Women's Education in Inchbald's *A Simple Story* and Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*:

Feminist Consciousness, Desire and the Cult of Sensibility

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Introduction

Important works of literary scholarship, such as Barker-Benfield's *The Culture of Sensibility* and Gilbert and Gubar's *The Madwoman in the Attic,* have shown that the Romantic period upheld an institutionalized patriarchal ideology in which women were inferior to men. According to Todd, the "key term of the period" is sensibility (7). The cult of sensibility flourished in the mid-eighteenth century. Sensibility "came to denote the faculty of feeling, the capacity for extremely refined emotion and a quickness to display compassion for suffering" (Todd 7). Women, who were considered the weaker sex within eighteenth-century patriarchal society, were associated with these characteristics. In mid-eighteenth century novels of sensibility and Romantic novels women were also portrayed as the weaker sex who displayed these characteristics. Todd claims "what is new in the eighteenth century is the centrality of sentiment and pathos" (Todd 3). Sentimental novels such as Samuel Richardson's *Pamela* (1740) and *Clarissa* (1748) often depicted women in distress; a distress caused by the gender roles prescribed to them within the dominant patriarchal ideology.

Sentimental literature and sensibility are not to be used interchangeably. Whereas sensibility denotes extremely refined emotion in a person, "the mark of sentimental literature is the arousal of pathos through conventional situations, stock familial characters and rhetorical devices" (Todd 2). Sentimental literature creates situations, which "reveal a belief in the appealing and aesthetic quality of virtue, displayed in a naughty world through a vague and potent distress" (Todd 2-3). An archetypal character in sentimental literature is the defenceless woman in distress who "is characterized by superlative sensibility" (Todd 119). In the middle of the eighteenth century, writers found it easier to depict women as victims because the society they lived in was male-dominated. Todd claims that "a sentimental work moralizes more than it analyses. The emphasis is on the communication of common feeling

from sufferer or watcher to reader or audience" (4). Novels which portray the oppression of women are also moral tales because through the suffering of women they depict a faulty male-dominated society.

At the end of the eighteenth century, the emphasis on women's sensibility by "moral philosophers had been largely assimilated or rejected" which created a broad cultural women's movement (Todd 28). This movement endorsed a debate about the feminist controversies of the day, "contesting women's claims to equality and the proper nature of their education" (Campbell 160). Female writers such as Mary Wollstonecraft wrote books advocating women's rights. According to Campbell, "at the same time, women themselves had become increasingly prominent in this period as the creators as well as consumers of popular novel" (160). There was a rise in women writers, such as Charlotte Smith, Mary Hays, Mary Robinson and Jane Austen who advocated female rights. In reaction to Rousseau's "anarchic stress on overwhelming feeling and the linking of sex and sensibility," Wollstonecraft wrote her most famous work, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792). It "proposed a model of what we would now call 'equality' or 'liberal feminism'" (Mellor 141). According to Wollstonecraft, women are mentally equal to men and should not be restricted in their education. Moreover, as Mellor explains, in order for women to be equal to men, Wollstonecraft demands a "reform of female education" (142).

According to Wollstonecraft in the *Vindication,* a young girl's intellectual education, acquired at school, as well as her social upbringing, has faults. A girl's upbringing was aimed at preparing her for marriage. Girls were educated, both socially and intellectually, in order to become objects to men. Mellor explains that Wollstonecraft demands a revolution in female manners in order to "dramatically change both genders and produce women who, were sincerely modest, chaste, virtuous: who acted with reason and prudence and generosity" (142). Wollstonecraft claims, in the *Vindication,* that a girl's faulty education causes an

excessive sensibility, which leads her astray because she is incapable of developing and utilizing her rational faculty.

From the late-eighteenth century until the mid-nineteenth century, women's equality was a much-debated topic among feminists such as Wollstonecraft, Hays, and Robinson. Next to feminists, "women novelists of the period indisputably took on those debates, adapting the novel form to explore questions of men's superior rights and powers and the proper basis of human social and political relations in reason or in feeling" (Campbell 161). The sentimental novel allowed women writers "the desire of exhibiting the misery and oppression, peculiar to women, that arose out of the partial laws and customs of society" (Campbell 162). A recurrent topic in late-eighteenth century literature was women's lack of education, which caused an excessive sensibility. According to Todd, "sensibility, when admired, was assumed to imply chastity, and only if denigrated was feared to denote sexuality" (8). By depicting women's faulty education, which resulted in an excessive sensibility, women novelists revealed the consequences of the institutionalized patriarchal ideologies in their society.

In *A Simple Story* (1791) and *Wuthering Heights* (1847), Elizabeth Inchbald and Emily Brontë created female characters whose faulty intellectual and social education lies at the heart of their misery. Both novelists make use of a two-generational plot structure in order to depict two female protagonists with a faulty education. None of the four female protagonists, in both novels, are independent. In the older generations one can notice the female defiance against men in a patriarchal society. Both Miss Milner, in *A Simple Story*, and Catherine Earnshaw, in *Wuthering Heights*, act rebelliously and do not conform to the reader's social expectations of an eighteenth-century female protagonist. Miss Milner acts rebelliously and defies her master's rules whereas Catherine's rebelliousness is portrayed in her decision to reject Heathcliff and climb the social ladder. Both of these characters' actions and decisions are rooted in their desire of creating an identity for themselves instead of rational thinking.

Their desire ultimately leads to a miserable and lonely death. Even though Catherine and Miss Milner make their own choices and act in a rebellious manner, they still fail to become rational thinkers and instead depend on men in order to fulfil their desire.

Unlike their mother, the female protagonists in the younger generation, Matilda and Catherine Linton, are provided with an education conforming to the late-eighteenth and mid-nineteenth century standards, respectively. Throughout their upbringing they are confined to the home. They both acquire a domestic education. As a result of their education, Matilda and young Cathy act passively in comparison to their mothers. According to Gilbert and Gubar, "the morals and maxims of patriarchy were being embroidered on the skins" of young girls throughout their social and intellectual education (275). Whereas Miss Milner and Catherine resist their male-governed education, Matilda and young Cathy become victims of patriarchal ideology. Matilda and young Cathy are straightforwardly the victims of the eighteenth and nineteenth century restricted education which did not allow women to acquire an education equal to men's education. Miss Milner and Catherine are indirectly victims of their society because their lack of education leads them astray. Women either submitted themselves to men or defied them. Their defiance led them astray because women were not able to participate in society without the authority of men.

This thesis will explain the extent to which works of fiction, such as Inchbald's *A Simple Story* and Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*, contributed to the debate whether social and intellectual education plays a role in the complete autonomy of women in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century patriarchal society. This thesis will also explain to what extent women, in *A Simple Story* and *Wuthering Heights*, are able to depict a feminist consciousness in a society which was structured by patriarchal ideals of womanhood and why Inchbald and Brontë use a two-generational plot structure of one family to portray the different outcomes of each generation.

This thesis also explores the ways in which two works of late eighteenth and mid-nineteenth century Romantic-era fiction criticize the emphasis on women's sensibility in a patriarchal society. Inchbald and Brontë make use of the plot structure of two generations of one family to illustrate that neither a restricted education nor a lack of education enables a woman her complete autonomy. The faulty social and intellectual education, in which girls were brought up with the sole purpose of marriage, created an excess of feeling and did not enable their reasoning skills. In order to allow young women to prosper as independent minds, they need to acquire an education, which is equal to men's education. This allowed them their complete autonomy and independence, as they did not need to depend on men in order to participate in society. Both Inchbald and Brontë respond, through their works, to Wollstonecraft's ideas on women's equality and sensibility. A faulty education either resulted in an obedient, passive or defiant woman. None of the two options granted a woman her independence, as her society did not permit women their complete autonomy.

In the chapters that follow, *A Simple Story* and *Wuthering Heights* will be analysed in the context of the culture of sensibility, which concerned the development and expression of feeling, as well as theories concerning the (moral) education of women, such as put forward by Mary Wollstonecraft in *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792), Hannah More, in *Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education* (1799), and Harriet Martineau in *How to Observe Morals and Manners* (1838). An overview of Wollstonecraft's, More's, and Martineau's perception of social and intellectual education, in the context of the culture of sensibility, is provided in chapter one. Their views on religion are also provided because religion played an important role in a girl's upbringing. The second chapter explores Miss Milner's social and intellectual education and how it has affected her behaviour and characteristics. The third, fourth, and fifth chapter will critically explore the remaining female protagonists, Matilda, Catherine Earnshaw, and Catherine Linton, in the same manner. The

mothers will be compared to their daughters in order to set the contrast between women's lack of education and the education conforming the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century standards.

Chapter 1: Mary Wollstonecraft's, Hannah More's, and Harriet Martineau's Perception of Education and Female Rights.

In order to analyse *A Simple Story* and *Wuthering Heights* in the context of the culture of sensibility, the stance of three early feminists on these subjects will be presented. Mary Wollstonecraft, Hannah More and Harriet Martineau each differ in their opinion on women's education. Mary Wollstonecraft is the earliest and most radical feminist among the three. According to Johnson,

> A revolutionary figure in a revolutionary time, she took up and lived out not only the liberal call for women's educational and moral equality, but also all of the other related questions of the 1790s – questions pertaining to the principles of political authority, tyranny, liberty, class, sex, marriage, prejudice, reason and sentimentality. (1)

Wollstonecraft advocated women's equal rights to those of men. She "placed an emphasis on education, independence and rationality" (Kaplan 251). An education, without any restraints, enables women to develop their reasoning skills, which in turn will lead to their independence.

According to Wollstonecraft, girls are brought up to serve men. Both women's social and intellectual education has faults according to her standards. She claims, in the *Vindication*, that women are mentally equal to men and should have the same opportunities. Wollstonecraft's successors, Hannah More and Harriet Martineau, do not agree that women are equal to men. They claim that women do not possess the same strength as men and that they should practise more sober studies. In order to compare Wollstonecraft's, More's, and Martineau's different views on women's rights, this chapter will critically explore their view on women's social and intellectual education, religiosity, and sensibility.

1.1 Mary Wollstonecraft on Social and Intellectual Education

According to Mary Wollstonecraft, one of the main reasons that women are rendered weak in society is the "neglected education" of the female sex in the eighteenth century (*VRW* 1). She also believes that the lack of education is the cause of her own misery. There are two types of education, according to Wollstonecraft, namely a social education and the education one acquires at school. Wollstonecraft claims that the neglect of social education starts at a very early age, during a girl's upbringing by her mother. Throughout their childhood, girls were taught by their mother to obey and submit to men in order to please them. According to Wollstonecraft, "women are told from their infancy, and taught by the example of their mothers, that softness of temper, outward obedience, and a scrupulous attention to a puerile kind of propriety, will obtain for them the protection of man" (*VRW* 28). Women, therefore, should be passive and obedient to their husbands, in order to feel secure in society. They were raised in an environment which taught them that they were not equal to men, because patriarchal society did not permit them equal rights.

One the one hand, a woman's beauty was an advantage, in the eighteenth century, because it helped her find a husband faster. On the other hand, it was a disadvantage because beauty fades. Wollstonecraft mentions that "should they be beautiful, everything else is needless for at least, twenty years of their lives" (*VRW* 28). This attitude forges them into an object of desire to men. Moreover, when beauty becomes the sole criteria for women to function properly in society, they will have no virtues to rely on when their beauty eventually fades. The consequences of rendering women as "insignificant objects of desire" and taking them out of "their sphere of duties" are that they will be "made ridiculous and useless when the short-lived bloom of beauty is over" (*VRW* 6). After becoming useless to society, women

would most likely go astray which is why they should not use their beauty in order to obtain power.

According to Wollstonecraft, in the *Vindication*, a girl should not be brought up with the idea that marriage is her sole aim. In a male-dominated society, as Wollstonecraft's husband William Godwin famously claimed, marriage only brings about a further objectification of women in the eyes of men because "it is a monopoly, and the worst of monopolies … so long as I seek, by despotic and artificial means, to maintain my possession of a woman, I am guilty of the most odious selfishness" (Godwin, *Enquiry* 762). In order to enforce a change in the social and legal fabric of British society, one that would put men and women on more equal terms in marriage, Wollstonecraft and Godwin advocated a change in the social education of women, as well as men.

Next to the neglect of social education, women were also denied the education at school which men were able to acquire during the eighteenth century. Wollstonecraft claims that she attributes one cause of the female subordination to "a false system of education, gathered from the books written on this subject by men who, considering females rather as women than human creatures, have been more anxious to make them alluring mistresses than affectionate wives and rational mothers" (*VRW* 1-2). Men were taught subjects which enabled them to develop their rational faculty, whereas women were not allowed to study these subjects. Women were treated as subordinates and were confined to domestic roles.

