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TRABAJO DE FIN DE GRADO

Double Morality and the Temperance Issue  
in Victorian Literature

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## ABSTRACT

After providing an analysis of the concept of double morality through examples extracted from Oscar Wilde's hilarious *The Importance of Being Earnest* and Robert L. Stevenson's mysterious and adventurous *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* in order to illustrate how frequently Victorians pretended to live in a perfectly moral society and to behave according to the canons of that society, this dissertation examines the indirect representation and any possible effectiveness or influence of the Victorian temperance movement through a literary and historical perspective, and eventually, pays attention to the role of the ecclesiastical movements in the drinking question.

Keywords: Double morality. Respectability. Moral pretension. Temperance. Alcohol.

Tras proporcionar un análisis sobre el concepto de la doble moral a través de fragmentos extraídos de la divertidísima obra de Oscar Wilde *The Importance of Being Earnest* y el misterioso e intrépido *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* de Robert L. Stevenson para así ilustrar cuán frecuentemente los Victorianos fingían vivir en una sociedad moralmente perfecta y se comportaban ciñéndose a los códigos de ésta, este Trabajo de Fin de Grado examina la representación indirecta del movimiento Victoriano de la templanza, así como su posible efectividad o influencia, mediante una perspectiva literaria e histórica. En última instancia se ha prestado atención al papel de los movimientos eclesiásticos en la cuestión sobre el consumo de alcohol.

Palabras clave: Doble moral. Respetabilidad. Petulancia moral. *Temperance*. Alcohol.



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## 1. Introduction

The following paper will attempt to argue that the Victorian moral conduct – presenting numerous contradictions derived from a set of values that puts self-respectability above the rest – affected every single societal aspect. Attention will be paid in particular to the double morality or hypocrisy applied by the Victorians to the temperance issue or the drinking question. Discussing this will imply discussing the theme of the social strata, studying the ecclesiastical standpoint on the matter, and what the whole business of drinking involved. All of these will be seen through the lens of a few chosen literary works from the same period.

The reason why I have decided to write on this topic emerged in the first place from my interest in the fact that alcohol has caused, is causing, and will continue to cause much damage to society as a whole, and to the families of those who have consumed and abused alcohol. Having spent more than a year in the United Kingdom, and having seen how high the consumption of alcohol was, as well as the public concern expressed in the press, I became interested in whether the issue had been dealt with from a socio-historical and a literary perspective, with particular regard to a period known for its concern for public behaviour.

Despite its lower popularity in comparison with the United States, the temperance movement in Victorian Britain has attracted the attention of twentieth century scholars. Rebecca Smith, for instance, describes in “The Temperance Movement and Class Struggle in Victorian England” (1993) the evolution of the temperance movement – from temperance to teetotal, or from moderation to abstinence – with an emphasis on the class issues involved. In “More Sinful Pleasures? Leisure, Respectability and the Male Middle Classes in Victorian England” (1993), Mike J. Huggins focuses on the concept of respectability, and while he *does* approach non-respectable activities such as drinking or gambling, he does not link their significance to the temperance movement. These two approaches verily differ from what has been suggested in this B.A. Thesis on account of our inclusion of literary sources with the purpose of extracting (indirect) representations of the temperance issue.

In order to achieve our goal, a framework regarding the concept of double morality has been provided in chapter 2 – “The Concept of Double Morality as a

Contextual Framework for Victorian Literature” – through a close reading of *The Importance of Being Earnest* and *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*. The literary examples of double morality that we have extracted have been further endorsed by Houghton’s *The Victorian Frame of Mind, 1830-1870*, where he meticulously examines the Victorians. In this chapter, temperance issues are tackled only tangentially. Nevertheless, the contextual framework is essential to the purpose of the paper, because it illustrates what the circumstances of the time were, and it is what allows us to conjecture that the Victorians were able to apply a double morality in a series of activities and issues, i.e. temperance.

Conversely, chapter 3 “The Temperance Movement in the Victorian Era through a Historical and Literary Perspective” uses Harrison’s *Drink and The Victorians: The Temperance Question in England, 1815-1872* as a theoretical basis, and only then proceeds to examine a number of literary examples which deal with the temperance issue. The examples have been extracted from the contemporary novels *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* and *Jude The Obscure*. Their presence has been analysed, and their potential association to the concept of double morality has been argued. Besides, the concept of recreation has been associated with the drinking question, and examples from Dickens’ *Hard Times* have been provided to illustrate the lack of recreation activities during the Victorian era. Eventually, the idea of linking the temperance movement to the ecclesiastical movements rose from both the theoretical basis and the literary sources.



## **2. The Concept of Double Morality as a Contextual Framework for Victorian literature**

Double morality is a somehow offensive and unofficial concept that has been often used to discuss the moral code in the Victorian era. However, the goal of this chapter is not to outweigh previous criticism on this topic, but to provide a contextual and slightly theoretical frame for chapter three, i.e. “The Temperance Movement in the Victorian Era through a Historical and Literary Perspective”. In what follows, an attempt is made to explain and exemplify the concept of double morality in different aspects of the Victorian society, as reflected in two canonical literary works, so that it can be used as a backcloth to the manifestation of the temperance movement in selected literary texts – the object of interest of the succeeding chapter.

### **2.1. *Bunburyism* as an Illustration of Double Morality in *The Importance of Being Earnest* (1895)**

The Victorian period is perhaps one of the most contradictory and controversial periods in Great Britain’s history and it has been thoroughly and abundantly represented through multiple literary genres. On the one hand, it was an age strongly characterized by the practise of fiction, with some prominent writers such as Dickens, Thackeray, Trollope, the Bröntes; and on the other hand, it was vigorously influenced by the writings of philosophers and sages such as Matthew Arnold, Thomas Carlyle, John Stuart Mill, or John Ruskin. Historically, it was a period known as *Pax Britannica* for Great Britain only participated in the Crimean war (1853-1856). These circumstances, together with colonialism and imperialism, paved the way for the British to be the most powerful nation in the world, and whenever a nationality grows in relevance, more and more attention the rest of nationalities pay to it. Consequently, Great Britain was somehow obliged to be an exemplary nation, and that is why so much philosophy, social criticism and theorising on moral conducts was produced during what Houghton argues in *The Victorian Frame of Mind* is a “transitional” period (1).

*The Importance of Being Earnest* mocks the status quo of the Victorian era and the offshoot idea of double morality originated by the value of self-respectability,

among others. Also, it is probably one of the most famous comedies of manners to have ever been written. However, what is curious about it is the fact that the reader, if unacknowledged with the Victorian moral values and context, could go through the play without even detecting with how much social criticism it is imbued. The play will still be hilarious, but its real message will not reach the audience. Thus, firstly, attention must be paid to the title of this allegedly inoffensive play.

