DIPLOMARBEIT

Titel der Diplomarbeit

“Shadows of the Past: Madness, Memory, and Place in Selected Nineteenth-Century Fiction”

Verfasserin

Elżbieta Filipek-Zarosa

angestrebter akademischer Grad

Magistra der Philosophie (Mag.phil.)

Wien, 2013

Studienkennzahl lt. Studienblatt:	A 343
Studienrichtung lt. Studienblatt:	Anglistik und Amerikanistik
Betreuer:	Univ.-Prof. DDr. Ewald Mengel

DECLARATION OF AUTHENTICITY

I confirm to have conceived and written this paper in English all by myself. Quotations from sources are all clearly marked and acknowledged in the bibliographical references either in the footnotes or within the text. Any ideas borrowed and/or passages paraphrased from the works of other authors are truthfully acknowledged and identified in the footnotes.

Signature:

HINWEIS

Diese Diplomarbeit hat nachgewiesen, dass die betreffende Kandidatin oder der betreffende Kandidat befähigt ist, wissenschaftliche Themen selbstständig sowie inhaltlich und methodisch vertretbar zu bearbeiten. Da die Korrekturen der/des Beurteilenden nicht eingetragen sind und das Gutachten nicht beiliegt, ist daher nicht erkenntlich mit welcher Note diese Arbeit abgeschlossen wurde. Das Spektrum reicht von sehr gut bis genügend. Die Habilitierten des Instituts für Anglistik und Amerikanistik bitten diesen Hinweis bei der Lektüre zu beachten.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

My special thanks go to Prof. DDr. Ewald Mengel, my supervisor, for his professional advice and encouragement he has given me throughout the writing process of this thesis.

I would also like to thank my family for their constant support, understanding and love.

Let us return to the past; it will be a step forward

— Giuseppe Verdi

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION **2**

1. 1. EMILY BRONTË – *WUTHERING HEIGHTS* **9**

1.1. “I am surrounded with her image”: the confessions of a lovesick maniac 11

1.2. “Is that Catherine Linton?”: Catherine’s identity crisis 33

2. 2. CHARLES DICKENS – *GREAT EXPECTATIONS* **43**

2.1. “If you knew all my story”: Miss Havisham introduced 45

2.2. “Why should I call you mad?”: Miss Havisham, madness and her memory prison 63

CONCLUSION **71**

BIBLIOGRAPHY **73**

INDEX **77**

DEUTSCHE ZUSAMMENFASSUNG **79**

CURRICULUM VITAE **81**

INTRODUCTION

As memory may be a paradise from which we cannot be
driven, it may also be a hell from which we
cannot escape.

— John Lancaster Spalding

We live in places, relate to others in them,
die in them. Nothing we do is unplaced. How could
it be otherwise?

— Edward S. Casey, *The Fate of Place*

Is it at all possible to leave the past behind, and, sometimes, maybe even against all odds, overcome the pervasive sense of helplessness and confusion in the face of the many trials and challenges that life inevitably brings? Does time indeed heal all wounds, helping one effectively deal with what made the dream of a life one had unexpectedly collapse? These questions, and many more, are likely to concern any individuals – real and fictional – struggling to find their way through the difficult and overwhelming situations they were confronted with at some point in their lives yet which have continued to have a strong hold over their minds ever since. For while there is certainly no denying that the past – whether joyful or not – is an integral part of human life and development and, precisely for that reason, it cannot simply be denied or altered at will, it is also worth noting that it is usually the past that is felt to be in some way unsettling – yet still remains important to the formation of one’s identity – that has an intrinsic tendency to lurk in the background, throwing its long shadow over the present and resurfacing, unbidden, when least expected. Generally belonging to the past and helping to “[create] a reality that is […] rich and vital in interconnections” (Marlow, *Memory* 23), memories – like places that are typically bound up with some personal histories and “lend themselves readily to symbolical extension” (Lutwack 35) – might thus conceivably prove to be just as essential to shaping, or validating, one’s steadily changing, and maturing, sense of self as to linking the past and the present together. [1]

---

[1] In her book *Memory*, Anne Whitehead expresses a similar view; she states that “memory is concerned with the personal and is inherently bound to identity”, and that “[t]hrough memory, then, the past of the individual can be revived or made actual again, in the sense of being brought into consciousness” (7).

In the two novels to be examined in this thesis, Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* (1847) as well as Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations* (1861), one can undeniably encounter a number of uniquely unforgettable yet humanly flawed characters who experience a profound and momentous change in their emotional and mental state, following some unexpected, overwhelming experience(s) which made the world crash around them and put them in a distinctly vulnerable position, psychologically and socially. Interestingly, while some of the characters to be discussed here ostensibly lapse into what can be compared to an amnesiac state in which their memories of the emotionally-charged moment(s), which shattered their reality and threw their minds off balance, seem to be pushed out of their consciousness in an attempt to ward off, or numb, the ensuing pain, others remain anchored firmly in the past as they continue to dwell on its most bitter aspects, and so, gradually, find themselves imprisoned in their own mounting despair, growing utterly unable – or maybe even reluctant – to break free from the confines of their own minds where lingering pain, or deep-seated anger, notably hold them captive. What they all seem to have in common though – apart from their lives being overshadowed by the upsetting past – is primarily their ultimate failure to move beyond their old wounds and disappointments and come to terms with what was irrevocably lost or perhaps even never gained, to simply let the past "be incorporated *as past* within the present […] in order for there to be difference, change, progress" (Brooks 519). This failure, as my thesis will argue, will considerably contribute to their impending mental and emotional collapse.[2]

Given that the primary intention of this project is to bring the peculiar and intricate interplay between madness, memory and place into sharper focus[3] and thereby to illustrate the effects of the (in)escapable persistence of the past into the present, a closer look will be taken at mostly those characters who ostensibly no longer are what they once were owing to the insistent – and as yet unmastered – past which manifestly exerts a powerful hold over their psyche and refuses to be forgotten. Accordingly, my discussion will focus, in particular, on the following individuals: (1) the manipulative, though somewhat naïve, recluse Miss Havisham, (2) the highly enigmatic and appallingly vengeful Heathcliff, and (3) torn between passion and duty, conformity and defiance, Catherine Earnshaw. All of these characters, it would seem, find themselves in a strikingly similar predicament as they are forced to contend not only with the largely fragmented and confusing reality that has come to surround them but also with the grim and instantaneous consequences of their own choices and decisions which have forever changed their lives and, in some measure, also the lives of those around them. In addition, all of them are subsequently forced to realize that the gap between their personal wishes and societal expectations – ideal and real – may not always be easy, or possible, to bridge. More significantly, though, all of them seem to be anchored – mentally and/or physically – to a particular place which, on the one hand, functions as a setting for their actions, thoughts and relationships with other characters and, on the other hand, is not only intrinsically imbued with some emotional or symbolic meanings the characters in question ascribe to it but also permeated with (their) memories that resound or are embodied therein and necessarily shape the way they all deal with their unhappy, difficult past. It is important, however, not to forget that even though there may be some parallels in their respective circumstances and responses to the events taking place in their lives, each of the characters mentioned above has, naturally enough, their own story to tell and their own set of problems and shortcomings to face. Yet what seems to bring their notably unique situations still close together is one simple fact: what was to make possible the fulfilment of those characters' intentions, innermost hopes or wishes has only brought a bitter disappointment to them owing to an unforeseen turn of events that made their lives markedly different from what they had apparently envisioned for themselves, and, thus, as previously noted, conceivably precipitated their ultimate downfall.

---

[2] As will be argued throughout this paper, the tension between what the characters desire or aim to achieve and what they instead get is an important factor in their ongoing descent into insanity. Moreover, this tension not only comes to the fore through their fixation on unrequited wishes and past hurts but – as one shall see – is clearly intensified by the place to which the characters concerned are inexorably tied.

[3] The terms "madness", "memory" and "place" will be elucidated and treated more extensively in the respective sections of this thesis. They will be considered in relation to both the impact of the past on the characters' sanity, on the one hand, and the nineteenth-century understandings of these terms, as reflected in literature of the period, on the other hand.

In general, even a casual glance at the selected novels by Dickens and Bronte leaves possibly little, if any, doubt that the intricacies of place and memory seem to be persistently thematized in their works. Whether apparently sane or mentally distraught, buffeted by life or not, the characters who crowd the pages of *Wuthering Heights* and *Great Expectations* are undeniably, and inexorably, subject to the inescapable influences of their own surroundings and the intricate processes of remembering and/or forgetting. Looking thus more closely at their individual histories, likewise their gradual descent into an alienating and terrifying state of mental disorder, one cannot help noticing that memory, insanity and place – the concepts that generally tend to be regarded as having relatively little in common[4] – seem to be intertwined in complex and intricate ways, in fact. Put differently, it becomes apparent that it is not only the (in)ability of characters to recollect/forget certain events and emotions evoked by them that seems to play a significant role in how they cope, among other things, with rejection, thwarted expectations or disillusionment in their lives, it is also the place to which the characters are inevitably tied and which has the inherent potential to sustain, or become a trigger to evoke, any memories of past experiences that proves an equally important factor in whether they remain stuck in the past moment, oscillating between reality and dream, "a lost past and a chaotic future" (Lelchuk 408), or manage to reconcile themselves to the vastly changed circumstances in the present and find a way of dealing with the re-surfacing shadows from their past. Generally speaking, my contention is that while it is plainly the case that the past's influence stands at the very heart of those characters' efforts to deal with whatever happens to remind them of an overly difficult, emotionally-charged time in their lives, it might very well be the case that the pervasive sense of loss and isolation in which they have been clearly trapped ever since not only may account in some measure for their gradually surfacing insanity but also can be related to the various places where their personal dramas play out; where their memories, positive or negative, inhere; and where past and present coalesce.

In trying then to unveil the perceptions that Brontë and Dickens seem to offer on the nature of remembering, place and madness in their novels and to illustrate the complex ways in which memories and places influence the lives – and sanity – of their characters, I will investigate the extent to which such patently different reactions as the individuals concerned come to display in connection with their past – be it in the form of their apparent loss of old memories and sense of self or their fixation on hurtful moments that sooner or later comes to prompt their mad quest for revenge – not only impact on their ensuing madness but also emerge as triggered by, or mirrored in, the very place they inhabit, or somehow associate, consciously or otherwise, with their distress. Accordingly, some of the key questions my thesis will address and engage with are the following:

---

[4] Regrettably, the majority of studies dealing with the representation of madness, memory, and place in literature tend to discuss these aspects either in isolation or, predominantly, in relation to the questions of gender and identity. See, for instance: Marianne Camus, *Gender and madness in the novels of Charles Dickens* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 2004); and Robert J.G. Lange, *Gender identity and madness in the nineteenth-century novel* (Lewiston, NY: Edwin Mellen Press, 1998).

- What does it actually mean to be mad, and what, in fact, leads to the psychic turmoil and subsequent alienation and otherness of the probably most arresting characters in *Wuthering Heights* and *Great Expectations*?
- Is madness purely a social construct, a label attached to any form of odd, or deviant, behaviour the characters come to exemplify? Is it a liberating and thus welcome form of their escape from harsh reality? Or is it perhaps both, or none?
- What is the role of memory and place in the construction of those individuals' (in)sane self? Does too much, or too little, memory in any way provoke their madness? And does place at all matters in their mental, or emotional, struggles?

Before these questions can be answered, some basic definitions are necessary. In view of the fact that memory as such can be broadly conceived as not only “a property of individual minds” but also “a diverse and shifting collection of material artifacts and social practices” (Klein 130) through which various acts of remembering can be articulated, the key expression of this study, namely, shadows of the past, is to be understood here first and foremost as an umbrella term for any kinds of reminders, or epitomes, of the past – be they written documents, physical objects, domestic and non-domestic spaces, or even persons – that not merely surround the characters under scrutiny, compelling them to return – whether literally or figuratively – to what no longer is, but also, and above all, come to haunt and notably disturb their lives by making their past strangely present again. Moreover, the term place is to be taken to mean more than just an array of physical locations in which the action of the three novels is set. It is also to be viewed in relation to the wider social and cultural environment into which the characters were born and in which their lives are inexorably embedded; the environment that through its prevailing values, expectations and norms to which the individuals in both *Wuthering Heights* and *Great Expectations* are expected to conform – and which, in point of fact, regulate and shape their conduct and way of thinking by defining what is acceptable and what is not in the community they belong to – plays a crucial role not only in the choices and decisions they take but also in the consequences they come to suffer in result. Finally, as there appears to be no clear-cut distinction between sanity and insanity (cf. Monod xii), rationality and irrationality, the term madness is likewise to be interpreted broadly as: an expression of the loss of authority or (self-)control, a sign of disease, and “a revelation of fears and desires, of alternative ways of seeing the world and its inhabitants, and of the irrational processes of the unconscious" (Pedlar 23).

Again, this thesis aims at unravelling and determining the extent to which the characters' fading, or at least questionable, sanity may be attributed to the intricate interplay between place and memory in the context of the past intruding upon the present. Thus, in drawing upon Marianne Camus's incisive remark that "there is generally more than one factor on the way to madness, that the threat lies in each of us as much as it comes from the uncaring or even brutalising world outside us" (13), the two chapters that follow will argue that the haunting presence of the 'shadows of the past', which lead the characters back to, or remind them of, the painful episodes from their past, not only can provide an important clue to a better understanding of the impact of memory and place on the nature of their circumstances in the here and now but should above all be regarded as one of the many factors that come to play a vital role in their gradual fall into some form of mental disorder.

Chapter one of this thesis will be devoted to exploring the extent to which the emergent madness of Heathcliff and Catherine in Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* may be seen as being influenced by the socially opposing worlds of Wuthering Heights and Trushcross Grange, the two places that played an important role in the shaping of their identity and attitude. Drawing upon the popular conceptions of, and approaches to, madness that had come to dominate nineteenth-century medical and literary thought[5], an attempt will be made to relate the protagonists' fall into mental disorder manifested most strongly through their deviant behaviour, lack of control and ultimate withdrawal into self-starvation and solitude to their perpetual reminiscing over the loss of their 'true' self and freedom due to the oppressive dictates of social norm and custom forced upon them by the patriarchal society in which they both live.

Chapter two, in turn, will move on to the analysis of Charles Dickens' rendition of Miss Havisham's suspension in the moment of trauma and her loss of hold on reality in his famous novel *Great Expectations*. It will argue that it is Miss Havisham's self-destructive and somewhat paradoxical quest for preserving the memory of her past disappointment and betrayed expectations that makes her come across as mad to the reader. In view of that, Miss Havisham's place of abode – "the dull old house" (*GE* 125) with "[n]o glimpse of daylight […] to be seen in it" (*GE* 57) – will be seen here not only as an evidence, or an emblem, of her deteriorating state of mind but also as a receptacle for memory and history, a place where the past meets the present and consequently influences the future of both Miss Havisham and the people in her life.

---

[5] See Sally Shuttleworth's discussion of the close interchange between medical and literary discourse during the nineteenth century, pp. 12-15, in *Charlotte Brontë and Victorian Psychology* (Cambridge: Cambridge UP, 1997). A more detailed account can also be found in Helen Small, *Love's Madness: Medicine, the Novel, and Female Insanity, 1800-1865* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998), pp. 18-19, 34-40.

Taking into account the fact that each of the characters to be discussed here struggles to find a meaning and purpose in life after going through some intensely emotional and psychic change(s) that forced them to call into question everything that was known and familiar to them, likewise the fact that memory plays quite a role in their struggle to come to terms with that traumatic part of their lives, some key insights from trauma theory will be incorporated into the analysis of the impact of the unresolved past on their madness and their overall functioning in the present.[6] Therefore, it is necessary to point out that trauma refers primarily to

> a response, sometimes delayed, to an overwhelming event or events, which takes the form of repeated, intrusive hallucinations, dreams, thoughts or behaviours stemming from the event, along with numbing that may have begun during or after the experience, and possibly also increased arousal to (or avoidance of) stimuli recalling the event (Caruth qtd. in Whitehead 115).

---

[6] Because the characters in the selected novels seem to be unable to cope with sudden and emotionally-loaded events that affect their minds and/or bodies, the basic assumptions of contemporary trauma theory might prove particularly useful in trying to understand the nature of their suffering as well as their strategies for coping with the resultant pain and feelings of void.

1. EMILY BRONTË – *WUTHERING HEIGHTS*

Faithful, indeed, is the spirit that remembers
After such years of change and suffering!

— Emily Brontë, *Remembrance*

Ever since its first appearance on the literary scene in 1847, a year before the early death of its author: not only "an individualist who spurned the easy road of convention" (Watson, *Tempest* 87-88) but also "a powerful genius who stood as an honourable exception from feminine norms" (S. Davies 13), *Wuthering Heights* has continued to inspire, attract and keep the interest of generations of readers and critics alike. Its striking duality,[7] its multi-layered narrative structure resembling "a nest of Chinese boxes" (S. Davies 90),[8] and the uncontested appeal of Heathcliff and Catherine's desperate search for coherence and transcendence in love reaching beyond the boundaries of identity and earthly existence have clearly provided a fertile ground not only for a range of adaptations, translations and re-workings of this powerful – "full of secrets" (S. Davies 84) and irreconcilable impulses – tale of love and grief but also for its numerous, cross-disciplinary readings (cf. Nestor xx-xxii; Miller vii)[9]. And even though "it was not until the twentieth century that Emily's novel began to enjoy the popularity and critical esteem it deserved" (Nestor xx), the diversity of responses to her masterpiece only seems to hint at the extent of curiosity and perplexity that its "unsettling nature" (Miller viii) has continued to engender for so many years.[10]

For "expressive as it is", *Wuthering Heights* "is also repressive and tantalizing", as Stevie Davies (84) goes on to assert in his incisive study of Emily Brontë's life and work. A similar point is made by Lucasta Miller who aptly notes that *Wuthering Heights* "is a book that generates tensions – between dream and reality, self and other, natural and supernatural, realism and melodrama, structural formality and emotional chaos – but leaves them unresolved" (viii). Patsy Stoneman goes even further and claims that "*Wuthering Heights* […] not only compels but simultaneously prohibits readers from identifying [its] 'secret truth'" (6).[11] That innumerable critics have gone to great lengths to explore and elucidate the intriguing complexity and distinctiveness of this enigmatic tale of love and hate appears then quite understandable. The amount of interpretative material on *Wuthering Heights* is, indeed, impressive and overwhelming. As Nestor shrewdly observes, *Wuthering Heights* "has become one of the most written about novels" in the history of English literature, "to the point where the novel's critical history reads like the history of criticism itself" (xx). Therefore, it is all the more surprising to see that despite the prolific research on Brontë's text relatively little attention has so far been devoted to what will be the subject of this chapter, namely the potential role of memory and place in Catherine and Heathcliff's struggle to face the inner void and the suffocating sense of displacement, which propel them further into mental anguish and isolation.

---

[7] As Stevie Davies points out, *Wuthering Heights* is "a novel of two narrators, in two volumes, there are two generations, two opposing houses, doubles, doubles of doubles, split personality [...]" (82).

[8] The structure of *Wuthering Heights* has been extensively analysed by a number of critics. See, for instance, Melvin R. Watson, "Tempest in the Soul: "The Theme and Structure of 'Wuthering Heights'", *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 4.2 (September, 1949), pp. 87-100; John T. Matthews, "Framing in *Wuthering Heights*", in Patsy Stoneman, *Wuthering Heights: Emily Brontë* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1993), pp. 54-74.

[9] For a comprehensive overview of different approaches to *Wuthering Heights*, see Patsy Stoneman, *Wuthering Heights: Emily Brontë* (Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1993).

[10] On contemporary reception and criticism of *Wuthering Heights*, see Melvin R. Watson, "'Wuthering Heights' and the Critics", *Trollopian* 3.4 (March, 1949), pp. 243-263.

While it is true to claim that the issues of madness and memory have attracted some earlier comment from the scholars, the majority of studies determined to arrive at a satisfactory reading of *Wuthering Heights* have rather tended to discuss them as separate and unrelated phenomena. In what follows, then, particular attention will be devoted to exploring the extent to which (1) Heathcliff's failure to overcome his mounting and consuming obsession with Catherine, intensified by his traumatic split from her through both her marriage to Edgar Linton and her subsequent death, and (2) Catherine's failure to fully relinquish her identity of a "half savage and hardy, and free" (*WH* 125) girl and reconcile herself to the oppressive reality of having become "Mrs. Linton, the lady of Trushcross Grange, and the wife of a stranger" (*WH* 125) instead, have to do with their memories, or what simply reminds them of, the past and what they both have irrevocably lost. In addition, the extent to which their tormenting struggle to transcend the limitations of social constraints that cruelly forced them apart begins to border on, and develop into, madness will be considered here with reference to the role that different places/spaces come to play in their downward spiral into self-destruction and fragmentation.

---

[11] Stoneman makes this point by referring to J. Hillis Miller's deconstructive reading of *Wuthering Heights*. See Stoneman, pp. 5-6, for more details.

Though neither Catherine nor Heathcliff seem to suit the conventional image of a raving madman/madwoman, it is worth noting that insanity, especially for the Victorians, was no longer “a self-evident disease” with a clear line of demarcation between “the sufferer” and “the rest of humanity” (Shuttleworth 15). Owing to an observable shift in the understanding of selfhood and madness that occurred in the course of the nineteenth century in response to the rapid changes within its socioeconomic structures,[12] it has been recognized that in reality “there are degrees in madness, and there are elements of madness in many apparently sane people” (Monod xii), which, subsequently, made the distinction between the sane and the mad, the normal and the pathological, all the more problematic. The questions that remain to be asked, then, are: Why, and to what degree, is it actually possible to classify Heathcliff and Catherine as mad? What drives them to the verge of madness? Memory? Convention? Place? And how does the portrayal of their condition by Emily Brontë tie in with and reflect the nineteenth-century ideas about madness: its nature and its potential causes?

1.1. “I am surrounded with her image”: the confessions of a lovesick maniac

I’m too happy, and yet I’m not happy enough. My
Soul’s bliss kills my body, but does not
satisfy itself (*WH* 328).

