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İSTANBUL YENİ YÜZYIL UNIVERSITY

INSTITUTE OF SOCIAL SCIENCES

ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE PROGRAMME

REPRESENTATION OF GENDER AND MARRIAGE IN THE NOVELS JANE EYRE AND WUTHERING HEIGHTS

MA THESIS

Aya Thamer Mahmood AL-AMEEN

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İSTANBUL, JUNE 2022

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Asst. Prof. Dr. Gökçen KARA

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THESIS APPROVAL PAGE

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ETHICAL STATEMENT

In this project, I prepared my manuscript in accordance with the thesis writing rules of the Institute of Social Sciences at Istanbul Yeni Yüzyıl University and I hereby declare that;

- I have obtained the data, information and documents provided within the thesis within the framework of academic and ethical rules,
- I have submitted all information, documents, evaluations and results in accordance with the requirements of scientific ethics and moral rules,
- I have cited all works that I have used in the project by appropriately referring to my sources,
- I have not made any changes to the data used,
- The work I present here is original, and if found otherwise, I declare that I accept all loss of rights that may occur.

19/08/2022

Aya AL-AMEEN

PREFACE

I would like to express my deep gratitude to my supervisor, Asst. Prof. Dr. Gökçen KARA for her guidance, enthusiastic encouragement, and valuable critiques of this thesis. I also would like to express my very great appreciation for her valuable and constructive recommendations during the planning and development of my thesis.

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ÖZET

UĞULTULU TEPELER VE JANE EYRE ROMANLARINDA TOPLUMSAL CİNSİYET VE EVLİLİK KURUMU TEMSİLİ

Toplumsal cinsiyet tarih boyunca ataerkil sistemin bir sonucu olarak hep var olmuştur. Toplumsal cinsiyet eşitsizliğinin tartışılmaz bir şekilde en çok hissedildiği dönemlerden biri Viktorya dönemidir. Sanayi devrimi ve şehirleşme hareketi ile birlikte giderek güçlenen sınıf çatışması toplumsal yapıyı derinden etkilemiştir. toplumsal cinsiyet dengelerini de etkilemiştir. Bu dönemde genç kızlar aileleri tarafından birer sosyal sınıf atlama aracı olarak görülüyordu. Evlilikler de sınıf atlama üzerine temellenmişti. Hiç şüphesiz böyle bir sistemde kadının hiçbir değeri yoktu. Evlilik kurumunda ise kadın sadece erkeğin konfor alanını yaratmak için vardı. Bu tez çalışması Viktorya döneminin en iyi örneklerinden olan Brönte kardeşlerin *Uğultulu Tepeler* ve *Jane Eyre* adlı romanlarını toplumsal cinsiyet üzerinden incelemeyi hedeflemektedir. Kadının ‘‘ev içindeki melek’’ olarak adlandırıldığı bu dönemde kadının ne kendi hayatı üzerinde ne de sahip olduğu ailesi üzerinde hiç söz hakkı yoktu. Çalışmaya konu olan iki romanda da kadın karakterler bu klişe anlayışa karşı çıkan kendi özgürlük mücadelelerini veren karakterlerdir. Bu tez çalışması, Emily ve Charlotte Brontë kardeşlerin söz konusu eserlerinde yarattığı marjinal kadın karakterleri ele alarak kadının ikincilleştirildiği Viktorya döneminde kadının durumunu sorgulamaktadır.

Aya AL-AMEEN, 2022

Anahtar Kelimeler: Feminizm, Ataerkillik, Toplumsal Cinsiyet, Uğultulu Tepeler, Jane Eyre.

ABSTRACT

REPRESENTATION OF GENDER AND MARRIAGE INSTITUTION IN THE NOVELS *JANE EYRE* AND *WUTHERING HEIGHTS*

Gender inequality has always existed a result of the patriarchal systems throughout the history. One of the periods in which gender inequality was undeniably felt most acutely is the Victorian era. The class conflict that intensified with the Industrial Revolution and the urbanization movement had a profound impact on the social structure. This also affected the gender rules in the society. During this period, young girls were seen by their families as a means of social advancement. Marriages were also based on social class mobility. Undoubtedly, women had no value in such a system. In the institution of marriage, the woman existed only to create the man's comfort zone. This thesis aims to analyze the Brontë sisters' novels, *Wuthering Heights* and *Jane Eyre*, which are among the best examples of the Victorian era, in terms of gender. In this period, when women were referred to as the 'angel in the house', women had no say over their own lives or families. In both novels that are the subject of this study, the female characters are the ones who fight for their own freedom. This thesis examines the position of women in the Victorian era, in which women were subordinated, by addressing the marginal female characters created by Charlotte and Emily Brontë.

Aya AL-AMEEN, 2022

Keywords: Feminism, Patriarchy, Gender, Wuthering Heights, Jane Eyre.

INTRODUCTION

The contribution of the Charlotte and Emily Brontë sisters to Victorian literature is undeniable. They are also known as being precursors of feminist movement at a time when the word 'women's rights' was not even uttered. Despite the fact that their novels are often criticized because they are essentially based on their personal experiences; their works do indeed question the state of universal femininity.

The Brontë sisters problematize Victorian society and society's view of women during this time by addressing women through Victorian society. In other words, they are the silent screams that inspired the feminist movement. Not only do the Brontë sisters pioneer feminism, they also address the issue of gender, which was perhaps never spoken before. Indeed, it is clear that the destructive gender norms in the Victorian society affect Heathcliff as much as Catherine. Many authors have claimed that gender has a negative effect on women. However, the Brontë sisters have shown that gender norms affect men as well. Interestingly, they tried to draw attention to the problem of women through their male identities. In fact, in the time in which they lived, it was not considered right for a woman to leave the house, let alone enter the world of literature. Anis refers to Brontë sisters' works and states:

> Nowhere do the sisters appear to be inferior in their craft than their male counterparts of the time. Rather, the male novelists hardly ever used their voice to protest against the repression faced by women or use their pens to ask for the rights of women. (Anis, 2009, p.

The Brontë sisters did not represent their female characters as submissive, docile, or gentle. Actually, they battled for equality, women's rights, and independence. They deal with a variety of issues related to women's independence, including the independent woman who leaves her spouse, and thus her primary caregiver, to live alone. For example in *Wuthering Heights* Isabella leaves Heathclif.

Considering the economic and health problems they had in a time when it was very difficult to be a woman, the works they produced in these difficult conditions were enough to show that they were literary geniuses. It is impossible not to be surprised how a poor governess, and her sister, caring for her father in an old house far from London's literary circles, wrote novels and

poems that almost surpassed all other British novels and poems of the 19th century. To better understand the works of these two literary geniuses, Charlotte Brontë and Emily Brontë, who published their works under male names, it is necessary to first look at the Victorian era.

The Victorian Age, which occupies an important place in the history of England, begins with the accession of Queen Victoria in 1837 and ends with the death of the Queen in 1901 at the beginning of the 20th century. During this period there were many economic, religious and social changes. These changes also bring some problems. Victorian literature is as important to English history as the Victorian age because it illuminates social problems. That is why Victorian novels always revolve around similar themes such as the plight of the poor and social mobility and thanks to the contributions of several pioneering feminist writers, the issue of gender has come to the fore.

The Victorian era was very challenging for people in terms of economic conditions. Under the influence of the industrial revolution, materialism did not delay to overthrow the moral values in all strata of society. People gave up all their human values just to survive. Living conditions were so difficult that life became a great struggle for the low socio-economic group. The impact of the Industrial Revolution on the economy changed not only how people worked, but also how they lived. In the Victorian era, the middle class was strengthened and grew faster than the rest of the population because of the increased wealth brought about by the Industrial Revolution.

Of course, it is not possible for the family structure to be affected by these negative conditions, as all these developments take place. The father, who was undoubtedly the head of the family, provided all the financial support for the family. Women were expected to run the household, especially middle-class wives. With industrial revolution middle-class women could pursue a variety of activities. Most importantly, they had time to focus on their duties as housewives and their children's needs.

Industrial revolution also accelerated the migration from the small towns to the city. As people flocked from village to city, a new life greeted them. This is a ruthless system in which both men and women have to work hard and earn money. It is an undeniable fact that the economic impact of the Industrial Revolution was great. This period was almost a struggle for survival for the people. There was an increasingly prosperous England, but this economic power was concentrated in the hands of only one particular group. So, the distribution of income was unequal. It is women and children who are most affected by every economic collapse. The poor living

conditions to which young children are exposed have resulted in a large number of child deaths. In *Understanding the Victorians* Steinbach states referring to the Victorian era, which coincided with the industrial revolution.

> Victorian Britain had a rapidly growing population. There were 24 million people in Britain and Ireland in 1831, twice as many as in 1761. The population was 30.5 million in 1871, 37.7 million in 1891, 41.5 million in 1901, and 45.3 million in 1911. This is an astonishing amount of growth, especially when we consider that the birth rate was declining, millions of people emigrated, and infant and child mortality were high. (Steinbach, 2017, p.3).

As Steinbach noted, this was a very difficult time, especially for children. It would not be appropriate to talk about humanism in this period when children were forced to work as laborers under harsh conditions. At this point, it is necessary to mention Social Darwinism. Social Darwinism is a theory that states that only the strongest people should live in the society, while the weak and unfit should perish. Considering that women and children are the weakest link in society, this cruel image should not be surprising. As for the situation of women, it was at least as bad as the situation of child laborers. In Victorian England, most working-class women had little choice but to work to support their families. They worked either in factories under harsh conditions or they worked as housekeepers for wealthy families, or in family businesses. Many women also worked from home, making shoes and clothing for manufacturers, doing laundry, or making snacks to sell on the streets or in markets. This was in addition to their unpaid domestic duties, which often included caring for children and small animals and growing fruits and vegetables to support the family. In short, the Victorian age was very difficult in every way for women and children, who were the weak link. Even, it would be true to say that in the Victorian period, "whatever their social rank … women were second-class citizens" (Gallagher, 1988, p.57). It would not be right to speak only of the working woman. To be a woman in the Victorian age was a great challenge. As Jenni Calder asserts, "the home and the female were inevitably intimately associated" (Calder, 1977, p.9). Women were considered exclusively suited for domestic duties such as cleaning, child rearing, and appeasing men at home, as they were disadvantaged in many areas, including business, writing, and education. Whether women were married or not, they served their fathers, brothers, husbands, or other male family members like domestic servants. Even after marriage, their duties included obeying the orders of their spouses and performing domestic duties. In the following parts of the study, the effects of Victorian society on women will be discussed.

Paris was the center of Western civilization in the eighteenth century. London, whose population increased almost threefold from two million to about six and a half million during the reign of Queen Victoria, became the new site of this center in the second half of the nineteenth century. England, the first industrial nation, went through some difficult times. Rapid and uncontrolled industrialization brought social and economic problems. England's prosperity also increased significantly. Thanks to an early start, it gained market share on a global scale. It had a dominant position in manufactured goods, including cotton, against which other nations could not compete. The income of the trade was widely invested as capital in international projects. Undoubtedly, it also benefited financially from its colonies, which in 1890 accounted for more than a quarter of the world's surface. As the world's leading imperial power at the turn of the century, England assumed its new role in the world. The significant changes that took place in England between the middle and the end of the nineteenth century, however, were much more far-reaching than the changes brought about by the Industrial Revolution (1833-34). Other changes include democratization through the expansion of suffrage, the questioning of religious faith due in part to advances in science and in part to the theory of evolution, and changes in the role of women.