In Wollstonecraft's day and age, women's lack of social and intellectual education led to the objectification of women by men. The only subjects women were able to practice were "the arts of coquetry," which made them "the toy of man, his rattle, and it must jingle in his ears whenever, dismissing reason, he chooses to be amused" (*VRW* 50). Women were treated as objects of desire and lust who should obey men. Qualities which did not satisfy men should be oppressed. All of women's "attainments, all [their] arts, are employed to gain and keep the

heart of man" (*VRW* 153). Under these circumstances women did not have an active role in society since their main purpose was to obey and serve their husband. Subjects of the arts, such as "novels, music, poetry, and gallantry, all tend to make women the creatures of sensation, and their character is thus formed in the mould of folly during the time they are acquiring accomplishments" (*VRW* 91). Women only acted out of passion, feeling, and sentiment due to their neglect of a (social) education, which caused them to rely on men and become the object of desire and love.

1.2 Wollstonecraft on Sensibility

As a result of their lack of intellectual education, women relied to a large extent on their sensibility to perform their prescribed gender role successfully. According to Wollstonecraft, women are "made by their education the slave of sensibility" (187) and "to their senses are women made slaves, because it is by their sensibility that they obtain present power" (*VRW* 91). A faulty education results in an "overstretched sensibility [which] naturally relaxes the other powers of the mind, and prevents intellect from attaining that sovereignty which it ought to attain to render a rational creature useful to others, and content with its own station" (*VRW* 91). Their education enabled a greater emphasis on their sensibility, instead of their reasoning faculties, which made them useful objects to men who serve patriarchal society.

Women's "overstretched sensibility" had two main faults: the first one was that during marriage women were inclined to fulfil their desire and therefore acted defiantly since they were not "rational creatures." They acted out of passion and feeling instead of reason. The second fault is that women who did not have a man to depend on could go astray, since their "overstretched sensibility" and lack of virtues did not permit them to realize when they

crossed the line. According to Wollstonecraft, women acquire "manners before morals" during their childhood (*VRW* 36). As a result they did not reason in order to understand whether their actions were acceptable or not in their society. Wollstonecraft mentions that "without knowledge there can be no morality" (*VRW* 93). The lack of education did not enable women to see what is morally appropriate and what is not. In order to obtain power they therefore misused the attributes they already possessed, such as their sex, beauty, and sentiment, which led them astray. They were inconsiderate whether they should be virtuous or not because their feelings trumped reason.

In the *Vindication,* Wollstonecraft claims that women should stop obtaining power by unjust means. She therefore insists on "a revolution in female manners. It is time to restore to them their lost dignity- and make them, as a part of the human species, labour by reforming themselves to reform the world. It is time to separate unchangeable morals from local manners" (*VRW* 66). According to Wollstonecraft, this revolution should start with the opportunity of acquiring an equal education for women in order for them to practise the subjects and professions men do which would place a greater emphasis on their reasoning faculties. The shortcoming of this particular education in women resulted in "obtaining power by unjust means, by practising or fostering vice, [which] evidently lose[s] the rank reason would assign them, and becoming either abject slaves or capricious tyrants. They lose all simplicity, all dignity of mind, in acquiring power" (*VRW* 66). In order to prevent little girls from acquiring manners before morals, they should be taught during their childhood the subjects which allow them to develop their rational faculty. Rather than becoming objects of men, women should be permitted to make their own decisions. Wollstonecraft wants to "persuade women to endeavour to acquire strength, both of mind and body, and to convince them that … susceptibility of heart [and] delicacy of sentiment … are almost synonymous with epithets of weakness, and that those beings who are only the objects of pity … will soon

become objects of contempt" (*VRW* 4). Wollstonecraft implies that women should obtain their power through their intellectual power because those who are shaped into an object will at one point be repulsed by society.

In order to realize this revolution in female manners, for men and women to become equal, Wollstonecraft also claims that women should not make use of their body to obtain power. She therefore denies "the existence of sexual virtues. … For man and woman … must be the same" (*VRW* 75). A woman who was only able to obtain power through her sexual virtues had pleasure as her only purpose in life, which rendered her weak in society. According to Wollstonecraft, "pleasure is the business of woman's life, according to the present modification of society, and while it continues to be so, little can be expected from such weak beings" (*VRW* 81). Considering that pleasure is what women lived for, their yearning for it did not have to stop after marriage because they only acted in the moment and did not think of the consequences. The desire for pleasure was a destructive feature for a wife because of the constant longings she will have for pleasure the minute she gets bored in her marriage. After all, "her habits are fixed and vanity has long ruled her chaotic mind" (*VRW* 126). A woman's uncontrolled desire would lead to her rejection by society, as it was unacceptable for women to behave rebelliously.

In order to prevent women from misusing their body to obtain power, "men and women must be educated, to a great degree, by the opinions and manners of the society they live in" and have an individual education so that "every being may become virtuous by the exercise of its own reason" (*VRW* 31). A girl should be brought up in a free environment in order to acquire her virtues instead of being brought up by parents who teach her manners in a confined environment. Without any restrictions, she should develop her own way of thinking in order to reason. With an individual education, Wollstonecraft claims, that "such an attention to a child as will slowly sharpen the senses, form the temper, regulate the passions as

they begin to ferment, and set the understanding to work before the body arrives at maturity" (*VRW* 31). Girls should have their own space and freedom in order to develop their virtues themselves without the strict guidance of parents, which restricts their freedom and independence.

1.3 Hannah More on Women's Education

When Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* was published in 1792, "at first [it] received fairly respectful reviews as a tract on female education" (Johnson 1). However, after Wollstonecraft's death, which resulted in the publication of William Godwin's *Memoirs of the Author of A Vindication of the rights of Woman* (1798), "Wollstonecraft was widely demonized" (Mellor 145). The memoir revealed to readers that Wollstonecraft made two suicide-attempts and had two children out of wedlock. This portrayal of Wollstonecraft caused women to stop reading her work. For those who still supported Wollstonecraft's ideas, it was difficult to express their opinion since she had been condemned so much. The events in this memoir "precipitated a decade of vilification for the author and her book" (McGuinn 191). One of the female authors who also condemned Wollstonecraft and even refused to read her work was the conservative Hannah More. In her *Strictures on the Modern System of Female Education* published in 1799, two years after Wollstonecraft's death, More takes a different approach to explaining women's rights concerning education and women's sensibility. In her work she completely contradicts Wollstonecraft's thesis concerning the equal opportunities for education that women should receive.

Whereas Wollstonecraft believes that the only difference between a man and a woman is their physical strength, More claims that women are also unable to acquire the same strength mentally. Barker-Benfield quotes from volume two of More's *Strictures*, when he

explains "that mind was gendered: men had not only 'a superior strength of body' but 'a firmer texture of mind … a higher reach and wider range of powers.' Women 'possess in a high degree … delicacy and quickness of perception.' Their minds do not 'seize a great subject with so large a grasp' as men" (384). According to More, women are unable to acquire the same subjects and strength which men are able to attain due to the capacity of their mind. Barker-Benfield claims that "terms such as power, range and grasp therefore connoted a kind of muscularity of mind," which More identifies with reason and men (384). Women, on the contrary, were more adept in delicacy and sensibility.

More also demands a reform of women's education. Her reasons are different than Wollstonecraft's. According to More, in volume one of *Strictures*, "the profession of ladies, to which the bent of their instruction should be turned, is that of daughters, wives, and mothers. They should therefore be trained with a view to these several conditions" (97-98). More believes that women should be educated in order to support their husband. When a woman marries "it is a companion whom he wants, and not an artist. It is a being who can reason and reflect, and feel, and judge; one who can assist him in his affairs, lighten his cares, sooth his sorrows, strengthen his principles, and educate his children" (More, *Strictures Vol. 1* 98). According to More, the education women acquire turns them into artists. Women need to be equally educated. She wants women to be better educated but still uphold the traditional domestic-role of women, which makes her a more conservative feminist than Wollstonecraft.

1.4 Hannah More on Religion and Sensibility

More's precursor Wollstonecraft was not a devout Christian. Taylor explains that "Wollstonecraft's family were inactive members of the Church of England, and according to her husband and biographer, William Godwin, she 'received few lessons of religion in her

youth,'" and stopped attending church (100). She went to church until the publication of *Thoughts on the Education of Daughters* in 1787 (Johnson). In the *Vindication*, Wollstonecraft claims, "with respect to religion, a woman never presumed to judge for herself; but conformed, as a dependent creature should, to the ceremonies of the church which she was brought up in" (*VRW* 73). In order for women to become independent, they should distance them from the strict religious doctrines.

Hannah More, being a devout Christian herself, disagrees with Wollstonecraft on the subjects of religion and sensibility. To start with the latter one, Wollstonecraft "presents sensibility as a sexual culture" and therefore disregards it as one of the characteristics a woman should possess (Barker-Benfield xxx). More, however, claims that it is the "ungoverned sensibility" which leads women astray (*Strictures Vol. 2* 51). She claims that "it is of importance in forming the female character that those on whom this task devolves, should possess so much penetration as accurately to discern its degree of sensibility, and so much judgment as to accommodate the treatment to the individual character" (*Strictures Vol. 2* 96). More believes that women will not be led astray by their excessive use of sensibility as long as there is an even balance between teaching a girl morals and leaving enough space for her as an individual throughout her upbringing.

More turns to religion in order to develop her idea of sensibility. She claims that "in regard to its application to religious purposes, it is a test that sensibility has received its true direction when it is supremely turned to the love of God" (More, *Strictures Vol.* 2 52). More and Wollstonecraft do not share the same ideas on religion when it comes to the education of girls. Whereas More insists that women should turn to God, Wollstonecraft does not believe that religion grants women their freedom. Wollstonecraft claims that both men and women are able to acquire the same subjects and professions whereas More believes that "women, whatever be her rank, I would recommend a predominance of those more sober studies. The

exercise of which will not bring celebrity, but improve usefulness" in order to strengthen one's mind (More, *Strictures Vol. 2* 5). According to More, a woman "should pursue every kind of study which … will lead her to be intent upon realities; will give precision to her ideas; will make an exact mind; every study which, instead of stimulating her sensibility, will chastise it" (More, *Strictures Vol. 2* 5-6). Mothers should guide their daughters, by religious means, in order to prevent excessive sensibility.

1.5 Harriet Martineau on Education

Whereas Wollstonecraft claims that men and women are equal, a later feminist, More claims that "every kind of knowledge which is rather fitted for home consumption than foreign exportation is peculiarly adapted to women" (More, *Strictures Vol. 2* 4). More believes that women are both physically and mentally inferior to men. After the eighteenth century, the "GREAT More may be seen presiding over the reformed culture of sensibility as it entered the nineteenth century" (Barker-Benfield 394). However, in the early nineteenth century another social feminist, Harriet Martineau, rose to fame for her ideas on women's equality. She shares the same ideas but also disagrees with her precursors, Wollstonecraft and More.

Harriet Martineau, born in 1802, started writing at a very young age. In *Society in America*, she claims that "the intellect of women is confined by an unjustifiable restriction of both methods of education, —by express teaching, and by the discipline of circumstance. The former … is a direct consequence of the latter" (107). Martineau agrees with Wollstonecraft that women are brought up to marry. Women are "driven back upon marriage as the only appointed object in life: and upon the conviction that the sum and substance of female education … is training women to consider marriage as the sole object in life, and to pretend

that they do not think so" (Martineau, *Society* 110). Just as her two precursors, Wollstonecraft and More, Martineau also demands a proper education for women. Martineau's arguments for a proper education are slightly different than Wollstonecraft's or More's.

In her article "On Female Education" (1822), Martineau claims that women should be educated for moral improvement in order to support their husbands. Women should be taught "that her powers of mind were given her to be improved" and "that she is to be a rational companion to those of the other sex, that her proper sphere is *home*—that there she is to provide, not only for the bodily comfort of the man, but that she is to enter also into community of mind with him" (Martineau, "On Female Education" 93). Martineau's ideas differ to Wollstonecraft's. Martineau believes that a man and woman could never gain the same knowledge and power because women are in every aspect inferior to men. According to Martineau, women must be granted the opportunity to have a proper education in order to support their husband. This allowed them to become better in their domestic duties. An education prevented women from becoming playthings to men. It also prevented women from seeking amusement because of their uncontrolled desire which led them astray. In "On Female Education," Martineau claims that "their attainments cannot in general be so great, because they have their own appropriate duties, … but I contend that these duties will be better performed if the powers be rationally employed. If the whole mind be exercised and strengthened, it will bring more vigour to the performance of its duties" (90). Martineau's ideas are not as radical as Wollstonecraft's because Martineau is not an advocate of equality between men and women, like Wollstonecraft.

According to Martineau, in exercising and strengthening the mind a woman should not, unlike More's perception, be supported by religious doctrines. Martineau's precursor More claims that Christianity helps support the mind of women. Martineau believes that religion does not enable a healthy mind. In *Society in America* Martineau asks herself: "but is

it not the fact that religion emanates from the nature, from the moral state of the individual? Is it not therefore true that unless the nature be completely exercised, the moral state harmonised, the religion cannot be healthy?" (147). A lack of education did not allow women to strengthen their mind. In order for one to practise Christianity one should have the moral state harmonised first.

