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A Study of Masculinity in *Wuthering Heights* and *The Picture of Dorian Gray*

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DEPARTAMENT D'ESTUDIS ANGLESOS I ALEMANYS

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Abstract

This end of degree essay is a literary analysis of the characters of Heathcliff from *Wuthering Heights* by Emily Brontë, and Dorian from *The Picture of Dorian Gray* written by Oscar Wilde. Two great works of literature that are characterized by their male protagonists. In this paper it has been analyzed whether the masculinity presented by Heathcliff and Dorian Gray is determined by the fictional environments in which they concur, whether they are public or private. The importance or need to belong to a group and how this can affect masculinity has also been studied, as well as if these two characters can be classified as Byronic heroes.

The analysis demonstrates that the key factors that shaped the masculinity of the 19th century English society helped on the construction of these characters. The analysis also shows that the environments in which the plot of the stories unfold, indeed, help the construction of the masculinity of the characters. It also shows that both characters can be defined as Byronic heroes.

Keywords: 19th century literature; Heathcliff; Dorian Gray; Masculinity; interrelationships.

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1. Introduction

This paper is a study about the masculinity of two characters from novels of the 19th century. The characters chosen are Heathcliff from *Wuthering Heights* by Emily Brontë and Dorian Gray from *The Picture of Dorian Gray* by Oscar Wilde. The reason I chose to do this literary analysis is to better understand the novels and to know if the two infamous main characters follow the construction of masculinity typical in middle and upper class, in the 19th century.

For my end of degree essay, I decided to find out how the society of the 19th century affected the creations of these characters. To do so, I decided to do some research about the masculinity of said century. In my research, the book that has helped me the most has been John Tosh's *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth-Century Britain* written in 2017. This book helped me determine the importance and influence of the relationships that these characters develop in the narratives and how they affect the construction of their masculinity, hypothesizing then, that masculinity is a social construction that is developed in the context of the public and private relationships. I then proceeded to check whether this hypothesis was fulfilled in both characters, analyzing point by point whether the factors that propitiated masculinity in the 19th century were followed in the making of these characters. From this first interpretation of masculinity, I have seen that there are other factors that may have influenced its development and that have determined the characters, making them the way we readers know them. These factors are the role that community takes in both novels and the verification that both characters are Byronic heroes.

2. Objectives

The aim of this paper is to better understand the aforementioned novels.

Hence, the objectives of the work are:

- Determine if what John Tosh defined in 2017 as the origin of masculinity in the 19th century applies to both characters,

- Resolve whether community has importance in the development of masculinity in these two characters and,

- Verify if the two characters follow the characteristics of what is understood by Byronic heroes in literature.

To meet these objectives, I will develop a theoretical framework with the help of Tosh's (2017) book *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth-Century*, and the articles *Wilde the 'Pervert': Oscar and Transnational (Roman Catholic) Religion* by McCormack (2014) and *Anti-hero Worship: The Emergence of the "Byronic hero" Archetype in the Nineteenth Century* by Palfy (2016).

Furthermore, to put the works in context, prior to the analysis of each character there will be a brief introduction to the story, its plot, and how did society receive it.

As a conclusion for the project, I will check whether the two characters follow the characteristic canons of the 19th century masculinity, if community has importance in the development of masculinity and, if the two characters are Byronic Heroes.

3. Theoretical framework

According to Tosh's book, masculinity in the 19th century society was developed both in the public and private spheres. Relationships between people were generated in public environments, such as schools, clubs, and cafes; and in private environments, family relationships and friendships were developed. But if the development of both public and private relations had one thing in common, it is that they both were divided by genders, thus generating the concept of separate spheres.

3.1 The role of relationships

During the 19th century, the concept of domesticity was very important, and inside the house, manliness and masculinity were developed. At the beginning of the century, the Victorians, lived by the concept of "separate spheres": men had stronger roles in society whereas women stayed at home caring and nurturing their children. Men controlled politics and the system that was outside the house, so what did women do? Wives from the bourgeoise were in control of the house and its rituals: from what the domestic workers were going to prepare for dinner to what the Christmas tree was going to look like. This control over household matters represented, as T.H.S. Escott stated, "the symbol of ascendancy of the softer over the sterner sex" (1885, p. 309), one of the first changes in society in which women had more power than men, even if this this power was inside the house, it gave women the confidence to demand other power implications in society. In England, it was during the 19th century that women demanded a role in society and so it began the suffragette movement, a socio-political movement in which women requested for more political responsibility, as it was to be able to vote. As John Tosh states in his book *Manliness and Masculinities in Nineteenth-Century Britain*: "Human progress depended on a radical reform of both". (2017, p. 14)

3.1.1 Private relationships: parenting and marriage

As it has been said, domesticity was important for the construction of masculinity and manliness. In England, the house represented more than just a place where the family lived. It was a place to demonstrate power whether it was from the outside with its façade, visible for the people from the street, or how it was carried on the inside. During the late 19th century, society was being rewritten as the fight for gender and class equality grew stronger. The idea went beyond domesticity, where bourgeois men could exert masculine authority over those deemed inferior whether for reasons of age, gender, or class. As English society changed, so did family life.

