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OPENING AN EXISTENTIAL WINDOW INTO WUTHERING HEIGHTS AND THE METAMORPHOSIS

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Abstract

This paper explores the existential theme of authenticity in two literary works, Emily Brontë’s Wuthering Heights and Franz Kafka’s The Metamorphosis, through the lens of Albert Camus’s philosophy as presented in The Myth of Sisyphus. The analysis focuses on the characters’ struggles to carve out meaningful existences, the symbolism of closed-in structures and the absurd, and failed attempts at rationalization. Through a literary exploration, this paper aims to acknowledge existential dilemmas presented in Brontë’s and Kafka’s works and the importance of recognizing the absurdity of life.

Albert Camus, a prominent twentieth-century existential philosopher, wrote about Franz Kafka’s literature, “The whole art of Kafka consists in forcing the reader to reread. His endings, or rather his absence of endings, suggest explanations which, however, are not revealed in clear language…. Sometimes there is a double possibility of interpretation, whence appears the necessity for two readings.”¹ Pauline Nestor wrote in review of Emily Brontë’s Wuthering Heights that it “[failed] to conform to my expectations.”² Of course, Nestor’s expectations of the novel had been shaped by romantic film adaptations and the fact that she first read the book at the age of twelve, but the point remains the same. Brontë’s and Kafka’s literature are the type that people tend to misinterpret because of the subtle symbolism that is elusive in a first reading.

When one typically thinks of Emily Brontë’s novel Wuthering Heights, existentialism might not be the first topic to come to mind. Brontë is not known for being a writer within the existential movement, but the existential angst presented in Wuthering Heights can be compared to topics explored in Camus’s The Myth of Sisyphus and Franz Kafka’s complex novella The Metamorphosis.

Both Wuthering Heights and The Metamorphosis are concerned with characters who have failed to carve out meaningful existences for themselves because of both their own shortcomings and the circumstances in which they find themselves. Both works demonstrate the perils of inauthenticity, since most of the internal strife in the characters’ lives is caused by a lack of authenticity. The characters, Catherine Earnshaw in Wuthering Heights and Gregor Samsa in The Metamorphosis, are victims of the absurd rather than finding within it as Camus states “my revolt, my freedom, and
my passion.” By examining *Wuthering Heights* and *The Metamorphosis* within the context of Camus’s *The Myth of Sisyphus*, the reader can finally delve into that second reading of existential symbolism.

### Doors and Windows

Albert Camus writes of the absurd walls found in our worlds, “At the heart of all beauty lies something inhuman…. The world evades us because it becomes itself…. It withdraws at a distance from us.” This is the open secret of the absurd, or the sense that human existence in the universe is meaningless. The world itself is not absurd, nor is life itself, but the two together create the absurd. When a person has a glimpse of the absurdity of life, the world becomes inhuman and distant as the realization sets in that the world is not a beautiful place according to human standards. Camus’s response to the absurd is to rebel against it with passion by creating meaning in life and thus attempting to find the self. If one does not revolt, Camus surmises, the individual will be left to live a closed-off existence by lacking the creation of any essence in life. The individual will either go through life inauthentic or will no longer be able to tolerate the absurd and will respond by suicide. Although no character in *Wuthering Heights* or *The Metamorphosis* chooses suicide, the topic is mentioned a few times in *Wuthering Heights*, particularly in reference to Catherine, Heathcliff, and Hindley. The characters in both works are left in a closed-in state that prevents both their intentional suicides and their revolts to discover authenticity.

One main symbol found in both *Wuthering Heights* and *The Metamorphosis* is closed-in structures used to emphasize how inauthenticity leaves an individual cut off from the self. Instances of inauthenticity will be described more in depth in other sections of the paper. The characters in both works are destined to live within trapped worlds, whether an insect’s body or an isolated house on the moor. The symbolism of the closed-in structure is presented both figuratively and literally in *Wuthering Heights* and *The Metamorphosis*. For example, in *Wuthering Heights*, the characters are isolated despite not being far from the crossroads and Thrushcross Grange. The nearby town of Gimmerton seems leagues away, and outsiders in the plot are rare. Catherine Earnshaw’s childhood bed is described as “a large oak case,” and later scenes involve characters locking themselves within rooms or being locked inside rooms by others. Several times, a character is locked outside of a room as well. When Catherine experiences her second illness, Edgar, Nelly, and the rest of the household staff are locked out of her room for three days.

