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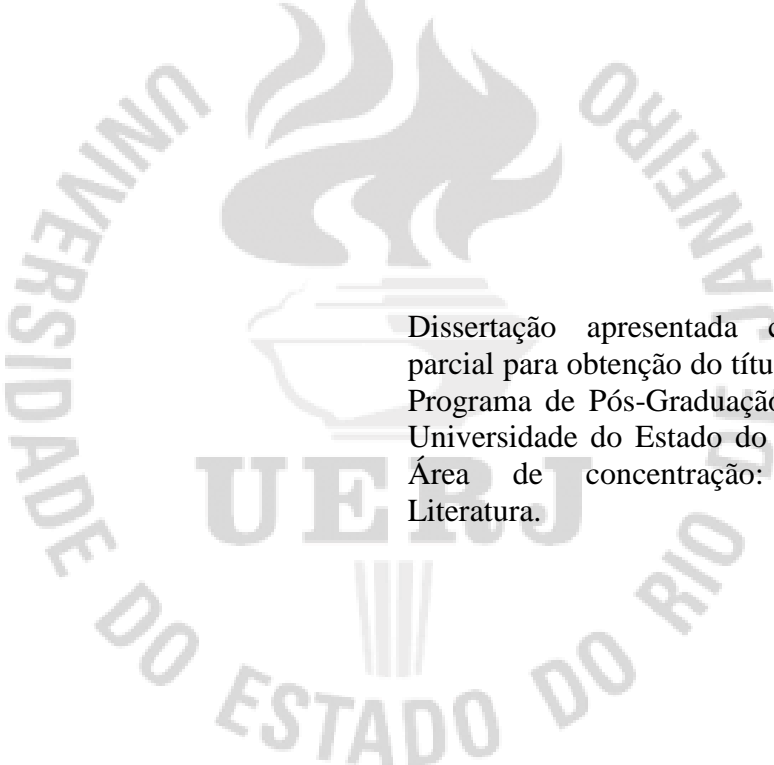
Emily Brontë's defense of women as writers in *Wuthering Heights*

Rio de Janeiro

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Andreza Ferreira Silva

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Dissertação apresentada como requisito parcial para obtenção do título de Mestre, ao Programa de Pós-Graduação em Letras, da Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro. Área de concentração: Estudos de Literatura.

Orientadora Prof^a. Dra. Adriana de Souza Jordão Gonçalves

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RESUMO

SILVA, Andreza Ferreira. *Emily Brontë e sua defesa das mulheres como escritoras em “O morro dos ventos uivantes”*. 2022. 80 f. Dissertação (Mestrado em Letras) - Instituto de Letras, Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro, Rio de Janeiro, 2022.

O presente trabalho pretende demonstrar como Emily Brontë elaborou uma defesa das mulheres como escritoras e validou a escrita como parte da sua identidade em *O Morro dos Ventos Uivantes*. Quando o romance foi publicado, em 1848, a Era Vitoriana já havia transformado a vida na Inglaterra e no mundo permanentemente. Tal Era impôs sólidas barreiras às mulheres que desejavam criar uma narrativa original, quer como escritoras ou como autoridades em suas próprias vidas. Uma das maiores influências do Vitorianismo na vida das mulheres foi o símbolo do anjo do lar: uma dama perfeitamente pura e bem-comportada que abraça completamente a vida doméstica enquanto abdica de outros papéis. Como um desafio a esse cenário, as quatro narradoras de *O Morro dos Ventos Uivantes* desviam do padrão comportamental vitoriano do gênero feminino e corajosamente aparecem como protagonistas e autoridades. Ainda, tal transgressão aparece dentro de um romance cuja protagonista é uma mulher que desafiou o patriarcado e trouxe a queda deste dentro do círculo social que ocupava. Neste trabalho, eu conduzo uma leitura atenta e observo os recursos literários que Emily Brontë empregou para criar personagens mulheres que fugiam às normas e contaram suas histórias com suas próprias palavras. Adicionalmente, argumento, baseada na ideologia doméstica vitoriana e nas críticas que *O Morro dos Ventos Uivantes* recebeu, que a posição de Emily Brontë, como autora de uma obra tão transgressora, também consiste de um desafio à tradição. Logo, reconheço que a obra prima de Emily Brontë é um exemplo da literatura feita por mulheres que tem desafiado a tradição por quase dois séculos.

Palavras-chave: Emily Brontë. O morro dos ventos uivantes. Era Vitoriana. Narrativa.

ABSTRACT

SILVA, Andreza Ferreira. *Emily Brontë's defense of women as writers in "Wuthering heights"*. 2022. 80 f. Dissertação (Mestrado em Letras) - Instituto de Letras, Universidade do Estado do Rio de Janeiro, Rio de Janeiro, 2022.

The present work demonstrates how Emily Brontë elaborated a defense and validated women as writers and as storytellers in *Wuthering Heights*. When the novel was published, in 1848, the Victorian Era had already transformed life in England and in the world permanently. Those times posed solid barriers to the women who wanted to create an original narrative, whether as a writer or master of their own life. One of the most significant influences of Victorianism in the life of women was the symbol of the angel in the house: a perfect pure and well-behaved lady who would embrace completely domestic life and abdicate other roles. As a challenge to this scenario, *Wuthering Heights* features four narrators who deviate from the commonplace of the female gender, and bravely appear as protagonists and authorities. Moreover, it happens inside a novel whose protagonist is a woman who challenged patriarchy and brought its fall inside the social circle she occupied. In this work, I conduct a close reading of the mechanisms Emily Brontë used to create female characters that escaped the norms and told a story in their own words. Additionally, I argue, based on the domestic ideology and criticism that *Wuthering Heights* received that her own position as a writer in the Victorian society also consisted of a defiance itself. In sum, it must be acknowledged that the masterpiece of Emily Brontë serves as an example of a literary work that has challenged gender standards for decades.

Keywords: Emily Brontë. *Wuthering heights*. Victorian Age. Narrative.

SUMÁRIO

	FIRST IDEAS.....	7
1	HISTORICAL FRAMEWORK.....	8
1.1	Female Gender Standards throughout the Ages.....	8
1.2	Women Writers in England.....	11
1.3	Brontë Sisters	19
1.4	Feminism and <i>Wuthering Heights</i>.....	31
2	WOMEN AS NARRATORS IN <i>WUTHERING HEIGHTS</i>.....	33
2.1	Cathy Earnshaw	36
2.2	Ellen Dean.....	47
2.3	Isabella Linton.....	54
2.4	Catherine Linton.....	62
	FINAL IDEAS.....	73
	REFERENCES.....	77

FIRST IDEAS

The present work is a study of *Wuthering Heights* that focuses on unraveling the meaning of the choices Emily Brontë made regarding the narrators of her only novel. Hereby, I have investigated this meaning by conducting a detailed close reading alongside a study of historical aspects. After my investigation, I argue that *Wuthering Heights* has in its pages a defense of women as writers. In other words, I believe that Emily Brontë has created in her novel a validation that writing and telling stories could integrate the life of women.

In the next chapter, I present a historical framework with the aspects I considered while conducting my close reading. Those historical aspects guided the standpoint I chose to conduct my study of the novel. It is important to comprehend the difficulties that women faced whenever they attempted to live from their pen or to free themselves from the tradition that has conditioned them to the domestic sphere. Additionally, I depict how the Brontë sisters were raised in an uncommon way for Victorian standards and how the young girls grew close to books and familiar to exercising their creativity and writing. Also, the feminist aspects of *Wuthering Heights* are discussed regarding the existence of Feminism as an idea in the 19th century and the rediscovery of the novel by Feminist researchers during the second wave of Feminism as a political movement. Therefore, once the needed historical background of women writers in the 19th century is detailed, I conduct the study on the narrative of *Wuthering Heights*.

Subsequently, the third chapter presents the close reading I have conducted. In this chapter, I demonstrate how Emily Brontë crafted the narrators in *Wuthering Heights*. All the narrators in *Wuthering Heights* are characters. I selected the four women narrators, Cathy Earnshaw, Catherine Linton, Ellen Dean, and Isabella Linton, to have their words studied throughout the novel.

The close reading alongside the historical framework both reveal how Emily Brontë elaborated a defense of women as writers in her only novel. The Brontë sisters were aware of how their gender would not favor their careers as writers and Emily, as it will be shown, had in creating stories through writing the biggest part of her life. Writing, back in the 19th century, was not considered a part of the female essential identity but Emily, seeing it in herself and her sisters, was aware of how accomplished as a storyteller a woman may be, and created four unforgettable narrators as evidence.

1 HISTORICAL FRAMEWORK

1.1 Female Gender Standards throughout the Ages

From times when the term literature had not even been coined, gender inequality has placed extra challenges for women to become writers. Evidence demonstrating how men have been hegemonic are plenty available if one returns as early as Classic times. Fortunately, women have long resisted those dynamics and left proofs of their acts to history. Virginia Woolf (2019[1928]), in *A Room of One's Own*, depicts those barriers, as lack of money and adequate space for writing, for women since the 16th century. In the present work, I demonstrate how Emily Brontë resisted the pressures of the Victorian society upon women through her only novel, *Wuthering Heights*. More than that, my belief is that her whole text is a well-crafted argument in favor of women as writers and storytellers.

The Brontë family, mostly the sisters, undoubtedly represent protofeminist ideas that became stronger in the 19th century and, eventually, gave birth to the Feminist movement in the early 20th century. During times when women were expected to be the basis of domestic life, silently and exclusively, the existence of the Brontë sisters and their works argue for different identities. Through the study of *Wuthering Heights*, I expect to show that Emily's resistance was based on her female characters and also on the fact that Emily, herself, was a writer and a storyteller who offered transgression to the Victorian tradition. The silencing of women in the European history is seen, for example, in the limited access women had to education and in popular manuals of conduct.

In medieval Europe, for instance, education was a privilege of certain women only, and rarely for the purpose of allowing them any type of independence or autonomy:

Castle schools, college church schools, village schools, apprenticeships, and universities provided learning opportunities, as did teaching offered in the home [...]. Although only a small segment of the female population was formally schooled. [...] The usual convent curriculum consisted of Latin reading and writing, religion, embroidery [...] Music was of great importance because chants and choir songs were sung to glorify God. [...] Women could perform medical services in the absence of doctors. (KERSEY, 1980, p. 188)

Popular ideas that tied women to the domestic sphere would find ways to live and last through manuals of conduct, many of which written by men. Among their guidelines, these manuals have in common the fact that education for women was never a priority. They would, even, motivate negative judgement on women who would approach the crafting of writing

and translation. The control of those manuals extended its coverage even to the sphere of conversation — condemning the expression of women in social occasions. On *The Education of a Christian Woman*, for example, a manual released by Juan Luis Vives in the early modernity, he positions himself clearly against women’s talking and even thinking:

But I should not wish any woman to be ignorant of the skills of working with the hands, not even a princess or a queen. What could she do better than this when free of all the household tasks? She will converse with men, I suppose, or other women. About what? Is she to talk forever? Will she never keep quiet? Perhaps she will think. About what? A woman's thoughts are swift and generally unsettled, roving without direction, and I know not where her instability will lead her. (VIVES, 2000 [1523], p. 90)

In the following years, thinking remained an undesired activity for women. The Victorian Ages also had their share of manuals of conduct that sought to keep women inside the domestic sphere. For instance, in *The Women of England, Their Social Duties and Domestic Habits*, Sarah Stickney Ellis argues that women with highly moral values should stay at home and guarantee the next generation to be well-educated (ELLIS, 1840, p. 20-21).

I argue that these barriers and difficulties turn every women writer in history into a subject: someone who has escaped the patriarchal dynamics that silence women while seeking to write her own story. The history of any woman who has become a writer displays the struggle she has been through at some point.

In the early 20th century, Virginia Woolf (2019[1928]) gave a lecture which eventually was turned into the long essay *A Room of One’s Own*. From this essay, comes the popular quote “A woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction”. In it, Woolf discusses different issues regarding women and writing, and depicts barriers which range from lack of money and appropriate space for writing to the overwhelming demands of domestic life. She imagines a hypothetical sister for Shakespeare, as much talented as he was, and while building her thesis, Woolf demonstrates how she does not believe women are less gifted than men regarding the ability to create literature. The issues that women have faced to become writers are purely social. For the present study, it is important to depict, firstly, what Woolf explains about material circumstances and, secondly, what she has to say about Aphra Behn, Jane Austen, and the 19th century writers; and, finally, the importance of the novel for women and writing.

Regarding material circumstances, Woolf (2019[1928]) explains that fiction is not the product of genius, but of material circumstances. Therefore, the lack of education, support, and opportunity, would have buried many women writers before they had the chance to start

their careers. The absence of those would not provide an important element to write fiction which, according to Woolf (2019[1928]), is the freedom of mind. Also, daily interruptions and caring for their children of managing household would make it impossible for a woman to have barely thirty minutes for themselves.

Additionally, she mentions the 19th century writers as the Brontës, who have hidden their identities under male pseudonyms to fit a tradition that refused letting them integrate it. In relation to the struggles these women faced, Woolf details and declares:

It is fairly evident that even in the nineteenth century a woman was not encouraged to be an artist. On the contrary, she was snubbed, slapped, lectured and exhorted. Her mind must have been strained and her vitality lowered by need of opposing this, disproving that. For here again we come within range of that very interesting and obscure masculine complex which has had so much influence upon the women's movement; that deep-seated desire, not so much that she shall be inferior as he will be superior, which plants him wherever one looks, not only in front of the arts, but barring the way to politics too, even when the risk to himself seems infinitesimal and the suppliant humble and devoted. (WOOLF, 2009 [1928], p.50)

Regarding the novel, Woolf explains that so many women have written novels due to its recent birth. The novel did not have a well-established tradition in the 19th century, which gave women enough space to create their own tradition:

There is no reason to think that the form of the epic or of the poetic play suit a woman any more than the sentence suits her. But all the older forms of literature were hardened and set by the time she became a writer. The novel alone was young enough to be soft in her hands. (WOOLF, 2019 [1928], p.70)

According to Woolf, women are inheritors and owe to those who have attempted to write and live from their pen before them. She argues that

Without those forerunners, Jane Austen and the Brontës and George Eliot could no more have written than Shakespeare could have written without Marlowe, or Marlowe without Chaucer, or Chaucer without those forgotten poets who paved the ways and tamed the natural savagery of the tongue. For masterpieces are not single and solitary births; they are the outcome of many years of thinking in common, of thinking by the body of the people, so that the experience of the mass is behind the single voice [...] All women together ought to let flowers fall upon the tomb of Aphra Behn, which is, most scandalously but rather appropriately, in Westminster Abbey, for it was she who earned them the right to speak their minds. (WOOLF, 2019 [1928], p.59)

Inside this tradition, Emily Brontë creates a milestone for novels in the form of *Wuthering Heights*, and her four narrators and their voices which contemplate the private sphere demonstrate how she is mastering the intimacy of the novel.

During the Victorian age, the limited space for women who wanted to write and, also, the fear of reject led the Brontës to the adoption of pseudonyms. Despite all challenges, the Brontë sisters managed to face censorship and the conventions of their times, and left a heritage of beautiful transgressive works.

In 1847, when Victorianism had ascended and transformed life in England and in the world permanently, Emily Brontë, by then, a young woman who inhabited the countryside, wrote a novel that would challenge the main standards of female identity of her time. *Wuthering Heights* had characters who deconstructed all the Victorian morality and women who escaped the popular concept of angel in the house. The challenge Emily represented to the Victorian society also lied on the fact she made herself a woman who tells stories and who created a novel straightforwardly daunting.

In this work, I expose the silencing dynamics of the Victorian Age, when Emily wrote *Wuthering Heights*. In other words, I wish to demonstrate the struggles a woman who lived in Victorian times would face in her path to becoming a writer and how the Brontë family overcame them. Also, I depict how Emily elaborated the women in the novel as narrators, considering to the study both Catherines, mother and daughter, Isabella Linton, and Ellen Dean. My assumption is that these women dominate the narrative both as characters and narrators. Their actions and words determine the plot, its development, and the final story that is told before the eyes of an outsider.

1.2 Women Writers in England

The several meanings of being a woman in England during the 19th century need to be discussed before I demonstrate how Emily Brontë elaborated a defense of women as narrators in her masterpiece. It is necessary to understand that the identity of a writer for women needed to be defended. The roles expected to be performed by them must be displayed, and this shall be accomplished by an overview of domestic ideology and Victorian law.

When *Wuthering Heights* was published, in 1847, it was the beginning of the mid-Victorian period. Queen Victoria had already established herself as a figure who would be associated with the greatest transformations England had ever seen in its history. Altogether, she already consisted of a female role-model:

In part Victoria herself encouraged her own identification with the qualities we associate with the adjective—earnestness, moral responsibility, domestic propriety. As a young wife, as the mother of nine children, and as the black-garbed Widow of Windsor in the forty years after her husband's death in 1861, Victoria represented the domestic fidelities her citizens embraced. (GREENBLAT, 2016, p. 980)

The characteristics of Queen Victoria demonstrate who was the ideal Victorian woman: one who would be guided by moral and religious values; and dedicated to the domestic sphere. The women who were restricted to the domestic sphere are represented in the following quote which explains the literary origin of the term angel in the house: “the title of Coventry Patmore's immensely popular poem *The Angel in the House* (1854—62), this concept of womanhood stressed woman's purity and selflessness” (GREENBLAT, 2016, p.992). During all the Victorian Age, the attempts of keeping women limited to their home and family were intense and persistent.

The Victorian laws were extremely more favorable to men and also worked to keep women in the domestic sphere. Women still did not have freedom to vote or engage in politics; neither to divorce, as explained in the excerpt below:

While men could divorce their wives for adultery, wives could divorce their husbands only if adultery were combined with cruelty, bigamy, incest, or bestiality. Educational and employment opportunities for women were limited. These inequities stimulated a spirited debate about women's roles known as the "Woman Question." Some of the social changes that such discussion helped foster eventually affected the lives of all, or many, of the country's female population. (GREENBLAT, 2016, p.992)

Prior to the start of Feminism as a movement and its battles against gender inequality, the women who lived in the 19th century saw a society where men were astonishingly more favored regarding legal rights. Law kept women subjugated to male control.

The existence of these laws is partially explained by the Victorian domestic ideology which, in the words of Ben Griffin, “sought [...] the total subordination of women to their husbands” (GRIFFIN, 2012, p.45). Griffin explains that this subordination aimed at guaranteeing that women would maintain the domestic sphere that men needed. For Victorian men, being head of a household was essential for masculine status and, additionally, home was where men believed they would find the refuge that would give them the means to prosper (GRIFFIN, 2012, p.40). The role expected from women was creating and maintaining this domestic environment for their families. According to Griffin, the Victorian society was concerned that if women were granted more rights or got involved in politics, it would divide

their attention and bring problems to the Victorian homes. In other words, men needed to keep women at home so their privileged masculine status could keep existing.