One of the factors that attested to this change was a reduction of the extension of family. This was due to the danger that birth giving gave women and the idea defended by many doctors and the clergy, that the quality of motherhood would increase if they had less offspring. As a result, women gained more control at home in mid 19th century, because they didn't have to give birth to as many children as they used to. So, they could have a say on how their children were being educated. However, this change wasn't only beneficial for women and children's health. Less children meant an economical help due to the expense of rising a child and being able to provide them a socially accepted amount of comfort in housing and education. To put it in numbers, people from middle and upper classes who married in the 1850s had an average of 6.4 children, whereas people who married in 1880s had an average of 3.5 children. (Szreter 1996, p. 51-68)

These were only good news from an economic and women's health point of view, since children were regarded as an indication of male virility, and men who lacked children suffered a loss of reputation, as it can be seen from the texts of Ruskin *Of Queen's Garden* published in 1865 and Mill's *Subjection of women* published in 1869.

Less children also meant a change in the function or dynamics of the family. Women had more power in the subject of parenting and could challenge the husband's command in other ways. The change of the dynamics in the family, affected parenting where there was a clear partition on what each parent taught to their children. Fathers taught discipline, while mothers taught love. Davidoff and Hall (1987) compare mothers from the 19th century to the Evangelical figure of Angel Mother, which emphasized feminine higher moral nature and its influence in the Victorian family. This comparison shows how mothers were put in charge of teaching to their sons "warmth, affection and emotional openness" while fathers taught them to be in a perpetual "survival mode" so the children knew how to survive in society that defined manliness with qualities such as "courage, resolution, tenacity and independence". (Tosh 2017, p. 14)

Another way to develop private relationships was through marriage. Marriage, that sanctified the idea of domesticity and home, was also seen as a ladder to upgrade social position. But there were many men who were reluctant to marriage, mostly in the second part of the 19th century: "The age of first marriage rose gradually but steadily in the second half of the nineteenth century; for professional men it had reached 31.2 years by 1885". (Anderson, 1990, p.34) In many cases, wealthy families saw the continuation of their name and family fortune about to terminate because of the inclination of bachelorhood of their sons. Many blamed women and their expectations of a nice household but the truth is that as society was being rewritten, smaller families offered "the possibility of greater intimacy within marriage, in conformity with the companionate and romantic ideals which had grown up since the late eighteenth century". (Froude, 1849, p. 113) Consequently, the idea of domesticity continued to be one of the factors shaping the 19th century society, but it was undergoing major changes.

3.1.2 Public relationships: boarding schools and gentlemen clubs

It would be an error to state that masculinity was first developed in the 19th century because there is no clear origin of masculinity. But if there is a thing that can be said about masculinity and where it was mostly developed in 19th century England, the focus should be on boarding schools.

During the 19th century there was the "fall of the domestic tutor" and sons were sent to boarding schools in which not only there was the hope of a great schooling development of the child but, the desire that the child was able to live in society from a very young age and where he learnt how to fight for a power position. School culture taught boys to sustain cruelty and then applying it on those who had less power than them, so it was necessary to demonstrate their strength once they arrived at boarding schools. They demonstrated it by fighting other students, for example, which made them feel identified with their fathers as they equated strong feelings with them. As a result, they associated tenderness with their mothers, therefore with the feminine gender. This association of tenderness and feelings with the feminine gender, was also taught by the British public boarding schools. They taught the oppression of feelings which marked so many men of the upper and middle classes, defined by Tosh (2017) as the "stiff upper lip" stereotype: men who did not know how to deal with their feelings and that in the face of adversity, maintained a steady and determined attitude (p.14).

Hence, what defined manliness in late Victorian Britain was described by the public-school values of the time. Manliness was defined by the behavior with other men and the chivalry against what was associated with the female gender.

In adult life, the concept of separate spheres is what could define best the division of genders and the continuation of manliness. As the role of men in home was changing and women were beginning to take part in decisions beyond the care of the house, men began

to look for other places where they could be independent, away from home. Tosh defines the late 19th century as the "golden age" of gentleman's clubs, principally in London's West End: "Here bachelors could conduct social life on their own terms, and married men could find a reassuringly masculine refuge from the overfeminine ambience of home". (Tosh 2017, p. 14) In gentleman's clubs many activities were being developed, such as sports, dining, and gossiping. As the activities were done among men, the atmosphere was considered very masculine. That is to say, that social relations between men nurtured their own masculinity.

3.2 The sense of belonging

Being part of a group, the will to belong to a community, is one of the factors that determine human nature. Since the beginning of time, both men and women have been looking for the group to feel understood and supported. Religion was a very important aspect of English life in the 19th century since it gave answers to those topics that science had not yet been able to explain. Furthermore, it provided a sense of community and belonging to a collective.

The main religion continued to be Anglicism, although at Oxford University, a movement later named as *The Oxford Movement* was born and it attempted to replace the Protestant tendencies of the Church of England with Catholic thought and practice. Anglicans were argued to be truly Catholic Churches by history and identity because Anglican liturgies resembled medieval ones and petitioned for the revival of these ancient customs. The movement was encouraged by the change on relations between the state and the Church of England between 1828 and 1832, starting in Ireland. John Keble (1792–1866), one of the leaders of the movement, was afraid that this change would liberalize and secularize the church of England. Among the leaders of the movement were, the poets and

clergyman John Keble and Richard Hurrell Froude (1803–1836) and John Henry Newman (1801–1890), later converting to Roman Catholicism and becoming a cardinal, as well as Oxford professor Edward Pusey (1800–1882).