In the next chapters, Wollstonecraft's, More's, and Martineau's view of women's education, sensibility and religiosity will be discussed with regard to the female protagonists in Inchbald's *A Simple Story* and Brontë's *Wuthering Heights.* A close analysis of women's oppression in these novels will determine which of these three feminists' ideas Inchald and Brontë follow in order to reveal women's faulty education.

Chapter 2: Miss Milner's Lack of a Social and Intellectual Education in *A Simple Story*

Feminists such as Wollstonecraft and More raised the issue of feminist consciousness and desire in the late-eighteenth century. Wollstonecraft's and More's emphasis on the role of education, in particular, contributed to the much-debated topic of female awareness. On the one hand, More's precursor Wollstonecraft is convinced of the fact that men and women are capable of acquiring the same knowledge. On the other hand, the conservative More disregards Wollstonecraft's arguments and claims that women should be educated in order to improve their domestic duties. Unlike Wollstonecraft, More does not believe that women are capable of acquiring the same knowledge as men. According to Wollstonecraft, next to the intellectual knowledge one acquires throughout school, an education also implies the upbringing of an individual. In order to prevent any confusion between the two different definitions of education, the latter will be referred to as social education.

Both an intellectual and social education contributes to a woman's development of morals and manners. A greater emphasis on the former enables women to reason whereas the latter causes women to rely on feeling and passion (sensibility). In *A Simple Story* (1791), Inchbald provides the reader with a two-generational plot structure. The two female protagonists live in a patriarchal society and are both oppressed by men in a different manner. Next to being women whose identity is oppressed by a patriarchal society, Miss Milner's and Matilda's behaviour and life-choices are determined by a limited and faulty education.

Miss Milner acts defiantly against men, which leads to her misery. The cause of her rebellious behaviour is her lack of education, which resulted in a greater emphasis on her sensibility, instead of her desire for equality. In order to examine how Miss Milner and Matilda differ with regards to their education, this chapter will provide an analysis of the first female protagonist in the novel, namely Miss Milner. Firstly, this chapter will focus on Miss

Milner's social education and background. Secondly, this chapter will critically explore Miss Milner's intellectual education. Lastly, this chapter will discuss sensibility and religion with regard to Miss Milner's education and behaviour. The analysis will show that Miss Milner's lack of education results in her desire to obtain power by unjust means which in turn leads to her misery.

2.1 Miss Milner's Background and Social Education

In order to grasp Miss Milner's behaviour and attitude towards men, it is important to examine the context in which the novel was written. Patriarchal society enables a culture for women in which they have to obey men. Miss Milner, for example, grew up in a society in which she was governed by men. During her upbringing she only had a father figure to look up to and learn from, because her mother had passed away. When Miss Milner's father falls ill and lies on his deathbed, he thinks of a solution for his daughter's new guardian. According to Parker, "on his deathbed, when Mr Milner provides his daughter with a substitute father, he, essentially transfers her from one authority to another, as one might bequeath a prized possession" (260). Mr Milner's decision results from the fact he has an androcentric perspective of society. According to Sandra Lipsitz Bem, androcentrism implies "males at the centre of the universe looking out at reality from behind their own eyes and describing what they see from an egocentric – or androcentric – point of view. They divide reality into self and other and define everything categorized as other – including women – in relation to themselves" (42). Their androcentric point of view allows them to treat women as objects inferior to them as long as their own wishes are fulfilled. Women are confined to domestic duties because men "define everything they see in terms of the meaning or the functional significance that it has for them personally rather than defining it in its own terms" (Bem 42).

For the religious Mr Milner, it is essential to keep his daughter under male authority. Dorriforth consents to Mr Milner's wishes and "promised to fulfil them" without the permission of Miss Milner (Inchbald 5). "When the will of her father was made known to Miss Milner, she submitted without the smallest reluctance" (Inchbald 7). At a very early stage of the novel, Miss Milner's submissiveness to men indicates her inferior position within the society depicted in the novel.

According to Wollstonecraft, eighteenth-century patriarchal ideology is one of the causes of women's oppressed role in society. Miss Milner "was accustomed to being protected and cherished, not to being asked to exercise her reason" (Parker 260). Even after her father's death, Miss Milner still is not allowed to discover the world on her own. Instead, she has to become the object of men and submit herself to them. First, she is the object of her father after which she becomes the object of Dorriforth's wishes. Throughout her upbringing, Miss Milner never had a mother figure whom she could have asked for advice. She quietly goes through her life obeying her father's rules and wishes to reside in Dorriforth's place and remain under his protection. Strikingly, Miss Milner's behaviour towards men changes after this movement. Her defiant behaviour depicts the feminist awareness in male-governed society. Miss Milner's rebellious attitude towards men is the consequence of her lack of social education rather than the benefits of her protected environment. According to Spencer, "the novel has a feminist interest, not because it shares the contemporary advocacy of a rational education for women, but because it reveals what was repressed in order to make that case" (xiv). Miss Milner's male-dominated upbringing is therefore a possible reason for the corrupt ways in which she obtains power. Her uncontrolled desire to obtain power depicts the consequences of women's lack of education in the eighteenth century.

One of the consequences of women's lack of social education in the late eighteenth century is, according to Wollstonecraft, their ability to use their sexuality in order to gain

power over men because they did not have other qualities or virtues to rely on. Wollstonecraft claims that from an early age women are taught manners before morals (*VRW* 176). They are taught to submit themselves to men and be obedient. When a woman does not have an identity of her own she needs to create an identity. According to Haggerty, Miss Milner "plays the abject victim who tries to create an identity out of her lack" by acting defiantly (663). Considering a woman's lack of moral values, the tool she chooses to create an identity with, is her sexuality. According to Spencer, "Miss Milner embodies the female sexuality that women writers of Inchbald's time were busy denying in the interests of their own respectability, and women's claims for better treatment" (xiv). By means of her body and beauty Miss Milner is able to resist men, such as Dorriforth and Lord Frederick. This enables her to defy men in a society, which is dominated by them. "Miss Milner, after all, at least imagines that a kind of resistance is her prerogative" (Haggerty 665). Her power lies in her sexuality because she does not have other virtues to rely on.

Whereas it appears as if the female protagonist in the older generation has a feminist consciousness, Miss Milner's defiant behaviour is the consequence of her lack of morals. To use one's body in order to obtain power over men is inconceivable, according to Wollstonecraft, because beauty is transient. She claims that "when the short-lived bloom of beauty is over" women will be made "ridiculous and useless" and therefore denies sexual virtues (*VRW* 6). Miss Milner is a beautiful young lady who is aware of her beauty and is not afraid to use it in order to gain power over men. At an early stage of the novel the reader learns that "she was beautiful [and] had been too frequently told the high value of that beauty" (Inchbald 15). Due to the lack of a social education, Miss Milner deliberately uses her sexuality in order to gain power, because she has to create an identity for herself. According to Parker, "Miss Milner relies on beauty, rather than intellect, as a means of gaining power" (259). Disregarding the moral standards of her day, Miss Milner defies men by using her

sexuality in order to gain control over men. Instead of considering what is morally appropriate, Miss Milner does not contemplate this subject, because she was used to "acquire manners rather than morals" throughout her upbringing (*VRW* 176). Therefore, she does not think about the consequences of her defiant behaviour towards men. Her main purpose is to gain power in a suppressed society in order to have an identity of her own.

Dorriforth is the first man Miss Milner can exert her power over. After Miss Milner moves into Dorriforth's residence, he shows his concerns regarding Miss Milner's upbringing: "He knew the life Miss Milner had been accustomed to lead; he dreaded the repulses his admonitions might possibly meet from her; and feared he had undertaken a task he was too weak to execute – the protection of a young woman of fashion" (Inchbald 6). Dorriforth hopes that he will be able to keep Miss Milner under restraint after having heard "that she's a young, idle, indiscreet, giddy girl, with half a dozen lovers in her suite; some coxcombs, some men of gallantry, some single, and some married" (Inchbald 9). It quickly becomes clear that Miss Milner's sexuality has a certain effect on men when, for instance, Dorriforth "had his handkerchief to his face at the time, or she would have beheld the agitation of his heart – the remotest sensation of his soul" (Inchbald 13). When he first meets her, Dorriforth puts a handkerchief in front of his face in order to hide the sexual attraction towards Miss Milner. This shows that Miss Milner's power lies in her beauty because Dorriforth feels uneasy when he looks at her and wants to cover his face.

Another instance of Miss Milner's defiance against men is when she refuses to marry Lord Frederick. According to Wollstonecraft, "the only way women can rise in the world is by marriage … making mere animals of them" (*VRW* 6). But as the discussion of marriage in chapter one showed, for writers such as Godwin and Wollstonecraft, marriage turned women into objects that men possessed. In fact, women were legally the possession of men. According to William Blackstone, in *Commentaries on the Laws of England* (1767), "by

marriage, the husband and wife are one person in law: that is, the very being or legal existence of the woman is suspended during the marriage, or at least is incorporated and consolidated into that of the husband; under whose wing, protection, and cover, she performs everything" (442). Married women were not considered to be individuals and did not have power of their own.

Miss Milner's refusal of Lord Frederick's proposal indicates her search for independence. With this refusal, Miss Milner initially does not conform to the typical eighteenth-century female protagonist, in a sentimental novel, because she is not in distress. She acts defiantly by means of her sexuality. Next to her sexuality, Miss Milner delivers her words in such a manner in order to fulfil her desire. The manner in which she uses her words in order to gain power is also the result of her lack of education. Instead of her social education, this flaw rather resulted from her lack of an intellectual education.

2.2 Miss Milner's Intellectual Education

Next to the lack of a social education, the reader also discovers that Miss Milner never had the opportunity to go to school in order to study. Her father is particularly to blame for this neglect because "from him the care of her education had been withheld" (Inchbald 4). Mr Milner made sure that Miss Milner grew up in a protected environment and prevented her from exercising her own will. Her lack of an intellectual education causes her to rely on other virtues than reason, such as passion and feeling. Miss Milner's excess of feeling leads to her defiance towards men, which eventually leads her astray.

Miss Milner relies on beauty rather than intellect when she has conversations with others. She believes that "as a woman, she was privileged to say anything she pleased; and as a beautiful woman, she had a right to expect whatever she pleased to say, should be admired"

(Inchbald 39). According to Parker, "put forward as a maxim, the sentence asserts that, rather than silencing women, their gender enables them to speak, and their beauty guarantees admiration for their words" (258). Therefore, everything that Miss Milner says, which has a positive effect on men, is not the result of her intellectual education, but the result of her manipulative power gained through acting out a specific gender role assigned to women by a patriarchal culture. According to the narrator, "what she said was delivered with … a powerful conception of the sentiment, joined with … a well-counterfeited simplicity, a quick turn of the eye, and an arch smile. Her words were but the words of others, and, like those of others, put into common sentences; but the delivery made them pass for wit" (Inchbald 15). Rather than the words Miss Milner utters, the way she delivers these words along with her physical attributes is what makes her appear convincing to her audience. This "implies that the reception of a woman's speech has nothing to do with what she actually says, but only with how she looks as she says it; she is given the freedom to speak in a context that renders her speech meaningless or inessential" (Parker 259). Miss Milner's power lies in her beauty.

Even though Miss Milner is able to exert power over men, her power nevertheless is limited. According to Haggerty, Inchbald "allows Miss Milner to exercise her female prerogative in order to demonstrate just how profound the limits to that power really are" (658). Miss Milner's behaviour and speech has developed from her lack of an intellectual education. Wollstonecraft disapproves the unjust manners of obtaining power and "addresses the limitations of such power" (Parker 258). She claims that women who "deluded by these sentiments, sometimes boast of their weakness, cunningly obtaining power by playing on their weakness of men" (*VRW* 59). Women who obtain power by means of their appearance will not have any other remaining virtues in order to participate in society when beauty fades. According to Parker, "Inchbald paints a picture that is strikingly akin to what Inchbald's contemporary Mary Wollstonecraft calls, in the *Vindication* 'the arbitrary power of beauty'"

(259). Wollstonecraft's call for equal education originated from the fact that she wanted to prevent women from relying on feeling instead of reason, which would not secure them a place in society because of their amoral decisions.

Wollstonecraft claims that "women, it is true, obtaining power by unjust means, by practising or fostering vice, evidently lose the rank which reason would assign them, and they become either abject slaves or capricious tyrants" (*VRW* 66). Miss Milner acts defiantly out of contrariness rather than reason. For example, when she "attends a masquerade in defiance of Dorriforth's express orders, she wilfully places herself in a less than respectable situation" (Parker 258). By obtaining power through wrongful means, Miss Milner becomes a "capricious tyrant" who defies everyone without any given reason. According to Parker, "her attempt to make Dorriforth submit to her will once they are engaged indeed appears to be little more than coquettish caprice: 'being beloved in spite of her faults, (a glory proud woman ever aspire to) was, at present, the ambition of Miss Milner'" (258). She acts in a manner that will make her superior to men. In doing so, she does not think of the consequences of her actions. Her actions lead to her misery because men despise her. According to Parker, Miss Milner "is fated to suffer for such disobedience" (258). When she disobeys Dorriforth and attends the masquerade, without a valid reason, Dorriforth breaks of their engagement and "banish[es] Miss Milner from his heart" (Inchbald 169).