For those unacquainted with the Victorian social sphere, the name of Earnest would seem rather normal, and it might be observed that there is a coincidence, especially at the end of the play when it turns out that the protagonist's real name is Earnest. As it may be supposed, things occur for a reason. During the Victorian era, the concept of earnestness was a fundamental value. Likewise, it was a fashionable word used to designate people with a serious purpose in life, in contrast to those who dissipated their time and money in enjoying themselves in ludic activities that involved drinking, which is one of the main objects of interest of the third chapter in this B.A. Thesis. Also, it is designated to those who followed the moral code of the age, those who worked and worked to achieve a goal, and finally, to those who attended mass every Sunday; in summary, people in possession of self-respectability, self-control, and self-denial. This jargon must ring a bell to those acquainted with moral and temperance issues in the nineteenth century. As a result, the title slightly alters the context that must come to mind when thoroughly reading the text. This issue is more deeply explained taking into account the historical context, as Houghton suggests: "If the importance of being earnest was first recognized about 1830 [...] we can be sure that people had begun to feel a danger or an evil in not being earnest" (218). Note that it is not the play's title that the scholar is mentioning – it appears in small letters – but an actual value within the age. In fact, this value encompasses the rest of qualities mentioned above in this same paragraph, and contributes to the global meaning of the play. Thus, Oscar Wilde uses a pun as a title which proves to be quite effective and appropriate.

Marriage of convenience is another aspect that requires the reader's attention in connection with the value of earnestness. It is something for which people in the Victorian era were well-known. At first glance, they bestowed great importance upon marriage and family, but, in fact, the former was used as a mere contract to obtain prestige or financial profit. This is represented in the play as Jack Worthing, the main

character, affirms that he is in love with Gwendolen, and expresses his sole desire to marry her to his friend Algernon, who indignantly replies that he thought Jack came for pleasure, and not for business (cf. 9), in a clear allusion to marriage as a contract. This self-explanatory example is one of the many tokens of a duplicity of character or double morality to be found within the play. If Algernon's allusion to marriage is interpreted as a business matter, the most likely conclusion to be drawn is that the initially unimportant factors within a marriage, such as inheritance or capital, are now considered as primary. Therefore, marriage among upper-class members was merely a contract, and that is how their double morality is represented. Hence, their apparent interest in love, marriage and family is translated in superficiality, reputation, and financial profit.

Previously, it has been mentioned that the concept of earnestness encompassed several characteristic Victorian values, e.g. self-denial, self-respectability, self-sacrifice. If an individual desired to be worthy of the current society, he had to renounce his natural taste or inclination to certain activities, because these were not included within the concept of earnestness. Thus, people lived restrained and enclosed in a constant, absurd and extreme political correctness. To exemplify this, an encounter between Algernon and Lady Bracknell, who is an overbearing matriarch and a great personification of double morality, will be described. When greeting each other, Lady Bracknell says she hopes Algernon is "behaving well", to which Algernon answers he is "feeling well". Then, the authoritative, pretentious and cold woman replies by saying that it is "not quite the same thing. In fact, the two rarely go together" (15). Wilde's command of language to play with words in such a manner is quite extraordinary. This is a revealing example of the previously mentioned concept of double morality: 'to behave' means to behave according to the aforementioned values, whereas 'to feel well' means living without restraining oneself, and not following any moral code but solely one's own. Then, it can be deduced that when one feels well, one speaks his or her mind freely, without controlling his or her thoughts. In a few words, it deals with not being a hypocrite. The following quotation expresses Matthew Arnold's opinion on the second kind of people when referring to his acquaintance Harriet Martineau:

The want of independence of mind, the shutting their eyes and professing to believe what they do not, the running blindly together in herds, for fear of some obscure danger and

horror if they go alone, is so eminently a vice of the English, I think, of the last hundred years...that I cannot but praise a person whose one effort seems to have been to deal *perfectly honestly* and *sincerely* with herself. (51; emphasis mine)

Two additional aspects within earnestness, in line with the Victorian values and double morality – the topic of the present section – are those of moral pretension and superficiality. These are represented by Gwendolen, Jack's fiancée-to-be, who tells him that she hopes he will always look at her in a harmonious and lovely way, especially when there are other people around (cf. 19). She is more concerned for how he will look at her in public, rather than in private. This is derived from her worries about what society would think if he did not look at her in front of people as though he is contemplating an angel recently fallen from heaven. Gwendolen shows more interest in external factors than in personal and sentimental feelings. In fact, she wants to be married for the sake of being married, if we were to draw a parallel with Wilde and the importance of art for art's sake. Regarding the same aspect, when Jack tells Gwendolen the truth about his real name, Wilde comically portrays her reaction as a typical Victorian cretin. According to her and the "popular magazines", her ideal "has always been to love someone of the name of Earnest" (17). This type of ideals could be read in the magazines of the age, and it could be observed that the ideal of marriage was closely related to "the continuing financial support of a husband" (Ballaster et al. 85). This means she is not able to marry a person who is not in possession of the prototypical Victorian values, and also shows how 'true' her feelings are. What adds more emphasis to the comicality is that Gwendolen is concerned for his name being Earnest, rather than indignant because he lied to her.

Some other questioned values or beliefs from the Victorian context such as class segregation and class struggle are apparent in the play. In a dialogue between the protagonist and the mother of his fiancée-to-be there is an annoying interrogatory carried out by Lady Bracknell which must not be overlooked, since it is an example of what Houghton argues is the "increasing emphasis on riches [which] produced a new attitude toward poverty" (184). Lady Bracknell, an aristocrat, methodically inquires on Jack's financial state, bloodline and inheritance, including a question regarding the number of bedrooms in his country house (cf. 21). In this particular case, Houghton's

statement can lead us to perceive Lady Bracknell's anxiety and horror at pondering the possibility of her charming daughter getting married to a proletarian.

Needless to say, Wilde verbally attacks and satirizes many facets of the social sphere of the day, and he does not spare the church. It must be observed that the author uses reverend Chasuble as a Victorian ecclesiastical prototype. He harshly criticizes him throughout the play for his nonsensical affirmations and lack of knowledge in his profession. Chasuble's foolishness and zero credibility, whenever he expresses his opinion, can be easily perceived with such comments as "None of us are perfect. I myself am peculiarly susceptible to draughts" (34). The point here is that Chasuble compares perfection to playing draughts, an innocuous board game. Therefore, his opinion must not be taken into account. However, one of his affirmations are of interest to the present study. In a reference to Jack, he says: "He usually likes to spend his Sunday in London. He is not one of these whose sole aim is enjoyment" (30). This praising comment alludes to the self-respectability of the protagonist as a self-controlling, self-sacrificing, and self-denying individual, and also a religious one. Mass was celebrated on Sunday, and such a reputable gentleman could not miss a Sunday sermon.

Furthermore, the reverend takes for granted that Jack does not permit himself much drinking on Saturday night. As for the rest of qualities that have been bestowed on Jack, these are inferred from the contrast used by Chasuble, who opposes work and enjoyment, or links pleasure to idleness. This is further clarified by what Houghton asserts: "The glorification of work as a supreme virtue, with the accompanying scorn for idleness, was the commonest theme of the prophets of earnestness" (243). The indicated statement is related to certain ideas on temperance, as values such as self-sacrifice and self-denial were promoted. If one focused on work more than on entertaining oneself, he or she was more likely to improve as a person, quite valuable a characteristic in this period. Additionally, Houghton states that a life of work was considered "a life of moral earnestness" (243).