This movement is of great importance because the departure of many Oxford artists and scholars to Catholicism and the separation from the Anglican church, placed them as a subgroup who thought differently from the majority. This conversion situated Catholicism in England as the wrong way of reasoning. (McCormack 2014, p. 212)

3.3 The figure of the antihero

From the beginning of time, heroes have been featured in stories and myths. In myths, heroes go away from home, then struggle through painful situations to prove their strength when they return with ultimate knowledge. Once we know what the function of the hero was in classical myths, we can get an idea of what the function of heroes is in classical literature.

However, Lord Byron introduced a new type of hero: the anti-hero. Also known as the Byronic hero, the anti-hero is a character that achieved entirely new literary and artistic standards by manipulating earlier ideas of the "hero" archetype and its behaviors. (Palfy 2016, p. 162) The Byronic hero is characterized as a revolutionary character who does not define himself by what is believed to be the right thing to do, and not fitting into the society in which he lives. First, the Byronic hero is constantly exhausted; secondly, it has a great deal of integrity; and thirdly, it is haunted with its "lost love". Palfy quotes Macaulay, who described the Byronic hero in 1831 as "a man proud, moody, cynical, with defiance on his brow, and misery in his heart, a scorner of his kind, implacable in revenge, yet capable of deep and strong affection".

4. Introduction to *Wuthering Heights*

4.1 Plot of the novel

Wuthering Heights is a novel written by Emily Brontë in 1847. The novel is set at the end of the 18th and beginning of the 19th century, and it is a narration by Nelly, the Thrushcross Grange housekeeper, to its new tenant Mr. Lockwood. The narration consists of the story of two families, the Earnshaw's, and the Linton's, in different generations. Both families have granges in the moors of Yorkshire, a natural paradise. Wuthering Heights is owned by the Earnshaw family, formed by Mr. and Mrs. Earnshaw and their children Hindley and Catherine. A third child is adopted from the streets of Liverpool, Heathcliff, who receives the name of a child that passed away as a baby. At the beginning of the story the three stepsiblings don't get along, since Heathcliff is gipsy and spoiled by their father. Nevertheless, the relationship with Catherine rapidly changes and she and Heathcliff become inseparable. During the time Hindley, the older brother, is away at college, Mr. Earnshaw dies, and he must return to the grange to take possession of it. Hindley returns with his wife Frances, and shortly after they have a child together. Frances dies of consumption a week after giving birth to Hareton. Hindley's alcoholism worsens after this death. The relationship Hindley has with Heathcliff hasn't changed, as well as the one Heathcliff has with Catherine: they spend all day together running in the moors, skipping church, and behaving as savages.

One night, spying on their posh neighbors the Linton's, Catherine is attacked by their dogs and since she is hurt the Linton's request her to stay so she can recover. During the five weeks stay, Mrs. Linton decides to transform Catherine into a fine young lady with her manners and social graces. When she goes back to Wuthering Heights, she finds everything very different, even Heathcliff, who she describes as a savage and dirty. So,

when Eric Linton, the older brother of the Linton family, asks her to marry him, she agrees, even though her heart has always belonged to Heathcliff. It is at this moment that Heathcliff decides to leave the grange to become a self-made man. Heathcliff returns to Thrushcross grange exactly three years after Catherine and Edgar get married, this time with money. Catherine is delighted to see Heathcliff again, thinking that their relationship may be returning to what it was before, given that Heathcliff now also takes care of Hindley's debts and payments. Nevertheless, Heathcliff wants more than friendship to continue his financial legacy and decides to marry Isabella, Edgar's sister, who is blinded by his good manners and new money. Edgar doesn't consent the marriage because he believes that Heathcliff is still in love with Catherine or has no clear intentions marrying his sister. When Isabella moves to Wuthering Heights, Heathcliff treats her poorly, and when she realizes her mistake, she moves to London and gives birth to Linton, their son. Catherine falls ill and dies the night after giving birth to her and Edgar's daughter Cathy. In her deathbed Catherine says that both Edgar and Heathcliff have broken her heart but, she never says that she regrets marrying the first. Hindley also dies and Heathcliff inherits Wuthering Heights. At this point, there is a 12-year time jump in the novel: young Catherine meets Hareton, and visits Wuthering Heights and Linton comes from London after her mother's death the same year. Linton and young Catherine fall in love, which causes Heathcliff to confine her to marry his son. Unfortunately, in the same year, both Edgar Linton and Linton die, and Heathcliff assumes control of Thrushcross Grange. The narrative and narration are synchronized at this point since Lockwood, the new tenant who rents the Thrushcross Grange from Heathcliff, is listening from Nelly what is going on at that time. Young Catherine and Hareton fall in love, and they plan to be married by new year. Some days before the marriage Heathcliff commits suicide because his revenge has already been exacted.

