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**The Motif of Insanity in the Brontes' Novels:**  
**Charlotte Bronte's *Villette* and Emily Bronte's *Wuthering***  
***Heights***

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**Dedication**

*To the memory of my father*

### **Acknowledgments**

All praise is to Allah the most compassionate the Almighty, who has guided me to this achievement.

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### **Abstract**

This dissertation is an investigation into the correlation between the woman's mental abnormality and the emotional failure with reference to Charlotte Bronte's *Villette* and Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights*. The problematic that is raised is in what way each of the Bronte sisters conceives female insanity. The aim of this study is to display the reaction of the Bronte sisters against their patriarchal codes which curtailed the woman's privacy. The study adopts an eclectic approach, which draws on feminist and psychoanalytic theories in literary criticism, so as to psychoanalyze the two female protagonists. *Villette* is an insight into the repercussions of repression on the protagonist's, Lucy Snowe, mental state. However, *Wuthering Heights* stands as a feminine voice to indulge Catherine Earnshaw, the protagonist, to engage in a double passionate connection. The analysis demonstrates that insanity which results from a precluded emotional expression and a severe disillusionment of the existing world could become a source of liberation from the social bounds. Thus, the analysis of the two aforementioned protagonists constitute a progressive model of a would-be rebellious Victorian woman.

### **Key terms**

Insanity, Charlotte Bronte, Emily Bronte, repression, patriarchy, rebellion, passion, Lucy Snowe, Catherine Earnshaw, *Wuthering Heights*, *Villette*

## ملخص

هذه المذكرة هي محاولة لاستكشاف العلاقة التي تربط الاضطراب النفسي من جهة بالاضطراب العاطفي و الكبت العاطفي من جهة أخرى من خلال دراسة الشخصيتين الرئيسيتين, لوسي سنو و كاترين ايرنشو, في روايتي فيلات لشارلوت بروني و مرتفعات وذرينغ لاميلي بروني على التوالي. وتحاول هذه الدراسة ان تجيب عن الإشكالية التالية: كيف تنظر كل من الأختين لاضطرابات المرأة النفسية. الهدف من هذه الدراسة هو إظهار رد فعل الأختين على الضوابط التي وضعها مجتمعهم الذكوري للتقليص من حرياتهم الشخصية. استخدمت نهج انتقائي بالدمج بين مذهب التحليل النفسي و الأنثوي لتحليل الشخصيتين السابق ذكرهما. تمثل روايتي فيلات تلميحا لتداعيات الكبت العاطفي على حالة البطلة لوسي سنو النفسية و العقلية. بينما تمثل مرتفعات وذرينغ صوتا أنثويا , لتبجح لكاترين ايرنشو البطلة الخوض في ازدواجية عاطفية. وتبين نتائج التحليل في هذه الدراسة أن الجنون الناتج عن الضغوطات النفسية التي تفرضها القيم الفيكتورية قد يتحول مصدرا لتحرر المرأة من العهود الاجتماعية. حيث سمح تحليل الشخصيات المذكورة سلفا ببناء مثال المرأة الفيكتورية المثيرة.

**الكلمات المفتاح:** الجنون, شارلوت بروني, اميلي بروني, الكبت العاطفي, الذكورية, الثوران, العاطفة, لوسي سنو, كاترين ايرنشو, مرتفعات وذرينغ, فيلات

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## **Definition of terms**

### **Insanity**

It Correlates with the “diminished capacity” of controlling the body and differentiating right from wrong ,i.e. irrationality ( R. Lazarus and B. Lazarus 201). In literary terms, insanity evokes deviation, abnormality, and rebelliousness.

### **Id**

It is one of the three agencies of the psyche ,referred to as libidinal desires and instinctual impulses. Being an element of the psychic apparatus ,the id is driven by the pleasure-principle which requests “immediate gratification” of desires and urges( Evans 71).

### **Superego**

known as an “interior moral agency, ” the superego is an aspect of the psychic apparatus which acts according to the morality principle. It represents one’s internalized moral standards and values which are acquired from family and society and commonsense to make judgments about what is right and what is wrong (Evans 56).

### **Ego**

The ego is driven by reality-principle which expresses desires striven by the id in a socially acceptable forms. It serves as an operator in the conflict between the insatiable requirements of the id and the impossibility of the strict obligations which are dictated by the superego, and the possible offerings of satisfaction by “reality”( Evans 53).

### **Libido**

It is a sexual energy which can be increased ,decreased and displaced. Libido and censor form a cyclical relationship of prompting desires in the mind and repressing them into the subconscious (Evans 103).

### **Sublimation**

It is a process of the reorientation of libidinal desires towards non-sexual purposes. As for literary works the writer unconsciously transforms his forbidden suppressed sexual tensions



into socially allowable expressed forms through a poetic language which unveils his psyche( Evans 13).

### **The Gothic Romance**

It is a Germanic term referring to a type of prose fiction which depicts the mysterious suffering of a heroine, due to supernatural and sensational occurrences. This typical story reflects perverse forms of natural impulses mingled with nightmarish horrors, melodramatic happenings ,and psychological abnormalities. Mary Shelly's *Frankstein* , Bronte's *Wuthering Heights*, Dickens' *Bleak House*, are examples of this literary genre. (Abrahams 111).

### **Denial**

it is one of the defence mechanisms which requires a direct effort to avoid displeasure, i.e. ignoring unpleasant realities. It is also identified as an act of objecting confessing these painful realities to others (Milon 26-27). It has harmful effects on the mind.

### **Repression**

It is a defence mechanism which runs according to the principle of reality in which the ego keeps unpleasant thoughts from reaching consciousness (Milon 26). That is, the ego defends itself from certain ideas in the subconscious through the process of censorship, leading frequently into hysteria (Easthope 49).

### **Fantasy**

It is the creation of an illusory world in order to evade a conflict and satisfy pleasurable urges (Milon 27). It is also described as an imaginary scene where the person fulfills a wish, which is expressed either in dreams or other forms of art (Easthope 128).

### **Projection**

It is a defence mechanism, meaning the attribution of one's incompatible emotions or subjective wrongdoings to others in order to avoid painful blame (Milon 2).

### General Introduction

Although England was ruled by Queen Victoria, women were crushed emotionally as well as psychologically. The Victorian era was culturally ruled by patriarchal rigidity that located women in a narrowed room, denying them freedom of expression. Yet, the Victorian women possessed willingness to rebel either externally or internally. Some of them, who in spite of their cramped lives, avoided any verbal objection or behavioural deviation from the conventional norms.

Some of them were angry and confronted “Victorian Medievalism” with their socio-psychological feminine literature (Morris 4). Among these feminine writers who realized that a woman’s cry could be heard but through literary works which are centered around rebellious female protagonists were the Bronte sisters. Anne, Emily, and Charlotte, who were endowed with rebellious spirits, sharp talent, and inspiring background, literarily implied their dissatisfaction with the idealization of womanhood, which chained the woman to a life of domesticity.

The Bronte sisters and Jane Austen stand in complete opposition. While Austen’s literature is a resonance of reason, conformity and decorum, the Brontes’ is an echo of violence, passion, and rebellion (Stephen 195). Particularly, Emily’s *Wuthering Heights* and Charlotte’s *Villette* resonate women’s mental illnesses and psychological debilities. Through these novels, which highlight female protagonists being in conflict between their natural urges and cultural constraints, Emily and Charlotte challenged the prevailing patriarchal cultural standards of the nineteenth century. Thus, a resultant mental collapse which could be an aspect of rebellion manifests itself as a motif in the aforementioned novels.

*Wuthering Heights*, Emily’s only novel which was published in 1847 under the pseudo-name of Ellis Bell, is a gothic romance where the author merges illicit romantic affair between Catherine Earnshaw and Heathcliff with an abnormal explosive passion in the wild

moors and “wuthering sky” (Sanders 421). It depicts disrupted tensions between such dichotomies as nature and culture, as well as consciousness and unconsciousness (David 66). These binaries are symbolically portrayed in the juxtaposition of two opposite settings, i.e. the Heights and the Grange.

*Villette*, Charlotte’s final novel written and published in 1853, is a bildungsroman, a “heretic narrative” of the twenty-three years Lucy Snowe who experiences internal conflicts (Bronte 460). The protagonist, therefore, exhibits her two episodes of mental breakdown due to both an excessive self-control and restricted external constraints.

Despite the fact that in 1837 Robert Southey, the Poet Laureate, believed that “literature cannot be the business of a woman’s life,” the Bronte sisters considerably contributed to the mid-nineteenth century English literature (qtd. in Adams 9). In addition to this, the Brontes rebuked their society for the prevalence of the Victorian fanaticism that mentally troubled women. This dilemma is echoed in both Emily’s *Wuthering Heights* and Charlotte’s *Villette*. The problematic that is stated in this research is the way the aforementioned Brontes’ novels, through the exploration of the female mental health crisis, overtone a critique to the Victorian cultural sterility, denying the woman free emotional expression.

Although *Wuthering Heights* anticipated the creation of *Villette* by four years, both are thematically interrelated in terms of the lack of female mental health, which seems to be a side effect of the restrictions of patriarchal conventions. In the light of what has been mentioned above, this dissertation is expected to provide an approaching answer to the following question: In what ways do the Bronte sisters’ diverging conceptions of the female mental disorders intersect at condemning Victorianism and how does this tone of anger manifests through their language? This general question generates in the following number of sub-questions: in what ways does insanity correlate with the female gender? How could the

female nervous collapse instigate an internal evolution ? Does the female doubleness represent an emancipation or a surrender ?

The life and literature of the Bronte sisters were extensively explored by many critics, scholars, and researchers. *Wuthering Heights* and *Villette* ,with their controversial characters, have long fascinated critics to study them from either a psychoanalytic or a feminist perspective.

James Elis Adams, in his book *A History of Victorian Literature*, states that the Brontes literary works, through film adaptations, were categorized under the “adolescent fiction”. This type of fiction is characterized by the archetype of the woman’s emotional inquiries, helpless romantic longing and wish-fulfillments. Furthermore, Adams argues that in *Wuthering Heights*, Bronte’s major female character experiences an“ incessant oscillation” of self-expression and self-repression. This tempered atmosphere signals the creation of an unconventional passion, a desire beyond the boundaries of marital bound, that challenges the Victorian standards (117-119). Bronte ,presumably, highlighted a nihilist stance towards her society through the abnormality of Catherine Earnshaw.

Allan Beveridge and Edward Renvoize, in an article in *Psychiatric bulletin Magazine*, placed Bronte’s *Wuthering Heights* in a higher status in the English novel due to its depiction of the individual’s emotional turmoil and mental instability. Through Catherine Earnshaw’ s successive destructive mental breakdown episodes, a connection between diabolism and insanity manifests itself(411-412). This description leads one to the idea of the Victorian’s false conception about the woman’s mental illness as an aspect of vampirism.

Differently, Rod Mengham in his critical studies of *Wuthering Heights* conveys a distinct attitude about the violent nature of Catherine Earnshaw, including the undeniable impact of the environment. Catherine’s paralysis to hold grief of the departure of her absolute beloved leads to her nervous breakdown. The violent response of Catherine is viewed to be an

acquired behaviour from the wild Wuthering Heights (39). Thus, the surrounding conditions may determine the psychological reaction of both main tragic characters of this romance.

Moreover, Daniela Machuca, in her Master Dissertation, “My Own Still Shadow-world: Melancholy and Feminine Intermediacy in Charlotte Bronte’s *Villette*,” investigates the female protagonist’s circular dilemma being torn between the two opposing forces, Reason and Feeling(04). Developing this dilemma, Machuca asserts that Lucy Snowe can neither surrender in full submission to emotional desires nor deny her nature by acquiesce compliance to the societal standards(09-10). This idea could be a hint to the Freudian theory of “narcissistic libido,” where the subject is torn between “self-sacrifice and self-indulgence”(Habib 577). Lucy’s psychological derangements could be an outcome of the incompatibility between her natural urges and the demands of her society.

In addition, Toni Wein, in her chapter “Gothic Desire in Charlotte Bronte’s *Villette*,” takes a deeper dimension claiming that Charlotte, through *Villette*, deals with sexuality, a correlation of desire and psyche, approximating “female models of pleasure”(qtd. in Wein 171). Wein added that critics attributed Bronte’s use of “hunting nun” to the need of Lucy Snowe for double (Bronte 419; Wein 172). Consequently, the character of Lucy is interpreted in terms of the conditioned correlation between woman’s desire and religious approval.

Furthermore, Sara Madeline Brokaw, in her Honours Thesis, establishes an analogy between Lucy Snowe in Charlotte Bronte’s *Villette* and Sigmund Freud’s patient Dora in terms of hysteria case based on the unreliability of a mysterious narration. The investigation explores the convergence of Lucy and her counterpart Dora on the deliberate omission of certain truths about their narratives for they are reticent about some details of their very private lives. It is as if they provide the reader with the version they favour( 9). Thus, Lucy’s mental instabilities are detected through her ambiguous unreliable narration.

The present dissertation, therefore, goes some way towards filling the gap of the lack of a comparative feminist psychoanalytic reading of the Brontes' aforementioned novels. Furthermore, the study is significant for Literature and Civilization Master students, generally for their broadening knowledge in the field; and it especially concerns those whose area of interest appeals to the Brontes studies. It is, depending on the Brontes attitudes in *Wuthering Heights* and *Villette*, an insight to the Victorian oppressive judgment of the woman in general and the madwoman in specific.

This comparative study is expected to provide the reader with a feminist psychoanalytic view of a type of the mid-nineteenth century novel. It emphasizes the depiction of the female protagonists as mentally disturbed throughout *Villette* and *Wuthering Heights*. The current research is then aiming at reproducing the portrait of woman's tragic life as molded in the Victorian expectations. Simultaneously, the investigation is intended to display the impact of the Victorian culture on the Bronte sisters to approach such a description of the female characters who can be mere victims of a bankrupt patriarchal system. Thus, the present dissertation is intended to analyze the Victorian feminine aforementioned writers' conceptions about the woman's mental breakdown. The investigation is limited to the chapters that depict the female protagonist's mental illness through the two above-mentioned novels.

The dissertation is divided into three chapters starting with General Introduction and ending with General Conclusion. The First Chapter covers theoretical framework, which includes, background to the Victorian society and literature. The Second Chapter explores passion and reason conflict in *Villette*. The Third Chapter investigates Nature and Culture antagonism in *Wuthering Heights*.

Ultimately, Data for this thesis is basically collected from the two selected novels, specifically from chapters in which the two protagonists' mental derangements episodes

manifest, and from an extensive library research including printed as well as electronic books, articles and dissertations that have relevance to the research topic. Furthermore, data analysis is extracted through a descriptive-analytical study from various references corresponding to the above stated research topic. The study requires the qualitative method. An eclectic approach which draws on Freudian psychoanalytic and feminist theories in literary criticism is intended to be adopted in this research.

## Chapter One: Theoretical Framework

### 1.1 Introduction

One aspect of the convergence of Charlotte Brontë's *Villette* and Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* is the inclusion of the woman's mental abnormality with reference to a passionate crisis. The exploration of such a theme should be based on feminist psychoanalytic background. Incidentally, possessing enough knowledge of the demands of the young woman, the Brontës, through the above-stated novels, portray realistically the inward melancholy life of a Victorian woman who has been ignorantly misjudged. This portrayal allows them to condemn their society's ignorance of the psychic origins of the woman's nervous collapse.

