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Master's Dissertation/  
Trabajo Fin de Máster

***JANE EYRE (1847) AND  
WUTHERING HEIGHTS (1847)  
AS BILDUNGSROMAN: A  
COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS***

**Student: Cano Gámez, Helena**

Tutor: Dr. Cinta Zunino Garrido  
Dpt.: English Philology

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## ABSTRACT/RESUMEN

The aim of this Master's Dissertation is to study two of the most renowned novels from the Victorian era, Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* and Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*, as novels of development or *Bildungsroman*. A comparative analysis on the protagonists' psychological and moral development, focusing on the typical devices found in *Bildungsroman* will be provided. The main subject matters that will be developed in this essay are the characters' origins and their families, social class and class mobility, love relationships and personalities.

**Key words:** *Bildungsroman*, Heathcliff, Jane Eyre, Outsider, Social class, Mistreatment, Psychological development, Justice.

El objetivo de este Trabajo de Fin de Máster es el de analizar dos de las novelas de mayor prestigio de la época victoriana, *Jane Eyre* de Charlotte Brontë y *Cumbres borrascosas* de Emily Brontë, como novelas de aprendizaje o *Bildungsroman*. Se llevará a cabo un análisis comparativo del desarrollo psicológico y moral de los protagonistas, centrándose en los rasgos que se encuentran normalmente en este género literario. El origen de los protagonistas y sus familias, la clase social y la movilidad social, así como las relaciones amorosas y la personalidad son los temas principales que se tratarán en el trabajo.

**Key words:** *Bildungsroman*, Heathcliff, Jane Eyre, Marginado, Clase social, Abuso, Desarrollo psicológico, Justicia.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

This final project is aimed at analyzing Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847) and Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* (1847) as novels of development or *Bildungsroman*. The two of them were first published during the Victorian era and are considered to be a hybrid of several genres; mainly Gothic, Romantic and *Bildungsroman*, although they include elements from other types of fiction such as autobiography and revenge tragedy.

The *Bildungsroman* is a European literary genre centered on the moral and psychological development of the main character from youth to adulthood. This essay aims at comparing the protagonists' growth, noting the similarities between both works as well as the differences. Despite the contrast between Jane and Heathcliff's personalities and their intentions (the former wants to become an independent woman, whereas the latter wants to get revenge), there are many parallels between them as both novels follow the pattern of the *Bildungsroman* and, consequently, coincide in the use of some devices.

This project is divided into three parts: the first part will focus on the cultural background. The second one analyses the works of the two the authors, whereas the last chapter explores and compares both novels.

The first part will include the social, cultural and historical context of 19<sup>th</sup> century Britain, Regency and Victorian Era on the one hand, and an overview on Victorian literature and the definition and development of the *Bildungsroman*, on the other hand. The second part will introduce the authors, Charlotte and Emily Brontë, as well as their works. The third part comprises two sections: to begin with, a summary of the novels and a commentary on the main themes and literary motifs will be offered. Then, the comparative analysis of *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights* will be provided. This will be arranged according to four distinct categories: family and origins, social class and class mobility, love and significant others and identity. Finally, a section for general conclusions will be included in order to recapitulate the main contents and to propose a general overview.

## **2. PART ONE: CULTURAL BACKGROUND**

### **2.1 Nineteenth-Century Britain, Regency and Victorian Era**

Before beginning with the development of the analysis, it would be necessary to introduce the historical, social and cultural backgrounds that directly affected Emily and Charlotte Brontë. The first half of the nineteenth century in Britain was a period of change and turbulence and, although the Brontë sisters lived afar from London, their texts reflected, captured and engaged with the events that occurred at the time. All the Brontë children were born not too long after the Duke of Wellington's defeat of Napoleon Bonaparte at Waterloo (1815) and they appear to have been interested in the political events of the time, gathering data from newspapers and from their father. They seemed to be particularly fascinated with the altercations and opposition between the two political parties: The Tories and the Whigs, which is evident in their Angrian stories, since they were frequently used in the storylines. Moreover, the Brontës were believed to be Tory sympathizers owing to Patrick's (Emily and Charlotte Brontë's father) connection to the party (Ingham, 2006: 39).

During this time, there was the continuation of industrialization, which in turn brought changes for the living standards for both the working and middle classes. Additionally, between 1801 and 1851, Britain saw an enormous increase in their population, doubling the number of inhabitants to over twenty million. Despite the industrial growth, the working classes were agitated due to the several post-war depressions and the consequent repression of the Tory government.

The 1840s were known as the 'Hungry Forties'. It was a period that caused much misery and starvation among the working classes and the poor. After this, however, the social conditions improved and there was an immense expansion in communications. In 1851, the Great Exhibition, credited mainly to Prince Albert, was held in Crystal Palace. It was a showcase of Britain's works of industry and it attracted visitors from all around the world.

With regards to social class, society was organized by means of ranks. Social stratification was considered to be appointed by God and it was based on inherited rank,

ownership of land or profession. As a result of the process of industrialization, the jobs and locations changed. Hence, while at the beginning of the nineteenth century two-thirds of the population resided and worked in the countryside, those numbers changed drastically by the end of the century, so that the majority of individuals now lived and worked in the metropolis.

Being able to vote also denoted your position on the social scale as the lower classes were unable to do so. Housing, health, clothing, accommodation on trains and even diet were indicators of social class too, since meat was not affordable for lower class individuals. In relation to this matter, Patricia Ingham stated that there “may be implications as to social class in the rumour after Charlotte’s death that the Brontë children had been brought up on a meatless diet” (2006: 46).

Needless to say, social class was not just divided into three rigid ranks. Many citizens found themselves in so-called grey areas, as for instance they would think of themselves as middle class, whereas others would view them as working class. This was the case of Charlotte Brontë, who perceived herself as middle class but who was treated as a lower rank individual due to her position as a governess (Ingham, 2006: 48 – 49).

Furthermore, until the Elementary Education Act of 1870 was passed, there was no state system of education in Britain. This particular act did not make education free nor compulsory, but it enforced attendance at school. From the beginning of the eighteenth century onwards, there were already some charity schools, as it was the case of Cowan Bridge School; the institution to which the Brontë sisters went. Consequently, although there were instances of a few self-taught people, improving your condition by education was not a common occurrence at the time.

Throughout Emily and Charlotte’s lives, women were deemed to be second-class citizens relegated to the domestic sphere and their main purpose was matrimony. They were in charge of the household and the upbringing of the children, and were expected to have a maternal instinct and be emotional and less rational than men. For this reason, education for middle-class women was solely focused on preparing them for marriage. They learnt how to paint, draw, sing and play the piano and also a little French or Italian. As Ingham puts it, “these skills were designed to vivify and enlighten the home” (2006: 53). Those who were not able to afford private education were home-schooled and were

taught by their mothers, older sisters, fathers or by governesses. Moreover, women were only able to file lawsuits through other males (i.e. their fathers or brothers) and until 1839, they did not have legal custody of their children. Additionally, they had no authority over money, even if it belonged to them before or they had obtained it for the duration of their marriage. Unless a pre-nuptial settlement had been signed, all the money went to the husbands.

## 2.2 VICTORIAN LITERATURE AND BILDUNGSROMAN

### 2.2.1 Victorian Literature

By the beginning of the nineteenth-century literacy increased significantly in Britain; hence, the majority of the upper and middle classes were able to read and there was an improvement as well on the rest of the population. By the end of the century, basic literacy was nearly universal, as education became compulsory to the age of ten in 1880. As a consequence, the number of published novels augmented considerably and owing to the expansion of the printing machine, texts became more accessible.

The publication of newspapers and periodicals also saw an immense growth, especially the latter one. The most popular periodical of the time was the magazine, which would be published weekly, monthly or quarterly and which offered a wide range of content; from religious magazines to satirical ones. There were also reviews and quarterlies and magazines which would publish fiction and poetry. Although the serialization of literature already existed since the seventeenth century, it reached its apogee in the Victorian period. Novels were printed in serials in newspapers and magazines, which was much more convenient and affordable for the middle classes. At the same time, serialization made authors change the way in which novels were written as they had to attract readers and manage to keep them engaged with their publications, as well as take into account their

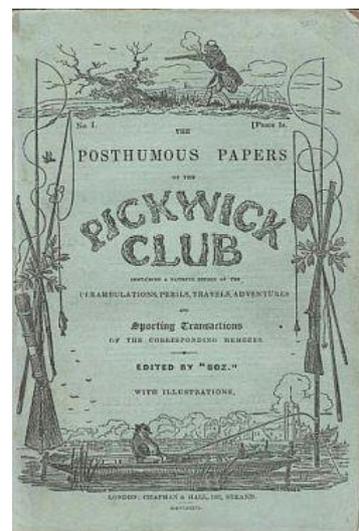


Fig. 1: *The Pickwick Paper's* cover (1836)

reactions. Many novelists of the period published in serial format. Among them, we can find George Eliot, Elizabeth Gaskell, Thomas Hardy, Robert Louis Stevenson and William Makepeace Thackeray. Charles Dickens, whose success started with *The Pickwick Papers* (1836), published in a serial publication, is believed to have popularized the format.

While the dominant form in the Romantic period had been poetry, the novel became the preferred literary art in the Victorian era, specially during the first half. These authors would normally focus on the middle classes, the social relationships between them and the possibility of class mobility. Furthermore, since the early nineteenth century, women authors became significant writers. From Jane Austen to the Brontë sisters, including George Eliot or Elizabeth Gaskell among others, women writers contributed to shaping and defining the novel. Moreover, the novel covered a variety of styles: comedy, Gothic Romance, satire, social and political realism, etc. Later on, Victorian novels also encompassed crime, mystery, horror, science fiction and detective stories. Overall, the novels published within the Victorian period put emphasis on social topics and some authors, as for instance Dickens, used their descriptions of social problems and conditions so as to encourage social reforms.