After Miss Milner and Dorriforth reconcile and marry Miss Milner's good fortune only goes downhill. Miss Milner cheats on her husband after which she and her daughter are banished from Dorriforth's life. The final words of volume two foreshadow Miss Milner's fate. As Dorriforth (by now Lord Elmwood) puts a ring on Miss Milner's finger, "she perceived it was a – MOURNING RING" (Inchbald 193). Whereas previously Miss Milner tested her independence by defying men, her marriage is bound to fail now that she has married a man and occupies an inferior position with respect to him. As Wollstonecraft

mentions in the *Vindication*, women who are used to defy men will continue to defy them even after marriage. This behaviour will eventually lead to their misery and downfall. Miss Milner continues to defy Lord Elmwood by committing adultery without having a reason for doing so. According to Parker, "the sequel of Miss Milner's story bears out Wollstonecraft's prophecy as to the fate of the short-lived queens who rely on beauty rather than reason to get their way-their dissatisfaction when the husband no longer plays the lover" (260). Miss Milner's adultery results from the fact that she is used to defying men in order to create an identity for herself. She continues to defy her husband by committing adultery in order to be superior to him because marriage does not allow Miss Milner to be superior to men. If a wife continued to defy her husband without a valid reason, she would be left powerless and alone. She would be abandoned by other men leaving her without a concrete authority figure to defy.

2.3 Miss Milner's Religiosity and Sensibility

In acting the way she does, Miss Milner does not take her religious upbringing into account and therefore denies her Protestant background. Dorriforth's sexual attraction towards his ward, Miss Milner, has to be hidden at the beginning of the story, because he is a Catholic priest and needs to remain celibate. Miss Milner, who was raised as a Protestant herself, is aware of the fact that she cannot approach Dorriforth sexually, because of his background. However, this does not prevent her from flirting with him. According to Judson, "absorbed in flirtation, … even after Lord Frederick himself draws attention to the charged atmosphere between guardian and ward: 'From Abelard it came, / And Heloisa still must love the name,' he quips, causing Miss Milner to 'h[o]ld her head out at the window to conceal the embarrassment these lines had occasioned'" (607). Miss Milner is ashamed because "Eloisa and Abelard, twelfth-century lovers made famous for Inchbald's era by Pope's poem, are

relevant to Dorriforth and Miss Milner both as teacher and pupil, and as breakers of religious vows" (Spencer xvii). According to Judson, "both Milner and Dorriforth find their capacity for self-knowledge frustrated by Christian culture; in her case, the culture of sensibility; in his, the Jesuit culture of casuistry and celibacy" (607). Miss Milner's frustration with Christian culture indicates that she does not turn to Christianity in order to find a balanced form of sensibility. Rather, she bases all of her actions on feeling, leading herself to her downfall.

Whereas Wollstonecraft emphasizes that women should not rely on their sensibility, Hannah More argues that it is only the ungoverned sensibility, which leads a woman astray. According to More, by means of religion and the right parental guidance, a woman is able to find the right balance of sensibility in order to participate in society. For Inchbald, in *A Simple Story*, "sensibility virtually defines bad faith, extolling love while trivializing it into social amusement, the merest pretext for gallantry and flirtation" (Judson 607). Inchbald belonged to the same circle of radical writers as Wollstonecraft and Godwin and in her novel she clearly takes Wollstonecraft's notion of sensibility into consideration and incorporates it into her novel.

The fact that an excess of feeling leads to pleasure and thoughtless actions is most certainly evident in Miss Milner's case. Wollstonecraft complains that the senses of sentimental women "are inflamed, and their understandings neglected, consequently they become the prey of their senses, delicately termed sensibility, and are blown about every momentary gust of feeling" (*VRW* 90). When Miss Milner is asked why she encourages Lord Frederick, whom she does not have any feelings for, Miss Milner replies, "because it entertains me" and "he makes part of my amusement" (Inchbald 57). She does not consider what the consequences of her behaviour towards men could be. She instead bases her actions

on what she feels like doing without realizing that her actions can hurt someone else's feelings. Miss Milner, therefore, relies on her sensibility rather than reason.

In the late-eighteenth century the novel of sensibility had been established. According to Brewer, "sensibility was both a moral and an aesthetic category. Sentimental story-telling was believed to set in train the sympathetic reaction that proliferates sensibility, uniting narrator, narrated and listener/reader. It elaborated a complex chain of interdependence affected through feeling" (29). Even though *A Simple Story* "usually is not read as a novel of sensibility, it nevertheless … demonstrates the dangers sensibility posed for female characters" (Ward 2). In the case of Miss Milner, an excessive use of sensibility led to her misery. Whereas the novel of sensibility flourished in the 1770s and 1780s, towards the end of the century "the idealization of sensibility and its literature had faded for both writers and readers" (Ward 1). *A Simple Story* also distances itself from this genre and rather depicts the dangers of an excessive sensibility.

The consequences of Miss Milner's behaviour indicate that a woman should be educated in an unencumbered environment in order to develop her mind freely. According to Judson, "nothing more forcefully declares the tenacity of education than the fact that she falls shortly after achieving her heart's desire" (611). After having fulfilled her desire, "lost in the maze of happiness which surrounded her, Miss Milner oftentimes asked her heart, and her heart whispered like a flatterer, 'Yes,' Are not my charms even more invincible than I ever believed them to be?" (Inchbald 138). Miss Milner's unjust means of obtaining power eventually turns her into an exile who dies all alone. Parker claims "but Miss Milner's very real faults make her a poor model of femininity according to the conduct-book standards of the late eighteenth century. Quick-tempered, extravagant, given over to frivolous pleasure, she lacks the essential qualities of feminine propriety" (258). Her corrupt femininity is exactly what feminists, such as Wollstonecraft and More, despised.

Chapter 3: Matilda's Limited Power as a Result of her Domestic and Male-Governed Education

After Miss Milner's death, at the beginning of the third volume, the story revolves around the second female protagonist in the novel, namely Miss Milner's daughter Matilda. When Miss Milner passes away, Matilda's father, Lord Elmwood, "refuses ever to see again his only child by his once adored Miss Milner, in vengeance to [Matilda's] mother's crimes" (Inchbald 195). Lord Elmwood's grudge results in Matilda's banishment from her father, which leads to her exile in the Scottish border country. In order to rejoice with her father, Lady Matilda, like her mother, "must break through Lord Elmwood's masculine firmness in order to teach him how to love" (Barker-Benfield 256). Both women realize their goal in a different manner. Matilda acts differently than her mother because she is educated in a different way. According to Breashears, "unlike her mother Matilda has been 'properly educated' to repress sexual desire" (465). Even though the second part of the novel depicts a progress in female education, in comparison to the first half, one should consider what a "proper education'' consists of. The power Matilda acquires by means of her male-governed education is limited to men and women who are physically or intellectually inferior to her.

As a result of her male-dominated upbringing and domestic education, Matilda behaves passively and is obedient, which does not grant her any power in society. The ending of the novel, in which Matilda is allowed to decide whether she wants to marry Rushbrook, gives the reader a false sense of a "proper education." It appears as if Matilda is rewarded for her passive behaviour, whereas, in truth, she is punished. In order to portray the faults in Matilda's education this chapter will first critically explore the consequences of her social education. Secondly, this chapter will analyse Matilda's intellectual education and the consequences it has for her moral development. Thirdly, this chapter will relate Matilda's

upbringing and intellectual education to her sensibility and religiosity. In order to point out the consequences of an improper education for women in the late-eighteenth century, this chapter will also emphasize Miss Milner's and Matilda's limited power over men, which is the result of their "faulty" education.

3.1 Matilda's Social Education: Exile and Patriarchy

As a punishment for Miss Milner's infidelity, Lord Elmwood "formed the unshaken resolution never to acknowledge Lady Matilda as his child" (Inchbald 202). Lord Elmwood, therefore, "sent [Matilda] out of her father's house at the age of six years" (Inchbald 198). Consequently, Miss Milner has to take care of the daughter she initially abandoned. Banished from her father's house, as a result of her mother's uncontrolled desire, Matilda lives in exile, next to her mother. Although

> Matilda's person, shape, and complection [sic] were so extremely like what her mother's once were, that at the first glance she appeared to have a still greater resemblance of her, than of her father – her mind and manners were all Lord Elmwood's; softened by the extreme tenderness of her heart and the melancholy of her situation. (Inchbald 220)

Even though initially it appears as if Matilda resembles her mother, the narrator makes clear that they are not similar. The narrator emphasizes that Matilda's characteristics resemble her father's in order to point out the differences between Matilda and her mother. This already indicates that Matilda differs in her behaviour in comparison to her mother, Lady Elmwood.

Lady Elmwood's last wish, on her deathbed, results in Matilda's move into Lord Elmwood's residence under one condition, which is that he will "never see her" (211) and that by "one neglect of my [Lord Elmwood's] commands, release my promise totally" (Inchbald

213). The minute Matilda enters the Elmwood residence, she finds herself under the strict government of men. Just as her mother, Matilda lives in a patriarchal society. Instead of acting defiantly against this society, in order to fulfil her desire, Matilda obeys the rules and is submissive to authority. According to Rogers, "Matilda is totally blameless, subjected to loneliness and oppression only because her father refuses to see her. [She]… shows no evidence of self-will, feels no love for a man until it is duly authorized by her father, and effusively worships the father who has disowned her for her mother's fault" (71). Matilda's obedience to patriarchal authority results from the circumstances of her daily-lived experience during childhood.

For the first seventeen years of her life Matilda was brought up by her mother. The narrator explains that

> Educated in the school of adversity, and inured to retirement from her infancy, she had acquired a taste for all those amusements which a recluse life affords – she was fond of walking and riding – was accomplished in the arts of music and drawing, by the most careful instructions of her mother. (Inchbald 221)

Unlike Miss Milner, Matilda does have a mother who provides her daughter with a domestic education "with the simultaneous insistent emphasis on protecting children and young women from the pernicious influences of the outside world, and the eighteenth-century assumption that girls would be best educated at home" (Halsey 441). The narrator emphasizes that Matilda's social circumstances are not favourable as she is "educated in the school of adversity" (Inchbald 221). Her social education results in her passivity.

Matilda's social education, or her upbringing, leads to her obedience because her mother protects her from the world outside. She was brought up with the "most careful instructions of her mother" (Inchbald 221). Unlike her mother who attended a ball without Dorriforth's permission, Matilda only watches "from her windows some part of this festivity"

(235) and does not even think of attending the ball without her father's permission because she wants to be saved "from provoking him [Lord Elmwood] perhaps to curse me" (Inchbald 222). Matilda's fear is the result of her protected upbringing.

In order to be strong independent individuals who are free from men, women need to be free from restraint throughout their upbringing. As Wollstonecraft claims, domestic education leads to "women as only the wanton solace of men, when they become so weak in mind and body" (*VRW* 220). A domestic education did not enable a woman her freedom. According to Halsey,

> Through such commentaries on domestic education, therefore, writers like Inchbald covertly suggest that in fact women must have a place in the public or external sphere if they are to develop the characters of moral worth that are so essential to the safety and security of the nation, and the education of future generations. (441)

Matilda's domestic education only creates a fear of disobedience towards men. She never has any interaction with them and is told, by her mother, to obey men, as this is the only purpose in a woman's life. According to Godwin, in "Of Public and Private Education," children should not be provided with a domestic education, because "this mode of proceeding seems to have a fatal effect. They come into the world, as ignorant of every thing it contains, as uninstructed in the scenes they have to encounter, as if they had passed their early years in a desert island, unwarned of the truth" (*Enquirer* 63). Inchbald, a friend of Godwin, must have discussed the education of children with the anarchist philosopher turned educator. In *A Simple Story*, she shows that she is of the same understanding. As a result of her domestic education, Matilda passively obeys men and is unfamiliar to the world outside.

Matilda's upbringing within a patriarchal society clearly determined the social role that she could play. Importantly, Matilda's behaviour is also culturally determined. Matilda resides under the rules of men, such as her father's and her ward Sandford's. She becomes, as

Wollstonecraft claims was the case for most women in society, the object of men as she does not fail to obey them. According to Parker, “Matilda is unfailingly so-a victim of her father’s unnatural demands that she stay out of his sight. In effect, within Matilda’s very victimization-her inability to fight against adverse external circumstances except in a purely passive way-lies her particular power” (263). In order to gain power, Matilda behaves passively as she obeys her father’s wishes. An example of her passivity is when she finally comes across her father and “gave a scream of terror … and fell motionless into her father’s arms” (Inchbald 274). Instead of defying her father, Matilda remains passive and faints in order to have, at least, some contact with her father. According to Parker, “Matilda cannot force her father to recognize her by obtruding upon his presence. But by obeying his demands to remain unseen and unheard, she can enable him to seek her out” (264). Matilda obeys and submits herself to men in order to reconcile with her father. According to Haggerty, “the only possible object of her desire, that is, the one other that can ever give meaning to her self, is her father” (665). Matilda cannot participate individually in society without having a man in her life to govern her, which is why she remains passive.