While *Villette* involves Lucy Snowe's internal war of passion and reason, which suggests a symbolic reference to the conflict that is created by the pleasure-principle and reality-principle, *Wuthering Heights* depicts the cultural and familial interference in the emotional affair of Catherine Earnshaw creating her doubleness. These two depictions reflect, on the one hand, the struggle of a Victorian spinster yearning for a happy marital experience. On the other hand, they embed the unresolved suffering of a Victorian lady regretting subconsciously wrong marriage.

In addition, a consideration of the Victorian societal circumstances and literary visions of the woman's insanity is necessary too. A historical overview of the portrayal of the woman's mental instability in human literature uncovers the archetype of insanity being a "female malady." That is, a general skim through literary eras starting from Greek mythology through Shakespearean tragedy to the Victorian novel reveals the convention of the woman's frightening fragility. This chapter, therefore, sets the theoretical framework to this feminist psycho-analytic investigation.



## 1.2 Background to the Victorian Society and Literature

### 1.2.1 The Victorian novel

#### 1.2.1.1 Overview of the Victorian novel

The mid-nineteenth century witnessed the flowering of the novel, termed now as the Victorian novel, which was widely read genre among all social classes. The birth of the Victorian novel coincided with Victoria's coronation in 1837 (David 1). According to Michael Wheeler, Various mature novels were published in 1847-1848: Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights*; Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre*; Anne Bronte's *Agnes Grey*; Charles Dickens' *Dombey and Son*; Elizabeth Gaskell's *Mary Barton*. These literary works and others, in terms of subject-matter and narrative structure, shared common characteristics that featured the Victorian novel which expressed social issues such as class conflict and the woman's search for selfhood ( Bloom, *The Victorian Novel* 55). Indeed, the Victorian novel "dwelt in the secrets of women" (Par. 07 Jones). Thus, the mid-nineteenth century novel devotes a large room for the interior and exterior depictions of the Victorian woman.

Firstly, the Victorian novel, describes the life of the individual in relation to social, political, historical, or spiritual circumstances. Its faithful portrayal of the existing conditions has won it a large audience to such an extent that "every middle-class eighteen years old has read *Great Expectations*" (David 2). In addition, it has been argued that the motif of infancy represents a Romantic aspect and key symbol in the Victorian fiction. This latter usually mirrors the misery of an orphan innocent child looking helplessly for emotional satisfaction in an unfriendly world and its implications on his adult internal and external life (qtd. in Bloom, *The Victorian Novel* 55). Then, this genre appears to be concerned with the multi-faceted sufferings of the working class.

Moreover, the Realist novel is featured by its "psychological realism" for the presence of psychological dimension of human experiences (Adams 63). Late Realist writers

extensively explored sexual desires, including obsessions with marriage and yearnings for successful romantic bounds, and their effects on the nineteenth century individual. In this respect, some asserted that the nature of sexuality described in this literary genre, including Bronte's *Jane Eyre*, Dickens' *Our Mutual Friend*, and Bronte's *The Tenant of the Wildfell Hall*, as unfulfilled "pangs of hunger" due to cultural considerations (Bloom, *The Victorian Novel* 244). Therefore, thwarted erotic passion thematically interconnects a list of mid-Victorian novels.

Besides the fact that the second half-nineteenth century novel examined the social and cultural conditions of sexuality rather than providing clear biological and psychological motives, a number of novels, including Charlotte Bronte's *Villette*, Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights*, Charles Reade's *Hard Cash*, and Dickens' *Pickwick Papers*, exposed the Victorian readership to a more complicated truths of insanity. Beveridge and Renvoize considered this aforementioned sample autobiographical novels. This could be attributed to the interference of a crucial experience with mental deteriorations or witnessing the experience in perilous confinement in asylums. As a matter of fact, the Bronte sisters lived the fraught months of their only mentally-ill brother; Dickens, too, visited St Luck Hospital in 1851 so that he decided to create pathetic narratives of mad central characters (411-412). In other words, these narratives sprung from the authors' subconscious that suppressed their past grievances and sympathies about the issue of a nervously disturbed Victorian.

### **1.1.1.2 The Bildungsroman Novel**

The Englishness of the Bildungsroman contributed enormously to enrich the literary background of the British novel. John Kucich and Jenny Taylor, in their book *the Oxford History of the Novel in English*, discussed the terminology of "bildungsroman". They write: "the term Bildungsroman is a synonym with the type of novel pioneered and popularized

during the nineteenth century(...) which traces the development of an individual protagonist from childhood or adolescence to the maturity of early adult life” (90). This definition demonstrates that this subgenre emerged with the nineteenth century to involve the shift of the major character from early life towards mature life.

Bildungsroman is a German term, which first was used by Karl Morgenstern, a German critic, in Estonia in 1803 before adopting it in English within *the Encyclopedia Britannica* in 1910 where “roman” indicated a novel and “bildung” indicated human evolution and formation (Maynard 279). It is then a “novel of formation” that involves the evolution of the major character in terms of consciousness and character throughout the course of his/her life, including passages from childhood to adulthood. It signals the transitory process, being instigated by an emotional crisis, from innocence to maturity (Abrahams 193). The protagonist is, then, presupposed to undergo an internal metamorphosis through a painful experience to end usually happily.

Furthermore, the critics, Kucich and Taylor, have put forward a definition that the bildungsroman as “a form of autobiographical narrative which should end in a compromise between the desires of the individual and the normative values of existing society”( 91). It, therefore, describes the acculturating of suppressed desires of the author himself. In addition to this, by tradition the bildungsroman has a positive closure which is indicated by the protagonist’s attainment to fulfill *her* wishes after a long struggle (Maynard 279).

Additionally, this sub-genre underscores a journey of heroine in search for selfhood within her society. It sheds light on the issues that “Everywoman” within patriarchal context may encounter starting “from the imprisonment of childhood toward an almost unthinkable goal of mature freedom” ( Bloom, *The Victorian Novel* 315). Presumably, this sort of female protagonists yearn for overcoming the man-made restrictive codes and obtaining consequently

a satisfactory self-autonomy in adulthood, not by means of sexuality but by rebellion and persistence.

In the light of what has been stated earlier, the bildungsroman novel served specifically the feminine writers to accelerate outstandingly their revolutionary procedure against conventionality in terms of both literary forms and social schemes. Moreover, highlighting the psychological and physical development of the female character throughout the narrative, this type of novel mirrors her interior life, including repressed thoughts, sexual desires, and eccentric attitudes that are prohibited by her social conventions.

Thus, the mid-nineteenth century novel realistically pictured the social illnesses that affected the working class member at all levels, mainly the sexual and the psychological ones. It, furthermore, frequently depicts the protagonist's life journey from infancy through adulthood including his fatal stops. Indeed, the Victorian novelists denounced their society which was constructed on the cultures of both hierarchy and patriarchy.

### **1.2.2 The Madwoman in the Victorian Society**

The Victorian woman was assessed according to the idealized conception of womanhood, determined and doomed to a "domestic prison." Such qualities of submissiveness, self-sacrifice and purity were the hallmarks of an ideal woman who, therefore, has succeeded to value her position according to the social conventional codes that heavily burdened women in limiting their liberties (Par. 02 Jones). However, possessing these qualities requires the negation of the self and celebration of the societal satisfaction. Accordingly, any facet of self-expression was perceived as an aspect of contravention of Victorian values.

Moreover, the Victorian dogma identified women as a mere subordination to man within a master-slave relationship. These principles that subjugated the nineteenth century woman to be an annexation might have troubled her psyche in the sense that she became a subject of a dilemmatic relationship of culture and nature. As a matter of example, Lucy Snowe, in *Villette*, throughout her narrative appears to be obsessive and possessed by the constant fear of being gazed at as a fallen woman, with a moral menace and sexual deviation.

In this respect, Anderson, in his book *Tainted Souls and Painted Faces*, attributes the conception of fallen woman“ to a range of feminine identities,” among whom“ unmarried women who engage in sexual relations with men” (qtd. in Barnhill). Abnormality may involve madness; for example, women who sought emancipation from marital obligations and enforcements either by means of divorce or rejecting radically the idea of marriage were critically condemned (Sigurðardóttir 13). Moreover, this unwomanly behaviour precipitated the Victorian woman to be diagnosed as mentally disturbed (Par. 02 Jones). Thus, the socially recognizable woman must not deviate from the archetype of familiarity and compliance.

Additionally, the nineteenth-century woman had to conduct an altruistic behaviour, a prisoner for life, so as to absorb man’s requirements and anger. Indeed, she seemed to play the role of a recipient who ought to quench man’s thirst while her urges were getting accumulated. Furthermore, the real Victorian woman was expected to express no sign of dissatisfaction; instead, she was favorably more likely to bury her whatsoever misery. Ironically, Shulterworth recounts that self-control was “prized by the Victorian as an index of insanity” (qtd. in Torgerson 66). That is mastering the body, as it was believed ,could be a symptom of a perfect mental health.

The Victorians’ wrong ideas about the woman’s nature misrepresented her when being a captive of a psychological unbalance. Tania Woods evaluates the pre-modern

psychological treatment methods of the case of mental instability as imperfect. Their defect lied in their ignorance of the fact that excess in suppression may affect the brain. Woods attributes the Victorian fiasco in psychological diagnosis to the misunderstanding of woman's sexual repression and expression(1-2). This explanation may lead one to consider how a woman, either as apparently sane or insane, might have been a victim of social stereotypical images.

### **1.3 Women vs. Madness in English literature:**

Women's minds were prone to diseases rather than men's. This stereotype could be traced back primarily to Ancient Greek's archetypal image of hysteria and appears in Shakespeare's famous depictions of the madwoman. Firstly, in Greek, *hysteron* means a womb. Accordingly, hysteria has been initially regarded a sexual disease ,affecting the woman as a result of the womb wondering throughout the body (Evans 79). Secondly, Shakespeare's Ophelia is an insane female character in his play, *Hamlet*.

Ophelia's insanity has been often interpreted as being precipitated by her unfulfilled passion for Hamlet. Familial interference and manipulations dooms her pure love to a tragic end: she has been warned by her father and brother of sexual ecstasies of youth ,making her separation from Hamlet imperative. Some adds that Ophelia's mental derangements could be caused by suppressed desires and concealed disillusionments about the unrealized promise of marriage (Spencer 14-16). In addition to this, as far as Elaine Shwalter's account is concerned, Ophelia is in fact one of the three female representations of the madwoman. The "Crazy Jane" and " Lucia" were the other two "Ophelias." Lucia appears in Geatano Donizetti's 1835 opera *Lucia of Lammermoor*, a woman who becomes criminally insane

murdering her bridegroom (Shwalter 92). In other terms, this literary tradition displays how women were depicted as dangerously hysterics.

Arguably, Hysteria, as a concept, may have disappeared, yet syndromes that correspond to the case such as depression and anxiety still function. Various psychologists have made an interconnectedness between a female's biological factors and liability to the experience of depressive incidence( Woods 3, 9). Shwalter in *The Female Malady*, included hysteria, along other mental illnesses, being exclusively woman's maladies( qtd. in Sigurðardóttir 5). This conclusion has been based on analyzing a set of Victorian novels.

In addition, insanity has been interrelated with rebelliousness against norms. since women's dutiful performances were suspected for they were liable to commit the "offence of madness," there was a persistent necessity to control them. It has been thought that when passion overwhelmed reason, the consequence will be the strangeness of madness (Ingham 167). The uncorrected behavioural nature of a woman was immediately interpreted as a "sexual wonton" (Par. 01 "Madness within Victorian Society"). In other words, from the Victorian lenses, madness signaled sexual abnormality and deviation. In these terms, the mad-woman has been notoriously ill-treated. As a result, insanity as experienced by women became a motif in the Victorian sensational novel.

By tradition, the Victorian literature associates femininity with mental derangements, referring to the "feminization of insanity" (Par. 04 Jones). The psychological abnormality is considered according to the concept of "female malady" where an unconventional sexual indulgence affects the woman's mind and psyche. Religious and moral values regarded the woman as "uncontrollable" and "deviant." The Bronte sisters touch on how women could be preys to societal manipulations to which they react inwardly, however. This underneath rebellion shakes the woman's psyche. On this issue, Gilbert and Gubar assume, in reference to

many Gothic novels, that “imprisonment leads to madness” (279). That is, women could have been victims of societal duties and personal requirements. The woman has scarcely been given confidence as she has been “archetyped” of carrying a natural defect.

Moreover, the Victorian physicians had no consideration of the fact that excessive self-discipline could create psychological and mental healthy troubles (Machuca 9). The Brontes challenged the Victorian principle that “moral and mental discipline overlap” (Torgerson 65). This contempt is demonstrated through their highlighting female protagonists with deficiency of mental health despite their moral sanity. By contrast, exaggeration in self-command and considering obsessively the cultural prejudices drive them to have abnormal experiences of the mental state.

In short, the woman was conventionally expected to fully pledge an unconditional servitude to man’s requirements. Mental illness, womanly youth, and sexuality, were triangular elements which surrounded the conception of Victorianism. Although the Victorian associations of female nature and insanity was not completely wrong, it lacked the appropriate method for its analysis and convalescence, which would be recognized later under the concept of Freudian psychoanalysis. Indeed, Believing that insanity necessarily resulted from passionate overexcitement may be the seeds that fruited the twentieth century analysis of hysterical symptoms, especially with women.

#### **1.4. Psychoanalysis**

Since this dissertation is concerned with concepts of insanity and desire, then Freud’s psychoanalytic theory of defense mechanisms, repression and denial, is bound to come into play. Above all, an overview of the foundation of Freudian psychoanalysis is necessary. Initially, psychoanalysis as a term was coined by Freud in 1896. His theories depended on the



sexual desires as mechanisms that run the body (Stephen 356). Psychoanalytic criticism is, in the general sense, defined as the search for connections between artists and their creative products. In the literary sense, psychoanalysis is concerned with the analysis of characters according to their language, as if they were authentic living human beings (Cudden 333). That is, psychoanalysis is an intersection of language and the psyche.

Originally Freud developed psychoanalysis for clinical purposes, implemented as an analysis and therapy in cases of neurosis. Then, his theories extended to various domains, especially literature. As far as literature is concerned, in his *Introduction to Psychoanalysis*, a collection of lectures published in 1920, he introduced the theoretical framework of psychoanalytic criticism which integrates literature with other arts such as dreams (Abrahams 347). Accordingly, a literary work could project the author's repressed anxieties, nature of his psyche and personality, in an artistic form. Then, literature is an opportunity to expose one's anxieties and wishful desires into a social allowable context in terms of language and form (Eagleton 185).

According to Freud, repression is "the cornerstone on which the whole structure of psychoanalysis rests" (qtd. in Petocz 151). Repression of "libidinal" desires prohibited by the "censor" creates an internalized conflict that affects human's mind and behaviour. However, the censor allows for expression, yet in forged forms such as symbolism. This could serve to analyze the author's life and literature which reveals his concealed instinctual desires and mental state (Habib 579). Therefore, literature becomes an outlet for the author's suppressed fantastic wishes in acceptable forms of expression.

Psychoanalytic approach is significant in exploring the Bronte sisters psychological and mental states as projected in *Wuthering Heights* and *Villette*. Freud explained that in the psychological novel the author, through an internal observation, divides his ego into "part-egos" to reflect one facet of *her* mental conflicting life in one of *her* heroes (Habib 579). This

could have resonance in the above-mentioned novels displaying a manifestation of an internal turmoil of these authoresses through their female protagonists Lucy Snowe and Catherine Earnshaw. These latter are constantly subjects to nature and culture conflict.

