

WUTHERING HEIGHTS

ENGLISH TEACHING RESOURCE



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INTRODUCTION / HOW TO USE THIS RESOURCE

This pack is designed to support students and their teachers in responding to the production of *Wuthering Heights*. It provides activities to inform written responses to live productions, devise work inspired by *Inspector Sands*, and develop skills in performance and production design.

In this production, *Inspector Sands* asks the question "If it takes a village to raise a child, does it take a village to create a monster?" This is a question that threads through all of the exercises and information below and can support students' evaluative responses to the production.

This resource was created by Susie Ferguson (Education Resource Consultant), Ailbhe Treacy (Wuthering Heights Education Coordinator), Izzy Taylor (Maternity Cover - Engagement and Participation Producer) and Andrea Pieri Gonzalez (Engagement and Participation Producer) and designed by Ivan Gonzalez.

Production images by Alex Brenner, photoshoot images by Stefan Lange, rehearsal images by Paul Blakemore.



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**ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND**

CAST AND CREATIVE TEAM

Created by
Inspector Sands

Adaptation conceived & developed by
Lucinka Eisler and Ben Lewis

**A CHINA PLATE, INSPECTOR SANDS, ROYAL &
DERNGATE, NORTHAMPTON AND OXFORD
PLAYHOUSE CO-PRODUCTION**

Writer
Ben Lewis

Director
Lucinka Eisler

Associate Director
Chris Yarnell

Designer
Jamie Vartan

Co-Sound Designers
Elena Peña & Dan Balfour

Lighting Designer
Ben Ormerod

Costume Designer
Johanna Martensson

Costume Supervisor
Victoria Nissley

Costume Makers
Kate Ireland & Sarah Poxton-Le'Strange

Hair & Makeup Supervisor
Gavin Rennick

Production Manager
Helen Mugridge

Casting
**Annelie Powell CDG, Hayley Kaimakliotis
and Alice Walters**

Artistic Associate
Giulia Innocenti

Consulting Artist
Tanuja Amarasuriya

GRT Consultancy
Alessandra Davison

Voice & Accent Coach
Gurkiran Kaur

Fight Director
Rachid Sabitri from True Edge

Wellbeing Practitioner
Shally Gadhoke

Supporting the production
Intimacy On Set
Intimacy Coordinator
Rose Ryan

Assistant Intimacy Coordinator
Veniece Forde

Company Stage Manager
Roisin Symes

Assistant Stage Manager
Fran De'Ath

Technical Stage Manager
Verity Clayton

Marketing Consultant
Emma Martin

Press Consultant
Arabella Neville-Rolfe

Producer
China Plate

Associate Producer (China Plate)
Amanda Fawcett

Education Coordinator (China Plate)
Ailbhe Treacy

Teaching Resource Consultant
Susie Ferguson

Workshop Facilitators
Emily Summers & Lakeisha Lynch Stevens

CAST

Hindley / Hareton
John Askew (he/him)

Catherine
Lua Bairstow (they/she)

Heathcliff
Ike Bennett (he/him)

Earnshaw / Edgar / Linton
Leander Deeny (he/him)

Nelly | **Giulia Innocenti (she/her)**

Isabella / Frances / Young Cathy
Nicole Sawyerr (she/her)

SYNOPSIS

The main question that this production aimed to explore is:

If it takes a village to raise a child, does it take a village to create a monster?

In this adaptation of *Wuthering Heights*, the housekeeper Nelly is our narrator. Alone in the middle of the night, haunted by the past, she is condemned to relive her story over and over. Throughout the course of the play, Nelly will be forced to reckon with her demons and recognise her role in it all.

QUICK SUMMARY

On the Yorkshire moors, the affluent Earnshaw family adopt a boy named Heathcliff. Catherine Earnshaw and Heathcliff's passionate love and jealousy forms the basis of the story, in which loyalty, family, revenge, abuse and forgiveness are explored in this adaptation of Emily Brontë's classic novel.

DETAILED SUMMARY

Act 1

Nelly – the orphan of Earnshaw's servant - and his two children, **Catherine and Hindley**, await the return of their father **Earnshaw** from Liverpool. Upon his return, they are shocked to discover that he has brought a bedraggled child home with him for reasons unknown (is it charity, an act of atonement or something quite different?) and introduces the child to Catherine and Hindley as their brother, naming him **Heathcliff**.

