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Two Women's Depictions in Victorian Literature

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This paper compares women's depiction through the main female character in *Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens and *Wuthering Heights* by Emily Brontë with the lens of the Feminist theory. The qualitative nature of the research assists in the analyses of women's education, role, and interaction as key elements to understand the domesticity represented in these two Victorian classics of the nineteenth-century literature. It is claimed that Charles Dickens in *Great Expectations* challenges the patriarchal state that confines women to a domestic life whilst Emily Brontë in *Wuthering Heights* uses domestic ideologies to portray her female heroine, respecting the values and norms of a male-dominated society. The study demonstrates the tendency of Dickens to give his main character with unique situations where opportunities of female empowerment and self-growth are provided. In contrast, Brontë represents her central character as a heroine in distress who is not only punished with her inability as a woman to choose her own fate but also goes through constant suffering that keeps her in a physical and mental submission. Throughout the analysis of the premises, questions in regard to authors' intentions and limitations emerged, which are yet to be studied in future researches.

Keywords: *Great Expectations*, *Wuthering Heights*, gender stereotypes, gender bias

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Chapter 1: Introduction

Historically, the foundation of the societies has been built on ideologies that are reinforced through years; this way a culture that identifies them and identifies their people is created, leading themselves to a categorisation based on commonality. Yet, how does the process of self-configuration affect the role men and women take in their lives? It is believed behaviour is conditioned and shaped both at a micro and macro level where the ideology of the time and place play an essential part in it. The ideology and identity process go hand-in-hand that eventually leads to collective social conduct. Specifically, Victorian society was embodied by an ideology where a patriarchal state exercised its control over the domesticity of women, making sure gender roles were well defined and enhanced. This reality was not only framed and reflected in Victorian literature, but the literature itself was also governed by male hegemony. Certainly, as the nineteenth-century society was on the verge of inevitable changes, the literature of the time was sentenced to face the same fate where male writers battled to maintain their authority and female ones fought to gain their recognition and respect.

Different works of literature concerning female writing put in evidence the struggles faced not only by women in general but also by female pioneers in literature and their predecessors. So, it may be believed that female writers always showed in their work the bravery to challenge traditional patriarchal norms of the society while male writers emphasised women's inferiority in their stories. Nonetheless, thinking that all male writers gender stereotype their narrations and their female counterpart opposed to it is a generalization that should not be taken lightly. This is an example of Charles Dickens in *Great Expectations* and Emily Brontë in *Wuthering Heights* whose novels antagonized the expectations of an era where men's and women's narrative intentions were believed to be gender biased. Consequently, it is considered that Charles Dickens in *Great Expectations* redefines Victorian women as part of a patriarchal society through his character Estella Havisham whilst Emily Brontë instils the domestic ideology in the female characterisation in Catherine Earnshaw.

The current dissertation aims to compare two classic Victorian novels through the analysis of their corresponding characterization of women. Charles Dickens and Emily Brontë are placed as two of the most influential English writers whose work display a sense of social altruism due to the social content of their novel. Dickens shows social-economic inequity, and Brontë contextualises the struggles of the women of the time.

Thompson (2015) explains that the authors of the nineteenth century developed characters of their own gender, so considering Charles Dickens a feminist in a world where men were deemed to be sexist was a distinction that was not likely to happen. However, Emily Brontë along with her sister, Charlotte, regardless of living in the pre-feminist time, may be believed to be "feminist in their views and the way they felt about their writing" (Devaney, 2014). These are the two misconceptions that this analysis unfolds through the following inquiry: how is women's domesticity represented in the nineteenth-century Victorian patriarchal society in *Great Expectations* and *Wuthering Heights*?

The research used a qualitative methodology for its literary analysis which employed Feminist Criticism better to understand the underlying interpretation of women in both novels. The Feminist approach to literature tends to unveil the patriarchal and the submission of women in literature by exploring the inequalities present in the text (gender stratification, sexual discrimination, lack of choice and opportunity, ...), challenging and questioning the representation of women as "other," "lack," "nature" (Barry 2017, loc. 2997). By using the Feminist theory as a critical lens, this study examines the two main female characters' development through the novels, by exposing elements in the narratives that could be easily overlooked or misinterpreted. Passages from the novels have been analysed accordingly, stating the authors' individual women's depiction. Nevertheless, the literary interpretation is primarily based on the reader's response to the text and their own values and beliefs (Mizic 2015, 8). Even though the author of the current research used specific information to support her claims, the objectivity of analysis may be biased by the contemporary beliefs of the women's role in the 21st century, among other limitations that are presented in the conclusion. Yet, this literary analysis offers opportunities for reflection through inquiries and statements that expose not only the characters' behaviour but also the rationale behind the characterisation of women displayed by Charles Dickens and Emily Brontë where insecurities, strengths and individual details came to the surface.

The consecutive chapters consist of the theoretical and analysis sections. In chapter 2, Women in the Victorian Time is the theoretical framework that contextualises the current study, explaining the sources of the rooted perception of women and the gender stereotypification, and their implication in the society and therefore in the nineteenth-century literature. In addition, it digs into the first steps towards the female movement that later led to the women's emancipation. In chapter 3, Analysis of Women's Depictions

is an argumentative-comparative analysis that presents passages from the novels that are studied based on the selected theory and considering other authors' work. Chapter 4 concludes with an overview of the analysis and an overall reflection of the findings.

Chapter 2: Women in the Victorian Time

In 1837, Alexandrina Victoria was crowned Queen Victoria whose reign marked an era of changes, development and achievements for Great Britain. During this time, Queen Victoria built a powerful empire that faced social, political, and economic challenges. Despite these circumstances, Queen Victoria was always considered the epitome of a reputable woman who perceived honourability and respectability as pillars of the Victorian society. The "hard work, a moral sense of duty and family were in line with their subjects' values, and a means to maintain the political and social order of the country" (Lemmer 2007, 12); that is why certain ideologies towards personal responsibility and roles within the society were inculcated, reinforced and maintained during the Victorian realm. These attitudes and ideas became sectarian ideologies that identified men and women of this time.

2.1 Ideology

Ideology represents the core principles on which expectations and norms of a given society are based (Nescolarde-Selva, Usó-Doménech, and Gash 2017, 2). These beliefs, then maintain, the enforcing element within that society. In other words, culture serves as a point of reference to solidify ideologies such as, especially the framework of this thesis, gender role, resulting in authority creation and power justification. "The authority, which is the legitimate indicator of the power, principal axis associated with masculinity in the power structure which hosts the gender" (Salamanca Mora 2014, 133). With this in mind, gender ideology is here considered as culturally endorsed attitudes towards the status of men and women within the society (Korabik, McElwain and Chappell 2008 in Ungaretti and Etchezahar 2013, 41).

The binary division into men and women is based not only on biological matters but also on rooted assumptions that define, for example, women as helpless and weak while men are thought to be competent and strong. How, then, do these ideologies get to be formed in society? Nescolarde-Selva, Usó-Doménech, and Gash (2017,5) cite three cultural forces introduced by Williams: emergent, residual, and dominant ideology. The latter of these is the most relevant one in this context. It refers to the governing ideology existing in the society at the time, which is accepted and maintained as a way for the individuals to identify themselves with the proffered values and beliefs. For the individual, ideologies are adopted at the early stages of life and consolidate over time, and their

behaviour is conditioned in interaction with the surrounding. That is to say, "what we know is a model of our experience that is constructed" (Nescolarde-Selva, Usó-Doménech, and Gash (2017, 2).

Just like any other ideology, the idea towards a division between genders has resulted in a series of consequences that directly affect people on the psycho-emotional level and even physically. These outcomes include effects on individual identity, patriarchal social hegemony, and women's domesticity. The gendered ideology has had a negative impact, especially on women.

2.1.1 Identity

Identity is a complex concept that remains a mystery for many authors due to the contradictory descriptions given to explain the term. For instance, Racevskis (1987) states that identity is ambiguously defined as an innate possession but also as a result of individual experiences and influence of the person's unique surrounding. The author also explains that identity represents a mental place where self-anonymity lies in. However, Foucault resents the idea of taking "identity" simply "as an out-growth of a very personal desire for anonymity, expressed in the well-known admonition" (Racevskis 1987, 133). Fearon (1999) wittily exposes the contradictions and the wide range of definitions attributed to this term and its different ramifications due which it is impossible to make the meanings agree.

Even though researchers have failed to provide a unified definition of "identity," they have ironically agreed on making distinction between two types, personal and social identity. The first concerns "moral code or compass, a set of moral principles, ends, or goals that a person uses as a normative framework and a guide to action" (Taylor in Fearon 1999, 21). The physical characteristics are also considered part of the personal identity, which, as the intrinsic features may be socially motivated (Fearon 1999, 22). So, social identity can also be explained in terms of social expectations and categorization within a society (Fearon 1999, 27) because it refers to the sense of belonging to a group that shares a common feature in or within the family or the wider society.

Taking into consideration that social and personal identities originate in the society and lead towards the line of inquiry of the current research, it is important to discuss female identity, as it is also socially constructed. The process of female/male identification starts at an early age when, in a normative context, parents make a clear distinction

between the expectations and behavioural norms set for boys and for girls that lead to social behaviour and ideology that are reinforced in children over time. In fact, model imitation of same-sex parent's behaviour and direct reinforcement are two approaches used to explain how sex-role acquisition process takes place during infancy when gender differences are internalized (Katz 1979, 157, 161). For girls, during the pre-oedipal stage, the relationship with their parents is defined. This theory serves as a reference to understand the indoctrination and mother-daughter dynamic present in *Great Expectations*. Chodorow (2004) explains that during the pre-oedipal phase, girls form a strong attachment to their mother that continues through childhood, eventually ending in daughters adopting their mother's behaviour, ideologies, emotional mindset, values and principles, among other features. In this way, the first step towards gender categorization takes place where certain activities and conduct are assigned to a specific gender, creating an influential connotation (Kolberg 1966 in Katz 1979,158) attached to a social norm. During adulthood, this "indoctrination" is practised and emphasised as men and women perform a role aligned with their gender identity in order to fulfil the social prerequisites. Butler (1999,12) expresses this as follow:

When the relevant "culture" that "constructs" gender is understood in terms of such a law or set of laws, then it seems that gender is as determined and fixed as it was under the biology-is-destiny formulation. In such a case, not biology, but culture, becomes destiny.

2.1.2 Patriarchal Hegemony vs Women's Domesticity

In the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, the Industrial Revolution resulted in many changes, specifically, in the area of social stratification. This change not only triggered the creation of social division that differentiated or categorised individuals according to their monetary income but also reinforced the division between men and women. The industry replaced labour in rural regions. Men were lured to the urban areas to work in factories, leaving farm and domestic responsibilities to women. Nevertheless, the economic downturn of the time also forced women to find jobs in factories; however, the industrial boost raised doubts about their ability to carry out the obligations in the private domain since it represented working long hours away from their home, leaving her domestic duties and children unattended. This impracticability exposed the impossibility to fuse home and the workplace, consolidating this way the domestic ideology of the Victorian era.

The public and private spheres were ideologies that initially were a product of the capitalistic societies. That is to say, the masculine gender system established in the public sphere and women's exploitation in the private one was nothing more than a consequence of the implanted economic system (Waters 1989, 202). Women's economic dependency and the limitations for them in the public domain heightened male domination and women's domestication. But what are the implications of the separation of the public and the private spheres for gender roles in Victorian society?

