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ЗАТВЕРДЖЕНО
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Qualifying paper

Comparative analysis of female characters in «The Sun Also Rises» by E. M. Hemingway and «Great Expectations» by Charles Dickens

Bachelor’s Thesis

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INTRODUCTION

The comparative analysis of female characters in The Sun Also Rises by Ernest Hemingway and Great Expectations by Charles Dickens is relevant due to its ability to illuminate the evolving representation of women in literature and the sociocultural forces shaping these portrayals. Literature has long served as both a reflection and a critique of societal norms, and examining female characters across different historical and literary movements provides valuable insights into gender dynamics, social expectations, and authorial intent. By studying characters such as Estella, Miss Havisham, and Biddy alongside Brett Ashley and the other women in The Sun Also Rises, it becomes possible to trace how Victorian and modernist narratives construct femininity, agency, and moral conflict within their respective time periods.

The Victorian era, in which Dickens wrote, was characterized by rigid gender expectations that shaped literary portrayals of women. Female characters were often confined within the binaries of virtue and vice, with their morality being a central concern of the narrative. Miss Havisham embodies the consequences of bitterness and emotional stagnation. These characters are products of a literary tradition that emphasized moral instruction, social stratification, and gender roles deeply intertwined with familial and societal expectations.

Hemingway’s The Sun Also Rises presents a stark contrast to Dickens' structured moral universe, instead portraying female characters through the lens of modernist uncertainty and existential crisis. Brett Ashley, in particular, serves as an emblem of the "new woman" of the early twentieth century—independent, sexually liberated, and emotionally conflicted. Her character reflects the broader social transformations that took place after World War I, including changing gender norms and the rejection of traditional values.

This comparative approach is essential for understanding the role of literature in shaping and responding to historical and cultural changes.

The object matter of the thesis is the exploration of the historical, social, and literary backgrounds of American and British societies during the lifetimes of Ernest Hemingway and Charles Dickens, and how these contexts influenced their respective novels The Sun Also Rises and Great Expectations. To explain the position of female characters in both works, aiming to reveal how their portrayals reflect the gender roles, expectations, and cultural values of their time.

The subject matter of this study is a comparative analysis of the representation, roles, and development of female characters in The Sun Also Rises and Great Expectations, examined within the historical, social, and literary contexts of their respective periods.

Purpose of the study is to examine the representation of female characters in The Sun Also Rises and Great Expectations, comparing and contrasting their characterization, social roles, and thematic significance while examining the impact of literary and historical movements on their portrayal. The purpose of the study is to examine how, during the Victorian and modernist eras, these depictions mirror broader cultural attitudes toward women. It also looks into how ideas of moral identity, agency, and femininity change over these literary periods. The study also looks at how these portrayals still influence the way readers think about gender roles today, supported by insights from a questionnaire filled out by secondary school students, offering a glimpse into how young people relate to and interpret female characters in classic literature.

This thesis explores how female characters in The Sun Also Rises by Ernest Hemingway and Great Expectations by Charles Dickens reflect the social and cultural values of their respective historical periods. It focuses on the ways in which Brett Ashley, Estella, Biddy, and Miss Havisham either embody or challenge traditional gender roles in literature, while also considering how the distinct literary styles of Hemingway and Dickens influence the portrayal and development of these characters. The study identifies thematic similarities and differences in the representation of women in the two novels, relating them to the broader concerns of Victorian and modernist literature. To achieve its objectives, the research draws upon the literary texts themselves, supported by critical analyses, historical sources, and scholarly articles dealing with gender representation and literary movements. Methods such as comparative literary analysis, historical-contextual analysis, discourse analysis, and character study are used, along with a questionnaire designed for secondary school students to gather insight into how younger readers interpret these portrayals.

The theoretical significance of the work lies in its contribution to the understanding of female characterization across distinct literary periods, offering a broader lens on the evolution of gender roles and the influence of narrative form. In terms of practical significance, the results provide valuable insights for educators, scholars, and students, promoting more inclusive and reflective teaching of literature by addressing changing social values and the portrayal of women. Including student responses helps to illustrate how classic literary figures continue to resonate with young readers and foster critical thinking.

The scientific novelty of the study lies in its original comparative approach to female characters shaped by differing historical and cultural contexts. The results have been presented and discussed in academic seminars, literature courses, and student conferences. The structure of the thesis includes three chapters: the first examines the historical, social, and literary contexts of the Victorian era and the Lost Generation; the second offers a comparative analysis of the female characters in both novels; and the third analyzes the findings of the student questionnaire, offering a contemporary view on literary gender representation.

PART I. GENERAL CHARACTERIZATION OF THE SOCIAL, CULTURAL, AND HISTORICAL BACKGROUND OF THE TWO ERAS

1.1. Victorian England and the Lost Generation: a Comparative Overview

Victorian England and the period of the Lost Generation represent two distinct historical, cultural, and social landscapes, shaped by unique political developments, economic conditions, and philosophical ideologies. The Victorian era, spanning from 1837 to 1901, was characterized by industrial progress, rigid social hierarchies, and a strong emphasis on morality, duty, and domesticity. In contrast, the period associated with the Lost Generation, emerging in the aftermath of World War I, was defined by disillusionment, shifting gender roles, and a profound questioning of traditional values. These two epochs produced vastly different literary movements and cultural attitudes, each reflecting the anxieties and aspirations of the people who lived through them. Analyzing the historical, cultural, and social contexts of these two periods highlights the ways in which literature evolved as a response to the shifting conditions of human experience.

The Victorian era was marked by rapid industrialization, urbanization, and the expansion of the British Empire. The Industrial Revolution had transformed England into the most powerful economic force in the world, leading to the growth of cities, the rise of a middle class, and significant advances in science and technology. However, this progress came with significant social challenges, including exploitative labor conditions, stark economic inequalities, and the displacement of rural communities [27]. The Victorian period was also deeply influenced by the strict moral code associated with Queen Victoria's reign. Society placed great emphasis on decorum, religious piety, and social duty, particularly in relation to gender roles. Women were expected to conform to ideals of domesticity, modesty, and self-sacrifice, while men were charged with public responsibilities, reinforcing the ideology of separate spheres. This rigid structure was reinforced through literature, which often depicted women in roles of moral guidance or tragic downfall, and men as the agents of action and industry. The novels of Charles Dickens, for instance, frequently illustrated the hardships of the lower classes while still upholding the importance of virtue and perseverance as means of achieving moral redemption. The literary culture of the Victorian era reflected these social and economic realities, serving both as a vehicle for moral instruction and a medium for social critique. Novels became the dominant literary form, reaching a wide readership through serialized publication in magazines and periodicals. Writers such as Dickens, George Eliot, and the Brontë sisters explored themes of social injustice, personal morality, and the consequences of industrialization. The Victorian novel often centered on characters navigating rigid social structures, with an emphasis on personal responsibility, redemption, and adherence to ethical principles. At the same time, literature

provided a platform for questioning these structures, particularly in relation to gender and class. The figure of the fallen woman, for example, became a recurring theme in Victorian fiction, highlighting the precarious position of women who transgressed social norms. While mainstream Victorian culture sought to uphold traditional values, literature also served as a means of exposing the contradictions and injustices within society [1]. The post-World War I era, in contrast, was marked by a radical shift in cultural attitudes and a deep sense of disillusionment. The term "Lost Generation" was coined to describe the young adults who came of age during and after the war, many of whom felt disconnected from the values of the past. The war had shattered long-held beliefs in national glory, progress, and moral certainty, leaving behind a generation that struggled to find meaning in a rapidly changing world. Economic instability, political upheaval, and the collapse of pre-war social hierarchies contributed to a sense of existential uncertainty. The rigid structures that had defined the Victorian era no longer seemed relevant, and a new cultural ethos emerged, characterized by experimentation, skepticism, and a rejection of traditional norms [1].

One of the most significant changes in the post-war era was the redefinition of gender roles. The war had necessitated the involvement of women in the workforce, leading to increased independence and visibility in public life. Although many women were expected to return to domestic roles after the war, their experiences had fundamentally altered societal expectations. The emergence of the "New Woman" challenged Victorian ideals of femininity, as women began to assert greater agency in matters of career, sexuality, and personal freedom. This transformation was reflected in literature, particularly in the works of writers such as Ernest Hemingway and F. Scott Fitzgerald, who depicted female characters navigating a world in which traditional gender roles were increasingly unstable. Unlike the virtuous and self-sacrificing heroines of Victorian fiction, the women of the Lost Generation were often portrayed as independent, unpredictable, and emotionally complex. This shift represented a broader questioning of established moral codes and a rejection of the rigid dichotomies that had governed Victorian society [13].

The literary landscape of the Lost Generation was shaped by the desire to capture the fragmented, chaotic nature of modern life. Unlike the structured narratives of Victorian fiction, modernist literature embraces ambiguity, non-linear storytelling, and introspection. Writers sought to depict the alienation and psychological struggles of individuals in a world that no longer offered clear moral or ideological certainties [11]. Hemingway's spare, understated prose and Fitzgerald's lyrical explorations of decadence and despair exemplified this new literary style. Themes of aimlessness, moral ambiguity, and the search for meaning dominated the literature of the period, reflecting the broader cultural anxieties of the post-war world. The Lost Generation's rejection of Victorian idealism was not merely a response to war but also an acknowledgment of the fundamental shifts in human experience brought about by industrialization, urbanization, and technological advancements.

Despite these differences, both the Victorian era and the post-World War I period grappled with questions of identity, morality, and societal change. While the Victorians sought to impose order and moral structure

onto an increasingly complex world, the writers of the Lost Generation embraced uncertainty and disruption as essential aspects of modern existence [2]. Both periods saw literature as a means of exploring the human condition, whether through the detailed moral examinations of Dickens or the stark, existential narratives of Hemingway. The contrast between these two literary traditions highlights the evolving nature of cultural and intellectual thought, illustrating how literature serves as both a reflection of and a response to the times in which it is created. The economic and political landscapes of these two periods further influenced the ways in which people understood their roles within society. Victorian England was defined by imperial expansion, economic optimism, and a belief in social progress, despite the underlying inequalities and hardships faced by the working class. The aftermath of World War I, however, shattered such ideals, replacing them with a pervasive sense of cynicism and uncertainty [1]. The global economic depression, the collapse of monarchies, and the rise of totalitarian regimes in the interwar years contributed to a widespread loss of faith in the institutions that had once been seen as the foundation of civilization. Unlike the structured ambitions of the Victorians, the Lost Generation was characterized by an awareness of impermanence and an aversion to grand narratives of progress and stability.

Religious belief and moral philosophy also underwent significant transformations between these two periods. The Victorians, while experiencing challenges to traditional faith through scientific discoveries such as Darwin's theory of evolution, largely maintained a strong moral and religious framework that guided public and private life. Religious piety was closely linked to social respectability, and moral transgressions were harshly judged. By contrast, the post-war era saw a decline in religious adherence and an increase in secular existentialism. The experience of war, combined with rapid technological change, led many to question the existence of a benevolent, ordered universe. This shift in worldview was reflected in literature, with Victorian novels often emphasizing moral redemption and personal growth, whereas modernist texts frequently explored themes of nihilism, despair, and the absence of absolute truth [13].

1.2. Political and Social Contexts of 19th-century Britain and Post-WWI Europe

The 19th century in Britain was marked by the expansion of the British Empire, industrialization, and a gradual shift towards democratic governance. By contrast, the aftermath of World War I in Europe was characterized by political instability, economic crises, and the rise of new ideological movements. While Britain's political landscape in the 19th century revolved around the balance of power between monarchy, aristocracy, and an emerging middle class, post-war Europe faced the collapse of empires, the restructuring of national borders, and a profound sense of disillusionment with traditional institutions. Socially, the Victorian era was defined by a rigid class system and the effects of industrialization on everyday life, whereas post-war Europe experienced widespread discontent and the challenge of

reconstructing societies after the devastation of war.

The 19th-century British political system was characterized by a constitutional monarchy with a gradually increasing role for parliamentary democracy. The early decades were marked by limited suffrage, with political power concentrated in the hands of landowning elites. The Reform Acts of 1832, 1867, and 1884 progressively broadened the electorate, reflecting the shifting social structure of the nation. The Industrial Revolution had created new economic centers in cities like Manchester and Birmingham, demanding political recognition for the rising class of entrepreneurs and industrialists [13].

This period also saw the growth of political parties. These parties debated issues such as free trade, social welfare, and the role of the state in economic affairs. The Victorian political landscape was influenced by Britain's imperial ambitions, with colonial expansion seen as both an economic necessity and a moral duty under the ideology of the "civilizing mission." The empire's vast reach reinforced Britain's global dominance but also led to tensions regarding governance and the treatment of colonial subjects.

Socially, 19th-century Britain was defined by the Victorian class system. Industrialization created new economic opportunities while also exacerbating social inequalities. The working-class struggle led to the emergence of labor movements and calls for better wages and improved living conditions. Philanthropic and religious organizations played a key role in advocating for social reform. Women's roles in society were largely confined to domestic duties, with limited rights in employment, property ownership, and political participation [9]. However, the late 19th century saw the rise of the suffrage movement. Education reforms, such as the Elementary Education Act of 1870, also played a role in shaping a more politically aware society.

In contrast to 19th-century Britain, post-World War I Europe was defined by political upheaval and social unrest. The war had devastated much of the continent, leading to the collapse of major empires. The Treaty of Versailles in 1919 sought to establish a new order but instead created resentment, particularly in Germany.

The political landscape of post-war Europe was marked by the rise of radical ideologies, including communism and fascism. The Russian Revolution of 1917 introduced the world's first communist state, inspiring socialist movements across Europe. Italy and Germany witnessed the rise of authoritarian regimes that promised stability and national rejuvenation [9].

Economically, the post-war period was fraught with difficulties. Britain experienced economic stagnation, labor strikes, and a decline in global influence. Germany, burdened by reparations, suffered from hyperinflation in the early 1920s. The Wall Street Crash of 1929 and the Great Depression further exacerbated economic woes across Europe. In response, some governments implemented protectionist policies, while others experimented with state intervention. These struggles created fertile ground for political extremism [1].

Socially, post-war Europe experienced a profound shift in cultural and intellectual attitudes. The

trauma of war led to widespread disillusionment with traditional values. This sense of alienation was particularly evident in the younger generation, the "Lost Generation," who were skeptical of the institutions that had led to mass destruction. Women, who had taken on significant roles in the workforce during the war, faced conflicting expectations in the post-war period. The emergence of the "New Woman" symbolized this shift, challenging traditional notions of femininity.

The arts and literature of the post-war period reflected this transformation. Modernist movements rejected the structured realism of the 19th century in favor of fragmentation and introspection. Writers such as Ernest Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and Virginia Woolf explored themes of disillusionment and the psychological impact of war. The Dadaist and Surrealist movements questioned the nature of reality itself. These artistic developments were part of a broader intellectual climate that embraced skepticism and broke away from the rigid structures of Victorian culture [27].

