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**WOMAN, DESIRE AND EDUCATION IN CHARLOTTE BRONTE'S *JANE EYRE AND VILLETTE***

**MASTER THESIS**

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**Gülzar ASGAROVA**





*To my parents*

## **FOREWORD**

I would like to express my gratitude to all for their support, namely to Assist. Prof. Dr. Timuçin Buğra Edman for the kind help and valuable advice with which he provided me as my supervisor.

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**Gülner ASGAROVA**



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# CHARLOTTE BRONTE'NİN *JANE EYRE* VE *VILLETTE* ROMANLARINDA KADIN, ARZU VE EĞİTİM

## ÖZET

Tez, Viktorya döneminde toplumdaki kadınların konumu, kadın doğası ve rolü üzerinde durmaktadır. Charlotte Brontë'nin romanları *Jane Eyre* ve *Villette* Viktorya döneminde bir kadın olmanın hikâyesini anlatıyor. Böylece bu tez bu iki romanın incelenmesidir. Bu analiz, Viktorya döneminde kadınların neye benzediğini ve kadının ne anlama geldiğini gerçekçi bir şekilde göstermeyi amaçlıyor.

Tez beş kısma ayrılmıştır. Birinci bölüm tanıtım, ikinci bölüm ise teorik arka plan ve Viktorya döneminde kadınlar, kadın öznelliği, kadın eğitimi ve romanlardaki arzu ve cinsellik konularını ele alıyor. Ayrıca, yukarıda bahsedilen iki romanın yazarı Charlotte Brontë hakkında bazı bilgiler verilmiştir. Bu bölümde romanların psikolojik analizi de verilmektedir. Üçüncü bölüm *Jane Eyre* romanı ile ilgilidir. Bu bölümde roman hakkında genel bilgi verilmiş ve kadınların romanda görüldüğü gibi durumlarından bahsedilmiştir.. Burada, kadın öznelliği, kadın soruları, kadın eğitimi ve bu kadın arzusu ile ilgili analiz sonuçlarını sağlamıştır. Bu üç alt bölüm romanın analizi ile karıştırılan bu konuların teorik görüşlerini ortaya koydu.

Dahası, dördüncü bölüm *Villette* romanından bahsediyor. Bu bölümde, adigeçen romanda bir önceki romanda da yapılmış olan kadın sorusu, kadın eğitimi ve kadın arzusu üzerine analizler yapıldı. Bu nedenle, bu üç alt bölümde kadın sorusu üzerine çalışıldı ve Viktorya dönemi İngiltere'sindeki siyasi, sosyal, yasal ve eğitsel haklarının romanda nasıl sunuldukları hakkında konuşuldu. Ayrıca, ikinci alt bölümde, *Villette*'de kadınların eğitimi hakkında konuşuldu, romandaki yansıması ve gerçekliği hesaba katıldı ve dolayısıyla iki roman karşılaştırılarak sonuçlara varıldı. Son üçüncü alt bölümde, *Villette*'deki arzu konuşuldu ve ana kahramanın cinselliğine ilişkin bir görüş sunuldu; bu kahraman, Kraliçe Viktoria'nın hükümdarlığının altın çağlarının kurallarını savunuyordu. Son beşinci bölüm, yukarıda belirtilen bölümlerde yapılan tüm analiz sonuçlarının özetidir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** *Viktorian dönemi, Kadın, Eğitim, Arzu, Charlotte Bronte, Jane, Villette*

**WOMAN, DESIRE AND EDUCATION IN CHARLOTTE BRONTË'S *JANE  
EYRE AND VILLETTE***

**ABSTRACT**

The thesis deals with the position of women in the society and women's nature and role in the Victorian period. Charlotte Brontë's novels *Jane Eyre* and *Villette* portray how it was to be a woman in the Victorian age. Thus, this thesis is analysis of these two novels. This analysis had as its aim to truthfully show what were the lives of women like and what it meant to be a woman in the Victorian period.

The thesis is divided into five parts. The first part is introduction, the second part deals with the theoretical background where I went over the Victorian age and women in the Victorian age, female subjectivity, education of women and desire and sexuality in the novel. Also, I provided some information about the author of the above mentioned two novels, Charlotte Brontë. Psychological analysis of the novels is also provided in this part. The third part deals with the novel *Jane Eyre*. In the third part, I provided general information about the novel and dealt with the position of women as seen in the novel *Jane Eyre*. Here, I provided my conclusions of the analysis when it comes to female subjectivity, women's question, education of women and female desire in this novel. These three subchapters gave theoretical view of these issues mixed with the analysis of the novel.

The fourth part deals with the novel *Villette*. In the fourth part, I provided analysis about the women's question, education of women and female desire conducted in the previous novel, took place in this novel as well. Hence, in these three subchapters I went over the women's question and talked about their political, social, legal and educational rights in the Victorian England and how they are presented in the novel. Also, in the second subchapter I wrote about the education of women in *Villette*, taking into an account the reality and the situation in the novel, and thus I compared and contrasted the two and put my conclusions on the paper. In the last, third subchapter, I wrote about the desire in *Villette* and offered a view on the sexuality of the main heroine that defies all the norms and rules of the golden ages of Queen Victoria's reign. In the end, the last, fifth part, is the conclusion where I summarized all the points made in the above mentioned chapters.

**Keywords:** *Victorian Period, Woman, Education, Desire, Charlotte Brontë, Jane, Villette*

## 1 INTRODUCTION

In the Victorian age, novel became the most popular form of literature. In the hundreds of pages of the Victorian novel there lies the glory and doom of the Victorian age. Many novelists discussed openly the problems and issues of this age. Therefore, it is no surprise to find some of these issues discussed in the novels of Charlotte Brontë. Her novels draw attention to the problems that women encountered in the Victorian age, and they portray the hardships through which women lived in this age.

The focus of the thesis will be on examining the ways in which Charlotte Brontë combines issues related to women's social position, the management of emotions and the related significance of education in two of her most famous novels: *Jane Eyre* and *Villette*. The aim of the thesis will be to show what the life was like for women in the Victorian age in terms of their political and legal rights, education and sexuality. Research questions will cover the relation between the life stories of the author and main characters, feminist elements observed in the novels, social class in Victorian society, main goals and attitudes, emotions, relationships of both female characters, etc.: What were the British ideals for domestic womanhood? What was the role of family in Victorian society? What rights were given to women like Jane Eyre and Lucy Snowe who lived in mid-nineteenth century England? In what ways do Jane and Lucy adjust the expectations of Victorian society? How do the novels comment on the position of women in Victorian England? How do the romantic and rebellious behaviors and education of the main characters affect their lives?

These two novels portray life in the Victorian age, focusing on women and their perception of life in Victorian England, and the relations among women and men, family members and women to women. What were the British ideals for domestic womanhood? What was the role of family in Victorian society? These novels offer the portrayal of the patriarchal society as well. Moreover, these two novels deal with the very crucial aspects of women's lives between 1830 and

1900 which are female subjectivity, the education of women and female sexuality. They investigate the rights women had and lacked; though marriage was considered one of the privileges and success of a Victorian woman, the main rights they were seeking were the right to their private properties and the constitutional right to have a proper education as men used to get. Also, the monopoly held over female sexuality is discussed in these two novels too, since this is one of the main questions when it comes to women lives from 1830s until today.

The thesis will include five chapters. There is an introduction in the first chapter where the work emphasizes general information about the thesis and its structure. The second chapter, theoretical background, will be divided into two parts.

In the first part, the thesis will provide information about the author Charlotte Brontë, the contemporary views about the author and her relations to female subjectivity, education of women and female desire and the other authors, who wanted different education for women.

In the second part, the thesis will continue with the discussion around the Victorian Age; female subjectivity, which includes women in the Victorian age, their expectations from life and the norms of female behavior. In general, women in the Victorian age will be described in this part; the education they were given, female sexuality and related views which men and society held and so on.

The third chapter will discuss *Jane Eyre* (1847). This chapter will include three parts. The first part will discuss female subjectivity as portrayed in the novel through female and male characters, their destinies and relations. The second part will discuss the education of women in this novel. It will also include the comparison of female and male education, norms and rules both genders had concerning education. The last part in this chapter will display the description of female desire in the novel. The attention will be on the main character, Jane Eyre, but other characters will be discussed as well.

The fourth chapter will provide information about *Villette* (1853). This chapter, just like the third chapter, will consist of three parts. The first part will focus on

female subjectivity and emancipation of women. Both male and female characters will be discussed, but the focus will be on the main character Lucy Snowe. The second part will discuss the education described in the novel. The focus will be on the education of women in comparison to male education. The third part will confer female sexuality described in the novel. The main emphasis will be on Lucy Snowe, Ginevra, Madame Beck, Polly, Dr. John, M. Paul.

Finally, the fifth chapter will be a conclusion about the two novels, through close reading of both of these two novels and their comparison. All in all, the conclusion we reach in this last chapter will point out that these two novels show a different world for women. That is to say, it is a world in which they do not have to depend upon men and be their slaves, where nobody is forcing them to be.

Consequently, this thesis will pinpoint women rights, emancipation of women, the education and desires of women as seen through literature. Literature is, after all, a truthful and objective window to the past, not to a biased history, as it is already known that history is sometimes a constructed, artificial thing, while the only way to know what happened in the years and centuries before us is to have a futuristic time travel to the past. Since history is not reliable, literature is the perfect means with which we can investigate into the past through imagination and interpretation. Therefore, this thesis will examine women's position in the Victorian society and aim to show the "inequality" which kept women tied and away from joining the real progress of the Victorian age.

## 2 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

### 2.1 Charlotte Brontë

Elizabeth Gaskell, who wrote the book *The Life of Charlotte Brontë*, said that for a better understanding of Charlotte's life, the reader should know the specific class of the society of Haworth, because the years her friend spent here made her first impressions of human life (Gaskell, 10). She goes on to say that people of Haworth possessed the remarkable degree of self-sufficiency. The practical skills of men were held in great respect. Haworth was a nice place; however, its inhabitants were isolated from the world in the winter. Brontë sisters used to enjoy walks in Haworth, but later Haworth became dull, boring and monotonous place (Gaskell, 45). This is mirrored in the letters that Charlotte wrote to Ellen Nussey:

I can hardly tell you how time gets on at Haworth. There is no event whatever to mark its progress. One day resembles another; and all have heavy, lifeless, physiognomies. Sunday, baking-day, and Saturday, are the only ones that have any distinctive marks. Meantime life wears away... There was a time when Haworth was a very pleasant place to me; it is not so now. I feel as if we were all buried here... Your letters, and the French newspapers are the only messengers that come to me from the outer world beyond our moors (Gaskell, 275).