In one of his conversations with Nelly Dean, shortly before his queer death, Heathcliff confides in her why he has found it impossible for nearly twenty years to ever get over his loss of Catherine, and thereby gives both his listener and the reader an unusual glimpse into his anguished, grief-stricken soul. Telling Nelly that because his “mind is so eternally secluded in itself, it is tempting, at last, to turn it out to another” (*WH* 323), Heathcliff poignantly exclaims:

> I cannot look down to this floor, but her features are shaped on the flags! In every cloud, in every tree – filling the air at night, and caught by glimpses in every object, by day I am surrounded with her image! The most ordinary faces of men, and women – my own features – mock me with a resemblance. The entire world is a dreadful collection of memoranda that she did exist, and that I have lost her (*WH* 323-324).

---

[12] Industrialisation, urbanisation, the rise of the middle classes and the gendered division of work and home might be a case in point. Cf. Shuttleworth, pp. 2-4, 36-37.

While it is true to claim that this surprisingly frank admission of his inner torment and of the hold that Catherine Earnshaw still has over him offers a partial explanation for the extremity of pain and sorrow that have engulfed his soul since her demise, the haunting presence of his “departed idol” (*WH* 324) in the material reality of his surroundings, likewise in the faces and features of others, clearly hints at the persistence, and prominent role, of memory in the life of the owner of Wuthering Heights and Trushcross Grange. One can even go so far as to suggest that memory indeed is to blame not only for his stubborn refusal to accept the physical reality of Catherine’s death, resulting in his restless quest and yearning for a final reunion with his “immortal love” (*WH* 324), but also for his elaborate scheme of revenge for the wrongs and degradation which widened the gap between him and Catherine, and which he suffered as a child at the hands of both:

- ❖ Hindley, who saw in him “the stranger” (*WH* 37), the “interloper” (*WH* 39) and the “usurper of […] affections, and […] privileges” (*WH* 38) that he and his sister were supposed to gain from their father, and
- ❖ the Lintons, who made him feel ashamed of his dark face, coarse manners and vagabond status, and who, in his conviction, were responsible for Catherine’s separation from him, her illness[13] and her subsequent death.

Having, however, no intention whatsoever to “suffer unrevenged” (*WH* 112), Heathcliff the child resolutely declares, "I don’t care how long I wait, if I can only do it, at last. […] I only wish I knew the best way!” (*WH* 61). Consequently, his entire adult life begins to revolve around two central objectives: first, to seize and destroy all the barriers that precipitated the loss of his “soul” (*WH* 169) and second, to “regain the wholeness he has lost” (Mellor 195) following Catherine’s death. Davies finds that Heathcliff’s firm resolve to seek vengeance, on the one hand, and to be reunited with Catherine, on the other hand, might be read as “a compensatory drive to substitute for the magnitude of inner loss” (S. Davies 113). In this light, Heathcliff’s earlier statement concerning his childhood resolve for revenge, “While I’m thinking of that, I don’t feel pain” (*WH* 61), begins to take on a more profound meaning in the face of Catherine’s death, which he experiences as an unutterable abyss, in which he cannot find her (cf. *WH* 169). In this regard, it can be assumed that the memory of loss along with the memory of oppression is what arguably motivates Heathcliff's every move and sets him on the path of a self-destructive, "dead-alive" (S. Davies 114) quest for the attainment of his desires, regardless of the consequences his mad pursuit of them might engender: the quest that inevitably evokes and ends in his madness.

---

[13] As Isabella expressly states in her letter to Nelly, Heathcliff “told me of Catherine’s illness, and accused my brother of causing it, promising that I should be Edgar’s *proxy* [emphasis added] in suffering, till he could get a hold of him” (*WH* 144). Heathcliff’s marriage to Isabella, then, is only a step towards his desired revenge on her brother, Edgar.

Significantly, it is only after Catherine's fatal rejection of him on the grounds that "it would degrade her to marry him" (*WH* 81)[14] that Heathcliff's hitherto patient endurance of oppression begins to fade away, only to explode into feverish brutality – directed towards both the Linton and the Earnshaw families – at a later stage. That is, when after a three-year absence from the Heights, during which he manages to ascend to a position of wealth and power, he returns to his former place of abode as a "gentleman", displaying no visible "marks of former degradation" (*WH* 96), and finds Catherine already married to Edgar: a bitter reality that only intensifies his inner anguish and frustration, pushing him further towards ferocious revenge that "impels and possesses him as an external force" (Eagleton 104-105). His reaction becomes all the more understandable as soon as one recalls the fact that his struggle for money and social advancement, the measures of respectability and independence during the Victorian period (cf. Houghton 184-186), was in part motivated by his wish to finally become worthy of Catherine in social terms. In justifying his long absence, Heathcliff himself declares to her: "Well, there was cause. I've fought through a bitter life since I last heard your voice, and you must forgive me, for I struggled only for you!" (*WH* 97).

To be yet better able to comprehend Heathcliff's restless and desperate journey away from the disturbing memory of rejection and loss yet paradoxically towards even greater disintegration, culminating in his madness and puzzling death,[15] it appears necessary to look back to his fragmented and tinged with affliction past: the past which comes to 'haunt' Heathcliff through Catherine's spectral presence and perpetual absence[16], and whose burden notably turns Heathcliff into “a man who is a ghost of himself before he is dead” (S. Davies 112).

---

[14] It is precisely this confession that Catherine makes to Nelly on the night of her engagement to Edgar that leads at once to Heathcliff's sudden disappearance from the Heights and her own psychic divide.

[15] As Nelly Dean recalls, "he was neither in danger of losing his senses, nor dying", and "according to [her] judgement he was quite strong and healthy" (*WH* 324).

[16] The scene in which Heathcliff describes to Nelly (chapter xv, vol. two) how he could sense Catherine's presence, how he "could *almost* see her and yet *could not*!" while trying to dig up her coffin to "have her in [his] arms again!" (*WH* 289) might serve as a good example of this. I will return to this point later.

Is Mr Heathcliff a man? If so, is he mad? And if not, is he a devil?

Before turning to the question of Heathcliff’s madness and its apparent origin in his unrelenting obsession with the past, which comes to the fore through his unwavering pursuit of revenge and reunion with Catherine, it might be useful first to briefly focus on his ambivalent and outcast position within the world of Wuthering Heights: the place where his fragmented identity and suffering originate, and where his past and present intersect with that of Catherine’s. As soon as Heathcliff enters the wild world of the Heights – a place “completely removed from the stir of society” (*WH* 3) – as “a dirty, ragged, black-haired child; big enough to walk and talk […] yet, when it was set on its feet, it only stared round, and repeated over and over again some gibberish that nobody could understand” (*WH* 36-37), he elicits a mixture of confusion and indignation on the part of the Heights dwellers. Nelly Dean, the character and narrator in Emily Brontë’s novel, recalls the event of “Heathcliff’s first introduction to the family (*WH* 37) and the responses his arrival provoked in its members as follows:

> I was frightened, and Mrs. Earnshaw was ready to fling it out of doors: she did fly up – asking how he could fashion to bring that gipsy brat into the house, when they had their own bairns to feed, and fend for? What he meant to do with it, and whether he were mad? […] Hindley and Cathy […] entirely refused to have it in bed with them, or even in their room, and I had no more sense, so, I put it on the landing of the stairs, hoping it might be gone on the morrow. […] Hindley hated him, and to say the truth I did the same (*WH* 37-38).

Thrust upon the family by the father who “took to Heathcliff strangely” (*WH* 38) and instantly excluded from it by all the others, “the poor, fatherless child” (*WH* 38) finds himself in a liminal position from the start. Stevenson astutely remarks that at this point Heathcliff is “doubly alienated” (67) because he is “both an outsider, and an outsider in a place specifically unaccustomed to strangers” (68). Ironically, years later, Heathcliff himself admits to Lockwood that “[g]uests are so exceedingly rare in this house” (*WH* 7). Elaborating on Heathcliff’s “unquiet and contradictory presence” (Vine 341) within the world he comes to inhabit, Vines adds that “‘strangely’, Heathcliff is an Earnshaw son and not an Earnshaw, belongs to the Heights and does not belong to the Heights, is the fulfilment of the Earnshaw patriarchal desire and exceeds that desire as an unincorporated other" (344). Interestingly, while Hindley, the representative of patriarchal society and the heir to Wuthering Heights, never really overcomes his resentment and aversion towards this new addition to his family, Catharine, after her initial scepticism and rejection of the foundling boy, soon becomes "very thick" with him (*WH* 38), to the extent that they begin to identify themselves as one being and "one another's 'all-in-all'" (S. Davies 89),[17] and Nelly herself "soften[s]" gradually towards her new nursling (*WH* 38).

Still, "inserted into the close-knit family structure as an alien" (Eagleton 102) and a foreigner, Heathcliff comes to embody not only a disruptive force within the Earnshaw home but also a lurking threat to the apparent stability of the Heights's world posed by what can be read as an overwhelming yet terrifying encounter with the Other.[18] As Eagleton goes on to explain, Heathcliff "emerges from that ambivalent domain of darkness which is the 'outside' of the tightly defined domestic system" and which is "at once fearful and fertilizing" (102). In line with Eagleton's argument, Vine insists that Heathcliff's unexpected and sudden introduction to the Earnshaw family can be seen as "a movement of *othering*: a passing of boundaries that takes the outside in and the inside out, where the familiar is made strange […] and the strange comes to inhabit the familiar" (340). In this respect, Heathcliff, who "comes from outside, from the other, introducing an instability into the world that precariously incorporates him" becomes, in Vine's conviction, "a trope of radical displacement" (341). Vine justifies his argument by claiming that "Heathcliff's narrative function is to open up fixed meanings and identities to otherness", which, in turn, may account for the fact that "his entire history in the novel is framed in terms of *taking the place* of others" (342).

Indeed, Heathcliff first replaces the dead son of Mr Earnshaw by being christened with his name[19] and, after that, by stealing the affection and favour of the old man away from his own children. Then, he takes the possession of his foster home, Wuthering Heights, by deliberately taking advantage of Hindley's "mania for gaming" (*WH* 188) and drinking. As Nelly Dean explains to the convalescing Lockwood during his stay at Trushcross Grange:

---

[17] In *Myths of Power*: *A Marxist Study of the Brontës*, Eagleton (103) suggests that it is possible to locate Hindley and Catherine's divergent responses to Heathcliff in the legal and economic realities of the period, especially in the contemporary inheritance laws and the subordinated position that women held within the patriarchal society.

[18] Importantly, Heathcliff is an equally disturbing force within the Linton family because of both his calculated marriage to Isabella, which "eternally divided" (*WH* 145) her from Edgar, and his ongoing relationship to Catherine during her later marriage to Edgar.

[19] "Heathcliff", as Nelly explains, "was the name of a son who died in childhood" (*WH* 38).

> The guest was now the master of Wuthering Heights: he held firm possession, and proved it to the attorney […] that Earnshaw had mortgaged every yard of land he owned for cash to supply his mania for gaming: and he, Heathcliff, was the mortgage. In that manner, Hareton, who should now be the first gentleman in the neighbourhood, was reduced to a state of complete dependence on his father's inveterate enemy; and lives in his own house as a servant deprived of the advantage of wages (*WH* 188)

and education, just like Heathcliff himself was deprived of those privileges under the tyranny of Hindley years before. So in an act of vengeance against Hindley, Heathcliff not only takes over his property but turns his only descendant, Hareton, into "a brute" (*WH* 197), utterly ignorant of the fact "that he has been wronged" (*WH* 188) and, thereby, "quite unable to right himself" (*WH* 188). That Heathcliff even takes pride and fiendish delight in degrading Hareton is clearly illustrated in his speech to Nelly: "I've got him faster than his scoundrel of a father secured me, and lower; for he takes a pride in his brutishness […]. And the best of it is, Hareton is damnably fond of me! […] I've out-matched Hindley there" (*WH* 219). Finally, to take revenge on Edgar, who embodies the values and convention that divided him from Catherine and created in her a psychic conflict, he usurps the ownership of the Grange by enforcing a marriage between his effeminate and repellent son, Linton,[20] and the only daughter of Edgar and Catherine, Cathy.[21] Commenting on Heathcliff's conduct, Gilbert and Gubar (297) draw attention to the fact that "Heathcliff steals or perverts birthrights" to injure those who injured him, to avenge himself against the system which thwarted his and Catherine's relationship. Consciously adopting and appropriating the constricting laws of the patriarchal society to achieve his warped ends, he "exacts vengeance from that society precisely by extravagantly enacting its twisted priorities, becoming a darkly satirical commentary on conventional mores" (Eagleton 113).

Throughout the narrative, Heathcliff persistently resists any clear identification: a recognition which has led many scholars to repeatedly draw attention to the underlying obscurity and elusiveness of his origins and character. And it seems that Mr Earnshaw's plea to his children to accept the gypsy boy as "a gift of God; though it's as dark almost as if it came from the devil" (*WH* 36) has only added to the overall mystery surrounding Heathcliff's persona. As Stevenson rightly notes, "[h]e is simultaneously from God and the devil, from heaven and hell, from, by implication, everywhere and nowhere" (67). His ferocity and vindictive nature lead Isabella, Catherine's "poor little sister-in-law" (*WH* 105), to query whether he is a man, a devil, or simply mad. In a letter she writes to Nelly shortly after her secret marriage and elopement with Heathcliff, Isabella asks: Is Mr Heathcliff a man? If so, is he mad? And if not, is he a devil? I shan't tell my reasons for making this inquiry; but, I beseech you to explain, if you can, what I have married […]" (*WH* 136). Variously referred to as an "imp of Satan" (*WH* 39), a "frightful thing" (*WH* 50), "a fierce, pitiless, wolfish man" (*WH* 103), "the hellish villain" (*WH* 138) or "a monster, and not a human being" (*WH* 151), to name but a few, Heathcliff not only figures as a puzzle to those who come into contact with him but is from the very beginning associated with the diabolical, the ungraspable, the inexplicable.

---

[20] In referring to the instrumental role that Linton is supposed to play in furthering his plan of revenge, Heathcliff announces: "he's *mine*, and I want the triumph of seeing *my* descendent fairly lord of their estates" (*WH* 208).

[21] Heathcliff's treatment of Hareton, Cathy and Linton is another example of revenge by "proxy" (*WH* 144).

Eagleton calls him "a contradiction incarnate" (112). To Bersani, in turn, he embodies a pure "fantasy of existence without origins" (205) because "[h]e merely appears, each time without causes, without history: first as an abandoned child, then as the elegant and rich gentleman whose good fortune is as untraceable as the forlorn wandering of the child had been" (205). "How has he been living? how has he got rich? why is he staying at Wuthering Heights, the house of a man he abhors?" (*WH* 103) – these are only some of the questions that reverberate throughout Nelly and Lockwood's – markedly unreliable[22] – narration and consistently baffle both the reader and the characters themselves. In her introduction to *Wuthering Heights*, Nestor (xxiii) highlights the fact that it is precisely the otherness and "the mystery surrounding Heathcliff – his lack of a personal history […] – which makes him such a suitable […] receptacle for other people's fantasies". Stevenson, likewise, concurs that Heathcliff's "indeterminate origins" (69), the very fact that he "appears to the world as a blank screen" (71), make him so "uniquely available to everyone else's powers of projection" (71).

---

[22] It is useful to remember that Nelly and Lockwood's account of the life of the characters and the events of the story they are imparting to the reader is essentially limited to what they have been told, what they themselves have witnessed as participants in the story world, and what they can, after all, recall. Their narrative account is thus not only saturated with their own subjective interpretations but also shaped by how they both choose to order their memories and what pieces of information they in fact wish to reveal to or withhold from the reader.

Yet the interesting thing about Heathcliff, the man with “no date or place of birth […] and even the name […] borrowed from a dead boy he never knew” (Stevenson 71), is that while all the others persistently try to assign him a meaning by inventing an identity and a past for him (cf. Stevenson 68-72), just like Nelly does, when she urges the little boy to “frame high notions of [his] birth” and think of himself as “fit for a prince in disguise” (*WH* 58), Heathcliff himself never goes back to his past, that is, to the time before Mr Earnshaw found him on the Liverpool streets and brought him to the Heights. That period of his life is represented largely as a hole, paralleling the emptiness of his existence without Catherine and at the same time implying “the unaccountable, the not-told, the not-shown”; in other words, “a pure loss” (S. Davies 85), which, in turn, might partly account for his devouring desire for love and vengeance.

Heathcliff’s madness and the ‘shadows’ of the past

> *You said I killed you – haunt me, then! Be with me*
> *always – take any form – drive me mad!*
> (*WH* 169).

Turning now to the question of Heathcliff’s madness, it is hardly besides the point that the ambivalent position Heathcliff comes to occupy in the world of the novel – his very otherness – is what after all aligns him with and brings him closer, even if only in a figurative sense, to the domain of madness, traditionally a female realm (cf. Showalter 3-7).[23] Conversely, it is also his actual fall into insanity that places him in an even more marginalized position and, thereby, foregrounds his essential otherness all the more. Given that madness in the nineteenth-century imagination was frequently associated with the aberrant, the irrational, the monstrous, in a word, the Other, Heathcliff, who seems to incarnate all these features, emerges as the perfect embodiment of not only madness *per se* but of the lure of curiosity and the potential threat[24] that the condition of mental derangement – itself the epitome of otherness (cf. Pedlar 11; Lange 115) – has come to represent for the Victorians, becoming a focal point in their persistent attempts, aided by the expert and interpretative gaze of medical professionals, to theorize and categorize its various forms, symptoms and causes so as to bring madness “into the spectrum of recognizably human experience”, that is, “into the circle of the familiar and the everyday” (Showalter 28)[25] while at the same time “distinguish those who were deemed to pose a threat to social order” (Rimke and Hunt 63) from the rest. In a very similar way, Heathcliff – desired and feared at once – becomes the object of the gaze of both the Heights and Grange dwellers, who obsessively struggle to fill “the void he represents with a meaning […] that *they* assign him” (Stevenson 68) in an attempt to place him outside or within the boundaries of the familiar. Still, to arrive at a better understanding of the nature of Heathcliff’s insanity, it is necessary to turn to the larger context of some popular perceptions of mental disorder that dominated nineteenth-century thinking and which reverberate in Brontë’s novel.

---

[23] As various scholars have noted, the prevalent view of the Victorian period was that women were more liable to madness, or any other type of nervous disorder, than men due to “the biological crises of the female life-cycle” (Showalter 55). Madness, thus, came to be “attributed to women on the basis of qualities and aspects of behaviour that are simply not-male” (Pedlar 14). Examples of these include typically “irrationality, silence, nature, and body” (Showalter 3-4).

[24] On the one hand, this threat can be seen to be related to the nineteenth-century belief that “the lurking threat of insanity […] menaced all individuals” (Shuttleworth 34) and could, in fact, afflict “anyone under stress” (Shuttleworth 35). On the other hand, it can be viewed in relation to the potential danger that madness posed to the stability and integrity of the self and social order on account of its inherent association with otherness threatening to disrupt the existing and accepted structures.

As madness “became increasingly an internal, psychological divide” (Shuttleworth 35) over the course of the period, the willingness to conform to “social and moral prescriptions of Victorian culture” (Shuttleworth 49) along with the “capacity to exert self-control” (Shuttleworth 35) to demonstrate “a willing obedience to designated social roles” (Shuttleworth 35) have come to figure as the only visible criteria by which the distinction between the normal and the pathological could be established. No longer seen as an impairment of the understanding, madness became fundamentally redefined as a deviance from or non-conformity to social norm (cf. Showalter 29; and Shuttleworth 49), a failure to balance “inner impulse and social demand” (Shuttleworth 38) evidenced in the breaching of boundaries of what would be deemed “normal” or appropriate, and therefore desirable, by social standards. Consequently, any traces or manifestations of social transgression have come to be equated with mental disorder and, by extension, with otherness. More to the point, subsumed under the newly emergent category of the so-called moral insanity,[26] madness came to be viewed primarily as “a morbid perversion of the natural feelings, affections, inclinations, temper, habits, moral dispositions, and natural impulses, without any remarkable disorder or defect of the intellect or knowing and reasoning faculties, and particularly without any insane illusion or hallucination" (Pritchard qtd. in Showalter 29, Augstein 312, and Shuttleworth 49); a perversion which typically "ranged on a scale from excess to depression" (Augstein 319) and manifested itself mostly in the "[e]ccentricity of conduct", "singular and absurd habits", and "a wayward and intractable temper, with a decay of social affections […] – in short, with a change in the moral character of the individual" (Pritchard qtd. in Augstein 312). Consequently, the diagnosis of moral insanity rested largely upon the question whether an individual's behaviour was or was not morally questionable or transgressive (cf. Rimke and Hunt 70).

---

[25] See also Shuttleworth, chapters 1& 3.

[26] The concept was introduced by James C. Pritchard in 1835. For more details see Hannah Franziska Augstein, “J C Pritchard’s Concept of Moral Insanity – a Medical Theory of the Corruption of Human Nature”, *Medical History* 40 (1996), pp. 311-343; Heidi Rimke and Alan Hunt, “From Sinners to Degenerates: the Medicalization of Morality in the 19th century”, *History of the Human Sciences* 15. 1 (2002), pp. 59-88. Cf.: Pedlar pp. 3-4, Showalter pp. 29-30, Shuttleworth pp. 49-51.

In one sense, then, the new conception of madness as "a partial state" (Shuttleworth 35) rooted essentially in what has come to be referred to as moral[27] causes – strong emotions, psychological stresses, intense grief, jealousy or poverty (cf. Showalter 29-30, 54; Pedlar 3; and Krishnan 32) – has not only blurred the line between reason and unreason, turning the very sanity into an ambiguous and relative concept,[28] but envisaged madness as a temporary state "which endures only so long as passion overturns reason" (Shuttleworth 35) and which can therefore be overcome by the power of the will[29] and the exercise of self-control, the maintenance of which "demarcated the boundaries of insanity" (Shuttleworth 35).[30] In another sense, though, the perpetuated understanding of madness as an "abnormal or disruptive" (Showalter 29) behaviour resulting from "the will's loss of control over the body and its impulses" (Krishnan 32) has made it possible for many nineteenth-century writers, including Emily Brontë and Charles Dickens, to use madness as a device to explore "a dissonance between the individual and society" (Pedlar 1), on the one hand, and "the extremities of human mental and emotional suffering, uniting the fascination of the strange and the abnormal with the familiarity of the known and the strange" (Pedlar 1), on the other hand.

