

T.C.
ISTANBUL BEYKENT UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTE OF GRADUATE STUDIES

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE
ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE PROGRAMME

**EFFECT OF SOCIAL CLASSES ON LOVE
RELATIONSHIP IN *WUTHERING HEIGHTS***

Master's Thesis

Thesis Prepared By
Bilgenur HACIBEKTAŐOĐLU KOCATEPE

İstanbul, 2025

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Bilgenur HACIBEKTAŐOĐLU KOCATEPE

Student No.
2120028020

ORCID ID
0009-0003-3544-2810

Advisor
Asst. Prof. Mehtap SARIARSLAN

İstanbul, 2025

OATH STATEMENT

Yüksek Lisans Tezi olarak sunduğum “**Effect of Social Classes on Love Relationship in Wuthering Heights**” başlıklı bu çalışmanın, bilimsel ahlak ve geleneklere uygun şekilde tarafımdan yazıldığını, bu tezdeki bütün bilgileri akademik ve etik kurallar içinde elde ettiğimi, yararlandığım eserlerin tamamının kaynaklarda gösterildiğini ve çalışmamın içinde kullanıldıkları her yerde bunlara atıf yapıldığını, patent ve telif haklarını ihlal edici bir davranışımın olmadığını belirtir ve bunu onurumla doğrularım. 17/01/2025

Bilgenur HACIBEKTAŞOĞLU KOCATEPE

T.C.
İSTANBUL BEYKENT ÜNİVERSİTESİ
LİSANSÜSTÜ EĞİTİM ENSTİTÜSÜ MÜDÜRLÜĞÜ
TEZLİ YÜKSEK LİSANS SINAV TUTANAĞI

17/01/2025

Enstitümüz *İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı* Anabilim Dalı *İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı* Programı yüksek lisans öğrencilerinden **2120028020** numaralı **Bilgenur HACİBEKTAŞOĞLU KOCATEPE**'nin "*Beykent Üniversitesi Lisansüstü Eğitim – Öğretim Yönetmeliği*"nin ilgili maddesine göre hazırlayarak, Enstitümüze teslim ettiği "*Effect Of Social Classes On Love Relationships in Wuthering Heights* " konulu tezini, Yönetim Kurulumuzun 07/01/2025 tarih ve 2025/01 sayılı toplantısında seçilen ve Beylikdüzü Avalon yerleşkesinde toplanan biz jüri üyeleri huzurunda, Beykent Üniversitesi Lisansüstü Eğitim ve Öğretim Yönetmeliğinin 29. maddesinin 3. fıkrası gereğince 45 dakika süre ile aday tarafından savunulmuş ve sonuçta adayın tezi hakkında "**OYBİRLİĞİ**" ile "**KABUL**" kararı verilmiştir.

İşbu tutanak, 2 nüsha olarak hazırlanmış ve Enstitü Müdürlüğü'ne sunulmak üzere tarafımızdan düzenlenmiştir.

DANIŞMAN
Dr. Öğr. Üyesi Me*** SA***
(İstanbul Beykent Üniversitesi)

ÜYE
Prof. Dr. Vi*** MA***
(İstanbul Beykent Üniversitesi)

ÜYE
Doç. Dr. Nur Em*** KO***
(İstanbul Aydın Üniversitesi)

Name and Surname : Bilgenur HACIBEKTAŐOĐLU KOCATEPE
Supervisor : Asst. Prof. Mehtap SARIARSLAN
Degree and Date : Master's (Thesis), 2025
Major : English Language and Literature
Keywords : Pragmatism, Utilitarianism, *Wuthering Heights*, Emily Brontë

ABSTRACT

EFFECT OF SOCIAL CLASSES ON LOVE RELATIONSHIP IN *WUTHERING HEIGHTS*

This thesis focuses on the effects of social classes on romantic relationships in Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*. The impact of social class differences and social status is analyzed through the novel's two main characters, Heathcliff and Catherine. Social classes and the sharp division of these classes have led to discrimination and become a problem across societies throughout history. As in many societies, nineteenth-century England was affected by such divisions. This novel, published in 1847, sheds light on British culture, and it offers the opportunity to examine Victorian England and the social and political structures of that period. By examining the effects of the social situation through the character of Heathcliff, the impact of social and economic problems on British society during the period will be analyzed. As the events in *Wuthering Heights* take place amidst the industrialization of England, this process is reflected in all aspects of society. In England, the Industrial Revolution was accompanied by profound social and economic shifts, and the Victorian middle class portrayed in the novel sheds light on this shift. The novel shows the individual and social effects of class discrimination and provides the opportunity to observe the resulting conflicts. By challenging the established hierarchies of her day, Brontë's novel provides important insights into the social reality of Victorian England, as this thesis aims to show.

Adı ve Soyadı : Bilgenur HACIBEKTAŐOĐLU KOCATEPE
Danışmanı : Asst. Prof. Mehtap SARIARSLAN
Derecesi ve Tarihi : Yüksek Lisans (Tezli), 2025
Alanı : İngiliz Dili ve Edebiyatı
Anahtar Kelimeler : Pragmatizm, Faydacılık, *Uğultulu Tepeler*, Emily Brontë

ÖZ

UĞULTULU TEPELER’DE SOSYAL SINIFLARIN AŐK İLİŐKİLERİNE ETKİŐİ

Bu çalışmada Emily Brontë’nin *Uğultulu Tepeler* romanında romantik ilişkiler üzerindeki sosyal sınıf etkileri incelenir. Sosyal sınıf farklılıklarının ve sosyal statünün etkisi, romanın iki ana karakteri Heathcliff ve Catherine üzerinden analiz edilir. Sosyal sınıflar ve bu sınıfların keskin bir şekilde bölünmesi, ayrımcılığa yol açmış ve tarih boyunca toplumlar arasında bir sorun haline gelmiştir. Birçok toplumda olduğu gibi, 19. yüzyıl İngiltere’si de bu tür bölünmelerden etkilenmiştir. 1847’de yayınlanan *Uğultulu Tepeler* romanı, İngiliz kültürüne ışık tutarak Viktorya İngiltere’sini ve o dönemin sosyal ve politik yapılarını inceleme fırsatı sunar.

Sosyal durumun etkileri Heathcliff karakteri üzerinden incelenerek, sosyal ve ekonomik sorunların bu dönemde İngiliz toplumu üzerindeki etkisi analiz edilir. *Uğultulu Tepeler* romanındaki olaylar İngiltere’nin sanayileşmesi sırasında gerçekleşir ve bu süreç toplumun her alanına yansır. İngiltere’de Sanayi Devrimi ile birlikte derin sosyal ve ekonomik değişimler ortaya çıkar ve romanda tasvir edilen Viktorya orta sınıfı bu değişime ışık tutar.

Roman, sınıf ayrımcılığının bireysel ve toplumsal etkilerini gösterir ve bu nedenle çıkan çatışmaları gözlemlene fırsatı sunar. Brontë’nin *Uğultulu Tepeler* romanı, döneminin yerleşik hiyerarşilerine meydan okuyarak, bu tezin göstermeyi amaçladığı gibi, Viktorya İngiltere’sinin toplumsal gerçekliğine dair önemli içgörüler sunar.

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ABBREVIATONS

IR	: Industrial Revoulution
MWPA	: Married Women's Property Act
PU	: Pragmatism & Utilitarianism
VL	: Victorian Lower Class
VM	: Victorian Middle Class
VU	: Victorian Upper Class
WH	: Wuthering Heights

GLOSSARY

Industrial Revolution: A period of significant technological and economic change that began in England during the 18th and 19th centuries.

Marriage Law: Legal frameworks during the Victorian era that restricted women's rights within marriage.

Pragmatism: A philosophical approach that focuses on the practical consequences of ideas. Developed by thinkers like William James and John Dewey.

Social Class: The hierarchical structure that categorizes people based on their economic and social status.

Utilitarianism: A moral theory developed by John Stuart Mill, which states that the correctness of an action depends on its contribution to overall happiness.

Victorian Era: The period of Queen Victoria's reign (1837–1901) in England, characterized by social class divisions and strict moral norms.

Wuthering Heights: A novel by Emily Brontë that explores social class struggles during the Victorian period.

INTRODUCTION

This thesis examines the novel *Wuthering Heights* (1847) by Emily Brontë, who lived in the nineteenth century and the Victorian period, from a pragmatist perspective. The Victorian period was marked by significant inequalities such as financial disparities and gender discrimination. Women, in particular, faced significant societal pressure. Due to the restrictive norms of the period towards women, many female writers of the period had to publish their works under pseudonyms. Despite this, Emily Brontë clearly demonstrates that she wanted change and wanted to be a part of this change with her novel. This indicates that Emily Brontë took a strong stance against the gender norms of her time because women were expected to be domestic and obedient during the Victorian era. Catherine Earnshaw, one of the main characters of the novel, exemplifies Brontë's resistance to the norms. In contrast to the stereotypical image of women, this character is rebellious and passionate. Emily Brontë challenged the stereotype in the Victorian era with this character she created. In this sense, she contributed to literature by breaking traditional gender norms. Furthermore, *Wuthering Heights* was written with inspiration from real-life situations. In this novel, it is possible to observe the conditions of the time as it sheds light on the social life, financial situation, and marital relations of the people in nineteenth-century England.

The novel reflects the social and political shifts of the time due to industrialization, and it is possible to see how the developments in the country affect every unit of society. Along with developing technology, there were developments in literature and art as well. Literature became a medium to criticize societal issues such as gender inequality and child labor, so the themes in the works from the Victorian period included pressures on women and harsh conditions in which children had to work. In her *Wuthering Heights*, Emily Brontë addresses both of these themes and offers a critique of the attitudes towards women and children that were fundamental to Victorian literature. Authors such as Charles Dickens and Charlotte Brontë, Emily Brontë's sister, criticize the Victorian era and make their voices heard through their works. Dickens' novel, *Great Expectations*, presents both village and city life and criticizes the difficulties of being a child in the Victorian period. Charlotte Brontë's

Jane Eyre depicts how Victorian women were forced and oppressed in a patriarchal system. In addition to these authors, the works of Jane Austen also emphasize the issue of gender inequality. Examples include Jane Austen's *Emma* and *Pride and Prejudice*, in which she portrays how the gender inequality and socio-economic conditions experienced by women affect people's lives and marriage processes. Victorian writers offer critical reflections on phenomena such as economic inequality, gender inequality, and child labor in their works. For this reason, Victorian literature is often regarded as the golden age of literature.