3.2 Matilda’s Limited Intellectual Education

Matilda’s intellectual education also contributes to her passivity. Even though Matilda is schooled, the manner in which she acquires an education does not meet Wollstonecraft’s standards. “As a scholar, she excelled most of her sex, from the great pains Sandford had taken with that part of her education, and the great abilities he possessed for the task” (Inchbald 221). Matilda acquires her intellectual education with the assistance of a male figure, Sandford, who can keep her under his strict rules. Whereas Miss Milner was not educated at all, Matilda is. Matilda’s education, however, does not allow her to develop a

rational mind, because the education she is provided with, does not allow her to develop her mind freely. According to Godwin, "an awakened mind is one of the most important purposes of education" (*Enquirer* 5). Matilda's male teacher is able to suppress certain virtues and qualities of her, which does not suit him. This results in an unenlightened mind because she is unable to develop as an individual.

Matilda's male-governed education leads to her undeveloped moral mind. According to Wollstonecraft, a proper education should "strengthen the female mind by enlarging it and there will be an end to blind obedience … ever sought for by power" (*VRW* 45). In Matilda's case, the education she is provided with does not lead to her independence. She lives in fear of disobeying her father. Her fear and obedience is the result of her education. Matilda was unable to develop her own rational mind because of the restrictions. A rational mind would allow her to realize that she does not have to fear her father since his vengeance is towards her mother. The suppression of women by men causes Matilda to rely on passion and feeling instead of reason. Sandford is the one responsible for the development of her rational mind throughout her intellectual education and does not allow her mind to develop as fully as possible.

According to Wollstonecraft, an unrestricted education enables an individual to develop his or her rational faculty, which makes it possible for him or her to rise above a life governed by feeling alone. Even though Matilda is educated, she "has all the qualities of the sentimental heroine; 'her mind and manners are softened by the delicacy of her sex, the extreme tenderness of her heart, and the melancholy of her situation'" (Parker 223). Matilda's limited education causes her to act out of feeling instead of reason. She therefore obeys every man and would not think of defying the male sex. When, for example, Miss Woodley tells Matilda that she can make an attempt to see her father, Matilda replies with "'not for worlds

… no counsel could tempt me to such temerity'" (Inchbald 226). Her choices are based on the implemented rules instead of her morality.

Matilda's submissiveness makes her the complete opposite of her mother, Miss Milner. According to Haggerty, "Miss Milner, after all, at least imagined that a kind of resistance was her prerogative; but Lady Matilda offers no resistance at all" (665). Matilda's passivity makes her an object to all men, even the men in her life whom she is not fond of. Lord Margrave, for example, manages to kidnap Matilda because she does not show any resistance.

Initially, it appears as if Matilda is granted more rights than her mother, because of her education. However, "Matilda is no exemplar of female independence. Although her education provides her with the intellectual recourses that her mother lacked, her behaviour comes to resemble that of the passive sentimental heroines Wollstonecraft criticized" (Clemit xviii). The cause of her behaviour is her restricted education. Matilda's education does not allow her to participate in society on an equal footing with men because her education has been designed by men with the purpose of supporting rather than challenging dominant ideas and values concerning the role of women within patriarchal society. According to Parker,

> Granted, the emphasis that Inchbald puts on her scholarly abilities is suggestive of the undercurrents of change in regards to traditional views on women's irrational nature. But Matilda, also like her exemplary counterparts, is essentially male-authored, owing her moral authority to a male mentor. (262)

The second-generational plot, therefore, does not show any progress in the development of women's rational mind. Wollstonecraft claims in the *Analytical Review* that "educated in adversity Matilda should have learned (to prove that a cultivated mind is a real advantage) how to bear, nay, rise above her misfortunes, instead of suffering her health to be undermined by the trials of her patience, which ought to have strengthened her understanding" (101-102).

Matilda's passivity and obedience cannot be the result of a feminist consciousness; rather it is the result of the dominant patriarchal ideology that prescribes this specific gender role to women.

Wollstonecraft is an advocate of an education for women in which they are free to develop their mind without any restrictions. By highlighting the lack of progress between two generations of women in *A Simple Story*, Inchbald follows Wollstonecraft's thesis. Just as *Caleb Williams* (1794) was Godwin's novelisation of his *Political Justice* (1793), *A Simple Story* can be said to be Inchbald's novelisation of Wollstonecraft's thesis on female education. According to Franklin, Wollstonecraft's "fellow female 'Jacobins,'" such as Inchbald, "were producing novels of protest which mixed the improbabilities of romance convention with social criticism" (80). Inchbald agrees with Wollstonecraft that women should be educated freely. An unrestricted education does not result in passive or rebellious women who obtain their power by unjust means. A proper education enables women's rational mind, free from the forces of men without an emphasis on their sensibility. Women will not have the desire to gain power in other manners because they are able to participate in society without any confinements.

3.3 Matilda's Sensibility and her Religious Ward

Inchbald depicts Matilda as a sentimental heroine, which Wollstonecraft despises. According to Barker-Benfield, "'the cult of sensibility' was coterminous with others; a cult of feeling, a cult of melancholy, a cult of distress, and a cult of refined emotionalism" (xix). Matilda's characteristics most definitely meet some of these requirements. When it comes to the cult of melancholy, "the melancholy of her [Matilda's] situation … and the extreme tenderness of her heart" forms a sentimental heroine (Inchbald 220). Matilda is also a woman in distress

when Lord Margrave kidnaps her. She is unable to defy him. She is also a victim of the patriarchal society in her own home, which puts her in distress.

Matilda's conditions result in her extremely emotional outbursts and fear. An example of Matilda's over-the-top emotional reaction is when Edward, an employee of Lord Elmwood who had been fired, mentions that he had spoken about Miss Milner to Lord Elmwood after which Matilda "sighed from the bottom of her heart" and "burst into tears" (Inchbald 270). According to Wollstonecraft, "the overstretched sensibility naturally relaxes the other powers of the mind, and prevents intellect from attaining that sovereignty which it ought to attain to render a rational creature" (*VRW* 91). As a result of the oppression by men, Matilda's overstretched sensibility inhibits her from developing a rational mind.

Matilda's ward, the priest Sandford, is the one responsible for Matilda's education and "had taken great pains with that part of the [intellectual] education" (Inchbald 22). The narrator does not provide any further information on Matilda's education. Considering the fact that Sandford has a religious occupation, being a priest, he repressed Matilda's bad attributes as a child. According to Parker, "Matilda has her priest Sandford, her virtue [is] thus regulated by the texts most fervent upholder of patriarchal values" (262). Sandford's religious occupation makes him, as a ward, responsible for the education of a woman. Naturally, he will follow the Christian conception of what the role of women should be. In educating Matilda, Sandford manages to oppress Matilda's virtues and desires that do not conform to as the virtues of a Christian woman.

Hannah More claims that a woman's sensibility is in a right balance when it is supported by religion. Matilda's education is supported by Sandford's religious motives. Even though Sandford teaches Matilda how to behave in society, she is not allowed to develop as an individual because of the limitations of her education. Her education, supported with religious motives, creates an excessive sensibility in Matilda, which is in contrast to More's

thesis. Matilda's sensibility is not properly balanced because her social, religious and educational circumstances do not allow her to find the right balance between reason and feeling. Matilda's story, just as Miss Milner's, portrays the oppression and limitations of women in a patriarchal society in order to reveal the consequences of it.

3.4 Miss Milner and Matilda's Social and Intellectual Limitations

After Matilda's reconciliation with her father, she is left with the decision to marry Rushbrook. At the end, it seems as if Matilda is rewarded for her passive behaviour when in fact she is not. Lord Elmwood "grants Matilda the 'power to give, or to refuse' Rushbrook at her 'own pleasure' (Inchbald 337). Therefore, as the novel concludes, Elmwood gives Matilda the authority to speak for herself and … thus earn her a limited form of autonomy" (Nachumi 337). Even though Matilda finally earns the right to express her opinion, one cannot call her an independent, rational woman because the right she earns is the result of her victimization and passivity rather than a fully developed rational mind. In both Miss Milner and Matilda's storyline, "Inchbald is unable to envision an alternative-a protagonist who develops a sense of herself as an autonomous, self-defining individual, who has the forcefulness to defy the arbitrary dictates of her guardians and the rationality to avoid a similar arbitrariness" (Parker 267). Neither Miss Milner nor her daughter Matilda are granted the opportunities, both socially and intellectually, to develop a rational mind which will enable them to participate independently in society. They both act differently because the relationships to the men in their lives are differently construed. However, both stories lead to the same conclusion: women in the eighteenth century were dependent on men because of their restricted social and intellectual education which did not grant them their independence and own will.

The novel makes a point about the limited options women had with respect to education. Parker claims "looked at together, the two stories make the indictment explicit. Paradoxically, the very disunity of the text enables Inchbald to make a unified argument about women's limited options" (267). The patriarchal society in which Miss Milner and Matilda live limits their options of having an education which stimulates their rational mind. In order to portray the consequences of women's improper education, Inchbald depicts two different storylines with two different outcomes. According to Haggerty,

> The feminism of the novel is unmistakable. It includes Inchbald's stifled cry of protest at female victimization as well as her bold attempt to articulate what she must see as the basic truth of female desire. By telling her story twice, moreover, Inchbald avoids a 'happy ending' two different times. (669)

Miss Milner's upbringing and lack of education results in her will to fulfil her desire whereas the consequence of Matilda's upbringing and male-governed education is her passivity. Neither of these two women show a sign of feminist consciousness. Spencer claims "Wollstonecraft herself was disappointed" because she "wanted a feminist moral which Inchbald failed to provide" (xiv). However, by revealing what was repressed in the eighteenth-century patriarchal society in order to emphasize the importance of both women's social and intellectual education, Inchbald nevertheless succeeds in providing the text with a feminist moral. Spencer's claim that "all the troubling questions raised by Miss Milner are laid to rest by Lady Matilda" is arguable (xx). The novel itself reveals what was supressed and depicts the flaws in women's education. The second generational plot, instead of making up for the previous one, portrays women's victimization, which is another form of suppression. Both generations therefore portray the consequences of a faulty social and intellectual education for women under the yoke of patriarchy, if in a different manner and with a different focus.

Chapter 4: Catherine's Selfishness and Sociality in Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*

When first published, Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights* (1847) was not well received. One of the reasons was that "in the wake of Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847)" readers expected "to be swept up in an earnest Bildungsroman. They were instead shocked and confounded by a tale of unchecked primal passions, replete with savage cruelty and outright barbarism" (Joudrey 165). One of the passionate characters whose wrong choices lead to her misery is Catherine Earnshaw. Her misery is the result of her inconsistent behaviour.

The female protagonists live in a male-governed society and are, unlike the opposite sex, less capable of acquiring an unrestricted education. According to Gilbert and Gubar, "it was the habit in the Brontë family, as in the Wollstonecraft-Godwin-Shelley family, to approach reality through the mediating agency of books" (250). Emily Brontë portrays the faults of her society by emphasizing women's restrictions in *Wuthering Heights*.

As a result of the institutionalised oppression of women by men, within the world of the novel, Catherine has to behave in opposition to the cultural standards in order to gain a more secure place in society for herself. For example, she decides to marry Edgar Linton, a young gentleman of the land-owning classes, instead of her long-time love Heathcliff, who belongs to her own, lower social circle. Her choice to marry Edgar stems from the fact that a wealthy man can provide her with a more stable home. Even though the young Catherine acts rebelliously throughout her youth, and her decision to marry Edgar is from a class perspective one of her most rebellious acts, her marriage to Edgar still reinforces women's inferior role in a patriarchal society. As the story of *Wuthering Heights* highlights, Catherine's marriage to Edgar turns out to be a form of entrapment, rather than liberty.

In order to have a better understanding of Catherine's impulsive behaviour and decisions, it is necessary to critically explore Catherine's social background, education, and

upbringing. These circumstances play an important role in the development of Catherine's character. Next to her impulsive behaviour, Catherine acts defiantly. Initially, her defiance of male authority at Wuthering Heights seems to suggest that Catherine has been able to develop a feminist consciousness within the patriarchal society in which she was raised. She defies her father's rules and does not obey men. By eventually marrying Edgar, Catherine fulfils her social ambition, but also submits herself once again to a man, and a more powerful one at that.

In order to retrace the origins of Catherine's feminist consciousness and social ambitions, this chapter will first explore the circumstances in which Catherine is raised. Secondly, this chapter will examine Catherine's intellectual education and the consequences it has for her moral development. Lastly, this chapter will critically explore Catherine's religiosity and sensibility in order to perceive to what extent these aspects shape her morality. The overall purpose of this chapter is to explain how Catherine's social and intellectual education helps shape her character in a manner that was not customary to the nineteenth-century readers. Brontë depicts the consequences of women's lack of education in the mid-nineteenth century in order to reveal the faults of her society. The theories of the contemporary feminist Harriet Martineau will shed a light on whether Catherine's behaviour is appealing to women in her society.