---

[27] Pedlar (10) indicates that the word 'moral' could refer either to "psychological, mental, or emotional, as opposed to physical" or to "ethical". Cf. Rimke and Hunt, p. 71.

[28] The point is that under the new theory of madness those who were sane could in fact be deemed insane, and, conversely, those who were insane could be considered perfectly rational, depending on whether social and moral norms were obeyed or not. Cf. Rimke and Hunt p. 72.

[29] Small (164) points out that "the will was generally interpreted as a mental faculty" and "used interchangeably with 'mind'". It simply "functioned as an intermediary, holding the mind and body in tension" and thus "[i]ts degeneration […] dictated insanity and moral decay" (Krishnan 32).

[30] Put simply, "an absence of self-mastery became the primary symptom of moral insanity" (Rimke and Hunt 76).

In her insightful article "'It Has Devoured My Existence': The Power of the Will and Illness in *The Bride of Lammermoor* and *Wuthering Heights*", Krishnan insists that Emily Brontë draws on and subsequently "manipulates pervasive nineteenth-century theories" (32) about madness and its ostensible association with "the failure of the will to control and govern" (32) the impulses which could allegedly lead to insanity by presenting "characters whose wills are indeed powerful enough not only to resist madness and illness if they desire, but in fact to engender them" (34). In what follows, though, I want to suggest that it is not only the power of the will alone that drives Heathcliff and Catherine to the verge of madness, it is also, and above all, their manifest unwillingness to let go of the past that has an equally disturbing effect on their minds and contributes markedly to their physical and mental collapse by simply incapacitating or overwhelming their wills to such an extent that their memories of loss and regret come to "taint all other experiences of the present" (van der Kolk and McFarlane 4). Generally speaking, it will be argued that in the unruly world of *Wuthering Heights*, where "[n]ormal emotions are almost completely inverted: hate replaces love, cruelty replaces kindness" (Thompson 71), "hell is heaven, heaven hell" (Gilbert and Gubar 259), madness and memory seem to be not only intertwined but mutually reinforcing.

That memory will indeed be a vital factor in Heathcliff's prolonged and committed "quest for a woman whose loss annihilates him" (S. Davies 114) and sends him on the downward spiral into insanity is already signalled in his outcry to Catherine's bitter accusation that "[he] and Edgar have broken [her] heart, […] have killed [her] – and thriven on it" (*WH* 160). Confronted with Catherine's blunt declaration, "I care nothing for your sufferings. Why shouldn't you suffer? I do!" (*WH* 160), and her subsequent question, "Will you forget me – will you be happy when I am in the earth? Will you say twenty years hence, 'That's the grave of Catherine Earnshaw. I loved her long ago, and was wretched to lose her; but it is past […].' Will you say so, Heathcliff?" (*WH* 160), Heathcliff not only implores her, "Don't torture me till I'm as mad as yourself" (*WH* 160), but demands to know:

> Are you possessed with a devil […] to talk in that manner to me, when you are dying? Do you reflect that all those words will be *branded in my memory* [emphasis mine], and eating deeper eternally, after you have left me? You know […] that I could as soon forget you, as my existence! Is it not sufficient for your

> infernal selfishness, that while you are at peace I shall writhe in the torments of hell? […] So much the worse for me, that I am strong[31] (*WH* 161-163).

Implicit in Heathcliff's reply is not only the fact that Catherine is the sole object of his love, the core and true essence of his existence, which in turn sheds light on the reason why the prospect of leading a normal and healthy life without her is utterly inconceivable for him and equivalent to tormenting hell, but also the idea that certain events and experiences may remain indelibly engraved on the mind, affecting significantly one's coping mechanisms and turning the memory of what one has been through into "an overwhelming and crushing burden" (Whitehead 87), a severe obstacle to moving on. As the quoted passage makes clear, Heathcliff seems to be well aware of this underlying yet rather threatening potential of memory to function as a kind of "a repository" (Whitehead 53) for various impressions and experiences – pleasurable or not – related to, and necessarily constituting an integral part of, one's life and self. And, notably, it seems that it is precisely this awareness which after all foreshadows his unyielding obsession with Catherine: an aspect of his behaviour which compels Nelly to remark, appropriately enough, that "he might have had a monomania on the subject of his departed idol (*WH* 324).

Etienne Esquirol, the psychiatrist who coined the term monomania, defined it essentially as "a disease of sensibility" (200). In his influential *Mental Maladies: A Treatise on Insanity*, he argues along these lines:

> Monomania is of all maladies […]. It embraces all the mysterious anomalies of sensibility, all the phenomena of the perversion of the human understanding, all the consequences of the perversion of our natural inclinations, and all the errors of our passions. […] It reposes altogether upon the affections, and its study is inseparable from a knowledge of the passions. Its seat is in the heart of man, and it is there that we must search for it, in order to possess ourselves of all its peculiarities. How many are the cases of monomania, caused by thwarted love, by fear, vanity, wounded self-love, or disappointed ambition! (200).

Shuttleworth maintains that "[t]ogether with the notion of moral insanity, the idea of monomania constituted one of the most decisive innovations in nineteenth-century psychiatry", adding that "[a]lthough monomania and moral insanity were rather different concepts, they were frequently associated […] since they both suggested ideas of partial insanity" (51) and they both could be excited by moral causes.[32] While moral insanity "showed madness to be part of the human condition: anybody was liable to become mad" (Augstein 313), monomania has become "a commonly used term to designate […] obsession" (Shuttleworth 51), an intense "preoccupation with a single idea, passion, or train of thought that was on the one hand obvious and knowable rationally to the subject while at the same time, despite the cognitive acknowledgement of the monomaniac, irresistible" (L. Davies 69). As a form of insanity "in which the understanding is partially disordered or under the influence of some particular illusion, referring to one subject, and involving one train of ideas, while the intellectual powers appear, when exercised on other subject, to be in a great measure unimpaired" (Pritchard qtd. in Shuttleworth 51), monomania not only came to embody a "bizarre combination of madness and reason" (Baillarger 364), a fusion of excess and restraint, in brief, "an awkward borderline state" (Pedlar 5) but it also foregrounded the difficulty of distinguishing between madness and sanity, normal and abnormal, all the more (cf. L. Davies 68; Pedlar 3). The reason is that despite being preoccupied with an apparently irresistible and "all-absorbing idea" (Esquirol 24) capturing their minds and dictating their conduct, monomaniacs could "think, reason and act, like other men" (Esquirol 321) indeed, showing thereby perfect "lucidity" as well as "clarity of ideas" (Baillarger 363). They could, furthermore, "speak about the passion" and "observe the effect" that it had on their life and behaviour but be nevertheless "powerless to stop the obsessive thought or action" (L. Davies 64).

---

[31] As Krishnan argues, "[t]his phobia of vitality is the perverse source of Heathcliff's self-willed illness" (36) and madness, "a mockery of his yearning: to attain 'self-fulfilment' through death and union with Catherine" because "[h]is probable longevity prolongs his torture" (37).

Taking then into account what has been said so far about Heathcliff and nineteenth-century understandings of mental disorder, it appears reasonable to argue that Heathcliff emerges as the perfect embodiment of a morally insane monomaniac: a man not only strikingly possessed by "a single wish" (*WH* 324) towards which "his whole being and faculties are yearning" (*WH* 324) but restlessly struggling for its ultimate fulfilment, crossing the boundaries of place and property, yearning to transcend the boundaries of life and death and using every possible means to achieve his ends. Although it might be tempting to believe that revenge – the marker of unrestrained passion and lack of self-control associated with madness – is his one and only goal, the fact is that it seems to constitute only "a stage to his ultimate desire: his bond with Catherine" (Krishnan 35). It can even be read as a mode to "staunch the wound" (Vine 353), or, to put it another way, to fill the abysmal void the loss of Catherine – caused not so much by her fatal decision to become Edgar Linton's wife as by her eventual death – has created in his life, turning it thereby into a hellish existence[33] and making "the world […] not worth living in" (*WH* 178).

---

[32] Again, "[m]oral causes had to do with the passions, which could be excited by unrequited love, domestic troubles and grief, as well as economic hardship" (Pedlar 3). What is important to add is that they incorporated "ideas about the need for passion to be regulated by reason" (Pedlar 3), which references to Krishnan's insistence on the association of excessive emotion with madness (see p. 19 of this chapter).

It follows then that Heathcliff's consequent acts of vengeance – contrived marriages, expropriation, manipulation of inheritance laws or brutal and vindictive treatment of others[34] – represent more than his pervert and in effect self-defeating endeavours to materialize his desire for revenge against the patriarchal system that divided him from Catherine while forcing her to make a choice between opposing forces – Thrushcross Grange and Wuthering Heights, culture and nature, reason and passion; the desire which he ceaselessly strives to attain, ironically, through the very same weapons and strategies which put him at a disadvantage years before, subjecting thereby his opponents and their descendants to what he himself has suffered, while moving from the position of the oppressed to the position of the patriarchal tyrant duplicating the old patterns. These acts, moreover, can be taken to mean "a kind of distraction" (Stevenson 70) from, or, perhaps even more appropriately, a reaction to "the trauma of separation and self-division" (S. Davies 116)[35] brought about by the disrupting experience of Catherine's death which left him alone in the world full of "*dreadful memoranda* [emphasis added] that she did exist and that [he] has lost her" (*WH* 324). On the whole, then, they seem to figure "a way of regaining control […], of reassuring continuity in the face of discontinuity, of mastering the absence" (Bronfen 17).

---

[33] As he tells Nelly: "Two words would comprehend my future – *death* and *hell* – existence, after losing her, would be hell" (*WH* 148).

[34] Perhaps one of the most memorable examples of Heathcliff's pitiless brutality is the scene in which he kicks and beats Hindley until he falls to the ground, "senseless with excessive pain, and the flow of blood that gushed from an artery, or a large vein" (*WH* 178). On another occasion, he throws a dinner knife at his wife Isabella and thereby wounds her ear. When she flees from the Heights to the Grange, her face is "scratched and bruised" and she has "a deep cut under [her] ear", which, as Nelly puts it, "only the cold prevented from bleeding profusely" (*WH* 172). On sadism and violence in Brontë's novel see: Wade Thompson, "Infanticide and Sadism in *Wuthering Heights*", *PMLA* 78. 1 (March 1963): 69-74.

[35] Because "his self seems to originate in Catherine" (Stevenson 72) and it thus seems to be defined through her, Heathcliff loses part of himself the moment he loses Catherine. Thus, his quest for Catherine can be read as a quest for the lost wholeness.

In light of the above arguments, it appears fitting to suggest that what fuels Heathcliff's fixated pursuit of revenge on his "old enemies" and "their representatives" (*WH* 323) for having been treated "infernally" (*WH* 112) at the hands of the system they all inevitably embody as well as his ensuing quest for reunion with his lost "soul" (*WH* 169) is, as mentioned at the beginning of section 1.1., his marked failure and reluctance to forget the past, and above all, to forget Catherine: "for what is not connected with her to me? and what does not recall her?" (*WH* 323). The memory of loss is not only what keeps him rooted to his own anguished mourning but it is also what underpins his markedly delusive and necessarily "impossible dream" (Vine 353) of regaining Catherine by "appropriating to himself the powers and resources" (Vine 353) that kept her beyond his reach in life, and what after all leads to his insanity and self-willed death. But how does it all come to pass, actually?

Throughout his life, Heathcliff remains strikingly unable to master the intrusive memories of thwarted hopes and unrealized desires personified through Catherine's spectral figure which have continued to haunt him "night and day, through eighteen years – incessantly – remorselessly (*WH* 289); that is, ever since he made an attempt, albeit a failed one, to unearth Catherine's coffin on the night of her burial, motivated, on the one hand, by the irrepressible desire to have her in his arms again (cf. *WH* 289) and so "undo the division that the grave affords" (Bronfen 312) and, on the other hand, by the outward denial of her death: "If she be cold, I'll think it is this north wind that chills *me*; and if she be motionless, it is sleep" (*WH* 289). Recalling that nocturnal visit to the churchyard in his conversation with Nelly eighteen years later, Heathcliff not only tells her, "You know, I was *wild* [emphasis added] after she died, and eternally, from dawn to dawn, praying her to return to me – her spirit" (*WH* 289), he provides her with an explanation, too, how he was forced to relinquish his "labour of agony" (*WH* 290), just as "[he] was on the point of attaining [his] object" (*WH* 289), because of the felt sense of Catherine's presence which accompanied him on his way back to the Heights:

> I was sure I should see her there. I was sure she was with me, and I could not help talking to her. […] Having reached the Heights, […] I remember hurrying upstairs, to my room, and hers – I looked round impatiently – I felt her by me – I could *almost* see her, and yet I *could not*! I ought to have sweat blood then, from the anguish of my yearning […] to have but one glimpse! I had not one. She showed herself, as she often was in life, a devil to me! And, since then, sometimes more, and sometimes less, I've been the sport of that intolerable torture! Infernal – keeping my nerves at such a stretch" (*WH* 290).

Since then, too, Heathcliff has become trapped in a world of his own delusions, perpetually chasing the unattainable: the ghostly vision of his lost beloved, “to be always disappointed” (*WH* 290). This is made explicitly clear in one of the opening scenes of the novel in which Lockwood recounts his “ridiculous nightmare” (*WH* 29) to Heathcliff, describing to him his frightful encounter with the child ghost of “that minx, Catherine Linton, or Earnshaw, or however she was called […] wicked little soul!” (*WH* 27), wailing to be let in and trying to force her way through the window into the room he was put in for the night by the servant Zillah, albeit she knew that “her master had an odd notion about the chamber […] and never let anybody lodge there willingly” (*WH* 19) but who, in Lockwood’s conviction, simply “wanted to get another proof that the place was haunted, at [his] expense” (*WH* 27). In relating Heathcliff’s impassioned yet to him rather peculiar reaction to the dream he has just told him about, Lockwood notes:

> I stood still, and was witness, involuntarily, to *a piece of superstition* [emphasis added] on the part of my landlord, which *belied, oddly, his apparent sense* [emphasis added]. He got on to the bed, wrenched open the lattice, bursting, as he pulled at it, into an *uncontrollable passion of tears* [emphasis added]. “Come in! come in!”, he sobbed. “Cathy, do come. Oh do – *once* more! Oh! My heart’s darling, hear me *this* time – Catherine, at last! […] There was such anguish in the gush of grief that accompanied this raving, that my compassion made me overlook its *folly* [emphasis added], and I drew off (*WH* 28-29).

The return of the ghost of the dead Catherine, blurring and transcending the boundaries of past and present, spirit and body, the real and the imagined, can be seen in the first place as a paralleled manifestation of the fulfilment of both Catherine’s delirious promise: “But Heathcliff, […] I’ll not lie there by myself; they may bury me twelve feet deep, and throw the church down over me; but I won’t rest till you are with me … I never will! (*WH* 126), and Heathcliff’s own prayers to be haunted by her: “Catherine Earnshaw, may you not rest, as long as I am living! […] haunt me, then! […] Be with me always – take any form – drive me mad! (*WH* 169); in short, as an evident embodiment of their shared resistance to separation. More to the point, Catherine’s ghostly return materializes Heathcliff’s professed belief in the existence of ghosts and, thus, in the permeability of the boundaries between life and death: “I have a strong faith in ghosts; I have a conviction that they can, and do exist, among us!” (*WH* 289). This, of course, might account to some extent for the fact why he strikes one side of Catherine’s coffin loose and bribes “the sexton, who was digging Linton’s grave, […] to pull it away, when I’m laid there, and slide mine out too” (*WH* 288) to allow their bodies to merge and dissolve together. More crucially, however, the appearance of Catherine's phantom testifies to the inherent potential of the past to intrude upon and unsettle the present through its uncanny[36] return(s), figuring thereby the return of that from which Heathcliff has indeed never become quite free, his marked reluctance to "assent to finality" (S. Davies 97) and loss. In a similar vein, it may be argued that his own return to Wuthering Heights after a three-year absence not only signals his strong identification and attachment to the place by virtue of the fact that his relationship with Catherine has been formed there but also necessitates his confrontation with the past and prefigures his ensuing entrapment in the world of harsh memories and inconsolable grief which propel his vengeful retaliation ending in madness and death. Lockwood's reflection "time stagnates here" (*WH* 28) might thus well be extended to include Heathcliff's own emotional and psychological stasis in the face of a traumatic event: the loss of Catherine.

That Heathcliff is tormented by the past reaching back to him from beyond the realm of the here and now through Catherine's spectral visitations is made vividly clear in each of the two passages quoted above. His uncontrollable displays of emotion, his loss of self-governance, his "defenceless grief" (S. Davies 81), they all inevitably call to mind and signal associations with madness, exposing thereby the extent of Heathcliff's helplessness and agony in the face of unmastered loss and unrealized desire. On the other hand, however, they plainly show that his overbearing and defensive nature is only a facade behind which he hides "the constant torment [he] suffer[s]" (*WH* 324), his true yet fragmented self. The second passage in particular places him in stark contrast to his unwelcome and prying guest Lockwood: while the former *is* all passion the moment Lockwood mentions the name "Catherine" and her spectral homecoming, the latter resolutely situates himself on the side of the reason overtly dismissing his host's reaction to the apparition as "a piece of superstition" and sheer "folly" (*WH* 29). What is also noteworthy, and what both passages reveal, is the fact that Heathcliff finds himself haunted not just by the ghost of his dead "friend, and love, and all" (*WH* 81) but, more importantly, by "the endless deferral of satisfaction" (Nestor xxv): "My Soul's bliss kills my body, but does not satisfy itself" (*WH* 328). The point is that through eighteen years in which he unwaveringly struggles to find and assure himself of Catherine's presence at his side, he remains unable to get even "but one glimpse" (*WH* 290) of her. Even though she does return in his imagination and sensation, she notoriously eludes him and perpetually withholds herself from his grasp and view (cf. Bronfen 312; Bersani 209).[37] He recollects:

---

[36] The concept of the uncanny (*unheimlich*) goes back to Sigmund Freud. As explained by Bronfen (113), the uncanny refers to both "the familiar and agreeable and to something concealed, kept out of sight […], the uncanny also refers to moments where the question whether something […] is real or imagined, unique, original or a repetition, a copy, cannot be decided". Julian Wolfreys, in turn, adds that the uncanny has to do with "doubling, […], repetition, and, equally, the ability to disturb not with something alien or strange, but, instead, through the return of the all too familiar" (15).

> When I sat in the house with Hareton, it seemed that on going out, I should meet her; when I walked on the moors I should meet her coming in. When I went from home, I hastened to return, she *must* be somewhere at the Heights, I was certain! And when I slept in her bedchamber – I was beaten out of that – I couldn't lie there; for the moment I closed my eyes, she was either outside the window, or sliding back the panels, or entering the room, or even resting her darling head on the same pillow as she did when a child. And I must open my lids to see. And so I opened and closed them a hundred times […] to be always disappointed! (*WH* 290).

Since Catherine is seemingly everywhere and yet nowhere to be found: "Where is she? Not *there* – not in heaven – not perished – where?" (*WH* 169), Heathcliff finds himself continually trapped and oscillating between pleasure and pain, hope and disappointment, his ideal of heaven and his horror of hell while restlessly searching for the dead beloved in the very places they used to spend their time together – the house, the bedchamber, the moors – before Catherine's violent initiation into the world of social propriety and decorum that estranged her from him. Considering the fact that places are "well suited to contain memories – to hold and preserve them" (Casey qtd. in Whitehead 10) and thus to evoke them, it should not be surprising to see that Heathcliff returns precisely to those locations where he can in some way reclaim Catherine, even if only through an act of recollection.[38] It is only when he does eventually unearth her grave and sees her dead face – "it is hers yet" (*WH* 288) – that he can reach some closure: "I gave some ease to myself. […] unless I had received a distinct impression of her passionless features, that strange feeling would hardly have been removed" (*WH* 289). As Bronfen argues:

> The sight of the corpse […] removes that 'strange feeling' of her intangible presence, assures him that she is indeed dead. The tranquillity he gains from this

---

[37] That Catherine shows herself to the sleeping Lockwood is further proof of that.

[38] Recollection tends to be distinguished from reminiscence. While the former denotes "the wilful search for a memory", the latter refers to "a more passive form of remembrance in which memories emerge of their own accord" (Whitehead 55).

> sight closes the uncertainty that the thwarted first disinterment provoked, because it discloses a repressed knowledge – the truth of her death. […] Though Catherine's second burial does not put closure on her revenant status, but on the contrary fixes it, […] it does terminate the spectrality that fed his mourning and introduces his dying (312).

As he draws closer to his own death, then, he expressly admits to Nelly: "It was a strange way of killing, not by inches, but by fractions of hair-breadths, to beguile me with the spectre of a hope, through eighteen years" (*WH* 291). Yet it is not only through Catherine's offering him "the spectre of a hope" (*WH* 291) while constantly showing "a spectre's ordinary caprice" (*WH* 28) that Heathcliff's memories of the past are kept alive. The memory of Catherine's loss is repeatedly brought to his mind in a chain of associations and re-enactments, as well. Here, Emily Brontë ostensibly draws on the prevalent theories of the nineteenth-century associationist psychology founded largely upon the premise that "recollection works by laws of association: we are reminded of something by that which is similar, opposite, or neighbouring to it" (Whitehead 26).[39] In view of that, Heathcliff's "idée fixe becomes an inescapable reality" (L. Davies 78) as soon as the entire world turns for him into "a universe of narcissistic mirrorings of a lost beloved" (S. Davies 66) which in effect "act as mnemonics, like a photograph album to the bereaved, of her one-time existence and her perpetual absence" (S. Davies 116) and, consequently, activate a sequence of associative recollections in his mind.