The public sphere is considered as "a discursive space in which individuals and groups associate to discuss matters of mutual interest and, where possible, to reach a common judgement about them" (Hauser 1998 in Stark 2011, 16). Men used this domain to perform politics to work for a monetary income, to receive education, and to participate in trading and lawmaking. The private sphere, then, is defined as the domestic area where Victorian women carried out their morality but also practised their submissiveness. In the private domain, specific tasks were awarded to women, mostly those that are related to motherhood, domestic labour, and husband's satisfaction. Religion was one of the most powerful ideological apparatuses in the nineteenth century. It made sure that the differentiation between the binaries: public and private, men and women, were respected, following the social expectations. Nonetheless, belonging to a private sphere was taken more as a God-given responsibility and part of the norm rather than an imposition. As much so that "the respectable dogmas of self-help and personal responsibility contributed to making life under the social conditions of Victorian England more bearable" (Lemmer 2007, 22) after the negative effects of the Industrial Revolution.

The different roles of men and women were seen as upholding the Victorian values rather than as male domination and female domesticity; they gave them the social respectability, the man in his role as a husband, provider and the woman in her moral role as a wife and mother. For Victorian women, carrying the morality of the family was a task embraced with honour. It was not seen as discriminatory or sexist as it is considered nowadays. In fact, being a domestic being besides giving women the femininity attribute, it gave them the authority to decide over different elements concerning the household. Women felt free within the limitation of the private sphere they belonged to although "much of this culture was determined by the needs of men" (Tosh 1999 in Lemmer 2007, 30). Middle-class women had more options than those in the lower social class. For instance, women in the middle class performed tasks as mistresses that gave them the

"power" to supervise and help servants, manage the family monetary expenditure (Branca 1975 in Lemmer 2007, 34) and attend a social event related to charity. Nonetheless, none of these activities required any kind of formal education or was a privilege women could count on.

Women's education somehow transgressed with Victorian values because women's responsibility was to fulfil the domestic role. Mora (2005) indicates that male hegemony was fortified by women's economic dependency and lack of education (in Salamanca Mora 2014, 132). Clearly, the only "education and training of girls was to prepare them for courtship and marriage" (Hall 1992 in Lemmer 2007, 35). Nonetheless, it may be that a step forward towards women's emancipation was taken when women secretly used magazines and journals as informal means of self-education (Brenzel 1983, 3). Yet, these publications focused not only on promoting domesticity but also on assisting girls and women to develop their knowledge of their duties as wives and mothers. In fact, Brenzel (1983, 4) states that the perception in women was intended to be shaped through these publications. For instance, the journal written in 1841 by Sarah Hale *Good Housekeeper* gave advises on intelligent household management as well as other tips regarding nutrition. Even though a few women received some education in the nineteenth century, this was aimed to purposely maintain women on condition of public "anonymity" or social exclusion.

Nevertheless, gradually women understood the importance to fight for the right to be part of the educational system. Pioneers like Emma Willard, Catharine Beecher, and Mary Lyon, who were also educational theorists, were committed to enabling access for women to receive formal education just like men to develop their understanding of geography, literature, and chemistry, among other areas, but also adding subjects to develop their knowledge of the "womanly callings" (Brenzel 1983, 7-8). The activism in search for women's right did not end there. In the late nineteenth century, women's social dissatisfaction resulted in feminist movements that demanded the right for women to receive a formal education, the right of suffrage, and the right to access paid employment. This first movement is called the First Wave of Feminism.

2.2 Women's Emancipation

In *Women's Emancipation Movement of the Nineteenth Century*, Paletschek and Pietrow-Ennker (2003, 312) explain that prior to this process, there was...

a number of important stepping stones: the European Enlightenment discourse, the revolutionary experience of 1789, the political conditions in the ensuing reactionary periods, the mobilization of women in the cause of nationalism and revolution, literary feminism, and the first attempts in association with contemporary social, political, religious, and moral movements. These experiences provided necessary skills for future action.

In the nineteenth century, challenging the values and the domesticity as a Victorian ideology was the first step for feminists to expose their unconformity towards the system. They organised movements that embraced their identity as women with high morality and strong principles, but these actions also demanded equality. Nonetheless, social stratification was an issue that also made a distinction between ideologies and aims within the feminist campaigns. Working-class women/socialist feminists and middle-class women/bourgeois feminists fought for their rights in different areas. While the first ones were committed to supporting movements that demanded fair wages and trade union organisation, the latter dedicated its effort to fight for equality in education, profession, and right for married women.

In education, feminists argued that there was a constant campaign discrediting the participation of women in formal schooling by claiming that women's capacity to reproduce and their family duties would be affected by it (Levine 2018, 26). Nonetheless, for women, education represented the opportunity to unlock doors for employment and other rights that were lashed by traditional assumptions of Victorian society. At first, women from the middle class self-educated through organised meetings and printed publications. Later, opportunities arose for girls from the bourgeois strata who received a formal education based on a curriculum similar to the boys' educational program. This deepened the social discrimination towards women who were already segregated for being biologically different from men, but they were also disfavoured for belonging to a low social order. Taking this into consideration, working-class girls also attended class but to be educated in subjects that reinforced the Victorian values such as needlework, laundry duties, and house management. So, even though there was not a real association between the creation of educational institutions to the feminist movement, the early efforts done by the feminists to expand education for women resulted in reinforcing traditional women's roles more than instilling feminist principles and values.

The impetus of women to position themselves in a place where they could be economically independent took them to fight against the apprehensiveness shown by many

universities such as Oxford and Cambridge that rejected the idea of accrediting women with a degree. With this, women trained as doctors and teachers represented a great battle that gradually was meant to be won. During feminist campaigns, actions towards women's education reforms were publically supported by the staff of newly founded colleges such as Queen's and Bedford. These two colleges compared to others offered active feminists and other women the opportunity to graduate in these institutions.

The gained ground won by women in education also served as steps towards employment opportunities as well as the construction of self-identity and respect. For feminists, Victorian society followed a double standard that diminished women for expecting a wage for the work they performed. However, women's respectability was acknowledged when their work was done without any remuneration since it symbolised sacrifice and commitment. So, many of the accepted occupations for women to perform exploited them with long working hours and underpayment. Activists were concerned about the repercussion this mentality would bring to the employment opportunities for women and on their reputation in the society. For instance, paid work was limited mostly to single women who were already degraded for their inability to find a husband to support them economically. As well, women's presence in the workforce was automatically seen as a way to denigrate the work that was also performed by many men.

Various efforts were committed to assisting women in the labour field. For instance, their conditions and injustices were exposed through printed publication, the Society for Promoting the Employment of Women (SPEW) created funds for women and monitored collective laws, and The National Union of Working Women (NUWW) assisted them in their search for paid employment (Levine 2018, 90). According to Levine (2018, 92), many feminists explored new labour markets in the government, in health and the education field, giving them the opportunity to successfully find stable incomes through occupations such as factory inspector which was an accomplishment for women's cause. Undoubtedly, conquering many work markets represented justice for the feminist supporters who saw this as a won battle. However, the success of many women in the employment area was at the expenses of "expensive and arduous years of training, the sacrifice of marriage and, in some cases, of a normal private life" (Rubinstein 1986 in Levine 2018, 99).

Certainly, the inclusion of women in education and the labour field challenged the values practised by the Victorian society where the morality of a woman was measured

by her level of domesticity. Sexual behaviour and marriage were controlled and punished by the Anglican Church. In this regard, feminists fought to gain women's right to divorce, to own a property and to have their children's guardianship. Murders, physical battering as well as psychological abuse, were some of the circumstances experienced by women. "They saw themselves as victims of male ideology, as victims of a lust denied to them, of a right to speak denied to them, of a society shaped by male requirements" (Levine 2018, 132).

The feminist movement aired the inequality of women in the marriage since their legal "rights" were in the hands of the husband. Church, the entity in charge of divorce matters, never found sufficient grounds to grant women the permission to divorce if the petitioner of the process was the wife. This act together with the restriction of women to own property was a way to maintain the pretence of a united family with high morality. Campaigns on this matter were organised over the years, petitions were submitted, articles were written while acts and reforms were viewed with eyes of injustices until July 3rd, 1884, when the Matrimonial Causes Act passed. This allowed women to file a legal motion for immediate separation from their husband. And with the passing of the Guardianship of Infant Act in 1886, it also offered women the possibility to opt for the custody of their children.

There is no doubt that women's participation in formal education, opportunities for a wider range of employment as well as fair remuneration, and the right of married women were the first steps for women's emancipation, which is a process that is still continuing. Looking back at the past, the process has gone through a metamorphosis in terms of women's perspectives, demands, and means to overcome specific challenges. Many wars have been fought and won since then, redefining the role of women in society, but gender bias is still a matter that yet needs to be eradicated.

2.3 Socio-Historical Conditions for Female Writers

Patriarchal ideology has dominated literature for centuries. The male stamp has been on great writings, even those written by women. It is not ironic to assume that after decades of constant fight to find a place for women in literature, it could be thought that the influence of male hegemony is still present restricting women's words. Identity loss, fear, anger, female mindset, absence of bravery to expose intimate thoughts are some elements attributed to men's influence as entities of authority.

In the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, women used note writing, letter, diaries and a couple of close friends as a way to communicate with the outside world. The private sphere where women belonged seemed to be kept secluded and personal. Nonetheless, women's role as women of letters gradually drew attention. Autobiographies, journals, magazines, periodical publications, plays and novels were among the first writings women were involved. Yet, these were regulated in some way. Magazine, for instance, were used for women's indoctrination where the importance of household work was emphasised and trailed. For instance, Englishwoman's *Domestic Magazine* "aimed to privilege the domestic sphere and pursued a traditional [...] exploration of what it meant to be a woman at home" (Boardman 2000, 151); in other words, written publications continuously moulded principles, behaviour, and societal beliefs (Delaney 2001 in Salamanca Mora 2014, 136). This might be explained by Marx's claims towards literature, which is taken as mere propaganda by which an ideology is imparted in a society.

The women of letters used writing not only as a means of communication but also as a way to maintain themselves financially and to voice their thoughts. In the past, women's writings focused on political critics, domestic issues, gender inequality, sexuality, to name a few. However, their skills as writers had been brutally criticised by both men and women through centuries. Men may have seen women in literature as a threat that jeopardised their hegemony while women might have considered them as contenders because becoming a writer meant being part of the competition where not the uniqueness but the mental stamina counted. Women's inferiority, lack of determination, and unwillingness to consider alternatives are the three challenges encountered as women and writers, according to Yang (1985, 510).

Similarly, Howell (2015, 23) states that harsh critics of women's writing were a matter of communal effort to discredit and humiliate the female authors and to keep them constrained under male shadows. Some did it with humour, some others with direct discriminatory remarks. Howell (2015, 23-24) cites N.S Willis, who not only qualified her sister's work as vulgar but prompted her to continue with her household activities. There is no doubt that women's pieces were not only described as docile, weak, and lack of identity, but they were also compared continuously to male writing that served as a point of correctness. As an illustration of this, autobiographies written by men and women were put under scrutiny that resulted in a gender-biased critique. Male autobiographies were considered chronological writing about individual success; instead, women's

autobiographies were undervalued with the description that defined them as a repetitive, non-linear tale of their domestic life (Khurana 2016, 55). Certainly, women's work as writers went through periods of hard criticism but also through phases of maturation that have allowed them to count with the acknowledgement as pioneers they have nowadays.