4.1 Catherine's Selfishness and Social Ambition

In order to present an adequate analysis of Catherine Earnshaw's background and social status, it is important to distinguish between the two residences in the novel, namely Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange. The two estates represent the opposite, which is significant for its inhabitants. Wuthering Heights, as its name already implies, represents an

uncontrolled nature. Thrushcross Grange represents nurture and sociality. Strikingly, "both are farms, though the Grange ('farm, 'barn') is a gentleman's estate and the Heights a humbler property [and working farm]. The Heights is exposed to the elements, the Grange sheltered, but each is a place of human habitation and cultivation" (William 103). It is rather the symbolic opposition between the Grange and Heights, which is established in the novel.

There are several examples which reinforce the theme of nature versus culture. One of them is the name of each estate. When Lockwood first comes across the Heights he explains that "'wuthering' being a significant provincial adjective is descriptive of the atmospheric tumult to which its station is exposed in stormy weather" (Brontë 2). Whereas Wuthering Heights is described as a place of turmoil, Thrushcross Grange is a "beautiful – splendid place carpeted with crimson, and crimson covered chairs and tables, and a pure white ceiling bordered by gild, a shower of glass-drops hanging in silver chains from the centre, and shimmering with little soft tapers" (Brontë 42). The darkness of the Heights is set against the whiteness and purity of the Grange.

Next to the estates, the characters inhabiting these residences similarly convey the theme of nature versus culture, because the house they are raised in reflect on their mood and emotions. An example of a female protagonist who conveys the theme of nature is Catherine Earnshaw. Catherine is the daughter of Hareton Earnshaw, a "kind-hearted" man (Brontë 30). From an early age, Catherine displays an ill-temper when, for instance, she "showed her humour by grinning and spitting at the stupid little thing [Heathcliff], earning for her pains a sound blow from her father to teach her clearer manners" (Brontë 32). The narrator, Nelly Dean, implies that Catherine has to improve her manners because they are unacceptable. Nelly further emphasizes throughout her narration that Catherine was "too mischievous" (32) and "had ways with her such as I never saw a child take up before" (Brontë 36). Unlike her peers in the Grange, Catherine is uncivilized.

Catherine's behaviour as a young girl was considered inappropriate by mainstream nineteenth-century social standards; standards that Nelly represents. Catherine is aware of the fact that she can act rebelliously and that such behaviour can be a source of power over others, which was not customary for a woman in the nineteenth century. Being aware of her power to rebel against male authority figures, such as Heathcliff and her father, Catherine is not afraid to make use of it. According to Rosenberg, at the age of six "and already less plain-hearted than her brother she senses her power, and asks for the instrument that confirms it," namely a whip (11). Unlike her brother's fiddle, Catherine's instrument of power is lost. Catherine therefore needs to acquire a new object of power in order to replace the whip.

After the loss of her whip Catherine finds her power in Heathcliff. According to Gilbert and Gubar, "Catherine gets her whip figuratively in the form of a 'gypsy brat'" (264). Even though Catherine displays a feminist consciousness during her upbringing by openly rebelling against patriarchal ideology, she nevertheless objectifies herself by becoming one with Heathcliff. As she claims in one of the most famous passages of the novel: "I am Heathcliff – he's always in my mind – not as a pleasure, any more than I am always a pleasure to myself – but as my own being" (Brontë 73). According to Joudrey, "importantly, Catherine does not claim that their souls are interdependent or symbiotically attached; rather, Catherine asserts, they share a single identity" (179). Without his presence in her life she does not have the opportunity to obtain power as an individual, because women were not equal to men in the nineteenth century. Gilbert and Gubar point out that "Heathcliff's presence gives her a fullness of being that goes beyond power in household politics" (265). In order to acquire more power Catherine goes a step further.

Even though Catherine loves Heathcliff, she nevertheless decides to marry Edgar Linton. Catherine replaces Heathcliff with Edgar because the latter is able to provide Catherine the wealth and status she desires. According to Harriet Martineau, in *How to*

Observe Morals and Manners, "in a society where pride and ostentation prevail, where rank and wealth are regarded as prime objects of pursuit, marriage comes to be regarded as a means of obtaining these" (169). The differences in social class are perceived when Heathcliff and Catherine encounter Trushcross Grange and describe how "beautiful it was" and that they "should have thought themselves in heaven" (Brontë 42). According to Van Ghent, they both "look in from the night on the heavenly wisdom of the refinements and securities of the most privileged human estate. Heathcliff rejects the vision because he senses the menace of its limitations; while Catherine is fatally tempted" (167). Whereas Heathcliff continues to emphasize, "we did despise them [the Linton's]," Catherine's point of view is not given (Brontë 42). Catherine, unlike Heathcliff, does not despise the Linton's because she is attracted to their fortune.

Catherine decides to marry Edgar in order to climb the social ladder. Heathcliff, who belongs to the working class, and has no family ties beyond his adopted family, is not wealthy enough in order for Catherine to marry him. According to Martineau, "in a country where women are brought up to be indulged wives, there is no hope, help, or prospect for such as have not money and are not married" (*Morals and Manners* 177). In a patriarchal society where women are inferior to men, Catherine, for her own selfhood, chooses Edgar over Heathcliff because the latter cannot provide her with a title. Catherine tells Nelly that "it would degrade me to marry Heathcliff now" and continues to defend her choice by asking Nelly if "it never strike[s] you that if Heathcliff and I married, we should be beggars" (Brontë 72). Catherine marries Linton in order to pursue her social ambition.

Catherine's desire to climb the social ladder does not result in her happiness. Catherine turns to marriage to realize her social ambition because in her days marriage was "considered the one worldly object in life, —that on which maintenance, consequence, and power depend. Where the wife marries for an establishment, for consequence, or influence, there is no

foundation for high domestic morals and lasting peace" (Martineau, *Morals and Manners* 178). The consequences of Catherine's marriage to Edgar are severe because the main reason behind this marriage has developed out of her desire for social status instead of any true feelings of love for the man that she marries. Catherine compares "her love for the elevated Edgar to transitory 'foliage,' and her attachment of the 'low' Heathcliff to 'the eternal rocks beneath'. But she is unable to translate imagery into principles, and, therefore, in part out of her strong desire to do right, she marries Edgar" (Sonstroem 56). According to Martineau, decisions, which are based on the desire of establishing oneself in society, do not guarantee lasting peace, which in the case of Catherine is plausible. However, since the country she lives in was a "country where marriage is made the single aim of all women," Catherine is not to blame for her decisions. (Martineau, *Morals and Manners* 178). It is rather the dominance of patriarchal ideology within nineteenth-century society that ensures women were brought up with the idea that marriage is their sole aim. This is the main cause of Catherine's social ambition.

Catherine's selfhood and desire to climb the social ladder has partially developed from her social education. According to Wollstonecraft, a mother teaches her child manners. Thompson claims "we may note that the children in *Wuthering Heights* are left to fend for themselves early in life without the love or protection of their mothers. Catherine is not quite eight when her mother dies" (139). The absence of a mother in Catherine's life – a maternal figure who can teach her acceptable behaviour for girls – leads to her rebellious behaviour and her will to fulfil her desire for a higher social status. Catherine "'needs' a mother-figure to look after her" who teaches her manners in order to prevent her from misbehaving and making the wrong choices (Gilbert and Gubar 267).

The passionate Catherine's uncontrolled desire for wealth is one of the reasons, which made the novel inaccessible for many nineteenth-century readers. According to Joudrey,

Brontë "defies her contemporaries in spurning the morality of self-negation –that is, striving to smother all desire– as both misguided and mortifying. The novel contains no model of self-capitulation on behalf of the collective good. Brontë boldly acknowledges and legitimates desire" (168). By validating Catherine's selfish motives, Brontë also highlights that the consequences of women's selfish motives are undesirable. Catherine's selfish choice to marry Edgar, in order to obtain power as a woman in a patriarchal society, does not earn her an active, independent role. She ends up miserable and eventually regrets marrying Edgar. The choices made by Catherine, which initially appeared revolutionary in its time, are not as appealing since it leads to the objectification by men. Brontë emphasizes the fact that no matter how rebellious women were in the nineteenth century, they were still unable to obtain power in a male-dominated society.

4.2 Catherine's Lack of Intellectual Education and Reason

Another aspect that shapes Catherine into the person she will become is her lack of an intellectual education. According to Martineau, unlike former times, women of the nineteenth century should be independent from men. She claims in *Household Education*:

> While so many women are no longer protected in safety from the world every woman ought to be fitted to take care of herself. Every woman ought to have that justice done to her faculties that she may possess herself in all the strength and clearness of an exercised and enlightened mind, and may have at command, as much intellectual power and as many resources as education can furnish her with. (244)

According to Martineau, women should use their intellectual power to become independent. They should educate themselves in such a manner that their education grants them their complete autonomy.

Catherine’s lack of an intellectual education initially results in a form of “freedom.” According to Ohmann, the true subject of *Wuthering Heights* is “freedom, or at least the will to freedom” (912). Instead of obeying her father’s wishes and rules Catherine enjoys being defiant. This defiance is the result of her will to freedom. When she behaves badly and tries to make it up with her father he says: “‘Nay, Cathy, I cannot love thee’. Go, say thy prayers, child, and ask God's pardon. I doubt thy mother and I must rue that we ever reared thee!’ That made her cry, at first; and then being repulsed continually hardened her, and she laughed” (Brontë 36-37). Catherine does not agree with her father’s way of correcting her behaviour because she wants to act the way she wants in order to enjoy her freedom. In her search for freedom she marries Edgar, which ironically signifies the moment she loses her freedom. According to Ohmann, “hers is a story not of freedom enjoyed but of freedom lost” (912). Rather than becoming free, Catherine’s decision to marry Edgar traps her in a restricted gender role as wife and mother-to-be. She has to depend on a man in order to acquire and hold onto both financial and emotional security. The decision to marry Edgar evolved from Catherine’s lack of an intellectual education, which could have granted her a more lasting independence from ideologically prescribed gender roles, and possibly a happier union with Heathcliff.

According to Martineau, in *Household Education*, topics which are taught by a mother to her daughter are “good as an exercise of both the moral and intellectual powers: but they do not yield full satisfaction to the reasoning faculty. The conclusions of morals are clear enough for practical guidance; but they are not provable. For the full satisfaction of the reasoning faculties, therefore, children must set to work elsewhere” (236). According to Martineau, a girl should also study subjects, outside the domestic environment, such as grammar because this will enable her to exercise all of the reasoning faculties. It is “this exercise of those powers only which makes the difference between a pupil who learns grammar and arithmetic

with the understanding or by rote" (Martineau, *HE* 236). Catherine lacks the skills of reason because she never was someone who was interested in an education and books. "Catherine's library was select" (16) and she vows that she "hated a good book" (Brontë 17). Her lack of an intellectual education does not allow her to exercise all of her reasoning faculties. Instead, Catherine bases all of her decisions on her passion for a social status. Nelly claims that "she never had power to conceal her passion" (Brontë 62). As a servant in the service of the man of the house, Nelly adopts a patriarchal voice, even though she is a woman.

4.3 Catherine's Religiosity and Sensibility

Throughout *Wuthering Heights*, one of the servants, Joseph, adds a religious voice to the novel. Catherine's father is also religious since he continues to advise Catherine to pray: "Go, say thy prayers, child, and ask God's pardon" (Brontë 37). Catherine is not religious and turns "Joseph's religious curses into ridicule" (Brontë 36). Another instance in the novel which proves that Catherine is not a practicing Christian is when her father passes away and Joseph succumbs her to "sit ye down, ill childer! there's good books eneugh if ye'll read 'em: sit ye down, and think o' yer sowls!" (Brontë 17). After which "Miss Cathy's riven th' back off 'Th' Helmet o' Salvation,' un' Heathcliff's pawsed his fit into t' first part o' 'T' Brooad Way to Destruction!" (Brontë 17). Catherine's rebellious behaviour towards Joseph's books indicates her rejection of religion. According to Gilbert and Gubar, "strengthened by Heathcliff, Catherine becomes increasingly rebellious against the patriarchal religion Joseph advocates, and thus, too, increasingly unmindful of her father's discipline" (266). Importantly, as a woman, Catherine acquires her power to reject the patriarchal religion, through Heathcliff.

According to Martineau, children are unable to develop as free-minded individuals if they are brought up with rigid religious doctrines. Martineau claims, in *Household Education,*

"the children of all these multitudes receive what they are early told, as their parents received it before them; and no one supposes that any one of those vast multitudes would think and feel as he does on matters of religion if he were not early habituated to think and feel as he does" (265-6). Martineau implies that if children are told from an early age on to believe in rigid religious doctrines, they will never be able to express their own opinion on it because they were brought up in a religious environment. The pressure of religious parents does not allow children to develop their mind freely because of the strict doctrines. This pressure is also visible throughout Catherine's upbringing; she is never allowed to develop her mind freely.