There are three Victorian laws that draw a portrait of the civil rights of women during the Victorian age: the Divorce Act, the Married Women's Property Bills, and the Contagious Diseases Acts. The first two represent rights which were adopted after much resistance from society. The third one, before abolished, demonstrates how strong the power of the state over women's body was even when they were not married. In the following excerpt, Griffin summarizes the progress of laws for women in the 19th century:

Married women were given the right to own property in two instalments in 1870 and 1882 and the law relating to child custody was changed in women's favour in 1873 and 1886. An English divorce court was created in 1857 and a string of reforms followed giving women greater legal redress against violent husbands and helping them to obtain maintenance from negligent or abusive spouses. The Contagious Diseases Acts were suspended in 1883 and repealed in 1886. Women still could not vote in parliamentary elections by 1900, but they had been given the right to vote in a range of local elections and to sit on a number of elected local government bodies. In the space of little more than thirty years legal and political privileges that had underpinned male power for centuries were either swept away or substantially undermined. (GRIFFIN, 2012, p. 5)

The Divorce Act and the Married Women's Property Bills, once established, allowed, respectively, women to divorce and to inherit properties and wills. Still, there were limitations. Griffin (2012) explains that divorce was allowed in extreme conditions only, and that women would not be able to keep their children. Regarding properties, only in 1935, according to Griffin (2012), the rights to own property became the same for men and women. The Contagious Diseases Acts represented the end of an atrocity where women could, in Griffin's words, "be subjected to a forcible medical examination and confined to a hospital for treatment against her will" (GRIFFIN, 2012, p. 5). For that, it was only necessary the suspicion that a woman was a prostitute".

The Victorian society's domestic ideology, therefore, reinforced to women that their existence in the domestic sphere was inherent to their identity. The comprehension of how laws favored men and also supported the domestic ideology helps comprehending why, for instance, Elizabeth Gaskell, who authors Charlotte Brontë's biography, would be concerned regarding her duties as a wife and mother and why Charlotte Brontë had to write the Biographical Notice for *Wuthering Heights* and *Agnes Grey* in an attempt to care for the reputation of her family. Clearly, a novel as *Wuthering Heights* does not maintain the domestic ideology. In her text, Emily Brontë demonstrates that the identity of women may

develop in untraditional ways.

Greenblat (2016) highlights that, in the 19th century, women were major figures in literature for the first time:

From the beginning of the nineteenth century, the novel was more than a fertile medium for the portrayal of women; women writers were, for the first time, not figures on the margins but major authors. Jane Austen, the Brontës, Elizabeth Gaskell, George Eliot—all helped define the genre. (GREENBLAT, 2016, p.994)

Prior to these women writers in the Victorian age, others before them were already facing the struggle of trying to become writers and earn something from their work.

According to the Forbes magazine, J.K. Rowling, mostly known for writing the Harry Potter saga, is, currently, the second highest-paid author in the world¹. This milestone where a woman can reach outstanding success and profit from her literary creations was only achieved after much had been done by women who came before. Like the Brontë sisters in the 19th century, J.K. also omitted her gender from her pen name — by using her initials — to avoid the consequences of prejudice against books written by women upon her work. It is safe to state that every woman writer in the history has faced struggles due to gender inequality in their career at some point. Those moments are commonly highlighted in the biographies of women writers. Emily Brontë and her sister had their share. Their history leaves the 19th century with great examples of women who dodged gender inequality, escaped traditional gender roles, and became writers despite the odds. Times before the Victorian age, however, also had their share of examples.

In medieval times, Christine de Pizan (1364–1430) wrote *The Book of the City of the Ladies* and is known as the first woman that survived exclusively from her pen (Brown-Grant: 1999). From her pen, different types of works were created:

She produced many works across a wide range of genres: from interventions in literary debates to courtesy manuals, from lyric poetry to treatises on chivalry, and from biographies of kings to books of pious devotion. (BROWN-GRANT, 1999, p. 24)

The Book of the City of the Ladies is her best-known work, which became popular for the bridge which it establishes with the first Feminist ideas. De Pizan wrote a defense of women against misogynist ideas.

In times pervaded by, in the words of Brown-Grant (1999), *literary misogyny*, De

¹ Available at <https://www.forbes.com/profile/jk-rowling/?sh=398949683aeb>. Last consulted on November 6th, 2022.

Pizan highlighted and praised women's values, achievements and qualities. In this book, three characters, personified virtues, come and

They inform Christine that she has been chosen by God to write a book which will refute, point by point, the misogynists' accusations against womankind. This book will be like a city, one which is designed to house virtuous ladies and to protect them from anti feminist attack. (BROWN-GRANT, 1999, p. 24)

Each virtue is one of three parts which the book is divided in. In these parts, Christine de Pizan narrates stories of women who became saints, stories of Christian devotion and courage, and stories of women who are known for their creativity.

Brown-Grant (1999) reminds the reader, however, that De Pizan did reinforce that the female role should be restricted to that of a mother and wife. This acknowledgement, Brown-Grant (1999) argues, should not obscure the fact that Christine de Pizan wrote a book that did not only refute misogynist thinking, but also reminded women and the society of their value in different achievements, even if they were not transgressive at all.

Christine de Pizan was pioneering when it comes to living from their pen. In England, two women known for their success in living from the products of their writing were, in chronological order, Aphra Behn and Jane Austen. Their earnings were not huge. Still, considering their historical backgrounds and limitations, their achievements were notably outstanding and not a pattern seen in other women writers contemporary to them both.

According to Todd ²(2004), a scholar, novelist, and also known for writing biographies of women writers, Aphra Behn, deceased in 1689, is a woman with literary and sociological importance for being the first professional woman writer. Behn was able to write different types of texts, as Todd explains: "In her own period Behn was held to be a considerable author, famous as a playwright, propagandist poet and panegyrist, novelist, and translator" (TODD, 2004).

Similarly to what would happen to the Brontës in the 19th century, Aphra Behn had her writings labeled as unfeminine and faced the due challenge which came from this fact. In Todd's words,

The eighteenth-century emphasis on femininity brought a demand that the many women writers now entering the market place should write in a feminine style and confine themselves to modest subject matter [...] Behn was most often damned for

² More about Janet Todd may be found at <https://www.janettodd.co.uk/home/about/>. Last consulted on November 6th, 2022.

monstrously writing like men; she was castigated as personally unfeminine by major authors such as Pope, Johnson, and Richardson. (TODD, 2004)

The twentieth century rediscovery gave Aphra Behn the due recognition (TODD, 2004). According to Todd, she is a “major force in the development of the early British novel”. Also, a women writer who was able to influence politics and the British national culture. Another great influential writer was Jane Austen.

In *A Room of One's Own*, Woolf (2019 [1928]) declares that every women owe Aphra Behn the right to speak their minds and the possibility to live from their pen. Woolf details:

Mrs Behn was a middle-class woman with all the plebeian virtues of humour, vitality and courage; a woman forced by the death of her husband and some unfortunate adventures of her own to make her living by her wits. She had to work on equal terms with men. She made, by working very hard, enough to live on. (WOOLF, 2019 [1928], p.58)

The eight novels — two of which were left unfinished when she died — Jane Austen wrote in her lifetime persist famous in current times and have been adapted in different formats for both television and cinema. Her current popularity is much due to the Feminist movement in the 20th century that, as already explained in this work, rediscovered several women writers. Marilyn Butler explains that in this process of rediscovering, Austen became acclaimed, for the first time, for being “perceived as part of a wave of late-eighteenth-century women writers who addressed a growing readership of women” (BUTLER³, 2010). In other words, women and their lives and feelings were central in the works of Jane Austen.

Currently, it is acknowledged that Jane Austen

emerged between 1870 and 1960 as a social critic, a moralist, an incomparable artist, and latterly a popular and universal writer. Today her novels are firm favourites among book buyers and library users and feature prominently in polls of favourite fiction, with a special attachment to *Pride and Prejudice*. (BUTLER, 2010)

Her importance for literature lies in having women and their issues in the center of her narratives, for her popularity and her success as a writer. Jane Austen is widely popular until nowadays and, also, known and respected for the financial profit she gained from her work.

It is said that Jane Austen dealt herself with her publishers and the business of publishing her works. Butler explains that

³ Marilyn Butler, who died in 2014, was a Professor of English Literature at Cambridge. More details on her life and academic life may be found at <https://www.lrb.co.uk/contributors/marilyn-butler>. Last consulted on November 6th, 2022.

Jane Austen dealt directly and firmly with her two publishers, Thomas Egerton and John Murray, complained when they were dilatory, and took a close interest in the progress of each of her publications, the costs of printing and paper (for which she was liable), and the copyrights and subsequent editions. She was not ashamed of meaning to make money. (BUTLER, 2010)

Although, still according to Butler (2010), her earnings were not enough for her to completely earn her living, Jane Austen represents a milestone in the history of women writers worldwide.

In early Victorian times, Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley published *Frankenstein* at age eighteen. Still nowadays, she is mostly known for this masterpiece, but her literary achievements were not limited to this novel only. According to Bennett (2004), “Mary Shelley published several dozen reviews, short-stories, and poems, as well as some of P. B. Shelley's works, in prominent London journals and the then popular annuals.”

One of the issues which Mary Shelley had to face before receiving the credit and acknowledgement for *Frankenstein* was that her work was firstly attributed to her husband, Percy Shelley (BENNETT⁴, 2004). When it happened, the criticism obtained by the novel, according to Bennett, revolved around its political aspects and also on the scientific, industrial and economic issues that were portrayed throughout the narrative. Bennett explains that

Once it was discovered that its author was a woman, however, critics seldom directly addressed the novel's politics, considered a ‘male topic’. Like P. B. Shelley and other English Romantics, Mary Shelley utilized her own experiences to interpret society, revered nature as a source of renewal, and was committed to public and domestic reform based on democratic principles, education, and expansive love. But the traditional bias against intellectual women caused most contemporary reviewers to evaluate her novels largely as romances, although the fervent animus of some reviews may have resulted from the unspoken belief that her work would be dangerous to the status quo. The power and imagination of her writing was recognized by various commentators with the dubious compliment that she had a ‘masculine mind’. (BENNETT, 2004)

Biases against works by women were already expected in the time the Brontës were producing their works. In a letter received by Charlotte Brontë, she is told by Robert Southey, whom she demanded comment from for the work of hers and her sisters’, that “Literature cannot be the business of a woman’s life”.

⁴ Betty T. Bennett was an American professor of Literature who taught at American University and was recognized as an authority in the life of Mary Wollstonecraft Shelley. Further information on her career may be found at <https://www.washingtonpost.com/archive/local/2006/08/24/au-dean-professor-betty-bennett-71/1d906503-d614-4502-9710-c86c6b1581f9/>. Last consulted on November 6th 2022.

Regarding the pseudonyms, Gaskell quotes the Biographical Notice of her sisters prefixed to *Wuthering Heights* and *Agnes Grey*:

We agreed to arrange a small selection of our poems, and, if possible, get them printed. Averse to personal publicity, we veiled our own names under those of Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell; the ambiguous choice being dictated by a sort of conscientious scruple at assuming ourselves women, because — without at the time suspecting that our mode of writing and thinking was not what is called “feminine,” — we had a vague impression that authoresses are liable to be looked on with prejudice. (BRONTË, 2020 [1850], p.310)

Surely, this letter reveals one of the motivations which made the three Brontë sisters adopt pseudonyms for publishing their novels and poems. Adding to the awareness of traditional gender roles, they knew how transgressive their works were. Before them, Jane Austen also chose not to reveal her gender. According to Buzwell,

Jane Austen’s first published novel, *Sense and Sensibility* (1811), appeared with the tag ‘By a Lady’. Her next, *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), appeared with the line ‘By the author of “Sense and Sensibility”’. Viewed from a 21st-century perspective it is deeply poignant to reflect that Jane Austen – one of our most loved and acclaimed authors – never saw her name on the title page of one of her books. (BUZWELL, 2020)

The prejudice which turned writing into something considered unladylike is certainly argued against in *Wuthering Heights* where every one of the main women characters, as I will demonstrate, narrates the novel or uses the craft of narrative to manipulate events in their lives. The defense of women as writers was necessary due to the prejudices caused by the domestic ideology. According to Buzwell,

the writing of fiction for money, was seen as a most unladylike activity. Unseemly parallels with prostitution arose regarding the notion of women writing novels which were then sold to anyone willing to pay. Derogatory terms such as ‘female quill-driver’ were common. Women from well-to-do backgrounds were not expected to pursue a career at all but rather to devote their efforts to making a good marriage. (BUZWELL, 2020).

The Victorian society posed several challenges for any woman who planned to write. As it has been discussed, for women, writing represented an escape from domestic roles and the standard of the angel in the house. Fortunately, the talented Emily Brontë was lucky enough for having been born in a family which had writing as part of the daily activities.

1.3 Brontë Sisters

The Victorian age was a time when values related to the upbringing of a strong-rooted traditional family were the most cherished. In the domestic sphere, women had their worth defined by having a husband, the keeping of a home and raising of children. The Brontë family, however, also had singular values of their own. Inspired particularly by their father, the six Brontë children grew up close to knowledge and art. Also, their household was a place where their imagination could exist freely. Their biographies and registers prove that all Brontë children were considered brilliant by their father and the family acquaintances. The ones who reached the adult age, Branwell, Charlotte, Anne, and Emily herself, were all writers and created stories of her own. The three sisters wrote some of the most important and read works of British literature in the canon. The Brontë's story reveals how their upbringing as artists happened and how Emily witnessed hers and her sisters' formation as artists and storytellers. In this work, I argue that *Wuthering Heights* is a defense of the voice of women. The story of the Brontë family proves Emily witnessed the ability of women to tell stories through her sisters and herself. Before the eyes of the young Emily, she saw an identity that was not considered the most appropriate or even natural, in essentialist ideas, to women, but that existed strongly.

The patriarchal Victorian society did not consider writing naturally part of the female nature. Nowadays, arguably, women are still working towards the construction of a strong and equally respected identity as writers. Inside academia, for instance, women are still underrepresented and facing extra challenges due to gender disparity when seeking to be respected as researchers⁵. As already demonstrated, Victorian society was not welcoming and gentle to women writers, and the contemporary society still is not. For Victorian women, studying and becoming published writers was possible only after hard with hard and unfair judgments on these writers' morals and skills. Studying the dynamics of the Brontë family and how they became artists, therefore, reveals arguments which invalidate such essentialist traditional assumptions.

⁵ As argued by Nicolo Romano in an article for the academic journal Nature. Available at <https://www.nature.com/articles/d43978-021-00037-2>. Last consulted on November 6th, 2022.

Emily Brontë's construction as a writer started in the early days of her life, thanks to the influence of her father, a man who subsisted by the success of his intellect, and of her older sisters.

In 1857, Elizabeth Gaskell, a woman novelist who was contemporary to the Brontës, published the biography entitled *The Life of Charlotte Brontë*. This biography was the first full-length biography of a woman novelist by another woman novelist (JAY, 1997). Patrick Brontë himself, in approval of the work of Gaskell, who was a close friend to his deceased daughter Charlotte, foresaw that, in his own words, this work "would be in the first rank of biographies until the end of times". Gaskell conducted a careful study of Charlotte's life and presents detailed information on Haworth, the origins of her parents, Patrick and Maria Brontë, and on her relationship to her siblings.

Gaskell, according to Jay (1997), intended to honor the reputation of Charlotte Brontë's and save hers. Being a Victorian woman, the author of the biography would be concerned, in her own word, to "honour her (Charlotte) as a woman, separate from her character as an authoress" (GASKELL, 1997 [1857], p.xiii). Throughout the work, Gaskell demonstrates how writing is not considered to be under the scope and responsibilities of being a woman. More than once, she states the belief of the two things being different and separate of each other. In the words of Gaskell and the letters she found during her research and study of Charlotte's life, it is found evidence of how the Brontë family constructed themselves as writers in their domestic sphere, not being able to abandon the traditional female occupations as cooking and cleaning.

Before reading Gaskell's text about the Brontës, however, it is important to comprehend who Elizabeth Gaskell was and some of decisions she would make to, as she desired, honour the memory of Charlotte Brontë. Defining the point of view from which Gaskell writes widens the interpretation of the content of the biography that is to be seen.

First, as a novelist, Elizabeth Gaskell tends to conform to patriarchal ideologies. According to Jay, "her fictional plots had conformed to the patriarchal ideology of the period by ultimately subjugating the lives of their heroines to the approved norms of familial duty and marriage" (JAY, 1997, p.xviii). The preservation of the reputation of both her own and Charlotte Brontë's as dignified women was a priority for Gaskell once, as mentioned before in this work, it was not expected that women would become writers. It was not easily taken as part of their identity.

Secondly, regarding Anne and Emily, Gaskell represents Charlotte as a sister that would sacrifice for the other two. Under the point of view in the biography, “Charlotte’s surviving sisters, Emily and Anne, occupy positions at either end of the spectrum of behavior to which Charlotte’s conflict of duty and desire inclined her” (JAY, 1997, p. xix). Emily, in the words of Gaskell “emerges as a woman of inviolably independent spirit, [...] impenetrable to friendly advice” (JAY, 1997, p. xx). Gaskell also mentions how Emily’s behavior tends to be passionate and suggests that, after her passing, she would be “dispatched to a mistily pagan afterlife” (GASKELL, 1997 [1857], p.xxi). Meanwhile, Anne becomes a portrait of gentleness and naivety who did not want to bother anybody (GASKELL, 1997 [1857], p.xxi). Gaskell was committed in writing a text that would not challenge the Victorian standards but, at the same time, would favor the memory of Charlotte Brontë. Despite that fact, the challenging formation of women as writers can still be identified in the pages of *The Life of Charlotte Brontë*.

In the third chapter of the biography, once Gaskell has already described Haworth and its people, she describes the origins of the Brontës: the early life of Patrick Brontë, his marriage to Maria Branwell, her death, and the beginning of his life and raising of his children. In this portrait, it is seen how the children were raised among books and grew to become writers. Patrick Brontë, the father of the Brontë children, opened a public school at the age of sixteen. According to Gaskell, this is how he deviated from the family, that survived by agricultural means. Patrick Brontë decided he would live by the labour of his brain (GASKELL, 1997 [1857], p. 32).

Regarding Charlotte Brontë’s imagination, Gaskell argues that “Miss Brontë, whose strong mind and vivid imagination must have received their first impressions either from the servants [...] or from Mr. Brontë” (GASKELL, 1997 [1857], p.34). Arguably, the Brontë children are known to have dedicated themselves to literature since childhood. Their imagination being fed by their father’s books and toys. Mostly known is a collection of toy soldiers which belonged to Branwell Brontë:

Two of the early manuscripts that captured Gaskell’s attention were ‘History of the year’ (1829) and ‘Tales of the Islanders’. Together they tell and retell the genesis of the ‘Brontë plays’ — the now-famous story of the Reverend Patrick Brontë’s birthday gift to his 12-year-old son Branwell of a box of twelve wooden toy soldiers, in June 1829. (ALEXANDER, 2010, p.xiv)

The above reference mentions the beginning of the imagination of the Brontë children: the stories of war and politics created for the toy soldiers set.

Gaskell explains how the way the Brontë children were raised and the influence from their father defined who they were. In her words, Patrick Brontë gave their children an

unconventional Victorian childhood[...] “he encouraged them to roam freely on the moors, at first in the care of a servant, and allowed them to read whatever they liked from his bookshelves. He gave them basic lessons in literacy, geography, history, and mathematics, and even managed despite his poor clergy salary to pay for art and music lessons by the best teachers in the district. He taught Branwell the classics and their aunt endeavoured to train the girls in the female accomplishment of sewing. But it was their father’s passion for poetry and the classics, his own early indescribable pleasure’ in writing, his enthusiasm for military and literary heroes of the day, for politics and military campaigns, and his love of nature, that provided the Brontës with a rich, if eclectic, imaginative life. (GASKELL, 1997 [1857], p. xv)

The imaginative Brontës were admired by their family and other acquaintances due to their achievements. Gaskell describes the children through the standpoint of others: “Maria read the newspapers, and reported intelligence to her young sisters[...] The servants often said that they had never seen such a clever little child (as Charlotte)” (GASKELL, 1997 [1857], p.46). Maria and Charlotte are described as clever children. From their father, Gaskell quotes a letter, where he says:

When mere children, as soon as they could read and write, Charlotte and her brother and sisters used to invent and act little plays of their own [...] I frequently thought that I discovered signs of rising talent, which I had seldom or never before seen in any of their age. (GASKELL, 1997 [1857], p.47)

Their exceptionality would be proven in the future by their development as great writers.