The urbanization movement also changed the position of women in society. Women from the lower socio-economic group had to work in very difficult conditions. The woman was crushed in brutal conditions while she was at home taking care of the housework and the children. It is possible to examine women in the Victorian era in three groups. The woman who marries a rich man and becomes an 'angel in the house'. Women from this group are the most valued by society. In this time when the intellectual abilities of women are totally ignored, the best thing that can happen to a woman is, of course, to be 'an angel in the house'. Not surprisingly, in Victorian pre feminist writer Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, Mrs Bennet's only concern is to marry off her daughters to wealthy husbands. The following quote from the novel summarizes this situation. ''Mrs. Bennet's business is not only to marry off her daughters but to ensure that they marry men of prosperity and social standing.'' (Austen, 2010, p. 48)

Women did not have the same opportunities as men to rise politically, socially, or economically. Almost all social, political and economic privileges enjoyed by men were denied to them. Because of the way legal and social rights and attitudes were defined by gender, women experienced inequality. In such a male- dominated society, women's attempts to free themselves,

make their own choices, and find true love are labelled by society as ‘rebellion’ and ‘sedition’. This inferiority was sanctioned by legislation. Before the nineteenth century, women had no rights and could only vote in local elections. The woman lost all rights to the property she owned before marriage, and she could not reclaim any of it after a divorce, which was not possible until 1857. Men could divorce their wives if they committed adultery, but women were barred from doing so. No matter why the couple divorced, the father received custody of the children.

In the Victorian era, as in all areas of life, there was a great injustice between men and women in education. Girls were not able to acquire the same quality of education as boys. They received education either at home or in boarding schools, but not with the same seriousness as boys. They were primarily instructed to live in the sphere of men as future wives and mothers. Thus, there were a number of inconsistencies in the mid-nineteenth century, primarily related to gender and educational problems. Women benefited far less from formal education than men in the nineteenth century. Although some Victorian women had access to formal education, they did not engage in society as much as men. Instead, they learned to strengthen their female caring responsibilities. According to Vineta Colby, ‘‘for a woman to be an achiever, to seek success outside areas mapped out for women, was to announce herself a singular anomaly’’ (Colby, 1972, p. 27). For Victorian women, then, being a woman was a profession in itself. Rather than being educated and accustomed to choosing a profession, they were advised to find a spouse rather than a job. In the preface to her book *Jane Eyre*, Charlotte Brontë outlines and criticizes the attitude of the Victorian age toward the status of women as follows:

> Women need exercise for their faculties and a field for their efforts 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. (Brontë, 2016, p. 96)

The concept of marriage as a social institution received much attention in nineteenth-century literature. This century saw a significant change in the conception of marriage: The institution of marriage was seen as a guarantee of life for women during this period. However, marriage was an institution that confined women to the domestic sphere and cut them off from the outside world. The Brontë sisters’ novels, *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights*, problematize the concept of woman by emphasizing her invisible individual identity. In these works, the Brontë

sisters created female characters that virtually challenged the views of the time. No matter how hard they struggle, they have taken their share from the gender pressures imposed by society.

In the nineteenth century, the novel emerged as the dominant genre. The novels of the time depicted life as it actually was, with a focus on current social issues. Literature thus became an important business in which ‘‘in which the social values and institutions that undergirded Victorian life’’ were protected and promoted (Heller, 2011, p. 7).

Thus, when one thinks of women in nineteenth-century Europe, domestic circumstances come to mind first and foremost. A successful marriage was always the most important goal to achieve. To achieve this, they were simply given the education necessary to assume their responsibilities as wives. Moreover, it was believed that marriage would improve the life standards of women. According to Baruch, ‘‘it was absolutely natural for them to seek to make their marital destiny a means of education since almost without exception every other institution of higher learning was closed to them’’ (Baruch, 1988, p. 342). Because of the lack of formal education for women in the nineteenth century, they were raised to be dependent on men. Women were confined to indoors without identity and independence, because they were forbidden to participate actively in culture. Women fought against the patriarchal ideology that assigned them certain roles from the perspective of men, while struggling to survive in their restricted environment where they were expected to be passive under the authority and pressure of patriarchy. As Du Plessis states, woman was seen either ‘‘as an adjective, in service to man’’, or ‘‘as a noun, created for some end proper to herself’’ (DuPlesis, 1985, p. 14). When female authors first tried writing, they chose to tell their own story of having few options and being hemmed in by the culture that left them without an identity. According to Gilbert and Gubar, most nineteenth-century literary women concealed in their works was ‘‘was in some sense a story of the woman writer’s quest for her own story; it was the story, in other words, of the woman’s quest for self-definition.’’ (Gilbert & Gubar, 2000, p. 76)

Due to discussions about political representation, women’s rights and suffrage were presented in the literature. According to Emily Legouise, the romanticism that dominated the previous century continues in the Victorian era. She goes on to say that the Romantic mindset of this era has particular characteristics that become clearer and clearer as time goes on. She states that:

> The characteristic feature of this period in comparison with the following one is the prudence and reserve with which novel ideas on the subject of faith and morality were ordinarily expressed. There was general agreement in avoiding scandal, and few who transgressed were blacklisted by public opinion. (Legouis, 1934, p. 311)

Few women were willing and excited to share a path that was mostly used by people of the opposite sex. It was difficult to start the activity by simply writing and getting it published with their name. Using the pseudonyms Currer Bell and Ellis Bell to publish their first novels, neither Charlotte nor Emily Brontë had the pleasure of holding their first published books in their hands. They were unmistakably male names. However, they were not the only women who began and continued their literary careers under male names.

The leader of the women's movement, Mary Wollstonecraft, advocated for gender equality in her 1792 book *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*. By first showing how education and gender roles are interrelated, Wollstonecraft's work emphasizes the importance of education:

> Fighting for the rights of women, my main argument is built on this simple principle: If woman isn't fitted by education to become man's companion, she will stop the progress of knowledge, because truth must be common to all; if it isn't it won't be able to influence how people in general behave. And how can woman be expected to cooperate if she doesn't know why she ought to be virtuous? if freedom doesn't strengthen her reason until she understands her •duty and sees how it is connected with her real •good? (Wollstonecraft, 2004, p. 2)

The author argues that both sexes must be given equal educational opportunities. Women have as much right to education as men, as it enables them to play an active role in society, both mentally and physically. A woman who demonstrates her physical and intellectual strength will never be subordinate to a man. Therefore, access to education can end women's dependence and subjugation. But a major reason for women's struggles is their lack of education, which limits their ability to advance, specialize, and be financially independent. For this reason, Wollstonecraft asserts that women cannot be forced to live a domestic life. Wollstonecraft continues her observations on the inequality between men and women in society with the following words:

> After thinking about the sweep of history and viewing the present world with anxious care, I find my spirits depressed by the most melancholy emotions of sorrowful indignation. I have had to admit, sadly, that either nature has made a great difference between man and man, or that the world is not yet anywhere near to being fully civilized. I have looked into various books on education, and patiently observed the conduct of parents and the management of schools; but all this has given me is a deep conviction that •the neglected education of my fellow creatures is the main source of

> the misery I deplore, and that •women in particular are made weak and wretched by a number of co-operating causes, originating from one hasty conclusion. (Wollstonecraft, 2004, p.6)

Charlotte Perkins Gilman, a feminist writer, published In *Women and Economics* in 1898. In her work, she argues that biological factors are responsible for women's dependence on men.

> When man began to feed and defend woman, she ceased proportionately to feed and defend herself. When he stood between her and her physical environment, she ceased proportionately to feel the influence of that environment and respond to it. When he became her immediate and all-important environment, she began proportionately to respond to this new influence, and to be modified accordingly. (Gilman, 2022, p.62)

Gilman points out that women are still marginalized in social matters because of the male-centered mindset. Male authority encompasses external space and assigns women the role of domestic space. It limits women's scope and prevents them from existing on their own. Gilman uses economic freedom as the basis for her expression of gender issues. Similar to Wollstonecraft, she believes that if women had access to material freedom, not only would their social and economic status improve, but so would the well-being of all people. Thus, economic subordination contributes to women's dependence and subjugation. Without economic independence, women can only have gendered identities such as wife or mother.

Throughout history, women have always had a lower social status than men. Because of this fact, female authors created their own category of creative works in the nineteenth century. While some books of this era focused on the 'woman question' to portray women as inferior to men, others introduced readers to a new kind of woman who fought for an equal life in the developing English society. The Brontë sisters' works in particular, *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights,* are crucial in showing Victorian society how atypical female characters can be portrayed. *Wuthering Heights* shows not only a strong Catherine but also the contradictory feelings she has for her lover. It is conceivable that Emily Brontë wanted to use this novel to show her readers how love and hate can coexist, while at the same time demonstrating the limits of power.

The Brontë sisters grew up in this social environment, far from the hustle and bustle of the big cities, but they felt the conservative pressures of the times. Emily and Charlotte's older sisters, Mary and Elizabeth, died of tuberculosis, one at age eleven and the other at age twelve. Two of the other three sisters, Anne and Charlotte, graduated from boarding school and tried to become governesses. Charlotte went to Brussels to learn French. The love she felt for her teacher at Héger

boarding school was the source of *Jane Eyre*. Emily Brontë almost never left Haworth. From the sources we learn that she found no opportunity to experience life, especially love.

Victorian readers had trouble understanding the name of Wuthering Heights. Because 'wuthering' was an unused adjective in dictionaries not used in everyday English. Emily Brontë, in her statement on the second page of the novel, says, ''Because the Earnshaw family home, Wuthering Heights, was exposed to the turmoil in the stormy weather, it takes its name from this meaningful adjective.'' (Brontë E., 1994, p. 20) The house of the Earnshaw family on a hill is dominated by a strong wind, symbolizing the wild and destructive power of the passions. In this novel, where people live in nature, passions burn people, destroy their lives, just as the north winds and storms tear off the leaves of trees, burn them, stunt them and make them crooked. There is no serene, green, grassy, peaceful nature here as in other Victorian novels. There is a destructive, disturbing nature ruled by wild forces, and humans are a part of that nature. It is in such an environment that Heathcliff and Catherine's passion for each other is born. The stormy relationship between them almost identifies with the nature in which they find themselves.

Heathcliff and Catherine are very different from Victorian lovers. They subvert all the morals of the Victorian age. Emily Brontë tells of a passion for love in an age more concerned with behaving moderately, observing mores, and acting sensibly. Both Heathcliff and Catherine say things that no one else would say at this time, and do things that they would not do.

Earnshaw, the owner of the house called Wuthering Heights, returns from Liverpool with a six-year-old dark gypsy boy. Heathcliff wants to raise this unnamed child, with his son Hindley and daughter Catherine, as if it were his own. Catherine and Heathcliff immediately fell in love with each other. After their father died, Catherine's older brother, Hindley, who was a bad boy, tormented Heathcliff, treating him like an ordinary butler. As the children grow up, Heathcliff overhears Catherine say that it would be humiliating for her to marry someone like him. After this incident, which highlights Victorian class distinctions, Heathcliff flees Wuthering Heights. After disappearing for three years, he returns as a wealthy man. In the meantime, Catherine has married young Edgar Linton, the owner of the neighbouring estate called Thrushcross Grange. When Catherine and Heathcliff meet, their passion begins anew. Catherine dies shortly after giving birth to her daughter of the same name.

Heathcliff also marries his sister Isabella, only to harm Edgar Linton. Heathcliff proceeds to take revenge on the Earnshaw family and the Linton family. Again, only to do evil, he forcibly marries his own son to Catherine, the daughter of Edgar Linton and Catherine. He also finds a way to seize the property of the Earnshaw and Linton families, namely Wuthering Heights and Thrushcross Grange, and treats Earnshaw and his son Hareton very badly.

Charlotte Brontë is the eldest of the Brontë brothers and is among the important novelists of the Victorian Age, along with Emily Brontë. She used the pseudonym of Currer Bell while publishing her works. The reason for this is that Charlotte Brontë thought that the critics of the period would approach the works of a woman writer with prejudice. With the publication *of Jane Eyre*, Brontë's best-known novel, controversy arose as to who Currer Bell really was, the author of this widely read book in England at the time. But Charlotte Brontë insists on hiding her true identity despite her book's rise to fame.

In *Jane Eyre*, Jane experiences various forms of persecution at each stage of her life, namely in Gateshead and Lowood, where the young orphan is subjected to abuse, seclusion, malnutrition, and deprivation. But Jane does not bow to the pressure exerted on her and fights for her own ideals. In her article "A Patriarch of One's Own: Jane Eyre and Romantic Love" (1985), Jane Wyatt argues that readers of Charlotte Brontë's novel "found there something not provided by family and culture, an alternative female scenario" (Wyatt, 1985, p. 201). Brontë courageously portrays a woman who resists the power of St. John River's Marsh End, Mr. Brocklehurst in Lowood, and John Reed in Gateshead. Jane's unique personality is controversial in the nineteenth century. In a time when women are taught to submit to and serve the dominant gender in society, Jane strives to advance herself personally by taking every opportunity to further her intellectual development. In doing so, she encounters resistance from people who do not support the advancement of women based on their individuality.