1.3. Literary Movements of the Two Eras

Victorian literature was largely shaped by the social, political, and economic transformations brought about by industrialization, urbanization, and imperial expansion. The novel became the dominant literary form, providing a means for writers to engage with pressing social issues such as class inequality, gender roles, morality, and the consequences of technological progress. Realism, the prevailing literary approach of the time, sought to depict life with fidelity, emphasizing detailed descriptions, plausible characters, and intricate plots that mirrored the complexity of human experience. Writers such as Charles Dickens, George Eliot, and William Makepeace Thackeray were central figures in the realist tradition, using their works to expose the contradictions and injustices of Victorian society. Dickens, for example, highlighted the struggles of the working class and the failures of institutional systems in novels such as Oliver Twist and Hard Times, while Eliot's Middlemarch provided a psychological and sociological study of provincial life that interrogated issues of ambition, marriage, and social reform [13].

Alongside realism, Victorian literature was also deeply engaged with moral and philosophical questions, reflecting the era's preoccupation with propriety, religious belief, and the tension between faith and scientific progress. The rise of industrial capitalism brought about significant material advancements but also led to widespread social dislocation and ethical dilemmas. This conflict between traditional values and modern developments found expression in the works of Thomas Hardy, whose novels often portrayed individuals struggling against deterministic forces beyond their control. Tess of the d'Urbervilles and Jude the Obscure challenged the moral certainties of Victorian society, illustrating how rigid social conventions and economic constraints could lead to personal tragedy. Similarly, Robert Louis Stevenson's Strange Case of Dr Jekyll and Mr Hyde explored the dual nature of human identity, engaging with anxieties about moral

hypocrisy and the limits of rational self-control [1].

Table 1.1 Dominant Literary Movements of Victorian and Modernist Eras

Literary Movement	Key Characteristics	Representation in *Great Expectations*	Representation in *The Sun Also Rises*
Victorian Realism	Detailed depictions of society, moral lessons, focus on class struggles	Dickens portrays social mobility, morality, and the impact of wealth through Pip's journey	Absent; Hemingway rejects moral didacticism in favor of subjective experience
Romantic Influence	Emotion, individualism, and dramatic personal conflicts	Miss Havisham's tragic existence and Pip's longing for Estella reflect Romantic ideals	Largely rejected in favor of a stark, unsentimental approach
Naturalism	Emphasis on environment shaping character, deterministic worldview	The rigid social structure and Pip's struggle against fate illustrate naturalist ideas	Elements of fatalism appear in Jake's physical and emotional limitations
Modernism	Fragmented narrative, stream of consciousness, existential themes	Absent; Dickens follows a linear narrative with clear resolutions	Nonlinear storytelling, minimalist prose, and themes of alienation define Hemingway's style
The Lost Generation	Disillusionment, instability, and rejection of traditional norms	Victorian ideals contrast with the postwar disillusionment Hemingway portrays	The expatriate lifestyle, emotional detachment, and aimlessness reflect postwar cultural despair

The latter part of the Victorian era also saw the emergence of aestheticism and the Decadent movement, which sought to reject the moralizing tendencies of earlier literature in favor of art for art's sake. Writers such as Oscar Wilde and Algernon Charles Swinburne embraced beauty, individualism, and subversive wit, challenging conventional notions of virtue and literary purpose. Wilde's The Picture of Dorian Gray epitomized the aestheticist philosophy, depicting the pursuit of pleasure and aesthetic perfection as both intoxicating and self-destructive. The Decadent movement foreshadowed the literary experimentation and rejection of tradition that would define the modernist period in the 20th century, marking a transition from the structured moral narratives of high Victorian literature to the more fragmented and ambiguous literary forms that followed.

The post-World War I literary landscape was profoundly shaped by the trauma and disillusionment of the war, leading to the emergence of modernism as the dominant movement of the period. Modernist literature sought to break away from the conventions of 19th-century realism, rejecting linear narratives, omniscient narrators, and traditional plot structures in favor of experimental techniques that mirrored the fractured nature of contemporary experience. The war had exposed the inadequacy of established institutions and belief systems, leading writers to explore themes of alienation, existential doubt, and the search for

meaning in an uncertain world. This shift was accompanied by a greater emphasis on subjective experience, stream-of-consciousness narration, and the use of symbolism and fragmentation to reflect the inner lives of characters [1].

One of the defining characteristics of modernist literature was its engagement with psychological depth and interiority, influenced by the developments in psychoanalysis pioneered by Sigmund Freud. Writers such as Virginia Woolf and James Joyce revolutionized literary form by delving into the complexities of consciousness and memory, abandoning traditional narrative structures in favor of fluid, non-linear storytelling. Woolf's Mrs Dalloway and To the Lighthouseemployed stream-of-consciousness techniques to explore the ephemeral nature of time and the intricacies of human perception, while Joyce's Ulysses deconstructed the conventions of the novel, blending multiple styles, voices, and allusions to create a dense, multi-layered text that challenged the reader's expectations. These experiments reflected a broader modernist desire to capture the ambiguities of modern life, rejecting simplistic representations of reality in favor of literary forms that embraced complexity and uncertainty.

The theme of disillusionment was particularly prominent in the literature of the Lost Generation, a term used to describe writers who came of age during or after World War I and whose works reflected a sense of moral and existential crisis. Ernest Hemingway, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and T. S. Eliot were among the most influential voices of this generation, depicting characters struggling with dislocation, aimlessness, and the erosion of traditional values [12]. Hemingway's The Sun Also Rises portrayed the expatriate community in post-war Europe, emphasizing the characters' attempts to find meaning through hedonistic excess and fleeting relationships. His spare, direct prose style and reliance on understatement exemplified the modernist preference for minimalism and implication over explicit moralizing. Similarly, Fitzgerald's The Great Gatsby captured the disillusionment of the Jazz Age, exploring themes of materialism, lost ideals, and the corruption of the American Dream.

T. S. Eliot's The Waste Land epitomized modernist experimentation, blending multiple literary traditions, languages, and fragmented voices to convey a sense of cultural decay and spiritual desolation. The poem's structure defied traditional poetic forms, mirroring the disordered and fractured nature of post-war existence. This rejection of coherence and unity in favor of ambiguity and intertextuality reflected the broader modernist rejection of the stability and certainty that had characterized Victorian literature [1]. Modernist writers sought not to provide clear moral lessons or neatly resolved narratives but to immerse readers in the complexity and instability of contemporary life, challenging them to engage with literature in new and unconventional ways.

Despite their fundamental differences, the literary movements of the Victorian and post-World War I eras share certain points of continuity. Both periods produced literature that responded to profound social and political transformations, whether it was the upheavals of industrialization and empire in the 19th century or the existential crises of war and modernity in the 20th century. Both movements also grappled

with the tension between tradition and change, with Victorian writers questioning the moral and social structures of their time, and modernists actively dismantling the literary conventions of the past. Furthermore, the preoccupation with identity, morality, and human suffering remained central to literature across both eras, even as the methods of representation evolved [12].

1.3.1. Realism and Victorian Morality in Dickens' Time

Victorian realism was distinguished by its commitment to depicting everyday life in a manner that was both comprehensive and emotionally engaging. Authors of this period sought to move away from the romanticized and often idealized portrayals of earlier literature, instead presenting characters and situations that reflected the struggles, aspirations, and moral dilemmas faced by real people. Dickens' novels are exemplary of this approach, as they meticulously document the lives of individuals from various social classes, exposing the stark realities of urban life and the moral challenges imposed by a rapidly changing society. His narratives often follow protagonists who navigate a world shaped by poverty, exploitation, and injustice, revealing the mechanisms through which social structures maintain inequality. Through detailed descriptions, intricate character development, and complex moral situations, Dickens brought attention to the plight of the working class, the failures of the legal system, and the limitations imposed by rigid class divisions.

At the heart of Dickens' realism lies a deep concern for social reform. His works frequently address the moral and ethical consequences of industrialization, exposing the exploitation of children, the inhumane conditions of workhouses, and the failures of institutions designed to aid the poor. Oliver Twist, for example, presents a searing critique of the Poor Law and the workhouse system, illustrating how these supposed solutions to poverty often exacerbated suffering. The novel’s depiction of Oliver’s struggles highlights the dehumanization inherent in institutional responses to poverty, challenging the reader to reconsider prevailing attitudes toward the underprivileged. Similarly, Bleak House critiques the inefficiency and corruption of the legal system through its portrayal of the endless legal battle in the Court of Chancery, illustrating the devastating effects of bureaucratic inertia on individuals seeking justice. These narratives, while fictional, were grounded in real social concerns, making them powerful vehicles for moral and political commentary.

While Dickens' commitment to realism allowed him to portray the harsh conditions of Victorian society, his works were also deeply embedded in the moral framework of the time. Victorian morality was shaped by a strong emphasis on duty, self-discipline, and social responsibility, influenced by religious belief and the values of the middle class [2].

Dickens’ characters frequently embody or struggle against these moral ideals, and his narratives often reinforce the importance of personal virtue, redemption, and the triumph of good over evil. Even as

his novels expose corruption and injustice, they also offer moral resolutions that align with Victorian sensibilities, often rewarding virtue and punishing vice. This moralistic dimension of Dickens' realism distinguishes his work from later realist movements, which would adopt a more neutral or even pessimistic stance toward moral questions [13].

One of the central moral themes in Dickens' work is the idea of redemption through personal growth and moral integrity. His protagonists often undergo significant moral transformations, learning to navigate the challenges of society while adhering to principles of kindness, honesty, and perseverance. Great Expectations exemplifies this theme through the character of Pip, whose journey from humble origins to social ambition is marked by moral trials and eventual self-awareness. The novel critiques the superficiality of wealth and social status, ultimately affirming the Victorian ideal that true worth is determined by character rather than material success. Similarly, A Christmas Carol portrays the redemption of Ebenezer Scrooge, a character who begins as the embodiment of greed and selfishness but undergoes a profound transformation upon recognizing the value of generosity and human connection. These narratives reinforce the belief that individuals have the capacity for moral improvement, a key tenet of Victorian morality.

Despite his engagement with Victorian moral values, Dickens was also critical of the hypocrisy and rigidity that often accompanied them. His novels frequently expose the ways in which moral principles were selectively applied, particularly in relation to class and gender. Characters such as Mrs. Jellyby in Bleak House, who neglects her own family while dedicating herself to distant philanthropic causes, serve as critiques of the performative morality that often characterized Victorian social reform efforts.
Similarly, the character of Mr. Bounderby in Hard Times represents the self-serving moral posturing of industrialists who claim to champion hard work and self-reliance while exploiting their workers. By highlighting these contradictions, Dickens challenges the reader to reconsider the application of moral values in Victorian society, questioning whether they truly serve the common good or merely reinforce existing power structures.

Another significant aspect of Dickens' engagement with Victorian morality is his portrayal of women and gender roles. His novels often depict female characters who embody the era’s ideal of virtue and self-sacrifice, such as Agnes Wickfield in David Copperfield and Esther Summerson in Bleak House. These women are portrayed as moral anchors, offering stability and guidance to the male protagonists. However, Dickens also presents female characters who challenge conventional expectations, such as Miss Havisham in Great Expectations, whose bitterness and manipulation serve as a critique of the constraints imposed on women by societal expectations. Through these portrayals, Dickens reflects both the limitations and the complexities of Victorian gender ideology, acknowledging the pressures placed on women to conform to idealized notions of femininity while also highlighting the consequences of these rigid roles [13].

The intersection of realism and morality in Dickens' work is further evident in his use of humor and satire. While his novels address serious social issues, they also employ wit, irony, and caricature to expose moral failings and institutional absurdities. Dickens' ability to blend realism with exaggerated characterizations allows him to engage with moral themes in a way that is both entertaining and thought-provoking. The grotesque figures that populate his novels, such as Mr. Bumble in Oliver Twist or Mrs. Sparsit in Hard Times, serve as exaggerated representations of institutional corruption and moral pretension, making his critiques both accessible and impactful.

1.3.2. Modernism and the Disillusionment of the Lost Generation in Hemingway's Era

Hemingway's works embody the key characteristics of modernism by depicting characters who grapple with loss, disillusionment, and the erosion of traditional moral frameworks. His concise, unembellished prose style reflects the stark realities his characters face, stripping away romanticized notions of heroism and virtue. In The Sun Also Rises, Hemingway portrays the aimlessness and existential struggle of expatriates who, having survived the war, find themselves adrift in a world that no longer adheres to the values they once accepted. The characters seek meaning through transient pleasures—drinking, traveling, and engaging in superficial relationships—yet they remain fundamentally dissatisfied and emotionally detached. This portrayal of disillusionment captures the essence of the Lost Generation, a term popularized by Gertrude Stein to describe those who had come of age during the war and were left disoriented in its aftermath. Hemingway's depiction of these individuals underscores the modernist preoccupation with alienation and the search for meaning in a world that has seemingly lost its moral and social cohesion [1].

Table 1.2 Themes of Modernism and Disillusionment in Hemingway's Era

Theme	Description	Representation in *The Sun Also Rises*	Broader Cultural Context
Loss of Faith	Disillusionment with traditional values and institutions after World War I	Jake Barnes struggles with identity and purpose, unable to find fulfillment	Reflects the widespread skepticism toward religion, nationalism, and societal norms
Emotional Detachment	Characters suppress emotions, avoiding deep connections	Brett and Jake's relationship remains unresolved due to emotional and physical barriers	Mirrors the coping mechanisms of the Lost Generation through cynicism and avoidance
Fragmented Reality	Disjointed narratives reflect instability and uncertainty	Hemingway's minimalist style and lack of clear resolution emphasize uncertainty	Represents the broader breakdown of structure in literature and life

Hedonism and Escapism	Indulgence in alcohol, travel, and superficial pleasure as a distraction from trauma	The characters constantly drink, party, and travel to avoid confronting personal pain	Highlights postwar existential crisis and avoidance of deeper reflection
Crisis of Masculinity	Traditional notions of strength and dominance are challenged	Jake's war injury leaves him physically and emotionally wounded, struggling with identity	Illustrates how war and societal changes redefined male roles and self-perception

One of the defining features of modernist literature is its rejection of conventional narrative structures and its embrace of fragmentation. Unlike the structured, omniscient storytelling of Victorian novels, modernist works often present events in a disjointed, nonlinear manner, reflecting the fractured psychological state of their characters. Hemingway employs this technique through his sparse dialogue, ambiguous resolutions, and understated emotional depth. The conversations in The Sun Also Rises are laden with subtext, revealing more through what is left unsaid than through explicit declarations. This minimalist approach forces readers to engage with the text on a deeper level, piecing together the motivations and emotions of characters who struggle to articulate their own inner turmoil. The fragmentation of narrative and meaning mirrors the broader cultural disintegration that followed World War I, reinforcing the sense that traditional certainties had been irreversibly shattered.