Psychoanalysis, as far as Freudian treatment of hysteria case is concerned, is significant in exploring the woman's mental disturbances through the previously stated novels. Freud, through his investigation on hysteria, proved that the origins of neurosis could be psychological rather than physiological (Habib 574). In publishing their collaborative essay, *Studies on Hysteria*, Freud and Breuer highlighted the passionate life of the neurotic in the sense that any syndrome could be the effect of a blockage of an impulse (Strachey 92-93).

In addition, one of Freud's findings was that originally neurosis might be caused by a sexual excitement. His account concerning repression process is that developing neurotic symptoms derive from the fact that the patient's embarrassment of any "powerful impulse" does not lead to any disruption. By contrast, it prompts to the continuation of this instinct more energetically in the unconscious. Consequently, this process of seeking to obtain "substitutive satisfaction" produces neurotic symptoms (Habib 574). Depending on what has been stated earlier, a woman could experience hysterical attacks due to an excessive unhealthy suppression of desires.

This theory of repression and hysterical analysis finds its *raison d'être* in these two Gothic romances. Firstly, in terms of neurosis, the "past, present and future are strung together (. . .) on the thread of the wish that runs through them". It is the wish that has been possibly fulfilled within the realm of childhood (qtd. in Habib 580-581). In Emily's *Wuthering Heights*, Catherine Earnshaw's self-alienation seems symptomatic of a delusional insanity. The protagonist during her delirious experience returns to her "happy childhood" which denotes companionship with her absolute beloved, Heathcliff, in the Heights.

Secondly, following the outcomes of these studies that a woman could be a subject to a severe torment as a natural reaction to the suppression of an immense desire, one can apply this idea to the case of Lucy Snowe, whose emotions are blocked by social and moral considerations. Consequently, Lucy goes through a sharp mental illness. Her libidinal urges highly contradict her status as a single woman under a severe “surveillance” by society. Taking into consideration the Victorian background of the praises of a woman’s controlled body, then repression becomes a necessary strategy to defend herself from external scorn and condemnation of impropriety.

As mentioned previously, repression, as an aspect of psychoanalysis and a defense mechanism, is applicable to the procedure of analyzing the case of mental health problems of Catherine Earnshaw and Lucy Snowe. This Freudian analysis allows for the understanding of the tensions between Charlotte’s and Emily’s repressed desires and their society.

### **1.5. Feminism**

By exploring the female portrayal in the Brontes’ aforementioned novels, a short overview of the historical evolution of Feminism is required. Firstly, Feminism has been defined as a movement in critical theory that emerged by the late nineteenth century; its function centers on describing and interpreting women’s experiences as depicted through literary genres, largely focusing on the novel. It questions the masculine traditions of literary criticism by providing a critique to male authors and masculine literature and consequently foregrounding female writings and representations. This literary development also challenged patriarchal dogma vis-à-vis women’s nature as presented in static characters (Cudden 315). This revolutionary current focused on the foregrounding of a new social, psychological and emotional identity for the woman.

Feminist criticism was not mere twentieth century movement. It has been traced back to Ancient Greek plays like Aristophanes' *Lysistrata*, which stresses a female's chorus superiority over male's. Feminist tendency appeared also through Chaucer's *Wife of Bath*, a wife of five men who celebrates "experience" over authority. Moreover, Medieval Christine de Pisan, was a literary figure who bravely debated male critics. Furthermore, during Renaissance female poets such as Catherine Des Roches emerged in the literary scene. In the eighteenth century, as a result of the French Revolution, some women like Mary Wollstonecraft developed a sense of consciousness that these enlightening principles of the revolution should reach women (Habib 667). These artistic works could represent the seeds of feminism, which has not yet been framed and conceptualized.

In addition, feminist phenomenon flowered during the nineteenth century with the emergence of women writers particularly in Europe such as the Brontes, Jane Austen, George Eliot, and Elizabeth Gaskell. According to Walter Allen, the Bronte sisters are the names that first come to one's mind when thinking of the chief feminist Victorian(139). They avowed the nineteenth century woman's preoccupation with economic, social and emotional securities. However, it was only during the twentieth century that this current would gain a literary thick with the leadership of Virginia Woolf and Catherine Mansfield (Habib 667). Accordingly, regardless of the implications of their revolution, feminists dared to stand directly against their society.

These flowering females had a long battle throughout history against patriarchal monopoly over education, literature, political and social affairs. With the turn of the nineteenth century which coincided with the suffragettes movement, Feminism took an ideological dimension. Since then, this criticism shed light on gender distinction so as to highlight the role of women in various domains.

Moreover, the nineteenth century marked the manifestation of feminine presentations calling for better woman's emancipation through better education, employment, disfranchisement and reform bills. In fact, feminism as a conceptual term, was not recognizable in the early Victorian critical literary conventions. Feminism stresses the concern on shedding light on the unjust marginalization of women within patriarchal culture. Simone de Beauvoir, in her book *The Second Sex* published in 1949, re-established an identity of a woman distinct from man's assumptions and constructions (Guerin, et al 222-323). It could be an identity that fits the twentieth century liberated woman.

Furthermore, Elaine Showalter sets three phases of Feminism: the *feminine* phase which spanned between 1840 and 1880, was characterized by women writings copying the prevailing male archetype; the *feminist* phase, which spanned the duration of 1880 and 1920, was featured by women's advocating their rights; and finally the *female* phase, has existed since 1920 and still dominant in the contemporary era, marked by the "rediscovery" of woman's writings (Guerin, et al 224-225). Regardless of the fact that the Brontes' literature is chronologically included within the feminine phase, their aforementioned novels embed a rebellious tone against their pervading social and literary conditions.

Additionally, feminist chief critics and writers have been largely influenced by psychoanalytic criticism. As a matter of fact, Gilbert and Gubar examined the female portrait in the feminine novels of Emily and Charlotte Bronte. Their investigation demonstrates that these novels convey themes such as living with limitations, duality of the self, female maladies and their treatment. Commenting on their literary female characters, Gilbert and Gubar argue that such writers identify themselves with their fictional characters under the concept of insanity and vampirism. Furthermore, this identification contributes to their definite rejection of the idealized Victorian angelic heroine being domestically pinned to a

house (Guerin, et al 227). In reversing the presentation of Victorian women, the Brontes' declared a contemptuous attitude towards their patriarchal society.

Moreover, Gilbert and Gubar discussed, in their text *The Madwoman in the Attic* (1979), that the insane woman is a central element of feminist rebellion (qtd. in Rogers 7). And, in a world which has been run according to the principle of gender inequalities, writers who expressed rebellious femininity were to face marginalization just like one of their insane female protagonists. Probably, hence, the fear of being never exposed to a large readership drove the Bronte sisters to select masculine pseudonyms.

Thus, Emily and Charlotte in a way or another took part in the long process of feminist struggle. They sought a new and unique depiction of a female protagonist with no charming body, passivity and compliance to the second gender. Moreover, they skillfully denounced their society's defects with reference to the woman's unfulfilled requirements including private emotions. The nature of their protagonists Lucy Snowe and Catherine Earnshaw symbolize their authoresses' rebellion .

## **Conclusion**

The Brontes, being representatives of the mid-Victorian novel, which reflects the social phenomena of the nineteenth century, capture the idea that the woman of their time suffered bitterly oppression in all its aspects. One aspect was undoubtedly the fact that they were sentenced to suppress emotional yearnings and psychological turmoil: it was a kind of suppression that disturbed and unbalanced her psyche and spoiled her life. The most appropriate sub-genres that allows for a considerable depiction of this internal suffering are the bildungsroman novel and the Gothic romance. A Freudian Psychoanalytic reading of the aforementioned novels reveals the effects of the overstated restrictions of morality on the woman's psyche and simultaneously her reaction to them.

## Chapter Two

### Passion vs. Reason in Charlotte Brontë's *Villette*

*When morality gains the upper hand in this conflict[ between the demands of 'civilized morality' and the essentially amoral sexual drives of the subject] and the drives are too strong to be sublimated, sexuality is either expressed through perverse forms or repressed, the latter leading to neurosis (qtd. in Evans 56).*

#### 2.1 Introduction

Charlotte Brontë, through the exploration of the interiority of the Victorian young woman, uncovers her anxieties, including yearning for emotional liberation in her final bildungsroman novel, *Villette*. Reason and Feeling, a key dichotomy, foregrounds an inward conflict that Lucy Snowe suffers. The fact that the instinctual urges of the body which contradict the conventional archetype of a Victorian spinster compels Lucy to live an interior quandary. This state which is presented in her withdrawal from external happenings to her own still shadow-world has its inconveniences on her psychological and mental health. Brontë depicts Lucy's internal chaotic existence by allusion to Gothic elements. This chapter, therefore, displays the effects of repression, as a defense mechanism, on both of the psychical and emotional lives of Lucy Snowe and on her resultant external limited agency.

#### 2.1 Lucy Snowe's Internal Control

##### 2.1.1 Reality vs. Imagination

Through *Villette*, Brontë captures the contrast between Reason and Feeling and its harmful consequences on the woman's inner as well as outer lives. First of all, her

personification of the interior conflict which basically depends on the annihilation of desire by the tyrant Reason is echoed in her sister's, i.e. Emily's, poem *To Imagination*:

Reason, indeed, may oft complain  
 For Nature's sad reality,  
 And tell the suffering heart how vain  
 Its cherished dreams must always be;  
 And Truth may rudely trample down  
 The flowers of Fancy, newly-blown. (qtd. in Ingham 72)

The pleasurable world of "cherished dreams," meaning sexual desires, collides with that of reality where rationality overcomes passion and bitter Truth of the cultural conventions aggressively tramples down the "flowers" of pleasure. In Emily's terms, the interminable suffering of heart seems to be nourished by the dictatorship of Reason. Similarly, Charlotte pictures a painting of a young woman who insanely and perilously pledges full compliance of Reason. In psychoanalytic terms, this fraught internal conflict described by Charlotte could be a symbolic reference to the relationship between the pleasure-principle, and the reality-principle. It is a cyclical relationship that culminates in the repression of unhealthy feelings which manifest in the recurrence of hysteria.

Moreover, the internal conflict that Lucy exhibits is the outcome of an antagonistic relationship between "Feeling" and "Reason". And, Lucy's melancholia may generate from a thwarted desire by the social and cultural system (Moglen 182). Lucy seems to vacillate between two worlds, imagination and reality. This is made apparent through many instances; one obvious example is her early recognition that "[she] seemed to hold two lives-the life of thought and that of reality." The former affords her an emotional pleasure, "strange necromantic joys of fancy" in the realm of the sub-conscious mind (Bronte 399).



However, it troubles her when returning to reflect upon the strangeness of these whimsical desires, misleading her far away from the real purpose behind the journey from London towards Villette, which is for a “daily bread, hourly work, and a roof of shelter” (Bronte 399). It is an admission which could reveal how her internalized standards dictates that shameful fancies must remain hidden in the subconscious, far away from societal judgmental eye. Kucich believes also that Lucy helplessly seems incapable of converging the two sides of her, the imaginative and the realistic, to one homogenous life. This is because hopeful pleasurable fantasies, if projected on the ground, may become disastrous disillusionment. Then, the imaginative world must inhabit her unconscious mind, resulting in pleasurable delusion (167). She seems to compromise the two worlds with self-repression.

### **2.1.2 Miss Marchmont's permanent neurosis**

Ahead of experiencing authentic symptoms of hysteria, Lucy Snowe has been a close spectator of Miss Marchmont's periodical mental derangement. This latter could be a consequence of a paralysis to overcome the dilemma of being a “virgin widow,” which is constructed by social and cultural condemnations. Instead of meeting her expected beloved Frank alive, in a Christmas Eve, Maria Marchmont receives him dying, uttering the last affectionate words. The shocking incident of the loss of her beloved, “furious rider,” affects her psyche and dooms her to an endurance of suppressed grief. This is echoed in the madwoman's outburst: “for what crime was I condemned, after twelve months of bliss, to undergo thirty years of sorrow” (Bronte 373-374). It seems that she shifts from extreme happiness to extreme melancholy.

Furthermore, the death of Miss. Marchmont's fiancé locks her in an intermediate situation between singlehood and widowhood. Neither is she able to reclaim “a new identity of a single woman” with innocence, nor could she accept adoption of the title of a widow with

its negative connotations. Whether the passionate connections with her supposed-to-be husband or obsessive fear of cultural scorn prompts her to seek refuge in insanity and claim the interminable status of an “invalid woman” (Torgerson 71-73). Having recourse to subversive means, she may risk the loss of various qualities such as femininity, motherhood and social recognition and validity above all.

To some extent, the residence with this deranged woman affects Lucy’s psyche and paves the way for her subsequent neurosis. In complete detachment with the outer world, Lucy psychologically involves herself in this stormy life of Miss. Marchmont. This could be seen in her confession that: “two hot, close rooms thus became my world; and a crippled old woman, my mistress, my friend, my all. Her service was my duty—her pain, my suffering—her relief, my hope—her anger, my punishment—her regard, my reward” (Bronte 372). This self-realization demonstrates that Lucy has enveloped herself in this dark riddled world, the psyche of Miss. Marchmont.

Then, Lucy continues detailing about her seclusion that: “I forgot that there were fields, woods, rivers, seas, an ever-changing sky outside the steam-dimmed lattice of this sick-chamber.” It could be this pledged withdrawal from the external world which allows Lucy for the study of “the originality of [Miss. Marchmont’s] character(...), the power of her passions” (Bronte 372). This experience leaves her “shaken in nerves” (Bronte 375). In this respect, Ian Gregor argues that the romantic tragedy of the old woman and her unexpected death might have caused an earthquake in Lucy’s psychological make-up (177). Actually, Lucy experiences a similar life for emotional reasons, though temporarily, in the “sick-chamber” of Mde. Beck’s school.

### 2.1.3 self-repression

It has been argued that Bronte consciously or unconsciously externalizes the interior side of the nineteenth century woman, through her literary madness (Rogers7). John David asserts that the Victorian novel, including the above mentioned one, is related with both sexual repression and painful existence(1). As a young woman with no volition offered by her strict fanatic society which enacts preventive conventions, prohibiting the occurrence of any scandalous landmark, Lucy Snowe forcibly retains aggressive suppression of libidinal pleasures.

This imposed repression reflects her inflicted “anger and sexuality” (Torgerson 61). Similar to the rest of the Victorian women who “have not been judged on the ground of whether they talk more than men, but of whether they talk more than silent women,” Lucy is desirable as long as she worships silence. Thus, her desires must be silenced too (qtd. in Sigurðardóttir 28). She seems enormously to master the art of self-repression which would sustain her virginity following obediently the instructions of Reason.

A similar idea is suggested by John Kucich, in his *Repression in the Victorian fiction*, who noticed that, during the Victorian era, censor of the libidinal desires was valued. Its worth lies in being a stage which allows for an inward reconsideration to decide whether to postpone the emotional expression or instead denounce such an embarrassing confession( qtd. in Cassell 15). In addition, Cara Cassell assumes that the conflict of Bronte’s protagonist generates from an intensified inner struggle rather than exterior insecurity(40). It seems, in other words, an attempt at “psychological exorcism”( qtd. in White 64). It has been said that exorcism could mean repressed thoughts to get rid of a disturbing memory( Strachey 1111). Depending on this idea, it becomes valid saying that Lucy seeks to suppress embarrassing sexual thoughts.

Contrastingly, Kucich remarks that Charlotte depicts a peculiar kind of suppression of sexuality: a strategy to obtain pleasure regardless of pain. That is, expression of passionate feelings means their subsequent distinction. However, suppressing them creates an unconscious fantasied pleasure. Additionally, Lawrence Jay Dessner provides a similar viewpoint in his observation that Imagination may mean “merely ‘Hope’, hope that Dr. John loves her. Often its referent is vague but apparently some special kind of pleasurable day-dreaming”( qtd. in Cassell 15, 49). Such an imagination offers Lucy the opportunity of fantasizing an alternate satisfaction of her sexual wishes if she is not able to spell them out.

