

Isabella Linton, incest survivor, and Heathcliff, her husband from British India

No coward soul is mine

By Alicia Clarke, CPA

U.S. Copyright Office Registration TXu 2-428-468

Abstract

Combining our knowledge of history with modern science, English grammar, and British inheritance laws sheds new light on the story of Isabella Linton Heathcliff. In addition to illuminating Isabella's tale, this information also offers insight into Heathcliff's South Asian heritage. The reason for and result of their interracial marriage provides readers with new perspectives about Emily Brontë and her powerful novel, *Wuthering Heights*.

In the editor's preface to the 1850 edition of *Wuthering Heights*, Charlotte Brontë under the pseudonym, Currer Bell, "avowed that over much of *Wuthering Heights* there broods 'a horror of great darkness'" (Brontë and Nestor 2003, xlviii).¹ Since 1847, readers have been analyzing the novel's darkness but have not yet fully examined its great horror. That great horror is incest. Linton is not the son of Isabella and her husband, Heathcliff. Instead, Linton is the son of Isabella and her brother, Edgar. Emily Brontë hid this plot in plain sight, which can mirror the nature of incest, leaving Isabella's story to remain untold.

The act of incest is almost impossible to fathom. Throughout history, it has been and remains taboo. Upon hearing of incest, people may experience denial, shock, and confusion. It takes time to process this unnatural relationship and to understand the signs of it that have nevertheless been present all along. In *Wuthering Heights*, readers

have sensed its existence. However, it has been linked to the foster brother/sister relationship of Heathcliff and Catherine Earnshaw instead of the biological sibling relationship of Edgar and Isabella Linton.

This misinterpretation has occurred because the primary focus of *Wuthering Heights* has been the intense bond between Heathcliff and Catherine. Their doomed love for one another has been a recurring subject in theatre, film, and literary analysis. It will endure as such because *Wuthering Heights* is one of the most acclaimed novels in English literature. However, their undying love, as well as its dramatic consequences, must be examined in light of Heathcliff's marriage to Isabella. Their marriage was forged through deceit. Heathcliff hastily married Isabella to take revenge on her brother, Edgar, whereas 5½ weeks pregnant Isabella wed Heathcliff in a desperate attempt to protect the Linton family honor and provide a surname for her unborn child.

Brontë diverts attention away from Isabella and the theme of incest using Heathcliff's volatile personality and Catherine's fiery temper. Heathcliff's love for Catherine and his vengeful actions toward the other characters monopolize most of the readers' attention. Isabella, on the other hand, is presented as a meek secondary character who ultimately fades into the background when she escapes both Thrushcross Grange and Wuthering Heights. Yet upon more careful examination, it appears that Isabella should be viewed as a more central figure. Her letter written to the narrator, Ellen Dean, is the only letter printed in the 337-page narrative. Her voice, in addition to that of the two narrators, is presented to readers in the first person. Thus, this letter is a significant tip-off that Isabella plays an important role in *Wuthering Heights*.

Interestingly, information found in Anne Brontë's *The Tenant at Wildfell Hall* and Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, also support *Wuthering Heights*' incest theme. The Brontë sisters likely discussed one another's novels, and readers can recognize their

similar vocabulary usage. The sisters themselves even included a kin connection between characters in *Wuthering Heights* and *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*. Their male narrators, Mr. Lockwood in *Wuthering Heights* and Gilbert Markham in *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, are first cousins (Brontë and Davies 1996, xiv).²

All three sisters' books were written to tell truths. Throughout *Jane Eyre*, Jane communicates, "I am merely telling the truth" (Brontë and Davies 2006, 128)³ to "I felt the truth" (Brontë and Davies 2006, 359) to "I beg your pardon, it is the literal truth" (Brontë and Davies 2006, 510). In *the Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, Anne Brontë described her writing on July 22, 1848:

I wished to tell the truth, for truth always conveys its own moral to those who are able to receive it. But as the priceless treasure too frequently hides at the bottom of a well, it needs some courage to dive for it (Brontë and Davies 1996, 3).

Emily Brontë also wanted to tell the truth, yet her signs of incest can be extremely difficult to identify. She challenges her readers to dive deeply to discover the true nature of Isabella's situation. The relevant information has been carefully written into the text to only whisper of the incest theme. Thus, Brontë placed this taboo subject before her readers to expose the destructive nature of incest while simultaneously hiding it for fear of the destruction that writing about incest could cause. Brontë courageously wrote to reveal and to conceal. I believe this theme, which has remained hidden for almost two centuries, is her novel's priceless treasure.

Brontë's writing echoes her sister Charlotte's statement, "I believe language to have been given us to make our meaning clear, and not to wrap it in dishonest doubt" (Brontë and Nestor 2003, xliii). Henceforth, it will be Emily Brontë's own words which detail that Isabella is an incest survivor seeking a better life for herself and her child.

Readers can now bear witness to Isabella's strength and fortitude at a time when the options for a pregnant eighteen-year-old woman were severely limited.

To begin this literary analysis, readers are required to bend their mindset back through time to align with that of a person living in England during 1847 and reading a book set in England between 1771 and 1802. Our current beliefs and advancement in knowledge and historical time have created a world that is completely different between then and now. To give two examples from the novel, consider that today no one sleeps in bed boxes like the oak closet used by Mr. Lockwood when he stayed at Wuthering Heights. Second, vaccines now exist for tuberculosis, otherwise known as consumption, that caused Frances Earnshaw's death. Therefore, only after readers adopt and immerse themselves in these earlier historical, cultural, and scientific perspectives will the incest theme appear.

There are seven ways to achieve this shift. First, readers must remove from their minds all images from theatre and film of actors and actresses who have portrayed the *Wuthering Heights*' characters. These visuals act as a form of bias. Readers must visualize the characters using Brontë's descriptions alone.

Second, readers must eliminate all current images of the term, gipsy, and rely instead solely on the reports from early nineteenth-century eyewitnesses. Their written accounts contain the accurate information as there was no photography at that time. Today's blended English gypsy community are the descendants of these earlier gipsies.

Third, readers must understand that the derogatory term, lascar, was used for the thousands of South and Southeast Asian males who worked on ships transporting goods back and forth to England and her colonies (Cultural India 2021; Kala 2021). These men and boys came from the lands, once controlled by the East India Company and

England, was referred to as the “Jewel of the British Crown”, and are now the countries of Bangladesh, India, Myanmar, and Pakistan.

Fourth, domestic servants who came from British colonies and served in English estates were a novel sight and a display wealth. This cultural belief can be seen in the 1765 painting by Reynolds, *George Clive and His Family with an Indian Servant Girl*, as this servant above all others was included in their family portrait. This artwork provides insight as to why Mr. Earnshaw brought Heathcliff back to Wuthering Heights from Liverpool and favored him over his own children. Most importantly, Brontë’s physical descriptions of Heathcliff and Catherine Earnshaw match those of the servant and child, allowing readers to develop a historically period correct image of both characters.

Fifth, in late 1700s England, the first-generation of biracial children were beginning to be born to poor working-class British women with lascars who had been abandoned at ports. These children were a small fraction of the population as not many people from other continents sailed over the vast oceans to England and married her citizens. Instead, almost all people at that time lived in the same area for generations and married others within their social class and religion. For example, the Earnshaw family had been residing at Wuthering Heights since 1500.

Sixth, readers must also be reminded that before DNA testing existed, observing physical traits was the primary way that a man, his family, and the wider community confirmed a child’s paternity. As the child aged, those around the child anticipated to see personality traits that matched the paternal family. It was imperative for a child such as Linton, who was born eight months after his mother and her husband were married, to look like his mother’s husband. If not, then paternity doubts would arise.