Bearing this in mind, Showalter (2009 in Khurana 2016, 60) explains the four 4F's of female writer development in literature. Starting from the current one, the *free phase* (1990 onwards-) frames the period when women dropped the restraints that anchored them to the gender biases, with this they reached "acceptance of their work, sexuality and existence in the mainstream" (Khurana 2016, 62). Second, the *female* (1920-1990) was a reflection phase that allowed women to discover and find their voice and place. In turn, in the *feminist* one (1880-1920), social change movements against social discriminatory normative took control where individuals were not only proactive but reactive. Moreover, in the first phase, the *feminine* (1840-1880), writers used male pseudonyms in order to avoid rejection, harsh critics and to give their writing the opportunity to be considered, but traditional behaviour was still imitated and voiced were silenced. That is, "a woman novelist unless she disguised herself with a pseudonym had to expect critics to focus on her feminist and rank her with the other women writers of her day, no matter how diverse their subjects or styles," expresses Showalter (1977 in Yadav and Yadav 2018, 62).

Female writers had the fear to talk about their issues as women openly. Howell (2015, 24) indicates that this fear went beyond the fact of being a woman; this handicap as many called it was emphasised by other "imperfections," for example, being a woman of colour and/or a woman from the low social strata. So, these pseudonyms gave them the needed anonymity to expose sexual matters, abuse, harassment, and oppression without being publicly scrutinised. However, for some writer using a pseudonym did not play in their favour because the name was either forgotten or did not get the expected recognition, which was the case of the Brontë sisters, Anne, Charlotte and Emily.

Lapp (2015, 12-13) explains that Brontë sisters used male and gender-neutral pseudonyms as they wanted to influence other work and minds, yet they also felt apprehensive towards the negative comments they could receive as female writers. For instance, Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell were the fictitious names used by the sisters. Even though the pseudonyms were neutral, their work was not categorised as feminine as their style, and thinking in writing was claimed to have a male approach, Lapp indicates (2015, 21-22).

2.4 Gender Bias in Literature

Nowadays, literature has become more inclusive when it comes to accepting not only a variety of writing styles, themes but also writers' background. Modern literature has shown its eclectic side that has found its place in the current society. Besides, authors are now craftsmen/women who create storylines that show a certain sense of complexity with unconventional characters and unique narrations. There is no doubt that the change of the literature comes hand in hand with the evolution of the society, but unfortunately, fragments of past ideologies remain, exposing inherited issues that have been dragged from generations to generations. Gender prejudice in literature is still present in contemporary literature. Even though female characters have succeeded at taking roles that were before dominated by male characters, the commitment of writers to enhance the characterisation of women in their story is still in question. To illustrate this, in the *Confession* (2018) by Jo Spain, the female detective Alice Moody struggles throughout the story to prove her ability as an investigator, receiving not only sexist comments but also constant rejections from their superiors and police colleagues. This, in comparison to male detective characters who are also characterised as relentless and opinionated but with autonomy and the power to decide, evidence that the current literature is not entirely unbiased when it comes to giving the same opportunities and confidence to female and male characters.

As it was previously stated, literature mirrors the beliefs, values and ideas of the time. In the nineteenth century in England, for example, discriminatory and derogatory representation of women was a common denominator among the publications. In contrast, the image of women portrayed in novels and magazines was considered neither vulgar nor unfair by the people of that time. Victorian women counted with their reputation and social expectations that made them valuable and respected as domestic individuals which obviously differed from the displayed image of men.

However, many authors from the 20th and 21st century criticise the arguments developed in the majority of the writing where the focus was on women's struggles towards men rather than real issues that surrounded women's life; in other words, "relationships with other women, with children, and with society, in general, are significantly diminished" (Griffin Wolff 1972, 206), feature that distinguished many but not all of the novels from the past. Writers showed a "symbiotic" relationship between the roles taken by men and women in literature where the woman was always the source of the man's problems, acting in function to the satisfaction of the male needs. It is probably because the voice in

literature was male dominated, which influenced or weakened female writers' expression. In this regard, Griffin Wolff (1972, 207) states that the inadequate interpretation of female struggles or issues has led to the rooted social stereotypes around women in literature, which I believe it may be the case in *Wuthering Heights*. These stereotypes can be easily determined by the identification of the language used by the authors.

In this regard, Menegatti and Rubini (2017) find the inexistence or no use of gender-neutral words within a language as one of the possible reasons why individuals are confined to a binary system, for example, women and men. There are different languages whose systems have female and male words like in Spanish, e.g. *profesora* vs *professor*, *hija* vs *hijo*; even objects are gender defined as in *computadora*, *huevo*. In any case, the gender-biased language could be used to describe a role in the society where "feminine gender role [...] reflects communal qualities but not agentic ones" (Wood and Eagly 2002 in Menegatti and Rubini 2017), roles that display affection. Mother, mistress, wife, to name a few represent amicability, morals, honesty, helpfulness, and caring. Women could also be characterised by roles where they are victimized or in distress due to a hostile environment or the circumstances as in maids, housewife, and widow; for instance, Catherine Earnshaw in *Wuthering Heights* (WH) who is portrayed as a woman in need in a love triangle. In turn, men like Heathcliff in WH are positioned in masculine roles "as they require agentic qualities, such as ambition, aggressiveness, and achievement" (Eagly and Karau 2002 in Menegatti and Rubini 2017); that is, by just being a man, all the requirements are fulfilled. So, words as competent, skilful, strong, successful, independent, intelligent would serve to describe the nature of a man.

To further explain this, Griffin Wolff (1972) introduces four arbitrary traits assigned to women, yet only three are relevant for the current paper: Virtuous Woman and the Sensuous Woman, the Sentimental Stereotype, and the Liberated Woman. The first stereotype delineates two prototypes of women that not only take Christianity and social hierarchy as appraisal tools to classify women, but also the reaction these made in men decides their value. Female characters are either portrayed as the epitome of purity and morality or as a synonym of lust and sin. Those that count with the respect of the society and men are considered the mother angels that belong to a higher social class and complies with the social, family, and religious expectations. Opposite to it, the immoral woman is the one with a humble upbringing that sexually arouse men and count with no honourable behaviour in the eyes of the different moral institutions.

Second, the Sentimental Stereotype categorises those female depictions in which women become a damsel in distress helpless and vulnerable in need of the man's protection. Numerous writers have used the role of heroine to portray these characteristics. The heroines illustrated in the nineteenth centuries emulated common women of the time who experienced different obstacles; for example, family disputes, illnesses, hegemony struggles, but their perseverance and strength were acknowledged by the reader and authors. Unfortunately, the fate of these heroines always ended in a tragic death or an unhappy resolution, as in the character created by Emily Brontë in *Wuthering Heights*. Catherine goes through a life of obstacles and limitation, suffering a chronic illness that took her life after giving birth to her daughter.

Lastly, the Liberated Woman stereotype projects female intelligence capabilities in search of social acceptance. This is seen as a rebellious act towards the established norms; this representation of women's aspiration is sometimes perverted by the writers, giving it a more sexual connotation. These powerful heroines "must submit (for their own good) to the restraints of male-dominated marriage; for their intelligence, however great, cannot compensate for biological inadequacy" (Griffin Wolff, 214). This clearly describes Estella Havisham, the female character developed by Charles Dickens in *Great Expectations*, who succumbed to married life for a time in order to look for "normality."

In all, the gender bias in literature and life comes to three of the five assumptions stated by Barbar (Crawford 1988, 87). First, the hegemony over women has not only its foundation on simple biology but also the enforcement of it; second, women's individual goals are unaccomplished due to marriage; and third, love is considered to be gender biased. With this Crawford reviews a series of women's representation in literature, stating that novels from the nineteenth century had the responsibility to expose the condition of the woman of that era. The author mentions Defoe as a novelist whose vision of the woman breaks with the patterns of his time, although some of his schemes were orthodox. He envisioned heroines shaping men in a way they could reach their goals. Daniel Defoe did portrait women with imperfections but also with ambitions and will power as in *Moll Flanders and Roxana*. From this last, John Crawford shares an empowering extract of the novel that voices the main character's fearless sentiment about women,

I returned, that while a woman was single, she was masculine in her politic capacity; that she then had the full command of what she had, and the full direction of what she did; that she was a man in her separate capacity, to all intents and

purposes that a man could be to himself... I added, that whoever the woman was that had an estate, and would give it up to be the slave of a great man, that woman was a fool, and must be fit for nothing but a beggar; that it was my opinion, a woman was a fit to govern and enjoy her own estate without a man as man was without a woman; and that, if she had a mind to gratify herself as to sexes, she might entertain a man as a man does a mistress. (Defoe in Crawford 1988, 100)

Conversely, Samuel Richardson took a more sublime approach to expose women's reality, according to Crawford. Richardson revealed the struggles of women to create awareness, keeping his distance from these issues. Nonetheless, there are authors as the female novelist, Frances Burney, who emphasised the traditional role of women through her writing. In *Evelina*, she highlighted the value of women's domestication through male domination.

In *Attitudes Toward Women in Eighteenth Century Literature*, Crawford (1988) displays different positions authors can assume towards women's struggles, and this is exposed by developing female characters that either have a "rebellious" attitude or characters who comply with the traditional patterns. That is to say, authors like Defoe use their characters to challenge the discrimination in the gender role, but others take a more subtle position as they defend women's value while the male hegemony keeps intact in their narratives.

Chapter 3: Analysis of Women's Depictions

Both *Great Expectations* (1861; henceforth marked as GE) and *Wuthering Heights* (1847; henceforth marked as WH) are classic novels of the nineteenth century. They were written in the same socio-cultural conditions but under unique personal circumstances. I dare to say that individual background and family history (appx. 1 and 2) greatly influenced the authors to the point of reflecting personal issues that marked them for life. Apart from the fact that the conditions in which the two novels were created may differ, it is worthwhile to focus the attention on elements in the stories that suggest that the main female character in *Great Expectations*, Estella Havisham, breaks with the domestic patterns of the 1800s. At the same time, Catherine Earnshaw/Linton in *Wuthering Heights* is preyed into a patriarchal state, acting in conformity with the established norms. That is to say, male domination and female submission are studied through access to education, the roles undertaken by Estella and Catherine and their interaction with other characters.

3.1 Novel Synopsis

Great Expectations by Charles Dickens

Great Expectations is a novel written by Charles Dickens in 1861. The main character is a boy called Philip Pirrip, best known as Pip. Pip is an orphan whose sister raised up by hand. The story begins with Pip's visit to his parents' grave. There, he encounters a convict named Abel Magwitch who has escaped from prison. This meeting between the felon and Pip not only builds in Magwitch a special bond towards Pip, but it is also the beginning of an undisclosed oath. On Christmas day, a search is held, taking Magwitch and another convict back to prison. The same year, Pip meets Ms. Havisham and her adopted daughter, Estella, for a playday at the Satis house. During Pip's staying, the proud, rude Estella humiliates him for his humble roots, making him feel common and unworthy. His interaction with Estella creates in him a wrong association between social respectability/money and worthiness.

