

## 5. Comparison between the structures of Wuthering Heights and Great Expectation

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**ABSTRACT:** The structure is the backbone of a book. Beneath the surface, it holds everything together and imposes order on the flow. Without a coherent and logical structure, the novel's key elements are unclear. Victorian Age is known for perfection of the novel from all corners. Though Charles Dickens and Emily Bronte have distinct places in the literary World, Yet their representation of their age has many things in common. The two novels in question "Great Expectations" and "Wuthering Heights" range from Gothic tradition to migration and romance to villainy. Both of these stories can be set off and paralleled to the other. The setting, narration, plot, time era, and lover's relationships are the elements of comparison as they form the overall structure of a novel.

**Key Words:** Victorian Age, gothic, plot, characterization

**FULL TEXT**

Studying 'structure' begins by standing back from the details of the novel and taking an overall view. The structure of a text is present in anything the author does to give a shape to our experiences as we read. So, we begin to study structure by thinking about the text in a particular way, concentrating on the question of its shape, and how it is fitted together. Comparing the structure of great masterpieces like *Wuthering Heights* and *Great Expectations* becomes all the more difficult when one has read them just for the first time.

Victorian age saw the English novel nearly perfected by the hands of novelists like Dickens, Jane Austen, Brontes and others. Throughout the years authors have written many great stories. *Wuthering Heights* written by Emily Bronte and *Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens are two examples of great stories. Both of these stories can be set off and paralleled to the other. The setting, narration, plot, time era, and lover's relationships are the elements of comparison as they form the overall structure of a novel.

The settings, in which the two stories take place, influence the people and the situations that occur. In Bronte's *Wuthering Heights*, the setting attracts our attention because, like the plot, it is so fully and precisely created for us. As soon as we begin to consider the setting, we realise that every scene of the story takes place within or between the two houses: *Wuthering Heights* and *Thrushcross Grange*. *Penistone Craggs* are beyond *Wuthering Heights*: they are the most distant visible feature. The narrative does not visit them, although several of the characters have visited them. The *Earnshaw* family is not as well off as the *Linton's*. This is compared to the small town off the ocean where *Pip* and *Estella* live. *Pip's* family is rather poor, and *Estella* lives in a large house with a wealthy aunt. The lives of the lover's in both stories revolved around the other partner's life. *Estella* moves away to Paris, but then meets *Pip* again in New York. He again pursues her and she marries another man. *Catherine* loves her adopted brother, but marries *Edgar* instead. The two meet again at her house and *Edgar* gets angry because he senses the love between the two. The different settings of the lover's first acquaintance is the contrasting element. *Pip* meets *Estella* on a warm summer day while playing in the garden. Summer is a time of happiness, which drew *Estella* to grow fond of *Pip*. Summer is also a time of romance, which flourishes in the end. *Heathcliff* meets *Catherine* on a cold winter night after her family takes him in. Winter is a time of grief and gloominess, and therefore *Catherine* does not care for *Heathcliff* at first. Winter is also a time of death, because the leaves die and most animals are hibernating. This parallels with the outcome of *Catherine* and *Heathcliff's* relationship; she dies. The time era of the lover's plays a role on the outcome of the stories. *Wuthering Heights*, in a Victorian

era, is set in a time where women strictly marry, have children, and keep the household in order. This makes women uncomfortable with themselves in making decisions that regard their future. Catherine was afraid to act on her true nature, so she married Edgar. Although she loved Heathcliff, she made the decision to betray him.

I've no more business to marry Edgar Linton than I have to be in heaven. It would degrade me to marry Heathcliff now; so he shall never know how I love him; because he is more myself than I'm. Whatever our souls are made of, they are the same; and Linton's is as different as a moonbeam from lightning, or frost from fire. (p 65)