This thesis explores the fictional world of the nineteenth century, particularly the dynamics and conflicts between the lower, middle, and upper classes. As the main character that stands out in the novel, Heathcliff experiences significant development from childhood to adulthood, which is a transformation that plays a critical role in shaping the narrative. Catherine is another crucial character in the novel, and she also plays a significant role in the development of the plot. She tries to provide the best living conditions for herself, and although she is passionate and rebellious, she prefers to marry Edgar Linton despite her love for Heathcliff. This decision is influenced by the socio-economic conditions of her period because socio-economic stability often outweighed personal desire in nineteenth-century England. Therefore, this attitude indicates that Catherine is seeking a more stable position in society. The evolution of Catherine's emotional state and confusion is essential to her character development. The dynamics of Catherine and Heathcliff's romantic relationship directly affect them and the other characters around them. In line with this information, the novel considers the influences that shaped their decisions, factors that constituted marital grounds, and the reflection of the pragmatic perspective on marriages and social life in nineteenth-century England.

Looking at the historical background of the novel, it can be seen that the Victorian Era, from 1837 to 1901, was a period of intellectual and cultural flourishing in English literature. In addition, this era was a period in which the effects of the Industrial Revolution were seen, so numerous innovations emerged including significant advancements in technology. Various aspects of society such as religious beliefs, economy, scientific progress, and social life were affected. The Victorian Era was also a period of economic dominance for England on a global scale, and it

coincided with the Industrial Revolution. The position of England as a globally influential nation was solidified during this era, and this contributed to the overall development of the country.

In *Wuthering Heights*, the class distinction between the characters, the impact of economic conditions on people's lives, and the change in their environment are clearly depicted in the setting. There are two essential places in the narrative of the novel: Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange. There is a connection between the places where the events take place in the novel and the lives of people in the Victorian period. These two places are essential to distinguish between the middle and upper classes. The changes in setting in the novel also point to the change in status experienced by the characters Heathcliff and Catherine. The lives of Catherine and Heathcliff revolve around these two places, and they indicate two different statuses. Wuthering Heights is known as a dark and foggy place in the bush. Unlike Wuthering Heights, Thrushcross Grange is depicted as having a more spacious and decent atmosphere. Comparing these two different places makes it possible to have an idea about the class distinctions in the Victorian period.

This thesis employs John Stuart Mill's utilitarian philosophy to critically examine Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* and incorporates this philosophy alongside the pragmatic frameworks of John Dewey and William James. These theoretical perspectives were selected due to their relevance to the Victorian era, a period marked by a significant upheaval in social dynamics and interpersonal relationships. In addition, this thesis explores the influence of utilitarian principles in depicting romantic relationships in the novel.

This thesis is structured in three separate sections. The first section outlines the theoretical framework that forms the basis of the research. It provides an in-depth examination of the basic tenets of pragmatism, the contributions of its key theorists, and the reasons for placing *Wuthering Heights* within this conceptual framework. This section contextualizes the novel within these theories and provides the methodological foundation for the subsequent analysis. The second section relates *Wuthering Heights* to the socio-historical realities of the Victorian era. It examines the cultural and historical context in which the novel was written and touches upon the themes related

to the social, ideological, and economic movements of the period. In addition, this section explains how the historical process permeates the characters and narrative structure of the novel and highlights the interaction between historical context and literature. The third section provides a comprehensive analysis of *Wuthering Heights*. This section explores the novel's characters and the dynamics of marriage and romantic relationships. It also examines class distinctions in society. It draws attention to how Brontë critiques the pragmatic decision-making processes that underpin romantic relationships and marriage choices in nineteenth-century England.

The primary purpose of this thesis is to explain how Emily Brontë expressed pragmatic approaches to romantic relationships in the Victorian era. This study explores the connections between individual behavior, social norms, and the theoretical framework of pragmatism. In addition, this study shows how literature contributes to the reflection and understanding of the ideological frameworks of the period.

1. WHAT IS PRAGMATISM?

1.1. Pragmatism as a Theory

Pragmatism is an approach that focuses on the practical consequences of ideas. This approach determines the reality and correctness of events or ideas. As William James (1907) explains, “The term is derived from the same Greek word *pragma*, meaning action, from which our words ‘practice’ and ‘practical’ come. It was first introduced into philosophy by Mr. Charles Peirce in 1878” (pp. 1-2). Charles Peirce (1878) further elaborates and states, “Consider what effects, that might conceivably have practical bearings, we conceive the object of our conception to have. Then, our conception of these effects is the whole of our conception of the object” (p. 6). William James is one of the most famous pragmatists, and while defining pragmatism, he says, “Pragmatism as a mediator between empiricism and religion. Barrenness of transcendental idealism. How far the concept of the Absolute must be called true. The true is the good in the way of belief. The clash of truths. Pragmatism unstiffens discussion” (2002, p. 3). This view, advocated by William James, represents the empiricist approach. This idea is parallel to the thesis statement of this study as one of the areas it covers is the empiricist aspect of pragmatism. Pragmatism is a mediator between faith and the empiricist approach. In this respect, pragmatism contributes to science. From a pragmatic standpoint, the concepts and ideas presented in any given context are subject to observation, and this emphasizes that reality is not limited to mental concepts. Practical experience is equally essential in this framework. The idea of the absolute is compared to the phenomena of reality, and this leads to the conclusion that one of the primary objectives of pragmatic thought is to explore and interrogate the nature of truth. There exists a relationship between belief and goodness. Thus, the truths one adheres to should yield positive outcomes for society. In his work, *Pragmatism: A New Name for Some Old Ways of Thinking*, William James articulates this idea by stating:

Surely you must admit this, that if there were NO good for life in true ideas, or if the knowledge of them were positively disadvantageous and false ideas the only useful ones, then the current notion that truth is divine and precious, and

its pursuit a duty, could never have grown up or become a dogma. (2002, p. 30)

If a belief is beneficial, it is true according to the pragmatic view. This view inherently resists stereotypes and dogmas because questioning and discussion are at the heart of pragmatic understanding. Consequently, pragmatic thought fosters an environment conducive to debate, where diverse ideas and critical questioning can lead to increased productivity and effectiveness.

Pragmatism as a theory emerged in the United States in the nineteenth century. As Ormerod (2015) notes, “American pragmatism was developed in a society that had been traumatized by the Civil War (1861–1865), a war in which according to Winston Churchill ‘three quarters of a million men had fallen on the field of battle’” (2015, p. 894). The key figures in this philosophical movement Charles Sanders Peirce, William James, and John Dewey were instrumental in shaping the principles of pragmatism as they contributed unique perspectives. The American Civil War was instigated by issues such as slavery and inter-state disputes, and this period was known as a time when America experienced radical change. The idea of pragmatism emerged during the social transformation process in America. When this idea was conceived, this approach helped bring together different cultures in America’s cosmopolitan society. During this time, pragmatism played a crucial role in addressing and solving social challenges such as racism and slavery.

As a philosophical approach, pragmatism examines events with the help of experimentation and observation. The outcomes of these observations are often reflected in literary works. In literature, the conditions of the time in which people live and their ability to make observations form the basis of the narratives. Both literature and pragmatism emphasize the importance of reality. The relationship between these two can be understood through their practical and functional nature. Frequently, a writer’s ideas reflect practical outcomes shaped by the environmental factors in which they live. Writers observe the events of their environment and articulate these experiences through language in a functional manner. This attitude directly overlaps with the pragmatic principle of functionality.

Pragmatism provides a valuable perspective for understanding literature because it focuses on the concrete effects and practical consequences of ideas and actions. When applied to literature, pragmatism explains how a text interacts with its historical and cultural context while also providing insights into universal human experiences. From this perspective, it becomes clear that literature and pragmatism have a complementary relationship and are important tools for interpreting meaning.

1.2. Leading Theorists of Pragmatism

Pragmatism is based on some fundamental principles such as the utilitarian use of pragmatism as a tool, the focus of pragmatism on practical outcomes, and the analysis of the connection between actions and happiness. This study will examine these principles to explore the pragmatic interactions among characters while connecting literary analysis to the sociological and historical contexts of their time. The idea of pragmatism, characterized by the notion of profiting from the results of actions, is concerned with the functional value of thought. According to pragmatic thinking, an idea only becomes a reality once it is assessed for its usefulness. As William James asserts:

Any idea upon which we can ride, so to speak; any idea that will carry us prosperously from any one part of our experience to any other part, linking things satisfactorily, working securely, simplifying, saving labor; is true for just so much, true in so far forth, true instrumentally. (2002, p. 24)

This idea is consistent with the utilitarian aspect of pragmatism and clarifies that the practical utility of an action or idea simplifies life. William James posits that a practical and functional idea acts as a tool that provides benefits and makes life easier. According to him, whether an idea is real or not depends on its effectiveness in real life and whether it works in practice. James sees an idea as a reliable tool that connects our disparate experiences and relates events meaningfully. For James, reality is not static; it evolves based on individual experiences and situational needs. Therefore, the truth of an idea depends on its practical usefulness.

This study will also use the techniques of experimentation and observation to analyze the relationship between the concepts of reality and truth from the perspective

of pragmatic thinking. In James's pragmatic philosophy, the relationship between reality and truth is fundamental. He asserts that facts are ideas verified through experiments and practical applications. An idea is considered true only when it is verified. Since pragmatism is a method based on experimentation and observation, it relies on verification to determine truth. William James further emphasizes this connection by stressing the importance of verification to determine the validity and practical value of ideas:

It is the nature of truths to be validated, verified. It pays for our ideas to be validated. Our obligation to seek truth is part of our general obligation to do what pays. The payments true ideas bring are the sole why of our duty to follow them. (2002, p. 22)

In this quote, James explains the pragmatist understanding of truth: accepting an idea's validity requires proof of its efficacy in practice. This process sheds light on whether the ideas function effectively in practice. According to James, the benefits provided by accurate ideas constitute the main reason for our acceptance of them. In addition to being a theoretical concept, truth also includes concrete results and benefits. Therefore, accurate ideas provide us with practical benefits in our lives.

Utilitarianism and pragmatism are inherently similar to each other. In both approaches, result orientation and experimental approach are essential. John Stuart Mill makes a utilitarian explanation about marital relations, which is the main subject of this study. Mill defines marriage as it follows in *The Subjection of Women*:

If he differs in his opinion from the mass—if he sees truths which have not yet dawned upon them, or if, feeling in his heart truths which they nominally recognise, he would like to act up to those truths more conscientiously than the generality of mankind—to all such thoughts and desires, marriage is the heaviest of drawbacks, unless he be so fortunate as to have a wife as much above the common level as he himself is. For, in the first place, there is always some sacrifice of personal interest required; either of social consequence, or of pecuniary means; perhaps the risk of even the means of subsistence. (1869, p. 99)

Therefore, if the mentality of one of the parties in the marriage does not match the mindset of the society in which they live, problems may occur. Navigating relationships, including marriage, can become extremely challenging when an individual's beliefs and desires conflict with societal norms and expectations. For example, in *Wuthering Heights*, Catherine chooses to marry Edgar Linton, a wealthy and socially respected man, in order to gain status. In this way, she conforms to 19th-century English societal norms. However, this decision does not reflect her true feelings and desires. This decision ultimately stifles her spirit as she sacrifices her true desires for social acceptance. As John Stuart Mill emphasizes, marriage can have significant disadvantages. He highlights that marriage may require individuals to compromise their personal interests. Depending on the circumstances, these sacrifices can be economic, emotional, or social. In such cases, individuals may want to adopt a utilitarian perspective by prioritizing personal interests such as social status or financial security over personal satisfaction.

