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THE (DUST) DEVIL IN LITERATURE:
AN ANALYSIS OF EVIL IN EMILY BRONTË'S *WUTHERING HEIGHTS*

Porto Alegre
2022

GRADUAÇÃO



Pontifícia Universidade Católica
do Rio Grande do Sul

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Monograph presented as a partial requirement for obtaining a Teaching Degree in Language Arts: English from the Language Arts: English course at the Pontifical Catholic University of Rio Grande do Sul.

Advisor: Débora Amorim Garcia Ardais, MA

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ABSTRACT

Of the objects of human interest and bewilderment, the concept of Evil is one that has structured belief patterns and influenced cultural practices all over the globe. Granted it still detains a sphere of mystery around it, Georges Bataille explored the topic inside the literary circle in *Literature and Evil*. While analysing Emily Brontë's *Wuthering Heights*, Bataille characterised Evil as a psychic phenomenon. Attempting to expand on this idea, the present work seeks to analyse how Evil is represented in Brontë's novel. Seeking support in the fields of psychoanalysis and literary theory, this study concerns itself with establishing a definition for Evil, scrutinising literature's relation with Evil, and analysing how Evil is manifested in *Wuthering Heights*.

Keywords: psychoanalysis; psychodynamic; transference; character; reader.

RESUMO

Dos objetos de interesse e espanto humanos, o conceito de Mal é um que estruturou padrões de crenças e influenciou práticas culturais ao redor do mundo. Reconhecendo que ele ainda detém uma esfera de mistério à sua volta, Georges Bataille explorou o tópico dentro do círculo literário em *A literatura e o mal*. Enquanto analisava *O morro dos ventos uivantes*, de Emily Brontë, Bataille caracterizou o Mal como um fenômeno psíquico. Tentando expandir essa ideia, o presente trabalho visa analisar como o Mal é representado no romance de Brontë. Buscando suporte nos campos da psicanálise e da teoria literária, este estudo se interessa em estabelecer uma definição para o Mal, examinar a relação da literatura com o Mal, e analisar como o Mal se manifesta em *O morro dos ventos uivantes*.

Palavras-chave: psicanálise; psicodinâmico; transferência; personagem; leitor.

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1 INTRODUCTION

The concept of Evil is one that has impacted human culture from times untraceable. Whether sparking fear or fascination, it helped shape working human dynamics all over the world, and its underlying morality has influenced various kinds of practices and products to this day. Present in topics from laws to artistic productions, however, it still retains a certain mystery to it.

The famous French philosopher, Georges Bataille (1897 – 1962), explored the topic in *Literature and Evil* (1985), analysing its influence in the literary circle. Among Kafka and Proust, he analysed Emily Brontë, characterising Evil as a psychic phenomenon. Attempting to expand on his study, the present work seeks to analyse the representation of Evil in Brontë's novel, *Wuthering Heights*. As the specific aims for this study, we concern ourselves with: firstly, establish a definition for Evil; secondly, scrutinise how literature interacts with Evil; and lastly, analyse how Evil is manifested in *Wuthering Heights*.

Starting with this introduction (1), this study is divided into 5 chapters, the rest being structured as follows. In chapter 2, we examine Evil from a psychological standpoint, using theories from the psychoanalytic field to estimate a definition for Evil. In chapter 3, we advance into the literary field to understand how literature operates under the influence of Evil, exploring pertinent elements in it to base our analysis. In chapter 4, we approach Brontë's novel, analysing the principal manifestations of Evil, and their impacts. Lastly, in chapter 5, we present the final considerations taken from this research, followed by the references used as basis for the present paper.

2 ON THE PHENOMENON OF EVIL

Of the objects of human interest and bewilderment, the concept of *Evil* – and the counterpart it plays against *Good* – is one that has structured belief patterns in various parts of the globe. The morality it implies is built within contemporary society in the form of legal systems, social beliefs, and artistic and academic production. In this chapter, the reader shall find an exploration of the definition of Evil as according to psychoanalytic theories and literary philosophies.

Among the forementioned productions, the French philosopher Georges Bataille explored the subject in his work *Literature and Evil* (1985), where he states his belief that “Evil – an acute form of Evil – which [literature] expresses has a sovereign value for us” (BATAILLE, 1985, p. ix). In this work, Bataille analyses prolific authors from the 18th to the 20th century, such as Baudelaire, Proust, and Kafka, looking for evidence to prove the value and influence of Evil in literature. According to the author, “Literature is not innocent. It is guilty and should admit itself so” (ibid, p. x), and, as such, it demands a closer investigation. But a question lingers: what *is* “Evil”?

To address the topic, the French philosopher first inspects the author Emily Brontë and her novel *Wuthering Heights*¹ ([1847], 1994). While commenting on her work, Bataille (1985, p. 29) arrives at an important point for debating Evil: it is not a concept that is “irrevocably opposed to the natural order”, but rather one that “exists within the limits of reason”. It becomes, therefore, imperative that we first attempt to grasp a basic understanding of how the mind works to proceed with the topic at hand.

2.1 A BRIEF INTRODUCTION TO THE PSYCHODYNAMIC MODEL

When discussing psychological phenomenology, it is nearly impossible to avoid the name of Sigmund Freud. The *father of psychoanalysis* incites debates (sometimes heated ones) whenever he is evoked. What is undeniable is that his theories enabled a better theorization of an old philosophical field as he attempted to describe the psychic structure in the form of *conscious* and *unconscious* (hereafter referred to as *Cs* and *Ucs*), the embryo of his legacy.

¹ For the purposes of preserving the organicity of the present work, all aspects related to the analysis of Emily Brontë’s work will be limited to chapter four.

According to Sigmund Freud,

the psyche's division between what is conscious and what is unconscious constitutes the fundamental premise of psychoanalysis, and only it enables understanding the pathological processes of the mind and finding a place for them in science (FREUD, 1987, p. 27, translated from Portuguese²).