In connection with the contrasting concepts of work and idleness, coming back to Lady Bracknell, when she interrogates Jack on his lineage, she asks him a few questions "an affectionate mother needs to know" (20), the first one being whether he smoked or not. After his affirmative answer, she replies she is glad to hear it, and that a

man should always have an occupation of some kind, as there are far too many idle men in London as it is (20). The sheer consideration of smoking as an occupation is a great irony that satirizes the Victorian set of values, and especially those of self-improvement, work, and having one's mind occupied, in contrast to being idle.

Possibly the most explicit example of Victorian double morality is the play's whole plot that turns around the duplicity of character or personality that both Algernon and Jack Worthing employ to evade themselves from society. In this particular literary piece, it is called *Bunburyism*. It consists of creating a nonexistent person, whether a cousin or brother, who is used as a smokescreen to perform or to enjoy the not so respectable natural tastes or inclinations, that can under no circumstances be seen in society or by their acquaintances. Thus, these characters are worn out with society and from time to time they need to be themselves by surrendering to self-indulgence, without being concerned with how heretical or unrespectable that was. One of the main reasons why they have created these unreal characters is the fact that "high moral tone can hardly be said to conduce very much to either one's health or one's happiness" (13). This was the situation with upper-class individuals who had the opportunity to squander around and evade their responsibilities, by avoiding society and giving free rein to their unrespectable desires.

To conclude, the analysis of *The Importance of Being Earnest* has provided various substantial evidences that illustrate the Victorian double morality expressed by the characters' changeable point of view or their applying of a double standard: a perfect and high morality in the public sphere, contrasted to their depraved and lascivious attitude in the private sphere. Consequently, some of the landmarks of that period such as respectability, earnestness, self-denial, self-sacrifice, etc., have been put to the test to show their double morality. These will be further illustrated, and some new ones will be derived from these, in the following chapter.

## **2.2. Double Morality through the Dualisms of Jekyll and Hyde**

*The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde* (1886) – a mysterious and gloomy short novel written by the Scottish writer Robert L. Stevenson – is a "good read, but, like the

horror of Bram Stoker (1897) *Dracula*, disappoints adult re-reading” (Alexander 316). In spite of the fact that it is considered a minor piece of literature by the scholars, it happens to be of great assistance to the aim of the present paper, as it provides multiple proofs which contribute to demonstrate the double morality of the Victorian era.

Before analysing this literary work, its title, as in *The Importance of Being Earnest*, requires a brief explanation. In this case, it points to the dual nature of Doctor Jekyll. For those acquainted with *The Strange Case of Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde*, a conclusion that the novel is used as an allegory of good and evil can easily be drawn. The aim of the present chapter is not to go in depth into the concepts of good and evil; however, bearing these in mind is of great importance to understand other contrasts that are useful to discern the behaviours of Jekyll and Hyde, which are illustrative of the main theme of this paper, i.e. double morality.

On the one hand, it may be observed that Jekyll appears to be a most earnest and self-respectable man who enjoys his profession and follows a strict moral code. This is pointed out when Jekyll affirms that he was “inclined by nature to industry, fond of the respect of the wise and good among his fellowmen [...] with every guarantee of an honourable and distinguished future” (48). Nevertheless, as his narration in chapter 10, “Full Statement of the Case”, goes on, he asserts that he “concealed his pleasures” (48), i.e. we are offered a first insight into his real thoughts on indulging in his natural tastes. Also, the protagonist informs us that because of this life of self-restraint he had reached a state of “a profound duplicity” (49). What can be deduced from these secluded emotional statements is Jekyll’s being informed, once again, by the prototypical Victorian earnestness, which has been already discussed in the previous section, and which translates into double morality or duplicity of character. Let us recall that this means people were following a vigorous moral code in public, when they could be seen, but thinking about the total opposites in their interior, and ultimately, freely executing their willingness in private, with no remorse.

As the narrator carries on with his account, the reader of the novel learns that Jekyll disliked society and the societal canon and that he had to hide his views with “an almost morbid shame” (49). In a period where the notions of good and evil were strongly established, and even exaggerated, he found himself in “the provinces of good and ill which divide and compound man’s dual nature” (57). By being an educated and



cultivated man, Jekyll is constantly tormented on deliberating what is good and what is evil, and he ultimately reaches the conclusion that “man is not truly one, but truly two” (57).

He admits this dualism and enjoys being Hyde, since he feels younger and free to do whatever pleases him, which presents a considerable doubt on the value of the concepts of self-restraint and self-sacrifice. Was there any real purpose, gratification, or effect brought by being perfect in terms of manners, insincerity, and political correctness? When one attempts to be perfect, in terms of societal values, through restraining oneself, controlling his thoughts, and putting a limit to one’s actions, he lives in a state of prohibition. This may sound a bit puzzling, but it is well-known that when a certain action is banned, the mere ban or prohibition makes that action even more desirable to whom the prohibition is aimed at. It must be noted then that prohibition of given behaviours did not exist as such at the time. Nevertheless, certain behaviours were not prohibited in the full meaning of the term, but they were looked at inquiringly, scrutinized by people and the public opinion, and commented with a didactic purpose in different circles, as though a mother is explaining to her child what is good and what is bad.

Consequently, this ‘prohibition’ did not officially exist, but something worse existed. It was the role of the neighbour, people and society as ruthless inquisitors. Another mode of naming this simile is ‘public opinion’. As Thomas de Quincey put it at the beginning of *Confessions of an English Opium-Eater*: “Nothing [...] is more revolting to English feelings, than the spectacle of a human obtruding on our notice his moral ulcers and scars, and tearing away that decent drapery” (1). It seems fair to suggest that Victorians would not step out of their home without putting a mask of political correctness and self-restraint, which is quite similar to the function of the ‘decent drapery’ mentioned by de Quincey.

Despite this avowed enjoyment of Jekyll at being Hyde, psychological conflict prevails. As the protagonist puts it: “in the agonised womb of consciousness, these polar twins should be continuously struggling” (52). These twins are representative of self-restraint and self-denial against pleasure and freedom of thought and action. Needless to say, the author presents again the exhaustive struggle between good and evil, i.e.



restraint and freedom. It turns out that every recurrent theme in this literary piece is constituted on the basis of dualities or the contrasting of two opposite terms.

Following this pattern of analysing through dualisms, another one is brought in. The manner in which Jekyll relates his experience, his restraint of emotions and pleasures sounds as though an overpowering beast has been unchained and is ready to unleash its wrath. Jekyll says he was “the first to plod in the public eye with a load of genial respectability, and in a moment, like a schoolboy, strip off these lendings and spring headlong into the sea of liberty” (61). He puts emphasis on the fact that in public he arouses in people that sense of respectability owing to his career, perfect manners and natural inclination to good and industry. Meantime, he can, by means of his duplicity of character, commit mistakes, act against the public opinion and earnestness of the century, in a total freedom of action.