As a young adult, Pip is approached by Jaggers, a powerful lawyer who serves as an intermediary between Pip and his benefactor. Jaggers delivers the great expectations set for Pip, who is then sent to London to become a gentleman. His education is funded by this secret patron who is believed to be Miss Havisham. Once in London, Pip meets various important people, including Herbert Pocket, who becomes his best friend and

confidant. Regardless of this fruitful experience in the new city, fulfilling the great expectations accentuates the separation between Pip and his family. His only goal is to become a gentleman and be worthy of marrying Estella. On Pip's 21st birthday, he starts to receive a regular allowance, making him more independent. At this point, Pip is even more certain that he would marry Estella. However, hearing Estella's engagement to Drummle makes Pip's intention crumble.

During the following year, Magwitch escapes from prison once again and pays a visit to his old friend, Pip. That evening, the convict discloses the name of Pip's real benefactor, Abel Magwitch, making Pip feeling in debt with his convict. With this, Pip and Herbert plan an escape that leads to the capture of Magwitch who is later sentenced to death for the committed crimes. This is not the only misfortune suffered by Pip. He also witnesses the fire that ruins the Satis House, causing fatal injuries in Miss Havisham.

This turn of events makes Pip understand the real meaning of love and the place money has now in his life. With this, he attempts to make amends with Joe and Biddy and solidifies his friendship with Hebert. Nonetheless, it is not until Pip meets Estella years later when he is finally at peace with his conscience and heart. Pip and Estella remain friends...but friends apart.

***Wuthering Heights* by Emily Brontë**

Wuthering Heights is a novel written by Emily Brontë in 1847. The story begins with Mr. Heathcliff, the main male character and the current landlord of Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange. He receives Lockwood, his tenant in Thrushcross Grange and one of the narrators in the story. During Lockwood's visit to the Heights, a snowstorm prevents him to go back to the Grange and confines him to a night in a haunted room. There, he hears the voice of a woman who has been trapped for 20 years. This inexplicable experience, along with the names he discovers on the books wakens his interest in the story of the place. The following day, back in the Grange, Lockwood meets Nelly, the housekeeper and the second narrator of *Wuthering Heights*.

Nelly tells the story of a dark skin gipsy orphan who is brought to Wuthering Heights to be raised along with Catherine and Hindley. The little boy's name is Heathcliff. Growing up, Heathcliff and Catherine are inseparable, causing troubles not only in the Heights but also in the nearby house, the Thrushcross Grange where the Linton Family resides. There, Catherine spends a short staying with Edgar and Isabella Linton that serves

as a bond between the two wealthy families and continues with Catherine's and Edgar's marriage. This marriage marks the separation and the beginning of a tumultuous relationship between Catherine and Heathcliff.

After a short absence from the Heights, Heathcliff returns more vindictive than ever. He takes possession of Wuthering Heights after a gambling game with Hindley; this fuels Heathcliff's pride and power. Nonetheless, his actions have always been an act of rebellion against the social system that has discriminated and isolated him from an early age. Because of it, Heathcliff's and Catherine's forbidden love takes them through a life of obstacles and an unbridled emotional relationship that end with Catherine's passing after giving birth to Cathy Linton, her daughter with Edgar.

However, for Heathcliff, Catherine's death strengthens his revenge against the world. Years later, he decides to take over Thrushcross Grange by marrying his son, Linton Heathcliff with Cathy Linton. After Edgar's death, Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange belong to Heathcliff. He lives a solitary and unfulfilling life making Hareton, Hindley's son, and Cathy pay for their parents' actions. With this, Wuthering Heights witnesses the physical, psychological and emotional abuse perpetrated by Heathcliff. Therefore, Nelly knows that Cathy's escape would only be possible through another marriage after Linton's death.

Back in Wuthering Heights in present time, Lockwood learns about Heathcliff's passing. Nelly tells him how Heathcliff's illness deteriorated him with time, resulting in his death. Now, Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange belong to Cathy Linton and Hareton Earnshaw who got married after Heathcliff's death.

3.2 Analysis

3.2.1 Education

Male hegemony and female domesticity are established in *Great Expectations* and *Wuthering Heights* taking different angles within their particular contexts. As it was previously reviewed in the theoretical background, education was one of the many areas that women of the nineteenth century had limited access to. This more than representing a mere gain of knowledge, could give and gave women the means to empower themselves against the mental and physical stagnation they were living. Even though women took small steps towards their emancipation by gaining some rights in education, they were still limited to study and learn what they were only allowed to, for instance, foreign languages or

household work, depending on the social status. Despite being a great accomplishment, it was only scraps given to appease the impact of actions taken by women at that time. Nonetheless, as it was indicated in previous chapters, women with specific social hierarchy counted with this privilege. Travelling overseas to receive education in art, language and culture, in general, came along with this opportunity; an opportunity that was provided to Estella and Catherine due to their family's social recognition granted by its high order in the society.

Dickens uses education as an important embodiment of power. He develops his main male character, Pip, around the significance of being educated as a way to fulfil great expectations that is nothing more than the social respectability and social mobility. It is my observation that Dickens does not approach education as a privilege that only enhances men, but he uses some of his female characters to envision women with opportunities as well as to place them in a position of empowerment, Biddy and Estella for instance. The author attempts to mould his main female character, Estella, by disassociating her from the outside world mentally, physically, and emotionally. This gives her the chance to act according to her own parameters and decide for an option different from the expected. In the novel, Dickens through Miss Havisham develops Estella to be a symbol of power. She was sent to be educated as a lady in order to be out of reach of any man who desires to be with her, including Pip (GE, 90). I believe that more than becoming a lady which is a concept aligned to the image of a well-behaved, pure and obedient Victorian woman, Estella sought to break the pattern that could chain her to a role that would suppress her and keep her under the dominion of a man. Education was not only a mean to reiterate her position in society, but it was also to gain power over those who dare to approach her.

Even though every action taken by Estella echoed her adopted mother's deeds, it was a step to secure her authority over Pip by making the social distance that separated them more pronounced and difficult to combine. Pip used Estella as his personal standard to measure his own value, making him take decisions that did not go along with his principles but helped him fulfil his own and others' expectations. Chapter 29 was especially revealing for the readers as well for Pip. In his confusion and astonishment to see his beautiful Estella turned into a splendid young woman, he did not see the sentiment behind Miss Havisham's words when she approached him to confess that all her effort has been to educate and prepare Estella for love (GE, 47). Estella has been educated with a sense

of determination where thinking is a matter that involves the reasoning, not the feeling. For her, Pip was just a practical part of her training where she allowed herself to be indispensable to others, but not others indispensable to her. She learned that love was deceitful, so she used it in her favour. Estella, as she described herself, is damaged and has no softness inside of her, which has allowed her to be very meticulous and cautious in her actions. She analyses the situation and the person to act accordingly, no word is expressed, or movement is done without an intention behind it. Certainly, Estella grew resentful for all the emotional limitations she developed throughout her life, yet she always showed her thankfulness for the privileges she received for being raised in a wealthy family; her devotion to accomplish her mother's wishes and her loyalty were a testament of it. Even though Dickens does not justify or explain Estella's studies further in the narrative, for me, the fact of giving her the opportunity to conquer one more obstacle in the women's rights has a great significance that separates Dickens from the commonality among the Victorian male writers.

On the contrary, Brontë, while creating her female character's personality, Catherine Earnshaw, addresses the issue with eyes of indifference, making the readers believe that education is a matter of masculinity not a matter of right and equality. It is my impression that the author develops her character as a woman whose growth depends on the attention given by her male protagonists, not on books, travel, or studies. At first, Brontë shows equal opportunity for Catherine and Hindley, Cathy's big brother, when using a curate character as responsible imparting his teachings to the Earnshaw children; however, as to be expected, Hindley was the one who was sent to college for formal education (WH, loc. 533), which marks a clear difference of opportunity, supporting the gender ideology of the 1800s. The author in her attempt to balance this unfair characterisation up, she justifies her approach by using Hindley's inaptitude "Hindley was nought and would never thrive as where he wandered" (WH, loc. 533), implying that home-schooling was not enough for him and college would help him focus. In reality, Brontë is following the Victorian society cult whose education "legitimized and institutionalized" the doctrine of separate spheres" (Hunt 1987 in ChiefCalf 2002, 28), emphasising with this the role of women as mothers and wives and men as the head of the family and the working force (ChiefCalf 2002, 28). In other words, Catherine's attention is diverted to fulfil the expectations of becoming a Victorian lady of good manners and acknowledged respectability. Brontë shows two sides of Catherine. As a child, Catherine had a free spirit, and her

decisions were taken to satisfy nobody but her. For instance, Catherine and Heathcliff "promised fair to grow up as rude as savages" (WH, loc. 601). However, this was seen as insolence and as an act of rebellion against her brother, her social position, and herself as a woman.

Respecting the code of behaviour, Catherine started to comply with the norms. She was sent to the Linton's residence to learn to behave with manners leaving behind the eccentricity that characterized her when she was a child. In her return from the Linton's, Catherine's change was undeniable, "Why, Cathy, you are quite a beauty! I should scarcely have known you look like a lady now" (WH, loc. 686). Her transformation was not intellectual but physical and in her demeanour, "pulling off her gloves, and displaying fingers wonderfully whitened with doing nothing and staying indoors" (WH, loc. 697). Indeed, Catherine's femininity lies in her elegant gestures and delicate approach to people as well as her physical development as a young woman. Yet, intellectual enrichment was never Catherine's aim. It was her husband who attempted many times to lure her attention to other interests, "a book lay spread on the still before her [...]. I believe Linton had laid it there: for she never endeavoured to divert herself with reading, or occupation of any kind, and he would spend many an hour in trying to entice her attention to some subject" (WH, loc. 2096). Indeed, Brontë makes believe that any attempt to deviate Catherine's attention from her endless search for Heathcliff's love was in vain. Nonetheless, the author makes amends with her female readers when creating Cathy Linton/Heathcliff, Catherine's daughter, as a continuation of her mother legacy but also as a second chance to correct failures from the past.

3.2.2 Roles

Following the same order of ideas, the roles undertaken by the main characters in the two novels put into evidence the male-dominated society in which the writers develop their narratives as well as the effort of some authors to break with the existing model. Roles define individuals and help with the endless categorisation between men and women. Unfortunately, the labels that roles bring along do not only come with inherited social imposition but also with inherited discrimination. The idea behind women belonging to the private sphere and men to the public one is caused by the cultural identity that is reinforced by the different ideological entities. Nonetheless, it takes one to question this system of beliefs.

To illustrate this, Dickens in *Great Expectations* makes sure to portray women fairly but realistically. I would state that the author does not develop heroines taken from a comic book, but he creates genuine women with common fears and a sense of achievement regardless of the vicissitudes. Estella, with her strong personality and unbreakable self, decided to follow her own path where her role was not imposed but chosen by her. Even though being a wife may be seen as an expected social role, Dickens endorses Estella in her power to decide if she marries, whom she marries to, and why she marries. This makes Estella take ownership of her own life and ruling. More than the marriage being propelled by love, it was forced by Estella's needs and search for normality, "Miss Havisham would have had me wait, and not marry yet; but I am tired of the life I have led, which has very few charms for me, and *am willing enough to change it*" (GE, 70; emphasis added). With this, I see Estella making a statement to Pip, to herself and to readers making clear her disposition to attempt to find a different life, but she also states she is in control of her fate, which is a rare characteristic in Victorian women due to their limitations as independent individuals.