Mill also draws connections between the method of pragmatism, which constitutes the method of this study, and the emotional state used in character analysis. Mill establishes this connection in *Utilitarianism* and says, "The creed which accepts as the foundation of morals, Utility, or the Greatest Happiness Principle, holds that actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness, wrong as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness" (2016, p. 15). In his view, happiness and pragmatism are directly proportional. The rightness or wrongness of an action depends on the result of that action. In other words, pragmatism focuses on the practical consequences of thought. According to the happiness principle, an action is beneficial if it makes the person happy but not if it makes the person unhappy. According to the quote here, in utilitarianism, the rightness or wrongness of an action depends on whether it increases happiness as a result of the action. Edgar's joy upon Catherine accepting his marriage proposal in *Wuthering Heights* illustrates this principle. Her acceptance benefits him by bringing him happiness, thereby validating his perception of this action as correct. Thus, it can be concluded that a pragmatic relationship exists between happiness and the consequences of actions.

There are many theories and discourses about marriage. Oscar Wilde offers one such perspective in his comedy *The Importance of Being Earnest*. As one of the writers

of the Victorian period, he remarks, “You don’t seem to realize, that in married life three is company and two is none” (Wilde, 2006, pp. 11-12). Here Wilde presents a critical perspective on marriage. In this sentence, the character Algernon states that marriage would be boring with two people. This situation depicts men’s view of marriage and tradition in the Victorian period. According to social rules, marriage is for two people and requires shared responsibilities. Algernon finds the routine of married couples boring. In other words, social expectations put the person under pressure causing him to be distant from the institution of marriage. For this reason, he argues that there is a need for a third person in marriage. Oscar Wilde examines the importance of the presence of a third person in marriage with this sarcastic statement from Algernon. It indicates the necessity of an external influence to avoid social traditions and prevent the marriage from becoming monotonous. Through this character, Oscar Wilde discusses the idea that the social dynamic created by the third person will keep the marriage alive.

Similarly, Thomas Hardy, one of the writers of the Victorian period, criticizes the relationships and women in the Victorian period. In his work *Far from the Madding Crowd*, he states, “It is difficult for a woman to define her feelings in language which is chiefly made by men to express theirs” (Hardy, 2005, p. 414). Thomas Hardy describes how suppressed women feel in their relationships with these words. Based on these, it can be concluded that there needed to be more communication and understanding in the relationships between men and women in the Victorian period because women shaped their needs according to men. Here, Thomas Hardy emphasizes the difficulties women experience in expressing their feelings and thoughts. When examined in a social context based on the quote, men in Victorian England determined social rules Thomas Hardy criticizes this point as social rules limit women’s need to express their feelings and thoughts. During the Victorian period, women were not free regarding verbal communication within any male-female relationship, so Hardy highlights women’s struggles with expression within male-dominated social structures in their relationships.

In this respect, Gayatri Spivak’s perspective on women’s roles and societal limitations during the Victorian era aligns with the themes of this thesis. About women’s lack of education and communication, Spivak (1988) asserts:

In our own situation as academic feminists, we can begin thinking of planning a classroom. What one does not know can be worked up. There are experts in the field. We can work by the practical assumption that there is no serious communication barrier between them and us. No anguish over uncharted continents, no superstitious dread of making false starts, no questions to which answers may not at least be entertained (Spivak, 1988, p. 141).

With this statement, Spivak guides us in approaching female characters in the social and historical contexts. During the Victorian period, women's lack of access to adequate education and their exclusion in legal and social areas prevented them from developing themselves. In response to the experiences of women in the Victorian period, Spivak argues that women should pursue knowledge. She indicates that they should work assuming there is no longer a communication barrier and that women should overcome fears of new beginnings, and she is a pioneer in this sense. Spivak's call for academic feminists may help further studies analyze *Wuthering Heights* more meaningfully and comprehensively

In conclusion, pragmatism is an approach that focuses on the practical consequences of ideas and evaluates it according to these consequences. As William James describes pragmatism is an intermediary between empiricism and faith, and it arises from the conflict between the empirical perspective based on experience, observation, and faith. James, on the other hand, emphasizes the importance of the pragmatic perspective on observability and practical experience. Pragmatism also shares similarities with utilitarianism as both focus on the outcomes of actions. According to John Stuart Mill, if an action gives happiness as a result, then it is beneficial. Utilitarianism is directly proportional to pragmatism. Thus, the rightness or wrongness of an action depends on the outcome of that action.

2. HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF ENGLAND DURING THE VICTORIAN PERIOD

2.1. Industrial Revolution

While writing *Wuthering Heights*, Emily Brontë had the opportunity to examine Victorian England and explore both the social and political structure of the time. While the Industrial Revolution occurred in England, there were also significant social and economic changes. The Victorian middle class portrayed in the novel sheds light on this change. This part of this thesis examines the effects of the social situation in nineteenth-century England and analyzes the impact of economic problems on British society at the time. The events in *Wuthering Heights* took place during the industrialization period in England. For this reason, the social and cultural events of the period in which the novel was written will be examined in the light of Peter N. Stearns' *Industrial Revolution in World History*. He describes the period as follows:

By the 1760s, then, several key ingredients of the industrial revolution had been assembled in England, after several decades of protoindustrial changes within the domestic manufacturing system. New entrepreneurs were ready to manipulate workers in novel ways. Inventions increased the number of industrial processes handled automatically. The manufacturing sector and its labor force were growing steadily. Then came a usable steam engine, which by the 1770s could be hooked up to some of the semiautomatic inventions already devised for manual textile workers. Because steam power was concentrated and could not be transmitted over long distances, workers had to be assembled near the engines to do their work; Small factories had to replace household production sites. This final change, too, was developing rapidly in certain key sectors by the 1770s. Britain's industrial revolution was under way. (2013, p. 26)

The Industrial Revolution is regarded as one of the most transformative historical events, impacting numerous countries, especially England, across various dimensions. This revolution spread from Europe to the whole world. The effects of the Industrial Revolution lasted for decades and influenced the world in many ways. This revolution

influenced society, especially in economic and technological terms, and played an important role in shaping social life. The formation of new business sectors, the emergence of new classes, and the transformation of family relationships were all under the direct influence of the Industrial Revolution.

The Industrial Revolution brought economic growth, and England's industrialization process played an essential role in changing social relations. This transformation affected numerous societal dynamics as individuals migrated from rural areas to urban centers in search of employment opportunities. Since industrialization was seen as a system change, its consequences were evident across multiple domains. This development, which was particularly important for 19th-century England, affected many segments of society:

By 1850 half of Britain's population lived in cities, the first such urban achievement in human history—for even the most effective agricultural societies had never been able to free more than 25 percent of a population from the rural economy. (Stearns, 2013, p. 22)

With the onset of technological innovations and economic growth, new social classes began to emerge, and class dynamics changed. In Victorian England, urbanization was a critical process. During this period, more than half of the population in England moved from rural areas to cities. This constituted a significant step in the urbanization process in England at that time. As the Industrial Revolution progressed, major cities became the heart for trade. People left their rural lives and migrated to cities in pursuit of better job opportunities and higher wages. This situation also caused the socio-cultural structure to change. In addition, the evolving economy influenced individuals' social standings, and distinct classes emerged as a result of industrialization. Many classes were formed under the influence of the Industrial Revolution. There were apparent differences between the working class and the middle class. While the middle class generally consisted of white-collar workers, the working class worked in jobs that required labor. Social injustices and economic differences became increasingly visible between these two groups. As Stearns (2013) says:

Many workers opposed the idea of intense work designed to maximize productivity and turned to a concept—called by British laborers a “lump o’

labor”—that a given day and a given amount of pay demand so much effort and no more. Not only the interests but many of the basic ideas of the working class clashed with those of the middle class. (2013, p. 83)

The city received a significant amount of immigrants from the countryside, and this brought about various problems. By 1850, half of the British population had settled in cities. During this period, people moved to cities for work. As a result, urbanization in metropolitan areas increased rapidly and created overcrowded living conditions. Furthermore, class distinctions became more pronounced. Therefore, a significant gap emerged between the wealthy industrialists and the working-class laborers. This situation is explained as follows:

The industrial revolution, it was argued, brought into being a new breed of factory masters and manufacturers who spearheaded the formation of a new class, identified strongly with the rapidly expanding industrial towns and cities of the Midlands and cities the North of England. Birmingham, Liverpool and Manchester all metamorphosed from small towns to great cities of a quarter of a million people and more between the later eighteenth and the mid-nineteenth century. (Gunn & Bell, 2011, p. 1878)

Cities such as Birmingham, Liverpool, and Manchester experienced significant immigration driven by the influence of industrialization. Following the development of the industrial system, new social classes emerged, such as the industrial bourgeoisie and the urban working class. While the industrial bourgeoisie accumulated large amounts of money and status, the working class endured harsh conditions such as long working hours, low wages, and poor living standards. One of the problems experienced after the Industrial Revolution was the working conditions of factory workers. Workers worked overtime and for low wages. The character Heathcliff in the novel *Wuthering Heights* is an example of the workers mentioned. Similar to many individuals during Victorian England, in *Wuthering Heights*, the working class' labor is largely used for economic gain, and their social well-being and moral values are not given sufficient attention. Heathcliff experiences financial difficulties and social exclusion throughout much of the narrative. Heathcliff, an orphan who first came to the Earnshaw's house, was an unqualified and lonely boy. Through Heathcliff, Brontë illustrates the situation

and changes in the working class of the period and shows the effects of the industrialization process in England and its surroundings.