The Brontë siblings have started writing from an early age in their lives. The literary production of their youth was found by Elizabeth Gaskell while she conducted her research to write Charlotte’s biography. Studying their juvenilia is important to comprehend the debut of the artistic life of the writer of *Wuthering Heights*. The juvenilia of the Brontë siblings the *Tales of Glass Town, Angria, and Gondal*, and regarding it, it is known that:

The early volumes of juvenilia were imitations of adult publications in all except size: they were initially designed the size of large postage stamps for the 12-inch toy soldiers and written in minuscule script to represent print. (ALEXANDER, 2010, p.xviii)

Writing was a hobby the family cultivated together. Gaskell quote a letter of Patrick Brontë when he explains that

As parsonage children they had little need to look beyond their family circle for friendship and entertainment. Close in age, intelligence and active, they naturally formed what their father called ‘a little society amongst themselves’. (GASKELL, 1997 [1857], p. xv)

Their preferences regarding writing were not identical, though. Regarding the writing preferences of Branwell and Emily, it is revealed that

their chief characters are present in stories which make it clear that they had their own more realistic preferences for Yorkshire models of setting and character [...] Branwell and Emily [...] prefer the cut and thrust of politics and war, and the mundane Yorkshire landscape of moorland, factories, and canals rather than love affairs, palaces, and exotic settings. (ALEXANDER, 2010, p. xix- xxi)

The early writings of the Brontës are greatly valued as historical documents of important historical figures as the Brontë sisters. Additionally, they also prove relevant to see the potential of young writing minds starting their development:

Their juvenilia represent the apprentice works of writers who produced such renowned novels as *Jane Eyre*, *Wuthering Heights*, and *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*; but they are also important documents in themselves: evidence of the making of literary minds, the collaboration and particularly the rivalry of writers — that ‘intelligent partisanship’ with which the Brontës imitated and ‘played at’ the lively publishing scene of the early nineteenth century. The Brontë juvenilia provide the richest record where the young writer can create a parallel political and social space, experiment with adult relationships, test genre and technique, and experience the power of the author and editor. (ALEXANDER, 2010, p xiv)

The study of Emily’s Gondal saga is able to show how some of the strongest features of her only novel, *Wuthering Heights*, were already present in this work. While Victorian women found mostly limitations in their domestic sphere, Emily Brontë found the perfect space for the development of her creativity. Outside her home and Haworth, she found it hard to remain alive:

All three sisters suffered illness and depression in varying degrees away from home and in the presence of strangers [...] Without the freedom to indulge in their shared imaginary worlds they could not express themselves; they became physically sick. Emily became so sick at Roe Head that Charlotte feared for her life. When she again attempted to live away from home as a teacher at Law Hill, near Halifax, Emily survived a mere six months. Home represented the space where her creativity could have free reign, where she might experience the passionate elemental world of Gondal amidst the mundane regularity of routine life at Haworth. (GASKELL, 1997[1857], p. xxiii).

It shows that writing and creating stories was so significant to Emily that, if hindered from this possibility, the consequences upon her health were intensely negative. Her sister’s

awareness to this fact, additionally, also serves as proof that being a writer was a huge part of Emily's life, a characteristic which made her an untraditional Victorian woman.

Emily was greatly fond of her domestic life, not finding it possible to be outside Haworth and her life for long. Regarding one of her experiences far from home alongside her sister, Gaskell explains that

Emily accompanied her (Charlotte), as a pupil, but she became literally ill from home-sickness, and could not settle to anything, and after passing only three months at Roe Head, returned to the parsonage and beloved moors. (GASKELL, 1997[1857], p.104)

At home, Emily's routine was divided between housework and studying, Gaskell reveals that

it was Emily who made all the bread for the family; and anyone passing by the kitchen door, might have seen her studying German out of an open book, propped up before her, as she kneaded the dough. (GASKELL, 1997[1857], p.105)

Additionally, Gaskell adds: "Books were, indeed, a very common sight in that kitchen". In other words, part of their domestic sphere.

Gaskell narrates that, due to the small stipend of Mr. Brontë, the three sisters found the need to work. Once more, Emily's attempt to leave home failed. She tried to be a teacher as Charlotte, but, as Gaskell reveals: "Emily — that free, wild, untameable spirit, never happy nor well but on the sweeping moors that gathered round her home" (GASKELL, 1997[1857], p.111).

It is said that Gondal remained significant in Emily's life until the end of her days. Although she worked in different projects, the mostly known being *Wuthering Heights*, she always inhabited Gondal in her mind. *Wuthering Heights* is the most popular work of Emily Brontë, however, Gondal seems to be the origin and elaboration of her creativity and development as an artist:

Gondal is of particular importance, however, in relation to Emily Brontë's only novel, *Wuthering Heights*. The relationship between the two is inescapable: not only do we find similar themes, associations, and images which strongly suggest that the novel grew out of the saga, but Emily continued writing about Gondal after her novel was completed. Numerous parallels have been detected, such as a dark, inscrutable Gondal child similar to Heathcliff, and a theme of childhood contrast [...]. More significant than detailed parallels, however, Emily's poetry can be seen as providing 'the emotional and spiritual context' for *Wuthering Heights*. (ALEXANDER, 2010, p.xli)

Emily's development as an artist was not limited to being a novelist or a writer. She also wrote poems and was skilled in other types of arts, as a pianist and a painter (Bugg: 2020,

p. xi). Bugg also writes that the first spark of creativity in the life of Brontës was given by the set of toy soldiers that their brother Branwell had. Due to it, they developed the habit of creating stories together and produced several stories. It is also pointed out by Bugg that this experience was the moment when Emily wrote several poems for her Gondal saga. Chitam et al detail more this initiation of the Brontë children, and Bugg complements:

In June 1826, Mr. Brontë brought home some wooden toy soldiers and this trivial gift to Branwell inspired the young children into writing a series of stories about them. Some of the early stories, written before the Brontës were into their teens, are naturally fairly rudimentary, but before Charlotte left for school in January 1831, she and Branwell were producing technically correct poetry and a variety of prose stories. (CHITAM ET AL, 2009, p.4-5)

Therefore, Emily grew up to be a great writer because she was prepared for it. Also, it seemed to fit her personality much better than teaching or being a governess. According to Bugg, Emily's experience as a teacher at Law Hill school was not positive. She complained of having to work from six in the morning into eleven at night, and, quickly, Charlotte Brontë was dissonant from Emily's nature and harmful to her health it would be to insist in this occupation. (BUGG, 2020, p. xiii)

Based on this overview of Emily's childhood alongside her siblings, I argue, in this work, that the path Emily had as an artist gave her a firm basis to defend women as writers. For an artist, it is influential to grow in a family that motivates their artistic education. Although Emily and the other Brontë sisters did not have it as intensely and formally as it could be, due to the limitation society gave their gender and due to the need to work, certainly they were influenced by the routine of sharing the products of their writing craft. It is possible to argue that the fact that Emily witnessed her sisters being storytellers inspired her in the craft of *Wuthering Heights*. This way, she could plainly believe in this capacity of women. Emily and the other Brontë sisters have produced mandatory masterpieces for the ones who wish to explore literature in English. *Wuthering Heights*, *Jane Eyre* and *Agnes Grey*, for instance, are now well established as part of the canon of English literature. The respect and acknowledgement have come throughout the years to this family because when their novels were published the critics did not hesitate to deeply criticize their work based on their deviations of gender standards. The acute criticism, at a certain point, forced Charlotte, after the passing of both her sisters, to disclose their identities and write prefatory texts as a compromising to the critics.

Nicola Thompson (1995) explores the critics' reception to *Wuthering Heights* regarding the role of gender and comparing the difference in the criticism which came before Charlotte Brontë revealed the real identity of Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell in the *Biographical*

Notice of the 1850 edition. The *Biographical Notice*, in Thompson's words, was

Prompted by a conscious or unconscious desire on Charlotte Brontë's part to distance and dissociate herself from the unfeminine "coarseness" of her sister's novel, and to prevent critical attacks on *Wuthering Heights* from spreading contagiously to *Jane Eyre*, already vulnerable to such accusations. (THOMPSON, 1995, p. 44)

It is explained by Thompson (1995) that, despite the positive criticism *Jane Eyre* received, some critics voiced, at times, that it had unfeminine qualities. Once *Wuthering Heights* was published, Thompson explains that many thought the unfeminine traits seen in *Jane Eyre* was being shown in a more intense way. Therefore, many would reach the conclusion that both works were the product of the same pen.

Wuthering Heights was frequently labeled by the first critics, according to Thompson (1995), as a powerful narrative. Power, as explained by Thompson (1995), was "a characteristic invariably associated in Victorian literary criticism with male authors" (THOMPSON, 1995, p.48). However, problems were also pointed. According to Thompson,

Reviewers, then, felt that the absence of a moral, the subject-matter of the book, and the character portrayal broke the unwritten authorial contract with the reader [...] the novel was not didactic, did not reflect Victorian middle-class society, and showed no sign of following in any literary tradition they could identify. (THOMPSON, 1995, p. 47)

Thompson mentions a piece of criticism which displays doubt regarding the identity of Currer Bell and authorship of two novels. Its author was concerned with both authorship and gender:

We hope it will be proven to have been written by another hand than that which wrote *Jane Eyre*, but if the authorship should be identical, it will at least settle the much-discussed question of sex. No woman could write *Wuthering Heights*. (*The Union Magazine*, 1848, p.287 *apud* THOMPSON, 1995, p.50)

It is highlighted by Thompson (1995) that many people, even after the *Biographical Notice*, would still doubt that *Wuthering Heights* had been written by a woman. Thompson (1995) reveals that rumors spread that Patrick Branwell Brontë was actually the real author. It proves how transgressive Emily Brontë was. The existence of a woman who could write a novel like *Wuthering Heights* was judged impossible.

Thompson (1995) argues that Charlotte Brontë dictated the tone of the critics who judged *Wuthering Heights* after the *Biographical Notice*. She argues that it was Charlotte who

first created for Emily the image of naivety and innocence in the young woman who lived almost isolated. Thompson (1995) notes that the attitude regarding *Wuthering Heights* changed after it was published. Not only there could be seen the shock of knowing this article was written by the pen of a woman, but, additionally, Thompson (1995) demonstrates that adjectives as *powerful* were no longer being used. Instead, “[...] the *Leader* now reads *Wuthering Heights* as a love story, and with its choice of adjectives could be describing a conventional feminine romance” (THOMPSON, 1995, p.57).

As Thompson (1995), argues, *Wuthering Heights* deconstructed gender biases. Emily Brontë proved, with her work, that it is not possible to tell the gender of the author based on their writing since creativity and literary skills are not naturally given by a person’s biological sex.

As I have already mentioned, *Wuthering Heights* was published in a historical moment when the Victorian age reached its peak, its golden years. Due to that, the angel in the house, a model for women’s lives, became spread during those years and — arguably — still imposes its standards to women worldwide nowadays. Those standards, certainly, did not encompass women who wrote defying novels as *Wuthering Heights*. The Brontë family, while still under the pseudonym surname of Bell, suffered from the impact of the criticism that Emily’s novel received. Due to that, Charlotte Brontë, who already had to deal with some negative criticism to *Jane Eyre*, had to reveal the identity of Ellis Bell in order to dissociate *Wuthering Heights* from the name of Currer Bell, her pseudonym.

Jane Eyre achieved the status of a best-seller right after its publication. However, the success of the novel came with some hard criticism due to the attitudes of Jane, the protagonist, a woman who behaves passionately. Passion and female desire triggered criticism since, as mentioned before, is not in consensus with the image of the angel in the house.

One of the cruellest pieces of criticism *Jane Eyre* received came from a journalist and critic named Elizabeth Rigby. According to her, *Jane Eyre* was “the personification of an unregenerate and undisciplined spirit”. Meanwhile Jane was, certainly, someone who would not accept other’s ideas to replace her own, specially if she found them mistaken and, therefore, could be labeled as undisciplined, Charlotte Brontë was open to compromising. After the publishing of *Wuthering Heights* and the criticism received, she decided to act and protect her work and her sister’s from an uprising from the critics.

Charlotte Brontë wrote three prefatory documents to the 1850 edition of Emily’s *Wuthering Heights* and Anne Brontë’s *Agnes Grey*. For the purpose of fulfilling the goal of

the present work, I will explore briefly the one she wrote about the lives of Emily and Anne and the one dedicated to *Wuthering Heights*.

Elizabeth Gaskell, as Charlotte Brontë, was concerned about their reputations in society and how their writing could influence it. In *The Life of Charlotte Brontë*, Gaskell argues that

[...] no other can take up the quiet, regular duties of the daughter, the wife, or the mother, as well as she whom God has appointed to fill that particular place: a woman's principal work in life is hardly left to her own choice; nor can she drop the domestic charges devolving on her as an individual, for the exercise of the most splendid talents that were ever bestowed. And yet she must not shrink from the extra responsibility implied by the very fact of her possessing such talents. She must not hide her gift in a napkin; it was meant for the use and service of others. In an humble and faithful spirit must she labour to do what is not impossible, or God would not have set her to do it. (GASKELL, 1997[1857], p.259)

The quote above demonstrates a defense that Gaskell elaborates to, once more, care for both her reputation and Charlotte's. Here, she intends to dialogue with Victorian tradition highlighting the acknowledgement of the female domestic duties. Gaskell attempts to compromise for women a life where they are able to both maintain the harmony in the domestic sphere but also develop their talents as writers. I argue that, when she invokes writing as a gift given by God, she attempts to make it as essentialist as the traditional ideas that women were made for the domestic sphere.

The Biographical Notice sought to dissociate *Jane Eyre* from *Wuthering Heights*. Charlotte describes her attempts, in former editions of *Jane Eyre*, to reveal that the authors of the novels consisted of different people. She writes that, since those attempts had not worked, she decided to try once more in the edition where the *Biographical Notice* is published for the first time. Charlotte mentions that the critics have been rudely mistaken to state she is the writer of *Wuthering Heights*, and highlights a piece of criticism which says Emily's novel was an earlier and ruder attempt of the same pen that had produced *Jane Eyre*. However, in the second preface, Charlotte also attempts to argue in favor of *Wuthering Heights* and justify the choices of her sister Emily.

The depiction of *Wuthering Heights* that Charlotte elaborated is based on creating for Emily the image of a naive woman who knew very little of the world and was not mature nor aware of her surroundings. Charlotte exposes issues as Emily's secluded life, her little disposition to dialogue with people and even describe Emily's behavior in comparison to a nun: "I am bound to avow that she had scarcely more knowledge of the peasantry amongst whom she lived, than a nun has of the country people who sometimes pass her convent gates"

(BRONTË, 2020 [1850], p. 316). Regarding Charlotte Brontë's compromising, Thompson wrote that:

both the Biographical Notice and the Preface were prompted by a conscious or unconscious desire on Charlotte Brontë's part to distance and dissociate herself from the unfeminine 'coarseness' of her sister's novel, and to prevent critical attacks on *Wuthering Heights* from spreading contagiously to *Jane Eyre*, already vulnerable to such accusations. (THOMPSON, 1996, p. 43-44)

In sum, it is possible to deduce that Charlotte judged it appropriate to elaborate these prefatory texts to protect both hers and, also, the memory of her deceased sisters. As a matter of fact, this attitude would not be necessary if the works of women had not suffered with the extreme criticism that was shown in the present work. Once one is aware of how many works of art have fallen into oblivion after massive rejection, Charlotte's fear regarding the destiny of *Jane Eyre* becomes comprehensible. Moreover, she was, too, affected by the dynamics that have silenced women writers throughout the ages.

It is relevant to mention, at this point, that after Charlotte Brontë stated in the Biographical Notice that Ellis Bell was not a man but, in fact, her sister Emily Brontë, it changed the behavior of the critics completely. None of them would, anymore, make any praising to Emily's style, uniqueness, and the masculinity. Rather, they would reveal their shock before the awareness that the author of such a transgressive novel was a woman. According to Thompson,

the 1850 reviewers of *Wuthering Heights* are 'dominant' readers, readers whose ideas about gender create a barrier between themselves and the text, a barrier which is reflected in their focus on the biographical information rather than the novel. (THOMPSON, 1996, p.45)

Others, on the other hand, would endeavour to read it as a love story. *Wuthering Heights* was daunting to the Victorian society. It made those in highest power positions have their control threatened by a writer who created a character that embodied several traits which caused fear and repulse, and women who believed it was possible for them to tell their own stories. *Wuthering Heights* and its intensity are notable from the very first pages. The first chapters display aspects that demonstrate to the reader it is not a typical Victorian novel. It is expected from the Victorian standards that religion, morals and habits are exhibited in high standards, but it is not seen in *Wuthering Heights*. In this novel, there is eroticism, desire, greed, anger, and its characters have more immediate concerns than following a Victorian standard. One of the aspects that caused the most marked surprise and astonishment in the readers is the fact that one of the main characters is a man with no concern at all with Victorian standards.

In sum, I argue that *Wuthering Heights* was, in so many ways, defying to the Victorian society that stating it was a love story was only a strategy to silence Emily Brontë and lead her brilliant novel into oblivion.

The negative criticism that *Wuthering Heights* received following its publishing were partially caused by the violence witnessed in the male characters, Heathcliff being responsible for most of it, but Hindley and Joseph also having their share. Nonetheless, I argue that the female characters may assume the blame for criticism that classified the work of Emily Brontë as immoral — and I believe they would be glad to do so. The female characters of Emily Brontë are equally transgressive. Their attitude would never be anything but shocking to a patriarchal society which, during years, endeavored terribly hard to keep women from succeeding in the occupation of power positions as the one of storytellers. The negative reception of *Wuthering Heights* is owed mostly to male critics. They characterized *Wuthering Heights* as unfit for social consumption and in numerous times referenced the gender of the writer. Regarding women characters in *Wuthering Heights*, my ideas are aligned with those readings that acknowledge the majority of female characters in the narrative, not only Catherine Earnshaw, as owners of the narrative.

1.4 Feminism and *Wuthering Heights*

While the Brontë Sisters were alive, Feminism as a political movement had not established itself yet. However, the suffragist movement was shining its first sparkles and Feminist thinking in the form of the need of escaping the patriarchal subordination and reaching equality had already been born. In Emily's *Wuthering Heights*, women disrupt the traditional female gender roles in different ways. Because of it, under this standpoint, it is possible to argue that Feminist ideas are present in *Wuthering Heights*.

As an idea, Feminism, according to Deborah Cameron, is older than the political movement. She explains that:

In Europe, the beginnings of political Feminism are usually located in the late eighteenth century; but a tradition of writing in which women defended their sex against unjust vilification had existed for several centuries before that. (CAMERON, 2018, p. 2-3)

This awareness is relevant to the present work. Emily Brontë did not integrate Feminism as a political movement or engaged in the genesis of the suffragist movement. Yet, by creating characters that have in their identity the unusual trait — for women — of being narrators and telling stories from their points of view, it is my belief that she is arguing for women as writers.

