appears instead to be defined by its bodily relation with this land, this weather. This reading, however, does not reduce her illness and death to environmental causation. Rather, separation from the moors forms one dimension of her wider psychological, social, and embodied dislocation. Recent ecocritical scholarship likewise connects Catherine and Heathcliff's identities to their material and ecological surroundings (Martin 273–92; Duell 100–117). The narrative framework, set in motion instead through weather mapped across the observations of city-based bodies unable to link with those of weather perceptive moorland-based ones, instantiates instead this understanding between *Wuthering Heights* and the reader about human narrative having necessary collaborative linkages with nonhuman matter to which its semantic constructive division between civilized speak and reason's configured mastery remains essential outsiders. While Catherine expresses an ecological desire to become part of the landscape of the North, in the moorland, Heathcliff's early participation in the environment of the farmhouse is gradually transformed into a possessive relationship with the land and with houses, and with bodies. This ecological desire is therefore distorted when attachment is transformed into mastery. The contrast between participation and possession is at the heart of this study's argument and it is not easily resolved. The environment, the landscape and the elemental forces that comprise it cannot be fully incorporated into human will. Recently

there have been a number of materialist readings of a variety of texts, which emphasize that the environment and its elemental forces continue to exceed human intention (Duell 100–117).

Additionally, the same set of physical processes such as weather, growth of plants and animals, and the physical features of the landscape continue to change the spaces left by the characters long after those characters have ceased to have any intentional influence on those spaces. Again, this is not to suggest that nature is now a conscious narrator bringing the novel to a close. Rather, just as the climate is affecting the spaces left by the characters, so too are materiality and the nonhuman world affecting the spaces that the characters had sought to make their own, long after they have ceased to have any influence (Martin 273–92; Duell 100–117).

In identifying *Wuthering Heights* as the study of ecological desire as opposed to another ecological novel, I found that the novel's greatest contribution was to an understanding of how affective attachment, embodied perception, and material agency form the human subject. The novel draws a distinction between ecological relation and ecological mastery. Catherine's attachment to the moors is formative in part because she has lived there, whereas Heathcliff's possession of the Heights and then the Grange has devastating effects on the environment and the people with whom he comes into contact. The movement towards Cathy and Hareton does not represent a return to untamed 'nature' but rather a tentative exploration of shared human habitation and of relational ways of being in the world.

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