4.2 Social context

The context of the society in which this novel was published, was of an industrial and beginning of a post-industrial England. During the industrial revolution people, from working class and higher classes, moved to cities where all the job opportunities were. This let nature and villages a way where people could restore and reconnect with the transcendent, avoiding the fumes of big cities. Hence, it clearly glorified nature and the return to it, as well as being a source of inspiration for the great authors of the century. People, mostly men, left their offices as farmers and soldiers to move to the city where new jobs, such as manufacturing, were found. Middle and higher classes looked for products of better quality, which required more time and delicacy, qualities that were associated with femininity: "Weak elegancy of mind, exquisite sensibility, and sweet docility of manners, supposed to be the sexual characteristics of the weaker vessel". (Wollstonecraft 2004, p. 82) A social movement began in England in order to break the established patriarchal pattern that described femininity in this way during the 19th century. There were many critics to the idea of the preservation of idleness and insubordination and there was a will to blend what was regarded as masculine and feminine. This let men to adapt and do more activities that society had previously established to women, such as going to teas and balls. Besides, to be respectable they had to have a civil status, preferably they had to be married. Characteristics went beyond the social aspects, they also applied to the personal traits of the individual. Men were supposed to be strong, feelingless and wealthy to be successful.

Despite its popularity, the reception of *Wuthering Heights* was seen as out of place in its day: "Unlike the contemporaneous, the industrial novels of Charles Dickens, Elizabeth Gaskell, Benjamin Disraeli and Charles Kingsley, *Wuthering Heights* shows no engagement with wider social issues; its environment is enormously detached". (Nestor

2000, p. 15) This novel departs from what other authors of the time were doing and what their readers were used to, because there is no "exploration of the community". (Williams 1974, p. 8-11) The novel had nothing to do with the outside world and it could be perceived as irrelevant by the society who was reading it. Although it was not considered relevant at the time of publication, it caught the attention of some readers and it is believed by Nestor, that it is due to the ease with which Brontë blended aspects of the Gothic novel and the domestic novel:

> *Like the Gothic novel it creates a dark and passionate world of imprisonment and torture, ghosts, and changelings. And it shares with the Romantics a preoccupation with the authority of the imagination and emotion, a concern for the formative influence of childhood and for man's relation to the natural world. Its focus is antisocial, rather than communal or ethical, and its central character Heathcliff, stands as a version of the Byronic hero.* (Nestor 2000, p. 16)

Readers in the 19th century did not understand Brontë's novel due to its complicated plot and the novel was object of many critics. The novel mixes and arouses questions about many topics that have been seen and are seen as taboos, such as incest and necrophilia. Incest is never committed in the novel, because Heathcliff and Catherine are not blood related, it is during the second generation where intermarriages between cousins occur, as if there weren't any other "eligible male outside her (Catherine's) family". (Nestor 2000, p. 25) There are also elements of necrophilia as when Heathcliff unearths Catherine's body 18 years later and dreams of lying with her cheek "frozen against hers". (Brontë 2003, p. 289)

In the preface of the book written by Miller in 2003, it is said that Charlotte Brontë, Emily's sister, tried to erase the confusion in the introduction she did of the novel after Emily's death. Charlotte debunked her sister by revealing she was a woman and not Ellis

Bell, and presented Emily as "a simple country girl, who was not 'learned' and had written a shocking book as a result of naivety rather than knowingness". (Brontë, 2003, p. 8) She even stated that their house was full of "unlettered moorland hinds and rugged moorland squires". As Charlotte couldn't think of her younger sister being "responsible for the unredeemed figure of Heathcliff", she took responsibility away, presenting Emily as an "unthinking vessel through which 'Fate or Inspiration' pours". (Brontë 2003, p. 9)

Differently from other novels of the century, *Wuthering Heights* does not present an explicit commitment with social problems. Nestor, in her introduction to the novel, states that *Wuthering Heights* seems "out of place in its historical moment", as it can be connected to previous works such as the gothic novel of the late 18th century and Romantic poetry. (2000, p. 15) This mix of genres lead the novel to be interpreted as a love story that connected the transcendent with the mundane world, through power and death.

Moreover, the setting of the novel plays an important role in it. The Yorkshire moors, an idyllic natural space of the east of England, represented what writers in the 19th century were looking for: the search of the purity of their ancestors who had lived in the countryside were the ambiance wasn't as corrupted as it was in the city.

Nature is what kept Heathcliff and Catherine together, it was their link to each other: "In *Wuthering Heights* Heathcliff and Catherine, who are conflicting egos indoors, could never be one with each other if human perception did not include the Yorkshire moors". (Woodring 1977, p. 195) The importance given to nature in this novel, is a critique to 19th century society: "The romantics saw nature like the human mind: willful, energetic and dynamic". (Woodring 1977, p. 196) Once people left the countryside their life in the city became unintentional, inactive, and listless. This is the reason why the idea of the countryside was romanticized and popular: "In some ways the whole world of the novel

is dream like. Geographically remote, socially, and temporally apart, it is a world operating as a law unto itself". (Nestor 2000, p. 16)

To sum up, the novel had a reception that left Emily as the "untalented" of the Brontë sisters. Nevertheless, time has given to the novel the recognition it deserved since there are many readings that can be done about it: from a Marxist to a feminist or even a psychoanalytic point of view. Some critics have concentrated on issues of class, gender, and sexuality, a type of analysis more similar to the one in this end of degree essay.