This thesis consists of three parts. In the first part, gender was discussed conceptually, in the second part *Jane Eyre* was examined through gender and the institution of marriage, and in the third part, *Wuthering Heights* was examined through the institution of gender and marriage.

FIRST CHAPTER

1. THE CONCEPT OF GENDER

In the history of mankind there have always been rules and debates about gender. In recent years, the differences between gender and sex have been a frequent topic of discussion in the field of women's studies. Sex refers to the fact that individuals are male or female from birth and the genetic and physiological characteristics they exhibit accordingly. Gender, on the other hand, is the set of roles, behaviors, and judgments that society and culture expect individuals to have depending on their sex. While nature determines sex, culture determines gender. It is not sex but gender that sets the rules for women and men.

> The distinction between sex and gender was originally used to challenge the phrase "biology is destiny" while making the point that gender, no matter how biologically irreversible it may seem, is culturally constructed, that is, it is neither a causal effect nor a fixed thing. It is used in the argument (Butler, 2015, p. 50).

The concept of gender is not innate, quite unlike the characteristics of the individual that depend on his biological sex, but is learned later, from the birth of the individual, by imitating and suppressing the norms created by society. Unlike sex, gender difference is the result of social configuration and can be changed. Gender is associated with socially constructed concepts of masculinity and femininity.

The concept of gender was introduced into the literature in 1972 by Ann Oakley in her work *Sex, Gender and Society*. As Ann Oakley writes in her book mentioned above:

> Everybody knows that men and women are different. But behind this knowledge lies a certain uneasiness: how different are they? What is the extent of the difference? What significance does it have for the way male and female behave and are treated in society? While the first questions are factual ones, the last is a question of value. In practice, of course, fact and value are not always separated, and the confusion between them has been crucial in the debate about sex differences. This debate has been carried on much more keenly during some historical periods than others. It seems to be revived at times when the existing roles and statuses of male and female are changing... (Oakley, 2005, p.7).

This social classification in society causes individuals to be discriminated against. If one and the same action and behavior in a community is considered right, acceptable and harmless for

some individuals, while for other individuals it is considered wrong, forbidden and reprehensible, this means that these individuals are deeply discriminated against.

Biological definitions have assigned women and men separate roles in society and placed men in a position of power. Feminists have brought the perspective that the norms of being a woman and a man are shaped by society. Simone de Beauvoir's famous statement, "A woman is not born a woman, she becomes a woman" (Butler, 2016, p.43) almost sums up the effect of culture on shaping women.

Because of their biological 'fertility', women are expected to have attitudes and behaviors appropriate to their 'mothering' role. All of these expectations are crucial to the social and civic life of the individual. Indeed, in many societies and cultures throughout history, women have not been allowed to exist in social life other than as mothers. People are exposed to gender stereotypes from birth. Girls and boys have certain behaviors, styles of dress, games, and even colors imposed upon them, and they are defined as men and women. Boys are encouraged from an early age to play outside, be free, and have adventures, so they learn about life at an early age. For girls, on the other hand, it is considered appropriate to stay at home and stay away from the outside world. This distinction was made by one of the most important representatives of modern Western philosophy, J.J. It was also theorized by Rousseau. According to Rousseau, educational systems should be different for girls and boys, and it is not desirable that children of two different sexes should receive the same education. According to Rousseau, the biggest reason for this is that "As long as a woman remains a woman, she is superior, and as long as she claims masculinity, she falls behind" (J. J. Rousseau, 2016, p. 226). Rousseau believes that because woman is biologically fertile, her main task is motherhood, that woman's nature is docile, passive and obedient, and that if she tries to look like a man, she will be deprived of all abilities. According to Rousseau, "Women must learn many things; but it would be better for them to learn things that will be useful to them" (Rousseau, 2016, p. 227). According to Rousseau, the information that will be useful to women is the information about the feminine duties they are expected to overcome when they get married in the future:

> Once it is demonstrated that man and woman are not, and should not be constituted the same, either in character or in temperament, it follows that they should not have the same education. In following the directions of nature they must act together but they should not do the same things; their duties have a common end, but the duties themselves are different and consequently also the tastes that direct them. After having

> tried to form the natural man, let us also see, in order not to leave our work incomplete, how the woman is to be formed who suits this man. (Rousseau, 2016, p. 229).

According to Rousseau, men are responsible for their own behavior and must not listen to judgments made about them. However, Rousseau argues that women should attach great importance to what is said about them:

> It is not enough for them to be honest; They need validation of their honesty. By being virtuous, a woman has done only half her duty; she should give importance to the judgments made about herself as much as she tries to do her duty" (Rousseau, 2016, p. 228).

For these reasons, Rousseau argues that men and women should receive different education. In her opinion, the main task of women is to provide for the happiness of men and their children. While there is no need for men to be virtuous and chaste, according to Rousseau, this is one of the most important tasks for women. She also believes that all education women should receive should be for the benefit of men or for men.

> To please men, to be useful to them, to love and respect them, to educate them when they are young, to take care of them when they are grown up, to give them advice, to comfort them, to make their lives pleasant... These are the tasks of women. These are the things they should be taught from the youngest age. Every woman wants to be liked by a man, and she must want it. (Rousseau, 2016, p.228)

As can be seen, Rousseau believes that the only task of women is to ensure the continuity and ease of existence of men, to alleviate the difficulties in men's lives, to be a pleasant point in the difficulties they encounter in the struggle for life, try to be recognized by men, and even makes this the rule. Rousseau believes that every woman has the desire to be liked by men, and it is interesting that, according to Rousseau, there is nothing more important for a woman than how she is seen and thought of by a man.

Race, gender, and other categories of identification are often viewed in mainstream liberal discourse as vestiges of prejudice or dominance, essentially unfavorable frameworks used by social power to marginalize or exclude those who are different. The patriarchal system promotes problematic identity politics in which women face various challenges as one of the discriminatory policies. And with disastrous results, this system has become an extremely harsh and misogynistic system. The patriarchal system is what stands in the way of women's independence the most.

1.1 Gender Inequalities in The Victorian Period

In the Victorian period, Women were considered only for domestic tasks such as cleaning, child rearing, and appeasing men at home, as they were disadvantaged in many areas, including business, literature, and education. They were like domestic servants, whether married or not, taking care of their fathers, siblings, spouses, or other male family members. As Jenni Calder states, “the home and the female were inevitably intimately associated” (Calder, 1977, p. 9). Even after marriage, their duties included obeying the orders of their spouses and performing domestic duties. All classes shared a common view of gender and domesticity despite differences in application. Upper-middle-class and working-class women were both favored for domestic work. Although there were servants to take care of the household, upper-class women had to stay home to take care of other duties, such as managing the household budget and supervising the household staff. According to Houghton, a Victorian woman was “submissive wife whose whole excuse for being was to love, honour, obey - and amuse - her lord and master, and to manage his household and bring up his children” (Houghton, 1957, p. 348).

Middle class women were not allowed to work in other professions because the family was considered a very important institution and women were considered the foundation of this domestic sphere. Working women were seen as a threat to traditional family values. The idea that women were physiologically inferior to males and that their intelligence and strength were best suited for the domestic sphere shaped all these views of women. Charles Darwin also declared that “the average mental capacity of man must be above that of woman” (Darwin, 1896, p. 564). Similarly, In the poem *The Princess*, by Alfred Lord Tennyson expresses the conventional gender role:

> Man for the field and woman for the hearth;
>
> Man for the sword, and for the needle she;
>
> Man with the head, and women with the heart;
>
> Man to command, and woman to obey (Tennyson, 1980, V. 347-350)

It is clear that society has strictly classified the roles, nature and potentialities of men and women. Moreover, the word “angel in the house” was used by Coventry Patmore, reflecting the view of patriarchal society, to describe women who run the household. It is

clearly seen that women in the Victorian era were dependent on men both economically and socially. This dependence highlights the power relations and the established sexist situation in Victorian society. Unfortunately, this submissive role that patriarchal society imposed on Victorian women led women to believe that self-realization and freedom could not be achieved. Due to the existing boundaries and norms in society, it is almost impossible for a woman to discover herself and find a job other than that of a mother or wife. It would be useful to highlight feminism and feminist criticism here. In her work entitled *A Literature of Their Own,* which can be considered one of the first feminist studies in the field of literature, Elaine Showalter examined the works of forgotten women writers in the Victorian era from a historical perspective and clearly showed how these writers were excluded from both normal life and literary life. The aforementioned study certainly took a radical approach:

> To their contemporaries, nineteenth-century women writers were women first, artists second. A woman novelist, unless she disguised herself with a male pseudonym, had to expect critics to focus on her femininity and rank her with the other women writers of her day, no matter how diverse their subjects or styles. The knowledge that their individual achievement would be subsumed under a relatively unfavorable group stereotype acted as a constant irritant to feminine novelists. (Showalter, 2009, p.73)

The discrimination between men and women continued in Victorian society and its institutions, and the role of 'angel in the house' assigned to women represented the central position in women's lives. This concept emerged in the post-industrial period in England and America and was used to describe women's subservient status to men. In 1851, 2.8 million women over the age of 10 were included in the business life in England. In factories, women and girls used machines such as steam looms, and in some factories all workers were women. Between 1830 and 1850, women formed the majority of the population and were employed in factories, but they were still considered an inferior class and most of them worked informally in these factories. In 1861, only 1% of women working in offices were registered, but although they did the same job as men, they were paid only half as much as men. However, teaching was a field where women were mostly involved.

On the other hand, a wide variety of job opportunities were provided and developed for men in banks, political organizations, voluntary societies and cultural institutions. Many government jobs were reserved for men only. Although women of this period could go to public places, they were forbidden to do so without the presence of a man. In this period, the fact that a woman was not accompanied by her husband or a suitable man in a social place where one spent

one's leisure time led to her being considered a prostitute. These reasons prevented women from necessarily participating in social life and made it impossible for them to have the same rights and opportunities as men.

When dealing with the Victorian woman, one cannot avoid mentioning the gender stereotypes that have existed for centuries. In fact, the Victorian era was one of the periods in which women were subjected to the greatest cruelties of the patriarchal system that created gender politics and disadvantaged them in this system..

SECOND CHAPTER

2. GENDER AND MARRIAGE IN JANE EYRE

Undoubtedly, *Jane Eyre* is a work that questions the social position of women and challenges stereotypical gender judgments. Inequality between men and women is examined in this work, but the destructive effects of the Industrial Revolution are also inevitably seen. Industrialization, one of the most significant challenges of the Victorian age, strengthens the male-dominated culture and creates a hierarchical order in Jane Eyre. The male characters establish their superiority and maintain their male authority through this hierarchy, which is crucial to the novel's theme of inequality between men and women. For this reason, the male characters constantly portray women as inferior, which serves to emphasize their own dominance.

Men put pressure on women and establish their supremacy in society by undervaluing women. Brontë shows how men dehumanize women to gain power; as a result, male characters become superior by dehumanizing women. Because of the male-centered, hierarchical culture, the male characters in the novel assert their hegemony and dominance over women by acting, thinking, and speaking in imperious ways.

In the Victorian era, changes in industrial growth emphasized the position of men in society. As men created much during the Industrial Revolution, they came to symbolize the opposites of femininity and triviality. In other words, with the development of industry, men became a symbol of strength, intellect, and dominance. In the nineteenth century, the concept of masculinity changed, and society gave it a stronger and superior position. Women were marginalized, and their daughters have adopted the stereotype of the oppressed since they were young. Men, then, occupy an overly prominent position in Victorian society, as they were considered the most important and superior members of humanity. As a result, Victorian men were driven, self-sufficient, aggressive, haughty, cynical, and dictatorial. Feminist revolutions have thus developed as a result of the oppression of women in patriarchal societies that view women as weak, uneducated, inferior, and other.