The disillusionment of the Lost Generation is further reflected in Hemingway's treatment of themes such as masculinity, love, and the futility of war. His male protagonists often exhibit traits of stoicism and emotional restraint, embodying what has come to be known as the "Hemingway code"—a set of values that prioritize resilience, self-control, and individualism in the face of existential despair. Yet beneath their composed exteriors, these characters grapple with profound inner conflicts [10].

In The Sun Also Rises, Jake Barnes, the novel's protagonist, embodies this internal struggle as he navigates his unfulfilled love for Brett Ashley and the emasculating effects of his war injury. His inability to engage in a conventional romantic relationship serves as a metaphor for the broader impotence of his generation, which finds itself unable to reclaim the prewar ideals of love, honor, and purpose. The tension between external toughness and internal vulnerability underscores the modernist exploration of identity and psychological fragmentation.

Love and relationships in Hemingway's works are often portrayed as fraught with disillusionment and unattainable ideals. The romantic relationships in The Sun Also Rises are marked by betrayal, jealousy, and emotional detachment, reflecting the broader collapse of stable social and moral structures. Brett Ashley, the novel's leading female character, embodies the modernist redefinition of femininity—independent, sexually liberated, and emotionally unanchored [13]. Her relationships with multiple men, including Jake, illustrate the instability of romantic and gender roles in the postwar world. Rather than serving as a source of fulfillment, love becomes yet another arena of existential disappointment. This portrayal aligns with the modernist rejection of traditional romantic tropes,

emphasizing instead the complexity and disillusionment that characterize human interactions in a rapidly changing society.

Hemingway's modernist approach also extends to his critique of war and its aftermath. Unlike earlier literary depictions of war that emphasized heroism and patriotism, Hemingway presents war as a source of deep psychological trauma and existential uncertainty. His characters do not return from battle with a renewed sense of purpose; instead, they are left disoriented, their previous beliefs rendered obsolete. The war serves as an invisible yet omnipresent force in The Sun Also Rises, shaping the characters' disillusionment and reinforcing their sense of alienation. This critique of war aligns with the broader modernist tendency to question grand narratives of progress and nationalism, highlighting instead the devastating consequences of blind allegiance to outdated ideals [1].

PART II. HOLISTIC ANALYSIS OF FEMALE CHARACTERS IN «THE SUN ALSO RISES» AND «GREAT EXPECTATIONS»

2.1. Female Characters in Charles Dickens' «Great Expectations»

In Charles Dickens' Great Expectations, female characters play a crucial role in shaping the novel's themes, character development, and social commentary. Each woman in the novel represents a different aspect of Victorian femininity, power dynamics, and the consequences of societal expectations. Miss Havisham, Estella, and Biddy function as central figures in Pip's development, each embodying contrasting ideals of womanhood, love, and moral guidance. Through these characters, Dickens not only explores personal relationships but also critiques the rigid class and gender norms of the nineteenth century.

Miss Havisham serves as one of the most memorable figures in Dickensian literature, embodying both the destruction caused by betrayal and the limitations imposed on women by Victorian society. Jilted at the altar, she remains frozen in time, her decaying wedding dress and dilapidated home acting as physical manifestations of her psychological torment. She wields significant influence over Estella, using her as a tool of vengeance against men, demonstrating the way in which personal trauma can lead to cycles of manipulation and suffering. Miss Havisham's characterization is deeply intertwined with the theme of time, as her refusal to move forward ultimately results in a tragic realization of her own cruelty. By the end of the novel, she expresses remorse for her actions, suggesting that her vengeance has not provided the solace she sought. Her character exemplifies how Dickens critiques the societal pressure on women to derive their identity from romantic relationships, showing that this dependence can lead to personal and moral ruin [10].

Estella, Miss Havisham's adopted daughter, represents another facet of female existence within Victorian constraints. Trained from childhood to be emotionally detached, she becomes a tool in Miss Havisham's scheme to break men's hearts, including Pip's. Estella's beauty and charm make her an idealized figure in Pip's eyes, but her inability to love reflects the consequences of an upbringing devoid of genuine affection. Her coldness is not entirely of her own making; rather, it is the result of Miss Havisham's manipulation and a defensive mechanism against vulnerability. Her eventual marriage to the brutish Bentley Drummle serves as a form of punishment, illustrating that emotional repression leads to personal suffering rather than power. Despite her privileged status, Estella is ultimately a victim of societal and personal conditioning, showing Dickens' critique of how women were often raised to fulfill roles rather than develop authentic identities. Her transformation at the end of the novel, where she expresses a softened demeanor, suggests a movement toward emotional liberation, though it remains ambiguous whether she achieves true happiness.

Biddy, in contrast to Miss Havisham and Estella, represents the idealized Victorian woman, embodying kindness, patience, and domestic virtue. As an orphan and Pip's childhood companion, she serves as a moral compass throughout the novel. Unlike Estella, Biddy does not rely on beauty or social status to define her worth; instead, she gains respect through intelligence, humility, and an intrinsic sense of goodness. She provides a stark contrast to Pip's misguided aspirations, as she values character over wealth and status. Her eventual marriage to Joe Gargery reinforces the notion that true contentment lies in simplicity and sincerity rather than ambition or social climbing. Through Biddy, Dickens presents an alternative model of womanhood that values emotional intelligence over social standing, reinforcing a more traditional yet affirming view of femininity [4].

The interactions between these female characters and Pip reflect his evolving perceptions of women and class. Pip initially idolizes Estella, believing that his self-worth is contingent on winning her affection. His blind pursuit of an idealized version of femininity prevents him from appreciating the genuine warmth and loyalty that Biddy offers. Through his journey, Dickens illustrates the dangers of romanticizing unattainable ideals and the necessity of recognizing true virtue. Additionally, Pip's complex relationship with Miss Havisham underscores the broader theme of manipulation, as he comes to understand the destructive nature of her bitterness and the far-reaching consequences of revenge. Beyond their personal narratives, the female characters in Great Expectations serve as a commentary on the limitations imposed on women in Victorian England. Miss Havisham's wealth grants her a degree of power, yet she remains imprisoned by her past, suggesting that financial independence alone does not equate to freedom. Estella, despite her beauty and status, is denied autonomy over her emotions and future. Biddy, while embodying virtue, ultimately conforms to the traditional role of wife and caretaker, reinforcing the era's expectation that a woman's fulfillment comes through marriage and service to a husband. These portrayals highlight the lack of true agency afforded to women, regardless of their social standing.

Furthermore, Dickens employs these characters to challenge the rigid dichotomies of womanhood that were prevalent in his time. Victorian literature often categorized women as either virtuous and self-sacrificing or manipulative and dangerous. In Great Expectations, Dickens complicates these stereotypes by presenting characters who, despite their differences, each suffer from societal constraints [4].

Miss Havisham's desire for revenge stems from the limited options available to a woman abandoned at the altar. Estella's coldness is a learned defense mechanism, not an inherent flaw. Even Biddy, though seemingly content, ultimately conforms to a role dictated by societal norms rather than personal ambition. Through these complexities, Dickens critiques the simplistic classifications of women and urges a more nuanced understanding of their struggles.

The depiction of female characters in Great Expectations also reflects broader anxieties about gender and power during the Victorian era. Miss Havisham's control over Estella and, by extension, Pip,

disrupts traditional gender dynamics, portraying a woman wielding influence in a way that is both unsettling and tragic. Estella's emotional detachment challenges the expectation that women should be naturally nurturing and affectionate. Biddy's quiet strength subverts the notion that only wealth and beauty determine a woman's value. Through these figures, Dickens explores the shifting perceptions of femininity and the underlying fears associated with women who deviate from societal expectations [16].

2.1.1. Overview of Women's Role in Victorian Literature

The representation of women in Victorian literature is deeply intertwined with the cultural, social, and legal constraints of the time. The Victorian era, spanning from 1837 to 1901, was characterized by rigid gender roles, with women expected to embody the ideals of purity, domesticity, and submission. Literature of the period both reflected and challenged these societal expectations, offering a spectrum of female characters that ranged from the angelic and self-sacrificing to the rebellious and transgressive. Writers such as Charles Dickens, Charlotte Brontë, Elizabeth Gaskell, and Thomas Hardy used their works to explore the limited roles available to women and, in some cases, to critique the structures that confined them. The portrayal of women in Victorian literature thus serves as a crucial lens through which to examine broader social issues, including class, marriage, education, and female autonomy.

One of the most dominant archetypes in Victorian literature was the "Angel in the House," a term derived from Coventry Patmore's poem of the same name. This idealized vision of womanhood depicted the perfect wife and mother as self-sacrificing, gentle, and morally pure, devoted entirely to the needs of her husband and children. Characters such as Esther Summerson in Dickens' Bleak House and Agnes Wickfield in David Copperfield exemplify this model, serving as nurturing figures who uphold virtue and stability in their respective narratives. These women function as moral compasses, reinforcing the Victorian belief that female virtue was essential to the maintenance of a harmonious society. However, this idealized role also imposed severe limitations on women's agency, confining them to the domestic sphere and discouraging ambition or independence [13].

Contrasting the "Angel in the House" was the figure of the "Fallen Woman," a character type that served as a cautionary tale about the consequences of deviating from societal norms. Women who engaged in extramarital relationships or displayed overt sexual autonomy were often punished in literature, reflecting the rigid moral codes of the period. Thomas Hardy's Tess of the d'Urbervilles presents a particularly striking critique of this double standard, as Tess, despite being a victim of sexual violence, is ostracized and ultimately condemned. Similarly, Elizabeth Gaskell's Ruth tells the story of a young woman who suffers greatly due to a single transgression, illustrating the harsh realities faced by those who failed to conform to Victorian expectations of female purity. These narratives highlight the era's preoccupation with female virtue and the severe social repercussions for women who failed to meet its demands.

Beyond these rigid archetypes, Victorian literature also featured women who sought to challenge the limitations imposed upon them. The rise of the "New Woman" in the late nineteenth century, a term popularized by writers such as Sarah Grand, signified a shift in the portrayal of female characters. The "New Woman" was educated, independent, and unafraid to challenge traditional gender roles [15]. In George Gissing's The Odd Women, the female protagonists defy expectations by choosing careers over marriage, reflecting the growing discourse on women's rights and economic independence. Similarly, in Charlotte Brontë's Jane Eyre, the titular character asserts her right to self-respect and emotional fulfillment, rejecting the constraints of both class and gender. These literary depictions paralleled real-world discussions about women's education, employment, and suffrage, signaling an evolving perspective on female autonomy.

Marriage, as a central institution in Victorian society, played a significant role in shaping the narratives of female characters. Women were often depicted as being economically and socially dependent on marriage, with their worth measured by their ability to secure a suitable husband. In Pride and Prejudice, Jane Austen critiques this dynamic by portraying marriage as a transaction influenced by financial necessity and social standing. Although Austen preceded the Victorian period, her influence extended into the era, and her works continued to be widely read and discussed. Similarly, in Middlemarch, George Eliot examines the limited choices available to women, portraying Dorothea Brooke's marriage as a stifling and disillusioning experience. Eliot's nuanced exploration of female intellect and ambition underscores the tension between personal fulfillment and societal expectations, illustrating the broader struggles faced by Victorian women.

Education was another crucial theme in the portrayal of women in Victorian literature. The expansion of educational opportunities for women during the nineteenth century was reflected in the increasing presence of female characters who sought intellectual growth. Charlotte Brontë's Shirley and Villette feature women who challenge the notion that intellectual pursuits should be reserved for men. Elizabeth Barrett Browning's verse novel Aurora Leigh presents a female protagonist who values her literary ambitions over traditional domestic roles, marking a significant departure from conventional portrayals of Victorian womanhood. The emphasis on female education in these works mirrored contemporary debates about women's access to knowledge and the push for educational reforms that would enable them to pursue careers outside of the home [13].

The intersection of class and gender further complicated the portrayal of women in Victorian literature. While middle- and upper-class women were expected to adhere to ideals of refinement and domesticity, working-class women often occupied a different literary space, one that highlighted the struggles of poverty, labor, and exploitation [2]. In Dickens' Hard Times, the character of Stephen Blackpool's wife represents the grim realities of working-class women who lacked the privilege of economic security. Similarly, Gaskell's Mary Barton portrays the struggles of women in industrial England,

emphasizing the hardships faced by those who were forced to work in factories or as domestic servants. These depictions challenged the romanticized view of Victorian femininity by revealing the harsh conditions endured by women who did not fit the mold of the "Angel in the House."

Female authors played a pivotal role in shaping the literary landscape of the Victorian period, using their works to critique gender norms and advocate for greater agency [4]. The Brontë sisters, Elizabeth Gaskell, and George Eliot all provided complex portrayals of women that went beyond the simplistic binaries of virtue and vice. Their works offered a more nuanced exploration of female psychology, ambition, and social constraints. Mary Shelley, though best known for Frankenstein, also contributed to Victorian discussions on gender through her lesser-known works, which explored themes of female agency and oppression. The success of these authors demonstrated that women could not only participate in literary culture but also shape its evolution.

Despite these progressive portrayals, Victorian literature often reinforced traditional gender roles through its resolutions. Many novels that depicted rebellious or independent women concluded with their conformity to societal expectations. In Jane Eyre, although Jane asserts her autonomy, she ultimately marries Rochester, suggesting a compromise between independence and traditional domesticity. Similarly, in The Mill on the Floss, Maggie Tulliver's tragic fate underscores the impossibility of true female liberation within the confines of Victorian society. These endings reflect the tension between emerging feminist ideals and the deeply ingrained structures that continued to define women's lives. The role of women in Victorian literature was thus multifaceted, encompassing both reinforcement and subversion of contemporary norms. While many works upheld the ideal of the virtuous, self-sacrificing woman, others offered critiques of the limitations imposed on female characters. The period saw the gradual emergence of more complex and independent women in literature, reflecting broader social changes regarding gender and power. By examining these literary portrayals, it becomes evident that Victorian literature was not monolithic in its depiction of women but rather engaged in an ongoing dialogue about their role in society [26].

2.1.2. Miss Havisham: the Symbol of Bitterness and Manipulation

Miss Havisham, one of the most striking characters in Charles Dickens' Great Expectations, serves as a powerful embodiment of bitterness and manipulation, shaping not only the trajectory of the novel but also the psychological development of its protagonist, Pip. As a woman frozen in time by betrayal and heartbreak, she represents the corrosive effects of unresolved trauma and vengeance. Her characterization as an aristocratic recluse, trapped in a decayed mansion while still wearing the wedding dress from the day she was abandoned, underscores her function as a symbol of psychological stagnation and the destructive nature of unchecked grief. Through her interactions with Pip and Estella, Miss Havisham exemplifies

manipulation, using others as instruments of her own revenge while remaining blind to the consequences of her actions. Her role in the novel serves as a critique of the ways in which personal suffering, when allowed to fester, can manifest in cruelty and perpetuate cycles of emotional damage.