### **2.2.2 Bildungsroman**

The *Bildungsroman* is a European literary genre whose origin is said to be Goethe's *Wilhelm Meister* (1795), translated into English in 1824 as *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* by Thomas Carlyle. This narrative was at first viewed as a text that had an educational value for young people and Goethe's work is believed to have many of the elements that became characteristic of the *Bildungsroman*. Hence, *Wilhelm Meister* became the model of the genre. It is combined by two German words: *Bildung* (education or formation) and *Roman* (novel). According to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, the first known use of the word itself was in 1906, referencing the type of novel that focuses on the moral and psychological growth of the protagonist. However, Thomas L. Jeffers (2005: 49) claims that it was first coined by the German philologist Karl Morgenstern

during his lectures in the 1820s, although it did not become prevalent until Wilhelm Dilthey employed it in *Das Erleben und die Dichtung*, originally published in 1907.

Nonetheless, Brigid Lowe (2011: 405) comments on the possibility of including earlier novels such as *Robinson Crusoe* (1719) or *Tom Jones* (1749) in the history of the English *Bildungsroman*, and adds that the majority of the English novels published during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were related to self-development, since at the time, there was great interest in the psyche and the inner psychological development. Lowe further states that this suggests “that the term *Bildungsroman* should be considered as describing a central tendency of the English Novel *sui generis*” (405). Additionally, the literary historian Franco Moretti claims that the historical course of the *Bildungsroman* originates with Goethe and Jane Austen (1987: 12).

The main characters in English *Bildungsromane* often find themselves at an economic disadvantage at the beginning of the novel and in many instances, they are orphans or misfits and are surrounded by harmful authoritative figures. This is the case of Dickens’ *David Copperfield* (1850), Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre* (1847) and Thomas Hardy’s *Tess of the d’Urbervilles* (1891), among others. Lowe then differentiates the detail and analysis found on Victorian *Bildungsromane* from other authors’ narrative styles, as it is “designed to capture the world of childhood” (2011: 409). In order to convey the child’s perspective, novelists tend to use a first-person narrative or an external narrator’s first-person presence, employ the present-tense and give vivid and detailed descriptions (409). Furthermore, beginning the narration while the protagonists are still children allows the authors to introduce the “fairy-tale tropes”, evident in some of the aforementioned novels (411). Moretti comments on the idea, too as he wonders: “Could it in fact be, that, deep down, these novels are fairy tales?” (1987: 185), and then claims that Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre* in particular is “strewn with fairy-tale ingredients.” (187).

These are also stories of social mobility. As abovementioned, the protagonists are usually impoverished or at a disadvantage. Hence, their intention is to improve their conditions and raise their position in society. Additionally, some characters are situated in between two classes; the bourgeoisie and the aristocracy, and they shift to the latter one. It is the case of Elizabeth and Jane Bennet, who married Mr. Darcy and Mr. Bingley, respectively, David Copperfield, who became an author, and Jane Eyre and Heathcliff, both of whom became landowners (Valero Redondo, 2018: 248).

Besides these characteristics, the *Bildungsroman* is also characterized by other elements such as alienation from their families, physical punishment, difficult living conditions, societal conflicts, loss of innocence, self-discovery, maturation, enduring and overcoming trials along their journey, etc. While it is very unlikely that a single novel will include all of these devices, it is undeniable that a *Bildungsroman* will contain, at least, a few of them.

Traditionally, this type of narrative would have a positive or happy ending (i.e. *Pride and Prejudice* and *Jane Eyre*). Nevertheless, novels that ended in resignation, dissatisfaction and even death became more frequent (i.e. *Great Expectations* and *Anne of Green Gables*). Additionally, the genre has been subdivided into several categories, amongst which we could highlight the *Künstlerroman*, which focuses on the artist's development. An example of this narrative could be James Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916).

The prototype of the *Bildungsroman* is thus far present in modern literature, which could imply that the genre is still developing. Contemporary novels focusing on human growth and self-realization are very common, albeit they have taken more liberties with regards to the classical and traditional model. Some recent examples of novels which follow the *Bildungsroman*'s archetype to a certain extent could be *Black Swan Green* (2006) and the *Harry Potter* series (1999 – 2007). Moreover, this type of narrative is not only existent in the literary field; it has also been spread to the film industry (i.e. film adaptation of *The Perks of Being a Wallflower* in 2012 or *The Lion King* in 1994), although in this case, they are defined as 'coming-of-age' stories. It should be noted that even though some people use the words '*Bildungsroman*' and 'coming-of-age' stories interchangeably, the former one is more specific, whereas the latter one could be referred to as an umbrella term.

## 3. PART TWO: THE BRONTË SISTERS

### 3.1 Charlotte Brontë

#### 3.1.1 Biography

Charlotte Brontë was born in 1816 in Yorkshire, England. She was the third daughter of Reverend Patrick Brontë and Maria Branwell. As her mother died when she was very young, Charlotte's aunt, Miss Branwell, a kind but prejudiced woman, helped to look after the children and the household. In 1824, Charlotte and three of her sisters attended and endured the rigid regime at Cowan Bridge School; an establishment for the daughters of clergymen. Soon after, her sisters Maria and Elizabeth died from tuberculosis and Charlotte and Emily returned home. Charlotte thus assumed the role of eldest sister and all the duties that Maria had now befallen her.

In 1831, Charlotte went to Roe Head school; a less authoritative institution than the previous one where she also became a teacher. She is said to have been a diligent and persevering student. She was found reading and learning all the time and, even at the early age of fifteen, she firmly believed in the necessity and importance of having an education. Despite her aloof habits and awkwardness, for she preferred to focus on her studies, her classmates generally enjoyed her company and, particularly, her story-telling. A year later, Charlotte left Roe Head and returned home, where she occupied herself teaching her younger sisters.



Fig. 2: Charlotte Brontë

Then, in 1835, she became a teacher in Roe Head School, but several years later she decided to become a private governess and accepted the position in the Sidgwick family and later on, in the White family. Nonetheless, she left both places after a few months and returned home. Following her return, Charlotte and her sisters decided to start their own school, aided by their aunt. Hence, Charlotte and Emily traveled to Brussels to improve their knowledge in French and German. There, she met M. Héger, an exceptional teacher to whom she became attached. Her experiences in Brussels are considered to be

key for her development and novels. In 1844, the Brontë sisters tried to establish their own school. However, their efforts were futile, as they attracted no pupils. However, in spite of this failure, they felt glad that they had attempted to pursue their plan.

In 1845, the authoress found some poems written by Emily, which led to the publication of a selection of poems of the three sisters: Charlotte, Emily and Anne. The collection of poems was published under their male pseudonyms, which were Currer Bell, Ellis Bell and Acton Bell, respectively. After this, the Brontë sisters chose to work on their novels while maintaining the pseudonyms. Charlotte finished writing *The Professor*, but was unable to publish it. Nonetheless, she was able to complete and print *Jane Eyre* later that year. Thereafter, she continued to write other novels, as *Shirley* (1849) and *Villette* (1853).

In 1848, Charlotte's brother Branwell and Emily died, which affected Charlotte very deeply. Moreover, Ann Brontë became sick and her condition worsened until she died the following year. Furthermore, she married Reverend Arthur Nicholls in 1854 and got pregnant not long after their engagement. However, Charlotte's health deteriorated hastily and died on 31<sup>st</sup> March 1855.

### **3.1.2 Works**

Despite the fact that *Jane Eyre* is Brontë's most renowned novel, that was not her first attempt at writing. Along with her brother and sisters, Charlotte created an imaginary kingdom called Angria, founded on some wooden soldiers that their father had gifted Branwell. The Brontës became quite invested in this fantasy world and they wrote poems and poetry about Angria and Gondal; another kingdom invented by Emily and Anne.

Charlotte Brontë is mainly known due to her novels, but she was also a poet. Her artistry concerning poetry is illustrated in the collection of poems published in 1846 together with her sisters under their male pseudonyms. However, their composition received very little attention and they decided to focus on their prose individually. After *Jane Eyre*'s success and critical acclaim, Charlotte ceased writing poetry.

*The Professor* was Charlotte Brontë's first novel. Based on the author's experiences in Brussels, she finished writing the text between 1845 and 1846 and submitted it for publication in 1847. Nonetheless, the manuscript was rejected numerous times and it was not published while she was alive. The book was published posthumously in 1857, but since its release was not that far from *The Life of Charlotte Brontë* (Gaskell, 1857), it was somewhat obscured by the fascination for the biography.

*Shirley* is a social novel that was issued in 1849, after Charlotte had already revealed the true identities of the Bells to their publishers. Nevertheless, the authoress was determined to maintain her identity hidden and even believed that there were "fewer traces of a female pen" than in *Jane Eyre*. However, the first critics that commented upon the text were certain that the author was a woman (Gaskell, 2005: 375). Moreover, Shirley's character is said to be a representation of her sister Emily (368).

*Villette* (1853) was Brontë's last novel. The text once again draws inspiration from her stay in Brussels and her relationship with M. Héger, as he is said to have been the model for *Villette*'s love interest Paul Emanuel (Taranto: 2005: 34). As a result, *Villette* is deemed to be her most autobiographical novel. This composition also differs from her previous ones due to the absence of positive female friendships. While *Jane Eyre* was supported and surrounded by Helen Burns and Miss Temple and *Shirley* had Caroline, *Villette* lacks this type of female relationship and positive portrayal of female characters (Patsy Stoneman, 2009:174).

## 3.2 Emily Brontë

### 3.2.1 Biography

Emily Jane Brontë was born on July 30<sup>th</sup> 1818, at Thornton (Yorkshire). Her father, Patrick, was the reverend of Haworth and her mother, Maria, died when she was only three. At seven, she also lost her two oldest sisters; Maria and Elizabeth. Afterwards, Emily and the rest of her siblings were raised by their father and aunt, Elizabeth Branwell, who was a traditional and religious woman.

Emily's formal schooling was not very extensive, for she was mainly homeschooled. There, the Brontë children had free access to their father's library, where they could find authors such as William Shakespeare, Lord Byron, Walter Scott, etc. She also attended two institutions: Cowan Bridge School and Roe Head. However, her stay in both places was brief, specially in the latter one, as she felt homesick.