The immobility of women forced authors such as Brontë sisters to take up feminine themes in their works and depict the female condition in order to change deeply ingrained social norms and achieve freedom for women. Based on this view, Brontë discusses the situation of women in the Victorian era in her famous work *Jane Eyre*. She shows how women were oppressed in many areas, including love and marriage. In her *book Understanding Jane Eyre,* Debra Teachman confirms that women in Charlotte Brontë's period were "considered to be subordinate to men according to the laws of both God and Nature." (Teachman, 2008, p. 14). Readers of *Jane Eyre* can live with Jane, express their own emotions, move like her, and feel her freedom and happiness, thanks to Brontë's meticulous description of each event.

Jane Eyre captures some of her experiences as a woman in the Victorian era, but also some of her pains. According to Brennan, ''Although Brontë never establishes an exact date for events in Jane Eyre it is generally thought to be set in the early 1800s'' (Brennan, 2010, p. 14) Jane Eyre, was published in 1847 under the pseudonym Currer Bell. Although the work is said to be obsessed with a straightforward love story, the reader is more fascinated by the portrayal of the heroine than by the love story itself. It is a novel that depicts the immense efforts of a woman who strives all her life to be accepted as she is and to have a place in society, as well as her marriage to the man for whom she has a deep passion.

The novel starts when Jane is eight years old. This extends to her pursuit of womanhood and self-realization, drawing parallels to the actual lives and social duties of women in early Victorian society. With her longing for freedom, respect, equality, dignity, the ability to stand on her own two feet, and the ability to follow her passion, albeit in a controlled way, the heroine Jane Eyre rebels against the stereotypical image of a Victorian woman. The plot of the work is determined by these ideas of the author, as well as by her resistance to discrimination based on gender, her search for her own self and her quest for life. They also show her longing to leave the confining environment of the moment and achieve the equality she has longed for all her life. This is realized at the end of the novel when she marries Rochester and feels truly empowered to be on equal footing with him. Although Rochester initially gives the impression that he is a 'powerful man' in the eyes of the public, he later loses most of that power when he loses his eyesight, physical health, and wealth. All of these things serve to curb Rochester's excessive passion and ego and put him in a suitable position to marry Jane.

In *Jane Eyre*, Brontë supports a woman's path to inner independence with her struggle against all the cruelties that befall an orphan girl. The cruelty of her aunt's three children, Georgiana, Eliza, and John, to Jane, and their mother's acquiescence in this cruelty, make Jane's life unbearable. The main reason for his exclusion is that he is a different child from the others. For he is despised and accused of mischief just for asking questions and wondering.

One of Jane's cousins, Eliza, draws attention with her strong interest in money Georgiana, on the other hand, is very fond of her beauty, playing with small house toys that she does not allow Jane to touch. These two sisters ironically embody Victorian society. The Victorian era is a time when materialism reached its peak and women came to the fore only with their sexuality.

As a child, Jane has learned to somehow cope with her loneliness. She is excluded because she is a questioning girl who does not conform to traditional conventions. Another reason that supports this view is Jane's appearance, which is anything but attractive and cute. The fact that she is not beautiful and unattractive is a tangible reality rather than a field of choice for Jane. As a matter of fact, while Abbot and Bessie, the servants of Gateshead Mansion, were talking among themselves one night, Jane overheard this conversation and began to listen with curiosity. Because they are comparing Jane and Georgiana, one of Miss Reed's three children. Georgiana is a child with blond hair and blue eyes, "like a doll"(Brontë, 2016, p.35). But Jane lacks the qualities that every girl should have in order to be liked. By creating the Jane character outside the typical Victorian standards of beauty, Brontë challenges these standards of beauty that are, in a sense, imposed upon women. The emphasis on her lack of beauty—perhaps too much emphasis—serves a purpose. Brontë opposes the masculine system, which tries to standardize the woman and ignores all her intellectual, emotional and cognitive skills. Even later, Jane is sent to an orphanage school filled with girls like her. Moreover, in this school, even the most beautiful girl loses her beauty because of the clothes given to her by the school. Jane has grown up in her loneliness among people who show him no affection because they find her unlovable, and there is no one with him to love, protect, or care for a child. Again, the brutality of Victorian society is striking. In such a society, a poor little girl who lacks the power and protection of a man is ostracized by society.

Jane's loneliness in the face of her difficulties causes her to struggle early on, so she is able to be alone with her loneliness and listen to herself. All of this liberates Jane in a way. This freedom, under the conditions of the time will lead Jane to go beyond the limits. Jane's experiences in Gateshead Mansion make her a lonely child. During this period, she enjoys spending time alone

in nature because it is the only place where he can be away from others. Jane is a sensitive child who even considers the possibility of nature calming her. She is not afraid of being alone and alone in the later part of her life, because she suffered the most from such an experience in her childhood. One of them is that Jane, who leaves the mansion to go to boarding school, will travel a long way in the early hours of the morning by stagecoach without any accompanying person. Moreover, no one from the household except Bessie sends Jane off. Thus, the process that leads to Jane's individualization by creating herself becomes possible when she is confronted with all kinds of problems that she must endure and with which she struggles 'on her own'.

After Gateshead Mansion, Jane's second stop will be Lowood School. This school is no better than Gateshead Mansion in bullying and cruelty. Moreover, the target of bullying here are girls who are orphans and have no support, just like Jane. In fact many of these girls will die from the typhoid epidemic that has broken out in the school as a result of poor care. One of these girls is Helen Burns, one of Jane's close friends. The reason for Jane to make friends with this girl is that Helen Burns caught her attention while she was reading a book in a corner of the garden, away from everyone. Moreover, this is a serious book, not the "light, childish stuff" (Brontë, 2016, p. 37) that Jane likes to read. For a woman at that time, reading was a very marginal act. By creating a female character who reads and asks questions, Brontë emphasizes the need to change the society's view of women. In the next lesson, the teacher unfairly punishes Helen Burns and forces her to stand in the middle of the classroom in front of everyone. What surprises Jane is that while she thinks how humiliating this is, Helen Burns does not blush in embarrassment without showing the reaction expected of her. As Jane states: "Still I felt that Helen Burns considered things by a light invisible to my eyes. I suspected she might be right and I wrong; but I would not ponder the matter deeply: like Felix, I put it off to a more convenient season." (Brontë, 2016, p. 47)

Helen Burns is constantly punished for petty reasons. What the teachers most blame and punish Helen Burns for is her untidiness. The main purpose of Helen Burns's incessant punishment, forcing her to be clean and orderly, is to try to penetrate the spiritual world in some way, to pull out independent thoughts where they sprout, and to bring the spiritual world under the control of authority. This system, in which not only Helen Burns but all the girls in the school are forced and disciplined to comply with certain rules of organization, is based on encircling and ultimately destroying their world. No matter what Helen Burns does, no one likes her. Thus, the lack of submission and cuteness that a girl should have in girls like Helen Burns and Jane causes

them not to be welcomed and punished by the authority because of their differences. Jane's pursuit of intellectuality and spiritualism is embodied by Helen Burns. As can be seen from the example of Helen Burns, independent characteristics are not allowed for Victorian women.

At the head of these authority figures is the owner of the school, Mr. Brocklehurst. As he inspects the school, he asks all the girls in the class to turn around to check all their hair. Brocklehurst, who freaks out when he spots a girl with red and curly hair, begins to bring up incredible reasons and make speeches with his bigoted and conservative attitude towards the Christian faith. The poor and orphaned girls are stereotyped by being stamped with a bigoted, malicious attitude. Above all, the 'devilish' passions attributed to women are tried to be restrained from an early age, and everything they cannot control, even their curly hair, is destroyed. As a matter of fact, in Mr. Brocklehurst's school, children are also disciplined with hunger. In this way, girls will learn both to ignore worldly desires and to condemn bodily experiences. Contrary to Victorian ideals Jane is a woman who hates being treated unfairly and desires freedom. When she says, "I desired liberty; for liberty I gasped; for liberty I uttered a prayer; it seemed scattered on the wind then faintly blowing." (Brontë, 2016, p. 87).

Miss Temple, the principal of the school, escapes from this oppressive environment by trying to protect the students in some way and wins the love of the students who are subjected to all the persecution and the warnings of the conservative teachers at the school by Mr. Brocklehurst. In fact, Miss Temple also gets her share of harassment from Mr. Brocklehurst. Although she is the principal, she too must subsist on poor and sloppy meals and endure the cold. Yet despite all the negative conditions, she and her students form a small group, a secret alliance that the authorities cannot control. She encourages children, treats them fairly and, above all, treats them with love. Declaring a secret war on authority, Miss Temple becomes a source of inspiration and role model for Jane.

Miss Temple is particularly close with Helen Burns and Jane. There is a friendship between them in which hierarchical distinctions such as age differences disappear, and two friends enjoy the deep understanding of each other. Jane describes the similarity of Helen Burns and Miss Temple and enjoys being with them, even though she cannot join in their conversations because of her age and understanding. This friendship is an example of a small minority who, under the pressure of the bigoted authority, are exposed to all kinds of punishments and bad conditions and still try to protect their inner independence, that is, their inner castle, to gain strength from each

other. Especially Helen Burns is a symbol of inner independence, with her self-developed belief system and her wise thoughts on God, death and life, despite the unfair treatment she has received.

Just as Charlotte Brontë felt in her soul a desire to go to distant lands and change, Jane Eyre wants to leave Lowood as soon as possible after Miss Temple. Jane wanders up and down her room for a while, and when she looks out the window, she wishes she could see beyond the farthest points of her vision. Ultimately, Jane will cry out to God, ‘‘...then give me another servitude than the present!’’(Brontë, 2016, p.112) Jane , then, though she fully feels her desire for change, can only act on reasonable grounds that male authority deems plausible.

Jane cannot ignore the way her independent spirit directs her and pushes the limits as far as she can. Since the only way to leave Lowood is to become a governess, Jane must get permission from Mr. Brocklehurst, the owner of the school, to get a job. Brocklehurst tells her to report the situation to her aunt and get her approval. Because Jane, who is eighteen, needs her parents' permission to work in the job she wants (or the job that is the only option). In her letter, Miss Reed states that she can do ‘‘whatever she wants’’ (Brontë, 2016, p. 117), dismissing Jane. Jane will have to wait a little longer for this letter to pass the board. Finally, Jane manages to get her letter of recommendation, as she is “always well known both as a student and as a teacher” (Brontë, 2016, p.117) at school. It took almost a month for this letter to arrive. The conditions imposed for passing from one slavery to another explain why the desire for freedom was indeed an impossible thought for Jane. As a matter of fact, when Jane finally reaches Thornfield Manor, the house where she will be a governess, after much toil, anxiety, and distress, she “kneels down and prays to God to express her gratitude that she has found a safe and secure haven (Brontë, 2016, p.127). But for Jane, who started working in Thornfield, the monotonous and sedentary days she spent here will not satisfy her desire for change. In fact, even after taking a job at the mansion and meeting good and lively people, Jane sometimes indulges in her soul: ‘‘leading an active life’’, “meeting all sorts of types”, “going to lively places, great cities she has never seen, though she has heard and read about them.”(Brontë, 2016, p.142) She cannot stop his desire to go, and sometimes this desire becomes unbearable. After this incomprehensible desire, which she frankly confesses, Jane defends herself by saying “let them accuse!”(Brontë, 2016, p.142). Because “hearing this… (him)… many accusers will come out.”(Brontë, 2016,p.142) Thus, Jane cannot find any other choice but to create dreams for herself.

Jane cannot help but imagine the places she cannot go: "...it was as if I dreamed of Hiedelberg Castle on the Rhine, which I saw in a picture..."(p.155) Living only in the freedom of her inner castle and being content with her dreams of adventure is no comfort to Jane Eyre, on the contrary: the freedom of the inner castle provokes her to move, to stir.