It is important to remember that while a woman was still single, the father was the one to decide over his daughter's wellbeing. In case of absence of the father, the brother inherited the power over his mother and sister (s) until she was obliged to marry (Lemmer 2007, 32). With this, her life's right laid in her husband's hand. Nonetheless, this was never Estella's case. Her untraditional upbringing opened the doors to become the independent woman she was. She was raised by a single mother who brought her up with the same resentment towards men making Estella grow with a calculating mindset that made her smart in certain ways but weak and human in others. Her desire to be normal led her to ride into a stereotypical role, being a wife, although her happiness never depended on being with a man. She was always aware of it, but it came to be confirmed during her marriage with Drummle, "I had heard of her as leading a most unhappy life, and as being separated from her husband, who had used her with great cruelty, and who had become quite renowned as a compound of pride, avarice, brutality, and meanness" (GE, 93). It is evident that Estella's nature was never being a wife or a mother regardless of the situation her unconformity got her into. A peaceful mind and conscious with no strings attached was the life she always sook. Gates (2009, 391) explains that Estella marrying Drummle showed her state of mind, yet her motivation behind this action depended on the

interpretation who analyses it; for example, it was her way to detach from her reality (Darby 1999 in Gates 2009, 391) or a way to carry out her mother's revenge against men (Friedman in Gates 2009, 391).

Certainly, Estella lived a conflicted life; she internally struggled to fulfil her mother's learning and expectations that were tainted with manipulation and toxic behavioural patterns. In her attempt to save herself, Estella made many mistakes, but this feminist heroine never fainted or turned her back to the adversities. Estella inner strength helped her forgive herself for what she did and to continue with her life along with the learning experiences. The last chapter is not only moving but also creates this intimacy among Estella, Pip and the readers that gives some comfort and relief putting an end to a life of struggles and welcoming life with uncertainties but with a new chapter waiting to be written. Pip came to the realisation and said, "we went out of the ruined place; and, and as the morning mists had risen long ago when I first left the forge, so the evening mists were rising now, and in all the broad expanse of tranquil light they showed to me, I saw no shadow of another parting from her" (GE, 94).

In turn, Catherine in *Wuthering Heights* was socially manipulated and lured into the prevalent social expectation of the time. In my opinion, Brontë fails to represent a heroine that exudes control of her fate as Estella did; instead, she depicts a damsel in distress who is in a constant search for masculine protection. The author makes her character as a continuity of the social correctness, making Catherine be the wife of a man with the same social status but did not love, be the mistress of a land she did not belong to, and the mother of a baby she did not get to meet. Catherine lived as a Victorian woman who belonged to a high social status and performed typical roles of her time. From an early age, she had Nelly Dean as a confidant and sometime adviser. However, the relationship as mistress and servant was always evident even for Dean who took it as part of her job as a housemaid when Catherine displayed her harsh attitude towards her, "Take yourself and dusters off, when company are in the house, servants don't commence scouring and cleaning," (WH, loc.931).

This distinction between servants and masters/mistress was always present, testifying to Catherine's position and her authority over the domestics in the house. This is a true image of the nineteenth-century woman whose power was limited to the private realm although there was a kind of camaraderie between Catherine and Nelly. When Edgar asked Catherine to marry him; she relied on Nelly to share the agony she was living due

to the role she needed to perform in front of the society, family and God, and the role her heart was telling her to take, "And he will be rich, and I shall like to be the greatest woman of the neighbourhood, and I shall be proud of having such a husband" (WH, loc. 1033) beside of his attractive look. Nelly in her amusement for such an act of incredulity lectured Catherine as a way to clear her mind and be at peace with hers. The truth is that Catherine's integrity as a future wife and mother would be in question if she had taken the other option, marrying Heathcliff. It is a reality that was clear for Catherine even in the naiveness her own age may have brought. Heathcliff did not count with a wealthy family or a family at all or with the education and richness to give Catherine the stability and social presence and respectability she was aimed to have in her social condition, "It would degrade me to marry Heathcliff *now*" (WH, loc. 1066; emphasis added) since she thought they would end up as vagabonds (loc.1081). With this affirmation, Catherine confirmed she would marry Edgar, leaving space for a future with Heathcliff; a hope that may be fanciful and uncertain.

Mahapatra (2014, 6) indicates that Brontë shaped Catherine into a Victorian heroine who carried an internal conflict when deciding for Edgar, which was an ethical step to take according to the norms of the time. With this internal conflict, I see, her loss of identity to become somebody else's. Regardless of Catherine's inexperience, she undertook the duty of a wife of a man, the mistress of the servants, and the mother of a child she birthed without knowing the implication it may have brought as interjected Nelly "You are ignorant of the duties you undertake in marrying" (WH, loc. 1094).

Novels written by women have the peculiarity of portraying women as individuals who suffer throughout their life, and Brontë's classic is not the exception. Catherine was neutralised by different tragedies in her life. Some authors of the nineteenth century may recognise her constant expression of pain and endless suffering as a heroic act; yet, I consider it as a characterization of what a woman is not, "'Oh, I will die,' she exclaimed, 'since no one cares anything about me'" (WH, loc.1610), said Catherine displaying her desperation to earn her husband's sympathy. During the novel, Catherine showed her capability of analysing her circumstances and act accordingly in her benefit, but Brontë repeatedly forces her character to experience events of treason, obsessiveness, delusion, violence that it is sometimes even unnatural to carry it all on one's shoulder. Motherhood, for instance, was also expected to suffer the same fate. Catherine's pregnancy was as ephemeral as her happy childhood. On Catherine's deathbed, Brontë briefly reveals that

Cathy was expecting a child without a significant introduction or preamble to the event; I assume that this may be a premeditated act by Brontë to sustain the illusion of a mythical innocence in the character or to show the author's own naiveness and personal taboos. Whether the answer is one or the other, this definitely opposes the heroine seen in Estella in *Great Expectations*. In *Wuthering Heights*, Catherine continued her grief for her forbidden love to the point of hallucinating on her deathbed while giving birth to a child who may share more than her mother's name but also her struggles and suffering. A premature baby called Catherine Linton was born at 12 o'clock as her mother's life faded away (WH, loc. 2198). With this, Mahapatra (2014, 7) reflects,

Catherine's final illness is, in effect, a withdrawal from both the world and the self. Her derangement enacts here experience of self-alienation. Like so many women in Victorian fiction, Catherine dies in Childbirth and is thus not required to negotiate that other profoundly ideo-logical version of womanhood – "the mother."

Mahapatra's idealistic statement about Catherine's death describes it as a holy escape from her Victorian duty as a woman. Opposite to it, I take a different view in this regard; it certainly puts an end to a life of sadness and disappointment, but it does not escape the stereotypical "ideo-logical version of womanhood." Catherine does not have the opportunity to raise her daughter, but she does mother Cathy by giving her life; besides of her similarities to her mother that are directly cited, "I surrounded my heart to that young person, and the daughter turned out a second edition of her mother" (WH, loc. 2075); and indirectly mentioned by her presence throughout the novel. In other words, Catherine undoubtedly did not escape from her honourable Victorian responsibility as a mother, but her motherhood was turned into a mystical presence in the narrative.

In all, Catherine's story may be explained through the analysis of male imposition as a social authority. However, it is fair to state that female writers of the time represented women as heroines to subtly expose their reality; yet, there is no doubt that these personifications accentuate their struggles making them endure excessive suffering that ends in tragedy. With this in mind, these melodramatic narratives as in *Wuthering Heights* make me wonder if this personification really earned the audience's awareness and admiration, or instead it gained their pity.

3.2.3 Interaction

As for interaction, Estella and Catherine have a distinctive behaviour when approaching their male counterparts as well as the female characters, revealing this way their values and ideologies as women of the eighteenth/nineteenth century. When analysing human behaviour, interaction plays an important role due to the information that is released from it. In literature, not only the characters' individual and particular complexities are exposed but also the authors'. The verbal communication, the tone of the narration and even the body language/gestures embedded in the narrative (e.g. raising her eyebrows in confusion) are pieces of evidence that give the reader clues about the characters' intentions and motivations towards certain events and other characters.

Estella Havisham

Estella Havisham always kept true to herself and to her essence as an independent woman. Her nature had never been a social individual rather an introspective one. She was eloquent and sincere when approaching men and women alike, yet, she preferred to take social and emotional distance which have been condemned by some characters in the story and possibly by many readers. In fact, Dickens delineates Estella's life around her strong will. He creates unique circumstances in her life, making her approach men and women different from the great expectations of a Victorian woman.

Estella vs the world

Throughout the novel, all the events are developed in function of the love Pip had for Estella regardless of the novel being about becoming a gentleman with particular social hierarchy and respectability. So, it is difficult to detach Estella from every circumstance Pip's experience while fulfilling the awarded expectations. While people around Pip saw the change his innocent obsession for Estella made in him, I may say Estella went through unfair social scrutiny due to her lack of domestic characteristics. Nonetheless, victimizing her is not an approach that readers should take since not even she did it to herself. Gates (2009, 390) claims that Estella's self was a creation of "parental nature" that was never consensual but manipulated. Later in the analysis, it is discussed Estella's predisposition to claim her mistakes and how the realisation of the consequences her deeds had on herself and others. Estella was perceived as frivolous and manipulative in the way she showed herself to the world. Actually, the introduction of Estella to readers was during Pip's first visit to the Satis House, Miss Havisham's and Estella's residence. Mr. Pumblechook, Pip's brother in law's uncle, took young Pip to this house in ruin. This first meeting left

the audience and others with a bitter-sweet taste of what a story with such a strong female character would be. At the gate, Pip said, “This is Pip, is it?” returned the young lady, who was pretty and seemed very proud” (GE, 11). While leaving Pip to enter the place, Estella with the indifferent behaviour that always characterised her since young age made her authority to be noticed “Mr. “Pumblechook was coming in also when she stopped him with the gate” (GE, 11) and did not let him entered because in her arrogance she did not consider it useful to allow him to meet Miss Havisham.

Estella vs Miss Havisham

As it was mentioned before, Estella’s upbringing has greatly influenced her view of herself and the world. I assume that this unhealthy, interdependent mother-daughter relationship between Estella and Miss. Havisham has its source in the connection built during Estella’s infancy. As an only child and adopted daughter of a single mother, she grew with an image of a self-confidence individual who refrained from any attachment with men. Estella’s mother protected her from love disappointment by cultivating in her a sense of self-worth as a core value and strength to face those who dare to harm her. Even so, Estella’s relationship with her adopted mother, Miss Havisham, went through a metamorphosis that started as a loyal and even symbiotic connection and ended in remorse, blames, and separation. Miss Havisham was a woman that resented her past even though she relived it until the moment she died. More than Estella being a daughter, Miss Havisham saw in her the strength and the sharp mindedness she wished to have had at her age. So, in the attempt to raise Estella to be the spitting image of the person Miss Havisham had in mind, she made of Estella a “heartless” creature who was there to appease her mother’s frustration by satisfying her demands.