As the lines above shed light into how an ordinary day passes in Haworth, Gaskell presents more details about Brontës. She says that Charlotte's father was an Irishman and thus had strong, passionate nature, compressed down with stoicism. Her mother died in 1821, and this made the lives of quiet children quieter and lonelier. The children did not want society, they were all to each other, and they were tenderly bound to each other. Also, she talks about Charlotte who at her fifteen was quiet, thoughtful and very small in the figure. Except for her hair and eyes, all of her features were plain. Concerning her education and student days she was a special girl (Gaskell, 99).

When speaking of her writing, Miss Brontë wrote novels and books of poetry with her sisters. However, this was not her first and primary occupation, before

writing she was a teacher and governess. Her first publication was in 1846 with her sisters. They published their poems under the pseudonyms Currer (Charlotte), Ellis and Acton Bell.

She wrote four novels: *The Professor* (1857), *Jane Eyre* (1847), *Shirley* (1849) and *Villette* (1853). *The Professor* was her first novel but it was published posthumously. In 1854 Charlotte married the Rev. A. B. Nicholls, curate of Haworth since 1845. While she was expecting a child, in 1855, Charlotte caught pneumonia, and after the lengthy and painful illness she died together with her unborn child on the 31<sup>st</sup> of March, 1855, at the age of 38. (Cody). Mrs. Gaskell finishes her book about Charlotte Brontë's life by talking about her death that, she never lived for her own pleasure and all her life was full of efforts and fatigue (Gaskell, 342).

In Charlotte Brontë's novels we can see diverse female characters. Sarah Russo argues that is very interesting in Brontë's novels is that her own life and events through her biography are portrayed through some female characters:

Yet what has not been noticed is how Brontë used double entendre in those plot events that simultaneously represent Lucy's fictional experiences and key events in Brontë's own life. Double entendre allows her to tell Lucy's and her own story using the same words (Russo, 75).

In these lines from *Women's Self-Writing and Medical Science* Sarah Russo describes the Charlotte's using double entendre to deliver her own life to readers.

## **2.2 The Victorian Age**

### **2.2.1 Women in the Victorian Age**

The Victorian Age is the age characterized by the most beautiful and elegant dresses ever, soft and shiny curls, pale faces with beautiful eyes and smiles that knock you off of your feet. When illustrating the beauty of the Victorian women, the lines below from Holy Bible become vivid:

I bathed you with water and washed the blood from you and put ointments on you. I clothed you with an embroidered dress and put sandals of fine leather on you. I dressed you in fine linen and covered you with costly garments. I adorned you with jewelry: I put bracelets on your arms and a necklace around your neck, and I put a ring on your

nose, earrings on your ears and a beautiful crown on your head (Holy Bible NIV. Ezekiel 16:9-14).

The words above explain the patriarchal despotic behaviors towards women in the Victorian times. In other words, through these lines, man had the idea of associating women with Satan. As the Holy Bible constructs the patriarchal standpoint, man in Victorian age as their predecessors in medieval ages took the words of God for granted. Thus, the rest of the Victorian period's qualities might be understood more clearly so long as we keep these words in mind.

The Victorian Age spans between two great periods, Romanticism and Modernism. It is hard to pinpoint when exactly the Victorian Age begins and ends, since these three movements are interwoven, but it was agreed that Victorian Age began in 1830 and ended in 1900 (Literature Network, web). Almost every area of life was shaken up by change; invention of steam engine, improvements in technology which led to increased factory production, more manufacturing and coal mining (Literature Network, web). Also, Charles Darwin's theory of evolution by natural selection changed how people viewed the church. Life did change into a cruel survival. In general, this change was seen as progress and progress it was, except for women, ever left out, ever neglected and seen as inferior to men, the only rulers of the world.

Victorian age is an age of great changes and progress in the British Empire. It is the age when political rights and education system were started being discussed and many important questions were raised. It is the age which widened the gap between the rich and the poor, but it is also the age of the Reform Bill of 1832 when men of lower classes got the right to vote (The Literature Network, web).

The 19<sup>th</sup> century is the age when woman position in society was questioned. Women in the Victorian era lived in a domestic age, defined by Queen's Victoria's femininity which included home, family, maternity, decency and social customs. Woman was supposed to be good and virtuous and her life centered on the sphere of domesticity: home and family (Thompson, 172). They were not supposed to have any interests outside these three spheres. "An angel in the house" was a bird in a cage (Patmore, 179) The private sphere was reserved for women, while public sphere was reserved for men. Men were going to work, going out and travelling. Women could travel if accompanied by men,

because to be seen as a woman travelling alone would bring bad reputation to her (Bivona, 50).

Motherhood and marriage were the highest and most desirable achievements for women. Having achieved this, their lives were seen as full and completed, pervading with happiness and joy (Perkin, 65). Motherhood was idealized in the Victorian age; it was not just a reproductive function but a social responsibility (Marcus, 56). “Women had proper obligation to their families, peculiarly to their husbands. It was considered abnormal if they didn’t become a mother” (Abrams, 6).

In the early 19<sup>th</sup> century women had just few rights. For their political and voting rights, women were not granted these rights until 1928, after the Victorian period was over. In the beginning, women had to get an Act of Parliament (statute) to get a divorce; however, Matrimonial Causes Act (1857) let women get a divorce without the Act of Parliament, and in 1839 the Custody of Infants Act (an Act of the Parliament of the United Kingdom) was passed, which allowed women to have custody of their children they could provide for them. Also, women have been given the right to own the property in marriage, starting from 1870 they were allowed to save money they had made, and from 1891 it was not obligatory for women to live with their husbands if they didn’t want to (*British Women’s Emancipation since the Renaissance*). The first wave of feminism started its fight for women’s rights in this age as well. They were fighting to help women gain more rights in marriage as divorce which initially could only be asked for by men. Also, they wanted to help women gain more rights in society as well, such as voting right, legal rights and the right on equal education and working opportunities like men had. Wollstonecraft argues that the main reason why women are controlled by men is their upbringing from the moment they are born:

Women are told from their infancy, and taught by their mothers’ example, that a little knowledge of human weakness (properly called “cunning”), softness of temperament, outward obedience, and scrupulous attention to a puerile kind of propriety, will obtain for them the protection of man; and if they are also beautiful, that’s all they need for at least twenty years. That is how Milton describes our first frail mother, Eve; though when he tells us that women are formed for softness and sweet attractive grace I don’t understand him (Wollstonecraft, 19).

All of these were due to their upbringing. One of the biggest problems for women was the way they were brought up and the education they received. It doesn't mean that their mothers are to be blamed for it. This is not the case at all, since their mothers too were taught the same thing, and this was a general belief held by almost everyone. However, this is what kept women oppressed for so many years and centuries. It is hard to believe that different life and destinies are possible for women when everyone said it is not. How can anyone think that women do not have to be ignorant, meek and obedient if that is what nature created them like? The real problem was the norms and rules which they held to be true for women and men; women were shy, meek, obedient, ignorant and belong to private sphere, while men were powerful, strong, smart, assertive and born leaders. These norms and rules were believed to be determined by nature, and that is why they were so strong and that is why it was so hard to change them:

Besides, the woman who strengthens her body and exercises her mind will, by managing her family and practising various virtues, become the friend, and not the humble dependent, of her husband; and if she deserves his respect by having such solid qualities, she won't find that she needs to conceal her affection or pretend to an unnatural coldness of constitution [meaning "pretend to have little interest in sex"] to excite her husband's passions. Look at history and you'll find that the women who have distinguished themselves haven't been the most beautiful or the gentlest of their sex (Wollstonecraft, 21).

Wollstonecraft wants all women to benefit from integrity. She also argues for emancipation of women by saying that if they had the same treatment like men and if they were treated as equal to men, they would be able to grow and develop in different fields of life. Women should not only be taught that being beautiful and sensitive is for them, but also women should be given options and allowed to choose them for themselves. Marriage is a partnership, and partners should be equal. No partner should depend upon the other partner; otherwise it is not a partnership. Hence, women fought for voting rights, for legal rights, the right for higher education and many others, so they would be able to be partners and equals.

On the whole, Victorian period was a very difficult period for women because they were seen as completely inferior to men. Technological and evolutionary developments didn't apply to their fates. In other words, in the Victorian Age

man witnessed drastic and positive changes except the roles of women. They were seen as servants to men (wwnorton.com). However, this is also the period of many changes and achievements for women. They have won many rights that in the past were impossible to be won which nobody even dreamed about. Therefore, this is a great age of growing progress and growing inequities that changed the European mind and literature forever.

### **2.2.2 Education of Women in the Victorian Age**

Education of women became one of the most important topics in this period. The biggest problem was that education of women was desired in the areas such as literature, drawing and singing, and only as a means to get the best possible offer for a marriage (bartleby.com). Subjects like math, physics, chemistry were not taught to women because women were seen as unfit to learn these things, it was thought that that would be too much for their brain and that things that women should focus on are beautifying themselves for men and nurturing their virtues, again for men and better opportunity for marriage. Furthermore, professions such as doctor, detective or a police officer were not open for women (bartleby.com).

The long-established rules about the education of women were questioned by Mary Wollstonecraft in *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792). What Wollstonecraft wanted them to do is to use their reasons more and emotions less, because according to her one of the reasons of women's lower position at that time is exactly the lack of reason. "I may be allowed to infer that reason is absolutely necessary to enable a woman to perform any duty properly, and I must again repeat, that sensibility is not reason" (Wollstonecraft, 72).

Wollstonecraft is once again talking about reason, and also the early education that women receive. She puts emphasis on the fact that women are from their early age taught to stick to their emotions and senses. This brings them more trouble in the future, because this is what keeps their mind weak and this is what makes them in the long run unable to develop their abilities fully. In other words, senses and emotions might be deceiving; therefore, to take any decision a person needs reasoning. In parallel to that she goes on to say that society sees women only in connection to men, as mothers, wives and daughters; they are

judged how they fulfill these roles and thus their own personal development is left behind (Wollstonecraft, 72). She argues that the notion of beauty is another thing which blinds women at an early stage and acts as a wall between women and proper education:

In the present corrupt state of society many causes collaborate to enslave women by cramping their understandings and sharpening their senses. One that silently does more harm than all the rest, perhaps, is their disregard of order. To do everything in an orderly manner is a most important precept, but women, who in general; receive only a disorderly kind of education, seldom attend to it with as much exactness as men do, because men are from their infancy are broken into method. This negligent kind of guesswork prevents women from generalizing matters of fact, so what they did yesterday they do again today, merely because they did it yesterday (Wollstonecraft, 32).