The characters Georgiana and Eliza should also be mentioned. Through these characters, the limited options available to women for survival are satirized. After the impending death of her aunt, Mrs. Reed, and her desire to see Jane Eyre at her bedside, Jane hastily leaves Thornfield Manor. Georgiana and Eliza meet with him at Gateshead manor, John Reed having died tragically. Jane spends a long time here. In this way he becomes well acquainted with the contrasting characters of Georgiana and Eliza. Toward the end of the novel, Jane reports that Georgiana will marry a wealthy and elderly man out of self-interest, while Eliza will continue her programmed, emotionless, and colorless life as a high priestess in a convent in France, as she has chosen to do.

In essence, this is a critique of the limited roles that women represented, which time accepted and ascribed to women. Jane stands at some distance from these two women, analyzing the contrasts in their characters and thus comparing the paths they took. The fact that these two sisters represent pure reason and emotion in the most extreme points and the opposite ways in which they lead their lives do not surprise us much about their future. The clarity with which they take on the roles of femininity they represent criticizes the limited private space and lack of opportunities offered to women of the time. Eliza, who attends church services at all costs, even when it is stormy on Sundays and the streets are muddy, makes fun of Georgiana for wanting to go to London, attract the attention of the gentlemen at the balls, and flirt with them. Georgiana, on the other hand, is afraid to be alone with her sister in the face of her obvious hatred and humiliation. This goes so far as to keep Jane at Gateshead Mansion so that she will leave as soon as possible before she is alone at home with her sister. The fact that these two women belittle each other or run away from each other shows that patriarchy has succeeded in preventing especially Georgiana, who cannot escape the attention of men, and Eliza, who has internalized the male myths of religion, from a possible solidarity by creating a field of conflict for women who abandon the flag of their inner castle at opposite poles. Jane wants to satisfy her soul first and foremost, and the people she associates with usually do. In the absence of his soulmate, the place where he remains locked is nothing but suffocating. For this reason, Jane will not hesitate to go to distant lands and force various life alternatives to the end. She is not satisfied with the freedom offered by her inner castle

and sees no harm in listening to the demands and desires of her body. At Thornfield Manor, Jane has an interesting encounter that adds vitality to her monotonous days. This encounter with the master of the house, Mr. Rochester, excites her. For he is a new face added to the human profiles in his limited social circle, Mr. Rochester, and their encounter is another act that breaks the routine. In Jane's words, "it was neither important, nor romantic, nor uninteresting" (Brontë, 2016, p. 151). But the excitement of this encounter illuminates Jane's emotional world, which is looking for change, a little bit.

Comparing the situation of Jane Eyre and Rochester, we find that Jane's struggle is to try to live with the rights of a man in the Victorian age. Jane believes that when she earns money and becomes rich, she will be equal to men. In conservative Victorian society, it is not usual for a woman to act like a man. Jane disagrees with the classic female role she has been assigned and almost rebels. She believes that men are beings who do what they want. The idea that men are superior to women bothers her. Jane can not get used to the idea, she refuses and believes that the woman can have the opportunities that the man has. In his opinion, a prize cannot be won without effort. Jane is willing to take risks in this direction. She wants to make money. She is one of those who believe that real freedom begins with economic freedom. She is a brave and reckless woman.

One of the most important moments in the novel is that Jane leaves Thornfield and embarks on a new journey to find out who she is and to face her true feelings for Mr. Rochester, as well as his feelings for Jane. Mr. Rochester also embarks on this journey. Rochester loses not only his sight and a hand during their separation, but also his mental strength, and they go through further traumatic experiences. Jane, on the other hand, eventually gains power through the fortune she receives and the lost relatives she discovers after failing miserably for a while to find a place to live and make a living. The plot revolves around an exchange of power between Rochester and Jane, with the latter rising to a superior position both physically and financially and taking care of Rochester after her marriage.

One of the main themes of Charlotte Brontë's Jane Eyre is love. In the novel, Jane's emotional nature is evident in her reactions, behavior, and conversations. Jane has lived without her parents since childhood and feels empty without them. Then, in her uncle's house, she experiences oppression through the cruelty of Mrs. Reed and her son. In other words, Jane believes that she is not accepted or loved by them, and therefore she does not love them as much as children love their parents. "I was a discord in Gateshead Hall: I was like nobody there: I had nothing in

harmony with Mrs. Reed or her children, or her chosen vassalage. If they did not love me, in fact, as little did I love them" (Brontë, 2016, p. 17). To be loved, appreciated and respected are human needs, but Jane had such a bad childhood that she was deprived of all these feelings. The remarkable thing, however, is that Jane, not being loved, appreciated and respected, has never felt an inferiority complex and has always stood out with her strong personality.

Jane undoubtedly feels pressured by Reeds' behavior. Through Jane, whose sense of defiance and passion deviates from the stereotypical Victorian child, Brontë creates a unique young woman character. Aside from the physical abuse, Jane is also verbally abused in Gateshead, making her feel neglected and severely affecting her self-confidence at certain points in her life. Jane's only wish was to be loved. "If she were a nice, pretty child, one might compassionate her forlornness; but one really cannot care for such a little toad as that." (Brontë, 2016, p. 27) Jane is determined to leave Gateshead after hearing this conversation between Bessie and Abbot. She decides that she must seek her emotional, intellectual, and educational fulfillment outside the place where she seems to be unloved.

Jane's transfer to Lowood Charity School represents a new start in her life, meeting new people and wanting to feel comfortable and valued by them. After enrolling at Lowood Charity School, however, she begins to feel the same way about Mr. Brocklehurst because of how harshly she is treated by the students there. Jane is subjected to emotional and sexual tyranny at Lowood because Mr. Brocklehurst imposes strict rules on her based on the patriarchal norms of nineteenth-century society. When Jane arrives at Lowood, she is forced to conform to the rigid patriarchal conventions that deprive women of their identity.

While at Lowood, Jane fights inwardly and makes preparations for her future freedom. In *Jane Eyre*, another cause of sexual repression is highlighted as Catholicism. Brontë portrays Brocklehurst as a hypocritically religious man who uses religion to oppress the girls at Lowood. In patriarchal civilizations, religion serves as a weapon of discrimination against men and women. According to, Simone De Beauvoir religion "becomes less of an instrument of constraint than of mystification" (Beauvoir , 2011, p. 707).

Jane Eyre primarily depicts the repressive life women experience from early childhood to the end of their lives. She emphasizes the social, religious, and cultural pressures placed on women to maintain the traditional patriarchal stereotype of the angle at home. According Teachman:

> Jane Eyre is the story of a woman who is unwilling to submit to anything she perceives as wrong or unfair. She believes that she should have the right to determine her future for herself, that she should have the right to make her own choices, and that she should be considered the equal of any man as a human being (Teachman, 2008, p. 14).

In a time when women were considered inferior and oppressed, *Jane Eyre* draws society's attention to a very important issue and emphasized the suffering of women. Brontë did this to bring women's lives into focus and encourage them to make positive changes in their miserable circumstances.

It is important to note that Jane's struggles at the orphanage overlap with Brontë's. According to Zoe Brennan, Brontë had hardships at her school due to ''its draconian rules, lack of heating, and barely edible food'' (Brennan, 2010, p. 10). By highlighting Jane's suffering at Lowood, she has illustrated these conditions.

Jane Eyre depicts a woman in the nineteenth century who goes through a difficult time that begins with her parents dying when she is 10 years old. As a result, she must move into her deceased uncle's house, where she endures cruel treatment at the hands of his wife and spoiled son. Jane then transfers to Lowood Charity School, where she experiences further religious tyranny. After finishing her schooling as a student and teacher, she moves to Thornfield to work as a governess and meet her love, Mr. Rochester.

Jane becomes aware during their initial conversations that Rochester holds patriarchal beliefs. As an upper-class man in the nineteenth century, Rochester tends to see himself as the Lord of Thornfield, to be obeyed. Rochester, however, stands out from the other men at the time because he values Jane's intellect and her heart. Long conversations later, Jane and Rochester decide to marry after realizing that their love has matured.

Marriage is the focus of the novel *Jane Eyre*, which also addresses the difficulties faced by women in the Victorian era. The author emphasizes the marriage problem in particular. The marriage in this book differs from other marriages in that it involves two people from different social classes and backgrounds. By depicting the life of a governess, Brontë captures the reality of women and their place in society. Jane Eyre was raised by her aunt after losing her family as a young child; she is a governess who is penniless and not part of a wealthy society. After she finished school, she worked as a governess. She took the job as a governess because she believed

that it would allow her to achieve her goals while remaining independent and free from others. Clearly, Victorian society saw the role of governess as more suited to women, so during this period many women became involved in this field and began working in homes. Despite the deprivations and humiliations, they occasionally endured from their masters, they insisted on protecting their careers. During this time, marriage was of vital importance to women, as they wanted to secure their future through marriage. Due to their poor economic situation, women could not inherit property, and everything that men owned, including women, was considered their property. Women considered working as governesses as a means to find a husband. Here, the master and the governess marry. However, the socioeconomic disparity between the master and the wife prevents British society from approving of this marriage.

The ups and downs of Jane's life lead her to another turning point-her surprise marriage to Mr. Rochester, her boss-before which she experiences a period of self-reflection on the roles of men and women in society. Brontë not only uses Jane to illustrate the theme of women's roles, but also Bertha's imprisonment in the attic to represent how women were silenced at this time. Bertha is Rochester's ex-wife of and is locked in the attic due to mental illness. Here, Brontë delivers a great message to the reader: Bertha is an example of an image of a woman deprived of all her freedom. A good example of double oppression is Bertha's position in Jane Eyre. Bertha, a Jamaican mental patient, is ostracized and imprisoned by society. Not only is she a woman and insane, but she is also from a colony of the British Empire and therefore a subordinate. In other words, women are the 'other' of every social group. Women, on the other hand, being in the minority, is a condition of double oppression, as in Bertha's case.

In the novel, Bertha, Rochester's wife, is thought to be insane. Rochester and other people believe that Bertha's mother, who was originally a 'creole,' was insane and that the insanity was inherited from mother to daughter like a hereditary disease. Accordingly, they believe, Bertha must also be mentally ill. Rochester states:

> My bride's mother I had never seen: I understood she was dead. The honeymoon over, I learned my mistake; she was only mad, and shut up in a lunatic asylum. There was a younger brother, too, a complete dumb idiot. The elder one, whom you have seen (and whom I cannot hate, whilst I abhor all his kindred, because he has some grains of affection in his feeble mind; shown in the continued interest he takes in his wretched sister, and also in a dog-like attachment he once bore me), will probably be in the same state one day. My father, and my brother Rowland, knew all this; but they thought only of the thirty thousand pounds, and joined in the plot against me. (Brontë, 2016, p.261)

For one day Richard's statement that he will go mad like his sister brings to light Rochester's prejudice. In terms of postcolonial feminism, Bertha must be a good resource. She is forced to speak, but only to show how inferior she is. This is just another example of the typical feminist elements of the novel. Aside from her brother, who would naturally have sympathy for her given their relationship, none of the other characters have sympathy.

In terms of marriage issue in Victorian period, religion is also an important factor. As shown by St. John, who persistently used this tactic, 19th century men used religion as a tool to persuade women to marry in situations where income was lacking. Jane, however, rejects his proposal because she knows his true intentions and does not want to travel with him to India as his wife. She also seems to imply that despite all she will do to support St. John, her role as a wife in this marriage will be undervalued.

> If I join St. John, I abandon half myself; if I go to India, I go to premature death. […] He will never love me, but he shall approve me; I will show him energies he has not yet seen, resources he has never suspected. Yes; I can work as hard as he can, and with as little grudging. Seek one elsewhere than in me, St. John; seek one fitted to you. One fitted to my purpose, you mean, fitted to my vocation. Again I tell you it is not the insignificant private individual—the mere man, with the man's selfish senses—I wish to mate; it is the missionary. And I will give the missionary my energies—it is all he wants—but not myself. (Brontë, 2016, p. 358-60)

In conclusion, this part of the thesis discusses the patriarchal codes that shape Victorian gender norms through the character of Jane Eyre. The struggle for freedom in the patriarchal society in which the character Jane Eyre lives is also discussed. It is emphasized that Jane Eyre, who does not like the duties and tasks assigned to women in the male-dominated society, rebels against this situation and makes a silent revolution, so to speak. Originally orphaned and poor, Jane Eyre spends her entire life campaigning for gender equality. She cannot come to terms with the fact that men are superior to women or see themselves that way. She argues that women can do anything men can do.