5. Masculinity in Heathcliff

5.1 The role of relationships

As seen in the theoretical framework, one of the factors for the development of manliness and masculinity in 19th century England were the relationships men had in their private and public life. Separate spheres are very clear in building the narrative of *Wuthering Heights*. Heathcliff and the other men in the grange, worked on the production of the fields and the maintenance of the farm. It was mainly the responsibility of the women to take care of the house and, later, of the children in *Wuthering Heights*. That is to say that men and women in the novel go in separate ways and they are only found together in romantic or family relationships they may have with each other.

5.1.1 Private relationships: parenting and marriage

The novel begins with the knowledge that Heathcliff was an orphan from the streets, so he lacks parental models at the beginning of his life. The first paternal figure in the novel is Mr. Earnshaw. As far as Mr. Earnshaw is concerned, his role as a father is distant and absent, and Mrs. Earnshaw would be almost entirely unknown to the reader, as she dies in the novel so soon. Thus, Heathcliff did not have a maternal role to teach him how to express feelings, but he did have a paternal role to teach him masculine qualities such as courage, resolution, tenacity, and independence. An example of this lack of ability to deal with feelings can be seen when he marries Isabella to be able to be closer to Catherine, since he would be her brother-in-law, and to make her jealous. He is insensitive with Isabella when he decides to tell Nelly why he has married her: "It was a marvelous effort of perspicacity to discover that I did not love her. I believed, at one time, no lessons could teach her that!". (Brontë 2003, p. 149)

Other relationships also developed through marriage. At first, Heathcliff had to marry to upgrade his position on the social ladder. In the case of *Wuthering Heights*, Catherine does not put her feelings before financial gain, as it is expected from her simply because she is a woman. Catherine tells us in the book, through a confession to Nelly, why she chooses Eric Linton over Heathcliff: "And he will be rich, and I shall like to be the greatest woman of the neighborhood, and I shall be proud of having such a husband. [...] If Heathcliff and I married, we should be beggars? Whereas if I marry Linton, I can aid Heathcliff to rise". (Brontë 2003, p. 78) Hence, money plays a very important role in Heathcliff's life, because it is one of the factors that makes Catherine decide Edgar over him. Seeing how his opportunities to marry Catherine fade away, he decides to put a solution to his condition. When he has already overcome this difficulty, he needs to marry for the continuation of his family name and his fortune, even though this meant to marry someone he didn't love and the impossibility to create greater intimacy with his wife.

5.1.2 Public relationships: boarding schools and gentlemen clubs

Heathcliff is not sent to school. He doesn't even have a tutor at the grange since, as it has been said, it was located far away from the civilization. It looks like the Earnshaw's didn't have enough money to send both their sons away to school, so they only sent their biological son Hindley. Therefore, the shaping and continuation of Heathcliff's manliness can't be originated in boarding schools. Nonetheless, if manliness was defined by the behavior with other men and the chivalry against what was associated with the female gender, it is quite sure that his manliness and frustration come from the relationship he had with his stepbrother Hindley, and later with Eric Linton.

As it has been said in the theoretical framework, one of the key elements for the construction of masculinity is socialization between men. Hence, the decision to leave Wuthering Heights to obtain money and to introduce himself into society is one of the

factors that may have shaped his personality. The readers do not know what Heathcliff has been doing for the last three years, but we can speculate that he has explored environments wider than the moors, and consequently it has been in these environments with other people where his masculinity has developed. When he comes back to Wuthering Heights, he feels self-confident now that he is able to prove his economic wealth and has no qualms about fighting to win Catherine back. This new version of the character would frame Heathcliff's with a masculinity more characteristic of the 19th century English establishment.

5.2 The sense of belonging

Heathcliff, lives in a small community that underestimates him because of his origins and lack of own wealth. Heathcliff grew up with his stepsiblings in granges isolated from urban environments. The moors were the only form of society these characters get to know, and they are formed by family and neighbors from other farms. If Heathcliff developed friendships or romantic relationships, they had to be within this small community.

Although he was adopted by Mr. Earnshaw, Heathcliff was never treated as a member of the family by everyone. Indirectly, he was always reminded that he belonged to a lower rank than his stepsiblings, whether it was having to work harder on the grange because his stepbrother had gone away to school, or rejecting idea of marrying him, despite mutual feelings, because of his lack of money.

Thus, the socializing element that helps and develops Heathcliff's masculinity has to be found in the society and environments he frequents when he is not in the moors.

Hence, leaving Wuthering Heights, in addition of being a chance to earn money and write his own future, is a good excuse to seek for a fairer and more benevolent form of society, that taught him how to behave among other men.

5.3 The figure of the antihero

The character of Heathcliff meets the definition of an anti-hero. Initially, he is a savage boy who is homeless, and since there are so few adult or parental figures in *Wuthering Heights,* he continues to act as one even when he is adopted by Mr. Earnshaw. As a result of this lack of education and role models, he has no idea how to fit in the little society of Wuthering Heights and does not hide his wild nature. Even after coming back to Wuthering Heights once he has earned money and has introduced himself to the upper society, his primary instincts continue to be savage as the tit-for-tat revenge he is seeking with Eric Linton and his stepbrother Hindley.