Furthermore, Lucy’s awareness of the significance and benevolence of sexual repression in fact derives from Charlotte herself, who could not be completely detached from the same world that she portrays. Firstly, Lucy in a friendly conversation with Paulina de Bassempiere expresses the plain truth that “[she] little respect[s] women or girls who are loquacious either in boasting the triumphs, or bemoaning the mortifications of feeling” (Bronte 608). For her, a young woman who expresses her passionate emotions risks the loss of respect. Secondly, an identical displeasure at the failure to obtain self-censorship is after all reflected in Bronte’s October 1836 letter to Ellen Nussey. She wrote:

Ellen( I have some qualities that make me very miserable some feelings that you can have no participation in(...) I don’t pride myself on these peculiarities, I strive to conceal and suppress them as much I can. but they burst out sometimes and then those who see the explosion despise me and I hate myself for days afterwards (qtd. in Smith 6-7).

In terms of form, the fact that Bronte locates the expressed “peculiarities” disturbing her between parentheses denotes the degree of her anxiety about divulging them. In this consideration, Charlotte’s fictional female character, Lucy Snowe, unveils part of her ego and

may personify her engraved persistence on self-repression at the level of the unconscious mind.

Moreover, Ingham argues that Charlotte's nature, being a woman of extremes of passion and calm, is reflected in Lucy's character, being a mixture of fire and ice. This is valuable when taking into account Freud's evaluation of the incorporation of fire into Greek myths as a symbol of the libido. Therefore, he sets an analogy between heat of fire and warmth of sexual excitation. That is, throughout history, flame has been attached to "passion of love" (Strachey 4784). It is, presumably, as if Lucy has been created to refrigerate desires.

Then, Lucy who has been originally identified as Frost, internally conceals volcanic sexuality and paradoxically reveals conscience. Charlotte susceptibly sought to select "a cold name, Snowe (spelt with an e)" for her morbid heroine (qtd. in Smith 210-211). This so-called "refrigeration" is more likely to be perceived as "repression rather than insensitivity" (Gregor 175). Such a paradox generates from the dictates of the conventions that an unmarried woman urgently has to worship self-suppression.

Additionally, Lucy summarizes her poor affectionate life in the following passage: "Oh, my childhood! I had feelings: passive as I lived, little as I spoke, cold as I looked (...). About the present, it was better to be stoical; about the future-such a future as mine- to be dead" (Bronte 421-422). There is a shift in such a life from an inclination towards passivity and alienation in her early years, to a severe self-denial and self-torture by being stoical in adulthood, and finally helplessly expecting no future if she has no power to overwhelm her character. Then, affection is apparently devoted a very indeed little room.

Accordingly, such a rationality to postpone sexual pleasures, with which Lucy Snowe unyieldingly complies, internally disturbs her (Ingham 166-167). This dichotomous relationship between Reason and Passion is openly expressed in her confession that: "Reason

is vindictive as a devil” which hauntingly troubles her mind and disrupts her pleasurable imagination. Similarly, a relevant image is offered in her use of simile in the following passage: “For me, she[ Reason] was always envenomed as a step-mother. If I have obeyed her it has chiefly been with the obedience of fear, not of love” (Bronte 507). Reason, representing the ego, is depicted as vindictive and tyrannical denying Lucy libidinal expression. As a result, a state of severe confusion and frustration is created.

Another case in which Lucy is a subject to the unresolved duality of Reason and Emotions is the drafting and redrafting of her letters which are meant to be sent to her indifferent beloved, Dr. John Graham Breton. She outright states the truth of writing two types of letters: one is dictated by Emotion and the other is a reaction of Reason which would “leap in vigorous and revengeful, snatch the full sheets, read, sneer, erase, tear up, re-unite, fold, seal, direct, and send a terse curt missive of a page.” Then, she comments that “she did right” overlooking her passionate sympathies( Bronte 524). She is paralyzed to express pleasure unless the conditions of reality approve, and which would not. Lucy conditionally sends the appropriate expression, by the revision of Reason reflecting a self-suppressed body. Another rational in her rewriting letters is suggested by the idea of Torgerson that passionate feelings “ must be hidden or rewritten until it no longer is threatening to male reason”(67). It is as if the woman is critically responsible for her repression and for man’s.

In addition, Freud’s and Breuer’s *Studies on Hysteria* describe one aspect of Lucy’s psychic storm which has relevance with the realm of female sexuality. Freud writes: “ at the base of all such affections[ of hysteria] there is to be found a conflict between the claims of sexuality and those of the ego.”( qtd. in De Morais 38). Then, the origins of her hysterical experience are ascribed to the antagonistic relationship of pleasure and reality, urging an unmarried woman to negate the self and observe chastity.

### 2.1.3.1 Jael and Sisera struggle

Lucy Snowe depicts the struggle of Reason and Passion by making reference to the biblical figures, Jael and Sisera. Initially, according to Martin H. Manser, in his book *The Facts on the File Dictionary of Allusions*, Jael is a heroic woman who, in defense of Israel, murdered Sisera, a Canaanite General and an enemy of her husband Heber. Offering him a “feigned hospitality” in her tent, she committed her murder maliciously by hammering a tent peg into his temple while he was sleeping (246). Taking into consideration this story of revenge and treachery, one can argue that Jael stands for Reason and Sisera for passion in which the former overwhelms the latter.

Accordingly, this biblical allusion appeals to Lucy’s internal conflict resulting from a severe suppression of libidinal desires. Lucy describes her thwarted passionate longing for someone to fetch her out of a deadly solitude and its harmful consequences on her head. She recounts that: “This longing, and all of a similar kind, it was necessary to knock on the head; which I did, figuratively, after the manner of Jael to Sisera.” Whenever passion rises, it becomes necessary to murder it. However, unlike Sisera, passion does not die and the struggle, hence, perpetuates. Calm is restored with the temporary silencing of desires, which is metaphorically represented in “My Sisera lay quite in the tent, slumbering,” with the power of the ego symbolized by “Jael, the stern woman, sat apart, relenting somewhat over her captive” (Brontë 422). It is a relationship which is based on the principle of sexuality being held in captivity and struggling the tyranny of rationality.

Moreover, Lucy elsewhere depicts the tension between passion and reason in this passage: “These struggles with the natural character, the strong native bent of the heart(...). They tend however slightly, to give the actions, the conduct, that turn which Reason approves, which Feeling, perhaps, too often opposes” (Brontë 417). Reason, being the only decisive until

the moments of nervous collapse, displeases Feelings which vainly resist. Her behaviour, then, is run according to the mechanism of repression.

### **2.1.3.2 Suppression of Emotions in Catholic and Protestant faiths**

It has been supposed that Lucy Snowe develops an ambivalent attitude towards the status of a single woman. She is torn between the Protestant stereotype of an unmarried girl as “inoffensive as a shadow” and that of Catholics as a nun who preserves her virginity (Bronte 569; Torgerson 60). Beth Torgerson attributes the neurotic symptoms which Lucy experiences through two hysterical episodes to the struggle between her emotional needs and the two sects of faith that converge on the sacredness of repression. While the Protestant mechanism focuses on internal self-control, the Catholic system stresses external intervention to control the body.

As a matter of fact, Lucy’s arrival at the Lebassecourian Catholic is accompanied with an excessive deal of repression, which becomes the cause of temporary self-destruction (Torgerson 61, 64). Having been a subject of internal control in England, Lucy, when reaching Villette, seems shocked with the system of external surveillance (Longmuir 16). She has been acquitted with excessive self-monitor but annihilates involvement of external elements, even religious, in this process of suppression of emotions.

Moreover, Torgerson provides a plausible justification for Lucy’s refusal to convert into Catholic faith which is the extreme constraint of sexuality. That is, opting for Catholicism carries the implication that a woman has to pledge fully herself for spiritual service with constant libidinal blockage. Lucy realizes her paralysis to overcome these natural urges which neither religion nor culture could defy.



In addition, Ingham describes repression as a “social mask” (157). It could be depicted, for instance, how Lucy, in a moment of emotional attachment with Mr. Paul Emanuel, describes the way his visage reflects “warmer feelings” and “changed (...) from a mask to a face” (Bronte 572). She is believed to be a subject of double-check system. Nevertheless, the type of self-control appears to have sharply harmful effects on the psychological level rather than that of external control. Therefore, she experiences hysterical attack as a result of an excessive self-check.

#### **2.1.4 Self-alienation vs. The Long Vacation Hysteria**

In a world of extreme control in which one is checked even for thoughts to prohibit any sexual scandal, Lucy is dictated to suppress definitely her passionate sympathies first for Dr. John and then for M. Paul Emmanuel. Consequently, such an extreme self-check determines her to be in bridge with society, evading any sensational confrontation with man. This state of self-seclusion is expressed in the following extract: “I might have had companions, and I chose solitude” (Bronte 433). A sense of paranoid frustration of emotional life is implied in her statement. Torgerson sums up Lucy’s perception that “lack of self-control is translated into being vulnerable to injury or loss.” Probably this phobia of being rejected prompts her to build “a wall of silence” which symbolizes a psychological distance between her and the surroundings (62). Such an aspect of solitary confinement manifests itself during the long vacation and onwards.

Thus, her alienation, a necessary evil, may be a shield hindering men from causing her unhealed psychological wounds of disillusionment. Kucich attributes the psychological tensions Lucy suffers from to the “necessity of hope and the reality of sorrow” (173). On the one hand, she could hardly cope with the displeasure of the real world. On the other, hope is

significant to survive these sorrowful realities. Charlotte in her 06 November 1852 letter to W.S Williams reveals that Lucy refers helplessly to the confessional which is “a semi-delirium of solitary grief and sickness”( qtd. in Smith 210-211). The confessional, being originally an opportunity for sinners to admit their faults, becomes the final outlet left for Lucy to express unconventionally what she could not do through normal means of conversation.

Ironically, this methodical self-repression which is achieved through self-alienation becomes the primary cause of her first episode of neurosis. The self-alienation that Lucy imposes on herself, through her ultimate retreat into her own still-shadow world signifying a concentrated repression, has its implications on her mind (Ingham 175). Her strange “inward tumult” caused by a contradictory alternation of “soreness and laughter, fire and grief, shared [her] heart between them,” and her hot tears pouring out from “complicated, disquieting thoughts” are doubtlessly symptoms of a “troubled mind” (Bronte 458). She experiences this psychological turmoil, at first, when being in seclusion: it remains an opportunity to liberate her suppressed desires towards Dr. John even if in abnormal forms. However, order seems to be restored with the re-exercising of self-check and eventually “next day [she] was again Lucy Snowe,” as she notes (Bronte 429). It is as if she re-adopted the apparent self-monitored woman.

Depending on the fusion of the unnatural elements with real experiences of the internal self, Bronte portrays Lucy’s mental disturbances. The Gothic terrors metaphorically signify Lucy Snowe ’s inward anxieties and horrors that result from the state of being emotionally ignored and suffering the unbearable outcomes of singlehood. She describes her hallucinatory visions in this extract: “the ghastly white beds were turning into spectres— the coronal of each became a death’s-head, huge and sun-bleached— dead dreams of an elder world and mightier race lay frozen in their wide gaping eyeholes” (Bronte 428). Such a

macabre depiction fits “the perceptions of a disturbed mind.” It is a displacement of the Gothic from external to internal setting (Ingham 176). Brontë alludes to the Gothic so as to approach a plausible description of Lucy’s psychic troubles.

Subsequently, during the long vacation, Lucy exhibits a severe state of mental exhaustion for two apparent reasons: a deadly isolation and a poisonous envy. Her wretched solitude forcibly pushes her to envy Ginevra Fanshawe for being a heroine of romance, followed by “ [t]rue Love: never could she be alone.” Hence, a day afterwards, syndromes of a mental malady have appeared. She details that: “ my nerves are getting overstretched: my mind has suffered (...) agonizing depression.” Hopefully to rescue herself from a solitary confinement “ under this house-roof, which was crushing as the slab of a tomb,” she goes out in confessional journey (Brontë 457). As Torgerson points out that: “Lucy’s confession signifies that the isolation and deprivation she has endured during the long vacation have broken her down” (Torgerson 64-66). The effect of this period of an unhealthy self-alienation manifests itself in a severe mental breakdown.

Furthermore, Lucy recounting her convalescence in Dr. John Bretton, describes physical symptoms of a nervous collapse. This could be found in this descriptive passage: “I looked spectral; my eyes larger and more hollow, my hair darker than was natural, by contrast with my thin and ashen face.” This physical exhaustion indicates an internal dysfunction of the mind. This abnormal state of mind which pictures the outer world as “a riddle” to an extent that she could not figure out “ Where was [she]? Not only in what spot of the world, but in what year of (...) Lord?” The extreme suffering leads her to assert that “[she] was very ill and delirious: and even then, [hers] was the strangest figment of with which delirium had ever harassed a victim” ( Brontë 462, 464). She reaches a point where the experience of delirium becomes identical to a severe harassment.

### 2.1.5 Stone Imagery

Besides the adaption of the Gothic into the interior context of Lucy Snowe, Charlotte uses recurrently stone imagery to describe Lucy's response to warm feelings and paradoxically reflect her internal anxieties. Firstly, Lucy is predetermined to reveal no desire through excitation. It has been believed that "silence and repression are the requirements of self-control" (Torgerson 68). In her first fraught meeting with Mde. Beck, she admits how she is "no more excited than this stone" (Bronte 400). Lucy probably has meant to express the absolute aspect of silence of a senseless Victorian woman.

Another example in which she expresses no agitation and where it is supposed to react passionately indeed, is when M. Paul's passionate outburst collides with her apparent unaffectionate reaction. The fear of being despised for an interest in her professor prompts her to stick to self-control. Her non-passionate reply, seeming "insensate as any stone" challenges the expectations of M. Paul who expresses furious anger of such an indifference when he expresses his love to her in public (Bronte 484). In other words, she may sacrifice love for the life of a pure reputation. Furthermore, despite her deep grievances over the departure with M. Paul, who is travelling to America for an indefinite return, Lucy "spoke and stirred no more than a stone" (Bronte 673). She is obliged to have a stony heart instead of a heart which may be troublesome.

This metaphorical presentation of the archetype of the Victorian "stone-like" woman is echoed in Bronte's 2<sup>nd</sup> April 1845 letter, which was sent to Ellen Nussey. Bronte once wrote: "I know that if women wish to escape the stigma of husband-seeking they must act or look like marble or clay-cold-expressionless, bloodless-for every appearance of feeling of joy" (qtd. in Torgerson 69). The letter reveals a dilemma in which a woman was required to choose either a marital life, which was not necessary built on mutual affection, or a life of celibacy.

Then, in case she sought escapism from the “stigma” of hooking a husband who did not appeal to her passionate sympathies, she was conditioned to appear a marble-like lady, cold, lifeless, and incapable of feeling. The woman, therefore, was precipitated to an internal death so as to be a model of purity and power of suppression, like a marble, for the subsequent generation of young girls who may dare and opt for an identical destiny. It could be this seeking for martyrdom at the expense of her natural urgency which drives her into an unavoidable neurotic experience twice.

