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Abstract

This thesis has two major purposes: to examine the concept antihero and to discuss if the literary figures of Charlotte Brontë's Jane in *Jane Eyre* (1847) and Emily Brontë's Heathcliff in *Wuthering Heights* (1847), conform to the accepted conventions of the antihero. It studies the wide and complex concept, and tries to make it more understandable by confining it into 'a grey area'. Further, it compares and contrasts Jane and Heathcliff, and uses the concept of the antihero to gain a better understanding of these characters. Finally, it looks at the relationship between female antiheroines and male antiheroes, to see if there are notable differences between these two types of antiheroes.

The literature review offers a theoretical background for this thesis, as it presents earlier research on the concept itself, as well as research on Jane and Heathcliff in relation to the concept. The primary critics that will be discussed in this chapter with connection to Jane is Helen Moglen, who states that Jane was the first antiheroine, and Carol Pearson and Katherine Pope, who disagrees and states that she is a heroine. The primary critics that will be discussed in this chapter with connection to Heathcliff, is Peter L. Thorslev, who argues that Heathcliff is an antiheroic Byronic hero, and Walter Reed, who claims that Heathcliff is a Romantic hero. Moreover, it discusses Bernard Paris's statement where he asserts that Heathcliff escapes the villain label because his evil actions derive from the mistreatment he has been a victim of. The literature review is followed by an in-depth discussion about the concept antihero, where its meaning, origin and purpose are in focus. The aim with this chapter is to set the base for the two following chapters, which are the analyses of Jane and Heathcliff as antiheroes.

This study shows that Jane and Heathcliff can be perceived as antiheroes, because their primary aim with their rebellious behaviour is justice. However, it has also shown that whether Jane is called an antiheroine or a heroine seems to be two sides of the same coin, because for the same reasons some interprets her as an antiheroine, she is perceived as a heroine by others. The perceptions of Heathcliff depend on whether or not the readers are able to sympathise with him, and thus excuse his malevolent actions, or if they are only able to view him as a villainous character. The different interpretations of these two characters indicate that the concept, the grey area they operate within, always is in flux. As society and its principles change, and the tolerance and acceptance increase, the confinements of the concept adjusts with it.

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1. Introduction

'This is the type of hero that fascinates us: the antihero, the character that is just a smidge too good to be labelled a villain even if their actions are sometimes indistinguishable from the bad guys'

<div align="right">(Crusie 2013:6).</div>

The antihero has allured readers and audiences for generations, in movies, television and literature. Too good to be a villain and too evil to be a hero, the antihero is representing a grey area between these two extremes. By being a good character that does bad things, but for the right reasons, the antihero has become a character that the reader root for. Even though their actions are sometimes highly questionable, it will always be possible to justify their behaviour. Antiheroes are divergent, but what they all share in common is that 'they capture our imagination by attempting to balance their evil methods with their good intentions' (Crusie 2013:47).

It is interesting how these antiheroes appeal to the audience, despite their immoral actions. What appears to be the prevailing thought is that because antiheroes tend to be more "realistic" than the hero, it is easier for the reader to identify with them. The flaws of the antiheroes that make them more genuine and sincere, and ultimately, a character the audience understand. The antiheroes always get away with questionable and even criminal behaviour because their purposes are always justifiable. They are all flawed heroes that rebel against the social norms, the unwritten rules of human behaviour.

This thesis aims to take a closer look at the complex literary term antihero, investigating what an antihero is, as well as the purpose of these figures. It compares and contrasts the literary figures of the antiheroes, and these figures are used to gain a better understanding of the fictional characters of Charlotte Brontë's Jane Eyre in *Jane Eyre,* first published in 1847, and Emily Brontë's Heathcliff in *Wuthering Heights*, first published in 1847. The reason for choosing these two characters is their rebellious behaviour, and their positions as outsiders, which means that they are not accepted or does not belong in the society that they live in. In fact, according to Jennifer Joline Anderson in *The Antihero* (2016), antiheroes 'are often outsiders and rebels, alienated and outcast' (Anderson 2016:11). Since Jane and Heathcliff do not conform to the social conventions of the Victorian era, they

fall outside the norm and operate as outsiders in their novels. It is this outsider position that allows them to break the rules and rebel against the structures that segregate them in the first place. Since they are outsiders, they have nothing to lose by rebelling. By examining how Jane and Heathcliff are outsiders, and how this position allows their rebellious behaviour, it will provide a platform for a discussion of them as antiheroes. This thesis investigates if Jane and Heathcliff conform to the accepted conventions for the antihero, and probes why and why not these two characters belong in this category. It also examines how and why Jane and Heathcliff represent the antihero in their respective stories. Furthermore, it explores why such characters are different from others and looks into what the meaning of these characters are, not to mention what they challenge.

The concept antihero is interesting in relation to Jane and Heathcliff because it helps show how complex they are, and it allows room for a political and social analysis of them and the novels they operate in. This is important because it reveals that these characters are not black and white characters. They are not characters that are created just for amusement, excitement or thrill. They are characters with an implicit message. They go against the tide in defence for their principles, and thus challenge social conventions. They are created for "a purpose", and often a purpose to highlight the unfair principles in a society. Therefore, by looking at them in the light of the antihero concept, their fight against injustice is also emphasised. Not only does this thesis, by the help of the concept antihero, explore how we can understand the social and political rebellion of Jane and Heathcliff, it also looks at how this social and political rebellion contributes to a better understanding of the concept. Ultimately, this study investigates how Heathcliff and Jane are in conflict with social structures such as gender roles, social class and social rules, and how this can be seen from an antihero perspective.

The basis of this thesis is Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* and Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*. This material is used for an analysis of two of the main characters, Jane Eyre and Heathcliff. This analysis examines the characteristics and behaviour of the characters, to see if they fit into the concept. By carrying out this analysis, the aim is to achieve a better understanding of them, but also look at how this term can shed light on the important challenges these two are faced with in their respective novels. This latter question is crucial in terms of understanding the roles of these characters, and should be answered along the lines of: because Jane and Heathcliff rebel against certain types of Victorian social politics. Types of politics that this thesis especially focuses on are class politics, plight of women and the prejudice towards foreigners. Jane and Heathcliff rebel against the structures that created

social divisions in the Victorian era, such as the hierarchal class system, but also gender role issues. Jane, for instance, challenges the role of the Victorian woman and strives for equality between men and women. While Heathcliff challenges the social elite by turning their odds against them, and thereby breaks free from the social entrapments he has been a victim of, due to his low-class status. Both of them rebel against the social values and morals of the Victorian era, such as the expectations concerning important matters like family, money and education or occupation.

There is an on-going discussion about Jane and Heathcliff, and critics do not seem to agree whether Jane is a true heroine or an antiheroine. Some even interpret her as both. Heathcliff, on the other hand, seem to be interpreted as an antihero, whereas certain critics have described him as one of the greatest villains. With this in mind, it is interesting to do an in-depth analysis of these two characters to see if they conform to the descriptions of the antihero, and if this will provide a better understanding of them. This classification matters because it contributes to an understanding and justifying of their rebellious actions. In addition, it helps to highlight the "hidden" social critique in the story. By using this classification, it is easier to understand the story itself, and the author's message to its readers. Then again, readers do not need to know if they are reading about an antihero, in order to be able to sympathise with him. The lack of this information does not prevent readers to feel sympathy for such characters. However, by using such a classification, it is easier to understand what the author's intention with the story is. It seems evident that both of the Brontë sisters wanted to highlight the unfairness of the Victorian society by using these characters. As such, this classification adds an additional meaning, as it presents characters that challenges well-established social conventions or principles, with an aim for justice.

The fundamental literature used to answer the research questions in this thesis, is literary criticisms and earlier research about the subject. Two books that are essential when examining the antihero are *Antihero* (2016) by Fiona Peters and Rebecca Stewart, and *Antiheroes, Heroes, Villains, and the Fine Line Between* (2013) edited by Jennifer Crusie. These books give an in-depth look at the antihero, as they discuss several antiheroes from literature and movies. What is interesting with these books is that while other critics try to clarify the characteristics of the antihero, to determine what exactly an antihero is, these are more concerned with putting the antihero in a grey area, and thereby leave the discussion open. Their focus is more directed towards the purpose of the antihero, which according to them, seems to be a more important concern than a characters characteristics. They also question the immense fascination of the antihero, despite some of their repulsive actions.

Critics such as Peter L. Thorslev with *The Byronic Hero: Types and Prototypes* (1962) and Percy G. Adams with 'The Anti-hero in Eighteenth Century Fiction' (1976) are also significant for this thesis. While Adams examines "the birth" of the antihero as well as the terms meaning, Thorslev describes features and characteristics that classify the antiheroic Byronic hero. In addition, he is one of the critics that claim Heathcliff to an antihero.

In terms of the analysis of Jane, Helene Moglen's *Charlotte Brontë: The Self Conceived* (1978) is significant for this thesis. Moglen is the source of the claim that Jane is an antiheroine, and therefore it plays a central role in this thesis. Carol Pearson and Katherine Pope also discusses Jane in their book *The Female Hero in American and British Literature* (1981), where they reflect on the role of the female hero. This book embrace important issues that are very relevant for this thesis, such as Victorian social politics, especially womens powerless situation in a patriarchal society. Pearson and Pope also questions why literary critics have neglected characters like Jane, and links this to myths about women. They contradicts Moglen's claim, as they state that Jane in fact is a heroine.

Heathcliff, on the contrary, is more often associated with the antihero, mainly because he is much more controversial than Jane, with his wicked and evil behaviour. This behaviour has led to him being elucidated as one of the greatest villains. Other critics disagree because they argue that he is too good to be a villain. Harold Bloom's *Major Literary Characters – Heathcliff* (1993), a collection of criticism, and *Wuthering Heights, a selection of critical essays* (1970) edited by Miriam Allot, examines Heathcliff's traits and behaviour, and will therefore be useful in the analysis of him.

1.2 Background and definition of terms

The reason behind the choice of research is the interest in the social politics of the Victorian era, but also the curiosity of a literary concept that is often misunderstood and widely discussed amongst literary critics. Not only is the concept antihero useful for understanding the social and political importance of these characters, it is also interesting in its own right, because it denotes a kind of character that operates betwixt and between different social positions. Jane and Heathcliff provide a useful starting point for exploring the concept, because they raise controversial questions that few people in their respective and fictional societies dare to bring up. Thereby they shed light on the social and political issues exploited

by the elite of the Victorian society. Even though there seem to be a general agreement of the literary concept antihero, there is room for interpretations. Both of these fictional characters of the Brontës, provides good platforms for discussion, as Jane is interpreted as both a heroine and an antiheroine, and Heathcliff as an antihero and a villain.

In order to guide the reader, it is necessary to clarify some literary terms and concepts. Due to the bewilderment of the concept antihero, this is crucial to explain. Because literary terms such as Byronic hero, Romantic hero and villain are used in chapter five about Heathcliff, these will be briefly clarified in the following sections. In addition, to divert any confusion when discussing the heroine, this term will be explained first.

1.2.1 The heroic hero

It is fundamental to have knowledge about the hero, a concept that in many ways forms the basis of the concept of the antihero. There are two ways of understanding the concept of hero/heroine. It can be used as a label for a character that manifests and possess heroic qualities and attributes, such as bravery, courage, altruism, morality and kindness. However, it is also used purely as an alternative to "protagonist", 'the principal male and female characters in a work of literature' (Cuddon 1998:378). Since both of these practices are in use, it can lead to misunderstandings when talking or writing about a hero/heroine. Nevertheless, Cuddon underlines that 'in criticism the terms carry no connotations of virtuousness or honour. An evil man or a wicked woman might be the central characters' (Cuddon 1998:378). Sometimes, both of these practises are used at the same time when referring to a hero, as one can refer to a hero as a protagonist with heroic qualities and attributes, often on a quest towards a goal.

This thesis is using the concept of hero as in heroic, even though the characters that will be analysed are protagonists as well. It is undoubtedly that Jane is a heroine in the sense that she is a female protagonist, but this thesis will look into her heroic qualities, and investigate whether or not she can be perceived as a heroine or an antiheroine. Ultimately, this thesis will be using the concept of heroine as in *heroic*, not just in the meaning of a female protagonist.

1.2.2 The antihero

The literary antihero is a complex term. Its meaning and application is widely discussed, and there are disagreements among literary theorists and researchers regarding its definition. It seems like the biggest issue is the confusion about the antihero being "the bad guy" or more specifically a villain. With the many definitions to be found, it seems like there is room for interpretation. In *A Glossary of Literary Terms* (2012), M.H. Abram and Galt Geoffrey Harpham defines the antihero as 'the chief person in a modern novel or play whose character is widely discrepant from that of the traditional protagonist, or hero... Instead of manifesting largeness, dignity, power or heroism, the antihero is petty, ignominious, passive, clownish or dishonest' (Abram 2012:14-15). When talking about a hero, one might envision a glorious and victorious character that fights for the good and defeats the evil. One might think of heroes like Hercules or Superman, or the heroes of classical epics, such as Odysseus. When talking about the antihero then, one might anticipate the opposite of a hero. This could be the reason why people misunderstand the concept, and why there are different interpretations of the antihero as a literary term. As this concept is in constant change, it does not appear as if there is a single correct interpretation. Unlike the hero and villain concepts, which in many ways are black and white concepts, the antihero concept is wide and grey. However, there seem to be corresponding ideas and interpretations, which might suggest a coherent pattern when defining an antihero. Antiheroes push the limits of what is acceptable, it seems like the more consistent interpretations are of a character that rebels in order to achieve justice, often in a societal context.

Stewart describes the literary term as a paradoxical term, and points out that 'the tradition of the hero can be seen to feed into the role of the antihero of modern and contemporary fiction' (Stewart 2015:7). She exemplifies using Achilles and Oedipus, 'all being capable of extreme violence in honour of their personal codes' (Stewart 2015:7). Critics do not agree on the antihero's first appearance in literature. O'Faolain suggest that its first appearance was in the 17th century (O'Faolain 1971:203), but Percy claims that the antihero has existed as long as there has been a hero, and as long as there have been good and evil (Adams 1976: 31). The question regarding the origin of the antihero will be more elaborated on in chapter three.

Stewart introduces the antihero by referring to what it is not – 'honest, idealistic, courageous, honourable, noble' (Stewart 2015:7). However, it does not seem as if these factors set the standard for what it means to be an antihero. A character does not have to be

courageous or honest to be an antihero, but a character can be courageous and honest and still be an antihero. Jane is an example of an antiheroine that might be seen as courageous and honourable for being honest in a society where her opinions and beliefs were not approved, and she is idealistic for believing in a different society than she is a part of, a society based on equality. This also applies to Heathcliff, who might be seen as courageous for taking up the battle against his oppressors. Nevertheless, their courage is not what that drives them; it is their intentions and motivations. Whether or not they are courageous, does not seem to make them less antiheroic. Heathcliff and Jane's believe in justice, and their desire for achieving it, no matter the cost, appears to be the essential factor to why they are antiheroes. Stewart continues to point out what the seeming role of the antihero then is, which corresponds with both Jane and Heathcliff:

> '[…] to challenge the ways in which we see, or wish to see, ourselves, and whereas heroes are celebrated and revered due to their own code of conduct, requires no veneration; in fact, these characters refuse to bow down to the expectations of society and rebel against the rules that bind us all' (Stewart 2015:7).

In many ways, it looks like the concept changes through time, as Stewart also points out, some traditional heroes are now seen as antiheroes. Stewart also links the antihero to the tragic hero, as the antihero, like the tragic hero, sometimes 'allows the darker side of their nature to surface' (Stewart 2015:7). It seems like the concept of the antihero is wide and that other labels such as 'Byronic hero' and 'Romantic hero' fit under this category as well. Thorslev is one of the critics that elaborate on the antihero and the Romantic hero as the same concept, but with different names for different eras. He even says that in one sense, the Romantic hero is a transformed villain, a villain that has become sentimental or sympathetic (Thorslev 1962:66). The most important attitude is that Romantic heroes are 'fundamentally and heroically rebellious, first against society only and later against the natural universe or against God himself' (Thorslev 1962:66). It seems like loneliness is a feature that applies to the Romantic hero, as 'they are solitaries in the sense that the eighteenth-century types are – by birth, by nature, or by breeding', and most of them are solitaries 'because of conscious moral choice' (Thorslev 1962:66). Thorslev argues that 'in any case, adjustments to society as it exist, is impossible for them, they either go down to glorious defeat, cursing God and dying, or they commit their lives to transforming the world' (Thorslev 1962:66). This also relates to Jane and Heathcliff. Jane commits her life to not giving in for the Victorian expectations and principles, and in the end shows, that it is possible to achieve "a happy ending" even if she is

does not adhere to the customs. Heathcliff refuses to be defeated by the tyrannical Hindley, and strives after justice over the characters that wronged him. However, this also leads to his death.

Stewart points out another aspect that is connected to the antihero and antiheroine, namely gender roles. She especially highlights the term in relation to:

> '[…] a shared gender crisis between men and women, with neither gender being able to escape the traditions of gender roles: whereas male antiheroes fail to find contentment as father and husband,….female antiheroes are punished for pursuing traditionally masculine roles and therefore sacrificing traditionally feminine roles, such as motherhood.' (Stewart 2015:12).

Antiheroes often fall outside the accepted norms and the traditional gender roles. This is something that both defines Heathcliff and Jane Eyre, and is a big part of why they may be interpreted as antiheroes. They are both characters of the Victorian era, from novels that challenged the social structures and conventional standards in this era. Jane and Heathcliff did not fit in to the accepted canon, and were used as weapons of criticism towards the established Victorian beliefs and values. Believes and values that not only suppressed women, but also anyone who did not belong in the upper reaches of the social class hierarchy. Heathcliff is a living evidence of this, because even if he is male, he is suppressed because of his foreign origin. What makes Heathcliff and Jane special is the fact that they, rather than bowing down for the established principles, rebel against them.

To make it clear then, even though the literary term has its grey areas, the fundamental description is of a flawed hero. The antihero, like the hero, wants justice, but is willing to do some questionable deeds in order to achieve it. There are no written rules of what characterizations an antihero has to obtain, and therefore there are room for different understandings of the term. Moreover, just like other characters, antiheroes differ from each other.

Crusie argues that most of the antiheroic characters have a monster inside, but what she finds fascinating with these characters is that 'each of these characters succeed by embracing their inner monster, harnessing it in order to effect justice' (Crusie 2003:6). Justice is a word that Crusie use when defending the evil actions performed by antiheroes, as she says that,

> 'All though we are not so naïve as to believe that justice is always the primary aim of the antihero, justice or some form of it often occupies a top spot on the list. This makes the

antihero the best type of character to cheer for: a flawed, complex hero we can relate to, one who occasionally loses his or her war but never fails to do what needs to be done. No matter how brutal the task, antiheroes save the day in a manner that is not only entertaining, but often downright badass' (Crusie 2003:7).

Crusie argues that the evil actions performed by antiheroes are justifiable, because their aim with this rebellious and sometimes evil behaviour is to achieve justice in some form. What is problematic with these characters, but is also the reason why they are antiheroes, is the fact that this justice is often 'a style of justice that is slightly outside of the law, wrought by sometimes-questionable means. It is a justice that does not hesitate to step into the grey area between good and evil' (Crusie 2003:6). This notion of questionable means, make some people mix them with villains. It is important to separate the antihero and the villain, as these two terms have different meanings.

1.2.3 Villain

Since there seem to be confusions in the accounts of critics regarding the antihero as similar to the villain, this concept needs to be clarified for the reader. In dictionaries of literary terms and theories, the villain is often described as a character with evil intentions, and often functions as the protagonist's opponent in a story. While Abram and Harpham define the villain as an antagonist, and claim that 'if the antagonist is evil, or capable of cruel and criminal actions, he or she is called the villain' (Abram 2012:294), J.A. Cuddon claims the villain to be a 'wicked character in a story' (Cuddon 1998:971). Thorslev emphasizes that the prime purpose of villains in novels is 'to provide vicarious thrills for largely feminine audiences through the agonized sensibilities of persecuted young heroines' (Thorslev 1962:53). When pointing out the significance in dividing the villain from the antihero, Thorslev says that 'the Gothic Villain is the protagonist of the novels in which he appears in the sense that he is the major character, he is nevertheless always a villain, not a Romantic rebel-hero' (Thorslev 1962:53). He refers to a certain difference between them, because in contrast to the antihero, the villain 'acknowledges the moral codes of society and his own wickedness in violation those codes, and therefore never engages our sympathies with his rebellion' (Thorslev 1962:53). What seems to be significant here is the fact that the villain does not gain the readers' sympathy, unlike the antihero. While villains are evil and wicked just for liking, antiheroes are immoral or evil for a purpose, often the purpose of justice. It is

essential to keep this in mind when separating the two, because antiheroes do not hurt for pleasure; they want to achieve some form of justice, either for personal reasons or to improve the standards and norms of the society they live in. Jane and Heathcliff are two examples of these different forms of justice, because Jane's quest is driven by her self-interest, to improve her own situation, but she also wants to achieve equality in the society she lives in. Heathcliff, on the other hand, wants personal justice after being mistreated, a mistreatment he is exposed to because he does not conform to the social standards of the Victorian society.

1.3 Summary of chapters

This introduction has presented the aims and research questions of this thesis. It has given an orientation of the most important terms, which will be elaborated further on in the literature review. With this summary section, it has aimed at giving the reader an overview of the chapters in this thesis. To summarize, this thesis will investigate the discussion of the literary term antihero, and use the figures of the antihero to gain a better understanding of Jane Eyre and Heathcliff. Besides investigating the discussion of the literary term antihero, this thesis also adds new arguments to the discussion and challenge exciting critique. Since Moglen appears to be one of the few critics that classify Jane as antiheroine, this thesis adds extra arguments to this debate, supporting Moglen's claim. Thereby it contribute to supplementary and new arguments to why Jane can be interpreted as an antiheroine, but also why seeing her as an antiheroine can be helpful in the understanding of her. The main issue with Heathcliff is the discussion whether or not he is an antihero or a villain. This thesis supports the on-going debate, arguing that he is an antihero and not a villain, as some critics claim. This is important because if we look at Heathcliff from an antiheroic perspective, his evil actions are justified as he is executing them for the right reasons, to achieve justice. By questioning other critics, this thesis aims to add new questions to explore and debate.

In chapter two, the literature review is presented, with an attention on how Jane and Heathcliff have been perceived by other critics. There will be a focus on how critics have seen them in relation to concepts such as antihero, hero and villain, and reviews from the time of publication will be included, as this contributes with a historical perspective. The literature review will examine ideas and concepts that are important for this thesis, such as the idea of

good girl and bad girl and Victorian xenophobia. In addition, it will highlight deficiencies in earlier research on the topic.

In chapter three, the focus is on the literary term antihero, where this thesis will attempt to do a more in-depth analysis of the concept. There will be a brief explanation of the term by using an illustrative model representing the grey area. In addition, there will be a discussion about the birth of the antihero, as well as its general purpose. This concept has been given a separate chapter because of its complexity, and because it is helpful for the reader to have a clear idea of how this thesis interprets the concept of the antihero before continuing with the analyses of Jane and Heathcliff.

Chapter four consists of the analysis of Jane Eyre, with a focus on her position as an outsider and how this contributes to her rebellious behaviour. It discusses and presents various aspects of her and her behaviour, and views this from a heroic and antiheroic perspective.

Chapter five consists of the analysis of Heathcliff, with a focus on his position as an outsider and how this allows his rebellious and evil behaviour. It discusses and portrays different features of him, and investigates whether or not Heathcliff is an antihero or a villain.

Chapter six is the last and concluding chapter of this thesis, and it answers the research question as well as summarizes the main findings. It also makes suggestions for further research.

2. Literature Review

We live in a time when the antihero has taken over the spotlight, with its fascinating characterizations of both good and evil. These figures have always been around, but through the ages, they have emerged with different names. As stated in the introductory chapter, antiheroes are a little too good to be labelled a villain, even if their actions are highly questionable. It does not seem as if the literary antihero has drawn attention to many researchers, and it seems like critics have different interpretations of the concept. However, what appears to be a recurring idea is of the antihero being a rebellious character who sometimes uses doubtful methods in order to effect justice.

This thesis will contribute to the limited field of research on these flawed heroes. Moreover, by using Jane and Heathcliff, it will look at two characters that have not been focused on in relation to this concept. Because antiheroes are related to societal attitudes and beliefs, the relationship between these characters and the Victorian society must be taken into consideration when discussing them from an antiheroic perspective.

2.1 Jane Eyre, the first antiheroine

> 'Charlotte Brontë created the first "anti-heroine": one who defined the conventions of both fiction and society. Orphaned, poor, and plain, faced with the pressures of making her own way in a world which measured the likelihood of her success by the degree of her marriageability (her familiar connections, her economic status, and, above all, her beauty), Jane tests the limits of social, moral, and psychological possibility, discovering the kinds of power which are in fact available to a woman' (Moglen 1978:106-107).

Jane Eyre was created as a revolt against Victorian standards, and in many ways, she represented a critique towards the social establishments. She was given characteristics that separated her from the accepted norms, and because of that, she was exposed to challenges throughout her journey in the novel. Many critics have elaborated on Jane's attributes and the purposes of these in her story. Some portrays her as a heroine, because no matter what she is always true to herself. Others see her uprising and revolt as offensive and repulsing, and as a threat to the well-established norms in society. What is evident, however, is that Jane, with her flaws, represents a new kind of heroine, an untraditional heroine, which tests the Victorian limitations. In chapter four, the thesis will analyse and discuss Jane's attributes and behaviour,

and see them in the light of the antihero concept. By doing this, it sets out to examine Jane as an antiheroine, as well as how her antiheroic features highlight political issues.

As stated earlier, there are different opinions of the characterizations of Jane. Despite the general tendencies of perceiving Jane as a heroine, some critics suggest that she rather represents antiheroic features. One of these critics is Moglen, who argues that Jane is an antiheroine, in her book *Charlotte Brontë: The Self Conceived* (1978). The quotation above is cited from this book, and is of significant interest, as this is one of the few places Jane is labelled an antiheroine. Moglen does not only state that Jane is an antiheroine, but she also concludes that she was the first. She argues that it was Charlotte Brontë's intention to create a new kind of heroine unlike anyone else, 'one who could be neither more or less than herself' (Moglen 1978:106). From Moglen's perspective, Jane was the creation of something unusual and unique, a heroine like no other heroine, a heroine that represented human flaws. A heroine that dared to break with the principles of the Victorian society and, despite this, realized her happy ending. As Moglen emphasizes, many factors made Jane unconventional in the time of publication. Not only is she all by herself in a world where everything she represents are viewed with ignorance and repulsion, she is also lacking the attributes of a "proper" Victorian woman. Moglen uses Jane's 'degree of marriageability' to highlight some of the attributes that prevented her from being a traditional heroine. Jane is an orphan with no money and left with a family of a higher class than her, which results in her becoming an outsider. However, Jane's attributes alone are not what make her an antiheroine; it is rather the fact that she, as Moglen puts it, 'tests the limits of social, moral, and psychological possibility' (Moglen 1978:107). Jane's "testing" of the Victorian principles, is rebellious behaviour in Victorian eyes, because she contradicts traditional beliefs and norms, and consequently threatens society.

Moglen also discusses material from another critic who shares the same view of Jane, namely Elizabeth Gaskell, a Victorian author and critic. Since Gaskell's book is published in the 19th century, it brings an historical perspective of Jane to the table. Given that Gaskell's main source when writing this book was letters written by Charlotte Brontë herself, provides us with a better understanding of why Jane was given such unconventional characteristics. In *Life of Charlotte Brontë*, originally published in 1857, Gaskell asserts that Brontë was resolute in making her heroine 'plain, small and unattractive' (Gaskell 2001:21). She claims that:

'She [Brontë] once told her sisters that they were wrong - even morally wrong – in making their heroines beautiful as a matter of course. They replied that it was impossible to make a heroine interesting on any other terms. Her answer was, "I will prove to you that you are wrong; I will show you a heroine as plain as small as myself, who shall be as interesting as any of yours"' (Gaskell 2001:21-22).

In other words, Jane appears to be a result of an uprising against the traditional heroines and the accepted canon. Apparently, the concept of beauty was important in terms of the creation of a heroine. Brontë wanted to show that other aspects than beauty could interest readers, and therefore she desired to make a heroine on the same terms as the traditional hero, '- by virtue of her interiority: her qualities of mind, character and personality' (Moglen 1978:106). According to Moglen, by creating this new kind of heroine, Charlotte Brontë could question the distorted gender roles characterized and supported by social structures (Moglen 1978:106). This factor seems very relevant for Moglen's allegation of Jane being an antiheroine, as she says that Brontë 'in freeing Jane Eyre from the conventional trappings of femininity and granting her liberty to feel and express her feelings, to think and express her thoughts, in asserting her "humanness", created the first anti-heroine' (Moglen 1978:106). In other words, the fact that Jane breaks with, and thus rebels against the entrapments and expectations that are pushed upon her because she is a female, ultimately makes her an antiheroine. Given that Moglen is one of few critics that identify Jane as an antiheroine, her account is significant for this thesis, as one of the most important sources that supports the claim of this thesis. However, even if there are not many critics that points out that she is an antiheroine, several have discussed her rebellious behaviour, and claimed that she does not represent the traditional heroine as she represents this idea as a bad girl. These observations are carried out in the analysis chapter.

Moglen's theory of Jane as an antiheroine emerges from her rebellious behaviour towards the rooted societal principles and norms. In order to understand how Jane can be interpreted as rebellious and uprising it is important to see her in light of the historical context. The following section provides a brief orientation of the social structures of the Victorian era that will be discussed in the analysis chapter of Jane, such as gender roles, with a focus on femininity and the role of women, as well as social class and norms of the Victorian society. It exposes the social issues that Jane differs from and rebels against, and thereby gives a backdrop for the political and social analysis of her and the novel she operates within.