Around 1837, she was a teacher at Law Hill School, but she did not remain there for longer than a few months and then resigned. Later on, Emily and Charlotte went to Brussels in 1842 to broaden and improve their knowledge in French and German. Although Emily's intellect and skills were greatly appreciated (more than her sister's), she was not content there and preferred the solitude of her home on the moors. Charlotte and Emily had to return home at the end of the year due to their aunt's death and even though Charlotte went back to Brussels in January 1843, Emily decided to remain in Yorkshire. Consequently, Emily spent most of her life in Haworth, to where she headed back permanently after her aunt's death. Emily then became the housekeeper and caretaker of her father Patrick.



Fig. 3: Emily Brontë by Patrick Branwell Brontë (ca. 1833)

In 1844, she begins to copy the poems she had been writing since 1836 into two notebooks, "Gondal Poems" and "E.J.B.". Following that, her sister Charlotte came across one of these notebooks and, after convincing Emily to publish them, together with Anne, the three of them issued a collection of poetry in 1846. Moreover, women writers at the time were prone to criticism and not taken seriously; hence, to avoid sexist

prejudices, they chose to publish under male pseudonyms. As a result, their volume of poetry was titled as thus: *Poems by Currer, Ellis and Acton Bell*. After this, the three sisters continued to work on their novels and used to compare, examine and read to each other their notes and most recent passages.

By 1847, Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* had been approved for publication along with Anne's *Agnes Grey*. However, Emily's novel received several negative reviews and critics deemed it as too coarse, animal-like and even clumsy. There is not much information about her two last years, as she was a reserved person, but it is known that her family endured several hardships during that time. Later on, Emily caught a severe cold in her brother's funeral and her health worsened quickly, turning into a respiratory infection. She died of consumption on 19<sup>th</sup> December 1848.

### 3.2.2 Works

Emily Brontë is mainly known for the prominent *Wuthering Heights*; the only novel she wrote throughout her life. Nevertheless, she was also a poet and was critically acclaimed for her poetic contribution and her artistry in *Poems by Currer, Ellis and Acton Bell*. As it was the case with her sister Charlotte, Emily began to write after the Brontë children started to play with Branwell's toy soldiers and created their own stories and kingdoms. These toys were the foundation for the countless plays they wrote and also performed. In addition, while Charlotte and Branwell had invented Angria, Emily and Anne had Gondal, which they placed in the North Pacific.

Her earliest manuscript is dated in 1834 and it is a Gondal story. However, the rest of the plays and stories that she and Anne wrote have not been preserved. Considering that many of her poems were part of their Gondal stories or related to the imaginary land and seeing how dedicated she was to it, it is apparent that Gondal not only developed her imagination, creativity and inspiration, but it also served as a way to escape domestic responsibilities and find comfort. The rest of her prose that has survived constitutes several French essays, a few notes and birthday letters that were exchanged with Anne.

Emily's involvement in *Poems* consisted in twenty-one poems, which were the only pieces of poetry published while she was alive. Even though the collection sold just two copies and received three reviews, the criticism was generally positive, particularly with regards to her. In 1836, she wrote her earliest dated composition and from 1837 to 1842, she wrote the majority of the existent poems. Needless to say, although many of her creations were connected to Gondal, the greater part of her poems were personal ones. In 1941, C. W. Hatfield published *The Complete Poems of Emily Jane Brontë*, where he compiled nearly two hundred of her verses.

*Wuthering Heights* was published towards the end of 1847 together with Anne's *Agnes Grey* and it received a few mixed reviews. Some viewed it as inappropriate, coarse and shocking, while others recognized her talent and seemed to be interested in what the author would write next. In 1850, after Emily's death, *Wuthering Heights* was reissued. This second edition contained a biographical notice and a preface by Charlotte, in which she revealed their identities and addressed some of the controversies concerning the novel (i.e. Heathcliff's character).

## 4. PART THREE: ANALYSIS

### 4.1 *Jane Eyre*: Summary and Overview

Charlotte Brontë's most notorious novel was first published in 1847 and could be described as a combination of three genres: *Bildungsroman*, Romantic and Gothic. As abovementioned, *Bildungsromane* focus on the psychological and moral growth of the protagonist from youth to adulthood. In this case, *Jane Eyre* begins with the character of Jane, a weak orphan who embarks on a journey of personal discovery, and ends with her becoming an independent and assertive woman. The author also puts emphasis on emotions and passion, which suggests that she was heavily influenced by Romantic writers as she grew up. Additionally, the novel contains a few elements characteristic of the Gothic fiction such as supernatural encounters (i.e. when Jane meets with her uncle's ghost) and manors (Thornfield) and institutions (Lowood) located in remote places, as well as other occurrences (i.e. imagery) used so as to create tension and expectation in the reader.

With regards to Jane's inner psychological development, it could be divided into five stages: Her childhood at Gateshead, studying at Lowood School, becoming a governess at Thornfield Manor, her time with the Rivers' family at Moor House and Jane's journey to Ferndean Manor and her later marriage to Edward Rochester. Moreover, the novel is an autodiegetic narration, as the narrator is not only a character in the story, but also the protagonist of the book. Consequently, it is a first-person narration told from Jane's point of view, ten years after her marriage, in which she depicts her own experiences and provides her opinion about other characters; hence influencing the readers' judgement. The narration also moves from the past tense to the present one at times, which indicates that she could be reliving distressing events whenever she uses the present. Jane addresses the reader in several occasions, thus enhancing a sense intimacy and making the audience reflect on what is being narrated: "Reader, though I look comfortably accommodated, I am not very tranquil in my mind" (Brontë, 2012: 109).

Charlotte Brontë's classic deals with a wide variety of topics amongst which we could highlight the most relevant ones, as for instance social class and gender relations. Jane struggles all throughout the story to overcome inequality and acquire power and

independence, which proves to be a difficult task given her social status and that she is a woman. As a woman, she does not have as many options at her disposal concerning jobs. In addition, since she is not financially independent, her best choice is to become a governess. Hence, Jane finds herself in an ambiguous social position; in between classes. She is educated and sophisticated and her manners are those of someone in the upper classes; however, she is treated as a kind of servant. She is able to interact with people from all classes, but those with higher statuses seem to sneer at her lack of affluence and at the same time, she knows that she does not belong with the lower classes. Furthermore, she confronts several male characters (i.e. St. John) who do not seem to consider women as their equals and attempt to control her and maintain her as a submissive and obedient woman.

Another major theme is love and autonomy. Jane strives to find love and affection but she is afraid that she will lose her independence or that it will be undermined. One of the types of love that she tries to attain is motherly love, but her aunt appears to be incapable of providing any sort of affection towards her and only cares about her own children. Nonetheless, she seems to find a sort of substitute mother in Bessie and later on, in Miss Temple. Her concern with her autonomy is one of the reasons why she rejects Rochester's marriage proposal. St John's proposal is also refused, for that would have been a loveless union in which he would have only been able to provide brotherly love. Jane only accepts Rochester once she is self-assured that she will not lose her status and that it will be an equal union.

Identity is one of the most significant topics of the novel. Jane embarks herself in a self-discovery journey in which she tries to find her own identity. Besides, she realizes that she needs to learn to balance her passionate attitude and exert self-control, which will allow her to favour reason over feelings. Her passionate nature was not the way in which Victorian women would behave at the time since it was deemed as inappropriate. As she grows up, Jane masters how to balance her emotions and her rationality.

Lastly, some of the literary motifs and symbols that the author incorporates into her narrative will be briefly mentioned. To begin with, there is the symbol of fire, and its counterpart; ice. Brontë uses fire imagery to exemplify Jane's nature, thus associating it to passion as well as rage. Furthermore, it can be found in relation to characters such as Miss Temple, Helen Burns and Mr. Rochester.

“The moment Miss Scatcherd withdrew, after afternoon school, I ran to Helen, tore it off, and thrust it into the fire. The fury of which she was incapable had been burning in my soul all day, and tears, hot and large, had continually been scalding my cheek” (Brontë, 2012: 84).

Fire is also showcased as destructive, as in this case. Although at the same time, it is also seen as a positive force, as it is utilized so as to end Helen’s degrading punishment. Additionally, Bertha Mason sets fire to Thornfield twice. Her first attempt brings Jane and Mr. Rochester closer, whereas the second one kills her, freeing Rochester from his past and enabling him to marry Jane.

On the contrary, ice and cold imagery symbolize isolation, sorrow, death and attempts to repress Jane’s passionate disposition. Hence, ice is presented as a negative element and is associated with Mrs. Reed and St. John as well as with landscapes. At Moor House, when St. John persuades Jane to learn Hindostanee she states that she feels as if she was “under a freezing spell” (481). Following that, he proposes marriage to her and she comes to the conclusion that if she were to marry him, she would be “forced to keep the fire of my nature continually low, to compel it to burn inwardly and never utter a cry” (492). Then, after rejecting his proposal, St. John shakes hands with a “cold, loose touch” (495).

Moreover, there is the so-called red-room; a symbol that reappears throughout the story. The red-room used to be Mr. Reeds’ bedroom and it is also where he died. Mrs. Reed confines Jane to this room to punish her for her behaviour and there, she experiences a traumatic episode that haunts her until she becomes a confident and independent woman. Jane deems the red-room an unwelcoming space that has no warmth because “it seldom had a fire” (9). The red-room, where Jane is locked in for an entire night, represents a symbol of imprisonment and alienation from society. As the night falls, her anxiety increases and the confinement finally takes a toll on her when she suddenly sees a “streak of light”, which she believes to be the apparition of her deceased uncle. Feeling oppressed and suffocated (13), she asks for help. Apart from serving as a Gothic element, the red-room is considered to have several connotations. Jane is locked in due to her passionate nature and the manner in which she behaves, and the goal of her punishment is that she learns to be submissive and calm. Therefore, the red-room could be a mirror of Victorian society: a time in which women were expected to be obedient, self-sacrificing and gentle, following the model of the ideal wife and woman known as the

“Angel in the House.”<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, the scholar Elaine Showalter (1977: 114) argues that the red-room is a “paradigm of female inner space” and that this episode suggests that Jane has begun to menstruate, thus associating the symbolic red-room with the passage to womanhood.