Lastly, another long-standing tradition that parents still use today to signal familial ties is to name their children after themselves, their parents, or their ancestors. In many cases, the same name would be passed down for generations. To honor a mother's family, a boy was sometimes given her maiden name as his first name. This naming pattern exists throughout the Brontë sisters' books.

With these adjusted lenses, readers can now examine the clues that point to incest: physical traits, birth date, personality traits, grammar, inheritance laws, and family names. Starting with physical traits, Isabella's truth emerges.

Clue 1 – Physical Traits

Linton does not resemble Heathcliff

Readers are told numerous times that Linton looks nothing like Heathcliff, not even a morsel. Biologically speaking, this situation cannot occur as every person is the genetic combination of two other people; and the mix of the parents' genes can be seen in the newborn person. The Brontë sisters use the word, resemblance, to help readers establish familial connections between characters. Even today, people can recognize in amazement how children look like their parents, siblings, and other extended family members. Thus, it will be the language of these physical descriptions that allows readers to trace the lineage of the *Wuthering Heights*' characters and provides key evidence that Edgar appears to be Linton's biological father.

Physical Description of Heathcliff – He is South Asian from British India

The incest theme takes shape when readers create an image of Heathcliff only as Emily Brontë describes him, not as how others have portrayed him to look. Unfortunately, her descriptions of Heathcliff's physical characteristics have been lost

over time, which has caused the novel's illicit truth to remain undetected. Brontë has not "left her readers intentionally in doubt as to the origin of her hero" (Brontë and Nestor 2003, 351), as Winifred Gerin opined. Instead, readers have not yet recognized it.

Heathcliff is not of European or African ancestry, despite his depiction to the contrary in various media. Born in 1764, Heathcliff was most likely a young shipboy abandoned in England by the East India Company or another merchant group. Heathcliff represents the many homeless South and Southeast Asian males whose plight and suffering was becoming a concerning social issue during Brontë's lifetime.

Brontë describes Heathcliff as a foundling in the port city of Liverpool who grew into a tall, athletic, well-formed man with dark skin, a dark face/black countenance, black long hair, black whiskers, black eyes, and black brows. Close your eyes now and see Heathcliff with these human features. Keep this image in your mind. This is Heathcliff.

Next, Heathcliff is depicted by at least six of the novel's characters and even Charlotte Brontë herself in the preface of the 1850 *Wuthering Height's* edition as looking like a gipsy. In the first pages of the novel, Mr. Lockwood introduces readers to Heathcliff and describes him as a "dark-skinned gypsy in aspect" (Brontë and Nestor 2003, 5). Therefore, it is critical to research the physical features of a gipsy from 1771-1847, the period of the novel to the year it was published. Readers will learn that gipsies in England were a marginalized group of nomadic people originating from northwest India (Healey 2018; Taylor 2011). H.M. Grellman, in his 1807 book *Dissertation on Gipsies*, states that "the Gipseys are unquestionably of eastern origin, and have eastern notions" (Grellman 1807, iii). Grellman notes that in past centuries, such people were described as "savage people, black horrid men" (Grellman 1807, 11), whereas now

authors can commend...the dark brown, or olive coloured skin of the Gipseys, with their white teeth appearing between red lips...their long black hair, on which they pride themselves very highly, and will not suffer to cut off; their lively black rolling eyes (Grellman 1807, 11).

Another author, James Crabb, in his 1831 book *A Gipsies' Advocate; Or, Observations on the Origin, Character, Manners, and Habits of The English Gipsies*, reports that “gipsies in general are of tawny or brown colour” (Crabb 1831, 23).⁴ He remarks that “a real Gipsie has a countenance, eye, mouth, hands, ancle, and quickness of manners strongly indicative of Hindoo origin” (Crabb 1831, 13). He reports that “the testimony of the most intelligent travellers, many of whom have long resided in India, fully supports this opinion. And, indeed, persons who have not travelled on the Asiatic Continent, but who have seen natives of Hindostan, have been surprised at the similarity of manners and features existing between them and the Gipsies” (Crabb 1831, 13). In addition, he states that when he himself “met with a Hindoo woman”, he was “astonished at the great resemblance she bore in countenance and manners to the female Gipsy of his own country” (Crabb 1831, 13). Furthermore, Crabb writes that “the strongest evidence of their Hindoo origin is the great resemblance their own language bears to the Hindostanee” (Crabb 1831, 14). He explains that gipsies call their language “Slang, or Gibberish” (Crabb 1831, 16).

From these two authors, today's readers can recognize that people known as gipsies during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries were originally from South Asia. Their origins have become blurred today due to the global mass migration of people after the novel's 1847 publication. The Irish Famine as well as the Industrial Revolution have allowed millions of people from all over the world to form today's blended English gipsy community and society in general. However, genetic evidence supports Crabb and Grellman's observations and even pinpoints that gypsies are from

the modern-day regions of Rajasthan, Haryana, and Punjab in India (Hancock 2002, 13).

Mrs. Earnshaw further supports Mr. Lockwood's account by exclaiming that Heathcliff looked like a "gipsy brat" (Brontë and Nestor 2003, 37) when Mr. Earnshaw first brought him to Wuthering Heights. Other characters call Heathcliff a gipsy such as Hindley (Brontë and Nestor 2003, 39), Edgar (Brontë and Nestor 2003, 95), Joseph (Brontë and Nestor 2003, 87) and old Mrs. Linton (Brontë and Nestor 2003, 50). Isabella describes Heathcliff as "exactly like the son of the fortune teller" (Brontë and Nestor 2003, 50) which was another reference to a gipsy at that time and can be cross-referenced to *Jane Eyre* (Brontë and Davies 2006, 234).

Although Ellen does not come outright and state that Heathcliff looks like a gipsy, she reports that Heathcliff spoke "gibberish that nobody could understand" (Brontë and Nestor 2003, 37). Readers may interpret the word gibberish by its definition as meaningless nonsense. However, in this 1847 novel it can also mean that Heathcliff is speaking Gibberish, the language of the gipsies, as described by themselves according to Crabb. The descriptions used by all these *Wuthering Heights* characters demonstrates that Heathcliff is Hindoostanee as known back then or South Asian as known today.

Next, besides being called a gipsy, Heathcliff is identified as a lascar. Early in the novel, Old Mr. Linton declares that Heathcliff looks like "a little Lascar" (Brontë and Nestor 2003, 50). It is significant to highlight here that lascar is written as a proper noun instead of a common noun by both Emily Brontë in her novel and Charlotte Brontë in the preface. Doing so, reveals the importance the sisters give to this word and the men and boys referenced. In the novel's Notes section, it reads "Lascar: east-Indian seaman" (Brontë and Nestor 2003, 352). Therefore, what did lascars look like as Heathcliff looks just like them.

Old photographs of lascars from more than one hundred years ago can be found on the Internet to give readers a more accurate image of how these sailors physically looked, similar to the men whom Brontë might have seen and, in turn, the Heathcliff she created (Lemmerman 2015; Stadtler and Visron 2021). Readers can view the photographs to see men not only resembling Brontë's Heathcliff, but also who match Grellman's gipsy description: dark-skinned, dark face, black hair, black whiskers, black eyes, black brows, well-formed, athletic man.

Furthermore, Ellen directly points to Heathcliff's Asian background when she looks at him and says to him, as well as to readers, "Who knows, but your father was Emperor of China, and your mother an Indian queen" (Brontë and Nestor 2003, 58). Her reaction to his physical traits signifies that Heathcliff is a child of parents from two neighboring countries that border each other on the southern Asian continent. Likewise, Heathcliff accepts her guess and if readers do the same, the incest theme will take hold. If Ellen's guess were wrong, Heathcliff would have told her so. He does not because he too must believe his parents could be from China and India. Also, he previously mentioned to Ellen, "I wish I had light hair and a fair skin" (Brontë and Nestor 2003, 57). At that moment, Heathcliff probably wished he looked like members of the Clive family in the Reynolds painting as he himself was a servant in the Earnshaw household.