Holding onto this premise, he explored consciousness in many of his works, but it was in his 1923 original piece *Das Ich und das Es* (The Ego and the Id) that he developed it on a dynamic lens, incorporating the idea of a *pre-conscious* (Pcs) and linking the theme with the concepts that named said essay. As a means of enabling the discussion of the forementioned terms, we must first clarify what Sigmund Freud's conceptions of them are.

Freud defines being conscious (Cs) as the most immediately evoked concept: a transitional state where ideas and experiences come to a subject's awareness before carrying out their ephemerality (FREUD, 1987). Once an idea fades, it is cast into another corner of the mind, which Freud defines as the unconscious (Ucs). This last conception, however, presents a forked definition as the idea of a Pcs might be opaque between the Cs and the Ucs minds.

Although Freud acknowledges the distinction of the Ucs and the Pcs, he also formulates that this division is merely descriptive, but that "in a dynamic sense, [there is] only one" (FREUD, 1987, p. 29) unconscious. Expressively, what distinguishes these two states of latency is the idea of *repression*. Freud elucidates that "there are ideas or mental processes too powerful [...] that may produce all sorts of effects in the mental life [...], although they themselves do not become conscious" (ibid, p. 28). This force of resistance to an idea being brought into awareness – into Cs – can have a range of motives that are particular to each individual, depending on the power unconsciously attributed to said idea. On this account, the Ucs is described as the mental space to where ideas are strongly repressed, while the Pcs is formed by ideas that may be accessed more easily given appropriate conditions for it are met (ibid).

Admittedly, as much as the description of said notions assists in comprehending the structure of the psyche, it does little to understand its processes and operation. Acknowledging it, Freud formulated the concept of Ego, a mental instance to which "consciousness finds itself attached: the Ego controls the approaches to [psychic]

² The exemplar of *The Id and the Ego* analyzed for this research is in Portuguese. Let it be known that the quotes drawn from it were translated by the author of the present research. We shall restrain from further mentions of this henceforth to maintain conciseness.

mobility” (FREUD, 1987, p. 30). In other words, it is the Ego that regulates the conscious mind’s activity, implying its sovereignty over the process of repression as later stated by the author in

from the Ego so do these repressions derive, by means of which it seeks to erase certain tendencies from the mind, not simply from conscience, but also from other forms of ability and competence (FREUD, 1987, p. 30).

Yet, it is important to note that, despite it being responsible for repression, it does not control the access to ideas made Ucs, which are subordinate to the external input of sensory perceptions (FREUD, 1987). This implies that there are parts of the Ego that are also Pcs and Ucs, and, thus, there cannot be a direct correlation between the Ego and Cs.

Another example of this is noted when Freud says, “we recognize that the Ucs does not coincide with the repressed; it is still true that all that is repressed is Ucs, but not all that is Ucs is repressed” (1987, p.31). If the Ego is the operator of repression, then that which it represses is stored in an Ucs part of it. What is notable in his claim, however, is that there is the insinuation of a distinct psychic instance that encompasses another part of the Ucs mind that is not the product of repression. To this other entity, Freud attributes the name of Id.

He states that “the Ego is that part of the Id which was modified by the direct influence of the external world, by means of the [perception]-Cs” (FREUD, 1987, p. 38) dynamic. As such, the Ego is a projection of the psyche’s surface, the part of it that establishes direct contact with the mundane world and the sensory perceptions derived from it. It is, therefore, a part of the psyche that was indoctrinated to be social and form good relations with the object world.

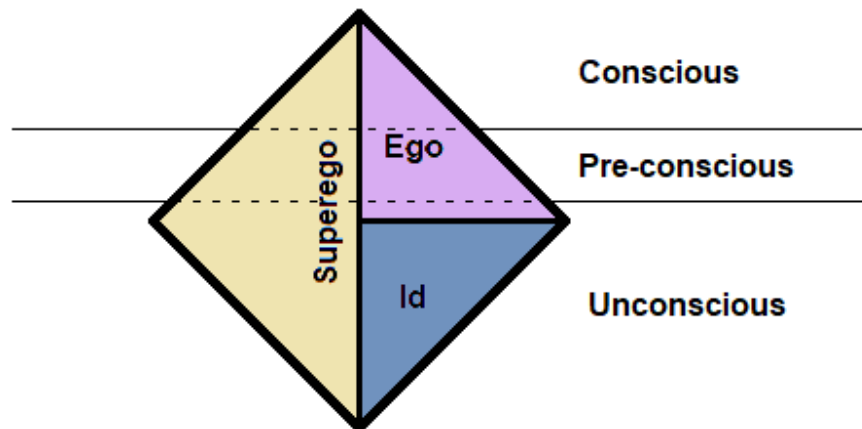
Nevertheless, if on one hand this *indoctrination* of the Ego assists in the sociability of the self, on the other hand it is quite frustrating for the Id. That is because the Id is said to work in a pleasure – or passion – instinct, a principle of instant gratification. It is the Id who serves as a powerhouse to the Ego. Freud (1987) compares these two psychic instances to a horseman (Ego) and his horse (Id), where the force of motion is granted by the horse but controlled by the horseman. The horseman, in turn, depends on the horse to move. Proportionately, the Ego utilizes forces only loaned from the Id, given it “has the habit of transforming in action the will of the Id as if it was its own” (ibid, p. 39). In this sense, the Ego’s reasoning works as

a double-edged blade, preserving the self's social life, but also serving as a toll to the Id's force.

At a first glance, this analogy might seem weak; the conclusion is obvious after all: all the horseman has to do is control the horse while maintaining common sense, right? That is where Freud introduces a complication to the system: the Superego.