As an intellectual framework, Cameron explains that it does not have “an agreed canon of Great Thinkers” (CAMERON, 2018, p. 8-9). That is due to the many labels Feminism receives, as ‘Black’, ‘radical’, and others. Some texts, Cameron also explains, are considered foundational of the modern Feminist thought. One of them is *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), by Mary Wollstonecraft.

In her essay, Mary Wollstonecraft argues that women are naturally equal to men, and if they failed to exhibit any virtue in relation to men, it is because they were hindered from their civil rights and education. She believed education could reform society, and argued that education for both men and women would lead them to living more independent and virtuous lives. In her own words, Wollstonecraft argues that

the most perfect education, in my opinion, is such an exercise of the understanding as is best calculated to strengthen the body and form the heart. Or, in other words, to enable the individual to attain such habits of virtue as will render it independent. In fact, it is a farce to call any being virtuous whose virtues do not result from the exercise of its own reason. This was Rousseau’s opinion respecting men: I extend it to women. (WOLLSTONECRAFT, p. 48, 2009 [1792])

The Brontë family would have served as a great example to illustrate Wollstonecraft’s ideas that women are educated into dependence. The Brontë sisters, according to Gaskell’s biography, had a Christian education and were aware of the duties and behavior of a woman in Victorian society. Despite that, they also had the opportunity to expand their mindset and incorporate to their identities those of women who studied, wrote, and worked because their father was not able to guarantee their subsistence. Before the Victorian standards, that deviation was pinned as inadequate. However, before the eyes of a woman as Mary Wollstonecraft, the development of their intellect and independence was nothing but fair.

Feminism in *Wuthering Heights* was first identified in the second wave of Feminism. According to Elaine Showalter, when Adrienne Rich, in a talk named “When We Dead Awaken: Writing as Re-Vision”, said that “Women can no longer be primarily mothers and muses for men: we have our own work cut out for us” (RICH, 1975 *apud* SHOWALTER, 2009 p, 682) she inaugurated a process of rediscovery of women writers and female writing.

In this process, the Feminist movement has, since its second wave in the 20th century, rediscovered several women writers that became forgotten for a myriad of different reasons. Kate Chopin, for instance, had her novel *The Awakening* fall into oblivion due to the transgressive behavior of its main character. Fortunately, Chopin and many others were found by Feminist scholars and had their works of art ascend to the literary canon:

In academia, feminist scholars began to seek out and recover lost American women writers and texts. The recoveries of the decade began with Toni Cade Bambara's anthology *The Black Woman* (1970) and continued with the Feminist Press edition of Charlotte Perkins Gilman's *The Yellow Wallpaper*. (SHOWALTER, 2009 p, 682)

I believe the feeling these feminist scholars had is still shared by today's feminists and translated by Nina Baym's *Woman's Fiction* (1978). According to Showalter, she analyzed 130 novels by American women published between 1830 and 1870. Baym declared:

We thought of this lost work as a legacy, an inheritance that had been denied us. We took it for granted that the women we rediscovered would delineate an admirable, specifically female literary tradition, through which we ourselves would find strength and inspiration. (BAYM, 2001 apud SHOWALTER, 2009 p, 682)

In 1979, the classics of the 19th century, *Wuthering Heights* included, were studied in a feminist point of view that integrated the rise of the Feminist criticism: "The Madwoman in the Attic".

Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar analyzed classic women's texts of the nineteenth century as coded repudiations and revisions of the male literary tradition (SHOWALTER, 2009, p. 682).

The feminist scholars and their work to rediscover those authors brought to women the possibility to believe writing was also for them. This concept has survived throughout the ages and resists and becomes more powerful as time passes. Personally, I witness that it has survived and became my primary inspiration to study Emily Brontë as a woman who, more than a century before the second wave of feminism, was already certain and defended those women should be writers and storytellers. Showalter herself also writes about this belief:

For writers, feminism promised the end of second-class status, critical denigration, and self-censorship. It meant the legitimization of their creativity; no longer would women have to seek permission to write from parents, teachers, or husbands. [...] No longer would women writers have to censor themselves in order to avoid offending traditional conventions of femininity. (SHOWALTER, 2009, p. 685)

2 WOMEN AS NARRATORS IN *WUTHERING HEIGHTS*

Emily Brontë's women narrators will be explored in this section through their roles in *Wuthering Heights*, narrative arc, and depiction of the precise moments when these women narrate the story. In this work, I argue that there is a rich meaning in the fact that a Victorian novel as *Wuthering Heights* depicts women telling their own stories with their own words. This meaning is revealed in a close reading of the novel guided by the historical context which reveals how writing and having an active voice was not common for Victorian Women. Due to it, formerly, I have exposed and discussed historical aspects related to *Wuthering Heights* and its author.

Similarly to several other women writers in the Victorian age, *Wuthering Heights's* author, Emily Brontë, also found a tribulated path to establishing herself as a writer. Due to the Victorian constraints to women, this path was highly tribulated.

The registers of the criticism to *Wuthering Heights* are evidence to how gender was relevant to whether literary Victorian critics would give a positive or negative feedback. *Wuthering Heights* gained criticism which proves that different standards were being applied to evaluate the works of men and women. As demonstrated beforehand, there were some critics who praised *Wuthering Heights*. This praising to the novel's power, however, disappeared after Charlotte Brontë disclosed that Emily Brontë's novel was not the work of a man. Therefore, the different standards, as previously shown in this work, attributed a bad reputation to *Wuthering Heights* that also impacted the career and works of the other Brontë sisters.

Moreover, these pieces of criticism and their sexist standards lead once again to the concept of the *angel in the house*. The literary critics who evaluated *Wuthering Heights* represent a society which did not expect women to deviate from the concept of the ideal woman. For the Victorian people, if a woman was ever to become a writer, the product of this role should never be a novel like *Wuthering Heights*.

The choice of the Brontë sisters to use pseudonyms to publish their novels at first reveal their awareness of the struggle they would face to publish their works due to their gender. Additionally, in Emily Brontë's masterpiece, there is evidence of the understanding that Emily Brontë had of how her novel would be received in her time. I adopt, here, a standpoint where I acknowledge that Emily knew and expected the forthcoming criticism.

From this standpoint, it is possible to see how the craft of the narrators in the novel establish a defense to women as storytellers. *Wuthering Heights* is, in itself, product of a woman who succeeded in dominating the craft of writing in the 19th century, during the Golden period of the Victorian Age. It is also possible to comprehend how women are central pieces in the novel, occupying active and disruptive roles rather than being only objects of desire or reinforcers of Victorian female gender standards. They dominate the narrative whether to tell it in their manner or manipulate words, facts and the flow of events according to their own discretion.

The narrative in *Wuthering Heights* tends, traditionally, to be attributed mostly to two characters: John Lockwood and Ellen Dean. Effectively, they are characters *and* narrators in the novel. Moreover, their presence and interaction to other characters are significant and the way they describe the novel's events have much to express regarding the Victorian gender standards.

In a novel, a character who is also a narrator has the opportunity to offer their standpoint to a narrative which they are included in. Lockwood dominates the beginning of the narrative of *Wuthering Heights*, its conclusion, and some alternate moments. These alternate moments are intervals in the narrative of Ellen Dean, the character who most extensively narrates the story of the people who lived in the moors. I argue here, however, that three other characters may also be considered narrators in *Wuthering Heights*. These characters are Cathy Earnshaw, Isabella Linton, and Catherine Linton.

A careful close reading of *Wuthering Heights* brings to the attention of the reader moments where the three women, alongside with Ellen Dean, have their words expressed as they have chosen to do it. In all the four cases, they are responsible for telling events in their own words, and those words are shown precisely as they were brought to the world. It will be shown in this work that some of the moments where these words appear in the novel are interruptions in the narrative of John Lockwood and Ellen Dean. However, in *Wuthering Heights*, these interruptions are like an interval that is made so the words of the aforementioned women appear without influence of external modification. It is, of other narrators. Catherine Earnshaw and Isabella Linton achieve the opportunity of being narrators also because their words have been written and the registers, as letters, survived so they could be read precisely as the women have left them. Catherine Linton, in her turn, is shown to have become a storyteller by, among other reasons, teaching her cousin and husband-to-be, Hareton Earnshaw, to read. The moments where these women are narrators in *Wuthering Heights* are

singular — consist of one or two chapters — and may be even considered brief in comparison to the extension of the novel. I argue, however, that their message is precious and relevant, even more in a reading that considers the social and historical background of *Wuthering Heights*. In the next pages, I shall explore these chapters and detail the narrative to support my argument.

As mentioned before, Ellen Dean and John Lockwood are commonly pointed as the narrators of *Wuthering Heights*. Clearly, I acknowledge that they are. However, in this work, a study of three other characters, Cathy Earnshaw, Isabella Linton, and Catherine Linton is conducted. Additionally, I also explore the meaning that comes from establishing these three women as narrators in Emily Brontë's novel.

Mr. John Lockwood, being the initial narrator of *Wuthering Heights*, may be considered a contradictory information to my argument in relation to the craft of narrators in the novel. I argue and will demonstrate later in this section that, despite being Lockwood's eyes through which the reader first sees the moors and its inhabitants, soon after his arrival, Emily Brontë demonstrates how little Lockwood knows and understands the world of the moors since it differs so much from the Victorian standard he knows. The man causes, in his visits, almost comical situations which happen as consequences of his lack of information and acquaintance with this segment of society. Through this standpoint, it is possible to characterize him as an unreliable narrator. Therefore, he is not the adequate one to describe the facts that occurred in the life of its inhabitants for not having enough information to such role.

Lockwood arrives in *Wuthering Heights* long after the death of important characters, as Cathy Earnshaw, and close to the chronological end of the main narrative. When Lockwood approaches the moors and the story of what happened between both houses of the novel, *Wuthering Heights* and *Thrushcross Grange*, I picture it as an analogy to all the male literary critics from London opening the novel of Ellis Bell and reading it for the first time. As outsiders, they apply moral Victorian judgements to Cathy's story and are not able to consistently read it. Chapters I and II are narrated only by Lockwood. The man narrates living several socially awkward situations while trying to interact with the inhabitants of the moors. Those situations happen because Lockwood is not aware of the events that happened before his arrival. Therefore, he does not comprehend how, for example, the traditional standard of Victorian families does not exist there. His narrative is as awkward as the embarrassing moments he lives when trying to interact with Heathcliff and Catherine Linton.

Returning briefly to points already discussed in this work, it has already been established that the study of the criticism to *Wuthering Heights* demonstrates how the negative responses to the novel became more acute and the positive ones disappeared once it was disclosed, by Charlotte Brontë, that her sister, Emily Brontë was its author. Therefore, the responsible for constructing characters who menace the morals and standards of the Victorian society was a woman. As mentioned before, Charlotte Brontë discloses this piece of information, among other reasons, to protect her work, *Jane Eyre*, of also suffering the consequences of this negative criticism. Emily Brontë's story was not well received in her time and, clearly, the fact that she is a woman made it worse. Fortunately, the future of the story of literature brought the second wave of Feminism and the scholars who revisited these works. Their studies, as already shown in this work, enabled the construction of Feminist criticism to, among others, Victorian works that had long been forgotten. The Victorian male critics could not possibly assess *Wuthering Heights* from a similar point of view. Therefore, when I compare Lockwood to them, I also argue that his previous life, as an inhabitant of London and classical Victorian citizen, he could not read the story of the people who lived in the moors without, at first, applying his moral judgements. Therefore, it turned Lockwood into an unreliable narrator inside the story. Here, an unreliable narrator is the one who does not possess enough information to observe the transformations which were undergoing in the life of the main character, Cathy Earnshaw, and what it meant for people around her.

2.1 Cathy Earnshaw

Catherine Earnshaw is the youngest child of the Earnshaw family, Hindley's sister. Later in the novel, she gives birth to another Catherine, who is named after her. In this work, the first Catherine is referred to as Cathy. Cathy is a character who has many possibilities of causing in the reader a powerful first impression. Whether a positive or negative one, she is not forgettable. In the narrative of *Wuthering Heights*, Cathy is a central character, arguably the main character of the novel. The howling wind in the title of the novel brings the idea of fear and ghost stories. In the first pages, there is a ghost and it is the ghost of Catherine Earnshaw. This apparition as a ghost is one among the many traits which make Cathy a character who impresses since the beginning.

The first apparition of Catherine Earnshaw, as a ghost, is in Chapter III. She appears after John Lockwood enters her chamber to spend the night. Once he is inside the place and among the objects that belonged to her, the first narrator of *Wuthering Heights* becomes impressed and curious about the story of Cathy and how it relates to the other characters in that house, Heathcliff, Ellen Dean, Hareton, Joseph, and Cathy's daughter, Catherine Linton.

In Chapter III, *Wuthering Heights*' protagonist directly narrates a slice of her own story. The reader sees how Cathy struggles and discovers a way to accommodate her words before Ellen Dean starts narrating the main facts. I argue that Cathy is the first reliable narrator of *Wuthering Heights*, her reliability being straightly connected to her awareness and knowledge of the society that existed in the novel's moors. This idea directly dialogues with my thesis that Emily Brontë has built in *Wuthering Heights* a defense of women as writers. Being the first in a series of narrators who will have their slices of the story of the moors to tell is certainly significant here. It is a fact that Cathy is the first to do it, and the meaning of her words and the way they appear in the narrative have much meaning to be explored. In regards to Catherine Earnshaw, it is also possible to comprehend how her role as a protagonist is strengthened when the reader of *Wuthering Heights* acknowledges Cathy as a protagonist.

Catherine Earnshaw, in *Wuthering Heights*, is like the wind that blows in the moors, names the house and, consequently, the novel. As the difficult weather of the moors does, every single character in the novel is impacted by Cathy's existence even when she is dead and not physically present. As a misfit to the traditional Victorian society, Cathy triggers the main events in Emily Brontë's masterpiece. Being a protagonist, she successfully moves the pieces in the narrative with her impassioned personality and the steps she takes to achieve her goals. Cathy, when a narrator, manages to see her narrative also moving pieces and achieving a significant relevance in the story.

Cathy's narrative begins once Lockwood, as an uninvited guest in *Wuthering Heights*, the house where Cathy lived during her childhood, is lodged in the chamber which she slept in without the awareness of Heathcliff, the present owner of the house. All the objects in the chamber had once belonged to Cathy. Lockwood describes it:

I fastened my door and glanced round for the bed. The whole furniture consisted of a chair, a clothes-press, and a large oak case, with squares cut out near the top resembling coach windows. Having approached this structure, I looked inside, and perceived it to be a singular sort of old-fashioned couch, very conveniently designed to obviate the necessity for every member of the family having a room to himself. In fact, it formed a little closet, and the ledge of a window, which it enclosed, served as a table. (BRONTË, 2020[1847]: p.15).

The man, afterwards, curious as he already has demonstrated to be, starts exploring the room. By the ledge, he, then, discovers some writing:

This writing, however, was nothing but a name repeated in all kinds of characters, large and small—Catherine Earnshaw, here and there varied to Catherine Heathcliff and then again to Catherine Linton. (BRONTË, 2020[1847]: p.15).

This is the precise way that Cathy's narrative begins in the novel. The names in the ledge, handwritten by Cathy herself, are her visible register, and her first words to be read in the novel. The experienced readers of *Wuthering Heights* know that this writing foreshadows the main narrative, which will be told mainly by Ellen Dean in subsequent chapters. I highlight, here, that the narrative is already being told; it has already started since the foreshadowing is only possible due to the words once handwritten by Cathy.

As mentioned before, Cathy interrupts the narrative of Lockwood, who is an outsider to the moors and, therefore, not a reliable character. The names may not be a straightforward narrative. However, they consist of an initial disclosure of her story through her words. The different names, here, work as significant evidence of one of the most important parts of her narrative, Cathy's identity conflicts.

The words scribbled by the ledge of the window demonstrate Cathy's conflict of ideas and identity. At the moment she writes these words, she is Catherine Earnshaw, a daughter. The daughter of a traditional family in England. Frequently, Cathy is reminded to act like a lady by the people in her home. Her behavior is often reproached because of how deeply it bothers the other inhabitants of the house.

Her parents' wish is that she grows to become a religious young woman. Due to that, there is a religious man who also lives in *Wuthering Heights*, Joseph. He is daily present in the life of the Earnshaw family and is charged with the religious education and also with punishing Cathy and Heathcliff when their behavior is considered inappropriate. Their punishment is shown to have to do with religion, as long hours of praying and threats of going to hell. Therefore, Joseph is a religious tyrant who she is under control of and it bothers Cathy.

The identity conflicts continue when, according to her father standards, she is not a lady, not a good girl:

“Why canst thou not always be a good lass, Cathy?”
And she turned her face up to his, and laughed, and answered,
“Why cannot you always be a good man, father?”
But as soon as she saw him vexed again, she kissed his hand, and said she would

sing him to sleep. (BRONTË, 2020[1847]: p.36).

This passage evidences how conflicted the young Cathy felt. She knew her father was not a good man according to her own standards. He often was aggressive and trusted her education to a religious tyrant. Yet, she felt guilty once she spoken the truth and apologizes in sequence. Therefore, Cathy shows to be conscious of how she should behave to be a good Victorian girl. In the aforementioned passage, she kisses his hand to apologize because she knows her father is sick. However, this attitude does not match the behavior she is mostly known for.

What Cathy really wants to be is revealed by the scribble “Catherine Heathcliff”. The young girl longs to be by the side of Heathcliff who, in their childhood, is a boy to whom she deeply relates to, who admires her, who is extremely devoted to Cathy and seems to love only her. However, she cannot be Catherine Heathcliff because Heathcliff has a very low status in the Victorian society. He is not a foster child nor an employee and was not educated. When Mr. Earnshaw dies, nothing is left to Heathcliff and all he has left is suffering and humiliation from Hindley, who also keeps him from seeing Cathy.

When Mr. Earnshaw dies and Hindley Earnshaw, Cathy’s brother, returns to Wuthering Heights after being sent to school, this is the moments where everything falls apart for Cathy. Hindley and the series of humiliations that are imposed upon Heathcliff include being separated from Cathy. This very moment, which was the beginning of the end for Cathy and Heathcliff, are narrated also when John Lockwood sleeps in the chamber that belonged to Cathy. Cathy faced the reality that she could not live the life she wanted and that she could not be Catherine Heathcliff.

Following the moment when Lockwood discovers the names by the ledge, a fantastic phenomenon involving these names happens during Lockwood’s dream or hallucination inside the chamber:

In vapid listlessness I leant my head against the window, and continued spelling over Catherine Earnshaw—Heathcliff—Linton, till my eyes closed; but they had not rested five minutes when a glare of white letters started from the dark, as vivid as spectres—the air swarmed with Catherines. (BRONTË, 2020 [1847], p. 17)

The swarming letters, a manifestation of a magical moment, hints the importance of these words. Their being “vivid as spectres” points to the reader that they hold special meaning to the development of the novel. Also, this image marks the moment where Cathy’s

words, which were locked in the chamber, awake and prepare to tell her story. These words also suggest that something bigger is coming.

The next action Lockwood performs is an attempt to dispel the words, which leads him to discovering more words from Cathy. It is as if the chamber is alive and does not allow him to escape from finding Cathy's words because she wants her story to be told.

When Lockwood tries to make the words disappear, he discovers one of Cathy's books, a Testament:

[...] the air swarmed with Catherines; and rousing myself to dispel the obtrusive name, I discovered my candle-wick reclining on one of the antique volumes, and perfuming the place with an odour of roasted calf-skin.

