**WH Open Questions**

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**General Meaning:** One ought to rebel against anything or anyone who keeps him from being fully human, fully free, fully himself. To do so is to “get it right” in Emily Brontë’s world.

1989: Make a “good case for distortion” as distinct from literary realism. Analyze how important elements of the work you choose are “distorted” and explain how those distortions contribute to the effectiveness of the work.

**Key Word:** Distortion (hyperbole or other exaggerated/unrealistic elements in the story)

**Possible Elements**

- **Heathcliff:** Hyperbolic character is nearly Satan, commits acts totally unrealistic (raises Hareton to turn out messed up, marries dying only son, whom he doesn't care about, solely to gain property, marries Isabella solely for social standing/to get closer to Catherine/to get property; doesn’t love her); this adds to the intensity of his moral rise/fall before cosmic harmony is restored and convinces reader that Heathcliff is dynamic character/truly loves Catherine--but revenge is unfulfilling, distorted until death when he can be with Catherine again, and distortion started when Catherine goes to TG finally becomes realism again

- **Catherine** - Distortion of her character once she goes to TG, hyperbolic love for Heathcliff and sickness (“dies of a broken heart”), “Open window to give me a chance at life”; “oak in flowerpot”--character too distorted for proper reality of TG

1995: Show how a character’s alienation reveals the surrounding society’s assumptions and moral values.

**Key Word:** Alienation (character who doesn't belong, oak in flowerpot)

**Possible Characters**

- **Heathcliff:** Gypsy boy father Earnshaw brings home to WH, not at all like rest of family; “savage”; values of Victorian society are alien to him--he’s not the kind of person to marry off, respect high society, arrange marriages (until he does so in revenge against society by marrying Linton and Cathy); satanic outsider--clearly reveals that one must be where he can thrive (with Catherine) to survive

- **Catherine:** Oak in flowerpot, taken off to TG and then alien element there, belongs at WH, not high-society girl, miserable married to Edgar, does so for no real reason other than that he loves her (conversation with Nelly that Heathcliff overhears)--rebellion would have saved her from woes of alienation at TG--she alienates herself

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1996: Identify “some kind of spiritual reassessment or moral reconciliation” and explain its significance.

**Key Word:** Reconciliation (restoration of cosmic harmony/happy ending/everyone in right place)

**Key Points**
- Disrupted when Catherine bitten by Skulker and goes to TG for a few weeks, she returns totally different both physically and mentally
- **“OAK IN FLOWERPOT”** (ends when Catherine dies with window open and returns to WH)
- **WINDOW IMAGERY (Throw this into basically any essay.)**
  a. LW in room with Catherine’s name scratched into walls and Catherine’s journals written on pages of old books; Catherine’s ghost claws at the window in an attempt to get IN to WH.
  b. Catherine and Heathcliff out playing together: Look through window IN to TG, Catherine bitten by Skulker, goes IN; Heathcliff stays outside IN window and looks IN at Catherine; can’t reach/communicate with her--After this event novel changes as cosmic harmony is disrupted
  c. Catherine wants Nelly to open window for her to look OUT of TG, Nelly refuses so that Catherine won’t get a cold; Catherine says Nelly won’t give her a “chance at life”
  d. Catherine’s window open so that she can go OUT of TG when she dies, Heathcliff is waiting outside
  e. Heathcliff’s window open when he dies so that he can go out of WH to meet up with Catherine in moors, look of exultation on his face, finally happy
- Catherine and Heathcliff restored to each other at end; Cathy and Hareton allowed to love, everyone in right place, “oak in flowerpot,” “moral teething” over”--Heathcliff and Catherine can love forever where they belong in the afterlife

2002: Explain how a character is morally ambiguous and how that quality relates to work as whole.