As the novel continues, Jekyll realises he is utterly unable to control his double – the beast discussed in the previous paragraph – and the master of his pleasures. A further statement can be provided on this thought, as the consequences of any kind of abuse are well-known, and also, that they lead to an indisputable physical or emotional deterioration. Then, it can be argued that the author implicitly warns the reader that an excessive relish may lead to an unbearable and uncontrollable reality. Hence, in the case of Jekyll and Hyde, the former decides to annihilate the life of the latter due to his untameability. This is exemplified by this quotation: “Yes, I preferred the elderly and discontented doctor, surrounded by friends and cherishing honest hopes; and bade a resolute farewell to liberty [and the] secret pleasures, that I have enjoyed in the disguise of Hyde” (57). He stopped being Hyde because he was leading him into all manner of wickedness, despite its feeling of freedom.

Lastly, two characters, of not the same importance but both meaningful, will be discussed with the purpose of enlightening the reader that Jekyll and Hyde’s is not the only duplicity of character in the novella. The first one is Mister Utterson, who apparently fits within the pattern of a prototypical Victorian, and yet is slightly dissimilar from the rest. The short novel opens with the description of the character in which an account of his peculiar attributes as a lawyer and as a person, and a slight cue to his personality, are given: “In friendly meetings, and *when the wine was to his taste*, something eminently human beamed from his eye; [...] which spoke in the acts of his

life” (1; emphasis mine). What can be argued after analysing this fragment is that his drinking in public is mentioned, which means that he does not restrain himself so harshly as other characters do; that he is able to taste the so-called temptation, but perhaps, is not weak enough to fall in it. Conversely, what may link, though indirectly, the character of Dr. Jekyll to the temperance movement which is the object of interest of the next chapter in this B.A. Thesis, is an allusion to the “self-denying toils of my professional life” (66). Jekyll, at the pinnacle of society, a most respectable and reputable man, has been sacrificing his pleasures and well-being for his career as a physician. These ‘self-denying toils’ can also include not going for a pint in a tavern, since he could be *seen* there and *talked about*; or having to restrain his sexual desires – a recognized taboo during the Victorian Era, as these would not have been positive activities in his spotless career path.

Additionally, the narrator goes farther to affirm that Utterson is quite ‘human’, a prominent quality that is not abundantly represented among Victorians, from the perspective of double morality. The humanity attributed to the character in question is later justified by the narrator on account of his assistance to ‘downgoing men’ such as criminals and mischief-makers. Precisely this enables us to place him out of the prototypical pattern of a Victorian person. Thence, this leads respectively to a further theme and issue in the novel and society. It deals with what Houghton argues are “the hallmarks of Victorian hypocrisy” i.e. “conformity, moral pretension and evasion” (395). Evasion has to do with turning a blind eye to what is actually happening in society, and this statement can be exemplified by numerous contradictions that will be solely mentioned here. These are the existence of prostitution in a supposedly stainless society in which only faithful individuals had place. Secondly, the propagation of the concern for alcohol and temperance, but in the meantime, allowing for certain alcoholic beverages to be easier to obtain than milk, on account of their being cheaper. Thirdly, people were perfectly aware of the existence of crime, but they acted and talked as though it never occurred. In addition, the abovementioned argument by Houghton is preceded by his assertion that Victorians “said the ‘right’ thing or did the ‘right’ thing: they sacrificed sincerity to propriety” (394) and pretended “to be pious and moral” while “shutting their eyes to whatever was ugly or unpleasant” (395). Obviously, all this

contributed to the creation of an utterly superficial set of societal values, and as it has been alluded to earlier, people were behaving in public as if disguised with a mask.

These theoretical assumptions of evasion and conformity are embodied in the second character that we announced, i.e. Mister Enfield, Utterson's acquaintance. The reason why we mention him lies in chapter one, "Story of the Door", in which Enfield gives an account of what he happened to catch sight of a night he was heading home. It was an "odd story" (1) which he witnessed, without knowing Hyde was its protagonist. Then, after an uncomfortable bombardment of questions by Utterson, Enfield observes: "No, sir; I had a delicacy. I feel very strongly about putting questions, it partakes too much of the style of the day of judgment." (13). He basically closes his eyes before what he witnessed, and this is narrowly linked to the concepts of evasion and feigning of ignorance of what is really occurring in society. Enfield attempts to keep up appearances as a model figure to be followed by the rest. He embodies the conformity that follows social conventions with a somehow cowardly demeanour, while the other side of the coin is Utterson who represents non-conformity, because he is eager to discover what stays behind the mystery.

Consequently, the doubleness, in terms of moral code, is depicted anew with yet another contrast, i.e. Utterson vs Enfield. These two characters can also be interpreted in terms of good and evil in the same way it has been exposed with Jekyll and Hyde, as Utterson attempts to discover the truth, while Enfield ostentatiously turns a blind eye to what happened – a clear case of evasion and conformity.



### **3. The Temperance Movement in the Victorian Era through a Historical and Literary Perspective**

Earnestness, self-sacrifice, self-denial, and morality are some of the emblems of the Victorian era, and they are closely linked to a reformist movement whose ‘official’ appearance in the first half of the nineteenth century – since a concern for alcohol issues pre-existed this – attempted to centre society’s attention on drunkenness and its consequences. The reformist movement in question was the *temperance movement*. In order to observe whether there are any temperance signs echoed in literature or not, and to enable the analysis of the literary works that have been selected to find the direct or indirect representation of the movement, some succinct definitions and contextual information will be provided.

It is probably easier to gather up information on the temperance movement on the other side of the ocean, as it was perhaps more popular in the United States than in England, which had to do with the implementation of certain laws and with a gradual reduction of the consumption of alcoholic beverages. Brian Harrison argues in *Drink and The Victorians: The Temperance Question in England, 1815-1872* that the temperance movement’s strength and influence was diluted because of the “twentieth-century decline in drunkenness” and “nonconformity” (367). Therefore, what the author suggests is that the priorities of the nineteenth century nonconformist movements, i.e. Chartism and Utilitarianism among others, had changed, and not as much emphasis was put on drunkenness as before.

Notwithstanding its lesser popularity and relevance within the social context of the nineteenth century, it may be useful to examine its representation in literature in order to observe how strong its impact was. The temperance movement was a nineteenth century reformist movement firmly concerned with the consumption and abuse of alcoholic beverages, whose main goal was primarily to moderate or reduce it. Among the qualities that it promotes the most, those of self-denial, self-restraint and self-sacrifice must be highlighted – three values with which we have already become quite familiar in the previous chapter. Therefore, it will be easier to apply and understand them within this specific context. According to Harrison, the temperance movement was “only one of several contemporary attempts to propagate the respectable style of life” (88). Hence, as it may be observed throughout this B.A. Thesis, the value

of ‘respectability’ encompasses diverse features that deal with the beliefs and conducts of the individual, but always strictly following the societal canon, of which the temperance movement is yet another representation.