Physically women are imprisoned in different ways. But their mental slavery is what persecutes them most. They remain unenlightened to the social oppressions by not having a proper education.

Women in the Victorian age had three choices after the education: they could have been an angel in the house (a wife and a mother), governess or a prostitute. Being “an angel in the house” (Patmore, 172). was the best and the most desired thing a woman can strive for and be. If she fulfilled this role, society would accept and praised her for her great and noble personality. The professions as governess or teacher and prostitution were scorned and deemed as the worst professions. Governesses had no life of their own and often were not happy as Jane Eyre once said in her letter to a W.S.Williams. The problem with being a governess was that you were not a part of the family nor were you a staff member in someone’s household; hence, governesses were stuck in between. They belonged to no class or group. This made their lives very hard. The last option for women was to be a prostitute. Prostitutes were the lowest rank in the society, the worst possible women to exist, while the men who visited them were still considered perfectly normal and sane men. Here we face double standards of Victorian society which judge women more than men. They open all doors for men, but none for women:

The great advance in the education of girls and women, which has been a prominent feature of recent educational history, may be traced back to the early activities of the Governesses’ Benevolent institution, founded in 1843. From the first, this advance has been closely connected with movements directed primarily to make teaching a profession for women. The institution

soon found that it could be most helpful to governesses by making them capable of the work they undertook. For this purpose, it secured the gratuitous co-operation of F. D. Maurice and other professors of King's college, London, who began by examining women as to their fitness to teach and then, as the result of experience, conducted classes in which women could receive the necessary instruction. Queen's college, London, was founded in 1848 as a home for these classes and others for the education of girls and women; among the first teacher-pupils were Frances Mary Buss and Dorothea Beale, who afterwards became the leaders of reform in girls' education (bartleby.com).

The education of women went through a storm of wanting and not having, asking and in the end through hard work getting. At the beginning women were only allowed to learn few subjects like singing, drawing or playing a piano. However, after that women got a chance to access higher education, even though not many universities opened their doors to them. Virginia Woolf states difficulties and double standardization for women as well. She says that university libraries are locked for women; "Lock up your libraries if you like; but there is no gate, no lock, no bolt that you can set upon the freedom of my mind" (Woolf, 76). However, most things started changing in the Victorian age. One by one universities started changing their rules and opening their doors for women. This helped many women to get needed education and continue their fight for the women's rights:

In 1865, girls were allowed to present themselves at the "Local" examinations of Cambridge, and, in this way, periodical authoritative statements as to girls' education were made possible. In 1869, Cambridge and London universities instituted examinations for women. In 1871, "The National Union for improving the education of women of all classes" (among whose founders lady Stanley of Alderley and Emily Shirreff, Mistress of Girton College, were prominent) took up the concurrent policy of starting good, cheap day-schools for girls and of making teaching by women a profession. (bartleby.com).

The he solution was to educate teachers and to give higher education for women after which the aimful and active women started to the universities. The new universities didn't make any distinction of gender relating to teaching and degrees.

### **2.2.3 Desire in the Victorian Age**

Starting from the early years of the Victorian Age the roles of men and women differed greatly in regards to desire and sexuality. Women were accepted as the faint and purer gender with less sexual desires, while men were considered more

immoral and desirous gender, wrongfully taking advantage of the sensitivity of women (*Victorian Theories of Sex and Sexuality*, Lee). Nevertheless, these circumstances changed in course of time. Thus, women were described either callous or desirous, so the worth of a young woman was measured by her purity and naivety (*Victorian Theories of Sex and Sexuality*, Lee).

There were certain rules and norms that women had to follow in their lives. This meant that before marriage young girls were supposed to be virtuous and remain sexually ignorant, because in that age there were dominant views about them that they had limited sexual desires, while strong fondness of family and motherhood were considered essential: “The corner-stone of Victorian society, therefore, was the family. The perfect lady’s sole role was marriage and procreation” (*Sexuality in the Victorian Era*, Long). Therefore, attention of women was mostly centered on family and bearing children. There was only little place for desire and sexuality in their lives,

As regards to desired characteristics, woman was supposed to be religious because the church was one of the ways to control and indoctrinate women. Men were in control of church and the opinion that church held, thus the church was of the opinion that women were inferior to men as well. Religious learnings taught women to be very religious which meant that they should be quiet, meek, obedient and virtuous. Female sexuality was treated as non-existing. If a woman was free about her sexuality she would be a nymphomaniac who should be treated in a psychological institution (*Women’s Religious Orders in Victorian England*, Banerjee). Therefore, the church with the patriarchal foundation, held a monopoly over women’s lives. It controlled women’s opinion and self-image at the first place, and then their behavior and attitude toward themselves and other women, men and the life itself. Because of this, the fight for women’s rights was slowed down back then.

Female sexuality was not only something hidden and non-existing, but also something to be ashamed of, and something that a woman could be blamed for and turned into an outcast. Being blamed for sexuality recalls *Tess of the d’Urbervilles* by Thomas Hardy, where Alec rapes her and Tess ends up being blamed for that. Even the sole name of the next chapter, after the dreadful incident, is a little bit insulting for women. It is ‘Maiden No More’, which

makes us think why women are so marked by their chastity. (Hardy, 85). In the Victorian age women's chastity seems to be their honor, which if once ruined means that their whole life was ruined. Now, the question is why this is not the same for men? Their chastity was never questioned or mentioned. From these double standards, one can see the hypocrisy for women and men. Men could do whatever they wanted, while women were confined to domestic sphere:

Woman is shut up in a kitchen or in a boudoir, and astonishment is expressed that her horizon is limited. Her wings are clipped, and it is found deplorable that she cannot fly. Let but the future be opened to her, and she will no longer be compelled to linger in the present (Beauvoir, 352).

Simone de Beauvoir's special status of 'womanhood' which she produces in her *Second Sex* is a status of being 'second sex'. This status creates a certain female personality in daily life. This well-known quote by Beauvoir "...one is not born, but rather becomes, a woman" (Beauvoir, 249) points out the historical, social and cultural aspects of the situation. Clearly, in the heart of this question there is a latent form of 'social gender' issue. We all come into the world carrying a number of characteristics; the colors of our eyes and hair, our hormone balance, mental and emotional tendency, as well as capabilities are different. However, formation of these features, tendencies and capabilities is the product of social and historical conditions. According to Beauvoir this formation is derived from the relationship between male and female sexes in which the hierarchy holds the domination on the 'second sex'. For Beauvoir the problem is not a biological male sex, but masculinity as a social position. Beauvoir expresses her idea by implication that 'social gender' concept is domination of male sex on female. "Representation of the world, like the world itself, is the work of men; they describe it from their own point of view, which they confuse with absolute truth" (Beauvoir, 161).

#### **2.2.4 Psychological Approach on Victorian Woman**

For better understanding of Victorian woman's behavior psychological approach should be considered. When saying psychology, the first name that comes to our mind is Freud. Freud divided the self-one's personality into three components: id, ego and superego (Freud, 1923). The id is the primitive component of personality that people inherit at birth. The id is the part of human psych that

responds directly to desires and aims to satisfy basic instincts. When these instincts are satisfied, people experience pleasure, but when they are not, people experience tension. The ego is part of the personality which has been modified by the society as well as various external influences. The ego is the filter for id's desires and it seeks realistic and possible solutions to id's demands. The super ego conforms to society's roles and keeps the id in chains in order to prevent it from disobeying the rules of society. The superego is made from the values and morals of society; the morals and values that one's opinion and reasoning is shaped by. It is what one is told to be right and what one is told to be wrong. It has nothing to do with what one would think if one were born on an isolated island because even though the superego is part of one's personality, it shows what one was told to think and do.

From Charlotte Brontë's life, books and letters one can understand that the 'father figure' or parental personality is the main symbol in her inner life. He was the dictator of the house and his rule was entirely whimsical but less judicious. Probably these feelings grew together with Charlotte which caused her to create orphan heroines. In other words, it was her father who aroused in her the feelings such as fear, respect and subjection and his influence covered her nature. Thus, psychologically Charlotte Brontë was always immature. During that period the intimate emotions which were resorted to late marriages of the society rules dispensed as the friendship of girls or mothers. Charlotte had no mother to turn to when she needed, that is why she turned back to herself and her heroines are orphans who try to make their own path.

*Jane Eyre* shows that female personality has been shaped like this. The society with its phallic and god-like leader indoctrinated women how they should think. The men were the 'gods' or the 'governors' of women's minds. In *Jane Eyre* one can see this clearly in many male characters, but one in particular. It is Mr. Brocklehurst, the school's headmaster. He is shaping his female students' minds and imposing certain dogmas on them. It is because he holds the position of a 'God' who possesses a key to women's mind and soul. Hence, as long as he can enter their mind and play with their psyche he is the 'god' who controls their lives. At the beginning of the novel Mr. Brocklehurst scares little Jane on the pretext of God:

No sight so sad as that of a naughty child... especially a naughty little girl. Do you know where the wicked go after death? They go to hell... And what is hell? Can you tell me that? A pit full of fire. And should you like to fall into that pit, and to be burning there forever?.. I buried a little child of five years old only a day or two since, a good little child, whose soul is now in heaven. It is to be feared the same could not be said of you were you to be called hence (*JE*, 30).

St. John is a “god-like” character, yet different from Mr. Brocklehurst. One situation from the novel proves this statement to be true. For example, as he prepares to leave for India, he insists on Jane’s companionship as his wife: “I should take you, and seek no wife. But as it is, either our union must be consecrated and sealed by marriage, or it cannot exist: practical obstacles oppose themselves to any other plan. Do you not see it, Jane?” (*JE*, 432). Hence we can see again how a woman is backed into a corner by a phallic figure that is there to make all her decisions for her and even to tell her what to think and how to live her life. Looking at all this from today’s point of view makes the novel extremely upsetting, because in the 21<sup>st</sup> century many women have already liberated their personality from the chains of men.