2.2 Behaviour expectations in Victorian England

In the Victorian era, women were expected to behave and to obey the patriarchal principles of the society. When elaborating on the "proper" female behaviour, Carol T. Christ and Catherine Robson state that 'a woman who tried to cultivate her intellect beyond drawing-room accomplishments was violating the order of Nature and of religious tradition' (Christ & Robson 2012:1608). Victorian women were not supposed to be educated beyond 'drawing-room accomplishments', and instead of seeking higher education, women were to be valued for 'other qualities considered especially characteristics of her sex: tenderness of understanding, unworldliness and innocence, domestic affection, and, in various degrees, submissiveness' (Christ & Robson 2012:1608). This is corresponds with Richard D. Altick deliberations in *Victorian People and Ideas* (1973). He argues that the Victorian 'woman's serfdom was sanctified by the Victorian conception of the female as a priestess dedicated to preserving the home as a refuge from the abrasive outside world' (Altick 1973:53). According to Altick, the stereotyped woman 'was to cultivate fragility, leaning always on the arm of the gentleman who walked with her in a country lane or escorted her in to dinner' and 'she was The Angel in the House' (Altick 1973:53). Altick refers to the idea of the stereotypical angel, which originated out of Coventry Patmore's poem *The Angel in the House*, published between 1854 and 1862. As Christ and Robson also argue, this icon 'has often been used to encapsulate a patronizing Victorian attitude toward women, for which the poem is cited as prime evidence' (Christ & Robson 2012:1613).

Altick continues to write that women, especially from the upper classes, 'worked harder at being decoratively futile than any productive occupation would have required' (Altick 1973:51). It seems like whether she liked it or not, the Victorian woman had no other choice than to obey the unwritten rules of this limited female position. Altick argues that 'whatever their social rank, in the eyes of the law women were second-class citizens' (Altick 1973:51). Altick's ideas agrees with François Bédarida perceptions in *A Social History of England 1851-1990* (1991), where he discusses Victorian values, and argues that 'the feminine condition in the Victorian age derived from the existence of two superimposed structures – the ancient patriarchal regime and the modern bourgeois regime' (Bédarida 1991:116). In other words, women's positions in society were determined by social class and maybe more importantly by men. 'Traditionally relations between the sexes were governed by a fundamental principle, the subordination of woman to man' (Bédarida 1991:117).

In *English Literature in Context* edited by Paul Poplawski, Maria Frawley elaborates on the historical context, and explains what was accepted and acknowledged in the Victorian society. The issue of Jane being an orphaned and poor girl, as Moglen also comments, may be contextualised with Frawley's understanding of this era. Frawley says that 'it is undoubtedly true that for Victorians birth, family, education, source of income, as well as speech and manners, combined to position one of as a member of a particular class' (Frawley 2008:458). As Jane does not represent any of these factors that Frawley highlights, she consequently ends up as an outsider. Moreover, because she is an outsider, she is destined to live a tough life suppressed by her superiors. However, it is also this outsider position that leads to her rebellious position. Since she is in this position, it is easier for her to rebel, as she has nothing to lose and everything to win. Jane can either bow down to the principles that limits her, and to the people that repress and treat her as unequal to them, or she make herself heard in hope for a better life. She chooses the latter, and thus becomes unpopular and threatens the whole social order.

Jane represents an uprising against the standards of social behaviour in the Victorian society, especially concerning women's position in a patriarchal and class divided community. In order to understand Jane as an outsider, it is essential to keep in mind the aspects that make her an outsider. In addition to not participating in certain forms of conventional "female behaviour", she is an outsider because of her social position as an orphan and a governess. Nearly all critics claim that Jane contrasts the archetypical woman, both by attributes and behaviour. Debra Teachman, for instance, claims that 'Jane Eyre's character is far from the traditional Victorian heroine' (Teachman 2001:1), and says that because she is a plain girl and has lower social position complemented with a lack of fortune, Jane is very unlikely to attract a husband and marry. In fact, Teachman argues that Jane is 'unlikely even to have a clandestine relationship with a man in nineteenth century literature' (Teachman 2001:1). Teachman's arguments of Jane being an untraditional Victorian heroine, contributes to the discussion of her as an antiheroine.

2.3 Good girl with a touch of bad

In Pat Macpherson's *Reflecting on Jane Eyre* (1989), another concept is brought to the table. Macpherson mentions the idea of Jane being a "bad girl", which in many ways links to

Moglens interpretation of her as an antiheroine. When describing Brontë's protagonist he says that:

> 'As a heroine, Jane's first act is to demolish the Victorian verities that childhood, and especially girlhood, are originally innocent, and that innocence is virtue, and goodness is patient humility. She challenges us to identify with her *as a bad girl,* who will not relinquish her criticism of the conventions with which the Reeds bully her, all 'for her own good'' (Macpherson 1989:4).

Macpherson comments that Jane challenges the reader with her behaviour. This new idea of Jane being a bad girl should be added to the discussion, as it underscores Moglen's claim. However, what does it mean that Jane is a bad girl? What is a bad girl? When Macpherson refers to Jane as a bad girl, he speaks of Jane's 'rebellious acts of self-definition' (Macpherson 1989:87). He especially calls attention to her life at Gateshead when she is 'angry and alienated' (Macpherson 1989:92), and highlights the episode when Jane 'strikes back with improvisation' after John has struck her with a book. As such, Macpherson defines Jane as a bad girl due to her angriness and rebellious act.

In the article 'The Four Box of Gendered Sexuality: Good Girl/Bad Girl &Tough Guy/Sweet Guy', Betsy Crane and Jesse Paul Crane-Seeber elaborate on the idea of good girls versus bad girls. They claim that:

> 'We face what feel like dichotomies. Either we are the "good girl" who will be a wife and mother, or we are a "bad girl." There are parts of the second "box" that offer each gender more freedom, but being in that box comes with its costs. Neither box really works for us, or represents the full range of our authentic selves. Yet the "boxes" represent images and labels that can have tremendous power' (Crane & Crane-Seeber 2003:17).

The stereotypes that Crane and Crane-Seeber discuss are interesting in relation to Jane, as she breaks with the Victorian idea of a "good girl" and thus emerges as a "bad girl". As cited, these boxes come with different costs. There are initially two scenarios: if Jane chooses to be a good girl, she will be liked and admired, but she sacrifices her freedom. On the contrary, if she chooses to be a bad girl she sacrifices her admiration, but is granted with more freedom. However, Jane's case is different. Because she is an outsider, she will not be liked or admired even if she chose to be a good girl. Consequently, Jane has everything to lose by being a good girl, as she would never receive admiration in the first place, and thus sacrifices her freedom for nothing. In other words, by already being a suppressed outsider, Jane has everything to win by being a bad girl.

Just to make clear what Crane and Crane-Seeber means when referring to a bad girl, some explanations are beneficial to mention. Some of the characterizations they comment when writing about the bad girl are that she 'represents everything the wife/mother tries not to be, and may be accused of when/if she steps out of the good girl role' (Crane & Crane-Seeber 2003:19). These types of women were traditionally women from the lower class, working class, servants or slaves. Crane and Crane-Seeber stresses that because 'poor and working class men had less money and privilege to pass down, poor and working class women had to work to support their children and were thus more socially and financially independent of men/marriage' (Crane & Crane-Seeber 2003:19). In addition, the bad girl is also often educated, or at least has the ability to act or think independently.

The most important factor is that these boxes are created by the society, and as Crane and Crane-Seeber states about the "bad girl"-box, 'the social pressures to avoid this box are immense and intense' (Crane & Crane-Seeber 2003:19). There are many similar traits with this idea of the bad girl and Jane. She is positioned between classes, as she interacts with poor orphans, working-class servants and aristocrats. Even if she has this social mobility, she is never viewed as more than a working-class woman. The Reeds family even see her as 'less than a servant' (C. Brontë 2001:9), as she is poor and financially independent on them. Most importantly, however, seems to be Jane's ability to act and think independently.

In contrast to the critics that see Jane as a bad antiheroine, some critics argue that Jane is in fact a heroine. In *The Female Hero in American and British Literature*, Pearson and Pope portray Jane as a classic heroine. They say that 'women, like men, may attain heroism through their wisdom or through their commitment to a truth beyond that recognized by social conventions' (Pearson & Pope 1981:9). In other words, Jane does not have to fulfil any physical requirements to be a heroine. According to Pearson and Pope, she is a heroine due to her wisdom and knowledge about society and life. Jane possesses knowledge greater than of her superiors, as she is able to resist and challenge the expectations that are laid upon her because she is female. They also cite Molly Haskell, the author of *From Reverence to Rape* (1974), who mention heroines such as Charlotte Brontë's Lucy Snowe and Charles Dicken's Ada, both 'women who were neither beautiful nor especially charming, who did not abide by sex-role definitions, and who (more scandalous than having a child out of wedlock) pursued knowledge and truth for its own sake' (Pearson & Pope 1981:9). Jane could also be described in this way, as she is neither beautiful nor accepts the Victorian ideas of gender roles, but possesses qualities of a higher knowledge and intelligence. Pearson and Pope argue that knowledge, in relation to women, were often linked to strong women, who were 'deviant' and

therefore 'should be punished' (Pearson & Pope 1981:10). According to them, female heroines 'have to be strong, wise, and courageous'. In addition, 'they have to disguise these qualities because, to win the treasure of love and social position, they have to play the role of the passive, dependent, innocent young thing' (Pearson & Pope 1981:10). A consequence of this has been that writers often portray women as secret heroes (Pearson & Pope 1981:10). Brontë, however, did not conceal these "unsolicited" characteristics when writing about Jane, as she portrayed Jane as a wise and strong woman.

2.4 Heroine or antiheroine: two sides of the same coin?

As shown, Jane is both perceived as an antiheroine and a heroine. The same features that some critics believe are essential factors to the antiheroic interpretation of her, are the same features that make Pearson and Pope interpret her as a true heroine. Jane's uprising and revolt against her superiors and society are perceived in two different ways, both heroic and antiheroic. Pearson and Pope believe that 'when she rebels against the Reeds, she escapes from the psychological cage and, asserting her own worth, becomes for the first time truly heroic and human' (Pearson & Pope 1981:165). The rebellious behaviour of Jane is perceived in two ways, but two ways that describes the same phenomenon. While some critics look at her behaviour as repellent, and thus see her as an untraditional character, others see this unconventional behaviour as heroic, as she does not break under the pressure of the Victorian principles.

As Pope and Pearson argue, in *Jane Eyre* Charlotte Brontë 'describes a woman's growth from partial being to a more heroically whole person when her virginal qualities are complemented by the Dionysian ones' (Pearson & Pope 1981:161). In other words, Jane becomes a heroine when her "good" qualities are harmonized with her "bad" qualities. They also argue that Jane as a heroine 'develops wholeness and independence as a result of encounters with two men, each of whom threatens her autonomy' (Pearson & Pope 1981:161). Therefore, according to Pearson and Pope, Jane develops into a heroine as she learns to balance her qualities of innocence and pureness with her 'Dionysian qualities', such as her passion, anger, feelings, imagination and faith (Nancy Taylor: n.d.). Another idea that relates to the heroic aspect of Jane is her journey through life. This idea is tied with the notion of 'wholeness', which Pearson and Popes mention. They argue that the novel's focus is 'on the development in the hero of self-command' (Pearson & Pope 1981:70). Which means in

practice 'that the hero becomes psychologically whole: She learns to balance reason and emotion and to develop the ability not to be emotionally dependent on the man she is to marry' (Pearson & Pope 1981:170). By way of this explanation, it seems as if Jane's journey through life, and the struggles that she overcomes, in the end makes her a heroic heroine.

It is evident that critics disagree on Jane's character, as some critics refer to her as a heroine, while others call her an antiheroine. It seems like some find her heroic because she is true to herself from the beginning to the end, as she stands up for herself and rebels against injustice and inequality among men and women. Others see her rebellious behaviour and uprising against her superiors as revolting, and thus perceive her as an antiheroine. In the analysis of Jane in chapter 4, these factors will be taken into consideration and argued throughout. It appears that whether she is called a heroine or an antiheroine, is two sides of the same coin. The different interpretations of her seem to be influenced by the historical and social context, which consequently, shifts the focus onto politics. However, in order to see if this is the case, this idea will be investigated further in the analysis.

2.5 Heathcliff as an antihero

Is Heathcliff a cold-hearted villain? Is he a Romantic hero or a tragic hero? Or is he an in fact an antihero? Are there even any differences between these heroes that are mentioned in relation to him? There are no doubts that Heathcliff is a highly discussed character among critics and theorists, and it seems to be debated whether he is an antihero or a ruthless villain. Even though there is an extensive discussion about these two concepts, it seems like critics are confused with the blurred line that separates antiheroes from villains. Some antiheroes resemble villains with their wicked behaviour, yet, some differences are important to remember. Yes, antiheroes can be "bad guys", but what separates them from villains is the fact that they are on the "good side".

Heathcliff is a complex character. Some critics and readers find his actions as cruel as it can get, while others have a more understandable approach towards him. Some see him as one of the greatest villains in fiction, while the majority seem to interpret him as some kind of antihero. As mentioned earlier, antiheroes have existed for a long time, but have emerged in literature with different designations, such as Romantic hero and Byronic hero. This thesis investigates if Heathcliff is a villain, as some critics claim, or if he fall in-between good and

evil, and thus operates as an antihero in the novel. To make it clear, this thesis considers Byronic heroes, Romantic heroes and tragic heroes as specific types of antiheroes.

Thorslev argues that the Byronic heroes 'are invariably solitaries, and are fundamentally and heroically rebellious, at first against society only, and later against the natural universe or against God himself' (Thorslev 1962:66). These antiheroic features resembles Heathcliff, as he, after being mistreated and oppressed for many years, dare to rebel against his oppressor, Hindley Earnshaw. Even if Heathcliff's main intention is revenge on Hindley and the other characters that mistreated him, his rebellious behaviour can also be viewed in the light of social politics and as a critique towards the Victorian society. Heathcliff is mistreated because he is different, and because he is an outsider. Moreover, by taking revenge on the people who supported Hindley's tyrannical rule at Wuthering Heights, he signals that such conduct has its consequences. As he transforms into a monster, Heathcliff also challenges nature and God, when he "takes" God's right to punish people into his own hands, because God 'will not have the same satisfaction' as he (E. Brontë 2003:48).

Because Heathcliff is a controversial character, there are many opinions about him. Some critics argue that he is more of a mythic figure or a devil. However, Bernard Paris challenges this view of Heathcliff in his book *Imagined Human Beings: A Psychological Approach to Character and Conflict in Literature* (1997). He argues that even though a common view of Heathcliff is of him as an 'archetype, symbol, or projection of the unconscious who is not supposed to be understood as though he were a person' (Paris 1997:241):

> 'Heathcliff retains his human status, however fiendlike he becomes, because Emily Brontë keeps telling us that he has been victimized and that his viciousness arises from his misery. Perhaps the strongest evidence that she meant us to see his cruelty as a natural phenomenon is the fact that several characters articulate the principle that bad treatment leads to vindictiveness and several others illustrate its operation' (Paris 1997:241-242).

According to Paris, Heathcliff preserves his humanity because his evil actions derive from natural causes. Since he is a victim of bad treatment, readers understand where his behaviour is coming from. In other words, because we sympathise with Heathcliff, he and his wicked actions are excused. This is connected with the idea of the antihero, as the antihero is a character that readers understand and sympathise with. For, as Paris states, readers were meant to view his cruelty as a natural phenomenon, which means that his cruelty is not entirely his own fault.

Walter L. Reed, cited in Bloom, argues in his essay 'Heathcliff: The Hero Out Of Time' that Heathcliff is a Romantic hero (Reed 1993:70). According to him, he is a Romantic hero because has 'gone beyond such conventional good and evil' (Reed 1993:70). However, what seems to be Reeds primarily focus is Heathcliff's love for Catherine. He states that Heathcliff's 'daemon is his possessive passion for Catherine' (Reed 1993:70), an idea that diverge from the one of him developing his hatred because of his oppressive and submissive life as young. According to Reed, it is more important to compare Heathcliff with the tragic heroes of Shakespeare, rather than as a Gothic villain. He reasons Heathcliff to be a combination of Shakespeare's tragic heroes, 'Romeo in his early love for Catherine, Hamlet in his loss of her and his need for revenge, Richard III in his evil usurpation, Macbeth in his hallucinations, Lear in his isolated rage' (Reed 1993:70).

Moreover Reed claims that Heathcliff is 'a composite of Byronic gestures and emotions', and claims that the biggest difference between these the tragic heroes and Byronic heroes, is that the paramount in Byronic heroes is 'the primary interest in romantic love' (Reed 1993:70). However, Reed also stresses that Heathcliff 'emotional presentness' distinguish him 'as a hero from his Byronic predecessors' (Reed 1993:73). He argues that 'there is a force and a substance in Heathcliff that reveals the passivity and hollowness Byron's heroes by contrast' (Reed 1993:73). By Reeds many comparisons with other heroes, it is clear that Heathcliff is a complex one. However, all these literary archetypes of the hero that Reed mentions are related to the antihero. The same thing can be said about tragic heroes, as they 'will most effectively evoke both our pity and terror if he is neither thoroughly good nor thoroughly bad but a mixture of both' (Abram 2012:408). As stated earlier, the Romantic hero and the Byronic hero are different variants antiheroes, originated from the Romantic period. Reeds main intention seems to be to distinguish Heathcliff from the villain label, as he believes that he in fact is a Romantic hero. However, unlike other critics, Reed sees Heathcliff's love for Catherine as the main reason behind his heroism, as he suggests that Heathcliff's 'heroism is inseparable from his love for Catherine' (Reed 1993:72). While other critics perceive him as an antiheroic because he his actions are justified by the mistreatment he has been a victim of, Reed sees him as antiheroic because of his love for Catherine.

Heathcliff's characteristics have been discussed since right after the publication of the novel, and when looking back at these reviews, it is obvious that some critics were horrified by the extent of wickedness portrayed in Heathcliff. Douglas Jerrold (1848), cited in Dunn's edition of *Jane Eyre*, wrote in the *Weekly Newspaper*,

'In Wuthering Heights the reader is shocked, disgusted, almost sickened by details of cruelty, inhumanity, and the most diabolical hate and vengeance, and anon come passages of powerful testimony to the supreme power of love – even over demons in the human form' (Dunn 2003:285).

As various other critics, Jerrold was bewildered by the conflicting characterizations of Heathcliff, not only could he behave heartlessly, he could also show the most passionate feelings of love. The reviewer in the *Examiner* in January 1848, cited in Dunn's edition of *Jane Eyre*, also criticised the contradiction in his characterization,

'We entertain great doubts as to the truth, or rather the vraisemblance of the main character. The hardness, selfishness and cruelty of Heathcliff are in our opinion inconsistent with the romantic love that he is stated to have felt for Catherine Earnshaw' (Examiner 2003:286).

The reviewer in the *Examiner* does not seem convinced that the cruel Heathcliff is capable of feeling the way he does for Catherine, as he writes that this love is 'stated', and thus not observed by the reviewer. Melissa Fegan argues that this critique suggests a very 'one-dimensional attitude to literary characterization on the part of the reviewer: Heathcliff loves Catherine, therefore he should be soft, selfless and gentle. As 'the main character', he ought to be attractive and heroic' (Fegan 2003:70). Nevertheless, there are no doubts that many critics see Heathcliff as a villain and a monster, because of the wicked way he revenge himself. In an excerpt from 1877, T. Wemyss Reid, cited in Allot, he announces that 'Heathcliff is the greatest villain in fiction' (Allot 1970:88). However, regardless of his monstrous features and evil actions, Reid emphasizes that because of his good qualities and love for Catherine, he is in fact accepted as real being, and not a 'merely grotesque monster' (Allott 1970:88).

The different interpretations of Heathcliff, reveals the complexity of him. However, the perception of him as a Byronic hero seems to rerun. Patsy Stoneman has written the article 'Rochester and Heathcliff as Romantic Heroes' (2011), where she elaborates on the Byronic hero. Her idea of Byronic heroes is that they 'are not heroic because of any moral or social excellence. They may in fact be moral outcasts, yet have passed somehow 'beyond good and evil'. They are passionate, unpredictable, mysterious, irresistible to women, yet strangely vulnerable' (Stoneman 2011:112). In other words, the Byronic hero, as the antihero, is neither good nor bad, and is therefore separated from the straight through evil villain.

The question seems to be whether Heathcliff is straight through evil. Is it not possible to be a villain because he has romantic feelings for a woman? Researchers do not agree, and

many are not able to excuse his malevolent behaviour. As this thesis sets out to investigate whether Heathcliff is a villain or an antihero, it is important to understand his position in the society in which he lives. Because of his social background as an orphaned and poor foreigner, Heathcliff becomes an outsider in Wuthering Heights. This position entails oppression and mistreatment, an abuse that appears to derive from Victorian xenophobia.

2.6 Xenophobia

In the analysis chapter of Heathcliff, this thesis discusses his social position as a gypsy, and how the consequences of this situation leads to discrimination and humiliation, and consequently contributes to his antiheroic development. This section is provided to give a backdrop for his situation, as xenophobia was a part of the Victorian culture.

Xenophobia was 'a way of interpreting the perceived foreignness of people, objects, and locations as a threat to English culture and identity' (Tromp, Bachman & Kaufman 2013:2). In other words, xenophobia can be interpreted as prejudice against anything that was foreign in Britain. The Industrial Revolution improved trade and transportation, and thus created new opportunities for shipping across countries and between cultures. Tromp, Bachman and Kaufman argue that this expansion in trading and travel 'enabled the transit of people, perspectives, and ideas; and disrupted putative spatial, ideological, and national boundaries' (Tromp, Bachman & Kaufman 2013:12). In addition, well-established social structures like the class system changed consequently with this expansion. Because of 'rising in professional class, a decaying aristocracy', 'a overburdened working class' and 'the ever-widening gap between rich and poor', which had 'so long shaped and stabilized relations among the English populace', the foreign seemed threatening (Tromp, Bachman & Kaufman 2013:12). Tromp, Bachman and Kaufman claim that 'all of these unprecedented disruptions contributed to perception of the foreign- including people and migrating objects – as both simultaneously omnipresent and threatening even when they were not overtly visible' (Tromp, Bachman & Kaufman 2013:12). These interpretations of the foreign as something threatening, correlates with the reception of Heathcliff at Wuthering Heights, as simply his looks and language frightened several characters. Heathcliff comes across as mysterious in the sense that his origin is foreign and unknown. He is described with negative and frightening expressions such as a 'fierce, pitiless, wolfish man' (E. Brontë 2003:81), a 'devil' (E. Brontë

2003:106) and a 'vampire' (E. Brontë 2003:252), rather than being referred to as a man. These characterizations of him, along with several others that will be presented in chapter five, illustrate how he was viewed by most of the characters in the novel. Heathcliff is in many ways a victim of Victorian xenophobia and prejudice.

2.7 Summary

This thesis investigates how Jane and Heathcliff can be viewed from an antihero perspective, and examines if they portray antiheroic characteristics. There have not been much research on the antihero as a unique concept, but there is research on concepts that relates to the antihero, and these related ideas can be used to inform this thesis's discussion. For instance, Heathcliff has been studied from a Romantic- and Byronic hero perspective, but there are few or none that literally suggest that he is an antihero. Jane, on the other hand, is interpreted both as a heroine and an antiheroine for the same reasons. In the same way she is perceived as a heroine for standing up for herself and opposing the unfair expectations in the Victorian society, she is also perceived as an antiheroine because this behaviour is rebellious.

When discussing the antihero as a field of research, it comes across as a field that should be explored more. One interesting observation that has been made when searching after fictional antiheroes is the lack of female antiheroines, and research on the few that exist. There are several non-research based lists online with rankings of the greatest antiheroes of all time, and there are very few women on these lists. Even if these lists are not informed by research, they give us an indication of the shortage of female antiheroines in the popular imagination. We read about Batman, Dexter Morgan, Edward Rochester and Jay Gatsby, but where are the female antiheroines?

The reason why this concept is important is that when perceiving a character from an antiheroic perspective, it helps to understand the character better. The usage of the concept even brings up important questions of the social and historical context. Therefore, by investigating it further, especially in relation to female antiheroines, which seems to be a very incomplete research field, this thesis seeks to set a base for further studies in this field.

3. Antihero

The concept antihero is widely discussed and complex. There are several interpretations of its meaning, and because of this, it is easy to misunderstand the concept. After reading several descriptions of the antihero, it is interesting to see that even critics disagree about the meaning of the term. Is the antihero a hero? Or is he a villain? What about a Romantic hero or a Byronic hero? There are several different names for essentially the same concept. Even if some attributes are similar between these different terms, there are clear distinctions that need to be highlighted. In order to provide an in-depth analysis of Jane Eyre and Heathcliff, it is essential that there are no confusions regarding the concept and how this thesis interprets it. For that reason, this chapter is provided, as it will give a much more detailed discussion than what have been provided in the introductory chapter and literary review.

This chapter is divided into five sections, including the introduction and conclusion. Through these sections, it discusses the meaning of the concept, as well as its origin and purpose. By using the idea of a grey area as a zone that the antihero operates in, this chapter aims at providing a clearer understanding of the concept. Ultimately, this chapter is necessary to establish an understanding of the term before moving on to the analysis chapters of Jane and Heathcliff.

3.1 What is an antihero?

As stated in the introductory chapter, there are different interpretations of the literary antihero and the term's meaning and application is widely discussed. There are disagreements among literary theorists and researchers about the definition, which makes it a little complex to understand. However, by using the model below it should be easier to understand the concept. Figure 1 illustrates a linear representation of the hero, the antihero and the villain. The hero and villain are divided into two polar extremes, indicated by the white and black colour, while the grey area in-between represents the antihero.

Figure 1.

In other words, the antihero could be anything in-between these poles, either with more in common with the hero or portraying qualities that resembles the villain. While the hero and the villain are contained within strict boundaries, the antihero operates in a much wider spectrum of attributes and characteristics, which explains some of the reasons why this literary character is perceived as a complex figure.

As stated in the introduction, Andersons claims that antiheroes are often outsiders and rebels (Anderson 2016:11). In addition, she argues that because of this, 'they are often figures of protest and social criticism and may be used to explore human psychology or challenge traditional notions of morality' (Anderson 2016:11). She defines an antihero as:

> 'A main character in a literary work who is not heroic. Although most antiheroes are unlikable or even despicable, they stop short of being outright villains because the reader sympathizes with them and roots for them. Also unlike traditional heroes and villains, antiheroes tend to be realistic, complex characters who are morally ambiguous – that is, neither all good nor all bad' (Anderson 2016:11).

Her description of the antihero being something in between a villain and a traditional hero corresponds with the illustrated idea that the antihero operates in a grey area between the two. According to her, an important difference between the antihero and the hero is that antiheroes often rebel against what heroes work for. She says that 'whereas heroes uphold the values of society, antiheroes often rebel against these values, acting in ways society believes they should not' (Anderson 2016:11).

In *Antiheroes, Heroes, Villains, and the Fine Line Between*, Crusie asks:

> 'If doing x makes you a villain and choosing z makes you a hero, what of those who settle on opinion y? The ones who encapsulate both ends of the continuum of good and evil to the extent that it is impossible to completely categorize them as either/or?' (Crusie 2015:42).

To answer to this question, Crusie uses the article 'Antiheroism in The Continuum of Good and Evil' by Spivey and Knowlton. According to them, such characters are antiheroes.

Antiheroes are characters that fall in-between the simplicity of black and white, and 'embrace the area of varying gray where the question is not always good versus evil and where it's okay to do "the bad things for the right reasons". Refusing to be pigeonholed on either end of the line, the antiheroes choose to blur it' (Knowlton & Spivey 2015:42). *Antiheroes, Heroes, Villains, and the Fine Line Between* is examining the line between the antihero and the villain, as well as looking at what relates the hero to the villain. While Spivey

and Knowlton's focus is on the concept of the antihero. They also mention the grey area that separates those 'idealized extremes', and argue that the antihero in fact does bad things, but for the right reasons (Knowlton & Spivey 2015:42). Instead of trying to categorize them or classify them, Spivey and Knowlton emphasize that it is better to treat the concept as 'an affiliation with regions along a continuum, rather than a set of discrete classifications that are either applied or not' (Knowlton & Spivey 2015:47). This opinion addresses the ever-changing interpretation and perception of the literary antihero. In terms of conduct, personality and moral code there is a disparity between the early idea of the antihero and the modern antihero. As society is in a constant process of changes, the antihero would inevitably have to evolve alongside with the society in order to maintain its own literary function. This means that a literary character has no influence on its context. The early appearance of the antihero and the modern antihero can therefore only be compared in light of their respective literary and historical context.

In *Hero/Anti-Hero* (1973) Roger B. Rollin stresses that the literary terms villain and antihero take on very different meanings. He says that 'the anti-hero can be defined as a literary character who does not conspicuously embody any value system except his own private one (which is frequently in conflict with that of his society)' (Rollin 1973:xvi-xvii), and as a result of this, 'the anti-hero normally is an "anti-establishment" figure' (Rollin 1973:xvii). This statement correlates with the idea of the antihero being a rebel. Rollin clearly implies that this oppositional behaviour against social, economic and political conventions often is typical for the antihero, as he claims that:

> 'At his most active, the anti-hero may be something of a rebel, but a rebel without much of a cause other than his own self-interest. A hero's acts are sanctified by his society, an anti-hero's by himself. In an age such as ours, however, in which the retreat into the self has become understandable to many and approved by some, an anti-hero … need not to be a contemptible figure' (Rollin 1973:xvii).