The temperance movement emerged as a middle-class movement that was highly concerned with the way working-class people entertained themselves, as most of their activities involved the consumption of alcohol, gambling, or both. During the early nineteenth century, until 1833, the movement remained as such, but when its goals were felt as not purposeful and its methods not appropriate or reasonable enough for working-class members, the latter created their own movement, i.e. *teetotalism* or the *teetotal movement*. In contrast with the former, this one promoted total abstinence and involved a signing of a pledge which obliged the signer to remain abstemious – that is, it entailed a social, individual, and moral responsibility. Thus, the former was interested in controlling and regulating, whereas the second one was concerned with extinguishing or abolishing alcohol consumption.

After briefly explaining the temperance and teetotal movements, in the first place, an attempt to identify the temperance rhetoric and activities in the literary works will be made; and, in the second place, the participation of the ecclesiastical movements will be scrutinized to find its real purpose. All this in order to prove one of the main points of this paper: that the middle and upper classes’ concern for the working class was not as philanthropic or altruistic as it might be deduced from the aims they had when temperance was promoted and from the methods they exerted. In fact, temperance provides a considerable illustration of the Victorian double morality, as do so many other societal aspects.

### **3.1. The Indirect Representation of the Temperance Rhetoric in a Selection of Literary Works**

Once the contextual background and certain definitions have been provided, it is time to explore the mostly indirect representation of either the temperance or teetotal movements in literature. It is an indirect representation “because of the unwillingness of writers to record such behaviour” (Huggins 588). The examples provided from the novels under analysis in this section are illustrative of a characteristic feature, cause, or

consequence of the movements. As Milton Albrecht postulates, “literature reflects predominantly the significant values and norms of a culture” (426). This statement presents literature as most of the time being a reproduction of reality, which means that the Victorian beliefs of self-denial, self-restraint, morality, etc. are extended within the society, and also, it means that we are allowed to observe how the society of the time was shaped through literature.

It is regularly believed that England has an inclination towards drinking. On the one hand, Harrison exposes that some French philosophers such as Montesquieu or Taine, among other foreign thinkers, attributed the high consumption of alcoholic beverages to the “depressing climate” (48); on the other hand, he argues that alcohol “brought temporary harmony in the disordered lives of many bored, exhausted or exploited people” (49). Another reason to justify why people were drinking is the complex process of industrialization. Harrison asserts that alcohol was used to provide physical stamina, and also that “by drinking deeply one asserted one’s virility” (40). Therefore, these are three possible causes for the high consumption of alcohol or drunkenness in Great Britain, the latter two being definitely more credible and logical ones. We can see them exemplified in two literary works, which, by the way, are respectively a mirror of a middle and a working class with aspirations.

In Anne Brönte’s *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* (1848), the character of Mister Lowborough, who is a gambler – and gambling is immoral (cf. Dickens 1989:163) – loses everything in a long night of betting, and he is desperate because he thinks he will go to prison due to his debt. Then, he turns to drinking, as this quotation illustrates: “He was not so much used to it then but after that, he took it kindly to solace his cares” (Brönte 150). This can be compared to what Thomas Hardy suggests in *Jude The Obscure* (1895) is the “regular, stereotyped resource of the despairing worthless” (70). In both cases, there is an allusion to alcohol. On these grounds, it can be argued that the fact that Lowborough is an aristocrat shows that not only working-class people were getting drunk to forget their problems and tortures, but also the upper classes. Obviously, we are allowed to make such a statement through comparison because the majority of upper-class characters in Brönte’s novel are very fond of enjoying themselves excessively, a confirmatory evidence that endorses what has been stated above.

It is commonly assumed that society has historically been integrated by different classes, and these classes have always had their respective recreations and sports. Harrison argues that “society can encourage or discourage the relieving of tensions through drinking” (23). In line with this, the more public houses there are, the more drunkards there will be, and the more problematic consequences will emerge. Besides this, the fact that the Victorian was not a society with a great variety of recreation, but the exact opposite – as most of their recreations were seen as immoral – enhances the favourable circumstances for alcohol abuse.

This crucial opposition between recreation or imagination against fact and proper moral conduct in society has been flawlessly established by Charles Dickens in *Hard Times* (1854). In a typical Victorian school, where pupils were “trained to mathematical exactness” (16), educators were teaching children “not to see anywhere, what [they] don’t see in fact; not to have anything, what [they] don’t have in fact” (8), and additionally to “discard the word Fancy altogether” (9). Paul Schlicke’s argument in favour of Dickens’ social criticism runs as follows: “Dickens declared that the very nature of life in industrialized, fact-ridden society was irrefutable justification of people’s need for recreation” (144). Thus, if not sufficient recreations were offered to the working class, or to any other social class, their activities will be automatically driven towards the public house and drinking.

The fact that working-class people visited the pubs over and over and spent most of their time after work in them may be linked to the fact that “[l]ight, heat, cooking facilities, furniture, newspaper, and sociability were often obtained by the poor only at the drinking area” (Harrison 47). In this way, this means working-class people did not have the proper conditions to live in, and they were doubtlessly more comfortable at the pub, as “[t]he working man’s home was often cold, uncomfortable and noisy” (46). It seems evident then that they were *encouraged* or perhaps *impelled* to spend much time in the pubs because they did not have the essential living conditions.

A further remark on the fact that, as Harrison affirmed, society encouraged people to relieve this tension through drinking, is that in some places in 1848 “milk was double the price of beer” (39). Besides being self-explanatory, it is indignant that milk could not be as attainable as beer by the whole society because of its price, it being such a fundamental product. Likewise, Harrison goes further to expose that “non-intoxicating



drinks were still neither as cheap as alcoholic drinks, nor as accessible as they became later” (40), which means that some of the cheapest products, in general, were the alcoholic ones. Besides being nonsensical, as it is a shame that an essential could be more expensive than a vice, this is what really pushes people to buy them for the sheer reason that they are cheaper.

Some other terms within the temperance movement’s rhetoric deal with idleness and thrift, as it tried to encourage working-class people towards the values of ‘self-improvement’ and ‘domesticity’ (Harrison 49). The middle-class was, so to speak, emboldening workers to employ the money they customarily spent in drinking into improving their home, making it cosier. However, Victorian working-class houses were tiny, dirty and water was rarely potable, and with no electricity but candles; they could not improve for the bare reason there was nothing with which they could start. Apparently, “in London the scarcity of water created the profession of water carrier” (38). The mere existence of this fact explains what the degree of the situation was. An illustration of the working and living conditions of English industrial towns is provided almost a century afterwards by the English writer George Orwell in *The Road to Wigan Pier* (1937). What he described is quite harsh, people with no essential living necessities being covered. Thus, if the conditions were such in 1937, it is unimaginable what the conditions were in the mid-nineteenth century.