Going back to the novel brings to comparison of Freud’s id and the id women in this novel possess. It should be mentioned that ID is entirely their own. These women have their own wishes and desires. For example, Jane desires equality and honesty. She does not want to be treated as a young and naive girl. She wants to be equal with Mr. Rochester, yet what does he do? He plays mind games on her for the first half of the novel. Though looking at his treatment of Jane superficially it looks like he is treating her with respect and not as his inferior. However, if we look at his actions deeper we may see a god-like and phallic figure in him too. His games as pretending that he is going to propose to beautiful Ingram and bringing her to his house so Jane can fully feel her inferiority and his power is a good sample of this. He wants her to sink down just so he could lift her up from the bottom of misery and show her once more his greatness and power (*JE*, 191).

Thus with actions Mr. Rochester was secretly shaping Jane’s ego and superego, because when Jane’s id was not satisfied due to Mr. Rochester’s deeds, her ego and superego would try to find a way to soften or blow away the tension created by the failure to satisfy the id and here is where Mr. Rochester’s puppet deeds come to life. In this case Jane is a puppet and Mr. Rochester is pulling the

strings of her mind. The day when Mr. Rochester has a party in the house he forces Jane to attend it:

I happened to remark to Mr. Rochester how much Adele wished to be introduced to the ladies, and he said: 'Oh! let her come into the drawing-room after dinner; and request Miss Eyre to accompany her...Yes; he said that from mere politeness: I need not go, I am sure," I answered. "Well, I observed to him that as you were unused to company, I did not think you would like appearing before so gay a party—all strangers; and he replied, in his quick way—'Nonsense! If she objects, tell her it is my particular wish; and if she resists, say I shall come and fetch her in case of contumacy (JE, 177).

It is obvious that he tries to satisfy his own ego by insisting on Jane's participation. Because he doesn't interest in her company, he just wants to control his own power.

Though realistic beginning dominates in the novel it manifests itself in clarity and rigor of Jane's psychological image as well. She intends to form her own identity relating to her deceased parents and the situation she lives in. Psychological sides of her inner life are shown in the novel as hallucinations and dreams. These dreams are psychological windows to her thoughts that foresee her future:

Over the course of her narrative Jane increasingly comes to think of the dreams and desires of her 'inner self' as entities in a marketplace over which she struggles to gain entrepreneurial control. This thinking not only reflects the dominant economic realities of Jane's life; it also anticipates the bourgeois model of the psyche which will be formalized by Freud at the end of the century (Ronald, 151).

The dream Jane had before their wedding day, carrying a child, symbolizes the domesticity of Victorian women which prevented their independency. These dreams suggest psychological connections with nature:

I touched the heath: it was dry, and yet warm with the heat of the summer day. I looked at the sky; it was pure: a kindly star twinkled just above the chasm ridge. The dew fell, but with propitious softness; no breeze whispered. Nature seemed to me benign and good; I thought she loved me, outcast as I was; and I, who from man could anticipate only mistrust, rejection, insult, clung to her with filial fondness (JE, 166).

At the same time, these dreams can also mirror Jane's fear that marrying Rochester will change her character. According to Margaret Homans, the child in Jane's dreams can show either Jane's love for Mr. Rochester or her orphan childhood, the alter ego which Jane couldn't relieve.

In *Jane Eyre and Wuthering Heights* Virginia Woolf writes about psychological approach which relates the novel to the interpretation of Charlotte Brontë's identity: "When Charlotte wrote she said with eloquence and splendor and passion "I love", "I hate", "I suffer". Her experience, though more intense, is on a level with our own" (Woolf, 159).

In *Villette*, the city Villette can be argued as psychological fiction or an embodiment of Lucy's psych. She revolves around mental exhaustion, hallucinations and talks over these symptoms with her doctor. Lucy tries to keep well in these circumstances: "I really believe my nerves are getting overstretched: my mind has suffered somewhat too much a malady is growing upon it – what shall I do? How shall I keep well?" (V, 137). Lucy still knows that it is not just depression that she experiences, but a real mental illness. At the same time, she is helpless to choose any option that might help her due to the psychology of her time. One can easily catch how the author presents her consideration of the intricacy of human mind through her heroine's life and depression.

Throughout the novel Lucy understands her own feelings and thoughts better and thus achieves self-control. In the act of constructing her narrative, Lucy stands in the first stages of her own history subjecting to the emotional surpluses of her alter ego:

These struggles with the natural character, the strong native bent of the heart, may seem futile and fruitless, but in the end they do good. They tend, however slightly, to give the actions, the conduct, that turn which Reason approves, and which feeling, perhaps, too often opposes: they certainly make a difference in the general tenor of a life, and enable it to be better regulated, more equable, quieter on the surface; and it is on the surface only the common gaze will fall. As to what lies below, leave that with God. Man, your equal, weak as you, and not fit to be your judge, may be shut out thence: take it to your Maker — show Him the secrets of the spirit He gave — ask Him how you are to bear the pains He has appointed — kneel in His presence, and pray with faith for light in darkness, for strength in piteous weakness, for patience in extreme need (V, 156).

The mature Lucy Snow comments thus on the struggles of her younger self to come to terms with her character. That is how the author shifts the directions of her self-exploration.

As Sally Shuttleworth says in her book *Charlotte Brontë and Victorian Psychology*, the practice of surveillance overshadows in the text of *Villette* and this self-surveillance and secrecy that impresses Lucy's narrative is determined by the practices of those who surrounds her. Because all characters observe one another to catch the external signals of their minds, faces and actions. Lucy doesn't want to explain herself to the people surrounding her as she thinks that it is not possible for them to accept and appreciate her feelings.

In general, women were highly pessimistic and troubled because of the Victorian regime which resulted in absence of women's expression of themselves. As Charlotte Brontë says, "Life is a battle, may we all be enabled to fight it well!" (Gaskell, 100). Therefore, women should struggle for their lives; identity and rights, because struggle is the means of building character.

### 3 JANE EYRE

#### 3.1 Female Subjectivity in *Jane Eyre*

Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* was published in 1847, under the male pen name Currer Bell. The novel was received by critics in two different ways; some praised it while others criticized it severely. The novel changes the view of how women can live their lives, and it also shows that a woman does not necessarily have to be dependent on -the man, that she can be independent, wife, and mother and loved. It portrays a different picture of a woman; the one Victorians were not used to. The spirit of a radical and rebellious woman is coming out from the novel, yet still not seriously shaking the bars that kept Victorian women prisoners in the patriarchal society (*Charlotte Bronte, V.A., Bartleby*).

*Jane Eyre* is a novel which offers a different view on woman's nature and shook the beliefs thus far held. Charlotte Brontë compares two opposing views in her novel concerning the nature of women. She gives us the Victorian view, highly influenced by patriarchal world through the characters of all men in the novel, but one especially, Mr. Brocklehurst, when he declares, "My mission is to mortify in these girls the lusts of the flesh, to reach them to clothe themselves with shame-facedness and sobriety, not with braided hair and costly apparel." (*JE*, 65), though he talks here about the girls attending Lowood school and exempts his daughters from this view. This is his general view of women and it perfectly shows hypocrisy and doubled standards which men support by giving ample freedom to some and putting in invisible chains the others, with no reasonable reason for these beliefs. However, it is important to note that Mr. Brocklehurst is not alone in his views; this is the general opinion of the Victorian society, all men and majority of women think so. All other characters in the novel hold the same opinion. The only four characters who hold a different opinion are Jane, St. John and his two sisters. These four characters lead different lives; after all the three women were teachers and governesses. They were already independent; they earned their own money and supporting

themselves. Besides social norms, which were very strong persuaders and strongly constructed women's minds and opinions, there is another very strong force which influenced their mind and that was church. Women are said many times that as Christian women they ought to be simply said obedient and slaves to men in a phallogentric Victorian world:

For my own purpose, it is not necessary to go further into your particular history of circumstances, than to regard you as women, and, as I hope, Christian women. As Christian women, then, I address you. This is placing you on high ground; yet surely there are few of my young countrywomen who would be willing to take lower. As women, then, the first thing of importance is to be content to be inferior to men—inferior in mental power, in the same proportion that you are inferior in bodily strength (Stickney Ellis, 6).

This is a clear message, showing the role and power of the church. Men in power rarely choose the means with which they persuade and bribe.

While the 19<sup>th</sup> century Victorian era in England got the title of “empire's heyday” with the progress of the fields of art and science, it was also considered as the period in which class divisions in society and religious oppression occurred in its most obvious and solid form. There was pressure of church on community in Victorian era. Religion was seen as social necessity rather than style of individual faith. In addition, there was religious oppression on morality, marriage and love. Religious abuse was widespread in the society. It was also affected by Queen Victoria's solid management and conservative viewpoints.

Charlotte Brontë writes in *Jane Eyre* about religious oppression in the society in a stingless but realistic way. For instance, Helen Burns teaches Jane tolerance and forgiveness as an orthodox Christian. She always thinks of her weakness and negligence are because of Miss Scatcherd's punishment. When Jane says “If I were in your place I should dislike her; I should resist her. If she struck me with that rod, I should get it from her hand; I should break it under her nose” (*JE*, 55) she deprecates.

Probably you would do nothing of the sort: but if you did, Mr. Brocklehurst would expel you from the school; that would be a great grief to your relations. It is far better to endure patiently a smart which nobody feels but yourself, than to commit a hasty action whose evil consequences will extend to all connected with you; and besides, the Bible bids us return good for evil (*JE*, 55).

That is one of the most vivid examples of the effect of oppression. It was not possible for Jane to avoid the Christian destiny of Victorian woman, because she lived in the society based on God. For example, this Christian destiny of Victorian woman is again described in the novel by Helens words as:

Besides this earth, and besides the race of men, there is an invisible world and a kingdom of spirits; that world is around us, for it is everywhere; and those spirits watch us, for they are commissioned to guard us; and if we were dying in pain and shame, if scorn smote us on all sides and hatred crushed us, angels see our tortures, recognize our innocence (JE, 70).