Rollin brings forth the idea that the antiheroes do not necessarily act in accordance with a broader social project, but that they are acting in the name of individualism. This claim, which addresses the antihero being a rebel without a cause, is interesting, because there are antiheroes that seem to work on a larger mission besides their self-interest. Jane, for instance, disagrees with the treatment of Victorian women, and how they are perceived as unequal to men. However, it is important to separate her implicit desire to improve the society, with her rebellious and opposing approach. It appears as if it is this choice of path, which makes critics look at her in an antiheroic perspective. This interpretation also relates to Moglen's idea that

the rebellious behaviour that Jane possesses, and the fact that she tests the entrapments and expectations that are forced upon her because of her gender, makes her an antiheroine (Moglen 1978:106-107).

Another example, which also Stewart, Crusie, Knowlton and Spivey use, is Batman, who's 'reputation as an antihero comes almost solely from his preference for striking from the shadows, using fear as a weapon against his enemies, and willingness to work slightly outside the law in order to catch villains' (Knowlton & Spivey 2013:44). On the contrary, there seem to be antiheroes that act for the sake of self-interest. Jay Gatsby from Great Gatsby appears to be one of these, as he rises from poverty through illegal activities, and uses lies and deceiving as tools to gain power and wealth. Heathcliff is can also be perceived as an antihero that is driven by self-regard, as he seeks revenge on people that have oppressed and mistreated him. These differences show how wide the grey spectrum is, and that antiheroes come in different forms and with different intentions.

Another important idea that Rollin emphasizes is that the antihero does not have to be a disgusting character because he or she rebels against societal principles. This is interesting because many critics argue that the antihero frequently resembles the villain, and they sometimes find it difficult to separate these two terms. As demonstrated in figure 1, the grey area does not only border to the dark area that represents the villain, but it also borders to the white area that represents the hero. Antiheroes are not heroic, because they are flawed and often portray immoral attributes. The most important aspect that separates antiheroes from villains is the fact that readers understand and sympathise with antiheroes. Several critics, such as Crusie and Marano, discuss the idea of a monster within, both in antiheroes and in villains. What appears to separate the two concepts is that while the antihero overpowers his monster, villains are conquered and controlled by their inner-monster. Adam-Troy Castro uses William Shakespeare's Iago as an example of a villain, 'whose malice toward Othello bear no explanation', and who is bad just because he is bad (Castro 2015:10).

Antiheroes can also be bad, but they are excused because their motivation for being bad is achieving justice in some form. Some antiheroes are more wicked than others, and some antiheroes only use their voice to contradict society and its norms, while others go as far as commit murders in order to fight injustice. Jeff Lindsay's serial killer, Dexter Morgan, is an example of this by being 'a cold-blooded antihero' but with 'a warm personality and a wry sense of humor' (Gowin 2013:57). Even if there are different interpretations of the antihero, critics seem to agree about them operating between good and evil, which corresponds with

Crusie's idea of a grey area with blurred line (Crusie 2013: 42). O' Faolain, in *Vanishing Hero* (1971), argues that the antihero is a much more cluttered term than the hero, because:

> '[…] being deprived of social sanctions and definitions – he is always trying to define himself, to find his own sanctions. He is always represented as grouping, puzzled, cross, mocking, frustrated, isolated in his manful or blundering attempts to establish his own personal, suprasocial codes. He is sometimes ridiculous through lack of perspicacity, accentuated by an attractive if foolhardy personal courage. Whether he is weak, brave, brainy or bewildered he is always out on his own' (O'Faolain 1971:xxix-xxx).

Alongside with the hero, the antihero is often presumed to be a term inflected with masculinity, and this is something that Pearson and Pope bemoan in their book *The Female Hero in American and British Literature*. They say that 'the great works on the hero – all begins with the assumption that the hero is male' (Pearson & Pope 1981: vii). This is also the assumption that comes across in the above quotation by O'Faolain. Pearson has also written *The Hero Within* (1998), where she continues to criticize this preconception. She says that 'the great books on the hero… assumed either that the hero was male or that male heroism and female heroism were essentially the same' (Pearson 1998: xx). Pearson and Pope have concluded that the classic 'journey to self-discovery' is the same for both female and male heroes, but 'the nature of the female hero's plight and the degree and kind of liberation she achieves, vary widely according to historical period and according to the politics, philosophy, and gender of the author' (Pearson & Pope 1981:viii). This means that female and male heroes are the same on 'the archetypal level', the hero's journey, but they differ in historical and social context because 'of the roles and opportunities afforded each sex in western society' (Pearson & Pope 1981:viii). This assumption about the hero correlates with the antihero as well. Even though it is a male-dominated literary term, there are also other literary antiheroines to be found, in addition to Jane Eyre.

The antiheroine is the female version of the antihero. She is similar to her male counterpart in terms of attributes and characteristics. However, it seems like female antiheroines often reflect or engage with feminist issues. They are often cast in terms of matter like women's rights, gender roles and sexuality, which is most likely a result of the long-term oppression of women. Pearson and Pope argue female heroes have been neglected 'as a subject for cultural and literary study', because of historical reasons (Pope 1981:viii). They say that 'with the rise of individualism, democracy, and secularism, men were expected to develop their individual identities', while women 'continued to be taught a collective myth:

They should be selfless helpmates to husband and children' (Pearson & Pope 1981:6). This neglecting of female heroines suggests that there are more male heroes than female heroines, which also appears to be corresponding with the concept of the antihero, as this often is considered as a masculine term with a 'small wealth of female antiheroes' (Walderzak 2016:128). According to Pearson and Pope, the reason for this is clear:

> 'In general, female independent selfhood was unnatural, psychologically unhealthy, and socially in bad taste. Literature, therefore, tends to portray the woman who demonstrates initiative, strength, wisdom and independent actions – the ingredients of the heroic life – not as a hero but as a villain' (Pearson & Pope 1981:6).

This relates to the views of Jane, who, because she portrays these qualities and a rebellious behaviour, provoked many Victorian readers. Therefore, it seems as if she was rather viewed as an antiheroine than a heroine in the eyes of many Victorians. Even if there are not that many antiheroines in literature, the ones that exist are powerful ones. Literature is given antiheroines like William Shakespeare's Lady Macbeth, who with her desperate desire for power persuades her husband to commit murder. Another one is Thomas Hardy's Tess of the D'Urbervilles, who ends up killing the man that abused her, and the antiheroine of this thesis, Charlotte Brontë's Jane Eyre, who questions the commonly held moral beliefs of her time and acts rebelliously towards her superiors. As with the antihero, the characteristics of the antiheroine vary from each character, but what all antiheroines share in common is that they are all flawed heroines.

3.2 The birth of the antihero

The emergence of the antihero is discussed and critics seem to disagree about a distinct birth of this type of character. While some argue that the antihero has been around for as long as the concept of heroism, others imply that the antihero emerged much later. Some say that it can be traced back several thousands of years, while others mention the emergence of the antihero in the 17th century with *Don Quixote* or as late as the 19th century with Dostoevsky's *Notes from the Underground*. This section discusses the various theories about the birth of the antihero, along with the increased interest for this type of character in the Romanticism, as well as in the modern time.

While Oxford English Dictionary notes that the earliest usage of the word was used in Sir Richard Steele's *The Lover and Reader* (1723), where the author, complaining about men's disrespect for women, cries out

> 'I shall enquire, in due time, and make every Anti-Heroe in Great Britain give me an account why one woman is not as much as ought to fall his share; and shall show every abandoned wanderer, that with all his blustering, his restless following every female he sees, is much more ridiculous' (Steele 1723:13).

The first usage of the term seems to relate to the idea of the antiheroes being callous men, who acts disrespectable in their chase after women. Since then, the meaning and application has expanded and the usage has increased. O'Faolain implies that the antihero's first appearance in literature was in Miguel de Cervantes Saavedras *The Ingenious Gentleman Don Quixote of La Mancha* (1605), with Don Quixote as the antihero (O'Faolain 1971:203). While Adams reasons it more accurate to say that the antihero 'was twin-born with the hero' (Adams 1976: 31). He is one of the critics that claim that the antihero has existed as long as there has been "the good" and "the bad", and "the accepted" and "disapproved". What there is an agreement on, however, is that the interest of this literary term grew with Fydor Dostoevsky's novel *Notes from the Underground* (1864). One of the critics who claim this is Victor Brombert in *In Praise of Antiheroes: Figures and Themes in Modern European Literature* (Brombert 1999:1). Stewart also discusses Dostoevsky's usage of an antihero. By using the underground man as a narrator, Dostoevsky writes of a hero that does not meet the readers' expectations, yet dominates the story as the protagonist. In his novel, Dostoevsky challenges the literary function of a hero as he 'explicitly relates the word to the notion of the paradox when he subverts the idea of a hero within the novel' (Stewart 2016:7). This subversion is shown in the last part of the novel, as the narrator writes his memoirs and asserts the reader that his life has been wasted, 'a novel needs a hero, and the traits of an antihero are expressly gathered together here' (Dostovesky 2008).

Even if there is an uncertainty around the first literary appearance of the antihero, the usage of this type of literary character flourished during the Romanticism in the 18th century. This period brought literary changes in both form and subject. Reed, in *Meditations on the Hero* (1974), argues that one of the most obvious changes in this literary revolution, 'and the one least studied in a sympathetic way, was the revival of interest in the hero, that singular and energetic individual whose character contains his fate, who dominates as well as represents the society around him' (Reed 1974:1). New Romantic attitudes arose and with

them the concept of the Romantic hero, which is the name of the 18th century antihero. According to Reed the idea of a hero that represents social standards and works as a good example for other people, and is therefore rewarded with a title as a gratification from society, does not apply to the Romantic hero at all (Reed 1974:5). Reed argues that 'the Romantic hero is never simply an antisocial being; his conflicts always involve some germ or vestige of social concern, and he may be pictured as an eventual redeemer of society. But he clearly feels free to reject most social norms' (Reed 1974:5). This kind of antihero that Reed mentions is a rebel with a cause, as he or she acts in a broader social project. This is interesting because it highlights the purpose of the antihero, which often is to achieve justice in some form. For instance, the justice that Jane seeks is the one of a more fair and equal society for women. This seems like a heroic act, but in order to achieve this, Jane rebels against the society and its rules. In this way, such an antihero 'may well be a wrongdoer but is in some sense "beyond good and evil" beyond the common categories of morality' (Reed 1974:4-5).

Reeds idea can be linked to the grey area, as it represents this "beyond good and evil"-category that he emphasizes. Even if antiheroes use questionable ways to achieve their goal, they are 'presented as the solution to a major problem of the age, the modern problem of an overly developed reflective thought' (Reed 1974:5). Jane challenges the social order as she stands up against her aristocratic aunt after being punished for her rebellious behaviour (C. Brontë 2001:30), and as she questions the authority of her employer and master Mr. Rochester, by telling him that his age and experience does not permit him to command her (C. Brontë 2001:114). In this way, she confronts the unfair and repressed situation, not only for Victorian women, but people who did not belong in the upper classes.

Heathcliff fights a self-centred battle where his goal is to achieve justice in the form of revenge, but he also represents a tragic result of the oppression he is exposed to. In that way, by showing how broken and wicked a human being can be after being treated like an animal or a slave, he can be perceived as a critique of society and its practices. Thus, the antihero can be perceived as a threat to the established norms and thereby the leaders of society, but also functions as a liberation for those who are silenced. Because of this, the antihero was and is important, as it questions conventional traditions that benefit only a small group in society. The Romantic ideal that Reed addresses and the relation it has to Jane and Heathcliff show that there is continuity between the Romantic ideal and Victorian Literature.

There are several opinions about the birth of the antihero and its first time entering literature, but it seems doubtful that it happened just a few hundred years ago. As Adams

states, 'as sure as heroes have always existed (...) – no doubt – anti-heroes, or non-heroes, or villains have always existed' (Adams 1976:34-35). As long as there has been "good" and "bad", and "the right thing to do" and "the wrong thing to do", there has existed a grey area in-between. There have always been someone or something that cannot be categorized into these polar extremes. In that sense, there have always been something indeterminate and the antihero has always existed. The first usage of antihero in literature, however, is hard to trace, because antiheroes are rarely explicitly presented as such.

The antihero can be understood as a challenger to the social conventions, and thereby the society itself. O'Faolain criticizes society, and implies that it is not the antihero there is something wrong with, but society. He claims that society 'is cruel…But nobody will go quite so far to reverse traditional roles and say that society is the villain of the piece' (O'Faolain: xvii). A theorist that agrees with O'Faolain is Adams, who also blames society for the creation of this flawed hero, as he says that antiheroes 'are creations of, as well as victims or conquerors of their society' (Adams 1976:50). This leads us in to another interesting topic, namely the antihero's purpose.

3.3 The purpose of antiheroes – what do they challenge?

According to critics, such as Stewart, the antihero 'has enticed readers and audiences for generations (Stewart 2016:15). It appears as readers are fascinated by the characters that fall betwixt and between good and evil, complex and rebellious characters that dare to take up the fight against injustice in any form. After presenting the meaning of the concept, as well as the earlier usage of it, this sections looks at why readers are captivated by antiheroes. It also probes what antiheroes often challenge in their stories, along with their purpose.

Stewart, accompanied with Crusie, says that 'arguably we are drawn to antiheroes specifically because they are not superhuman and do not have entirely virtuous qualities' (Stewart 2016:8; Crusie 2013:6). Stewart argues that it is 'the flaws, the rebellious nature or immoral undertones of the antihero' that makes them appealing and interesting (Stewart 2016:8). It seems like people are more interested in these types of characters because they are easier to relate to. We are in many ways drawn to characters that we feel connected to, characters that we can understand. This seems to be the prevalent idea with the fascination of

antihero as well. In contrast to the heroic hero, which often portrayed as perfect and good, the antihero has human flaws, and that is something readers can relate to.

Critics seem to agree that antiheroes are frequently challenging societal principles that are unjust and often discriminating towards a group, which often the antihero is a part of. As previously stated, some antiheroes fight against injustice because of their self-interest, while others fight for a bigger political cause. Antiheroes often work alone towards their goal, which is achieving justice, in any form. Crusie claims that the primary aim of the antiheroes is in fact justice. (Crusie 2013:6). However, she also stresses that justice does not always have to be the 'primary aim', but that 'justice or some form of it' often is of highest priority (Crusie 2013:6). Both the antihero and the hero want to accomplish justice, but what separates them is their method of achieving this justice. While heroes achieve justice by a noble and fair method, antiheroes are rebellious and often practice debateable ways to achieve their justice. As Crusie argues, the antihero has a different style of realizing its aim of justice, a version that is 'slightly outside the law, wrought by sometimes questionable means' (Crusie 2013:6). Besides Heathcliff, who uses violence and seeks revenge in order to achieve his justice, other characters even commit murder.

Crusie brings up the idea of a monster alive inside these antiheroes, and claims that these characters triumph only by accepting this monster and by taking control over it. Only when they accomplish this, they are able to achieve justice (Crusie 2013:6). Because the aim of the antiheroes is justice, we somehow forgive them for their questionable and sometimes sinful approaches. As Crusie says, because the antihero seeks to accomplish righteousness it is easy for us to cheer for this 'flawed, complex hero we can relate to, one who occasionally loses his or her war but never fails to do what needs to be done' (Crusie 2003:7). As Spivey and Knowlton points out, readers forgive their bad behaviour, because 'those bad things that the antihero does are often arguably... the right thing to do' (Knowlton & Spivey 2013:43)

What kind of justice is the aim of the antihero then? In many cases, the major issue seem to be the unfairness concerning social conventions or society in general. As Stewart puts it 'these characters refuse to bow to the expectations of society and rebel against the rules that bind us all' (Stewart 2016:7). However, as stated earlier, not all antiheroes fight for a political cause. Some, such as Heathcliff, want justice in form of revenge and punishment because they have been treated unjustly. The purpose of the antihero is to achieve justice, either for a group of people or for themselves. What is certain for most antiheroes, including Jane and Heathcliff, is the fact that they will do whatever it takes, regardless of what the cost will be. The feeling of injustice is individual from character to character. It might concern matters

such as social class system, racism and prejudice, or perhaps women's rights and gender equality. Heathcliff, for example, seeks revenge on everyone that has wronged him, while Jane rebels against the expectations of the Victorian woman.

Antiheroes are accepted and liked by readers even if their actions are debatable. According to several critics, including Spivey and Knowlton, this is because we see ourselves in them:

> '[Antiheroes] capture our imagination by attempting to balance their evil methods with their good intentions. Sometimes the results are purely gratifying; sometimes purely horrifying. More often, the results are a strange but compelling mixture of the two. Indeed, it is those mixed results that endear them to us. We see our flawed selves in antiheroes, and this allows us to understand their humanity, even when their deeds are questionable evil' (Knowlton & Spivey 2013: 47).

Because antiheroes are more realistic than heroes, especially in the sense that they are not perfect, it is easier for the reader to identify with them. Just like antiheroes have flaws, humans have flaws too. As Knowlton and Spivey argue, we see our selves in them, and therefore it is easier to see past their bad qualities.

The interest in the antihero has flourished in the twentieth century, and as Stewart mentions in her introduction, 'literature containing the antihero seems to blossom in reactionary times' (Stewart 2016:7). This is interesting because the historical context in many ways serves as a backdrop for the later interest in these kinds of characters. Alan Edelstein confirms the idea and says that the antihero 'made a comeback almost immediately after that war [Second World War], as if in recognition of the fata wounding of the genuine national hero during the conflict' (Edelstein 1996:17). As the antihero 'appeared after and as a consequence of the First World War, he reappeared after and as a consequence of the Second World War' (Edelstein 1996:17). The reason for this, according to Jonathan Michael, was the subsequent mistrust of 'the establishments, including it's boundaries between right and wrong' (Michael 2013). In such way, rebellious antiheroes arose as an effect of the mistrust that occurred after these wars. Why? Because traditional heroes were unrelatable to humans, and because 'characters who shine as morally pure and upright don't ring true to us anymore, because it's not who we see around us in the world. Neither is it what we see when we look in the mirror' (Michael 2013). Michael emphasizes that 'brokenness is a part of humanity', and thus we can 'more easily relate to the choices that a character makes… if they are broken too' (Michael 2013).

Similarly, the increase of the grey area can be seen as an effect of the societal changes.

It is certain that this twilight zone has been evolving over the last hundreds of years, and it seems like the tolerance for what is accepted has increased. Take Jane Eye for example, the reason why she can be interpreted as an antiheroine is because of the historical and social settings. Everyone in the household she lives in, including her aunt and cousin, view at her as a wicked girl (C. Brontë 2001:13), just because she stands up for herself, something that Victorian females were not supposed to do. Jane rebels against the social structures in the Victorian era, and differ from the ideal woman. If the story had been set today, Jane might not have been characterized as an antiheroine, because she challenged the social conventions of the Victorian society, conventions that are not as evident in society today. The social norms have changed since the Victorian era, and in that way, one can say that the boundaries of what is accepted and not has changed. As the society is in constant change, the limits that confine the antihero will also be in flux.

Critics seem to agree on the idea that readers' enjoyment of the antihero is mostly because they are relatable. This is also the main essence in the previous quotation by Knowlton and Spivey, where they say that antiheroes excites us by their evil behaviour justified with their good intentions. Because these flawed characters are easier to identify with, we allow us to accept their mistakes. It appears as if antiheroes are the most natural image of heroes, as the superhero will never be an attainable ideal to humans. Regardless of their flaws, and their sometimes-evil actions, the "bad side" of the antihero is always justified with their good intentions.

This chapter has presented the concept antihero, and by depicturing it within a grey area, it has centralized the concept between the good and the evil, and between the hero and the villain. The exact time antiheroes were first introduced in literature is debatable and hard to pinpoint. This is because antiheroes, or at least characters with similar attributes as the antihero, have always existed, but with other names, as for example Romantic hero and Byronic hero. Antiheroes do in many ways represent a critique of unfair societal principles, and often challenge well-established structures. In other words, they highlight unfairness in the society they operate in. The purpose of the antihero, as this chapter has argued, is to achieve justice. Even if this seems heroic, the antiheroes use questionable methods in order to succeed. These conclusions are also related to Heathcliff and Jane, and will be elaborated on in the coming literary analysis of them.

4. Jane Eyre

'I will show you a heroine as plain and as small as myself' – Charlotte Brontë

(Cited in Gaskell 2001:22).

4.1 Introduction

This chapter argues that Jane can be interpreted both as a heroine and an antiheroine, as she displays features and attributes that correlate with both types of characters. Her goals and intentions seem to belong to the mindset of a true heroine, but the rebellious aspect of her personality still differs from the traditional hero. Interpretations and different points of view seem to influence the way readers perceive her, in which the social context appears to be an important factor. In fact, whether she is called a heroine or an antiheroine seems to be two sides of the same coin, because for the same reasons some view her as an antiheroine, others see her as a heroine.

From a feminist perspective, Jane can be seen as a feminist antihero. She rebels against the submissive role of womanhood in a patriarchal society, and she represents personal qualities of courage and strength, qualities that 'were associated with men, not women' (Anderson 2016:24). Comparable to Jane, antiheroines are 'often describing how female characters reflect attitude towards women at the time the work was written', and in this way, they 'examine how women are represented in a work of literature' (Anderson 2016:22). Through Jane's journey, readers witness the attitudes towards Victorian women, which will be elaborated on in this chapter. Even if Jane is driven by her own self-interest, she also has a 'moral argument for women's rights' (Macpherson 1989:18). She refuses to be a submissive female, because she is 'a free human being with an independent will' (C. Brontë 2001:216). However, there is a conflict between critics, such as Pearson and Pope and Moglen, whether these qualities are antiheroic or heroic.

Jane choses a rebellious path to achieve her goal, and this appears to be what differs from the traditional course of action. The historical context is a relevant factor when looking at the different perceptions of her as antiheroic and heroic, because whether she is perceived heroic or antiheroic varies from readers from different times. One explanation of this can be that the boundaries of the grey area that the antihero operates in, expands throughout history. In other words, the boundaries that define the grey area change correspondingly with the

tolerance and acceptance in society. In that way, the grey area will always be in constant change, and therefore will such characters as Jane be interpreted in different ways, depending on the societal and historical context. By examining Jane's rebellious behaviour against Victorian social and political pressures, this chapter explores her role as an antiheroine. The social structures and principles that this chapter focuses on are the class system, the patriarchal rule, and the role of the Victorian woman. This is because these are central factors of Jane's rebellion. This chapter argues that Jane is an outsider, due to her social situation as an orphan and a governess. It examines how this position allows her rebellious behaviour, as she has nothing to lose by rebelling. In addition, it looks at how the rebellious behaviour that she portrays contributes to the interpretation of her an antiheroine. By highlighting characteristics and behaviours that have traditionally been related with the Victorian social expectations placed upon women, this chapter not only analyses how Jane moves away from these traditional expectations, but also how she rebels against them, and thus becomes a revolutionary antiheroine.

Similar to the novel, as well as works of other critics, this chapter is structured by the settings and locations of the narrative, such as Gateshead, Lowood School, Thornfield, Marsh End and Ferndean. Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar, as well as Teachman, have also used this structure, and it is a useful because it allows us to approach Jane's development from childhood. Her development is important because her role as an antiheroine is complex, and is closely related to her development as a literary character. By following Jane's thoughts and behaviour from childhood, we consequently follow her development in becoming an antiheroine throughout the narrative.

This chapter explores Jane's social position as an orphan. It looks at how this position makes her a suppressed outsider, and how it sets in motion Jane's rebellious behaviour at Gateshead. Moreover, it explores Jane's development in becoming a governess through her education at Lowood School, and how she opposes to the Victorian principles that are represented by Mr. Brocklehurst. Jane's position as a governess is an important aspect of Janes 'outsiderness'. In order to understand Jane's position better, this chapter also examines the position of the governesses in Victorian England, probing their complex situations as they fell 'between the roles of relation, guest, mistress and servant' (Macpherson 1989:1). This will contribute to a better understanding of Jane's years working as a governess at Thornfield, where she is met with female prejudice and the patriarchal order. These are societal both problems that she rebels against. The Victorian principles of marriage drives Jane away from Thornfield, and she ends up at Marsh End where she is no longer an outsider due to her social

position, but diverges because of her different perceptions of how life should be. Finally, it studies Jane's achievement of justice when she arrives Ferndean and marries Rochester. As this chapter examines these different stations of Jane's life, it discusses how Jane rebels in certain situations in the novel, and how this behaviour can be interpreted as heroic and antiheroic.

Jane is not only critical to the strict social hierarchy, but she is also very troubled with the discriminations towards women like herself. Being first positioned as a poor orphan, and later as a governess, Jane faces societal challenges. She rebels against the class hierarchy, and opposes the patriarchal domination. She stands up against those who perceive and treat women as if they were less than men, and fights for equality and self-respect in a society that perceives her as insignificant. In the novel, Jane is forced to be submissive to the male characters. The patriarchal order is represented in every station of her life (except the last one at Ferndean), and is depicted by John Reed, Mr. Brocklehurst, Mr. Rochester and St. John Rivers. Even though she on occasions resists their principles, she feels subordinate to these male characters and is often unable to express her opinions and feelings. This chapter analyses her rebellion towards her superiors and the social conventions of the Victorian era, and investigates how the role as an antiheroine is in conflict with these social structures such as female gender roles, social class and social norms.

4.2 An unsolicited outsider at Gateshead

This section argues that Jane is an outsider because of her social situation as an orphan, and that this position contributes to her rebellious behaviour. It also discusses how we, as readers, can allow and understand the rebellious behaviour she exposes at Gateshead. By exploring how orphans were situated in the Victorian era and connecting this to Jane, it aims to shed light on Jane's social situation. This section provides an analysis of Jane through her experiences at Gateshead, focusing on her rebellion against social conventions and her superiors, the Reed family. Jane's uprising and revolt is demonstrated with certain outbreaks towards her cousin John Reed and her aunt Mrs. Reed. As this section discusses Jane's situation, as well as her behaviours in certain situations, it examines her position as an outsider and her development in becoming an antiheroine.

When living at Gateshead, Jane is faced with the expectations of Victorian children, and especially the expectations of a Victorian girl. In addition, she is also confronted with her situation as a poor, orphaned girl in a patriarchal society. Jane's situation as an orphan is one aspect of her 'outsiderness'. In a society where the importance of family and blood relations was highly stressed, Jane fell outside the traditional sphere. According to Laura Peters in *Orphan Texts: Victorian Orphans, Culture and Empire* (2000), Victorian orphans were 'vulnerable, disadvantaged, miserable' (Peters 2000:1), mostly because they had no rights or privileges. Peters claims that it was through marriage and family that one connected to the community, and thereby cultivated manners, appeal, but also achieved happiness and freedom (Peters 2000:6). Consequently, the orphan became 'an outsider, a body without family ties to the community, a foreigner' (Peters 2000:6). When elaborating on Jane as an orphan, Peters argues that her orphanhood 'leaves her as an outsider to both the Reed family and the larger community' (Peters 2000:20). This outsider position is significant when discussing her rebellious behaviour, because it is this position that allows her to rebel. The principles and structures that came with the social class system, established restrictions that removed many people's opportunities in life. Since Jane's primary relations are with people from a higher class than hers, she ultimately becomes an outsider. The fact that she is an outsider results in her not having the same options and opportunities as her cousins, and thus she is not seen as an equal to those around her.

The reason that her outsider position allows her rebellious behaviour is because as an outsider, she has nothing to lose. In contrast to heroes, that are fighting for a cause and many people rely on them, outsiders and antiheroes are often driven of their own self-interest. Heroes are often elected to fight for their country or society, while antiheroes, Jane included, are not elected. Jane is driven by her own self-interest in improving her own life, but she has a broader perspective, as she also wants to improve the conditions for Victorian women. She is not representative for a suffragette, or a politician, she represents herself as an outsider that will not bow down to the unfair principles or to the accepted canons in the Victorian society. Jane has nothing to lose by rebelling against the structures that she finds unfair and wrong. In fact, she has everything to win.

Jane is aware of her situation as an outsider, and her introspection combined with a greater knowledge of right and wrong, unfairness and justice, is the motivation in becoming an antiheroine. It seems like she believes that her opinion is of fairer than the norms and regulations that is forced upon her. Because of this, she rebels against unfairness and injustice. Even though her thoughts can be interpreted as heroic, her rebellious behaviour is antiheroic.

A characters motivation can reveal whether actions are performed with the right intention, and whether it is selfish or altruistic thoughts that lie behind. Jane is complex, because she strives for justice for herself, but she also has an unspoken political statement regarding the conditions for all women. As such, her motivation can be seen as altruistic or heroic, but it is also accurate to say that it is selfish. However, when Jane takes action and turns her plans into practice and rebels, she becomes antiheroic. The only way she can achieve justice, is by questioning and rebelling against the rules that restraints and treat women unjustly. Especially considering that women were not supposed to speak up to superiors and men, Jane emerges as a rebel. This antiheroic rebellion is approved and accepted by readers, because Jane has been left without a choice of being an outsider, as she is "born and chained" to this position because of the social structures of the Victorian era.

Frawley's idea that birth, family, education, money and speech and manners decided people's position, as it settled people in different classes (Frawley 2008:458), depicts a society where people were bound to their social heritage, as an indisputable fact they carried with them like shackles around their ankles. The social structures worked like clockwork, and it was not permissive. People from the lower classes had no affiliations with the elite, and it was supposed to be this way. This social class system functions as a prison, where Jane is deprived her freedom and opportunities in her own life because she does not belong to the upper reaches. Jane does not want to be defined by a society that discriminates her as a subordinate human being, just because of the restrictions of the class system. As this chapter will address, equality and freedom is a human right in her eyes, regardless of which class you belonged to. In a society where the voices of women were silenced, Jane raises her voice and demands to be heard. She rebels against the whole social structure, and a society without equality and freedom, insofar as gender inequality affects the whole social structure. Because of this rebellious behaviour, she emerges as an antiheroine.