I snuffed it off, and, very ill at ease under the influence of cold and lingering nausea, sat up and spread open the injured tome on my knee. It was a Testament, in lean type, and smelling dreadfully musty: a fly-leaf bore the inscription—"Catherine Earnshaw, her book," and a date some quarter of a century back. (BRONTË, 2020 [1847], p. 17)

This Testament which Lockwood finds is also an important object in the chamber since it, curiously, also registers the words of Cathy.

Catherine Earnshaw wrote her narrative at a ledge. Subsequently, at a Testament. Curiously, the young girl did not have a journal of her own. Historically, a journal is a special possession to women; a means of writing and developing a voice. The blank pages of a diary invite writing. Therefore, invite dealing with words and thinking, reminiscing over their own lives. Questioning life and society and its structure may become a part of this sequence. The item was a privilege which Cathy could not access. However, it did not stop her from writing. The young Cathy ignored the content of the Testament and wrote her story in the margins. Also, she labeled it with her name and tagged the book as hers: "Catherine Earnshaw, her book". The act might be interpreted as a sign of defiance to tradition. Here, Cathy cherishes her words better than the words from the Bible, known to be written by men. This portrayal demonstrates how the words of women have more value in the narrative of *Wuthering Heights*.

It is also significant to explore why Cathy has chosen a Testament to leave her words because this idea connects strongly to Cathy being a narrator in *Wuthering Heights*. A *Testament*, by definition, is a text that seeks to be read by future generations. In a Testament, Cathy guarantees her words to be read long after she is not alive. Which happens when Lockwood enters her chamber and explores her books. Likewise her protagonist, Emily Brontë, also, perpetuated her words and disruptive ideas through *Wuthering Heights*.

Lockwood, while in the chamber and by chance of the previous accident which came from his hallucination, explores Cathy's library:

I shut it, and took up another and another, till I had examined all. Catherine's library was select, and its state of dilapidation proved it to have been well used, though not altogether for a legitimate purpose: scarcely one chapter had escaped a pen-and-ink commentary—at least the appearance of one—covering every morsel of blank that the printer had left. Some were detached sentences; other parts took the form of a regular diary, scrawled in an unformed, childish hand. At the top of an extra page (quite a treasure, probably, when first lighted on) I was greatly amused to behold an excellent caricature of my friend Joseph,—rudely, yet powerfully sketched. An immediate interest kindled within me for the unknown Catherine, and I began forthwith to decipher her faded hieroglyphics. (BRONTË, 2020 [1847], p. 17)

This passage describes a longer and more detailed contact of Lockwood to Cathy's words. It proves that writing was a habit for Cathy. Therefore, she was a writer because she found means to register her narratives and experiences using words. Lockwood notices that "every morsel of blank that the printer had left" is covered by the writings of Cathy. Also, he describes this use as not legitimate. It is my comprehension that the registers of Cathy's writings prove how the young girl had necessity of telling her story and registering her words. When Lockwood invalidates this use by labeling it as "not legitimate", the reader may observe the construction of a moment where a man tries to diminish and silence the words of a woman. Another important aspect to be pointed and discussed is that the episodes which Lockwood reads from Cathy's improvised diary are moments where her and Heathcliff are affected by Hindley's patriarchal control and Joseph's religious tyranny. This is also, therefore, a brief introduction, by Cathy, to the story of Heathcliff. In this introduction, she shares the pain of the times when, as a kid, they were kept apart of each other. The register of the words is a manner that Cathy found for her story to be told, for her and her suffering not be forgotten.

The swarming handwritten names are the beginning of Cathy's narrative and it evolves when the man further explores her library and discover that, at the margins of the pages of religious books as Testaments, for example, the young girl has left her own Testament to be read in the future. By the edge of the pages, Cathy has handwritten narratives and confessions about the first years of her life and it proves she is as much a narrator of the story as Lockwood and Nelly.

"How little did I dream that Hindley would ever make me cry so!" she wrote. "My head aches, till I cannot keep it on the pillow; and still I can't give over. Poor Heathcliff! Hindley calls him a vagabond, and won't let him sit with us, nor eat with us anymore; and, he says, he and I must not play together, and threatens to turn him

out of the house if we break his orders”. (BRONTË, 2009[1847]: p.17)

The registers of these words also prove that Cathy is present in the novel since its very start. Moreover, these words are responsible for her presence. Cathy is no longer alive, but her words bring her to life. She shows Lockwood initial flashes of her story, marked by her love for Heathclif and Hindley’s and Joseph’s tyranny.

Wuthering Heights, the house of the Earnshaw family, keeps the belongings of Cathy, her objects and even her daughter. Its inhabitants keep memories about her. Her life is so present in the chamber that her narrative does not finish at the moment Lockwood finishes reading her words. Cathy, through the impact her words cause on Lockwood, can materialize herself in a spectral figure. As a ghost, she begs to enter Wuthering Heights again and reveals she has been wandering the moors for twenty years. When he falls sleep, she materializes during a nightmare and the tenant sees in the window a woman who asks him to let her enter:

I muttered, knocking my knuckles through the glass, and stretching an arm out to seize the importunate branch; instead of which, my fingers closed on the fingers of a little, ice-cold hand! [...] 'Who are you?' I asked, struggling, meanwhile, to disengage myself. 'Catherine Linton,' it replied, shiveringly (why did I think of Linton? I had read Earnshaw twenty times for Linton)—'I'm come home: I'd lost my way on the moor!' As it spoke, I discerned, obscurely, a child's face looking through the window [...] As it spoke, I discerned, obscurely, a child's face looking through the window [...] it wailed, "Let me in!" and maintained its tenacious gripe, almost maddening me with fear. (BRONTË, 2020[1847]: p. 20)

Subsequently, Lockwood tries to get rid of the ghost of Cathy with great violence by hurting it in the broken glass of the window. Even though the brutality of Lockwood makes her disappear quickly, Cathy still finds space to speak and guarantees her story will be told because her apparition stirs the curiosity of Lockwood. Soon, he will ask Ellen to tell him the story of the people in the moors. Additionally, Cathy reveals how long she has been deceased and roaming on the moors while trying to reach Wuthering Heights:

“Begone!” I shouted, “I’ll never let you in, not if you beg for twenty years.”
 “It’s twenty years,” mourned the voice: “twenty years. I’ve been a waif for twenty years!”. (BRONTË, 2009[1847]: p. 20)

This moment finalizes the first glimpses on the main narrative of *Wuthering Heights*. In subsequent chapters, Ellen Dean will start the narrative from the moment Heathcliff first arrived at the moors and was presented to the inhabitants of Wuthering Heights.

Heathcliff, it is told in Ellen's narrative, arrived at Wuthering Heights as a child, only a bit older than Catherine. He arrives with Mr. Earnshaw, who had gone in a trip to Liverpool. From this trip, he was supposed to have brought gifts for his children and Ellen, who was not much older. Mr. Earnshaw was supposed to bring a whip for Cathy and a fiddle for Hindley. The children get upset and angry when they learn their father did not keep the promise and did not bring the gifts, all they got was Heathcliff. Initially, Cathy, Hindley and Ellen all hate Heathcliff. However, as time passes, Cathy and Heathcliff become closer and he becomes a gift for Cathy. He becomes her whip, an instrument for her.

The literary criticism to *Wuthering Heights* has different visions regarding, for instance, the main themes and central characters of the novel. In a reading which I am greatly aligned to, Terry Eagleton points in his text *Myths of Power* that Cathy is central to *Wuthering Heights*: [...] The choice posed for Catherine between Heathcliff and Edgar Linton. That choice seems to me the pivotal event of the novel, the decisive catalyst of the tragedy (EAGLETON, 1975: p.399). His idea contrasts with Bataille's words in his *Emily Brontë and le Mal*, where Bataille (2015) states that *Wuthering Heights* revolves around the hate and disruptions of Heathcliff for the impossibility of being with Cathy.

It is my point in the present work that *Wuthering Heights* is not the story of Heathcliff's, it is Cathy's. As much as Heathcliff's rage against the ones who removed him from his childhood kingdom, as Bataille states, is undoubtedly central to the narrative, it is worthy pointing out that all this rage originates from the feeling of not having Cathy and from her decision of not being with him due to social expectations Cathy had upon her. Obviously, this rage would not exist if Cathy did not exist. It is clear throughout the novel that she is the only person that Heathcliff ever loved or cared about. Heathcliff is Cathy. He cannot exist in the novel without her.

Moreover, besides being Cathy the reason for Heathcliff's childhood kingdom to exist, she is the ghostly apparition in Chapter III, the reason why Lockwood wants to learn what happened in the moors. The register of Cathy's words is the reason why the story is told by Ellen Dean. Cathy's words trigger Lockwood's curiosity and creates the opportunity for Ellen Dean to start her narrative.

The appearance of the Lintons brings a new stage to the novel. A transformation in Cathy's life is triggered once she discovers this new life. At the Grange, Cathy and Heathcliff see another couple of kids: Isabella Linton and Edgar Linton, who are completely different

from anyone who inhabits Wuthering Heights. They are perfect embodying of the Victorian standards and even the light resembles heaven.

When Cathy returns to Wuthering Heights, she is a completely different person, but this is only in the outside. Cathy, upon her return, looks like a Victorian lady. However, inside, she is still full of passion and anger and still found of Heathcliff. Cathy wants to, at the same time, marry Linton and take care of Heathcliff and live his passion for him. To Nelly, she assumes she loves two men at once and how she plans to solve this problem. She, therefore, wants to be Mrs. Linton and Catherine Heathcliff at once. When Cathy compares her love for Edgar with her love for Heathcliff, she declares she is Heathcliff. In other words, that although she has feelings for Edgar, the deepest feelings are for Heathcliff:

My love for Linton is like the foliage in the woods: time will change it, I'm well aware, as winter changes the trees. My love for Heathcliff resembles the eternal rocks beneath: a source of little visible delight, but necessary. Nelly, 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. (BRONTË, 2020 [1847], p. 71)

Cathy's feelings regarding Linton and Heathcliff and how divided she feels in both her mind and heart are displayed in a conversation with Ellen Dean. In this conversation, Cathy is not paraphrased by Nelly. Therefore, in this section, we see Cathy narrate a part of her own story. In a similar effect to the one that, later in *Wuthering Heights*, will enable Isabella to describe complete dialogues in a letter, with people's precise words as they were enunciated, Cathy will manifest her feelings with words of her choice. This is another moment of the novel where Cathy has an active voice to explain and create the narrative of *Wuthering Heights*. As a central character whose conflicts of identity and feelings move so many pieces and greatly influences her surroundings, her feelings and idea have great significance and should be explained by Cathy herself.

“Where's Heathcliff?” she said, interrupting me.
“About his work in the stable,” was my answer.
(BRONTË, 2020 [1847], p. 67)

Here, Ellen's answer makes Cathy comfortable to start a confession that she expects to be private between her and Ellen Dean. In this confession, Cathy's words share a dream she had and provide a foresight of what happens to Cathy when she lives in the Grange. Far from her home, her heart will be broken and that, eventually, triggers her death:

“This is nothing,” cried she: “I was only going to say that heaven did not seem to be my home; and I broke my heart with weeping to come back to earth; and the angels were so angry that they flung me out into the middle of the heath on the top of Wuthering Heights; where I woke sobbing for joy. (BRONTË, 2020 [1847], p. 70)

Cathy is aware that Wuthering Heights, as much as it is different from the traditional Christian heaven, is heavenly to her as it brings joy enough to make her sob. She also understands, however, that her close relation to Heathcliff, which speaks so much to her identity, since Cathy is an untraditional Victorian lady, could never develop into a marriage. Cathy knows the social impacts and admits the awareness before Ellen, but also does the same with the nature of her feelings for Heathcliff

[...] no more business to marry Edgar Linton than I have to be in heaven; and if the wicked man in there had not brought Heathcliff so low, I shouldn't have thought of it. It would degrade me to marry Heathcliff now; so he shall never know how I love him: and that, not because he's handsome, Nelly, but because he's more myself than I am. Whatever our souls are made of, his and mine are the same; and Linton's is as different as a moonbeam from lightning, or frost from fire". (BRONTË, 2020 [1847], p. 70)

In order to balance both her relationships to Heathcliff and Edgar, Cathy tries to develop a solution, which is using her privileged social position that will come through her marriage to provide for Heathcliff. She expects Edgar to tolerate it and accept her feelings, so she can, in her words, *aid Heathcliff to rise*, and, therefore, live out of patriarchal power that is represented by Hindley's tyranny. It shows how Cathy wishes to compromise for still having some control over her life despite having to marry Linton instead of Heathcliff. Although she accepts marrying Edgar, distancing herself from Heathcliff and, therefore, the disruptive part of her personality, was not a possibility Cathy wanted to accept. It demonstrates how Cathy struggled to make the story one she could define and tell it her own way:

Every Linton on the face of the earth might melt into nothing before I could consent to forsake Heathcliff. Oh, that's not what I intend—that's not what I mean! I shouldn't be Mrs. Linton were such a price demanded! He'll be as much to me as he has been all his lifetime. Edgar must shake off his antipathy, and tolerate him, at least. He will, when he learns my true feelings towards him. Nelly, I see now you think me a selfish wretch; but did it never strike you that 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. (BRONTË, 2020 [1847], p. 71)

All the affection Heathcliff shares with Cathy is central in the story. However, as the concerns the woman exhibits regarding the Victorian moral and also her concerns with the future and becoming a lady, she does not stay by Heathcliff's side although she loves him. Cathy knows that she will not inherit Wuthering Heights, it will be her brother's, and since Heathcliff has no possessions until that moment, their union is impossible to happen. Cathy will have to marry Linton and become an angel in the house, the perfect and ideal Victorian lady. Although Cathy does not fit the Victorian society, she chooses to try to incarnate the angel in the house and, at this moment, Cathy decides to leave the childhood kingdom and, as Terry Eagleton explains, this is suicide for Cathy: "In a crucial act of self-betrayal and bad faith, Catherine rejects Heathcliff as a suitor because he is social inferior to Linton; and it is from this that the train of destruction follows" (EAGLETON, 1975, p.402).

When Heathcliff is finally able to marry a lady, Cathy is already married and their union is no longer possible. Eventually, he marries Isabella in an act of revenge against the traditional Linton family.

Although Ellen Dean narrates most of the main events, there is great relevance in the fact that, as shown before, Cathy is the first to do it with reliability. *Wuthering Heights* is the story of Cathy and the progress of her decisions and actions to the fall of the patriarchy which is established by the beginning of the novel. Cathy as the first in the novel to have this role certainly contributes to reading *Wuthering Heights* as a defense of women as storytellers.

It is relevant to highlight how Cathy manages to someone to discover her words by the use of magic and supernatural. Magic and fantasy are seen when the words fly in the air before John Lockwood and by appearing as a ghost in the window. Certainly, those great moments right in the beginning of the novel serve as reinforces of the importance of Cathy to *Wuthering Heights* as a narrative.

Cathy's personality and the decisions that result from her issues throughout the novel dictate all the events that will, eventually, lead to the fall of the families Earnshaw and Linton. Heathcliff, I argue, is only her whip.

Heathcliff appears as a central character to dismantle all the Victorian society supports in high standards, and a great number of critics published refer themselves to this character. The transgression and remarkability are noticeable due to the moral deviations of this character.

Heathcliff, certainly, participates in the defiance of Catherine to the tradition. This character works as an extension of her fiery behavior and as materialization of her desire in several different moments of the narrative.

For instance, exploring the symbol of the whip offers a great point against transforming the relation between Cathy Earnshaw and Heathcliff into a love story. In the beginning of the narrative, before Mr. Earnshaw departs to the trip which he will bring Heathcliff from, he offers his children the opportunity of choosing a gift. Cathy asks her dad for a whip and, in exchange, she receives Heathcliff: "What shall I bring you? [...] Miss Cathy; she was hardly six years old, but she could ride any horse in the stable, and she chose a whip". (BRONTË, 2020[1847], p. 36). Throughout the narrative, this whip becomes a form of chastisement to the ones who forced the tradition upon Catherine and kept her away from Heathcliff. The man, eventually, will seek his revenge and, as a whip, will not hesitate in punishing every element of the Victorian society which had stolen Cathy from him. Sandra

Gilbert and Susan Gubar, in *Madwoman in the Attic*, explain that, through the whip, Heathcliff becomes an alternative identity for Cathy; an addition that gifts her with power beyond the domestic sphere (Gilbert et al: 1979, p.265).

Once apart from Heathcliff, her whip, the reader watches as Cathy eventually loses her fierce behavior and die while giving birth to her daughter. Cathy's marriage to Linton means, in *Wuthering Heights*, the death of the person she was in her childhood, the girl who ran passionately with Heathcliff in the moors. I discuss later in this work, however, that the arc of having a whip to punish the traditional society is concluded with Cathy's daughter.

2.2 Ellen Dean

Ellen Dean, also known as Nelly, is one of the main characters in *Wuthering Heights*. Her importance to the novel lies, mainly, on her role of narrating a large extension of the novel. However, beyond narrating, she is also present in many of the decisive moments of Emily Brontë's novel. As a character, Ellen's arc evolves from being the daughter of a servant to being the responsible for the economic control of the two main properties in the Yorkshire moors. She has this control because once Heathcliff dies and all the properties return to Catherine Linton, she is underage and a widow; therefore, Ellen Dean, as the closest adult, becomes the one in charge and remains so until the end of the novel. In the present work, studying Nelly brings a wider understanding of how Emily Brontë constructed her women narrators in *Wuthering Heights*.

Ellen Dean is the character who is responsible for telling the story of the past years to John Lockwood. Emily Brontë created, in Ellen Dean, a woman whose voice is heard. Before Lockwood, an outsider, the reader sees a man quietly listening to a woman. From the start, it is possible to see how she is comfortable and willing to tell the story.

Through Ellen Dean, I argue, Emily Brontë creates a narrator who is ready and will speak if she is given the opportunity. Living in a society where being storytellers and having an active voice was not common for women, speaking happened in the margins. For instance, when Cathy writes her narrative in the margins of the pages of a testament. Ellen speaks when Lockwood asks her to tell a story. It may be argued that the man seeks only for entertainment. However, through this chance, Ellen speaks and creates the narrative of the facts she has

witnessed throughout her whole life. Additionally, she opens the path so other women may speak since, through her narrative, we listen to Cathy, Isabella, and Catherine. Although the last one does not appear that much in Ellen's narrative, her presence is not less significant, as it will be shown.

Ellen Dean's transgression in the novel is not as shocking as Cathy's or Isabella's, for instance. However, as the other women, she also does not conform to the most common narratives of Victorian times. Throughout the story she narrates, Ellen is seen in moments of reading and studying, speaking her mind openly without hesitation before Cathy or Heathcliff: she never forces herself to develop empathy for any of them. Additionally, in many parts of the story, she is shown to directly influence the narrative and the facts that happen on the moors.

The first time the reader sees Nelly is when Lockwood becomes acquainted to her. At the moment, the woman works as a housekeeper in Thrushcross Grange. Through the eyes of John Lockwood, Ellen Dean is, at first, someone who will help him while he is sick by providing meals and company for conversation. The following quote is the first time in the novel where Ellen Dean is mentioned:

I dine between twelve and one o'clock; the housekeeper, a matronly lady, taken as a fixture along with the house, could not, or would not, comprehend my request that I might be served at five. (BRONTË, 2020[1847]: p.27).

By his words, the reader may imagine a very traditional lady that, in Victorian homes, would be in charge of taking care of homes. Being a housekeeper is considered a high position among the other servants in a house. Lockwood certainly had the most stereotyped image of Ellen Dean being formed in his mind, therefore, those were his expectations:

I desired Mrs. Dean, when she brought in supper, to sit down while I ate it; hoping sincerely she would prove a regular gossip, and either rouse me to animation or lull me to sleep by her talk. (BRONTË, 2020[1847]: p.27).