Finally, there is the character of Bertha Mason, whose significance and symbolism has been the subject of discussion ever since *Jane Eyre* was published. According to Sally Shuttleworth (1996: 153), there were two main figures concerning the discourse of Victorian psychiatry who determined the sphere of excess, and both of them appear in the novel: the passionate child and the madwoman. Bertha Mason is related to the latter one. She was Mr. Rochester’s first wife and she has been designated as “The Madwoman in the Attic”. She is confined to the third story of Thornfield due to her madness.<sup>2</sup> Bertha Mason could be seen as a representation of the Victorian wife, who is expected to stay at home and devote herself to her husband and children. Additionally, they were not allowed to travel or work outside their homes and, as a result, many became agitated and frustrated. Further to this, since Bertha is not only insane, but also a Creole, it could be viewed as a reference to imperialism or to the way in which foreigners and foreign cultures were treated at the time in Britain. The feminist literary critics Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar have discussed on the possibility that Bertha Mason could be the manifestation of Jane’s innermost feelings: “the specter of Bertha is still another...avatar of Jane. What Bertha now does... is what Jane wants to do” (2000:159). Gilbert & Gubar argue that Bertha is “Jane’s truest and darkest double” (2000: 160). Hence, it could be said that Bertha Mason is the externalization of Jane’s inner fire and rage. Moreover, it should be taken into consideration that even though Brontë was criticized because of the manner in which Bertha Mason was depicted and treated, over time Bertha became a

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<sup>1</sup> The phrase “The Angel in the House” is taken from a narrative poem written by Coventry Patmore (1823 – 1896) in 1854. The composition was inspired by his wife, Emily, and it depicted an ideal of a happy married life. Later on, it became the reference of the ideal Victorian Woman. The term has been criticized by feminist authors such as Virginia Woolf, who stated that “killing the Angel in the House was part of the occupation of a woman writer.” (“Professions for Women”, 1931).

<sup>2</sup> Shuttleworth (1996: 154) as well as Susan & Gubar (2000: 361) have commented on the parallelism between Jane’s confinement in the red-room and Bertha’s imprisonment in the third story.

critique of a community in which women who refused to follow the patriarchal society were deemed monsters, aggressive or madwomen.

#### **4.2 *Wuthering Heights*: Summary and Overview**

*Wuthering Heights* (first published in 1847) is Emily Brontë's first and only novel and it has become her most distinguished composition. It begins when Mr. Lockwood, a tenant at Thrushcross Grange, visits his landlord, Mr. Heathcliff. His visit to Wuthering Heights and his encounters with Heathcliff and the other residents prompts his interest. When he returns to Thrushcross Grange he asks his housekeeper, Nelly, who used to work in Wuthering Heights, to tell him their stories.

The novel is mainly written from the perspective of two characters: Mr. Lockwood and Nelly Dean. Brontë adopts the literary device known as frame narrative in order to narrate the events. By means of this technique, the authoress uses embedded narratives; that is to say, she sets a story within another story, and hence, provides the readers more information about the subplots as well as multiple points of view. In this case, Nelly Dean recounts Heathcliff and Catherine's story to Mr. Lockwood, who records her narration and helps to move the narrative from the present to the past and vice versa. Both narrators could be defined as unreliable narrators. In the first place, Lockwood is, for the most part, an intermediary between Nelly and the reader, but when he gives an account of certain characters, those are heavily based on his beliefs. This is noticeable when he recounts his first encounter with Heathcliff. Similarly, Nelly grew up with Heathcliff and Catherine and because of that, she could be considered as too closely involved in the situation. She tells her version of the events and when she was not present, she tells what somebody else told her.

Brontë's tale principally deals with three major topics: Social class, morality and love. Social class, upward mobility, class ambiguity and the need to improve your status are recurrent themes all throughout the novel. Heathcliff's lower class is the reason why he is unable to marry Catherine, treated differently and abused by other characters such as Hindley. However, by the end of the story, he manages to advance socially and financially

and becomes a powerful landowner. Concerning class ambiguity, Hareton Earnshaw could be one of the main examples, as he is born as the son of a gentleman but raised as a servant. With regards to morality, Emily's ambivalence on the matter of Christian values and morality is one of the reasons why her novel received mixed reviews and was deemed inappropriate. Finally, on the subject of love, the (borderline obsessive) relationship that transcends social norms and even death between Heathcliff and Catherine is the main focus. The other relevant relationship is that of young Catherine and Hareton.

In order to organize her novel, Brontë makes use of two techniques: repetition and doubles. Names, places and even motifs are sorted into pairs and recurrent. This is particularly noticeable with the name 'Catherine', shared by two characters and followed by different surnames: "*Catherine Earnshaw*, here and there varied to *Catherine Heathcliff*, and then again to *Catherine Linton*...the air swarmed with Catherines." (Brontë, 2004: 58). Catherine Earnshaw is wilder and passionate; she is the Catherine that Heathcliff fell in love with. She becomes Catherine Linton when she marries Edgar and grows into a more moderate, although still intense and unrestrained character. In addition, she also pondered about becoming Catherine Heathcliff. However, her daughter, young Catherine (or Cathy) is known as Catherine Linton first, then as Catherine Heathcliff when she marries Linton Heathcliff, and lastly, she will become Catherine Earnshaw when she marries her cousin Hareton. Personality-wise, young Catherine is both similar and completely opposite to her mother.

Furthermore, places are arranged into pairs too. It is the case of Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange. The two places mirror the differences between their inhabitants. The former one is described as dark, cold, unwelcoming and "descriptive of the atmospheric tumult to which its station is exposed in stormy weather" (43), whereas the latter one is more welcoming and warm and not as dark, as "it is not so buried in trees" (231). Another case of paired elements would be something which has already been mentioned; which is the fact that the novel has two prominent narrators, Nelly Dean and Mr. Lockwood.

Finally, concerning repetition of motifs, the most noticeable instance could be how Heathcliff humiliates and degrades Hareton Earnshaw, treating him like a servant and preventing him from acquiring an education and even learning how to read. This plot element clearly mirrors how Hindley behaved towards Heathcliff when they were

younger, as he would call him a vagabond and would not even let him eat with the rest of them (61). The moment Mr. Earnshaw dies, Hindley begins to degrade Heathcliff, orders him to labour outdoors and tries to stop Catherine from spending much time with him. Later on, Heathcliff takes revenge on Hareton because of the way his father treated him, thus causing the past to repeat itself.

### 4.3 A Comparative Analysis of *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights*

#### 4.3.1 *Origins and Family*

The present section will be focused on family given that it is one of the commonest devices found in *Bildungsromane*. The main characters in these types of compositions tend to be parentless children who are alienated from their families and who endure physical abuse and difficult living conditions. As abovementioned in section 2.2.2, one of the elements that can be often found in *Bildungsromane* is the orphan who is brought up by wicked authoritative figures. Because of this, the aim of the protagonists is not just to reach maturity, but also to find a sense of belonging. In the case of *Jane Eyre*, the main character is placed in the care of her aunt, Mrs. Reed, once her parents die of typhus. Jane hears from a conversation between Miss Abbot and Bessie that her mother had married her father going against her friends and family's advice, who deemed the union beneath her, for he was a clergyman. After getting married, her mother's father disowned her (C. Brontë, 2012: 24). In the case of *Wuthering Heights*, Mr. Earnshaw finds Heathcliff wandering in the streets of Liverpool, starving and houseless (E. Brontë: 2004, 74). By the end of the novel, Heathcliff's origins remain a mystery. Nothing is known about him prior to being adopted by Mr. Earnshaw, not even his real name. In addition, his ethnicity is ambiguous too, but he is referred to as a "gipsy" multiple times, and Mr. Lockwood describes him as a "dark-skinned gipsy in aspect" (44).

Consequently, both Jane and Heathcliff are orphans that grow up in homes where they are neither wanted nor valued. However, their backgrounds differ, as Jane is surrounded by her relatives, whereas Heathcliff is rescued from the streets and saved from starvation by Mr. Earnshaw. Moreover, Jane's origins and information about her parents is provided, but that is not the case with Heathcliff. In both instances it is clearly noticeable that Jane and Heathcliff are not well treated in their homes and that they are alienated. Jane's

exclusion is shown from the first scene: “Eliza, John and Georgiana were now clustered round their mama... Me, she had dispensed from the group.” Mrs. Reed argues that Jane must be excluded “from privileges intended only for contented, happy little children (C. Brontë 2012: 1). From an early age, Jane is aware that her aunt does not appreciate her and she states that she feels a “discord” in Gateshead Hall, that she was like a nobody there (11). Similarly, Heathcliff is isolated from the family, specially after Mr. Earnshaw’s death. Hindley, Mr. Earnshaw’s son, tries to prevent Catherine from spending time with Heathcliff and to do so, he dives “him [Heathcliff] from their company to the servants, deprived him of the instructions of the curate, and insisted that he should labour out of doors instead; compelling him to do so as hard as any other lad on the farm” (E. Brontë 2004: 82). Thus, instead of welcoming Heathcliff into the family, he is separated from them, degraded and treated as a servant.

While Jane stays in the red-room she thinks about how her uncle, Mr. Reed, had taken her to his house and had made his wife promise him that she would “rear and maintain me as one of her own children” (C. Brontë 2012: 12). Jane is sure that, had her uncle been alive, he would have treated her kindly (12). Heathcliff finds himself in a similar position to that of Jane. Even though he does not explicitly lament Mr. Earnshaw’s death, it is evident that while he was living, Heathcliff was treated amiably. Hence, at the beginning, he is a lower-class orphan who becomes a gentleman’s son after being adopted. Following Mr. Earnshaw’s decease, his status is once again reversed. It could be said that both Jane and Heathcliff are portrayed as outsiders in their own homes.

Another central topic in *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights* is physical punishment. From the first paragraphs of the novel, Jane states that she is so used to being punished and abused that she does not event react anymore. Although the physical abuse is mainly perpetuated by her cousin John, to whom she refers to as “a tyrant” and “a murderer” (6), her aunt Mrs. Reed and the rest of inhabitants at Gateshead are also at fault, since they turn a blind eye to it:

“John had not much affection for his mother and sisters, and an antipathy to me. He bullied and punished me; not two or three times in the week, nor once or twice in a day, but continually: every nerve I had feared him, and every morsel of flesh on my bones shrank when he came near... and Mrs Reed was blind and deaf on the subject: she never saw him strike or heard him abuse me” (C. Brontë 2012, 4 – 5).