2.2. Emerging New Classes

The Industrial Revolution brought significant changes to the economic landscape in England. During this time, distinctions emerged among employers, the middle class, and workers based on their occupations and financial situations. This differentiation revealed the concept of class in social life. Another pivotal event for the middle class in nineteenth-century England was the Great Reform Act. The Great Reform Act aimed at political change and transformation just before and throughout the Victorian Era. Eric J. Evans (1994) describes this process as follows:

Looked at from a modern perspective, 1832 can be seen as the vital first step on the road to full, representative parliamentary democracy. We know, though contemporaries could not, that the 1832 Reform Act was not destined to be, as Lord John Russell put it at the time, 'the final solution of a great constitutional question.' Further reforms were not so long delayed. Extending the vote to adult male householders in 1867 produced working-class majorities in many urban constituencies thereafter. The Third Reform Act (1884) produced a similarly modest male franchise threshold in rural areas, giving the vote to humble miners and many agricultural labourers. Virtually all men who had not qualified for the vote before 1918 were given it then, together - much more famously - with women ratepayers of 30 years and above. (1994, p. 2)

In this quote, Evans describes the Victorian era as a period when reform movements and innovation were at the forefront. The Victorian era is often regarded as a period of rapid industrial growth, and it is marked by significant transformations in economic relations, social structures, and social rights. Social norms were reshaped during this period. In this context, it is observed that innovative ideas and social reforms were of great importance, especially in areas such as labor, social justice, and women's rights. With the Reform Act in the nineteenth century, people gradually gained the right to vote. This situation is explained as follows:

It was much more common in the eighteenth century for people to use the terms ‘middle ranks’ or ‘middling sort’ to describe the groups concerned. This language was significant. It derived from a model of society based on a well-established idea of hierarchy. The social order was envisaged as a finely graded hierarchy of ranks and interests (landed, trading, legal, etc.), which existed in more or less harmonious interrelationship. (Gunn & Bell, 2011, p. 17)

This terminology reflects a societal model rooted in a well-defined hierarchy where social order was envisioned as a finely graded system of ranks and interests. Rapidly developing industrialization and urbanization gave rise to the concept of the middle class. The Industrial Revolution fostered many branches of business which created new and diverse employment opportunities for many people. This growth, which mainly began in certain regions of England, was essential to England in the late eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. As a result of these developments, England underwent a radical change in this process and began to influence the world by adopting a new order.

Another class affected by the economic changes and innovations was the working class. This group comprised people who earned their living by working in industry, factories, mines, and many other workplaces, and they experienced the effects of industrialization on both economic and social levels. The working class gained political representation after the Reform Act, and this expanded the scope of men’s right to vote. As a result, they constituted a majority within urban populations. Since this class often faced poor working conditions and low wages, it became increasingly important for them to have a voice in political matters. Thus, the working class gained importance both economically and politically during this transformative era.

2.3. Middle-Class Women in Victorian England

The Victorian era was a period of great innovations, and there was the rise of reform movements in many areas. The middle class during the Victorian era can be described as “a group of people who are neither part of the working classes nor the landed aristocracy” (Mishler, 2012, p. 25). This period saw a notable increase in both

production and consumption, leading to substantial changes in the lives of middle-class individuals. The middle class occupied a position between the working class and the landowning aristocracy. Furthermore, the working class usually worked in difficult conditions for low wages and were employed in industries such as factories, construction, and the services. On the other hand, the Victorian middle class worked in professions such as merchandise, industry, teaching, medicine, and law. During this time, the middle class had a higher chance of accessing education compared to the working class. In the Victorian era, members of the middle class could pursue education and engage in the arts and sciences. Although the middle class had better opportunities and economic status than the working class, they still remained below the living standards of the aristocrats. As the upper class consisted of landowners, their lifestyle was more luxurious and affluent than the middle class.

The Great Reform Act was a significant event for the British Parliament and the people of nineteenth-century England. The measures implemented during this time brought about significant political and social improvements. The 1832 Reform Act was the beginning of innovative steps that reflected a national desire for change and transformation within British society, as well as the determination of the middle class to gain a stronger momentum in social issues. The first of these reform movements was an important step towards parliamentary democracy. The second reform movement, the Reform of 1867, granted voting rights to adult male householders. This led to an increase in the number of workers in the cities. The third reform movement in 1884 extended voting rights to men in rural areas. This was the first step for rural areas to have a voice in the country. Finally, in 1918, suffrage was extended to all women over the age of 30 and to all men who met certain property requirements. This limited suffrage for women laid the groundwork for future expansion of women's suffrage. This foundation represented a significant turning point and a decisive step toward democratic reform. This movement not only enhanced the political power of the middle class but also marked an important historical milestone.

Victorian middle-class women attained their political rights much later than men. In nineteenth-century England, there was gender discrimination between men and women. In the Victorian era, women were morally and emotionally repressed. Societal expectations dictated that women fulfill idealized roles as devoted wives and

mothers, and this placed considerable pressure on them. During the Victorian era, women were inadequately supported in many aspects of life due to rigid societal standards they were expected to meet. The perspective of Mary Wollstonecraft is essential in examining the development of the characters in *Wuthering Heights* because she cared about the education of women and men for a good and strong society. She recommends that “[m]en and women must be educated, in a great degree, by the opinions and manners of the society they live in” (2011, p. 21). This perspective of Wollstonecraft emphasizes that Victorian middle-class women and men should pay attention to their education for fostering a strong society as personal education improves and moves society forward. During the Victorian era, many thinkers advocated that women should receive education as they saw it as a crucial step towards achieving social equality and intellectual knowledge. However, women’s primary duties were regarded as housework and childcare in that period, and even though some women worked in factories, they were paid less than men. Therefore, the developments stemming from reform movements and industrialization provided women with limited opportunities for employment during this time, but these opportunities often came with restrictions on their rights and freedoms. Financial freedom was typically guaranteed through marriage to wealthy men, so middle-class women tended to marry wealthy men. As it can be seen, although women began to gain visibility in business settings, they faced significant inequalities and injustices within these environments. For this reason, Victorian literature often deals with women’s obstacles and oppression, and the novels explore these themes in depth.

2.4. Marriages in the Victorian Era

The institution of marriage was of great importance to the Victorian English society. This period was known for its specific norms and discrimination. The economic fluctuations brought about by the Industrial Revolution also affected people’s social lives. In this era, marriage was seen as much more than just the union of two people. For people living in that period, marriage did not only mean establishing a family, so some social rules and pressures expected to be followed affected marriages. Beyond companionship, marriage also aimed to maintain or enhance financial stability.

The dynamics of marriage in the Victorian period were defined by distinct roles. While men were responsible for the livelihood and economy of the house, women were responsible for housework and childcare. For this reason, it was important for women of the period to marry rich men to raise their living standards, live in better conditions, and have a voice in society. In these marriages, the parties' status and economic situation were considered. Social expectations also played a significant role in marital decisions. People from socially and financially equal families were expected to marry each other. There were certain marriage traditions in the Victorian period, and their pioneer was Queen Victoria because her marriage idealized love and social responsibility. Her happy and strong partnership with Prince Albert established a model that shaped the marriage norms of the era. For these reasons, people living in the Victorian period placed great emphasis on weddings. An example of this influence is noted as follows:

The one family occasion that became more public in the nineteenth century was the wedding, although it was limited to invited guests. When Queen Victoria broke with convention and walked down the aisle to musical accompaniment, wearing pure white instead of the traditional silver and white gown and colored cape, she created an overnight "tradition." Thousands of middle-class women imitated her example, turning their weddings into the most glamorous event of their lives, an elaborate celebration of their entry into respectable domesticity. (Coontz, 2005, p. 167)

The importance given to weddings was directly proportional to the sanctity of marriage, and it was seen as the most important event for women. This was because it was important for women to prioritize their economic freedom. Securing a comfortable life often depended on marrying a wealthy husband, which further underscored the importance of marriage for women during this time. Although Queen Victoria was a strong female figure who reigned for many years, excessive importance was given to marriages and weddings during her period, and women were given restrictive social roles contrary to the queen's character. Women's rights to personal development and education remained limited because ideal marriages were defined by women's commitment to home and fulfillment of domestic duties. Contrary to the developments in England during the Victorian period, women were still under pressure. Many

believed that technological developments after the Industrial Revolution destroyed society and the family structure and tried to keep the women under control.

Since marriages were primarily based on financial interests and property inheritance, families often arranged marriages. For example, families who sought to strengthen economic ties often arranged marriages between their sons and daughters. Personal interests and practical decisions often preceded love and romantic relationships. This theme is evident in *Wuthering Heights*, where economic conditions and differences in social status significantly influence the characters' lives and decisions. The destruction caused by economic concerns affects all the characters and the relationship dynamics between them.

Looking at the history of marriage in the Victorian period, one can see that marriage was not considered as an event consisting of desires and emotions. The Victorian era is known as a restrictive period that was based on rigid social and moral norms. In such a society, marriage was based on reason rather than desire. Schaffer (2016) explains this situation as follows:

What made people marry in Victorian fiction was not necessarily desire—indeed, Victorians often found “human desire” to be a very bad reason for marriage. We might have more luck looking in the Victorian novel for “non desire” and domestic fiction. (2016, p. 22)

Victorian marriages were generally based on a system in which emotions were kept in the background, and couples expected only material or moral support from each other. Reasons such as social status and economic concerns were prioritized when making marriages. At this juncture, it is crucial to acknowledge the role of literature as it serves as a valuable source of information for examining marriage agreements and the social norms of that period. These marriages during the Victorian period constituted the focus of many novels written at that time. Many novels from this time focus on themes such as couples' priorities when getting married, emotional conflicts, being torn between emotions and logic, gender inequality faced by women, and the factors influencing family formation. Novels such as *Wuthering Heights* and *Jane Eyre* can be cited as examples to reflect these issues of the period.

The type of marriage commonly performed in the Victorian period was described as “familiar marriage.” Schaffer (2016) explains the concept of familiar marriage as “a Victorian literary convention that developed out of the eighteenth-century ideal of marrying from rational esteem rather than romantic love. Historians often call this ‘companionate marriage’” (Schaffer, 2016, p. 2). This concept reflects how marriages were typically arranged among individuals from similar social circles without an emphasis on romantic love. In the Victorian period, familiar marriage was regarded as the ideal type of marriage, and agreement between families, suitability of social status, and economic situation were the conditions for ensuring it. Therefore, it was an understanding of marriage in which the bond of acquaintance between two people was prioritized over emotions and romantic relationships. In this type of marriage, couples could be friends or relatives who had known each other for a long time. More importantly, these couples were expected to fulfill familial responsibilities and create an environment of trust. An example illustrating familiar marriage can be found in the novel *Jane Eyre*:

God and nature intended you for a missionary's wife. It is not personal but mental endowments they have given you: you are formed for labor, not for love. A missionary's wife you must —shall be. You shall be mine: I claim you— not for my pleasure, but for my Sovereign's service. (Brontë, 1848, p. 613)

This quote captures the essence of familiar marriage in *Jane Eyre*, which is a novel written by Charlotte Brontë during the Victorian period. In this conversation between the character Jane and her cousin St. John, no love relationship is observed, and the parties have known each other for a long time. John emphasizes duty over emotional needs and prioritizes his missionary duty. In the logic of familiar marriage, as in this example, there is an environment of trust and a rational family life where only duties are fulfilled.

The marriage of Catherine and Edgar Linton in *Wuthering Heights* is an example of a marriage based on reason rather than love. After Catherine receives a marriage proposal from Edgar, the dialogue between Catherine and the maid Nelly illuminates this situation :

— Perfectly right; if people be right to marry only for the present. And now, let us hear what you are unhappy about. Your brother will be pleased; the old lady and gentleman will not object, I think; you will escape from a disorderly, comfortless home into a wealthy, respectable one; and you love Edgar, and Edgar loves you. All seems smooth and easy: where is the obstacle?