Jane feels like an outsider in her aunt's house, something that she reveals to the reader in the second chapter when she says 'I was a discord in Gateshead Hall; I was like nobody there; I had nothing in harmony with Mrs. Reed or her children' (C. Brontë 2011:12). Not only does she feel insignificant in the house she lives in, but her aunt also tells her children in the presence of Jane that she is 'nasty' and not worthy of any notice, and that they are not fit to associate with her (C. Brontë 2011: 22). It is not just Jane's behaviour they criticize, calling her 'troublesome' and a 'careless child' (C. Brontë 2011: 25); they also condescend her because of her looks. Abbot, a servant at Gateshead, says that 'if she [Jane] were a nice, pretty child, one might compassionate her forlornness; but one really cannot care for such a little

toad as that' (C. Brontë 2011:21). These persistent remarks upset Jane, feelings that she shares honestly with the reader. According to the Gateshead household, Jane 'was the most wicked and abandoned child ever reared under a roof' (C. Brontë 2011:23). It seems that after being told these hurtful accusations over and over again, Jane starts to believe in them, as she replies 'I half believed her; for I felt indeed only bad feelings surging in my breast' (C. Brontë 2011: 23). Living in this hostile household, Jane is oppressed and constantly reminded of her dependant status. The attitudes of a patriarchal society are early represented to Jane, by her older cousin John Reed. John is both physically and mentally abusive to Jane, and he is also a relentless reminder of her helpless situation she is in, as an orphan. After he finds Jane sitting by the windowpane behind a curtain, reading, he beats her and says:

> 'You have no business to take our books; you are a dependent, mamma says; you have no money; your father left you none; you ought to beg, and not live here with gentlemen's children like us, and eat the same meals we do, and wear clothes at our mamma's expense' (C. Brontë 2001:8).

John is the first dominant male that commands Jane and tries to make her submissive. The following event is important, as it shows a side of Jane that differs from 'appropriate' child- and female behaviour, and displays her antiheroic rebellion. John takes the book from Jane and hits her so hard with it that she strikes her head against a door and gets a bleeding cut. She then shouts 'wicked and cruel boy' at him, and calls him 'a murderer' and 'slave-driver' (C. Brontë 2011:8). As Reed grasps her hair, Jane strikes him. The family is shocked by this unfeminine and wicked behaviour and locks her in the red-room. This is the first time the reader witnesses Jane's anger and revolt against her superiors. This episode is interesting because after Jane's outburst, she refers to herself as a 'rebel slave' (C. Brontë 2011:9).

Clearly, Jane is aware of her situation, as she does not only see herself as a rebel, but she also feels like a slave. This idea of the rebel slave can be compared to the idea of the antihero, because the motivation and knowledge derives from the same idea, which seems to be the idea of injustice. As Crusie argues, justice is frequently the primary aim of antiheroes, and because their behaviour is defended by their good intentions, readers seem to approve their questionable ways in achieving their goals. (Crusie 2013:6). This theory is important, because if their motivation had not been justice, they could fall outside the grey area and operate as villains instead. In Jane's case, this can be difficult to understand, as she seems to be balancing on the line between hero and antihero, while other antiheroes that perform brutal actions, such as murder, balance on the line between antihero and villain. In Jane's case, it is

important to keep in mind that she has the same motivation as a hero, which is fighting injustice, but because her method in achieving justice is rebellion, she falls into the grey area and operates as an antiheroine. Because of Jane's position as an orphan, she is a slave to society, as well as to the Reeds. It is a natural reaction that people will try to break away from what keeps them trapped. Moreover, in Jane's situation, the entrapment is the restrictions and rules of the Victorian society. In other words, the antihero can in many ways be interpreted as a slave, because they are "enslaved" by their life situation and restraints created by society. Jane's childhood is filled with constant reminders that she is poor and thereby of her lower position in a hierarchal society, especially with her aunt constantly degrading her, calling her "less than a servant", "wicked" and "a mad cat" (Brontë 2011:9). As an orphan, Jane has no other option than to stay with her aunt, and thus she is imprisoned in a destroying home, which results in her rebellious behaviour.

Critics such as Teachman and Macpherson agree that Jane's rebellion begins as a response to the violating treatment by John. Teachman argues that:

> 'Jane's sensitivity to acts of injustice develops while she lives at Gateshead, where she sees herself treated as less worthy even than a servant, while her cousins, who are significantly less well-behaved than she is, receive all the privileges and honors' (Teachman 2001:2).

To that note Macpherson adds that John's violence 'for the first time, causes her to strike back, first through talking back, and when this proves provocative, through fighting back with her body in a most unfeminine fashion' (Macpherson 1989:5). Jane striking back at John may not only be perceived antiheroic because it is rebellious in the sense that it is the wrong thing to do, but also because she is a girl hitting a boy. It seems like in Victorian eyes, this act was twice as disturbing because not only is she a girl fighting a superior boy, which itself is unfeminine conduct, she also combats a male character of a higher class.

Macpherson states that Jane, by challenging John's tyrannical control over her, 'learns the power of the spoken word, moves beyond self-protection to passionate self-declaration, and defends the world of books and imagination as her claim to authority over Gateshead's hierarchy' (Macpherson 1989:5). This is an interesting remark that also Teachman emphasizes, when she claims that 'Jane learns in this situation that rebellion can eventually work to one's benefit where bullies are concerned – even if one must sometimes endure severe trauma in the process' (Teachman 2001:10). As a child, Jane sees that her rebellious behaviour first leads to punishment, as she is sent to the red room, but in the end benefits her,

because it helps her "escaping" Gateshead. The rebellious behaviour that Jane shows, underpins Moglen's idea of her testing the limits and restrictions of the society she lives in. As Moglen claims, the fact that she is a poor, plain and an orphan girl, who 'tests the limits of social, moral, and psychological possibility', makes her an unconventional heroine (Moglen 1978:107). In other words, as Jane begins to test these limits, she starts to develop into an antiheroine from a young age.

Jane's attack at John is the most rebellious outbreak while living in Gateshead, and an episode that is often discussed among critics. It can be interpreted in different ways, and it portrays certain characteristics of Jane that is highly debatable. For instance, Pearson and Pope argue that this episode is actually, what makes Jane a heroic heroine. They say that 'when she rebels against the Reeds, she escapes from the psychological cage and, asserting her own worth, becomes for the first time truly heroic and human' (Pearson & Pope 1981: 165). She is heroic because she stands up for herself and thereby frees herself from the emotional imprisonment she has been a victim of. Macpherson, however, addresses this episode as 'Jane's first act to demolish the Victorian verities that childhood, especially girlhood, are originally innocent, and that innocence is virtue, and goodness is patient humility' (Macpherson 1989:4). He argues that by doing this, she challenges the reader to identify her as a bad girl, 'who will not relinquish her criticism of the conventions which the Reeds bully her, all 'for her own good'' (Macpherson 1989:4).

These interpretations seem to resemble the idea of the antihero as a character that does bad things but for the right reason. Even today, it is unquestionable that striking a person is unacceptable behaviour, and parents teach their children that this bad behaviour is not tolerable. Even if she knows that hitting is wrong, she still strikes John. What is interesting with her attack is that to most readers, her behaviour is acceptable, and for some almost pleasing because of the cruel way John has treated Jane. This relates to the ideas that both Stewart and Crusie brings up; that because the aim of the antiheroes are justice, we understand and support their questionable acts. Because John has treated Jane badly, this attack symbols her achievement of justice over him. As Spivey and Knowlton argue, we can relate to antiheroes because 'we see our flawed selves' in these flawed heroes. It is easier for the people that have experienced being hurt or bullied by someone, to relate to Jane, because they see themselves in her. As such, they thereby understand why she opposes her aunt, and strikes her cousin.

Even if Jane is aware of her position as an outsider in the Reed family, she is still self-confident, as she knows who she is and what she is like. She is realistic about the fact that she

does not fit in and expresses this to the reader:

> 'I know that had I been a sanguine, brilliant, careless, exacting, handsome, romping child – though equally dependent and friendless – Mrs. Reed would have endured my presence more complacently; her children would have entertained for me more   of the cordiality of fellow-feeling' (C. Brontë 2011:12).

Although Jane knows that she does not fit in, she fights for her right to be herself. This is antiheroic, because her way of standing up for herself is to be rebellious against her superiors. In the chapters of Gateshead, Jane is using her voice and intelligence as a weapon against the Reed family. Macpherson claims that Jane 'definitively differentiates herself from the Reeds by speaking instead of being silenced or spoken through' (Macpherson 1989:5). Jane, along with many other women, was silenced in a society that condemned women who deviated from the Victorian gender expectations. She did not belong in a society where women were viewed as inferiors, and the expectations of females were to be silent, obedient, emotionless and gentle (Muller 2015). Jane contradicts from this because she is passionate, outspoken, honest and in conflict with the Victorian ideas of societal principles and structures. Her voice is a big part of her rebellion, and she 'sees that she has some power to challenge the authority of John and Mrs. Reed and Reverend Brocklehurst by talking back to them, by using their own words against them' (Macpherson 1989:6)

After being unjustly accused of being a liar, Jane has had enough of her aunt's inequitable treatment, and cries out:

> 'I am glad you are no relation of mine: I will never call you aunt again as long as I live. I will never come to see you when I am grown up; and if any one asks me how I liked you, and how you treated me, I will say the very thought of you makes me sick, and that you treated me with miserable cruelty' (C. Brontë 2011:30).

Her aunt is revolted by this behaviour, and asks her how she dares to say such a thing, and Jane replies:

> 'How dare I, Mrs. Reed? How dare I? Because it is the *truth*. You think I have no feelings, and that I can do without one bit of love or kindness; but I cannot live so: and you have no pity. I shall remember how you thrust me back – roughly and violently thrust me back – into the red- room, and locked me up there, to my dying day; though I was in agony; though I cried out, while suffocating with distress, "Have mercy! Have mercy, aunt Reed!" And that punishment you made me suffer because your wicked boy struck me – knocked me down for nothing. I will tell anybody who asks

me questions this exact tale. People think you are a good woman, but you are bad; hard-hearted. *You* are deceitful' (C. Brontë 2011: 30).

This passage is interesting because it once again shows a side of Jane that can be interpreted both heroic and antiheroic. In her aunt's eyes, Jane is an insurgent because she breaks with the traditional expectations of Victorian girls. She rises up against her aunt, her superior, which she is dependent on. After giving her aunt a lecture on how deceitful and cruel she is, instead of regretting the whole episode and ask for forgiveness for her disobedient behaviour, Jane felt like her 'soul began to expand, to exult, with the strangest sense of freedom, of triumph' and that it seemed as if 'an invisible bond had burst, and that I had struggled out into unhoped-for liberty' (C. Brontë 2011:30). In other words, this outburst felt good and freeing for Jane. This notion of freedom that she feels, relates to Moglen's idea that 'by freeing Jane Eyre from the conventional trappings of femininity and granting her liberty to feel and express her feelings, to think and express her thoughts, in asserting her "humanness"', Brontë created an antiheroine (Moglen 1978:106). While Moglen claims this notion of liberation Jane feels make her an antiheroine, Pearson and Pope disagree. They claim that when Jane 'rebels against the Reeds, she escapes from the psychological cage and, asserting her own worth, becomes for the first time truly heroic and human' (Pearson & Pope 1981:165). They view Jane's rebellious behaviour with a different perspective, and argue this behaviour to be what essentially makes her a true heroine.

However, when looking at it from a heroic perspective, Jane is honourable for standing up for herself, and for opposing her tyrannical aunt, who treats her like a servant. She is heroic in the sense that she speaks the truth, even if she knows that she is most likely to be punished for it. Even though Jane is expected to be silent, she is unable to keep her true feelings inside when she is exposed to injustice. On the other hand, from a Victorian perspective, Jane's honesty can also be viewed as rebellious. The perspective, as well as the social and historical context, is primarily what define her as an antiheroine. Jane breaks with accepted girl behaviour, as she confronts her guardian and superior instead of showing gratitude for allowing her to live at their home. These two different perspectives, the Victorian and the modern, can be explained because of an expansion of the grey area. With the changes in societal structures, tolerance and acceptance have also increased. For instance, Jane will most likely be interpreted as a heroine today because the structures that she rebels against are not as evident today as it was in the Victorian era. Perhaps more important, today, readers are most likely to condemn these structures, because they see how they create unfair

and corrupt divisions in society. In other words, Jane can be seen as an advocate for a fairer and equal civilization.

Macpherson remarks an interesting perception of this episode, as he addresses that 'the issue of who is the good woman, and who is the bad one, and who is deceitful, is not so tidily solved by plain speaking' (Macpherson 1989:7). He argues that even though Jane 'may have cowed Mrs. Reed and won her release from the prison of Gateshead'; her passion has now become her own problem and not Mrs. Reed's. (Macpherson 1989: 7). Macpherson note that even if Jane is "free", 'she is in deep waters now if she is unable to summon 'the restraints over passions without which the female characters is lost'' (Macpherson: 1989:7) In other words, Jane may feel free from the imprisonment her aunt has caused on her, but she is still entrapped due to her position as dependent, and her deviation from the expectations of her as a female. Besides, Jane's attributes such as her passion and low self-control restraints her from being completely free. As Macpherson emphasises, 'female creativity, sensuality, solitude, ambition, achievement, subversion, confrontation, vengeance, anger, discontent, passion – all are claimed by Jane as part of her nature' (Macpherson 1989:8). Macpherson claims that these sides of her contribute to the creation of a monster within her, and that 'she must wrestle with the monster this makes of her' (Macpherson 1989:8). It is interesting that Macpherson brings up this idea of a monster within, because this echoes with Crusie's reflections. Crusie claims that there is a monster alive inside these characters and that antiheroes succeed 'by embracing their inner monster, harnessing it in order to effect justice' (Crusie 2015:6). Jane must therefore learn, as Macpherson also proposes, to control her inner monster 'before her truth can go marching on' (Macpherson 1985:8). Ultimately, Jane will not be able to achieve liberty or justice before she learns to accept and control her detrimental attributes such as her passion and anger. By learning to control these attributes, they can be used as tools in her mission to accomplish freedom and equality.

An essential characteristic of Jane is her perception of the social conventions she is controlled by. Since Jane is telling her story as an adult, the social restrictions and suppression she experiences at Gateshead becomes very apparent. As an adult, she is fully aware of the expectations, but unlike many others, she does not support them and chooses to rebel against them. This is something that Pearson and Pope elaborate on, when claiming that Jane's intellect is one of the factors why she is a heroine. They say that 'women, like men, may attain heroism through their wisdom or through their commitment to a truth beyond that recognized by social conventions' (Pearson & Pope 1981:9). In other words, Jane is a woman ahead of her time. She knows of a bigger truth than the one recognised by the Victorian elite,

which is of a society consisting of equal rights among social classes, but also amongst men and women. According to Pearson and Pope, this greater knowledge is essential when defining her as a heroine:

> 'The hero who is an outsider because she is female, black, or poor is almost always a revolutionary. Simply by being heroic, a woman defies the conditioning that insists she be a damsel in distress, and thus she implicitly challenges the status quo. If she and the author of her story are aware that sexism is not ordained by God or nature but that it s a social phenomenon that can be changed, the work will be explicitly feminist. In either case, her heroic action often results from the superior knowledge the outsider possesses' (Pearson & Pope 1981:9-10).

Jane is an outsider because she is an orphan and poor. She stands out because she is a female challenging the social structures ruled by men. Pearson and Pope argue that she is a heroine because she has a superior knowledge, seemingly the knowledge of how the society ought to be. In addition to this idea of a greater knowledge, Pearson and Pope claim that 'the female hero's powerless position in patriarchal society and her freedom from negative effects of male socialization' makes her appear more realistic than the male hero (Pearson & Pope 1981:10). They also emphasise that 'the difference between the female and the male heroic pattern usually results from the cultural assumptions that strong women are deviant and should be punished' (Pearson & Pope 1981:10).

The question is then, what are the qualities of a strong woman? Jane is weak in the sense that she is financially dependent and thus subordinate, but she is strong in the sense that she is socially, and to some extent morally, independent. She is strong because she is honest and dares to speak the truth, because she believes in her feelings and has a good moral. Ultimately, Jane is strong because she never bows down to principles that she does not believe to be right.

While most modern readers see her strong qualities as beneficial and good today, they were seen as flaws and immoral by many Victorians. When living at Gateshead, Jane challenges the system and the people that try to restrain her, and thereby she becomes a rebel in the eyes of the Victorian aristocrats, who finds this system advantageous. Elizabeth Rigby, for instance, was a Victorian critic that harshly condemned *Jane Eyre*. In 'The Quarterly Review' in 1848, cited in Dunn's edition of *Jane Eyre*, she wrote that the novel was 'an anti-Christian composition' created with 'a horrid taste' (C. Brontë 2001:452-453). Rigby considered Jane to be 'unregenerate and undisciplined', as well as 'proud' and 'ungrateful' (C. Brontë 2001:453), and manifested that the novel was a social threat as it 'fostered

Chartism and rebellion at home' (C. Brontë 2001:453). Rigby's statement regarding the nurtured Chartism, which 'was the first attempt to build an independent political party representing the interests of the labouring and unprivileged sections of the nation' (Cannon 2009), confirms the idea that Jane strives after political independence and equality. Her rebellious behaviour was not permitted, because it in many ways protested against the rooted beliefs and values that the Victorian society was built upon.

The social and political structures that Jane rebels against while living at Gateshead are mostly those of social class and social rules. Her status as an orphan makes her an outsider in a society where family was of high importance. Because of her dependent status, she is more treated like a servant than one of her aunt's children. After she has been tormented and supressed by the tyrannical Reeds, Jane eventually loses control and revolts against her superiors. From a Victorian viewpoint, this rebellion coming from a young girl was outrageous, and therefore it can be interpreted as antiheroic. In other words, Jane can be interpreted as an antiheroine because she rebels against injustice, which corresponds with the idea of an antihero that does 'bad things for the right reasons' (Crusie 2013: 42). After the attack on John Reed, she is punished and sent into the red-room. A punishment that seems ironic because in the moment she declares her independence over John, her liberty is taken from her.

Ultimately, Jane did not only fight a battle against John Reed or her aunt; she fought against the whole system, the principles and constraints of the Victorian era. As a character fought for herself, but as a literary character she also paved the way for other women in the same position by being an example. Her understanding of the society is of a greater scale than the one of the majority around her. However, because she is a child, a female, an insignificant outsider, she is forced being silenced. Janes "problem" is that she is not able to submit to anything that she feels is wrong and discriminating, and consequently she rebels against it. This seems to be the foundation behind her development in becoming an antiheroine.

The chapters concerning her life at Gateshead deals with her powerless position as an orphan and the mistreatment she is exposed to by the Reeds. Jane knows that she deserves a better treatment, but due to her position, she is in no place to complain. Her only chance in life seems to rely on her getting an education in order to create a place for herself in the society. She follows the footsteps of many others in her position, and becomes a governess. This position relates to her status as an antiheroine, in the same way as her situation as an orphan, because it later makes her a rebellious outsider at Thornfield.

4.3 Becoming a governess at Lowood Institution

This section explores how Jane's rebellious behaviour becomes more moderate when equals surround her for the first time. It looks at how Jane becomes more comfortable with her situation, at the same time that she is challenged with new and different perspectives on how to handle the suppression she is faced with. This new perspective is presented to her by her friend Helen Burns, who tries to teach Jane that rebellious behaviour is not the right way to cope with the restrict regime of Lowood, or in life in general. Even if Helen's opinions fascinate her, Jane's passions are too immense to adapt such a submissive conduct. Consequently, Jane holds on to her beliefs and ideas, which later conflicts with societal principles and lead to more antiheroic rebellion.

Macpherson argues that Lowood and Miss Temple are 'the makings of Jane Eyre: her education, the food for her soul, the means of her livelihood, and the key to Rochester's affection to her' (Macpherson 1989:95). However, Lowood, with Mr. Brocklehurst in front, also turns out to be an ordeal. Brocklehurst's evangelical mission is to 'mortify in these girls the lust of the flesh: to teach them to clothe themselves with shame-facedness and sobriety, not with braided hair and costly apparel' (C. Brontë 2001:54), and he established a strict regime at Lowood. As in Gateshead, Jane is also punished unjustly at Lowood. She is called 'a liar' and forced to stand on a chair for hours without any interaction with the rest of the children (C. Brontë 2001:54-55). Despite this, Jane becomes increasingly at ease with her situation at Lowood, and in addition, she gets her first friend, Helen Burns. Burns tries to teach Jane to tolerate the personal injustice they are being exposed to at Lowood, but even though Jane is impressed by the way Helen abides the unfairness, she admits that she would never be able to do as Helen. In other words, she is confessing that she does not conform to the rules that allow these submissive demands or the unfair treatment the children are exposed to, and thus she challenges the rules and beliefs of her superiors.

Jane's rebellious characteristics are for instance present when she sees Burns being 'inflicted on her neck a dozen strokes with the bunch of twigs' (Brontë 2001:45). While Helen justifies the punishment by explaining it as a consequence of her own faults, Jane utters 'if I were in your place I should dislike her; I should resist her; if she struck me with that rod, I should get it from her hand; I should break it under her nose' (C. Brontë 2001:46). Helen tries to teach Jane that it is better 'to endure patiently a smart which nobody feels but yourself, than commit a hasty action whose evil consequences will extend to all connected with you; and besides, the Bible bids us return good for evil' (C. Brontë 2001:47). What Helen is trying to

teach her is self-interest. She is tells Jane how it is easier for oneself not to quarrel, because there will not be consequences if she refrain. Even though Jane is hearing Helen 'with wonder', and suspects that Helen might be right and that she is wrong, she still admits that she 'could not comprehend this doctrine of endurance' (C. Brontë 2001:47). Jane's project is implicitly political, as her interests are larger than her own self-interest. She wants there to be consequences that expose the injustice of the structures she rebels against. Since Jane disbeliefs the Victorian principles that Mr. Brocklehurst executes, and the harsh unfair treatment of the students, she cannot understand how Helen can excuse it. Helen is a representative of how Victorian girls and women should behave, as she does not question nor speak up to any of her superiors. Since Jane's quest is political, she must speak up in order to raise awareness of her own and women's suppressive situation. Again, her motivation is heroic, as she strives for a better society based on equality, but because her way of raising awareness is her rebellious behaviour, she ultimately becomes an antiheroine.

In the chapters concerning Lowood, readers witness defiant tendencies, but not in the physical ways as in Gateshead. Especially to Helen, Jane is expressing rebellious thoughts that challenge the social conventions. Thoughts, that according to Helen is coming from nothing 'but a little untaught girl' (C. Brontë 2001:48). Jane tells Helen that, if she were in her shoes, she would 'resist' Miss Scratched, take the stick from her and 'break it under her nose' (C. Brontë 2001:46). Although she does not practice this, she shows her uprising by revealing these ideas to Helen, indicating the antiheroic features of her. However, the thoughts and reasoning Jane expresses at this stage of the novel shows a more balanced approach to the issues and tribulations in her life. She still feels an urge to rebel against what she thinks is fundamentally wrong, but her motivation seems clearer now that she is more mature:

> 'You are good to those who are good to you. It is all I ever desire to be. If people were always kind and obedient to those who are cruel and unjust, the wicked people would have it all their own way; they would never feel afraid, and so they would never alter, but would grow worse and worse. When we are struck at without a reason, we should strike back again very hard; I am sure we should – so hard as to teach the person who struck us never to do it again' (C. Brontë 2001:48).

This quotation demonstrates Jane's reason for her rebellious behaviour. She knows that if no one speaks up and rebels, things will never change for the better. Her heroic motivation is clear, as she expresses that she fights against 'cruel and unjust' (C. Brontë 2001:48). Yet, she admits that her way of doing this is by being unkind and disobedient. At the same time that she appears heroic, she also appears as antiheroic because she encourages Helen to strike

back, and says that striking back seems to be the right thing to do. An idea that correlates with Knowlton and Spivey's idea that the antihero often does bad things for the right reasons, and that the 'bad things that the antihero does are often arguably... the right thing to do' (Knowlton & Spivey 2013:43).

Helen Burns tries to encourage Jane to renounce her rebellious nature by introducing her to new ways of thinking about the unfairness she is exposed to. She wants Jane, with 'unavailing and impotent anger' (C. Brontë 2001:45), to turn to the New Testament, and asks her to 'observe what Christ says, and how he acts; make his word your rule, and his conduct your example' (C. Brontë 2001:49). Helen gives Jane an advice to 'love your enemies; bless them that curse you; do good to them that hate you and despitefully use you' (C. Brontë 2001:49). However, Jane finds this principle unmanageable, because that would mean that she 'should love Mrs. Reed' which she 'cannot do', and 'bless her son John, which is impossible' (C. Brontë 2001:49). Even if Helen is forgiving and advices Jane to be forgiving too, Jane has a different opinion:

> 'But I feel this, Helen: I must dislike those who, whatever I do to please them, persist in disliking me; I must resist those who punish me unjustly. As natural as that I should love those who show me affection, or submit to punishment when I feel it is deserved' (C. Brontë 2001:48).

For Jane it is a natural feeling to feel displeasure in people that is cruel and disapproving towards her. Once again, she shows that she is true to herself, to her nature, even if it is only 'heathens and savage tribes' that 'hold that doctrine', while 'Christians and civilised nations disown it' (C. Brontë 2001:49). Even if Jane disagrees with Helen during her stay at Lowood, her mind seems to gravitate more towards a rational and intentional behaviour, where there is a goal and a sense of meaningfulness in her actions. The reason for this development can be explained by the fact that she is more mature at this point in life, and that she has been able to interact with young women of her own social class, and with an orphan background. Jane never rebels against anything that she does not view as unfair, and that is why she is antiheroic. Antiheroes rebel because they want justice, and so does Jane.

It is interesting to compare her life at Gateshead and Lowood, because her rebellious behaviour seems to tone down when arriving the governess school. In Gateshead she was an outsider due to her social disadvantage as an orphan, while at Lowood she is for the first time surrounded by equals. Since Lowood is an institution for orphaned girls, Jane is not an outsider anymore. Even though she is bullied by Mr. Brocklehurst and is forced to be

submissive, it does not become as intensive as in Gateshead. She is now situated with other girls of her own class, but she is also taken under the wings of Miss Temple, which in many ways becomes a mother figure to Jane (Brontë 2001:71). Jane's behaviour is more balanced in Lowood, which could be a result of her not feeling as much as an outsider. What appears to be the motivation behind Jane's revolting at Gateshead were her feelings concerning injustice, and the feelings of being treated as a divergent outcast. The feeling of equality was never present at Gateshead, something it seems to be at Lowood, as other orphaned girls and Helen Burns surround her. This is also demonstrated when Jane admits that she actually prefers the poverty-stricken institution to the extravagances of Gateshead, as she says, 'I would not now have exchanged Lowood with all its privations, for Gateshead and its daily luxuries' (C. Brontë 2001:63). At the institution, Jane has experienced that she can be happy without money, as she has enriched her life with new friends and an education. Yet, after spending eight years at Lowood, Jane urges after a change and wants new responsibilities.

Lowood and Mr. Brocklehurst succeed in educating Jane, but not in removing her passionate attributes. Teachman argues that at Lowood 'emphasis is placed on the need for the girls to accept their station in life, to learn to endure hardship and deprivation without complaint, and to restrain their passions in the process' (Teachman 2001:3). Because they failed to extinguish the flame of her rebellion entirely, consequently Jane rebellious passion and opinions are still present, and will therefore contribute to her development in becoming an antiheroine.

4.3.1 The complex role of the Victorian Governess

In order to gain a better understanding of Jane's position and her years as a governess at Thornfield, this section provides a brief backdrop of the complex situation of the Victorian governess. Her position as a governess is an important aspect of her 'outsiderness', as it plays a crucial role when she arrives at Thornfield and, because of her situation, is unable to be with the man she loves. By exploring the role of the governess within the home of her employers, it gives a depiction of their difficult and confusing lives trying to find their place.

The Victorian governess and her situation were widely discussed amongst Victorians and in novels, such as *Jane Eyre*. In her article 'The Victorian Governess: Status Incongruence in Family and Society', M. Jeanne Peterson claims that the mid-nineteenth

century interpretations of the term governess referred to a woman working as a teacher, either at a school or in private households. The governess could either travel to her employer to work, or she could live in her employer's home. Often, governesses lived with the families they served for, and functioned as a companion to the children as well as their teacher (Peterson 1973:4). According to Peterson the common ideal of a Victorian governess was of 'a homely, severe, unfeminine type of woman' (Peterson 1973:15), which relates to Jane as she was 'disconnected, poor, and plain' (C. Brontë 2011:137). Peterson argues that the governess was a 'subject of charitable endeavours' (Peterson 1973:3), and that she had no social position worthy of any notice (Peterson 1973:4). In other words, the employment of a governess, as well as servants, could be seen as a demonstration or proof of economic power in the middle-class families. Peterson adds that this change may also be a 'symbol of the movement of wives and mothers from domestic to ornamental functions' (Peterson 1973:5).

Peterson claims that the Victorian stereotyped governess was 'a woman who was born and bred in comfort and gentility and who, through the death of her father or his subjection to financial ruin, was robbed of the support of her family and was driven to earn her own living (Peterson 1973:6). Jane differs from the stereotyped governess that was born into luxuries, because she a daughter of a poor clergyman, and thus there was no money for her to inherit. She is raised under the care of the Reeds in a comfortable home, but since they exclude her when her biological uncle dies, becoming a governess is her only option in life. Working as a governess not only provided paid labour, but also a home, which some governesses lacked. Jane, for instance, has no place to go to after Lowood, as Gateshead is not an option. The education offers her both a salary and a house that she can live in.