The first time Pip encountered Miss Havisham and Estella, Havisham asked Pip to play cards with her daughter whispering in her ear, ““With this boy? Why, he is a common labouring boy!”” (GE, 12). Estella’s reaction towards Pip was an act of superiority due to the different social classes they belonged to. Estella did not feel he was worthy of playing with her since education, manners and intelligence were not a gift that the working class counted with. In other words, Pip was considered dumb and not smart enough for such a simple card game. Nevertheless, Miss Havisham invited Estella to use Pip as a toy, “only it seemed so unlikely, ‘Well? You can break his heart.’” (GE, 12). This is the moment Miss Havisham sentenced Pip to be Estella’s prey and Estella Pip’s nemesis. Years passed, and Estella got to the point of ebullition, where she began to have

conflicted emotions towards her mother and her own actions. Although Estella was always thankful and loyal to her mother, she could not avoid re-evaluating her principles as a woman and human being which made her understand that she was as a mere product of Miss Havisham's nonsense revenge. While gathered in the living-room in the Satis House, Miss Havisham placed her hand over Estella's which was slowly retreated. Seeing this act of rebellion, Miss Havisham disconcerted, reproached, "'What!' [...] are you tired of me?' 'Only a little tired of myself,' replied Estella" (GE, 59). At this moment, the foundation where Estella's character was built upon collapsed and her bond with her adopted mother with it.

Gates (2009, 395) sees this act as a way to revive the abandoned Miss Havisham suffered the day of her wedding. The author explains that the separation between these two people who have been connected as mother-daughter and friends represented a kind of betrayal for Havisham who saw Estella taking any other side than hers, leaving her with the same sense of alienation she felt towards Compeyson, Havisham's ex-fiancé. Undoubtedly, this was a separation between Estella and Miss Havisham, yet I think that more than taking this as a disloyalty act, this divorce between mother and daughter should be taken as a time of reflection and growth that allowed them to find their own identities as strong, independent women. For Havisham, this made her realise that her actions were misunderstood and taken wrongly. She never asked for forgiveness since in her eyes there was nothing to be forgiven for. Miss Havisham was convinced that her deeds were to protect Estella from harm. And for Estella, this was the means to show the face of an oppressed soul that led her to commit many mistakes in search of normality but later redefined her as a woman, "'You should know,' said Estella. 'I am what you made me. Take all praise, take all the blame; take all the success, take all the failure; in short, take me'" (GE, 59).

Estella vs Phillip (Pip)

Estella was trained to exude her power over men. She did manipulate the situation and people around, especially Pip, showing toughness in her words and actions. I firmly believe that her attitude was the armour she used to protect herself from emotional despair rather than searching for a fine gentleman to keep her from suffering. In addition, Estella's divorce from having a meaningful interaction with her adoptive mother may be explained by Estella's need to control her emotions and her life outcome. Indeed, her position as a woman who challenged the norm could imply a sexual connotation and even be described

as diabolical and vicious demeanour as it did not follow the angelical behaviour of the lady of the 1800s, but in the end, Estella was a woman who succeeded to manage her world in her own way, dismissing any external imposition.

Estella's interaction with Pip was at first an innocent game encouraged by her mother; nonetheless, Pip's attraction for Estella became an impediment for both to have a normal life as they grew older. In reflection, Pip said, "sending her out to attract and torment and do mischief, Miss Havisham sent her with malicious assurance that she was beyond the reach of all admirers, and that all who staked upon that cast were secure to lose" (GE, 59). He understood that Estella was assigned a task that she delivered with complete devotion. From the first day they met, Estella had a unique effect on Pip. The humiliation started as a way to make a distinction between social classes and therefore, power. Making Pip embarrassed for his humble upbringing was Estella's focus of her insults that went from the way he looked to the clothes he was wearing. The degradation was as such that affected Pip to the point of noticing in himself how common he was. Estella in her pursuit to embarrass Pip, she asked,

'Why don't you cry?'

'Because I don't want to.'

'You do,' said she. 'You have been crying till you are half blind, and you are near crying again now.' (GE, 13)

With this Estella was proving her control over Pip's emotions and thoughts, but she was also showing the emotional deprivation she was accustomed to. Estella's lack of remorse when seeing Pip crying was a sign of her ability to display emotional detachment from people and situations.

Upon Estella's return to the Satis House after her absence due to her studies, Estella and Pip met again. This time Estella at an age that cultivates men's admiration. Although Estella made believe she wanted to be taken as nothing more than a woman of steel with no heart, she uses femininity and beauty to hypnotise Pip and any men who come closer to her. It may be thought that Estella empowered herself by employing her sexuality to blind her preys. To illustrate this, "the air of completeness and superiority with which she walked at my side, and the air of youthfulness and submission which I walked at hers" (GE, 46) enraptured Pip was left in the scene. Thompson (2015, 40-41) explains that "Estella wields her feminine charms as a form of entitlement, the way all men in her time period are allowed to do, simply for being men. She is very much like a man in her ability to wreak havoc and cruelty. Her faults are obvious, but she is all the more desirous

for them". This makes readers think if showing women's sexuality is an act of personal degradation or an act of self-preservation. I refuse to judge Thomson's statement with an unbiassed eye when men's weapon is associated with pistols and women's with sexuality, or when men's charm is attached to their natural right and women's charm to a privilege they do not have. Regardless where the neutrality in the argument lies in, it may be agreed on the fact that Estella's strength was to carry her mother's baggage and her own and move on despite her suffering in silence.

For many, it is evident to see in Estella a damaged human being who sheltered herself behind a shield of emotional indifference. "'You must know,' said Estella, condescending to me as a brilliant and beautiful woman might, 'that I have no heart, if that has anything to do with my memory'" (GE, 46). Through this statement, Estella demonstrated a pervasive attitude rooted due to years of mental manipulation and inherited behavioural patterns. The rationality behind this repeated behaviour is to keep control over her emotions and protect them from being humanised. Estella might see this feeling of exposure as a weakness and a failure that could generate more pain than relief. Yet, Estella's maturity allowed herself to stop the vicious cycle that involved her, her mother, and Pip and symbolically break with the chains that attached her with her past to be able to continue with her life in spite of years of the resentment did not belong to her. The relationship with Pip was never a necessity to Estella as it was to Pip. For Estella, it was more a lifestyle that was chosen for her; Pip was only a pawn on a chessboard. As Thompson (2015, 41) explains, Estella was a victim of the circumstances, yet, she showed her human side when recognising her wrong acts towards the end of the novel. Years later Estella and Pip reunited at the burnt property where the Satis House used to be. It was time for her to conciliate with Pip but also with herself,

"But you said to me," returned Estella, very earnestly, "'God bless you, God forgive you!' And if you could say that to me then, you will not hesitate to say that to me now,- now, when suffering has been stronger than all the teaching, and has taught me to understand what your heart used to be. I have been bent and broken, but – I hope – into a better shape. Be considerate and good to me as you were and tell me we are friends.'" (GE, 94)

Catherine Earnshaw

Opposite to Estella, I would claim that Catherine complies with the typical representation of woman in the Victorian era. Catherine finds comfort and security in her male counterpart while taking female characters as rivals and source of disloyalty. Brontë exposes a

trust issue through her character. Catherine doubts the actions of the only people she could rely on, condemning intentions behind words and steps. However, she is an overly complex character whose actions should be carefully analysed.

Catherine Earnshaw/Linton's life was surrounded by tragedy, jealousy and violence that led to internal and external conflicts, conditioning the way she showed herself in the narrative and how she coped with different episodes in her life. Catherine grew up with strong and conflictive men and patriarchal influence around her: her brother Hindley, an alcoholic and resentful man; Heathcliff, a violent and revengeful forbidden lover, and Edgar whose public decency and good manners were sometimes misinterpreted as passivity and weakness. The relationship Catherine had with these men brought out her melancholic and destructive being in her adulthood.

Catherine vs Hindley

Hindley represented the authority figure in *Wuthering Heights* once their father died. Hindley's resentments against Heathcliff restricted the liberty the wicked little Catherine had as a young child. These restraints continued until she left her home in the Heights, marking a separation between the two siblings farther apart. Surprisingly, young Catherine was a lively person who despised unfairness and any act of humiliation mostly those towards her servant brother, Heathcliff. Even though Catherine respected Hindley and saw him as the master and authority in *Wuthering Heights*, she did not confine her actions to be docile. Regardless Hindley's tyrannical behaviour, Catherine was rebellious enough to cheat her brother's restriction, feeling no fear to break any norm prepared for such a respectable young lady of her social hierarchy; "I wish my father were back. Hindley is a detestable substitute-his conduct to Heathcliff is atrocious- Hand I are going to rebel-we took our initiatory step this evening" (WH, loc. 258). Till this point, Catherine fought to keep her self-identity by breaking the forces that oppressed her in the family. Her femininity, which was a value attached to the society, was tested. Her freedom of thinking and actions was at risk to be suppressed and limited to the private sphere.

At first, I believe that Brontë uses Catherine as a way to defy the norms and to give positive enforcement to the female awakening; yet, her timid efforts to set a personal statement against male control is weakened by the creation of male counterparts who asserted their dominant position in the story. In fact, the author develops Hindley as a character with masculinity to maintain the family's morality intact. With an air of superiority, he returned to the Heights well-educated and, this time, married, to take over his

late father's place and participate in a patriarchal system that, by the time, was challenged by Catherine and Heathcliff. Catherine's disobedient behaviour stained The Earnshaw's reputation. The evening that thirteen-year-old Catherine and her adopted brother went on a quest to the Thrushcross Grange at the Linton's, Hindley showed his fury by ordering all servant to lock and block anyone from entering the house, including Catherine and Heathcliff. Hindley's reaction evidenced his inability to control his own sister but also his need to set a statement to everyone around about his power in Wuthering Heights. For Hindley, Catherine was nothing but a wild problem which was tamed by a five-week staying at the Linton's by which manners were polished, and a lady was shaped (WH, loc. 681).

Regardless of the attempt of domesticating young Catherine, Catherine's and Hindley's already fractured relationship grew apart with the years. With it, Catherine's sassiness, and power to decide for herself faded away as she grew older, forcing herself to follow a fate that only brought her sorrow even after her death.

Catherine vs Heathcliff

In turn, the tempestuous relationship with Heathcliff emphasised their emotional interdependency. Catherine's need for a reciprocal display of affection took her through a toxic, painful journey. She constantly accused Heathcliff to be arrogant and full of hatred, leaving her fragile and in an unstable mental state that debilitated her slowly. During her adulthood, Catherine went through internal battles where her heart continually questions the decision she took with her mind. As it was implied before, Catherine's relationship with Heathcliff was built on pure love and mutual acceptance. In fact, besides Mr. Earnshaw, Catherine's father, being one of the few people who treated Heathcliff with fairness, Catherine also had a great appreciation for him. Catherine was not only Heathcliff's sister, teacher but also his only companion in the Heights which, in my understanding, suggests a way for Brontë to show early domesticity and an extension of women's role in the men's life: to nurture, to care, and to accompany them. Yet, their relationship started to wobble upon Catherine's return from a short staying at the Linton's in the Thrushcross Grange. Jealousy, feeling abandonment, or probably a feeling of betrayal was likely to be the source of Heathcliff's change of demeanour towards Catherine; "You have grieved Catherine: she's sorry she ever came home, I daresay! It looks as if you envied her, because she is more thought of than you" (WH, loc. 733), Nelly appalled when seeing Heathcliff's reaction.