Second, Heathcliff also accepts Ellen's reference that he is black when she states, "if you were a regular black" (Brontë and Nestor 2003, 58). Rearranging the statement, Ellen is stating that he is, in her opinion, not a regular black, but nonetheless black which matches how gipseys were described according to Grellman.

Readers must accept the words spoken by Mr. Lockwood, Ellen, old Mr. and Mrs. Earnshaw, old Mr. and Mrs. Linton, Edgar, Isabella, Joseph, and Charlotte Brontë plus Crabb and Grellman to guide them. Emily Brontë may have also added old Mr.

Linton's other descriptions of Heathcliff as "an American or a Spanish castaway" (Brontë and Nestor 2003, 50) to further reiterate that he is not from Europe but from one of their colonies overseas in the Americas or Asia (the Spanish East Indies). Back then, indigenous people from these distant regions could be cast away with little to no regard.

Charlotte Brontë also underscores Heathcliff's South Asian heritage, when she stated in the 1850 edition preface, "we should say he was a child neither of Lascar nor gipsy, but a... Ghoul" (Brontë and Nestor 2003, xlix). Her words contradict Ellen's conclusion that Heathcliff is not a ghoul, asserting "what absurd nonsense it was to yield to that sense of horror" (Brontë and Nestor 2003, 330). Therefore, we should say he was a child either of a Lascar or a gipsy.

Why does Charlotte Brontë want to turn our thoughts away from Emily's true description? Both Emily and Charlotte Brontë's words indicating that Heathcliff is South Asian are key clues to the purpose behind Isabella and Heathcliff's interracial marriage and Isabella's secret.

Brontë's other character descriptions

Table 1 lists the adjectives used to describe *Wuthering Heights*' main characters. Readers can see that Heathcliff and Linton share no physical resemblance and instead Linton strongly resembles Edgar and Isabella. The descriptions also discredit the theory that has been proposed that Heathcliff is Mr. Earnshaw's biological son and, thus, Catherine's half-brother. Readers should also note that the adjectives used to describe Cathy, the daughter of Edgar and Catherine, are a combination of them both. (Note: going forward, Catherine will be used for the mother and Cathy for the daughter)

Table 1. Comparison of physical characteristics to determine paternity.

<u>Heathcliff</u>	<u>Edgar</u>	<u>Linton</u>	<u>Isabella</u>
-------------------	--------------	---------------	-----------------

Eyes	Black	Great Blue	Great Blue	Blue
Hair	Black	Light	Light	Yellow
Skin	Dark	White	White	White
Build	Tall/Broad	Small/Slight	Slim/Delicate	Small/Delicate
Temper	Violent	Cowardly	Cowardly	Cowardly

	<u>Catherine</u>	<u>Cathy</u>	<u>Hareton</u>	<u>Old Mr. Earnshaw</u>
Eyes	-----	Black	Brown	-----
Hair	Brown	Flaxen/Golden	Brown	-----
Skin	-----	Very Fair	Ruddy	-----
Build	Graceful/Hearty	Healthy/Hearty and Slender/Small	Stout/Healthy	Active/Healthy
Temper	Headstrong	No Coward	Headstrong	Strict and Tender

In reviewing Table 1 plus Tables 2 and 3 below, it is evident that Emily Brontë focuses on descriptions of the eyes to connect family members. According to Jane Eyre, “the soul, fortunately, has an interpreter – often an unconscious, but still a truthful interpreter – in the eye” (Brontë and Davies 2006, 365).

Table 2 lists the words and phrases that Brontë used to describe her characters and to demonstrate resemblance. The descriptions are organized to develop first the physical build of each character, then their eyes, hair, complexion, and, finally, personality. Descriptions of Heathcliff start with phrases that might have been common at that time to describe people native to European colonies and explored lands.

Table 2. Descriptions of Heathcliff, Edgar, Linton, and Isabella

Heathcliff

“Surly indigenae” (34)

“Savage face” (335)

“Sharp cannibal teeth” (178)

“Basilisk eyes” (180)

“Who knows, but your father was Emperor of China, and your mother an Indian queen” (58)

“A little Lascar, an American, or Spanish castaway” (50)

“Taller and twice as broad across the shoulders” compared to Edgar (57)

“Tall, athletic, well-formed man” (96)

“Tall man” (93)

“Erect and handsome figure” (5)

“Upright carriage” (96)

“Black eyes” (3, 320)

“Those deep black eyes!” (329)

“Black hair and eyes!” (206)

“Black-haired child” (36)

“Black hair” (324)

“Black long hair” (335)

“Black lock” (170)

“Black whiskers” (93)

“Black brows” (328)

“Dark face” (287)

“Dark face and hair” (93)

“Black countenance” (178)

“Dark-skinned gypsy in aspect” (5)

“Dark almost as if it came from the devil” (36)

“The little dark thing” (330)

“If you were a regular black” (58)

“black villain” (111)

“Gipsy” (39) spoken by Hindley

“Gipsy brat” (37) - spoken by old Mrs. Earnshaw

“A gipsy!” (50) - spoken by old Mrs. Linton

“Flaysome divil uf a gipsy, Heathcliff!” (87) - spoken by Joseph

“The gipsy – the plough-boy?” (95) - spoken by Edgar

“He’s exactly like the son of the fortune-teller” (50) - spoken by Isabella

“Deep voice (93)

“God..was curiously confounded with his own black father!” (175)

“I wish I had light hair and a fair skin” (57)

“Servant” (96)

Edgar

“Quite slender and youth-like” (96)

“Figure almost too graceful” (67)

“Delicate constitution” (191)

“Great blue eyes” (58)

“Blue eyes of the Lintons” (51)

“Eyes were large and serious” (67)

“Curl of light hair” (170)

“Long, light hair curled slightly on the temples” (67)

“I discerned a soft-featured face, exceedingly resembling the young lady at the Heights” (67)

“White faces” (58)

“Slight hand” (96)

“Soft thing” (72)

“Even forehead” (58)

“Lacked the ruddy health” (191)

“Cowardly” (50)

Linton

“A pale, delicate, effeminate boy, who might have been taken for my master’s younger brother, so strong was the resemblance, but there was a sickly peevishness in his aspect that Edgar Linton never had” (200)

“Weakling” (201)

“Slender arms” (207)

“Small fingers” (207)

“Limbs were all equally frail and feeble” (207)

“Linton’s looks and movements were very languid, and his form extremely slight; but there was a grace in his manner that mitigated these defects” (216)

“Delicate constitution” (209)

“Very delicate” (206)

“Great blue eyes” (207)

“Large blue eyes” (261)

“Thick flaxen curls” (207)

“Long soft hair” (238)

“Weak health” (211)

“Aunt Isabella sent papa a beautiful lock of his hair; it was lighter than mine – more flaxen, and quite as fine” (199)

“White complexion” (206)

“Whey-faced whining wretch!” (208)

“My father’s character is not mine; he affirms I am more your nephew than his son” (258)

“He does not resemble his father” (256)

“He had a fixed idea...that as his nephew resembled him in person, he would resemble him in mind” (265)

“I am a worthless, cowardly wretch” (266)

Isabella Linton

“Her family were of a delicate constitution” (191)

Her eyes “detestably resemble Linton’s” (106)

“Blue eyes of the Lintons” (51)

“Yellow hair, and the whiteness of her skin” (98)

“White face” (172)

“White faces” (58)

“Lacked the ruddy health” (191)

“Small fingers” (106)

“Cowardly” (50)

“Infantile in manners, though possessed a keen wit, keen feeling, and a keen temper too” (101)

From these the tables’ descriptions, Linton, Edgar, and Isabella share the common trait of blue eyes. No one else in the novel is described with blue eyes. Brontë

further depicts Edgar and Linton as both having “great blue eyes” (Brontë and Nestor 2003, 58, 207). Their other features are apparently so similar that Ellen believes that Linton “might have been taken for my master’s younger brother, so strong was the resemblance” (Brontë and Nestor 2003, 200).