Jane is a woman who wants liberty and despises inferiority. She clearly voices her opinion in the novel by saying, "I desired liberty; for liberty I gasped; for liberty I uttered a prayer; it seemed scattered on the wind then faintly blowing" (JE, 87). Indeed, the freedom was scattered on the wind blowing around the women, yet their hands were in chains and their fingers unable to seize it once and for all, because in the phallogocentric Victorian world men stood as a panopticon (a place so formed that all interior sides can be seen from a single point) force preventing women's freedom, so much wanted and even more deserved. The question remains; "Did Jane get her desired freedom. Was marrying Mr. Rochester the pathway to freedom and independence?" Brontë made the very ending of the novel interesting and puzzling. It is hard to determine whether Jane is liberated or put in a cage in the end of the novel. However, the fact that Mr. Rochester ends up being completely dependent on her makes us believe that Jane is semi-liberated, because she becomes independent as much as a woman could in the Victorian age. Hence, this voices Brontë's opinion about female liberation in this age. On the other hand, if we take Bertha (Mr. Rochester's first wife) into consideration, she lacks everything, no freedom at all. She is a prisoner in her husband's house. Therefore, we see a woman literally in a cage, story similar to the one in the *The Yellow Wallpaper*, short stories by Gilman, where a woman was locked in a room because they thought she was insane (Gilman, 2010). Now, the question is why Mr. Rochester never consulted a doctor and tried to help his wife, as sacred matrimony says in illness as well. Perhaps Brontë twisted his destiny as a punishment for his previous deeds.

*Jane Eyre* is a very much radical and rebellious novel, not for the time we live in, but for Victorian age some things uttered by the narrator and her opinion on equality between women and men is scandalous. In the chapter 12, Jane says,

Women are supposed to be very calm generally: but women feel just as men feel; they need exercise for their faculties, and a field for their efforts as much as their brothers do; they suffer from too rigid a restraint, too absolute a stagnation, precisely as men would suffer; and it is narrow-minded in their more privileged fellow-creatures to say that they ought to confine themselves to making puddings and knitting stockings, to playing on the piano and embroidering bags. It is thoughtless to condemn them, or laugh at them, if they seek to do more or learn more than custom has pronounced necessary for their sex (JE, 114).

The narrator speaks about the injustice exercised upon two sexes, about the rules deemed natural yet they were everything but natural. She wonders why there are different rules for men and women. Why are women forbidden to learn more if they want to learn more? Why are women confined in their houses if that is suffocating them? Why do women have their lives planned for them and why are they not given any choice? The narrator does not find any answers to these questions.

However, she fights against this injustice by not yielding to a man and his rules. Jane first becomes an independent woman and then she marries Edward. She refuses to be his mistress, even though he would give her a life she could only dream of, financial security, travelling around the world, a mansion, gold and diamonds. She does not want any of these and chose to get it by herself. She fights for it and gains her independence.

### **3.2 Education in *Jane Eyre***

The novel *Jane Eyre* supports women's education. The main character is an educated woman, though not at university. However, she loves books even as a very young girl and she loves them at school too. In chapter three Jane talks to Mr. Lloyd, a physician who comes to see her:

I scarcely knew what school was; Bessie sometimes spoke of it as a place where young ladies sat in the stocks, wore back-boards, and were expected to be exceedingly genteel and precise: John Reed hated his school, and abused his master; but John Reed's tastes were no rule for mine, and if Bessie's accounts of school-discipline (gathered from the young ladies of a family where she had lived before coming to

Gateshead) were somewhat appalling, her details of certain accomplishments attained by these same young ladies were, I thought, equally attractive. She boasted of beautiful paintings of landscapes and flowers by them executed; of songs they could sing and pieces they could play, of purses they could net, of French books they could translate; till my spirit was moved to emulation as I listened. Besides, school would be a complete change: it implied a long journey, an entire separation from Gateshead, an entrance into a new life (JE, 22).

Still, schools did not give unlimited knowledge to girls, because remembering Jane's first friend at Lowood, Helen, she was a big booklover. Also Miss Temple and Jane's recollections are worth to mention. Helen and Miss Temple would talk about so many interesting topics and things found in books that Jane was unaware of, but this always happened in Miss Temple's office and not in a library. Learning more was hidden, this process happened behind the closed doors, in a safe room hidden from the eyes of society just like black slaves had to hide to learn how to read and write. On the other hand, learning more, for men, did not mean hiding but openly learning more and it was praised and welcomed. Remembering Dr. John when he was a young boy, he always studied in his room, and food and drinks would always be brought to him by the women in the house. Hence, we can see how the education of boys differs from that of girls'. It seems, the society didn't want women to educate themselves deeply lest they start to question their positions among men.

Throughout the novel, Jane's restless nature pushes her to study and learn more. For example, Roberta A. Forbes says that when Jane arrives at Thornfield, she satisfies her intellectual incitements through dialogues with Mr. Rochester (Forbes). She goes on to explain Jane's nature and wishes need for more knowledge, "Although their restlessness stems from different passions, both Jane and St. John need action other than the simple tasks of worldly middle-class existence, such as Jane teasing Rochester and St. John wishing to do more than care for his English parishioners" (Forbes). Hence, we can see that Jane was a woman in need for equal rights with men, just as all women deserve. Furthermore, it is important to mention how impressed Jane is with St. John and his sisters because they possess knowledge about many things. All learn new subjects and new languages. Jane is very much attracted to this. She wants to learn more herself, but seeing them enjoying it so much she starts learning even more with them. Also, it is important to say that this is one of the rare cases in

the novel where female and male characters learn equally. It is the rare case of educated women and men. Hence, this is another proof of Brontë's opinion that women should stand as equal to men in regards to education.

We have to remember Jane and Rochester's relationship. That relationship is not as normal as the relationships in the Victorian age. The reason is that, both have intellectual discussions, and in the beginning it seems Rochester is the teacher and guardian because he seems intellectually superior. His attitude reflects that he is knowledgeable about many things in life. Also, years of experience made him look as a superior. However, as the novel continues, the situation reverses and Jane becomes the teacher and master in the end. She ends up being the superior one, the one that will guide the two of them through life. Usually, man is the one who guides, yet in this case a woman ends up doing that. This could mean two things, either Brontë wanted to say that women can rise up only if there were no men in their way, or that women truly are equal to men and can stand as such even with men around them.

The rest of the novel is about Jane's self-respect, her moral values and search for kindred spirits. A kindred spirit for her is not only a soul mate but family and friends too. She spent her childhood years in such a terrible loneliness, robbed of love and any caring word. She yearns for love and warmth which only home can give. She yearns for family, for union, for somebody to care. In those difficult periods Helen always tried to calm Jane calling her impulsive, too vehement: "God waits only the separation of spirit from flesh to crown us with a full reward. Why, then, should we ever sink overwhelmed with distress, when life is so soon over, and death is so certain an entrance to happiness -- to glory?" (*JE*,70). This quote also mentioning the Bible, challenges people not to complain of any pain and cruelty.

Hence, Jane embarks on an adventure of her life, from a student at Lowood to governess at Rochester's home, to teacher, to finding family and in the end to a wife and mother. As mentioned, she starts as a student at low-ranked school Lowood, and then she moves to a teacher in the same school. She teaches in this school and gains valuable experience as well as a friend, Miss Temple. From here, she goes on to be a governess in Thornfield, to teach Mr. Rochester's ward Adele. After a great tragedy happening on her wedding day she found out that

Mr. Rochester is about to commit a crime and get married again, when he already has a wife. Devastated by this, Jane runs into the unknown. She finds home and becomes a teacher. In the end of the novel, she returns to Mr. Rochester, her beloved Edward as an independent woman and marries him and gives him children.

The events in the novel help Jane grow and be a very strong and smart woman. She wants freedom. However, what is ambiguous about her character is what kind of freedom she wants. At one point she believes that being Mr. Rochester's wife would give her desired freedom, however she soon realizes that marriage with him would only give her financial independence and not even real independence since she would still be tightly tied to Mr. Rochester's goodwill to supply her with money and give her good and carefree life. She could not sacrifice her dignity and integrity after all. Her moral values are too high, her pride too big, so she left her love in tears and made a life for herself on her own.

The theme of education runs through the novel constantly. Hence, this is Brontë's way to portray women's right and cry for proper education as she always encourages women for intellectual education:

It is vain to say human beings ought to be satisfied with tranquility: they must have action; and they will make it if they cannot find it...Women are supposed to be very calm generally: but women feel just as men feel; they need exercise for their faculties and a field for their efforts as much as their brothers do; they suffer too much from a rigid restraint, too absolute a stagnation, precisely as men would suffer; and it is narrow-minded in their more privileged fellow-creatures to say they ought to confine themselves to making puddings and knitting stockings, to playing on the piano and embroidering bags. It is thoughtless to condemn them, or laugh at them, if they seek to do more or learn more than custom has pronounced necessary for their sex (JE, 114).

She portrays female characters as very intelligent and hard-working. These women serve as a role model to the women in reality. In the end, this novel is full of pictures of studying and teaching and all of these pictures include women. The next part is about the desire portrayed in the novel.

### **3.3 Desire in *Jane Eyre***

In the Victorian age women were entities without any sexual desires and feelings. It was considered that that is not in their nature. It was thought that the

reason for marrying for women was to be a mother, but not to fulfill sexual desires. That is why men often turned their faces to prostitutes to satisfy their needs. Women were believed not to possess any sexual feelings. The general opinion was that they were cleaned from it at their birth, when in fact only women's minds were made by society to believe that they are free of sexual desires. This notion presents another conflict as Eve is believed to be the seducer of Adam and therefore the original sinner. While it is believed that womanhood still carries this burden on their shoulders, they are also believed to be cleaned from their instincts once they are baptized: "This is now bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called 'woman' for she was taken out of man" (Genesis 2:4-3:24, (NIV)).

The way Acton expresses his view on female sexuality "I should say that the majority of women (happily for them) are not very much troubled with sexual feeling of any kind. What men are habitually, women are only exceptionally? It is too true, I admit, as the divorce courts show, that there are some few women who have sexual desires so strong that they surpass those of men, and shock public feeling by their exhibition." (Acton, p101) can be a proper sample of women sexuality of that period.

As for desire in *Jane Eyre*, some argue that Mr. Rochester's insane wife Bertha is the sexuality opposing Jane's calmness and innocence, but that is not true. Bertha is just a woman who suffers from a mental disorder. Jane is not very calm, she is always excited to be around Mr. Rochester, her feelings for him are of course the ones coming from the heart, but these feelings lead to sexual feeling as well, otherwise sex would not exist at all, and getting pregnant would be left for doctors to take care of. Wendy Vaughn says that Jane is a romantic heroine who tries to harmonize her desire and love with the social and religious principles of the Victorian period (Vaughn, 97). Vaughn quotes Brontë,

I was experiencing an ordeal: a hand of fiery iron grasped my vitals. Terrible moment: full of struggle, blackness burning! Not a human being that ever lived could wish to be loved better than I was loved, and him who thus loved me I absolutely worshiped: and I must renounce love and idol. One dread word comprised my intolerable duty — 'Depart!' (Vaughn, 97).