*The Metamorphosis* also has a confined feeling, since the action takes place only within the Samsa house, particularly within Gregor’s room. Gregor is kept confined within his room following his transformation into a bug. His window to the past is the furnishings within the room, especially his prized writing desk. Gregor’s literal window from which he can see the hospital across the street is eventually
closed to him as he loses the crisp sight of a human and gains the sight of a bug. Li Anheng observes that, “even [though] the hospital is on the other side of Gregor’s house, his family never send[s] him to see the doctor.” The window is closed to him because help across the street is not available for his care or for his failing sight to glimpse. Not only that, but the adjacent hospital treats humans, not humans transformed into insects, so even if his family had taken him, more than likely, nothing could have been done to help his condition.

Windows to the past or outside are frequently shown as open, however, such as when Lockwood breaks the glass window in his dream. Following a misunderstanding that Lockwood is stealing a lantern, he is attacked by the dogs at Wuthering Heights and then is taken to Catherine’s childhood room to spend the night. He subsequently has a couple of disturbing dreams after reading Catherine’s old books, including the dream that he breaks the glass to stop a branch from knocking against the window, only to encounter the ghostly hand of Catherine as a child.

Catherine’s opening the window when under her attack of “brain fever” demonstrates a similar look to the past. Catherine opens the window and experiences hallucinations of the lights from Wuthering Heights being visible even though Nelly describes the lights as never having been visible. She also claims to talk with Heathcliff about not traveling through the Kirkyard and says, “He’d rather I come to him.” A child claims to see both Heathcliff and Catherine wandering together near Wuthering Heights following Heathcliff’s death. Nelly (the housekeeper) finds Heathcliff’s window open and his room door locked upon his death, demonstrating that his door to life and others is closed and his window to the past, and presumably Catherine, is open.

In The Metamorphosis, the Samsa family began leaving Gregor’s door open in the evenings toward the end of his life. This provides Gregor with yet another glimpse of how life at the Samsa house was forever changed and caused him to reminisce about the days before he became an insect, thus providing a gloomy view of the past. After his death, Gregor’s door and window are opened wide and he is removed by the charwoman. The family takes a holiday and leaves the confines of home and work the day of Gregor’s death. In Wuthering Heights, the closed-in structures appear less concrete around death. Catherine’s death brought new life, her daughter Cathy, into Thrushcross Grange, and Catherine and Heathcliff’s ghosts are believed to roam near Wuthering Heights. Heathcliff tries to dig up Catherine’s body following her death and sees her corpse eighteen years after her death.

An existential perspective into why closed-in structures open around death is that death is a complete mystery to the existentialist. Vilma Irén-Mihály states that, “[a]ccording to existentialists, we ourselves are the question, and therefore we cannot ever ask the question why about ourselves. Thus, existentialism highlights the importance of the subjective self, while this subjectivity becomes the source of our
Kafka and Brontë, though not specifically existential philosophers, both demonstrate belief in the idea that humans cannot answer the question “why” about themselves. Gregor can attempt to express himself all he wants by walking on the walls and ceiling of his room, Catherine can become as much or as little of a lady as she likes, and Heathcliff can dig up Catherine’s body repeatedly, yet none of these three is any closer to answering the question “why” about their existence and ending of existence (death).