Upon his arrival, the dynamic at Wuthering Heights changes. Nelly becomes the family servant and is treated as such, meanwhile Catherine and Heathcliff become close friends.

As the children grow older, a rivalry forms between Heathcliff and Hindley as they compete for their father's attention. The outcome of the rivalry is that Earnshaw

decides to send Hindley to boarding school to "make a man" of him.

In the absence of Hindley, Catherine and Heathcliff's friendship continues to blossom and Earnshaw becomes increasingly unwell, eventually resulting in his death.



Act 2

Hindley returns for his father's funeral with a surprise; he has married a woman named **Frances** in secret and what's more, she is pregnant. Hindley assumes the role of patriarch and instructs Heathcliff to work on the land as a servant.

Heathcliff and Catherine ignore their brother and instead run amok across the moors, eventually coming across Thrushcross Grange. Whilst taunting the inhabitants, siblings **Edgar and Isabella Linton**, Catherine is bitten by the family's bulldog and injured. A servant brings her inside to be tended to, but Heathcliff is barred from the home and sent away.

Catherine returns to Wuthering Heights a few weeks later and has morphed into the image of a young lady, the total opposite to Heathcliff, who appears to have become the servant Hindley demanded. Edgar and Isabella arrive at Wuthering Heights and the meeting promptly turns sour, resulting in Hindley beating Heathcliff as punishment.

A while later, Frances gives birth to a boy – **Hareton**, and she then dies shortly afterwards. Nelly cares for the child whilst Hindley descends into drunkenness and despair, choosing to humiliate and abuse Heathcliff all the while. Hindley continues to behave erratically which results in an accident where Hareton is almost killed.

Catherine confides in Nelly that Edgar has proposed to her and has plenty of reasons why she accepted his proposal. However, she further confesses that if only Heathcliff were of a higher status then there would be no question of who she truly wishes to marry. Unbeknown to Catherine, Heathcliff has heard only part of her conversation and leaves before he can learn just how much Catherine cares for him. Catherine searches for him, but it is too late – Heathcliff has gone.

Catherine marries Edgar and commands Nelly to come with her to her new home, Thrushcross Grange. Having raised him since he was a baby, Nelly is forced to leave Hareton behind at Wuthering Heights to accompany her mistress.

Act 3

Nelly struggles to acclimatise to life at Thrushcross Grange and it appears that Catherine does too, although she is pregnant and appears to have found a kind of happiness.

Heathcliff, now a well-dressed gentleman, arrives unexpectedly at Thrushcross Grange and requests to see Catherine who is overjoyed to see him, if a little mesmerised by his new appearance. He tells her that he is staying at Wuthering Heights, having coaxed Hindley to invite him to stay there with the offer of gifts.

As Catherine and Heathcliff once again wander the moors, Isabella confesses that she loves Heathcliff. Catherine demands Heathcliff's opinion of this revelation and cruelly teases Isabella – but an idea is planted in Heathcliff's mind.

Heathcliff begins to seemingly seduce Isabella, irritating Catherine and frightening Edgar, who attempts to quash the relationship before it can begin, demanding Heathcliff leave and never return to Thrushcross Grange. Alas, Heathcliff continues to goad Edgar, who eventually decides to half-heartedly attack him, before promptly running off to get help. The fracas results in Edgar returning and giving Catherine an ultimatum: either she gives up Heathcliff or Edgar.



However, Catherine does not respond to this ultimatum and instead locks herself away. She emerges three days later in an apparently unstable state of mind, flying into a rage when Edgar reveals Nelly to be the source of his information concerning Heathcliff.

The next night, Heathcliff invites Isabella away with him and they marry. Edgar is appalled at their relationship, and resolves that she has disowned him and ceases contact with his sister. Over time, Heathcliff becomes bored of Isabella and returns to Thrushcross Grange.

Heathcliff demands that Nelly allow him to enter Thrushcross so that he can see the unwell Catherine alone. When he enters, Catherine has deteriorated greatly and tells Heathcliff that it is he that has caused her to be so gravely ill. Shortly after, she births her daughter (**Little Cathy**) and dies.