He also has a great deal of integrity. He is true to his principles of being a hard worker in the farm and to never lose his wild spirit, which he shares with Catherine: "They both agreed to grow up as rude as savages". (Brontë 2003, p. 46) Even when he returns after having made his fortune, he is true to his feelings. The love he feels for Catherine remains, and so does his thirst for revenge with his stepbrother and Eric Linton. His act of self-sacrifice after his son marries Cathy, Edgar and Catherine's daughter, is also an act of faith to his integrity.

It is also important to note that Heathcliff's torment for his lost love Catherine is also a factor to describe him as a Byronic hero. It is no secret that Heathcliff was jaded by having lived without Catherine and that he was tormented by the fact that she had not mentioned him when she was dying. As a result, he continues to dream about her death and pronounces the famous sentence "May you never rest, as long as I live! You said I killed

you – haunt me, then!". (Brontë 2003, p. 169) When she dies, he is unable to live in peace, and his purpose in life is to avenge her death and the unhappiness he feels.

6. Introduction to *The Picture of Dorian Gray*

6.1 Plot of the novel

The plot of this story is situated in the city of London at the end of the 19th century. The main character of this novel is young and belonged to the Victorian establishment society. The characters that will shape his personality, behavior, judgement, and introduce him to the world of art are Basil Hallward and Lord Henry Wotton. Basil is the painter who made the infamous self-portrait of Dorian. Right after Basil finished painting it, Dorian grew envious of it and not knowing how, he made a deal with the devil wishing it was the picture the one who grew old and lost the good looks rather than him:

> *I shall grow old, and horrible, and dreadful. It will never be older than this particular day of June... If it were only the other way! If it were I who was to be always young, and the picture that was to grow old! For that for that – I would give everything! Yes, there is nothing in the whole world I would not give! I would give my soul for that!* (Wilde 2012, p. 26)

Following in the story, Dorian meets an actress, Sybil Vane, with whom he falls in love and proposes marriage, even though they are not of the same social class. He is attracted to her because she is a very talented actress who can play a different classic heroine each night. When he decides to introduce her to his friends Basil and Lord Henry, he takes them to the theatre to watch one of her plays. However, her performance is appalling. She does so, because she is madly in love with Dorian and he is the reason she doesn't have to act to live fake scenarios because her life with Dorian is already a beautiful story: "I might mimic a passion that that I do not feel, but I cannot mimic one that burns me like fire. […] Even if I could do it, it would be a profanation for me to play at being in love". (Wilde 2012, p. 87) Dorian, very angry after her disappointing performance and

embarrassed in front of his friends, decides to break the engagement with Sybil Vane. The day after, Dorian comes to his senses and decides to ask for forgiveness but, Lord Henry informs him that she has committed suicide.

It is during that night that Dorian can see how the picture his dear friend had painted for him, was beginning to change and to look scary. At first, he decides to cover it but as the picture degenerates he decides to move it upstairs in the attic schoolroom. He continues to live a life of excesses with activities such as going to operas, balls, opium dens, and cafes and day to day his portrait degenerates more and more. His friend Basil, who is moving to Paris, asks to see his artwork one last time. After discussing it for a while, Dorian angrily decides to show it to him, because in the end, he is the author of the misfortune. Nonetheless, Dorian kills him after seeing such an embarrassment.

Dorian, tormented after killing his friend Basil, decides to go to his country estate *Selby Royal* with some friends: the Duchess of Monmouth and her husband, Lady Narborough and Lord Henry. The brother of Sybil Vane seeks revenge for her sister and follows Dorian to said estate, where he accidentally gets shot and dies. Dorian, corrupted by all the sins he has committed throughout his life, hates the portrait that keeps getting older and more hideous. One night, after being haunted by the ghosts of his past for several days, he decides to put an end to the painting that has brought so much misfortune to his life. It is when he sticks the dagger with which he had killed Basil Hallward, into the canvas, that he kills himself.

6.2 Social context

People in 19th century England, moved to cities where a new class of bourgeoisie was being developed. The classes were sharply divided: either you were rich, or you weren't. There were many factors that pushed people to move to cities, such as the growth of the

empire and industrialization. (Ashton 2006, p. 654) After the rural exodus and the increasing power of women at home and outside of it, male citizens had to fulfil their time and disdain for domesticity with other activities, such as: going to gentleman clubs, opium dens, and cafes. People who belonged to the upper classes had a certain lifestyle that could be analyzed through food, education, housing, and clothing.

However, even though people moved to cities, there was an extreme like for natural things and natural ambiences: they glorified the time humankind lived in naturals environments. (Woodring 1977, p. 198) The time in which this novel was written, and the set was a time of changes: the Marxist theory was beginning to spread meanwhile industrial revolution was at its highest point in England.

This way of living and seeing life from the city certainly had an impact when Oscar Wilde wrote the character of Dorian Gray and tried to reproduce some of the ideas of the society that the character followed and some that he broke.