Jane says that she “never had an idea of replying to it [the abuse]”, that her care was “how to endure the blow which would certainly follow the insult” (5). Nevertheless, during one of John’s attacks, she finally loses her temper and fights him back. She claims that she did not “very well know” what she did, but after attempting to defend herself, she is locked in the red-room. The red-room episode becomes a traumatic experience that haunts her throughout the story. She is forced to stay there for an entire night so that she learns to be submissive and behave properly. It is clear that the red-room is a key element in the story and is crucial to Jane’s development. Additionally, scholars have considered the space as an element with several connotations. Perhaps one of the most straightforward meanings of the red-room is that it stands for a symbol of exclusion and imprisonment from society. Subsequent to this punishment, Mrs. Reed separates Jane from her children even more; she now sleeps in a small closet by herself and eats alone. Further to this, she spends her time in the nursery, whereas her cousins stay in the drawing-room all the time, avoiding contact with her. Jane remarks that Mrs. Reed’s glance expresses an “insuperable and rooted aversion” (25) towards her, specially since her illness. She is also excluded from dinners and evening parties (27).

With regards to Heathcliff, he has his “own John Reed” too. In this case it is Hindley the one who physically abuses him. Ever since Heathcliff is introduced to the family, Hindley professes his hatred towards him. In addition, Nelly depicts Heathcliff as a “sullen, patient child; hardened, perhaps, to ill-treatment” (E. Brontë 2004: 74), suggesting that he had probably endured abuse before being adopted by the Earnshaw family and because of that, he “would stand Hindley’s blows without winking or shedding a tear” (74). However, contrary to Jane’s situation, Mr. Earnshaw becomes aware of Hindley’s persecution and is furious about that. Mr. Earnshaw grows fond of Heathcliff and continues to treat him as if he were his son. Due to this behaviour, Hindley starts to view Heathcliff as an “usurper of his parent’s affections and his privileges” (75) and grows “bitter with brooding” (75). When he realizes that his father treats him as if he were part of the family, Hindley becomes jealous and sees Heathcliff as a threat. As a consequence, he is scared that Heathcliff will take his position and continues to bully and abuse Heathcliff. Once his father dies, Hindley takes advantage and degrades Heathcliff again, treating him like a servant and alienating him.

Consequently, Jane and Heathcliff are oppressed and abused in their own homes and, in both instances, the mistreatment is aggravated after Mr. Reed and Mr. Earnshaw die.

Nevertheless, there is a difference in how they react to the harassment. Although Jane usually does not react to John's aggressive behaviour, she strikes back and tries to defend herself in one occasion. Heathcliff, on the contrary, remains still and endures the blows.

According to Jerome Hamilton Buckley (1974: 17), formal schooling is not as important in English *Bildungsromane* as in other types of *Bildungsromane*. Notwithstanding, he argues that it is common to find protagonists that have to leave their homes to attend school from an early age: "his [the protagonist's] first schooling, even if not totally inadequate, may be frustrating... He therefore, sometimes at a quite early age, leaves the repressive atmosphere of home...to make his way independently in the city".

Thus, taking into consideration Buckley's statement, Jane being sent to Lowood Institution is another characteristic of the *Bildungsroman*. Mrs. Reed decides to send Jane to school because she does not want to take care of her anymore. Jane's situation, however, does not improve when she attends Lowood Institution<sup>3</sup>, as she is still punished. Nevertheless, Lowood is a school for poor and orphaned girls, so in that sense, Jane stops being an outsider because all the students are in the same position. Furthermore, she meets her first friend, Helen Burns and her mentor, Miss Temple there. So, for the first time, Jane now have people who support and console her and who are willing to listen to her side of the story. As Sellers (2017: 9) puts it: "The support and comfort that Jane gets from her friend Helen and her mentor Miss Temple can be seen as contributing factors to that they become the first real family that Jane experiences".

On the contrary, Heathcliff does not attend any kind of school nor (officially) receives formal education. After Mr. Earnshaw dies, Hindley inherits the state and deprives Heathcliff of an education, forcing him to stay with the servants. By denying Heathcliff of an education, Hindley intends to humiliate him and prevent him from ameliorating his position in society. On the other hand, Mr. Earnshaw sent his son Hindley away to college for three years "so that his children's status and respectability consequently makes them socially acceptable to the local gentry" (Ingham, 2006: 122). It would be interesting to

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<sup>3</sup> Lowood Institution is said to be inspired by the Brontë sisters stay in Cowan's Bridge; an establishment for the daughters of clergymen and where Maria and Elizabeth Brontë died of tuberculosis. In fact, Elizabeth Gaskell affirms that Charlotte herself told her that she "should not have written what she did of Lowood in *Jane Eyre*, if she had thought the place would have been so immediately identified with Cowan's Bridge." (2005: 100)

wonder if Heathcliff's situation would have been the same had Mr. Earnshaw been alive or if he would have preferred that Heathcliff acquired an education. Furthermore, Charlotte Brontë commented in one of her letters that had Heathcliff received a proper education he could have behaved as a "human being": "Carefully trained and kindly treated, the black gypsy-cub might possibly have been reared into a human being, but tyranny and ignorance made of him a mere demon" (2008: 117).

#### 4.3.2 *Social Class and Class Mobility*

This section will analyze Jane and Heathcliff's positions in society and how they improve their situations throughout the novels. In *Bildungsromane*, the protagonists are often financially dependent or at an economic disadvantage and because of that, they aim at upwards mobility so as to improve their conditions. Both Jane and Heathcliff follow this pattern: they are orphans, dependent on other people and they find themselves in an ambiguous social class. However, by the end of the stories, they have raised their positions and have become landowners.

According to Junghan Choi (2008: 23), the existence of stories of orphans stirred anxiety among the middle and higher classes in Victorian England because some believed that they threatened domestic stability. At the time, social structure was based on class, which was normally inherited. Consequently, orphans rarely experienced class mobility. In fact, most of them were "born into poverty and educated to live in servitude or to immigrate to English colonies" (2008: 25) and had no privileges. In the nineteenth-century, orphans were deemed to be a "side effect" of poverty or immorality and viewed as "outsiders" because of social prejudice (2008: 26). Laura Peters also shares this idea, as she claims that orphans became "an outsider, a body without family ties to the community, a foreigner" (2000: 6). Taking this into consideration, Jane and Heathcliff's situation as orphans is one of the reasons why they are treated as outsiders in their own homes.

In the case of *Jane Eyre*, Randi Eline Selvik (2016: 21) comments that the aspects that make Jane an outsider are her unconventional female behaviour and her social

position as an orphan and a governess. As a result, she finds herself in between classes and is able to associate and socialize with people from all classes, including orphans (Helen Burns), working-class (Mrs. Fairfax) and upper and middle class (Mr. Rochester). In spite of this, she is usually viewed as a lower-class individual. At Gateshead, Bessie tells her that she is “less than a servant, for you do nothing for your keep” and refers to John Reed as Jane’s “young master” (7). Miss Abbot, another server, adds that Jane ought not to think herself “on equality with the Misses Reed and Master Reed” because they will inherit a large amount of money, whereas she will have none (8). Thus, while Jane stays in that household, she is constantly reminded of her lower and dependent status, not only by Bessie and Miss Abbot, but also by her cousin John Reed, who abuses her both physically and mentally: “You have no business to take our books; you are a dependent, mamma says, you have no money; your father left you none; you ought to beg, and not live here with gentlemen’s children like us, and eat the same meals we do, and wear clothes at our mamma’s expense” (5).

When Jane is sent to Lowood Institution, she does not feel as an outsider anymore, as she is surrounded by orphan girls. Consequently, her behaviour appears to be “more balanced” due to the “feeling of equality” (Randi Eline Selvik, 2016: 59). Gilbert and Gubar (2000: 347) comment that although Jane learns to control her emotions better while she is at Lowood, her passionate nature has not disappeared; she has just learnt to compromise: “Her way of confronting the world is still the Promethean way of fiery rebellion, not Miss Temple's way of ladylike repression, not Helen Burns's way of saintly renunciation. What she has learned from her two mothers is, at least superficially, to compromise”. Furthermore, the said institution allows her to acquire a decent education, which helps her to ameliorate her status and to go from a lower-class student to a teacher and then to a governess. As Emma E. Gruner (2016: 1) puts it: “The character of Jane Eyre acquires a vast array of classical knowledge and ladylike accomplishments, facilitating her transition from a lowly student to a highly-respected teacher in a true Bildungsroman fashion”. Gruner also adds that her years in Lowood introduce her to the “thrill of educational accomplishment” and help her to develop a “new sense of self-worth” (2016: 2).

With regards to Heathcliff, he is treated as poorly as Jane and even more cruelly. He is viewed as an outsider not just because he is an orphan and has no manners, but also due to the colour of his skin. He constantly endures remarks that liken him to a devil and a

wild animal. Hence, he is described as a “vagabond” (E. Brontë, 2004: 61), a “dog” (76), a “creature” (136), and a “savage beast” (196). Additionally, when Mr. Earnshaw first brings Heathcliff home, they refer to him as “it”. This situation changes after his christening, where he is given the name “Heathcliff” (74).

Although Heathcliff’s origins are never specified throughout the novel, some characters identify him as a gypsy, whereas others, such as Mr. Linton, contemplate that he is “that strange acquisition my late neighbour made, in his journey to Liverpool – a little Lascar, or an American or Spanish castaway” (86). Eline Selvik (2016: 82) considers that Mr. Linton’s speculation could connect Heathcliff’s race to the British Imperialism. In addition, she comments and on two other theories concerning his origin: Meyer’s idea that Heathcliff could be the descendant on an Indian slave and Terry Eagleton and Elsie Michie’s hypothesis that he might have been Irish. In *Heathcliff and the Great Hunger* (1995: 3), Terry Eagleton also theorizes that Heathcliff could possibly “be a gypsy, or... a Creole, or any kind of alien” and that it is “hard to know how black he is” or even how much of that “blackness” is skin colouring and how much is “grime and bile.”