Isabella returns to Thrushcross Grange, wild and furiously condemning Heathcliff for his cruelty during their marriage. She tells how, upon returning to Wuthering Heights after Catherine's funeral, Heathcliff beats Hindley to near death. Six months later, Hindley dies too and Heathcliff becomes the master of Wuthering Heights.

Act 4

Behind the closed gates of Thrushcross Grange, Little Cathy grows up sheltered by Edgar and Nelly. As she becomes older, she becomes restless with her isolation and seeks to explore beyond their home. Cathy's hopes are answered when Linton, Isabella's sickly son, comes to live at Thrushcross Grange.

However, Heathcliff immediately sends Hareton to collect Linton. Nelly delivers him to his estranged father at Wuthering Heights. Meanwhile, at Thrushcross Grange, Cathy is distraught that her hopes of having a playmate have been dashed as soon as they arose.

A few years pass and Cathy finally persuades her father to allow her to visit the moors but only if she is accompanied by Nelly. Upon the moors, Cathy meets Hareton who is accompanied by Heathcliff. Despite Nelly's attempts to refuse his offer, Heathcliff invites Cathy to visit Wuthering Heights where she is reunited with Linton once more. Heathcliff insists that Cathy visits whenever she pleases.



Edgar refuses to permit Cathy to visit Wuthering Heights again. She embarks upon a secret exchange of letters with Linton, which become increasingly romantic. Nelly begins to throw Linton's letters on the fire and the exchange stops.

A while later, Edgar becomes ill with a supposed head cold and Cathy becomes fearful of what might happen if he doesn't survive the illness. In an attempt to lighten Cathy's mood, Nelly takes her out onto the moors where they meet Heathcliff once again.

Under the pretense of saving Linton from death, Heathcliff lures Cathy and the unwilling Nelly back to Wuthering Heights and refuses to let them leave. Whilst Cathy and Linton are married by Heathcliff, Nelly is locked away for five days at Wuthering Heights. When she is eventually freed, it is Linton and Cathy who are locked away. However, Cathy manages to escape to Thrushcross Grange to see her dying father.

Upon the death of Edgar, Heathcliff's plan finally is complete: Cathy's marriage to Linton means her entire inheritance, including Thrushcross Grange, goes to her husband – ergo to Heathcliff. Cathy is taken back to Wuthering Heights, where Linton dies a short while later.

Act 5

Nelly, fearful and enraged, returns to Wuthering Heights to care for Cathy. Nelly remains at Wuthering Heights as housekeeper, caring for Cathy and Hareton as time passes on. Cathy taunts and teases Hareton for her own entertainment – demanding he be her friend. Just like Catherine and Heathcliff, Cathy and Hareton eventually grow closer. Meanwhile, Heathcliff grows restless – haunted by Catherine, his will to live deteriorates. He gives Nelly one final order and dies.



CHARACTER BREAKDOWNS

When casting for a production, the team create 'character breakdowns' of each of the characters so that casting agents and the actors are able to see what they're looking for from the role. These character descriptions below come from these breakdowns - this is part of what the actors would have received when they first auditioned for the parts.

Nelly

Housekeeper at Wuthering Heights, responsible for the upbringing of the children who pass through there and Thrushcross Grange. Same age as Hindley, childhood companions, at one point sweethearts, but was displaced by the arrival of Heathcliff and Hindley's departure. Tries to do the right thing but sometimes can be judgmental, can let her own jealousies and frustrations determine her actions. Must come to terms with her own agency and failings in how Heathcliff came to be her nemesis, all the terrible things that have happened.

Mr. Earnshaw

Patriarch. Misguided drunk. Proud. Inwardly incredibly lonely and grieving his late wife but enraged when disrespected. Beats his children as a matter of course.

Hindley

Deeply sensitive and as a child has a strong poetic side and love of music but this is quickly knocked out of him by his father, whose love he believes Heathcliff to have usurped. Meets any challenge to his authority/ identity with bullying authoritarianism.