According to the father of psychoanalysis, in the early stages of childhood, when the Ego is still under development, a child sees no harm in acting in favour of that which feels pleasurable to them. But then, the idea of social cues is implemented in the child's life, and they have to conform to external rules. These rules are imprinted on the child's mind as a reactionary force to the Id's behaviour that is considered socially unacceptable (FREUD, 1987). As a result, this worldly morality assumes the form of an ideal to be sought in order to be accepted in society. The Superego is, consequently, the Ego's ideal (ibid), a force largely – but not exclusively – Ucs that seeks to silence the Id.

Figure 1 – Psychodynamic model schema



Source: developed by the author

This is what Freud called the psychodynamic model, a system of drive and resistance. The Ego struggles to conciliate what is correct and what it wants in a tug of war between Id and Superego. Hence, this model describes how the psyche is conflicted by design, alluding to the inevitable strife of the human condition. And finally, with that in mind, we may proceed to discuss the original topic: Evil.

2.2 ON OBJECT-RELATION DISTURBANCES AND THE DEFINITION OF EVIL

The field of psychoanalysis, as formulated by Sigmund Freud, enabled the discussion of psychological phenomena in more scientific circles. His theories have reached far over the globe to this day, inciting the development of new theories that expand on his. Among the names that can be evoked, there is Anna Aragno, a psychoanalyst and former ballerina, who provides a closer look into the evolution of psychoanalytical thought. In her 2014 study – *The roots of evil* –, she seeks to understand the essence of Evil and why people engage in said behaviour. We shall make use of it as an attempt of characterizing Evil.

As stated in the previous topic, the human condition presents an internal dissonance between two referential points: the Id and the Superego. This conception exists at the heart of the object-relational school of psychoanalysis, which concerns itself with this shift in perspective between the objective reality and the relations we establish with it. Aragno draws on the name of Melanie Klein to help elucidate the idea in

we exist in two planes of experience, two coexisting worlds: an inner, tied to past introjects and imagoes, and an outer, tied to current reality. It is impossible to keep these two worlds completely separate; they constantly interact and overlap (KLEIN, 1932 apud ARAGNO, 2014, p. 256).

Klein brings an interesting argument, for she acknowledges the antithesis present in the mind, but also stresses the co-dependency between Id and Superego. Consequently, superseding Freud's conception, the object-relational school proposes this dichotomy be seen as a conflict among external and internal worlds; the objective one versus the theorized version of the mind. The important part in Klein's statement, however, is the interaction and overlapping amid these two.

If we were to recapitulate Freud's psychodynamic model once more, we could raise the question: what causes this interference between the Id and the Superego? Between the inner and outer worlds? This is where the concept of morality³ appears. In the Ego's exercise of theorizing the world to make sense of it and establish good object-relations, morality has a direct interference on these relations, shaping the Ego's perception. An example of this is present in one of Freud's essays in 1916:

³ Morality here is to be understood not only as something based on morals, but as a larger cultural definition that includes theology and law as well.

guilt antecedes delinquent acts, which are done in order to rationalize a preexisting primary sense of culpability. The problem in delinquency is not the absence of a superego but its primitive, punitive nature (Freud, 1916 apud ARAGNO, 2014, p. 257).

If guilt – and by default the idea of delinquency – precedes the action itself, so does Evil, since it stems from morality. The problem with delinquency being the Superego's punitive nature is that it presents a contradiction. As stated in the previous subchapter, the Superego's purpose is to serve as an ideal for the Ego to preserve good relations. But if it turns against the very principle that governs it, then there must be a disparity in the way the Ego processes said morals. Thus, to avoid such acts of delinquency, there is a need for the psyche to conciliate its theory with the object world.

To explain the driving forces that motivate humans to act in a certain way, Freud (1930 apud Aragno, 2014) formulated the concepts of Eros and Thanatos, Life and Death drives, respectively. The antithesis present among these two concepts being their objectives, Eros is described as a force of life and creativity, whereas Thanatos is a force of death and destruction. Freud articulates that “this aggressive instinct is the derivative and main representative of the death instinct which we have found alongside of Eros and which shares world-dominion with it” (ibid, p. 255), acknowledging that despite their opposing goals, Eros and Thanatos do complement each other.

Therefore, it must be noted here that although these two forces present opposite objectives, they are not antagonistic; it would be exceedingly easy to place them on both ends of a spectrum and designate Thanatos as the definition of Evil. Let us take as an example a hypothetical married couple. To say that Eros was what brought them together and characterize that as *good* would not be incorrect; after all, it *is* a driving force of love, and love is generally considered good. However, should this couple find themselves having marital problems, to the point where they present more harmful limitations to each other than good, calling a plausible end to their relationship *Evil* would be incorrect. Thanatos, as a destructive drive, motivated them to break away from their marital status. As such, they do not compete, as they do not present, in essence, an assault against each other, but rather exist in shared world-dominion as stated by Freud.

Provided the forementioned concepts do not seem to be sufficient for a proper characterization of Evil, Aragno (2014) brings yet another author to the discussion: the integrationist Erich Fromm. Fromm (1973 apud Aragno, 2014) abandons Freud's

distinction of Good and Evil, proposing that a distinction be made between rational and irrational passions. He defines as

rational any thought, feeling, or act that promotes the full realization and growth of the whole of which it is a part, and as irrational that which weakens, thwarts, or destroys, the whole (FROMM, 1973 apud ARAGNO, 2014, p. 259).

He adds that within this destructive spectrum there are traits that might be considered ambiguous, but that ultimately present damaging outcomes to human life, such as procrastination, arrogance, or defiance (ibid). In this sense, irrationality could be linked to Freud's concept of delinquency. If the Superego's purpose is indeed to serve as an ideal for good human relations, then this antisocial behaviour is a disturbance to the Ego's reasoning. Rational drives could be seen here as those which are socially-encompassing, whereas irrational ones would correspond to those which sustain an antisocial discourse, scorning the existence of the whole.