Catherine, as one might recall, returns in "an endless multiplicity of images" (S. Davies 116) that perpetually surround Heathcliff – day and night – so that the ensuing effect is, to be sure, that of "the air swarm[ing] with Catherines" (*WH* 20). Her uncanny return in the form of multiplying selves and images is seemingly prefigured in the variation of the three names scratched on the window ledge of her old room at Wuthering Heights, that is, "*Catherine Earnshaw*", "*Catherine Heathcliff*", and "*Catherine Linton*" (*WH* 19), which provoke Lockwood's nightmare vision of her and which act not only as reminders of her existence, and absence, but also as signifiers of her fragmented self mirroring that of Heathcliff's.[40] Be that as it may, Heathcliff "sees" her image in the nearby landscape and in every physical object he encounters on his way. In a similar fashion, "the most ordinary faces of men, and women – [his] own features – mock [him] with a resemblance" (*WH* 324) to her. She stares at him through her portrait and through the eyes of her brother who "has exactly her eyes" (*WH* 182), as Isabella notes to Heathcliff after Catherine's interment. Yet what seems to trouble him most is the uncanny similarity between his dead beloved and the young pair Cathy (her daughter) and Hareton (her nephew): their "eyes are precisely similar, and they are those of Catherine Earnshaw" (*WH* 322). In Hareton, moreover, Heathcliff recognizes not just himself but Catherine, too: "It will be odd, if I thwart myself! But when I look for his father in his face, I find *her* every day more" (*WH* 303).[41] The look into young Cathy's face, in turn, prevents him from hitting her again: "he seemed ready to tear Catherine in pieces, […] when of a sudden, his fingers relaxed, he shifted his grasp from her head, to her arm, and gazed intently in her face" (*WH* 320). In the shadow of "a strange change approaching" (*WH* 323), Heathcliff confesses to Nelly that it is precisely Cathy's and Hareton's staggering resemblance to the dead Catherine, and therefore to him due to his strong identification with her, that causes and intensifies his anguish:

---

[39] For more details see: Nicholas Dames, *Amnesiac Selves: Nostalgia, Forgetting, and British Fiction, 1810-1870* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 127-164.

[40] Apart from that, the names seem to foreshadow the cyclic progress of both mother and daughter. When read from left to right, they trace mother's drama of choice between Heathcliff and Edgar Linton, whereas when read from right to left, they prefigure the progress of her daughter.

> About *her* I won't speak; and I don't desire to think; but I earnestly wish she were invisible – her presence invokes only maddening sensations. *He* moves me differently; […] if I try to describe the thousand forms of past associations, and ideas he awakens; or embodies […]. Five minutes ago, Hareton seemed a personification of my youth […], his startling resemblance to Catherine connected him fearfully with her […]. Well, Hareton's aspect was the ghost of my immortal love, of my wild endeavours to hold my right, my degradation, my pride, my happiness, and my anguish […], his society is no benefit to me […]. I can give them no attention, any more (*WH* 323-324).

As it turns out later, these moments of uncanny recognition not only cause him pain but in fact thwart his initial desire to annihilate everyone and everything that contributed, directly and indirectly, to his separation from Catherine: "I could do it; and none could hinder me – But where is the use? I don't care for striking, I can't take the trouble to raise my hand! […] I have lost the faculty of enjoying their destruction, and I'm too idle to destroy for nothing (*WH* 323). At this juncture, then, it would seem, Heathcliff's quest for revenge becomes "extinguished by his greater will for absolute union with Cathy" (Krishnan 38). Realizing the futility of his "violent exertions" (*WH* 323) and the impossibility of regaining Catherine through acquisition and destruction, he lets his lifelong obsession with vengeance transmute into an obsession with death as the only possible way he can think of to be finally able to fuse with "his original counterpart" (S.

---

[41] Bersani suggests that "[i]n a sense, then, Catherine and Heathcliff's union […] is realized only in the peculiarly hybrid 'person' of Hareton" (200).

Davies 112) and regain the lost wholeness. Henceforth, he loses "interest in [his] daily life" (*WH* 331) and withdraws more and more into solitude, taking yet again on the role of an isolated outsider, but this time of his own accord. Sleepless and abstaining from food for many consecutive days, he struggles to justify his odd behaviour, "It is not my fault, that I cannot eat or rest. […] I'll do both, as soon as I possibly can. But you might as well bid a man struggling in the water, rest within arm's length of the shore! I *must reach it* [emphasis added] first" (*WH* 333).[42] In referring to his "single wish" (*WH* 324), he self-assuredly adds: "I'm convinced it *will* be reached – and *soon* – because it has devoured my existence – I'm swallowed in the anticipation of its fulfilment" (*WH* 325). Having informed Nelly Dean that "[he] [has] nearly attained *[his]* heaven" (*WH* 333), Heathcliff passes away the following day, in the oak-closed bed situated in the room he shared with Catherine in his boyhood, to be buried next to her, in a single grave, on the moors. The room in which he dies is not just a source of reverberating mystery for the household dwellers, it is indeed a fine reflection of Heathcliff's entrapment in the past. Cold, locked up and decayed, it appears to mirror his own decaying morals and desperate attempts to freeze time, to let things remain as they were. It is on the whole a site of his nostalgic longing for the bygones, a shrine barred from intruders and their prying eyes in which the traces of his blissful yet interrupted union with Catherine linger.[43]

All in all, as a foundling boy, abandoned and abused in childhood, Heathcliff emerges as a wounded adult. Yet his actions do not seem to be driven solely by his desire to avenge himself for the wrongs done to him; quite the opposite, they appear to be motivated by his much more stronger desire to escape the void of loneliness created by his separation from Catherine – his "life" and "soul" (*WH* 169) – and return to the world they shared before, even if they both suffered physical, verbal and emotional abuse under the patriarchal tyranny of Hindley and Joseph. In addition, his obsessive quest for Catherine appears to be driven by fear, too; the fear of being left alone in the abyss where she is nowhere to be found. What is even more noteworthy with regard to his neurotic fixation on reconnecting with the dead beloved, which after eighteen years of inner torment and struggle with her present absence shades into fixation on death, is that

---

[42] Lennard Davies writes that "sleeplessness, loss of appetite, and lack of attention to the details of life come out of the idée fixe" (72). The fact that Heathcliff cannot bring himself to eat and rest shows that his obsession is much stronger than his will (cf. p. 23 of this chapter).

[43] Preceding her conversion into a lady and his brutal expulsion from their shared realm by Hindley.

Heathcliff remains capable of talking about his disordered condition in a self-reflexive and coherent manner until the final days of his life, which only goes to prove that his memory, despite his deepening mental fragmentation, stays intact. His confessions to the housekeeper not only resemble the patient-doctor interaction, they ostensibly reveal his urge to tell, to share his traumatic experience(s) with another, even if he finds in the end that "[m]y confessions have not relieved me – but, they may account for some, otherwise unaccountable phases of humour which I show" (*WH* 325). That the portrayal of his character is consistent with the symptomatology of monomania is confirmed once again through Nelly's remark: "not a soul, from his general bearing, would have conjectured the fact" (*WH* 325). On the whole, then, he emerges as the perfect example of the inherent difficulty of distinguishing between the mad and the sane, reality and appearance, fact and fiction.

As the foregoing discussion has hopefully shown, too, memory is not merely a source of inexorable pain, a driving force of obsessive quest either for retribution or for the lost soul-mate, or even both. It is, above and beyond, "an action; essentially, it *is the action of telling a story*" (Janet qtd. Leys 124). In this respect, then, it is closely tied to narrative because "to remember is to be able to relate one incident or episode to another, and thereby to produce a version of the self" (Whitehead 63). Indeed, much of what one learns about the inner life and agony of Heathcliff comes through his own verbal account to Nelly Dean,[44] forcing him to return to the yet unmastered past and place it in relation to the still unbearable present. This return is thus essentially posited in the novel as a repetition, repetition which precludes Heathcliff's ability/willingness to forget and forces him to relive his pain over and over again, much the same way his hallucinatory and multiplying visions of Catherine, likewise his pursuit of revenge modelled on the patriarchal patterns, do. It should not be forgotten, however, that repetition is not only what sustains Heathcliff's memory of past times; it is, more significantly, what drives the narrative plot itself by virtue of its marked reliance on multiple narrative voices, each repeating what s/he has been told/witnessed/read while suffusing the account with their own subjective interpretations, additions and modifications. Since repetition is essentially "a double movement, a return to something primary and the production of something new" (Bronfen 326)[45], it is always intimately bound up with the uncanny effect: even though the repeated event/action may be similar, it is never exactly the same. And, what is more, it always destabilizes the existing boundaries of self and structure, the same way the appearance of Catherine's ghost not only disrupts the temporality of the story told by Lockwood but also brings to the surface the other side of Heathcliff's character, his hidden and not accessible to the outsider's gaze anguished soul.

---

[44] Like Isabella Linton's letter to Nelly, and like Catherine Earnshaw's diary fragment (on which I will comment later), Heathcliff's account supplements the narratives of both Nelly Dean and Lockwood, filling thus the gap in the text as a whole.

1.2. "Is that Catherine Linton?": Catherine's identity crisis

We've odd reports here. A stout, hearty lass
like Catherine does not fall ill for a trifle.
[…] How did it begin? (*WH* 129).

As introduced by Lockwood in his diary entry dated 1801, Wuthering Heights is "the name of Mr Heathcliff's dwelling" (*WH* 4). Realizing it is unlike any other place, Lockwood immediately proceeds to elucidate its name:

> "Wuthering" being a significant provincial adjective, descriptive of the atmospheric tumult to which its station is exposed in stormy weather. Pure, bracing ventilation they must have up there, at all times, indeed: one may guess the power of the north wind, blowing over the edge, by the excessive slant of a few, stunted firs at the end of the house; and by a range of gaunt thorns stretching their limbs one way, as if craving alms of the sun. Happily, the architect had foresight to build it strong: the narrow windows are deeply set in the wall, and the corners defended with large jutting stones (*WH* 4).

As the passage suggests, Wuthering Heights connotes wilderness, isolation and unconstrained exposure to the forces of nature. From the very first pages, indeed, it is depicted as "a house under stress" (Vine 339) in which violence, emotional tumult and disorder seem to be nothing extraordinary and even taken for granted. Undecorated, disturbingly inhospitable and guarded by a pack of undomesticated "four-footed fiends, of various sizes, and ages" (*WH* 7) ready to tear one into pieces, the house does not seem to be the type of place where one would normally seek comfort and refuge from the pressures and anxieties of the harsh and competitive world outside. It is neither a peaceful place nor "a storehouse of moral and spiritual values" (Houghton 348) crucial to the development of a stable and coherent self, especially the self that would conform to societal standards and expectations. Rather, it is an unpolished place where “the distinction between the wild and the tamed is blurred” (Mellor 193) and where nothing is what it in fact seems to be.[46]

---

[45] That is, "[r]epetition does not merely imitate" (Bronfen 325) but also produces something new out of an earlier body" (Bronfen 325).

Wuthering Heights is, however, not only Heathcliff’s dwelling; it is, above and beyond, the place where Catherine Earnshaw was born and raised, and where her indissoluble bond with the gypsy boy her father brought home from his three-day trip to the city of Liverpool had been shaped under the patriarchal (dis)order and control. Unlike Heathcliff, whom Nelly introduces in her narrative as a cuckoo (cf. *WH* 35), Catherine is the rightful member of the Earnshaw family that has been living in the same house since three hundred years.[47] Like Heathcliff, however, she has an unruly spirit and tends to rebel against the tyranny of her brother Hindley, the moral preachings of the “self-righteous pharisee” (*WH* 42) Joseph and the lack of affection from her father, Mr Earnshaw. As Nelly Dean recalls in her narrative:

> Certainly, she had ways with her such as I never saw a child take up before; and she put all of us past our patience fifty times and oftener in a day: […] we had not a minute’s security that she wouldn’t be in mischief. Her spirits always at high-water mark, her tongue always going […]. A wild, wick slip she was […]; she was never so happy as when we were all scolding her at once, and she defying us with her bold, saucy look, and her ready words; turning Joseph’s religious curses into ridicule, baiting me, and doing just what her father hated most” (*WH* 43).

Similarly, Catherine’s own diary, which Lockwood discovers by chance in her old bedroom at Wuthering Heights while perusing a selection of her books, and which he then takes the liberty to read to satisfy his curiosity, not only introduces her character to the novel while allowing the reader – and Lockwood – a glimpse into her private perceptions and experiences; it also reveals her insubordinate and defiant nature, her sullen reluctance to accept male/patriarchal authority without complaint and to submissively endure cruelty directed against Heathcliff and herself. Her vehement declaration, “H. and I are going to rebel – we took our initiatory step this evening” (*WH* 20) coupled with her subsequent assertion, “we cannot be damper, or colder, in the rain than we are here” (*WH* 22) not only demonstrate her strong sense of identification with the Other, personified in the figure of Heathcliff, in the face of the "oppression past explaining" (*WH* 107) but also picture Wuthering Heights as a rather unwelcoming, comfortless and alienating place forcing the two children to seek refuge and "scamper on the moors" (*WH* 22) and, thereby, suggest that not much indeed has changed at the Earnshaw family home over the span of two decades separating Lockwood's recorded arrival at the far removed Wuthering Heights mansion and Catherine Earnshaw's inevitable yet doomed departure for the neighbouring Trushcross Grange – "a splendid place carpeted with crimson" (*WH* 48) – in the hope that she will become "the greatest woman of the neighbourhood" (*WH* 78) able to "aid Heathcliff to rise" (*WH* 82). The diary fragment itself, moreover, can be seen as "an act of rebellion" (Mellor 201) on the part of the little girl given the fact that she writes it on the margins and blank pages of her books, partly to assert her own authority and identity and partly to escape into a world where she herself is "the little mistress" (*WH* 42) unrestrained by any external force trying to control her life. As Lockwood notes, even a book of "Testament […] bore the inscription – 'Catherine Earnshaw, her book'" (*WH* 20).

---

[46] The most notable example relates to Lockwood’s mistaken assumption that young Cathy is Mr Heathcliff’s wife and Hareton is merely a stable boy.

[47] When he enters the house during his first visit to Wuthering Heights, Lockwood detects above the door the date “1500” (*WH* 4).

Inclined to disobedient and self-assertive behaviour since her early days, Catherine Earnshaw is without a doubt far from being the submissive, pale and delicate 'angel in the house' propagated as an ideal of femininity by the women's magazines, conduct books and literature throughout the nineteenth century. She is rather more often than not described as being "selfish" (*WH* 60), "headstrong" (*WH* 66), "passionate" (*WH* 88), and "full of ambition" (*WH* 67). She displays thus all the features of behaviour which were deemed highly unacceptable and hence undesirable in women by the social and moral standards of the Victorian period.[48] Hence, being not simply a woman[49] – and by extension the Other – but the woman who dares to question and disobey patriarchal rules and codes of civil conduct, Catherine Earnshaw inevitably emerges as a madwoman, a morally insane girl. Her "insistence on self-expression" (Showalter 81), articulated, as noted above, through her diary fragment that is written "*over* what is written" (Mellor 201), signifies precisely "the kind of behaviour that had led to

---

[48] See Gilbert and Gubar, pp. 22-27, 264-265. Cf. Shuttleworth, p. 76; and Jane Wood, *Passion and Pathology in Victorian Fiction* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 9-10.

[49] As already mentioned at the beginning of this chapter, women were believed to be predisposed to madness by nature on account of the "unstable processes" (Shuttleworth 4) of their bodies and reproductive functions.

[women] being labelled ‘mad’” (Showalter 81).[50] Her subsequent instruction in social decorum and self-renunciation which she receives during her five-week stay at Trushcross Grange by the Lintons after she is bitten by their bulldog might thus be read as an attempt on the part of the patriarchal authority, embodied in the Linton family, to tame her wild and noncompliant self and turn her into a model of feminine virtue and beauty, associated, paradoxically, with nothing other than paleness, sickness, passivity, in a word, lurking death.

This instruction, quite interestingly, seems to echo and be strikingly reminiscent of one of the most popular treatments of madness that emerged in the course of the nineteenth century: moral management. Since the main objective of moral management consisted in “an effort to re-educate the insane in habits of […] self-control, moderation, and perseverance” (Showalter 29), the emphasis was put on the restoration of propriety and the improvement of morals in the individuals showing signs of abnormal behaviour (cf. Shuttleworth 34-35) without recourse to physical restraint and confinement popular in the treatment of madness until the end of the eighteenth century.[51] As a marriageable woman, living in the patriarchal world, Catherine’s uncivilized manners appear to be in dire need of “reform” (*WH* 53) if she is to fulfil her future role of a dutiful wife and mother, the only options available to her and testifying to her sanity by virtue of the fact that conformity to social demands and gender roles, the very “ability to maintain surface control” (Shuttleworth 36), was typically perceived as “an index of sanity” (cf. Shuttleworth 35). So under the surveillance of Mr and Mrs Linton, Catherine – after being washed, dressed in silk clothes and educated in graciousness – becomes transformed, in a Cinderella-like fashion, from the “half-savage, and hardy, and free; and laughing at injuries” (*WH* 125) young girl into “a very dignified person”, “quite a beauty” (*WH* 53), “a bright, graceful damsel” (*WH* 54). But what this basically means is that her “primitive linguistic constructions – in which she said what she meant and uttered her desire as forthrightly as possible – have been complicated into a sophisticated ‘doubleness’” (Mellor 197), in a word, into an art of concealment consistent with the nineteenth-century notion of a rational self (cf. Shuttleworth 38). The point is that struggling to reconcile conflicting impulses and desires, to balance her passionate love for Heathcliff and her prospective relationship with Edgar, Catherine adopts “a double character” (*WH* 67) manifested, among others, in her “using one speech and behaviour at Wuthering Heights, another at Trushcross Grange” (Mellor 197), to achieve her ends. As Nelly Dean explains: “In the place where she heard Heathcliff termed a ‘vulgar young ruffian,’ and ‘worse than a brute,’ she took care not to act like him; but at home she had small inclination to […] restrain an unruly nature when it would bring her neither credit, nor praise” (*WH* 67). And although she does not intend to deceive anyone (cf. *WH* 67), the truth is that the person she deceives most is in the end precisely herself.

---

[50] On the relationship between madness and female creativity/self-expression see the discussion in Gilbert and Gubar, especially chapters one and two.

[51] See Andrew Scull, *The Most Solitary of Afflictions: Madness and Society in Britain, 1700-1900* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993), pp. 98-104. Cf. Michel Foucault, *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason* (New York: Vintage Books, 1965); Showalter, pp. 30-34.

Heaven or Hell? – Catherine Earnshaw’s drama of choice

If I should be in heaven, Nelly, I should
be extremely miserable (*WH* 80).

Like Heathcliff, Catherine Earnshaw becomes trapped in a world of her own delusions, which, eventually, reinforce her liminality and marginality. Longing to “escape from a disorderly, comfortless home into a wealthy respectable one” (*WH* 79) while believing, naively enough, that not even a marriage to another man can separate her from Heathcliff,[52] Catherine decides to become Edgar Linton’s wife,

> because he is handsome, and […] young and cheerful […], because he loves me […] because […] I shall like to be the greatest woman of the neighbourhood, and […] I love the ground under his feet, and the air over his head, and everything he touches, and every word he says – I love all his looks, and all his actions, and him entirely, and altogether (*WH* 78-79).

Albeit she realizes that this is by no means the right decision: “In whichever place the soul lives – in my soul, and in my heart, I’m convinced I’m wrong!” (*WH* 80), she still hopes that she will be able to “accommodate both loves” and thus “have it all” (Nestor xxiii). As she says, “Edgar must shake off his antipathy, and tolerate [Heathcliff], at least. He will when he learns my true feelings towards him” (WH 82). While Nestor might be right in arguing that Catherine’s attempt to keep a relationship with both Edgar and Heathcliff “represents an attempt to evade the necessity of choice and thereby avoid limitation” (xxiii), Bersani draws attention to another aspect, namely, that “[s]he appears to take literally the identification between Heathcliff and herself, and therefore expects Edgar to recognize her in Heathcliff, to love her in him" (210). Her famous yet confusing "act of self-naming" (Vine 347) – "Nelly, I *am* Heathcliff" (*WH* 82) – might be read, however, not only as "a declaration of identity" (Vine 347),[53] or, to put it another way, as an expression of the "desire for an impossible symbiosis, for a state of non-differentiation between the self and the Other" (Nestor xxiv); it might well be read as a kind of recognition on her part that "her need of Heathcliff involves his representation of all that she is not" (Matthews 57), or, more precisely, what she has to renounce to avoid social marginalization, poverty[54] and the stigma of a madwoman. It is thus not without significance that she utters these words after she has been introduced, albeit abruptly and involuntarily, into the genteel world of Trushcross Grange, the symbol of patriarchal order and convention.

---

[52] She exclaims to Nelly, “I shouldn’t be Mrs Linton were such a price demanded!” (*WH* 82).

Albeit her love for Heathcliff "resembles eternal rocks beneath" (*WH* 82), Catherine takes the risk and sacrifices it for the sake of what others expect of her by taking on the role of a wife to the patriarchal son. In this way she arguably "breaks apart into two Catherines – the old, mad, dead Catherine fathered by Wuthering Heights, and the new, more docile and acceptable Catherine fathered by Trushcross Grange" (Gilbert and Gubar 286-287). So, in a way, this unavoidable "*rite de passage* in [her] history signifies her 'fall' from female autonomy into conformist femininity and from protest into patriarchy" (Vine 346). But, still, her marriage to Edgar appears to be only a façade: "I've no more business to marry Edgar Linton than to be in heaven; and if the wicked man in there had not brought Heathcliff so low, I shouldn't have thought of it" (*WH* 81); a façade which represents after all her vain effort to accommodate to adulthood and to the constricting world of social decorum. While it might be true to claim that this tension between autonomy and conformity, social demand and desire, propels Catherine into mental disintegration and creates a rift in her mind, my contention goes beyond the view that her madness is provoked solely by the conflict of opposing forces that makes her escape into self-induced illnesses which serve for her primarily as a means to vent excessive passion and to frighten or manipulate others. Her threat to Edgar, "I will cry myself sick!" (*WH* 72), made when he wants to leave her after she has struck him during their fight in the kitchen, likewise her later determined decision, "Well, if I cannot keep Heathcliff for my friend – if Edgar will be mean and jealous, I'll try to break their hearts by breaking my own. That will be a prompt way of finishing all, when I am pushed to extremity!" (*WH* 116), might serve here as prime examples. Notwithstanding the nineteenth-century conviction that "emotions could produce somatic effects" and consequently "magnify the production of physical symptoms" (Vrettos 23) acted out in madness, my suggestion is that Catherine's ultimate decline into insanity is intricately tied to memory which after years of denial and repression comes to haunt her and shatters her gilded and illusory reality she has built for herself at Edgar Linton's side.