Readers should now consider how Linton’s features would appear as the first-generation biracial child born in 1784 to Heathcliff, a man of 100% South Asian lineage, and Isabella, a woman of 100% English lineage. Linton would be the genetic combination of dark- and light-colored skin, black and blue eyes, and black and yellow hair. He would most likely have olive to brown-toned skin, dark brown eyes, and dark brown hair, not blue eyes, yellow hair, and white skin, as depicted. Additionally, it would be highly unlikely for Linton to look strikingly similar to any of his relatives, as he is a blend of two ethnicities while they are each of one ethnicity. Furthermore, one would not expect Linton to have lighter and more flaxen hair than Cathy, his 100% English first cousin. Linton should have darker hair than Cathy because Isabella married a South Asian man with black hair, whereas Edgar married an English woman with brown hair. Readers can also consult the Internet image of Albert Mahomet who was the son of a British mother and a lascar to view how Linton’s human genetic features would have looked as Isabella and Heathcliff have the same heritage as Mahomet’s parents.

Even Heathcliff stares in confusion at Linton and says, “Thou art thy mother’s child, entirely! Where is *my* share in thee, puling chicken?” (Brontë and Nestor 2003, 207). Heathcliff does not recognize any of himself in Linton. Neither does Joseph who after a grave inspection states “he’s swooped wi’ ye, maister, an yon’s his lass!” (He is swapped with you, master, and that’s his lass!) (Brontë and Nestor 2003, 207).

Heathcliff does not care because he is blinded by the desire to obtain revenge on the Earnshaw and Linton families.

Finally, when Cathy meets Heathcliff for the first time as he stands near Linton, “‘Your son?’ she said, having doubtfully surveyed, first one, and then the other.” (Brontë and Nestor 2003, 216). At this moment, she also confirms that Heathcliff cannot be Linton’s biological father. She knows that a father and son must share at least one physical resemblance.

The Brontë sisters were well versed in theories of resemblance and knew that Linton should not look so much like his maternal uncle to be mistaken for the latter’s younger sibling. They knew that both similarities and differences should exist. Linton should look like Edgar in the same manner as little Arthur Huntingdon looks like Frederick Lawrence in Anne Brontë’s *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* similar but not entirely the same. For example, when rumors begin flying that Frederick is little Arthur Graham’s father, Gilbert Markham stares at the young boy and then at Frederick. Gilbert concludes, ‘there *was* a likeness’ but a number of features and in particular their eyes were “utterly dissimilar” (Brontë and Davies 1996, 82). Immediately, Gilbert knows that Frederick is not Arthur’s father. The same cannot be said about Linton and his uncle, Edgar. Nothing about them is dissimilar and in particular their great blue eyes are exactly the same.

Other characters in the Brontës’ novels use physical traits to determine paternity. Lord Lowborough knows that little Anabella is not his daughter because of her “blue eyes and light auburn hair” (Brontë and Davies 1996, 348). Mr. Rochester knows that Adele is not his daughter, finding “no proofs of such grim paternity written in her countenance” (Brontë and Davies 2006, 169–170). However, when blind Mr. Rochester regains some of his sight, although he cannot now “see very distinctly...he could see

that the boy had inherited his own eyes, as they once were – large, brilliant, and black” (Brontë and Davies 2006, 520).

Emily Brontë also uses physical resemblance to confirm the paternity of Hareton and Cathy. With Hareton, she details his distinct similarities to his paternal aunt, Catherine, who serves as proof that Hindley, Catherine’s brother, is Hareton’s father. Meanwhile, the description of Cathy validates her as Edgar’s daughter. One example is that the portrait of Edgar exceedingly resembles Cathy. Continuing with this method, Brontë verifies Linton’s biological father as he looks exactly like Edgar and nothing like Heathcliff. To this effect Table 3 lists Brontë’s descriptions of the Earnshaw family members.

Table 3. Earnshaw Family Descriptions

Cathy Linton

“had reached her full height; her figure both plump and slender, elastic as steel, and her whole aspect sparkling with health and spirits” (216)

“a real beauty in the face - with the Earnshaws’ handsome dark eyes, but the Lintons fair skin, and small features, and yellow curling hair” (189)

“Slender...an admirable form, and the most exquisite little face...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” (11)

“Black eyes flashing with passion and resolution” (270)

“Let me beware of the fascination that lurks in Catherine Heathcliff’s brilliant eyes” (153)

“Golden ringlets” (213)

“Light shining ringlets” (307)

“Healthy, hearty girl” (272)

“*I’m* no coward” (267)

Catherine Linton (Earnshaw) – Cathy’s mother

“Brown ringlets” (53)

“Thick, long hair” (157)

“Stout, hearty lass” (129)

“Haughty, headstrong creature!” (66)

“Headstrong and domineering...fierce temper!” (128)

“Fiery temper” (89)

“Wilful girl” (86)

Hindley Earnshaw – Catherine’s brother

“I see her in Hindley; Hindley has exactly her eyes” (182).

“*His* eyes, too, were like a ghostly Catherine’s” (138)

“His constitution defies him” (76)

Mr. Earnshaw – Catherine and Hindley’s father

“Active and healthy” (41)

“Strict and grave” (42)

Hareton – Hindley’s son, Catherine’s nephew, Cathy’s cousin

“Strong in limb...with a look of Catherine in his eyes, and about his mouth”

(137)

“Well-made, athletic youth, good looking in features, and stout and healthy”

(196)

“His startling likeness to Catherine connected him fearfully with her” (323)

“But when I look for his father in his face, I find *her* every day more! How the devil is he so like? I can hardly bear to see him” (303)

“Brown-eyed boy” (109)

“Brown locks” (308)

“Thick brown curls” (12)

“Ruddy countenance” (109)

“His bearing was free, almost haughty” (12)

Hareton and Cathy – resemblance to Catherine

“Their eyes are precisely similar, and they are those of Catherine Earnshaw”

(322)

“He could not stand a steady gaze from her eyes, though they were just his own”

(195)

“The present Catherine has no other likeness to her, except a breadth of forehead, and a certain arch of the nostril....With Hareton the resemblance is carried farther: it is singular, at all times” (322)

“This resemblance disarmed Mr. Heathcliff” (322)

The Earnshaw family members’ resemblance to one another also indicates that

Heathcliff is not related to them. He does not bear any of their physical features.

Instead, he, like Ellen, was a servant in the Earnshaw household and both of them acted as foster siblings to Catherine and Hindley. With all this physical evidence, readers can earnestly begin to wonder if Linton is Heathcliff’s biological child, or maybe could he be Edgar’s child?

Clue 2 – Birth Date

Linton is born at almost 35 weeks or 8 months after Isabella and Heathcliff's wedding date

Nine months or 40 weeks of a standard pregnancy

One way to check Linton's paternity is to determine if he born at least nine months or 40 weeks after his mother's wedding date. He is not. Additionally, if Linton were a forty-week, full-term baby born on or just before September 20, 1784, the conception date would be December 14, 1783, or earlier. As of this date in the novel, however, Heathcliff and Isabella are mere acquaintances. Actually, Heathcliff despises Isabella and describes her as having a mawkish face and that he feels about her the same way as he does about a centipede from the West Indies.