In retrospect, Evil cannot be reduced to fit a binary definition where Eros and Thanatos are ends on a spectrum. Thanatos is not inherently evil for it is also a drive that recycles life, and both Eros and Thanatos are complementary driving forces of change. Thus, what could be viewed as *Evil* is the negation of the socially-encompassing change proper to Eros.

We may take prejudice as an example. Presumably, most people would agree with the argument that prejudice is *evil*. Well, in this lens, what is prejudice if not the negation of change in perspective on the existence of the whole? Is racism not the refusal of seeing people of distinct colour as part of the whole? Is homophobia not the denial of changing perspective on homosexuals? Is misogyny not the male rejection to accepting women as equals? We are convinced that the presented arguments are sufficient to claim that here, in the preservation of antisocial thought, lies the root of Evil.

As an extension, true Evil is the executive product of said mentality as carried out by a conflicted Ego. Its inevitable driving force, Thanatos, is merely a tool bedevilled by its unfortunate denomination; it is a scapegoat to the antisocial root of Evil. Besides, since morals are socially established, by definition, Evil consists of an attack against morality, which implies that this antisocial conflict between the objective and theoretical world may be adjusted.

Lastly, as of yet, we have managed to establish a rough characterization of the phenomenon of Evil. What remains to be seen, as intended by this research, is how literature is connected to it, and *if* it can assist in re-educating the Superego. Going forward, we shall turn this study to theories more familiar to the literary field.

3 THE DIABOLIC (IN) LITERATURE

In chapter 2, we analysed how the subject of Evil can be explained through a psychoanalytical lens, and that exploration enabled us to estimate a definition for it. We also observed how Freud's theoretical production impacted the scientific field, sparking considerable expansion in the discussion of psychological phenomenology. From this point on, we shall scrutinize how the previously explored discussion relates to the literary field, and how literature can assist in improving human relationship with Evil.

Attempting to establish a somewhat smooth transition between topics, we evaluate the contributions of Roland Barthes. As a literary scholar with psychoanalytic influences, Barthes provides prolific arguments for this study. To start this chapter, we draw on Barthes' (1977) claims of reader-protagonism in interpreting literature, considering the process of reading is also a psychological one. Approaching it, we seek to explain how the process of interpretation works, and why we can consider literature *diabolic*, according to our definition of Evil.

Additionally, to assess Brontë's novel, we dive further into the literary field, seeking to investigate theories that facilitate our analysis. To do so, we must first understand not only how interpretation functions, but also which elements in a novel influence the reader to achieve meaning. By the end of this chapter, we hope to demonstrate how literature establishes a relationship with the reader, and, most importantly, to answer the question: *can* literature amend Evil?

3.1 BARGAINING WITH DEATH

As observed in the previous chapter, Sigmund Freud's contributions were undeniably influential to scholars of various areas that sought to legitimise the discussion of psychological processes. In the field of literature, Roland Barthes is one of the most widely impactful authors to derive from the theory of psychoanalysis in his works. Throughout his academic career, Barthes studied reading and interpretation extensively, exploring subjects in and outside of literature.

In one of his most famous essays, *The death of the author*, Barthes (1977) defends the emancipation of the text from its author. According to him, "the text is a

tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture” (BARTHES, 1977, p. 146), a place where “it is language which speaks, not the author; to write is [...] to reach that point where only language acts” (ibid, p. 143). Here, Barthes makes explicit his position in favour of language’s supremacy in writing. The work of a writer, in this sense, is curating previously emitted gestures of meaning that are never original into another tissue of voices.

Leaving no doubt that the author is not present in a text – only language, which is prior to the author –, he complements that “writing is the destruction of every voice, of every point of origin [...], the negative where all identity is lost” (BARTHES, 1977, p. 142). Well, since identity cannot be traced back to an author or belong to an object, as a book, there is only one logical place for it to lie: the reader, the one who engages in the office of interpretation. The roles in literature, as previously believed, are inverted, and Barthes is categorical in concluding that “the birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the Author” (1977, p. 148). Literature is, therefore, parricidal by design, and now orphaned, it must rely on a reader to bargain for its meaning with the same death which consumed its author.

Considering the text as this plural tissue of voices, Roland Barthes (1977, p. 160) states in another of his essays (*From work to text*) that “for [monistic] philosophy, plural is the Evil”. This claim could seem problematic, almost antagonistic, for the purposes of this research in light of the definition of Evil established in chapter 2. However, we should note that Barthes classifies plurality as Evil for *monistic* philosophies; plurality challenges the idea of a single truth sustained by them. Conversely, the antisocial thought preserved by the Superego, from which we have established Evil emerges, is also its truth. Challenging this monological discourse present in both monistic and antisocial thought can, and will, reveal their points of inconsistency.

If on the one hand, this is a monistic philosophy’s doom, on the other hand, it is a hope of disrupting the Superego’s insistence on antisocial behaviour. Barthes (1977) even claims that the text, from a monological viewpoint, seems “demoniacal” for its plurality. As a fortunate change in denomination, we propose that it be seen as *diabolic*, opposed to *demoniacal*, since these would represent a punishment and a source to Evil, respectively. Also, resuming the definition of Evil as explored on the previous chapter – that it is an antisocial impulse originated from the Superego’s resistant irrational discourse –, there is nothing literature can do about it on the plane of action,

but it *can* interact with the reader on the theoretical plane of the mind, from which Evil emerges (its root).

Acknowledging it has now been established by Barthes (1977) that the literary text is independent from an author, it can be considered a separate theoretical body with which a reader may try to engage in interpreting. Nevertheless, obeying a principle of verisimilitude, the literary text only motions to the object world, and that generates estrangement for the reader. And, since a reader has no choice if not to use what background they have to make sense of this other world, the literary, they are coerced to put their preestablished theories in check.