---

[53] Vine (347) argues that "in identifying herself with Heathcliff, Cathy fictionalizes her own being; […] and incarnates her identity as the gendered meaning of Heathcliff's history" in the sense that they both lack "a stable sense of identity".

[54] As she reasons: "[I]f Heathcliff and I married, we should be beggars […] whereas if I marry Linton, I can aid Heathcliff to rise, and place him out of my brother's power" (*WH* 82).

Memory bursts in … I've been haunted, Nelly!

Nelly, I will tell you what I thought, and what
has kept recurring and recurring till
I feared for my reason (*WH* 125).

When Heathcliff runs off into the storm hearing Catherine's confession to Nelly that marriage to him would degrade her and make her a beggar, Catherine becomes the wife of a magistrate, Edgar Linton, achieving thereby the position and power – the whip (*WH* 36) – she has always wanted. During Heathcliff's absence, she struggles then to reconcile herself to the reality of her new role – Mrs Linton – in the face of her personal loss: the disappearance of Heathcliff and the aftermaths of her illness she has contracted in the rain while waiting for him to return. Once "much too fond of Heathcliff" (*WH* 42), she now grows "almost over fond of Mr Linton" (*WH* 92), which only goes to suggest that she substitutes one lover for another – loss for gain – to be able to deal with the reality that substantially overwhelms her. The return of Heathcliff six months after her wedding might be read as a return of that what she has repressed[55], her rebellious self, to be able to adjust herself to her new life at the polished and ordered Thrushcross Grange (cf. Vine 352; Gilbert and Gubar 280) but what now propels her into a state of hysteria and delirium,[56] both considered to be linked to the unconscious: the repository of buried memories (cf. Whitehead 89-91; Pedlar 66) that tend to act "like a foreign body which long after its entry must continue to be regarded as an agent that is still at work" (Freud qtd. in Whitehead 89) and that can be activated through external stimuli, for example, associations. In this respect, Catherine's confession: "Nelly, […] he's always, always in my mind" (*WH* 82) might be read as an evident foreshadowing of the return of the repressed – Heathcliff and all that he possibly embodies in her consciousness: nature, freedom, self – but what she had to suppress to become acceptable to others.

---

[55] In psychoanalysis, repression tends to be defined as a defence mechanism enabling the individual to keep the painful event out of an awareness until the repressed material is brought back into consciousness and expressed through the hysterical symptoms. For more details, see: Phil Mollon, *Multiple Selves, Multiple Voices: Trauma, Violation and Dissociation* (Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, 1996), pp. 7-8, 32-34.

[56] The word delirium, Foucault indicates, derives from "*lira*, a furrow; so that *deliro* actually means to move out of the furrow, away from the proper path of reason" (99-100).

What is interesting about Catherine's delirium, which tends to be regarded as "a channel to the unconscious" (Pedlar 66) and "the dream of waking persons" (Foucault 103), is that Catherine does indeed come to recognize the reality of her self-enforced solitude, the fact that her conventional marriage to Edgar "has […] locked her into a social system that denies her autonomy" (Gilbert and Gubar 280) and reduced her to "a role, a function, a sort of walking shadow" (Gilbert and Gubar 282). Not surprisingly, then, she compares her marriage to nothing other than "an exile […] from what had been [her] world" (*WH* 125), nostalgically wishing to be back at Wuthering Heights again: "I'm sure I should be *myself* [emphasis added] were I once again among the heather on those hills" (*WH* 125-126); the place inevitably charged with memories of unrestrained freedom and relationship with Heathcliff. No longer able to recognize herself in the mirror: "Don't *you* see that face? (*WH* 123), Catherine poignantly laments: "Oh! Nelly, the room is haunted!" (*WH* 123). Given that to "be haunted is the on-going process of coming to terms with one's being" (Wolfreys 18), or, it may even be argued, of searching for the lost self, Catherine's impression might be read as a painful yet unavoidable process of facing, and dealing with, the trauma of displacement and disintegration brought about by her separation from her "all in all" (*WH* 125). As her mad confessions clearly demonstrate, this trauma is located in her childhood:

> 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, and rousing from a dismal doze after a night of weeping – I lifted my hand to push the panels aside, it struck the table-top! […] and then, memory burst in […] But, supposing at twelve years old, I had been wrenched from the Heights, and every early association, and my all in all, as Heathcliff was at that time, and been converted at a stroke into Mrs Linton, […] the wife of a stranger; […] You may fancy a glimpse of the abyss where I grovelled!" (*WH* 125).

She even states that “the whole last seven years of [her] life grew a blank!” (*WH* 125), equating thereby her transition to the Grange with a kind of nonexistence, the period of her life with which she cannot fully identify. In this respect, the possibly greatest disillusionment she is faced with the moment she gazes in the mirror is that the heavenly and decorous Trushcross Grange did turn out to be a hell indeed, “the home of concealment and doubleness, a place where […] reflections are separated from their owners like souls from their bodies” (Gilbert and Gubar 274).

Again, memory is a double movement, the return to and of the past, the return which inevitably forces Catherine to confront her blatantly delusive dreams, and which clearly shows that the past can be pushed away from the conscious mind but never indeed denied and for that reason she cannot “have only to do with the present” (*WH* 79). It is interesting to note at this point that where Heathcliff is able to relate his past memories in a logical and self-confident manner, deciding what he wants to share and what he wishes to withhold, Catherine’s narrative of her former life “breaks in upon her, erupting on the scene of the present and disorganizing it according to the logic of desire and fantasy” (Vine 355). Not only does she jump from one recollection to another in recounting her past to the perplexed Nelly, she fluctuates between opposing emotional states, too. As Nelly reports, “A minute previously she was violent; now, […] she seemed to find childish diversion in pulling the feathers from the rents she had just made, and ranging them on the sheet according to their different species: her mind had strayed to other associations” (*WH* 122).

On the whole, then, where Heathcliff falls into a repetition compulsion as a means to deal with his trauma and so substitutes his emotional loss for material acquisition, Catherine represses her true self and dissociates herself from the painful reality, leading an outwardly normal life, until the repressed returns and she can do nothing about it any more. In her portrayal of Catherine’s madness, then, Emily Brontë obviously uses insanity as a device to demonstrate the discord between societal expectations and individual wishes, reason and emotion, self and other, dramatizing the consequences of the double bind women were necessarily faced with under the dictates of patriarchal rule. The paradox that Catherine comes to embody in the end is that whether she embraces self-denial (Trushcross Grange) or engages herself into self-expression (Wuthering Heights), she will nevertheless be labelled mad. In her case, then, madness emerges as a means of breaking out, a way to find a place within the existing and definable categories. On the other hand, her madness can indeed reflect her sanity (cf. Gilbert and Gubar 278, 283), her growing recognition of “who and what she has become in the world’s terms” (Gilbert and Gubar 283), showing once again that there is no sharp line of distinction between the one and the other.

2. CHARLES DICKENS – *GREAT EXPECTATIONS*

That mind my own. Oh, narrow cell;
Dark – imageless – a living tomb!
There must I sleep, there wake and dwell
Content, - with palsy, pain, and gloom.

— Charlotte Brontë, *Frances* [57]

I must make the most I can out of the
book. […] The name is
GREAT EXPECTATIONS.
I think a good name?

— Charles Dickens[58]

Published in 1861 and "devoted to assessing the cost of dreams" and "stances towards the future" (Marlow, *Charles* 98), *Great Expectations* belongs, by all means, to one of Charles Dickens' finest and much-admired novels. Written in the confessional mode of a fictional autobiography,[59] it chronicles the life and progress of a young blacksmith's boy, a social climber, struggling to rise in the world by means of the "great expectations" and a large sum of money he has been surprisingly endowed with at an early age by a secret benefactor (*GE* 138-139) and traces thereby not only the way in which this orphaned, and necessarily inexperienced, child becomes both a marionette in the hands of his foster parents – the escaped convict Magwitch and the eccentric recluse Miss Havisham – and the instrument of their revenge for the injustices and wrongs they have suffered but also, and above all, the way in which his own "false hopes" (*GE* 411) and mistaken perceptions collapse after years of idle existence and self-delusion, forcing him thus to look back and to reconsider both the nature of his Cinderella-like ascent to the position of power, wealth and class – the ascent marked, paradoxically, by no effort on his part – and the price he actually had to pay for his manifest and self-deceptive ignorance.[60]

---

[57] Quoted in Gilbert and Gubar, p. 401.

[58] Letter to Wilkie Collins quoted in R. George Thomas, *Charles Dickens: Great Expectations* (London: Edward Arnold Publishers, 1964), p. 10.

[59] See Jean Ferguson Carr, "Dickens and Autobiography: A Wild Beast and His Keeper", *ELH* 52 (Summer, 1985), pp. 447-469.

[60] In this context, it might be useful to mention that Charles Dickens's *Great Expectations* tends to be seen more often than not as a re-writing of his first autobiographical novel *David Copperfield*, published ten years earlier, because it arguably entails his more mature outlook on and disillusionment with life and society. For more details, see: Jerome Meckier, *Dickens's Great Expectations: Misnar's Pavilion versus*

As Samuel Sipe has fittingly observed, “it is this turning towards the past which culminates in the telling of his life’s story” (58-59). In this respect, then, Charles Dickens’ *Great Expectations*, like Emily Brontë’s *Wuthering Heights*, emerges first and foremost as a novel of memory. Crucially, however, it is enclosed not only in the realm of “Pip’s past” (Sipe 54); it centres, likewise, on the never-ending and perpetually re-enacted drama of Miss Havisham’s past: her trauma of rejection and betrayal by the idolized lover on the eagerly anticipated and arranged wedding day. Therefore, somewhat at variance with what its title connotes and alludes to – an orientation and gesture towards the future (cf. Marlow, *Charles* 98), *Great Expectations* seems to be preoccupied substantially with a return and clinging to the painful past tinged with disappointment and disenchantment. The story of Miss Havisham, the jilted bride, is arguably a prime illustration of “how great expectations can become great dissatisfactions” (Marlow, *Charles* 100) and, in effect, not only shatter the integrity of one’s self but taint the lives of others, and retard the process of moving on.

Albeit the story as a whole is told from the vantage point of Pip,[61] it is nevertheless suffused with other first-person accounts, which not only allow the reader, and the narrator, to attain an additional perspective on the recounted events but also provide the protagonist/narrator with the otherwise hardly accessible or obtainable pieces of information about the inner life of the individuals that he encounters on his way, or, to put it simply, with the context needed to the understanding of their predicaments, filling thereby the gaps in his necessarily limited narrative stance. One of such accounts belongs, crucially, to the ghostly Miss Havisham, whose narrative voice not only adds a certain level of validity and immediacy to the portrayal of her personal tragedy by the narrator, Pip, in what can be termed his work of memory but also provides a further dimension to the way in which others persistently struggle to define and fathom the enigma surrounding her eccentric character and eremitic, self-enforced confinement behind the walls of her – once fine and grand but now evidently dilapidating – mansion, Satis House.

Cinderella (Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2002), chapter one; James E. Marlow, *Charles Dickens: The Uses of Time* (London: SUP, 1994), chapter three; and Thomas, pp. 11, 25.

[61] Pip is both the protagonist and narrator in the story he is recounting to the reader from the standpoint of a disillusioned adult, commenting on his youthful attitudes and how they have been subject to change and revision over time. See the discussion in Thomas, pp. 36-41, Sipe, pp. 53-63, and Meckier, chapters one and two.

In what follows, then, attention will be devoted not to the commonly and much-discussed theme of young Pip's coming of age and his growing disillusionment with life and the world around him but to Miss Havisham, "the waiting bride" (Bronfen 352), and her obsessive quest for the past that she ceaselessly strives to master through the play of calculated re-enactments and repetitions,[62] likewise her self-tormenting quest for revenge[63] for what she has been forced to suffer at the hands of the patriarchal system into which she was born and whose norms she was more than eager to obey. In particular, the questions concerning the nature of her insanity and the extent to which it can be attributed to both

- the place where "she has buried herself alive" (Bronfen 351) after the trauma of rejection and thwarted expectations and
- her marked reluctance to forget the past, simply to adjust to the new, albeit unfavourable, situation in which she has unwittingly found herself,

will be discussed here in greater detail and referenced to the nineteenth-century approaches to, and understandings of, mental disorder echoed in Dickens' intricate tale of "crushed dreams" (Meckier 6) and aspirations.

2.1. "If you knew all my story": Miss Havisham introduced

> *I had heard of Miss Havisham up town – everybody*
> *for miles round, had heard of Miss Havisham up town – as*
> *an immensely rich and grim lady […] who*
> *led a life of seclusion*
> (*GE* 51).

Before discussing the nature of Miss Havisham's madness and the potential role of memory, and place, in her decline into insanity, it might be useful to focus on her character first. During his early visit(s) to Miss Havisham's gloomy and barricaded mansion (cf. *GE* 51), Pip is thrown into a world which not only perplexes and leaves him scared but, paradoxically, captivates his mind to such an extent that he resolves to abandon his dreary and simple life of a blacksmith's apprentice and transcend his social position by becoming a gentleman on account of a beautiful yet cold-hearted girl that he comes to meet there and with whom he gradually falls in love, encouraged by Miss Havisham's cold and calculated manipulations.[64] Be that as it may, in recalling his very first encounter with "an immensely rich and grim lady" (*GE* 51) he has only heard about so far but to whom he has now been summoned to play games with her adopted daughter Estella, under the constant and watchful gaze of the old lady herself, Pip not only reports how "very uncomfortable" (*GE* 57) and "half afraid" (*GE* 57) he was as he moved through the dark and countless passages of the grand house to meet the "fine lady" (*GE* 57) but how, once he reached his destination, he found himself in "a pretty large room, well lighted with wax candles" (*GE* 57). Relating the childish impression that the scene has then made on him in his autobiographical account written many years after the incident has indeed taken place, Pip notes:

---

[62] I will elaborate on this point in the discussion that follows.
[63] Again, revenge emerges as a marker of unrestrained passion and thereby a marker of madness.

> No glimpse of daylight was to be seen in it. It was a dressing-room, I supposed from the furniture […]. In an armchair, with an elbow resting on the table, and her head leaning on that hand, sat the strangest lady I have ever seen, or shall ever see. She was dressed in rich materials – satins, and lace, and silks – all of white. Her shoes were white. And she had a long white veil dependent from her hair, and she had bridal flowers in her hair, but her hair was white. Some bright jewels sparkled on her neck and on her hands, and some other jewels lay sparkling on the table. Dresses, […] and half-packed trunks were scattered about. She had not quite finished dressing, for she had but one shoe on – the other was on the table near her hand – her veil was but half arranged, her watch and chain were not put on, and some lace for her bosom lay with those trinkets, and with her handkerchief, and gloves, and some flowers, and a prayer book, all confusedly heaped about the looking-glass (*GE* 57).

The first image that one ostensibly gets of this strikingly weird woman, sitting on her own in a candle-lit and murky chamber, a woman who seemingly "had not quite finished dressing" (GE 57) yet, as the boy swiftly observes, is rather disturbing and shocking, indeed. Not simply surrounded with an assortment of her wedding paraphernalia but, in fact, wearing her bridal flowers in her now white hair[65] and, even more strangely, her bridal dress, half-arranged veil and only one shoe, Miss Havisham not only emerges as a rather uncanny and tragicomic figure, an aged bride waiting for "a wedding never to be" (Meckier 138), but she indeed forms a stark contrast to her dark and gloomy surroundings by virtue of the fact that the colour of her clothing is "all of white" (*GE* 57). It is only a few moments later, after his initial shock is apparently gone, that Pip comes to realize not only that “everything within [his] view which ought to be white, had been white long ago, and had lost its lustre, and was faded and yellow” (*GE* 57-58) instead but also that even the bride herself “within the bridal dress had withered like the dress, and like the flowers, and had no brightness left but the brightness of her sunken eyes” (*GE* 58). What Miss Havisham manifestly shows herself to be at this very moment is perhaps best illustrated in Pip’s evocative comparison of her “shrunk to skin and bone” (*GE* 58) figure to “a ghastly waxwork” (*GE* 58) which he had once seen “at the Fair” (*GE* 58), on the one hand, and, on the other hand, to “a skeleton in the ashes of a rich dress […] [with] dark eyes that moved and looked” (*GE* 58) at him, the skeleton that “had been dug out from a vault” (*GE* 58). On the whole, then, dressed in her once white bridal gown, now “yellow and withered” (*GE* 89) and resembling nothing other than “grave-clothes” (*GE* 60), Miss Havisham, as Elisabeth Bronfen argues in her book *Over Her Dead Body: Death, Femininity and the Aesthetic,* appears to be “not only the material embodiment of a living dead, but more importantly, a living sign of the bride as a dead woman” (351).

---

[64] Like Heathcliff, he wants to rise in the world to become a suitable partner for a woman whose social class does not appear to match his own.

[65] An indicator of her old age and thereby of the grotesqueness of the whole situation.

An even more haunting picture of the withered lady and her laid to waste surroundings is brought into focus as soon as Pip the child becomes aware of another aspect, namely that “her watch had stopped at twenty minutes to nine, and that a clock in the room had stopped at twenty minutes to nine” (*GE* 58), and “that everything in the room had stopped, like the watch and the clock, a long time ago” (*GE* 60). This suspension of time on the part of the aging bride might arguably be read as a manifestation of her desired, albeit in effect futile, attempts to defy the passage of time by remaining arrested, one may even say frozen, in a single moment: the moment of her “cruel mortification” (*GE* 180), failed expectations and aborted dreams.[66] For it is precisely at twenty minutes to nine, as it is revealed later on in the novel, that the existence she has struggled to build for herself at the side of a man whom she not merely “passionately loved” but “perfectly idolised” (*GE* 181) has been shattered into pieces the minute he failed to arrive at their planned wedding: “The marriage day was fixed, the wedding dresses were bought, the wedding tour was planned out, the wedding guests were invited. The day came, but not the bridegroom” (*GE* 182). More crucially, the idolized fiancé sent her only a letter which "she received […] when she was dressing for her marriage […] [a]t twenty minutes to nine […] at which she afterwards stopped all the clocks" (*GE* 182), as the young protagonist learns from his London roommate – and Miss Havisham's close relative – Herbert Pocket,[67] long after his first visit to the dismal and ruined Satis House. Seen in this perspective, Miss Havisham, caught in the middle of her preparations for the big day when the bad news arrives, becomes a perpetually waiting bride, "bewitched […] under an unbreakable spell that arrests the hands of time" (Meckier 13).

---

[66] In her book *Gender and Madness in the Novels of Charles Dickens* (Lewiston, NY: Mellen Press, 2004), Marianne Camus in turn suggests that Miss Havisham’s desire to stop all the clocks might be read in a twofold way as “a sort of negation of linear historical time” (39), on the one hand, and as “a rejection of the cyclical time to which [women] are assigned” (39), on the other hand.

It should not be forgotten, however, that Miss Havisham's impossible dream for a kind of timelessness is reinforced not only by the fact that she stops all the clocks in the entire house but also by the fact that she virtually tries to block an awareness of time from her consciousness in a vain effort "to think outside the passage of time" (Tambling 71),[68] which is made evident in her declaration to the young Pip, "I know nothing of days of the week; I know nothing of weeks of the year" (*GE* 62). Nonetheless, as Small astutely points out, "[s]he may have stopped the clocks, but her life is a bitter testament to the power of devouring Time" (207), illustrating thereby the discrepancy between desire and reality, fact and imagination, the discrepancy manifested primarily through the blatant contrast between Miss Havisham's aging body and decaying objects, on the one hand, and the stopped clocks, on the other hand.[69]

In another crucial scene, and perhaps even the most telling and disturbing in the entire novel, Miss Havisham leads the young Pip to another room, the one in which the wedding feast was supposed to take place, and from which, too, "the daylight was completely excluded" (*GE* 84). It is obviously there that the real drama of her life seems to thrive and it is there that her fixated desire to freeze, or stop, time seems to take the central stage. Pip recalls in retrospect that the room, albeit "spacious" (*GE* 84) and once certainly "handsome" (*GE* 84), "had an airless smell that was oppressive" and, what is more, "every discernible thing in it was covered with dust and mould, and dropping to pieces" (*GE* 84). Further he notes:

---

[67] Herbert Pocket identifies himself as the son of Miss Havisham's cousin, Matthew Pocket (cf. *GE* 177).

[68] Cf. Camus p. 39. See also p. 47 of this chapter.

[69] Camus makes a similar point when she states that in his portrayal of Miss Havisham and her dark surroundings Dickens "never lets the reader forget that time goes on outside the character's fantasy" (40).

> A fire had been kindled in the damp old-fashioned grate, and it was more disposed to go out than to burn up, […] and the reluctant smoke which hung in the room seemed colder than the clearer air […]. Certain wintry branches of candles on the high chimney-piece faintly lighted the chamber: or, it would be more expressive to say, faintly troubled its darkness. […] The most prominent object was a long table with a tablecloth spread on it, as if a feast had been in preparation when the house and the clocks all stopped together. An epergne or centre-piece of some kind was in the middle of this cloth; it was so heavily overhung with cobwebs that its form was quite indistinguishable; and, as I looked along the yellow expanse out of which I remember its seeming to grow, like a black fungus, I saw speckled-legged spiders with blotchy bodies running home to it, and running out from it […]. I heard the mice too, rattling behind the panels (*GE* 84).