Catherine

Strong-willed but playful and cheeky. Physically bold. Attracted to danger. Can be operatic/ provocative or utterly lost – often both at once. Enjoys the natural wilds until her lengthy stay at the Grange where she is tutored in how to behave as a 'lady'. She is then caught between two versions of herself and of what it is to be a woman. Kindred spirit to Heathcliff.

Heathcliff

We meet Heathcliff as a young orphan "starving and houseless" who is 'rescued' by Mr. Earnshaw. He is the ruthless and tragic 'villain' of the story. He is used to fending for himself but he also has a powerful capacity for love, openness and curiosity. This is steadily eroded at Wuthering Heights and an equally strong survivor mentality takes over. He becomes quietly vengeful and calculating, beginning to have a different understanding of how we can use his physical presence.

Frances

Wife of Hindley. Suspected she has no money she is a surprise arrival into the house when Mr. Earnshaw dies. Brash, speaks her mind, supports Hindley in his violent, authoritarian reign over the children. Dies shortly after childbirth. Aspirational.

Hareton

Son of Hindley and Frances. Abused by Heathcliff who he sees as a father figure. Ashamed of being illiterate. Confused and angry but quietly loyal and loving.

Edgar

Brother of Isabella and lives at The Grange. Dotes on Cathy from the moment he sees her, though does not connect to or understand her wilder side. Intellectual, bookish, pedantic, lives in his head.

Isabella

Sister of Edgar. Moves from naïve girl of privilege to embittered, abused woman. Raised in pure comfort and with a sense of social superiority, she elopes with Heathcliff seeking adventure and passion but becomes

desperate and isolated in a violent, vengeful and loveless marriage before escaping to London to raise her child alone.

Young Cathy

Daughter of Cathy and Edgar. Grows up enormously sheltered and pampered but well loved. Inherits her mother's love of the wilds and nature. Naturally inquisitive and nurturing, though her closeted upbringing can at times make her seem naïve and condescending. Becomes fierce and strong willed.

Linton

Son of Heathcliff and Isabella. Brought up away from Wuthering Heights. Has always been of a poorly constitution. Insecure, anxious, bookish like his uncle. Terrified of his father once he meets him – brought up in an environment not unlike Isabella's and utterly unprepared for harsh words or violence.



HEATHCLIFF
Ike Bennett
(he/him)



NELLY
Giulia Innocenti
(she/her)



CATHERINE
Lua Bairstow
(they/she)