Existentialism can comment upon the lack of externally imposed meaning on life and the detrimental effects of using a particular religious ideology or belief system to impose meaning but cannot state with certainty whether there is an unseen external meaning to life, or whether life continues after death. Albert Camus states of death and life, “By the mere activity of consciousness I transform into a rule of life what was an invitation to death.” Because Camus cannot peer into the abyss of death, he chooses life despite realizing that the world and his existence have no logical meaning to impart. He chooses attempting to give meaning to his subjective self instead of demanding the answer to “why” his entire life and creating undue misery. Along this line of reasoning, for Camus, one must turn away from the temptation of the open window of existential angst over questions that are not intended for humans to answer and must resort to making the best of the closed-in room, since that is the way to create meaning in life; thus, the windows must be left open following death because the existentialist’s guidance for life and the self ends without a concrete conclusion.

Life’s Wake-Up Calls

Another piece of existential symbolism featured in both Wuthering Heights and The Metamorphosis is that characters have missed their “wake-up calls” in life. Gregor literally misses his alarm clock on the morning he transforms into a bug, and he has missed his wake-up call figuratively in life as well. He labors as a traveling salesman because his family is dependent on him even though he despises the job. As Gregor puts it, “What an exhaustive profession I’ve chosen! Day in and day out on the road. Work like this is far more unsettling than business conducted at home.” Gregor’s metamorphosis serves to externalize his condition of being vermin to those around him. His family uses him to survive because it is convenient. To the firm he works for, he is merely a tool, useful only as long as he can perform his duties. He chooses to sacrifice himself and his essence for that of others. He represses himself to become just a cog in society.

Comparably, characters in Wuthering Heights have also missed their wake-up calls and go through false wake-up calls. For example, Catherine becomes close with Heathcliff as a child after initially being cruel to him. One night, after being turned out of the house by her brother Hindley and his wife Frances, Catherine and Heathcliff have their first encounter with Thrushcross Grange and its occupants. Catherine is
bitten by a dog and is left at the Grange to recover. When she returns home around Christmas, she is markedly changed for the worse, although well-bred society would have considered her improved. Hindley notes the change immediately: “Why, Cathy, you are quite a beauty! I should scarcely have known you—you look like quite a lady now.” But all she has done is transform into what the world and her family wanted to see, not discovered her own essence and identity. To others and initially perhaps to Catherine, it would appear she has found her essence and identity—as a fine lady, which at first pleases her. The new Catherine proceeds to scorn her childhood companion and part of herself, Heathcliff, in favor of new companions Edgar and Isabella Linton.

The backstory behind Gregor’s metamorphosis is comparable to Catherine’s. Gregor’s room is described as containing a writing desk and a picture of a lady in a gilded frame hanging on the wall. At one time before he sacrificed himself, Gregor had wanted to be a writer. The picture of the lady cut from a magazine may reflect Gregor’s past hopes that he could find a lady to be his wife, as well as his love of finery. But like Catherine’s transformation into a fine lady, Gregor’s transformation into the mere laboring son, brother, and employee has left him lifeless and predetermined as a paid model for a catalogue whose picture is placed in a gilded frame. Gregor is lifeless in the sense that he is no longer concerned with his own self, in favor of others. He is predetermined in that, like a model presenting clothing in a fashionable way to sell to others, he is given a set role to be the life of others and not of himself. The model is at least allowed some difference in self-expression, however, whereas Gregor lacks even this. On top of this is the gilded frame of a respectable family that Gregor has provided. Inside the gilded frame is darkness, both in the Samsa family and in Wuthering Heights, since both worlds are trapped in a vicious cycle of a lack of self-expression, rationalization, and inauthenticity.

It is intriguing that a quote from Camus’s *Myth of Sisyphus* echoes Gregor’s realization that he missed his “wake-up call.” Camus writes,

Rising, streetcar, four hours in the office or the factory, meal, streetcar, four hours of work, meal, sleep, and Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday and Saturday according to the same rhythm—this path is easily followed most of the time. But one day the “why” arises and everything begins in that weariness tinged with amazement.