Traversing this hell of interpretation, a reader must face the inconsistencies prevalent in their internal theories when projecting these onto the text's insinuations of a world. Granted the text, as this theoretical body, does not pose an apparent threat to the reader's conception of their object world, they let their guard down to the reassessment of their theories. This process exposes inner-outer conflicts, and, as a result, the reader may establish all kinds of relations with the novel's world.

In one of his essays, *Studies in hysteria*, Sigmund Freud mentions a similar phenomenon happening in the psychotherapeutic context. He argues that when a patient is being investigated by a doctor to uncover pathogenic ideas, this patient may transfer their feelings onto said doctor (FREUD, 2004) – the one who attempts to access the pathogenic idea – in an event which Freud denominated as *transference*. He clarifies that this event is the fruit of a false connection, and that “the patient will fall victim to every new occurrence of this depiction” (ibid, p. 294) once it has been drawn from the Ucs to which it had been repressed. Freud exemplifies this in

the origin of a particular hysterical symptom in one of my patients was a wish that she had felt many years previously and immediately relegated to her unconscious, namely that the man she was talking to at the time would just take swift and firm action and give her a kiss. Once, after the end of a session, a wish like this arose in my patient with regard to myself (FREUD, 2004, p. 294).

Conversely, on a literary context, it is the text the one who tries to access these pathogenic ideas. Ergo, this process proves much more inevitable than in psychotherapy, for a text contains various points of indetermination which the reader must fill to achieve an interpretation. Granted, as forementioned, the reader must project their personal background and emotions in the literary text as a codex to

decipher it, literature is very demanding of its reader. Barthes talks about a procedure similar to this deciphering in *S/Z*

Without the – always anterior – Book and Code, no desire, no jealousy: Pygmalion is in love with a link in the code of statuary; Paolo and Francesca love each other according to the passion of Lancelot and Guinevere (Dante, *Inferno*, V): itself a lost origin, writing becomes the origin of emotion (BARTHES, 1990, p. 73-74).

According to him, even the significance of emotions is not free from the precedence of language. Thus, by engaging with a novel, its reader must not only revisit their reason, but the emotions evoked with it as well. Simultaneously, while attempting to conciliate both worlds, the reader's and the novel's, the reader inhabits a space in-between them. Yet, as Freud concludes on transference

The patients, too, gradually learnt to see that these kinds of transference to the person of the doctor were a matter of a compulsion and an illusion that would melt away when the analysis was brought to a close (FREUD, 2004, p. 295).

Hence, since the novel's world is bound to finish by the end of the story, the reader must return from whatever transferences they may have established and reassess the way in which they view their world. By the end of this harsh task of diving into the twister that is interpretation, the reader returns with their newfound conceptual knowledge to be assimilated.

Admittedly, although it is rough to estimate the outcome of this return, the job of disrupting the stasis of monological thought was already accomplished by then. Literature, as this charming dust devil of interpretation, could disrupt, or even eradicate, the root of Evil along the process. Whether this process is received as therapeutic or as torturing will depend solely on the reader and their willingness to engage with literature. And finally, after having characterised the diabolic role literature plays in a reader's mind, we now turn to more palpable theories that may assist in the analysis of literature.

3.2 THE TOUCHSTONE IN INDETERMINATION

The influence of psychoanalysis in Roland Barthes' work is apparent. Undoubtedly, he presents valuable arguments for exploring the relation between reader and text. However, Barthes can only take this research so far, as he lacks the analytical rigour to assess the literary text. In an attempt to find a literary theory that enables a more concrete approach to *Wuthering Heights*, the text in focus, we reach Catherine Gallagher and her theories about fiction.

Regarding the novel genre, Gallagher (2009, p. 629, translated from Portuguese⁴) states that despite the obvious, that it is fictitious prose, "everyone knows how present the acts of pretending are in our culture". Much of our culture is divided between what is fiction and what is non-fiction, you have but to enter a bookshop to notice it, but, as stated by Gallagher (2009), it has not always been this way. For about two hundred years or more, the novel "masked its own fictionality with verisimilitude and realism, [...] presenting frequent pretensions of veracity" (ibid, p. 630). We must not regress too far in time to recall Gustave Flaubert being sharply interrogated about the real identity of his novel's main character, *Madame Bovary*.

This example demonstrates why contemporary culture concerns itself so deeply with distinguishing fiction and non-fiction. As stated by Barthes (1977, p. 142) on the previous section, "writing is the destruction of every voice, of every point of origin", and as such, it is virtually impossible to attest for the veracity of a text that follows principles of verisimilitude. Thus, the line that separates fiction from non-fiction is quite thin when it comes to textual records; life and fiction overlap at some point.

According to Gallagher (2009, p. 634), what grants the novel this believability is, paradoxically, the lack of a worldly reference; "the novel opens, little by little, the conceptual space proper to invention, while seemingly restraining its practice". By adopting this non-referentiality, the novel abandons the specific in favour of the species, "these works don't talk about anyone in particular, [...] as a result, none of their statements can be considered true or false" (ibid, p. 635). Thus, what governs the narrative, in a novel, is its plausibility. Gallagher uses a sentence from *Joseph*

⁴ Similar to Freud's study in chapter 2, the exemplar of *The culture of novel* (MORETTI, 2009) analysed, from which Gallagher theory was taken, is in Portuguese, and quotations extracted from it have been translated by the author of the present research. Again, to maintain conciseness, we shall refrain from further mentions of this henceforth.

Andrews, the narrator from Henry Fielding's novel, to illustrate this process in "I do not describe men, but customs; not individuals, but species" (FIELDLING apud GALLAGHER, 2009, p. 635).