Peterson also underlines the negative aspects of the job as a governess, and says that her complex situation in fact was 'an aggravation of her incongruent status' (Peterson 1973:11). In other words, her situation was a reminder of her dependent status, and by working among wealthy aristocrats, she were constantly faced with a desired life she would never have. The status of the governess was very complicated. On one hand, she was a lady and therefore not a servant, but on the other hand, she was never equal with the wife and her daughters because she was their employee.

By being in this already complex situation as a governess, Jane's relationship with Mr. Rochester does not make it less complicated. Jane is not an equal with Mr. Rochester or the child she is teaching, Adele. She falls in love with a man that is her master, which she is financially dependent on. Because Jane is an employee, and a woman of a lower class than Rochester, she will never be equal with Rochester. In addition, it turns out that Rochester is

married, which means that she incapable of having a romantic relationship him without losing her dignity.

In her article 'The Figure of The Governess', Kathryn Hughes elaborates on the idea of the governess as an outsider. She writes of a life filled with social and emotional tensions, as the governess did not fit in anywhere. The governess filled in many ways the role of a mother, yet she did not have any children of her own, besides she was a kind of paid family member, often taken as a servant (Hughes n.d.). Hughes raises the question that Peterson already has answered; was the governess socially equal to her employer? Hughes agrees with Peterson's belief that she was not, because the governess seldom or never was invited to eat dinner with the family she worked for (Hughes n.d.). She also emphasises the complex relationship between the governess and the servants of the house (Hughes n.d.). Hughes writes that the governess often was unpopular among servants because they had to treat her with respect, although she was an employee, just like them (Hughes n.d.). It appears to be a natural reaction of envy, because the governess was in a better or higher position in the society. Since governesses were supposed to teach children manners and prepare them for the expectations of society, they had to be cultivated in the same aristocratic culture (Hughes n.d.).Yet, many governesses were treated like servants.

This section has provided an orientation about Jane's position as a governess, which will be explored further in the following section. As such, it contributes with a piece to the overall picture of her, and situates her in the Victorian society. It serves as a backdrop to understand how Jane becomes an outsider at Thornfield, as she is neither a servant nor an equal with the master of the house. This outsider position allows her rebellious behaviour at Thornfield, because, due to the gender expectations and the class system, she is in some situations treated in a downgrading way. The unfair treatment and prejudice Jane becomes a victim of at Thornfield, motivates her rebellious behaviour, and thus adds as a part of the hero/antihero discussion.

4.4 Prejudice and unattainable love at Thornfield

This section explores Jane's rebellion towards issues concerning gender roles and female prejudice. It provides an analysis of Jane through her years working as a governess at Thornfield, and falling in love with a man of higher class. Her position as a governess makes her an outsider at Thornfield because she is in a situation that is difficult and complex to

define. She is of a higher rank than the servants are, yet a kind of servant, since she is employed to work for the master of the house. This relates to Kathryn Hughes idea of the governess being a woman that did not fit in anywhere, and consequently became an outsider (Hughes n.d.). Jane's outsider position entails oppression, and as a reaction to the oppression and unfair treatment because of her social background, her rebellious behaviour awakens. By looking at the social and political structures that Jane opposes, such as the gender roles and patriarchal rule, this section discusses how this disobedient and rebellious behaviour can be seen from an antihero perspective. In addition, it questions Jane's choice of leaving Rochester, and probes whether or not her choice can be complemented in the discussion of her as an antiheroine. Finally, it inspects the relation between the idea of the "monster within" and Bertha Mason, arguing that Bertha represents this monster by being Jane's double. This idea is important in the heroine/antiheroine discussion, because the monster within represents a different drive than we find in a hero. If the monster had prevailed Jane, there would not be a hero/antihero discussion about her, because she would end up mad just like Bertha.

Life at Thornfield sets Jane up for an emotional integrity test, as she is falls in love with her master and employee, Mr. Rochester. She is probably more than ever faced with the societal restraints due to her social position, not just because her situation as a governess prevents her from being with the man she loves, but also because Rochester wants Jane to be submissive, and he wants to be in control of her. However, Jane rebels against his attempt by standing up for herself, even though she has to resist her true feelings.

One of the main issues that Jane is confronted with while living at Thornfield is the gender constraint, which she was harshly introduced with by John Reeds male supremacy at Gateshead, and rebelled against. Jane longs after freedom and equality, and is not contented with women's situation in society. When describing the fates of her fellow women that are 'condemned to a stiller doom' than her, and to which 'millions are in silent revolt against their lot' (C. Brontë 2011:93), she refers to the oppressive conditions for women, and the principle of women being silent and subordinate. Jane expresses her frustration and feelings of entrapment, not only for herself, but her fellow women. In doing so, she becomes a kind of revolutionary antiheroine. She criticises society's expectations of women as submissive and confined as she cries behalf of women:

> 'Women are supposed to be very calm generally: but women feel just as men feel; they need exercise for their faculties, and a field for their efforts, as much as their brothers do; they suffer from too rigid a restraint, too absolute a stagnation, precisely as men would suffer; and it is narrow-minded in their more privileged fellow-creatures

to say that they ought to confine themselves to making puddings and knitting stockings, to playing on the piano and embroidering bags' (C. Brontë 2001:93).

In this famous feminist speech, Jane criticises the expectations and regulations regarding women's lives. She admits that she does not meet these expectations, because she cannot bear to be constantly still, 'I could not help it: the restlessness was in my nature; it agitated me to pain sometimes' (C. Brontë 2001:93). As Macpherson also emphasise, Jane does not only speak for her self, she 'moves from a defence of her individual case to a moral argument for women's right to 'seek to do more or learn more than custom has pronounced necessary for their sex'' (Macpherson 1989:18). Again, Jane condemns the reality of Victorian women's situation, and 'she disputes the very reality of the Victorian ideal of womanhood, the selfless angel of tranquility, by claiming it is not in her nature, not women's nature at all' (Macpherson 1989:18). If it is not in men's nature to be 'constantly still' and 'very calm generally', then it is not in women's nature either, because as she declares, 'women feel just as men feel' (C. Brontë 2001:93).

This passage can be seen as a radically feminist philosophy, as it is in conflict with the most central belief in the Victorian society, that men and women are very divergent. Jane affirms that women are not different from men in the sense that they too have feelings, and need to have an opportunity to do something with their lives. By using the descriptions of 'restlessness' and feelings of 'stagnation' and 'restraints', Jane highlights the imprisonment of her fellow women (C.Brontë 2001:93). This makes Jane a radical antiheroine because she revolts against established political conventions. This rebellion corresponds with the idea Rollin emphasizes, that the antihero usually is an 'anti-establishment figure' (Rollin 1973:xvii). Jane expresses an oppositional attitude against social and political conventions, which is very typical for the antihero. Today, she can be seen as heroic because she challenges these social and political conventions, which unjustly judges and values people based on their social background. Moreover, she can be perceived as a heroine, because she fights for a bigger truth than the other characters in the novel is aware of. She is heroic for never giving in to the Victorian conventions, and fights her battle against the class system and female prejudice. However, for the same reasons stated above, which make Pearson and Pope view Jane as a heroine, other critics, such as Moglen and Gaskell, interpret her as an antiheroine.

Another episode that shows Jane's criticism and uprising against these gender expectations, is when she reprimands Rochester after he commands her to answer him clearly:

'I do not think, sir, you have any right to command me, merely because you are older than I, or because you have seen more of the world than I have; your claim to superiority depends on the use you have made of your time and experience' (C. Brontë 2011:114). Jane is not afraid of telling Rochester how she feels, even if she is supposed to be respectful and not oppose her superior and employee. Once again, she defies the expectations of her as a woman, by using her rebellious voice. Macpherson calls it a 'masculine freedom of expression', and claims that Jane several times 'transgresses gender boundaries' (Macpherson 1989:18). Even if Jane does not say so explicitly, this confrontation can also be interpreted as her beliefs of equality. It can be read as an implicit message, where she says that Rochester is not better than her, just because he is older and more experienced. To take it even further, Rochester is not better that her, just because he is an aristocratic male.

From Victorian perspective, this challenging behaviour towards Rochester would most likely be seen as churlish and disobedient. However, this behaviour also attracts Rochester to her:

> 'to women who please me only by their faces, I am the very devil when I find out they have neither souls nor hearts — when they open to me a perspective of flatness,triviality, and perhaps imbecility, coarseness, and ill-temper: but to the clear eye and eloquent tongue, to the soul made of fire, and the character that bends but does not break — at once supple and stable, tractable and consistent — I am ever tender and true' (C. Brontë 2001:222).

His declaration shows that Jane charms Rochester by the same reasons others see her as 'passionate and rude' (C. Brontë 2001:10). The antiheroic side of her attracts him. Jane opposes her employer and master, but also a man from a higher class, whom she is dependent on. In addition to being from a lower class than him, it is important to keep in mind that she is a woman expected to be silent. However, when looking at it from a modern perspective it might not seem rebellious, because of changes in gender perspective and social structures. As stated earlier, when looking at Jane today, she appears heroic because she speaks of the truth, no matter the cost. Ultimately, the fact that she raised questions that most women did not dare to ask makes her a heroine in some eyes, and an antiheroine to others.

Jane is not blessed with fortune, family or money, and because of her social background, she is in many ways forced to become a governess. As a 'disconnected, poor, and plain' (C. Brontë 2011:137) governess, Jane becomes an outsider at Thornfield. When Miss Ingram arrives the mansion, Jane finds herself as an outsider because she is not comparable to the beautiful aristocrat who wants to marry Mr. Rochester. Miss Ingram seems to present the

desired woman in the Victorian era, as she comes from a rich family and is an elegant, beautiful woman. In fact, she seems to represent everything that Jane is *not*. Due to the expectations and believed values of the Victorian society, Miss Ingram is the perfect match for Mr. Rochester, even if his feelings are not as passionate for her as for Jane. Feelings and passion seems to be insignificant in many Victorian marriages, which is also proved when Rochester marries Bertha Mason, just because of financial agreements between their parents. Even if Jane can offer Rochester passion and true love, the right thing to do, according to Victorian beliefs and principles, is to marry Miss Ingram, who is of same class. Jane is not supportive of this system, as she believes that feelings and love are more important than the political reasons. Once again, Jane's idea can be viewed as revolutionary, because it challenges the well-established traditions that Victorians lived by. She addresses that Rochester was going to marry Miss Ingram 'for family, perhaps political reasons, because her rank and connections suited him', yet she stresses that 'he had not given her his love, and that her qualifications were ill adapted to win from him that treasure' (C. Brontë 2011:158-159). In other words, Jane challenges the social traditions and norms by implying that true love is more important than money and class.

In reluctance, Jane sees no other option than to leave Thornfield and Rochester. Because he is about to marry Miss Ingram, Jane cannot continue her life at Thornfield. When she confronts him with the news of her leaving, Mr. Rochester begs her to stay, which disturbs her:

> 'Do you think I am an automaton? — a machine without feelings? and can bear to have my morsel of bread snatched from my lips, and my drop of living water dashed from my cup? Do you think, because I am poor, obscure, plain, and little, I am soulless and heartless? You think wrong! — I have as much soul as you — and full as much heart! (C. Brontë 2011: 215- 216).

Jane speaks up against class prejudice, but she also asserts the expectations of the desired woman that she cannot fulfil. Even though society decides that they are not equal, it is her opinion that they are. This depicts the same essence of a higher knowledge that Pearson and Pope asserted. Jane knows how the society should be in a justified world, and in this world, she would not be discriminated because of her social status. Thereby she criticise the class-related divisions, which is one of the reasons why Jane is unable to marry the man she loves. By confronting Rochester and stating that she also has feelings, despite her situation as 'poor, obscure, plain, and little', Jane challenges the Victorian beliefs of passive women. In fact,

Jane stands up for herself and revolt against the constraints of Victorian femininity. By declaring her repressed feelings, she stands up for herself, but also sets an example for Victorian women in her position.

Then, when she is about to leave, she says something that diverges far from the norm in the Victorian era, 'I am no bird; and no net ensnares me: I am a free human being with an independent will' (C. Brontë 2011: 216). This quotation is also an evidence for Jane criticism and oppositional behaviour toward the gendered expectations. Jane states that she is no bird, she is no ordinary Victorian woman, who will not let the net of social structures that supress women, ensnare her. Jane compares women with trapped animals, and refuses to be one of them herself. She assures Rochester that she refuses to be trapped by the net of social expectations and rules, and stands up for what she feels is a human right, to be a free independent woman. This uprising is antiheroic, because she protests against traditions and rules that are fundamental for the Victorian society. Jane withdraws the Victorian perception of a woman and her position, as she does not want to be such a woman herself. She is radical, and expresses ideas that are in conflict with the beliefs of a woman being dependent on the man. Because these ideas are in conflict with the Victorian politics, Jane emerges as a Victorian antiheroine.

Jane knows that her situation would have been different if she had been blessed with money and good looks. She addresses this to Rochester and claims that even if they are not able to attain equality at earth, their spirits are equals:

> 'And if God had gifted me with some beauty and much wealth, I should have made it as hard for you to leave me, as it is now for me to leave you. I am not talking to you now through the medium of custom, conventionalities, nor even of mortal flesh: it is my spirit that addresses your spirit; just as if both had passed through the grave, and we stood at God's feet, equal — as we are!' (C. Brontë 2011:216).

This can be interpreted as criticism of the principles that separate the two, the expectations of Rochester as her employer and a man of higher class, and of her as a plain and poor governess. To Rochester, Jane states that she is not an ideal woman, and that she never will be, as she says: 'I am not an angel,' I asserted; 'and I will not be one till I die: I will be myself. Mr. Rochester, you must neither expect nor exact anything celestial of me — for you will not get it, any more than I shall get it of you: which I do not at all anticipate' (C. Brontë 2011:221). According to Oxford English Dictionary, one of the descriptions of the word "angel" is of "a very beautiful, kind, or good person". In other words, Jane separates herself the attributes of the preferred woman, assuring Rochester that she will never be anything else

than herself. Once again, Jane is true to herself, and does not bow down to the expectations of the female role, making her a subversive antiheroine.

Rochester also opposes the Victorian beliefs when he proposes to his governess, and Jane challenges the social customs by accepting his proposal. According to Victorian standards it was not appropriate for Rochester to marry a woman of a lower class or a governess, and the fact that Jane accepts only in her own terms, shows that she would not let anyone overrule her, that she will only marry on *her* principles, not society's. Once again, Jane demonstrates that she is in conflict with the Victorian beliefs and that she wants to do things *her* way, which relates to the idea of the antihero feeling free to 'reject most social norms' (Reed 1974:5). However, Jane is not in conflict with these beliefs and values for purely individualistic reasons, as it seems as if Jane's behaviour is underpinned by a larger political project. When Jane wants to do things her own way, it is because she believes that this is a better way not just for herself, but for women in general. Therefore, at the same time that she is antiheroic for her rebellious behaviour towards the Victorian constructions and expectations that restrain women, she is also a heroine for wanting to "free" women from these social constraints.

On the day of their wedding, Jane eventually finds out Rochester's secret, which is his marriage with the mad Bertha Mason. Even though Jane is devastated and heartbroken, she is still not repelled by the truth. Arnold Shapiro in 'In Defence of Jane Eyre' writes that 'she who has been so aware of the horrors committed in the name of society, certainly can realize that Rochester is not fully to blame for his terrible marriage' (Shapiro 1968: 691-692). Due to society's dictates, Rochester is pledged to Bertha, and because of this, both Rochester and Jane ends up as social victims. Jane knows that because Rochester is legally tied to Bertha Mason, she cannot become anything more to him than his mistress, and thereby sacrificing her own integrity. Sacrificing her integrity for the sake of her feelings is not debatable for Jane. Therefore, she flees Thornfield, an action that some critics, have referred to as cowardice.

One of these critics is Richard Chase, cited in Shapiro, who claims that 'Jane is a coward when she runs away from Rochester' (Shapiro 1968:681). This complements the discussion of Jane as antiheroic, because the cowardice is not a heroic attribute. Yet, in some way she is courageous for leaving everything she is familiar with behind her, to wander into something unknown. In fact, Jane's choice of leaving Rochester and refusing to be his mistress is arguably the most important decision she makes. If Jane had not been so moralistic about marriage and become Rochester's mistress, she would be fighting the institution of

marriage, which was one of the cornerstones of the Victorian patriarchal society. Jane's choice is difficult due to the complicated situation and the quandary she is facing regarding the two options. On one hand, she can follow her passion and desire and stay with her true love, but this alternative is in conflict with her self-respect and morality. In addition, it would lead to suffering because she would only become Rochester's mistress and not his wife. On the other hand, she can leave him and act in accordance with her religion and the accepted standards of conduct. Emily Griesinger reasons that:

> '[…] for Victorian readers it would have been extremely unusual for a "raw school girl" of eighteen to have married a wealthy, landed member of the upper class. Not just unusual but wrong. Jane is guilty of the sin of pride for stepping out of her "appointed" place in God's hierarchy' (Griesinger 2008:47).

For modern readers, on the other hand, 'it is Jane's refusal to abide hierarchies that underscores a sinful misappropriation of power on the part of the wealthy, upper class Rochester' (Griesinger 2008:48). Therefore, according to Victorian expectations, Jane does the right thing when she leaves Rochester. However, today this may be seen as cowardice because it seems like she suddenly gives in for the Victorian standards. According to Griesinger, 'Victorian readers would also appreciate, in a way we may be unable to today, Jane's moral dilemma once she realizes Rochester already has a wife' (Griesinger 2008:48). Some modern readers will probably not understand why Rochester does not divorce Bertha, and take Jane instead. However, as Griesinger also clarifies, Rochester would not be able to divorce his mad wife, because 'not until late in the century would it have been legal to divorce a spouse who had been declared insane as Bertha was' (Griesinger 2008:48). Therefore, for Jane and Victorian readers 'the only alternative is bigamy and / or adultery' (Griesinger 2008:48).

These different interpretations of the same episode demonstrate that as the society and its principles change through time, the grey area in changes with it. This relates to the idea of the antihero being relative to times, because what they fight against will always change along with society. For instance, what Victorians viewed as wrongful and deceitful, can be viewed as the opposite today, because we see the consequences of this kind of regulation from a different point of view. In that way, the grey area will always be in flux, as the regulations of society establish the limits.

Rochester questions Jane's decision as he asks 'is it better to drive a fellow-creature to despair than to transgress a mere human law – no man being injured by the breach? for you

have neither relatives nor acquaintances whom you need to fear to offend by living with me'
(C. Brontë 2011:270). Even if Jane admits this is true, she replies:

> 'I care for myself. The more solitary, the more friendless, the more unsustained I am,
> the more I will respect myself. I will keep the law given by God; sanctioned by man. I
> will hold to the principles received by me when I was sane, and not mad – as I am
> now. Laws and principles are not for the times when there is no temptation: they are
> for such moments as this, when body and soul rise in mutiny against their rigour;
> stringent are they; inviolate they shall be. If at my individual convenience I might
> break them, what would be their worth? They have a worth – so I have always
> believed; and if I cannot believe it now it is because I am insane: quite insane: with my
> veins running fire, and my heart beating faster than I can count its throbs.
> Preconceived opinions, foregone determinations, are all I have at this hour to stand by:
> there I plant my foot' (C. Brontë 2011: 270-271).

This incident is complicated and can be viewed from different perspectives. On one hand, Jane is antiheroic because she opposes Rochester, as she does not obey him, when he begs her to stay. Her pupose as a woman is to please the man at the expense of herself, and in Jane's situation at the expense of her values. By defying this idea of a woman's role in a patriarchal society, Jane emerges as rebellious. On the other hand, one can question this sudden change in Jane's behaviour. Throughout the novel, she has been cheered on for standing up for herself and rejecting the accustomed values, but now her attitude changes as she puts morality before her feelings. Jane changes her behaviour and all of a sudden meets the social expectations of the Victorian era. Instead of following her heart, she follows the laws of God, rules and laws she refuses to violate. Rochester wants Jane to reject the conventional morality because she does not have anyone to offend, he also offers her protection in France (C.Brontë 2001:259), but it is more important for Jane to have self-respect, and thus she rejects Rochester. Whether or not this action is antiheroic or heroic depends on the perspective, which can be interpreted in different ways. Jane is rebellious against the patriarchal society as she refuses to obey the demands of Rochester, but she can also be interpreted as heroic because she acts morally and follows her religious faith. Today, she can also be perceived heroic because she acts morally and does the "right thing" by leaving a man that lied to her several times, and was already married.

While passion and love are the fundamentals of Jane's relationship to Rochester, status, sex, money and 'everything but love and equality' were the fundamentals in Rochester's relationship with Bertha (Gilbert & Gubar 1980:356). Jane is rebellious towards society's conception of marriage, as she opposes the traditional marriage characterizing

inequality. 'In her [Jane's] world, she senses, even the equality of love between true minds lead to the inequalities and minor despotisms of marriage' (Gilbert & Gubar 1980:357). Jane is sceptic about marrying Rochester because she is afraid of being trapped in a marriage of inequality. She requires a marriage where woman and man are equals, and will only marry Rochester on these terms. Rochester agrees to Jane's terms as he refers to her as his equal, when talking to Jane as his bride, ''My bride is here,' he said, again drawing me to him, 'because my equal is here, and my likeness. Jane, will you marry me?'' (C. Brontë 2001:217). The fact that Jane demands equality by Rochester is interesting because most women in her position would most likely be overjoyed by his proposal, as he offers a new and improved lifestyle. As poor, plain and orphan, it seems like this was Jane's best chance of a decent life. However, for her it was never a question of marrying Rochester for his money or for a better status in life. The only reason Jane wants to marry Rochester for is the love between them. Still, Jane knows how marriage have destroyed and suppressed so many women, and therefore she will only go along with it on her terms, which means that they marry as equals. This adds to the argument of her as an antiheroine, because it demonstrates how she stands up for herself and defies the traditional Victorian beliefs of marriage.

Gilbert and Gubar elaborate on Bertha as Jane's double, an idea that is interesting in the interpretation of Jane as an antiheroine. Gilbert and Gubar have described Bertha as Janes 'avatar' (Gilbert & Gubar 1980:359) and her 'truest and darkest double' (Gilbert & Gubar 1980:360). They argue that Bertha is 'the angry aspect of the orphan child, the ferocious secret self Jane has been trying to repress ever since her days at Gateshead' (Gilbert & Gubar 1980:360). Their suggestion contributes to the idea of Jane's inner monster, previously discussed in section 4.2 about Jane's life in Gateshead. By using Macpherson's idea of a 'monster within', section 4.2 suggests that the rebellious attributes of Jane create this monster. It also explains that Jane needs to learn to control her inner monster, before she can realise her 'happy ending'. In this way, Bertha may be perceived as the antiheroic side of Jane. If the monster of Bertha would not be present in her, Jane would most likely not be such an unconventional heroine. Gilbert and Gubar claims that what Bertha does, is what Jane wants to do, and refer to Bertha's violent attacks, and when she burns the wedding dress and Thornfield. (Gilbert & Gubar 19801979:359) They argue that Bertha does these things for Jane, and that even though Jane is disobedient with her uprising and rebellious tongue, Bertha takes it to a higher level, completing Jane's inner desires of revenge and justice. Gilbert and Gubar states that Brontë juxtaposes these two characters, and that Jane represents the 'socially acceptable or conventional personality', while Bertha represents 'the free, uninhibited, often

criminal self' (Gilbert & Gubar 1980:360). This statement underpins the idea of Bertha as the scandalous and rebellious side of Jane, and that she can be seen to complement Jane as an antiheroine.

Gilbert and Gubar question if Bertha is a double or if she is rather 'a monitory image' of Jane. They argue that:

> 'The relationship between Jane and Bertha is a monitory one: while acting out Jane's secret fantasies, Bertha does (to say the least) provide the governess with an example of how not to act, teaching her a lesson more salutary than any Miss Temple ever taught' (Gilbert & Gubar 1980:362).

Rochester tells Jane that Bertha 'came of a mad family', and as such, had inherited madness from her mother, 'the Creole', who 'was both a mad woman and a drunkard' (C. Brontë 2001:249). However, Bertha's madness can also function as an example of what might happen to Jane if she marries on terms of society and its fundamental ideas of marriage. She and Rochester married on these terms, and it resulted in her turning mad and locked away in the attic of Thornfield. As Sharon Friedman indicates, the madness inside Bertha could be a result of 'Rochester's rejection and imprisonment of Bertha, the supposed "madwoman"', more specifically his 'rejection of Bertha's role as passionate and sexual' (Friedman 2008:20).

Bertha's madess can also be an example of what might happen to Jane if her inner monster takes over. It is important that Jane takes control over her passion and anger, in order to keep the monter at bay. The death of Bertha seems to be symbolic in the way that it frees Jane from this monster. 'The death of Bertha frees her from the furies that torment her and makes possible a marriage of equality – makes possible, that is, wholeness within herself' (Gilbert & Gubar 1980:362). Gubar and Gilbert argues that at this point, 'when the Bertha in Jane falls from the ruined wall of Thornfield and is destroyed, the orphan child too, as her dream predicts, will roll from her knee – the burden of her past will be lifted – and she will wake' (Gilbert & Gubar 1980:362). This might indicate that her antiheroic rebellion died with Bertha. However, in the eyes of many Victorians, Jane did not emerge as a heroic heroine. She was rather looked at as a repellent character opposing the well-established social norms. In that way, Jane and her idea was most likely seen as a threat to these social structures, and thus appeared as antiheroic. While today, she can be interpreted as a heroine, because she faced the suppression and fought the gender restriction. Yet another example of how she can be seen as heroic and antiheroic for the same reasons.

At Thornfield, Jane is faced with female prejudice and gender expectations, which she rebels against by opposing Rochester. She refuses to become his mistress, and thereby resist his patriarchal approach. Jane emerges as an antiheroine because she rebels against him and the Victorian norms that try to restrain her. This section has supported Gilbert and Gubar's claim that Bertha Mason is Jane's double. In addition, it has added an argument to their discussion, by arguing that Bertha is in fact Jane's 'inner monster'. This reasoing correlates with Crusie's statement that all antiheroes have a monster inside them (Crusie 2015:6). Jane emerges as an antiheroine because she rebels against well-established and respected structures. After she flees Thornfield, she ends up at Marsh End where she is for the last time in the novel, confronted with the patriarchal rule and the Victorian expectations of women.

4.5 Rejection at Marsh End and finally equality at Ferndean

This section looks at Jane's stay at Marsh End, where she befriends the Rivers siblings who are in the same social position as her. It examines how Jane opposes St. John Rivers when he demands her to be his wife, and how this can be interpreted from an antiheroic perspective. As well as it investigates how St John represents the patriarchal rule, which Jane has rebelled against throughout the novel. Finally, it probes Jane's "happy ending" as she becomes independent and finally marries Rochester at Ferndean, which can be percieved as the victory of the antiheroine.

When the Rivers family welcome Jane, and offer her shelter and food, a new world opens up to her. Jane is no longer an outsider, as equals surround her. The Reeds siblings are orphans just like her, and Diana and Mary even share the same social position as governesses. For the first time as an adult, Jane has found like-minded companions. However, this place also presents her with a new dilemma when St. John proposes to Jane, and asks her to come with him on a missionary travel to India. According to the norms of the Victorian society, Jane is most likely expected to accept this proposal, as it is "the right thing to do". St. John uses God and Jane's moral responsibility as an argument to why she should come with him:

> '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' (C. Brontë 2001:343).

St. John tries to push her into a life as a missionary wife, and thereby he wants her to suppress her feelings. He claims that this is what Jane is "supposed" to do, arguing that she needs to be humble and put her feelings aside. Even if St. John claims her, she rejects his proposal. As such, Jane does not answer to the expectations St. John has of her, which also seem to represent the expectations society has of her. Ultimately, Jane refuses to go with St. John because she is not in love with him, even if it means her sacrificing her companionship for her independence. St. John wants Jane to sacrifice her emotions for Rochester to her moral responsibilities, but Jane will not be imprisoned in a loveless marriage or be dependent on any man. By declining St. John proposal, she once again challenges the social expectations of the Victorian patriarchal society, particularly regarding the expectations of marriage.

Although Jane is in company by equals at Marsh End, she still withdraws because of her challenging attitude. For instance, the event when Jane is confronting St. John with his feeling for Miss Oliver shows how Victorian's were shocked by her manner of her speech:

> 'Again the surprised expression crossed his face. He had not imagined that a woman would dare to speak so to a man. For me, I felt at home in this sort of discourse. I could never rest in communication with strong, discreet, and refined minds, whether male or female, till I had passed the outworks of conventional reserve, and crossed the threshold of confidence, and won a place by their heart's very hearthstone' (C. Brontë 2001: 319).

In this quotation the conflict between Jane and social class, social rules as well as gender roles are presented. She indicates that women were not supposed to speak in the way she spoke to John; however, Jane feels comfortable in such language. Jane's speech is central in the critique towards Victorian standards, as she uses it to rebel against the social customs. As an antiheroine, Jane feels content with manners that were not accepted of a Victorian woman. Moreover, it does not seem as if she care what St. John thinks of her by speaking in this way. This discourse is a big part of Jane's rebellious behaviour, because it conflicts the expected social conduct of Victorian women. Moreover, this quotation demonstrates that Jane does not seem to differentiate between man and woman, which also disagree with the traditional gender beliefs that were nurtured in the Victorian society. Because of this rebelliousness towards the established norms, and the expectations of a feminine speech, Jane emerges as antiheroine.

Even if Jane is much more independent at Marsh End than she has ever been, she still feels subordinate to St. John. She finds him 'very patient, very forbearing, and yet an exacting master' (C. Brontë 2001: 339) as he expects her to do a lot for him. She also accuses him of

taking her freedom away, 'by degrees, he acquired a certain influence over me that took away my liberty of mind: his praise and notice were more restraining than his indifference' (C. Brontë 2001: 339). Jane once again feels as an inferior to a male, and explains how she surrendered to his demands:

> 'I could no longer talk or laugh freely when he was by, because a tiresomely importunate instinct reminded me that vivacity (at least in me) was distasteful to him. I was so fully aware that only serious moods and effort to sustain or follow any other became vain: I fell under a freezing spell. When he said 'go', I went; 'come', I came; 'do this', I did it' (C. Brontë 2011:339).