It is not until January 12, 1784, that Heathcliff learns of Isabella's feelings for him. Once he becomes aware of this valuable information, Heathcliff wastes no time and elopes with Isabella a week later. Although he has detested her since she was a child (Brontë and Nestor 2003, 48, 106), Heathcliff knows that marriage will give him beneficiary rights to Thrushcross Grange if Edgar dies and has no sons as declared in old Mr. Linton's will. Their wedding date is January 19, 1784, more than five weeks after the conception date if Linton was a full-term baby.

Brontë is silent about whether Linton and Hareton were full-term babies. Readers are led to believe that Hareton was full term, as he is described as a "bonny little nursling" (Brontë and Nestor 2003, 64) and "such a grand bairn!" (Brontë and Nestor 2003, 64). Brontë adds confusion in her novel by disclosing that Cathy was a premature, "puny, seven months' child" (Brontë and Nestor 2003, 166). If Linton were also premature and born less than nine months from his mother's wedding date, the key to his paternity is whether he looks like his mother's husband. Readers may infer that

Linton is premature because of his weak constitution; however, Cathy grew hearty, healthy, and strong. Therefore, if Linton was conceived on his mother's wedding date and still does not look like Heathcliff, his mother's husband, it again begs the question, who does he look like, and is that man his father?

The aforementioned dates as well as those listed below have all been calculated using the one day that Brontë discloses almost two-thirds of the way through her novel. That date is the "twentieth of March" (Brontë and Nestor 2003, 212), Cathy's sixteenth birthday.

Below is a timeline of Brontë's intended dates. It works backward from Linton's birthdate to his assumed forty-week conception date. Each date also includes supporting sentence(s) to calculate the dates not explicitly listed in the novel. Although this timeline has been written as concisely as possible, it may still feel convoluted. Emily Brontë intentionally scattered it throughout her book to hide Isabella's pregnancy.

Timeline of Linton's birth to conception

September 20, 1784 – "Linton is just six months younger than I am" (Brontë and Nestor 2003, 199). Six months earlier is March 20, 1784.

March 20, 1784 – Cathy was born on the "twentieth of March" (212). Catherine died two hours later (166). The day before these events is March 19, 1784.

March 19, 1784, Sunday – Heathcliff came to Thrushcross Grange and "had grasped her in his arms" (159). He came on this day, which is four days after he had Ellen "carry a letter from him" (153) to give to Catherine (153). Ellen noted that "I had made up my mind not to give it till my master went somewhere....the consequence was, that it did not reach her before the lapse of three days. The fourth was Sunday, and I brought it into her room, after the family were gone to church" (157). Four days earlier is March 15, 1784.

March 15, 1784 – Ellen goes to Wuthering Heights after Edgar says, “You may call at Wuthering Heights this afternoon” (145). This visit is prompted by a letter Isabella sent to Ellen (136, 145). Isabella sends this letter to Ellen because she has still not received a response from the letter she sent to Edgar a fortnight before (136). Fourteen days earlier is March 1, 1784.

March 1, 1784 – On this day, “the commencement of the following March” (134), Catherine leaves her chamber after being sick. According to Ellen, “I should mention that Isabella sent to her brother, some six weeks from her departure, a short note announcing her marriage with Heathcliff” (135). Six weeks before is January 19, 1784.

January 19, 1784 – This is the day that Isabella and Heathcliff leave for “Gimmerton, not very long after midnight!” (132). This date is again confirmed when Heathcliff goes to see Catherine on March 19, 1784, after the “two months [that] the fugitives remained absent” (134).

January 18/January 19, 1784 – Thursday evening/Friday morning – Catherine falls into a fever. Dr. Kenneth arrives after “the clock is striking twelve!” (123).

January 18, 1784 – Thursday evening – Catherine unbars her door after being in her chamber for three days (120). Three days before is January 15, 1784.

January 15, 1784, Monday – Catherine secures herself in her chamber (118) after Heathcliff visits and argues with Edgar. Catherine is angry with Heathcliff because of Isabella (111-18). This is the first day Heathcliff shows attention to Isabella. He sees her in the garden and lays “his hand on her arm....he had the impudence to try to embrace her” (111). Ellen knows that until this point, “Heathcliff had not the habit of bestowing a single unnecessary civility on Miss Linton” (110). She shouts to him, “Judas! Traitor! You are a hypocrite too, are

you? A deliberate deceiver” (111). Catherine also pushes him to tell the truth.

She is certain he does not like Isabella. As of this day, Isabella “had never spoken a word to her sister-in-law, for three days” (110). Their argument occurred three days before, on January 12, 1784.

January 12, 1784 – Catherine embarrasses Isabella by telling Heathcliff that Isabella is infatuated with him. Isabella then, “calling up her dignity” (105), tells Heathcliff that Catherine “forgets that you and I are not intimate acquaintances” (105). Before this moment, it appears that Heathcliff had no idea, until Catherine tells him, that Isabella “had been pining for your sake several weeks” (106) had which Heathcliff “lapse into ominous musings” (107). This scenario evolves from a discussion that Catherine and Isabella had the day before, on January 11, 1784.

January 11, 1784 – Isabella is unhappy with Catherine and demands, “When have I been harsh, tell me? ‘Yesterday,’ sobbed Isabella, ‘and now!...In our walk along the moor’” (102). Isabella declares her love for Heathcliff, “I love him more than ever you loved Edgar” (102). The day before was January 10, 1784.

January 10, 1784 – Isabella, Catherine, and Heathcliff walk on the moor. However, a full-term forty-week-old baby born on or just before September 20, 1784, would have been conceived approximately 30 days earlier on December 14, 1783.

December 14, 1783, or earlier – Conception date

Brontë provides no information about whether Linton is premature or full term, leaving readers to rely on physical traits to determine paternity. This timeline has most likely been overlooked because September is the ninth month of the year.

Clue 3 – Personality Traits

Edgar and Linton have similar innermost thoughts

Scientists are now studying the complex polygenic of human personality traits that are also inherited from two parents. Brontë uses behavior to reveal but also conceal Linton's biological father by giving him behaviors resembling both Edgar and Heathcliff. While some personality traits have been already noted in Table 3, readers can also determine that Edgar and Linton's innermost thoughts are the same. Examples include their idea of perfect happiness and the use of the word, heath, when they are both critically ill.

For Linton, "the pleasantest manner of spending a hot July day was lying from morning till evening on a bank of heath in the middle of the moors, with the bees humming dreamily about among the bloom, and the larks singing high up over head, and the blue sky, and the bright sun shining steadily and cloudlessly. That was his most perfect idea of heaven's happiness" (Brontë and Nestor 2003, 248).

Similarly, Edgar reflects that "I've been as happy musing by myself...lying, through the long June evenings, on the green mound of her mother's grave, and wishing, and yearning for the time when I might lie beneath it" (Brontë and Nestor 2003, 257). Catherine's burial place "was dug on a green slope, in a corner of the kirkyard, where the wall is so low that heath and bilberry plants have climbed over it from the moor" (Brontë and Nestor 2003, 170).

These two scenes are located on a small hill of heath. It is low-lying areas of heath that bring Edgar and Linton the most joy, whereas heath on a cliff, Heathcliff, cause their greatest pain. These parallel thoughts and words subtly echo the saying, Like father, like son.

Clue 4 – English Grammar

The clever use of syntax and semantics reveal paternity

Listed below are the various uses of grammar that Brontë employed to unveil the incest theme.