Ellen Dean, in sequence, demonstrates that she is, indeed, someone who may be called a "regular gossip". However, more than that, the dialogue that follows between Lockwood and Nelly already shows how Ellen knows how to impact and prepare her listener's impression to the story she will tell:

"Yes," I remarked, "you've seen a good many alterations, I suppose?"

"I have: and troubles too," she said. (BRONTË, 2020[1847]: p.28).

By mentioning that she has seen many troubles, Ellen prepares Lockwood — and, of course, the reader — to the events that happened in the moors. From the start, she lets him know how — to say the least — complicated these events were.

As the narrator of the passionate story of Cathy and Heathcliff, Ellen Dean actively chooses to narrate this story of transgression and defiance to tradition. It is her decision to include the most intense moments of Heathcliff and Cathy in the narrative.

Ellen Dean starts the story at a point when she was still a child. Therefore, the very beginning of Ellen's story is presented by herself, similarly to what Catherine does. Among the children of Wuthering Heights, she exposes that she was not a common servant, but one that could stay inside home. Mr. Earnshaw, also, is fond of her, one of the reasons why she has the right of being inside the house with the other children.

Another proof of how affectionate the owner of Wuthering Heights is to her, for example, is when he promises Nelly he will bring her fruits once he is back from his trip. As previously mentioned, Mr. Earnshaw does not bring any gift from his trip abroad. He arrives back at Wuthering Heights only with Heathcliff by his side. The people in the house negatively see the arrival of Heathcliff. His reception is the worst possible, and Nelly is not exempted from the bad attitude. After Heathcliff's arrival, the first act of manipulation of narrative is shown: she disobeys Mr. Earnshaw. Ellen puts the young Heathcliff to sleep in the stairs and hopes that it will make him be gone by the morning. She is still a child, however, this first glimpse on her is especially important because it foreshadows how manipulative Nelly is at times. Here is how she narrates her act of disobedience:

I had no more sense, so I put it on the landing of the stairs, hoping it might be gone on the morrow. By chance, or else attracted by hearing his voice, it crept to Mr. Earnshaw's door, and there he found it on quitting his chamber. Inquiries were made as to how it got there; I was obliged to confess, and in recompense for my cowardice and inhumanity was sent out of the house. (BRONTË, 2020[1847]: p.31)

When Ellen Dean tries to act so Heathcliff, who has brought so many negative feelings into her home, leaves, she directly tries to influence the facts so that tradition remains untouched in Wuthering Heights. The young girl does not want a stranger in her home, someone who has already been described as dark as the devil. Her actions culminate, however, in Mr. Earnshaw being even more fond of Heathcliff due to the boy's rejection from most of the members of the family.

As the children in Wuthering Heights grow, Ellen participates in their daily life and dares to act as more than a servant in the home. After witnessing a fight between Heathcliff

and Hindley because of a horse, she fears Hindley will be punished by Mr. Earnshaw due to physically aggressing Heathcliff. Because of that, she goes directly to Heathcliff and pleads: “I persuaded him easily to let me lay the blame of his bruises on the horse” (BRONTË, 2020[1847]: p.32). Her actions demonstrate she wants to avoid Mr. Earnshaw to become even less fond of Hindley than he already is because of Heathcliff. Therefore, once more she acts in favor of tradition. Ellen Dean behaves accordingly to the Victorian domestic tradition. She favors and cherishes the Victorian home that represents peace and harmony. From the Lintons, she appreciates the environment where she raises Catherine alongside the girl’s widower father, inside the limitations and expectations of tradition and far from the stress that comes with transgressions as Cathy’s. However, as much as the character demonstrates to be fond of tradition, still she is the one who decides who narrate a passionate story without concealing the transgressive moments. That, in addition to the fact that she is a narrator, makes Ellen Dean an untraditional woman for Victorian times.

Another trait of Nelly that the reader discovers through the beginning of her narrative is how she does not hesitate before giving her opinion even if it is a negative one. Frequently in the narrative, it is seen how she disapproves of Cathy’s behavior and would prefer not having to deal with the girl. Her remarks on Cathy and Heathcliff are never kind and show how much she disapproves of their untraditional behavior. In the early days of Heathcliff in *Wuthering Heights*, she sided with Hindley in hating Heathcliff: “Hindley hated him: and to say the truth I did the same; and we plagued and went on with him shamefully” (BRONTË, 2020[1847]: p.37).

The negative nature of her feelings for Cathy are also shown in several ways. It happens early in their lives, when she is a children growing up by Heathcliff and Cathy. Her bad opinion about the woman is shown even at the Grange, where she is forced to be the housekeeper when Edgar marries Cathy, and has to witness the new Mrs. Linton’s bad behavior. Whenever the possibility is given to her, Ellen Deans chooses whatever position will put her against Cathy or give her means to somehow control the girl. For instance, she readily accepts Hindley as a master once he returns after Mr. Earnshaw’s death. She does it despite disapproving his new behavior and his wife, Frances:

I thought she was half silly, from her behaviour while that went on: she ran into her chamber, and made me come with her, though I should have been dressing the children [...] Young Earnshaw was altered considerably in the three years of his absence. He had grown sparer, and lost his colour, and spoke and dressed quite differently; and, on the very day of his return, he told Joseph and me we must thenceforth quarter ourselves in the back-kitchen, and leave the house for him. (BRONTË, 2020[1847]: p.38)

Ellen did not marry or have children. However, in the novel she discovers the mother role with Hareton Earnshaw, the son of Frances and Hindley. Once his mom dies, Ellen becomes completely responsible for Hareton and it is shown in the novel how she is pleased to occupy the place of a mother. Replacing a woman as Frances, who fit well the position of the angel in the house, reinforces Ellen's affinity with traditional Victorian standards.

Ellen Dean also openly demonstrates how she would rather have stayed at Wuthering Heights taking care of Hareton than moving to the Grange to be Cathy's housekeeper. She reveals it to Lockwood in the narrative and how emotional she feels when she remembers it. When she had to go, Ellen reveals how it was a decision of her present master, Edgar Linton, after his wedding to Catherine Earnshaw:

Much against my inclination, I was persuaded to leave Wuthering Heights and accompany her here. Little Hareton was nearly five years old, and I had just begun to teach him his letters. We made a sad parting; but Catherine's tears were more powerful than ours. When I refused to go, and when she found her entreaties did not move me, she went lamenting to her husband and brother. The former offered me munificent wages; the latter ordered me to pack up: he wanted no women in the house, he said, now that there was no mistress; and as to Hareton, the curate should take him in hand, by-and-by. And so I had but one choice left: to do as I was ordered. I told the master he got rid of all decent people only to run to ruin a little faster; I kissed Hareton, said good-by; and since then he has been a stranger: and it's very queer to think it, but I've no doubt he has completely forgotten all about Ellen Dean, and that he was ever more than all the world to her and she to him! (BRONTË, 2020[1847]: p.78).

The farewell to Hareton is one of the most difficult moments to Ellen Dean throughout her narrative. As such, she exposes to Lockwood how hurt she was by having to leave the young boy behind to follow Catherine, someone Ellen had such a bad opinion about.

The following quote exemplifies how Nelly depicts Cathy Earnshaw to Lockwood:

Certainly she had ways with her such as I never saw a child take up before; and she put all of us past our patience fifty times and oftener in a day: from the hour she came downstairs till the hour she went to bed, we had not a minute's security that she wouldn't be in mischief. Her spirits were always at high-water mark, her tongue always going—singing, laughing, and plaguing everybody who would not do the same. (BRONTË, 2020[1847]: p.35)

Nelly's words do not display any affection for Cathy. Living with the girl clearly bothered her due to her manners and attitude. Cathy's passionate personality differed greatly from that of a lady. The reader, by realizing Nelly's feelings regarding the unusual behavior,

may deduce Ellen Dean sides with those who wish Cathy to behave accordingly to the Victorian standards.

Throughout the novel, in many moments it is visible how Ellen Dean has big antipathy for Cathy Earnshaw. Cathy, who seemed naive enough to ignore this aspect, trusts Ellen some of her secrets. For instance, it is to her that Cathy reveals how divided she feels when Edgar proposes to her and she does not know what to do. Ellen is aware that what she is about to say is private and will hurt Heathcliff, still, she lets Cathy continue even though the young man is listening:

Heathcliff, as I thought, walked through to the barn. It turned out afterwards that he only got as far as the other side the settle, when he flung himself on a bench by the wall, removed from the fire and remained silent [...] when Miss Cathy, who had listened to the hubbub from her room, put her head in, and whispered,

“Are you alone, Nelly?”

“Yes, Miss,” I replied.

She entered and approached the hearth. I, supposing she was going to say something, looked up. The expression of her face seemed disturbed and anxious. Her lips were half asunder, as if she meant to speak; and she drew a breath; but it escaped in a sigh instead of a sentence.

I resumed my song, not having forgotten her recent behavior.

“Where’s Heathcliff?” she said, interrupting me.

“About his work in the stable,” was my answer.

He did not contradict me; perhaps he had fallen into a doze.

There followed another long pause, during which I perceived a drop or two trickle from Catherine’s cheek to the flags.

Is she sorry for her shameful conduct? I asked myself. That will be a novelty, but she may come to the point as she will—I shan’t help her!

No, she felt small trouble regarding any subject, save her own concerns. (Brontë, 2020[1847], p. 66-67).

This passage demonstrates the resentment Ellen has against Catherine due to her passionate and fiery behavior. Consequently, she does not respect nor takes seriously Cathy’s feelings and demand to have a private conversation. This decision of hers influence tremendously the future of the narrative in *Wuthering Heights*. At some point during this conversation that Heathcliff is listening, he decides to flee from the house. Ellen herself tells Catherine about it: “I whispered to Catherine that he had heard a good part of what she said, I was sure; and told how I saw him quit the kitchen just as she complained of her brother’s conduct regarding him.” (BRONTË, 2020[1847], p. 72). After these events, Catherine gets

married to Edgar Linton and Heathcliff does not return to the moors before many years have passed. Therefore, this milestone in the novel is greatly defined by Ellen's attitude.

When Heathcliff returns, Ellen allows herself to be convinced into sending messages to Catherine without the awareness of Edgar Linton. She also voluntarily chooses to let Heathcliff in to see Catherine when she is sick.

Ellen also has an important role in relation to Heathcliff's attitude once Catherine becomes closer to the Lintons. While Heathcliff suffers by comparing himself, who does not know his origins, to Edgar Linton, a traditional and rich Victorian young boy, she says: "Were I in your place, I would frame high notions of my birth; and the thoughts of what I was should give me courage and dignity to support the oppressions of a little farmer!" (BRONTË, 2020[1847], p.49). If one is not reading *Wuthering Heights* for the first time and is aware of Heathcliff's upcoming revenge, it is possible to see how Nelly's words may serve to motivate Heathcliff to seek for superiority in relation to Edgar Linton.

One more evidence in the novel regarding Nelly's affinity with the Lintons and what they represent is in one of the first pieces of explanation that she gives about the people in the moors: "Very old (family), sir; and Hareton is the last of them (the Earnshaws), as our Miss Cathy is of us—I mean, of the Lintons" (BRONTË, 2020[1847]: p.28). Although Ellen has lived since her early days with the Earnshaws, she never says she is one of them. Therefore, arguably she feels more comfortable in the Grange and considering herself one of the Lintons.

John Bugg in his introduction to the Oxford edition of *Wuthering Heights* reveals how the words of Ellen also play a great part in the facts that succeed at *Wuthering Heights*. Those situations I have described and explored were selected out of many others passages in *Wuthering Heights* that reveal the great influence of Ellen Dean in the main events of Emily Brontë's novel. "Very little happens in *Wuthering Heights* for which Nelly cannot be blamed" (STERNLIEB, 2002 *apud* BUGGS, 2020, p. xxvi). According to Buggs himself "Critics have pointed out that Nelly here plants the seeds for Heathcliff's later revenge (STERNLIEB, 2002 *apud* BUGGS, 2020, p. xxvii).

My point is that Ellen Dean desired to be a part of the Victorian tradition herself, attempting to enter it as much as she could. Despite this desire being in the opposite hand of the main narrative, which depicts Catherine Earnshaw and how she is a threat to the patriarchal society of the moors, it is necessary to explore how Ellen Dean used her attitudes and power of storytelling to achieve her goals.

In sum, Ellen Dean's narrative may be considered to have been crafted to elaborate the credibility of women as writers in *Wuthering Heights*. More than that, she has been constructed to act, also, as a character. Her actions and attitudes, as it has been shown, directly impact several events which happen in the moors. Ellen's role goes significantly beyond that of a servant: she is relevant to the narrative and later her abilities of storytelling are needed so most part of the story is told.

As the main narrator and considering that even the narratives of Cathy and Isabella are inside hers, we see that Ellen Dean has got a great power. She is able, before Lockwood, to direct his gaze wherever she wants him to look at. She organizes the facts as she wishes and chooses what to show and what to leave behind, as the craft of a writer, of a storyteller, should do.

On the whole, Ellen Dean proves again that, in *Wuthering Heights*, the female characters frame the construction of the female identity of narrators who have voices of their own and work to have it reproduced. Lockwood, despite being the one who opens the novel with his narrative, in the end, turns out to be an attentive listener to the narratives of women.

2.3 Isabella Linton

Isabella Linton is the younger sister of Edgar Linton and in the beginning of the novel her home is Thrushcross Grange. In *Wuthering Heights*, her becoming a storyteller and creating a voice of her own is a painful process.

She starts the novel as the daughter of a traditional Victorian family and as a passive woman who embodies all the qualities that are expected of a Victorian lady. After Isabella faces the consequences of her decisions, she will tell her own story in her own words. The decision that brings her the most trouble is marrying Heathcliff despite seeing his demonstrations of violence. Although she starts the narrative as a character who apparently will not display any disruption with Victorian standards, it comes from Isabella one of the most untraditional behaviors of the novel: for over ten years, she lives alone with her son in happiness, far from her husband. Isabella's naivety brings her serious problems. However, it will be demonstrated how becoming conscious of her surroundings and the Victorian society

and being exposed to suffering awakens courage and defiance in the woman. Consequently, this process makes Isabella able to tell her own story.

Isabella's first appearance happens at Cathy's and Heathcliff's visit to Thrushcross Grange. Roaming the moors was part of the children's life and, eventually, they discovered Isabella's and Edgar's house. Later, while narrating the events to Ellen Dean, this is how Heathcliff described the Linton children:

Edgar and his sister had it entirely to themselves. Shouldn't they have been happy? [...] And now, guess what your good children were doing? Isabella—I believe she is eleven, a year younger than Cathy—lay screaming at the farther end of the room, shrieking as if witches were running red-hot needles into her. Edgar stood on the hearth weeping silently, and in the middle of the table sat a little dog, shaking its paw and yelping; which, from their mutual accusations, we understood they had nearly pulled in two between them. The idiots! [...] ((BRONTË, 2020[1847]: p.41)

Isabella emptied a plateful of cakes into her lap, and Edgar stood gaping at a distance. [...] I saw they were full of stupid admiration; she is so immeasurably superior to them—to everybody on earth, is she not, Nelly?". (BRONTË, 2020[1847]: p.43)

Heathcliff's description illustrates that the Linton's children, Isabella and Edgar, look and behave greatly different from Cathy and Heathcliff. Differently from the siblings, they were never seen screaming or crying in demonstrations of fragility and shallowness. Likewise, Thrushcross Grange differs from Wuthering Heights, the Linton children, being raised in a traditional Victorian home, would obviously differ from Cathy and Heathcliff. Wuthering Heights, certainly, was not a traditional Victorian home. Although the Earnshaws were a traditional and old family, their house did not display the decoration, warmth and elegance that Thrushcross Grange did. Isabella, at this point, ignores the existence of such reality. However, once she becomes aware of it, she will be influenced by Wuthering Heights and its inhabitants and undergo significant changes that will determine her future. Those changes do not come alone, they are followed by a more active voice coming from the woman and also courage to seek her goals and protect herself.

Isabella's arc demonstrates that there is more to this character than being a young woman who is destined to become an angel in the house. Despite having grown amidst the traditional Victorian values and, at first, displaying no difficulty in being a girl who fits such standards. Isabella Linton, similarly to the other women in the novel, also proves she is not that well-behaved and obedient. For instance, Isabella shows no hesitation to follow her desire when she decides to follow Heathcliff into marriage despite his having shown to be an immoral and violent man. Additionally, likewise Cathy, Ellen Dean and Catherine Linton —

that will be discussed in the following section — she also finds space to narrate her story with her own words. Isabella starts building herself as a narrator from the moment her interest for Heathcliff begins. She positions herself as a subject as she tries to approach Heathcliff. Once they are married, in a letter to Ellen Dean, she actively describes and narrates the facts that happened after the wedding and her decision to leave her traditional Victorian home. In sequence, she visits Ellen at Thrushcross Grange and narrates how she escaped Heathcliff. In the end, she flees with her child, living alone with him and arranging so the boy is under the care of her brother Edgar once she passes.

Once Cathy Earnshaw arrives to the Grange and the reader meets the Lintons, it is shown how Isabella embodies the angel of the house model and is bound to become an influence to the Earnshaw's girl. According to Heathcliff's words, Isabella and Linton seem to be limited to the domestic sphere of the Grange, drowned in their naivety and protected from the exterior. This environment is likely to absorb Cathy Earnshaw and turn her into a Victorian lady like Isabella. Nevertheless, as the novel develops, Isabella, too, is influenced by the habits of Cathy and the passion she shares with Heathcliff. This influence will, eventually, lead her to not hesitate before following Heathcliff into marriage and ignoring the dangling risk of being disgraced. Witnessing Cathy's passion influences Isabella and makes her so eager to write her own narrative that she develops the courage, for instance, to demonstrate interest for a man before he ever does for her.

One example of how Cathy Earnshaw influences Isabella occurs after Cathy marries Edgar and moves to the Grange. Heathcliff had been away for a long time and, upon his return, visits Thrushcross Grange. There, Cathy threatens to reveal to Heathcliff that Isabella is in love with him. The rage Isabella feels at that moment turns into physical harm that she inflicts directly to her sister-in-law by digging the nails on Cathy's hand: ““There's a tigress!” exclaimed Mrs. Linton, setting her (Isabella) free, and shaking her hand with pain.” (BRONTË, 2020 [1847], p. 110) The passion in Isabella is arisen by the behavior of Cathy. When Isabella's sister-in-law tries to expose her feelings to Heathcliff in a rude manner, Cathy triggers in Isabella an animalistic behavior which is shown for the first time in this passage. Once Heathcliff is aware of Isabella's passion for him, he decides to architect a revenge plan on Edgar Linton using his sister. Heathcliff approaches Isabella and, because she is passionate and naïve, he does not find much trouble in executing the plan.

One of the most important moments in Isabella's life portrayed in *Wuthering Heights* is the attempt Heathcliff makes to show her he is not a decent man. The man hangs Isabella's

dog in front of her and, yet, it does not change the woman's mind about becoming his wife. Here, Isabella seems to be blinded by illusions of living a love story by the Heathcliff's side. Whatever reason motivates Isabella's decision to marry Heathcliff despite the signs of that being a bad idea and Edgar's and Cathy's warns, it is strong enough so the woman does not change her mind or obey her brother. The most important to look at, in this moment, is not the motivation, but the action and its meaning. Marrying without her brother's blessing is an act of defiance to tradition by Isabella. Although she knows what will be the consequences within her family and understands that it means she will never be able to call the Grange her home again nor be welcome at the place, she decides to marry Heathcliff and leave Thrushcross Grange.