— “Here! and here!” replied Catherine, striking one hand on her forehead, and the other on her breast: “in whichever place the soul lives. In my soul and in my heart, I’m convinced I’m wrong.” (Brontë, 2005, p. 84)

The character Nelly enumerates the rational aspects of Catherine’s marriage to Edgar Linton. Through this marriage, Catherine will fulfill the requirements of a familiar marriage. Catherine’s brother and the family elders will approve this marriage, her social status will rise, her economic situation will improve, and she will marry a respected person. However, later in the dialogue, Catherine talks about her love for Heathcliff. As it can be seen, the concept of marriage of convenience is associated with external factors and social rules rather than inner feelings. Therefore, Catherine’s marriage to Edgar exemplifies a familiar marriage.

In the Victorian era, marriage was important for women to secure themselves socially, but they also needed legal protection for economic security. The Married Women’s Property Act was an essential piece of legislation in this sense. This act was prepared to protect married women’s property rights and enacted in the nineteenth century. During this period, women were restricted and oppressed not only socially but also legally. Their legal rights were restricted, and their ability to manage their own property was limited. This act gave nineteenth-century women the right to manage their own property. With this law, women became free regarding their property rights and economic independence. This step strengthened the social position of women in society and gave them legal power. Therefore, the Married Women’s Property Act was a significant step for Victorian women.

The nineteenth century marked the beginning of jurisprudence in favor of women. Divorce during this time was a complicated and costly process, especially for the middle-class. The Divorce Act and the Matrimonial Causes Act of 1857, made the process easier for people of all classes. Margaret K. Woodhouse (1959) discusses the

reform of the legal system and the religious courts in *The American Journal of Legal History*:

An anomaly from the Middle Ages and the day of the universal church, the church courts still represented the established church amid fast developing protestant sects. The fundamental linking of the common law and the canon law had never been broken. The English lawyers faced the task of trying to bring medieval institutions designed to serve a religiously homogeneous population into harmony with the nineteenth century, its heterogeneous denominations and changing social standards. (1959, p. 260)

In nineteenth-century England, the church played a key role in shaping the understanding of law. Anyone seeking a divorce had to deal with the demands of the church courts and Protestant sects. English lawyers tried to adapt the legal processes to the changing social norms. The Marriage and Divorce Bill centralized divorce proceedings, making them independent of the church. This law secured both marriage and divorce for women and made divorce procedures in the nineteenth century more equitable and straightforward, especially for women. Thus, women were both empowered legally, and they did not have to remain in unhappy marriages. This constitutes an important step towards women's equality and welfare. In summary, with this reform movement in the nineteenth century, a secular legal system independent of the church's dominance emerged. Women gained more autonomy and freedom in their social lives.

During the Victorian era and beyond, women experienced societal exclusion and oppression that continued into subsequent generations. Simone de Beauvoir was born just after this period, and her feminist thought and understanding of individual freedom are essential for both society and literature today. Issues such as class discrimination and women's inequality in the social environment are prevalent in her works. In her book, *The Second Sex*, she reflects on how societal expectations about marriage continue to shape women's identities:

Simone-Ernestine-Lucie-Marie Bertrand de Beauvoir was born in 1908 into a reactionary Catholic family with pretensions to nobility. She had a Proustian childhood on the Boulevard Saint-Germain, in Paris. But after World War I,

her father, Georges, lost most of his fortune, and without dowries Simone and her sister, Hélène, had dim prospects for a marriage within their class. Their mother, Françoise, a banker's daughter who had never lived without servants, did all the housework and sewing for the Her pious martyrdom indelibly impressed Simone, who would improve upon Virginia Woolf's famous advice and move to a room of her own—in a hotel, with maid service. Like Woolf, and a striking number of other great women writers, Beauvoir was childless. (Beauvoir, 2010, p. 8)

Growing up in Paris within a family that claimed nobility exposed her to a culturally rich environment that shaped her feminist perspective. On the other hand, this background illustrates how de Beauvoir's family navigated the challenges posed by societal norms similar to those experienced during the Victorian era. Beauvoir's feminist outlook developed from her family's experiences during this period, and the fact that her mother managed all household duties despite having grown up with servants is a reflection of how deeply entrenched Victorian values influenced domestic life even into de Beauvoir's time.

As with many women of her time, including those in Victorian society, marriage was seen as an essential element to secure one's future in Beauvoir's family. Although Simone and her sister were of marriageable age, they lacked dowries due to their family's financial difficulties. Finding a suitable candidate was tough because they did not have enough financial means to have a good marriage. Although Simone's mother grew up in a household with a maid, she sacrificed her life for her family. This situation is an indication of how post-war financial losses directly affected women's domestic lives and the marriage status of young girls. The decline in social status due to reduced income negatively affected the women of the Beauvoir family on multiple levels. Affected by her mother's passing and societal pressures surrounding marriage, Simone chose not to have children herself, and she prioritized her independence while taking inspiration from Virginia Woolf's advocacy for women's space. Simone de Beauvoir articulates how societal expectations surrounding marriage create pressure on women:

The destiny that society traditionally offers women is marriage. Even today, most women are, were, or plan to be married, or they suffer from not being so. Marriage is the reference by which the single woman is defined, whether she is frustrated by, disgusted at, or even indifferent to this institution. (Beauvoir, 2010, p. 353)

According to this discourse, societal norms define single women's identities regardless of their feelings toward marriage. Considering the social pressure, it does not matter whether women are married or not. Because women of the period were evaluated by society according to the marriage norm, it limited women's ability to build their identity and live their lives freely. In drawing parallels between de Beauvoir's experiences and those of Victorian women like Catherine in *Wuthering Heights*—who faced similar societal pressures regarding marriage—the interconnectedness of these historical contexts becomes clear.

John Stuart Mill was another prominent thinker and theorist who wrote for women's rights in the Victorian era. His wife, Harriet Taylor Mill, made him think about women and influenced his views on gender equality through their intellectual partnership. Mill dedicated *On Liberty* to his wife:

To the beloved and deplored memory of her who was the inspirer, and in part the author, of all that is best in my writings- the friend and wife whose exalted sense of truth and right was my strongest hurt, and whose approbation was my chief reward—I dedicate this volume. Like all that I have written for many years, it belongs as much to her as to me; but the work as it stands has had, in a very insufficient degree, the inestimable advantage of her revision; some of the most important portions having been reserved for a more careful re-examination, which they are now never destined to receive. Were I but capable of interpreting the world one half the great thoughts and noble feelings which are buried in her grave, I should be the medium of a greater benefit to it, than is ever likely to arise from anything that I can write, unprompted and unassisted by her all but unrivaled wisdom. (Mill, 2001, p. 5)

According to this dedication, Harriet Taylor Mill's influence on John Stuart Mill cannot be underestimated. This emphasizes the importance of Harriet Taylor Mill's role as a woman at a time when women's feelings and thoughts were often overlooked.

Additionally, he emphasizes that he cares for and supports his wife as a friend and husband. In this way, Mill showed that a Victorian marriage could be a partnership with an emotional bond and an exchange of ideas. Through this acknowledgment of Harriet Taylor Mill's influence on his work, he shows that spouses in marriage can support and nurture each other's work. He also states that his writings have become much more valuable with the unique wisdom and guidance of his wife. This is an indication of how important the existence and efforts of women are. Mill's dedication advocates for greater social engagement among women while asserting their equal status alongside men within society, which was a progressive view at that time.

In summary, the Industrial Revolution was an important event for the change of the socio-economic structure of England. Accordingly, significant changes occurred in society during this period. The middle class examined in the novel is an example of this change. With this revolution, new business lines were established, new classes were formed, and economic and technological changes occurred. As a result, society was divided into classes: employers, middle class, and workers. The Great Reform Act was an important event for these social transformations and reforms. The Reform Act of 1832 was the beginning of important events for the middle class, and in 1918, women over the age of 30 were able to vote, which was another example of social reforms. Thus, the political power of the middle class increased in the 19th century. On the other hand, marriage was of great importance for the Victorian period in terms of women's social positions. Women in the Victorian period aimed to develop financial stability through marriage. The dynamics of marriage in this period showed changing roles for women and men. Men were responsible for the financial responsibility of the house, while women were responsible for the household chores and childcare. Women evaluated their spouses according to their economic freedom. The Married Women's Property Act was an important piece of legislation in the Victorian era as women gained legal protection. With this legislation, women became free to be economically independent. On the other hand, the Marriage and Divorce Bill made divorce proceedings independent of the church. The intellectual exchange and development of ideas between John Stuart Mill and his wife Harriet Taylor Mill constituted an important example in terms of the importance of women having a voice in society. Consequently, it can be said that the transformations in this period redefined societal roles and laid the foundation for gender equality.

3. THEORY-BASED REVIEW OF WUTHERING HEIGHTS

3.1. Social Classes in Wuthering Heights

Wuthering Heights reflects the sociological structure of the time in which it is set. This novel was written in Victorian England, and it explores social hierarchies and class differences. The story in the novel takes place in two settings: Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange. Emily Brontë portrays different social classes and conflicts between three different classes: the upper class, the middle class, and the lower class. The characters belonging to these classes reflect the social life and economic conditions of people in nineteenth-century England. The novel focuses explicitly on the effects of economic conditions on human connections and romantic relationships.

The novel's social classes are generally associated with different settings. The upper class is represented by the place known as Thrushcross Grange. Thrushcross Grange is the home of the Linton family, and it exemplifies the surroundings of the Victorian upper class. This place is large, rich, and spacious, with fertile land. It represents the Victorian upper class with its rich and sumptuous structure and design. The interior of the house is exceptionally comfortable. The members of the Linton family living in this house are well-educated people. In Thrushcross Grange, a calm and chaos-free atmosphere prevails. Throughout the novel, the upper class, in this setting, is seen as a point that the middle and lower-class characters try to reach. The people in the novel conform to Victorian norms and behave accordingly, and the marriages of most of the characters in the novel serve as strategic means to elevate social standing and acquire property. The aspiration to rise to the upper class was considered a necessity for Victorian society. Edgar Linton is the representative of the upper class in the novel, and he is an example of a well-endowed, educated, and wealthy gentleman. Unlike many others who experience fluctuations in their social standing, Edgar Linton remains firmly entrenched in his bourgeois position from beginning to end. His education and wealth distinctly set him apart from others and reinforce his role as a symbol of upper-class stability and privilege within the narrative.

Another member of the Linton family who plays a vital role in the novel is Isabella Linton. Isabella is the sister of Edgar Linton. She is an educated and elegant

young woman, just like her brother. In the latter portion of the novel, she marries Heathcliff, and this marriage results in a tragic outcome. Her marriage to this lower-class individual does not fit in with the Victorian era in terms of social status. Also, it leads her to unhappiness. Isabella's marriage to someone from the lower class leads to social mobility, and it challenges traditional class boundaries and shows that individuals could move between social ranks. Nevertheless, this kind of mobility often came at a high cost, especially during the Victorian period, where societal pressures and personal sacrifices were significant.