THIRD CHAPTER

3. GENDER AND MARRIAGE IN WUTHERING HEIGHTS

Wuthering Heights, one of the classics of English literature, is the only novel by Emily Brontë and was published in 1847. *Wuthering Heights* was originally written in 1847 under the male pseudonym Ellis Bell and posthumously republished by Charlotte Brontë under the author's real name. The patriarchal systems that prevailed in the nineteenth century are criticized in Emily Brontë's novel *Wuthering Heights*. The novel explicitly describes and presents the strict gender norms of the Victorian era, despite its apparent inconsistencies. The Gothic setting of the novel is used to depict domestic violence, tyranny and confinement in marriage, as well as decadence and rebellion against the rules of patriarchal society. Although at first glance the novel seems like a gothic and tragic love story, the focus of the novel is on marriage and the position of women in society.

Emily Brontë is often regarded by contemporary critics as a proto feminist icon and one of the literary pioneers who paved the way for the New Woman movement that prevailed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries, and rightly so. Elaine Showalter states that:

> Born between 1800 and 1820, included all the women who are identified with the Golden Age of the Victorian authoress: the Brontës, Mrs. Gaskell, Elizabeth Barret Browning, Harriet Martineau, and George Eliot. The members of this group […] were what sociologists call "female innovators"; they were breaking new ground and creating new possibilities. (Showalter, 2009, p.19)

These authors were influential in expanding the boundaries that physically and symbolically constrained women at the time. Brontë serves as inspiration for other women to pursue careers outside the home. There is no question that Emily Brontë, along with her sisters and other female writers of the time, contributed to the development of the New Women's Movement. A year after writing *Wuthering Heights*, she died in 1848 at the age of thirty. Considering that she was raised by a bookish and intellectual man. Emily's career as a writer is not entirely unexpected. Emily's sisters Anne and Charlotte were also published authors, along with their avid reader father.

Wuthering Heights essentially depicts the development of Catherine and Heathcliff from adolescence to adulthood. Brontë presents their relationships as a line of defense against the expectations and rules that society places on people. “This is what Catherine and Heathcliff refuse to do adamantly; insisting on their own interpretation of their own experience in defiance of every custom, and law that would keep them from doing so” (Thomas, 1990, p. 118). Their close bond, as Thomas says, exceeds the limitations imposed on them.

On the other hand, girls in the Victorian era were not expected to spend time outdoors. Catherine behaves differently than girls are expected to by staying home and studying the rules. Nelly, the maid at Wuthering Heights, notices that Catherine has a peculiar character even at a young age. As Nelly states:

> Certainly, she had ways with her such as I never saw a child take up before; and she put all of us past our patience fifty times and oftener in a day: from the hour she came down stairs, till the hour she went to bed, we had not a minute’s security that she wouldn’t be in mischief. Her spirits were always at highwater mark, her tongue always goingsinging, laughing, and plaguing everybody who would not do the same (Brontë, 1994, p. 43).

Brontë challenges the stereotypical images of women in the Victorian age by portraying Catherine as a disobedient, mischievous, and witty girl. In doing so, Brontë seems to disagree with Rousseau's view of women: “she must be modest, attentive, and reserved” (Rousseau, 2016, p. 361). Catherine also has the courage to defy her father when she is still a little girl. The following conversation shows how brave she was to confront her father:

Mr. Earnshaw: Why canst thou not always be a good lass, Catherine?

Catherine: Why cannot you always be a good man, father? (Brontë, 1994, p. 45)

Brontë thus contrasts the rebellious spirit of her character with the stereotypical image of women as submissive and passive. The lives of Catherine and Heathcliff are significantly affected by the attitude of Catherine’s family after the death of Mr. Earnshaw, particularly Catherine’s brother Hindley. Hindley purposefully subjects Heathcliff to torment and treats him like a slave. Hindley leaves the children in the care of Joseph, a pious man who has subjected Catherine and Heathcliff to harsh treatment and regulations at home, rather than setting a positive example by addressing their misbehavior. Nelly states:

> The young master being entirely negligent how they behaved, and what they did, so they kept clear of him. He would not have even seen after their going to church on Sundays, only Joseph and the curate reprimanded his carelessness when they absented themselves, and that reminded him to order Heathcliff a flogging, and Catherine a fast from dinner or supper. (Brontë, 1994, p. 48-49)

Furthermore, Brontë highlights how a child's social beliefs can influence his or her decisions about the future. In this way, Brontë demonstrates the effects of the strict Victorian norms that were instilled in children from an early age. For example, Heathcliff becomes a vengeful man in the following years because Hindley constantly oppresses him. In *Selected Letters of Charlotte Brontë*, Brontë states that:

> Heathcliff exemplifies the effects. A life full of continuing injustice and hard usage may produce a naturally perverse, vindictive, and inexorable disposition. Carefully trained and kindly treated, the black gypsy-cub might have been reared into a human being possibly, but tyranny and ignorance made him a mere demon (Brontë, 2004, p. 117).

Catherine, on the other hand, rejects authority and resists the enforcement of her will. After Mr. Earnshaw's death, Hindley assumes the role of patriarchal leader. Catherine is forced to make a bad decision and marry to protect Heathcliff and herself from Hindley's oppression. Although Catherine is a rebellious and defiant character by temperament, he cannot stand against the pressures of Victorian society on marriage. In this way, it can be claimed that Hindley influenced Catherine's choice in some way. Accordingly, Gilbert and Gubar states:

> By the patriarchal laws of primogeniture [Hindley] is the real heir and thus the new father who is to be introduced into the novel as the proximate causes of Catherine's fall and subsequent decline. (Gilbert and Gubar , 2000, p.88)

Catherine and Heathcliff inadvertently end up at Thrushcross Grange when they try to escape the restrictions of Joseph and Hindley. In the novel, this is depicted as a magnificent house. Heathcliff tells to Nelly:

> A splendid place carpeted with crimson, and crimson covered chairs and tables, and a pure white ceiling bordered by gold, a shower of glass-drops hanging in silver chains from the centre, and shimmering with little soft tapers"(Brontë, 1994, p. 50).

The reader has the opportunity to compare life at Thrushcross Grange and Wuthering Heights through Heathcliff's observations. However, these children do not know that Thrushcross Grange will be the place where their childhood memories come to an end. They will never be together again. They are not aware that this place will drastically change their lives.

> When Catherine is caught by the Lintons' bulldog, she is carried inside and recognized as "Miss Earnshaw"; Heathcliff, by contrast, is pronounced a "wicked boy... quite unfit for a decent house and dismissed, the door secured against him. Thus the Lintons of Thrushcross Grange administer the crucial moment of separation for Catherine and Heathcliff. (Lamonica, 2003, p. 104)

Catherine is taken to a new environment where she learns to act like a lady and change her appearance. Nelly notices the changes in her appearance once she returns to the Heights:

> Instead of a wild, hatless little savage jumping into the house, and rushing to squeeze us all breathless, there lighted from a handsome black pony into a very dignified person, with brown ringlets falling from the cover of a feathered beaver, and a long cloth habit which she was obliged to hold up with both hands that she might sail in. (Brontë, 1994, p. 55)

Catherine enters a new world and transforms into a lady, completely leaving behind her former appearance and way of thinking. Catherine's feelings for Heathcliff remain the same, but she can not help but make fun of him: ''Why, how very black and cross you look! and how-how funny and grim! But that's because I'm used to Edgar and Isabella Linton. Well; Heathcliff, have you forgotten me?" (Brontë, 2004, p. 56). This sentence implies that Catherine is joining the civilized world and has become accustomed to the environment of the Linton family. It becomes clear to the reader that their relationships will not be the same as they were as children. Heathcliff is aware of the circumstances and wants Catherine to accept him as he is.

It should be noted here that gender stereotypes affect not only women but also men. This can be seen in the tragic events that Heathcliff goes through. Although society expects men to be strong, it does not pay attention to the social, psychological and economic status of men. The man should be strong and lead the woman to financial prosperity. If a man cannot fulfill this task given to him, then he is ostracized by society and declared powerless. A powerless man is not respected. It is gender stereotypes that influence Catherine's decision to marry and make Heathcliff such a cruel, vindictive, and angry man. As seen in the tragic love story of the two lovers, society has made the two lovers miserable by creating stereotypes of femininity and masculinity. Referring to Catherine Beversluis says states:

> She fails totally to grasp his inner anxiety, his humiliation, and the fact that she has violated him. She has become a person with a paradigm of the respectability, empty, and loveless against which they both had formerly rebelled, and she fails to perceive it. One might be inclined to say that after this incident Heathcliff loses her little by

> little. It would be more accurate to say that he gradually comes to the realization that she has never been his at all. (Beversluis, 1993, p. 109)

It would no longer be possible for Heathcliff to complement Catherine's new lifestyle and polite demeanor. Heathcliff wants to be like Edgar Linton, but his socioeconomic conditions do not permit it. The economic power that idolizes man is lacking in poor Heathcliff. For this reason, he must suppress all his desires and, worst of all, lose his childhood love, Catherine. Brontë demonstrates with Heathcliff the ideal qualities of a Victorian man. "I wish I had light hair and a fair skin, and was dressed and behaved as well, and had a chance of being as rich as he will be!" (Brontë, 1994, p. 59).

As Catherine develops into the perfect Victorian woman, Hindley demotes Heathcliff to the lower class, and his lack of wealth and rank, prevent him from entering Catherine's world. The point that stands out here is that gender norms are destructive not only to women, but to men as well. Hindley, in particular, keeps blocking his path to Catherine. In one of the scenarios, when Edgar visit Wuthering Heights for Christmas, Hindley locks Heathcliff in the attic. It is also notable that when Heathcliff tries to attack Edgar, he is tortured by Hindley in front of Edgar. No matter what Hindley does to keep Catherine and Heathcliff apart, she will always feel sorry for him. She mourns Heathcliff at dinner, and the reader can feel it. "She lifted a mouthful to her lips; then she sets it down again: her cheeks flushed, and the tears gushed over them. She slipped her fork to the floor, and hastily dived under the cloth to conceal her emotion." (Brontë, 1994, p. 62) Her feelings do not change, even though her appearance and demeanor change. However, she lacks the courage to show her feelings in front of others. She is limited to suppressing them internally. Based on Catherine's activities, the reader might conclude that these changes in her outward appearance are the result of social production. As Mary Wollstonecraft states: "Women likewise acquire from a supposed necessity, an equally artificial mode of behaviour from a supposed necessity in the same way" (Wollstonecraft , 2004, p.104). Catherine's final actions show that she is forced to follow the rules of society, which require her to be submissive and silent. It is evident that Catharine's actions begin to change as a result of society's expectations. As the reader can see, she struggles to change her personality in order to fit into Linton's society. She strives to present herself as a perfect Victorian girl to the Lintons when they are around:

> [A]s she had no temptation to show her rough side in their company, and had the sense to be ashamed of being rude where she experienced such invariable courtesy, she imposed unwittingly on the old lady and gentleman by her ingenuous cordiality; gained

the admiration of Isabella, and the heart and soul of her brother…" (Brontë, 1994, p. 70).

It is noteworthy that Catherine strives to model her identity after Linton. As Catherine matures into adulthood, the reader can observe the influence of culture as well as the internal struggle that exists within her. In Victorian society, girls are expected to be submissive and taciturn. As a result, Catherine hides her rebellious tendencies and is forced to adopt a new identity in order to succeed in Linton's social circle. The following passage shows how Catherine, sabotaging her affections for Heathcliff, gives in to social expectations and accepts Edgar's proposal. Catherine's transformation is evident in the following discussion of marriage:

[Nelly]: Why do you love him, Miss Catherine?

[Catherine]: Nonsense, I do-that's sufficient.

[Nelly]: By no means, you must say why?

[Catherine]: Well, because he is handsome, and pleasant to be with.

[Nelly]: Bad was my commentary.