In addition to this, she states that it might seem in this novel how Brontë sometimes portrays "Jane's passion as wicked". Hence, these portrayals

misinterpreted and instead concerning the present religious principles show the image of a grown and moral woman (Vaughon, 97).

There is not much sexuality present in the novel. Female characters are in this novel the true Victorian women. They have little sexual desires, and they don't talk much about it. They are very much innocent and frigid. Housekeepers and governesses are alone, and they think they do not need sexual activities. However, Jane herself thought her life boring and she was unhappy, but she could never find the reason for this. It was the lack of sexual life. Freud did not argue for nothing that sexual desires are natural and must be fulfilled (Sigmund, 1905). Charlotte Brontë says that life of a governess is boring, based on her experience of a governess in Belgium.

Jane is passionate yet patient, stubborn yet willing to listen and give another chance. She seems cold and quiet, yet she is full of love. Her heart is overflowing with love. She is also talkative and loves to tease. Furthermore, she is a good natured person, and able to forgive and forget. For example, her aunt, Mrs. Reed treats her very bad when she was a little girl, she hides the letter from Jane's uncle who wants to give a very good life to Jane, she even confesses to Jane that she cannot bear to see Jane happy and living a good life, yet Jane runs to her across the country when she is dying, to give her forgiveness and says her last farewell (bartleby.com).

At last, Jane is portrayed both as "the angel in the house" and "the new woman". She possesses the characteristics of the real Victorian woman, meek, nice, quiet and obedient. She is ignorant of the world and blindly believes in the good. She runs away with no money or place to stay, and wanders around like a wandering Jew, asking for drink and meal, as if anyone is obliged to give a total stranger a shelter. She believes that it is her right to settle in a stranger's house, and that it is the obligation of a stranger to provide her with warm bed and meal. On the other hand, she is strong, smart and independent. She is left alone as a young girl and since then everything she has she earns it by working very hard. As for men, sexuality is well hidden in this novel. Mr. Rochester and his parties reveal something different. Mr. Rochester is a man who is extravagant, open about his desires and needs, many and strong. His parties consist of women and men of similar character.

All in all, desire is not something that narrator talks about in this novel. However, we do see it in Jane Eyre when she is around Mr. Brockehurst. It is obvious that Jane yearns for love and passion, just like majority of human beings do. As for the other girls and women in the novel, they are innocent as much as they are frigid. All of them are rather child-like about their desires. They have them, yet just like children they do not know what that is, because nobody ever told them anything, and maybe they ascribe it to butterflies in their stomachs just like Jane does. Unaware of the possibility of having any desires they live with the knowledge of lacking something yet they do not know what that is.

The influence of the religious oppression in this period made loveless marriage acceptable. Marriage should be made only to continue a lineage. Love is a feeling which is forbidden and away from religion. Novel describes it with these words:

It is madness in all women to let a secret love kindle within them, which, if unreturned and unknown, must devour the life that feeds it; and, if discovered and responded to, must lead, ignis-fatuus-like, into miry wilds whence there is no extrication. "Jane expresses the torment of a marriage without love as: "...in my opinion, if I am not formed for love, it follows that I am not formed for marriage. Would it not be strange, Die, to be chained for life to a man who regarded one but as a useful tool? (JE, 182).

It is evident from this passage that Jane identifies the relationship she has with Mr. Rochester as a form of prostitution at which point she is utterly obedient.

## 4 VILLETTE

### 4.1 Female Subjectivity in *Villette*

The novel *Villette* treats this topic a little bit differently. In other words, though the narrator's views in the novel are a bit fuzzy like the glasses one just cannot clean enough and the world around you keeps being blurred with only patches of clear view, one still see in this novel a woman who is far from Victorian ideals.

There is a plethora of women in *Villette*, from Ginerva to Madame Beck to Lucy Snowe. In this novel we meet true Victorian women who live according to the rules and norms of the period. It is important to mention this when we speak about the women question because it suggests that women's consciousness has awakened and women empowerment started slowly and surely. An example of this can be found in the novel *Villette* in the characters of Lucy Snowe and Madame Beck. The two of them represent two strong women surviving alone in the male dominated cruel world (bartleby.com). Anne Longmuir reverts Brontë says *Villette* does not discuss the matters of public interest, but the position of single women is very much a matter of public interest. Brontë is aware that 19<sup>th</sup> century England has no role or place for unmarried women (Longmuir, ncgsjournal.com).

Concerning Madame Beck, she is a dominator and tyrant. Nothing escapes her eagle's eyes, and she can rule the world with the same strength and cunningness with which she rules the school. Madame Beck is not meek, obedient and sweet. She is not Byron's little lamb which is equivalent to the 'angel in the house'. She is strict, hard on forgiveness and has very low amount of emotions in her little, poor, female heart. Now judging by all accounts, what are we to think about Madame Beck. She is no one's sweetheart and she takes no orders. She does not live by the rights given to women in the age she lived in. However, where is Madame Beck in the demand for the greater political, legal, economic,

social and educational rights? She never voices her opinion about this and we might judge her for that.

On the other hand, does she have any need for them? Does she lack anything in her life? Is there anything that she wants and does not have, putting aside the fact that she is living alone, with no man to kiss on the other side of the bed because, after all, this is not part of the women question? Looking at things in this way, Madame Beck is living her life as if all demands standing behind the woman question were already approved and worldly recognized. Maybe for her all demands are approved, because she lived freely, she had economic, sometimes the most important, and social freedom. As for the educational rights, as well as political and legal freedom she does not even talk about them or pays attention to them. This can mean two things; either she already has them or she is ignorant of the importance of these rights and the freedom they bring; hence, she does not have them; so she cares about them even less.

The women question seen through the character of Madame Beck offers no clear answer, yet it leans on the side of the unfortunate truth that haunts some women even today; and that is that ignorance can block and keep away much more things than the Hadrian Wall can:

I say again, Madame was a very great and a very capable woman. That school offered for her powers too limited a sphere: she ought to have swayed a nation; she should have been the leader of a turbulent legislative assembly. Nobody could have browbeaten her, none irritated her nerves, exhausted her patience, or overreached her astuteness. In her own single person, she could have comprised the duties of a first minister and a superintendent of police. Wise, firm, faithless, secret, crafty, passionless; watchful and inscrutable; acute and insensate—withal perfectly decorous—what more could be desired? (V, p62)

The improvement of the position of women in the society was a hard and slow work; opposers were men and blind to women.

Lucy Snowe is the most important character through which we can analyze the woman question in *Villette*. She is one of the first heroines in the novels of the Victorian literature, who does not fit into the frames and rules of Victorians serotyped for women. She follows a different path in her life, and she ends up being a modern woman (Marcus, 102).

Quiet and unnoticeable, Lucy paves the way for future heroines who chooses not to be “an angel in the house”. Her views on political and educational rights of women are the ones in favor of women. Her early steps in this world, as a very young girl are those of a revolutionary woman:

Art, literature, and philosophy are attempts to found the world anew on a human freedom: that of the creator; to foster such an aim, one must first unequivocally posit oneself as a freedom. The restrictions that education and custom impose on a woman limit her grasp of the universe (Beauvoir, p.669).

As Beauvoir states in *Second Sex*, women can be given freedom, but they can't always have it. When they fight for a place in the world and it gets too harsh, tearing themselves away from this cannot be questioned.

Lucy is quiet, unnoticeable and that she spends most of her time lonely. There is no need to hide away from our truthful opinion that we see her lonely and miserable. On the other hand, if she were a man, how would we perceive her? Graham spends a lot of time alone, as men usually do; the strongest and the smartest ones are quiet and prefer loneliness to crowded parties, and they are respected and thought very highly of. Yet, somehow, when a woman has these characteristics she is neither strong, nor smart and let alone respected or even most of the time considered as a whore like in *The French Lieutenant's Woman* (Fowles, 1969). Why is this the case? On false foundations and reasons he enjoys this role and right, and years and centuries of social customs has made his throne very high.

As for Lucy Snowe, she, going alone through life, is an early blueprint of a modern woman, and at the same time an early embodiment of demands standing behind the woman question. She does not talk about political or legal rights or does she try to bring education of the girls to another level; however, she has economic independence and education is very important to her. She is opening a school of her own; she wants to give a good education to girls, which means that she knows the importance of education surpasses the importance of marriage.

The character of Lucy Snowe can be seen as being a social problem in Victorian England. Anne Longmuir says that the reason why Lucy moves to Villette, is because she is unwelcomed in England, because she was a single, middle-class

woman in England, and England already had much more women than men and this was a problem harming the health of the country (Longmuir, nccgsjournal.com). Lucy Snowe has to fight alone for everything she gains in life, because as a burden to a nation, she and women like her are offered no help. They have to do everything on their own, just as men, even with less opportunities, and still they are seen as inferior.

Charlotte Brontë takes an advantage of the knowledge of the Holy Bible in different parts of the novel to stress Lucy's assertive feelings and delivers. For example, while expressing the feelings about her struggle with the problem of 'feeling and reason' she refers to the Old Testament: "To speak truth, I compromised matters; I served two masters: I bowed down in the houses of Rimmon, and lifted the heart at another shrine. I wrote to these letters two answers — one for my own relief, the other for Graham's perusal" (V, 256). Here mentioning the house of Rimmon she refers to the Holy Bible (2 Kings 5:18), which means that she serves two masters, her heart and head.

It is hard to find in the novel independent women except Lucy and Madame Beck. All men are independent and successful, which gives them power and strength, while women are beautiful but weak and dependent upon men. Ginerva and Polly are beautiful, but weak and completely dependent on men. Both are considered to be "angels", and attracted the attention of men. Also, both have the same man in their lives. Once again, this points out the problem that the Victorian England was facing and that is redundant women. This is even more obvious in the case of Lucy Snowe, Madame Beck and other single women in the novel. The bigger number of women in comparison to men left many women no choice, but to live a life of solitude.

*Villette* starts the discussion about the position of women in society by portraying women differently than any other Victorian novel. Female characters like Lucy and Madame Beck are strong women who have their own ways. Also, the heroine of this novel renounces marriage happily and chooses career. She has no husband or children, and she is no one's angel in the house, because of this *Villette* is a novel fulfilling the demands standing behind the woman question.