St John is another representative of the male supremacy, as everything he teaches Jane about men and marriage is 'drab and dutiful, exacting and self-denying, claustrophobic and constricting' (Macpherson 1989:59). He tries to teach Jane about her place as a woman, and tries to deceive her into a marriage for the sake of God and morality. Macpherson argues that 'St. John's power over Jane is finally limited by his limited capacity for love, for feeling, and thus for moral growth' and Jane's control 'is finally 'in play and in force'…because of her capacity to feel and recognize love when it inspires moral authority and when it does not' (Macpherson 1989:60). This is interesting because the reasons that St. John uses, as an argument to make Jane accept his offer, are the same considerations that Jane respected when she decided to leave Rochester. She left him because of morality and God, but when St. John asks her to do the same, she refuses. Does Jane then, only execute these moral choices on *her* terms? The love and passion that she opted out of Thornfield, is all of a sudden so important that she rejects St. John's proposal. Once again, Jane does what *she* wants and what *she* thinks is most important. The notion of egoism seems to be relevant when describing her as an antiheroine, as it is a human flaw and not a heroic attribute. She refuses to obey St. John, as he claims her as his wife, and thus she rebels against the patriarchal social norms. Jane will mislead into a marriage that will not contain any affection or love, and thus breaks with St. John:

> 'I broke from St. John, who had followed, and would have detained me. It was *my* time to assume ascendency. My powers were in play and in force … I mounted to my chamber; locked myself in; fell on my knees; and prayed in my way—a different way to St. John's, but effective in its own fashion' (C. Brontë 2001:358).

Here Jane asserts that *she* has taken control and is not dominated by anyone, which was probably shocking for Victorians, because she as a woman had disobeyed and claimed herself independent. By doing so, Jane opposes against the traditional beliefs of a woman as submissive and independent. She shows a degrading attitude towards Victorian values, but in the same time, she does this because she refuses to be "captured" into a loveless marriage.

Since Jane inherited a lot of money from her unknown and deceased uncle, she is also financially independent for the very first time in her life. She is not in need of any man and can finally feel free. Jane's difficult path has finally resulted in justice. Still, she is not completely satisfied, because she is not with the man that she loves. Therefore, she seeks Rochester and finds him at Ferndean. Bertha Mason died in the fire, and Jane has become an independent woman and inherited a lot of money. In addition, since fire physically weakens Rochester, they are finally equals in the eyes of Victorians. Since Jane and Rochester are now equals, they can marry on Jane's terms.

However, after Jane's reunion with Rochester, she once again opposes the societal structures by saying 'Reader, I married him' (C. Brontë 2001:382). As Samantha Ellis points out, this way of phrasing it is 'thrilling because it is so far from the more passive constructions we might expect; it is not "Reader, he married me", or even "Reader, we married"'(Ellis 2016). Jane shows that she is not a subordinate woman any more, which differs from the Victorian perspective on gender roles. If Jane had said 'he married me' or 'we married' it would have been more conventional and approved by Victorians, instead she once again rebels with a feminist approach as a last uprising towards the gender expectations in the Victorian era. This quote is also important because it shows Jane's happy ending, and thereby the antiheroine's achievement of justice.

4.6 Conclusion

Jane rebels against the social and political structures, as well as confinements of the Victorian era. She is rebellious because she is an outsider, and this position allows her behaviour. The important aspects of Janes 'outsiderness' are that she is orphaned, without friends or family, but also her position as governess. As Moglen claims, Jane lives in a society where she contradicts the standards, because she has different opinions and values. Even though Jane is born into a position as dependent, her goal is always to achieve freedom and be independent. Her path towards this goal is challenging and sometimes very painful, as

she at times is faced with cruelty and violence. She is supressed and treated like a servant, in a world that looks at her as an inferior. Jane can be interpreted as an antiheroine, as Moglen claims, but she can also be interpreted as heroine, as Pearson and Pope claims. Whether she is called a heroine or an antiheroine is two sides of the same coin. Jane is heroic because she challenges the social conventions, but at the same time, she is antiheroic because of her rebellion.

The concept of the antihero is complex, but as explained in chapter 3, it can be located into a grey area. Jane exists in this area because she differs from the Victorian customs, the exepctations of a Victorian woman. Jane's uprising against her superiors, the social class system as well as the female suppression can be interpreted as antiheroic. This is because the aim of this rebellion is justice. Jane meets the qualifications of an antihero, because she 'refuse(s) to bow down to the expectations of society and rebel(s) against the rules that bind us all' (Stewart 2015:7). Jane is a flawed character; she is an outsider, an antiheroine with a project that is larger than her own self-interest. For the same reasons that she is antiheroine, she is also a heroine. In a Victorian perspective, she is an antiheroine because she rebels against well-established principles, and thus emerges as a threat to the structure of the Victorian society. However, she is also a heroine because she fights against these principles, which entails injustice on innocent people.

Today, it is easier to view Jane as a heroine, because we see how the Victorian structures that she fights against, entailed injustice, as people were devalued because of their social background. Jane is a flawed hero, operating in a grey area to achieve justice, not only for herself, but also for women in general. By using the concept to understand Jane better, it helps to highlight the message that she as character conveyes in the novel. When looking at Jane from an antihero perspective, it is clear that she has a purpose. Her purpose is to shed light on the injustice that the Victorian era represents, such as the hierarchical class divisions and their understanding of women and men. Jane challenges and questions the society and its customs in a way no other female character has dared to do before. She continues to confront these social principles even if she is punished or beaten, and thus emerges as a revolutionary antiheroine.

In the following analysis of Heathcliff, we will take a closer look at a different type of antihero. While Jane operates in the blurred line between hero and antihero, Heathcliff operates at the opposite side, and thus share similar traits with the evil villain. However, his wicked actions seem to be justifiable, as his quest is the same as Jane's, namely justice.

5. Heathcliff

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

(E. Brontë 2003:106).

5.1 Introduction

Heathcliff has been described as the greatest villain in fiction because of his malevolent actions. George Barnet Smith (1873), cited in Bloom, states that 'in Heathcliff, Emily Brontë 'has drawn the greatest villain extant, after Iago', as there is not 'a redeeming quality in him' (Bloom 2008:141). Smith's opinion is accompanied with Reid, cited in Miriam Allot, who claims that 'Heathcliff is the greatest villain in fiction' (Allott 1970:88). Charlotte Brontë, cited in Bloom, in even wrote of Heathcliff: 'carefully trained and kindly treated, the black gipsy-cub might possibly have been reared into a human being, but tyranny and ignorance made of him a mere demon' (Bloom 1993:5). Yet, many critics, such as Thorslev and Arnold Kettle, excuse his behaviour and defend him from being labelled as villain. He is complex and, for some, difficult to understand, as he portrays some villainous characteristics and behaviour that are hard to justify. Despite this, this chapter argues that Heathcliff is rather an antihero than a villain, as Smith and Reid claim.

Like Jane, Heathcliff's goals and intentions are to achieve justice, and just like her, he chooses a rebellious path towards his goal. However, unlike Jane, Heathcliff's pursuit of justice appears to be more self-centred. He wants vengeance over the people that have mistreated him, whereas Jane wants a justified society, not only for herself but also for her fellow women.

By examining his situation at Wuthering Heights, this chapter sets out to study why Heathcliff chooses to rebel, and how readers are able to justify his wicked actions. This chapter claims that because most readers recognise Heathcliff's motivation behind his actions, and because they are able to sympathise with him, it is easier for them to preserve him from the villain label. Similar with the chapter on Jane, this chapter argues that it is Heathcliff's outsider position that allows his rebellious and wicked behaviour. Because he is an outsider and is despised by the other characters, he has nothing to lose by rebelling against them.

The chapter is structured into six sections, which includes the introduction and conclusion. In the following order, this chapter investigates how Heathcliff's foreignness and social background makes him outsider at Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange. It looks

at how this position and the subsequent suppression contribute to his development in becoming an antihero. Further, this chapter looks at how Heathcliff's relationship with Catherine Earnshaw, and her rejection, due to his social status, boosts his antiheroic development. It also probes Heathcliff's quest of revenge, and explains why his malevolent behaviour and actions can be justified. These three sections discuss Heathcliff's transformation from being a silent outsider to becoming a violent monster, and are followed by a section that discusses how his transformation can be justified because readers identify and with for him. This reader identification relates to the concept of the antihero, because readers often see their 'flawed selves' in them, and for this reason, are able to recognize their humanity (Knowlton & Spivey 2013:47). On that account, readers are able to accept their mistakes, even the highly doubtful ones. This structure is useful as it examines different situations in Heathcliff's life, and his development in becoming an antihero, as it follows his "antiheroness" being strengthened along his journey.

One major difference with Heathcliff and Jane and the novels they operate in, is the fact that Jane herself tells the story in *Jane Eyre*, while several characters narrate *Wuthering Heights*. Therefore, examining Jane from an antiheroic or heroic perspective less complicated, as the reader is introduced to her thought and beliefs throught the novel. As such, it is easier to understand what she thinks of certain situations and issues, and why she rebels. In fact, readers learn to know Jane in a complete different way than with Heathcliff. With Heathcliff, readers witness his oppressive childhood and adolescent through other narratives, and are therefore not able to read his mind or experience his feelings in the same way. This means that there are room for more interpretations around his behaviour. Because of this factor, it is important to look at his social background, his life at Wuthering Heights and the betrayal he faces with Catherine, all matters that complement his antiheroic development.

5.2 The gypsy outsider at Wuthering Heights

This section examines Heathcliff's foreignness, and how his social background and alien looks make him an outsider at Wuthering Heights. Not only is he a poor orphaned boy with a mysterious background when he arrives Wuthering Heights, his looks and physical characteristics distinguish him from the other characters in the novel. Consequently, Heathcliff does not fit in with the aristocratic Earnshaws, as he is dependent and belongs to

the lower classes, and so he becomes an outsider to them. In addition, this section also investigates how Heathcliff becomes an outsider because he does not adhere to the Victorian expectations and social values. His situation will be viewed in light of Victorian xenophobia, as his mysterious background frightens many of the characters in the novel. Heathcliff's social position as a low class outsider is a situation that enables abuse, and representatives from both the Earnshaws and Lintons, mistreat him. This mistreatment contributes to the development in becoming an antihero, as it functions as nourishments for the growing monster within him.

Readers are first introduced to Heathcliff by the description made by Lockwood, when he meets Heathcliff for the first time:

> 'Mr. Heathcliff forms a singular contrast to his abode and style of living. He is a dark-skinned gypsy 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' (E. Brontë 2003:5).

Lockwood contrasts his appearance, and his comment displays the prejudice towards people with a different skin-color, as he did not expect a 'gipsy' to be dressed and mannered as a gentleman. It is clear that Lockwood is confused over Heathcliff being a wealthy gypsy, and this illustrates how foreigners were perceived in the Victorian society, especially considering social position. The fact that he is surprised that a gipsy is dressed and lives the life of a gentleman, depicts the idea of foreigners being poor people, restricted in the lower social classes, never being able to have what Heathcliff has. As Lockwood comment on his dark mysterious looks, he leaves the reader to wonder about Heathcliff's background, and how he got into his current social position.

Heathcliff's past is never clarified, which has led several critics, such as Susan Meyer, Elise Michie and Terry Eagleton, to speculate on his mysterious background and appearance. However, Emily Brontë's characterization of his different skin-color and black hair gives evidence for his foreign origin, and some of this evidence will be elaborated on in the following sections. Mr. Earnshaw presents him to the household, explaining that he found Heathcliff starving and homeless in the streets of Liverpool (E. Brontë 2003:29). From the moment Heathcliff is introduced to the household, it is clear that he is not perceived as one of the other characters present. In fact, Mr. Earnshaw does not even refer to him as a human, as he refers to him as thing instead of human being, when he says that Heathcliff is 'as dark

almost as if it came from the devil' (E. Brontë 2003:29). His wife seems provoked by Mr. Earnshaw's idea of bringing such a 'gypsy brat into the house', and was ready to throw him out at once (E. Brontë 2003:29). Heathcliff's unfamiliar looks, and the fact that 'not a soul knew to whom it belonged', seems to scare Nelly, the housekeeper, as she is frightened by this 'dirty, ragged, black-haired child' (E. Brontë 2003:29). Not only does Heathcliff look different, he also articulates himself in a different way, speaking 'some gibberish that nobody could understand' (E. Brontë 2003:29). There are no doubts that Heathcliff is brought into Wuthering Heights as an outsider, as he does not fit in with the Earnshaw family, neither by appearance nor by social class. This latter factor coincides with Jane's situation at Gateshead, as she also belongs to a lower class than the family she lives with, and thus becomes an outsider. As orphans, Jane and Heathcliff become dependent and consequently fall into a vulnerable social situation, which in their case is a helpless situation that entails unfair treatment and suppression. There is not a racial issue in the bullying Jane is a victim of, however, their situations matches as they are both bullied because they are different and because they are dependent. In both cases, this unfair treatment contributes to their rebellious behaviour. The unjust that Heathcliff and Jane faces are grounded in social beliefs that segregate and suppress people like them, such as women that does not fulfil the expected role as a female, and foreign men who are poor and belongs to the lower class. As such, they are antiheroes 'deprived of social sanctions' (O'Faolain 1971:xxix), and 'creations of, as well as victims' of their society (Adams 1976:50).

Throughout the novel, Heathcliff's appearance is described with adverse words and expressions by each character. From the moment when he is brought in to the Earnshaw family as a child, to his adolescents and even as an adult, Heathcliff is harassed and mocked because of his different skin colour. Jane, like Heathcliff, is described with inhumane characterizations by other characters, such as 'bad animal' (C. Brontë 2001:7), a 'rat' (C. Brontë 2001:8), a 'mad cat' and a wicked girl (C. Brontë 2001:9). She is also, like Heathcliff, literally compared with the devil, but not because of her skin colour, but because of her behaviour. When visiting Lowood, Brocklhurst makes Jane stand on a stool in front of all the teachers and children, while he announce that she is a servant of the devil, 'who would think that the Evil One had already found a servant and agent in her? Yet such, I grieve to say, is the case' (C. Brontë 2001:56).

Both of these characters are victims of the social inequality. Because readers are aware of the innocence of young Heathcliff and Jane, it falls naturally to take these characters in defence and turn against their oppressors. The fact that Heathcliff is repeatedly called a gipsy

in a negative fashion signifies how he is a victim of racial prejudice. Meyer reflects on the idea of race in Wuthering Heights and highlights a situation when the Linton's capture Heathcliff and Catherine, spying at Thrushcross Grange. She argues that while captured, 'Heathcliff is subjected to a visual scrutiny that relegates him to what is to be his place in the social order' (Meyer 1996:97). When Mr. Linton catches the first glimpse of Heathcliff, he cries out:''Oh, my dear Mary, Mary, look here! Don't be afraid, it is but a boy – yet, the villain scowls so plainly in his face, would it not be a kindness to the county to hang him at once, befor he shows his nature in acts, as well as features' (E. Brontë 2003:39). Heathcliff explain how Mr. Linton pulled him ' under the chandelier, and Mrs. Linton placed her spectacles on her nose and raised her hand in horror. The cowardly children crept nearer also (...)' (E. Brontë 2003:39). Young Isabella is also frigthened by his looks and says 'Frightful thing! Put him in the cellar, papa. He's exactly like the son of the fortune-teller, that stole my tame pheasant' (E. Brontë 2003:39-40).

This episode clearly shows the prejudice towards Heathcliff, as he is 'subjected to the potent gaze of a racial arrogance deriving from British Imperialism' (Meyer 1996:97). Heathcliff's darker skin colour hinders him from having the same opportunities as the other characters in the novel, such as Catherine and Hindley Earnshaw as well as Edgar Linton. He becomes a victim of xenophobia and discrimination. The Linton's 'reacts to him as if he is a visual object only, or an animal, incapable of speech' (Meyer 1996:100). They even use his dark face as 'a license to punish him for crimes of property putatively committed by others of similar appearance' (Meyer 1996:97). This notion of racism contributes to build compassion towards Heathcliff, as the reader witnesses the bullying and mistreatment that he is exposed to because of his darker skin and peculiar language. Due to his foreignness only, he is called 'a wicked boy, at all events,' and told that he is 'quite unfit for a decent house!' by the Lintons (E. Brontë 2003:40). Like Nelly, Mrs. Linton also mocks him because of his language, by saying 'did you notice his language, Linton? I'm shocked that my children should ever heard it' (E. Brontë 2003:40).

The above quotation and the animalistic descriptions of Heathcliff throughout the novel is also interesting when seen in relation to the descriptions of Bertha Mason, Jane's double and inner monster. Isabella Linton even tells her father to put him in the cellar, because of his frightful looks. The fear in regards to his humanity, especially portrayed when Heathcliff arrives Wuthering Heights and Trushcorss Grange for the first time, resembles the fear that Jane describes as she sees Bertha, who is locked away in the attic, for the first time:

'In the deep shade, at the further end of the room, a figure ran backwards and forwards. What it was, whether beast or human being, one could not, at first sight, tell: it grovelled, seemingly, on all fours; it snatched and growled like some strange wild animal: but it was covered with clothing; and a quantity of dark, grizzled hair, wild as a mane, hid its head and face' (C. Brontë 2001: 250).

Jane's descriptions do not portray a human being, but those of a wild animal. In the same fearful way that Bertha is characterized, Heathcliff is described with expressions such as 'hellish villain' (E. Brontë 2003:136), a 'savage beast' (E. Brontë 2003:130), and 'a demon' (E. Brontë 2003:92). Nelly also tells of an incident when Heathcliff 'gnashed' at her and 'foamed like a mad dog' (E. Brontë 2003:92). There are no doubt that both Heathcliff and Bertha are portrayed as wild animals, she as a 'clothed hyena' (C. Brontë 2001: 250), and he as 'a fierce, pitiless, wolfish man' (E. Brontë 2003:81).

Since Heathcliff's origin is never revealed in *Wuthering Heights*, several critics have elaborated on this enigma. In the novel, Mr. Linton speculates if Heathcliff's race can be connected to the British imperialism, 'I declare he is that strange acquisition my late neighbour made, in his journey to Liverpool – a little Lascar, or an American or Spanish castaway' (E. Brontë 2003:40). Meyer reflects over Heathcliff's origin, and questions whether he is 'the child of one of the Indian seamen… recruited by the East India Company to replace members of the British crews who died on exposure to disease in India or in military encounters with the Indians', or 'a result of the trade for which the city [Liverpool] was most famous in the late eighteenth century' (Meyer 1996:97). Meyer points out that Liverpool was England's largest slave-trading port in 1769, the year that Mr. Earnshaw found Heathcliff on the streets there. She also reminds that the slavetrade through the Liverpool Triangle exchanged European industrial goods for West African slaves, who then again were brought over Atlantic to work in the American and Spanish American colonies (Meyer 1996:98). According to her, this industrial exchange paves the way for a discussion that he could be a descendant of a slave. However, throughout the novel, Heathcliff is identified as a gypsy by the other characters. While Abby Bardi refers to gypsies as Romani people (Bardi 2006:31), George K. Behlmer highlights that this label was applied 'so loosely', and it is therefore difficult to estimate exactly where Heathcliff originates (Behlmer 1985:234).

Terry Eagleton and Elsie Michie, on the contrary, raise the idea that Heathcliff might be Irish. Eagleton states that 'Heathcliff starts out as an image of the famished Irish immigrant', but also confesses that he 'may be a gypsy, or … a Creole, or any kind of alien' (Eagleton 1995:3). Michie argues that novel rather portray Heathcliff as a 'contemporary

stereotype of the Irish', and that Brontë's portrayal of Heathcliff at his arrival to Wuthering Heights, 'links him to Victorian representations of the Irish children who were pouring into England in the late 1840's as a result of the potato famine' (Michie 1992:129). She also emphasises the descriptions of Heathcliff later in the novel, especially his long hair illustrated as 'a colt's mane' (E. Brontë 2003:46), his 'slouching gait, and ignoble look' (E. Brontë 2003:53), which he 'contrived to convey an impression of inward and outward repulsiveness' (E. Brontë 2003:53). Michie says that 'these details all reinforce his resemblance to the kind of image of the Irish we saw articulated in Kingsley's travelogue' (Michie 1992:129).

Whether Heathcliff is Irish or originates from India, Romania, or from the black slaves, his look is unquestionably making him an outsider at Wuthering Heights. Ultimately, what leads to Heathcliff being repressed and downgraded by the other characters in the novel, is primarily Victorian xenophobia. Because of the prejudice towards foreigners, Heathcliff stands out from the crowd even more than Jane does. Both of them are orphans, poor and dependent, but Heathcliff's darker skin and strange language makes him a more noticeable outsider than Jane. Unlike Jane, who marries her employer and consequently climbs the social ladder, Heathcliff is left with no other option than to serve at Wuthering Heights after his guardian Mr. Earnshaw dies.

The fact that Jane and Heathcliff are outsiders is significant when studying them from an antiheroic perspective, as it is this position that allows them to rebel against the social principles and people who suppresses and discriminates them. Just like Jane, Heathcliff is left without an option of becoming an outsider, as he was born into the world as an outsider because he did not adhere to the Victorian standards. Because of Heathcliff's looks, he was sentenced to a life as a 'stranger' and 'outcast' (E. Brontë 2003:98), and thereby treated unjustly by the other characters in the novel, which are of a "finer" race and higher class than he is. This repressive doom later becomes a fatal consequence for his superiors, as the 'monster within' Heathcliff flourishes.

As Heathcliff grows up, Mr. Earnshaw treats Heathcliff as if he is his own son, which indicates that it is more the issue of race than class that makes him an underdog. The treatment Heathcliff receives from Mr. Earnshaw makes Hindley regard Heathcliff as 'a usurer of his parent's affections and his privileges' (E. Brontë 2003:31). As a result, Hindley 'grew bitter with brooding' (E. Brontë 2003:31), and became cruel towards Heathcliff. Nelly reveals that both she and Hindley hated Heathcliff and that they 'plagued and went on him shamefully' (E. Brontë 2003:30). Because Heathcliff is different, and because Hindley finds him threatening as he becomes favourable to Mr. Earnshaw, and consequently takes Hindleys

place, he is exposed to an unfair and cruel treatment. When Nelly tells Lockwood about the mistreatment Heathcliff was exposed to as a child, and how Heathcliff turned the other cheek and tolerated the punishment, it is not difficult to sympathise with him:

> 'He seemed a sullen, patient child, hardened, perhaps, to ill-treatment: he would stand Hindley's blows without winking or shedding a tear, and my pinches moved him only to draw in a breath, and open his eyes as if he had hurt himself by accident, and nobody was to blame' (E. Brontë 2003:30).

In many ways, Hindley resembles John Reed, as both of them exemplify a tyrannical and violent abuse. Unlike young Heathcliff, young Jane strikes back at John Reed. Consequently, Jane's rebellious behaviour starts earlier than Heathcliff's, and as she escapes Gateshead, she is able to start over with other girls in a similar situation at Lowood School. Hindley, on the contrary, abolishes Heathcliff's options and makes him a slave at Wuthering Heights. If Jane had stayed in Gateshead under John's and his mother's dictatorial rule, she could have ended up in the same situation as Bertha Mason or Heathcliff, driven madness or wickedness. However, Jane escapes madness and wickedness because she, unlike Bertha and Heathcliff, is learns to control her inner monster, her passion and anger.

As Nelly states in the quotation above, Heathcliff never avenges himself as a child. However, his desire for revenge is present from early on as he tells Catherine, 'I'm trying to settle how I shall pay Hindley back. I don't care how long I wait, if I can only do it at last. I hope he will not die before I do!' (E. Brontë 2003:48). Even if Heathcliff does not respond to Hindley's cruelty as a child, the abuse that Hindley causes on 'the poor, fatherless' Heathcliff, makes Mr. Earnshaw furious (E. Brontë 2003:30). Mr. Earnshaws appears to favour Heathcliff, and as a result, the relationship between Hindley and Heathcliff develops into a relationship filled with jealousy and 'bad feelings' (E. Brontë 2003:30).

The fact that Heathcliff becomes a prey for Hindley, and is treated like a servant rather than a family member, is very similar to Jane's story, as she is treated with cruelty and is degraded after her uncle passes away. In the same way that she is supressed and bullied at Gateshead, Heathcliff is supressed and bullied at Wuthering Heights. In addition, all this mistreatment derives from one thing, their position as outsiders, which makes them an easy prey for their superiors.

Soon after Mr. Earnshaw's funeral, Hindley 'drove him [Heathcliff] from their company to the servants, deprived him of the instructions of the curate, and insisted that he should labour out of doors instead, compelling him to do so, as hard as any other lad on the

farm' (E. Brontë 2003:36). Catherine writes in her diary that she misses her father and wants him back because Hindley is 'a detestable substitute' whose 'conduct to Heathcliff is atrocious' (E. Brontë 2003:16). Even if readers does not get to read Heathcliff's mind as much as they do in Jane' story, the cruelty and unjust he is exposed to is obvious.

Because Heathcliff is of a lower class then Hindley and Catherine, as well as an outcast in the Earnshaw family, his only option is to obey Hindley. This cruel conduct is slowly but surely contributing to the rise of Heathcliff's inner monster. As stated in the previous chapter of Jane, this idea of an inner monster is typical when discussing antiheroes. Just as Jane's monster breeds on the constant discrimination and degradation, Heathcliff's monster does the same. In order for Jane to succeed, she needs to take control over her anger and passion, which ultimately forms this monster within her. What seems to be separating Jane and Heathcliff, however, is the fact that Heathcliff lets his monster prevail him after Catherine betrays him. Unlike Jane, who achieves her happy ending, the monster overcomes Heathcliff, at least until the end of the story. His situation does resemble that of Jane's 'darkest double' (Gilbert & Gubar 1980:360), Bertha. As demonstrated earlier in this section, these two characters have comparable looks, both being described as dark characters and associated with 'a monster' (C. Brontë 2001:264; E. Brontë 2003:119). In addition, they have both lost control over their monster within. Bertha is possessed by a monster that is either a result of genetics, or by the rejection by Rochester (Friedman 2008:201), while Heathcliff's monster is nurtured by the cruel conduct of Hindley.

This section has looked at how Heathcliff's social position and his foreign origin make him an outsider at Wuthering Heights, and how the oppression he is faced with because of this position contributes in the development in becoming an antihero. Because of the mistreatment Heathcliff is exposed to, his inner monster start developing. It reaches its climax when the only character that have supported him after the death of Mr. Earnshaw, his beloved Catherine, betrays him.

5.3 Heathcliff's relationship with Catherine Earnshaw

Heathcliff's relationship with Catherine is significant because it plays an important role in the way that Catherine's rejection of Heathcliff becomes an extra push in the development of becoming an antihero. Heathcliff has already started on this journey, as he as young starts

planning his future revenge on Hindley. However, Catherine's betrayal makes his desire for vengeance even greater, as Catherine was Heathcliff's only support at Wuthering Heights. This section therefore studies Heathcliff and Catherine's relationship, and looks at how the Victorian expectations of class interfere and ultimately dismantle their relationship, just like it was about to do with Jane and Rochester at Thornfield.

Catherine and Heathcliff establish a special relationship, which is revealed to the reader when she compares her love for Heathcliff with 'the eternal rocks beneath – a source of little visible delight, but necessary' (E. Brontë 2003:64). Catherine has witnessed the oppressed and wicked treatment that Heathcliff has been a victim of, and she has been one of few, if not the only person, who has supported Heathcliff throughout his childhood. Her diary also signifies that she and Heathcliff rebelled together against the tyrannical Hindley and his degrading regime at Wuthering Heights, as she writes 'I wish my father were back again. Hindley is a detestable substitute – his conduct to Heathcliff is atrocious – H. [Heathcliff] and I are going to rebel' (E. Brontë 2003:16). Even if Heathcliff becomes a prey for Hindley after the death of Mr. Earnshaw, Catherine always supported him. As such, Catherine can be viewed as Heathcliff's motivation to stand up after every downfall. She appears to be the reason why Heathcliff's inner monster has not prevailed him, yet.

Catherine takes Heathcliff's side because she has such passionate feelings for him, even if this means that she becomes in conflict with her brother. She is not happy about the way Hindley treats him, and Hindley tries to put a spanner in the works, and prevent their relationship by degrading Heathcliff to a servant. As Nelly narrates, Hindley 'drove him [Heathcliff] from their company to the servants, deprived him of the instructions of the curate, and insisted that he should labour out of doors instead, compelling him to do so, as hard as any other lad on the farm' (E. Brontë 2003:36). However, Heathcliff and Catherine stick with each other and rebel against Hindley together (E.Brontë 2003:35). Kettle argues that it is through their revolt that 'they discover their deep and passionate need of each other' (Kettle 1976:135).

Heathcliff and Catherine's relationship is significant because it shows a side of Heathcliff that is important when discussing him as an antihero. It is this relationship, supplemented with the unfair treatment of him as an outsider, which excuse him from turning into a villain. Through this relationship, readers witness a soft and caring side of Heathcliff. A side that is important to keep in mind when looking at him from an antihero perspective. In addition, Kettle argues that the rebellion against 'the tyranny of the Earnshaws and all that tyranny involves', is in fact what wins over the reader's sympathy to Heathcliff (Kettle

1976:135). He reasons that because of this, reader's 'know he is on the side of humanity', and that Heathcliff is 'active and intelligent and able to carry the positive values of human aspiration on his shoulders' (Kettle 1976:135). In other words, Heathcliff rebels for 'the right reasons', and thus is, according to Kettle, 'a conscious rebel' (Kettle 1976:135). Kettles perception relates to Spivey and Knowlton's idea that antiheroes rebels and does bad things but for the right reasons (Knowlton & Spivey 2015:42). This is also, what Heathcliff does, as he turns against his oppressors and uses their financial weapons against them by making and using his financial ascendancy.