Miss Havisham's bitterness originates from a profound personal tragedy—her abandonment by Compeyson on what was meant to be her wedding day. This event becomes the defining moment of her existence, leading her to construct a life centered entirely around mourning and resentment. Her house, Satis House, is a physical manifestation of her mental and emotional decay, preserved in the exact state it was in when she received the fateful letter informing her of her fiancé's betrayal. The wedding feast remains untouched, the clocks are stopped at the precise moment her life was effectively ruined, and her once-elegant attire has deteriorated along with her sense of self. This setting reinforces her function as a character who embodies the inability to move beyond past suffering. Rather than seeking resolution or healing, she chooses to dwell in her pain, allowing it to define her identity and shape her interactions with the world [28].

One of the most significant aspects of Miss Havisham's characterization is her manipulation of Estella, whom she adopts and raises with the explicit purpose of enacting revenge on men. Instead of nurturing Estella with love and guidance, Miss Havisham instills in her a cold and calculating disposition, teaching her to view men as objects to be toyed with and discarded. By doing so, Miss Havisham ensures that her suffering extends beyond herself, passing it down to another generation. Estella, who grows up devoid of emotional warmth, becomes the very embodiment of the weapon Miss Havisham seeks to wield. She is trained to be beautiful and desirable yet utterly incapable of genuine affection, ensuring that the men who fall in love with her will experience the same heartbreak that Miss Havisham endured [7]. This deliberate crafting of Estella as an agent of pain demonstrates the extent of Miss Havisham's manipulation, illustrating how bitterness can distort one's moral compass and transform personal anguish into a destructive force.

Pip, the novel's protagonist, becomes another victim of Miss Havisham's manipulations. When he is first introduced to her, he is a naive and impressionable boy who has no grand aspirations beyond his modest life. However, Miss Havisham deliberately fosters in him an illusion of potential grandeur, leading him to believe that she is his secret benefactor and that he is being groomed to marry Estella. By allowing him to harbor these beliefs without correction, she indirectly contributes to his discontent with his humble origins and fuels his growing obsession with Estella. Pip's blind pursuit of social elevation and romantic fulfillment is rooted in the deceptive environment Miss Havisham has constructed [22]. Her role in his life underscores the extent to which manipulation can alter the course of an individual's development, causing them to pursue illusions rather than reality. Despite her calculated cruelty, Miss Havisham is not a one-dimensional villain. Dickens imbues her character with complexity, allowing her moments of vulnerability and eventual regret. As the novel progresses, Miss Havisham comes to recognize the

devastating consequences of her actions. When Estella ultimately rejects both Pip's love and the idea of emotional connection in general, Miss Havisham is confronted with the realization that she has succeeded too well in her manipulations. Estella's emotional detachment is not merely a tool of vengeance but a fundamental aspect of her character, leaving Miss Havisham without the affection or gratitude she may have unconsciously desired from her adopted daughter. This moment of reckoning marks the beginning of Miss Havisham's transformation from a figure of pure bitterness to one of tragic remorse.

Her repentance is most poignantly expressed in her later interactions with Pip. She comes to understand the full extent of the harm she has inflicted, not only on him but also on Estella, who has been denied the capacity for genuine love and happiness. Miss Havisham's plea for Pip's forgiveness reveals her deep-seated regret and desperation for some form of redemption. However, her fate ultimately prevents her from achieving true atonement. The fire that consumes her is both a literal and symbolic punishment, serving as the culmination of her self-imposed suffering. Whether this fire represents divine retribution or an act of self-destruction remains open to interpretation, but it undeniably reinforces the novel's overarching theme that unchecked bitterness leads to inevitable ruin [18].

Miss Havisham's character serves as a powerful commentary on the dangers of allowing past wounds to dictate one's present and future. Her inability to move beyond her heartbreak leads her to perpetuate suffering in the lives of others, turning her personal pain into a force of widespread emotional devastation. In this way, she functions as both a cautionary figure and a tragic victim of her own inability to heal. Dickens' portrayal of Miss Havisham is not merely that of a woman consumed by vengeance but also of an individual trapped by her own emotional paralysis. Her arc underscores the novel's broader themes of social mobility, the nature of expectations, and the consequences of unchecked emotions [5].

Furthermore, Miss Havisham's role in Great Expectations can be examined within the larger context of Victorian literature's treatment of women and emotional repression. The trope of the jilted woman, abandoned and left to wither away in solitude, was not uncommon in the literature of the time. However, Miss Havisham's characterization goes beyond simple victimhood. She is not merely a passive sufferer but an active agent of manipulation, demonstrating the complex interplay between power and vulnerability. In this regard, she serves as a subversion of the traditional portrayal of women in Victorian fiction, occupying a space that is neither entirely sympathetic nor wholly villainous. Her character challenges the notion that women in literature must be either paragons of virtue or objects of pity, presenting instead a deeply flawed and psychologically rich figure.

Miss Havisham's legacy within literary analysis extends beyond Great Expectations, as she has become one of the most enduring symbols of emotional stagnation and revenge in English literature. Her image—clad in a tattered wedding dress, surrounded by the decaying remnants of a day that never came to pass—has transcended the novel itself, becoming an archetype for characters driven by past trauma [19]. Her influence can be seen in later literary figures who embody similar themes of lingering grief and

manipulation, demonstrating the lasting impact of Dickens' characterization. The psychological depth with which she is written ensures that she remains a subject of extensive critical discussion, allowing for varied interpretations of her motives and ultimate fate.

In examining Miss Havisham as a symbol of bitterness and manipulation, it is important to consider the social and psychological dimensions of her character. Her actions are not simply the result of inherent cruelty but are instead rooted in profound personal suffering. Dickens presents her as an individual whose heartbreak has consumed her entire identity, transforming her from a person into a symbol of despair. Her inability to let go of the past not only destroys her own potential for happiness but also inflicts lasting harm on those around her. This dynamic serves as a broader allegory for the dangers of living in the past and allowing pain to dictate one's actions. Through Miss Havisham, Dickens warns against the corrosive effects of bitterness and the ways in which personal grief, when left unchecked, can manifest in manipulation and cruelty [12].

2.1.3. Estella: a Product of a Cruel Upbringing

Estella, one of the most enigmatic and compelling characters in Charles Dickens' Great Expectations, is a striking example of how an individual's upbringing can shape their emotional and psychological development. Raised by Miss Havisham to be an instrument of vengeance against men, Estella is systematically deprived of natural affection and conditioned to embody detachment and cruelty. Her character illustrates the long-term effects of emotional manipulation and neglect, showing how nurture, or the lack thereof, influences personal identity. Estella is not naturally devoid of warmth, but the deliberate training she receives transforms her into a figure incapable of genuine emotional connection. Through her interactions with Pip and other characters, Estella's upbringing emerges as the defining force in her life, demonstrating the devastating impact of a childhood shaped by cruelty and calculated conditioning [30].

Miss Havisham's influence on Estella begins from the moment she is adopted. Taken in as an orphan, Estella is placed in an environment designed to cultivate an emotional detachment that mirrors Miss Havisham's own bitterness. Miss Havisham, devastated by her own betrayal at the hands of Compeyson, dedicates herself to a life of retribution, using Estella as the primary vehicle for her revenge. Rather than nurturing Estella with love and care, she raises her to be beautiful, distant, and emotionally unattainable, ensuring that any man who falls in love with her will experience the same heartbreak that Miss Havisham endured. This deliberate construction of Estella's personality prevents her from developing natural human warmth, forcing her to embody an artificial coldness that serves Miss Havisham's purposes but ultimately leaves Estella herself emotionally barren.

Throughout the novel, Estella exhibits a detached and often cruel demeanor, particularly in her interactions with Pip. From their first encounter, she treats him with condescension, mocking his lower

social status and openly scorning his affections [25]. She refers to him as a "common boy," reinforcing the social hierarchy that Miss Havisham has taught her to uphold. However, her cruelty is not entirely of her own making; it is a learned behavior, instilled in her from childhood.

Estella does not torment Pip out of genuine malice but rather because she has been trained to do so. This distinction is crucial in understanding her character, as it highlights the extent to which she is a product of her upbringing rather than an inherently unfeeling person. Her interactions with Pip demonstrate the consequences of emotional conditioning, revealing how learned behaviors can override innate human emotions [12]. Despite her outward coldness, there are moments in the novel that suggest Estella possesses a deeper emotional complexity. On several occasions, she expresses an awareness of her own limitations, acknowledging that she is incapable of love. She warns Pip repeatedly that she cannot return his affections, emphasizing that she has been made to be as she is. This admission reveals a level of self-awareness that sets her apart from Miss Havisham, who remains blinded by her own bitterness. Unlike Miss Havisham, Estella does not actively seek to perpetuate cruelty for its own sake; rather, she accepts her condition as an inescapable part of her identity. Her inability to love is not a choice but a consequence of her upbringing, highlighting the tragic dimensions of her character.

Estella's relationships with other characters further illustrate the extent to which she has been shaped by Miss Havisham's influence. Her marriage to Bentley Drummle serves as a pivotal moment in the novel, reinforcing the consequences of her upbringing. Drummle, a brutish and abusive man, is the type of suitor Miss Havisham has ostensibly sought to punish through Estella. However, rather than using her emotional detachment to control Drummle, Estella becomes trapped in a toxic and violent marriage. This development underscores the irony of Miss Havisham's plan—rather than protecting Estella from harm, her training has left her vulnerable to it. By denying her the ability to form genuine emotional connections, Miss Havisham has rendered Estella defenseless in the face of real cruelty. Her marriage to Drummle is a stark illustration of how emotional repression can lead to personal suffering, demonstrating that the very detachment she was taught to wield as a weapon ultimately becomes a source of her own pain [16].

The contrast between Estella's upbringing and Pip's emotional development further highlights the impact of her conditioning. While Pip experiences growth, learning from his mistakes and ultimately gaining a deeper understanding of himself and others, Estella remains emotionally stunted for much of the novel. Pip's journey is one of self-discovery, shaped by his relationships and experiences, whereas Estella's trajectory is one of emotional paralysis, dictated by the rigid framework imposed upon her by Miss Havisham. This contrast reinforces the novel's broader themes of personal transformation and the influence of external forces on individual identity. Pip, despite his own flaws and misguided aspirations, is able to evolve beyond the expectations imposed upon him, while Estella remains confined by the constraints of her upbringing [4].

Estella's eventual realization of the damage done to her by Miss Havisham marks an important

turning point in her character's arc. Although she does not undergo a radical transformation, she comes to understand the extent to which she has been manipulated and emotionally deprived. Her later interactions with Pip suggest a shift in her perspective, as she expresses regret for the pain she has caused and acknowledges the limitations imposed upon her by her upbringing. This moment of reflection does not undo the years of conditioning she has endured, but it does suggest a degree of emotional awakening. Unlike Miss Havisham, who remains trapped in her bitterness until her death, Estella is given the opportunity to break free from the cycle of emotional repression. Her final meeting with Pip, depending on the interpretation of the novel's ending, offers a sense of closure, suggesting that she may be capable of personal growth and redemption.

Estella's character serves as a broader commentary on the impact of nurture over nature, illustrating how an individual's environment can shape their emotional and psychological development. Dickens presents her as both a victim and a product of manipulation, emphasizing the ways in which early experiences influence later behavior. Her inability to form genuine emotional connections is not an inherent flaw but rather a learned response to her upbringing, reinforcing the novel's exploration of social conditioning and personal agency. Estella's story is a testament to the enduring effects of emotional neglect, demonstrating how a childhood devoid of affection can lead to a lifetime of detachment and isolation [3].

Furthermore, Estella's character can be examined within the larger context of Victorian literature and its treatment of women. In many ways, she embodies the archetype of the unattainable and emotionally distant woman, a figure frequently found in literature of the period. However, Dickens complicates this archetype by providing Estella with a depth of self-awareness that prevents her from being merely a one-dimensional figure of cold beauty. Her character challenges the traditional portrayal of women as either virtuous and loving or manipulative and cruel, occupying a space that is more nuanced and psychologically complex. By depicting Estella as a product of her environment rather than an inherently heartless person, Dickens offers a critique of the societal forces that shape individual identity, particularly in relation to gender and emotional expression.

The psychological implications of Estella's upbringing also extend to broader discussions of trauma and emotional resilience [11]. Her character illustrates how prolonged exposure to manipulation and emotional deprivation can result in a form of learned emotional detachment. Unlike Miss Havisham, whose bitterness manifests in overt cruelty, Estella's emotional repression is more subtle, manifesting in her inability to engage in meaningful relationships. This distinction highlights different responses to trauma, demonstrating how individuals adapt to their circumstances in different ways. While Miss Havisham externalizes her pain, seeking to inflict it upon others, Estella internalizes hers, resigning herself to a life devoid of emotional fulfillment. This contrast reinforces the novel's exploration of psychological resilience, raising questions about whether individuals can truly overcome the effects of their upbringing or whether they are forever shaped by early experiences.

Estella's character remains one of the most complex and thought-provoking figures in Great Expectations, embodying the themes of social conditioning, emotional repression, and the long-term consequences of a cruel upbringing. Through her interactions with Pip, Miss Havisham, and other characters, she illustrates the ways in which nurture influences personality and behavior, demonstrating the profound impact of early emotional experiences. Her eventual recognition of the damage inflicted upon her suggests the possibility of growth and change, offering a glimmer of hope that she may ultimately break free from the constraints of her past [28].

However, her journey is marked by deep psychological scars, serving as a reminder of the enduring effects of childhood conditioning. Estella's story is a powerful exploration of the intersection between identity, trauma, and personal agency, reinforcing Dickens' broader critique of the rigid social structures and emotional repression that defined Victorian society.

2.1.4. Biddy: the Contrast to Estella – Virtue and Domesticity

Biddy, as a character in Charles Dickens' Great Expectations, serves as a stark contrast to Estella, embodying qualities of virtue, humility, and domesticity. While Estella is shaped by manipulation, emotional detachment, and social ambition, Biddy represents a model of natural goodness, resilience, and emotional intelligence. Dickens constructs these two female characters in opposition to one another, not only to highlight the differences in their personalities but also to underscore the broader social themes of the novel, including the role of women, the impact of upbringing, and the consequences of personal choices. Biddy's steadfast nature, kindness, and practicality place her in direct contrast to Estella's calculated coldness, reinforcing the novel's exploration of love, morality, and human fulfillment.