A look into the different families and social structure of the two novels reveal some entirely different things. In *Great Expectations*, Estella grew up under her aunt's care. She had ambition and an education. She made decisions that better her. Estella moves to Paris to go to college and then to New York to work. She sees Pip as a «poor» man, and marries another man. Catherine, from *Wuthering Heights*, is from a rather poor family. The Linton family educates and refines her. Her refinement complicates her relationship with Heathcliff and leads to her marriage to the upper class Edgar Linton. Catherine unfortunately lives in the time when women married for money and social-status, but were also forced to be housewives as well. The two couples, Pip and Estella and Catherine and Heathcliff, come together in the end. Both struggle and learn from mistakes. Estella loves Pip, but she is afraid that he will hurt her, as her aunt was hurt. Estella is afraid because all of her life she is taught to not fall in love. When she does, she becomes afraid and flees because she does not know how to handle her new emotions. After she marries Drummel, she realizes her mistake and they divorce. Fate brings Pip and Estella together at her house on the ocean and they never part again. "I took her hand in mine, and we went out of the ruined place and I saw no shadow of another parting from her." Catherine and Heathcliff are in love, but Catherine's decision to marry Edgar drives Heathcliff away. He returns to see her, and to find that she still loves him. He tells her of his plans to kill himself, but does not follow through with his plan in fear of hurting her. When Catherine dies, Heathcliff is devastated. He desperately wants to be with her. After Mr. Lockwood reports his ghost encounter, Heathcliff rushes to call her (Catherine) ghost into the house so that he could feel her presence. Soon after Heathcliff's death, people report seeing their (Catherine and Heathcliff) ghosts roaming around the moors. This shows that love conquers all, even death. A family systems critic can easily demonstrate that, like *Wuthering Heights* and many other Victorian

novels, *Great Expectations* is an excellent illustration of trans-generational transmission of abuse and rigid roles. We learn that the alcoholic father of Pip's stepfather, Joe, beat both Joe and his mother. As what we now might call the "hero-child" — the oldest -- Joe tried to protect his siblings. He had to sacrifice his childhood and go to work to support his family because his alcoholic father did not. It is no surprise that Joe accepts verbal and physical abuse from his wife and wants to take on all the abuse to protect Pip. Indeed he may have chosen his wife to accept the punishment his father should have received from his mother. In any case Mrs. Joe had the kind of addictive personality he was used to: a rageaholic (like Catherine in *Wuthering Heights*) obsessed with controlling her house and everyone in it. Pip, of course, watches Joe as his role model and himself accepts verbal and physical abuse from Mrs. Joe who stated that he should never have been born and wished that he was dead. In fact Pip becomes the scapegoat for her entire family system. Hence we are not surprised that he "falls in love" with Estella and accepts her sadistic treatment of him. We learn that she behaves this way because she learned it from the previous generation (her mother figure, Miss Havisham, used Estella to avenge wrongs done to her). Illustrating the basic therapeutic rule, "Recover or Repeat," Estella then goes on and marries a man who physically abuses her. Today we might call Pip's "love" for Estella (like the love of Heathcliff and Catherine) an addiction or a parody of courtly love, though some Victorians would have called it idolatry. For Pip, it was an addiction fuelled by his newly acknowledged shame, "the smart without a name." He tried to fill what we might call the hole in his soul with another person, a solution that would not have worked with a saint, much less a sadist. "Her contempt for me was so strong, that it became infectious, and I caught it"; yet he wanted to see her again and again. As "compensation" for his shame he soon identified himself with her extraordinarily dysfunctional "family" and adopted her view of Joe and a stance of "vicious reticence" or lying. Needless to say, secrecy pervades these families. It grows steadily in Pip especially because of his furtive connection with an alternative father figure, Magwitch, until "the secret was such an old one now, had so grown into me and become a part of myself, that I could not tear it away." The popularity of this novel is due to how well these patterns match those in the family holograms of many readers.

As for as narration is concerned *Wuthering Heights* is radically different as it employs the concept of double narrators in contrast to linear narration in *Great Expectations*. The former is subject to heavy research for the same quality and later is mainly read as the pure mirror of the Victorian society.

Although these two stories are written by different authors and one was written under the pseudonym of "Elis Bell" to avoid certain complex issues of gender etc., the elements in both

the stories are quite similar. The setting and time era play a part on the lives of the characters. In both novels children are portrayed with keen insight. Pip, Estella, Cathy, Hareton become the central interest and finishing mediums in both the novels. Also, the couples are reunited in the end, one in life, and one in death. The statement to summarize the two stories is: *Love conquers all*.

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