Martineau prefers children who are domestically educated to those who acquire a public education. In *Household Education*, Martineau compares a child who is domestically educated to a child who has the opportunities to go into the world alone and travel. She concludes that "the intellectual and moral value of families who have lived quietly at home very far transcends that of young people whose anxious parents have dragged them about the world" (314). Martineau prefers those who are educated at home because she believes that "the untravelled have a deeper reflectiveness than the travelled, –a deeper sensibility, –a better working power, on the whole, –a better preparation for the life before them" (*HE* 314). In Catherine's case, she is unable to benefit from a domestic education because she refuses to acquire one, no matter how hard her father, Nelly, and Joseph try to provide her with one. Martineau comforts parents who provide their daughters with a domestic education by claiming, "that their children are happier than they suppose" (*HE* 315). Catherine is able to develop a strong feeling of emotion because of her passionate character. However, the consequences are not preferable because Catherine's sensibility has developed out of her lack of an education instead of a domestic education, which led to her wrong choices.

At the end of her life, Catherine's misery is the result of her social ambition, which caused her to marry Edgar. Her decision to marry Edgar instead of Heathcliff evolved from her lack of reason, which in turn was the result of her lack of an intellectual education. Without bearing the consequences, Catherine leaves Heathcliff, which ultimately leads to her despair. Before her death she regrets the choices she made and tells Edgar "I don't want you, Edgar; I'm past wanting you … Return to your books … I'm glad you possess a consolation, for all you had in me is gone" (Brontë 113). She also confesses to Heathcliff "I only wish us never to be parted" (Brontë 140-1). Catherine's choices lead to her downfall and she is perfectly aware that her torment is the result of her own decisions. She tells Heathcliff that "if I've done wrong, I'm dying for it" (Brontë 12). Catherine's choices are based on her desire for a social status, which is the fault of the patriarchal society she is living in.

Martineau's claim that those who are domestically educated will lead to a happier life is invalid because a domestic education did not grant a woman her independence. A domestic education did not allow a woman to exercise all of her reasoning faculties, which led to the wrong choices. Wollstonecraft, on the contrary, is aware of the fact that a woman should not possess sensibility as her only virtue. According to Wollstonecraft, an emphasis on a woman's sensibility will lead to her desolation because she is less capable of exerting the power of reason.

Chapter 5: Catherine Linton's Social and Domestic Education

The second part of *Wuthering Heights* tells the story of the next generation. The female protagonist of the remaining part of the story, Catherine Linton, is set in contrast to her mother's character. Unlike her mother, Cathy is passive and obedient. Both Catherine's and Cathy's behaviour is the result of their social and intellectual education. Catherine Earnshaw's lack of a proper education resulted in her misguided decisions concerning marriage, which in turn led to her misery as Linton's wife. Cathy, by contrast, is capable of making the right decisions concerning her freedom and marriage. Read in the light of Martineau's ideas about education, Cathy is able to make the right choices as a result of the "proper schooling" she acquired by means of a domestic education. Whereas the decisions Cathy makes concerning marriage and education lead to a better ending of her life, she still does not have the equal opportunities and the freedom which men have.

One of the reasons Cathy is restricted in her freedom is the fact that she was raised and educated by her father. This resulted in her fear of disobeying her father because he is the only one she loves. Clearly, Cathy is also a victim of a patriarchal society. Despite her fear of disobeying her father, Cathy does display power over other men. For example, she asks Nelly whether Hareton "mustn't be made to do as I ask him?" after she tells Nelly how he dares to speak to her in such a manner (Brontë 172). Cathy believes that she is able to govern men. However, her power is limited because she is unable to avoid Heathcliff's harsh orders who forces her to marry his son. Heathcliff's orders are a sign of the institutionalised oppression of women by men within the world of the novel.

The theme of male oppression of women highlights the extent to which Cathy's storyline is similar to her mother's, even though Nelly claims that "she did not resemble" Catherine (Brontë 167). Just as her mother rejected Heathcliff because it would degrade her,

Cathy resents Hareton for his social status and appearance. Just as Catherine married Edgar in order to climb the social ladder, young Cathy falls in love with Linton, who is wealthier than Hareton. Cathy Linton is eventually forced to marry Linton. The main difference between these two generations lies in the fact that the young Cathy has the benefits of a domestic education. However, to what extent Cathy is able to gain power by means of her education is arguable.

In order to establish the origins of Cathy's restricted education, which creates an emphasis on her sensibility and limits her power as a woman in society, this chapter will first critically explore Cathy's upbringing and her behaviour. Secondly, this chapter will search for the purpose of Cathy's intellectual education and compare it to her mother's. Thirdly, this chapter will compare young Cathy's sentiment to her mother's and explain how it affects her as a person. Lastly, this chapter will compare young Cathy to her mother with regard to their insolence, in order to find out whether there are any signs of feminist consciousness in these two female protagonists.

5.1 Cathy's Patriarchal Upbringing

Cathy's upbringing is primarily in the hands of her father Edgar. Nelly Dean takes up the role as Cathy's female educator. Cathy's mother, Catherine Earnshaw, dies in childbirth and leaves "a puny, seven months' child" to be raised (Brontë 145). As a result of her mother's death, Cathy's father initially does not welcome her. Nelly recounts: "an unwelcomed infant it was, poor thing! It might have wailed out of life, and nobody cared a morsel, during those first hours of existence" (Brontë 145). Those feelings pass as Nelly and Edgar "redeemed the neglect afterwards" (Brontë 145). Consequently, after her mother's death, Cathy's upbringing is in the hands of her father. Nelly tells Lockwood that "it was named Catherine, but he never

called it the name in full, as he had never called the first Catherine short. The little one was always Cathy: it formed to him a distinction from the mother" (Brontë 162). Nelly distinguishes between Cathy and her mother from the beginning of Cathy's story in order to emphasize that they are not similar.

In comparison to her mother, Cathy is not able to wander outside and travel to wherever she wants: "Till she reached the age of thirteen, she had not once seen beyond the range of the park by herself. Mr. Linton would take her with him a mile or so outside, on rare occasions; but he trusted her to no one else" (Brontë 167). When Cathy, out of her curiosity, asks Nelly "how long it will be before I can walk to the top of those hills," Nelly tries to supress those thoughts by describing those places in a negative manner (Brontë 168). She "explains[s] that they were bare masses of stone, with hardly enough earth in their clefts to nourish a stunted tree" (Brontë 168). Nelly does everything in order to prevent Cathy from leaving the estate.

Next to Edgar Linton, Nelly Dean plays an important role in Cathy's upbringing. Nelly Dean takes upon herself the role of a female educator because Cathy's mother has passed away. Just as Cathy's father, Nelly protects Cathy from the world outside. Whereas Martineau claims in *Household Education* that "so many women are no longer sheltered, and protected, and supported, in safety from the world," Cathy most definitely is (244). After repeating a couple of times that she is old enough to go and see the country herself, the answer to her cry is "not yet, love, not yet," because "the road [is] thither wound close by Wuthering Heights" (Brontë 168). Edgar refuses Cathy's request because he wants to protect her from encountering Wuthering Heights and coming across Heathcliff. Cathy's restrictions are a sign of the dominance of patriarchal ideology in the society she lives in. Men are able to govern her which does not permit Cathy her freedom. Edgar's precaution restricts Cathy's

possibilities of exploring the world as an individual. She is therefore never granted the complete autonomy throughout her childhood.

Even though Catherine Earnshaw's restrictions led her to disobey men, Cathy never thinks of being disobedient towards her father. Cathy's obedience is the result of her upbringing. According to Nelly, Cathy "was always 'love,' and 'darling,' and 'queen,' and 'angel,' with everybody at the Grange" (Brontë 175). Martineau, who is an advocate of domestic education, claims that those who do not travel and stay at home will please their parents because those who are "duly improved must be sufficient for all the purposes of human life" (*HE* 315). Parents who educated their children at home were able to shape their child into the person they wanted it to become. The domestically educated child has "a mind which has depth, and in ordinary course, must widen" (Martineau, *HE* 315-6). Cathy's domestic education allows Edgar to teach her to be obedient towards him without an emphasis on her reasoning skills.

The fact that Cathy never disappoints her father is the result of her obedience towards him. An example of her obedience is when she claims, "I care for nothing in comparison with papa. And I'll never – never – never – oh, never, while I have my senses, do an act or say a word to vex him. I love him better than myself" (Brontë 204). Cathy's claims of loving her father more than herself indicate the presence of a male-dominated culture. Her father teaches her how to behave and what she is allowed to do. Cathy does not portray a feminist consciousness in the novel, because she has been taught by her father to be obedient and is not permitted to travel alone. She therefore does not have complete autonomy, which does not make her equal to the male sex. The patriarchal society is the cause of women's obedience to men.

5.2 Cathy's Limited Power through a Domestic Intellectual Education

Even though Cathy's father restricts her autonomy, she still believes she has power over men. Yet, it is only the uneducated, lower-class men over whom she can exert her power. Cathy has power over the weaker men because of her intellectual education. In comparison to her mother, her father provides Cathy with a domestic education. Nelly claims "he [Edgar] took her education entirely on himself, and made it an amusement; fortunately, curiosity and a quick intellect urged her into an apt scholar; she learnt rapidly and eagerly, and did honour to his teaching" (Brontë 167). Cathy's education grants her the power to make fun of Hareton because she is more knowledgeable. Cathy resents Hareton, even though they are cousins, because he is from the working class and is illiterate. For example, judging him by his appearance, she tells Hareton "now, get my horse," because she assumes he is a servant. Hareton, who is offended, tells her "I'll see thee damned, before I be thy servant!" after which Catherine asks Nelly in disbelief how he dares to speak to her like that (Brontë 172). According to Newman, Cathy's power over men displays "a feminist resistance to the patriarchal order in which its story partially acquiesces" (139). Young Cathy is only able to denigrate the "weaker" men in a patriarchal society.

Another scene in the novel depicting Catherine's ability to denigrate Hareton is when "I [Cathy] gave him a cut with my whip" (Brontë 222). The whip symbolizes Cathy's power just as it symbolizes Catherine's loss of power when her father lost her whip. Unlike her mother's reality, however, "the second kind of reality is given in the romance of Cathy and Hareton, where book learning and gentled manners and domestic charities form a little island of complacence" (Van Ghent 162). The young Cathy is able to resist men because of the power she gains through her education, whereas Catherine acts defiantly because of her lack of an education. Cathy's power lies in her restricted education.

Lockwood emphasizes Catherine's defiance at the beginning of the novel when he enters Wuthering Heights and comes across young Cathy. In Lockwood's case, however, it is Cathy's defiant gaze, which defies men. He says: "she never opened her mouth. I stared – she stared also: at any rate, she kept her eyes on me in a cool, regardless manner, exceedingly embarrassing and disagreeable" (Brontë 7). The fact that Cathy keeps staring at Lockwood with a disapproving gaze indicates that Cathy is not afraid of defying men. According to Newman, "though she is often regarded as a saccharine imitation of her mother the gaze provides a context for reading Catherine as more subversive than readers of the novel have been willing to grant. Lockwood's first encounter with her emphasizes her defiance of the male gaze" (1032). The fact that Cathy's behaviour does not resemble her appearance is highlighted by the description of Lockwood when he sees her for the first time. He emphasizes her "exquisite little face, small features [which are] very far, and delicate neck" and claims, "had they been agreeable in expression, they would have been irresistible" (Brontë 7-9). According to Lockwood, her outer beauty does not reflect her inner beauty, because "the only sentiment [her gaze] evinced hovered between scorn and a kind of desperation" (Brontë 8). In a society which oppressed women, Catherine defies men.

Next to Lockwood, Heathcliff is also affected by Cathy's gaze. According to Newman, "even Heathcliff finds the power of her gaze preternaturally disconcerting: 'What fiend possesses you to stare back at me, continually, with those infernal eyes? Down with them! And don't remind me of your existence again'" (1032). In order to have control over Cathy, Heathcliff orders Cathy not to look at him because her power lies in her gaze. According to Newman, "Cathy's impudently assertive look makes her a monstrous woman to almost every male character in the novel-a 'little witch,' as Lockwood puts it" (1032). Cathy has inherited the defiant gaze from her mother Catherine. An example of Catherine's defiant gaze is when Edgar stood before her and "she [Catherine] gave him no glance of

recognition … he was invisible to her abstracted gaze" (Brontë 112). Cathy's power, which she gains through her gaze, is one of the similarities between mother and daughter. Their gaze enables them to act in defiance against men in a patriarchal society.

The defiant female gaze was a threat to men because they were used to govern women. By means of the presence of Cathy and Catherine, "the text parodically inscribes the dynamics involved in the gaze and articulates the psychological fact that when a woman looks back she asserts her 'existence' as a subject, her place outside the position of object to which the male gaze relegates her and by which it defines her as 'woman'" (Newman 1032). The fact that a woman's gaze acknowledges her existence is discernible when Heathcliff refuses to look at Cathy. According to Newman, "the novel confronts these dynamics straightforwardly, having Catherine explicitly deny to Heathcliff that he has anything to fear from her gaze: 'I'll not take my eyes from your face, till you look back at me! No, don't turn away! Do look! You'll see nothing to provoke you'" (1032). Cathy makes the reader aware of her power by claiming that Heathcliff has nothing to fear from her gaze. Indirectly, she makes her power visible because apparently Heathcliff does have something to fear since he does not look at her.