However, this loose referentiality described so far is also theoretically loose, for it would be naïve to just accept *vagueness* as an element of the novel. The reader must have something particular to hold on to, something which they might identify with on an intimate level – and possibly even establish transference. Admitting to this plausibility, Gallagher (2009, p. 638) defends it on the premise of "reducing to a minimum its range of reference". The points of non-referentiality, therefore, should be vague enough so that a reader can fill – or project – into those gaps, but also narrow enough as to feel personal.

Gallagher later expands on it, citing John Frow to indicate that "the representation of conscience is essential to fiction" (FROW apud GALLAGHER, 2009, p. 655). In this sense, given the near-sovereignty of the characters to the construction and motivation of a narrative (subordinate only to the narrator and the reader respectively), they become the most obvious objects of transference for the reader. Considering there is no real *person* in a novel, just as there is no author, Gallagher talks not about a character, but rather a "character effect", defined by her as

the impression, consciously illusory, of a preexisting creature with many layers of existence, and with exteriority and interiority of its own. We have the impression of being in the presence of the multiple strata that compose a person, but without the usual deterrents that interpose our conscience (GALLAGHER, 2009, p. 652).

Along this line, the personified illusion known as the character is but an abstract amount of textual resources that are unified by a name, and as an element of the text, it is inevitably and purposely full of indetermination. Facing this indetermination, the reader projects what they feel would be the most coherent to the profile insinuated by the text for that *character*, and it is only in contrast with these all-too-human projections of the reader that these linked features take on the form of a fictional *person* (GALLAGHER, 2009). In all aspects, Gallagher (2009, p. 653) adds, "the characters in a novel are finished and, at the same time, inevitably incomplete".

Thus, given a character is under no circumstance separate from the reader, the sense of familiarity provided by it causes the reader to "be invaded by a pleasing sensation" (ibid, p.652). In fact, the reader desires to identify with the text (ibid), and

this, added to the fact that no real repercussion is assumed by the Ego, facilitates reader-to-character transference. Subsequently, this involvement lowers the reader's guard, allowing for the reassessment of topics evoked by the characters.

Far from noticing their own ego fragmented by this experience, the readers of a novel are moved by the desire of seeing themselves as flexible and long-lasting subjects with multiple possibilities of identification (GALLAGHER, 2009, p. 656).

As a result, it is the characters, or the character effect, that are the touchstone of the novel. The emotive power of the character "derives from [...] the intersection, in it, of an illusory cognoscibility with apparent depth" (ibid, p.652), but this depth of character is only ever inferred by the reader. Also, when projecting to fill these gaps of interpretation, the reader calls to Cs elements from their Pcs that are closest to the references in the text. If Evil resides in the reader, literature is sure to draw it out, and it is the character the diabolic tool of extraction.

In this sense, the literary is much more present in what is unsaid, than in what is actually said. Literature *is* the unsaid. The text serves as a faded map for the reader, but what the reader actually navigates is their own conscience, with the characters as their compass. The connections established between reader and character, although inspired by emotion, are false, as are the ones in the process of transference, but the by-product of this relation has a real effect in the reader's conscience. In the following chapter, we shall analyse how *Wuthering Heights* presents this cartography, seeking to understand the underlying reader-to-character relations in it and how these can collaborate to the dissolution of Evil's foundation.

4 THE WUTHERING MIRROR

Described by Georges Bataille (1985, p. 16) as “the most beautiful and most profoundly violent love story”, we reach *Wuthering Heights*. The author, Emily Brontë, is known for having been a reserved person, with literature as her company. According to Bataille (ibid, p. 15), Brontë “had a profound experience of the abyss of Evil”, living in a sort of silence which, it seemed, “only literature could disrupt”. Avoiding speculation, if she sought to attune for, exorcise or make sense of an ineffable kind of Evil which may have dwelt within her, it matters not to us.

As a piece of gothic literature, *Wuthering Heights* (1994) tells a double story: a story of life and death, of love and hatred. However, as its reader might realise, these subjects are not antithetical among each other, but rather coexist in writhing cacophony in the novel. The dissonating topics are slowly revealed as the reader discovers, between the real and the imaginary, the vengeful story behind its inhospitable setting.

Additionally, on that note, is there a most fitting expression for Evil if not vengeance? In this chapter, we are going to explore how these topics are manifested in the novel, and what impacts they present, through its characters and their dynamics. Then, we shall analyse the possible relations a reader might establish with them, as well as the product of this unilateral exchange.

4.1 THE TOUCHSTONES OF EVIL

As stated at the beginning of this research, Georges Bataille (1985, p. 29) claims that the concept of Evil is one that “exists within the limits of reason”, revealing the psychological nature of this phenomenon. Given the definition of Evil established on section 2.2, the root of Evil can only be observed inside conscience. This could pose a problem to our analysis, for the field of the mind is way too abstract to be observed. Luckily, Gallagher (2009) points out that fiction holds the benefit of frequently providing the reader with insight on the character’s mind, solving the problem of observance, whereas language solves the problem of abstractness.

As previously demonstrated in chapter 3, John Frow (apud GALLAGHER, 2009, 655) states that “the representation of conscience is essential to fiction”, illustrating the importance of the character to the novel. Consequently, considering the novel is

constructed on characters' stories and motivated by their actions, this conscience mimicry made possible by the character effect seems to be the logical route for assessing Evil. Going forward, we shall focus on the *three* most prominent characters of *Wuthering Heights*.

4.1.1 *Lockwood & Nelly Dean*

As seen on the previous chapter, the characters, from the reader's vantagepoint, are the most apparent objects of transference in the novel. Above them – yet still second to the reader – lies the narrator. This figure serves as a *gatekeeper* of language, which proves addressing it indispensable, especially in the novel at hand.