In fact, a vigorous concern for society and these disquieting conditions was already illustrated in what is known as ‘The Condition of England Question’, a term first used by the Scottish philosopher and writer Thomas Carlyle in *Chartism* (1840). This concept will not be analysed here, but rather used as a proof to justify in certain manner what the causes of the abusive consumption of alcohol or drunkenness were. Dickens, who was closely attached to Carlyle, states in an article in *The Examiner* that “[d]runkenness, as a national horror, is the effect of many causes”, and among these he enumerates those we have previously implied: “foul smells, disgusting habitations, bad workshops and workshop customs, want of light, air, and water, the absence of all easy means of decency and health” (436). The available evidence seems to endorse what has been argued above. In the same article, which is an abundant source of information, Dickens sharply reminds and even whips people with common sense and sages by stating that “it is the duty of the moralist, if he strikes at all, to strike deep and to spare

not” (436). What Dickens suggests is to discern and find the real problem or cause of drunkenness, i.e. the benefit people obtain from trading and selling alcohol, and those involved in it.

What has just been exposed leads to the monetary aspect of the whole matter of ‘the drinking question’. Let us imagine that a certain product is abundantly consumed by society; logically, there will be an increase in the number of people interested in manufacturing that product, because it is believed to be a safe bet. Thus, bearing in mind that Victorian society is mostly immoral, owing to their widespread moral pretension, evasion and conformity (Houghton 395, and this B.A. Thesis 12), and owing to the fact that the bourgeois has been well-established for the last century and a half, mainly through their typically materialistic ideology, it is obvious that the production and subsequent consumption of alcohol beverages will hardly be moderated nor abolished. As Harrison argues, “[d]rink-sellers and the trade community were too closely linked for middle-class nonconformist to be bowled over by temperance zeal” (45). Harrison’s quote explains the connection between producer and retailer; and if these two figures obtain a financial benefit, it must be a folly to think they will stop producing or selling out of philanthropic ideas, common sense, morality, etc.

A further and astonishing fact which is quite illustrative of the matter that is being described here is that “in the 1850s, there were more drink-sellers in London than fishmongers, dairy-keepers, cheesemongers, greengrocers, butchers, bakers, and grocers combined” or that “a twelfth of Birmingham’s population – that is 11,000 people out of 140,000 – was directly engaged in drink manufacture and sale” (Harrison 58). As the truth starts to shine out of these facts, there must be some other reason or cause for the drinking question rather than those of the working and living conditions. It seems that facts have led and guided us to the role of the state in this matter. Needless to say, the state is benefited through this economic process by means of the taxation it applies to this sector.

On top of that, it seems to be a chain process which is continually going round in circles, in which the only victim that suffers the consequences of that economic pattern is the working class. Harrison suggests that “[h]igh taxation and monopoly enable drink manufacturers to make large profits [...] at the expense of the poor” (64), which makes explicit the role of the state through taxation, and therefore, the three participants of that

chain process are present. Along similar lines, Harrison argues that “England relied far more heavily than continental countries on drink taxes for her national revenue” (61), which naturally completes the process, as the state or government taxes the manufacturer, the retailer and the individual who drinks – three different targets to tax.

What proves this chain process to be even more beneficial is the existence of adulteration of alcohol, and more precisely, of beer. As adulteration comes into the scene, and it is known to be a common practice, the alcoholic beverage is still sold at the same price but with a lower gradation. Instinctively, it may be conjectured that more drinks will be required to be tipsy or to get drunk; together with the fact that the exploited and exhausted people’s unique solace is drinking (Harrison 49), this means that people spend more and more money in alcohol. For example – to return to our literary illustrations – during one of the first encounters of Jude and Arabella in *Jude The Obscure*, they visit a public house where they order a beer. Once she has taken a sip, Arabella says: “‘Adulterated—I can’t touch it!’ She mentioned three or four ingredients she detected in the liquor beyond malt and hops” (37). This was actually happening everywhere, as alcoholic drinks were “often adulterated, and many still thought them debilitating” (Harrison 40). It cannot be assured that the point here was to make alcoholic beverages weaker, but a ‘hidden’ fact – unless we are being pretty naïve – is that manufacturers and retailers sell more and gain more.

A further remark on the interest of people in partaking in this business can be made through Hardy’s novel again. Jude admires a musical piece whose composer he happens to talk to, but he realises how immorally or spiritually poor the man who composed the piece is. The individual in question affirms he will stop composing as there is not enough money in it and tells Jude he “must go into trade” if he desires “to make money nowadays. The wine business is what I am thinking of” (204). According to Harrison, “wine merchants, were personal advisers to the aristocracy and plutocracy” (58). Based on the evidence currently available, it seems fair to suggest that a huge interest and profit in producing alcoholic beverages existed, as it appears in the novel.

Further research in this area reveals the rising importance of drinking privately against drinking publicly, and the meaning these two nuances conferred on the same activity. When explaining the effects of industrialization, Harrison informs us that “working man marked their son’s maturity by making them publicly drunk” (40). In

order to illustrate that this was not an exclusively working-class performance, it must be observed that Arthur Huntingdon, from *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, wanted to “make a man of” his son (272). During one of those manly performances, the youngster calls his mother words he did not know the meaning of, obviously encouraged by his father before his friends. Then, as a rebuttal to the belief that only the working-class men made their sons drink, it could be argued that Huntingdon, being from the upper social classes, *privately* performed this or any other activity involving drinking; that it remained unknown is precisely the object of interest of the following paragraph – private vs public drinking – as it provides a strong societal connotation.

“Although class segregation in drinking existed before the nineteenth century, it does not seem to have been so rigid in the eighteenth century” (Harrison 46). It has been thought from historical and social accounts that drinking united people, and that before the nineteenth century upper, middle and lower classes could be seen drinking in a public house. Gwen Hyman develops this claim in “An Infernal Fire in My Veins: Gentlemanly Drinking in *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*” by asserting that “[d]runkenness was not particularly problematic – it was a sign of fellowship, part of the social contract” (452). With the passage of time, a gulf emerged between the classes. For instance, “London tradesmen [...] were drinking at home, and private as opposed to public drinking was becoming a mark of respectability” (Harrison 46). Not only tradesmen drank privately, but upper and middle classes too, mainly because of their moral pretension to be perfect and respectable in public. Ethically, there is barely a difference between being immoral either publicly or privately, which is a further illustration of Victorian prudery and primness.

Private drinking allowed the creation of clubs where the upper classes enjoyed themselves unrestrainedly, and a literary proof for the existence of those clubs is every single trip to London by Arthur Huntingdon in *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, where he continually goes to take care of responsibilities of the utmost importance. As Mike Huggins puts it in “More Sinful Pleasures? Leisure, Respectability and the Male Middle Classes in Victorian England”: “Where drink could be taken in the home, or in the club, [...] overindulgence could be easily concealed, and prosecution for alcohol-involved misbehaviour avoided” (590). There is a growing support to the claim that middle and upper class gentlemen were using those clubs as a way of escapism from the constant

self-restrain and self-denial. On top of this, as it has been previously alluded to, what the middle and upper classes did in public, very much differed in private, as, once again, Huggins propounds the view that “the gap between public rhetoric and private practice is sometimes well established” (591), an evidence that automatically brings us to the hypocritical nature of the middle and upper classes in the Victorian era.