The young Catherine is in many ways similar to Jane, as she neither meets the Victorian expectations for female conduct. She has a passionate and wild nature, evidenced by her promise to Heathcliff that they would 'grow up as rude as a savages' (Brontë 2003:36), and by her enjoyment to 'run away to the moors in the morning and remain there all day' (E. Brontë 2003:37). Could Catherine love Heathcliff because she also is different? The famous quote, 'I *am* Heathcliff', signify how she feel as one with Heathcliff. Like young Jane, young Catherine does not adhere to the typical Victorian lady, even if she is from a "finer" class. She and Heathcliff often get in trouble, and acts violently towards other characters. Nelly tells of one occasion when Catherine 'pinched' her, and describes how Catherine 'never had power to conceal her passion' and how 'it always set her whole complexion in a blaze' (E. Brontë 2003:55). She continues to decribe how Catherine 'stamped her foot, wavered a moment, and then, irresistibly impelled by the naughty spirit in her, slapped me on the cheek a stinging blow that filled both eyes with water' (E. Brontë 2003:56). By Nelly's decriptions, it is evident that Catherine, like Jane, portrays a rebellious behaviour. Even if Jane strikes back at John Reed, her language often shows her angry and passionate aspects. Both of these girls show trends of unfeminine conduct, by unveiling ther passionate and angry features.

As young, Catherine and Heathcliff are inseparable. When older, even if they are not in a physical relationship, they are spiritually connected. This is displayed when Catherine reveals to Nelly that Heathcliff is her 'own being' (E. Brontë 2003:64), and when Heathcliff mourns over Catherine's death, and cries 'I cannot love without my life! I cannot love without my soul' (E. Brontë 2003:130). Unlike Heathcliff, who has Catherine by his side, Jane is always on her own. However, it is tempting to draw a link between the spiritual relationship between Heathcliff and Catherine, to the one of Jane and Rochester. Jane and Rochester also seem to have an extraordinary and uncanny connection, which is especially presented when Jane and Rochester have a telepathic connection. She hears Mr. Rochester's 'known, loved,

well-remembered voice' crying 'Jane! Jane! Jane!' (C. Brontë 2001:357), and this indicates that Jane and Rochester, like Heathcliff and Catherine, have a deep and spiritual connection.

Even if Heathcliff has been treated like an outsider at Wuthering Heights, he has always had Catherine by his side. He becomes a victim of prejudice, as he is increasingly suppressed and degraded throughout the story. Nelly narrates that 'Heathcliff bore his degradation pretty well at first, because Cathy taught him what she learnt, and worked or played with him in the fields' (E. Brontë 2003:36). However, and it peaks when Catherine turn against him as well.

After spending the Christmas with the more sophisticated and cultured Linton's, she has been influenced by their opinions, and now sees Heathcliff in a different way. From being as one with Heathcliff, these weeks at Thrushcross Grange transform Catherine into a "proper lady", which is illustrated when she arrives home as 'quite a beauty' and looks just 'like a lady' (E. Brontë 2003:41). It is clear that she now sees herself as a cultured superior to Heathcliff, as she, as soon as she arrives Wuthering Heights, mocks Heathcliff at their first encounter, calling him 'funny and grim', 'black and cross' and 'dirty' (E. Brontë 2003:42). Not only has Catherine become more cultivated, she has also adopted the higher-class discriminatory power over the people below. In other words, Catherine has adopted the cruel method that Hindley has practiced. Heathcliff becomes upset and refuses to be laughed at, and tells Catherine, 'I shall not stand to be laughed at, I shall not bear it!' (E. Brontë 2003:42). He knows that he cannot be measured with the fine and rich Edgar Linton, which he reveals to Nelly by saying, 'if I knocked him down twenty times, that wouldn't make him less handsome, or me more so. I wish I had light hair and fair skin, and was dressed and behaved as well, and had a chance of being as rich as he will be!' (Brontë 2003:45).

Just like Jane, Heathcliff is aware that he is different, and will never be able to offer Catherine the wealth that she desires. However, in the same way, that Jane and Rochester's relationship is truer than Rochester's relationship with Miss Ingram and Bertha, Catherine and Heathcliff's love more sincere than the love between Catherine and Edgar Linton. This is evident as Catherine reveals to Nelly that she love him 'not because he's handsome…but because he's more myself than I am. Whatever our souls are made of, his and mine are the same, and Linton's is as different as a moonbeam from lightning, or frost from fire' (E. Brontë 2003:63).

What differs Jane and Heathcliff is the fact that Jane does not want to be anything more than she is, as she only wants freedom to be herself. She will not change for the expectations of society, while Heathcliff would do anything to change. Heathcliff wishes for

'Edgar Linton's great blue eyes, and even forehead' (E. Brontë 2003:45). He wants to be like the Earnshaws and the Lintons, both in looks and in social position, because that is the only way he can win Catherine. However, he knows that because of his looks and his dependent status, his wishes will not help to improve the situation (E. Brontë 2003:45). Therefore, just like the principles of marriage prevented Jane and Rochester to marry the first time, beliefs of social class prevent Heathcliff and Catherine to do the same.

Although Catherine loves Heathcliff, it is difficult for her to marry him because her Hindley has humiliated him and made him a servant at Wuthering Heights. She admits to Nelly that she knows that Edgar is too good for her, as well as confesses that marrying Heathcliff would destroy her, 'I've no more business to marry Edgar Linton than I have to be in heaven; and if the wicked man in there had not brought Heathcliff so low, I shouldn't have thought of it. It would degrade me to marry Heathcliff now' (E. Brontë 2003:63). From always being Heathcliff's support, she has now allowed Hindley and the Lintons to come in between her feelings for Heathclif. After staying with the Lintons, she perceives Heathcliff in a different way; a way that is more similar to the way Hindley and the other characters perceive him. This is displayed when she tells him to go and freshen up, 'if you wash your face and brush your hair, it will be all right. But you are so dirty' (E. Brontë 2003:42).

Heathcliff and Jane's situations are reversed in the two novels, as Heathcliff being a male, is unable to marry Catherine due to his social position, and Jane being a female, is initially unable to marry Rochester due to her social position and because he is already married. However, because she inherits money and thus becomes independent, as well as Bertha dies, she marries him in the end. This depicts a society that not only discriminates females if they are in a lower class, but also men in same situations. Just like Jane, Heathcliff must, in order to be able to marry Catherine, climb the social ladder.

As Catherine now starts to turn against Heathcliff, he turns to violence in order to protect himself from the degrading abuse he is a victim of. When Edgar Linton visits Wuthering Heights and mocks Heathcliff's looks, he responds with a violent attack. When Hindley shouts 'wait till I get hold of those elegant lock – see if I won't pull them a bit longer!', Edgar replies 'they are long enough already, I wonder they don't make his head ache. It's like a colt's mane over his eyes' (E. Brontë 2003:46). Nelly describes how 'Heathcliff's violent nature was not prepared to endure the appearance of impertinence from one whom he seemed to hate, even then, as a rival' (E. Brontë 2003:46). Heathcliff response to Edgar Linton's remark was to throw 'a tureen of hot apple-sauce' at in his 'face and neck' (E. Brontë 2003:46). In the same way that Jane was sent to the red room after her attack on

John Reed, Heathcliff is locked in his chamber, where Hindley 'administered a rough remedy to cool the fit of passion, for he reappeared red and breathless' (E. Brontë 2003:46). Because Heathcliff is subordinate to the Earnshaws and Lintons, he has no other choice than to obey their regime.

Ultimately, Catherine accepts Edgar Linton's proposal, and thus betrays Heathcliff. The reason for this is not romantic feelings for Edgar, but the fact that Heathcliff does not conform the social expectations of the Victorian society. It other words, he is betrayed because he is an outsider. Even if Catherine wants to marry Heathcliff, she knows that a marriage with him will destroy her, as she explains to her housekeeper: 'Nelly, I see now, you think me a selfish wretch, but, did it never strike you that if Heathcliff and I married, we should be beggars? whereas, if I marry Linton, I can aid Heathcliff to rise, and place him out of my brother's power' (E. Brontë 2003:64). Because of Heathcliff's social position and the fact that he is poor, Catherine chooses Edgar, who is of a higher class and thus can provide her with a better future. This illustrate the importance of class for Victorians, which also Frawley emphasised by claiming that 'birth, family education, source of income, as well as speech and manners' where important to them, as it positioned them in classes (Frawley 2008:458). Catherine's choice underpins the importance of these factors by rejecting Heathcliff. This action plays a crucial part in Heathcliff's development in becoming an antihero, as he now has nothing to lose and everything to win by rebelling against everyone that have wronged him.

When Catherine is on her deathbed, Heathcliff appears in her room one last time. As Kettle points out, this episode comes with two possible outcomes: either Catherine will once again reject Heathcliff, marry Edgar Linton and 'wickedness meets its reward', or true love will win (Kettle 1976:138). However, instead of its predictable outcomes, the scene shows an overwhelming moral power, as Heathcliff confronts dying Catherine. According to Kettle, this confrontation is 'ruthless, morally ruthless: instead of easy comfort he offers her a brutal analysis of what she has done' (Kettle 1976:138):

> 'You teach me now how cruel you've been – cruel and false. *Why* did you despise me? *Why* did you betray your own heart, Cathy? I have not one world of comfort. You deserve this. You have killed yourself. Yes, you may kiss me, and cry: and wring out my kisses and tears: they'll blight you – they'll damn you. You loved me – then what *right* had you to leave me? What right – answer me – for the poor fancy you felt for Linton? Because misery and degradation, and death, and nothing that God or Satan could inflict would have parted us, *you*, of your own will, did it. I have not broken your heart – *you* have broken it; and in breaking it you have broken mine. So much the

worse that I am strong. Do I want to live? What kind of living will it be, when you – oh, God! would *you* like to live with your soul in the grave? (E. Brontë 2003:126).

Even if Kettle argues this quotation to be 'ruthless', it also shows Heathcliff's wounds after being betrayed by Catherine, and the passionate bond between these two characters. It shows a humane side of Heathcliff, as it is evident that he is in pain. The quotation displays a broken man, and by these obvious intense feelings of betrayal, most readers feel for him. His words illustrate the helplessness that Heathcliff feels over Catherine's mistake of deceiving him.

This section has provided an overview of the relationship between Heathcliff and Catherine, as this is the turning point in Heathcliff's development in becoming an antihero. Heathcliff has been harbouring ideas of revenge since childhood, and so Catherine's betrayal becomes a catalyst in a process that has already started.

5.4 Heathcliff's anger and pursuit of revenge

This section examines the behaviour and characteristics that Heathcliff portrays after returning to Wuthering Heights, as he is now a wealthy and thus a powerful man. These characteristics and behaviours repelled many 19th century reviewers. The reviewer in the *Examiner* in 1848, cited in Allot, described Heathcliff as 'an incarnation of evil qualities' with his 'implacable hate, ingratitude, cruelty, falsehood, selfishness, and revenge' (Allot 1970:40). According to Douglas Jerrold, cited in Allto, when reading this book readers were 'shocked, disgusted, almost sickened by details of cruelty, inhumanity and the most diabolical hate and vengeance', and clearly, he is referring to Heathcliff whom he call a demon 'in human form' (Allot 1970:44). These characteristics and behaviours are also the base of the arguments critics have used as when claiming that he is a villain. As stated in the introduction of this chapter, critics such as Smith and Reid, have described Heathcliff as a 'the greatest villain' (Bloom 2009:141; Allott 1970:88).

This section studies Heathcliff's pursuit for revenge on the people that have wronged him. When looking at Heathcliff from an antiheroic perspective, it is important to keep in mind the harsh and unfair treatment that ultimately feeds Heathcliff's anger and lust for vengeance. The only thing Heathcliff wants is to be treated fair, and not be discriminated by the other characters. It seems like he only feels this justice can be accomplished through the principle of an eye for an eye.

First, when Heathcliff returns to Wuthering Heights, he is a changed man. Nelly describes his transformation to Lockwood and says that Heathcliff:

> '[…] had grown a tall, athletic, well-formed man… his countenance… looked intelligent, and retained no marks of former degradation. A half-civilized ferocity lurked yet in the depressed brows and eyes full of black fire, but it was subdued; and his manner was even dignified, quite divested of roughness, though too stern for grace' (E. Brontë 2003:75).

Heathcliff is now a wealthy gentleman, but there is only one thing on his mind, revenge over the people who mistreated him. In the same way Jane is able to achieve her justice after she has received her inheritance, by marrying Mr. Rochester, Heathcliff, after becoming a rich man, is now able to achieve his justice and revenge by using the same approach that the Earnshaws and Lintons used against him, money and fortune. Heathcliff's plan is to revenge himself both on Hindley, who has mistreated him throughout his childhood, but also the Linton family, as they too, have degraded him.

It is Heathcliff's pursuit for vengeance, and his malevolent behaviour, that have disturbed readers and given him this villain impression. As mentioned, Heathcliff starts thinking about vengeance early in the novel, as he tells Catherine that he tries to figure out how to accomplish revenge on Hindley (E. Bronte 2003:48). Even if Catherine knows all the wicked things Hindley has exposed Heathcliff to, she tells him that it is not his place to punish Hindley, 'For shame, Heathcliff!' said I. 'It is for God to punish wicked people; we should learn to forgive' (E. Brontë 2003:48). Catherine's words to Heathcliff resemble those of Helen Burns's, when telling Jane at Lowood that it is better to be patient and not rebel, as it will come with consequences if she does. She even tells Jane that she should, in accordance with the Bible, 'return good for evil' (C. Brontë 2001:47). Neither Jane nor Heathcliff adhere to the religious expectations of their respective fictional contexts. Both of them take the pursuit for justice into their own hands. Heathcliff shows that he does not care about how Catherine feels about his plans for revenge, as he claims that 'God won't have the satisfaction' that he will. He says that, 'I only wish I knew the best way! Let me alone, and I'll plan it out: while I'm thinking of that, I don't feel pain' (E. Brontë 2003:48). This signifies how important revege is to him, as thoughts about it are the only thing that keeps him from pain. When Catherine then turns her back on him and betrays him, his pursuit of revenge becomes the only thing Heathcliff has left. It seems to be his pursuit of justice, in the form of revenge, which keeps him alive at Wuthering Heights. A pursuit that brings out the antiheroic

features in Heathcliff. Heathcliff's comeback corresponds with Crusie's statement, that antiheroes are characters 'who occasionally loses his or her war bur never fails to do what needs to be done' (Crusie 2003:7). Heathcliff's return, and his pursuit for revenge, is his chance to make up for his earlier defeat to those who mistreated him, and especially Hindley.

Another incident that portrays his plan is his first meeting with Catherine after hearing about her marriage with Edgar Linton. When they meet, he explains his original plan for revenge as he says, 'I meditated this plan: just to have one glimpse of your face, a stare of surprise, perhaps, and pretended pleasure; afterwards settle my score with Hindley; and then prevent the law by doing execution on myself' (E. Brontë 2003:76). Afterwards, he admits that Catherine's welcome of him has changed his plans. This reveals how weak he is for Catherine, as he changes his plans when he sees how happy she is by his return.

Heathcliff's original plan was to kill himself after carrying out his revenge on Hindley. This illustrates how much this payback on Hindley means to him, as he is willing to end his own life by executing it. Heathcliff's intention is to achieve justice for himself, and if that means risking his own life, he is willing to make the sacrifice. Although Hindley and the rest of his oppressors are to blame for the mistreatment he was exposed to, Kettle argues that the societal conditions share some responsibility, because the tyranny that is embedded in Wuthering Heights is the same that is embedded in the Victorian society. He says that 'the values of Wuthering Heights and Trushcross Grange are not simply the values of *any* tyranny but specifically those of Victorian society' (Kettle 1976:144). In the same way is Heathcliff's rebellion 'a particular rebellion, that of the worker physically and spiritually degraded by the conditions and relationship of this same society' (Kettle 1976:144). However, even if Heathcliff takes up a fight against race- and class discrimination, an unfairness that also affected others in his shoes, it appears as if Emily Brontë portrays his fight for justice as a selfish one. Heathcliff's quest for justice is also his quest for revenge. Unlike Charlotte Brontë, who writes of Jane, who implicitly fights for a 'bigger cause', Emily Brontë does not convey the same impression of Heathcliff in *Wuthering Heights*. Hence, Heathcliff corresponds with Rollins idea of an antihero being 'something of a rebel, but a rebel without much of a cause other than his own self-interest' (Rollin 1973:xvii).

Charlotte Brontë portrays Jane's fight for justice as a self-interested, but with a broader perspective. Yes, Jane wants primarily justice for herself, but she also sees the unfair treatment of her fellow women and addresses this. She does not explicitly represent a political statement, or a protest against the unfair conditions of women; however, the behaviour that she depicts is in keeping with these reflections. The way Charlotte Brontë portrays it, Jane

wants the society to change because women are unequal to men, and thus are left with few options in life. She portrays this by expressing Jane's frustration over women's entrapments in the Victorian society, as she declares that women should not be treated differently because they are women, because 'women feel just as men feel' (C. Brontë 2001:93). Jane's political project is not an outspoken one, but the novel itself, however, has a politically impact. Heathcliff's rebellion is not portrayed as a political one in *Wuthering Heights*, it is portrayed as a pure lust for retaliation after being restrained and oppressed for no other reason than just being himself. Antiheroes does bad things but with a good intention. Heathcliff is a tricky character because some might say that his intentions are not good, as he seeks retaliation. However, it is important to keep in mind that Heathcliff's intention is justice, even if he uses evil methods to achieve it.

Peter Bayne argues that Heathcliff is a devil in all cases, except 'in the days of his early love for Cathy' when 'there is still a gleam of nobleness, of natural human affection, in the heart of Heathcliff' (Bayne 1857:400-401). Bayne refers to the scene where he 'rushes manfully at the bull-dog which has seized her, and sets himself, after she is safe in Thrushcross Grange, on the window ledge, to watch how maters go on' (Bayne 1857: 401). Still, he claims that 'Heathcliff's original nature is seen only in the outgoing of his love towards Cathy; there he is a human, if he is frenzied; in all other cases, he is a devil' (Bayne 1857:401). He says that Heathcliff's 'nature was never good, as there were always in it the hidden elements of the sneak and the butcher, the whole of that semi-vital life which he retains towards the rest of the world is ignoble and revolting' (Bayne 1857:401). What he does not acknowledge, however, the reasons for Heathcliff's personal transformation, the mistreatment he has been a victim of.

Heathcliff's intentions can also be seen in the light of his romantic love for Catherine Earnshaw. For instance, after revealing his original plan to Catherine, and how he changed it because of her warm welcome, he continues to tell about the three years he has been away, and says that she is the reason for his struggle after he left. He says, I've fought through a bitter life since I last heard your voice, and you must forgive me, for I struggled only for you' (E. Brontë 2003:76). Are his intentions, then, only self-centred? Or is this something he says to justify his actions? Either Heathcliff fools himself by saying that Catherine is the reason behind his actions, only to lighten the burden of carrying out his wicked plans, or he is only trying to get Catherine back by flattering her. It seems like Heathcliff's intention can be perceived in two different ways: the intention as he sees it himself, or he has convinced himself to believe, and the way other sees it. As Brontë portrays it, Heathcliff thinks that he

does something good, in other words, from his point of view, his intentions are good and fair. He convinces himself that he does the right thing and that he brings justice to the table by taking down the bad person, Hindley. Critics, however, are divided in their opinions. Some, such as Kettle, are able to see his motivation behind his rebellious and evil behaviour, while others, such as Reid, are not.

In addition to the ide of Heathcliff's good intentions, deriving from the argument that he seeks justice, it is also important to look at the notion of readers' sympathy. In order for readers to percieve him as an antihero, they must be able to understand and sympathise with him. If not, his actions will not be excused, and consequently he will be viewed as a villain.

After everything Heathcliff has been through, he deserves Catherine and his happy ending, and he deserves justice. However, as this is unachievable, the only way that Heathcliff can achieve his justice is to pay the Earnshaws and Lintons back in their own coin. If Heathcliff had been like Hindley, in the same position and with the same starting point in life, without the oppressive and violent experiences, and still be as criminal, this would be a different case. Heathcliff would then be a villain. Nevertheless, because readers know about his past, they know about his motivation, and thus understand why he chooses to rebel. John K. Mathison also emphasize this in his article 'Nelly Dean and the Power of "Wuthering Heights', where he writes that it is due to the novels structure, and the way Nelly tells the story, readers hold on to the feelings of sympathy towards Heathcliff:

> 'The engaging of the reader actively as one who does a large part of the work of comprehending is an important cause of the power of the novel. As Nelly contentedly provides her superficial interpretations of motive, and contentedly recounts her inadequate parental behavior, we are constantly directed toward feeling the inadequacy of the wholesome, and toward sympathy with genuine passions, no matter how destructive or violent' (Mathison 1956:129).

Readers are left with the evidence that Nelly 'supplies but does not take into account or understand', and makes their own explanations and perceptions 'increasingly sympathetic with the thoughts, feelings, and deeds of Heathcliff and Cathy' (Mathison 1956:129). Mathisons idea of the structure being a part of the reason why readers hold on to their sympathy, links to idea that because readers take part in Heathcliff's childhood, and witness the cruel treatment he has been exposed to, they take this into consideration later when his actions becomes problematic.

After Catherine's death, several characters describe Heathcliff's transformation as a transformation in becoming a monster. The revenge Heathcliff seeks and eventually

accomplishes starts with him marrying Isabella Linton, only for wanting revenge on her brother Edgar. His plan with Isabella is to take control over Thrushcross Grange, to steal it from the Lintons. After he is married, he continues to mistreat his wife so much, that she question whether he is a human being, 'Don't put faith in a single word he speaks. He's a lying fiend, a monster, and not a human being!' (E. Brontë 2003:119). Heathcliff has told her that she was only used as a pawn in his game, and what upsets many readers is that he does not show any remorseful feelings, as he cries: 'I have no pity! I have no pity! The more the worms writhe, the more I yearn to crush out their entrails! It is a moral teething; and I grind with greater energy, in proportion to increase of pain' (E. Brontë 2003:119). Kettle argues that the phrase 'It is a moral teething' is both 'odd and significant, giving as it does the answer to our temptation to treat this whole section as a delineation of pathological neuroses' (Kettle 1976:139). He argues that this portrays a monstrous side of Heathcliff, as he states that 'Heathcliff becomes a monster: what he does to Isabella, to Hareton, to Cathy, to his son, even to the wretched Hindley, is cruel and inhuman beyond normal thought' (Kettle 1976:139). He argues that after Catherine's death, Heathcliff 'seems more concerned to achieve new refinements of horror, new depths of degradation' (Kettle 1976:139). The idea that Heathcliff acts in a moral cause, fighting injustice, is now probed, because it seems like the only thing he cares about is destroying the other characters in the novel. So, why is it that readers still find it in their hearts to excuse his malevolent behaviour? Because, as both Kettle and Anderson emphasises, readers are able to identify with him, and most importantly because 'Heathcliff's past evokes sympathy' (Anderson 2016:46). The two following chapters will explain how and why this happens.

5.5 From a heartless villain to a sympathised antihero

This section argues how and why he can be interpreted as an antihero, even though his actions are evil, and looks at why Heathcliff is rather an antihero, than a villain. Heathcliff's actions seems evil, the question is, why is he excused of this wicked behaviour?

Kettle describes the marriage between Heathcliff and Isabella as 'the first of his [Heathcliff's] callous and ghastly acts of revenge' (Kettle 1976:137). An act 'so morally repulsive that it is almost inconvincible that we should be able now to take seriously his attack

on Edgar Linton, who has, after all, by conventional, respectable standards, done nobody any harm' (Kettle 1976:137). Yet, Kettle emphasizes the justification of this act because,

> 'Emily Brontë convinces us that what Heathcliff stands for is morally superior to what the Lintons stand for. This is, it must be insisted, not a case of some mysterious 'emotional' power with which Heathcliff is charged. The emotion behind his denunciation of Edgar is *moral* emotion' (Kettle 1976:137).

Kettle claims that because Heathcliff's action is of moral emotion, the reader continues to sympathise with him. In addition, this notion sympathy makes Heathcliff an antihero, rather than a villain as critics such as Skelton and Bayne claim. However, Kettle argues that because readers are able to sympathise with Heathcliff, and because there is a 'moral emotion' behind his behaviour, readers excuse this behaviour and understands it (Kettle 1976.137). Because nearly all characters in the novel have suppressed Heathcliff, readers tend to feel sorry for him and thus understand his actions. This thought of understanding and recognition is essential when discussing the antihero, because as Knowlton and Spivey argues, this is why readers are drawn to them and approve their immoral actions (Knowlton & Spivey 2013:47). Because readers see their 'flawed selves' in antiheroes, it allows them 'to understand their humanity, even when their deeds are questionable evil' (Knowlton & Spivey 2013:47). In other words, readers feel with Heathcliff after all the unfair treatment and Catherine's betrayal. Kettle argues that readers feel with Heathcliff after being deceived, because they are persuaded to think that 'the alternative life *he* has offered Catherine, is more natural, more social and more moral than the world of Thrushcross Grange' (Kettle 1976:137).

This idea of morality is crucial when discussing Heathcliff from an antihero perspective, but not all critics see the moral force that Kettle clearly emphasises. Therefore, not all critics or readers are able to excuse Heathcliff's behaviour. Kettle claims that those who criticize him are critics that do not see this moral motivation:

> 'Most of those who criticise Heathcliff adversely (on the grounds that he is unbelievable, or that he is a neurotic creation, or that he is merely the Byronic satan-hero revived) fail to appreciate his significance because they fail to recognise this moral force because they are themselves, consciously or not, of the Linton party' (Kettle 1976:137).

What Kettle is saying is that the critics, who do not see the moral force that Heathcliff denotes, are supporters of the Linton family. Kettle's idea of a Linton party echoes an idea

that Eagleton also presents, which is the idea of two groups of critics. Eagleton calls these groups 'two broad schools of *Wuthering Heights* opinion: Heights critics and Grange critics' (Eagleton 2005:134). He claims that 'Heights critics are secretly in love with Heathcliff, finding in his dark primitive, subversive existence a source of natural vitality far more fertile and fulfilling than the one selfish, brittle, skin-deep civilization presented by the Lintons' (Eagleton 2005:134). While he claims that Grange critics view Heathcliff as 'a brutal, demonic, domineering property baron who treats Catherine violently and could never have developed a mature relationship with her' (Eagleton 2005:134).

The views of Heathcliff amongst critics and readers are divided. When looking at reviews from the time of publication, it seems like Heathcliff was perceived in way that is more villainous. As presented in chapter two, the reviewer in the 'Examiner' in 1848, cited in Allot, described Heathcliff as 'an incarnation of evil qualities' (Allot 1970:40). Charlotte Brontë, cited in Bloom, warned others not to create such a character, 'whether it is right or advisable to create beings like Heathcliff, I do not know: I scarcely think it is' (Bloom 1993:6). Even if some critics and readers are repelled by his actions and malevolent behaviour, some are able to understand why he turns from an innocent boy into a resentful man. When reading the novel, readers' witness how Heathcliff is mistreated and abused by Hindley, and mocked by the other characters in the book. Consequently, readers are able to sympathise with Heathcliff, and thus understand why he wants revenge on these characters. In this way, and because his primary aim is justice, Heathcliff should be perceived as an antihero, rather than a straight through evil villain.

Kettle writes that we as readers tend to feel, 'unless we read with full care and responsiveness, that Emily Brontë has gone too far, that the revenge … had o'erflown the measure' (Kettle 1976:139). However, he continues,

> '[…] despite our protests about probability…, despite everything he does and is, we continue to sympathise with Heathcliff – not, obviously, to admire him or defend him, but to give him our inmost sympathy, to continue in an obscure way to identify ourselves with him *against* the other characters' (Kettle 1976:139).

Kettle's idea is interesting because it corresponds with Knowlton and Spivey's idea of the antihero being a character we sympathise with. Kettle argues that 'the secret of this achievement', the reason why readers ignore his evil actions, lies in the words that Heathcliff utters in the phrase above; 'it is a moral teething' (Kettle 1976:139). Kettle emphasises that 'Heathcliff's revenge may involve a pathological condition of hatred, but it is not at bottom

merely neurotic. It has a moral force' (Kettle 1976:139). The notion of morality saves Heathcliff from turning into a true villain.

Heathcliff wants to achieve justice through revenge on the other characters that have mistreated him. As Kettle describes it:

> '[…] for what Heathcliff does is to use against his enemies with complete ruthlessness their own weapons, to turn on them (stripped of their romantic veils) their own standards, to beat them at their own game. The weapons he uses against the Earnshaws and Lintons are their own weapons of money and arranged marriages' (Kettle 1976:139-140).

What Kettle argues is that Heathcliff turns the social advantages of the Earnshaws and Lintons against them. The advantages that have facilitated them to supress Heathcliff earlier in the novel are now in Heathcliff's own hands, because he is rich and thus belong in the same class as both of these families. He revenges himself by buying out Hindley from Wuthering Heights, marries Isabella, just to take revenge on the Lintons, thereafter he arranges the marriage of his and Isabella's son to Catherine and Edgars daughter, 'so that the entire property of the two families shall be controlled by himself' (Kettle 1976:140).

In order to recognise Heathcliff as an antihero, it is important to understand how and why readers retain their sympathy for him, after all the evil he portrays. The primary clue is this moral justice that readers witnesses. As Kettle stresses, 'though he is inhuman, we understand *why* he is inhuman' (Kettle 1976:140). Since readers have observed the cruel injustice that Heathcliff has been a victim of, both by the Earnshaws and the Lintons, they are able understand why he pays back in own coin.