Even though Cathy is able to exert power over men, she is unable to govern them all, because those who are more powerful than her are able to oppress her. For example, Catherine is capable of exerting her power over Hareton and Linton, because they are either physically or mentally weaker. Heathcliff, however, is able to suppress her powers by forcing her to marry his son Linton. After Heathcliff asks Cathy to marry his son, she initially rejects the offer and wants to leave the Heights. She tells Linton "I'll burn that door down, but I'll get out" (241). She is afraid to disobey her father by staying away and tells Linton that "I must obey my own [father] and relieve him from this cruel suspense" (Brontë 241). Cathy's defiance against Heathcliff results from her fear of her father. When Heathcliff asks her if she

is afraid she replies with "I am afraid now, because if I stay, papa will be miserable; and how can I endure making him miserable" (Brontë 242). Even though it initially appears as if Cathy acts in a rebellious manner towards Heathcliff, she does no such thing in fact. Her resistance to Heathcliff is in truth the result of her obedience towards her father. Therefore, Cathy does not portray a feminist consciousness.

Instead of fighting Heathcliff, Cathy negotiates with him and gives in by telling him "I'll marry him [Linton] if I may go to Thrushcross Grange afterwards" (Brontë 243). The fact that she gives in portrays the limited power of women in a patriarchal society. Women had to settle with men in order to fulfil their wishes. Cathy is restricted in her freedom. First "she is confined in the house and park of Thrushcross Grange, later more severely in the house and garden at Wuthering Heights" (Ohmann 913). Her domestic education, therefore, does not enable her to have her own will because she is repeatedly confined.

Cathy's obedience towards her father does not allow her to reason anymore because the only thing she can think of is her father's disappointment. According to Rosenberg, "while Catherine declares her free will to marry Linton, Nelly frames the scene as unlawful coercion" (17). Cathy kneels and begs Heathcliff to let her go to the Grange after she marries Linton. Cathy's obedience results in her misery because she has to marry Linton in order to return to the Grange and reunite with her father. The cause of Cathy's fear has derived from her education in which she has been taught to love her father more than herself. Her education does not allow her to develop the skills of reasoning. According to Martineau, "certainly, children whose faculties are developed freely and fairly have an intense relish for reasoning, while the mind remains unwearied" (*HE* 235). Since Cathy is educated by her father she is unable to develop her faculties freely and is therefore less capable of reasoning.

5.3 Cathy's Sensibility

In *Household Education*, Martineau explains the benefits of a domestic education. She claims that it enables "a deeper sensibility" (314). Martineau claims that "teachers should be aware of the fact that the mind of a child is continually acquiring habits of thought, whether by the spontaneous and unguided efforts of its own mind and body, or by following the training of those having the care of it" (*HE* 269-70). In order to prevent children from becoming something other than the teacher or parent want them to become,

> They should continually improve themselves in the art of so guiding the infant dispositions, and the exercises of their charge as to form the disposition as early as possible; and this course of training would preserve the child from every approach to the formation of any other habits than those inculcated by the teacher. (*HE* 270)

A domestic education did not allow children to develop their minds independently because their teachers oppressed certain habits. Children's behaviour was the result of their teacher's restrictions. Cathy's autonomy is also restricted because she is the victim of domestic education.

Throughout Cathy's education her father emphasizes that she should be obedient towards him. Her obedience enables her to base her decisions on feeling and passion instead of reason. Her actions are based on her obedience towards her father, because she has been taught to be obedient. According to Nelly, Cathy's "affection for him was still the chief sentiment in her heart" (Brontë 226). Her father shapes Cathy into the person he wants her to become and oppresses her other virtues, such as reason. Edgar's schooling resulted in a great emphasis on her sensibility. An example of Cathy's emotional outburst is when she sobs and asks Nelly "what have I done?" (Brontë 171). This outburst has been triggered by her fear of disobeying her father. Another instance of a passionate outburst is when "she wept outright;

upset at the bare notion of a relationship with such a clown [Hareton]" (Brontë 173). Cathy repeatedly cries over small matters. Cathy suffers from such emotional outbursts because her father has shaped her into taking the position of a victim of society, instead of teaching her to be an independent woman who has the intellectual and moral qualities to defy the dominant patriarchal culture into which she is born.

5.4 Catherine's Passion versus Cathy's Domestic Education

Both Catherine and her daughter Cathy, to a certain extent, display signs of a feminist consciousness. However, their restricted and domestic education results in a limited power over the dominant patriarchal ideology. Whereas Catherine is more rebellious than Cathy, the latter's actions result in a more preferable outcome than her mother's. Cathy ends up less miserable, because no matter how restricted her education is, she nevertheless is educated whereas Catherine is not provided with any education at all.

Initially, Catherine and Cathy display the same attitude towards men from the lower class, such as Heathcliff and Hareton. Whereas Catherine makes the fatal decision of marrying Edgar instead of Heathcliff, Cathy learns from her mistakes and marries Hareton, who she initially detested. Catherine therefore does show a progress in her moral development by educating and marrying Hareton. The tool which unites Cathy and Hareton is her education because she teaches him to read and write. In educating Hareton, Cathy's affection for him grows whereas before she repelled him. According to Sonstroem, "although, like her mother, she judges unwisely, marrying the wrong, her essential nature and her grounds for ultimate compatibility fall well within the pale of civilization and sociability, as her mother's do not" (Sonstroem 59). Cathy possesses a more favourable nature in comparison to her

mother, because her power lies in her education whereas her mother acquired her power by means of her sexuality.

If one compares the romance between Catherine and Heathcliff, and Cathy and Hareton, the latter relationship does show progress in terms of selfhood, whereas the former leads to the destruction of both characters. According to Joudrey, Brontë "finally locates a mutually enhancing compromise between selfhood and sociality in the relationship of Cathy and Hareton. The two demonstrate that susceptibility to interpersonal exchange proves vital to fostering their autonomy as discrete selves" (168). Cathy and Hareton find a balance between their selfhood and social ambition by supporting each other and being selfless, unlike Catherine. The role of Cathy's education is vital because it allows her to think of others whereas her mother based all of her actions on her selfhood.

Even though Cathy breaks free from Heathcliff, one cannot claim that she has a fully developed feminist consciousness because, as Newman argues, "the transformation envisaged has limits. It involves the domestication of a potent male figure (Hareton), not the release of the woman from the domestic sphere" (1036). Catherine never establishes her freedom because the novel ends in "cosy domesticity" (Newman 1039). According to Wollstonecraft, a woman has complete autonomy if she is provided with the same education as men, which is uncontrolled by men. Even though in Cathy's case, this is not applicable, she does have the advantages of a domestic education in comparison to her mother who lacked an education.

Through both generations Brontë depicts the consequences of women's faulty education system in a male-governed society. In the first generation she portrays the consequences of the lack of education and in the second generation women's restricted education. *Wuthering Heights* is a continuation of Wollstonecraft's ideas concerning an equal education for men and women because it "reflects the repressiveness with which the nineteenth century educated all its young ladies" (Gilbert and Gubar 275). Women need to be

equally educated in order to exercise all of the reasoning faculties, which prevents an emphasis on their sensibility. They will not obtain power through unjust manners and will not act passively.

Conclusion

In response to the great emphasis on women's sensibility by moral philosophers, such as Rousseau, during the late eighteenth and mid-nineteenth century, both Inchbald and Brontë, depict in their novels the faults of a patriarchal society. Inchbald and Brontë created a two generational-storyline in order to illustrate the consequences of women's lack of social and intellectual education in a male-governed society. They created two female protagonists in order to convey to their readers that neither submission to men nor defiance leads to a woman's independence.

In both *A Simple Story* and *Wuthering Heights*, the first generation of female protagonists, Miss Milner and Catherine Earnshaw, more or less reject an intellectual education. During their upbringing they live under the rules of men and choose to defy them. Their rebellious behaviour and defiance against men is the result of their lack of education. Whereas it seems as if Miss Milner and Catherine Earnshaw depict a feminist consciousness by defying men, the motive for their defiance is their desire. They do not defy men because, they want, just as Wollstonecraft, to be as equally educated as men. They defy them because an excess of desire is the result of their upbringing and lack of intellectual education. For Miss Milner it is her meaningless desire to obtain power by means of her body. Catherine's defiance is rather the result of her social ambition. In both cases their desire leads to their downfall because they acquire their power through unjust means.

According to Wollstonecraft, in order to obtain power as a woman, one should have an unrestricted intellectual education and should be brought up in a free environment, uncontrolled by men, in order to develop one's mind freely. An unrestricted education leads to a woman's independence, because it allows women to acquire their strength independently from men. Reasoning skills, developed through a proper unrestricted education, allow women

to obtain power through rightful ways. In Miss Milner and Catherine's case, their faulty education leads to obtaining power through either their sexuality or desire to climb the social ladder. Inevitably, both Miss Milner and Catherine do not gain their freedom and become objects of men because they acquire their "power" through unjust manners.

Their desire for power is the result of their inferior position in society. Miss Milner wants to become superior by defying men. Catherine wants to climb the social ladder in order to have a place in society, which still leads to her subordination to men. Miss Milner and Catherine's defiance ultimately leads to their downfall, because their faulty education does not enable them their reasoning skills. Women's lack of reason and emphasis on sensibility results, according to Wollstonecraft, in immoral decisions, and grants them limited power, which in the case of Miss Milner and Catherine is discernable.

Whereas Inchbald and Brontë depict the consequences of a lack of women's education in the first generation, the second generation allows them to portray the result of women's obedience and faulty education, which leads to their passivity. Contrary to their mother, Matilda in *A Simple Story*, and Cathy Linton in *Wuthering Heights* are obedient and educated. They acquire a women's education conforming to the eighteenth- and nineteenth- century standards, respectively. Both Matilda and Cathy also obey their father, which is the patriarchal voice in both novels.

Matilda and Cathy's obedience and education creates a great emphasis on their sensibility. They have an excess of feeling which suppresses their reasoning skills. As a result of their social education, Matilda and Cathy are taught manners before morals, which does not allow them to reason. Throughout their upbringing they are taught to obey men, which leads to their objectification of men. Both Inchbald and Brontë illustrate in the second generation plot-structure that the standardized women's education only realizes women's dependence on

men and produces an excess of feeling in them. They are by no means capable of acquiring power on their own.

Remarkably, *Wuthering Heights* is a continuation of Wollstonecraft's vision on education even though it was written a half century after Wollstonecraft's publication of the *Vindication*. This indicates that women's education did not make any real progress between the late-eighteenth and mid-nineteenth century, because both Inchald in 1791, and Brontë in 1847, depict women's suppression in two different manners in order to reveal the faults of their society. Through their two-generational storyline, they demonstrate that women were unable to break free from the institutionalized patriarchal ideologies because their society and faulty education did not permit them to acquire their complete autonomy. Inchbald and Brontë disregard More's and Martineau's ideas and illustrate that their society allows women to become either "abject slaves or capricious tyrants," following Wollstonecraft's ideas (*VRW* 66).

Neither an "abject slave," as in the case of Matilda and Cathy, nor a "capricious tyrant," as in the case of Miss Milner and Catherine, grants a woman her independence. The neglect or lack of women's education leads to amoral choices, an excessive sensibility, and the wrong ways in obtaining power as a result of their desire. Women should not make use of their sexuality in order to exert their power over men, as it will not grant them their happiness and independence. According to Wollstonecraft, a woman's real power lies in knowledge acquired through an intellectual education, which is equal to men's education. An equal education allows them to study every subject, which will not create an emphasis on their sensibility. Next to an equal intellectual education, women should be brought up without any confinements or restrictions in order to develop their mind freely. An awakened, enlightened mind will prevent them from obtaining power for the wrong reasons and making amoral choices.

Wollstonecraft's demand for a revolution in female manners and reform of women's education has evolved from women's suppressed role in society, which is illustrated in both *A Simple Story and Wuthering Heights*. In order for women to break free from men, women's education should be reformed. According to Wollstonecraft, "the most perfect education … is such an exercise of the understanding as is best calculated to strengthen the body and form the heart, or in other words, to enable the individual to attain such habits of virtues as will render it independent" (*VRW* 5). Just as Wollstonecraft and her contemporary feminists, Inchbald and Brontë contributed to the much-debated topic of women's education throughout the Romantic Period. Even though the female protagonists in *A Simple Story* and *Wuthering Heights* do not develop a feminist consciousness, and fail to attain an equal education in order to be independent of men, Inchbald's and Brontë's novels do convey a feminist moral: both novels reveal how a patriarchal society needs to repress women's independence and equality through prescribed gender roles, and religious, social and intellectual restrictions. As such the novels reveal the faultiness in late eighteenth- and early nineteenth-century society's educational system.

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