Arthur Huntingdon embodies this moral pretension of being a respectable figure in public, and an over-indulgent savage in love with the bottle and the excesses provided by it in private. When he *bunburies* in town – the meaning of this concept having been previously stated in this B.A. Thesis – he and his friends enjoy themselves in private parties where gambling, alcohol and perhaps prostitution, though not directly mentioned, were predominant.

Furthermore, this social segregation in terms of drinking is reflected in the fact that middle and upper classes established what was ‘respectable’ in society, and in the Victorian era, it was respectable to drink either at home or in a club, but in any case, privately. It is obvious that the working classes neither had the same financial nor physical possibility to gather in a meeting and drink. Meantime, the lower classes were pushed towards self-improvement, which goes hand in hand with self-sacrifice (Houghton 287). This statement is endorsed by the fact that by the 1850s no respectable Englishmen entered an ordinary public house (Harrison 46). Consequently, it is clear enough that upper and middle classes changed pubs for their spacious houses or clubs, where only ‘respectable’ people were admitted.

For the sake of discussion, I would like to argue that even if an individual from a working-class environment followed the respectable and estimable values of self-sacrifice, self-denial and self-improvement, the individual in question was not given the opportunity to grow as a person or to improve his current state. We see this when Jude – from *Jude The Obscure* – persistently strives to become a scholar. He attempts to pursue this herculean task for a working-class individual, because of the elitist character of education, by acquiring a decent knowledge of the classics, the Bible, and English history. However, his aspirations to become a learned man fail, as he receives a letter from one of the colleges he addressed that runs as follows: “I venture to think you will have a much better chance of success in life by remaining in *your own sphere* and sticking to your trade than by adopting *any other course*” (120; emphasis mine). All

kind of ‘earnest’ people, reformists, sages, politicians, etc. were encouraging the working class to adopt an attitude of self-denial or self-improvement, but once those were approaching the fulfilment of their aspirations, the same ‘earnest’ people did not allow them to climb the ‘social ladder’, simply because they were born in a different social class or environment.

Let us recall the issue that the upper and middle classes encouraged the working class to have aspirations but, once they had them, they were denied their intellectual or financial growth. This statement finds support in the fact that the upper and middle classes protected their own. This has been brazenly portrayed when Lowborough, from *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, is depressed at the thought of going to prison because of his huge debts. Huntingdon basically exonerates him by saying: “They can’t put you in prison, you are a peer” (150). According to the *Collins Online Dictionary*, a peer is “a person who holds any of the five grades of British nobility”. A further evidence supporting this is that “the police seldom arrested respectable drunkards” (Harrison 68). Then, it would be too daring to consider putting ‘respectable’ drunkards behind bars, at a time when debtors and defaulters were not severely punished, simply because of their lineage and the privileges bestowed by it. Then, the several assertions that have been made confirm the fact that there was a double morality or double standard, the application of which depended on the social class to which an individual belonged.

### **3.2. The Ecclesiastical Movements’ Participation in the Drinking Question**

Since its creation until the present day, the persuasive power of the church has been illustrated by, for instance, its influence over the outbreak of a war, the decisions regarding society, or simply by daily persuading individuals. The role of the church has been influential in numerous areas because of its ability to manipulate the masses of people, and because, apparently, people need to be guided by someone or something that creates a reality for them. In what interests us here, the role of the church is exemplified in a much lower scale of importance. Nevertheless, it provides an interesting and additional perspective to the present paper, as the participation of the

ecclesiastical movements in the so-called drinking question stands out among that of other institutions.

Therefore, after analysing their moves and actions regarding alcohol, it will be argued that the standpoint of the ecclesiastical movements was somewhat ambiguous, i.e. neither radical nor absolute. Within the literary works that have been studied for the purpose of the present paper, the role of the different ecclesiastical movements – Catholics, Evangelicals, Anglicans, Puritans, Methodists, Calvinists, Baptists – can only be noticed indirectly, as there are no direct statements of their involvement or participation in the drinking question. However, the opinion of Victorian philosophers and historians has been taken into account, and has provided us with plenty of information so as to make assumptions about the role of these ecclesiastical movements in temperance issues. That they did not adopt a passive attitude during the Victorian era is illustrated with the Victorian thinker Charles Kingsley's statement in the preface to his novel *Yeast: A Problem* that “[t]he country clergy are severely improving, I do not mean merely in morality – for public opinion now demands that as a *sine qua non* – but in actual efficiency” (iv).

In the first place, the positive approach of the issue will be here exposed through the discourse and actions of the ecclesiastical movements. In the first half of the nineteenth century, these shared the idea of the temperance movement by not promoting total abstinence, but a reduction or moderation of the consumption of alcohol. However, certain movements “forbade its members to become public innkeepers” (Harrison 86) as it was considered that by owning such a place, the owner was promoting drinking and encouraging people to consume and acquire, as a consequence of drinking, the undesirable values of drunkenness and idleness, against those of self-improvement, self-denial and self-restraint. Moreover, we read that “religious societies often met in public houses, and never favoured abstinence” (87), and the aim of one of these societies, i.e. the puritan community, was “the balanced life” (87). Then, what can be logically inferred from these facts is that what has been provided by God must not be refused, “for everything God created is good, and nothing should be rejected” (Timothy 4:4), but not taken in excess either. In fact, this appears to be quite a neutral and positive stance to take up by the ecclesiastical.



Literary examples of this positive approach are found intermittently in some passages from Anne Brönte's *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall*, where alcohol is a secondary but recurrent theme. In the novel, certain characters and behaviours seem to exemplify some of the characteristic condemnations which were part of either the temperance or teetotal movement. Within the following passage, some of the temperance, teetotal and ecclesiastical basic jargon can be easily noticed:

But you are not required to *abstain* from the substantial dinner of to-day: you are only advised to partake of these coarser viands in such *moderation* as not to incapacitate you from enjoying the choicer banquet of to-morrow. If, regardless of that counsel, you chose to make a beast out of yourself now, and over-eat and *over-drink* yourself till you turn the good victuals into *poison*, who is to blame if, hereafter, while you are suffering the torments of yesterday's *gluttony* and *drunkenness*, you see more *temperate* men sitting down to enjoy themselves at that splendid entertainment which you are unable to taste? (164; emphasis mine)

As it may be observed, alcohol is referred to as a 'poison', quite strong a term, and together with 'abstain', the words lead us to associate them to the teetotal movement, which encouraged people towards total abstinence; therefore, they used harsh terms to refer to alcohol and its effects. Then, 'moderation', 'over-drink' and 'drunkenness' are associated to the temperance movement which did not proclaim total abstinence. Lastly, the presence of 'gluttony' is connected to the ecclesiastical movements, as gluttony is one of the seven deadly sins. Later in the novel, terms such as 'hell broth' or 'rank poison' are used to refer to alcohol. A four-line poem whose origin is unknown, but which is inserted when a character, Mister Lowborough, is being tempted to drink alcohol by the rest of the characters, further illustrates this: "Stop, poor sinner, stop and think / Before you further go, / No longer sport upon the brink / Of everlasting woe" (150). The mere fact that so many ecclesiastical elements are present in a dialogue involving drinking issues is enough to establish a parallel between the temperance and ecclesiastical movements in the novel.