As a work of gothic literature, *Wuthering Heights* tells a double story – an explicit and an occult one. The narrator, curiously, takes on the same duality as the novel, as its spotlight is shared among two characters: Lockwood and Ellen 'Nelly' Dean. When it comes to a narrator that shares in the character effect, Gallagher (2009, p. 653) states that it "maintains the illusion of opacity of the characters, making them vehicles essential to the articulation of uncertainty". As such, the narration of both Lockwood and Nelly is unreliable, for they hold motivations of their own, chiefly Nelly who is closer to the story.

Approaching this double figure, we first encounter Lockwood, the unfortunate tenant of Thrushcross Grange. From the first moment this narrator appears, the old landlord – Heathcliff – makes it austere clear that, had he had the choice, Lockwood would not be welcomed at the estate. Still, despite the dull reception "uttered with closed teeth" (BRONTË, 1994, p. 19), he seems to embrace a sort of civilised obliviousness regarding Heathcliff.

Initially, Lockwood inspires a kind of respect in the reader as his first impressions of the host are very mannerly; he avoids raising assumptions about Heathcliff's character based on preliminary interactions. The narrator prompts the reader to a state of interest in Heathcliff's figure, claiming that he "felt interested in a man who seemed more exaggeratedly reserved than [himself]" (ibid, p. 19). Additionally, he also lingers in the examination of the old man's clashing complexion – "a dark-skinned gypsy in aspect", yet a gentleman "in dress and manners" (ibid, p. 21) – , which motions to the reader that they should pay closer attention to Heathcliff.

Consequently, the reader associates and projects an *illusory* character depth (GALLAGHER, 2009) to Heathcliff, instigating speculation; an insinuation that is imperative for both kindling transference (FREUD, 2004) and contributing to the effect of a double story. Moreover, considering Lockwood to embody the outsider species (FIELDLING apud GALLAGHER, 2009), it facilitates identification with the reader, who is the ultimate outsider to those moors. Embracing humility to his knowledge of the remote setting, Lockwood's narration biases the reader to a similarly unpretentious perspective.

Nonetheless, humbled and instigated by Lockwood, the reader soon learns that the host's primary behaviour was not out of character, as the outcome of their unsociable exchange nearly results in the narrator's death. As a result, injured and compelled by forces greater than him, Lockwood secretly lodges for the night in an abandoned room at Wuthering Heights, Heathcliff's personal estate. There, he uncovers bits of information about a certain *Catherine*, and falls asleep among distinct scriptures of the name (*C. Earnshaw*, *C. Heathcliff*, and *C. Linton*). At last, upon encountering her ghost, Lockwood wakes up from a nightmare, only to find out that his cries had exposed his whereabouts to Heathcliff.

Had it not been for the host's reaction upon the mention of *Catherine Linton*, narrator and reader alike could have assumed this to be a delusional episode derived from Lockwood's injuries, and the boundaries between real and supernatural would remain intact. However, at this point in the novel, the reader has little evidence to suppose either way, preserving a narrow plausibility derived from the character's uncertainty (GALLAGHER, 2009). Gradually, the novel opens more inferential spaces for its reader to speculate and project into (ibid).

Considering this, Lockwood's role in the novel, although limited, is essential for establishing a sufficiently narrow referential space and swaying the reader towards embracing its duplicity. As a character, he is inevitably uncertain (ibid) and sustains plausibility by persuading the reader into a diffident attitude, which corroborates positively to the subsequent shift in narrative voices. After having conditioned the reader to seek depth in Heathcliff, he creates a yearning for resolution that Nelly *appears* capable of satiating.

Conversely, compared to Lockwood, she seems to know a lot about the past of Wuthering Heights, barely escaping the outsider archetype, which appeals to the reader as someone with answers. Nonetheless, Nelly's reports are tarnished by her

proximity to the story, as she presents a distorted narration that seeks to exempt whatever responsibilities could be attributed to her in the events of the novel. Inadvertently, but inescapably (GALLAGHER, 2009), exposing her unreliability as a narrator, she perpetuates the double in the novel, as the reader is held between ignorance (Lockwood) and deception (Nelly). Therefore, the reader *must* assume protagonism and project their theories to conciliate both narrators' points of view and sew the plot together.

4.1.2 *Heathcliff*

In *Wuthering Heights*, the contrast between Good and Evil is articulated, through the character effect (GALLAGHER, 2009), under the name of Heathcliff. The mock-conscience (FROW apud GALLAGHER, 2009) attributed to him embodies the cacophonous coexistence of these concepts and contributes to the preservation of the double effect in the novel as the narrative knot to be unravelled by the reader. This implies that Heathcliff ultimately holds the most inferential space among the novel's characters, and, because of that, Lockwood's insinuation of an underlying character depth in him is invaluable to the narrative.

Considering the investigation on Heathcliff's character as the centrepiece of the novel, had Lockwood not ushered the reader to project preliminary depth onto him, they could have hastily ruled him out as a bad persona. Although not entirely wrong, this would belittle Heathcliff's character, discouraging the reader's projections, and subsequently harming the potential for transference (FREUD, 2004) on him. Fortunately for the novel, his indecorum is met with a seemingly analogue capability for love, present in the forms of Catherine's apparitions and some of Nelly's accounts.

As exposed in the previous section, Heathcliff is described in the novel as a character with conflicting internal and external traits. Referring back to chapter 2, Klein (apud ARAGNO, 2014) talks about this double nature of the mind, and how inseparable these two instances are, often overlapping each other. In Heathcliff's case, this internal-external interaction displays conflicting signs between his aspect and manners. Added to Heathcliff's antisocial conduct, as indicated by Lockwood in "It is astonishing how sociable I feel myself compared with him" (BRONTË, 1994, p. 23), we notice the first signs of Evil in the old man.

Curiously, Heathcliff's mind seems to be reflected by the space around him; if not for a principle of internal verisimilitude that prevents this association, *Wuthering Heights* could be considered an extension of his character. His estate, in contrast to the Grange, is dark and hostile, similarly to him, and the characters residing with him seem to suffer from the same influence. As signalled by his surroundings, Heathcliff is extremely antisocial, which reveal the existence of Evil in him (FROMM apud ARAGNO, 2014).