For Gregor, however, this wake-up call comes too late. Along Camus’s line of reasoning, perhaps if Gregor could have snapped out of his trance of living like an insect, he would have transformed into a functional human. Catherine does not fare any better, considering she also wakes up but, like Gregor, does not know how to take advantage of the revelation. When Nelly and Catherine are talking the night Heathcliff leaves, Catherine says the obstacle to herself is in her forehead and heart, or “in whichever places the soul lives—in my soul, and in my heart, I’m convinced I’m
wrong!”26 But she clearly never wakes up, just like Gregor, considering she immediately catches “brain fever” afterward and later marries Edgar Linton, never having truly become authentic. She remains like Gregor’s picture: flat, predictable, and gilded.

Rationalization

Characters in *Wuthering Heights* and *The Metamorphosis*, entrapped by their individual struggles, attempt to rationalize their situations by unhelpful thought patterns and violence; however, because they are all victims of the absurd instead of being Camus’s fighting overcomers, none of the characters seem to have the ability of constructive rationalization. Matthew Kaiser argues of *Wuthering Heights* that “Brontë explores . . . a future-negating ethic of nonproductivity.”27 It should thus be no surprise that characters in *Wuthering Heights* never seem to get anywhere in their lives. The same can be said for Kafka’s *The Metamorphosis*.

For instance, Gregor’s physical transformation defies logic, yet Gregor is never shocked that he has mysteriously transformed into a bug. That could be attributed to the fact he has been a mere insect for years. In fact, his thoughts center around his family and their welfare despite his family caring little about him even when he was successful. “Thoughts like these, utterly futile in his current state, passed through his head.”28 Gregor is more concerned about his new appearance shocking the family than about his own state of mind. He may be physically locked within the body of an insect, yet his mind continues to function as a human’s. When his sister Grete assumes that removing his furniture would be beneficial for Gregor, as he would have more room to crawl around, Gregor realizes this act would be “at the price of simultaneously swiftly and completely forgetting his human past.”29 Gregor, as long as he lives, is forever caught. His metamorphosis is incomplete, as he cannot be fully insect or fully human.

In *Wuthering Heights*, characters have more insight into their states than Gregor has but fall into the same situation of attempting to rationalize their situations. Heathcliff knows the hurt that has been forced upon him by others but lacks a knowledge of how to escape it like Gregor. Heathcliff returns to *Wuthering Heights* to slowly torment the Lintons and Hindley Earnshaw for the cruel injuries they have dealt him. Unlike Gregor, who takes his injuries passively throughout the entire novella, Heathcliff “seemed a sullen, patient child; hardened, perhaps, to ill-treatment”30 and resorts to violence in his adulthood. Violence is a common theme that Brontë and Kafka both explore as part of rationalization.

Despite the overwhelming sense of violence, however, Graeme Tytler notes, “*Wuthering Heights* is conspicuous for violence of various kinds, it is useful to remember that . . . the most serious forms of violence . . . happen far less often in the narrative than some readers might be inclined to suppose or recall.”31 The violence
somehow does not seem so violent because of how absurd the situations are. Camus perhaps best states the sheer absurdity of the absurd: “Forever I shall be a stranger to myself…. Socrates’ ‘Know thyself’ has as much value as the ‘Be virtuous’ of our confessi...32 Camus’s point is there are no concrete truths to life, as everything is absurd, and thus, full comprehension of life and all it involves, including violence, seems somewhat laughable and illusionary.

Heathcliff, distraught over Catherine’s death, bashes his head against a tree, as he cannot live without his “life and soul.”33 Heathcliff, though, was by far not an innocent creature. At the time of Catherine’s death, he was gradually destroying Hindley for Hindley’s past cruelty and had already taken steps to destroy Edgar Linton by seducing the childish Isabella. Shortly after Catherine’s death, Hindley has a moment of clarity about Heathcliff’s damage and decides to kill Heathcliff with a pistol and knife; however, Heathcliff gains the upper hand and accidentally cuts one of Hindley’s arteries in the mêlée and then proceeds to “[kick] and [trample] on him, and [dash] his head repeatedly”34 before administering rudimentary first aid. Catherine has a history of self-violence, not so much on the physical level of self-harm but on the level of ostensibly contributing to her hysterical fits. She says at one point, “I’ll try to break their hearts by breaking my own”35