In short, according to Torgerson also, Lucy Snowe exhibits two episodes of mental collapse: the first is caused by an internal challenge of repression; meanwhile, the second is a result of external overbearing authority. Evidently Torgerson continues that Lucy’s narrative does not end with her recovery from the first mental instable experience. Indeed, it is followed by another yet with lesser damage. When Lucy’s internal war ceases to exist, a war between her and the rigid outside world erupts. In either wars she is crucially involved. She is rather determined to conduct a disciplined path by the indirect supervision of Mde. Beck.

## **2.2 External surveillance of Mde. Beck**

### **2.2.1 Espionage**

Lucy Snowe’s already internalized self-repression counteracts Mde. Beck’s strict external surveillance. This latter forms an inevitable obstacle for the woman’s libidinal emancipation. It is, above all, a school which separates girls from boy, female teachers from male ones through “l’allée defendue”, meaning the forbidden alley. In addition to this separation, Mde. Beck’s pensionnat is run by espionage, “a sleepless eye” (Bronte 420,633). Lucy’s suppression concentrates on the discovery of the fact that she is carefully watched.

This intensified stifling of emotions may have harmful consequences on her mind and pride as well.

Mde. Beck and M. Paul, being in charge of controlling her conduct, have eventually reached the conclusion that Lucy is immune from committing a moral offence. In a conversation with M. Paul about the nature of the English women including obviously Lucy, Mde. Beck reveals this conclusion: “Mais au moins il n’est pas besoins de les[ Anglais] surveiller ”. This realization negates the need for any outer constraints and which is clear when Mde. Beck offers her, as a reward, to “leave [her]alone with [her] liberty ” (Bronte 552, 556). It is undoubtedly the relief for which she has long been in need. Lucy does not require any form of external surveillance has long for she has long “internalized the disciplinary mechanisms of power”(Longmuir 12). Thus, social surveillance of female desire transcends the external world to become an internal control and self-check.

### **2.2.2The legend of the Nun**

In her adoption of the supernatural so as to explore the interior world of her heroine, Bronte has been known of the process of the“ psychologizing of gothic” (David 199). Whenever Lucy is about to obtain liberty, another aspect of external control manifests to re-declare the urgency for self-suppression. It is the call of religious morality for restoring the social mask and evading having sensational inclinations towards the “opposite sex” (Bronte 423). According to David, the hallucinatory visions of the nun could be an embodiment of Lucy’s “acknowledged and unacknowledged ”anxieties and desires (200). It is an allusion to lead an asexual life.

“A vague tale went of a black and white nun” who was“ buried alive, for some sin against her vow,” recounts Lucy (Bronte 419-420). With her settling in Villette, Lucy is

exposed to this horror which affects unconsciously her psyche in the sense that she becomes hunted by the nun. The allusion of being buried alive evokes a scandalous life driven by a limitless sexual energy. The mysterious emergence of the ghostly figure serves as a reminder of the moral vow that a young woman must retain until marriage. Therefore, the horrific nun personifies a repressive force of libidinal desires since its apparition coincides with an emotional arousal. It is a fantastical figure which Lucy constructs based on the groundless myth that Victorianism deliberately created to distract her passionate engagement. Lucy, among Catholics in *Villette*, is required to maintain an inward watchful eye checking of her pleasures.

The ghostly figure of the nun symbolically stand for the suppression of sexuality and its psychological effects. This idea is made insistent in Kucich' argument that:

the usual interpretation of the nun as a symbol of Lucy's repression returning to torment her seems obvious enough. But the nun is also, quite literally, a piece of acting- a theatrical use of repression in disguise" (69).

The history of this haunting figure could be considered as an alarming reminiscent of the significance of self-censorship. The latter, when being excessive, becomes a peril instead.

As for the external effects of repression, as a defense mechanism, on her limited outer agency stands as an example of her loss of Dr. John. Possibly, Lucy's hopes to commence a romance with Dr. John vaporize due to her subsequent delay of articulating her emotional wishes. She rather prefers to haunt her own still-shadow world and maintain mastery of suppressing her inner thoughts and inquiries. This volition eventually creates psychic troubles that appear through hallucinatory sightings of the ghostly nun. In this issue, Gregor assumes that the gothic nun embodies Lucy's "alter ego" (46). She helplessly needs social recognition to fulfill her sexual wishes. Instead, cultural restraints imperatively drive her to sublimate her

sexual urgency through either successful marriage or self- control preserving purity as long as she lives just like a nun.

Moreover, the apparition of the nun recurrently coincides with the intensity of her passionate desires. It is presumably the embodiment of patriarchal fearful rigidity. Having prior knowledge about the scandalous history of the nun, one can assume that Lucy has unconsciously internalized a moral standard based on chastity and purity. One instance of the emergence of the ghostly figure, “an image like a nun,” simultaneously occurs as Lucy escapes to the attic seeking privacy, “strange, sweet insanity,” so as to read passionately a letter from Dr. John (Bronte 514, 518). Accordingly, the encounters with the nun, which is a presentation of the super-ego running according to the morality principle, happen to decrease her libidinal activity by suppression. Paul De Morais deduces that the hunting nun represents Lucy’s internal wish to displace her own sexual tensions( 38). Hence, her energetic desires are doomed to be buried following the example of the nun.

The re-emergence of the nun happens with her realization that she will be accompanied with Dr. John to the theatre with no external control. However, according to Torgerson, the two final instances of its apparition indicate the new orientation of Lucy’s emotional interest, which must be stifled of course, from Dr. John towards her professor M. Paul Emanuel. The nun crosses her path during Lucy’s intimate closeness with M. Paul in the allée defendue. Eventually, the nun’s costume put in Lucy’s bed signals its last appearance. This apparition of hallucinatory nun is interpreted as a result of obsessive fear of losing her beloved due to a new competitor, Justine Marie( Torgerson 69). The ghostly figure, thus, serves as an “internalized chaperon.”

Depending on what has been mentioned earlier, the fictionalization of the legend of the hunting nun devilishly promises an internal barrier, meaning repression, against



responding to pleasurable inquiries. Indeed, thwarting sinful pleasure is the cornerstone on which Victorian culture rests. Furthermore, it has been argued that having included the unfounded legend of the fallen nun serves to construct a critique of the Victorian fanaticism to thwart woman's sexual pleasures ( De Morais 38). Bronte selectively incorporates this baseless story, which is mere patriarchal construction, so as to demonstrate her society's fallacy in suppressing the nineteenth-century woman's desires.

This decision, which derives from within, to suppress such a misleading passion is marked by her burial of letters in the garden of Mde. Beck's school. In this sense, Lucy establishes a connection between her own buried self and the nun (Morris 6). Justifying this act of burial near this vault, Lucy reveals :“But I was not only going to hide a treasure—I meant also to bury a grief” (Bronte 554). It is the grief that Dr. John does not return her love that's why this unrequited passion should be buried.

Additionally, Ingham describes that Lucy's melodramatic obsessional fantasy is externalized as she surrenders to what Reason dictates, which “stabbed to the heart each moment by the sharp revival of regret”(Bronte 553; Ingham 216). Her sexual desires are chained enough by an inner surveillance( Torgerson 64). The burial of letters beneath the “convent tree” suggests a sense of hopelessness to love any more( Bronte 554). Still, it remains a form of expression, even though hurtful. The burial of both the undisciplined nun and the letters in the soil of Mde. Beck's school could be a good symbolic example of the womanly sexual suppression.

### **2.2.3 Separation with M. Paul vs. the Second Hysterical Experience**

The second episode of her neurosis occurs after an emotional crisis. As it has been argued, in the earlier chapter, that a departure from the beloved with a high degree of intensity

in sexuality could cause a woman a serious hysterical attack, Lucy experiences a severe torment subsequently after receiving knowledge of the inevitable soon farewell with M. Paul. Once again after she has rested on the hope that M. Paul exchanges her emotions, which would be a compensation for the injuries of the past, unfortunately he urgently is required to leave Villette towards America.

Lucy, to the last moments, mourns her paralysis to express passion and reassure his love. She admits: “to follow, to seek out, to remind, to recall-for these things I had no faculty. M. Emanuel might have passed within reach my arm: Had he passed silent and unnoticed(...) should I have suffered him to go by.” Her intensified desire to contact her beloved before his sailing is blocked by a rigid passivity. This inward emotional turmoil is not translated into an outer agentive initiation so as to rescue herself from an emotional crisis and a nervous breakdown. Such a paradoxical state results in a mental exhaustion which begins with: “my heart trembled in its place. My blood trembled in its current. I was quite sick”( Bronte 657).

Some claim that Lucy condemns Mde. Beck who ceases the opportunity of her flaw and inability to express her farewells to her soul-mate in order to carry on the surveillance plan. She unconsciously projects her defects “to vocalize her emotional needs” on Mde. Beck’s malice (Torgerson 85). This projection that apparently frees her from any remorse affects the procedure of a natural sane form of libidinal expression. Lucy claims that although she voluntarily goes with the intention to establish a solid romantic connection with M. Paul, Mde. Beck stands as an obstruction that hampers the action. In this sense, she wrote: “she eclipsed me; I was hid. She knew my deficiency, she could calculate the degree of moral paralysis- the total default of self-assertion- with which, in a crisis I could be struck”(Bronte 658). This displays how she is imprisoned by the power of the super-ego, “moral-paralysis,” the conventional frontiers that she has already internalized. Thus, it could be an inward

discourage for expression rather than an external obstacle which really prevents her realization of emotional wishes.

However, Lucy breaks the chains and hysterically outbursts to challenge Mde. Beck's surveillance: "I forbid it(...) keep your hand off me, and my life, and my troubles. Oh, Madame! In your hand there is both chill and poison. You envenom and you paralyze." Lucy declares Mde. Beck a secret rival, poisoning her with strict surveillance. This rivalry, in fact, results from a deep suspicion that Mde. Beck might bind Mr. Paul for her and marry him. Such a perilous rage signals also the beginning of a mental derangement in which she appears "untamed, tortured, again pacing a solitary room in an unalterable passion of silent desolation" (Bronte 660, 662). These symptoms could be attributed to a case of severe melancholic depression after a hysterical explosion (Strachey 80). Her emotional density leads to depression and a mental collapse. The fear of a sexual fall dictates a continuous process of repression.

### **2.3 Self-expression, Self-cure, and Sexual maturity**

The aftermath of Lucy Snowe's mental derangement is a "greater health"(Torgerson 73). The experience of nervous breakdown, indeed, balances her psychic apparatus through the production of natural impulse with equivalent repression. Accordingly, Torgerson stresses that the long vacation serves as a turning point in Lucy's life. In her illness, there is therapy in the sense that it allows for a "time for reflection and analysis" which guides to self-awareness and achieve self-cure. The experience with physical pain renders Lucy to her body so as to meditate about her real identity detached from the "cultural body," which is framed by Victorian values. Torgerson argues also that Lucy's illness is beneficial as long as it replaces self-control with self-authority (74). To be able independently to determine where to express her feelings and where voluntarily reveal them, is the principle of her new identity.

Moreover, claiming that :“repression heightens and vitalizes emotional autonomy,” Kucich reinforces the idea that Lucy approaches self-expression after an excessive suppression (qtd. in Longmuir 19). In this sense, it seems that it is this intensified self-surveillance which prompts Lucy to voice her feelings towards Paul Emanuel. It could be the case in which the poison enchants to a therapy, and thus the cure bursts from within.

Then, Lucy decides to decrease the density of repression which parallels with an “emotional growth.” Gradually, she realizes the importance of the expression of intimacy. Lucy’s realization of the truth that Dr. John will never exchange her feelings drives her to express on her own suitable way. According to John Maynard, “ [Lucy]in the long vacation had been unable to admit, far less express, her feelings. Now when she goes to bury her letters she performs a conscious and deliberate ritual of expressing her feelings and her loss” (qtd. in Torgerson 83). Accordingly, this action could foretell a tragic sense of emotional loss, however, it implies Lucy’s capacity to recognize the impossibility of any potential mutual passion with Dr. John.

Lucy ,for the first time, dared to express her passionate desires and anxieties to lose M. Paul. Her utterance :“ my heart will break!” reveals an emotional anguish. Besides, her jealousy, during the fête, from the young rich girl Justine Marie is another sign of maturation of sexual expression ( Bronte 684). Maynard stresses that: “[ Lucy’ s] jealousy, as always in Bronte, is a sign of mature sexual engagement ”( qtd. in Torgerson 85). These two instances of emotional trembling mark her turning from an unhealthy repression to open expression, the initiation to experience sexual maturity. Self-control is transcended to adopt a healthy way of expression rather than hysteria which must be “disdained.” This is made clear in“ tempered by late incidents, my nerves disdained hysteria”( Bronte 677). This is because she has experimented with the harmful consequences of absolute suppression.

Moreover, she even proves, these moments of burial, the needlessness for the guidance of the ghostly nun. This is clear when she confronts the nun, she immediately drives it away( Bronte 555). As her sexual desires are regulated with a reduced suppression, the eruption of the nun becomes futile. Lucy describes her attainment to destroy the fantastic nun in“ I had rushed on the haunted couch; I tore her up-the incubus! I held her on high-the goblin! I shook her loose- the mystery! And down she fell- down all around me- down in shreds and fragments-and I trode upon her” (Bronte 677). The brave action of destroying the nun with its implications,“ the incubus, the goblin, and the mystery,” implies Lucy’s rebellion against the constraints imposed by cultural reason. Since it is Lucy who has offered these cultural restrictions credibility,“ the life, the reality, and substance,” she is free to dispossess them life, reality, and substance( Torgerson 86). Yet, after she buries any hope to love, she discovers that she is loved. Unfortunately this love affair mysteriously might be mutilated by the fatal Atlantic storm attacking her beloved M. Paul.

## **Conclusion**

Lucy Snowe symbolizes“ Charlotte Bronte’s cri de Coeur”( Allen 192). Like a silent volcano, Lucy is inwardly dynamic and explodes in a moment of neurosis. However, undergoing the experience of mental abnormalities has demonstrated to be a necessary evil for a self-awareness of its causes and consequences. Her nervous illness allows for truth-telling. In her first mental breakdown, Lucy refers to Catholicism through confession; however, she rages against the external control through confrontation in her second neurotic experience( Trgerson 85). Lucy succeeds to settle her psychological and emotional turmoil by a reasonable sexual expression. Therefore, the ghostly nun must resign as Lucy becomes independent in running her emotional affairs.

## Chapter Three

### Nature vs. Culture in *Wuthering Heights*

*Catherine, meanwhile, becomes a divided self: gratified by a life of luxury and refinement but still seeing herself and Heathcliff as indivisible* (Lamonica 124).

#### 3.1 Introduction

Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights* foregrounds, as an epitome, a delirious young woman, Catherine Earnshaw, who is torn between natural urges and cultural thresholds. This interior conflict, which appears to be an outcome of a passionate aberration, is depicted through the juxtaposition of the two settings, the hostile Heights and the cold Grange, symbolizing the volcanic impulses of Heathcliff and the rigid civility of Linton. The incompatibility of these struggling forces dooms her to be a victim of a deadly hysteria. Thus, Catherine reacts in a perilous game of a raging revenge through a systematic self-inducement, inflicting starvation on herself, self-imprisonment, excessive day-dreams, leading to her mental and physical decay. Bronte depicts the bleakness and pathos of such an abnormal state of mind through the adoption of natural imagery into the context of her heroine's interiority.

