

'Novels often present women as constrained by society.' Explore the presentation of women in the light of this statement. In your response, you should focus on *Wuthering Heights* to establish your argument and you should refer to the second text you have read to support and develop your line of argument.

As known, Emily Brontë and Alice Walker have provided in their novels some of the most reflective and most sustained proposals and defences of the female cause, feminism remains an important aspect of both novels. Being knowledgeable enough about feminism, we are able to understand what is meant by women being constrained by society. *Wuthering Heights* is an important novel for two reasons; it's honest and accurate portrayal of life during an early era which provides a sight of history, but even though society is different nowadays than it was centuries ago, people remain the same, and up to date readers can still relate to the feelings and emotions of the central characters, like Heathcliff and Catherine presented by Brontë, Celie and Shug presented by Walker, as well as those of the supporting characters.

Walker chose to show the ill-treatment of black women, especially in the early twentieth century to show how they have struggled to free themselves and stand up for themselves in such a society back then, and so did Emily Brontë, by demonstrating the relative silence and passivity of the female characters in her novel, to portray the society's negative treatment and speak on the behalf of those who suffered...

As we read on throughout the novel, we find a lot mentioned to prove how women were constrained by society back then. We know that Catherine grew up among nature and lacked the sophistication of high society. She was removed from society, unconsciously, where for example; she was forced to remain at Thrushcross Grange, the Linton's place, after her injury where she was isolated from Heathcliff and her world of freedom. "...had ways with her such as I never saw a child take up before; she put all of us past out patience fifty times and oftener in a day; ... we had not a minute's security that she wouldn't be in mischief. Her spirits were always at high-water mark, her tongue always going—singing, laughing and plaguing everyone, who would not do the same." This tells us mostly about who Catherine was while growing up, but then we see a new Catherine by some means, when society backed her off from Heathcliff and made her choose Edgar over him. Society 'exiled' her from Heathcliff, where it left her with no other option, especially when Heathcliff escapes *Wuthering Heights* knowing that she was getting engaged. In the end, a generation is lost to the warmth of a strict society that forced traditionalism, because traditions were to be respected in such an era, and Catherine did not live her life the way she wanted to, neither did Heathcliff in some way.

Women are of different kinds and personalities, and this is seen from all its aspects in both novels. The major differences are that there are women with voices and some without. Cathy, Catherine, Isabella and Nelly Dean for example are all strong women who refuse to remain silent in the face of their maltreatment, and Mrs Earnshaw, although she is present in the text briefly, she gives every impression of being a dominant figure in her household, however, they are all no more helpless when confronted with the power of Heathcliff than are many of the male characters. Sofia and Shug are also two other characters <The colour purple> who prove the same point, they both have a voice and use it because they do not

want to be dominated by men, or by the patriarchal society in other words, "Well, Miss Celie, I believe it time for me to go" The stereotyping of female characters according to male fantasy is another criticism levelled at a wide range of texts. While Cathy, Catherine and Isabella are all beauties, they do not obey the rules of traditional models of politeness.

On the other hand, characters like Celie, who is a proud woman repressed inside of a young 'shut-mouthed' girl, cannot stand up for themselves, to face the bad sides of such a society, she does not have a voice, and she doesn't stand up for herself. We learn from the text that women without a voice, such as Celie, cannot do this without the help of women like Shug and Sofia. Celie writing letters, is a means of escape, a means of exploring her thoughts by expressing them on paper, and of convincing herself that she is just fine like this, however this proves that she does not or is afraid of standing up for herself, saying it out loud, or expressing her feelings out loud, but we can sympathise with her situation, because we know that those women who overcome the limitations of their social roles and did write found it more difficult to challenge or reject society's 'assumptions' and expectations than their male equivalents. Yet someone like her would never fulfil their fantasies due to their inferiority to men, since Celie is being misled, and mistreated by her stepfather, and Mr \_\_\_\_\_. She loses everything that matters to her, becomes a victim of unthinkable abuse both in her child and adulthood. *Wuthering Heights* also deals extensively with the issue of domestic violence, which is frequently directed at women. It also highlights the problem of inequality with inheritance law, and the difficulties and dangers this often put women under. Even though many of the women in the novel are strong characters, they are obliged to live under the protection of males/men.

▲According to the Patriarchal world that both novels revolve around, men are seen in their worst in the feminist part of each of the novels. ▲Albert for example teaches Harpo that a woman have to be beaten because they are like children, yet women obey orders to avoid this type of violence, or being abused, to please the society they are struggling in. However, men are the childish ones, in their actions throughout the story.

Overall, both texts see the opposition of nature and culture in traditionally gendered terms, with culture as male, and nature as female, basically known as a 'gender -obsessed' novel, but despite all this readers can still observe that even though the legacy of slavery was still around, as in *The Colour Purple*, and even though women had a difficult time coping with such a society back then, they still found their own ways in overcoming all this. Someone like Catherine was still portrayed as the 'mirror' of Heathcliff despite how she was far apart from him. ▲And someone like Celie, who was supported by both Sofia and Shug, we learn that she had defeated her weak point, stood up for herself and confronted Mr \_\_\_\_\_. ▲As a whole, these women have options to get out of their current situation, and they advise each other as a way of supporting each other. We the readers, also notice that Celie used quilting as a way to escape from what she is in, and as a form of communication and bonding with others. The point of the quilt was all about women having a choice to do what they want. Celie's love for Shug for example, is emphasized using the quilt, "If the quilt turn perfect, maybe I give it to her, if not perfect, maybe I keep." This means that only the best can be given to Shug. In conclusion, despite the odds, women can overcome all obstacles no matter what the given situation is. When they help one another, whether it is physical or emotional, they can defeat their dilemmas.