From her first introduction, Biddy is portrayed as a character rooted in simplicity and sincerity. Unlike Estella, whose beauty and refinement are emphasized, Biddy is described in plain terms, her physical appearance secondary to her inner qualities. She is a foundling, much like Estella, but her upbringing is starkly different. Raised by her grandmother in modest circumstances, Biddy learns the value of hard work and self-sufficiency. She does not possess the wealth, privilege, or formal education that define Estella's existence, yet she demonstrates intelligence, wisdom, and a natural sense of compassion. Unlike Estella, who is conditioned to be emotionally distant, Biddy is capable of deep empathy and understanding, offering genuine friendship and support to Pip throughout the novel. Her character thus serves as a reminder that true worth is not determined by social standing or beauty but by inner strength and virtue [29].

One of the most significant aspects of Biddy's character is her role as a moral compass in Pip's life. While Estella inspires in Pip an obsessive and ultimately misguided ambition, Biddy offers him honest and constructive guidance. She does not seek to manipulate or control him but rather provides a steady

presence that contrasts with his fluctuating desires and insecurities. Biddy's intelligence is not rooted in formal education or aristocratic refinement but in emotional wisdom and practical knowledge. She recognizes Pip's aspirations and the flaws in his character, warning him of the dangers of his blind infatuation with Estella. Unlike Miss Havisham, who encourages Pip's unrealistic dreams for her own amusement, Biddy genuinely cares for his well-being, offering him insights that he frequently disregards in favor of his fantasies about Estella. This dynamic highlights the contrast between artificiality and authenticity, reinforcing Dickens' broader critique of superficial social values.

Despite her goodness, Biddy is not idealized or presented as a perfect character. She experiences moments of frustration and disappointment, particularly in her interactions with Pip. She is aware of his flaws and the ways in which he overlooks her in favor of Estella, yet she does not allow herself to become embittered [40]. Her quiet dignity and refusal to compete for Pip's attention set her apart from the other women in his life. Rather than engaging in manipulation or deception, she remains true to herself, maintaining her integrity even in the face of neglect. This quality makes her one of the most stable and admirable figures in the novel, embodying Dickens' vision of virtue as something that exists independently of external validation or social recognition [11].

Biddy's role in the novel also serves to reinforce Dickens' perspective on domesticity and the ideal Victorian woman. While Estella represents a more aristocratic and emotionally detached model of femininity, Biddy embodies the traditional virtues associated with domestic life. She is nurturing, capable, and self-sufficient, qualities that align with the Victorian ideal of the virtuous wife and mother. In contrast to Estella, who is raised to be unattainable and unfeeling, Biddy is presented as a woman who finds fulfillment in meaningful relationships and acts of kindness. Her eventual marriage to Joe Gargery symbolizes the triumph of sincerity and emotional depth over social ambition and artificiality. This resolution reinforces the novel's moral message, suggesting that true happiness is found not in wealth or social status but in personal integrity and genuine human connection [11].

The relationship between Biddy and Joe further illustrates the contrast between authentic virtue and misguided aspiration. Joe, like Biddy, represents simplicity and honesty, standing in opposition to the pretensions and ambitions that dominate Pip's early life. Their marriage is a natural and harmonious union, built on mutual respect and shared values. Unlike the toxic relationships that define much of the novel—such as Estella's destructive marriage to Bentley Drummle or Miss Havisham's obsessive fixation on past betrayal—Biddy and Joe's relationship is one of quiet stability and emotional fulfillment. Their marriage serves as a counterpoint to Pip's own struggles, highlighting the consequences of his choices and reinforcing the idea that true happiness lies in sincerity and moral clarity.

Biddy's significance extends beyond her role in Pip's life; she also represents Dickens' broader critique of Victorian social structures and gender expectations. In a society that often values appearance and status over character, Biddy's quiet strength challenges conventional notions of success and

desirability. While Estella, with her beauty and aristocratic demeanor, captivates Pip's imagination, Biddy offers a model of womanhood that is grounded in real-world virtues. Dickens uses these contrasting female figures to question the superficial values that dictate social relationships, suggesting that true worth is not determined by external attributes but by inner goodness. In this way, Biddy serves as a corrective to the misguided ideals that drive much of Pip's narrative, offering an alternative vision of fulfillment that is based on authenticity rather than illusion.

Another crucial aspect of Biddy's character is her capacity for personal growth and self-sufficiency. Unlike Estella, who is largely defined by the expectations imposed upon her, Biddy takes control of her own destiny. She pursues education and personal development, becoming a teacher and establishing a stable life for herself. Her achievements are not the result of external privilege or manipulation but of her own determination and resilience. This independence further distinguishes her from Estella, who, despite her social advantages, remains emotionally stunted and dependent on the structures that have shaped her. Biddy's success demonstrates the power of self-determination, reinforcing Dickens' belief in the value of hard work, education, and moral integrity [7].

Pip's eventual recognition of Biddy's worth serves as one of the novel's most poignant moments of self-realization. Over the course of the narrative, he comes to understand the depth of his misjudgments, realizing that he has spent years chasing an illusion while overlooking genuine affection and virtue. However, by the time he reaches this realization, it is too late—Biddy has moved on, marrying Joe and building a life that does not revolve around Pip's aspirations. This outcome serves as a powerful commentary on the consequences of misplaced values and the importance of recognizing true worth before it is lost [38]. Biddy does not exist as a mere consolation prize for Pip's failed ambitions; rather, she emerges as a fully realized character who finds fulfillment on her own terms. Her happiness does not depend on Pip's recognition or approval, reinforcing her role as a symbol of self-sufficiency and quiet strength.

In the broader context of Great Expectations, Biddy's character functions as an essential counterpoint to the novel's themes of ambition, social mobility, and personal transformation. While Pip embarks on a journey of self-discovery that is fraught with mistakes and disillusionment, Biddy remains a steady figure of wisdom and moral clarity. She represents an alternative path, one that is not driven by external validation or social aspirations but by an intrinsic sense of purpose and goodness. Her presence in the novel serves as a reminder that true success is not measured by wealth or status but by the depth of one's character and the ability to form meaningful relationships [4].

The contrast between Biddy and Estella ultimately reinforces Dickens' critique of the values that dominate Victorian society. While Estella is shaped by manipulation and social conditioning, Biddy's character develops through genuine experience and personal growth. Estella's beauty and refinement may make her desirable in the eyes of society, but it is Biddy's honesty, kindness, and emotional intelligence

that make her truly admirable. By juxtaposing these two characters, Dickens highlights the limitations of superficial ideals and advocates for a more authentic understanding of human worth. Through Biddy, he presents a vision of femininity that is grounded in virtue and resilience, offering a counter-narrative to the more rigid and artificial constructs of gender and social status [16].

2.2. Female Characters in Ernest Hemingway's «The Sun Also Rises»

The novel primarily revolves around the character of Brett Ashley, whose presence significantly influences the dynamics between the male characters. Other women in the novel, though less prominent, serve to reinforce themes of gender, power, and emotional detachment. Hemingway's portrayal of female characters reflects both the modernist ethos of the time and the broader cultural shifts regarding femininity, relationships, and autonomy in the early twentieth century. The novel's depiction of women is deeply intertwined with the broader themes of disillusionment, the effects of war, and the shifting gender dynamics of the era, making an analysis of its female characters crucial to understanding its overall message. Brett Ashley stands as one of Hemingway's most iconic female characters, embodying both the allure and the contradictions of modern womanhood. She is beautiful, charismatic, and sexually liberated, yet emotionally torn and often elusive.

Unlike the traditional Victorian ideal of women as passive and domestically confined, Brett defies social conventions by openly pursuing romantic relationships and rejecting the notion of stable domesticity. Her interactions with the male characters, particularly Jake Barnes, illustrate the tensions between desire, emotional fulfillment, and societal expectations. Jake, the novel's protagonist, is deeply in love with Brett but is physically incapable of consummating their relationship due to a war injury. This physical limitation serves as a metaphor for the broader emotional impotence of the Lost Generation, highlighting the psychological wounds inflicted by the war. Brett's unwillingness to commit to Jake, despite her feelings for him, underscores the novel's theme of unattainable love and the existential despair that defines its characters [49].

Female Characters	Ashley as the Modern Woman
	Frances Clyne's Traditional Role
	Brett's Influence on Male Characters
	Georgette as a Symbol of Marginalization
	Women as a Reflection of Social Change

Figure 2.1. Female Characters in Ernest Hemingway's The Sun Also Rises

Brett's character challenges traditional gender roles, embodying the shifting perceptions of femininity in the post-war period. She is assertive and independent, often exerting control over the men around her. Unlike the demure and submissive women of previous literary traditions, Brett speaks openly about her desires and makes decisions without seeking male approval. However, this independence is not without consequences.

While Brett enjoys a degree of freedom uncommon for women of her time, she also faces social judgment and internal conflict. Her relationships with multiple men, including Robert Cohn, Mike Campbell, and Pedro Romero, demonstrate both her power and her vulnerability. Cohn, who clings to outdated notions of romantic devotion, struggles to accept Brett's lack of emotional attachment, leading to violent confrontations. Mike, her fiancé, oscillates between adoration and resentment, reflecting the broader societal ambivalence toward independent women. Romero, the young and traditional matador, briefly attempts to mold Brett into a more conventional feminine role, but she ultimately rejects this, recognizing that such conformity would come at the cost of her autonomy.

Despite her modernity, Brett is not entirely free from internalized gender norms. She expresses guilt and sadness over her inability to commit to Jake, suggesting that she is not wholly at ease with her choices. Her final decision to end her relationship with Romero, despite his willingness to be with her, further emphasizes her awareness of the constraints imposed by gender expectations. By refusing to settle into a traditional role, Brett embodies the existential uncertainty that pervades the novel. She is both empowered and trapped by her independence, illustrating the paradoxes faced by women navigating new social freedoms while still bearing the weight of traditional expectations.

Beyond Brett, The Sun Also Rises features other female characters who, though less developed, contribute to the novel's exploration of gender roles and relationships. Georgette, a prostitute whom Jake briefly interacts with, serves as a stark contrast to Brett. While Brett moves freely in social circles and maintains control over her relationships, Georgette exists on the margins, bound by economic necessity. Her role highlights the commodification of women within a patriarchal society, emphasizing the limited options available to those without social privilege. Georgette's brief appearance underscores the transactional nature of many relationships in the novel, where emotional connections are often secondary to economic or social considerations.

Frances Clyne, Robert Cohn's former lover, represents another facet of female experience within the novel's world. Unlike Brett, who exerts control over men, Frances is depicted as desperate and manipulative, attempting to pressure Cohn into marriage. Her frustration stems from her diminishing social prospects and her recognition that, as a woman, her future is largely dependent on her relationship status. Frances's bitterness and anger contrast sharply with Brett's cool detachment, highlighting the different

ways in which women navigate a world that affords them limited agency. Her character serves as a critique of the societal pressures placed on women to secure stability through marriage, reinforcing the novel's broader themes of disillusionment and dissatisfaction [10].

The interactions between the male and female characters in The Sun Also Rises reflect Hemingway's broader commentary on gender relations in the post-war period. The men, particularly Jake and Cohn, struggle to reconcile their expectations of women with the realities of changing gender dynamics. Jake, despite his deep affection for Brett, cannot offer her the kind of relationship she desires, leaving him in a state of perpetual longing. Cohn, who adheres to outdated notions of chivalry and devotion, finds himself repeatedly humiliated and rejected. Mike, whose financial instability makes him dependent on Brett, oscillates between indulgence and resentment. These dynamics reveal the broader anxieties of a generation grappling with the erosion of traditional gender roles and the uncertainty of new social structures.

Hemingway's portrayal of women in The Sun Also Rises has been the subject of extensive critical debate. Some scholars argue that the novel reinforces sexist stereotypes, depicting women as either manipulative or emotionally unstable. Brett, in particular, has been criticized as a femme fatale figure whose actions cause turmoil among the male characters. However, a more nuanced reading suggests that Brett is not simply a destructive force but rather a product of her circumstances. She embodies the contradictions of modern womanhood, navigating a world that offers her both freedom and limitation. Her struggles mirror those of the male characters, all of whom grapple with the disillusionment and emotional detachment that define the Lost Generation. Rather than being a one-dimensional figure, Brett represents the complexities of gender and identity in a rapidly changing society.

The novel's exploration of female agency extends beyond individual characters to broader societal themes. The Sun Also Rises reflects the anxieties of a post-war world in which traditional structures have been destabilized. Women like Brett, who embrace independence and reject conventional domestic roles, symbolize the broader shifts in gender relations that characterized the early twentieth century. However, the novel also acknowledges the challenges and contradictions inherent in this transformation. While Brett enjoys a degree of freedom, she remains emotionally unfulfilled, suggesting that liberation does not necessarily equate to happiness. This ambivalence reflects the broader uncertainties of the Lost Generation, for whom traditional ideals no longer held meaning but new paradigms had yet to provide clarity [8].

The treatment of women in the novel also raises questions about Hemingway's own perspectives on gender. Critics have often noted Hemingway's tendency to depict female characters in relation to the men around them, rarely granting them fully autonomous narratives. While Brett is a central figure, her story is largely told through Jake's perspective, reinforcing the male-centered nature of the narrative. However, this does not necessarily diminish her significance. Instead, it highlights the ways in which gendered power dynamics shape both personal relationships and broader social interactions. Brett's presence challenges the

male characters, forcing them to confront their own insecurities and limitations. In this sense, she serves not merely as an object of desire but as a catalyst for the novel's exploration of masculinity, power, and emotional resilience [4].

2.2.1. Women in Post-WWI Literature: a New Feminine Identity

The aftermath of World War I brought profound social, economic, and cultural transformations that significantly influenced literature, particularly in the representation of women. The early twentieth century saw a reconfiguration of gender roles, as women gained greater autonomy in various spheres of life, including the workforce, politics, and personal relationships. These shifts were reflected in post-WWI literature, where female characters began to embody a new feminine identity that broke away from the restrictive ideals of the Victorian and Edwardian eras. The trauma of war, the disillusionment of the Lost Generation, and the changing social structures contributed to the emergence of female protagonists who were independent, sexually liberated, and often at odds with traditional expectations. This shift in literary portrayals of women not only mirrored real-world changes but also played a role in shaping the cultural discourse on gender and modernity.

One of the most striking aspects of the new feminine identity in post-WWI literature is the rejection of the passive, domestic role that had long defined women in earlier literary traditions. Whereas nineteenth-century novels often depicted women as virtuous, submissive, and confined to the private sphere, modernist literature introduced female characters who actively sought personal fulfillment beyond marriage and motherhood.

These women were often portrayed as intelligent, self-sufficient, and engaged in social and professional life. The war had created opportunities for women to participate in the workforce, and many authors reflected this reality by depicting female characters who were financially independent and unwilling to conform to the limitations imposed by patriarchal structures. The changing economic and social landscape enabled women to redefine their roles, and literature became a key medium for expressing these evolving identities.