#### 3.2 *Wuthering Heights* vs. Thrushcross Grange

Since the very beginning of *Wuthering Heights*, the universe is shown as the scene of two opposed worlds, *Wuthering Heights* and *Thrushcross Grange*, which even though they seek to devour each other, they compose a harmony for Catherine's easiness (Allen 195). These two diverging worlds presuppose such dichotomies, love and pain, freedom and

restrain, which place Catherine in a line of “in betweenness” (Sanders 421). Cathy seems to be torn between these two worlds that she urgently seeks to combine. In doing so, she unconsciously manages to harmonize her psychic apparatus. This idea could be valid when applying the psychoanalytic concepts of the structure of the mind, taking the Heights as a representative of her libidinal desires and the Grange as a symbol for her societal considerations, meaning the superego.

*Wuthering Heights* has been considered a praiseworthy novel for the reason that the authoress indulges her female character, Catherine Earnshaw, to hold simultaneous passionate intimacy for *two* rivalry men, belonging to two opposing worlds (Easthope 103). Catherine manifests “an internal division of self and sexual role” resulting in her, as even Nelly depicts, “adopt[ing] a double character without exactly intending to deceive anyone” (Bloom, *Emily Bronte’s Wuthering Heights* 133; Bronte 897). Her happiness seems exclusively conditioned by the impossible liaison between Edgar and Heathcliff. The former appeals to her quest for cultural refinement while the latter suits her desirous self (Bloom, *The Brontes* 179). That is, her internal balance seems predetermined by the merging of these external settings.

This impossible wish of integrating herself with both men could be found in her refusal to respond to Edgar’s demand to utter a decisive choice, either to continue her life with Heathcliff and abandon Edgar or remain faithful to her husband. Yet, trying to evade giving an immediate answer, she says :“I require to be let alone! (...) I demand it! Don’t you see I can scarcely stand?” As Edgar has been already a spectator of her fearful neurotic farce, he has to retreat so as to evade “aggravating her fiery temper” (Bronte 911). Therefore, the question of choosing one path in her life sounds unanswerable.

Moreover, it has been viewed that the internal conflict, which Cathy frequently exhibits, could arise from an inordinate passion towards two antagonistic men. As a matter of

fact, Lamonica argued that Cathy's tragic delirium could be a consequence of her paralysis to fulfill the wish to be "Catherine Earnshaw-Heathcliff-Linton" (113). Incidentally, Earnshaw is Catherine's parental name, i.e. before marriage, Heathcliff is her beloved, and Linton is her husband's family name. This identification overlaps with the three identities obsessively inscribed, "*Catherine Earnshaw*, here and there varied to *Catherine Heathcliff*, and then again to *Catherine Linton*," which Lockwood, a second major narrator, discovers in the ledge of the window of the bedroom of Cathy in the Heights after twenty years from Cathy's death (Bronte 869). This idea may reinforce the dilemmatic quest for the presence of both men officially in her life. Her psychological dysfunction, then, can be conceived as symptomatic of the loss of the internal security, resulting from the failure to befriend her husband and her beloved.

It has been argued also that Cathy's awful character is pictured in her terrifying instinctive nature that urges for the unfamiliar existence of a dual love. Therefore, the simultaneous passion towards Heathcliff, who has long been a friend, and Edgar, the husband, must coexist. That is, her mind appears to be doomed to bear the impossible fusion of the two contrasting worlds, a rebellious adolescence and a compliant maturity. Cathy's marital bond, which represents a new world, does not necessarily negate her romantic longing for the close friend of childhood, which stands for her prior world (177). This kind of women needs to be licensed to lead a life of an adolescent maturity, with its paradoxes.

In addition, home in *Wuthering Heights* has been regarded a symbol of a psychological and an emotional state (Lamonica 96). In this consideration, home could be a self-fulfillment which Cathy ironically loses when leaving the Heights and being installed in the Grange. The impulsive initiation Cathy has taken, to be Miss. Linton in the Grange, contrasts her delirious longing for the Heights. According to some explanation, the schizophrenic believe the hallucinatory things she hears and visions real (R. Lazarus and B.



Lazarus 209). As far as Nelly Dean's narration is concerned, when being in the Grange: "of Wuthering Heights Catherine was thinking as she listened: that is, if she thought or listened at all; but she had the vague, distant look (...) which expressed no recognition of the material things either by ear or eye" (Bronte 952). Such a description depicts the fact that Cathy rescues her needs for the Heights, which she regrets exchanging for the Grange, in the abstract world of fantasies.

Additionally, this depiction of a state of self-alienation, which could be the result of an ambivalent desire towards possessing two worlds, leads one to presume that Cathy may have gone schizoid. As far as Terry Eagleton's definition of schizophrenia, the schizophrenic is alienated from reality, retreating to the interior of the self with an excessive creation of fantasies: it is the case when the unconscious mind overwhelms the conscious mind with its illogicality (138). During Catherine's delirious fever, she has been absorbed by her self-division, exhibiting "seasons of gloom and silence (...) produced by her perilous illness" in her room (Bronte 912-913).

Ultimately, Cathy's final loss of identity denotes the process of descending in schizophrenia. This could be found in her inability to recognize her reflection in the mirror hanging in the opposite wall, wondering whether the figure in the mirror is Catherine Linton (Bronte 930). This could be because in being Linton's wife, she risks the loss of her "true mirroring self," Heathcliff (Bloom, *Emily Bronte's Wuthering Heights* 135). The logic of her delirium, thus, defies her associative identity of Linton.

Furthermore, Mengham mentions another cause for Cathy's interior tumult, which is the paradoxical feeling of love and egotism towards Heathcliff (71). This sense of superiority and feeling of disgrace of his lack of cultural background, despite her undeniable passionate inclination, could be the motive behind her marriage to Edgar Linton, who possesses a

civilized way of life. Cathy herself expresses how :“it would degrade [her]to marry Heathcliff now ” and asserts the truth :“if Heathcliff and I married, we should be beggars” (Bronte 906). Temporarily, she seems obsessed about maintaining her social status at the expense of her passion.

Besides, the simultaneous thinking of both men could unveil an abnormal urge for two men in her life. One obvious example lies in her contradictory feeling towards them: on the hand, she praises Edgar and the qualities that he possesses; on the other hand, she expresses pure desire for Heathcliff. This ambivalence could be detected when she describes her passionate connection with Edgar :“I love the ground under his feet, and the air over his head, and everything he touches, and every word he says. I love his looks, and all his action, and him entirely and altogether”(Bronte 904). Taking into consideration such an affectionate outburst, one could assert that Edgar is her absolute beloved.

However, she elsewhere reassures that her love for Heathcliff is everlasting to the extent that :“if all else perished, and *he* remained, I should still continue to be; and if all else remained, and he were annihilated, the universe would turn to a mighty strange: I should not seem a part of it.” Here, she foretells her psychological state in the absence of Heathcliff. From the moral perspective, such an illogical passion from the part of an “unprincipled girl” was odd in a Victorian context (Bronte 907). Her psychological disturbance and uncertainty about her identity which prevents a wise choice of one man represents a “moral failing” (Bloom, *Emily Bronte’s Wuthering Heights* 57). Thus, Cathy helplessly seeks to formulate an identity which covers both the claims of culture and urges of nature.

In another instance, Cathy enthusiastically receives Heathcliff after three years of exile and goes to inform her husband ,with a great love ,of the news. “She parted ,flinging her arms round his neck” and then reveals :“Oh ,Edgar, darling! Heathcliff’s come back—he is!”

Her speech is interrupted “and she tightened her embrace to a squeeze” (Bronte 914). This state of an overexcitement, which is reinforced with the use of physicality, may signal out her wish to share with her husband a gleeful happiness of the return of her beloved!

Subsequently, in the sight of Heathcliff, Cathy “remembers” the melancholy of her marital status, describing with agony: “I cannot rest Ellen (...) And I want some living creature [Edgar] to keep me company in my happiness.” Her inward unrest generates, thus, from her husband’s inability to comprehend her passionate connection with Heathcliff. Moreover, such an expression suggests a state of confusion: on the one hand, Cathy is well aware of her marital responsibility towards Edgar; on the other, she is passionately and psychologically devoted to Heathcliff. Cathy’s rest, therefore, demands her status as Miss. Linton who is allowably uncrossed in her passionate link with Heathcliff. Cathy’s doubleness manifests itself in her plan to marry Edgar Linton in spite of her love to Heathcliff (Easthope 103-104). Eventually, she bodily becomes an annexation to Edgar but heartily is still attached to Heathcliff.

Besides, in her final episode of insanity, Cathy recognizes the fact that she must have chosen to live either in Wuthering Heights or in Thrushcross Grange. She yearns that: “I have been wrenched from the Heights (...) and my all in all, as Heathcliff was at that, and been converted at a stroke into Mrs. Linton (...) and the wife of a stranger: an exile” (Bronte 933). After she has passionately planned for associating herself to the Lintons, Cathy terminates feeling alien in the Grange, “an exile”, finding herself “the wife of a stranger” (Bloom, *Emily Bronte’s Wuthering Heights* 58). This sort of alienation could be due to the fact that the newly adopted identity, “convert[ing] at a stroke into Mrs. Linton,” has negated the prior association with Heathcliff in the Heights.

As mentioned earlier ,Cathy is deranged as a result of being a subject of nature and culture conflict. On the one hand ,her emotional needs towards Heathcliff are natural impulses, “irresistible passion.” On the other hand, her attraction to Edgar is based on his civility. In this respect ,Debra Goodlett claims that Cathy’s“ psychological security” requires a wealthy and socially acceptable partner. This archetypal successful marriage has been the condition for a Victorian woman to accomplish a complete identity (qtd. in Abdulkareem 22). Ironically, this “successful marriage” which values culture over nature is reflected as a fiasco at the emotional and psychological levels.

Therefore, neither could she cope with the new acculturated world of the Grange ;nor could she accept the loss of the savage world of the Heights. Hence, Cathy is predetermined to be in “another world[ that of imagination] as she has no place in this one” (Menghan 28). Rather, she is sheltered in the subconscious which promises her more fantasied pleasure.

### **3.2 Denial , Heathcliff’s Departure, and Delirium**

#### **3.2.1Wrong Marriage to Edgar Linton**

Initially, psychologists have provided an account for the inner conflict of Catherine Earnshaw that it may be a construction of an “adolescent sexuality, molded by innocence and repression” (Stephen 196). This account embeds a reference to the binary of passion and violence, as a consequence of an immense suppression. That is, the more there is an immense implosion the more the explosion is rude. Similarly, Terence Dawson assumes that“ in Wuthering Heights, violence is not exceptional, it is the norm”. Moreover, Cathy’s rebellious delirium could be an aspect of violence that pervades the novel (Dawson 15, 172). Since she has been aggressively deprived of Heathcliff ,Cathy revolts with self-injuring.

Then, it has been thought that Cathy experiences delirium from a brain fever due to a heart-break, which could be caused by man-made convention. Her marital bound to Edgar has been perceived an absurd decision since she is already, “in her mind,” engaged permanently to Heathcliff (Dawson 191). Similarly, George Bataille assumed that Cathy’s marriage remains “an element of ambiguity” (qtd. in Abdulkareem 05). Its bleakness may lie in its illogicality: how come a lady materially marries a man and spiritually is still engaged to another?

Moreover, there is no apparent compatibility between what Catherine says and does. On the one hand, she confesses “I am Heathcliff,” reflecting the oneness of her soul and Heathcliff’s. This conviction may embody a “psychological integration” (Bloom, *Emily Bronte’s Wuthering Heights* 129). On the other hand, astonishingly, she chooses to marry Edgar Linton (Bronte 907). The decision to undertake such an illogical procedure may be an outcome of an internal unbalance which terminates in her self-ruin (Abdulkareem 05). Presumably, if she has got a societal approval for her emotional relationship with a “vagabond,” Cathy would not have troubled herself with a wrong engagement with a “civilized” man.

Denial, as a defense mechanism, could be a motive behind her tragic mental instability. Cathy seems ambivalent about how to treat the two men competing for her. In a span of one single night, her psychological state volatilizes from an extreme joy to an “uncontrollable grief” (Bronte 910). She has been gleeful, when entering into the kitchen where Nelly Dean is humming a song for the young Hareton, willing agitatedly to divulge her secret that Edgar has just asked for her hand. Yet, she does not reveal whether her answer has been a consent or denial unless she listens to her friend’s positive opinion which she does not get immediately.

Furthermore, her denial of the fact that this engagement should not have occurred appears when she impatiently replies: "I accepted him, Nelly" and then demanding: "be quick and say I was wrong!" (Bronte 903). Obviously, in requesting so, she expects Nelly Dean to deny the wrongness of this fatal flaw and, consequently, decrease its implications. By contrast, Nelly projects the truth in questioning: "Why do you love him?" The reply which Cathy offers, to love Edgar for his youth, richness, cheerfulness, seems complacent and very indeed unconvincing. This is because, in Nelly's terms, these qualities could disappear and drive this kind of love to vanish too (Bronte 904). That is, this momentary interest in the material side may not involve any pure spiritual connection.

However, under a psychological pressure, Cathy confesses in response to Nelly's question: "Where is the obstacle?" She achingly presses on her heart and her head, indicating that the barrier is: "*Here!* and *here!* in my soul and in my heart, I'm convinced I'm wrong!" (Bronte 905). She acknowledges the fallacy of this fatal decision where she recognizes the amount of self-damage that she has caused.

### **3.2.1.1 The Dream**

In Freudian terms, one's repressed thoughts and instincts in the unconscious may appear in dreams, i.e. "Freudian slips" (Peterson 350). Accordingly, Catherine's dream, of being unhappy in heaven and longing for return to the world of the Heights, may indicate her denied awareness of the wrongness of her marriage to Linton. Cathy reveals to Nelly Dean her "queer dream" 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." viewing heaven a symbol for the Grange, it becomes a source of disturbance where Heathcliff is

excluded (Bronte 904-905). Her broken heart indicates that heaven “is converted to a place of exile” (Lamonica 111). Therefore, Cathy internally seems to annihilate the Grange even if it resembled heaven.

Additionally, Cathy allows herself to interpret this dream in a way that her marriage is a mere sacrifice for elevating Heathcliff, who has been systematically declassed by Hindley. She claims that she may aid him through marrying someone else. “It would degrade me to marry Heathcliff now,” says she. That is, this marriage could not deny her intimate feelings for him. The latter idea may be detected in her confession :“so he shall never know how I love him” and then admits the reason for which she loves him :“not because he’s handsome(...) but because he’s more myself than I am” (Bronte 906). Cathy’s emotional bound with Heathcliff may be at the spiritual level in which she pledges her soul to his own, but she is incapable of making the concession to share him his social and material self (qtd. in Mengham 49). For cultural considerations, she splits her soul and becomes deranged.

In fact, the displeasure when being in heaven alludes to a repressed conviction that Cathy will never regain happiness in marrying Edgar. Although she tries to eclipse, in her subconscious, the thought of the unhappy life which she will lead in the Grange ,it emerges in a “queer dream.” Cathy seems to suppress the already prophesied reality, of her tragedy in becoming the Lintons’ lady, for the purpose of having properly fulfilled a cultural and social elevation. However, this denial proves to provide a false happiness, a mere mirage driving her to an eventual mental disorder.

### **3.2.2 Heathcliff’s Departure vs. Cathy’s feverish Delirium**

The causal root of Cathy’s first neurotic exhibition could be a bereavement :her engagement to Edgar results in the separation from Heathcliff, whom she has been denied on

the ground that he does not deserve her. Lamonica argued that Catherine interprets the engagement with Linton ,in her own terms ,as a hopeful satisfaction of three elements instead of a normal single couple. On the one hand, for Edgar, marriage grants sexual pleasure, which he seeks from Cathy's company. On the other hand, for both Cathy and Heathcliff, marriage equates an emancipation from the familial constraints (105). Walter Allen compares both lovers, Heathcliff and Catherine :“ to two rivers that ought by every configuration of territory to flow into each other”( 196). Thus, despite the apparent truth that Cathy has declared her marital promise to Edgar, she unconsciously does not mean any separation from Heathcliff.