A) The possessive pronoun, his

Edgar states Linton is his heir (son)

In the rules of grammar, possessive pronouns are used to demonstrate ownership. It is the possessive pronoun, his, located in one sentence in the novel that serves as the grammatical tip-off that Linton is Edgar's son. The sentence featuring the key pronoun is spoken by Ellen to Mr. Lockwood about Edgar and his daughter, Cathy, while Edgar lays dying:

...for June found him still declining; and, though he had set aside, yearly, a portion of his income for my young lady's fortune, he had a natural desire that she might retain, or, at least, return, in a short time, to the house of her ancestors; and he considered her only prospect of doing that was by a union with his heir (Brontë and Nestor 2003, 259).

For further clarification, readers can replace the following pronouns with proper nouns:

he, him, his = Edgar

my = Ellen Dean

my young lady = Cathy

she, her = Cathy

Now read the sentence with the proper noun conversion:

...for June found Edgar still declining; and, though, Edgar had set aside, yearly a portion of Edgar's income for Cathy's fortune, Edgar had a natural desire that Cathy might retain, or, at least, return, in a short time, to the house of Cathy's ancestors; and Edgar considered Cathy's only prospect of doing that was by with a union with Edgar's heir.

Who is Edgar's heir? Who is the man Cathy can marry who lives in the house of her ancestors? The answer is Linton. It is through this possessive pronoun, his, in Ellen's speech that Brontë openly states that Linton is Edgar's son.

The sentence, when examined outside of the surrounding context of the novel, more clearly demonstrates the father and son link. It is easy to miss because there are two prominent distractions in this section of the novel. First, all the characters emit a tremendous amount of emotion, and second, Heathcliff is continually referred to as Linton's father. These issues cause readers to believe that Edgar is referring to Linton as the heir to Thrushcross Grange. This assumption is not true. Readers will learn twenty-three pages later, on page 282, that Edgar already has a will with Cathy declared as his heir (estate beneficiary) of Thrushcross Grange. Therefore, Linton must be Edgar's heir based on the word's other possible explanation: his son.

B) The language of a passing thought

When Ellen says the aforementioned key sentence to Mr. Lockwood, it stands to reason that she, too, knows that Linton is Edgar's son. Another sentence supports this notion, as do some of Ellen's private thoughts. As a valued servant in the home, she would have intimate knowledge of the family and its dynamics.

In Volume II after Isabella dies, Ellen escorts Linton to Wuthering Heights to live with Heathcliff. She describes Heathcliff to Linton, who is surprised that his father, a man he had never even heard of, has black hair and is tall and large altogether. When

Linton asks, “I am not much like him, am I?” (Brontë and Nestor 2003, 206), Ellen responds,

‘Not much,’ I answered...Not a morsel, I thought: surveying with regret the white complexion, and slim frame of my companion, and his large languid eyes ... his mother’s eyes save that, unless a morbid touchiness kindled them (Brontë and Nestor 2003, 206).

Ellen’s secret thoughts suggest that Linton’s features may have been conceived by this morbid touchiness. If, as this sentence suggests, Ellen is cognizant of Isabella and Edgar’s incestuous relationship, she may regard Linton’s features as proof. Linton does not even have a crumb of likeness to Heathcliff. Genetically speaking, this outcome cannot be if Heathcliff is Linton’s biological father.

C) Commas

Another grammar clue can be found when Edgar is on his deathbed as he tries to revise his existing will prior to Cathy’s impending marriage to Linton. Edgar wants to change his will because “He divined that one of his enemy’s purposes was to secure the personal property, as well as the estate, to his son, or rather himself” (Brontë and Nestor 2003, 282). Readers can see that, his son (Linton) and his enemy (Heathcliff), are possessive adjectives/nouns related to the personal pronoun, he (Edgar). Brontë’s placement of his son closer to his enemy, but set apart with the use of commas to show its real meaning, confuses readers who have been led to believe that his son belongs only to his enemy.

D) The double entendre, heir

Another sentence uttered by Ellen further confirms Linton as Edgar’s son. When Cathy is born and her mother, Catherine, dies, Ellen reports that “a great addition, in my

eyes, was his being left without an heir” (Brontë and Nestor 2003, 166). Brontë uses the word, heir, here to represent a son. Cathy is not an heir because she is a daughter. In contrast to the tip-off sentence, Linton is an heir because he is a son. (Interesting note: heir and Eyre are homophones further connecting the sisters’ novels.)

The word, heir, is complex, and Brontë uses this double entendre to misdirect her readers. In the English language, heir has two meanings. Therefore, its use in *Wuthering Heights* must be carefully reviewed as it is used to mean both a son and an estate beneficiary. Both Cathy and Linton are Edgar’s heirs. The skilful way Brontë uses the term regarding Linton prompts readers to think of heir as indicating an estate beneficiary. Readers are deliberately misled to overlook Edgar’s actual meaning that Linton is his son.

E) The noun, ecstasy

Another way that Brontë links father and son is through the word, ecstasy. Linton wants for “all to lie in an ecstasy of peace” (Brontë and Nestor 2003, 248) and this dream comes true for Edgar at the moment of his death. Edgar Linton is described on his deathbed as follows:

All was composed, however; Catherine’s despair was as silent as her father’s joy. She supported him calmly, in appearance; and he fixed on her features his raised eyes that seemed dilating with ecstasy. He died blissfully (Brontë and Nestor 2003, 283).

Linton shortly follows him, as they both die in September 1801.

F) The verb, wish

As Linton's wish for peace comes true for Edgar, Brontë also fulfils Cathy's wish: "Pretty Linton! I wish you were my brother!" (Brontë and Nestor 2003, 238). Here, Brontë hints that the two are half-siblings. Both Cathy and Linton experience major life events similar to those experienced by the Earnshaw siblings, Catherine and Hindley. Cathy and Linton are born just six months apart, while Catherine and Hindley die with "scarcely six months between them" (Brontë and Nestor 2003, 185). Both sets of events occur in March and September.

It is these six grammar clues that reveal that Edgar is Linton's biological father.

Clue 5 – British Inheritance Laws

Edgar declares that Cathy is his heir (estate beneficiary)

As Edgar's will currently and legally stands Cathy is his heir; however, due to her upcoming marriage to Linton, Edgar

felt his will had better be altered – instead of leaving Catherine's fortune at her own disposal, he determined to put it in the hands of trustees, for her use during life; and for her children, if she had any, after her. By that means, it could not fall to Mr. Heathcliff should Linton die. (Brontë and Nestor 2003, 282).

Adding this wording to his will would have ensured that Thrushcross Grange remained with Edgar's direct family descendants and out of the hands of Heathcliff. Without this revised clause, the English law of coverture, dictating that a wife's property became her husband's property on the date of their marriage, would have taken effect (Ablow, 2012). Unfortunately, Edgar's will was not updated in time, and as he feared, once Linton and Cathy were married, Thrushcross Grange became part of

Linton's estate. Then, seriously ill Linton created a will bequeathing his entire estate to Heathcliff. Therefore, Linton's will took precedence over the law that would have reverted Cathy's property back to her on the date of her husband's death (Ablow, 2012). Upon Linton's death, Thrushcross Grange was transferred to Heathcliff.

It is challenging to follow the estate's transfer because Brontë generates inheritance confusion early in Volume I through the will of old Mr. Linton, the father of Edgar and Isabella. He conveys in his will that if his son, Edgar, dies without a son, then the estate will go to his daughter, Isabella. To clarify, old Mr. Linton left his estate first to his son, then to his son's son, and then to his daughter. Heathcliff and Catherine discuss this bequest succession, which is one of the vindictive reasons Heathcliff marries Isabella. Heathcliff asks, "She's her brother's heir, is she not?" (Brontë and Nestor 2003, 107), and Catherine responds that Isabella is his heir unless "half-a-dozen nephews shall erase her title, please Heaven!" (Brontë and Nestor 2003, 107). At this point in the novel, old Mr. Linton is deceased, and Edgar has inherited Thrushcross Grange.