A major characteristic of the new feminine identity in post-WWI literature is the emphasis on sexual liberation and autonomy. The war had disrupted traditional courtship and marriage patterns, and many women in literature came to symbolize the breakdown of Victorian moral codes. Female characters were no longer solely defined by their relationships with men; instead, they pursued their desires on their own terms, often engaging in love affairs and rejecting societal condemnation.

This new portrayal of women was particularly evident in the works of writers such as Ernest Hemingway, Virginia Woolf, F. Scott Fitzgerald, and D. H. Lawrence, who explored themes of female sexuality, emotional independence, and the complexities of modern relationships. These authors depicted

women who were unafraid to express their needs and challenge the constraints of monogamy and conventional romance. However, this newfound freedom was not without conflict, as many female characters struggled to balance their independence with the lingering expectations of traditional femininity [13].

The psychological effects of war also played a crucial role in shaping the new feminine identity in literature. The disillusionment and existential crises that defined the post-war generation were not confined to men; women, too, grappled with the loss of stability and meaning. Many female protagonists in post-WWI literature are depicted as restless, searching for purpose, and often disenchanted with the social norms that governed their mothers' lives. This sense of disillusionment is particularly evident in characters such as Brett Ashley in The Sun Also Rises, Daisy Buchanan in The Great Gatsby, and Clarissa Dalloway in Mrs. Dalloway. These women navigate a world that offers them greater freedoms than previous generations but also presents new challenges, particularly in forming meaningful connections and defining their identities. The psychological depth of these characters marks a departure from the simplistic portrayals of women in earlier literature, adding complexity to the literary representations of femininity in the modern era.

Modernist literature also explored the tension between tradition and progress, particularly in how female characters negotiated their roles in a changing society. While some women fully embraced the new freedoms afforded by modernity, others found themselves caught between competing expectations. The works of Virginia Woolf, for instance, frequently address this duality, portraying women who are intellectually ambitious yet constrained by lingering societal pressures. In To the Lighthouse, Woolf juxtaposes the character of Mrs. Ramsay, who embodies traditional maternal femininity, with Lily Briscoe, an independent artist who resists the conventional expectations placed upon women. This contrast highlights the shifting perceptions of gender in the early twentieth century and underscores the difficulty of completely severing ties with the past. Even as literature celebrated female autonomy, it also acknowledged the emotional and psychological struggles that accompanied this transformation.

Another crucial aspect of the new feminine identity in post-WWI literature is the exploration of female agency in intellectual and artistic domains. Women were no longer relegated to passive muses or objects of male desire; instead, they emerged as thinkers, creators, and active participants in cultural discourse. The literary landscape itself saw a surge of female authors whose works challenged traditional narratives and introduced innovative storytelling techniques. Writers such as Virginia Woolf, Gertrude Stein, and Jean Rhys contributed to the development of modernist literature, experimenting with stream-of-consciousness narration and fragmented storytelling to reflect the complexities of female subjectivity. Their works provided a platform for exploring themes such as mental illness, artistic ambition, and the limitations of gender roles, offering nuanced representations of women that had been largely absent from earlier literary traditions.

The depiction of female friendships and solidarity also became a prominent theme in post-WWI literature. While previous literary traditions often positioned women as rivals competing for male attention, modernist works began to explore the significance of female bonds in a rapidly changing world. Women in literature were no longer defined solely by their romantic relationships but also by their interactions with other women, highlighting the importance of companionship, mentorship, and collective support. This shift reflected the broader feminist movement of the early twentieth century, as women increasingly engaged in social activism, higher education, and professional careers. The representation of female alliances in literature helped to redefine the cultural understanding of women's roles, emphasizing their agency and resilience [8].

Despite the advancements in female representation, the new feminine identity in post-WWI literature was not without its contradictions. While many female characters gained unprecedented independence, they also faced new forms of alienation and disillusionment. The very freedoms that allowed women to explore new lifestyles often came at the cost of emotional fulfillment and stability. Literature frequently depicted women who struggled with feelings of loneliness, uncertainty, and existential malaise, mirroring the broader anxieties of the modern era. Characters such as Nicole Diver in Tender Is the Night and Julia in 1984 embody this paradox, as they navigate a world that offers them agency yet simultaneously denies them lasting happiness. This tension underscores the complexities of gender identity in the modern age, demonstrating that progress does not always equate to personal contentment [1].

The portrayal of women in post-WWI literature also intersected with class and race, complicating the notion of a singular feminine identity. While many modernist works focused on the experiences of upper-class or educated women, others explored the struggles of working-class women and women of color. Writers such as Nella Larsen and Zora Neale Hurston provided critical perspectives on the intersection of race and gender, portraying female characters who faced not only gender-based oppression but also racial discrimination. These works expanded the literary conversation on femininity, illustrating the diverse and often unequal experiences of women in the modern world [11]. The recognition of these intersecting identities was crucial in shaping a more comprehensive understanding of gender in literature.

2.2.2. Brett Ashley: the Femme Fatale and the Modern Woman

The cultural and social context in which Brett Ashley exists is crucial to understanding her character. World War I had profoundly altered the structures of society, particularly gender roles. Women had taken on new responsibilities during the war, working in factories, serving as nurses, and experiencing a level of autonomy that was previously denied to them. This shift created a new kind of woman—one who was less constrained by Victorian ideals of domesticity and obedience. Brett epitomizes this modern woman through her independence, confidence, and refusal to conform to traditional expectations of

femininity. She moves freely in male-dominated spaces, drinks, smokes, and engages in sexual relationships without concern for societal judgment. In doing so, she challenges the notion that a woman's value is tied to her purity and devotion to a single man. Instead, she asserts her own desires and autonomy, characteristics that were increasingly visible in women of the post-war generation.

At the same time, Brett exhibits traits that align her with the archetype of the femme fatale. Traditionally, the femme fatale is a seductive and enigmatic woman who leads men to their downfall. She is often portrayed as manipulative, emotionally distant, and ultimately unattainable. Brett's relationships with the men in The Sun Also Rises illustrate this dynamic. She captivates nearly every man she encounters, yet she remains emotionally unavailable, often leaving them frustrated and heartbroken. Jake Barnes, the novel's protagonist, is deeply in love with her, yet their relationship is doomed due to his war injury, which has left him impotent. Despite her clear affection for Jake, Brett continually engages in relationships with other men, reinforcing her unattainability and the pain she inflicts on those who love her. Her relationship with Robert Cohn further demonstrates her femme fatale nature. Cohn becomes obsessed with her after a brief affair, but she quickly discards him, leading to his emotional turmoil and eventual humiliation. Through these relationships, Hemingway presents Brett as a woman who exerts power over men while remaining emotionally detached, a characteristic central to the femme fatale archetype.

Despite these qualities, Brett is not merely a one-dimensional femme fatale; she is also a deeply human and vulnerable character. Unlike traditional femme fatales, who are often portrayed as deliberately manipulative and malicious, Brett does not seek to harm the men around her. Instead, she struggles with her own desires and limitations, caught between her longing for love and her inability to commit. Her relationship with Jake is particularly telling in this regard. She genuinely loves him, but his impotence prevents them from having a conventional romantic relationship. This creates a tragic situation in which both characters suffer, unable to be together despite their deep emotional connection. Brett's emotional turmoil is evident in her expressions of regret and self-awareness, as she acknowledges the pain she causes yet seems unable to change her behavior. This internal conflict distinguishes her from the traditional femme fatale, making her a more complex and sympathetic figure [10].

Brett's characterization also highlights the challenges faced by modern women in a society that had not yet fully accepted female independence. While she embraces her freedom, she is also constrained by societal expectations and her own emotional struggles. Her engagement to Mike Campbell, for instance, is not based on love but on convenience and financial security. This suggests that despite her apparent independence, she is still affected by the pressures placed on women to form socially acceptable relationships.

Moreover, Brett's drinking and reckless behavior can be seen as a coping mechanism, a way to navigate a world in which she is simultaneously liberated and constrained. Her interactions with men reveal the contradictions of her existence: she desires meaningful connections yet repeatedly engages in

fleeting, superficial relationships. This complexity makes her a compelling representation of the modern woman—one who is free in many ways but still bound by societal structures and personal limitations.

Another important aspect of Brett's character is her rejection of traditional femininity. Unlike the passive and virtuous heroines of earlier literature, Brett is assertive, outspoken, and unapologetically sexual. She does not conform to the ideals of modesty and restraint that had long been expected of women. Instead, she embraces a lifestyle that was traditionally associated with men—drinking, traveling, and engaging in casual relationships. Her short haircut, androgynous name, and confident demeanor further reinforce her departure from conventional femininity. This androgyny aligns her with the "New Woman" of the early twentieth century, a figure who rejected traditional gender roles and sought greater personal and social freedom. However, this rejection of femininity also isolates Brett, as she struggles to find a space where she can exist on her own terms without facing judgment or emotional turmoil.

Brett's interactions with the other characters in the novel further illustrate her role as both a femme fatale and a modern woman. The men around her are drawn to her, yet they also express frustration and resentment. Robert Cohn, for example, idealizes Brett, seeing her as a romantic conquest rather than a fully realized individual. His inability to accept her independence leads to his downfall, as he becomes consumed by jealousy and obsession.

Mike Campbell, her fiancé, oscillates between adoration and bitterness, recognizing Brett's flaws but remaining attached to her nonetheless. Jake, the most understanding of Brett's lovers, accepts her as she is but suffers because of it. Through these relationships, Hemingway explores the tension between traditional and modern conceptions of love and gender dynamics. The men in the novel, despite their modern surroundings, still hold onto outdated notions of masculinity and femininity, which creates conflict in their interactions with Brett. She does not fit neatly into their expectations, and this inability to categorize her contributes to their frustration and, in some cases, their downfall.

Brett's ultimate fate in the novel underscores the ambiguities of her character and the complexities of the new feminine identity. Unlike many femme fatales, who are often punished for their transgressions, Brett does not face a dramatic downfall. Instead, she remains caught in an endless cycle of fleeting relationships and emotional dissatisfaction.

Her final scene with Jake, in which she wistfully imagines what could have been, highlights the unresolved tension within her character. She is neither fully liberated nor fully constrained; she exists in a liminal space, representative of the broader struggles faced by women in the modern era. Hemingway does not provide a clear resolution for Brett, which reinforces the idea that the challenges she faces are ongoing and reflective of the changing but still restrictive nature of gender roles in the early twentieth century [48].

2.2.3. The Role of Other Female Characters in the Novel

One of the most notable secondary female figures in the novel is Georgette, the prostitute whom Jake Barnes briefly accompanies early in the narrative. Georgette's presence serves multiple purposes within the novel's structure, particularly in establishing the contrast between traditional and modern forms of female agency. Unlike Brett, who enjoys a degree of financial and social independence, Georgette is confined to a profession that has long been associated with female subjugation and economic necessity. She represents the commodification of female sexuality, a stark reminder of the limited options available to women who lack the financial means to sustain themselves independently.

However, Georgette is not merely a passive victim; she exhibits a sharp, cynical wit, suggesting an awareness of her own position within the social hierarchy. Her interactions with Jake reveal his own conflicted relationship with women, as he engages with her but remains emotionally detached. Georgette's brief presence underscores the transactional nature of many of the relationships in the novel and highlights the varying degrees of female autonomy in a male-dominated society.

Another significant female character is Frances Clyne, Robert Cohn's fiancée, who provides a striking contrast to both Brett and Georgette. Frances is characterized by her bitterness, insecurity, and growing frustration with Robert, whom she has supported emotionally and financially. Her presence in the novel serves to illustrate the limitations placed upon women who adhere to more traditional roles in relationships. Frances has invested in Robert, expecting marriage and stability, only to be cast aside when he begins to pursue Brett. Her bitterness and resentment manifest in sharp, cutting remarks, revealing her awareness of her diminishing influence over Robert. Unlike Brett, who navigates relationships on her own terms, Frances is left humiliated and powerless when Robert moves on. This dynamic underscores the novel's broader theme of shifting gender roles and the consequences for women who are unable or unwilling to adapt to the changing social landscape. Frances represents a woman caught between traditional expectations and the evolving realities of male-female relationships, making her a tragic but significant figure in the novel [49].

The presence of unnamed women in The Sun Also Rises further reinforces Hemingway's exploration of gender roles. Throughout the novel, there are multiple instances in which women are reduced to their social functions rather than being given individual identities. Whether they are waitresses, dancers, or fellow travelers, these women often serve as background figures that reflect the male characters' attitudes toward gender and relationships. The ways in which Jake, Robert, and other men interact with these women reveal the broader cultural shifts occurring in the post-war world. In some cases, these women are treated with casual disregard, reinforcing the objectification and disposability of women in a world that is still largely controlled by men. However, their presence also highlights the growing

visibility of women in public spaces, an indication of the broader societal changes that Hemingway subtly incorporates into his narrative.

Hemingway's portrayal of these secondary female characters also contributes to the novel's commentary on power and control in relationships. While Brett appears to wield a significant amount of influence over the men around her, the other women in the novel often struggle to assert any form of control over their lives or relationships.

Georgette's profession forces her into a position of dependency, Frances's emotional investment in Robert leaves her vulnerable, and the unnamed women are often treated as interchangeable objects of fleeting interest. These portrayals underscore the ongoing struggles women faced even as they gained more social and economic freedoms in the early twentieth century. The novel does not present a fully emancipated vision of womanhood; rather, it acknowledges the limitations and contradictions inherent in this transitional period.

Another important aspect of Hemingway's depiction of secondary female characters is the way they interact with Brett and how they reflect different facets of her identity. While Brett is undoubtedly the most dominant and complex female character in the novel, the presence of other women serves to contextualize her position within the broader social landscape. For instance, Frances's bitterness toward Robert mirrors Brett's own struggles with maintaining control in her relationships, albeit in a different manner. While Brett is able to dictate the terms of her romantic entanglements, Frances experiences the frustration of being discarded. This contrast highlights the precarious nature of female agency in a world where men still hold the majority of power. Similarly, Georgette's transactional relationship with Jake serves as a foil to Brett's more emotionally charged yet equally unsustainable relationship with him. Through these interactions, Hemingway presents a spectrum of female experiences, illustrating the different ways women navigate love, power, and independence in a changing world.

The role of these secondary female characters also reinforces the novel's themes of disillusionment and existential uncertainty. Just as the male characters struggle with their post-war identities and the collapse of traditional values, the women in the novel also grapple with the instability of their roles. Frances's desperation, Georgette's cynicism, and the fleeting presence of other women all contribute to the novel's broader sense of dissatisfaction and impermanence. The relationships in the novel, whether romantic, transactional, or platonic, rarely provide fulfillment for any of the characters. This thematic element extends beyond Brett and encompasses the experiences of the other women, reinforcing Hemingway's depiction of a world in which traditional notions of love and gender roles no longer function as they once did.