As a consequence of this, it can be further argued that Anne Brönte was pretty knowledgeable with the discourse of temperance, teetotal or ecclesiastical movements. Firstly, Helen, the protagonist, is the personification of temperance as well as the main victim of the abusive consumption of alcohol. Secondly, Arthur Huntingdon is the



villain, the tempter, the abusive or “tyrannical husband” (Harrison 91), and the representation of virility through drinking, i.e. drinking as a manly performance. Thirdly, Mister Lowborough is the example of what alcohol can cause when consumed in excess, but also of how once it is realised that abusive drinking is wrong and mischievous, it is possible to buckle up and become a normal person. Fourthly, Helen personifies the protective and caring mother that has escaped from the tyrant, i.e. her husband, and now lives in a small village. There, in a gathering with the locals, her son is offered a drink, and Helen sharply refuses it as she hopes “to save him from one degrading vice at least” (19). Helen, let us recall, was giving adulterated wine and other spirits to her son “just to produce inevitable nausea and depression without positive sickness” (289), to create an abhorrence towards alcoholic beverages. Fifthly, something else that can incline us to think that Brönte was in fact aware of the temperance discourse is that she describes Huntingdon, the villain, as a “man of no self-restraint” (180), not “restraining his natural appetites” (191) while committing a “crime of over-indulgence” (180). All these illustrations are part of the temperance, teetotal or ecclesiastical rhetoric of the time, as it has been stated in the previous section.

Two more positive representations of the ecclesiastical movements in the role of a protective father and saviour will be approached to conclude this section. The first one is that the church served as a shelter or haven for those who were willing to quit the wretchedness of drinking. For instance, in *Jude The Obscure*, the character of Arabella desires to get rid of the habit of drinking, and she achieves her goal through embracing the church. “I felt a need of some sort of support under my loss, and, as ’twas righter than gin, I took to going there regular [sic], and found it a great comfort” (330), in a clear allusion to the church. This represents, on the one hand, that a way of escaping the influence and dependence on drinking was to embrace the church, and, on the other hand, that the church was stretching out a helping hand to those who had fallen in temptation. As for the second representation, it puts emphasis on the fact that the ecclesiastical movements were morally instructive, and at the same time, these were exhorting people on the danger that existed regarding alcohol. This is exemplified by John Henry Newman, the Catholic Victorian theologian, in his sermon “Self-Denial the Test of Religious Earnestness”, where he admonishes people to “strengthen [their] general power of self-mastery”, which he defines later as “such an habitual command of

yourself, as will be a defence ready prepared when the season of temptation comes” (69).

After exposing the positive approach of the participation of the church people in connection with the temperance or teetotal movements, the possible existence of a negative approach will be considered. David Newsome suggests that “if evangelicals joined the temperance movement, they were inspired more by thirst for souls than by a belief for abstinence for its own sake” (qtd. in Harrison 90). In addition, it turns out that the ecclesiastical movements were “closely allied with the brewers [and] enjoyed full cellars and a good table” (90). These two quotations do not present yet a reason to accuse them of any illicit or immoral act, because as far as those who drink did not fall in temptation, let us recall that, in the church’s view, what God has given us should be enjoyed.

Harrison goes further to explain that “the evangelical opinion had no objection to beer, which was then seen as a temperance drink” (85), which is still perfectly reasonable, as beer has a lower gradation and it is not as harmful as spirits are. Nevertheless, on the other hand, we learn that “brewers were prominent in evangelical philanthropy; some even supported anti-spirits movements” (85), which exposes the real interest of the churchmen in the whole matter. Apparently, the church depended on the brewers because of their ‘evangelical philanthropy’, while enjoying a ‘full cellar’, and therefore, they could not advocate for total abstinence or at least they did not feel the moral necessity to do so. What they could advocate for was the abolition or prohibition of spirits, because their consortium with the brewers will be benefited as the demand for beer will suddenly increase.

The dark relationship between the brewers and the ecclesiastical can only be conjectured. But what can be asserted is that it seems that some ecclesiastical societies did not act out of altruism, philanthropism, or love for the fellow man. In fact, they jumped on the bandwagon because of their interest in capturing more and more devotees at the expense of these reformist movements. Besides, it can be further claimed that the ecclesiastical movements in question killed two birds with one stone, the first being the prestige they obtained by participating in such wholesome activities, and the second the number of devotees they were bringing under their influence.

## 4. Conclusions

Throughout this B.A. Thesis, an attempt to confirm that the Victorian double morality or hypocrisy permeated the sphere of the temperance and anti-alcohol issues has been made. The attainment of this objective has been possible through a thorough reading of a selection of literary pieces from the period that indirectly illustrate the presence of the concern for the drinking question. For instance, in *Jude The Obscure*, where a working-class individual aspiring to become a scholar is denied access to the academic sphere by the middle and upper classes, Jude succumbs to drinking or, as Hardy puts it, the ‘resource of the despairing worthless’; *The Tenant of Wildfell Hall* illustrates, on the other hand, that the middle and upper classes drank as much as the working class, but as it was done privately, they could still carry on deceiving society disguised in self-respectability.

As it is essential to understand the circumstances of the time, a contextual framework that reveals the existence of the Victorian double morality or hypocrisy has been provided through historical and social accounts in order to understand the big picture for the analysis of the literary works. With this combination of literary, historical, and social accounts, it has been deduced that the concern for the drinking question did exist; but also, that it was simply one more feature of the Victorian hypocrisy – the so-called double morality which, we have argued, wholly imbued the Victorian society. Obviously, it cannot be generalized on these grounds; however, as it has been mentioned here, the Victorians were exaggeratedly concerned, because of their moral pretension, with doing the ‘right’ thing in public while adopting a self-indulgent attitude in private, exemplified by the co-existence of the public houses and the private clubs.

The portrayal of the temperance issue or the drinking question – a social and historical societal aspect – through a literary perspective is rather novel. During our research, the shortage of Victorian novels directly depicting the drinking question has been a slight obstacle, which has to do with what Huggins calls the ‘unwillingness of the writers’ to critically describe improper behaviours. After this initial approach, we could tackle a broader issue, which is the control exerted by middle and upper classes in the Victorian society, and how much self-improvement of the working class they

allowed for. In other words, the middle and upper classes' modus operandi in oppressing the working class and its literary representation would merit some attention. Furthermore, on a more strictly socio-historical level, to analyse the role of the state would be of great interest as it would give the researcher the chance to link the participants in the drinking question, i.e. producer, retailer, consumer, and taxpayer.

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