Hence, even though his background is not revealed and there are multiple theories about it, it is evident that all of them portray Heathcliff as a foreigner. According to Tromp, Bachman and Kaufman (2013: 2), during the nineteenth century, foreigners were perceived as a “threat to English culture and identity”. Furthermore, they add that it was a period of “rapid and unprecedented social transition” in which trade, travel and transportation improved, thus creating opportunities for “material and cultural migrations”. As a consequence, they state that xenophobia was defined over the course of this century in particular. Another reason for the rise of xenophobia had to do with the social structure:

“Moreover, a class system dramatically in flux—a rising professional class, a decaying aristocracy, and an overburdened working class...profoundly unsettled the social structure that had for so long shaped and stabilized relations among the English populace. All of these unprecedented disruptions contributed to perceptions of the foreign— including people and migrating objects—as both simultaneously omnipresent and threatening” (Tromp, Bachman & Kaufman, 2012: 12).

All things considered, and as Eline Selvik (2016: 86) argues, “what leads to Heathcliff being repressed and downgraded...is primarily Victorian xenophobia. Because of the

prejudice towards foreigners, Heathcliff stands out from the crowd even more than Jane does. Both of them are orphans, poor and dependent, but Heathcliff's darker skin and strange language makes him a more noticeable outsider than Jane". Therefore, even though both of them are viewed as the Other and treated as lower class individuals because they are orphans and have no money, it is evident that in Heathcliff's case he is handled and punished in a crueler manner owing to his foreignness and darker skin. From the beginning of the story, the authoress makes a distinction between him and the rest of characters, who constantly associate him with the devil and dehumanize him, neglecting him as if he was not another human being.

As opposed to Jane Eyre, Heathcliff is not sent to any institution and is deprived of acquiring an education. At first, Heathcliff seems to be content with the situation, as he is allowed to roam freely with Catherine. However, his so-called "freedom" seems to be an illusion, as Hindley's intentions are to prevent him from improving his situation, to separate him from Catherine and to "reduce him to his right place" as a servant (61). The consideration of his social status is particularly noticeable when Heathcliff and Catherine trespass The Lintons' house and they are treated accordingly to their social class: "she was a young lady, and they made a distinction between her treatment and mine" (86). At first sight, they welcome Catherine, whereas Heathcliff is automatically rejected. After Catherine begins to associate herself with the Lintons, Heathcliff starts to become more aware of the difference in their status.

On the subject of becoming independent and acquiring wealth, they do so in opposite ways. Even though by the end of *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights* both Jane and Heathcliff have become landowners and are not dependent anymore, their paths are entirely different. On the one hand, Jane had no choice but to become a governess, since her own family excluded her. However, by becoming a governess, she was not only provided paid labour, but also a roof, which apparently was not the case for some governesses. Hence, her education "offers her both a salary and a house that she can live in" (Eline Selvik, 2016: 60). Furthermore, when her aunt is on her deathbed, Jane learns that she had a distant uncle who wanted to get in contact with her and adopt her. However, he is unable to do so, as Mrs. Reed conceals the truth from her. Later on, Jane's uncle, Mr. John Eyre, dies, proclaiming her as his sole heir:

" 'Merely to tell you that your uncle, Mr. Eyre of Madeira, is dead;

that he has left you all his property, and that you are now rich – merely that – nothing more.’

‘I! – rich?’

‘Yes, you, rich – quite an heiress.’ ” (C. Brontë, 2012: 461).

As it had been previously stated in section 2.2.2, the scholar Franco Moretti argues that *bildungsromane* in general and *Jane Eyre* in particular incorporate numerous fairy-tale “ingredients” (1987: 187). One of this so-called “fairy-tale ingredients” is the unexpected inheritance that helps Jane to find a new family (the Rivers siblings) and to become financially independent. Moretti comments that the inheritance is not a mere gift, but an “act of justice”, that it is a way to compensate the deprivation of her rights and the way in which she was mistreated:

“Fairy-tale justice, of course, worthy of the ‘family romances’ we dream of in childhood: our parents are not our true ones, they are wicked impostors who have intercepted what is rightfully ours and want to cheat us out of it. Hence the unfailing clash between absent, dead, or cruel parental figures, and the host of ‘uncles’ and ‘aunts’... who, novel after novel, set things right. And why always and only uncles and aunts? Because in this way the principle of family inheritance is simultaneously respected and ‘adapted, avoiding conflict with justice.’” (Moretti, 1987: 205 – 206).

On the other hand, Heathcliff’s upward mobility story is fairly unorthodox in comparison to Jane’s. He leaves *Wuthering Heights* after hearing Catherine say that it would degrade her to marry him (E. Brontë, 2004: 115) and disappears for three years. Upon his return, he is a changed man. During his absence, he seems to have acquired education and money; however, no proper explanation is given in respect to his unexpected new wealth. Emily Brontë gives vague hints about his situation by means of other characters but, as she did with Heathcliff’s origins, she decides to keep it wrapped in a veil of secrecy. The mystery surrounding his fortune (and his story in general) has fueled speculation, not just from the readers, but also from scholars and critics. In addition to becoming a powerful man during his three-year absence, Heathcliff also emerges as a cruel and vengeful being. His ruthless attitude horrified the audience at the time of its publication. A review from 1848 published in *Douglas Jerrold’s Weekly Newspaper* stated that “In *Wuthering Heights* the reader is shocked, disgusted, almost sickened by details of cruelty, inhumanity, and the most diabolical hate and vengeance”. Other academics, such as John Sutherland have also commented on Heathcliff’s vindictive

demeanor and how he left “an uncouth but essentially humane stable-lad” and returned a “gentleman psychopath” (*Is Heathcliff a Murderer?*, 1996).

Regarding the hints provided by the authoress, Nelly, the narrator, suggests that Heathcliff might have been in the army: “Have you been for a soldier?” (E. Brontë, 2004: 127). She also says that there is something “foreign” in his tone, implying that he could have been abroad too (127). Nelly alludes once again to her theory later on, as she declares that his “upright carriage suggested the idea of his having been in the army” (130). Nonetheless, even though this is a mere speculation, it is evident that Heathcliff’s new wealth has been probably acquired in an unethical way, specially considering how he becomes the owner of Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange afterwards. Heathcliff takes advantage of Hindley’s weaknesses and his mental state. In particular, he exploits his alcohol and gambling addictions and lends him money, so that Hindley becomes in debt to him. Eventually, when he dies, Heathcliff inherits Wuthering Heights.

Thus, although both Jane and Heathcliff ameliorate their social position and financial conditions, there are no similarities in the manner in which they do so. This contrast might be because their motives are also different. Jane has no ill intentions and her objective is freedom and becoming financially independent, whereas Heathcliff’s goal is to take revenge on those who abused him. After becoming a wealthy man, Heathcliff’s sole intention is his pursuit for vengeance and he does so by using “the same approach that the Earnshaws and Lintons used against him, money and fortune” (Selvik, 2016: 92).

### 4.3.3 Love

On the subject of love, Moretti (1987: 92 – 93) comments on two possible outcomes that can be found in *bildungsroman*: Firstly, if the hero is able to “grow”, he will “either learn to break the bond once and for all” or the bond will “shape the rest of his life”. Secondly, it could also be the case that the hero will end his first relationship and then initiate others, only to come back to his first affair in the end once again. Similarly, Buckley (1974: 17) argues that the hero will usually be involved in two or more love affairs or encounters, “one debasing, one exalting, and demands that in this respect and others the hero reappraise his values”. These patterns appear in both of the novels

examined here, as for instance the two protagonists are engaged in two affairs. Additionally, although Jane finishes her relationship with Mr. Rochester, they resume their relationship at the end and, with respect to Heathcliff, his bond with Catherine shapes his entire life. However, as Seller (2017: 11) states, it is complicated to claim that one of their affairs is “debasement” and the other is “exalting” in these cases, as they “can be seen to hold both of those qualities.”

Jane’s first relationship is with her employer Edward Rochester. Because of her occupation as a governess, Jane is not an equal with Mr. Rochester; in fact, she is not even an equal with Adele, the child she is teaching. This is a case of power imbalance, as she falls in love with someone from a higher position who she is financially dependent on. Thornfield’s housekeeper, Mrs. Fairfax, advises Jane against this relationship once she finds out and, additionally, comments on their significant age gap, which further adds to their inequality:

“Equality of position and fortune is often advisable in such cases; and there are twenty years of difference in your ages. He might almost be your father.’

‘No, indeed, Mrs. Fairfax!’ exclaimed I, nettled; ‘he is nothing like my father! No one, who saw us together, would suppose it for an instant. Mr. Rochester looks as young, and is as young, as some men at five-and-twenty’” (316 – 317).

Nevertheless, Gilbert & Gubar claim that though their relationship starts as master and servant, they are still “spiritual equals” and they further state that as the story unfolds, their equality is “emphasized” and developed “in even more complex ways.” (2000: 352). According to them, Jane does not fall in love with Rochester because he is her master, but “in spite of the fact that he is” (352).

Selvik argues that besides her lower position as a governess, one of the problems that she has to face is gender constraint; first, from her cousin John and later on from Rochester, who wants to be able to control her (2016: 62). However, Jane rejects the idea that women should be submissive and quiet, and criticizes the restrictive conditions that they constantly have to endure:

“Women are supposed to be very calm generally: but women feel just as men feel; they need exercise for their faculties, and a field for their efforts as much as their brothers do; they suffer from too rigid a restraint, too absolute a stagnation, precisely as men would suffer; and it is narrow-minded in their more privileged fellow-creatures to say that they ought to confine

themselves to making puddings and knitting stockings, to playing on the piano and embroidering bags. It is thoughtless to condemn them, or laugh at them, if they seek to do more or learn more than custom has pronounced necessary for their sex” (129).

In this quote, Jane not only criticizes the situation of Victorian women, but also transmits her feelings of confinement and her desire to achieve freedom and equality. Selvik (2016: 63) adds that this excerpt can be seen “as a radically feminist philosophy” because it opposes a central belief in Victorian society, “that men and women are very divergent”. Another instance in which Jane goes against the traditional Victorian female roles is when she tells Mr. Rochester that even after they get married, she intends to be herself and maintain her individuality: “I am not an angel...and I will not be one till I die; I will be myself...you must neither expect nor exact anything celestial of me – for you will not get it any more than I shall get it of you, which I do not at all anticipate” (311).