Referring self-consciously to “this heap of decay” (*GE* 89) while pointing with her stick at the indistinguishable spot covered entirely with cobwebs and dust, Miss Havisham explains to the bewildered boy: “It’s a great cake. A bride-cake. Mine!” (*GE* 85), adding a few moments later: “It and I have worn away together. The mice have gnawed at it, and sharper teeth than teeth of mice have gnawed at me” (*GE* 89). The rotten wedding cake, then, not only seems to “mark for ever the moment of excessive expectation and excessive loss” (Bronfen 352) epitomizing simultaneously the passage of time which Miss Havisham incessantly struggles to defy but also it seems to externalize – along with an array of other paled and rotten objects in the house that surround her withering and ghastly figure and which all appear to be in a state “to crumble under a touch” (*GE* 89)[70] – the extent of her own emotional damage and vulnerability, acting thereby at once as a vestige and as a reminder of her unfulfilled desire(s) and concomitant humiliation.

What is more, given that “all her energy goes into maintaining the physical evidence of her pain, preserving her own image and the wedding scene around her at just that level of decay where the form remains recognizable” (Small 214), it might be further argued that what Miss Havisham wants to achieve is not only to preserve “the moment of supreme loss” (Bronfen 352), not even to entirely negate the inevitable passage of time, but also, and more importantly, to stress “the equivalence of physical and emotional damage” (Small 213), showing thus that “emotional suffering is as ‘real’ as physical suffering” (Small 214). That Miss Havisham opts for a showy and straightforward display of her anguish and humiliation rather than for a secret pining for the gone lover is made vividly clear, among others, in one of her early conversations with the young Pip, especially the one in which she expressly identifies herself as “a woman who has never seen the sun since [he] [was] born” (*GE* 58). Lying her hands on her heart in an ostentatious move, Miss Havisham not only commands the puzzled boy to tell her: “Do you know what I touch here? […] What do I touch?” (*GE* 58) but immediately, and poignantly, declares her heart to be “[b]roken!” (*GE* 58), making thereby an obvious reference to the source of her harrowing suffering and psychic breakdown, “the festering wound of despised and rejected love” (Camus 67). Her later confession that real love is merely “blind devotion, unquestioning self-humiliation, utter submission, trust and belief against yourself and against the whole world, giving up your whole heart and soul to the smiter – as I did” (*GE* 240) only completes this picture of despair enveloping her persona and throws more light on the general circumstances of her affliction, on “the angry pain that time could not quieten” (Camus 67).

---

[70] This, in turn, seems to be connected to Pip’s childish impression of Miss Havisham as a very fragile woman who looked “as if the admission of the natural light of day would have struck her to dust” (*GE* 60).

It is interesting to note at this point that not only does Miss Havisham speak about her inner torment and desolation in a seemingly outward and self-critical manner, taking pervert pride in displaying her vulnerability and agony,[71] she even plans her own funeral ceremony in the presence of her greedy relatives who continue to visit her annually on the day of her birthday, which is at the same time the day of her failed wedding, making sure that they all “know where to take [their] stations” (*GE* 88) when her body is ultimately “laid on that table” (*GE* 88) and they all “come to feast upon [her]” (*GE* 88).[72] As Marianne Camus fittingly argues, “the feast she plans is a grotesque parody of the feast of love which she has been denied” (67-68) in that “she […] offers her dead body to be consumed by the vultures of her family whom she despises as much as she was despised by Compeyson” (Camus 68). Telling Pip, “[t]his is my birthday […]. I don’t suffer it to be spoken of. I don’t suffer those who were here just now, any one to speak of it” (*GE* 89), Miss Havisham adds in a self-confident manner that “[w]hen the ruin is complete […], and when they lay me dead, in my bride’s dress on the bride’s table – which shall be done, and which will be the finished curse upon him[73] – so much the better if it is done on this day!" (*GE* 89). In this way, she manages not only to re-enact the gap between what is and what should be, reality and unreality, but also to make a spectacle of her own unconsummated passion and arrested pain.

---

[71] For example, while referring to her broken heart, Miss Havisham has “an eager look” and “a weird smile” with a “kind of boast in it” (*GE* 58).

[72] This expression might be read as a sign of Miss Havisham’s recognition that all that her relatives want from her is just her money, a thesis supported by their paying her compliments about her good looks while in reality she is well aware that she is “yellow skin and bone” (*GE* 86). Bronfen makes the point that it simply invokes “their wish to feast on this wealthy relative” (353).

Generally, what is worth noting, and what becomes more and more apparent as the puzzled boy surveys the "corpse-like" (*GE* 60) figure of Miss Havisham and her distinctly neglected and dusty surroundings, is that Miss Havisham, far from being merely a wealthy and eccentric lady who lives secluded in a barricaded and tomb-like house to protect herself against potential robbers – as others believe she does[74] – is, indeed, a lady who has barred herself behind the house walls to be continually exposed to the reminders of her past, or to put it another way, to what in reality has never taken place in her life, making thereby the trauma of disappointed love and disillusioned expectations "perpetually visible by extending the moment of its origination into a living experience" (Wood 44). Thus, "committed to thinking about the past" (Tambling 70) while incessantly and desperately "trying to keep it present" (Tambling 70), Miss Havisham becomes virtually "paralysed in and as to her present existence" (Tambling 70),[75] organizing her whole life around the memory of one single yet wounding event, the event of being jilted at her wedding day twenty-five years ago.

So uncanny and "incomprehensible" (*GE* 66) does she appear to the young boy through her entrapment in the past that he feels compelled to fabricate a heap of lies about his strange encounter with her to satisfy his sister's and uncle's curiosity about the woman whom others "never see" (*GE* 68), never "[clap] eyes upon her" (*GE* 68). It cannot therefore come as a surprise that Pip reasons: "I felt convinced that if I described Miss Havisham's as my eyes had seen it, I should not be understood. Not only that, but I felt that Miss Havisham too would not be understood; […] I entertained an impression that there would be something coarse and treacherous in my dragging her as she really was" (*GE* 66). Hence, upon his return home from his memorable visit to the strangest lady he has ever seen in his life, the visit which inevitably "made great changes in [him]" (*GE* 72), the young Pip relates merely his "pretended experiences" (*GE* 69) and lies to his relatives, telling them, among others, that Miss Havisham was tall and dark, that she was sitting in a black velvet coach placed in her drawing room, that they "all had cake and wine on gold plates" (*GE* 67), and that they each played with flags and swords.[76] It is only to the poor Joe,[77] who like all the rest naively believed every single word Pip said about Miss Havisham, that Pip, "overtaken by penitence" (*GE* 69), confesses self-reproachfully: "it ain't true […], it's lies, Joe" (*GE* 70), struggling to justify himself: "I don't know what possessed me, Joe; […] I felt very miserable" (*GE* 70). Still, the lies he chooses to tell might be read as his early "experiments in fashioning himself in images more appealing than reality" (Bronfen 354), the experiments prefiguring his ultimate entrapment in a world of romantic yet inherently delusive hopes fostered by Miss Havisham's intrigues.

---

[73] Compeyson, the man who destroyed her marital expectations by abandoning her before the wedding.

[74] See *Great Expectations* p. 51.

[75] Tambling makes this point in reference to other Dickensian character, namely Mrs Clennam from *Little Dorrit* (1857), but the description fits Miss Havisham, too.

Love her, love her, love her! How does she use you?

So new to him, […] so old to me; so strange to
him, so familiar to me; so melancholy
to both of us! Call Estella (*GE* 59).

Like Heathcliff in Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*, Miss Havisham finds herself trapped in a conspicuously liminal position that at once underlines and helps one to understand some of the reasons behind both her growing mental fragmentation and her elaborate and meticulously planned quest for revenge against the patriarchal system. Marianne Camus insightfully and concisely elaborates upon this point:

> Miss Havisham, a wealthy heiress on the eve of being married finds herself […] jilted by a crook or an embezzler. She goes from a recognized, respectable and respected social position to what could be called a non-position. Being abandoned on her wedding day means that she is neither a marriageable young lady, nor a married lady, nor a spinster to whom no man has ever proposed. She finds herself in a sort of no woman's land fitting none of the categories open to Victorian women and with little hope of fitting any. To which is added the final straw that she acted as women are supposed to do, loving and trusting her husband-to-be (28).

Put simply, Miss Havisham not merely fails to conform to the propagated ideal(s) of womanhood and feminine virtue, threatening thereby the domestic ideal of the

---

[76] For more lies that Pip invents see *Great Expectations*, pp. 67-69.

[77] Joe Gargery is not only the husband of Pip's older and prone to violence sister, he is in fact the only person the young boy can turn to when he needs protection and consolation.

Victorians, she virtually fails to fit the existing categories of wifehood and motherhood, deemed to be the highest and proper goals with regard to the roles and duties that women were expected to fulfil within the male-dominated society and towards which they were persistently encouraged to aspire.[78]

The paradox that she comes to embody, however, is that she is thrust into this marginal and liminal position not because she disobeys the advocated norms and rules of feminine conduct but, on the contrary, because she submissively and obediently strives to abide by them in her clearly unrestrained readiness to put herself "unreservedly" (*GE* 181) in the hands and the power of a beloved man, the man who in the end not only betrays but robs her, too.[79] To make matters worse, "[i]t has been supposed that the man to whom she gave her misplaced confidence, acted throughout in concert with her half-brother; that it was conspiracy between them; and that they shared the profits" (*GE* 182). Be that as it may, left with few or no viable choices at her disposal after she has been ruthlessly exploited and forsaken, Miss Havisham re-invents herself as the heartbroken and socially alienated yet at the same time highly vindictive bride who "out of the ruins of a world that had come down crashing over her, is building a sort of alternative, if rather gruesome world in which she still has a part to play" (Camus 47).

Significantly, apart from being introduced as an aged and jilted bride haunting the dimly-lit rooms of her wasted mansion,[80] Miss Havisham is introduced as a heartless and cunning woman, too, using her liminality not only to "represent her process of dying, to make the effect of her broken heart a continual spectacle for others" (Bronfen 353) but to "wreak revenge on all the male sex" (*GE* 177) by intentionally exploiting her adoptive daughter Estella as the cold instrument of her personal revenge and the young Pip as "the first victim to test the effectiveness of the monster which [she] has moulded inmidst her mansion of decay" (Bronfen 353-354). In this respect, it seems reasonable to argue that Miss Havisham moves from the position of a disempowered and wounded victim of the circumstances far beyond her control to the self-appointed position of a vindictive and scheming oppressor striving persistently to author, and remain in command of, the lives of others so as to impose upon them her markedly twisted perception of love and, thereby, to make them suffer exactly the same way she has been made to suffer twenty-five years earlier. The repetition she has designed is thus "one that re-enacts the loss and wounded narcissism – the breaking of a second heart" (Bronfen 355). In view of the above, it might be useful now to briefly focus on the role that both Pip and Estella come to play in her carefully plotted quest for revenge and how they both become a means by which she attempts to retaliate against the patriarchal system, and in effect against the joys of life and human passion.

---

[78] See, for instance: Houghton, pp. 348-351; Wood, pp. 9-12; Gilbert and Gubar, pp. 22-27, 264-265.

[79] As Herbert Pocket explains to Pip, "[h]e practiced on her affection in that systematic way, that he got great sums of money from her, and he induced her to buy her brother out of a share in the brewery at an immense price, on the plea that when he was her husband he must hold and manage it all" (*GE* 181). She, in turn, being "too haughty and too much in love to be advised by any one" (*GE* 181), failed to see the reality of the situation in which she found herself.

[80] On one occasion the narrating Pip compares her even to "the faded spectre in the chair by the dressing-table glass" (*GE* 125).

As already mentioned, it is during his first introduction to Satis House that Pip, an orphaned boy restlessly searching for a sense of self and a place to belong, is acquainted with "beautiful and self-possessed" (*GE* 56) Estella: the girl who is nearly the same age as he yet who shows herself to be not only "dreadfully proud (*GE* 70) but "as scornful of [him] as if she had been one-and-twenty, and a queen" (*GE* 56), too. It is therefore all the more interesting to see that despite the fact that Estella treats him in a manifestly patronizing and contemptuous manner from the very first day of their acquaintance, not only making him painfully aware of his lowly origins reflected in his unsophisticated behaviour, "coarse hands" (*GE* 62) and "common boots" (*GE* 62) but provoking in him a myriad of conflicting feelings ranging from humiliation through anger to offence while taking pervert delight in watching him suffer,[81] Pip nevertheless becomes blinded by her beauty and, so, unwittingly falls into the trap set by Miss Havisham, remaining utterly oblivious to the fact that the "hard and haughty and capricious" (*GE* 177) girl has been brought up by Miss Havisham to break the male hearts: "Break their hearts, my pride and hope, and have no mercy (*GE* 95).

Determined to win Estella's regard and love, Pip resolves to make himself uncommon and "get on in life" (*GE* 73). His "wild fancy [is] surpassed by sober reality" (*GE* 138) as soon as he learns that not only will he "come into a handsome property" but will "be immediately removed from his present sphere of life […], and be brought up as a gentleman – in a word, as a young fellow of great expectations" (*GE* 138). To support his transition from the dreary forge to the great city and to ensure that he has the means necessary to support himself there, Pip is thus provided with "a sum of money amply sufficient for [his] suitable education and maintenance" (*GE* 139). Thereby, his childhood dreams of gaining both material prosperity and social status, the means which he believes will surely help him to become more worthy of Estella's affection and "less open to [her] reproach" (*GE* 109), all of a sudden, and without any effort on his part indeed, turn into reality. Pip himself admits: "I know I have done nothing to raise myself in life, and that Fortune alone has raised me" (*GE* 248).

---

[81] As Pip recalls, "I was so humiliated, hurt, spurned, offended, angry, sorry – I cannot hit upon the right name […] – that tears started to my eyes. The moment they sprang there, the girl looked at me with a quick delight in having been the cause of them" (*GE* 62).

The role that Miss Havisham plays in fostering and sustaining not simply his exalted expectations but his warped ideals of gentility and refinement, coupled with his increasingly growing arrogance and selfishness,[82] should by no means be underestimated or disregarded here. When Pip pays her a visit to inform her about his approaching departure for the city and implicitly expresses his gratitude to her for enabling him to leave the village and move to London: "I have come into such good fortune since I last say you, Miss Havisham. […] And I am so grateful for it, Miss Havisham!" (*GE* 157), she makes no attempt whatsoever to correct his deeply erroneous assumptions, letting him instead cling to the false, albeit enchanting, belief that she herself is his generous patroness. Small wonder that Pip keeps "painting brilliant pictures of her plans for [him]" (*GE* 231) in his imagination for many consecutive years while simultaneously deluding himself that those plans include Estella. As he muses, "I felt that our patroness had chosen us for one another" (*GE* 239), adding:

> She had adopted Estella, she had as good as adopted me, and it could not fail to be her intention to bring us together. She reserved it for me to restore the desolate house, admit the sunshine into the dark rooms, set the clocks a going and the cold hearths a blazing, tear down the cobwebs, destroy the vermin – in short, do all the shining deeds of the young Knight of romance, and marry the Princess (*GE* 231).

While the meeting of Estella and the treatment he receives at her hands force him to look at the drudgery of his apprenticed life from a new perspective and engender in him a presumptuous desire to "lead a very different sort of life from the life [he] lead[s] now" (*GE* 128), in a word, to rise in the world, Miss Havisham's intentional refusal to tell him that his exalted hopes are in fact utterly divorced from reality pushes him further into expectant self-deception and fuels substantially his fatal infatuation with the beautiful yet conceited girl. Moreover, Miss Havisham's repeated questions: "Does she grow prettier and prettier, Pip?" (*GE* 95), "Is she beautiful, graceful, well-grown? Do you admire her? (*GE* 239), likewise her insistent commands: "[l]ove her, love her, love her! If she hurts you, love her. If she wounds you, love her. If she tears your heart to pieces – and as it gets older and stronger, it will tear deeper – love her, love her, love her!" (*GE* 240), not only make the boy all the more convinced that Estella should be destined for him and consequently awaken in him "a burst of gratitude" (*GE* 243) for Miss Havisham but also hint at Miss Havisham's own vulnerability which she struggles to master on her own terms, namely by contriving and directing Pip's and Estella's relationship according to her own "sick fancy" (*GE* 59), that is, in such a way that one of them – here Pip – gets hurt the same way she herself got hurt.

---

[82] Interestingly, Pip's social ascent is paralleled by his moral descent since material gain and prosperity blind his vision of reality, turning him into an idle snob, "lessening his capacity for loyalty and friendship" (Meckier 15) and making him feel ashamed of his own origins, friends and trade.

That Pip realizes the folly underlying his blind passion for Miss Havisham's adopted daughter is made obvious in his own reflection: "I knew to my sorrow, often and often, and if not always, that I loved her against reason, against promise, against peace, against happiness, against all discouragement that could be" (*GE* 232). Albeit he does not regard Estella as "human perfection" (*GE* 232) and neither does he "invest her with any attributes save those she possessed" (*GE* 232), he still finds her beauty and her manner simply "irresistible" (*GE* 232) and considers it utterly impossible to "separate her […] from the innermost life of [his] life" (*GE* 236). Taking into account the fact that Estella symbolizes apparently everything that the young Pip himself longs to achieve, namely status, fortune and refinement, he "can no more detach himself from her than he can from his own imagination, of which she is a product" (Marlow, *Charles* 101). Instead, he keeps wondering, "When should I awaken the heart within her, that was mute and sleeping now?" (*GE* 244).

His words to Estella, which he utters while trying to dissuade her from marrying another man, in other words, from "flying [herself] away upon a brute" (*GE* 360), vividly illustrate the hold that Estella's "air of inaccessibility" (*GE* 239) has on him:

> You are part of my existence, part of myself. You have been in every line I have ever read, since I first came here, the rough common boy whose poor heart you wounded even then. You have been in every prospect I have ever seen since – on the river, on the sails of the ships, on the marshes, in the clouds, in the light, in the darkness, in the wind, in the woods, in the sea, in the streets. You have been

> the embodiment of every graceful fancy that my mind has ever become acquainted with. […] Estella, to the last hour of my life, you cannot choose but remain part of my character, part of the little good in me, part of the evil (*GE* 365).[83]

His "mad" (*GE* 129) and frenetic obsession with Estella blinds his vision to such an extent that he stubbornly refuses to acknowledge her own self-revelatory confessions and warnings to him that she can never reciprocate his feelings. The brief verbal exchange between them, quoted below, might be the case in point:

> "You must know", said Estella, condescending to me as a brilliant and beautiful woman might, "that I have no heart […]."
> I got through some jargon to the effect that *I took the liberty of doubting that. That I knew better. That there could be no such thing beauty without it* [emphasis added].
> "Oh! I *have a heart to be stabbed in or shot in* [emphasis added], I have no doubt," said Estella, "and, of course, if it ceased to beat I should cease to be. But you know what I mean. *I have no softness there* [emphasis added], no – sympathy – sentiment – nonsense."
> […] "I am serious", said Estella, […] "if we are to be thrown together, you had better believe it at once. […] I have not bestowed my tenderness anywhere. I have never had any such thing" (*GE* 237-238).

Moreover, not even the kind-hearted admonitions of his closest friend Herbert Pocket trying to make it clear to him that nothing good can ever come out of his fixated quest to gain Estella, even if only on account of the fact that she has been raised "in that strange house from a mere baby" (*GE* 267) by the reclusive Miss Havisham: "Think of her bringing-up, and think of Miss Havisham. Think of what she is herself […]. This may lead to miserable things" (*GE* 250), seem to be convincing enough to prevent the young Pip from detaching himself from his idolized object of love and from unwittingly continuing to follow the path towards inevitable self-destruction: the path which Miss Havisham has carefully laid out for him and the path which will lead eventually to his entrapment in the circle of repetition of her own emotional drama. Pip's explanation is simply, "I can't help it" (*GE* 250).

Another conversation between Estella and Pip, the one taking place after the young boy has finally learned the real identity of his secret benefactor[84] and recognized the fact that he has built his whole existence on completely illusory hopes and aspirations,[85] seems to be even more revealing not only with regard to his professed incapability of dissociating his own existence from Estella's but, more significantly, with regard to the striking effectiveness of Miss Havisham's moulding of Estella into "a heartless monster" (Meckier 102), a double of her own wounded narcissism:

---

[83] Interestingly, Pip's declaration seems to echo Heathcliff's hallucinatory visions of the dead Catherine, especially his famous confession that Catherine's image surrounds him everywhere and all the time.

[84] As it turns out, it is not Miss Havisham but the escaped convict Magwitch whom Pip met on the Kentish marshes as a young boy and who resolved to make him a gentleman in an act of gratitude for the

> "Estella", said I, […] trying to command my trembling voice, "you know I love you. You know that I have loved you long and dearly."
> She raised her eyes to my face, on being thus addressed, and her fingers plied their work, and *she looked at me with an unmoved countenance* [emphasis added]. […]
> "I should have said this sooner, but for my long mistake. […] I refrained from saying it. But I must say it now."
> Preserving her unmoved countenance, and with her fingers still going, Estella shook her head.
> "I know,", said I […]; "I know. I have no hope that I shall ever call you mine, Estella. […] Still, I love you. I have loved you ever since I first saw you in this house."
> Looking at me perfectly unmoved and with her fingers busy, she shook her head again. […]
> "It seems," said Estella, very calmly, "that there are sentiments, fancies – I don't know how to call them – which I am not able to comprehend. When you say you love me, *I know what you mean, as a form of words; but nothing more. You address nothing in my breast, you touch nothing there* [emphasis added]. I don't care for what you say at all. I have tried to warn you of this; […] But you would not be warned, for you thought I did not mean it. […]"
> "I thought and hoped you could not mean it. […] Surely it is not in nature."
> "It is in *my* nature," she returned. And then she added, with a stress upon the words, "*It is in the nature formed within me* [emphasis added]" (*GE* 361-362).