The middle class was an essential class during the Victorian period. Individuals belonging to the middle class often faced economic constraints, and it was characterized by aspirations for upward mobility of its members. In Emily Brontë's novel, the Earnshaw family living in Wuthering Heights serves as a representation of the middle class, and this family consists of Mr. Earnshaw, his son Hindley, and his daughter Catherine. In addition to these people, servants such as Nelly, Dean, and Joseph also live there. Mr. Earnshaw finds Heathcliff on one of the streets of Liverpool and brings him to Wuthering Heights. He adopts Heathcliff, and he becomes a member of the family there. It is important to note that Mr. Earnshaw owns Wuthering Heights and earns his living from his land. Therefore, as the owner of the estate, he contributes to social mobility by adopting Heathcliff. This indicates that he does not discriminate regarding status and rejects social prejudices. The children of the estate, Hindley and Catherine are both well-educated members of this family, and upon their father's death, Hindley becomes the owner of Wuthering Heights, and the management passes to him. However, Hindley cannot maintain his socioeconomic status after losing his father's assets. This is a situation that changes Hindley's socioeconomic status. Since his youth, Hindley treats Heathcliff with contempt and constantly humiliates him because he is from a lower class and of a different race. Hindley's attitude towards Heathcliff exemplifies social conflict in the Victorian period. As Hindley maintains his dominance in the house, the conflictual situation between Hindley and Heathcliff constitutes social injustice. Catherine, Hindley's sister and a resident of Wuthering Heights, is also educated like her brother. Catherine's relationship with Heathcliff begins amicably, and she initially disregards his lower status. However, as the narrative unfolds, she ultimately chooses to marry Edgar Linton in accordance with

Victorian marriage conventions. This shows that she prioritizes financial security over personal affection since she does not see Heathcliff as a suitable husband because of his low economic status. This decision provides an example of the impact of social class on relationships and marriages in nineteenth-century England. By marrying Edgar Linton, Catherine achieves social mobility as a result of her own choices and efforts. In summary, the interactions within the Earnshaw family illuminate broader themes of class struggle and social mobility in Victorian society. Therefore, the novel illustrates how individual choices are often constrained by societal norms and economic realities, reflecting the complexities of middle-class existence during this transformative period in British history.

On the other hand, Heathcliff is the most striking character, with his changing social position, origin, race, relationships, and exclusion. Heathcliff is portrayed as a character who lacks a sense of social belonging. When Heathcliff first comes to Wuthering Heights as a child, he is portrayed as an orphan of an unknown origin and a lower class individual. Mr. Lockwood, who seeks to rent Wuthering Heights, is very impressed by Heathcliff upon their first encounter and describes him as a

[...] dark-skinned gipsy in aspect, in dress and manners a gentleman: that is, as much a gentleman as many a country squire: rather slovenly, perhaps, yet not looking amiss with his negligence, because he has an erect and handsome figure; and rather morose. (Brontë, 2022, p. 13)

In light of the information given here, it can be concluded that Heathcliff's adulthood is dark-skinned but handsome, with a sullen face and a harsh temperament. After going to the city and returning rich many years later, although his financial situation is good, his appearance is still sloppy. The gypsy emphasis used by Lockwood in his definition is the striking element here since it highlights his perpetual outsider status. Nelly, the maid of the house, describes Heathcliff's arrival at the estate by Mr. Earnshaw and describes him as

[...] a dirty, ragged, black-haired child; big enough both to walk and talk: indeed, its face looked older than Catherine's; yet when it was set on its feet, it only stared round, and repeated over and over again some gibberish that nobody could understand. (Brontë, 2022, p. 43)

Just as in his adulthood, Heathcliff's attire in his childhood is described as sloppy and messy. He looks older than his peers. It can be assumed that the reason behind this appearance is his homelessness and difficult upbringing. His depicted physical traits are constantly associated with his lower-class status. He is explicitly referred to as a gypsy throughout the novel. For instance, Hindley derogatorily addresses him as "gypsy" during a confrontation (Brontë, 2022, p. 46). Therefore, in addition to being used as a servant, he is also described as a gypsy, an adjective that triggers his lack of belonging. Heathcliff, who appears as an example of a lower class individual, does the work of the house and farm after the death of Mr. Earnshaw and is used as a servant by Hindley. The concept of servitude brings the problem of hierarchical inequality and racism. Emily Brontë illustrates this theme by interpreting this exclusion and racism through the character of Heathcliff in the book with the following sentences:

"I seek no revenge on you," replied Heathcliff, less vehemently. "That's not the plan. The tyrant grinds down his slaves and they don't turn against him; they crush those beneath them. You are welcome to torture me to death for your amusement, only allow me to amuse myself a little in the same style, and refrain from insulting as much as you are able." (Brontë, 2022, p. 117)

Here, Heathcliff articulates the torture he experiences, the violence he suffers, and the insults he hears. In this social conflict and injustice environment, Heathcliff endures violence in this servant and master relationship.

Heathcliff's position both at home and work illustrates the working conditions of the lower-class individuals in the Victorian period. Heathcliff's love for Mr. Earnshaw's daughter, Catherine does not help them to overcome their class differences. As an uneducated boy from a lower-class background, Heathcliff lacks both moral grounding and formal education. When he learns that Catherine will marry Edgar Linton, he disappears for a few years and then returns to Wuthering Heights as a wealthy man. The transition between these classes, as in the example of Heathcliff, signifies social mobility. Heathcliff's effort to move up and raise his status depicts the goal of lower-class and middle-class people. To acquire property, Heathcliff first buys Wuthering Heights from the bankrupt Hindley. Another move he makes to strengthen his economic situation is to marry Edgar's sister, Isabella. Later, Linton, the child of

Heathcliff and Isabella, marries Cathy, the daughter of Catherine and Edgar, which is an attempt to consolidate power. Ultimately, when Linton dies, Heathcliff inherits Thrushcross Grange from Cathy. Class conflicts are apparently observed here, and Emily Brontë also emphasizes the legal restrictions on women's inheritance. The forced marriage of Cathy Linton and Linton Heathcliff demonstrates Cathy's lack of a say in her own property before the law.

3.2. Class Distinctions in Wuthering Heights

Social classes and the sharp separation of these classes have caused discrimination in all societies throughout history and have become a problem. Elizabeth Barret Browning is a poet who lived in the Victorian era, and like many of her contemporaries, she focused on themes such as child labor and class discrimination in her poetry. In her poem "The Cry of the Children," she illustrates these themes:

Go out, children, from the mine and from the city,
Sing out, children, as the little thrushes do;
Pluck you handfuls of the meadow-cowslips pretty,
Laugh aloud, to feel your fingers let them through!
But they answer, "Are your cowslips of the meadows
Like our weeds an ear the mine?
Leave us quiet in the dark of the coal-shadows,
From your pleasures fair and fine!

"For oh," say the children, "we are weary,
And we cannot run or leap;
If we cared for any meadows, it was merely
To drop down in them and sleep.
Our knees tremble sorely in the stooping,
We fall upon our faces, trying to go;
And, underneath our heavy eyelids drooping,
The reddest flower would look as pale as snow."
(Browning, 2012, pp. 31-32)

In these verses, child workers are asked to engage in joyful activities such as singing songs, collecting grass, and laughing. They ask whether the flower the poet mentions resembles the wild grass near the mine where they work. In addition, the children further state that they are in the darkness of the coal shadow and deprived of beautiful pleasures. In the second line of the quote, the children state that they want to sleep and rest because they are exhausted. The children mentioned in the poem are a depiction of child workers who worked during the Victorian period and were subjected to class discrimination. Browning's critique parallels Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*, where characters like Heathcliff endure severe hardships due to their social status. Elizabeth Barret Browning also criticizes Victorian-era society, lack of equal income, child labor, and class discrimination with this poem. This poem is an important example of demonstrating working conditions and social decay prevalent during her time.

Wuthering Heights, published in 1847, sheds light on the British society of that period. It is clearly stated in the novel that there were serious distinctions among social classes in 19th-century England. Because Heathcliff does not come from a noble family, he is bullied and treated poorly by the people around him. Although he has a good friendship and a love affair with Catherine, their bond is not enough for them to find happiness. Catherine's closeness with Heathcliff is not tolerated by her family as her descent from that family makes her an upper-class person. In the novel, Heathcliff is seen as a scapegoat and exposed to unfair treatment. The estate, *Wuthering Heights* represents a society of average social status, but it is not a good place in terms of virtue and fair treatment. Despite working hard from an early age, Heathcliff is undervalued. Terry Eagleton explains this dynamic with the following words:

If the scapegoat is shut out of the city, the city will fail to see in its monstrosity an image of the violence and disfigurement which lie at its own foundation. The Grange in *Wuthering Heights* is a place of order and civility, but one which veils the hard labor and exploitation on which these virtues are based. (2005, p. 16)

This statement shows that the relationship between upper-class society and virtue is not directly proportional and that the wealthy upper-class exploits labor. When Heathcliff grows up and returns as a wealthy man, he appears arrogant and malevolent. The injustices and bullying he endured during his earlier years at Wuthering Heights lead him to harbor resentment and class-based grudges. Within this context, social class discrimination and marginalization can be described as phenomena that damage people's psychology and emotions from an early age. It is possible to say that inequality of opportunity creates injustice that fosters anxiety about the future and disrupts social harmony. This class discrimination, which causes conflict and deterioration in human relationships, disturbs Heathcliff and Catherine throughout their lives. As they comply with the rules imposed by the social structure of the Victorian era, Heathcliff and Catherine are forced to struggle with class discrimination and its consequences.

In Victorian England, class discrimination was influenced by many factors. One of the most important was individuals' education and cultural level. Social status during this period was generally directly proportional to the education and cultural development of the individual. In this period, access to information was limited, which caused inequalities in education levels. This situation slowed the acculturation of lower-class people, and it created significant differences between the lower and upper class. The lower class remained illiterate due to a lack of financial resources. The inequality of educational opportunities and lack of development caused the cultural gap to widen even further. The upper class in Victorian England had access to high-quality education, while the middle class received a more standard level of education. Unfortunately, the lower class lacked proper educational opportunities.