Ultimately, Cathy's superficial understanding of such a crucial initiation leads to a serious separation with her beloved, which causes her a tormenting nervous collapse (Torgerson 111). This realization, however, comes too late, after giving Edgar the word to be his wife. Attempting at opening Cathy's eyes about the fact of the expense of such a decision, Nelly wanders :“Have you considered how you'll bear the separation, and how he'll bear to be quite deserted in the world?” Here, Cathy reassesses, in a moment of an epiphany :“I shouldn't be Mrs. Linton were such a price demanded” (Bronte 906). Cathy ,therefore, appears powerless to retreat from engaging to Mr. Linton and unable to revive Heathcliff's pure heart.

Moreover, Cathy's sacrifice to promote Heathcliff and transcend cultural obstacle of social prejudice, seems too risky to such an extent that it drives her to a downfall. Torgerson claimed that the alienation Cathy exhibits could be born out of the conflict which is circulated around loyalty. On the one hand, she seems paralyzed to challenge the patriarchal system dictating faithfulness to marital bound; on the other, she is tortured by her passionate requirements towards Heathcliff. The misunderstanding of the Victorian mechanism ,that a married woman is fully determined by constraints to conduct a loyal and disciplinary path,



contributes to the complexity of her dilemma (Lamonica 112). Ironically, marriage becomes another source of an internal insecurity leading to a tormenting nervous collapse.

In addition, the emotional injury of the loss of her beloved precipitated her into a psychological alienation. As it has often been argued, Cathy's response to Heathcliff's departure is "a lapse into illness" ( Bloom, *Emily Bronte's Wuthering Heights* 59).

Furthermore, the interior instability of Cathy is thought to be a resultant outcome of the conflict of nature and culture. Rubinow Gorsky, in " 'I'll Cry Myself Sick'", discusses Cathy's self-alienation :

acknowledging the power of society, Bronte shows how Catherine reacts internally to the external division between a natural free spirit and a trammled nineteenth-century lady suffering from not being allowed to be yourself, from conflict with society, and from thwarted love, divided from her soul and soul-mate, she both acts out and falls ill. (qtd. in Torgerson 112)

Gorsky's development of this case seems appropriate in the sense that Cathy's health deteriorates immediately after Heathcliff's unexpected leaving of the Heights and continues to collapse with a second tragic episode of hysteria (Torgerson 112). Besides, Cathy rebels against her societal norm " of not being allowed to be yourself" by becoming her true self. In a moment where madness speaks the words of truth ,Cathy decides to resolve the double which consequently derives from nature and culture antagonism. She reveals :“I should be myself were I once among the heather on those hills” (Bronte 933). Thus, the life of the moors allows her true self to emerge.

Additionally, Gorsky's argument indicates also the fact that Cathy reacts in a way where the feigned illness turns to be a dangerous problematic. Similarly, Gilbert and Gubar argued that Heathcliff's self-exile from the Heights results in "Cathy's psychic fragmentation"

(Dunn 390). Her mental degeneracy ,therefore, becomes evidential symptoms of the effect of an emotional injury.

### 3.2.2.1 Nature Imagery

It has been thought that Emily Bronte was inseparably attached to the nature of Haworth. This profound psychological attachment to such an environment manifests in her novel. “*Wuthering Heights* is in crucial ways a response to a given environment[ that of the moors of Haworth]”( Menghan 18). Accordingly, she skillfully depicts the passionate affection of Catherine Earnshaw through the adoption of nature imagery presented in the recurrent images of the moorland, the Wuthering sky and the storm.

Catherine’s double may emerge from a twofold passionate sympathies towards two rivalry men. This is made clear in her analogous image that: “ my love for Linton is like the foliage in the woods: time will change it(...) as winter changes the trees ” and differently“ my love for Heathcliff resembles the eternal rocks beneath: a source of little visible delight, but necessary” (Bronte 907). This acknowledgment refers to a passing pleasure ,an interest in Edgar’s elevated social class and refined culture ;contrastingly, it foreshadows a an everlasting love for Heathcliff ,who is less attractive but necessary for her nature.

#### 3.2.2.1.1 Storm Symbol

Wemyss Reid related the stormy weather with the warmth of passion and insanity. This may depict the truth of a mental illness of the authoress herself( Bloom 181). E. M. Forster, in his *The Aspects of the Novel* ,stated that *Wuthering Heights* is “filled with sound-storm and rushing wind” (qtd. in Allen 197). According to *A Dictionary of Symbols* by J.E. Cirlot, the storm may symbolize the struggles of the psyche (366). Furthermore, Elizabeth

Gaskell, in her *Life of Charlotte Bronte*, views Haworth, the living setting of the Bronte family, as changeable in its impression“ according to the mood in which the spectator may be” (qtd. in Ingham 2). Therefore, the Brontean environment has been a mirror, reflexive to their internal instabilities.

Accordingly, the weather which Bronte describes in *Wuthering Heights* reflects the psychological turmoil of Catherine Earnshaw. The stormy midnight summer ,which erupts with Heathcliff’s sudden departure from the Heights to an exile ,foresees the chaotic psychical life of Cathy.“ the storm came rattling over the Heights in full fury,” said the major narrator Nelly Dean. Nature’s fury indicates Cathy’s volcanic eruption and rage. In consternation, Catherine gets out screamingly in the thunder storm to check Heathcliff who has already left the Heights (Bronte 907). Cathy seems indifferent about the dangers of being exposed to such a storm since a more aggressive storm has already begun in her interior self.

The implication of the storm appears in the split of the tree, being an aspect of nature’s rage, may embody the separation of the two intimate beloved resulting in Cathy’s self-division withdrawal from the world of bitter reality. Besides, the subsequent physical destruction of the building serves as an indicator of her inward ruin (Bronte 908). As far as all these natural variations as identical to the atmosphere described in Shakespearean tragedies are concerned, one can presume that the sudden climatic abnormality is a reflexive mirror of the shaking of Cathy’s internal balance and universe.

Cathy’s response to Heathcliff’s self-exile ,which manifests in an internal breakdown, could be a reaction to external disorder (Bloom, *Emily Bronte’s Wuthering Heights* 134). Subsequently, immediately after Heathcliff’s dislocation, Cathy becomes “saucier and more passionate, and haughtier than ever” and “burst[s] into uncontrollable grief, and the reminder of her words were inarticulate.” Eventually, further symptoms“ proved the

commencement of a delirium” (Bronte 910). Thus, these aspects of nature’s rage foreshadows the striking of a psychological calamity in Cathy’s character.

Despite her unstable state of mind, Cathy is still promised to be Linton’s wife. After her three years of convalescence in the Grange, Cathy and Edgar seem homogenous couple. Yet, the abrupt occurrence of Heathcliff’s return seems to break this apparent marital harmony. His intrusion manifests itself in an unquenched revenge on Cathy.

### **3.3. The Second Mental Breakdown Episode**

#### **3.3.1 Heathcliff’s Avenging Return**

Catherine’s efforts for reconciling Heathcliff, who is loaded with revenge, and Edgar, who is intolerable towards the fact that his wife befriends a man, go in vain. She attempts ,for example, prompting Edgar and Heathcliff friendly to shake hands :“she seized Linton’s reluctant fingers and crushed them into his [Heathcliff’s]” (Bronte 915). In this respect, Cathy is viewed to seek “to reconcile the irreconcilable: an acceptance of the wish that Heathcliff is: ‘more myself than I am’ and a belief that nothing has changed if she marries another man” ( Lamonica 168). Consequently, Cathy wishes to correct the uncorrectable, to erase from the past memory the tragic episode of her marriage.

Moreover, Abdulkareem argues that Cathy’s pride and prejudice prevent her from encountering the impropriety of her fatal choice, to favour Edgar Linton over Heathcliff. However, in her unconscious mind she seems knowledgeable about this fact. Consequently, Heathcliff’s return for revenge complicated her fatalistic mistake :again, Cathy eclipses the idea that she loses radically control over Heathcliff by suppressing it in her unconscious mind. Elizabeth R. Napier asserts that Cathy tries to repair her fault by enforcing Edgar’s and

Heathcliff's reunion, befriending each other (qtd. in Abdulkareem 118). Instead of confessing outright her past fault, she blames Edgar for being "jealous and mean," rejecting her plan to re-establish a harmonious relationship that relates the three, Cathy, Heathcliff, and Edgar.

Once more, Cathy is in front of the dilemma of choosing one single man out of two. Edgar Linton impatiently demands from Cathy : "will you give up Heathcliff hereafter, or will you give up me? It is impossible for you to be my friend, and his at the same time" (Bronte 928-929). Having the repressed thought of her wrongly chosen approach in life, Cathy refuses to spell out any choice that she regrets unconsciously (Abdulkareem 17). Heathcliff's return seems to be the straw that broke the camel's back because it unveils the reality of her fault. Yet, the hallucinatory delusion could fulfill her desires to rejoin her beloved through the mental detachment from the real world of the Grange.

Heathcliff's marriage to Isabella Linton is one aspect of his revenge on Catherine who, in his deep mind, has betrayed her heart (Bronte 954). Isabella, Cathy's sister-in-law, becomes "a sexual instrument of his scheme in revenge" (Bloom, *Emily Bronte's Wuthering Heights* 131). Dawson argues that the beginning of Cathy's "brain fever" coincides with Isabella's elopement with Heathcliff (188). Cathy could not absorb the fact that Isabella has usurped her. That is, this mysterious avenging engagement erupts her panicky jealousy, signaling an emotional collapse, and gradually leading in to an interior fragmentation. Indeed, Cathy's nervous syndromes intensify with the return of Heathcliff after six months of wedding. This avenging return foreshadows the starting of hysteria, a form of "feverish infection of [psychological and emotional] wounds." (Bloom, *Emily Bronte Wuthering Heights* 60). Thus, Cathy's sense of the loss of her "all in all," the innocent Heathcliff, may be the source of her inward turmoil.

### 3.3.2 Catherine's Self-destruction

The return of Heathcliff disharmonizes Catherine's and Edgar's conjugal existence, disrupting their "possession of deep and growing happiness" (Bloom, *Emily Bronte's Wuthering Heights* 131 ;Bronte 913). Cathy becomes a subject of frustration, and falls dangerously ill, as she grows aware of the shocking truth of both Edgar and Heathcliff. First, Edgar's declaration that Heathcliff must be considered alien from the Grange Park stuns her and destroys the hopes to reunite with her intimate beloved after a departure of about three years. Second, her expectations of controlling Heathcliff seem challenged when she discovers his unusual aloofness. She astonishingly expresses :“That is not *my* Heathcliff. I shall love mine yet; and take him with me: he's in my soul” (Bronte 954). Thus, she decides not to dissolve this emotional bound, but instead she loves him eternally in her memories.

Furthermore, it has been often argued that Cathy indulges in a self-destructive gambling through a systematic attempt to break the two men's hearts by breaking hers( Dawson 185). In a scene, she outright rebelliously avows :“if I cannot keep Heathcliff for my friend—if Edgar will be mean and jealous, I'll break their hearts by breaking mine”( Bronte 928). In another, Cathy admits :“If I were only sure it would kill him [Edgar], (...) I'd kill myself directly” (Bronte 930). She ,thus, engages in a perilous game of avenging her emotional requirements that have long been unfulfilled.

Additionally, some argue that Cathy's choice indicates a fatal omen (Dawson 185-186). She claims full knowledge of how to initiate her revenge from Edgar's indifference that: “ I'll choose between the two— either to starve, at once, that would be no punishment unless he had a heart—or to recover and leave the country” (Bronte 930). In both options, either deliberate starvation or resultant psychological journey with Heathcliff into her unconscious mind, are meant to harm not only Edgar but Cathy and Heathcliff, too. Three days of

starvation followed by a delirium could be indicators of a rebellion to involve the two men who are still competing for owning her in the suffering she undergoes.

Starvation and imprisonment, two strategic methods adopted by Cathy to harm herself and the two men who selfishly seek for possessing her, are believed to be essential instigators of insanity (Bloom, *Emily Bronte's Wuthering Heights* 59). Her chilling rage could be an evidence of a nihilist behaviour towards her social limitations (Dawson 184). It seems that it is only through the state of psychological abnormality that she liberates herself from societal judgment and responsibilities.

### 3.3.3.1 Insanity vs. Power

In response to patriarchal oppression, Cathy once declares :“I'll cry - I'll cry myself sick!” Her wickedness in creating a serious sickness, which usually instigates due to a psychological pressure or an emotional frustration, is meant to impose authority. As a matter of example, on the ground that :“ Cathy will be sick, only to grieve [them],” Nelly commands Edgar to please and conform to her mad demands (Bronte 900). Indeed, rejecting her husband's exercise of power, Cathy manifests strength in referring to sickness. She rescues herself from the impossible choice between Heathcliff and Edgar by requesting :“I require to be let alone! (...)I demand it!” Here, immediately she asks :“Don't you see I can scarcely stand?” (Bronte 911). An internal weakness ,therefore, has apparently transformed to be an external strength.

Moreover, it is often believed that Cathy grasps from her mental illness the fake power to control both men at once, no matter whether they were intimate friends or rivalry competitors. For example, intending “to frighten [Edgar]” for he “distressed [her] shockingly,” by being intolerant with her beloved, she declares :“I'm in danger of being ill”

(Bronte 928). Gorsky asserts that :“ she tries to use her illness to order the world, but finally her illness and her world destroy her” (qtd. in Torgerson 144). Thus, Cathy pledges in a destructive adventure to restore the balance that she has wrongly shaken.

Indeed, Nelly notes that there could be “a favourable crisis in Catherine's mental illness” (Bronte 950). This narration overtones how Cathy extracts from her mental abnormality rest, freeing herself from any marital obligations behaving purely naturally. Since she has been analyzed as a deranged wife and she could not bear any crossing, Cathy possibly could meet her beloved in her husband’s room. Thanks to this severe mental exhaustion that she could reunite with Heathcliff.

However, Hendle has a dissimilar view, stressing that the losses women may get out of this form of rebellion may exceed its advantages. This is found in :“ when women are taught that illness and death offer them the best route to power, we all suffer the loss of possibilities. There is nothing empowering in victimage” (qtd. in Torgerson 73). Truly, Cathy’s contemptuous behaviour during her feverish delirium leads to a self-destruction. Depending on what has been just stated, one could assume that the Victorian woman had been denied normal means of expression, which drove her to react in abnormal ways of insanity.

### **3.3.3 Deadly Delirium**

Cathy’s nature ,being “domineering and headstrong,” drives her to accomplish the wicked plan of a self-damage (Bronte 935). Lamonica also assumes that her delirium, during a“ feverish bewilderment,” culminates in transgressing the existing reality into the subconscious world ,into childhood in Wuthering Heights. In psychological terms, Cathy exchanges adulthood with girlhood: she fantasies a world which allows her escaping the responsibilities of the Grange (110). Moreover, this world of illusions and self-fulfillment



creates an “undisrupted union” with her soul-mate. It is, then, this fantasy which offers her “temporary return” to the Heights while “death promises a permanent union” with Heathcliff (112). Permanent insanity, therefore, becomes the unique way to guarantee her the renewal of the emotional contract with Heathcliff.