[Catherine]: And because he is young and cheerful.

[Nelly]: Bad, still.

[Catherine]: And because he loves me.

[Nelly]: Indifferent, coming there.

[Catherine]: And he will be rich, and I shall like to be the greatest

woman of the neighbourhood, and I shall be proud of having such a husband (Brontë, 2014, p. 83).

They lead unhappy lives as adults after a pleasant childhood. Heathcliff seeks revenge at the Heights and pretends to be a bully, and Catherine is lonely at the Grange. Heathcliff is also lonely. In order to maintain the social norms of the time and improve her social standing, Catherine marries Edgar Linton. Even after her marriage, she has no intention of leaving the Heights. Both the Heights and the Grange are places where she wants to stay. Because of her relationship with Heathcliff, she navigates both of these worlds. As a result, she is unable to live the life she desires, and she eventually dies. Catherine died because of social pressure. Society did not even give her the chance to marry the person of her choice. All the decisions in her life were always made by the

men. The reason Catherine accepts Edgar's marriage proposal is because she wants to become the ‘‘greatest woman in the neighborhood,’’ as she says in her speech to Nelly. The moment Catherine said, ‘‘It would degrade me to marry Heathcliff now so he will never know I love him,’’ her attitude toward her real love was corrupted. Although Catherine’s love for Heathcliff was genuine and strong, she eventually pushed him away because she was affected by her society. Although the action of the story takes place far from the hustle and bustle of society, Brontë shows her readers that social striving drives the decisions of many of her characters. Catherine's decision is an example of how social position affects people’s behavior.

Wuthering Heights examines social norms and addresses gender issues in particular. As N. M. Jacobs states ‘‘Emily Brontë seems to have moved beyond any faith in categories of gender as formulated by her culture. To her, gender is a ragged and somewhat ridiculous masquerade concealing the essential sameness of men and women’’ (Jacobs, 1986, p. 74). Female role models are always constrained in their actions by social conventions, in contrast to the support that patriarchal rules provide for men. Women in the Victorian era were never able to find their own identity or gain their freedom. In this way, Wuthering Heights depicts the condition of women and their lives in the Victorian era and engages in social criticism of their times. Like other writers of her time, Emily Brontë undoubtedly experienced the strain and influence of patriarchy in her life and portrayed it in her novel.

Brontë raises the issue of gender equality while criticizing the social structure and attitudes of the time. In other words, her novel is a critique of the firmly established gender roles in patriarchal societies. At the time, criticism of her book was not as harsh, as reviewers mistakenly thought they were criticizing the work of a male author, but when they learned otherwise, they were confronted with a female author. These problems that intellectual women encountered in the Victorian era shows that the author’s sex had a significant impact on the path that criticism would take. Since the work was written by a female author, there was a general undervaluation. For example, David Cecil argues that although Emily Brontë’s writing shows signs of originality and inventiveness, her writing is considered “remote from the central interests of human life, often clumsy and exaggerated, and incapable of expressing her inspiration in a coherent form” (Cecil, 1970, p.117). The novel was often dismissed by many critics as a simple romantic story without deeper meaning. For instance, Cheshire makes the claim that the book is nothing more than the author’s own dreamy fantasy in which she sees herself as the protagonist. According to Kettle:

> Wuthering Heights is about England in 1847. The people it reveals live not in a nevernever land but in Yorkshire. […] The story of Wuthering Heights is concerned not with love in the abstract but with the passions of living people, with propertyownership, the attraction of social comforts, the arrangement of marriages, the importance of education, the validity of religion, the relations of rich and poor. There is nothing vague about this novel […] there is nothing sloppy or uncontrolled. On the contrary the realization is intensely concrete […]. (Kettle, 1971, p.200–201)

In Kettle's view, the components of the novel have important value as illustrations of the social structures of a nineteenth-century family and society. In the Victorian era, especially in the early nineteenth century, there were marriage laws that stated that the husband was the head of the household and the wife had to be subservient to him or to another man in her family, such as her father. There were different laws for married and single women. Compared to the rights of the husband or the unmarried woman, the rights of the married woman were considerably curtailed. According to Françoise Basch, ''the girl who contracted a marriage – which the entire weight of nineteenth-century ideology put forward as being the culminating point of a woman's life – lost at one stroke all her rights as a 'feme sole', that is to say a free and independent individual" (Basch, 1974, p.16). Marriage was a bad system for a woman from a legal point of view. However, since social norms forced women to marry and made life difficult for single women, the woman had little choice but to marry. Although the unmarried woman was forced to marry by the society, the married woman was deprived of any property rights. John Stuart Mill disagreed with the norms and laws that applied to marriage in the nineteenth century. Mill states that: ''Marriage confers upon one of the parties to the contract, legal power & control over the person, property, and freedom of action of the other party, independent of her own wishes and will.'' (Mill, 1970, p.3) Mill explicitly argues that a woman has the right to her freedom and even the ability to act according to her own choice, regardless of her husband's power over her. In addition to Mill, other Victorian era feminists "pointed out that marriage law was based on the premise that a wife owed obedience to her husband, and where she did not voluntarily follow his will the law would leave her no other option" (Mary L. Shanley, 2021, p. 8). As a result, the law subordinated the wife to the power of her husband, and she could not invoke the law when she sought greater independence or when faced with domestic violence, for example. In her quote, Joan Perkin summarizes some of the limitations imposed by law on married women:

> if a married woman committed any crime in her husband's presence, except murder or high treason, the law presumed that she performed the deed under his coercion and was therefore guiltless. He was also responsible for her debts […]. He was obliged by

> law to support her as long as she shared bed and board […]. He could not ill-use her beyond reasonable chastisement (which stretched in those days of corporal punishment to the actual beating of wives as well as children, servants and petty offenders, provided it fell short of life and limb), and he could not imprison her with impunity. Although he was entitled to all her property and earnings except what her relatives and friends could hold in trust for her, he could not will away her personal jewellery or clothes, though he could dispose of them during her life with her presumed consent. […] any child she had during marriage was her husband's, however improbable the circumstances, unless he sued another man for 'criminal conversation' and could prove her adultery with him. (Perkin, 2016, p.56)

The common law therefore assumed that a woman is unable to properly assess her own actions and their consequences, and that she should act under the duress of her husband. It is also worth noting that the husband often held authority in the marriage and that many of the factors that served to oppress the married woman had to do with property issues. In addition, it was more difficult for women to lead an independent lifestyle because they were responsible for the household. They were also excluded from the expanding industrial society and its social structures and were generally marginalized.

Mr. Lockwood narrates the first pages of the book. In 1801, the new tenant of Thrushcross Grange, Mr. Lockwood, visits his landlord, Mr. Heathcliff, who shares a house in Wuthering Heights with young Catherine and his cousin Hareton Earnshaw, just next door. He falls asleep and in his dream encounters a ghostly youth who calls herself Catherine Linton. The next day he sets out for home. Mr. Lockwood, who has been ill for some time, inquires of his servant Nelly Dean about the inhabitants of Wuthering Heights. Nelly Dean, who serves both families, then begins to tell the peculiar stories of the Lintons, who live in the house, and the Earnshaws from Wuthering Heights. Her story links the four sections of the book, all of which deal with the fate of the two families and center on the love story of Heathcliff and Catherine. This love turns into great pain for the lovers under the influence of the strict rules of Victorian society.

The center of the novel is Heathcliff. He is ruthless and despotic, unrestrained and fully committed to achieving his greatest goal at any cost to others or himself. In Catherine, he sees his ideal partner. He worships her. Heathcliff thinks that Catherine betrays him by marrying Edgar Linton, destroying the freedom they had as children on the moors. The Lintons, Earnshaws, and their children are cruelly punished by him. The book ends in 1802, when Mr. Lockwood returns to the Heights. Although several people claim to have seen Heathcliff and Catherine exploring the moor, Lockwood learns that Heathcliff has died unexpectedly and is buried near Catherine.

During her childhood, when her life was confined to the confines of her father's estate and his conventionalist educational philosophy of teaching her proper feminine manners, Catherine Earnshaw experienced the first, albeit milder, form of confinement. For example, the father has forgotten the gifts he promised his children, such as Catherine's whip and Hindley's fiddle, due to Heathcliff's unwanted intrusion. This scene illustrates the father's view of what is appropriate girl behavior. Learning that her father lost her whip, Catherine "showed her humor by grinning and spitting at the stupid little thing, earning for her pains a sound blow from her father to teach her cleaner manners" (Brontë, 1994, p. 37).

As Catherine's acquaintance with Heathcliff deepens, Mr. Earnshaw's conviction that she should be taught "purer manners" becomes clearer. As her father warms to Heathcliff and shows him more affection than her, she becomes wilder and begins to get into mischief. Because of his attitude towards Heathcliff, this eventually leads to an argument between Catherine and the father. With the support of Heathcliff, Catherine becomes increasingly disobedient to her father's rules as she rebels against the patriarchal religion. Thus, Catherine's emotional control over Heathcliff becomes her only means of gaining the attention of her father, who has always been strict and serious with them.

> His peevish reproofs wakened in her a naughty delight to provoke him,; she was never so happy as when we were all scolding her at once, and she defying us with her bold, saucy look, and her ready words; turning Joseph's religious curses into ridicule, baiting me, and doing what her father hated most, showing how her pretended insolence, which he thought real, had more power over Heathcliff than his kindness: how the boy would do her bidding in anything, and his only when it suited his own inclination. (Brontë, 1994, p. 43)

This suggests that there is no way for women to escape oppression. Even though they repeatedly succeed in reconciling, their efforts are in vain, for each time they fail, they are further rejected. At one point Catherine tries to explain her reason, to which Mr. Earnshaw replies: ''Nay, Catherine ... I cannot love thee; thou'rt worse than thy brother. Go and say thy prayers, child, and ask God's pardon. I doubt thy mother and I must rue that ever we reared thee!"(Brontë, 1994, p. 43).

Emily Brontë thus criticizes through Mr. Earnshaw, a patriarchal authority figure, how adults treat children. Although he is gracious enough to care for a starving orphan, he openly exercises his authority. When Catherine behaves inappropriately, Heathcliff subtly uses his authority on her. The Heights continues to be a place of oppression and brutality even after Mr. Earnshaw's death; but then that Hindley, another patriarchal figure rules the Heights. Hindley uses the social influence he has gained to abuse Catherine and Heathcliff, either punishing them for exploring the moor or forcing them to participate in moral and religious instruction.

Wuthering Heights also portrays the property problems associated with marriage, as Heathcliff forces Catherine II and Linton into marriage so that he can become Catherine's II father-in-law and inherit Catherine II estate. Even before the couple had a legal marriage, the laws governing marriage went into force. As soon as a woman consented to marrying a man, Perkin states that ''she could not thereafter dispose of or give away her property without the consent of her betrothed.'' (Perkin, 2016, p.16). As soon as the marriage the contract was signed, the wife's submission began. And even if the two did not live together, the wife's husband had the right to use and dispose of all the property she had acquired before the marriage and all the money she had earned during the marriage. In other words, because women were under so much pressure to marry, they had little to no ability to own property or money. Property acquired before marriage belonged to the husband after marriage, and if acquired during marriage, it also belonged entirely to the husband. *Wuthering Heights* also shows these realities when Heathcliff forcibly reclaims his son Linton, even though his mother Isabella wishes him to have no contact with Heathcliff.

Brontë builds Catherine Earnshaw's gender identity using various Victorian female gender norms. E. Brontë uses the description of feelings to show how Catherine conforms to the expectations of the female gender in Victorian society. Women in the Victorian era were often considered emotional. E. Brontë uses her understanding of this norm to create Catherine's gender identification. According to E. Brontë, Catherine is sobbing and compassionate towards Mr. Heathcliff. The ability to cry could be seen as a sign of emotional openness, which would be consistent with the gender norm for women. Another emotion often associated with Victorian women, who believed that showing empathy was part of being a compassionate person, is empathy . Therefore, tears and empathy are emotions that show adherence to Victorian gender ideals for women. Although Catherine is forced by society to suppress her emotions and true feelings for Heathcliff, Brontë allows the reader to understand these feelings:

> My love for Linton is like the foliage in the woods. Time will change it, I'm well aware, as winter changes the trees- my love for Heathcliff resembles the eternal rocks beneath- a source of little visible delight, but necessary. Nelly, I am Heathcliff- he's always, always in my mindnot as a pleasure, any more I am always a pleasure to myself, but ,as my own being (Brontë, 1994, p. 87).