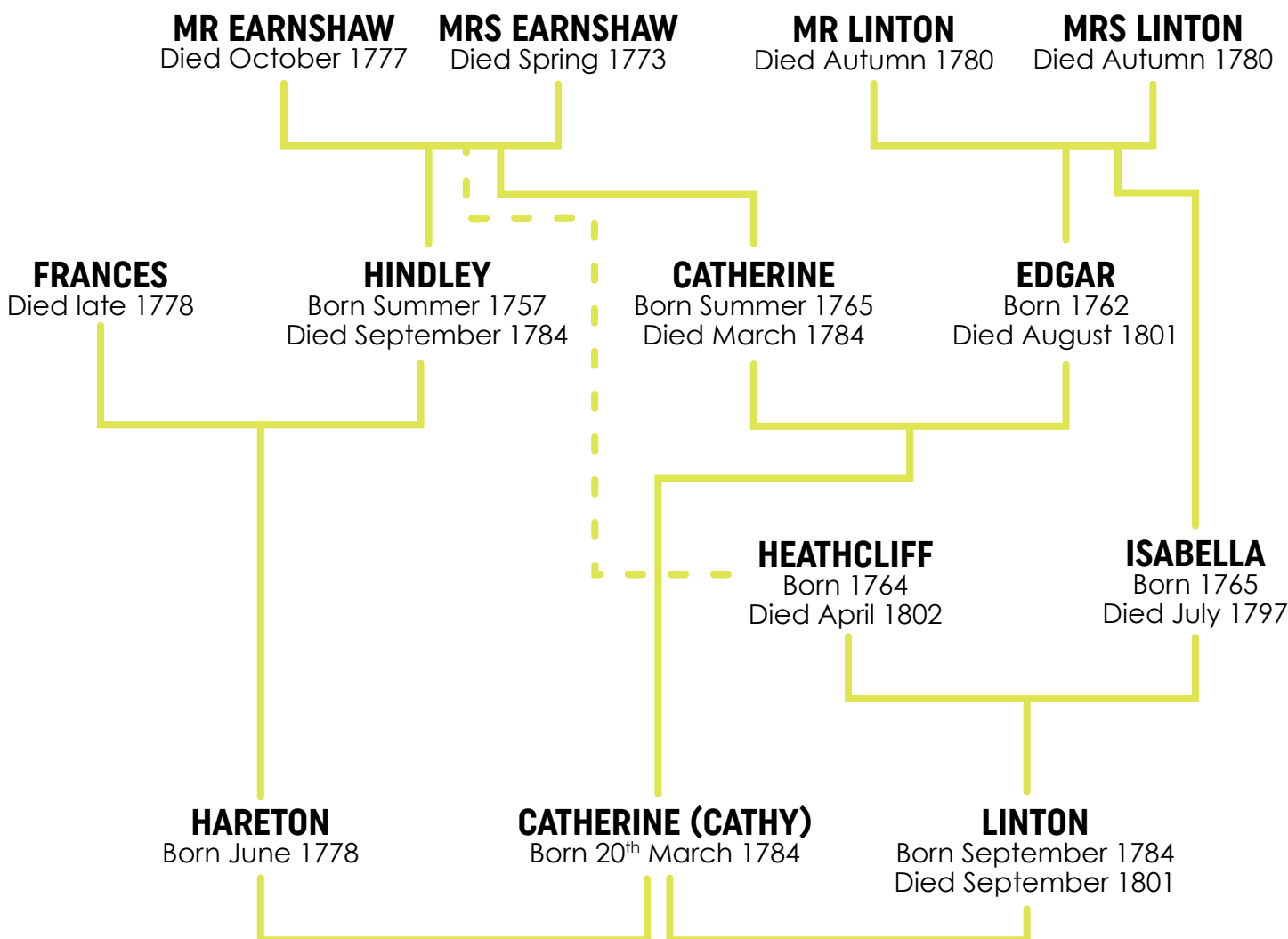
HINDLEY / HARETON
John Askew
(he/him)



**MR EARNSHAW
EDGAR / LINTON**
Leander Deeny
(he/him)



**ISABELLA / FRANCES
YOUNG CATHY**
Nicole Sawyerr
(she/her)



MEET THE DIRECTOR & WRITER

This section is designed to give students insight into the roles and responsibilities of creatives involved in the making of Wuthering Heights. Questions will highlight the activities that each of the team members undertake on a day-to-day basis and the aspects of the creative process that each creative is accountable for.

Visit <https://vimeo.com/showcase/10202197> to access filmed interviews with the show's actors and director. Visit <https://chinaplatetheatre.com/news-more/> to read interviews with other members of the creative team, including the writer and costume designer.



CONTEXT AND LEGACY OF THE NOVEL

Emily Brontë's 1847 novel poses a number of questions that remain important in 2023. Consider the following points and discuss how these might inform your own interpretation of the novel, and how you might apply critical theories to the text.

- The Brontë sisters all published their work under male pseudonyms, with Emily's being Ellis Bell. What has changed, or what do you think has remained the same, in terms of attitudes to women writers in the UK, and internationally?
- One of the (many) reasons the pseudonym was considered necessary was the potentially scandalous nature of the novel's content, particularly if written by a woman. Do you think attitudes and expectations of women writers have completely changed in the 21st century, or do you think some topics remain 'better written by men'?
- How can *Wuthering Heights* be considered a novel of protest?
- Why do you think *Wuthering Heights* remains an important part of the literary canon?
- The Brontë sisters often used their own experiences to inspire their narratives: their prominent use of schools and teachers (and the exploration of literacy in *Wuthering Heights*) being a significant example. Do you think the best literature always draws on the author's own life experiences?
- Of the critical theories you have studied, does this production demonstrate any of those in particular? For example, is this adaptation a Feminist reading? Does the way in which Nelly - a servant - narrates the story, encourage a Marxist reading of the text? Justify your answers with reference to the novel, the play and the detail of your chosen theory.