Heathcliff's experience in the estate, Wuthering Heights, exemplifies this systemic class discrimination, and the cultural conflict that he experiences due to lack of education reflects the social reality of that period. One of the differences between the residents of Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange is their level of education. Terry Eagleton (2005) asserts that "While landowners became supporters of turnpikes, canals, ports, and banks," in Victorian England, "the children of wealthy merchants who purchased land in the eighteenth century received such a good education that they emerged as more genteel country gentlemen than the upper classes" (2005, p. 5). In

this context, since Heathcliff is a boy taken from the streets of Liverpool to Wuthering Heights by Mr. Earnshaw, he has yet to have an opportunity to have an education because of his loneliness and lack of financial means. Heathcliff, who is unable to read and write, is an uneducated and uncultured individual due to his limited opportunities. However, the other residents of Wuthering Heights, Hindley and Catherine have a wealthy father, and he provides them with education. This creates a class conflict, particularly between Heathcliff and Hindley during their childhood. One of the motivations underlying Hindley's belittling and mistreatment of Heathcliff is because of the fact that Heathcliff lacks formal education. Edgar and Isabella, who live in Thrushcross Grange, have better conditions than Hindley and Catherine's, as they belong to the upper class. Heathcliff's educational disadvantage is described in the novel as follows:

First, by that time he had lost the benefits of his early education: constant hard work, begun quickly and finished late, had destroyed the curiosity he had once possessed in the pursuit of knowledge and the love of books or learning. The sense of childhood superiority inculcated in him by old Mr. Earnshaw's favorites had vanished. (Brontë, 2022, p. 77)

As a child, Heathcliff does not have equal opportunities compared to his peers, and his labor is exploited within the household. Here, Brontë draws attention to the unequal living conditions and child labor in the British society of the Victorian period. Education, being integral to social change, is a missing piece in Heathcliff's life. As Hindley's social status and wealth increase, he humiliates and mistreats Heathcliff. This indicates social corruption and intensifies Heathcliff's class hatred.

The only solace for Heathcliff is his love for Catherine. Catherine's decision to marry Edgar Linton drastically affects his future. His loss of Catherine increases his class hatred and fuels his desire for revenge against the bourgeois class. After Catherine chooses Edgar Linton, Heathcliff leaves Wuthering Heights and goes to the city to become rich. This move mirrors the migration of the working class from the countryside to urban centers during the Industrial Revolution. At this point in the novel, Heathcliff symbolizes the people of a country trying to recover and survive

during this transformative period. His ambition to rise above his current position reflects the aspirations of the working class.

Heathcliff returns to Wuthering Heights as a wealthy gentleman who embodies these two worlds. Terry Eagleton (2005) explains how this embodiment of the two worlds of Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange is reflected through Heathcliff:

Heathcliff is subjectively a Heights figure opposing the Grange, and objectively a Grange figure undermining the Heights; he focuses acutely the contradictions between the two worlds. His rise to power symbolises at once the triumph of the oppressed over capitalism and the triumph of capitalism over the oppressed. (Eagleton, 2005, p.112)

Heathcliff represents the oppressed group of the capitalist system that rose with the Industrial Revolution in England. Before going to the city, Heathcliff's working conditions were always challenging. He worked hard but was always oppressed by Hindley, with whom he lived in the same house. For this reason, Heathcliff is seen as a representative of the oppressed working class. Heathcliff's social and economic status increases after going to the city and becoming rich. Following the idea that Heathcliff embodies these two different worlds, Wuthering Heights reflects Heathcliff's domineering and ambitious nature across social statuses because the events he experienced at Wuthering Heights made him that way. Thrushcross Grange, on the other hand, is the symbol of his rise as it is a place of high social standing. Heathcliff takes possession of it after becoming wealthy, and this makes him participate in the capitalist system. Therefore, the transformation of his social position exemplifies the conflicting mood between the two classes.

Another contradiction between Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange is the origins of the people. Having a good ancestry and family background is one of the most essential markers of status for Victorian society. Most novels written during the Victorian period emphasize the importance of people's origins. In *Wuthering Heights*, origins play a vital role in the development of events as well. What causes class discrimination, exclusion, and exploitation is primarily people's family background. People at Thrushcross Grange, for instance, belong to a well-educated family with a prestigious background. On the other hand, when Heathcliff first comes to Wuthering

Heights, he is described as a gypsy without any surname or family ties. Mr. Earshaw finds him on the street in Liverpool and gives him his surname. Because of this, Heathcliff feels the lack of identifiable heritage throughout his life. The fact that he does not have a specific family background and origin is the primary source of his feelings of non-belonging. He finds a sense of connection through Catherine and feels happy with her. In other words, he satisfies his sense of belonging thanks to Catherine. However, his sense of belonging vanishes again when he loses her. In brief, these distinctions between the two worlds highlight how people's origins significantly shape their future lives. Heathcliff challenges the boundaries of these two worlds as he embodies a paradoxical figure, representing both the marginalized, disadvantaged working class due to his obscure family background and the privileged, glorified upper class he later ascends to.

Catherine is another character in the novel who undergoes a transformation and crosses into a different class, and when she comes to Thrushcross Grange, a different environment and customs await her. This estate is described as a more luxurious place than Wuthering Heights. It is in a refined setting on decent land, not in the middle of wild moorland like Wuthering Heights. After marrying Edgar Linton, Catherine experiences a change in social class. This compels her to adapt to a new lifestyle in Thrushcross Grange. Instead of running through the bushes with Heathcliff in disheveled clothes, she is in the position of continuing her life as a lady at Thrushcross Grange. In other words, Catherine is adapting to a new culture and a class with higher standards than the one she is used to. As noted by Ullah (2001),

The Grange has changed Catherine not only in dress, but also in behaviour, attitude and taste. She comes to her farmhouse as a girl redefined, and is inculcated in a high-class culture, which is very unlikely to suit the inmates of the Heights. (Ullah, 2001, p. 87)

Paralleling Heathcliff's rise in status, as her standard of living rises, so does her cultural level. In the 19th century, a rich and beautiful appearance and a high artistic level were among the most essential elements to gain respect in society, and this is reflected in the character development of these two characters in the novel. In Victorian England, these qualities were seen as indicators of high status. As a result of

their efforts to rise in class, Catherine and Heathcliff become respectable people in terms of Victorian society's standards. However, the outcomes of social mobility differ drastically for the characters. Regarding social status and class change, Hindley, for instance, presents a complex picture. At the end of the novel, Hindley, Mr. Earshaw's heir and Heathcliff's tormentor at the beginning of the plot, finds himself in a wretched state. He is portrayed as an individual whose economic situation and social position are initially good, but later, he becomes a character who is unhappy and in debt. When Heathcliff returns from the city, Hindley's downfall becomes evident. Hindley, who has lost everything because of his gambling debts, dies at the end of the story as an alcoholic who has lost all his possessions. Therefore, the journey between classes ends differently for each character. Therefore, Hindley's destruction exemplifies how classes can change and influence people negatively while highlighting different impacts of social class transitions on individual fates.

The family is another element in the novel where the effects of class discrimination are seen. Family relationships are portrayed as the basis of all the problems Emily Brontë explores in her novel. Since the family is the first place where people socialize, most of the learned habits and knowledge are acquired within the family. Therefore, family is one of the most critical factors in shaping a person's character traits and behaviors. When the characters' personalities are examined, it is observed that Heathcliff's lack of belonging, Hindley's bullying character, and his mistreatment of Heathcliff result from their upbringing. People who grow up with their families can be educated by their families and receive the guidance they need for their future. However, the fact that Heathcliff has no family leaves him without any familial guidance. On the other hand, Hindley is Catherine's older brother, and he wants to protect her, so the first reason Hindley cannot accept Heathcliff is his instinct to protect his family. The strong bond he has formed with his family makes him cruel to Heathcliff, a stranger he does not know. This is why he always wants to keep Heathcliff away from Catherine.

It is possible to observe the effects of family ties on a person's psyche and protective instincts. However, class differences and economic conditions also play a crucial role in shaping these relationships. The efforts to forge family ties may appear positive, but they can also cause pain for the characters and trap them in a cycle of

struggle. As Terry Eagleton (2005) observes, “The genealogical structure of the book makes sense here: family relationships both provide the essence of hostility and complicate that essence by creating a tightly integrated form out of the essence of struggle and fragmentation” (p. 98). Therefore, the family relationships established in the novel provide the essence of hostility. Heathcliff’s first entry into the Earnshaw household triggers tension. Even the maid Nelly does not like Heathcliff when she first sees him. Although Mr. Earnshaw adopts Heathcliff, he is frequently rejected by other members of the household, which is a result of the instinct to protect family ties against strangers.

The impact of class differences on family ties is also present in other established families of the novel. Heathcliff and Isabella’s marriage, for example, illustrates the destructive effects of class-based revenge. Their union lacks love and trust, and Isabella ultimately flees and leaves her son behind. Similarly, Catherine’s marriage to Edgar Linton represents a pragmatic decision to gain status, and this brings suffering to multiple characters, including herself and Heathcliff. Heathcliff’s mistreatment of his own child, Linton, as well as Hindley’s son Hareton and Edgar and Catherine’s daughter Cathy, underscores how broken family relationships are intertwined with the pursuit of power and revenge.

In conclusion, Brontë presents various familial arrangements and marriages to explore the effects of class distinctions on family bonds in *Wuthering Heights*. Many relationships in the novel are motivated by social ambitions, and they often lead to emotional devastation. The novel ultimately portrays family relationships as both a source of belonging and a stage for conflict, which are shaped by the overarching influence of social class.

3.3. Exploring Marital Relationships in *Wuthering Heights*

Marriages were primarily based on pragmatic reasons in Victorian England. This is an essential topic for understanding the pragmatic human relations that underpinned the Victorian sociological structure. The intellectual environment shaped by the Victorian era, technological developments, and philosophical movements such as pragmatism form the basis of this study. Concerning the theory of pragmatism, the

theorists whose works this study will benefit from include John Stuart Mill, John Dewey, and William James.

John Stuart Mill explains the relationship between people's actions and happiness by linking joy with utilitarianism. This explanation is essential to understand the logic of the marital decisions made. In his work *The Subjection of Women*, Stuart Mill examines utilitarianism through the relationships between men and women. He claims that personal interests must be sacrificed in a relationship and posits that marriage is a serious disadvantage if the man has no partner above the standard level. The collective talents of both sexes can lead to substantial advantages, which means that men will benefit financially and emotionally in a society where women are given equal opportunities. Despite the theoretical underpinnings of equality, women were not provided with such equality in the Victorian era. This societal context prevented women's ability to develop and build themselves up. Similar to the character Catherine, women had to focus on the economic side of their relationships rather than the emotional side. They needed to secure their lives by making decisions in that direction. Catherine's decision to end her relationship with Heathcliff in pursuit of financial stability can be an example in this context.

On the other hand, the pragmatic method aims to answer research questions by combining theoretical and applied knowledge. When theoretical knowledge is implemented, research results can have practical implications for daily life. In this sense, John Dewey sees pragmatism as the basic approach to evaluating ideas. He argues that their practical consequences determine the truth of ideas and provides examples. William James approaches this relationship from a pragmatic perspective by linking the truth or falseness of events to their consequences.