As the passage suggests, Estella, on account of her upbringing – especially on account of "the nature formed within [her]" (*GE* 362) – by her foster mother remains utterly indifferent to and unmoved by Pip's passionate declaration of love to her, heartlessly dismissing it to be mere words with which she cannot identify herself. In this respect, Estella performs her task to attract and "deceive and entrap" (*GE* 311) her potential admirer(s) – the task for which Miss Havisham has been carefully preparing her since her early years by both schooling Estella in breaking the hearts of men and "keeping a part of her right nature away from her" (*GE* 399) – to perfection in remaining strikingly

---

help he received then from the little boy and in an act of revenge for his own suffering at the hands of the middle-class society.

[85] He expressly states: "All the truth of my position came flashing upon me; and its disappointments, dangers, disgraces, consequences of all kinds, rushed in such a multitude that I […] had to struggle for every breath I drew. […] I began fully to know how wrecked I was, and how the ship in which I had sailed was gone to pieces" (*GE* 319-320).

insensitive to and thus beyond the reach of a man who feels dreadfully attracted to her and who loves her unconditionally and against all reason.

In view of that, it can be argued that Estella emerges as the walking embodiment of Miss Havisham's pervert lessons: "I am what you have made me" (*GE* 304). It follows, too, that "[i]n Estella, Miss Havisham sees her destructive desires realised because this remoulded daughter[86] enacts to perfection the scene which […] she has, for so many years, longed to watch" (Bronfen 356). Moreover, she arguably "offers her the sight of a woman saved from 'misery like my own', because under her hand the feminine position transforms from a castrated into a castrating one" (356). It is no longer the male lover who hurts and rejects, it is the woman herself who has the upper hand in steering the course of her own future and the future of those who helplessly adore her. Seen in this perspective, Estella's rejection of Pip – her submissive and blind lover – not only completes Miss Havisham's vengeance, it shows, too, how an overreliance on a vague and uncertain future, especially on unquestioning devotion to an idealized object of love, can lead to a bitter downfall and disenchantment, ending even in madness.

Clearly, the future that Pip imagined for himself does not turn out the way he had hoped: "Miss Havisham's intentions towards me, all a mere dream; Estella not designed for me; I only suffered in Satis House as a convenience, a sting for the greedy relations, a model with a mechanical heart to practice on when no other practice was at hand" (*GE* 323). When he confronts Miss Havisham with his knowledge of the matter: "But when I fell into the mistake I have so long remained in, at least you led me on?", she does not even try to deny that she intentionally let him head for a fall, admitting instead: "Yes, […] I let you go on" (*GE* 360), which only goes to prove how dreadfully manipulative her actions towards him have been for so many years. Like Magwitch, then, Miss Havisham comes to perform "a double role as both giver and destroyer of Pip's expectations" (Meckier 22), and hopes. Importantly, his bitter disillusionment, his recognition that he has been only the instrument of vengeance at the hands of the embittered bride and that Estella has never been intended for him,[87] seems to parallel

---

[86] Her "pride and hope" (*GE* 95).

[87] Still, the paradox of his situation is that even though he seems to be well aware of the fact that "Estella was set to wreak Miss Havisham's revenge on men" (*GE* 302) and that "all who staked upon that cast were secured to lose" (*GE* 303), when he confesses his love to her to become rejected like all the others, he refuses to acknowledge it. It is thus not only Miss Havisham who deludes him but it is Pip himself who fails to see beyond his own obsession.

Miss Havisham’s own disappointment with Compeyson who courted her only to take advantage of her riches and whom she fancifully worshipped the way Pip has come to worship Estella. Again, the tension between fact and imagination, expectation and fulfilment, is brought to the surface, hinting thus at the way in which appearance can belie reality.

What is equally important to point out with regard to Miss Havisham’s obsessive quest for revenge – which partly epitomizes her madness while hinting at the importance of memory in her perpetuation of the past sorrow – is that the confrontation between Pip and Estella cited above takes place in the presence of the eternal bride herself. Comparing the situation to a kind of spectacle, Bronfen argues that Miss Havisham acts here as both “the director and the only audience” (355). Positioned thus between Pip and Estella, while glancing from him to her, and from her to him (cf. *GE* 363), Miss Havisham “splits her former self in two, repeats the beautiful bride in the body of Estella and the blind, unquestioning, submissive lover in the figure of Pip” (Bronfen 355). In this way, then, the “re-enactment of her psychic trauma – a lover’s marital expectations unremittingly destroyed – is doubly successful as though […] she were finally enabled to have and eat the long hidden bridal cake” (355). The question, however, arises: Does Estella’s denunciation of Pip’s romantic advancements bring Miss Havisham the desired satisfaction? Or does it simply re-open the old wounds and memories, forcing her to look back to the past and reconsider all her actions?

What have I done! What have I done!

In her book *The Moral Art of Dickens*, Barbara Hardy makes an observation that Charles Dickens’s characters more often than not “undergo a change of heart by looking within, seeing the fault, and changing their lives […]. They first see themselves in the true or distorting mirrors outside themselves” (57-58). In Miss Havisham’s case such distorted mirror is without a doubt offered in the character of Pip. The point is that the encounter between Estella and Pip discussed above makes her realize that her inordinate desire for retribution has been largely grounded on delusion(s) which substantially occluded her capability to see the perversity underlying “her system of unsentimental education” (Thomas 34) which inevitably rendered “an impressionable child” (*GE* 399) not just heartless but merciless, too. Filled with remorse, then, Miss Havisham confides in Pip:

> My Dear! Believe this: when she first came to me, I meant to save her from misery like my own. At first I meant no more. […] But as she grew, and promised to be very beautiful, I gradually did worse, and with my praises, and with my jewels, and with my teachings, and with this figure of myself always before her a warning to back and point my lessons, I stole her heart away and put ice in its place (*GE* 399).

That Estella has shown herself to be a diligent and attentive pupil is made more than obvious in the way she responds to Miss Havisham's reproachful accusations of her being not only "hard and thankless" (*GE* 304) for all the years of "tenderness" (GE 304) that Miss Havisham has allegedly lavished upon her but unable to return Miss Havisham's "burning" (*GE* 305) love. Ironically, tenderness and love are precisely the aspects of human nature which Miss Havisham has trained Estella to suppress and conceal and which Estella herself seems rather unable to associate either with her childhood experiences at the gloomy Satis House or with the figure of her "[m]other by adoption" (*GE* 304). What her memory is dominated by instead is the image of Miss Havisham's face, the face which she considered strange and which only frightened her as a child,[88] and the image of Miss Havisham's greedy relatives who "under the mask of sympathy and pity" (*GE* 33) plotted against her. Thus, when confronted with Miss Havisham's reproaches, Estella retorts bitterly along these lines:

> What […] do you reproach *me* [emphasis added] for being cold? *You?* [emphasis added] […] You should know […] I am what you made me. Take all the praise, take all the blame; take all the success, take all the failure; in short, take me. […] Mother by adoption, I have said that I owe everything to you. All I possess is freely yours. All that you have given me, is at your command to have again. Beyond that, I have nothing. And if you ask me to give you what you never gave me, my gratitude and duty cannot do impossibilities. […] When have you found me false to your teaching? When have you found me unmindful of your lessons? […] Be just to me. […] Who taught me to be proud? […] Who praised me when I learnt my lesson? […] Who taught me to hard? […] Who praised me when I learnt my lesson? […] I cannot think […] why you should be so unreasonable […]. I have never forgotten your wrongs and their causes. I have never been unfaithful to you or your schooling. […] I must be taken as I have been made. The success is not mine, the failure is not mine, but the two together make me (*GE* 304-306).

---

[88] Cf. Sipe, p. 62. See also *Great Expectations*, p. 305.

When Miss Havisham commands Estella to tell her: “Would it be weakness to return *my* [emphasis added] love?” (*GE* 306), the girl can merely ask with wonder:

> if you had taught her, from the dawn of her intelligence, with your utmost energy and might, that there was such a thing as daylight, but that it was made to be her enemy and destroyer, and she must always turn against it, for it had blighted you and would else blight her; if you had done this, and then, for a purpose, had wanted her to take naturally to the daylight and she could not do it, you would have been disappointed and angry? (*GE* 306).

Generally, Miss Havisham is once again faced with bitter disappointment. This time, however, it is not Compeyson, who cruelly jilted her on the wedding day, that is to blame for her psychic suffering and broken heart; it is her adopted daughter Estella, who indifferently declares that she finds herself simply unable to love her, that intensifies Miss Havisham’s inner anguish, rendering her “a miserable sight to see” (*GE* 306) while reiterating her mental and emotional susceptibility, in a word, breaking her heart the second time.

After his merciless rejection by Estella, Miss Havisham self-reproachfully tells the heartbroken Pip: “Until you spoke to her the other day, and until *I saw in you a looking-glass that showed me what I once felt* [emphasis added], I did not know what I had done. What have I done! What have I done!” (*GE* 399). What she simply recognizes in this suffering and disillusioned boy – the product of her perpetuated self-centredness and bitter sorrow – is her own wounded self and frustrated hopes, which triggered her strong wish for retribution. This experience, then, “forces a kind of recognition of a forgotten self, refound in […] pain” (Brooks 513).[89] The change that this recognition engenders in Miss Havisham is succinctly summed up by Bronfen: “[t]his repetition of her own pain by proxy […] puts an end to her wild resentment, to her wounded pride, to the fetishisation of her sorrow and her desire for vengeance” (356),[90] allowing her in effect “to accept her fate” (356) and admit responsibility for her past mistakes. Not only does Miss Havisham fall on her knees in a self-humiliating act to ask Pip’s forgiveness, she even implores him: “If you can ever write under my name, ‘I forgive her,’ […] pray do it!” (*GE* 398). The question that remains to be asked now is why it is actually possible to place the embittered and deceitful bride – Miss Havisham – within the province of madness. Is she indeed mad, or is her madness only a staged spectacle?

---

[89] Moreover, it emerges as a return of the repressed which forces Miss Havisham to confront the past and the feelings she suppressed to deal with the humiliating situation.

[90] In this respect, then, “[r]epetition becomes revaluation” (Meckier 102).

2.2. “Why should I call you mad?”: Miss Havisham, madness and her memory prison

I had been shut up here in these rooms
a long time (*GE* 400).

Addressing the question of the nature of Miss Havisham’s madness not only demands the consideration of the nineteenth-century theories and understandings of mental disorder discussed in the first chapter of this thesis but also necessitates the investigation of the extent to which her apparent decline into insanity can be attributed to her marked reluctance – or inability – to forget the past wrongs, to process and accommodate the reality of loss and to move forwards with her life. Both Tambling and Camus seem to share the view that a reading of Dickens’ construction and delineation of mentally distraught characters must necessarily take into account the aspect of time past, the role that the memory of a painful experience/event comes to play in the lives of not only those afflicted with mental disturbance but also those with whom the sufferers inevitably come into contact (cf. Tambling 70-71; Camus 39-41). Miss Havisham, “a woman betrayed in her expectations” (Camus 64), emerges here as the perfect example of a (mad)woman whose influence extends far beyond the walls of her private sphere, that is to say, whose actions and behavioural patterns not only have an effect on her own wretched existence but most notably shape the lives of other individuals too; especially, the lives of her adopted daughter Estella and the orphaned boy Pip, both of whom turn out to be the weapons in her relentless and single-minded quest for revenge on the man who deserted and humiliated her and both of whom unwittingly become part of her staged “self-representation which preserves the moment of loss” (Bronfen 353).

Taking into consideration all that has been said so far about Miss Havisham’s secluded existence in the midst of her “mansion of decay” (Bronfen 354), it is possible to argue that in the figure of this ruthlessly jilted bride Dickens shows “the harrowing suffering of a mind caught in a darkness of feelings that matches that of Satis House” (Camus 66). Confined to “the darkened and unhealthy house” (*GE* 303) filled with countless reminders[91] of what should be yet what she has lost – reminders signifying at once presence and lack – while remaining alienated and "secluded from a thousand natural and healing influences" (*GE* 399) that could possibly help her overcome her trauma of loss and disappointed love, Miss Havisham naturally finds herself unable to dissociate herself from the very moment at which her peaceful life has been rapidly shattered into pieces and powerless to stop "going round and round grievances which she cannot forget or forgive" (Camus 57). Imprisoned in her "mortally hurt and diseased" (*GE* 302) mind – which is arguably mirrored in her dilapidating mansion – Miss Havisham becomes trapped, too, in an endless cycle of uncanny repetitions, desperately striving to create "a younger version of herself" (Camus 31) in the figure of her adopted daughter Estella – a self that is not just more powerful than she had been but non-woundable as well – with the sole purpose "to reverse the past" (Marlow, *Charles* 99), or, to put it differently, to "bend the world to her will" (Camus 77).

The fixation on the harrowing memory of being "tricked *out* of marriage" (Meckier 191), the memory around which the scheming and revengeful bride manifestly organizes her entire existence and future, turns her into – and places her in the position of – a monomaniac.[92] Her monomania, however, seems to be of the melancholy type (cf. Camus 24-25).[93] According to Lennard Davies, melancholy might be not only regarded as one of "the oldest terms for mental illness in English" (37) but seen as "an irrational disease" (43), too. As understood by Esquirol, in turn, melancholia refers primarily to "a disposition to a fixedness of ideas, and sadness" (200), a disposition in which "the body is indifferent to every impression, while the mind no longer engages itself, except upon a single object, which absorbs all the attention" (206). "Hence it is that melancholics love solitude and shun company; this makes them more attached to the object of their delirium or to their dominant passion, whatever it may be, while they seem indifferent to anything else" (Dufour qtd. in Foucault 118).[94] As a form of partial insanity in which the mind is "fixed on a single object, imposing unreasonable proportions upon it, but upon it alone" (Foucault 125), melancholia "never reaches violence; it is madness at the limits of its powerlessness" (Foucault 122)[95] reinforced by morbid feelings of sadness, bitterness, immobility and a marked preference for solitude and isolation (cf. Foucault 120-125).

---

[91] The rotten bridal cake and the wedding feast might be seen as the most notable examples in this case.

[92] For a detailed discussion of monomania see chapter one of this thesis, especially pp. 22-23.

[93] According to Camus, melancholia can in fact be seen as one of the defining characteristics of female madness in the fiction of Charles Dickens. Cf. Camus, p. 24.

[94] See also Camus, p. 24.

Needless to say, Miss Havisham's eccentric conduct is arguably consistent with the symptomatology of melancholic insanity. It is indeed not hard to notice that Miss Havisham leads a life of solitude and self-enforced isolation behind the walls of her father's house, remaining apparently indifferent to any events which are not directly related to or associated with her morbid condition or revenge plan. The only presence she seems to tolerate near her is that of her adopted daughter, albeit even she is denied the chance to experience Miss Havisham's more humane side and occasional "stores of peace of mind" (*GE* 267) since these can be sighted only during the nighttime when Miss Havisham wanders around the house in "a ghostly manner" (*GE* 307). During the daytime, her relationship with Estella appears to resemble less a typical mother-daughter relationship and more a theatrical spectacle in which Estella – decked with Miss Havisham's jewels – is made to play the role of a heartbreaker following the instructions of the witch-like director, personified in the figure of her adoptive mother, staging the show.[96] Pip the protagonist, in turn, even if afforded the rare opportunity to approach and witness the reclusive lady in her decaying surroundings and her few moments of weakness – while others never get to see her at all – is for Miss Havisham, as has been repeatedly noted, merely a means to an end, an instrument enabling her to execute her scrupulously plotted plan of revenge on the male sex, the plan which necessarily entails and gives her the power to rule over the hearts and lives of others.

Anyway, commenting on Miss Havisham's melancholic mood and demeanour, which struck him immediately during one of his first visits to the dark and ruined Satis House, Pip the narrator notes:

> Saving for the one weird smile at first, I should have felt almost sure that Miss Havisham's face could not smile. It had dropped into a watchful and brooding

---

[95] Foucault (132-133) argues that the distinction between monomania and melancholia rests upon the difference of degree to which the mind is agitated by the external stimuli.

[96] This kind of relationship is hinted at in Estella's speech to Miss Havisham (see pp. 60-62 of this thesis). It is furthermore confirmed in Pip's observation concerning the exchange between Estella and Miss Havisham showing that Miss Havisham seems to be interested only in "the names and conditions of the men whom [Estella] had fascinated" (*GE* 302). Finally, it is reinforced through her attempts to make Estella look as a young bride by decking her with her own bridal jewels (cf. Bronfen 355).

> expression – most likely when all things about her transfixed – and it looked as if nothing could ever lift it up again. […] altogether, she had the appearance of having dropped, body and soul, within and without, under the weight of a crushing blow (*GE* 61).

This crushing blow appears to be inexorably tied to her shock of finding out that she had been “unloved, unwanted, unrecognized by the one who mattered most” (Camus 30), Compeyson. In her book entitled *Love’s Madness*: *Medicine, the Novel, and Female Insanity, 1800-1865,* Helen Small perceptively remarks that “to love deeply is to love ‘madly’; to suffer any intensity of emotion – grief, remorse, anger, jealousy, and, equally, hope, pleasure, devotion – is to risk mental disintegration” (Small 87). In light of Small’s claim, Miss Havisham may be seen, at least at first glance, as a woman driven to the brink of insanity simply by thwarted love,[97] given the extent to which she doted on her self-seeking fiancé before he unexpectedly deserted her, precipitating thereby her social displacement and ensuing marginalization testifying to her madness by virtue of her failure to re-enter, and actively partake in, the stream of social life after her separation from Compeyson; and given the fact that lovemadness was a fairly popular and well-established convention in the nineteenth-century literature and culture, which enabled “readers to contemplate madness as a subject of pathos rather than terror” (Small 79) and provided writers with a useful means of “say[ing] something *more* with it or through it” (Small 32) about both women and mental collapse.[98]

On closer reading, however, Miss Havisham’s discernible failure to cast the wounding event out of her mind – the incident of her failed romantic relationship – sheds an utterly different, if not more revealing, light on the cause of her mental disorder, making it thus possible to argue that her “master mania” (*GE* 399), even if triggered by disappointed affection, is intricately intertwined with memory. As has been argued throughout this chapter, memory does indeed play a crucial role in the life of the reclusive bride: on the one hand, it is what keeps her firmly rooted to her own emotional and psychological trauma – “her wild resentment, spurned affection, and wounded pride” (*GE* 399), precluding notably her ability to look forward to a better future, and, on the other hand, it is what inevitably instigates and sustains her unwavering pursuit of revenge – which can be read of course as a marker of excessive passion associated typically with madness[99] – for past disgrace and humiliation she had to bear. Generally, structuring her existence around the memory of one particular incident while repressing any other softening recollections pertaining to her relationship with Compeyson, Miss Havisham's memory emerges notably as a burden "by which [she is] perpetually weighted down" (Whitehead 40), a burden which she has carried around with her for twenty-five years and which substantially "interferes with [her] ability to pay attention to […] new […] situations" (van der Kolk and McFarlane 4): an aspect which clearly underlines her fixation on the bygone time, fixation which seems to be greatly enhanced by the presence of the decaying wedding paraphernalia with which Miss Havisham surrounds herself and which by way of conceptual association[100] inevitably remind her of and make her cling to the painful moment all the more. Crucially, Miss Havisham does not seem to be haunted by unbidden recollections from her past; rather, she herself wilfully insists on keeping the past persistently present in her life,[101] turning not only her own body but also her surroundings into a living sign of her unceasing suffering.

---

[97] It might be worth recalling here that thwarted love was seen as one of the very triggers of monomania. See chapter one, p. 22, of this thesis.

[98] See: Small, pp. 5-32, for more details on lovemadness.

In his portrayal of Miss Havisham's madness, then, Dickens apparently "transforms what was the definition of an inner state into a visible representation of it in everyday life" (Camus 36), thereby implicitly suggesting that the memory of the moment of shock which Miss Havisham suffered when she was abandoned by her fiancée has been not wholly "accepted as a part of [her] personal past" (van der Kolk and McFarlane 4). In this respect, Miss Havisham's shrunken body may be read primarily as the physical expression or manifestation of her emotional and psychological distress, which seems to be in accord with the nineteenth-century "tendency to read the human body – and particularly the female body – as a text" (Vrettos 15) offering "a privileged access to the emotional life of the subject" (Vrettos 15), a tendency of which Miss Havisham seems to be well aware in letting her body become "a fully materialised sign" (Bronfen 353) of her tragic romance. The mismanaged, dark and tomb-like Satis House, a place which is very far from providing a safe and cosy haven from the world outside and, thereby, from conforming to the domestic ideal of the Victorians, might then likewise be regarded as an extension of Miss Havisham's inner anguish, reinforcing the image of both her broken heart and her disordered state of mind.[102] On the other hand, it might well be perceived as an alternative world which offers Miss Havisham a chance – or perhaps just leaves her no other alternative – to live outside the rigid structures and constricting norms of feminine and domestic ideal, even if her self-incarceration within the iron-barred house might impel others to declare her mad, and even if the house itself with its walled up windows and closed gates (cf. *GE* 55) seems to be reminiscent more of a prison "masquerading as a retreat" (Showalter 102) or a punitive asylum (see Tambling 69, 75-76) than of a dwelling place. On the whole, what the place seems to provide her with after all is "the exclusive world which [she] create[s] in order to better inhabit [her] madness" (Camus 48)[103] and where she can hide from society and its penetrative and judgemental gaze. While her withdrawal from the normal world into self-indulgent isolation is certainly expressive of her madness, which is reinforced by her overt failure to embrace the role of a gentle and administering 'angel in the house', it is still important to remember that this withdrawal seems to be in essence facilitated by her social rank and money.[104] Moreover, while it is equally true to say that her madness can be seen to be the product of the situation in which she has involuntarily found herself, it is her own reluctance to forgive and forget which in large measure underscores her mental collapse.

---

[99] See the discussion in chapter one of this thesis.