When Isabella flees the Grange with Heathcliff, she defies her brother and knows she will not be able to return. From this point on, Isabella interrupts her relationship with her traditional and conservative family forever. Altogether, she also tears her connection with the traditional Victorian values which are represented by Edgar Linton. Despite her marriage not being one that brought positive additions to her life, Isabella proved she was not inclined to deposit the decisions of her life in the hands of her older brother. Therefore, at this moment, she distanced herself definitely from the image of the angel in the house.

All the suffering that follows Isabella's marriage to Heathcliff was predictable. Nevertheless, the woman is surprised by the chaotic life and poor treatment she finds at Wuthering Heights. There, she finally understands that her destiny after marrying Heathcliff will not be a happy one as long as she is at Wuthering Heights. For instance, her husband does not wish to share a chamber with her, she is mistreated by the other inhabitants, Joseph, Hindley and even Hareton, who is a child but has enough bad manners to display. Also, she is warned by Hindley that he intends to kill her husband whenever he finds opportunity to do so. All the suffering seems to change Isabella and, through a letter, she reveals the suffering to Ellen Dean. By doing so, she writes the letter which establishes her position as a narrator in the novel.

From the moment Isabella first appears in Wuthering Heights to her last appearance, in the beginning of the second part of the novel, there is transformation in her personality and in the forms through which she appears in the narrative. In the beginning, she is not more than a supporting role. As the story develops, it is possible to identify her motivations and desires and the existence of a fierce personality inside the young woman. Altogether with these changes, comes a change in the narrative form. If in her early apparitions she is only slightly

mentioned in chapters that are not really about her, closer to the middle of *Wuthering Heights* she has a voice of her own and her own story being developed.

Isabella's storytelling, in other words, is present in *Wuthering Heights* through the development of autonomy in her own life, but it is not limited to it. As Cathy Earnshaw and Ellen Dean, she also has the chance of being a narrator. Through the biggest part of a chapter, a letter enables such achievement:

I got a long letter, which I considered odd, coming from the pen of a bride just out of the honeymoon. I'll read it: for I keep it yet. Any relic of the dead is precious, if they were valued living. (BRONTË, 2020 [1847], p. 117)

Precisely, the letter is a relic which brings Isabella back to life to tell her own story. Until the end of chapter thirteen, she is the narrator. Although the reader is aware that Nelly is the one reading the letter to Lockwood, there is a transportation to the moment when Isabella arrives at *Wuthering Heights* and experiences the most unpleasant time in the company of Heathcliff, Joseph, Hindley and Hareton. It happens to the presence of direct speech and quotations of dialogues in the letter:

I was not aware how openly I grieved, till Earnshaw halted opposite, in his measured walk, and gave me a stare of newly-awakened surprise. Taking advantage of his recovered attention, I exclaimed:

“I'm tired with my journey, and I want to go to bed! Where is the maid-servant? Direct me to her, as she won't come to me!”

“We have none,” he answered; “you must wait on yourself!”

“Where must I sleep, then?” I sobbed; I was beyond regarding self-respect, weighed down by fatigue and wretchedness. (BRONTË, 2020 [1847], p. 110)

Therefore, the reader perceives the moments narrated in the letter as if they were happening at the present time of reading, and under Isabella's point of view. Isabella narrates her letter completely from her perspective, providing facts and dialogues as if her voice replaces Ellen's narrative for the extension of the chapter. Additionally, the letter not only narrates the events, it also represents a demand for both advice and help.

In the beginning of the letter, it is shown how quickly Isabella has understood the nature of Heathcliff. Her narrative highlights the time and also her first impressions:

[...] my heart returned to the grange in twenty-four hours after I left it [...] I beseech you to explain, if you can, what I have married — that is, when you call to see me; and you must call, Ellen, very soon. Don't write, but come, and bring me something from Edgar. (BRONTË, 2020 [1847], p. 118)

Isabella realizes that by Heathcliff she will not have the same peace and comfort she had at the Grange. As in other moments, her description of Heathcliff, for instance, by using the question word *what*, demonstrates how his inhumanity traits are finally visible to her.

Wuthering Heights, for Isabella, is the opposite of what it meant to Cathy. While the latter had it like her heaven and the place she longs to return while living in the Grange, Isabella does not find anything she may appreciate in it:

You'll not be surprised, Ellen, at my feeling particularly cheerless, seated in worse than solitude on that inhospitable hearth, and remembering that four miles distant lay my delightful home, containing the only people I loved on earth [...] (BRONTË, 2020[1847]: p.120)

One curious moment of Isabella in Wuthering Heights comes from her initial contact with Hindley. He reveals to her that Heathcliff must keep his chamber shut, otherwise, he will kill him during his sleep. After it, he shows her his gun. Isabella spends some time contemplating the pistol in his hands:

I surveyed the weapon inquisitively. A hideous notion struck me: how powerful I should be possessing such an instrument! I took it from his hand, and touched the blade. He looked astonished at the expression my face assumed during a brief second: it was not horror, it was covetousness. (BRONTË, 2020[1847]: p.122)

Before the weapon that could take Heathcliff's life, Isabella imagines how powerful she would be in the possession of such object. Once, she was raised to be an angel in the house and dreamed of a romance with Heathcliff. At this moment, she desires for power and openly admits it to Ellen Dean. Therefore, it is significant evidence of the transformation that Isabella is undergoing at Wuthering Heights.

Another dialogue between Isabella and Hindley reveals how she has distanced herself from the life and the patterns of the life at Grange. Hindley inquires her through a comparison with her brother: "Are you as soft as your brother? Are you willing to endure to the last [...]" "I'm weary of enduring now" (BRONTË, 2020[1847]: p. 157). The comparison is provocative and almost offensive. Isabella does not let Hindley continue with the provocation. In an assertive manner, she expresses her awareness of being enduring great challenges since she arrived at Wuthering Heights. Isabella, at this point, knows she is not soft nor similar to Edgar Linton.

At Wuthering Heights, Isabella is also driven to feelings that the life in the Grange did not arise on her. She demonstrates highly emotional behavior, anger, and even hate. Joseph witnesses these moments and his reaction brings important meaning to be discussed:

I was so vexed, I flung my tray and its contents on the ground; and then seated myself at the stairs' -head, hid my face in my hands, and cried.

“Ech! ech!” exclaimed Joseph. “Weel done, Miss Cathy! weel done, Miss Cathy!”. (BRONTË, 2020[1847]: p.124).

Isabella's explosive reaction after being refused a chamber and place to rest in *Wuthering Heights* leads Joseph to compare her to Cathy when she was young. Being angry and having unladylike behavior was common for Cathy and, in this moment, Isabella repeats this behavior and, immediately, Joseph compares her to Cathy. Her behavior is, in effect, similar to Cathy's as a child. Before becoming Edgar's wife, her anger outbursts were much more numerous than after the moment she had to become the Mrs. of a house. Isabella, at the moment of her outburst, realizes she will not be treated like a lady and her behavior is proof of her acknowledgment of the fact. A poor control of emotions, definitely, is not expected of a Victorian lady. It proves, also, how Cathy reverted the roles and became a model to Isabella Linton, who should have been a model to Cathy.

Extreme feelings are not expected to be demonstrated and nurtured by Victorian ladies. The passion Isabella felt for Heathcliff was inappropriate, but he also awakens in her more inappropriate feelings: “I do hate him—I am wretched—I have been a fool! Beware of uttering one breath of this to any one at the Grange. I shall expect you every day—don't disappoint me (p.126)”. Isabella, once well-behaved and the personification of a Victorian lady, now is filled with hate as typically the inhabitants of *Wuthering Heights* are.

In the second part of the novel Isabella, once more, is given the opportunity of narrating her story and, also, demonstrating her abilities of manipulating words to achieve her goals. When Isabella starts to shape the words, she finds herself apart from her original family and with Heathcliff, a husband who does not create a new traditional family with her. When she finds herself alone, Isabella finds a weapon in herself, in her words. Now, she wishes to find herself free from Heathcliff and *Wuthering Heights*.

Having been mistreated and oppressed by Heathcliff's tyranny after their wedding, Isabella has grown feelings of hate for the man. Once he finds himself in a fragile position due to Cathy's recent death, Isabella has a good opportunity to escape. At this point, she knows him well enough to know that Cathy consists of a weak point for Heathcliff and uses this knowledge, associated with words, to escape. In a quarrel with Heathcliff in the presence of Hindley after Cathy has passed, Isabella says:

‘At the Grange, every one knows your sister would have been living now had it not been for Mr. Heathcliff. After all, it is preferable to be hated than loved by him.

When I recollect how happy we were—how happy Catherine was before he came—I'm fit to curse the day.'[...] Most likely, Heathcliff noticed more the truth of what was said, than the spirit of the person who said it. His attention was roused, I saw, for his eyes rained down tears among the ashes, and he drew his breath in suffocating sighs. I stared full at him, and laughed scornfully. The clouded windows of hell flashed a moment towards me; the fiend which usually looked out, however, was so dimmed and drowned that I did not fear to hazard another sound of derision.

“Get up, and begone out of my sight,” said the mourner”. (BRONTË, 2020[1847]: p. 158)

His pain gives Isabella opportunity to escape. Still, she keeps on provoking his anger and gets physically injured by him before she runs to the moors back to the Grange, where she meets Ellen Dean and narrates everything that happened between them before she escaped: “And far rather would I be condemned to a perpetual dwelling in the infernal regions than, even for one night, abide beneath the roof of Wuthering Heights again” (BRONTË, 2020[1847]: p.159).

The exposure to the people from Wuthering Heights and the life at such place changed Isabella for good. The woman did not spend much time mourning her previous life, but rather, started a new one as a lonely woman, without her husband, alongside her son and far from the place that caused her so much trouble. Her final appearance shows that she did not become the angel in the house she was expected to. On the contrary, she became a woman who grows out of naivety and is able to feel passion, anger, extreme feelings, and who also has a voice of her own and knows how to tell her story and even use words in her favor.

The evolution of Isabella Linton in *Wuthering Heights* shows a character who went from a girl who was ready to become the angel in the house to one who discovered other possibilities, as sexual desire, and wished for it. When Isabella flees, pregnant, from Wuthering Heights, she demonstrates how ready she is to accept the consequences of her choices and be the most important person of her own life.

Isabella, at first, seems to be the opposite of Cathy. She is sensitive, delicate, and even aesthetically looks like an angel, the perfect angel in the house. The contact with the Earnshaw family and Wuthering Heights changes her. When she meets Heathcliff, however, some passion and blind love is born in Isabella. He tries to kill her dog, however, she does not care and marries him anyway. Although she is naive at first, she also proves she is brave. She has the courage to do what she wants to despite the disapproval of family and she surrenders herself to it. The painful and challenging experiences she faces for deviating from the traditional Victorian path for a lady will also lead her to finding a voice and becoming a

storyteller and narrator in *Wuthering Heights*. As the other women in the novel, not only she narrates the story, but also proves to know how to use words according to her interests.

2.4 Catherine Linton

Catherine Linton is the daughter of Cathy Earnshaw and Edgar Linton. She is one of the main characters in the second part of *Wuthering Heights*. Being the daughter of Edgar Linton and a product of his marriage to Cathy, Catherine Linton is one who suffers most directly the consequences of Heathcliff's revenge.

It has been demonstrated, in the present work, that Catherine Earnshaw – Cathy –, Ellen Dean, and Isabella Linton are arguably narrators in *Wuthering Heights*. Moreover, these women use language wisely to both having their voices listened to and influence the facts which happen in the moors. Catherine Linton may also be read as a narrator in the novel and, likewise Ellen Dean, her mother, and her aunt, she also demonstrates awareness of the possibility of using words in her favor.

In *Wuthering Heights*, Catherine Linton uses words as means to achieve her purposes. First, to visit Wuthering Heights and her cousin, Linton Heathcliff, even though she is forbidden to do so. Afterwards, her words become a weapon to fight the oppression she suffers while she is under Heathcliff's tyranny and, later, to educate Hareton, her husband-to-be. It is relevant to the present discussion to point that Catherine Linton, while at Thrushcross Grange, under the watch of Ellen Dean and her father, starts using words strategically when there is something she wants and that is not possible to achieve yet.

First, it is necessary to understand the identity of Catherine Linton. Being the daughter of Catherine Earnshaw and Edgar Linton, she is, also, one of the consequences of her mother's decision to abide by the Victorian standards and become married to a man as Edgar. Heathcliff, who Cathy loved since she was a child, was not what Victorian standards would consider an appropriate husband. Catherine is born right after her mom, who had been sick, succumbs to her emotional disease, a consequence of being apart from her original nature and Heathcliff. Due to being raised by her father and Ellen Dean, Catherine Linton becomes a Victorian child with little awareness of what exists apart from her Victorian domestic life. Throughout the novel, Catherine's arc goes from a peaceful Victorian childhood to the chaotic

life at Wuthering Heights, a house that greatly differs from the Victorian standards of home that the Grange represented. In Wuthering Heights, there was not any adequate Victorian example for the young Catherine, just the tyranny of Heathcliff seeking for his revenge. The last appearance of Catherine Linton in the novel is as the owner of the two main properties and the richest person in the moors. In this section, a study of her arc and how she used words and narrative to reach this position will be carried.

Catherine Linton is born inside a traditional Victorian home and, as explained by Ellen Dean, she has the routine of a recluse girl:

Till she reached the age of thirteen she had not once been beyond the range of the park by herself. Mr. Linton would take her with him a mile or so outside, on rare occasions; but he trusted her to no one else. Gimmerton was an unsubstantial name in her ears; the chapel, the only building she had approached or entered, except her own home. (BRONTË, 2020[1847]: p.164)

A routine which is limited to the domestic sphere and church demonstrate a girl who is growing to become an angel in the house. The closest model of a woman for young Catherine was Ellen Dean. Although not an angel in the house, before Catherine, Ellen occupies a traditional and respectful place in a Victorian home, therefore, also in the Victorian society. Both Ellen and Edgar only address Catherine by using kind words:

She was the most winning thing that ever brought sunshine into a desolate house — a real beauty in face —, with the Earnshaws' handsome dark eyes, but the Lintons' fair skin, and small features, and yellow curling hair. Her spirit was high, though not rough, and qualified by a heart sensitive and lively to excess in its affections. That capacity for intense attachments reminded me of her mother; still she did not resemble her; for she could be soft and mild as a dove, and she had a gentle voice and pensive expression: her anger was never furious; her love never fierce; it was deep and tender. (BRONTË, 2020 [1847], p. 164)

She was expected, therefore, to become a Victorian lady, an angel in the house. Ellen's words, however, demonstrate her concern regarding Catherine growing to be resistant to the Victorian standards like her mother before her. a

Although Catherine Linton starts her story being greatly different from her mother as a child, her path will bring her closer to Cathy Earnshaw as the narrative develops. Her motivations and whims will bring her to Wuthering Heights, her mother's first home, and make her a misfit to the Victorian standards and someone who wisely use words.

One of Catherine Linton's motivation is being close to her cousin, Linton Heathcliff, son of Heathcliff and Isabella Linton. Before meeting him, Catherine spent twelve years where she had everything she wanted and needed. But once she became familiar with the

existence of her cousin, she would not confine to the limits her father imposed anymore and, for the first time, Catherine uses words to obtain something she could not have.

“Oh, Catherine!” I cried, sorrowfully. “You know you have been doing wrong, or you wouldn’t be driven to uttering an untruth to me. That does grieve me. I’d rather be three months ill, than hear you frame a deliberate lie.”

She sprang forward, and bursting into tears, threw her arms round my neck.

“Well, Ellen, I’m so afraid of you being angry,” she said. “Promise not to be angry, and you shall know the very truth: I hate to hide it.”

We sat down in the window-seat; I assured her I would not scold, whatever her secret might be, and I guessed it, of course; so she commenced—

“I’ve been to Wuthering Heights, Ellen” (BRONTË, 2020[1847]: p.15)

In the passage above, it is seen how Catherine manipulates words, lies, and then convinces Ellen not to scold her for having been at Wuthering Heights despite the prohibition of her father. While narrating her time at Wuthering Heights to Ellen, her use of words to keep Ellen from becoming angry at her is clear once more:

“On the morrow I was sad; partly because you were poorly, and partly that I wished my father knew, and approved of my excursions: but it was beautiful moonlight after tea; and, as I rode on, the gloom cleared [...]” (BRONTË, 2020[1847]: p.215)

Catherine, firstly, highlights how guilty she felt and her awareness of her wrong actions. After it, however, she tries to explain how she felt well outside and how the cousin, Linton, needed her.

Edgar Linton’s prohibiting Catherine to visit Wuthering Heights is due to his awareness of how evil Heathcliff may be to her. However, he is not able to keep his daughter safe from Heathcliff and, eventually, the young woman is forced to marry Linton Heathcliff. After that, her father and husband soon die and all her properties go to Heathcliff.

Living in Wuthering Heights under Heathcliff’s tyranny, the use of words become relevant once more in Catherine’s life. She will manipulate the words to protect herself, prove herself to be a reliable narrator, and also to influence other characters.

As her mother before her, it was important to Catherine to protect herself from Joseph and his hard words. Cathy, as a child, had Heathcliff to stand by her while suffering from Joseph’s chastisements. Catherine had to do it by herself:

“You scandalous old hypocrite!” she replied. “Are you not afraid of being carried away bodily, whenever you mention the devil’s name? I warn you to refrain from provoking me, or I’ll ask your abduction as a special favour! Stop! look here, Joseph,” she continued, taking a long, dark book from a shelf; “I’ll show you how

far I've progressed in the Black Art: I shall soon be competent to make a clear house of it. The red cow didn't die by chance; and your rheumatism can hardly be reckoned among providential visitations!"

"Oh, wicked, wicked!" gasped the elder; "may the Lord deliver us from evil!" (BRONTË, 2020 [1847], p. 11).

In the passage above, Catherine uses hard and offensive words against Joseph. Additionally, she uses his religiosity against him when making him believe she is a witch and is acquainted with the "dark arts". Joseph labels Catherine as "wicked" while, in the first part of *Wuthering Heights*, Mr. Earnshaw said Cathy was not a "good girl". It is possible to comprehend not being a good girl and being wicked as synonyms. At this point in the novel, Catherine Linton is a misfit to tradition, like her mother before her, although through a different construction, also was:

"No, reprobate! you are a castaway—be off, or I'll hurt you seriously! I'll have you all modelled in wax and clay! and the first who passes the limits I fix shall—I'll not say what he shall be done to—but, you'll see! Go, I'm looking at you!" (BRONTË: 2020 [1847], p. 11)

"Then I hope his ghost will haunt you; and I hope Mr. Heathcliff will never get another tenant till the Grange is a ruin," she answered, sharply.

Hearken, hearken, shoo's cursing on 'em! muttered Joseph". (BRONTË, 2020 [1847], p. 13)

These passages show that Catherine Linton uses her words to scare Joseph away. Joseph used to oppress Cathy, her mom, as a child. He did it, especially, using religious punishments. Catherine Linton, however, does not allow Joseph to be an authority over her. With her words, Cathy proves she is not afraid of any devil or Christian chastisement. In opposition, she mentions, with not a shadow of shame before the religious tyrant, that she masters the black arts, mentioning she is able to cast spells with her words, do voodoo, and even evoke ghosts.