Furthermore, the depiction of these women provides insight into Hemingway's own views on gender and relationships. While his portrayal of women has often been criticized for being limited or reinforcing stereotypes, the complexity of Brett and the contrasting experiences of the other female

characters suggest a more nuanced exploration of femininity. Rather than presenting a singular, definitive perspective on women, Hemingway offers a range of female experiences that reflect the ambiguities of the modern world. His female characters, though often subjected to male dominance and societal expectations, are not entirely powerless. They navigate their environments in different ways, each attempting to assert some degree of control over their circumstances, even when faced with significant obstacles. [7]

2.3. Comparative Analysis of Female Characters in the Two Novels

The portrayal of female characters in Great Expectations by Charles Dickens and The Sun Also Rises by Ernest Hemingway reflects significant differences in societal attitudes toward gender, power, and identity in the respective historical periods in which these novels were written. Dickens, writing in the Victorian era, constructs his female characters within a framework of domestic virtue, emotional suffering, and social constraints. Hemingway, on the other hand, presents women who exist in the aftermath of World War I, grappling with newfound freedoms yet still subjected to the limitations imposed by a patriarchal society. By examining the central female characters in both novels, it becomes evident that while Dickens and Hemingway explore common themes of love, power, and manipulation, their representations of femininity differ considerably due to their contrasting literary styles, cultural contexts, and philosophical perspectives [13, 8].

Table 2.2 Representation of Female Characters in Great Expectations and The Sun Also Rises

Character	Novel	Role in the Narrative	Key Traits	Symbolism	Impact on Male Protagonist	Social Commentary
Estella	Great Expectations	Love interest, tool of revenge	Beautiful, cold, emotionally detached	Represents societal control over women's emotions	Causes Pip's emotional suffering and personal growth	Critique of upper-class upbringing and lack of emotional autonomy
Biddy	Great Expectations	Supportive figure, voice of reason	Kind, intelligent, nurturing	Embodies the Victorian ideal of virtue and domesticity	Offers Pip an alternative to his obsession with Estella	Reinforces traditional values and stability

Miss Havisham	Great Expectations	Antagonist, manipulator	Bitter, vengeful, emotionally damaged	Symbolizes the destructive power of emotional trauma	Shapes Estella's upbringing, indirectly influences Pip	Critique of societal expectations and gender roles
Brett Ashley	The Sun Also Rises	Central female character, object of desire	Charismatic, independent, emotionally conflicted	Represents modern womanhood and postwar disillusionment	Causes emotional turmoil for Jake and other male characters	Highlights gender shifts and complexities of female independence
Frances Clyne	The Sun Also Rises	Minor female character, contrast to Brett	Jealous, possessive, insecure	Embodies traditional female dependence on men	Struggles with Cohn's neglect and eventual rejection	Critique of male dominance and power imbalance
Georgette	The Sun Also Rises	Marginalized female figure	Superficial, transactional, sexually available	Represents commodification of women	Highlights Jake's emotional detachment and social norms	Reflection of class distinctions and gender roles in modernist society

In Great Expectations, the primary female characters—Miss Havisham, Estella, and Biddy—each embody different aspects of womanhood in the Victorian era. Miss Havisham is a symbol of bitterness and manipulation, shaped by the trauma of being abandoned at the altar. She wields power through her influence over Estella, using her as an instrument of revenge against men. Estella, raised under Miss Havisham's guidance, becomes emotionally detached and incapable of love, serving as a tragic figure who ultimately suffers as a result of her conditioning.

In contrast, Biddy represents virtue, domesticity, and emotional stability. She serves as a moral counterpoint to Estella, embodying the ideal qualities of a Victorian woman—nurturing, selfless, and grounded in traditional values. These female characters function within a rigid social structure that dictates their roles and limitations, illustrating the expectations imposed on women during the nineteenth century.

Conversely, the female characters in The Sun Also Rises operate within a post-war context that challenges traditional gender roles. Brett Ashley, the novel's most prominent female character, defies conventional femininity by embracing independence, sexuality, and an unconventional lifestyle. Unlike Estella, who is emotionally controlled by Miss Havisham, Brett actively asserts her own desires, although she remains bound by the constraints of a society that ultimately does not permit women to exercise full

autonomy. Secondary female characters such as Georgette and Frances also reflect varying degrees of female agency and struggle. Georgette, a prostitute, represents the economic realities of women who lack social or financial independence, while Frances, Robert Cohn's fiancée, illustrates the consequences faced by women who adhere to traditional romantic expectations in a world where male commitment is increasingly unreliable. These characters collectively depict the fractured identities of women in the early twentieth century, caught between newfound liberties and lingering societal restrictions.

One of the most striking differences between the female characters in these two novels lies in the ways they engage with power and control. Miss Havisham in Great Expectations wields significant influence over Estella and, by extension, Pip, shaping their emotional lives through her manipulative guidance. She is not a passive victim of her suffering but an active force of destruction, demonstrating how women within the Victorian social order could exert power indirectly, often through emotional manipulation rather than direct societal influence.

Estella, despite her beauty and perceived dominance over Pip, is ultimately controlled by Miss Havisham's designs, highlighting the limitations placed on women's autonomy within this period. In contrast, Brett Ashley's power in The Sun Also Rises derives from her ability to captivate and influence men, but unlike Miss Havisham, she does not seek revenge. Instead, she is a product of her time, a woman who enjoys social freedom yet remains emotionally unfulfilled. She manipulates relationships to maintain control, but she is ultimately a tragic figure, unable to secure lasting happiness due to societal constraints and her own internal conflicts.

The theme of emotional detachment is another significant point of comparison between the female characters in both novels. Estella and Brett are both emotionally distant, but for different reasons. Estella's detachment is imposed upon her; she is raised to suppress affection and to use her beauty as a weapon against men. Her inability to love is not a choice but a condition instilled by Miss Havisham's influence. Brett, on the other hand, exhibits emotional detachment as a form of self-preservation in a world where romantic stability is elusive [8].

While she engages in multiple relationships, she remains emotionally unavailable, particularly to Jake Barnes, the novel's protagonist, whom she loves but cannot be with due to his war-inflicted impotence. Unlike Estella, Brett is aware of her own detachment and struggles with it, making her character more self-reflective and conscious of her limitations. This distinction highlights a shift in literary portrayals of women—from Dickens' portrayal of a woman as the passive victim of societal molding to Hemingway's representation of a woman who actively navigates her own circumstances, albeit with significant challenges.

Another important aspect of comparison is the role of traditional femininity as represented by Biddy in Great Expectations and by the more conventional female figures in The Sun Also Rises, such as Frances. Biddy embodies the idealized domestic woman of the Victorian era, selflessly devoted to others and

seeking no personal ambition beyond a stable family life. She serves as a moral contrast to Estella, reinforcing the dichotomy between virtue and corruption that is common in Dickensian narratives. Frances, while not as nurturing or virtuous as Biddy, represents a woman who adheres to traditional expectations of relationships, believing in emotional commitment and financial dependency on a man. Unlike Biddy, however, Frances is left humiliated when Robert Cohn disregards her, illustrating how the post-war world offers less security for women who adhere to conventional romantic ideals. This contrast reflects the broader societal shift between the two periods: Victorian women like Biddy could find stability in traditional roles, whereas women in Hemingway's world could no longer rely on such expectations to ensure their security or happiness [7].

The way both novels conclude their female characters' arcs also sheds light on the evolving role of women in literature. In Great Expectations, Estella undergoes a transformation, eventually softening and recognizing the limitations of the life that was imposed upon her. She is granted a degree of redemption, but her fate remains uncertain, reinforcing Dickens' tendency to offer moral resolution while still acknowledging the difficulties faced by his characters. Miss Havisham, consumed by her past bitterness, meets a tragic end, serving as a cautionary tale about the dangers of living in resentment. Biddy, in contrast, achieves a stable and fulfilling life, reinforcing the Victorian belief in the rewards of virtue and humility. In The Sun Also Rises, the fates of female characters are less conclusive. Brett remains trapped in a cycle of fleeting relationships, unable to achieve true fulfillment. Frances is left abandoned, and Georgette's brief presence in the novel offers no indication of any change in her circumstances. Hemingway's modernist approach rejects the moral resolutions of Dickens' Victorian narrative, instead presenting a world where uncertainty prevails and female characters, like their male counterparts, must navigate an unpredictable and indifferent reality [16].

PART III. The life and literary career of ERNEST HEMINGWAY and Charles Dickens IN THE SECONDARY SCHOOLS

3.1. Participants of the Research

The participants in this research were secondary school students, primarily from upper grades, who had previously studied or were introduced to key elements of *The Sun Also Rises* by Ernest Hemingway and *Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens. These students had varying levels of familiarity with the texts: while some had read both novels as part of their school curriculum, others worked with selected excerpts and teacher-provided summaries. Their responses were shaped by classroom discussions, personal reading experiences, and guided literary tasks.

Students took part in the study voluntarily. The selection process involved collaboration with secondary school literature teachers, who invited interested students from classes focused on English literature, gender roles in fiction, or historical literary periods. A total of twenty-five students participated. While most were literature-enthusiasts, others joined out of general curiosity or interest in gender-related topics in storytelling. The group was intentionally diverse in terms of gender identity and reading preferences to allow for a variety of perspectives.

To support meaningful engagement, students were first given an overview of both novels, including background on the historical periods they represent the Victorian era and the post–World War I modernist period. The students were then asked to complete a structured questionnaire that explored their interpretations of key female characters such as Estella, Miss Havisham, Biddy, and Brett Ashley. The questions focused on themes like independence, social expectations, emotional expression, and the characters' personal struggles.

In addition to the questionnaire, students were encouraged to write short personal reflections on which character they related to most, or which one they found most complex or interesting. These written responses allowed for more personal insights that extended beyond classroom interpretations. The combination of structured questions and free-form reflections provided a balanced dataset, offering both guided and spontaneous perspectives.

To ensure inclusivity and reduce potential bias, the study aimed to involve students with different reading habits, interests, and backgrounds. Some students preferred historical fiction, while others were more drawn to modern, emotionally complex characters. The diversity of opinions enriched the overall analysis, showing how even younger readers can engage critically with themes of gender, identity, and societal norms.

Ethical considerations were respected throughout the research. Participation was entirely voluntary, students and their guardians gave informed consent, and all responses were anonymized. Though the research involved no sensitive personal data, a safe and respectful environment was maintained where students could express their thoughts freely and without judgment.

The responses were analyzed thematically. Several strong patterns emerged, including students' observations on how Victorian female characters often followed strict gender expectations, while modernist characters seemed to push against them, even if not entirely freely. Estella and Miss Havisham were commonly described as "controlled by others" or "damaged by expectations," while Brett Ashley was seen as "bold," "confused," or "free but lonely." Many students recognized that, despite the time gap between the novels, both authors showed how women are often shaped—and limited by their societies.

Interestingly, some students debated whether any of the women in either novel could be truly independent. Others felt that characters like Biddy, who quietly maintained her values, were just as strong as the more rebellious Brett Ashley. These reflections showed that students were not only able to compare

the texts but also to reflect thoughtfully on the complexities of female identity in literature. Their insights helped deepen the study's understanding of how younger generations perceive and relate to female characters across time.

3.2. Instruments of the Research

The research used a combination of qualitative and simple quantitative tools to explore how secondary school students perceive female characters in *The Sun Also Rises* and *Great Expectations*. The main instruments included guided classroom discussions, focused reading tasks, and a short questionnaire. These tools were designed to help students reflect on the roles, personalities, and societal challenges faced by women in both novels. The goal was to balance literary understanding with personal interpretation, offering insight into how young readers relate to classic female characters.

The classroom discussions were central to the research, giving students the chance to talk about what they noticed and felt about the characters. Teachers helped guide the conversations using pre-prepared questions that touched on character behavior, personal choices, emotions, and social expectations. Students were encouraged to compare characters like Estella, Miss Havisham, Biddy, and Brett Ashley, and to share how these figures reminded them of real-life situations or modern gender topics. These discussions were summarized for analysis.

Close reading exercises were also used to help students focus on key scenes from the novels. Instead of analyzing every page, they worked with selected passages where the female characters had strong emotional moments, made big decisions, or faced social pressure. These readings helped students better understand how authors use language and description to shape character perception. Discussions around these passages drew on classroom knowledge and everyday experiences rather than formal literary theories.

To support the findings, a short questionnaire was given to each student. It included a mix of open-ended questions and simple rating-scale items about how strong, independent, or relatable each female character seemed. The results helped highlight common opinions among the students, such as which characters they admired, which ones confused them, or who they felt were unfairly treated.

This combination of tools ensured that the research reflected both group discussions and individual viewpoints. It allowed for a thoughtful look at how younger readers engage with gender roles in literature, without requiring advanced literary training. The methods were adapted to suit a school environment, making participation accessible, enjoyable, and educational

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3.3. Procedure of the Research

The questionnaire was distributed in November and December 2024 at Kontsivskyi Lyceum and Kholmkivska Gymnasium. Before completing the survey, all questions were explained clearly to the students and translated into their preferred language if needed, to ensure full comprehension. The research was conducted with the permission of the school administrations, and participation was voluntary. Both the teachers and pupils gave their informed consent to take part in the study.

The research was carried out in several steps to explore how secondary school students understand and respond to the female characters in The Sun Also Rises by Ernest Hemingway and Great Expectations by Charles Dickens. The goal was to create a comfortable and engaging environment in which students could think critically about the texts, even if they had not read both novels in full.

In the first stage, students were introduced to both literary works through short summaries, selected passages, and teacher-led presentations. These materials focused on the main female characters—Estella, Miss Havisham, Biddy, and Brett Ashley and gave background on the historical and cultural settings of the Victorian and post–World War I periods. This step helped ensure that all students, regardless of their previous reading experience, had enough context to participate meaningfully in the research.

The second stage involved small-group discussions. Students were divided into groups of four to five and given guiding questions that focused on themes like independence, social expectations, emotional expression, and personal agency. Teachers or facilitators helped guide the conversations, making sure each student had the chance to share their thoughts. These discussions allowed students to compare the characters, connect literary situations to modern experiences, and reflect on how women were treated differently in the two time periods.

In the third stage, students were asked to complete a short questionnaire. It included open-ended questions such as “Which female character did you find most relatable and why?” and “Do you think the women in these stories had real freedom of choice?” In addition, there were a few simple rating-scale questions to gather data on how students viewed each character in terms of strength, realism, and independence. This step allowed for both personal reflection and measurable data.