**Key Words:** Morally ambiguous (not clearly good or bad, grey/somewhere in middle)

**Characters**
- **Heathcliff:** Commits horrible acts (marrying Isabella, marrying off of Linton, abuse of Hareton, rebuke of dying Catherine, violence toward Cathy--pulls her hair in fight) but for a moral reason--wants to restore moral order/cosmic harmony. Is he bad? Uses awful means to achieve good ends.
- Helps to reveal central meaning of novel--Rebellion, even if morally ambiguous, is a good thing. May not seem right in proper society to rebel, but to do so is the only way for a person to be in his true place/be happy.
2012: Explain how cultural, geographical, or physical surroundings shape a character’s psychological/moral traits.

**Key Words:** Cultural, geographical, surroundings, moral

**Characters**

- **Catherine:** In wrong surroundings at TG, with Edgar instead of Heathcliff, “oak in flowerpot,” results in her being miserable, dying, cosmic harmony broken, asks Nelly to “give chance at life” by opening window
  - See window imagery list presented earlier, key examples of geography/surroundings changes
  - Morally ambiguous toward end of life--talks to Heathcliff while Edgar is off at church on Sunday
- Differences between WH and TG--WH less refined, more homey, stormy (children of the storm); TG more culturally elevated, less natural, less given into human nature, but each one is preferable environment for certain people, neither is better
- **Heathcliff:** The case for alienation from ‘95 essentially answers this: Heathcliff is alien element in wrong cultural surroundings (especially when visiting Catherine at TG), gypsy boy not related to main characters of story by blood, as a result has “moral teething”/commits morally ambiguous acts--His desire to be in his proper surrounding culturally (free to human nature, with Catherine) leads his morality into ambiguity.
  - Rebukes Catherine upon her death as part of “moral teething”: Placing herself in the wrong environment has influenced them both morally/psychologically, making them both miserable and morally grey

2013: Choose pivotal moment in psychological or moral development of a single character; explain how it shapes meaning of work as whole.

**Key Words:** Moral, psychological (epiphany)

**Characters**

- **Heathcliff:** Witnesses conversation b/t Catherine and Nelly in which Catherine says she loves Heathcliff but will marry Edgar anyway (and hopes the two men will be fine with it), becomes more distanced from Catherine, realizes that she has put herself in wrong place--and as a result he is in the wrong place and grows morally ambiguous/satanic to restore cosmic harmony. Enforces general theme to rebel however necessary after this single moment solidifies the separation between the two.
- **Catherine:** Bitten by Skulker while out exploring with Heathcliff, taken into TG until Christmas, comes back totally changed/refined as “oak in flowerpot”--She is no longer in her right place, and whole novel falls out from here. She grows miserable/cold, no longer the young mischievous/rebellious Catherine who so irked Nellie Dean.
- Throw in some window imagery here (see earlier list). First window at TG after dog bit is break and pivotal moment in change; leads to her total separation from Heathcliff and the life she’s meant to live.

2017: Explain how character’s mysterious origins shape him and his relationships as well as the work’s whole meaning.

Key Words: Origins, relationships

Character (He’s too easy.)
- **Heathcliff**: Comes home with father Earnshaw after trip from Liverpool, introduced as breaker of dreams (the gifts Earnshaw promised his kids don’t turn up), not related by blood to anyone in WH/TG
  - Mysterious origins mean that WH is his proper setting (not TG)—So when Catherine ends up at TG, his relationship with her decays to the dying rebuke he leaves her with (she’s her own murderer; how could Heathcliff love his only love’s murderer?)
  - Abuse by Hindley as child because of Heathcliff’s status as Earnshaw’s favorite (even though he’s not related) leads Heathcliff to take on Hindley’s model and eventually become a tyrant (mistreats Hareton and Cathy, reduplication of Heathcliff and Catherine’s love, but Heathcliff still tries to prevent their relationship)
- Whole meaning: Heathcliff is from mysterious alien place, so he doesn’t fit in, and WH/TG transform him into a tyrant undergoing a “moral teething,” an “oak in a flowerpot”: His relationships with others take turn for worse as he attempts to restore cosmic order by getting back to his origins (free child of love unconcerned with propriety), finally happy when he dies with window open and can be with Catherine at WH forever