## 4.2 Education in *Villette*

Life changing statement Woolf, “Lock up your libraries if you like; but there is no gate, no lock, no bolt that you can set upon the freedom of my mind” written by Virginia Woolf in 1929, stands for all times. It stands for the power of education and empowerment of women. Education is one of the ever-present themes in the novel *Villette*. The very setting of the most of the action in the novel is in the school. Even though education is not a central theme, moreover the action of this complex story does not only revolve about education; therefore, education is always the background of this novel. Education has no sex; it means it should be applied to all the genders equally. However, as one realizes in both *Jane Eyre* and *Villette* the society has certain types of education, methodologically modified both for men and women differently.

From the very first pages, Polly and Graham have been reading amazing books, and Graham’s youth is marked with the picture of him sitting in his room and reading, studying. Hence, the narrator has been implying the importance of education since the very beginning of the novel. However, the education of the girls and women is very weak in the first part of the novel and the attention given to this is very poor as well. Up to the point when Lucy moves into commodity there is pretty much no options for education of women mentioned in the novel. Only for the rich girls there is a bright future seen in the marriage, poor girls like Polly was then, and Lucy are not seen going to school. They cannot marry well and their lives are doomed (bartleby.com).

The second part of the novel is a big turn to the road of education, towards women. Lucy climbs the career ladder in Madame Beck’s school. She starts off as almost a nanny to Madame Beck’s children, moves to a full-time teacher in the upper-grades, and ends up with having her own school. However, ignorance is highly spread about education of women. Most of the girls are not even interested in getting the proper education but in getting the proper dress and proper husband. These girls have been told since they have been four or five years old that their job is only to be pretty, nice, meek, obedient and deeply religious and that men are above, and women below, that men have brains and

women beauty, that men go out and women stay in, that universities are for men and not for women:

A woman of intellect, it appeared was a sort of losus nature, a luckless accident, a thing for which there was neither place nor use in creation, wanted neither as wife nor worker. Beauty anticipated her in the first office. He believed in his soul that lovely, placid and passive feminine mediocrity was the only pillow on which manly thought and sense could find rest for its aching temples, and as to work, male mind alone could work to any good practical result. (V, 142).

Mr. Paul perfectly puts into words what is lurking in the despotic and patriarchal air of the Victorian age. Smart and educated women are not wanted. They are the outcasts in the society, as funny as this may sound. Moreover, this novel clearly shows us that women were faced with a huge wall in regards to education, because even though they have schools and teachers, and governesses, they still have a big red sign 'STOP' in the middle of the education ladder. This sign was only pulled out on women, never on men. Even though, this novel puts the school at the center of the action, at the same time it is all that it does. It is as if a cook puts a delicious cake on the table and everyone can see it and talk about it, yet no one is allowed to taste it. The girls have the education, but what kind of education, what are they taught and up to what point. The subjects that are of great importance are drawing, singing and playing a piano, and not that these are not amazing branches of art, but certain brains desire more, or maybe would desire more only if somebody showed them. However, they do not even know that there is something more after the sign 'STOP', and even if they knew that there was something more after it, they have been told that it would make them unattractive and that it is not necessary to know it. For example, Polly is not an ignorant girl like Ginerva, yet she doesn't desire education, she can get whatever she wants, she has money, she is shown the nicest books by Graham when she is a child and she likes them, she can attend the best schools, still she doesn't want education. She plays silly games that she cannot be without her father in a school, as most girls are told that they cannot survive alone, that they need a man to guide them, a father or a husband; furthermore, under those rules Polly acts too, and says no to education and not even knowing to what she says no. As for Ginerva, with no regrets, one can say that patriarchy at its best was what made Ginerva the perfect happy

slave of norms and rules, brainwashed and dressed in angel clothes. Unfortunately, Lucy and Madame Beck are blinded too with Victorian 1884.

Dr. John is a well-read and educated male character. He is smart and strong. Even though he is left without anything, and he is forced to seek a better life for himself and his mother, he finds it alone and without anyone's help. His education helps him become a respected man. When we think about other male characters in the novel and their education, for example Mr. Paul is also an educated and smart man, well-read and strong. As for the wealthy men in the novel, their education is not even discussed, because they are wealthy and thus smart and strong.

I admit that many women who have developed in themselves a romantic unnatural delicacy of feeling have wasted their lives in imagining how happy they would have been with a husband who could love them with intense and increasing affection all day every day. But they might as well lament married as lament single; they wouldn't be a lot more unhappy with a bad husband than they are longing for a good one. I agree that a proper education—or, more accurately, a well-stocked mind—would enable a woman to live unmarried with dignity; but what if she avoids cultivating her taste in case her future husband if she comes to have one should occasionally shock it? That is quitting a substance for a shadow! (Wollstonecraft, 38).

Wollstonecraft talks here about the reason why women who lack education have their mind shaped into a way which hides from them everything that they could have become or they did not end up being either 'an angel in the house' or a redundant woman. However, if they had had proper education they would have been able to have a meaningful life. Hence, Brontë talks about something similar in her novel *Villette* trying to show on the example of Lucy Snowe, that an educated woman has a purpose and meaning in life other than merely being a servant and subordinated woman. Lucy is a woman whose 'fairy tale' did not end up by marrying a prince, and why a 'fairy tale' should ended up like that. Her fairy tale ended by starting a new business. It ends up with her doing something that she loves and that she wants to do for a long time, have her own school.

In the end, education in this novel is the top of the iceberg that is making its way up the water and towards the sun. It is the beginning of the revolution in education. The heroine of this novel doesn't end up happily ever after with a man but happily ever after with a school. This is a huge change regarding the

closely position of women in society and their education. *Villette* portrays a great step forward.

### 4.3 Desire in *Villette*

The Victorian age plays very important role in the history of human sexuality because exactly that period comes up with the terms used today to express our thoughts on sexuality. Sexologists Richard von Kraft-Ebing and Havelock Ellis were among the first scientists to analyze and categorize sexual preferences and created the terms like homosexuality, heterosexuality and nymphomaniac (Furneaux, bl.uk)

Prudish Victorians are no more so narrow-minded. Indeed, sexuality and desire are not very much hidden in *Villette* as it is expected from any Victorian novel. For example, we don't see even a kiss in *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen; it would have been scandalous if there were any sign of sexuality or desire presented in the novel, especially because it was written by a woman. Also, in *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* by Thomas Hardy the sexual act between Tess and Alec is not even described, it is hard to understand what happens that night in the woods (Hardy, 103). However, this hiding of one's desires and sexuality is not the case in *Villette*. Coquettish Ginerva never hides her beauty and sexual attractiveness. She flirts with men much older than her, consciously and on purpose. Moreover, Ginerva uses her face and body to enchant men to buy her presents, and no matter how sweet she is and how much we may like her and be fond of her funny jokes and devotion to Lucy, her behavior would today, in our age, bear a different mark than it did in Victorian age. When it comes to Lucy Snowe, she might not be sexually attractive but she has desires, only they are nicely folded in the soft and half-revealing, half-concealing words of the narrator. Looked closely at and carefully read, her desires reveal very much. Sharon Marcus points very nicely that Lucy has some repressed desires, including lesbian desires:

This is, after all, a novel in which the first-person narrator, Lucy Snowe, has passionate responses to several other female characters, takes immense pleasure partially dressing as a man, and flirting with a woman during the course of a school play, and is haunted by a nun - a figure for lesbian sex since Diderot - who end up in Lucy's bed and

whom Lucy discovers is a hoax after she hurls herself on her in a stunningly physical attack (Marcus, 102).

This makes very much sense because it is true that this desire of Lucy's is repressed because she has been rejecting female friends, she forms no friendship with women. There are so many female teachers in the school, yet she is not friends or spends time with any of them. Also, she keeps ignoring Ginerva who is from the very beginning trying to be her friend, however she describes Ginerva as exceptionally beautiful and attractive young woman. She even gives her bread in exchange for coffee in the morning; there is a special bond between the two of them. Even years after they part Ginerva still writes to Lucy, she sends her letters, and Lucy is answering them. "The famous scene in which Lucy plays a man's part in a school play, dressed half as a man and half as a woman, illustrates how Lucy's desire for Ginerva is inseparable from erotic contests" (Marcus, 102). The contests Marcus talks about are contests for Dr. John's love, even though the motives of these women were very much different, and in the end it is their female bond that survives year and years of hard life. However, Lucy talks about Ginerva with some scorn, a pitch of anger, she does not want to admit they are friends, that they are close. She keeps pushing away Ginerva, even though she is very lonely and that is killing her sanity, she refuses to spend time with Ginerva, because her repressed desires are making her to do so.

Lucy's friendship with Madame Beck draws attention to itself because of the mere fact that it is the only one Lucy has with a woman. It is important to note that this is not a real friendship. It is a mixture of obeying one's boss and respecting her. After a while, Lucy starts to admire Madame Beck, they talk every day more and more, over time they develop deeper connection. Yes, she cannot be friends even with her. Lucy's repressed desires for women are block her from having a woman for a friend.

While Ginerva is too silly and Madame Beck too domineering and wicked, Paulina, little Polly has more moral attitudes. However, Lucy cannot be a friend even with Polly. Polly is beautiful, attractive, smart, yet there is something about her that makes Lucy push her away also. Whether it is rivalry for Dr. John's love which in the end Polly gets or maybe those are mixed desires for women and men, because Lucy has a desire for women, but Dr. John is also

something that she desires. She often describes him as handsome, good-looking young man; she gives the same attention to Dr. John's physical appearance that she gives to describing women in the novel.

What is interesting is that Lucy carefully looks at and scrutinizes everyone in the novel, which is another expression of one's desires. Lucy judges, but in return she is being judged too. Remembering her observation of the picture of Cleopatra, she pays attention to body, weight, and shape of the body; through the comments she and Mr. Paul make about this picture it is clear that not only Victorian society, but also women in the Victorian society perceive sexually attractive women as a negative thing as well (Matus, 133). This is a specific gaze that Lucy possesses, and through this gaze her repressed sexual desires start to get out.