The collected responses from both the group discussions and the individual questionnaires—were reviewed and analyzed. The goal was to identify common patterns in how students interpreted the female characters and what themes stood out most. This includes ideas about social pressure, emotional complexity, and the contrast between traditional and more modern portrayals of women. The results provided insight into how younger readers today perceive gender roles in classic literature and how those perceptions might inform future teaching approaches.

3.4. Findings of the Research

The survey results provide significant insights into the reading habits and literary preferences of the respondents, as well as their familiarity with and perceptions of two major authors, Ernest Hemingway and Charles Dickens. The data indicate that the sample consists of a slightly higher percentage of female respondents (57.3%) compared to male respondents (42.7%). In terms of age distribution, the majority (51.4%) are within the 15-16 age group, while the 13-14 and 17-18 age groups are represented by 23.8% and 24.8%, respectively. This suggests that the sample is relatively balanced across the later stages of adolescence, which is a crucial period for the development of reading habits and literary preferences.

Table 3.1 Survey Results

Question	Answer Options	Percentage (%)
What is your gender?	Male	42.7%
	Female	57.3%
How old are you?	13-14	23.8%
	15-16	51.4%
	17-18	24.8%
Do you like reading?	Yes	68.9%
	No	31.1%
How often do you read books?	Daily	18.5%
	A few times a week	34.2%
	A few times a month	26.7%
	Rarely	20.6%
Have you heard of Ernest Hemingway and Charles Dickens?	Yes	84.3%
	No	15.7%
Have you read *The Sun Also Rises* by Hemingway?	Yes	29.4%
	No	70.6%
Have you read *Great Expectations* by Dickens?	Yes	44.8%
	No	55.2%
Do you think female characters are important in a story?	Yes	79.6%
	No	20.4%
Which author do you find more interesting?	Hemingway	41.9%
	Dickens	58.1%
Which novel did you like more?	*The Sun Also Rises*	34.7%

	Great Expectations	65.3%

The data on reading habits reveal that 68.9% of respondents enjoy reading, indicating a generally positive attitude toward literature. However, only 18.5% report reading books daily, while a larger proportion (34.2%) reads a few times a week. A notable percentage (26.7%) reads only a few times a month, and 20.6% admit to reading rarely. These findings suggest that while a majority express enjoyment in reading, the frequency with which they engage with books varies considerably, possibly due to academic workload, extracurricular activities, or access to reading materials. The discrepancy between stated enjoyment of reading and actual reading frequency highlights a complex relationship between attitude and behavior in literary engagement.

Awareness of classic authors appears to be relatively high, with 84.3% of respondents recognizing the names of Ernest Hemingway and Charles Dickens. However, familiarity does not necessarily translate into readership, as only 29.4% have read The Sun Also Rises, whereas 44.8% have read Great Expectations. The discrepancy in readership between the two novels suggests that Dickens' work is either more widely assigned in academic curricula or more accessible in terms of narrative style and thematic engagement. Given that Great Expectations is often included in school syllabi, its higher readership is unsurprising. Conversely, the relatively lower percentage of respondents who have read The Sun Also Rises could indicate that Hemingway's novel is either less commonly assigned in educational settings or perceived as less approachable due to its themes and writing style. An important aspect of literary engagement is the perception of character importance, particularly regarding gender representation. A significant majority (79.6%) believe that female characters play an essential role in a story, while 20.4% do not share this view. This suggests that contemporary young readers place considerable value on gender inclusivity in literature. The preference between the two authors also reveals an interesting pattern. While 58.1% of respondents find Dickens more interesting than Hemingway, 41.9% favor Hemingway. This distribution suggests that while Dickens remains a dominant literary figure in education and readership, Hemingway still holds significant appeal.

The novel preference results further reinforce Dickens' dominance, as Great Expectations is favored by 65.3% of respondents, whereas The Sun Also Rises is preferred by 34.7%. This may be attributed to differences in narrative structure, character development, and thematic content. Dickens' novel, with its intricate plot, character complexity, and moral undertones, may resonate more strongly with younger readers. In contrast, Hemingway's minimalist style and themes of existential uncertainty may be less immediately engaging to this demographic. The findings overall indicate a strong but selective literary engagement among young readers, with external influences such as educational exposure playing a significant role in shaping their preferences.

3.5. Discussion of the Research Results

The findings of this study offer valuable insights into the reading habits and literary preferences of adolescents, particularly in relation to the works of Ernest Hemingway and Charles Dickens. The demographic composition of the sample, with a slightly higher percentage of female respondents, aligns with broader trends observed in studies of reading engagement, where female readers often report greater involvement with literature. The age distribution suggests that the majority of respondents are in the mid-to-late adolescent stage, a period marked by evolving cognitive and emotional engagement with literature. Given the developmental significance of this stage, literary preferences and habits established during this time may have long-term implications for future reading behaviors.

The data suggest that while a significant majority of respondents express enjoyment in reading, there is considerable variation in the frequency with which they engage in this activity. The relatively low percentage of daily readers, coupled with the higher proportion of those who read only a few times a month or less, indicates potential barriers to regular literary engagement. These barriers may include academic workload, the increasing prevalence of digital entertainment, or limited access to books outside of structured educational settings. The discrepancy between stated enjoyment and actual reading frequency suggests that factors beyond mere interest, such as external obligations and accessibility, influence engagement with literature.

Familiarity with classic authors appears to be high among the respondents, as the vast majority recognize the names of Hemingway and Dickens. However, recognition does not equate to direct literary engagement, as evidenced by the relatively lower percentage of individuals who have read works by these authors. The higher readership of Great Expectations compared to The Sun Also Rises can likely be attributed to curricular influences, as Dickens' works are frequently included in school reading lists. This suggests that institutional factors play a crucial role in shaping exposure to and engagement with classic literature. The lower readership of Hemingway's novel may also be indicative of differences in accessibility, both in terms of linguistic style and thematic complexity. Hemingway's sparse prose and focus on existential themes may present greater interpretative challenges for younger readers compared to Dickens' more structured narrative and moralistic themes. The significant majority of respondents who regard female characters as essential to a story underscores the increasing awareness of gender representation in literature.

This finding aligns with contemporary discussions in literary studies that emphasize the role of diverse and dynamic female characters in shaping narrative engagement. The preference for Dickens over Hemingway among the respondents suggests a broader inclination toward literature that offers complex character arcs and moral resolutions, which are more prominent in Dickens' works. The higher preference

for Great Expectations further supports this conclusion, as its intricate plot and character development may resonate more strongly with adolescent readers who seek structured storytelling and clear moral themes.

CONCLUSION

The comparative analysis of female characters in *The Sun Also Rises* by Ernest Hemingway and *Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens highlights the evolution of gender roles, literary techniques, and societal expectations across two distinct historical periods. The portrayal of women in both novels reflects the prevailing cultural attitudes, yet the authors approach their female characters with different stylistic and ideological perspectives.

Dickens, writing in the Victorian era, presents women largely within the framework of domesticity, virtue, and moral influence, whereas Hemingway, as a modernist writer, explores female characters in a context of disillusionment, emotional complexity, and shifting social norms. The contrast between these portrayals provides insight into how literature functions as a mirror of its time, illustrating the constraints and possibilities available to women in each respective society.

The analysis demonstrates that Dickens' female characters, particularly Estella, Biddy, and Miss Havisham, are defined by their relationships to men and by their adherence to or rejection of Victorian ideals of femininity. Estella, shaped by the bitter and manipulative Miss Havisham, serves as an example of how societal conditioning can suppress emotional depth and personal agency. Biddy, in contrast, represents the traditional virtues of kindness and domestic stability, reinforcing the era's ideal of the nurturing woman. Miss Havisham herself, as a symbol of bitterness and vengeance, deviates from the expected female role, ultimately embodying the destructive consequences of emotional repression and societal constraints. These characters function within a moral framework where their fates often serve as commentary on the dangers of deviation from accepted norms.

In contrast, Hemingway's *The Sun Also Rises* presents female characters, most notably Brett Ashley, in a world marked by postwar disillusionment and the breakdown of traditional gender roles. Brett defies conventional expectations through her independence, sexual freedom, and rejection of emotional containment. However, rather than serving as a triumphant figure of female empowerment, she is depicted within the framework of existential despair, illustrating the challenges faced by women attempting to navigate a rapidly changing society. Her relationships with male characters highlight the tensions between desire, power, and autonomy, showing the limits imposed even on women who appear liberated. Other female characters in the novel, though less central, contribute to the overall representation of women as figures negotiating the uncertainties of modernity.

Through this comparison, it becomes evident that while Dickens' and Hemingway's female characters differ significantly in terms of agency and self-determination, they are alike in their function as symbols of their respective cultural and historical landscapes. Both novels depict women as deeply affected by societal structures, whether through the rigid moral codes of the Victorian era or the fractured ideals of

the postwar generation. The differences in narrative style further reinforce these themes, with Dickens employing detailed characterization and moral lessons, while Hemingway's sparse prose and implicit subtext reflect the existential uncertainties of his time.

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РЕЗЮМЕ

У кваліфікаційній роботі представлено порівняльний аналіз жіночих персонажів у романах «І сходить сонце» Ернеста Гемінґвея та «Великі сподівання» Чарльза Діккенса, зосереджено увагу на тому, як ці образи відображають соціальні, культурні та літературні тенденції своїх епох.

У першій частині роботи розглядається історичний та літературний контекст Вікторіанської Англії та «втраченого покоління», аналізується, як політичні та соціальні обставини вплинули на зображення жінок у літературі. Порівнюються моральна жорсткість і соціальна ієрархія XIX століття у Великій Британії з екзистенційним розчаруванням післявоєнної Європи, що дозволяє показати, як ці фактори вплинули на створення жіночих персонажів у кожному романі. Крім того, досліджуються літературні напрями реалізму та вікторіанської моралі доби Діккенса у порівнянні з модернізмом і темами відчуженості «втраченого покоління» у творчості Гемінґвея.

Друга частина роботи містить глибокий аналіз ключових жіночих персонажів обох романів. У «Великих сподіваннях» Діккенс зображує жінок як продукт вікторіанських цінностей: міс Гевішем уособлює озлобленість і маніпулятивність, Естелла – наслідки виховання без любові, а Бідді символізує чесноти та домашній затишок. Натомість у «І сходить сонце» Гемінґвей створює новий жіночий образ через Брітт Ешлі, яка кидає виклик традиційним гендерним нормам і уособлює складність жіночої ідентичності у повоєнному світі. Дослідження простежує еволюцію жіночих образів, наголошуючи на контрастах між впорядкованою моральною реальністю Діккенса та фрагментованим, невизначеним світом Гемінґвея. Порівняльний аналіз підкреслює, що зображення жінок у цих творах відображає ширші тематичні питання: від прагнення до спокути та визначених суспільних ролей у Діккенса – до автономії та емоційної відстороненості в Гемінґвея.

Заключна частина містить емпіричне дослідження щодо сприйняття сучасними читачами цих жіночих персонажів. Було досліджено рівень обізнаності учнів з романами, з літературним процесом та поглядами на роль жінок у тогочасному суспільстві. Результати дослідження свідчать, що хоча читачі визнають значущість жіночих персонажів в обох творах, вони частіше віддають перевагу більш традиційним образом Діккенса, ніж психологічно складній та неоднозначній Брітт Ешлі у Гемінґвея. Обговорення результатів показує, що сприйняття літературних героїнь значною мірою залежить від рівня літературної освіти, культурних очікувань та особистих уподобань, що підтверджує вплив соціокультурного контексту на інтерпретацію жіночих образів у класичній літературі.

APPENDIX

Questionnaire

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1. What is your gender?

a) Male

b) Female

2. How old are you?

a) 13–14

b) 15–16

c) 17–18

3. Do you like reading?

a) Yes

b) No

4. How often do you read books?

a) Daily

b) A few times a week

c) A few times a month

d) Rarely

5. What kinds of books do you enjoy reading? (e.g., fantasy, historical fiction, science fiction, etc.)

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6. Who are your favorite authors?

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7. What languages are you learning?

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8. In which language(s) do you prefer reading books?

---

9. Have you heard of Ernest Hemingway and Charles Dickens?

a) Yes

b) No

10. Which works by Ernest Hemingway do you know?

---

11. Which works by Charles Dickens have you read or heard about?

---

12. Have you read *The Sun Also Rises* by Ernest Hemingway?

a) Yes

b) No

13. Have you read *Great Expectations* by Charles Dickens?

a) Yes

b) No

14. Do you think female characters are important in a story?

a) Yes

b) No

15. Which author do you find more interesting?

a) Hemingway

b) Dickens

16. Which novel did you like more?

a) *The Sun Also Rises*

b) *Great Expectations*

17. Do you remember any characters from *The Sun Also Rises*? If yes, name them.

---

18. Do you remember any female characters from *Great Expectations*? If yes, name them.

---

19. What was the name of the woman who raised Pip in his childhood?

a. Miss Havisham

b. Mrs. Joe Gargery

c. Estella

20. Who was Estella in *Great Expectations*?

a. Miss Havisham's adopted daughter

b. Pip's sister

c. Joe Gargery's wife

21. Why did Miss Havisham wear her wedding dress for many years?

a. Because her fiancé left her on her wedding day

b. Because she lost her memory

c. Because it was her favorite dress

22. Have you ever paid attention to how authors describe the inner world of female characters?

a. Yes, especially in classic literature

b. No, I don't always notice

23. Do you think female characters in 19th-century and 20th-century literature are different?

a. Yes, in the 20th century, female characters became more independent

b. No, there are many similarities in characters from both periods

24. Who do you think is the central female figure in *The Sun Also Rises*?

---

25. Where do the main events of *The Sun Also Rises* take place?

a. In Paris and Spain

b. In London and New York

c. In Rome and Madrid

26. What is the name of the woman Jake Barnes was in love with?

a. Brett Ashley

b. Frances Clyne

c. Gertrude Stein

27. What major event happens at the end of the novel?

a. Bullfighting in Pamplona

b. A party in Paris

c. The marriage of Brett Ashley and Michael

28. What is your impression of the female characters in *Great Expectations*?

a. They are complex and have a strong influence on the plot

b. Their characters reflect the social limitations of women at that time

29. What role do the female characters play in the plot of these novels?

a. They are key figures who influence the development of the main characters

b. Their actions have a decisive impact on how the story unfolds

30. In your opinion, how are the female characters in Hemingway's and Dickens' novels different?

---

31. Have you noticed any differences in the character and behavior of women in the works of Hemingway and Dickens?

a) Yes

b) No

32. What do you think about Miss Havisham in *Great Expectations*? What is your opinion of her behavior?

---

33. Do you think these female characters could be considered role models?

a) Yes

b) No

34. Do you feel sympathy for the female characters in *The Sun Also Rises*?

a) Yes

b) No

35. In your opinion, how would the plot change if the female characters acted differently?

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