Being a man of tradition, Joseph is threatened by Catherine's words because they are powerful. Words from women have already been shown to be powerful enough to break tradition. Therefore, that power turns Catherine into a villain before conservative eyes like Joseph's.

Catherine demonstrates resistance through her wise use of words. While facing the violent attitude she receives from Joseph, the young woman is aware of her possibilities of scaring the overly religious man when choosing her words carefully as to sound like a witch.

Her words, also, reinforce the power of her point of view. Using her words, she

demands that he obey her and positions her gaze and observation as a threat to the man. Catherine understands how to threaten and which words she should use, what images she would evoke.

A wise use of words is also relevant to Catherine to establish herself as a reliable narrator. Previously in this work, I have detailed why John Lockwood may be acknowledged as an unreliable narrator. Both Catherine Earnshaw and Linton are central to the development of this idea. The socially awkward moments he experiences during his first moments in the moors all feature Catherine Linton somehow. For instance, when Lockwood and Catherine are alone in the living room, the reader finds out how Lockwood does not have enough information and experiences to adequately comprehend — read — what happens at *Wuthering Heights*.

This discovery is brought, firstly, by a comparison between his point of view and gaze and Catherine Linton's one. The construction of these moments prove how Catherine is suitable for telling and influencing her own story, while Lockwood is inappropriate to narrate any event set in the moors.

In the beginning of Chapter II, a passage symbolizes the strength of the point of view of women in *Wuthering Heights*. Lockwood describes the moment as follows: “She never opened her mouth. I stared—she stared also. At any rate, she kept her eyes on me in a cool, regardless manner, exceedingly embarrassing and disagreeable” (BRONTË, 2020 [1847], p.7). Lockwood's description reveals how Catherine does not demonstrate a traditional behavior. Differently from the Victorian standard of a well-behaved lady, Catherine stares Lockwood in return and refuses to be an object. Her attitude is aligned with that of a subject, a narrator, while Lockwood feels bothered.

Catherine Linton, as mentioned before, has grown to become an unusual lady, since it is not usual for a Victorian lady to fight the limitations brought to her due to living at *Wuthering Heights*. Daily, she has to resist Heathcliff's attempts to control every single one of her acts and steps and Joseph offending her likewise he did with her mother before her. In every one of her words in chapter two, it is clear how, despite the threats, she persists in maintaining control and refuses to become an object. This attitude dialogues with the attacks of the dogs to Lockwood that happen in the beginning of the novel. These elements are greatly symbolical of a reaction against Patriarchy from a woman, especially when the female dog, Juno, is named after the Roman goddess who protects the home. When Lockwood

addresses the offspring of Juno in front of Catherine and tries to initiate a conversation, he commits a comic mistake and she discourages further conversation sharply:

‘Ah, your favourites are among these!’ I continued, turning to an obscure cushion full of something like cats.

‘A strange choice of favourites,’ she observed scornfully.

Unluckily, it was a heap of dead rabbits [...] (BRONTË, 2020 [1847], p. 7)

This mistake of Lockwood shows, once more, how unprepared to conduct this narrative he was, and Catherine does not hesitate in releasing a remark that leaves Lockwood embarrassed and interrupts the conversation. Still in relation to Lockwood, Catherine’s behavior towards him demonstrates, yet, another deviation from the standard of a traditional lady. She does not hesitate before using her words to dictate what his actions must be: “You should not have come out” (BRONTË, 2020 [1847], p. 7).

The first two chapters of *Wuthering Heights*, therefore, justify why someone as Lockwood could not be the narrator of the main events in the novel, and how Catherine is more than merely an object who accepts orders or gazes. Lockwood does not have enough information to conduct a narrative on the moors. His narrative initiates the novel as a metaphor for the ideas that a standard Victorian man would demonstrate before becoming acquainted with the moors.

The next demonstration of Catherine’s control of words lies when Cathy teaches Hareton how to read. This gesture is symbolic of the type of relationship that will grow between them. By teaching Hareton how to read, Catherine is able, also to transmit ideologies, ideas, concepts, and definitions. Hareton, therefore, will learn a language that is Catherine’s: the language of a woman.

Heathcliff, after becoming aware of their friendship, tells Hareton not to listen to Cathy because she will bewitch him and her words will destroy him (BRONTË, 2020[1847]). He becomes apprehensive that she will turn Hareton against him. Heathcliff’s revenge is against the ones who took Cathy away from him. In the life of Catherine Linton, however, he is a man who steals all her properties and keeps her like a prisoner inside *Wuthering Heights*, even forcing her into marriage. Once he becomes a rich man and the owner of property, Heathcliff uses his power to subjugate a woman to his power. Her words scare him because Heathcliff comprehends that they are capable of manipulating Hareton and creating himself

an enemy inside his property. An enemy which could eventually threaten the power position he has achieved in the moors.

Ellen Dean supports the Catherine's attempts of being close to Hareton. She becomes a mediator in the relationship of the young couple: "And tell him, if he'll take it, I'll come and teach him to read it right" (BRONTË, 2020[1847]: p.273). It is possible to consider that, by saying "read it right", that Catherine Linton considers her ideas to be right and worth being followed and spread.

The arc of Catherine Linton, therefore, proves herself to be one of the narrators in *Wuthering Heights* who, also, influences other characters and all the narrative with her words. Catherine, in her childhood, is a lovely and welcoming girl. Her father, mostly, but also Ellen Dean, educated her into growing as a respectable lady, the ideal angel in the house: full of affection and tenderness, and responsible for maintaining happiness in the house. Catherine Linton grows protected until she meets the world outside, when she is thirteen years old. She escapes the circle of protection represented by Thrushcross Grange when, like her mother and aunt, Catherine starts growing a desire for freedom, exploring, and new experiences. Her father and Ellen, who raised her as a recluse, tried hard to keep her distant from *Wuthering Heights*. She refused to obey and, as a consequence, had to face the pain Heathcliff inflicted her due to his wish of revenge. Yet, she regains control of her life by the end of the novel. At this point, it is clear to see, because she teaches Hareton how to read, that her words, from that moment on, will be the ones that rule in the moors. Heathcliff and Joseph being nervous around her shows how Catherine's words are powerful and they are aware of it.

From this point of view, Catherine continues the journey of her mother and goes back to *Wuthering Heights* as Cathy before her mother wished to do. There, Catherine Linton encounters her mother, at first. After it, she rises to become the owner of both main properties in the novel, as her mother before her never did.

In relation to love, Catherine Linton, as an educated woman is, like her mother before her, in relation to her object of desire, in a position of privilege. Differently from her mother, though, she can marry Hareton despite his being poor because she is the owner of both properties and no authority is over her now.

If the arc of both Catherines are compared, their names evolve in this way: Cathy Earnshaw wishes to be Catherine Heathcliff before she marries, but she becomes Cathy Linton and gives birth to another Cathy Linton. This Catherine, later, becomes Catherine Heathcliff, but without the same passion and fire the first Catherine would have in this place.

After it, when she approaches Hareton, she finds the passion and the heat of the Earnshaw. After they marry, she will return to being Catherine Earnshaw. As a child, Cathy Earnshaw could not be the heir of *Wuthering Heights* because of her brother, but her daughter will. It all belongs to her and, because of that, she is able to marry a man who does not have any possessions but who she is attracted to. This return to being the Catherine Earnshaw her mother would have desired to be could not have happened if Catherine Linton was not prolific in using words to construct the life she desires.

In *Wuthering Heights*, Emily Brontë created four women narrators. Although some voices are more present throughout the narrative than others, Cathy Earnshaw, Catherine Linton, Ellen Dean, and Isabella Linton, as demonstrated in the present work, use words and their ability of storytelling to achieve their goals and fulfill desires. Such attitude turns the four women in subjects who break with the Victorian tradition and the passivity of the angel in the house. The four women tell their stories, under their points of view and strongly based in their singular experiences of life in the moors. As narrators in a novel, each of the women has their voice crafted by Emily so they fit the typical narrative of the English novel.

Ian Watt, in his *The Rise of the Novel*, provides in the early pages a definition of novel:

The novel is the genre which mostly mirrors this individual renewing reorientation. The novelist has as primordial function providing the impression of fidelity to the human experience. (WATT, 1990, p. 13 -14)⁶

The four women's experiences are voiced by themselves in *Wuthering Heights*. Turning the novel in one that enables women to tell their own stories, speak their truth, and voice their feelings. The narrative in *Wuthering Heights* relates to some aspects revealed in Watt's study of *Pamela*, by Samuel Richardson, one of the novels that Watt studies in his work.

Watt (1990) argues that, in Richardson's work, he sets what is the direction of a novel's narrative when he decides to, with his words, embody the domestic life and the domestic experience which belong to her. This way the reader is able to enter Pamela's house and mind. It is also argued by Watt (1990) that Richardson creates a primordial experience regarding comprehending the individuality of a character.

⁶ Translated from the edition in Portuguese by Companhia das Letras, which says "O romance é a forma literária que reflete mais plenamente essa reorientação individualista e inovadora. [...] O romancista tem por função primordial dar a impressão de fidelidade à experiência humana".

In a novel, the proximity between reader and character is given by enabling the reader to participate in the experience a character's life. As an embrace, the reader is involved in setting, feelings, thoughts and interactions with others. Watt explains that

The content of minute-by-minute consciousness constitutes the true personality of the subject and determines its relationship with others: it is only through this contact with consciousness that the reader may participate fully in the life of a fictional character. (WATT, 1990, p. 202)⁷

This is the novelty brought by the novel that had not been witnessed yet. In *Wuthering Heights*, the female narrators are crafted to be close to the reader and provide a special feeling of closeness. It was a unique feature of the novel as a genre which Emily Brontë uses. Watt (202) also highlights how this is a unique feature of the romance. It provides the feeling of being in touch not with literature, but with life inside the mind of the protagonists.

Emily, therefore, follows this tradition which was started by Richardson, and uses the possibilities given by the novel to create identification between reader and her women narrators. According to Watt, in novel, we

Relate not with actions and situations, but with the agents themselves, and there has never been so many opportunities of participating without restrictions of the private life of fictional characters as the ones Richardson has provided. (WATT, 1990, p.212)⁸

Wuthering Heights, as one of the works studied by the Feminist scholars during the second wave of Feminism, proves the power of this identification. Its meaning reveals, in Feminist readings, transgressive characters who distanced from traditional gender standards. Characters who, as the women who meet them in different times, also want to tell their own stories.

Emily Brontë pushes the reader closer to her narrators' mind and home. It is possible to be intimately with the four women in her ideas in feelings. According to Richardson's model, Emily uses the written genres, as letters and diary pages. Those are genres that, in their

⁷ Translated from the edition in Portuguese by Companhia das Letras, which says "É esse conteúdo de consciência minuto a minuto que constitui a verdadeira personalidade do indivíduo e determina seu relacionamento com os outros: só através do contato com essa consciência o leitor pode participar inteiramente da vida de uma personagem de ficção".

⁸ Translated from the edition in Brazilian Portuguese by Companhia das Letras, which says "Identificamo-nos não com atos e situações, mas com os próprios agentes, e nunca houve tantas oportunidades de participar sem restrições da vida interior das personagens de ficção como as que Richardson proporcionou".

end, carry intense emotions. Such intimacy between reader and narrators draws a portrait of how each woman break with the traditional angel in the house image.

Therefore, Emily Brontë's defense of women as narrators, built inside the novel genre, includes resemblance with one of the most important works to the rise of the novel. Emily crafted *Wuthering Heights* so the reader would closely discover the story from a female point of view mostly, and also witness their homes, point of views, and have a wide understanding of their feelings. Feelings which included passion that many Victorian authors would argue not even to exist in women.

Norman Friedman (2002) highlights the different manners through which a story is told to the reader. These manners are set, according to Friedman (2002), once it is defined who speaks to the reader; from which position this person speaks from; which means the narrator uses to do so; and how involved in the story they are. Studying Emily Brontë's narrators through these three aspects will reveal their different possibilities of action in the novel. Possibilities which enable them to break with tradition and achieve their ends.

Ellen Dean, for instance, fits Friedman (2002)'s explanation of the narrator which is also a witness. This narrator is inside the story as a character. The reader accesses the narrator's thoughts, feelings, and perceptions. This narrator-witness, as Friedman (2002) names it, is able to select which facts they will reveal to the reader. This is precisely what Ellen Deans does when she narrates the story to John Lockwood. Another possibility which appears for this narrator is, Friedman (2002) explains, is the possibility of inferring information and presenting elements as letters to the reader, similarly to what Ellen does when she reads Isabella's letter to Lockwood. These possibilities guarantee Ellen a high level of influence which, previously in the work, it has been shown how she uses it to manipulate facts around her. She also uses her voice to display her disapproval of the behavior she witnesses in Cathy and Heathcliff.

Cathy Earnshaw and Isabella Linton, in their turn, fit Friedman (2002)'s definition of narrator-protagonist. He describes this type of narrator as being too sunk and limited to their thoughts, feelings and perceptions. In Friedman (2002)'s own words, "the point of view is that of a fixed center". Therefore, Cathy and Isabella are able to more precisely and closely describe their feelings and, because of it, the reader has more possibilities to feeling closer to them, relating to, and comprehending their standpoint.

In *Wuthering Heights*, Ellen Dean is arguably a great influential character, as it has been shown. However, Cathy's passion moves the narrative even once she is not alive

anymore. The reader becomes acquainted to her feelings and presence from the start to the end of the novel.

FINAL IDEAS

In this work, I studied *Wuthering Heights* alongside the history of the Brontë family, of women writers and, and, additionally, relevant aspects of the Victorian age. In my reading, I argued in favor of identifying, in the novel, a defense of women as writers. This defense is, in other words, a validation of writing as part of the female identity.

Writing was not an activity commonly attributed to women in the 19th century. It conflicted directly with the domestic ideology which expected women to be an angel in the house, as in Patmore's poem. Yet, the Victorian age had many women who broke with tradition, became writers and attempted to begin a career and live from their pen. Therefore, Emily Brontë's writing was, by itself, a transgression from tradition.

The criticism that Emily received from critics represents what *Wuthering Heights* stands against by having a transgressive narrative and transgressive narrators. When critics argue against women who craft stories of violence and passion as Emily Brontë's novel is, they attempt to keep women limited to tradition. In other words, they try to maintain the domestic ideology by invalidating women as writers with freedom of mind. Emily works, on the other hand, to validate the creativity and ability of women with words.

It was demonstrated how Emily Brontë, throughout her life, built herself as a writer and how writing as such a vital activity that whenever she distanced herself from her pen the consequences were harmful. Emily could never work as a governess or as a teacher because of how distant from writing she would get. The exhausting activities of having to work would consume all the active hours of a day and made Emily so tired and sick that returning home was the only option so she could remain alive. Although she had her share of domestic duties, Emily's life revolved mostly around her writing and her imagination.

In the biography of Charlotte Brontë written by Elizabeth Gaskell, it has been seen how the author was concerned with her reputation and Charlotte's. It proves the awareness of how easily their reputations could be challenged depending on the nature of the texts they wrote and how critics would receive it. Therefore, Gaskell brings the Brontë sister's geniuses in becoming the accomplished writers they were, but also praise their domestic duties and roles. Emily's development as a writer included witnessing the evolution of her sisters as writers. Writing was the center of the small writing society which the Brontë siblings created. Together, they would create fantastic worlds with many characters and political systems, the

ones they named Gondal, Angria, and Glass Town. It was a habit the siblings had for years and in the pages of their juvenilia, the seeds of inspiration for future works of the Brontë sisters, as *Wuthering Heights* and *Jane Eyre* were identified. Therefore, Emily was and had, before her, evidence of the female capacity of becoming accomplished writers. The Brontë family was also aware that this fact was not acknowledged or well accepted by society. This reason motivated their adopting pseudonyms.

In the Victorian age, women, supposed to be angels in the house, were not expected to write a novel as *Wuthering Heights*. The violence and passion of the writing was incompatible with what was expected of a Victorian lady. The violence itself shocked the public even before it was disclosed that the novel came from the pen of a woman.

My main point is that Emily Brontë, while aware of the limitations for a woman to become a writer, cared to elaborate four women narrators with strong voices inside her narrative. All her narrators, Ellen Dean, Cathy Earnshaw, Catherine Linton, and Isabella Linton, contrast with the only male narrator, John Lockwood.

Although *Wuthering Heights* has a male narrator which initiates the narrative, it is visible that he is crafted to be considered an unreliable narrator. The contrast between John Lockwood and the women narrators reveals that he is a stranger who does not have enough information to conduct an accurate narrative of the life which differs so much from anything he had witnessed in his life until this point.

Among the women narrators, Ellen Dean, being the only narrator who is not a protagonist and, therefore, is able to distance herself more from the main events, is also the one with more possibilities. She conducts the narrative for the longest time and is able to pick the facts, events, and even memorabilia which will be presented to Lockwood, the outsider.

In the development of Catherine Linton throughout the story, it is seen how she is expected to be an angel in the house because of the way she was raised in a traditional Victorian home. In the end, however, her arc is concluded by her becoming the whip who tames society which Cathy, her mother, asked as a gift. Catherine is the most powerful person in the narrative by the end of *Wuthering Heights*. For instance, she tames Hareton, teaches him with her words, and enters a relationship where the dynamics will not reduce her to be an angel in the house. Isabella, despite her initial naïve behavior to fall for Heathcliff and traditional upbringing, demonstrates to be brave enough as she becomes a lonely mother living in London raising her son with happiness despite having been rejected by her brother and given only little help. When she sees what the cruelty of a man may do in her life, she is not passive,

fights back and does not give up her son, her life, and happiness. Also, Isabella demonstrates great deviation from tradition when, after becoming closer to Cathy, she opens herself to feeling passion and desire.

Emily's elaboration of the narrative follows the model of Richardson. According to Ian Watt, Richardson was pioneer in establishing a personal and detailed narrative where the reader is able to join the mind of a character. In *Wuthering Heights*, being the text a novel, the reader is intimately close to the mind of women who defied the limits of tradition using words and their abilities of storytelling, each one in their own way.

The lives of men and women are different, and Virginia Woolf has argued about it in *A Room of One's Own*. Their literatures are expected to be different. However, the differences cannot be used as arguments to say women cannot write or are not as talented or gifted as men are. Woolf argues against essentialism and tradition when they point that women may not create a character as Heathcliff, and Emily Brontë is evidence of the possibility of doing it prolifically.

Emily Brontë crafted *Wuthering Heights*, as she crafted her life, to prove that women can write and tell stories. The doubts that critics in her time had regarding the novel being written by a women proved the gender limitations believed to exist. Back when *Wuthering Heights* was published, Emily Brontë defied the poor existing ideas about women as writers and the female identity and created a novel which figured among the rediscovered works by the Feminists in the 20th century, during the second wave of Feminism.

While I finish the present work, in 2022, I witness women achieving more space in the literary universe. However, disparity still exists, alongside with prejudice. It is still seen how women are restricted to certain genres, find more challenges to publish, and face sexism.

Wuthering Heights, when studied through the standpoint I have established, is a significant work in the history of women writers. It has an elaborated crafting which proves how women may be skilled in writing and storytelling. More than that, it is, in itself, a defiance to the traditional Victorian society and a milestone in the achievements women have in literature.

As an aspiring literature professor, I see, in this research, a reminder of the importance of bringing young women closer to literature and other types of art. Not only should professors expect to see more women writers, but also guide them to a wider comprehension of the importance of dominating storytelling and the use of words in their favor. May the

words become the whip that, even in the 21st century, women still need to tame the limiting gender standards.

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