[100] As explained in the preceding chapter, the principle of association is one of the basic tenets of the nineteenth-century associationist psychology operating upon the assumption that memories are evoked in a complex of associations related to the previously formed experiences and triggered by external stimuli.

[101] This is of course reflected in the fact that she never takes her bridal clothes off and never gets rid of her wedding paraphernalia.

That Miss Havisham's memory is indeed unaffected and intact despite her deepening mental fragmentation – the fact which is consistent with the nineteenth-century understandings of monomania and partial insanity – is made vividly apparent through Estella's question directed at her adoptive mother: "Does any one live, who knows what a *steady memory* [emphasis added] you have, half as well as I do?" (*GE* 305). It is furthermore confirmed through Miss Havisham's telling of her own private history to the young protagonist in an attempt to both explain herself and elicit from him "a better understanding" (*GE* 400) of her predicament and of the decisions she made in the past. In this respect, apart from seeing memory as being only responsible for Miss Havisham's neurotic obsession placing her within the realm of madness, it is essential to read it, too, as being intricately intertwined with narrative, which itself necessarily constitutes "a return, a calling back, or a turning-back" (Brooks 512) to the familiar, allowing the memory to be “verbalized and communicated, both to oneself and to others” (Whitehead 116) through the act of repetition. Posited therefore as a return to the past, repetition emerges inevitably as “a kind of remembering” (Brooks 523). On the other hand, if one considers the repetitive journeys which Miss Havisham undertakes with Pip around her rotting banquet table and the wedding cake, likewise her unquenchable desire for retribution which she seeks to achieve precisely through the reiteration of her own psychic trauma, it becomes apparent that repetition is more than just a form of remembering; to be precise, the compulsion to repeat, to replay the painful experience from the past, which characterizes Miss Havisham’s conduct and thinking might well be seen in terms of not only her entrapment in certain behavioural patterns and the moment of trauma but also her effort to “put affect into serviceable, controllable form” (Brooks 511), that is to say, to “master painful material” (Brooks 522) from the still unprocessed past.[105] Conversely, it might be argued that repetition as such also “articulates loss not only by virtue of enacting a lost object in the midst of difference” (Bronfen 326) but also by virtue of the fact that the repeated or re-enacted event/action/experience simply “refers to something that is not only a presence but also an absence” (Bronfen 326).

---

[102] Camus goes further and suggests that in turning her house into a dead-alive place Miss Havisham attacks the inherent principles underlying the domestic ideology of her time. Cf. Camus, p. 38.

[103] In contrast to Camus, Wood reads Miss Havisham's self-incarceration within Satis House as a parody of "the model of woman's confinement within the domestic sphere" (10).

[104] See Camus, pp. 80-81.

To conclude, it might be useful to briefly return to Estella’s questions with which she self-assuredly confronts her adoptive mother: “Why should I call you mad […] I, of all people? Does anyone live, who knows what set purposes you have, half as well as I do?” (*GE* 305) and which, as a matter of fact, quite tellingly articulate her doubts as to whether Miss Havisham is mad at all. Thus, while Tambling might be right in arguing that Estella’s questions on the one hand bear “the meaning that she accepts she is the same type as Miss Havisham, part of what Miss Havisham is” (74)[106] and on the other hand show “that she sees the logic in Miss Havisham’s madness” (74), it is still essential to note that what her observations basically touch upon is the tacit recognition that the line between madness and sanity, reality and appearance, is inherently thin indeed. What Dickens seems to be saying then about mental derangement is that madness can be conceived not only as a label attached to those who “don’t fit or don’t fit any longer […] any of the categories pre-established as acceptable” (Camus 30), madness can well be seen as “a human reaction” (Camus 27) to the trauma of loss and displacement, a useful means by which an individual can “express and communicate […] the things that could not be said in reasonable/normal language and speech at that time” (Camus 49). As “the excluded, solitary being, trying to build, out of the emptiness of her life, a self which […] could claim to belong somewhere in the world” (Camus 54), Miss Havisham becomes an isolated outsider whose identity as a madwoman seems to be closely tied to memory, revealing the self trapped between the past and the present within the very place – Satis House – which itself signifies this kind of entrapment.

---

[105] For a more detailed discussion of the Freudian concept of repetition compulsion see: Peter Brooks, “Repetition, Repression and Return: *Great Expectations* and the Study of Plot, *New Literary History* 11. 3 (Spring, 1980), pp. 503-526. Cf. Bronfen, pp. 30, 324-326

[106] This, as one might recall, echoes Herbert’s observation (see p. 57 of this chapter).

CONCLUSION

> *[T]he past and its retrieval in memory holds a curious*
> *place in our identities, one that simultaneously*
> *stabilizes that identities in continuity*
> *and threatens to disrupt them.*
>
> — Antze and Lambek[107]

It has been the intention of this thesis to investigate the relationship between mental disorder, remembering/forgetting and place in both Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* and Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations*. Drawing upon popular nineteenth-century understandings of, and approaches to, insanity which found their expression in the literature of the period, including naturally the two novels under consideration here, the preceding chapters have focused primarily on the characters of Heathcliff, Catherine Earnshaw and Miss Havisham in an attempt to trace and determine the extent to which their gradual descent from sanity into madness can be seen to be not only reinforced by their (in)ability, or reluctance, to forget the painful moment(s) from their past but also enhanced by their surroundings, the places which in themselves have the inherent capacity to preserve and evoke the memories of earlier experiences, facilitating thereby the process of recollection based on association.

What the foregoing analysis of the construction and representation of madness in the selected texts has revealed is above all the fact that madness appears linked not to the state of "being born male or female" (Camus 4) but to the state of being born human; thus it inevitably emerges as a condition which can indeed affect anyone, even if it tends to be conceived of typically as a female malady. Moreover, and more crucially, madness essentially has to do with more than simply the question of whether socially prescribed norms, attitudes or gender roles are complied with or not.[108] As the examination of Miss Havisham's, Catherine Earnshaw's and Heathcliff's predicaments has sufficiently demonstrated, madness principally arises in a complex interplay between place and memory – "holding on and letting go, […] assimilating and forgetting" (Antze and

---

[107] See Paul Antze and Michael Lambek. Introduction: Forecasting Memory, p. xvi. In Paul Antze and Michael Lambek. Eds. *Tense Past: Cultural Essays in Trauma and Memory* (New York: Routledge, 1996).

[108] It might be useful to recall at this point that on account of the fact that "Victorian society feared deviancy of any kind that could not be safely rendered powerless by a declaration of insanity" (Lange 38) the level of social conformity came to regarded as indicative of sanity.

Lambek xxix), an interplay which arguably keeps the characters not only attached to their obsessions but also “embedded in the trauma as a contemporary situation” (van der Kolk and McFarlane 9). This, in turn, seems to lie at the very heart of their apparent failure to fit the accepted categories, making it thus all the more difficult for them to escape the stigma of the madman/madwoman.

It might be concluded then that apart from showing madness as a deviance from, or non-conformity to, what society may deem acceptable, both Dickens and Brontë construe madness as a response to some traumatic event or experience which the characters discussed strive to master through either repetition (Miss Havisham and Heathcliff) or repression (Catherine), and both of them exploit madness as a device to bring the impact of the external world on the characters’ mental experience and sense of self into sharper focus, exploring thereby not only the gap between individual and societal expectations, desire and reality, but the way in which this gap becomes a determining factor in the construction of those characters’ (in)sane self. To be better able to appreciate Charles Dickens’s and Emily Brontë’s rendering of the mad characters in their novels, it is thus necessary to go beyond the aspect of the social (non)conformity and consider how and what the characters’ conduct and surroundings communicate about their traumas.

BIBLIOGHRAPHY

Primary Sources:

Brontë, Emily. *Wuthering Heights*. 1847. Ed. Pauline Nestor. London: Penguin, 2008.

Dickens, Charles. *Great Expectations*. 1860-61. Ed. Charlotte Mitchell. London: Penguin, 1996.

Secondary Sources:

Antze, Paul and Michael Lambek. Introduction: Forecasting Memory. In Paul Antze and Michael Lambek. Eds. *Tense Past: Cultural Essays in Trauma and Memory*. New York: Routledge, 1996. xi-xxxviii.

Augstein, Hannah Franziska. "J C Pritchard's Concept of Moral Insanity – a Medical Theory of the Corruption of Human Nature", *Medical History* 40 (1996): 311-343.

Baillarger, J. "Essay on a Classification of Different Genera of Insanity. 1853. Trans. G. E. Berrios. *History of Psychiatry* 19. 3 (2008): 358-373.

Bersani, Leo. *A Future for Astyanax: Character and Desire in Literature*. London: Boyars, 1978.

Bronfen, Elisabeth. *Over Her Dead Body: Death, Femininity and the Aesthetic*. Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1992.

Brooks, Peter. "Repetition, Repression, and Return: *Great Expectations* and the Study of Plot". *New Literary History* 11.3 (Spring 1980): 503-526.

Camus, Marianne. *Gender and madness in the novels of Charles Dickens*. Lewiston, NY: Mellen Press, 2004.

Carr, Jean Ferguson. "Dickens and Autobiography: A Wild Beast and His Keeper". *ELH* 52 (Summer, 1985): 447-469.

Dames, Nicholas. *Amnesiac Selves: Nostalgia, Forgetting, and British Fiction, 1810-1870*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2001.

Davies, Stevie. *Emily Brontë*. Plymouth: Northcote House, 1998.

Davies, Lennard J. *Obsession: A History*. University of Chicago Press, 2008.

Eagleton, Terry. *Myths of Power: A Marxist Study of the Brontës*. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 2005.

Esquirol, Etienne. *Mental Maladies: A Treatise on Insanity*. Trans. E. K. Hunt. Philadelphia: Lea and Blanchard, 1845.

Foucault, Michel. *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*. New York: Vintage Books, 1965.

Hardy, Barbara. *The Moral Art of Dickens*. London: Athlone Press, 1970.

Houghton, Walter E. *The Victorian Frame of Mind: 1830-1870*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1957.

Gilbert, Sandra M. and Susan Gubar. *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-century Literary Imagination*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1984.

Klein, Kerwin Lee. "On the Emergence of Memory in Historical Discourse". *Representations* 69 (Winter 2000): 127-150.

Krishnan, Lakshmi. "'It Has Devoured My Existence': The Power of the Will and Illness in *The Bride of Lammermoor* and *Wuthering Heights*". *Brontë Studies* 32 (March 2007): 31-40.

Lange, Robert J. G. *Gender identity and madness in the nineteenth-century novel*. Lewiston, NY: Mellen Press, 1998.

Lelchuk, Alan. "Self, Family, and Society in Great Expectations". *The Sewanee Review* 78. 3 (Summer, 1970): 407-426.

Leys, Ruth. "Traumatic Cures: Shell Shock, Janet and the Question of Memory". In Paul Antze and Michael Lambek. Eds. *Tense Past: Cultural Essays in Trauma and Memory*. New York: Routledge, 1996. 103-145.

Lutwack, Leonard. *The Role of Place in Literature*. New York: Syracuse University Press, 1984.

Marlow, James E. "Memory, Romance, and the Expressive Symbol in Dickens". *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 30.1 (June 1975): 20-32.
-----. *Charles Dickens: The Uses of Time*. London: SUP, 1994.

Matthews, John T. "Framing in *Wuthering Heights*". *Wuthering Heights: Emily Bronte*. Ed. Patsy Stoneman. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1993. 54-74.

Meckier, Jerome. *Dickens's Great Expectations: Misnar's Pavilion versus Cinderella*. Lexington: University Press of Kentucky, 2002.

Mellor, Anne. *Romanticism and Gender*. London: Routledge, 1993.

Miller, Lucasta. Preface. *Wuthering Heights*. By Emily Brontë. London: Penguin, 2008. vii-x.

Mollon, Phil. *Multiple Selves, Multiple Voices: Trauma, Violation and Dissociation*. Chichester: John Wiley & Sons, 1996.

Monod, Sylvère. Preface. *Gender and Madness in the Novels of Charles Dickens*. By Marianne Camus. Lewiston, NY: Mellen Press, 2004. xi-xiv.

Nestor, Pauline. Introduction. *Wuthering Heights*. By Emily Brontë. London: Penguin, 2008. xv-xxxv.

Pedlar, Valerie. '*The Most Dreadful Visitation*'*: Male Madness in Victorian Fiction*. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 2006.

Rimke, Heidi, and Allan Hunt. "From Sinners to Degenerates: the Medicalization of Morality in the 19th century", *History of the Human Sciences* 15. 1 (2002): 59-88.

Scull, Andrew. *The Most Solitary of Afflictions: Madness and Society in Britain, 1700-1900*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1993.

Showalter, Ellen. *The Female Malady*: *Women, Madness, and English Culture, 1830-1980*. London: Virago Press, 1993.

Shuttleworth, Sally. *Charlotte Brontë and Victorian Psychology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1997.

Sipe, Samuel. "Memory and Confession in Great Expectations". *Essays In Literature* 2. 1 (Spring, 1975): 53-64.

Small, Helen. *Love's Madness*: *Medicine, the Novel, and Female Insanity, 1800-1865*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998.

Stevenson, John Allen. "'Heathcliff is Me!': *Wuthering Heights* and the Question of Likeness". *Nineteenth-Century Literature* 43.1 (June, 1998): 60-81.

Stoneman, Patsy. Ed. *Wuthering Heights: Emily Brontë*. Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1993.

Tambling, Jeremy. "'Why Should I Call You Mad?': Dickens and the Literature of Madness". In Max Vega-Ritter. *Charles Dickens and Madness*. Montpellier: Publ. Montpellier, 2002.

Thomas, R. George. *Charles Dickens: Great Expectations*. London: Edward Arnold Publishers, 1964.

Thompson, Wade. "Infanticide and Sadism in *Wuthering Heights*", *PMLA* 78. 1 (March 1963): 69-74.

van der Kolk, Bessel, and Alexander McFarlane. "The Black Hole of Trauma". *Traumatic Stress: The Effects of Overwhelming Experience on Mind, Body and Society*. Eds. Bessel van der Kolk, Alexander McFarlane and Lars Weisaeth. New York: Guilford Press, 2007. 3-23.

Vine, Steven. "The Wuther of the Other in *Wuthering Heights*". *Nineteenth-Century Literature* 49. 3 (Dec., 1994): 339-359.

Vrettos, Athena. *Somatic Fictions: Imagining Illness in Victorian Culture*. California: Stanford University Press, 1995.

Watson, Melvin R. “Tempest in the Soul: The Theme and Structure of ‘Wuthering Heights’”. *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 4.2 (Sep., 1949): 87-100.

-----. “‘Wuthering Heights’ and the Critics”. *Trollopian* 3.4 (March, 1949): 243-263.

Whitehead, Anne. *Memory*. Abington: Routledge, 2009.

Wolfreys, Julian. *Victorian Hauntings: Spectrality, Gothic, the Uncanny and Literature*. Basingstoke: Palgrave, 2002.

Wood, Jane. *Passion and Pathology in Victorian Fiction*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2001.

INDEX

A

angel in the house ……. 35, 68
association ……. 29, 40, 67, 67f, 71
associations ……. 29, 30, 40, 41, 67f
associationist psychology ……. 29, 67f

B

Brontë, Emily ……. 3, 4, 5, 7, 9, 10, 11, 14, 19, 20, 21, 29, 41, 44, 52, 71, 72

D

delirium ……. 39, 39f, 40, 64
Dickens, Charles ……. 3, 4, 5, 7, 20, 43, 44, 45, 60, 63, 67, 69, 71, 72

E

Esquirol, Etienne ……. 22, 64

F

fixation ……. 5, 31, 64, 67
Freud ……. 27f, 40

G

Great Expectations……. 3, 4, 6, 7, 43, 44, 71

I

idée fixe ……. 29, 31f
insanity ……. 5, 6, 11, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 25, 41, 45, 63, 65, 66, 71

L

lovemadness …………… 66

M

madness ……. 3, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 13, 14, 18, 19, 20, 21, 23, 24, 27, 36, 38, 39, 41, 42, 45, 59, 60, 63, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72
melancholia ……. 64
melancholic insanity ……. 65
memory ……. 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 21, 22, 25, 29, 32, 39, 40, 41, 44, 45, 51, 60, 61, 63, 64, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71
memories ……. 2, 3, 4, 5, 10, 21, 25, 27, 28, 29, 39, 40, 41, 60, 71
mental derangement …… 18, 69
mental disorder ……. 4, 7, 19, 23, 45, 63, 66, 71
Mental Maladies: A Treatise on Insanity ……. 22
monomania ……. 22, 23, 32, 64, 68
moral ……. 20f
moral causes ……. 20, 23, 23f
moral insanity ……. 19, 20, 20f, 22, 23
moral management ……. 36

O

obsession ……. 10, 14, 22, 23, 30, 57, 68
Other, the ……. 15, 18, 35, 38
othering ……. 15
otherness ….... 6, 15, 17, 18, 19

P

partial insanity ……. 23, 64, 68
place ……. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 10, 11, 13, 14, 15, 23, 26, 27, 33, 34, 37, 40, 41, 42, 45, 54, 61, 67, 68, 70, 71
places ……. 2, 5, 7, 10, 28, 71

Pritchard, James C. ……. 19f, 20, 23

R

recollection ……. 28, 28f, 29, 41, 71
remembering 4, 5, 6, 69, 71
reminiscence ……. 28f
repetition …… 32, 33f, 41, 54, 57, 62, 69, 72
repressed, the return ……. 39, 40, 41, 62f
repression …… 39f, 72
revenge …..... 5, 12, 13, 14, 16, 23, 24, 25, 30, 32, 43, 45, 52, 53, 54, 60, 63, 65, 66

S

sanity ……. 5, 6, 7, 20, 23, 36, 42, 71
shadows of the past ……. 6, 7

T

trauma ……. 8, 24, 40, 41, 44, 45, 51, 60, 66, 69, 70, 72
traumatic ……. 8, 10, 27, 32, 72

U

unconscious, the ……. 39, 40
uncanny ……. 27, 27f, 29, 30, 33, 46, 51, 64

W

will, the ……. 20, 20f, 21
Wuthering Heights ……. 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 10, 17, 21, 44, 52, 71

DEUTSCHE ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Die vorliegende Diplomarbeit widmet sich der Untersuchung des Zusammenspiels zwischen Wahnsinn, Erinnerung und Raum anhand von Charles Dickens' *Great Expectations* (1861) sowie Emily Brontës *Wuthering Heights* (1847). Sie setzt sich vor allem mit folgenden Fragen auseinander: Was versteht man überhaupt unter dem Begriff Wahnsinn? Wie wird Wahnsinn in den genannten literarischen Werken des neunzehnten Jahrhunderts konstruiert und dargestellt? Und inwieweit lässt es sich letztendlich sagen, dass sowohl der Raum als auch das Gedächtnis bei der Entstehung bzw. dem Ausbruch des Wahnsinns zusammenwirken? Der Einfluss der Vergangenheit auf die Gegenwart und infolgedessen auf die Zukunft, insbesondere aber auf die Psyche der untersuchten Charaktere, wird dadurch in den Fokus gestellt. Die Schatten der Vergangenheit sind hierbei als Auslösreize zu verstehen, die Erinnerung aktivieren beziehungsweise stark beeinflussen und damit bestimmte Verhaltensweisen der Protagonisten hervorrufen, auch solche die nicht unbedingt mit dem übereinstimmen, was die patriarchale Gesellschaft als 'normal' betrachtet.

Die Analyse ist in zwei Kapitel unterteilt. Das erste Kapitel befasst sich mit Brontës Roman *Wuthering Heights* und untersucht vor allem, wie die Protagonisten Heathcliff und Catherine Earnshaw mit ihren schmerzhaften, beziehungsweise traumatischen Erinnerungen an die Vergangenheit umgehen und wie sie versuchen, diese mithilfe von Wiederholungszwang oder Verdrängung zu meistern. Das zweite Kapitel hingegen beschäftigt sich mit der exzentrischen Miss Havisham in Dickens' *Great Expectations* und widmet sich der Frage, wie die verlassene Braut ihr ganzes Leben um das Trauma der Trennung und Enttäuschung herum organisiert und versucht, das traumatische Erlebnis durch Wiederholung zu überwinden. Beide Kapitel stützen sich auf Theorien des Wahnsinns, die im neunzehnten Jahrhundert durchaus populär waren; des weiteren, basieren sie auf den Erkenntnissen der Traumatheorie.

Die Analyse zeigt, dass der Wahnsinn, dem die Protagonisten unterliegen, wesentlich mehr als nur das Abweichen von sozialen Normen bedeutet. Wahnsinn hat eher viel mehr damit zu tun, wie die Protagonisten mit traumatischen Situationen und Erinnerungen umgehen, die ihr Verhalten und Denken deutlich bestimmen und dementsprechend entweder als normal oder abnormal bezeichnet werden. Desweiteren

gelangt man zur der Schlussfolgerung, dass es keine klare und feste Linie zwischen Wahnsinn und Verstand gibt, weil der Wahnsinn prinzipiell ein sozial geprägtes Phänomen zu sein scheint.

CURRICULUM VITAE

Persönliche Daten

Name: Elżbieta Filipek-Zarosa
Geburtsdatum: 20.03.1983
Geburtsort: Myślenice, Polen
Familienstand: verheiratet
Staatsbürgerschat: polnisch
E-Mail: efilipek.zarosa@gmail.com

Ausbildung

2006-2013	Diplomstudium der Anglistik und Amerikanistik, Universität Wien
2002-2005	Fremdsprachenlehrerkolleg in Sucha Beskidzka, Polen (mit der didaktisch-wissenschaftlichen Aufsicht der Jagiellonen-Universität in Krakau) Fachgebiet: englische Philologie/Anglistik Abschluss mit Diplom Berufstitel: Lizentiat
1998-2002	Allgemeinbildende Lyzeum namens Świętej Rodziny in Krakau, Polen Maturaabschluss
1990-1998	Volksschule, Polen

Sprachkenntnisse

Polnisch	(Muttersprache)
English	(fließend in Wort und Schrift)
Deutsch	(Österreichische Sprachdiplom, Niveau C1)