Furthermore, Jane encounters two hindrances. First of all, Miss Ingram’s arrival to Thornfield. Miss Ingram seems to be the personification of the ideal Victorian woman; she is beautiful, classy and from a higher class and, for this reason, she is deemed as the “perfect match” for Mr. Rochester. Despite this, Rochester prefers to propose to Jane instead, defying Victorian beliefs, since “according to Victorian standards it was not appropriate for Rochester to marry a woman of a lower class or a governess” and moreover, as Jane only accepts his proposal on her terms, it is evident that “she will only marry on her principles, not society’s” (Selvik, 2016: 67). Jane’s second and most significant obstacle is Bertha Mason. On their wedding day, Jane discovers that Rochester is already married and that his wife, Bertha, is mad and locked up in the third story at Thornfield. Because Rochester is legally bound to Bertha, Jane must decide whether she should stay there and become his mistress or leave the manor. Even though Jane yearns for a sense of belonging, she is afraid that if she were to remain at Thornfield, she would lose her autonomy. Hence, her fear and integrity urge her to refuse Rochester’s proposal and depart from the estate. Moretti (1987: 188) states that it is very obvious why Jane decides to flee, as otherwise she would have become an adulteress, and adds that “any *Bildungsroman* worthy of the name would have had Jane remain among the needles of Thornfield”, but that at the same time, they would have had to face the consequences of their choice. Consequently, he says, it is better “to begin all over again, and as the first tale did not work, start afresh with a new one” (188).

When she leaves Rochester, she comes across the Rivers family and among them, St. John Rivers, her second affair. St. John, as it was the case with Rochester, also appears to be intent on controlling Jane as she declares that he had “acquired a certain influence over me that took away my liberty of mind”, and how she could not even “talk or laugh freely when he was by” (480). Marianne Thormählen (2007: 123) points out that St. John plays a “dominant role” on Jane, whereas Sally Shuttleworth (1996: 178) claims that he “fixes Jane with his ‘freezing spell’, exerting on her the imperial authority he hopes to unleash overseas”. In addition, Lauren Owsley (2013: 60) says that feminist scholars have normally interpreted this character as the “embodiment of religious and patriarchal oppression” and that he creates “an environment in which Jane functions as a second-class citizen.”

St. John, who later on is discovered to be his cousin, insists that Jane should become his missionary wife and even tells her that she is “formed for labor, not love” (486). Despite his multiple attempts at trying to convince Jane of accepting his proposal, she still declines it. Then, he declares: “Refuse to be my wife, and you limit yourself forever to a track of selfish ease and barren obscurity” (494). Essentially, Jane refuses his cousin because she is not willing to give up love and be content with a loveless union nor to become dependent again. For this reason, and since she has been now able to establish her own family and has gained financial independence by means of an inheritance, she now decides to return to Mr. Rochester. Owsley (2013: 55) refers to this as a “reversal of authority” since Jane goes from being a lower-class, dependent governess to a financially autonomous woman, and it is now Mr. Rochester the one who is dependent on her due to his blindness. Jane now describes herself as “an independent woman” (526) and negotiates the terms of their relationship, refusing to accept a rejection (Owsley, 2013: 63). Since *Jane Eyre* was written before 1870, her resolution to get married would have automatically transferred her wealth to Mr. Rochester.<sup>4</sup> Nonetheless, Owsley argues that it is her “active choice” to marry him, and that she does it out of love and not because he has “the financial capabilities to sustain her” or due to “social advancement” (64).

Heathcliff, like Jane, is involved in two affairs: Catherine Earnshaw and Isabella Linton. However, his is a story consisting of violence, vengeance and infatuation. He

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<sup>4</sup> In 1870, the Parliament passed the Married Women’s Property Act, which allowed women to treat any money they earned as their own property instead of their husbands’.

never moves on from his relationship with Catherine, which shapes his entire life, whereas Isabella appears to be just a pawn in his revenge game. Heathcliff and Catherine's passionate romance is presumably one of the most crucial themes of *Wuthering Heights*, specially taking into consideration that the majority of the problems that arise throughout the novel originate from this relation.

As aforementioned, Heathcliff grows up surrounded by individuals that neither want nor value him and who also abuse and degrade him. Thus, Catherine could be described as his silver lining within *Wuthering Heights*, for she is his one and only support throughout his childhood. On this matter, Jennifer Lodine-Chaffey (2013: 209) observes that, as a child, Heathcliff longs for "fulfilment and completion", and notes that Catherine becomes an "all-encompassing presence" for him because she provides him "with a feeling of belonging". Consequently, it is to be expected that Heathcliff bonds with the only character capable of giving him moral support.

Catherine is a witness of Hindley's abusive behaviour towards Heathcliff and, instead of pretending not to see it, she defends him and prefers to choose his side, even if it means that she has to confront her own brother. She despises her brother's demeanour and laments her father's death, as she writes in her diary: "I wish my father were back again. Hindley is a detestable substitute – his conduct to Heathcliff is atrocious" (59). Therefore, Heathcliff is able to endure the ill-treatment and downgrading that he is subjected to throughout his childhood because he has Catherine's support. However, this begins to change from the moment they set foot on the Lintons' manor. While Heathcliff was aware of the difference in their social class, he had not taken it into consideration as much since Catherine did not treat him as an outsider. Nonetheless, her stay in the Linton's house seems to awaken her social ambitions and she commences to behave accordingly. During the five weeks she spends at Thrushcross Grange, she discovers a new world full of luxury, commodities and appearances (Pérez Porras, 2017) and for this reason, she becomes acquainted with them and acts appropriately in their presence.

Catherine's change of behaviour is visible even in the way she treats Heathcliff, as the moment she returns to *Wuthering Heights* she tells him that he looks "very black and cross" and "grim" and how he needs to wash up because he looks "dirty", to which he answers that he "shall not stand to be laughed at" (89). Heathcliff then, starts to realize the difference in their positions, not only regarding Catherine, but also Edgar Linton: "I

wish I had light hair and a fair skin, and was dressed and behaved as well, and had a chance of being as rich as he will be!” (92). Selvik (2016: 88 – 89) comments that, for her, one of the most significant distinctions between Jane Eyre and Heathcliff is that she is not willing to change for the expectations of society, whereas Heathcliff “wants to be like the Earnshaws and the Lintons, both in looks and in social position, because that is the only way he can win Catherine.”

The conversation between Catherine and Nelly that Heathcliff overhears appears to be the novel’s turning point. Catherine explains to Nelly the contrast between her love for Edgar and Heathcliff: “My love for Linton is like the foliage in the woods: time will change it... My love for Heathcliff resembles the eternal rocks beneath: a source of little visible delight, but necessary” (116). Although she has no romantic feelings for Edgar, she knows that Heathcliff is a lower-class orphan and an outsider and that if she were to marry him, it would “degrade” (115) her. At the time, it was more usual to marry owing to social class and upwards mobility than love. This is the case of Catherine. She decides to accept Linton’s proposition because he is from a higher class and the union would benefit her. Additionally, she believes that by marrying him, she could be able to help Heathcliff: “If Heathcliff and I married, we should be beggars? Whereas, if I marry Linton I can aid Heathcliff to rise, and place him out of my brother’s power” (116). Eagleton (1995: 18) adds that it is “Catherine’s renegacy” what “compels Heathcliff to run off, turn himself into a gentleman and appropriate the weapons of the ruling class in order to bring them low”. Notwithstanding, Heathcliff takes Catherine’s words and acceptance of the proposal as a betrayal and disappears for three years.

When he returns, he is a wealthy and powerful man. Nevertheless, he does not revel in his ameliorated social status; in fact, “his new wealth and acceptability are merely weapons in his vengeful armoury” (Ingham, 2006: 125). As a result, he seems to be fixated with the past and his revenge against Hindley and the Lintons. For this reason, Valero Redondo (2018: 262) points out that “although he does evolve socially, Heathcliff remains psychologically the same vindictive child”. Thus, it could be said that Heathcliff gives the impression to be emotionally stuck in his childhood.

The nature of Heathcliff’s second affair is completely opposite to that of Catherine’s. Ingham (2006: 126) refers to this union as “a kind of quid pro quo for Edgar’s marriage to Catherine”, as well as “a move” in his game. Heathcliff uses Isabella’s infatuation and

Romantic idealization to his advantage and marries her, not only to degrade her, but also with the intention of inheriting the Lintons' possessions:

“She abandoned them under a delusion...pic turning in me a hero of romance, and expecting unlimited indulgences from my chivalrous devotion. I can hardly regard her in the light of a rational creature, so obstinately has she persisted in forming a fabulous notion of my character and acting on the false impressions she cherished” (181).

Moreover, after having a son with her, he manipulates and forces him and young Cathy to get married, so that he can become the owner of the property of both families: “my son is prospective owner of your place, and I should not wish him to die till I was certain of being his successor. Besides, he's *mine*, and I want the triumph of seeing *my* descendant fairly lord of their estates; my child hiring their children to till their fathers' lands for wages” (234).

Heathcliff never puts his feelings towards Catherine behind him, not even after her death. For Margaret Lenta (1984: 73), the love between them is the perfect illustration of Romantic love. Bloom (2007: 7) agrees that Romantic love has “no fiercer representation” in literature, but argues that “love” seems to be an inadequate term to describe their connection. On this note, Lodine-Chaffey (2013: 209) prefers to address it as an emotion that goes “beyond romantic notions of obsessive love.”

Heathcliff and Catherine's love and connection seem to transcend the limits of the physical world. Catherine herself asserts that she and Heathcliff are a single entity and hence, her union with Linton will not interfere with their relationship: “I am Heathcliff! He's always, always in my mind: not as a pleasure, any more than I am always a pleasure to myself, but as my own being” (117). Catherine emphasizes the spiritual nature of their relationship and how they are, fundamentally, the same being, as she states “he's more myself than I am. Whatever our souls are made of, his and mine are the same” (115).