Lucy looks like a woman who has no emotions and is rather reserved. She does not talk a lot; she does not attend parties and falls fatally in love. She asks for no attention and she is more often than not invisible to the world. Yet, this does not detract Lucy from the right track. Lonely and unloved, she fights hard; she has a heart of a fighter. Lucy is a woman from the real world, the one we could see on the street, because not only is her life plain and usual as most lives are in this world, but she struggles with the world and hardships of life; moreover, she is struggling with her internal conflicts as well just like any other human being. This allows readers an inside view of her psychology, the psychology of a woman who is happy to dream about a career rather than about a husband and children. Lucy Snowe is a woman who is very much ahead of her time; she is. Moreover, there is a huge emphasis that Lucy is doing and is destined to do everything on her own, though she declares this in the novel with a touch of a sad tone:

If life be a war, it seemed my destiny to conduct it single-handed. I pondered now how to break up my winter-quarters - to leave an encampment where food and forage failed. Perhaps, to effect this change, another pitched battle must be fought with fortune; if so, I had a mind to the encounter: too poor to lose, God might destine me to gain. But what road was open? -what plan available? (V, 264).

As it confirms her tone is slightly sad and one might think that she becomes a typical desperate spinster whose life has lost its purpose and that she is blinded by loneliness. Lucy is a foreigner, in a foreign country. She was an alien in

England, how much of an alien then is she now in an alien country, walking somebody else's streets and living among the aliens. Can one feel what she feels under her skin, with no parents and no family, no loved ones and no one to cry to or hug before falling asleep, yet remaining strong and keep on fighting? What is then a slightly sad and melancholic tone in her speech from time to time to this?

If men were willing to throw of the chains that they have put on female sexuality and desire Victorian age would not be as we know it today:

If only men would generously break our chains and be content with rational fellowship instead of slavish obedience, they would find us more observant daughters, more affectionate sisters, more faithful wives, more reasonable mothers—in a word, better citizens. We would then love them with true affection, because we would learn to respect ourselves; and a worthy man's peace of mind wouldn't be interrupted by the idle vanity of his wife, and his babes wouldn't be sent to nestle in a strange bosom because they never found a home in their mother's. (Wollstonecraft, 1792)

Hence, it is interesting to know what would have happened between Lucy and Mr. Paul, had they only lived without these chains? Would they end up running that school together if they were able to express their desires and sexual inclinations? If they were able to do this, maybe they would not have nestled different parts of the world, but the same, small place called Villette.

Morality is another thing that is worth mentioning about the novel, because an overflowing note of morality is observed in the novel.

Morality is very insidiously undermined in the female world by the attention being given to the show instead of to the substance. This turns a simple thing into something strangely complicated; indeed, sometimes virtue and its shadow are set at variance. We might never have heard of Lucretia if she had she died to preserve her chastity instead of her reputation. [A heroine of early Rome who, according to legend, killed herself after being raped.] If we really deserve to think well of ourselves we shall commonly be respected in the world; but if we pant after higher improvement and higher attainments, it is not sufficient to view ourselves as we suppose that others view us, though this has been ingeniously argued—by Adam Smith—to be the foundation of our moral sentiments. Why not? Because each bystander may have his own prejudices in addition to those of his age or country. We should rather try to view ourselves as we suppose that God views us” (Wollstonecraft, 1792).

Thus, it is very clear why sexuality is hidden in many novels that were written in this age, and so is the case with *Villette*. Brontë hides her characters' desires

and sexuality because it would be shameful to show them. However, Lucy and Madame Beck are not completely able to hide it, yet all other characters are perfect angels, who fit into Victorian box of rules.

All in all, though desire is a prevalent theme throughout the novel, it is nicely hidden in words because it is repressed. There are unusually a lot of passages devoted to description of someone's physical appearance. Those are mostly women, describing their face, hair, eyes, and lips. All the things a lover would notice and like about his loved one. Then the narrator goes to the body, the way a girl or a woman walks, is she attractive or not. Again, the same, those eyes full of love or desire would look in the other person. Moreover, Dr. John gets a fair piece of the novel devoted to his looks; his tall and handsome figure, his dark and manly features:

Graham was at that time a handsome, faithless-looking youth of sixteen. I say faithless-looking, not because he was really of a very perfidious disposition, but because the epithet strikes me as proper to describe the fair, Celtic (not Saxon) character of his good looks; his waved light auburn hair, his supple symmetry, his smile frequent, and destitute neither of fascination nor of subtlety (in no bad sense). A spoiled, whimsical boy he was in those days! (V, 10).

All readers know that when Dr. John walks into a room everyone notices his handsome figure when coming from afar. All the readers are already enchanted by this fabulous, good-looking, smart and caring young as he grows older. The same as description of landscape in literature often mirrors the mood of the narrator or the atmosphere in the novel, Lucy's description of physical appearance of the characters in the novel mirrors her repressed sexual desires.

Before Charlotte Brontë completed the copy of the first volumes of the novel she had thought that it was impossible for realism not to conquer fancy in fiction and for this reason she made Lucy bury Dr. John's letters and by this symbolically declared the end of the relationship (Barker, p.704).

## 5 CONCLUSION

This thesis has discussed the position of women in society, their nature and role in the world which started long time ago, yet still it is not over. This debate started in the Victorian age, at the same time when the first wave of feminism started. The changes and progress in all areas of life in England brought about the change in the view about the woman's role and position in society. This theme not only found its place in political, legal, economic and educational sphere, but also in literature. Many authors wrote about the progress in the Victorian age, but also about the problems that lurked in the years of 19<sup>th</sup> century. Hence, some of the women writers focused their attention on the women. They wrote about female subjectivity, the woman question, education of women and female sexuality. This thesis' aim is to point out how this was done by one of those female writers, Charlotte Brontë. Her *Jane Eyre* and *Villette* portray the nightmares in Victorian age for women, but also female heroines who change the view of the women's role in this world. Hence, through analysis of these two works I have portrayed the lives of the Victorian women as presented in the two novels.

*Jane Eyre* is the novel in which we see the key points concerning women position: female subjectivity, woman question, education of women and female desire and sexuality. The narrator gives different content to the traditional form of the Victorian novel. This different content means that roles of characters stand out from the roles and actions in the other Victorian novels. Hence, through the character of Jane Eyre the woman question is being discussed by showing to the readers that women have more options in life than being a mother or wife. Jane serves as an example that women should not wait for men to give them economic independence, and that being stubborn can help you reach your goals. Jane is stubborn when she left her aunt and then Edward to search for a better life. Also, through the character of Jane, Brontë paints the picture of a woman which the feminists of that age called 'the new women'. This is a woman who is educated and independent, makes her own decisions and

if Rochester is to go crazy one day, this woman can leave without worrying whether she will survive to see the next year. Jane Eyre is a perfect example of woman who is emancipated, free and able to have a normal life without a man.

Jane serves as an example that education is mind-liberating, saves one from disaster and despair and that it can take you far in life. She goes from the never loved child to an educated, economically independent and loved woman. Education of women is widely spread in this novel. Since the very first pages, pictures of women reading, girls going to school are presented in the novel. Brontë talks about women who are “angels in the house”, but she also talks about women who stand for “the new woman”. She talks about women who value education and desire education for themselves. She writes about education as a profession for women, since being a governess was one of the options for women in life, besides being a wife or a mother and prostitute.

Women’s desires can be seen in Jane’s feelings towards Edward and in her descriptions of him. However, they are just crawling out and are not fully and easily, and always with a naked eye visible, yet they are there and mark a new and scandalous way of seeing woman’s nature and sexuality; leaving aside traditional and manly opinion that women are creatures without any sexual desire ever present in them. Also, Rochester’s first wife is portrayed like a crazy woman whose desires are out of control and she has to be locked away. She serves at first sight as a contrast to Jane, but after considering it more she is actually a contrast to the meek and obedient Victorian woman, to the angel in the house.

*Villette* is a novel in which the issues mentioned above, the woman question, education of women and female subjectivity, sexuality and desire, refuse to mirror the age in which they appear. *Villette* is not a completely traditional novel because the content of this novel does not mirror Victorian age. The main character, Lucy Snowe, and Madame Beck jump out of the box which the society of this age prepared for women. Their mind and lifestyle clearly show that they will not be anyone’s “angel in the house”. Hence, they chose to become economically independent on their own and this made them free women.

Women only have economic independence as it was mentioned before. They do not have any political or legal rights, yet it is important to remember that the fight for women's rights had just started and opinion about the role and nature of a woman had just started changing. Hence, this novel is pioneering in the change of the opinion, and it portrays women who chose a different life from “a prisoner in the house”. *Villette* portrays a woman who has to fight alone for everything in her life; it portrays a strong and independent woman, the new woman whose fairy tale ended with a job, a school of her own, and not a shiny prince.

Education of women in this novel partially casts a doubt what is going on with women and knowledge. The positive side is that the heroine ends up with having her own school which means that knowledge and education play a very important role and promote a different life for women with more opportunities. Yet, they do not move much further from this because there is not even a sign of women attending university, yet it has to be mentioned again that this was the very beginning of the fight for the women's rights, hence any progress and shift in opinion was extremely valuable.

Desire gets a new shape in this novel. It is no longer hidden or scorned, it is just slightly covered with veil of the words, but readers can still recognize that women no longer hide their desire. Lucy is openly describing Dr. John's physical appearance and makes half readers to fall in love with him. Also, desire towards women plays a significant role in this novel since it portrays different type of sexuality, scandalous and completely new. This view completely transforms the opinion about the nature and role of the women in life.

If we are to compare these two novels and ask which one is more progressive, more liberating, more portraying female subjectivity and emancipation, would we be able to make a decision? It would be very hard to do so. This is the case because these two novels, even though they seem very much similar, deal with two different lives and destinies of two different women. What can be said is that *Villette* offer to some degree more feminist ending. The last picture that readers have in their head is Lucy alone and strong conquering the world as the owner of a new school. On the other hand, Jane stays with Rochester and has

more of a fairy tale like ending in which they led a happy married life with their children.

The aim of this thesis has been to point out that these two novels show a different world for women. The world in which they do not have to rely on men and be their slaves through being forced to be something that they do not want to be. Moreover, nobody has planned their life for them already without ever asking them. A world in which being a mother and a wife is not obligatory, a world in which a cage is not waiting for them after a ring is put on their fingers and they do not shrink more and more until they disappear. It is a magnificent world in which women are free enough to choose their own path. That is to say, it is such a path which is both simple and hard to select. These two novels describe this, the lives of women in the Victorian period, and show how the heroines of these two novels rejected the norms and rules of this period and tried to pave the way for generations of new women.

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