PRE-SHOW DISCUSSIONS



These discussion points have been designed to support students in articulating personal responses to the novel and demonstrate understanding of the different interpretations that can be applied.

1. If you had to summarise *Wuthering Heights* (novel) in three sentences, what would you write?
2. Are there any characters in the novel that you would cut out in a stage or screen adaptation, and why? Justify your choices.
3. What are the three key themes of the novel? Once you have identified those, which moments in the novel most explore those themes?
4. Is there one scene in the novel that absolutely **MUST NOT** be removed from an adaptation?
5. Lucinka Eisler (director) is particularly interested in this question: *If it takes a village to raise a child, does it take a village to create a monster?* What aspects of the novel do you think particularly connect with this question?
6. Playwrights have been adapting *Wuthering Heights* since the novel was published in 1847. There are several film versions. Why do you think the novel has had such a long history of adaptation?

Playwright Laura Wade adapted *Alice in Wonderland* and discussed “The need for an adaptor to uncover the spirit of the book as well as the detail of the book before letting the play become its own thing”.

Teacher's Note: *Wuthering Heights* has been adapted numerous times. It may be fruitful to engage your students in discussion about the purpose of adaptations, and the varying levels of alterations that a director or adaptor may choose to make. Although your students are studying English Literature as opposed to Drama and Theatre, there are plenty of points that they could consider whilst watching this adaptation.

POST-SHOW DISCUSSIONS

These discussion points have been designed to allow students to reflect on an adaptation of the novel and interrogate key creative decisions made by Inspector Sands.

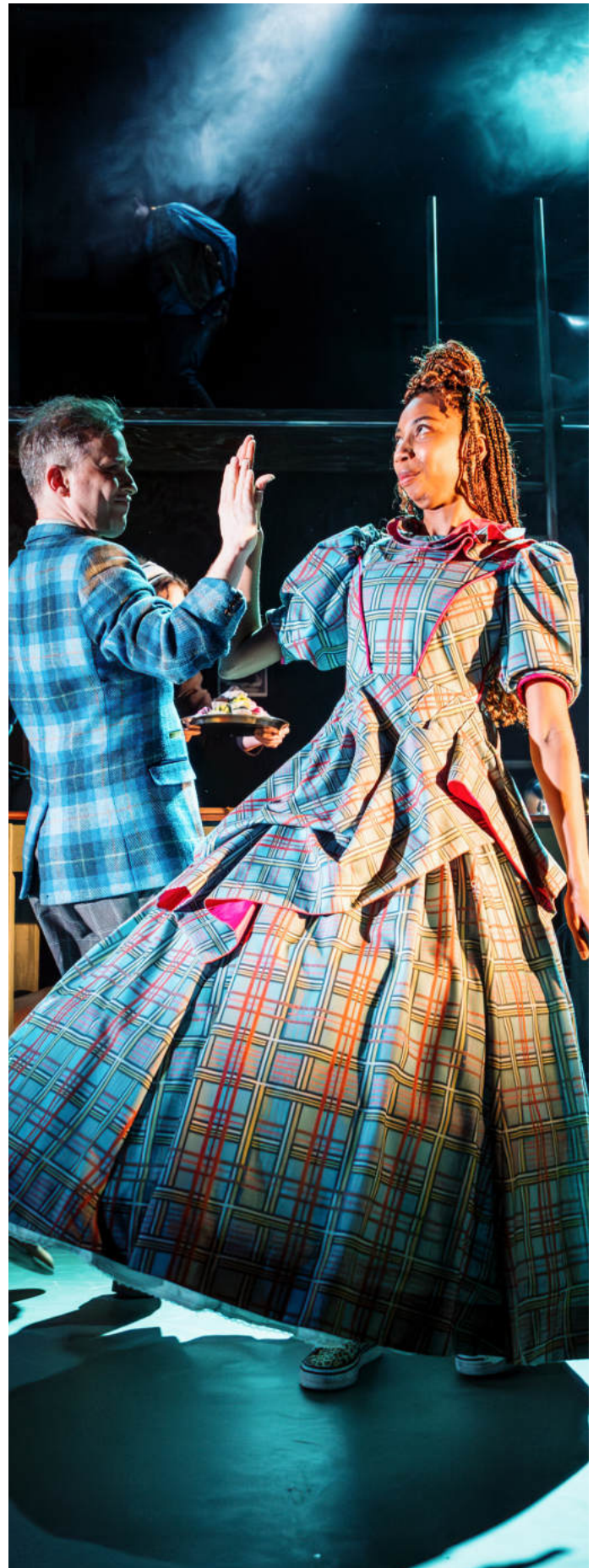
Discussion topics:

- The stage directions towards the end of the play state, “Nelly is fully in control of the narrative.” Given what you know about the narrative structure and devices of the original novel, what are the advantages and disadvantages of restricting the narrative viewpoint to Nelly in this version?
- How has the design of the production created a sense of the settings in the novel? Given that pathetic fallacy is such a key technique in the novel, what specific examples from the production can you give to answer this question?
- How is the passage of time shown in the play? Do you think it is effective?
- The final image of Heathcliff is of him as a child. Why do you think the adaptor has chosen to do this? What impact does that have on our understanding and interpretation of the novel?
- Are there any scenes or conversations that have not made it into the final version that you would have liked to see? Justify your answer, thinking carefully about the artistic intentions behind this production and your own interpretations of the individual characters.

If you are studying *Wuthering Heights* as part of ‘Love Through the Ages’ (AQA) you might discuss the following points:

Looking at the different definitions of love in *Love Through the Ages* (AQA) (p.17 of the A Level specification) which ones could you apply to:

- i) the original novel?
- ii) the Inspector Sands adaptation of *Wuthering Heights*?



POST-SHOW COMPARISONS

Below are four short extracts which are taken from the novel. How has the Inspector Sands production conveyed these aspects of the novel? Consider in particular how Assessment Objective 2 (AO2) might be applied to the way in which the production has responded to the original text.

1) I could not half tell what an infernal house we had. The curate dropped calling, and nobody decent came near us, at last; unless Edgar Linton's visits to Miss Cathy might be an exception. At fifteen she was the queen of the countryside; she had no peer; and she did turn out to be a haughty, headstrong creature! I own I did not like her, after her infancy was past; and I vexed her frequently by trying to bring down her arrogance; she never took an aversion to me though.

(Chapter 8)

2) I've no more business to marry Edgar Linton than I have to be in heaven; and if the wicked man in there had not brought Heathcliff so low, I shouldn't have thought of it. It would degrade me to marry Heathcliff, now; so he shall never know how I love him; and that, not because he's handsome, Nelly, but because he's more myself than I am. Whatever our souls are made of, his and mine are the same, and Linton's is as different as a moonbeam from lightning, or frost from fire.

(Chapter 9)

3) 'I'll not retract my word' said Catherine. 'I'll marry him, within this hour, if I may go to Thrushcross Grange afterwards. Mr Heathcliff, you're a cruel man, but you're not a fiend; and you won't, from mere malice, destroy, irrevocably, all my happiness...I've given over crying; but I'm going to kneel here, at your knee; and I'll not get up, and I'll not take my eyes away from your face, till you look back at me! No, don't turn away! Do look! ...Have you never loved anybody, in all your life, Uncle? Never?'

(Chapter 27)

4) I sought, and soon discovered, the three headstones on the slope next the moor - the middle one, grey, and half buried in heath - Edgar Linton's only harmonised by the turf and moss, creeping up its foot - Heathcliff's still bare.

I lingered round them, under that benign sky; watched the moths fluttering among the heath and hare-bells; listened to the soft wind breathing through the grass; and wondered how anyone could ever imagine unquiet slumbers, for the sleepers in that quiet earth.