Gradually, the novel opens, leaving narrow points of plausibility for its reader to project into (GALLAGHER, 2009), and Heathcliff's story is revealed to the reader. As possessing a mock-conscience (FROW apud GALLAGHER, 2009), Heathcliff also projects outwardly, blaming Edgar Linton and Hindley Earnshaw – Catherine's widower and brother – for his present condition, as a way of revolting against forces beyond his control. Motivated by his monological manias, he plots to destroy them.

Resuming Georges Bataille (1985 p. 16), he claims that

those who reproduce themselves do not die if, by death, we understand the passage from life to decomposition, but he who was, by reproducing himself, ceases to be what he was – because he doubles himself.

Thus, with a similar idea in mind, Heathcliff schematizes a revenge on the Lintons and the Earnshaws through their offspring, as if they were their extensions. Adamant, Heathcliff seems to preserve his monological version of reality distorted by the past. Trapped in a loop of irrationality (FROMM apud ARAGNO, 2014), he sustains his revenge derived from his obsession with Catherine. In fact, even her apparition could be speculated to be a product of his resistant delusions, as he still believes in reconciling with her much after her death.

Ultimately, Heathcliff embodies the conflict between Id and Superego (or internal and external) to an irrational extent. His refusal to challenge his monological thought has him inevitably lashing out and projecting his frustrations on others, as it is characteristic of Thanatos (FREUD, 1930 apud Aragno, 2014). As a result, although he appears very particular in the context of the novel, Heathcliff still manages to sustain certain “non-referentiality” (GALLAGHER, 2009) as the nature of his conflicts are relatable. Rejection, resistance, conflict, and powerlessness are all feelings that can promote Evil, and with which any reader can relate at a certain level.

4.2 SHAKING HANDS WITH THE DEVIL

As stated on the conclusion of the narrators' section, placing the reader between two unreliable narrators forces them to assume protagonism in the interpretation of the novel. This role being shared among two characters prohibits the reader from sustaining a monological view, as such a thing does not even exist in the narrative. Also, considering Barthes' (1977) claims about the death of the author, the *Wuthering Heights*' reader is inescapably left to negotiate meaning with the devil of plurality that inhabits it.

Granted, as forementioned, the novel is loaded with points of indetermination which allow only plausible assumptions (GALLAGHER, 2009), Brontë's is an especially demanding narrative. The double, present throughout the near entirety of the story, has the reader viciously projecting their internal theories to make sense of it. As a result, no ideas evoked by the characters are left undisrupted, which demonstrates *Wuthering Heights*' potential for tackling the monistic root of Evil.

With its centrepiece being Heathcliff's internal conflict, the novel provides a distinct theoretical corpus for the reader to engage with, and unassuming the fragmentation of their Ego, they seek identification with the character (GALLAGHER, 2009). In this seemingly innocent act of pretending, the reader tries to transcend their existence by projecting their emotions onto Heathcliff through transference (FREUD, 2004). This one-sided interaction with him, exposes the reader to Heathcliff's perspectives and serves as a contrast to the reader's, possibly drawing out its conflicts.

Considering Evil as a psychological concept (BATAILLE, 1985), its struggle against Good is articulated inside of Heathcliff's mock-conscience (FROW apud GALLAGHER, 2009). Hence, once the reader establishes a transference relation with his character, this process should imminently reveal Evil's latent essence within them. Luckily for the reader, the character's resolution in the narrative – successful or not – transfers back to them by the end of the novel, enabling the reassessment of both their reason and emotions linked to the possibly conflicting topics evoked during the story.

As Freud (2004) concludes on transference, by the end of analysis – in this case, the novel – the illusory connection established with the other melts away. Hence, Heathcliff's closure incites a similar process on the reader, causing the reader to "be invaded by a pleasing sensation" (GALLAGHER, 2009, p. 652). Thus, upon returning

from the novel, the reader's newfound knowledge can be assimilated into their reality, as the by-product of transference is retained.

In the case of Heathcliff, the universality of the conflicts faced by him (rejection, loss and feeling powerless, for example) makes it so a larger range of readers can benefit from the effects of his novel. By interacting with his story, the reader could conciliate not only the plot, but also their own internal-external conflicts. In conclusion, the silent pact of mutual Evil between character and reader can be enough to disrupt, or even eradicate the essence of Evil.

5 FINAL CONSIDERATIONS

Originated from Bataille's studies and the mystery surrounding Evil, this paper sought to elaborate on the topic with the intent of shedding light on it through a psychological perspective. Debunking the naïve idea that Evil is inevitably opposed to life, we have demonstrated that it is actually an integral part of the human intellect, malfunctioning via the preservation of an irrational and antisocial behaviour. Admitting to the fact that this phenomenon holds considerable influence over human culture and dynamics, we decided to investigate not only how it is reflected on the literary practice, but also the impacts of how it reflects back to the reader.

To analyse these interactions, we have chosen Emily Brontë's novel, *Wuthering Heights*, acknowledging its repercussion and particularities. The multi-layered duplicity it displays through its plot and narration contributed to the internal and external analyses of evil. Thus, assisted by theories about reading and character, we have shown how the reader is inevitably interwoven with the text, ultimately interacting with themselves.

Considering the combination of literary and psychoanalytic theories, we have pointed to the uncertain nature of interpretation, illustrating it as a projective hurricane. Thereby, enabling the reader to transfer their internal-external conflicts onto the text through the character effect, literature diabolically evokes their inconsistencies, demanding resolution. Conclusively, as this dust devil in interpretation, literature allows its readers to reassess their conflicts, therapeutically assisting in the dissolution of their Evil or serving as torture for the monological thought.

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