In *The Metamorphosis*, Gregor’s father, Mr. Samsa, is the most visibly cruel character, as he is described shoving Gregor back into his room, causing Gregor physical injury while brandishing a newspaper and stamping his foot.36 Later, he pelts Gregor with apples, leaving one lodged in Gregor’s exoskeleton.37 Grete is actually the cruelest character, however, considering that it is her care and attempted affection that initially keep Gregor in a happier state than he would have otherwise been under the circumstances. It is Grete who cleans his room and feeds him. Toward the end of the story, these tasks are left to a charwoman who likes to taunt Gregor. The family places unneeded belongings in Gregor’s room, demonstrating that they no longer want Gregor because he can no longer be useful to them. Grete finally repudiates Gregor by stating, “I am unwilling to utter my brother’s name before this creature, and therefore will say only: we have to try to get rid of it.”38 Gregor is no longer a “he” but an “it.” Grete’s rejection is what contributes to Gregor’s death that night, although physical causes are also to blame.

Catherine’s and Heathcliff’s deaths may also be looked at in a similar light. Catherine dies after childbirth, but her emotional state contributes to her death. She and Heathcliff meet for the last time in this world despite Edgar’s forbidding Heathcliff to return to Thrushcross Grange. After Catherine sinks down into an insensible state because of this meeting, Nelly states, “Far better that she should be dead, than a lingering burden, and a misery-maker to all about her.”39 Edgar mourns Catherine’s death, though, and raises Catherine’s child and namesake, Cathy. When Heathcliff dies, Hindley’s son Hareton mourns his death, although perhaps he should
not, as Heathcliff was a bad influence on his life, and Nelly states about Heathcliff’s grave, “I hope its tenant sleeps soundly.”

Camus states, “But practically I know men and recognize them by their behavior, but the totality of their deeds... by gathering together the sum of their consequences in the domain of intelligence, by seizing and noting all their aspects, by outlining their universe.” All these characters—Catherine, Gregor, Grete, Heathcliff, and Hindley—are not limited to what has been thrust upon them. Throughout the course of both works, they choose their paths in life and then attempt to rationalize their states. The characters are known through their thoughts, behaviors, and actions. In truth, one cannot entirely blame Gregor’s father, Grete, Catherine, Hindley, or even Heathcliff, as they were trying to deal with impossible circumstances as well as they thought they could. Regardless of reasons for their behavior, no one picked efficient methods of rationalization. But honestly, do not we all do such at times?

Authenticity vs. Inauthenticity

Because of a lack of authenticity—the concept of whether a person’s decisions and actions are consistent with one’s personal identity and values or whether one is living according to social conformity—the only natural state for the worlds of Wuthering Heights and The Metamorphosis is the closed-in structure. Camus notes, “So long as the mind keeps silent in the motionless world of its hopes, everything is arranged and reflected in the unity of its nostalgia. But with its first move this world tumbles and cracks: an infinite number of shimmering fragments is offered to the understanding.” When the absurd is realized, the illusion of perfect life is shattered and then it is time to find out who cannot or does not know how to be authentic. Certainly, in the worlds of Wuthering Heights and The Metamorphosis, no one is authentic.

The best word to describe Catherine might be “disaster.” Her character was high-strung even as a young child, but the final break for her from finding any authenticity is when she is bitten by the Lintons’ dog. Catherine is “transformed into a very dignified person,” a doll whose ‘beautiful hair’ the Lintons ‘dried and combed,’ and whom they ‘wheeled’ dotingly, like a thing, to the fireplace.... They give her a husband. They give her a future. But she loses, in effect, her cosmos.” Even when she is older, her lack of “cosmos,” or essence, remains. Following the disappearance of Heathcliff, he vanishes for three years. The subsequent events after Heathcliff’s return reach a climax one evening when Edgar has enough of Heathcliff’s presence. He asks Catherine, “Will you give up Heathcliff hereafter, or will you give up me? It is impossible for you to be my friend, and his at the same time.” Catherine refuses to choose and finally be authentic for once, a decision that leads to her locking herself up in her room for three days because she cannot accept the absurd.
In the past, Catherine tried to be somewhat authentic by self-expression. She expresses herself uniquely on more than one occasion, including the exchange with Nelly in Volume I, Chapter IX but never goes further than mere expression of the self in words or rather, expression of the lack of her own self. Catherine tells Nelly:

[S]urely you and everybody have a notion that there is, or should be, an existence of yours beyond you. My great miseries in this world have been Heathcliff’s miseries, and I watched and felt each from the beginning; my great thought is living in himself. . . . Nelly, I am Heathcliff.45

Instead of attempting to find her own identity, Catherine expresses herself by identifying herself with another person. Understandably, Nelly is confused by this speech and annoyed, considering Catherine’s typically strange behavior and tempestuous ways. Catherine’s is a good example of the result of a life lived inauthentically.

Heathcliff, though, apparently can make his own decisions when he chooses to spend his life tormenting the Lintons and Hindley and cheating Hareton out of an education and inheritance while he, Heathcliff, is alive. Heathcliff’s son, Linton, is used as a mere tool to gain Thrushcross Grange from Cathy Linton since she is the heiress, but one must ask, even though Heathcliff is choosing his own essence in life, is it authentic? Heathcliff’s decisions never leave him any pleasure or peace of authenticity, so it can be assumed he is not living authentically. Neither do any of the other characters seem to be living authentically, although the novel closes with a bit of hope that Cathy and Hareton may be able to lead authentic lives.

Gregor’s inauthenticity comes from sacrificing himself for a family and company that use him only for his worth. His decisions eventually result in his death. Before he dies, though, Gregor attempts self-expression by walking on the walls and ceiling of his room.46 He explores the limitations and advantages of his insect body in ways he never explored his human body. The story ends with a foreboding that Gregor’s story may repeat itself through Grete. She had to sacrifice her dreams of attending a music conservatory because Gregor could no longer support them and may in the future sacrifice her essence for her parents or her future family when she marries.

An interesting thought pertaining to Brontë’s and Kafka’s existential theme of authenticity is that both authors are attempting self-expression by writing about characters with no authenticity. Emma Francis notes, “[I]t was precisely in terms of Brontë as a woman that I encountered problems in my analysis.”47 Of course, Francis’s main analysis was centered on Emily Brontë’s poetry, not her sole novel, but the same remains true. Kaiser referred to Brontë as “the great antiparent of nineteenth-century literature”48 because of Brontë’s rugged individualism when compared to other Victorian writers. Franz Kafka, although writing in the early twentieth century, also
utilized his own individualism in writing, although, as William Hubben points out, maybe Kafka’s existential symbolism should be taken with some reservations. Hubben notes that most of Kafka’s works were unfinished products at the author’s death and that “[p]erhaps it is this absence of solutions in his own life as well as in his work that makes these stories more symbolic than he may have intended."\textsuperscript{49} The Metamorphosis is one of Kafka’s works that is thought to be in complete form, however, though even in complete form, it remains absent any true solution.

The point is that the authors of both works seem to have been attempting to locate their own sense of authenticity by writing about characters who completely lack authenticity. At any rate, regardless of the authors’ exact motives and personal struggles, readers will continue to search for some meaning in these works. After all, by no means is it certain that Brontë and Kafka intended for us to create all the myriad interpretations that have been used to explain \textit{Wuthering Heights} and The Metamorphosis. Camus notes, “In this universe the work of art is then the sole chance of keeping his [humanity’s] consciousness and of fixing its adventures.”\textsuperscript{50}

Literary interpretations are like the absurd world: There is no external definability to human life; thus, anything produced by humans is by default essentially indefinable. Yet we must keep turning to the self-expressive art of art to continue to revolt amid the absurd.