From Freudian perspective, the revival of desire with the absence of power may lead to a mental illness. Hence, the reappearance of Heathcliff reawakens Cathy’s pleasures, however, her status of Lady Linton paralyzes her and consequently precipitates her to an inevitable nervous decline. Heathcliff’s return signals the rebirth of her “true self’s desires” without the reemergence of her “former powers” (Bloom, *Emily Bronte’s Wuthering Heights* 60). As a result, Cathy seems to be the victim of a nervous illness since she expresses her sufferings and the sources of her happiness, i.e. “phantasies,” mad reveries (qtd. in Habib 579). This could be applicable when analyzing Catherine’s delirious confessional to her friendly nurse, Nelly Dean.

Accordingly, lamenting the loss of contentment and pleasure with her passed unrestrained childhood, Cathy reveals to Nelly Dean that:

the whole seven years of my life grew a blank! I did not recall that they had been at all. I was a child; my father was just buried, and my misery arose from the separation that Hindley had ordered between me and Heathcliff –I was laid alone, for the first time. (Bronte 933)

Speaking this memory to Nelly, Cathy reveals a regretful acknowledgment of her absurd and ridiculous engagement, which has detached her from her beloved in their mature years just like Hindley separated them during their childish days.

These happenings belong to the period of her childish pre-marital life. Specifically, she recounts an incident where her tyrant brother, who stands for cultural restraints, ceases the opportunity of his father’s death to separate her from Heathcliff. This miserable detachment,

which her marriage to Edgar strengthened, makes her seven years of maturity “grew blank” (Bronte 933). Vainly, Cathy has spent her years far from Heathcliff. Hence, she desires avenging the loss of any sense of life through a mad self-ruin. Therefore, she seeks to recapture these desirable moments in forms of feverish delusions.

As it has been stated in the previous chapter, in a case of neurosis, the “ past, present and future are strung together (...) on the thread of the wish that runs through them.” The neurotic refers to the world of fantasy, merging the present life with the memories of childhood towards a wish within the realm of the subconscious mind. Accordingly, Cathy deliriously expresses her longings for the status of girlhood :“ I wish I were out of doors! I wish I were a girl again, half savage and hardy, and free... laughing at injuries, not maddening under them” (Bronte 933). It is the wish of being re-liberated by girlhood from the cultural body. She appears critically to be in need for the girlish autonomy to respond to Heathcliff’s powerful passions.

Afterwards, her claiming to vision Wuthering Heights shining, in a dark moonless night from a farther distance in the Grange out of the window, reinforces the severity of her delirium. Fixing her thoughts on the Heights, Cathy pictures to Nelly Dean the illusory world which she favourably creates. Spelling out memories of childish days, her speech appears nonsensical and mad :“ ‘Look!’ she cried eagerly, ‘ that’s my room with the candle in it, and the trees swaying before it.” Then she goes on detailing about her ventures with Heathcliff, who has always followed her, and dreamily with a deeper childlikeness of spirit, describes her usual “ rough journey, and a sad heart to travel it,” daring to stand among the graves and ask them to come.” At these moments, Nelly conceived such signs symptomatic of insanity (Bronte 933-934). Moreover, it is the wish to re-accompany Heathcliff just like in her early life Cathy where :“the greatest punishment [they]could invent for her was to keep her separate

from [Heathcliff]" (Bronte 882). The lack of her beloved in the existing world could not prevent the process of capturing him in her mind.

Significantly, Freud stressed also that the neurotic regains "what [s]he possessed in [her] happy childhood"( qtd.in Habib 580-581 ). Therefore, despite Hindley' s attempt at detaching her from her intimate friend, girlhood offers her the natural impulses of pleasurable rebellion. In questioning :“ why” she is“ so changed?” Cathy conceives the cultural and biological forces combining to plot against her( Bronte 933; Bloom ,*Emily Bronte's Wuthering Heights* 58). This seems ,however, a late self-discovery about the change from adolescence to adulthood, which was marked by the transition from the Heights to the Grange( Lamonica 111). Consequently, wifhood and pregnancy were essential conditions too for this tormenting realization.

Moreover, Catherine crosses the boundaries of the natural so as to reconcile her beloved in the fantastic world of sweet memories. Catherine's contemptuous character to transcend the “prison-houses” of body and society is exemplified in her bitter outburst to Nelly Dean. In her mad speech She complains :

“ the thing that irks me most is this shattered prison; after all. I'm tired of being enclosed here. I'm wearying to escape into that glorious world(...)not seeing it dimly through tears, and yearning for it through the walls of an aching heart.  
(Bronte 954)

She seems not only enveloped in her body but also imprisoned in the Grange (Bloom, *Emily Bronte's Wuthering Heights* 113). Her mourning reveals an abnormal quest for emancipation from the material world, liberating her soul from the mortal carcass, which counterparts with a wish for a romantic reunion with Heathcliff in the glorious one.

One aspect of her mental abnormalities is depression. Barlow and Durand include ,in their book *Abnormal Psychology* ,a case of a woman’s psychological disorder that corresponds to the case of Catherine Earnshaw. Katie, a shy sixteen years old, depicted her personal suffering from depression, which :“ is like falling into a deep dark hole that you cannot climb out of. You scream as you fall, but it seems like no one hears you”( qtd. in Matlin 390). It appears to be a psychological state where the patient becomes a prisoner of grief.

Similarly, this description overlaps with Catherine Earnshaw’ s mad reveries. She reveals that :

I have been wrenched from the Heights, and every early association, and my all in all, as Heathcliff was at that, and been converted at a stroke into Mrs.

Linton(...)and the wife of a stranger: an exile, and outcast, from what had been my world-you may fancy a glimpse of the abyss where I groveled ! ( Bronte 933)

She makes an analogous image between her experience of depression ,which comes as a result of a wrong catastrophic marriage separating her from her “all in all,” Heathcliff, and an “abyss.” In addition, other syndromes such as feeling terribly sad,“ uncontrollable grief” and headaches, indicate the degree to which Cathy has been a “subject to depression of spirits” (Bronte 913). Consequently, these symptoms may signal out the effect of her fragmented psyche on her physical health.

In a scene of her perilous hysterical attack, Cathy is described to be animalistic when “she increased her feverish bewilderment to madness, and tore the pillow with her teeth; then raising up all burning, desired that [Nelly]would open the window.” Although Nelly Dean objects to open the window due to the cold windy weather, “the expressions flitting over her face, and the changes of her moods, began to alarm [Nelly]terribly.” Yet, few moments afterwards, Cathy seems to change from a violent mood to a childish behaviour through

“pulling the feathers from the rents she had just made.” At these moments, trying to analyze her nonsensical words, Nelly realizes that Cathy’s “mind had strayed to other associations” of her past childhood days with Heathcliff (Bronte 931). In another scene, she seems dangerously abnormal that “it was nothing less than murder in her eyes for everyone to presume to stand up and contradict her” (Bronte 911). The true self of Cathy has rebelliously emerged in order to transcend the cultural conventions.

Before her death, Cathy seeks to unburden herself from conscious remorse in her projection that both Edgar and Heathcliff, whether intentionally or not, have destroyed her real and psychic life. This seems clear when she confronts Heathcliff: “you and Edgar have broken my heart, Heathcliff! And you both come to bewail the deed to me(…)You have killed—and thriven on it”( Bronte 952-953). Cathy projects her misachievement ,to select a suitable partner to make her happy, on Heathcliff’s and Edgar’s enmity. She attributes her mental illness to Heathcliff and Edgar’s quarrel a few days ago. Apparently, she condemns both for causing her tragic breaking-heart. However, she still unconsciously denies confessing her wrong decision and paralysis to undertake a second choice.

In addition, even when being in her last few days ,Cathy refuses recognizing any responsibility of her mistaken marriage ,rather she excludes herself from being a causal effect of her deadly mental illness. This kind of denial hinders her from taking any further step to enhance her situation, correcting her earlier mistake. Catherine eventually confesses the futility of her decision ;she outbursts out, telling Heathcliff :“if I’ve done wrong, I’m dying for it. It is enough” (Bronte 954). Besides, her hysterical experience is rather perceived to be sanity because it leads her to open her eyes to the mistake she has committed against herself, her beloved ,her husband, and the whole external universe( Bloom, *Emily Bronte’s Wuthering Heights* 58). In this way of self-destruction, Cathy attempts to correct what has been done

wrongly when she has considered the cultural restrictions and complacently elevated her social status.

Furthermore, the deadly delirium, which transports her to the memories of innocence with Heathcliff, demonstrates a semi-victory of nature over culture. In this respect, Bettina L. Knapp comments that “the central theme of *Wuthering Heights* is the birth(...) and the death of love on a worldly plane, and the rebirth of this passion in atemporal spheres” (qtd. in Dawson 136). This idea could find its echo in Cathy’s mad wish : “I wish I could hold you until we were both dead” (Bronte 953). This kind of wishes could derive from a disturbed mind, being overcome by a passionate driving force.

Eventually, it seems that her abnormal state of mind has liberated her from the chains of social, religious, and familial conventions to reunite with her beloved in a farewell passionate kiss (Bronte 952). Actually, Cathy’s “latest ideas wandered back to pleasant early days. Her life closed in a gentle dream” (Bronte 958). That is, these last insane moments have proved to be her the most favourable moments in her life.

## **Conclusion**

Once Catherine has taken the road of Linton, she definitely forsaken the road of Heathcliff. Catherine could stand as an example of the nineteenth century women ,referring to a destructive denial, projection, and burying their emotional and psychological miseries. Despite the fact of the fallacy of Catherine Earnshaw’s misguided choice and self-destruction, she is rather considered a victim of social and natural combination. Being ruled by patriarchal culture, Cathy is doomed to fall :her decline has commenced with her fatalistic acceptance of Edgar’s offer of marriage (Bloom ,*Emily Bronte’s Wuthering Heights* 58-59). Just like a tragic

heroine, her first mistake leads to the succession of faults and the resultant self-damage, which may redeem her emotional mistake.

### **General Conclusion**

This dissertation is an investigation into the exploration of the female mental abnormalities with reference to sexuality, through Charlotte Bronte's *Villette* and Emily Bronte's *Wuthering Heights*. Through the analysis of the case of hysteria with Lucy Snowe, the protagonist of *Villette*, and the case of doubleness of Catherine Earnshaw, the anti-heroine of *Wuthering Heights*, this feminist psychoanalytic study aimed at displaying the Bronte sisters' diverging conceptions about the Victorian woman's insanity, in terms of manifestations, roots, and functions. Moreover, The Brontes' rebellious nature could validate their depiction of the woman's interiority, which allows for uncovering their repressed emotional anxieties and thus criticizing Victorianism for meddling in every detail of young woman's privacy.

The first chapter, which includes a flashback about the representation of the madwoman in the Victorian society and English literature, has put forward the false idea of the woman's proneness to mental instabilities. Instead, this chapter has attributed these abnormal states of the mind to the lack of emotional freedoms within the involuntary domestic prison, where women used to preserve physical and moral chastity until an appropriate marriage and consequently pledge a marital faithfulness for life. Moreover, a feminist and psychoanalytic background has been useful to enhance the procedure of unveiling the Brontes' rejection of their society's overstated restrictive codes.

The second chapter, which is an analysis into the depiction of the chaotic existence of a passionate young woman through Charlotte Bronte's *Villette*, has displayed the repercussions of repression, whether internal or external, on the female protagonist's psyche. The externalization of the shadowy world of Lucy Snowe has revealed her inward perturbing conflict of reason and feeling. Moreover, having two neurotic episodes, as a result of the unreasonable requirements of the Victorian morality and the fantastical libidinal urges of



youth, seemed, however, to benefit her in the reshaping of a new identity of a self-autonomous woman. Lucy trespasses the first experience of her mental derangements due to self-analysis which regulates the process of self-repression and decreases her self-alienation. However, she manages to transcend the second hysterical attack, which is instigated by the fear of a subsequent failure to have an emotional outlet, through annihilating the external surveillance and adopting the natural method of esteeming self-expression. This personal achievement seems to be marked by her emancipation from the internalized chaperon, the haunting nun.

The third chapter, which is an analysis into the dilemmatic interior life of Catherine Earnshaw-Heathcliff-Linton, has shown the implications of the conflicting cultural and natural forces on her mind. This psychological insecurity which has possibly generated from the incompatibility between her nature and culture results ultimately in her self-division. Furthermore, the inconsistency of her decision foreshadows the twofold emotional urge for two dissimilar men, each is supposed to fill in a specific gap in her life. Then, Catherine's schizophrenic tendency manifests itself through her recurrent images of oscillations between the two worlds, Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange. Yet, through maintaining this duality, which apparently signals a sort of self-ruin where she feigns illness and ends with serious neurotic symptoms, Catherine emancipates her soul from the cultural carcass.

The analysis that has been conducted within this investigation has displayed the discrepancy between Charlotte Bronte and Emily Bronte, in terms of the embedment of female mental disorders in their above-stated novels. Initially, similarly the Bronte sisters, by proxy, license their female protagonists to rebel against patriarchal norms through mental abnormalities. Furthermore, unlike Emily whose incorporation of mental illness does not require recovery, Charlotte's inclusion of hysteria indicates resulting insights to the

experience. Just like her tragic pathetic heroine, Emily seems less optimistic than her sister Charlotte, whose conception of neurosis appears to be promising.

From the perspective of Charlotte Bronte, hysteria becomes significant as long as it causes a moral maturity and a psychological metamorphosis within the character. This hallmark signals Charlotte's emphatic concern with the transformative process of illness. Charlotte, through displaying the implications of cultural restrictions on the woman's psychological normality, criticizes her societal constraints from within. In other words, she does not express a radical rebellion but only she asks for a little breathing room. In this sense, Lucy Snowe's two experiences reveals her internal wish to reconstruct out of destruction just like a phoenix, resurrecting from the ashes.

However, Emily Bronte reflects the undeniable destructive power of culture in creating incurable psychological wounds, which denote a sort of fatal love. Emily, in her exclusion of the analytic process from the neurotic experience of Catherine Earnshaw, seems to target the whole system, yet from a detached distance. Emily rejects the possibility of any fertile consequence of a mental collapse in causing an internal change. Instead, the experience of the mental instability equates an absolute destruction of the woman. Indeed, Emily victimizes the Victorian woman whose doubleness, a necessary evil, becomes a refuge representing wish-fulfillment.

Furthermore, Charlotte seems convinced that a woman could generate from collapse strength, from illness health; however, Emily pessimistically believes in a destructive rebellion. Meanwhile, *Villette* is a sophisticated insight into some psychological illnesses, focusing on hysteria which might be a necessary revolution to instigate change from within, *Wuthering Heights* metaphorically implies a condemnation of the Victorian bankrupt system, which functioned according to the principle of the possession of the woman just like the land.

In a way or another, each of the Brontes resisted the nineteenth-century medievalism, where their starting point is a mental illness.

Eventually, as for language, the Bronte sisters romanticize the woman's interiority through the Gothicization of the external setting and the adoption of a natural imagery. For Charlotte, the horrific nun besides a stone metaphor could symbolize an aspect of an unhealthy repression, leading Lucy Snowe to the verge of insanity. For Emily, the storm symbol may prophesy the psychological abnormalities of Catherine Earnshaw and the moors, during her delirious fits, which may signal a spiritual liberation and an absolute reunion with the natural body far from the cultural yokes.

This investigation is still far from perfection. Hence, this modest study has not covered a stylistic analysis through *Wuthering Heights* and *Villette*, thus a further research is required to explore other aesthetic qualities of insanity that result from the use of a number of stylistic devices, which in turn correlate with feminist thematic parameters. Therefore, this investigation could be a cornerstone for those whose area of interest appeals to the Bronte sisters literary aspects.

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