The couple, Catherine and Edgar, serves as the initial focus of the analysis since the marriage of this couple is central to the novel. Catherine is a woman who lives in a house among the bushes called Wuthering Heights. Catherine is accustomed to the standards of living of a middle-class family. One day, when she visits Thrushcross Grange and has to stay there for a few days, Catherine is introduced to upper-class life and is impressed. Edgar Linton, the owner of this place, falls in love with Catherine and wants to marry her. Catherine makes a choice and accepts his proposal. What

primarily can be observed here is that Catherine considers her interests. The dialogue between Catherine and the housemaid, Nelly, supports this interpretation by revealing her motivations and priorities in navigating her relationships:

“Why do you love him, Miss Cathy?”

“Nonsense, I do—that’s sufficient.”

“By no means; you must say why?”

“Well, because he is handsome, and pleasant to be with.”

“Bad!” was my commentary.

“And because he is young and cheerful.”

“Bad, still.”

“And because he loves me.”

“Indifferent, coming there.”

“And he will be rich, and I shall like to be the greatest woman of the neighbourhood, and I shall be proud of having such a husband.”

“Worst of all. And now, say how you love him?”

“As everybody loves—You’re silly, Nelly.”

“Not at all—Answer.”

“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. There now!” (Brontë, 2022, p. 83)

The dialogue here shows that Catherine values status and financial security; therefore, Edgar Linton is a suitable husband for her. Catherine agrees to marry Edgar Linton for these reasons because Linton comes from a more respectable family and is an upper-class member, so his high status and economic situation will secure Catherine’s stability. Thus, the marriage of Catherine Earnshaw and Edgar Linton represents a union realized under the influence of factors such as pragmatic thinking, social status, and economic security. This marriage is also shaped by utilitarian interests rather than romance and emotional ties. William James (1916) articulates a relevant perspective

about the rightness and wrongness of decisions: “The truth of an idea is not a stagnant property inherent in it. Truth happens to an idea. It becomes true, is made true by events” (p. 138). In other words, the rightness or wrongness of an action depends on the consequences of that action. Catherine’s decision to marry is motivated by her desire to achieve greater well-being and security in society. Stuart Mill (2016) establishes the following relationship between happiness and pragmatism: “The creed which accepts as the foundation of morals, Utility, or the Greatest Happiness Principle, holds that actions are right in proportion as they tend to promote happiness, wrong as they tend to produce the reverse of happiness” (p. 15). Mill explains here that the happiness and well-being of individuals are essential. In this context, Catherine’s decision to marry Edgar is considered pragmatic as it aims to increase her happiness and well-being.

“—My love for Linton is like the foliage in the woods: time will change it, I’m well aware, as winter changes the trees. My love for Heathcliff resembles the eternal rocks beneath: a source of little visible delight, but necessary. Nelly, I am Heathcliff! He’s always, always in my mind: not as a pleasure, any more than I am always a pleasure to myself, but as my own being. So don’t talk of our separation again: it is impracticable; and—” (Brontë, 2022, p. 87)

In these words against Nelly, Catherine states that her heart and soul belong to Heathcliff, and her soul is not separate from him. She sees her own existence as independent of Heathcliff. She expresses her deep feelings for him by saying that she is Heathcliff. She explains that her love for Heathcliff is like eternal rocks. She states that Catherine's love for Linton is not real and this love will change like the leaves in the forest in time, indicating that it is a temporary love. Although Catherine's feelings for Linton are temporary, she chooses Linton in order to secure her place in society. Catherine's marriage, despite her feelings, thinking logically, and choosing her love, which she knows is temporary, for the sake of her true love, is an indication that she sees marriage as a pragmatic relationship.

Another married couple examined in the novel is Heathcliff and Isabella Linton. In this context, Isabella’s pursuit of happiness is pragmatic. Heathcliff is found on the street and adopted by Catherine’s father, Mr. Earnshaw. When he comes to

Wuthering Heights, he falls in love with Catherine. However, their union never materializes even though Catherine loves him too. Catherine marries Edgar Linton to ensure her security and rejects Heathcliff. Heathcliff leaves Wuthering Heights and flees to the city because he loses his great love, Catherine. When he returns a few years later, he appears as a rich and powerful man. The desire for power and the feeling of revenge motivates Heathcliff to marry Isabella Linton. Unlike Catherine, she is a naive and sensitive girl from a wealthy background. She decides to marry Heathcliff hastily because she is attracted to Heathcliff without understanding his intentions. However, Isabella looks for happiness in her relationship with Heathcliff. In doing so, she ignores her family's expectations and marries him. Her pursuit of happiness aligns with Stuart Mill's principle of happiness, which highlights the importance of individual fulfillment even when it challenges conventional values. However, this decision leads to disillusionment as it underscores the complexity of seeking happiness in an unequal relationship.

Heathcliff's pragmatic attitude in this marriage is based on other reasons. Heathcliff marries Isabella, considering his interests as he wants to gain power and land. Marrying Isabella Linton will allow him to link Wuthering Heights to Thrushcross Grange. Thus, Heathcliff has the chance to possess Edgar Linton's assets. He strengthens his social status and economic situation and takes revenge against Edgar for marrying Catherine.

"She's her brother's heir, is she not?" he asked, after a brief silence.

"I should be sorry to think so," returned his companion. "Half a dozen nephews shall erase her title, please heaven! Abstract your mind from the subject at present: you are too prone to covet your neighbour's goods; remember this neighbour's goods are mine." (Brontë, 2022, p. 112)

In this section, Heathcliff asks if Isabelle Linton is the heir of his brother Edgar. With this question, Heathcliff aims to learn whether Isabelle has the right to inherit. It is possible to observe through the character of Isabella that in the Victorian era, women had no say over their own property. The control of women's inheritance was up to a

man. This dialogue between Heathcliff and Catherine proves how Heathcliff views his marriage to Isabelle from a pragmatic perspective. When Heathcliff's attitude is examined pragmatically, his marriage to Isabella aims to benefit from Isabella's wealth and her family's power. Heathcliff's case aligns with the utilitarian principles because his actions lead to the greatest possible benefits for him.

Linton Heathcliff, the son of Heathcliff and Isabella, emerges as a significant character in *Wuthering Heights*, with his personality reflecting the dynamics of class and familial obligations. Through Heathcliff's emotional manipulation, Linton falls in love with Cathy, and Cathy agrees to marry him to help Linton. Heathcliff is behind this marriage plan because he sees it as a way to achieve his own goals. Thanks to Cathy, he will become the owner of Thrushcross Grange. He will expand his property, further increase his status, and avenge Catherine's death. This marriage can be examined from a pragmatic perspective in two ways. First, Heathcliff's sense of revenge and his efforts to acquire property show that he acts for his benefit. The realization of this marriage is a pragmatic approach for Heathcliff. The other pragmatic perspective is that Cathy finds emotional satisfaction by seeing the opportunity to help Linton. The feeling of emotional satisfaction makes her feel happy. These pragmatic decisions reflect a world where characters prioritize their own interests. They also illustrate how pragmatic motivations can coexist with personal emotional satisfaction in the context of relationships within the novel.

Another married couple in the book is Hareton Earnshaw and Cathy Linton, who get married at the end of the novel. Hareton is the son of Hindley Earnshaw and Catherine's nephew. Since Hareton is Hindley's son, he is expected to be the heir to Wuthering Heights. However, since his father Hindley loses his entire inheritance in gambling, Hareton is given to Heathcliff as an adopted son. After Linton Heathcliff dies, a romance arises between Cathy Linton and Hareton Earnshaw. They are the only couple who really find happiness from their union. This is compatible with the aforementioned principle of happiness. From this perspective, there is a situation of emotional utilitarianism and satisfaction. Hareton and Cathy's marriage is the result of love rather than manipulation or strategies. Their happy relationship stands as a hopeful incident amidst all those conflicts caused by class differences and societal pressures.

CONCLUSION

This thesis examines the effects of social status on romantic relationships in Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* from a pragmatic perspective and sheds light on how class distinctions shape the characters' interactions. In particular, the detailed analysis of the romantic relationship between Heathcliff and Catherine reveals the devastating impact of social distinction on emotional dynamics and personal decisions in the novel. The dimensions and effects of this distinction in the Victorian period have been examined pragmatically by exploring the societal barriers. It is observed how the consequences of these class distinctions are reflected in the characters' choices in their social lives.

One of the prominent findings in this thesis is the cultural and social conflict caused by class distinction arising from the relationship between Heathcliff and Catherine. Their decisions prevented them from being emotionally satisfied and revealed the reflection of class distinction in the relationship. Catherine's decision to marry Edgar Linton, although she feels a deep love for Heathcliff, developed out of a desire to secure her social status. This decision indicates that marriage was used to achieve social status in the Victorian era, which is a theme revealed throughout the novel. On the other hand, Heathcliff feels like a battered lower class throughout most of the novel and experiences the pain of being unable to reach the person he loves. This situation leads him to a desire for revenge and greed.

This thesis distinguishes itself by examining the marriages depicted in *Wuthering Heights*, through a pragmatic lens in the context of Victorian-era social norms. The perspectives of key important intellectuals, especially John Dewey and John Stuart Mill, are employed. When the novel's historical background is examined, it is concluded that some historical events directly reflect the time the story takes place. The Industrial Revolution affects the environment in the novel socially and culturally and mirrors the socio-economic consequences of these effects. The industrialization process of England and the class division of society created by this process are observed in the novel.

One of the issues in the Victorian era was the place and role of women in society. The participation of women in business life was limited. They were restricted in social and legal terms compared to men, and as a result of the pressures of the patriarchal society, their roles were often limited to domestic responsibilities such as doing housework and being a good wife and mother. With The Great Reform Act in the nineteenth century, these roles assigned to women began to change radically, and they began to have a voice in society and the legal arena.

The last part of this study presents a new analysis and application of the theoretical frameworks. The fundamental similarities and differences in theoretical understanding are compared, and a general synthesis of the novel is constructed based on its characters. The pragmatist perspective of William James and the utilitarian perspective of John Stuart Mill are integrated to form the core of the study. In this part of the study, a relationship between pragmatism and John Stuart Mill's principle of happiness is explored and applied to the novel. As a result of the findings, these methods were applied to the characters' marital and romantic relationships.

The main aim of this study is to examine the relationship between pragmatism and Stuart Mill's principle of happiness and apply it to the characters' relationships. Observations show that the couples studied in this thesis enter their marriages within a pragmatic framework. Some marriages are driven by financial gain, others for emotional fulfillment. These marriages, which are supposed to bring happiness in both respects, are compatible with Stuart Mill's happiness principle and create a pragmatic context for understanding the choices of the characters. While the characters navigate their feelings, whether happiness or revenge, they act according to their self-interests, which this study evaluates from a pragmatist perspective. This study is essential to understand the basis of the methods that shaped the marriages of people in the Victorian era, as well as their economic, social, and ethical implications of these relationships. The philosophical principles used in the study enhance the depth of the study and provide valuable insights for future literary studies.

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