\textbf{Conclusion}

Because life is absurd, according to Camus, he chose Sisyphus from Greek mythology to symbolize the plight of humans. Sisyphus notably was a tyrant who was punished by the gods in the afterlife to eternally roll a stone to the top of a hill, only to have the stone roll back down, for Sisyphus to repeat the cycle. Camus states, “The struggle itself towards the heights is enough to fill a man’s heart. We must imagine Sisyphus happy.”\textsuperscript{51} Sisyphus is still toiling against the absurdity of his situation; therefore, he is revolting against the absurd. Taking a lesson from Sisyphus, we must keep reading and analyzing to finally grasp the best interpretation of literature, to procure Camus’s “second reading.”

Through glimpses into \textit{Wuthering Heights} and The Metamorphosis, it is possible to reflect upon Camus’s absurdity and the dangers of failing to recognize it. Characters are doomed to be enclosed in trapped worlds without any sense of authenticity. Characters are both confined and free simultaneously, as Gregor is confined to an insect body yet is free to attempt self-expression. His family is unsympathetic to his situation, especially by the end of the novella, something also seen in \textit{Wuthering Heights}, although attitudes between characters tend to fluctuate more. The most striking part of both works is the imagery of locked doors and open windows. The open window provides a view into the world of the past and the unseen.
One can only hope that the characters beyond the events told in each story manage to unlock the doors and secure the windows, metaphorically speaking, considering these objects are associated with the downfall of the authentic self. After all, one must imagine Sisyphus happy.
Notes


4 Camus, 14.

5 For a few examples of this, see Brontë, 121, 162, 187, 335–36.

6 Emily Brontë, Wuthering Heights, ed. Pauline Nestor (London: Penguin Classics, 2008), 19. Catherine’s “large oak case” is also known as a “box-bed,” which was used in European homes, especially rural homes, from medieval times to the nineteenth century. The purpose of this style of bed was to create sleeping space in a house that otherwise did not have many bedrooms. This is apparently the case with Wuthering Heights, considering that Isabella is left with no proper place to sleep after marrying Heathcliff (143). For pictures of this style of bed, see https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Box-bed.

7 Brontë, 120.


10 Brontë, Wuthering Heights, 25.

11 Brontë, 126. “Brain fever,” as often seen in Victorian literature, as an illness following a severe emotional event, was an actual medical condition, although it was rooted in physical, not emotional, causes. It is thought to be either meningitis or encephalitis, neither of which was understood in the 1800s when Emily Brontë was writing Wuthering Heights. More than likely, the condition came to be used in literature after people in real life developed symptoms following emotional stress, and people connected the two because a medical explanation had not been discovered yet. (See https://daily.jstor.org/did-victorians-really-get-brain-fever/.)

12 Ibid.

13 Ibid.

14 Brontë, 336.

15 Brontë, 334.

16 Kafka, Metamorphosis, 32.

17 Kafka, 43–44.

18 Brontë, Wuthering Heights, 336.

19 Brontë, 288.

20 Vilma-Irén Mihály, “Hope and Hopelessness Through the Lens of Myths: A Comparison Based on

21 Camus, Myth of Sisyphus, 64.
22 Kafka, Metamorphosis, 4.
23 Brontë, Wuthering Heights, 53.
24 Kafka, Metamorphosis, 28.
28 Kafka, Metamorphosis, 23.
29 Kafka, 27.
30 Brontë, Wuthering Heights, 38.
32 Camus, Myth of Sisyphus, 19.
33 Brontë, Wuthering Heights, 169.
34 Brontë, 178–79.
35 Brontë, 116.
36 Kafka, Metamorphosis, 16.
37 Kafka, 32.
38 Kafka, 41.
39 Brontë, Wuthering Heights, 164.
40 Brontë, 336.
41 Camus, Myth of Sisyphus, 11.
42 Camus, 18.
44 Brontë, Wuthering Heights, 117.
45 Brontë, 82.
50 Camus, Myth of Sisyphus, 94.
Camus, 123.