All in all, although Jane and Rochester also seem to share a very special and even spiritual connection (i.e. Jane hears Rochester's voice calling after her though they are far apart), the fundamental nature of their relationship contrasts with Heathcliff and Catherine's relation. While Jane strives for love, independence and equality, Heathcliff's perceptions of the world appear to be pervaded by Catherine's sole existence. Moreover, his obsession seems to fuel his desire for revenge. Such is the case, that his monomania leads him to feel haunted by Catherine's ghost and to excavate her grave.

#### 4.3.4 *Personality*

One of the most notable similarities amongst the protagonists is their portrayal as outsiders, which has already been commented previously. Furthermore, another shared characteristic is their unconventionality and the addition of antiheroic or morally ambiguous traits. Both Jane and Heathcliff seem to challenge traditional Victorian ideas and conventions and owing to that, they are viewed as a threat to society.

In *The Life of Charlotte Brontë*, Gaskell (2005: 298) explained that Charlotte was “determined to make her heroine plain, small, and unattractive, in defiance of the accepted canon” and adds that she told her sisters that they were wrong for making their heroines beautiful and for thinking that it was not possible to make them interesting otherwise, and that she would “show you a heroine as plain and as small as myself”. Cadwallader (2009: 235) states that Brontë uses Jane’s plainness and beauty to condemn the upper-class system of values, for it limited women’s ability to develop selfhood and achieve autonomy considering that it mainly emphasized their physical appearance. In addition, beauty was a signifier of class status, as middle-class and lower-class women were taught a different mode of femininity than upper-class women. Lower-classes learnt a “roughening and physical-self-negating” ideal of femininity, whereas the upper-classes were focused on the “objectifying” and “weakening” aspects. Nevertheless, by providing Jane with an education in both variants, Brontë attempts to prove that neither is adequate and that in order to accomplish individuality, Jane must be educated “both for labour and for love” (Cadwallader, 2009: 238 – 239).

Charlotte Brontë decided to disregard beauty and opted for creating her character “on the same terms as the traditional hero – by virtue of her interiority: her qualities of mind, character, and personality” (Moglen, 1984: 106). Moglen (1984: 106) also remarks that as a consequence, the authoress created the first “antiheroine”, who defied the tradition of “both fiction and society”. Thus, the fact that Jane opposes and rebels against traditional societal beliefs and norms make her a kind of antiheroine according to Moglen. One of the instances in which Jane’s rebellious behaviour is evident is when she confronts Mr. Rochester and tells him:

“Do you think I am an automaton? — a machine without feelings? and can bear to have my morsel of bread snatched from my lips, and my drop of living water dashed from my cup? Do you think, because I am poor, obscure, plain, and little, I am soulless and heartless? You think

wrong! — I have as much soul as you — and full as much heart! ... I am not talking to you now through the medium of custom, conventionalities, nor even of mortal flesh: it is my spirit that addresses your spirit ... equal — as we are!” (303).

Jane criticizes class prejudice as well as the traditional role of women by stating that she has “as much soul” as he has, hence rejecting the belief that Victorian women had to remain quiet and compliant. Moreover, by declaring that they are equals, she also condemns discrimination owing to social class. Furthermore, other episodes in which Jane’s unconventionality is shown is when she responds to John Reed’s abuse violently, her emotional outburst in the red-room, the rejection of St. John’s marriage proposal and when she questions Mr. Rochester’s authority and superiority as she tells him: “I don’t think, sir, you have a right to command me, merely because you are older than I, or because you have seen more of the world than I have; your claim to superiority depends on the use you have made of your time and experience” (158). Gilbert and Gubar (2000: 338) assert that Victorian readers were particularly shocked by Jane’s passion. They claim that the audience seemed to dislike the “anti-Christian refusal to accept the forms, customs, and standards of society” and Jane’s “refusal to submit to her social destiny” more than the novel’s coarseness and sexuality.

Heathcliff’s unconventionality is more prominent than Jane’s. Throughout the years he has been depicted as a Romantic hero, Byronic hero, antihero and a villain. In the novel, he is called wicked, tyrannical (281), not a human being (201) and a murderer (247). Even Catherine warns her sister-in-law, Isabella, about Heathcliff when she shows interest in him. Although the nature of her advice could be more out of jealousy than concern, her comment about Heathcliff’s intentions proves to be accurate: “Tell her what Heathcliff is: an unreclaimed creature, without refinement, without cultivation; an arid wilderness of furze and whinstone...He’s not a rough diamond...he’s a fierce, pitiless, wolfish man... and he’d crush you like a sparrow’s egg...if he found you a troublesome charge” (136).

It is evident that his antiheroic qualities lie in his cruel behaviour and his eagerness for revenge. Nevertheless, at the same time, he is also portrayed as a victim, specially during his childhood, due to the constant abuse that he has had to tolerate. As a result, Paris (1997: 241) declares that Heathcliff’s attitude can be “understood in motivational terms” because his “viciousness arises from his misery”. Hence, Paris (1997: 242) argues

that his vindictive impulses are rooted in the sufferings that he endured in childhood. Thus, the complexity of this character resides in the fact that he operates within a grey area since, although he is attributed antiheroic (an even villainous) traits, he is also making the readers sympathize with his condition. For this reason, Valero Redondo (2018: 83) states that “*Wuthering Heights* puts readers in an uncomfortable situation when they find themselves sympathizing with Heathcliff and not being able to assign the label of hero or villain unequivocally.”

Furthermore, Heathcliff’s conduct and personality has caused some literary critics and academics to question whether or not the novel should be proclaimed as a *Bildungsroman*. This is the case of Kaitlin Brittany Wood (2018: 8), who claims that it would be more accurate to label the novel as an “anti-*Bildungsroman*” because Heathcliff becomes an individual “consumed by revenge and depravity, rather than forgiveness and virtue”. Nevertheless, even though *Wuthering Heights* does not include neither the so-called “fairy-tale” elements nor the “recognition-inheritance pattern” that Moretti (1987: 205) mentioned (both of which are present in *Jane Eyre*), it is clear that it includes, at least, a few elements typical of *Bildungsromane*, as it has been explained throughout the analysis. Admittedly, as Valero Redondo says, this does not necessarily mean that the story “falls perfectly into this category” (2018: 305), but it is undeniable that the essence of the *Bildungsroman* is found in *Wuthering Heights*.

Ultimately, Jane and Heathcliff reject traditional Victorian norms and beliefs and are mistreated and oppressed due to their position as outsiders and class division. Both of them possess what has been referred to as “antiheroic” qualities. Nevertheless, it should be taken into consideration that even though some of the protagonists’ actions were deemed as “antiheroic” because their attitudes differed from the traditional Victorian model, it is also true that their rebellious attitudes could be “viewed in two different ways, heroic and antiheroic” (Selvik, 2016: 110). Hence, since both of them stand against their abusers and rebel against social expectations and ideas, they could also be perceived as heroic (particularly in the case of Jane), for they defy the established Victorian norms and values. As Selvik (2016: 112) states, Jane and Heathcliff have a common goal: to achieve justice. However, their main difference is that they seek different types of justice: “Jane wants to free herself, but also highlights the unfair conditions for her fellow Victorian women, due to the restraints that are pushed on them because of their gender.

Heathcliff, on the contrary, wants justice in form of punishment, over the people that mistreated him.”

## 5. CONCLUSIONS

This project has focused on a study of the development of the protagonists in *Jane Eyre* (1847) and *Wuthering Heights* (1847). Both novels are considered to be hybrids of several genres; as for instance Gothic, Romantic and autobiography. Nevertheless, this dissertation has aimed at analyzing Charlotte and Emily Brontë’s works as *Bildungsroman*; a literary genre that focuses on the psychological growth of the main characters. As a consequence, the essay has attempted to compare Jane and Heathcliff’s evolution from youth to adulthood, taking into account their similarities as well as their differences. Although at first sight, Jane and Heathcliff could give the impression of being antithetical characters, it has been determined that there is a clear resemblance in the use of certain elements typical of the *Bildungsroman*. Both of them are presented as outcasts, orphans, lower-class and dependent; they are outsiders in their own homes and endure constant physical and psychological abuse throughout their childhoods. Additionally, it has been argued that Heathcliff’s mistreatment and dehumanization is more severe than Jane’s due to his darker complexion and possible foreignness. Furthermore, these are stories of class mobility; another common device of the *Bildungsroman*. Jane and Heathcliff, albeit following opposite paths, ameliorate their social position as lower-class individuals and become landowners. Moreover, this essay has examined how neither of them conform to Victorian social expectations and how, as a result, they were perceived as threats to society. Thus, the possibility of interpreting some of the protagonists’ attributes as “anti-heroic” in the sense of differing from the traditional Victorian model has also been explored. Hence, it could be said that their unconventionality, and in particular their rebellious behaviour, have been deemed as a challenge to the established beliefs and values. Ultimately, it has been determined that one of the most significant dissimilarities amongst Jane and Heathcliff is that even though both of them wish to achieve justice, their intentions and methods are completely

different: Jane strives for freedom and independence, whereas Heathcliff becomes consumed by his desire of seeking revenge. All in all, although some scholars have questioned whether or not these novels should be considered as novels of development, this study has taken into account the unlikeness of a single novel containing all of the elements typical of this genre. As a result, it has been concluded that Jane and Heathcliff's psychological growth follows the pattern of the *Bildungsroman* and it has been demonstrated that the essence of the *Bildungsroman* is found in both *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights*.

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○ **IMAGES:**

- Figure 1: *The Pickwick Paper's* cover (1836)      URL:  
<https://www.uvic.ca/library/featured/collections/images/pickwick1.jpg>  
(accessed 3 July 2020)
- Figure 2: Charlotte Brontë      URL:  
<https://cdn.britannica.com/50/138650-050-A7D5DE13/portrait-Charlotte-Bronte-George-Richmond-chalk-pastel.jpg> (accessed 23 June 2020)
- Figure 3: Emily Brontë by Patrick Branwell Brontë (ca. 1833)      URL:  
<https://www.npg.org.uk/collections/search/portrait/mw00800/Emily-Bront> (accessed 23 June 2020)