The reception of the work is also very interesting. Oscar Wilde (2012) wrote a provocative preface in which he asked the readers to put art before anything else, which was not understood by the Victorian establishment: "The nineteenth century dislike of Realism is the rage of Caliban seeing his own face in glass" (p.9), because the reality Wilde was living was very different from the reality of most of the establishment. The Victorian society did not receive the novel with high hopes. Once Wilde's father died, he had to "survive" in London's middle class and aristocracy making a salary of his own. Many critics situated him as a clear example of the 19th century "decadence and dandyism" (Cohen 1987, p. 802), explaining that most of his works criticized and showed disinterest in the bourgeois culture but the need of its prevalence for his works to continue. In the same preface, he states to his readers that "Diversity of opinion about a work of art shows that the work is new and complex, and vital". (Wilde 2012, p. 9) I have interpreted this

fragment as if Wilde was explaining to the readers that his work was necessary for the evolution of society that the 19th century was living. Wilde seemed to know that the novel he was going to publish, wouldn't be accepted by everyone and hence, he had to add other chapters to the novel that were common of the 19th century Victorian society, such as revenge, which was introduced to the story with the fragment of James Vane. (Ackroyd 1985, p. 234)

According to Ackroyd's (1985) introduction to the novel, Wilde had already a reputation in London's society. He even had two friends from Oxford, the painter Frank Miles and Lord Ronald Gower, who introduced him to the "homosexual aesthete". Similarities that may have something to do with the characters from *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, Basil Hallward and Lord Henry Wotton. This resemblances with the author's real life, categorized the book as something more than the mere representation of Wilde's predilections of sexual life, but about his feelings in his personal life as well. (p. 235)

Wilde, after being outed as a homosexual, was put on trial. The defense used *The Picture of Dorian Gray* to accuse Wilde of homoerotic seduction, and after the withdrawal of Wilde's lawyers, he was sent to prison. Once he was released, he went back to France, where homosexual acts were not a crime after the French revolution. Ackroyd states in his introduction that Wilde had already in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* made an anticipation of what the fate of its own author was going to be: "Here, one should never make one's début with a scandal. One should reserve that to give an interest to one's old age". (Wilde 2012, p. 99)

7. Masculinity in Dorian Gray

7.1 The role of relationships

The world of separate spheres is very clear in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, because both Dorian and most of the characters in the novel, spend little time at home with their respective wives and most of their time is spent in gentlemen's clubs. It was through these clubs and other social events, where Dorian got to meet Basil and Lord Henry Wotton. Both characters fancied Dorian very much and they were the personalities who introduced him into a different society. A subculture, mostly represented by the fields of art and leisure, in which friendship between men takes a primary role going beyond the matters that were conventional from male morals such as sincerity, and the sense of knowing what was right and wrong. The author of the novel is very subtle when writing about physical responses to express what characters feel for each other. In the case of Basil, it is through art how he expresses his admiration and captivation for Dorian's personality. Lord Henry Wotton uses words instead. Through art and aestheticism these characters found a great way "to challenge the Victorian standards of 'true male' identity" (Cohen 1987, p. 806), since they felt liberated from the responsibilities stated before.

7.1.1 Private relationships: parenting and marriage

It is impossible for the readers to know what parenting style was used in *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, since Dorian is directly presented as an adult in the novel. Still, the little we know, is of importance to speculate and try to understand the construction of the character's masculinity. At the beginning of the novel, Lord Henry Wotton asks his Uncle George, about Dorian's family. He explains that Dorian's mother fell in love and married a man who wasn't from the same social class as her and that his father died in a duel in

Spa because of their acts. The mother died a year after giving birth to Dorian. Thus, Dorian grew up without his biological parents and was forced to live, as it is said in the novel by Lord Henry, with his cold-hearted grandfather who didn't want a grandchild from a relationship he didn't approve of: "The boy left to solitude and the tyranny of an old and loveless man". (Wilde 2012, p. 35) Dorian's childhood was therefore not very pleasant. So, the upbringing at home, with the absence of a mother figure, must have been hard, and as far as feelings were concerned, there was probably a lack of education about them.

Marriage in *The Picture of Dorian Gray* should play an important role because it is settled during the 19th century, however as Dorian is already a member of the upper social class, he doesn't really need to marry to grow his economical position. The character of Dorian fulfils what Tosh (2017) says in his book: 19th century men treated feelings as women's issues and relegated their importance to women. (p. 14) And it can be seen with these two sentences: "Besides women were better suited to bear sorrow than men. They lived on their emotions. They only thought of their emotions. When they took lovers, it was merely to have some with whom they could have scenes" (Wilde 2012, p. 92) or "A man can be happy with any woman, as long as he does not love her". (Wilde 2012, p. 185) Plus, it must be considered that Dorian did not have a mother figure who could teach him how to convey feelings. At one point in the novel Dorian proposes marriage to a woman, Sybil Vane, but rather than falling in love with her, Dorian falls in love with the idea of being able to change one's identity every night and therefore being able to be with different heroines from classic dramas. Dorian's character never marries and is an example of the mythification of the bachelor, an increasingly widespread trend in the 19th century, who does what he wants with whomever he wants without having to deal with feelings. There is a clear difference between a bachelor and a spinster, and that is that men chose to be

bachelors and were considered men of marriageable age who did not want to marry. Spinsters, on the other hand, were women considered to be no longer marriable because its marriageable age was over.

7.1.2 Public relationships: boarding schools and gentlemen clubs

About Dorian's childhood we do not have much information but, as he is described as a member of the aristocracy he probably was educated and had a domestic tutor or went to a boarding school.