In the previous sections and in the chapter of Jane, Crusie's idea of a monster within has been emphasized. As this thesis argues, both Jane and Heathcliff have this monster inside, and it is crucial that they learn to control it. If not, if they let the monster prevail them, they fail their undertaking and might even end up as failures or villains. Antiheroes' main goal is justice in some form, and in order to achieve this, they must accept their inner monster and take control over it (Crusie 2013:6). Jane overcomes her inner monster when she learns to control her passion and anger, and is symbolized with Bertha Mason death. Heathcliff, on the other hands, seems to be prevailed by this monster for a period, but, unlike Bertha, he at the last moment escapes. Near the end of the novel, he finally makes peace with himself and thus overpowers the monster that has for so long been a disruptive part of him. The exact moment is portrayed as Heathcliff utters his feelings to Nelly:

'It is a poor conclusion, is it not . . . An absurd termination to my violent exertions? I get levers and mattocks to demolish the two houses, and train myself to be capable of working like Hercules, and when everything is ready, and in my power, I find the will to lift a slate off either roof has vanished! My old enemies have not beaten me; now would be the precise time to revenge myself on their representatives: I could do it; and none could hinder me. But where is the use? I don't care for striking, I can't take the trouble to raise my hand! That sounds as if I had been labouring the whole time, only to exhibit a fine trait of magnanimity. It is far from being the case—I have lost the faculty of enjoying their destruction, and I am too idle to destroy for nothing' (E. Brontë 2003:247).

This quotation shows Heathcliff's conquer over his inner monster, his anger and lust for revenge. As he reveals to Nelly that he does not enjoy to ruin people, that even if he is in any position to do it, he will not. Heathcliff has accomplished his revenge on the people that mistreated him, and thus he has achieved his justice. If he had continued to ruin these innocent children, and continued to be a monster, Heathcliff would most likely end up as a villain. However, he realises that being cruel to the 'representatives', as he call them, will not give him any pleasure, and it will not give him Catherine back. Therefore, just in time, Heathcliff makes peace with his inner monster, and exits the story as an antihero.

Heathcliff achieves justice, but does he realize his happy ending like Jane? After overcoming her inner monster, and inheriting a lot of money, Jane finally gets her happy ending, as she is able to marry Rochester. Heathcliff is never able to marry Catherine when they are alive, but his happy ending seems to be his death. Emily Brontë suggests that Heathcliff and Catherine are reunited. She indicates through the neighbours of Wuthering Heights that they have appeared together as ghosts. Several neighbours 'would swear on their Bible that he *walks'*, and a little boy that Nelly encounters as she is passing the Wuthering Heights, tells her that 'Heathcliff and a woman, yonder, under t'Nab' (E. Brontë 2003:257). Whether or not Heathcliff receives his happy ending, is up to the reader to judge. Regardless, Heathcliff achieves his justice, takes control over the monster within, and dies as an antihero.

Heathcliff and Jane Eyre are in many ways similar when discussing them from an antihero perspective. Both of them are outsiders, and because they do not obey Victorian expectations and values, they are degraded by society, a society represented by the other characters in the narrative. Jane is orphan, and Heathcliff appears to be an orphan too, as her is mentioned as a 'fatherless child' (E. Brontë 2003:30). Regardless, they are both dependent and living inside a home where they are treated as unequal because their social positions degrade them within the household. Orphaned and poor, Jane consequently in a lower class than the Reeds. Heathcliff is foreign and poor, and thus in a lower class than the Earnshaws.

Both of these characters are met with a difficult life because of their social positions, positions that are determined by their orphanhood, lack of money, education, speech and manners (Frawley 2008:458). Most importantly, both of these characters rebel against the unjust authority, prejudice and their lives as equals, principles that limited and suppressed their life. However, what separates Jane and Heathcliff, is their way of rebellion. Jane uses her voice and opposes the characters that mistreat her. On one occasion, she even uses violence, as she strikes back at John Reed, an act she does not regret. Heathcliff on the other hand, is more evil in his rebellion, as he hatches out a revengeful plan against the characters that oppressed him, and abuse them in the same way they abused him.

This section has argued that Heathcliff can be interpreted as an antihero, because readers understand and sympathise with him. In fact, even if his actions are evil, many still find a way to excuse his behaviour because of this. It has also compared the life of Jane and Heathcliff, as well as compared them as rebellious characters. Jane and Heathcliff are similar in many ways, but they are also different in many ways. She represents a different kind of antihero than Heathcliff, as she operates more towards the line between a heroine and an antiheroine. Heathcliff is found in the opposite side of the grey scale, as he operates more towards the line between antihero and villain. The following and last section of this chapter, looks further into these two antiheroes, as it compare and contrast the figures of the male antihero and the female antiheroine, represented by Jane and Heathcliff.

5.6 Heathcliff compared to Jane Eyre

After studying Heathcliff and Jane from an antihero perspective, it is clear that there are some similarities and differences between the two. This section concentrates on these similarities and differences, as it compares and contrasts them as antiheroes. In addition, it looks at female and male antiheroes in general, and examines if there are distinct characteristics with them. By exploring the differences between female and male antiheroes, it sets out to explore the idea that antiheroines are less likeable than antiheroes, which critics such as Lauren Duca, Emma Jane Unsworth and Roxane Gay argues.

Heathcliff, as a male antihero, performs acts that are more questionable than those of Jane, as he executes a vengeful plan, with a desire to destroy the characters that mistreated him. Jane, as a female antiheroine, has an implicit quest for a better world based on equality

between men and women, but is also primarily acting in her own self-interest. What connect these two antiheroes are their positions as outsiders. Both of them are orphans, dependent on families that are of a higher class then them. Jane stands out because of her passionate behaviour, while Heathcliff sticks out with his dark and foreign appearance. Both of them are victims of the higher elite and its financial powers. Jane is constantly being mistreated and is exposed to violence by her aunt and cousin at Gateshead, while Heathcliff is experiencing the same treatment at Wuthering Heights by Hindley. The mistreatment and degration they are exposed to, results in their rebellious behaviour.

Some critics will probably question this comparison between this woman, who wants to revolutionize the world to a better place, with this dark and sinful man, who uses innocent children in his quest for revenge. Yet, they have much in common, especially from an antihero perspective. Yes, Heathcliff's rebellious behaviour is more extreme than Jane's, as he takes his revolt to a higher level, by exposing several characters to his wickedness. However, both of these characters can be seen as the antiheroes in their stories. The motivation of both Jane and Heathcliff derives from the same point, as the set of stems from the structures of the Victorian society that entails injustice.

The grey scale that was introduced in chapter three is a helpful tool when perceiving these two in an antiheroic perspective, as it shows how they can operate in two opposite ends of the grey area. As Figure 2 shows, Jane operates closer to the line between hero and antihero, while Heathcliff balance on the line between antihero and villain:

Figure 2

These two characters demonstrate the big grey gap that the antiheroes manoeuvre in, as they localize in each opposite ends. Jane can be viewed as a heroine, as her thoughts of beliefs seem to be of a true heroine, as her goal is a more fairer and equal society. However, what makes Jane an antiheroine is the way she chooses to achieve her goal, which is to rebel against the structures and principles that creates an unjustly society. In Victorian eyes, especially those of the higher elite, Jane's mind was one of a rebel, because her thoughts and

opinions challenged well-established Victorian principles. As such, it is evident that the interpretations of the characters changes along with society, and thus the perceptions of antiheroes will too.

Antiheroes often fight for a political or an individual cause, where the primary aim is justice. This is also the case with Jane and Heathcliff. Jane seems to be fighting a battle for women, as much as for her self. Therefore, she can be perceived as a feminist antihero. Heathcliff, on the contrary, seems to be fighting an individual battle, against the injustice he has been exposed to. Thus, Heathcliff's case is less political, even if there are many things to say politically about it. He is driven by his self-interest. Like Jane, Heathcliff's motivation is justice, justice over the people who wronged him and treated him as if he was an animal. What saves him from falling into the villain category is the reason behind his evilness; the oppression and injustice he has been exposed to earlier, which makes readers sympathise and feel with him rather than feel disgust over his actions. Actually, motivation, which derives from unjust treatment, seems to be the fundamental element in both Jane and Heathcliff's case when discussing them as antiheroes.

Critics have elaborated on antiheroes, but few have elaborated on antiheroines and the differences between the two. In one way, Heathcliff can be perceived as a more "traditional antihero" because he is male, because there are without a doubt more male antiheroes than females.

In her article 'Anatomy Of The Female Antihero', published in *The Huffington Post*, Duca argues that the female antiheroine is 'as difficult to accept as she is to write' and that the most common difficulty when creating an antiheroine is sympathy (Duca 2015). She states that 'it doesn't take much for us to reject a woman as "unlikable", which makes it harder for an author to succeed with a literary female antihero. By presenting the idea of a 'gendered likability issue', Duca reflects on a potential answer to why there are few antiheroines, as she writes:

> 'There are infinitely more obstacles faced by leading ladies making morally questionable choices while hoping to keep viewers engaged. The gendered likability issue of the small screen has never been so clear as in our willingness to accept serial-philandering murderers and meth cooks, just so long as they're men' (Duca 2015).

Women are *supposed* to be liked; they are representatives of wives and mothers, not murderers. What Duca implies is that readers do not find female antiheroines as interesting as male antiheroes, in fact, because they act morally wrong, readers find them unlikable. For

instance, because violent attacks or fraud not happen as often with women as with men, it is harder to imagine a woman beating or killing a person, than a man doing the same. According to Duca, it is easier to accept that men kills and not women (Duca 2015). Rebellious behaviour, violence and even murder seem more natural in relation to a man, than to a woman. Ideas that relates to the issue of gendered stereotypes. Moreover, as discussed in chapter three on the antihero, the term antihero is often assumed a masculine term, an assumption than Pearson and Pope criticize (Pearson & Pope 1981: vii).

Unsworth also highlights the lack of female antiheroes and argues that 'monstrous men are more than welcome in serious fiction, but create an unlikeable female character and you're in for trouble' (Unsworth 2014). Gay explanation of this problem is that unlikable women are not as compelling as unlikable men (Gay 2014). She states that 'in many ways, likability is a very elaborate lie, a performance, a code of conduct dictating the proper way to be. Characters who don't follow this code become unlikable' (Gay 2014). The disapproval of unlikable characters is a result of 'a wider cultural malaise with all things unpleasant, all things that dare to breach the norm of social acceptability' (Gay 2014). This means that when characters are unlikeable, 'they don't meet our mutable, varying standards' (Gay 2014). Gay writes that these characters by rebelling against the social expectations 'are freeing themselves from the burden of likability', which very much relates to the episode when Jane opposes her aunt and tells her the truth, calling her 'bad', 'hard-hearted' and 'deceitful' (Brontë 2001:30). After this, she addresses her reader 'with the strangest sense of freedom' (Brontë 2001:30).

According to Gay, 'in literature as in life, the rules are all too often different for girls. There are many instances where an unlikable man is billed as an antihero, earning a special term to explain those ways in which he deviates from the norm, the traditionally likable' (Gay 2014). Antiheroines are in many ways "unlikable women", because they shocks and provokes readers with their rebellious conduct. Gay writes that such women refuse to give in to the social expectations, and that 'they are, instead, themselves' (Gay 2014). Her account complements the discussion of Jane as antiheroic, as Jane refuses to give in to the social expectations of her as a Victorian woman. Her rebellious behaviour at Gateshead is her start of opposing to the traditional expectations of Victorian girls, but Jane confirms the idea that she will be true to herself when she declares to Rochester 'I will be myself' (Brontë 2001:221). Antiheroines are themselves and do not let societal expectations control their lives even if it has consequences. In fact, as Gay puts it, 'they accept the consequences of their choices and those consequences becomes stories worth reading' (Gay 2014). By being

unchained from restrictions of likeability, female characters 'are able to exist on and beyond the page as fully realized, interesting, and realistic characters' (Gay 2014). Readers are drawn to these characters because they are realistic, and because, as Knowlton and Spivey puts it, 'we see our flawed selves' in them. When describing the 'what lies at the heart of worrying over likability or the lack thereof', Gay refers to the saying that the truth hurts, and thinks that this might be it. She argues that it depends on 'how much of the truth we're willing to subject ourselves to', an impression that links to Stewart's claim regarding antiheroes, that they 'challenge the ways in which we see, or wish to see, ourselves' (Stewart 2015:7). Many antiheroes, including Jane, have an implicit political message, often about injustice connected to social conventions.

Gay also states that an unlikable man is 'inscrutably interesting, dark, or tormented but ultimately compelling even when he might behave in distasteful ways'. However, 'when women are unlikable, it becomes a point of obsession in critical conversations' (Gay 2014). As shown in the analysis of Jane, she is unlikable amongst Victorian readers, because she does not follow the Victorian expectations of female conduct. As a result, she was subjected to critical conversations, earlier illustrated by the review of Rigby, who harshly judged the novel. Therefore, according to Gay, it is acceptable or interesting when men behave in repulsive ways, but not when women do. This means that even if Heathcliff portrays more rebellious traits than Jane, even evil qualities, this is more acceptable because he is male.

Even if Gay declares that female antiheroes are not likeable, she does not say that they are not fascinating. In fact, it is the "unlikability" that makes them fascinating and interesting. They are not only characters that just possess rebellious or outrageous behaviour. Antiheroes have a mission, as they want to achieve justice. Their rebellious behaviour is used as a tool to achieve this justice, and that is what ultimately makes them antiheroes. That means, that just because a character has a bad temper, it does not mean that he or she consequently is an antihero. As many critics have concluded, antiheroes rebel in order to achieve justice, for either a personal or a political cause.

Jane seems to fascinate readers because she is a 'bad girl' who opposes believed and worshiped Victorian principles. She is interesting because she dares to speak the truth, in a society where women are ought to be silenced. In addition, she is captivating because she believes stands up for herself, believe in herself and will not be trampled on by oppressive male characters. However, it is important to keep in mind that Jane, along with many other cherished antiheroes, has won readers sympathy. Charlotte Brontë has succeeded to do what Duca described as a 'the most basic obstacle' when creating a female antihero, to win readers

sympathy (Duca 2015). The only way Jane wins readers sympathy, something that she did not accomplish with Victorian critics from the upper class, is because readers are aware that she fights injustice. Readers have witnessed her oppressive and unfair life, due to her social position as an outsider, and consequently they feel with her. These ideas relates to Heathcliff, as he, too, wins readers sympathy and thus falls into the antihero category.

Right now, it seems as if the biggest differences between female and male antiheroes are the quantity of them, and that antiheroines are more challenging to create, as they often becomes "unlikable" and thus not appealing. However, just as readers' expectations change, this can be changed too. Moreover, as the tolerance and acceptance increase, as readers get used to subversive females, literature will correspondingly receive more female antiheroines. It also appears as if male antiheroes are more likely to take the law into their own hands, while female antiheroines often rebels in order to be equivalent with men or to escape an oppressive life. It is interesting to see how Jane, as most female antiheroes, is contextualized with feminist issues, such as women's rights, female prejudice and gender roles. This corresponds with Moglen's idea of Brontë using Jane as opponent to the distorted gender roles characterized and supported by the social structures of the Victorian era (Moglen 1978:106).

Literature is provided with great female antiheroes such as the ones mentioned in chapter three, Lady Macbeth and Tess of the D'Uberviles. Other examples is Stieg Larsson's Lisbeth Salander from *The Girl with the Dragoon Tattoo* (2005), Gustave Flaubert's Emma Bovary from *Madame Bovary* (1856) and Jane Austen's Elizabeth Bennet from *Pride and Prejudice* (1857), to name a few. These are all female characters that most readers root for, and sympathise with. Lisbeth Salander, who is exposed to harsh physical and sexual violence, and takes revenge on her abuser. Emma Bovary, who is sent as a child to live suppressed in a convent, and who, in spite of the social expectations, tried to live out her dreams. Finally, Elizabeth Bennet, who similar to Jane, is intelligent and outspoken, and thus opposes the social expectations of women of their times. These women, like Jane, contrast the traditional woman and the expected female conduct. They want to achieve justice, either in the form of revenge or just a non-discriminatory life because of the fact that they are women. Because of this aim of justice, and because readers understand and sympathise with them, they can be perceived as antiheroines.

By the minor numbers of female antiheroines compared to male antiheroes, it is evident that there is an issue related to gender. Antiheroes are in many ways unlikable characters, because they often portray evil qualities or perform repulsive actions. However,

what spares them from rejection, and which ultimately is the key to succeed in creating an antihero, is sympathy. The fact that it is harder for readers to accept and sympathise with female antiheroines, explains the reason for the lack of them. As Duca, Unsworth and Gay emphasise, readers find unlikeable men appealing, while it is hard for them to accept unlikable women.

5.7 Conclusion

Even though Heathcliff has been described as one of the greatest villains in fiction (Bloom 2009:141; Allott 1970:88), this chapter has argued that it is more appropriate to perceive him as an antihero. There is no doubt that Heathcliff portrays some villainous qualities with his wicked behaviour and sinful quest for revenge, but there are two aspects that separates him from being a villain, and that is his motivation and his aim of justice. Because Heathcliff's motivation derives from the mistreatment he has been exposed to as a child and adult, readers are able to understand why Heathcliff wants revenge. By reading this novel with objective eyes, readers witness a degrading and oppressive life at Wuthering Heights under Hindley's regime. Moreover, because readers witness this, they are able to sympathise with Heathcliff. This notion of sympathy is crucial when looking at Heathcliff from an antihero perspective, because the reader's ability to understand his behaviour keeps him away from the villain label. However, it is clear that both readers and critics are disagreeing in the opinions of his character.

Like Jane, Heathcliff becomes rebellious because of his situation as an outsider at Wuthering Heights, and it is this position that allows his behaviour. The important aspects of Heathcliffs 'outsiderness' are his situation as a poor orphan, and his alien background. Since he is poor, orphaned and a gypsy, factors that ultimately situate him in the lower classes, he does not fit in with the wealthy Earnshaw family. This exposes him for a vulnerable position, which Hindley and other characters exploit by mistreating him. In addition, as he does not possess financial assets, he is never able to marry the woman he loves, Catherine Earnshaw. As she chooses the more sophisticated Edgar Linton instead of him, he has nothing to loose by rebelling. The cruel mistreatment that Heathcliff is exposed to at Wuthering Heights makes him dream about revenge. Heathcliff wants justice, and this justice is the revenge he sets out to accomplish. This lust for revenge has made critics such as Skelton and Bayne view

Heathcliff as a villain. However, this chapter has argued that because readers are able to understand and sympathise with him, his actions are excused. Similar to Jane, opinions about Heathcliff and his actions have altered throughout the years, which shows that the concept is in flux.

Jane and Heathcliff are similar in many ways, even if they operate in two opposite ends of the grey scale. Jane is both interpreted as a heroine and an antiheroine, while Heathcliff is both interpreted as an antihero and a villain. Besides being orphans, poor, and oppressed and mistreated, Jane and Heathcliff are both of a greater knowledge, as they know that it is not right to be treated the way they have been treated, just because they are different. Heathcliff revenge himself on the people who mistreated him by turning their own weapon against them, the power of money and wealth. In that way, he shed light to the injustice that the Victorian society represents, such as the hierarchical class society and the money that the higher class uses in a degrading way. While Heathcliff's rebellious behaviour sheds light to the societal injustice, Jane's rebellious behaviour is more directly related to it. Even if Jane politics are implicit, she challenges the society and its customs by opposing her superiors, questioning the gender roles, especially the favourable role of men, and by resisting the submissiveness expected of Victorian women.

In addition to concluding that Heathcliff is an antihero, this chapter has also investigated the differences between female antiheroes and male antiheroes. It does not seem to be evident distinctions between these two types, however, there is a shortage of female antiheroines because readers find it harder to accept and sympathise with them. Nevertheless, just like all literary characters, antiheroes are divergent. Some share similar traits, others do not. This is also the case with female and male antiheroes. The only factors that are certain, are that antiheroes operates within a grey area, and are willing to rebel in order to achieve justice, which frequently is their primary aim.

6. Conclusion

This thesis has been a study of the complex literary term antihero, as it has examined what an antihero is, as well as its purpose and meaning. It has investigated how Charlotte Brontë's Jane Eyre in *Jane Eyre* (1847) and Emily Brontë's Heathcliff in *Wuthering Heights* (1847), conform to the accepted conventions of the antihero concept, and probed why they belong in this category. The aims of the study were primarily to use the concept in order to gain a better understanding of Jane and Heathcliff, to see how and why they represent the antihero in their respective novels. Furthermore, it has examined how these two characters do not conform to the social conventions of the Victorian era, and thus operates as outsiders in their novel, a position that enables and motivates them to rebel. By the help of the concept antihero, this thesis has explored how we can understand the social and political rebellion of Jane and Heathcliff, but also how this social and political rebellion contribute to a better understanding of the concept of the antihero. Finally, this study has looked at the notable differences and similarities between these two characters as antiheroes. By doing this, it has shown that 'antihero' is not an exclusively male category, which has been important in order to display the different aspects and nuances of the concept. Male and female antiheroes have different starting points, and because of gendered likability problems, readers find it harder to accept female antiheroes. However, female antiheroes are just as important as male antiheroes, because they, too, call attention to certain societal traits that causes problems or injustice. Yes, antiheroes are exciting and fascinating and add an extra tension to their novels, but they also have a purpose to fight an injustice, which often can be related to real social problems.

In chapter three, this thesis argued that the concept antihero is widely discussed and complex, and that there are different opinions in the world of authors and critics. However, this thesis has delimited the concept into a grey area, featured in chapter 3.1. Literary antiheroes are characters that fall in-between good and evil, represented by to polar extremes heroes and villains. In other words, antiheroes are characters that are to evil to be a hero, and too good to be a villain. However, unlike the strict boundaries that define the hero and villain, the antihero maneuvers in a much wider spectrum of attributes and characteristics, which explains some of the reasons why this literary character is perceived as a complex figure. Yet, some qualities connect all antiheroes, which is their aim of justice and their willingness to rebel in order to achieve it.

Often, their aim of justice is related to issues concerning society and its principles, as 'these characters refuse to bow to the expectations of society and rebel against the rules that

bind us all' (Stewart 2016:7). In other cases, antiheroes rebel against social, economic and political conventions, but 'without much of a cause than his own self-interest' (Rollin 1973:xvii). Jane refuses to bow down to the expectations of her as a Victorian woman, as she responds with violence when John Reed mistreats her, has an "unfeminine" outburst towards her aunt when she locks her in the red room, questions the authority of Mr. Rochester at Thornfield and rejects St. John at Marsh End. Jane shatters the expectations of a submissive and silent female, as she uses her voice to highlight the unjust gender aspects of the Victorian society. Along these lines, Jane's rebellion can be seen as a political one. By being a poor orphan, with an unfamiliar and possibly foreign background, Heathcliff is doomed to an oppressed situation under the tyrannical rule of Hindley. However, this repressed position results in a thirst for vengeance. Since Heathcliff's pursuit for justice is framed as a selfish one, his mode of rebellion correlates with Rollin's claim, that the cause of some antiheroes are only their self-interest. Nevertheless, the aim of justice is often, if not always, one of their highest priorities (Crusie 2013:6). This means that the rebellious behaviour of antiheroes are excused and understood, as they are characters that do 'bad things for the right reasons' (Knowlton & Spivey 2015:42).

In chapter four, this thesis probed if Jane Eyre conforms to the accepted conventions of the antihero, and discussed if she is an antiheroine. It concluded that for the same reasons Jane is interpreted an antiheroine by some, others interpret her as a heroine. The reason for this is that for the same reasons Jane has been perceived as an antiheroine, she has also been perceived as a heroine. Modern critics, such as Pope and Pearson, often interpret her as a revolutionary heroine, as she dares to challenge the unfair social conventions of the Victorian era, especially concerning gender equality, and speaks up against her superiors who treat her wrongful. These characteristics are viewed differently from a Victorian upper class perspective, as she was perceived as a treat to well-established principles that benefited this class. However, the fact that Jane rebels against social expectations and principles, as Stewart argues to be an important antiheroic feature, she appears to conform to the conventions of an antiheroine. This study has shown that Jane can, as Moglen claim, be perceived as an antiheroine. If she was the first antiheroine is not easy to determine, because there have been little research and writings on female antiheroines. However, this study has also shown, that Jane can also be perceived as a heroine, like Pearson and Pope argues her to be. Her rebellious behaviour is in fact viewed in two different ways, heroic and antiheroic. She rebels against social and political structures, speaks up against her superiors and even strikes back at her male cousin as a child, acts that are seen as shocking from a Victorian perspective. Jane's

purpose is to shed light on the injustice that the Victorian era represents, such as the hierarchical class divisions and their understanding of women and men. Jane is able to do this because she has nothing to lose as an outsider. In addition, because she possesses knowledge and social understandings, greater, than the beliefs and values in Victorian society was built upon. She knew, that the principles and custom that were practiced were wrong and unjust, and thus, she challenged them, and thus becoming an antiheroine or a revolutionary heroine, depending on the eye of the beholder.

In chapter five, this thesis studied if Heathcliff conforms to the accepted conventions of the antihero, and discussed whether he is an antihero or a villain. Even if several critics have described him as a villain, this thesis argued that he coincides with the antihero. He does portray some villainous qualities with his quest for revenge and violent acts, however, because we as readers have witnessed the cruel mistreatment he has been a victim of, it is easier to understand him, and consequently sympathise with him. Because of this, his questionable and evil actions are excused. This means that this study agrees with Paris claim that Heathcliff 'retains his human status, however fiendlike he becomes' (Paris 1997:241-242). Paris states that his evilness arises because of the victimization he has been exposed to, which corresponds with this thesis argument.

Heathcliff has been labelled with several different labels, from villain, to Byronic hero, to Romantic hero and now as an antihero. This thesis has reasoned that Heathcliff is not a villain, and it has claimed that Byronic heroes and Romantic heroes are in fact antiheroes. As argued in the introduction, this is because these types of heroes are related to antiheroes, and actually are different "sorts of" antiheroes, originated from different time periods. They are all heroes with antiheroic features, and they are all heroes that operate within a grey area, as they are neither heroic heroes nor villains. Therefore, instead of labelling Heathcliff specifically as a Byronic hero, as Thorslev does, or a Romantic hero, as Reed does, this thesis concentrates these flawed heroes into a grey area of antiheroes.

This thesis also looked at the similarities and differences between Jane and Heathcliff. In fact, these two characters are similar in many ways. They are both positioned as outsiders in their novels, because they do not adhere to the social expectations. Both of them are orphans, poor, and thus dependent, and they are both victims of mistreatment and oppression because of this. It is also evident that they have a greater moral knowledge that the other characters in their novels, as they know that what they are exposed to, because of their social position, is not right or fair. Jane and Heathcliff take up the fight against the injustice they have been exposed to, she with a powerful voice and an intelligent mind, and him with a quest

for revenge. Both of them share the aim that is common for antiheroes, to achieve justice, and both of them choose a rebellious path towards this goal. The main difference between Jane and Heathcliff is the type of justice they seek. Jane wants to free herself, but also highlights the unfair conditions for her fellow Victorian women, due to the restraints that are pushed on them because of their gender. Heathcliff, on the contrary, wants justice is form of punishment, over the people that mistreated him. Even if Heathcliff's justice is more a selfish one than the one Jane pursues, it does not make him less of an antihero, because as Crusie states 'justice or some form of it' is the primary aim of antiheroes.

What we see in these two novels and by these two characters is that the concept antihero is in flux. As society and its principles change, the limitations of the concept change with it. As there have been positive developments in both gender roles and racism, tolerance and acceptance have changed, and the grey area changes accordingly. However, it is important to emphasise that we have not arrived somewhere where problems related to injustice have been "fixed", and thus there is still room for literary antiheroes. In Heathcliff and Jane's case, readers and critics are divided in their interpretations of them. Some contemporary critics have been horrified by their actions, while others have a different way in perceiving them, and in some cases informed by a political change. This underpins the idea of antiheroes being floodlights for societal injustice, by raising awareness over prejudice and reprehensible attitudes and doctrines in the society in which they operate within.

As this thesis has set out to explore the concept, it has also looked at the relationship between the female and male antihero, to see if there are noticeable differences between the two types. This was not easy to study, as there is little research done on the female antihero as an exclusive concept. This research has not found evident distinctions between these two types of antiheroes. However, it has discovered that female antiheroines are less acceptable than male antiheroes. There is a political issue behind this, which is 'the gendered likability issue' (Duca 2015). According to critics such as Gay and Duca, readers do not like unlikable women. While readers find male antiheroes 'inscrutably interesting, dark, or tormented but ultimately compelling even when he might behave in distasteful ways' (Gay 2014), most of them finds it hard to accept female antiheroines. This can be a result of an implicit prejudice that readers might not even be aware of, and it links our expectations of women. Females are often portrayed as obedient, nurturing and motherly, and are nearly expected to be as such. Thus, women that deviate from this icon are consequently viewed as unlikable and hard to accept.

This thesis has concluded that just like all literary characters, all antiheroes are

differing, regardless of gender. Some characters share similar traits, others do not, and this is the case with female and male antiheroes. However, what binds these antiheroes together is that they operate within a grey area, and are ready to rebel in order to achieve their primary aim, justice.

This study has shown that there is a lack of research and writing on female antiheroines, which is a possible point for further study. It is evident that this concept is male dominated, and it could be interesting to examine why this is the case. Duca's idea that readers are more likely to warm to 'bad boys' than 'bad girls', as 'bad girls' are not likable due to gender bias, would also be an interesting point of departure for potential future development. The hope for this thesis is that it has provided a good basis for future studies of the concept antihero.

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