When Cathy, a girl, is born two months later, Isabella remains Edgar's heir. However, when Isabella dies "above a dozen years" (Brontë and Nestor 2003, 191) later, old Mr. Linton's will becomes null and void. At her death, Edgar is released from his father's succession declarations, because Edgar does not have a son and Isabella has died. Old Mr. Linton's will is silent about Isabella's children; therefore, the English primogeniture law applies, and Cathy, Edgar's only descendant, is heir to Thrushcross Grange (Jamoussi 2011, 10). Even so, Brontë eliminates this legal issue because Edgar, like his father before him, chose to write a will and Edgar declares Cathy the heir to Thrushcross Grange.

Heathcliff's legal actions in Volume II further prove that Linton is not Edgar's estate beneficiary. If Linton had beneficiary rights to Thrushcross Grange, then Heathcliff would not need Linton to marry Cathy. Linton would simply inherit the estate and personal property at Edgar's death. Heathcliff's urgent rush to have the gravely ill Linton marry Cathy is motivated by the legal fact that once the two are married, all of Cathy's property would belong to Linton.

Heathcliff is familiar with British inheritance laws and recognizes that once Linton dies, Cathy's property reverts back to her. To avoid this legality, Heathcliff ensures that Linton's will is written so that all of his property, which now includes Cathy's, is instead bequeathed to him.

In the many years that have passed since the novel's publication, essays such as C.P. Sanger's 'Legal Aspects: The Structure of *Wuthering Heights*' (Brontë and Nestor 2003, 354; Sanger 1926a) have discussed other British laws. Overall, the three laws that Sanger cites, especially the Game Act of 1831, which discusses the bird gaming open season ("Game Act 1831", 1831), do not supersede a person's last will and testament. Readers should focus only on Brontë's choice of words within *Wuthering Heights*. She details the succession rights in the wills of old Mr. Linton, Edgar, and Linton to outline the transfer and inheritance of Thrushcross Grange.

From Brontë's words, readers can see that Linton was never included in Edgar's or old Mr. Linton's wills, which further reinforces the fact that the only way Linton can be Edgar's heir is if the word's other definition is accepted: Linton is Edgar's son.

Clue 6 - Family Name Patterns

Brontë buried these clues about the incest within the ingenious naming pattern of her characters. She used this tactic in a more complicated and clever manner than her

sisters did. Thus, family names are the final reveal of the true relationship between Edgar and Linton. Below is Table 4 that includes examples from the Brontës' novels to demonstrate parent–child bonds.

Table 4. Parents and children with the same names

In *Jane Eyre*

- Jane Eyre is the daughter of Jane Reed.

In *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*

- Arthur Huntingdon has a son named Arthur.
- Ralph Hattersley has a son named Ralph.
- Annabella Lowborough has a daughter named Annabella.

In *Wuthering Heights*

- Catherine (Cathy) has a daughter named Catherine (Cathy).

Then, the Linton name connects three generations:

- Old Linton (nickname) has a son nicknamed young Linton (Edgar), who then has a son named Linton.

Emily Brontë employed four techniques to obscure the grandfather-father-son relationship connected to the Linton name. First, Brontë has three male characters' names beginning with the letter H. Mr. Earnshaw brings the main character, a foundling, to Wuthering Heights and gives him the name Heathcliff, which is the name of his own son who died in childhood. Heathcliff then joins the household that includes Mr. Earnshaw's other son, Hindley, and daughter, Catherine. Later in the novel, Hindley has a son named Hareton. Hareton is named after the first owner of Wuthering Heights, whose name is inscribed on the front gate alongside the date 1500.

Second, Brontë gave many of her characters the same name. For example, Mr. Earnshaw's daughter, Catherine, later has a daughter named Catherine. Both women are

main characters in *Wuthering Heights*, and throughout the novel, both are called this name.

Third, Brontë gave some of her characters the same nickname. For example, the nickname Cathy is used interchangeably for the full name of both the mother and daughter called Catherine.

Fourth, Brontë uses names as both a first name and a surname. For example, with the name Heathcliff, it is reported in the beginning of the novel, that “it has served him ever since, both for Christian and surname” (Brontë and Nestor 2003, 38). Then, at his death, it is stated that “he had no surname” (Brontë and Nestor 2003, 330). Brontë applies this first name/surname method to the name Linton for both Edgar Linton and his father. In many instances, both men are simply referred to as Linton.

Some examples of Edgar Linton being referred to only as Linton can be found early in Volume I (Brontë and Nestor 2003, 70–73, 81). In addition, other characters, such as Hindley (Brontë and Nestor 2003, 87) and Joseph (Brontë and Nestor 2003, 87), call him Linton or young Linton. Edgar is called Linton by his wife, Catherine, when she declares, “my love for Linton is like the foliage in the woods” (Brontë and Nestor 2003, 82) or speaks of him to others. Most importantly, Brontë uses the nickname Linton when the character himself is speaking. For example, “‘How is this?’ says Linton, addressing her; ‘what notion of propriety must have you to remain here’” (Brontë and Nestor 2003, 113). Ellen also refers to him as Linton (Brontë and Nestor 2003, 66, 70, 96). For example, she states, “I believe Linton had laid it there” (Brontë and Nestor 2003, 158). In another instance, when talking with Catherine about marriage, Ellen replies, “I think that’s the worst motive you’ve given yet for being the wife of young Linton” (Brontë and Nestor 2003, 82).

Ellen refers to both Edgar and his father in this manner. She calls Edgar's father old Linton (Brontë and Nestor 2003, 166). She uses the name Linton for old Mr. Linton when she describes him while speaking to his manservant: "'What prey, Robert?' hallooed Linton from the entrance" (Brontë and Nestor 2003, 49). Finally, even old Mrs. Linton refers to her husband as Linton only. For example, "Did you notice his language, Linton? I'm shocked that my children should have heard it" (Brontë and Nestor 2003, 50-51).

It does not seem right for a lady of an English estate to call her husband by his surname only. Instead, a wife would call her husband by his first name or Mr. Linton. Even today, it seems unlikely that a wife would call her husband by his last name only. Furthermore, in the 1700s, it would have been an unthinkable breach of English etiquette for Ellen, a domestic servant, to ever refer to the owners of Thrushcross Grange by just their surname. However, she does so throughout the novel. Both men should always be referenced by her as Mr. Linton.

Fifth, readers are misguided by this talented use of language, which is further confused when Isabella bestows her maiden name upon her son. However, in this situation, Brontë uses the name/nickname to connect old Linton, young Linton (Edgar), and Isabella's son, Linton, as grandfather, father, and son, respectively. It is this apparent faux pas among all the other name confusion that further confirms that Linton is Edgar's son.

With all these clues of names, physical and personality traits, birth date, English grammar, and British laws, readers can recognize that Linton is Edgar's biological son. Readers can now understand Isabella's purpose for marrying Heathcliff in such haste. Unlike most women of her time, who were required to marry to forge family alliances or gain wealth, Isabella marries for love, not love for herself or Heathcliff but for her

unborn child. Isabella's marriage to Heathcliff brings no honor to the Linton family; instead, it brings "degradation of an alliance with a nameless man" (Brontë and Nestor 2003, 101). Yet, such a marriage was a better choice than being an unwed mother at that time.