Thus, as we get to know only about Dorian's adulthood, the development of his masculinity must be focused on gentlemen clubs. As we have seen, one of the factors in the development of masculinity was centered at home, where Dorian lived alone and where he spent little time, as his portrait tormented him. Most of the passages narrated in the story are set in gentleman clubs with Lord Henry Wotton. The masculine ambiences Dorian and his friend frequented were a place of socialization with other men, in which he must demonstrate moral or economical superiority. Hence, it is in these ambiences where he builds his masculinity.

7.2 The sense of belonging

Dorian searches throughout the story for a community that understands him, as he wants to escape from the world in which he lives to take refuge in the world of art. In the quest for this community, the character considers joining a religious movement. He describes in the book, how once he was attracted to the Catholic idea of communion as well as the doctrine of the daily sacrifice, which he found to be more awful than all the sacrifices of antiquity. However, he never succumbed to these doctrines. As stated in the book, he is a follower of the Darwinist movement that was very powerful in Germany at the time. Nevertheless, the book summarizes the relationship between the character of Dorian and

the Christian religion in the following way: "Yet, as has been said of him before, no theory of life seemed to him to be of any importance compared with life itself". (Wilde 2012, p. 135) In the book Dorian also states the Oxford movement, which according to McCormack (2014) was situated as the wrong way of reasoning since "Catholicism in England was becoming the focus of a new and emerging gay culture". (p. 212) This subculture was unaccepted by the establishment English society who followed the Anglican church, and neither was the lifestyle of excesses and murders Dorian was living. Therefore, although Dorian's character introduces the controversial point of view of "The Oxford Movement" into the narrative, in the end he does not address the issue of religion and homosexuality.

7.3 The figure of the antihero

Dorian fulfills the idea of the Byronic Heroes constantly exhausted and tormented. Even though Dorian seems to possess eternal youth and beauty, he does not appear to be aware that his way of living has robbed him of true contentment: "I have never searched for happiness. Who wants happiness? I have searched for pleasure". (Wilde 2012, p. 203)

At the beginning of the novel, Dorian is a respectable member of society, probably educated in higher institutions and from a rich family. However, as the plot of the novel progresses his perfect character that made him a "classical" member of the establishment degenerates. The innocence of Dorian is corrupted by Lord Henry Wotton, with whose ideas and opinions triggers him. He even describes this corruption as something pleasant:

> *Talking to him was like playing upon an exquisite violin. He answered to every touch and thrill of the bow…There was something terribly enthralling in the exercise of influence. No other activity was like it. To project one's soul into some gracious form, and let it tarry there for a moment.* (Wilde 2012, p. 36)

Dorian is faithful to his principles hence, as many Byronic heroes, he has a great deal of integrity. Dorian seeks revenge after having fallen under the curse of his own portrait. In search of culprits for his and the painting bad fortune, instead of assuming his guilt and wanting to change his way of being – hence the portrait too – he prefers to blame his bad fortune on the creator of the piece, by killing him. In the beginning of the novel, Dorian is presented as an exemplary young man but throughout the novel we see that he is simply a rich and ill-bred man who believes himself to be immune to blame. He prefers to relegate all his sins to other people and his portrait. Besides being spoiled, he is also manipulative, as he gets one of his friends, Alan Campbell, a young scientist with knowledge of chemistry, to help him get rid of Basil's body, after having objected to do so many times.

Dorian as many Byronic Heroes has a reason to be so tormented and evil: he is haunted by his lost love. But in the case of Dorian, this lost love is not a person or an object, it is the idea of being able to escape the real world and find refuge in the world of art, seeking the beauty of the great classical works. Hence, Dorian's lost love is art.

8. Conclusions

The masculinity of these characters is difficult to compare in a parallel way. However, we can see how they both had everything in place to develop a similar masculinity to the one middle- and upper-class English men from the 19th century, seemed to have.

The two characters coincide in the way they were brought up: with the lack of a female mother figure who can teach them how to deal with feelings. Both characters delegate feelings to women and act as if they were unable to feel. We see this when Heathcliff marries Isabella just to be closer to Catherine; and with Dorian choosing to be a bachelor and being with whoever whenever he wanted to, so as not to have to deal with deeper feelings. So, it can be determined that both characters fit with the description of the origins that resulted key factors for the development of masculinity from 19th century English men.

With what it has been seen from the relationships section, I can state that masculinity was developed and stablished in society. Hence, it is a social construction, which is why these characters mostly develop theirs when they are in community and in company of other men, to demonstrate superiority. In the case of Heathcliff, it is when he leaves Wuthering Heights to grow economically where his masculinity is developed; and in the case of Dorian, it is when he goes to different clubs and social events with lord Henry Wotton.

Overall, both Heathcliff and Dorian can be described as Byronic Heroes. Through their actions in the novels, it is noticeable that they both do not fit in their societies; that they have a great deal of integrity; and, that the two of them have experienced the figure of lost love. They both prefer to die rather than live a life without love, although they do not share the idea that a life together is still possible in the afterlife. Heathcliff's lost love is Catherine and Dorian's is the world of arts.

To sum up I have been able to determine that these characters do share aspects that are related with what John Tosh defined in 2017 as the origin of masculinity in the 19th century. I can state that community was an important factor for the development of masculinity, at least from these two main characters from 19th century novels. And finally, I have also been up to verify that both characters can be defined as Byronic heroes.

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