The reader can infer from this sentence that Catherine has strong affection for Heathcliff. She did not really feel the way she did when she decided to marry Edgar, and her feelings about marriage are not entirely genuine. However, she has to suppress her feelings. Because of societal constraints, Catherine's sense of responsibility overwhelms her feelings. Women do not have the right to choose the spouse they want. According to Rousseau:

> This is the right of nature, which nothing can abrogate. Those who have hindered it by so many civil laws have paid more attention to the appearance than to the happiness of marriage and the morals of citizens (Rousseau , 2016, p. 400)

Catherine Earnshaw, the protagonist of *Wuthering Heights*, tries to have a passionate and forbidden relationship with Heathcliff, away from the city and community life, stepping out of the role of 'angel at home', governed by social responsibility and Victorian norms, but Victorian traditions, values and social pressures do not give Catherine the love she desires. does not let him. Therefore, Catherine dies because of social pressures. The cause of Catherine's death is not known, but she died giving birth to her child. However, her daughter Cathy was born prematurely two months ago. Here it is noticeable that Edgar is as saddened by the death of his wife as he is by the fact that the child is a girl. For having a daughter means that he cannot leave his inheritance and continue his surname. The sadness of a father because his child is a girl is the clearest indication that the high price of womanhood begins at birth.

Catherine has no choice in the time in which she lives but to marry a wealthy man. Marriage is an inevitable consequence for women, for they are not allowed to pursue an education or earn their own living. As Gilbert and Gubar states:

> As we have seen, Catherine has no meaningful choices. Driven from Wuthering Heights to Thrushcross Grange by her brother's marriage, seized by Thrushcross Grange and held fast in the jaws of reason, education, decorum, she cannot do anything better than getting married to Edgar. (Gilbert and Gubar, 2000, p. 67)

Catherine is forced to rely on a man to survive. Women accept actual male dominance for the purpose of social and cultural survival. It appears to be every woman's lot in life. And it is society that causes women to be dependent on males only due to their gender and social standing,

including income, and places them in a submissive position. Edgar uses his position of power to remind Catherine of her duties as a wife. As mentioned in the following quotation:

> Because Cathy does not fully understand the patriarchal system, she does not appreciate until it is too late that once she has legally aligned herself with Edgar. She is more constrained by the system than before. She no longer has any legal power over her own destiny since she is no longer considered to be an independent person in the eyes of the law. A married woman, she no longer can choose whether or not to stay connected to Heathcliff. She can petition, coax, entreat, and cajole her 43 husband to tolerate Heathcliff's presence in their life, but the ultimate power of decision lies in the hands of her husband. Edgar's self-interest will be more of a determining factor than his wife's affections. (Torgerson , 2010, p. 112)

Catherine is no longer as free as she was as a child, as Torgerson notes. She does not understand her place in patriarchal society until she is married. After marriage, Catherine feels confined in a society where patriarchal norms are very strong. At this moment, Catherine has no other options. She could neither separate from Edgar nor return to Heathcliff. When the story was written in 1847, a woman could not divorce her husband without his consent. She is thus bound by patriarchal restrictions. In other words, marriage is a system that takes away the woman's freedom and puts her under the full control of her husband; in short, it ignores the woman.

In *Jane Eyre*, Jane rebels against marriage and pursues her own choices, while Catherine does not. Although they actually have much in common, Jane and Catherine differ on this point. Catherine pays with her life for the social pressures Victorian society places on women and for participating in the institution of marriage, which is under male control. In fact, Catherine has some health problems during her marriage, but her husband does not even know about it. In other words, it is clear that the woman is no different from 'any thing in the house' in the institution of marriage. In other words, the woman plays no role in the institution of marriage other than extending lineage and running the household.

CONCLUSION

In the middle of the 19th century, Europe was the scene of the greatest political turmoil in its history. Since the beginning of the century, the country was the scene of social protests against the existing social structure. England was on its way to becoming an empire, but the country's social and economic contradictions had intensified. So much so that, in this male-dominated society, granting all men the right to vote seemed to be a major step toward changing society. The struggle of women for independence, self-determination and liberation could be perceived as a rebellion against the established order and values.

In the nineteenth century, women faced various obstacles when it came to writing and had to overcome these obstacles in order to express themselves. Women had the difficult task of challenging the social norms, standards, and exclusions they faced. However, since they were excluded from social, political, and economic activities, literature arguably remained their only means of expressing their situation. Writing gave them the opportunity to stage a creative revolt against the discrimination they experienced as writers and as women. Whether Jane Austen or the Brontë sisters, their criticism of the flaws in the social order that affected women of the time were evident in all of their works. The Brontë sisters are unsurpassed in English literature, for no other trio of sisters has made such a strong literary effect. The Brontës portrayed the social, intellectual, and passionate facets of women in their characters. To achieve their independence, they simultaneously gave their heroines authority over their passionate side. Brontë sisters, defied the norm and fought against non-literary restrictions being imposed on their works. In their works, they showed courage, candor, and bluntness. When viewed in the context of their social and historical setting, Brontë sisters' writings are fundamentally feminist. The fact that these novels were written by three unmarried sisters caused quite a stir in the literary world. Their strong writing style and extremely secluded lives formed a stark contrast that aroused great curiosity about them and their works. Their works were groundbreaking for the time, as they sought to represent the cultural positioning of the nineteenth-century and concerns about women, their place in society, their desires and fears, and their need for individuality and independence. The Brontë sisters engaged in a constant struggle to promote notions of female autonomy. The Brontë sisters were undoubtedly gifted writers. They were interested in and spoke about the yearnings and passions,

the desires and aspirations of the women. In doing so, they painted a true, if depressing, picture of the condition of women in nineteenth-century England.

The Brontë sisters lived a life away from urban life in Yorkshire in the 19th century and left very important classics to world literature. Emily, Charlotte and Anne are the forerunners of today's feminist theorists, because they wrote about the social oppression of women of all classes in the Victorian era. Of course, it is not possible to speak of a strong feminism in the 19th century. In this period we can only speak of a consciousness of equality that is just taking shape. This awareness of gender equality was realized thanks to the efforts of Brontë sisters and other women writers. While living a life apart from the vibrant social and cultural life of the city, the Brontës, around whom countless myths entwine, are in fact the extraordinarily talented daughters of an Irish immigrant family struggling to get a good education.

Although not many details are known about the life of Emily, who is considered more talented than her sister Charlotte, 19th century gothic writer Elizabet Gaskell, who wrote the biography of Charlotte Brontë; She uses the words 'wild' and 'introverted' to describe Emily. Today, however, it is understood that she was an extraordinary talent who managed to become one of the classics of literature with her only novel, *Wuthering Heights*, published in 1847.

The novels *Wuthering Heights* and *Jane Eyre*, analyzed for this thesis, illustrate how women are oppressed in Victorian society. Women were required to behave according to societal norms throughout the Victorian era. They were expected to be submissive, silent, and obedient. On the other hand, Brontë sisters created unorthodox heroines who deviated from Victorian norms of femininity. Their existence, personalities, and outward appearance do not conform to Victorian ideals. The Brontë sisters intend Jane and Catherine's problems to be presented in a way that conforms to Victorian social conventions.

Wuthering Heights highlights the societal constraints that prevent women from discovering their own selves. By focusing on the portrayal of her female characters-who are not given the same opportunities as their male counterparts-she hopes to show society's contradictory attitudes toward men and women. As Laura C. Berry notes, ''imprisonment is dominant in Emily Brontë's Wuthering Heights''. (Berry, 1996, p. 4) Her female characters, always constrained in their behavior by the social dictates of patriarchy, constantly struggle to gain their own identities and to live as they wish. But despite their efforts, they are unable to escape the norms and restrictions of

patriarchal society. Thus, the only way out of their sad situation is death. According to Lyn Pykett, Emily Brontë' novel *Wuthering Heights* stands out for combining two important literary subgenres: domestic fiction and Gothic literature. Pykett continues by saying:

> *Wuthering Heights* straddles literary traditions and genres. It combines elements of the Romantic tale of evil-possession, and Romantic developments of the eighteenth century Gothic novel, with the developing Victorian tradition of Domestic fiction in a realistic mode. (Pykett, 1989, p. 88)

In *Wuthering Heights*, Brontë illustrates the adverse effects of a marriage based more on social norms than on love. A bad marriage has made Catherine a victim. She hides her true self in favor of marrying the socially acceptable Edgar in order to fit into society. Catherine is not satisfied playing the role of a wife. At Thrushcross Grange, she experiences exclusion. She begins to long for Wuthering Heights, her home, and her independence. When Catherine first discovers the strength of patriarchy, she thinks of suicide. She welcomes her own death caused by hunger. Thanks to her madness, she has a measure of control over her actions. She fights against patriarchal domination while wearing a mask of madness. She also strives to fulfill her dreams in order to find happiness. With the help of her memories of Heathcliff, she manages to return to her childhood and find joy and freedom. But her individual efforts cannot lead her to happiness. With Jane Eyre, on the other hand, the situation is different. She managed to resist the patriarchal system with confident and determined steps. Thus, unlike Catherine, she married for true love and not for money and social prestige.

Jane Eyre's dual role as a female protagonist in a male-dominated society and as an outspoken feminist within that society reveals a certain dichotomy. This contrast inspires both the character Jane Eyre and Charlotte Brontë as an author commenting on modern society to make feminist statements. Specifically, Jane notes to Mr. Rochester that the assumption that equality is dictated by gender is explicitly questioned and debated. "your claim to superiority depends on the use you have made of your time and experience" (Brontë, 2016, p. 157). Jane's perceptible expression indicates her beliefs as a female character, suggesting that her own life experiences and approach to time are comparable to Mr. Rocheste's. Jane Eyre did not stop to achieve her goals in life. She accepted herself as she was, respected herself for her way of life, and always valued education.

The Brontë sisters ably illustrate how Victorian society viewed women as secondary. The female characters in the novels are dependent, passive, and mute individuals with no identity, no place, and no voice. They acquire identities that have to do with gender. Women are dominated and oppressed by male supremacy.

It is already mentioned that gender norms affect both men and women. In this regard, we have seen in both novels that both Heatcliff and Rochester have been subjected to gender stereotypes and deprived of happiness, which is actually the greatest product of freedom. Gender reveals itself as a bondage in individuals. Of course, this captivity is not physical for the man, but emotional and intellectual. Having spent a life hiding his first wife, Bertha Mason, who is a Creole, Rochester is a person who cannot live as he wishes, cannot act like a free man, and cannot use the power of being a sovereign power. In *Jane Eyre*, Rochester is all alone. Although he has friends and servants around him, he is lonely because he is emotionally lonely. Although he loves Jane Eyre to death, he cannot explain his feelings to her. Heathcliff was humiliated in his childhood and early adolescence because he lacked financial power and did not have a strong family. These pressures and humiliations took away his happiness. In other words, we do not just see women in captivity in the novels. We also see men oppressed and unhappy because of the responsibilities imposed by society. This shows that gender stereotypes have a negative impact on both men and women.

Women's liberation in the Victorian era was hindered by a number of factors, as this thesis shows. The Brontë sisters, who were women of the Victorian age, experienced severe gender discrimination at the time. Their personal struggles against patriarchal constraints are undoubtedly reflected in the way they are portrayed in their novels *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights*. In *Jane Eyre*, at the end of the novel, Jane achieves both social and financial freedom while maintaining her determination to be independent of others, especially men. She thus embodies the author's idea that the social order can change for the benefit of women. *Wuthering Heights*, on the other hand, offers little hope for female independence, as it exudes a tone of terror and despair. From this standpoint, it could be argued that Wuthering Heights symbolizes the impossibility of female emancipation through its depiction of Catherine trapped in the ongoing patriarchal system.

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