Conclusion

When Linton is born, what has been kept a secret becomes visible for all to see. Now many questions arise. Is the incestuous relationship between Isabella and Edgar consensual or not? How and when did it start? For how long does it last? Readers can notice there is a change in the behavior of both Edgar and Isabella in the months after Heathcliff returns. Isabella starts acting unwell but refuses the care of a doctor. Edgar is described as entering another mental zone. Edgar was married at the time Linton was conceived, and Catherine was pregnant with Edgar's child. Could Linton still be Heathcliff's biological son despite looking nothing like him and instead being the spitting image of his uncle, Edgar? Why does Isabella never mention Heathcliff to Linton and instead speak only of Edgar?

None of us would ever want to suspect that the sibling relationship between Edgar and Isabella is incestuous. It's easier to discuss the pseudo-incest between Heathcliff and Catherine. All appears so orderly and in control at Thrushcross Grange. Edgar, like his father before him, is a magistrate, an upholder of the law. Edgar is weak and cowardly compared to Heathcliff and Hareton from *Wuthering Heights*. Could Edgar really be the vilest "devil daddy"?

Intentionally misled, readers have not delved into the novel's great horror. The focus all this time has been directed towards Heathcliff's relationship with Catherine instead of his marriage to Isabella. Readers can feel confusion after reading this essay. It

can be psychologically challenging to connect all the written information and accept the telling truth. In addition, readers may have subconsciously chosen to not fully explore the realm of incest out of disgust. Incest is an extremely disturbing subject.

Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* is one of the greatest books of all time; and, Isabella's hidden storyline continues to affirm the novel's esteemed standing. Brontë has ingeniously buried one of civilization's worst sins behind a passionate love story. Readers encounter a world where the tragic problems of incest are exacerbated by inadequate societal laws. Incest is a horrible trap for all of those involved and destroys families.

Readers may wonder how Brontë came to write about such a horrific topic. Was it an event she witnessed, learned, or experienced? She intertwined incest with other elements of the book in such a way that it has remained unseen for so long. Readers may never know the truth, but one person who may have known was her sister, Charlotte. Living in the same household, Charlotte Brontë understood and loved her sister and family in a way that no other reader ever could. Her feelings, as expressed in the Biographical Notice of Ellis and Acton Bell, confirm this notion. Like Emily, she too may not have wanted readers to ever learn what how this issue arose in the novel.

Their sisterly bond may have prompted Charlotte to convince readers that both Emily and Anne had no understanding of the world outside of their home in Northern England. Charlotte Brontë purposely dismissed their talents, as she "felt it a sacred duty to wipe the dust off their gravestones, and leave their dear names free from soil" (Brontë and Nestor 2003, xlv). She avowed that Emily Brontë "had scarcely more practical knowledge of the peasantry amongst whom she lived, than a nun has of the country people who sometimes pass her convent gates" (Brontë and Nestor 2003, xlvii).

After 178 years, with the recognition of Heathcliff's South Asian heritage from British India, a new focus on Isabella Linton's marriage to Heathcliff reveals the identity of her son's biological father. This novel, detailing the issues that her women characters faced, negates the assessment that "Emily was no feminist" (Brontë and Nestor 2003, xv). Instead, she was a woman "full of ruth for others" (Brontë and Nestor 2003, xlv) who supported women as well as lascars and English gipsies and bravely wrote *Wuthering Heights* in a way that shows how women made choices to better their own lives as well as those of their children under extremely restrictive and the worst of circumstances. Readers can observe Isabella gaining the strength to break free of societal restrictions. It is through the power of the pen that Emily Brontë's voice, together with Isabella's, reverberate through time: "No coward soul is mine" (Brontë and Nestor 2003, xiv).

Notes

¹ All subsequent references to this edition are noted parenthetically in the text.

² Ibid.

³ Ibid.

⁴ Ibid.

References

1831. "Game Act 1831." *Legislation.gov.uk*, October 5.
www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Will4/1-2/32/introduction/enacted
1833. "Inheritance Act 1833." *Legislation.gov.uk*, August 29. *Legislation.gov.uk*.
www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/will4/3-4/106/contents
- Ablow, Rachel. 2012. "One Flesh,' One Person, and the 1870 Married Women's Property Act." In *BRANCH: Britain, Representation and Nineteenth-Century History*, edited by Dino Franco Felluga.
- Allingham, Merryn. 2021. "Women in Victorian England." July 28.
<https://www.merrynallingham.com/19th-century/women-in-victorian-england/>
- Brontë, Anne, and Stevie Davies. 1996. *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*. England: Penguin Books.
- Brontë, Charlotte, and Stevie Davies. 2006. *Jane Eyre*. England: Penguin Books.
- Brontë, Emily, and Pauline Nestor. 2003. *Wuthering Heights*. England: Penguin Books.
- Crabb, James. 1831. *A Gipsies' Advocate; or, Observation on the Origin, Manners, and Habits of the English Gipsie*. London: Barron and Sons Printers.
- Cultural India. 2021. "A Brief History of the British East India Company – An Essay." July 28. <https://learn.culturalindia.net/brief-history-british-east-india-company-essay.html>
- Grellman, Heinrich Moritz. 1807. *Dissertation of Gipsies*. London: William Ballintine.
- Guiliani-Hoffman, Francesca. 2020. "Scientists Discover a New Species of Snake Hiding in Plain Sight." *CNN*, December 26.
www.cnn.com/2020/12/26/world/new-snake-species-trnd-scn/index.html
- Hancock, Ian. 2002. *We are the Romani People*. Herfordshire, UK: Univeristy of Herfordshire Press.
- Healey, Jonathan. 2018. "Gypsies in England: A Sympathetic Narrative of a People Integral to the National Story." *History Today*, December.
www.historytoday.com/reviews/gypsies-england
- Jamoussi, Zouheir. 2011. *Primogeniture and Entail in England*. Newcastle upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Publishing.
- Kala, Futley Ali. 2021. "Introduction: Lascars." *More than a List of Crew, Maritime History Archive, Memorial University of Newfoundland*, August 3.
<https://www.mun.ca/mha/mlc/seafarers/lascars>

- Lemmerman, Mick. 2015. "The Isle of Dogs - Past Life, Past Lives." Friends of Island History Trust." *The Lascars*, August 4.
www.islandhistory.wordpress.com/2015/04/14/the-lascars/
- Montgomery, Reginald, and William Majeski. 2005. *Corporate Investigations*. Tucson: Lawyers & Judges Publishing Company.
- Roos, Davis. 2020. "How the East India Company Became the World's Most Powerful Monopoly - HISTORY." *History*, October 23. www.history.com/news/east-india-company-england-trade
- Sanger, Charles. 1926a. "Legal Aspects: The Structure of Wuthering Heights." *The Reader's Guide to Wuthering Heights*, January 1. www.wuthering-heights.co.uk/wh/legal
- . 1926b. "Sangers Timeline: The Structure of Wuthering Heights." *The Reader's Guide to Wuthering Heights*, January 1. www.wuthering-heights.co.uk/wh/sanger-timeline
- Stadtler, Florian, and Rozina Visron. 2021. "The Lascars: Britain's Colonial Sailors." *Our Migration Story. The Making of Britain*, July 28.
www.ourmigrationstory.org.uk/oms/the-lascars-britians-colonial-era-sailors
- Taylor, Becky. 2011. "Britain's Gypsy Travelers: People on the Outside." *History Today*, June 6. www.historytoday.com/archive/britains-gypsy-travelers-people-outside
- Wikipedia. 2022. "Romani People." February 13.
- Wikipedia. 2022. "Albert Mahomet." July 11.

Author

Alicia Clarke is a certified public accountant in the Boston area with a masters degree in accounting from Northeastern University and a bachelors degree in psychology from the College of the Holy Cross.

Funding

No funding was received for the research.