As their relationship grew apart, their obsession for each other fortified, making both individuals have great obstinacy, pride, and unhealthy temper. “Nelly, I AM Heathcliff! He’s always, always in my mind: not as pleasure, any more than I am always a pleasure to myself, but as my own being” (WH, loc. 1091). Catherine’s self-identity was once again jeopardised, but this time by this external force that took control of her emotions and thoughts. This marks the demise of herself as Catherine Earnshaw to make way for a woman who she later was not able to recognise. With this, it is clear to me that Brontë portrays feminine value as an element conditioned by a male authority which might be justified by the mindset of the Victorian women who found their own value in function of their male partners. The author also shows the typical chauvinist villain through Heathcliff character who acted as the core reason of Catherine’s mental, physical subordination; mental, when Mrs. Earnshaw/Linton was unable to control thoughts that caused her pain and sometimes ended in delusion, and physical when her actions were driven by the need to be with Heathcliff to later succumb to her desperation on her deathbed.

To illustrate this, Brontë develops the events around Catherine to allow Heathcliff not only to take over her property in the Heights but also to slowly take possession of her by controlling her mental and emotional state. Heathcliff was nurtured by using women as objects that benefited his cause. “‘What is it with you?,’ he growled. ‘ I have the right to kiss her, if he chooses; and you have not right to object. I am not YOUR husband: YOU needn’t be jealous of me!’” (WH, loc. 1494), Heathcliff scolded Catherine after approaching Isabella, Edgar’s sister, for a kiss on the cheek. Heathcliff’s false interest for Edgar’s sister caused great anxiety and jealousy in Catherine, making her more insecure and emotionally fragile. With this, certain vanity in Heathcliff’s actions is acknowledged when he employed his control, managing Catherine and Isabella as he pleased. Sometimes, I feel that the melodramatic female-male dynamic between these two main characters throughout the novel allows us, readers, to see the innocent, idealistic, and inexperienced side of Brontë regarding human relationships.

Catherine’s marriage to Edgar Linton marked the distance between Heathcliff and her which emphasised her “womanly nature” for attention and love. Even in her delusion, she inquired Heathcliff if he would go with her when she died, otherwise she would not be in peace even if prayers were done to save her soul (WH, loc. 1693). In fact, on Catherine’s deathbed, both had a passionate conversation where reproaches came back and

forth about decisions taken in the past and attitude shown in the present that were not faithful to their hearts (loc. 2160). This psychological commodity just served as a mean to deepen their pain, and in a way to maintain the power they had over each other, taking their obsession to a level of dependency. Heathcliff ordered,

‘Catherine Earnshaw, may you not rest as long as I am living; you said I killed you- haunt me, then! The murderer DO haunt their murderers, I believe. I know that ghosts HAVE wandered on earth. Be with me always- take any form- drive me mad! Only DO not leave me in this abyss, where I cannot find you! Oh, God! It is unutterable! I CANNOT live without my life! I CANNOT live without my soul!’ (WH, loc. 2243)

These dialogues in the story represent the intensity of Catherine’s and Heathcliff’s fixation, where she is seen as a manipulative victim that juxtaposed her heartless ruffian whose life is worthless without his heroine.

Catherine vs Edgar

Marrying Edgar Linton represented not only a social-economic benefit but also a personal one. I see Catherine’s and Edgard Linton’s marriage as a social façade that enhanced Catherine’s condition as an unmarried woman and Linton’s as a bachelor. For Victorian women, marriage was a task they needed to achieve to reach a certain standard and for men was a matter of masculinity and power. Linton carried out his role as the head of the family by protecting and making out of Catherine a reputable woman.

During the courtship, Edgar Linton visited Wuthering Heights on several occasions where he witnessed Catherine’s characteristic mistress outburst. Once she pinched Nelly as a way for her to follow her instruction as it was demanded. Edgar in his disbelief of what he saw lectured her, “‘Catherine, love, Catherine,’ interposed Linton, shocked at the double fault of falsehood and violence which his idol had committed” (WH, loc. 941). Edgar’s act of altruism showed a different image of the men in Catherine’s life, Hindley and Heathcliff, although Edgar mirrored the kindness and composure seen in Mr. Earnshaw in the first chapters of the novel. In continuation of the event, Linton ashamed by his lady’s reaction decided to leave, which triggered Catherine’s compulsive behaviour whereby she displayed her neediness and manipulative acts. As Edgar was leaving, Catherine begged him to stay to try to calm her down; otherwise, she would be miserable all night (loc. 951). “Well, go, if you please-get away! And now I’ll cry- I’ll cry myself sick” (loc. 954). This invites the readers to analyse and understand Catherine’s way of thinking

and her approach to unfavourable situations for her. She positioned herself as a damsel in distress, the characteristic nineteenth-century heroine, victimizing herself in order to manipulate Edgar through his guilt and embarrassment. As a woman, I see this emotional manipulation as a disgraceful manoeuvre for Brontë's to indirectly display women's power over men.

Nevertheless, Catherine's outbursts were always taken slightly by Edgar, who now as her husband needed to deal with her changeable mood and her estranged relationship with Heathcliff. "Catherine had seasons of gloom and silence now and then, they were respected with sympathising silence by her husband, who ascribed them to an alteration in her constitution, produced by her perilous illness; as she was never subject to depression of spirit before" (WH, loc. 1222). For Catherine's wellbeing, Edgar accepted Heathcliff at Thrushcross Grange until he transgressed his boundaries. Linton imposed his authority at Grange by forbidding his entrance to the house. Linton felt the social pressure and the urge to fight for his family's honour against the intrusion of Heathcliff; after all, "If his authority was lacking, he was not equal to his fellow" (Lemmer 2007, 38-39) since the integrity of man and therefore his family in the public dominion depended on the pretence of a virtuous private one. In my opinion, Edgar's masculinity is attacked by the presence of a second man who represents not only the reason for Catherine's sorrow but also Edgar's hurt ego. For his wife, this act of virility as Edgar tried to force Heathcliff out of his property was considered a foolish outburst from a weak man, "Oh, heavens! In old days this would win you knighthood!" [...] 'We are vanquished, we are vanquished! Heathcliff would as soon lift a finger at you as the king would march his army against a colony of mice. Cheer up! You sha'n't be hurt! Your type is not a lamb, it's a sucking leveret'" (WH loc. 1542). This hard remark leaves evidence of Catherine's character and changing attitude towards her husband. Her morality as a Victorian woman in some way is in question due to the absence of support and respect towards the patriarchal figure. Perhaps this is a gesture of social defiance expressed by Brontë who once again places Catherine in a position where she had to choose between social connectedness and emotional empathy.

Nonetheless this type of "insubordination" was always followed by Catherine's mournful state by which she predisposed physically and mentally in a way she became a threat to herself, "if you see him again to-night, that I'm in danger of being seriously ill. I wish it may prove true. He has startled and distressed me shockingly! I want to frighten

him” (WH, loc. 1560). Her emotional state desperately called for attention from her husband. She used this as a weapon to manipulate others’ behaviour and emotions. ““If cannot keep Heathcliff for my friend-if Edgar will be mean and jealous, I’ll try to break their hearts by breaking my own”” (loc. 1568). However, Edgar somehow never took this childish behaviour too seriously. He submerged in his books probably as a way to deal with his wife’s mental state, leaving Catherine dealing with her inner struggles. Catherine’s relationship with Edgar gave her the opportunity to believe she had the autonomy and freedom lost in her youthhood in *Wuthering Heights*; however, Edgar’s indifference to her psychological games left her always in disdain.

With this, Mahapatra (2014, 7) indicates that Catherine “dramatizes the limits of female influence.” However, I think that the influence exercised by Catherine is through emotional manipulation, which reduces to a constant cry for protection and begging for meaningful human intimacy. Mahapatra (2014, 7) also believes that Catherine turns into Edgar’s and Heathcliff’s source of a fight and a mouldable winning price. Without disagreeing completely with such a statement, I see Brontë creating Catherine as the force that attracts two opposite sides to the centre, her. With this, it is my assumption that Mrs. Linton was never a victim of the struggle for power of these two men, but a victim of herself. Catherine, in her act of “heroism”, condescended to be part of this love triangle, which was propitiated by her decisions and her actions. This leaves the readers with the following inquiry, to what extent was Catherine fully aware of her own doing and the consequences of her own deeds? Certainly, this is a question that yet needs to be carefully analysed in order to establish her true intentions.

Concerning Linton and Heathcliff, Stoneman cites Gilbert and Gubar to explain Brontë’s “polarity” in developing her male characters. In Freud’s term, while Edgar Linton represents the patriarchal figure who protects the high morality, Catherine’s superego; Heathcliff is her instinct and desire (Stoneman 1992, 149). Undoubtedly, I agree that Edgar and Heathcliff are their antitheses that exemplify different areas in Catherine: Edgar is symbolically the stability and the sacred figure in the family who ensures that the Victorian morality is carried out appropriately as Heathcliff is the forbidden fruit and her unconscious urge. Even though Edgar as a patriarchal figure may be in question sometimes due to his weak authority, he performs his role of a husband who is neglected, a master who is respected but sometimes betrayed, and a landlord who dares to fight but could be easily defeated.

To sum up, Catherine's life decisions, actions, and words cycle around an emotional dependency which is evident from the beginning. I strongly believe that even though Catherine's circumstances may improve and play in her favour, she sabotages herself by going back to the source of her suffering, Heathcliff. As any other Victorian fictional heroine, she committed many mistakes that affected her and others, but unlike Estella, Catherine never took honest responsibility for the fate her life encountered and for the outcomes caused by her actions.

Chapter 4: Conclusion

Social ideologies and individual identity are essential elements that are not only represented through the way we act but also how we approach certain areas in our lives. Undoubtedly, these are reinforced through structures of power that use different means to impart their teachings. As Marx would say, written publications serve as propaganda for the ideology instilled in our societies. The nineteenth-century novels are not the exception to the previous statement. As Dickens and Brontë, many other novelists exposed their own vision of reality through their narratives, putting into evidence their own beliefs, ideologies, and values.

The Victorian novels were considered to have an inclination either towards patriarchal ideas where male characters were embraced and taken as an important part whilst female characters were considered as inexistent or as “others”; or towards a more tragical approach where male domination was exposed, but women were portrayed as heroines for tolerating constant emotional and physical pain. Nonetheless, this research has proven that generalizations like this should not be taken. Dickens and Brontë have defied beliefs that label them as a patriarchal writer for being a man or a feminist novelist for being a woman. In other words, in spite of *Great Expectations* being written by a male writer, Estella Havisham, its main female character, breaks with the beliefs of domesticity rooted in the Victorian society by assuming control over her own decision and actions. In contrast, Brontë guides her female heroine through a journey of suffering that only emphasises the male control over her actions, emotions, and mental condition.

Great Expectations and *Wuthering Heights* are great literary examples of different visions towards women in Victorian society. Dickens envisions the woman of the future who regardless of the “limitation” her gender may bring, she is allowed to act in function of her own beliefs. Dickens contrary to Brontë humanizes Estella in a way to portray not a perfect heroine but a genuine one with life struggles who commits many mistakes that affect others including herself, but reborn from the ashes and move on with her life. Dickens allows Estella to look back and make amends with herself and the world. On the other hand, Brontë mirrors a society with a gender inequality where women are taken to fulfil a role. The author may disappoint female readers with her characterisation of women in *Wuthering Heights*. Through Catherine, Brontë romanticises the idea of being part of an abusive love triangle where melancholic and disturbing episodes could be even considered psychotic. Brontë’s heroine is forced to experience and support a series of

frustrations, suffering, and emotional manipulation that only lead to a state of consternation, even for the readers.