(Chapter 34)



INTERPRETING THE NOVEL

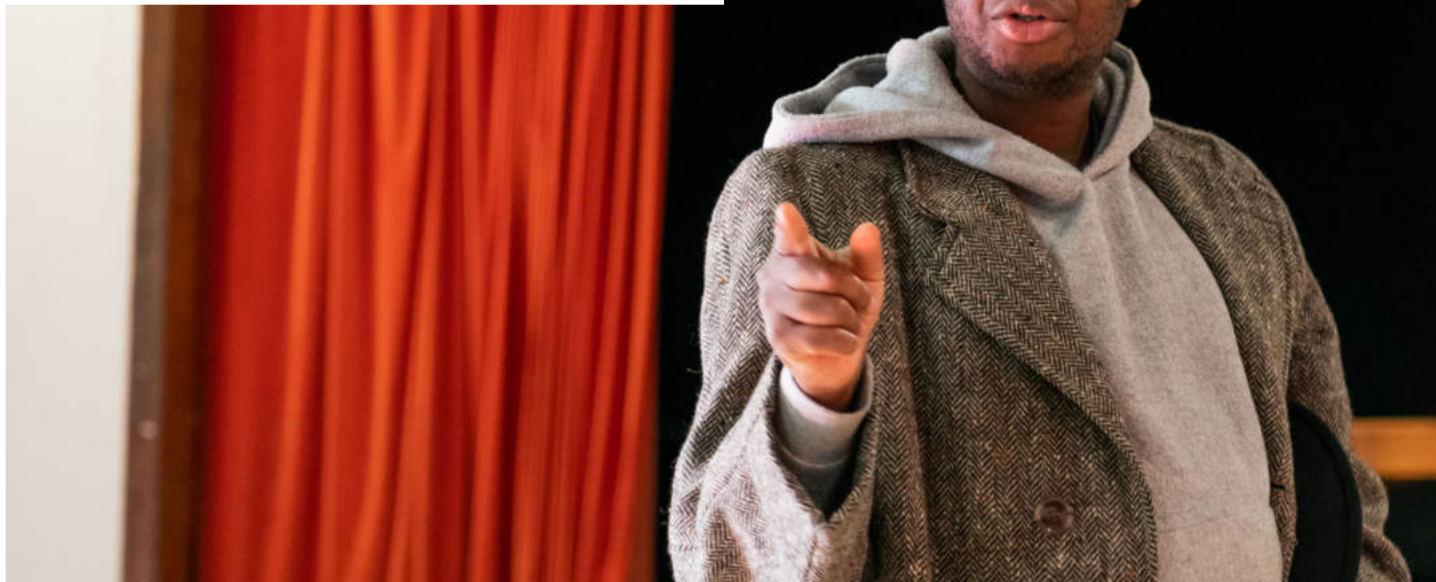
These discussion points are designed to encourage students to consider how the novel has been adapted. This reflection will help revise and consolidate their understanding of the novel.

1. In the process of adapting a novel for the stage, what opportunities or techniques do theatre makers have that novelists do not?
2. What decisions have been made during the adaptation process, for example what is the impact of having Nelly as the sole narrator? What is the effect on your understanding of the text?
3. Do we find ourselves being more or less sympathetic towards particular characters when seen through the filter of an adaptation? What influences the behaviour and reactions of Heathcliff and Hareton, for example? Can we be sympathetic towards even the most challenging characters in the narrative?
4. Which themes or ideas do you think are prominent in this adaptation in comparison to when reading the novel? Why do you think this might be?
5. If you were going to transpose Wuthering Heights into a different time period, when would it be and why? Justify your answer in terms of themes, context and subject relevance.

For further Drama based activities, visit <https://chinaplatetheatre.com/whats-on/current/wuthering-heights/> to find our Drama resource.

For example:

- Textual comparisons between the novel and the script
- Opportunities to discuss how mood and atmosphere is created aurally rather than through text
- Improvisation: Playing the moment
- Creating playlists with period and or contemporary music. You could also ask students to create playlists (all genres) that they think apply to each character.



CREATIVE WRITING TASKS



INTERPRETING IMAGES

Look closely at this photograph. Write a narrative in response to two of the characters in that photo.

NARRATIVE

Other writing tasks which support KS4 language papers:

- Write a story about an outsider
- Write a story about jealousy
- Write a story about a character who is betrayed
- Write a story about coming home

USING IMAGES AS A STIMULUS

You may wish to look for images related to Haworth (home of the Brontës), the Yorkshire moors, Top Withens (the house said to have inspired *Wuthering Heights*), and apply one of the following prompts:

- Write about an abandoned place as suggested by this picture
- Write about historic place as suggested by this image
- Describe a place associated with the supernatural
- Describe a place associated with history