Throughout the novels, evidence suggests that *Great Expectations* and *Wuthering Heights* approach education, women's roles, and human interaction with unique lenses. First, education is an important element for Dickens. He displays this as a mean to aim for social respectability. Yet, through his writing, the author shyly acknowledges his limitation to develop a realistic female character with a college education. Instead, he allows readers to take a glance of his own beliefs on women's education as a tool of empowerment to fight adversities. Estella is sent to be educated so that she is prepared to protect herself from a world of misfortunes. In turn, Brontë shows education as a privilege that men and high social classes count with. The author maintains the emotional struggles as the core element in her narrative neglecting female education and personal growth.

Second, the authors also differ in their view of female roles. Dickens portrays his character as a feminist symbol that causes in men a sexual appetite which can be taken as a masculine Victorian characteristic due to the sexual freedom and the public behaviour that this may imply. In contrast, Brontë ensures her character performs the Victorian private duties reserved for women of her social strata. Catherine married Edgar Linton as a way to secure her social hierarchy and to procreate an heir, taking over the household tasks as a mistress of the Thrushcross Grange.

Finally, Dickens and Brontë develop their characters with two unique personalities and particular ways to interact with others in the story. Estella, a damaged soul, treats her adopted mother and Pip with an eye of disinterest. Even though the influence of her mother drives her actions, she sees how Pip succumbs to her words and moves, weakening Pip's self-control to the point of being considered an act of "domestication" and "submissiveness" from his side. Conversely, Catherine exhibits an obsessive behaviour and dependency towards her two male counterparts. Her "woman instinct" wakes up in her the need for male protection and emotional recognition. Her self-power and identity are weakened as she submerges more and more into a behavioural pattern, where battling for a woman turn her men into more masculine and virile entities, while she became more docile and mentally and emotionally oppressed.

Certainly, Dickens takes a braver approach to women's characterization than Brontë; nonetheless, socio-cultural context cannot be ignored which undoubtedly benefited more male writers than the female ones in terms of having the liberty to express

thoughts without restrictions or public humiliation. Brontë camouflaged herself through the use of a neutral pseudonym to avoid being scrutinised by a male-dominated society. Bearing this in mind, disguising her unconformity and disapproval of women's treatment with strokes of patriarchal hegemony and women's domesticity is a possibility that is worthwhile to examine in the future. Nonetheless, we would never know for sure the author's true intentions behind the words. So, it is crucial to be critical readers who read between the lines and deepen into the author's thoughts to make justice to the piece of work; but also naïve readers who are surprised by the turn of events that enchanted us until the last word.

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Emily Brontë's Biography

Emily Brontë

Emily Brontë was a novelist who was not literature gifted or had inherited talents, but she was the epitome of willpower and passion. Many decades after her death, her name was recognised as one of the greatest novelist and poet of the era. The following information about Emily Brontë's life is based mainly on *Biography: Emily Brontë (Annotated)* by Robinson ([1883] 2018) but complemented with *Emily Bronte Biography* by Hayes Mansfield (1934).

Emily Jane Brontë was born on July 31st, 1818 in Thornton, Yorkshire. Her mother was Maria Branwell and her father, the Reverend, Patrick Brontë. As a child, she lived at Haworth Vicarage along with five other siblings: Maria, Elizabeth, Charlotte, Patrick, and Anne. Patrick had an aggressive and exasperated personality that marked him and his children throughout their life. Yet, his determination during his humble upbringing as a young boy awarded him with a fruitful life as a clergyman. Emily's mother, in turn, was a calm young lady whose life was interrupted too soon. While Maria was weak and fragile due to her illness, Patrick was submerged in his duties and poetic facet as a writer. Maria spent her last days silenced, experiencing the cruelty, explosive temperament, and fixated demeanor of her husband. During the mother's illness, the eldest daughter, only 7 years old, took charge of her siblings' well-being. But not long after, their mother died in the September 1821 when Emily was only 3 years old.

After matriarch's passing, the isolation from the world increased. Patrick only saw his children for breakfast and tea, leaving them alone with no friends to play with. However, the Brontë children did as they pleased in the beautiful outdoors without any adult supervision until their mother's oldest sister took charge of their education at home. The children grew older shaping and displaying their unique talent and personalities; Emily, for instance, was a strong and persistent young lady who was fond of fairy tales and peculiar fantasy stories.

After a brief stay at Clergy Daughter's in Cowan's Bridge, Emily and her sisters' education continued at home where two oldest sisters, Maria and Elizabeth died.

The years to follow were full of introspection and solitude for Emily. She cultivated her love for nature, novels, and poetry. Mansfield (1934, 45) cites some thoughts in regards Emily' personality:

Mrs. Gaskell had said that she never showed regard to any human creature; all her love being reserved for animals. Reid states that her heart was indeed given to those dumb creatures, that she 'never forgave those who ill-treated them or trusted those whom they disliked,' and that her chief delight was to roam with her dogs on the moors to which she would whistle in masculine fashion.

Nonetheless, those who knew Emily described her as disciplined, witty, sympathetic in front of those who she knew and distant and shy only towards the ones she did not. Yet, Emily's fears would disable her in a way she would find it difficult to live freely. In her unwillingness to go to school, Emily stayed home and did domestic tasks. Regardless of her happiness accompanied by her dog, performing the chores, and writing, Charlotte believed that Emily should receive formal education, but financial struggles made no space for school. Emily started to work as a teacher, but later when the situation aggravated, she worked as a housekeeper with her 70-year-old servant, Tabby. During those harsh days, the sisters taught and did house chores to earn their living. Unlike Emily's sisters' thirst for fame, she put aside her literary dreams and found comfort in her peacefulness. Soon after, an opportunity arose for Emily to go to Brussels with her sisters to learn foreign language for six months, but her return was triggered by her melancholic self and her need to be home where she felt safe and happy. As Emily felt the pressure of fulfilling others' expectations upon her return, she wrote a truthful letter to her sister on 23 of January 1844:

Everyone asked me what I am going to do now that I am returned home [...] I desired above all the things, I have sufficient money, and I hope now sufficient qualifications to give me a fair chance of success; yet I cannot yet permit myself [...]. It is on papa's account [...] he is losing his sight [...]. It would be too selfish to leave him [...].

I suffered much before I left Brussels [...]. Haworth seems such as lonely quiet spot, buried away from the world. I no longer regard myself as young, indeed, I shall soon be twenty-eight; and it seems as if I ought to be working, and behaving the rough realities of the world, as other people do. (Robinson 1883, Ch. IX, loc.1437)

Emily continued working hard and writing poems that mirrored her inner state. She later joined forces with her sisters to publish a book of poems under the pseudonyms Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell. Unfortunately, the book written by the "brothers" did not

receive good reviews. In 1846, Emily wrote her only novel *Wuthering Heights* and her sisters a year more to finish their respective novels: *The Professor* by Charlotte, and *Agnes Grey* by Anne. In 1848 after a year of being published, the audience had poor acceptance of Emily's novel, describing it as a violent tragedy. Emily Brontë died that year December 19 due to tuberculosis. Today, *Wuthering Heights* is considered one of the most important modern world classics.

Appendix 2: Charles Dicken's Biography

Charles Dickens

Charles Dickens or David Copperfield, as he is called in reference to his autobiographical book under the same name, was a man with many facets: a journalist, an illustrator, but above all an English writer. Dickens counts with twenty novels or novellas under his names of which *Great Expectations* (1860-1861) became a classic of all time. The following information on Dickens is based primarily on *Charles Dickens: His Life and Works* by Moses (2017).

Charles John Huffam Dickens was born on February 7, 1812 on the island of Portsea, Portsmouth. Charles was one of seven siblings: Frances Elizabeth, Letitia, Frederick, Alfred, Augustus, Alfred and Harriet; the last two died as babies. His mother was Elizabeth Barrow and his father, John Dickens, was a Navy Pay Office clerk known by his sense of humour and skilled conversation. His childhood which Charles remembered very vividly was spent in Portsea and Chatham. These happy years were recalled with birthday parties, picnics, singing for entertainment, and having a first crush. At home, he had the company of his siblings, specially Frances who he used to sing and play with. However, his great stamina did not help him much during his reading lessons. Regardless of his charming personality and great disposition, Charles was undisciplined when it came to reading. Yet, he was exposed to plays and pantomimes performed at Theatre Royal and other artistic experiences during his life. Actually, at the age of 9, Charles wrote his first tragedy "Misnar, the Sultan of India."

In 1821, problems with finances started to show. The Dickens' family had to move to a smaller house where two of the youngest sibling were born and died. The situation brought the family to a state of unhappiness. Even Charles' fascination for the theatre was affected by the dire straits, "Poor little Charles! *He* would only have to turn his pockets inside-out, and they would have passed him by" (Moses 2017, loc.198).

Nine-year-old Charles had his first experience in education. He attended a school on the Brook with his other siblings. William Giles was a qualified teacher graduated from Oxford University. Mr. Giles made a deep impact on Dickens's education but also on his persona. Charles came through as a successful pupil receiving admiration from peers and family. In 1822, the family moved to London, leaving the school behind, another abrupt change for young Charles. He was frustrated with his father and with the situation he got to live, which worsened after several unpaid debts, sending John to prison

until his debts were settled. Due to this, young Charles started working in order to help his family's finances until the economic situation ameliorated. In 1825, Charles went back to school in Wellington House Academy where he authored several school plays.

After two years, Charles left school and started working again, this time as an office boy and later a clerk for an attorney's office. After four years working in the office, it was time for him to move on. He became a reporter in the Lord Chancellor's Court, an occupation that leaned more towards his future profession. During 1833 to 1835, some of his illustrations were published by the *Monthly Magazine* and *Evening Chronicle*, sketches that he remembered with nostalgia but with some imperfections.

In 1834, Charles got engaged to Catherine Thomson Hogarth and married her two years later. A year before the wedding, Chapman and Hall published monthly installments of his first books that established him as a writer: *The Pickwick Papers*. Its popularity grew steadily as sections appeared and characters were added, bringing him success and economic stability.

The years to come were filled with joy with the arrival of the first of his ten children, Francis Dickens, but these happy days were interrupted by the death of his sister in law Mary Hogarth who he was fond of. Definitely, the loss greatly impacted his persona and work. His characterisation of female characters was dignified regardless their social position. The sense of sadness shows in many of his writings, and his presence has been noticed resembling sombre characters like Oliver in *Oliver Twist* and his personal struggles like Pip in *Great Expectations*.

Charles Dickens became extremely popular after many well-recognised publications, adaptations and illustrations, but his greatest achievement was always his family and the friends he made in his childhood and cultivated throughout the years. Charles John Huffam Dickens died on June 9, 1870 in Higham, Kent, leaving a great legacy for future writers.

In the first half of the nineteenth century , the world of literature was illuminated by the flaming torches: Macaulay, Carlyle, Tennyson, *Dickens*, Thackeray, George Eliot, Bulwer-Lytton, *the Brontës*, the Brownings, Charles Reade, Leigh Hunt, Thomas Hood, and many lesser lights; so wherever genius burned in those Victorian days [..... we saw] the birth of immortal verse and prose. (Moses 2017, loc. 3250, emphasis added)