

ATILIM UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE
ENGLISH CULTURE AND LITERATURE DOCTORAL PROGRAMME

**A GYNOCRITICAL STUDY OF GENDER IN THE SUB-GENRES OF THE
VICTORIAN NOVEL: CHARLOTTE BRONTE'S *JANE EYRE*, ELIZABETH
GASKELL'S *NORTH AND SOUTH* AND MARY ELIZABETH BRADDON'S
LADY AUDLEY'S SECRET.**

Dissertation

Ziead AL-KHAFAT

Ankara-2022

ATILIM UNIVERSITY
GRADUATE SCHOOL OF SOCIAL SCIENCES
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE
ENGLISH CULTURE AND LITERATURE DOCTORAL PROGRAM

**A GYNOCRITICAL STUDY OF GENDER IN THE SUB-GENRES
OF THE VICTORIAN NOVEL: CHARLOTTE BRONTE'S *JANE
EYRE*, ELIZABETH GASKELL'S *NORTH AND SOUTH* AND
MARY ELIZABETH BRADDON'S *LADY AUDLEY'S SECRET*.**

Dissertation

Ziead AL-KHAFAF

Supervisor
Prof. Dr. N. Belgin ELBIR

Ankara-2022

ACCEPTANCE AND APPROVAL

This is to certify that this dissertation titled “A Gynocritical Study of Gender in the Sub-genres of the Victorian novel: Charlotte Bronte’s *Jane Eyre*, Elizabeth Gaskell’s *North and South* and Mary Elizabeth Braddon’s *Lady Audley’s Secret*.” and prepared by Ziead Al-Khafaf meets with the committee’s approval unanimously/by a majority vote as dissertation in the field of English Language and Literature following the successful defense of the thesis conducted on 17/1/2022

Prof. Dr. Nüzhet Berrin AKSOY (Jury Chair)

Prof. Dr. N. Belgin Elbir (Supervisor)

Prof. Dr. Nazan Tutaş (Jury Member)

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Zeynep Atayurt Fenge (Jury Member)

Assist. Prof. Dr. Kuğu Tekin (Jury Member)

Prof. Dr. Dilaver Tengilimoğlu (Director)

ETHICS DECLARATION

I hereby declare that;

- I prepared this thesis in accordance with Atılım University Graduate School of Social Sciences Thesis Writing Directive,
- I prepared this thesis within the framework of academic and ethics rules,
- I presented all information, documents, evaluations and findings in accordance with scientific ethical and moral principles,
- I cited all sources to which I made reference in my thesis,
- The work of art in this thesis is original,

I hereby acknowledge all possible loss of rights in case of a contrary circumstance. (in case of any circumstance contradicting with my declaration)

[Date and Signature]

Ziead Al-Khafaf

ÖZ

AL-KHAF, Ziad. “Viktorya Dönemi Romanı Alt Türlerinde Toplumsal Cinsiyet Konusunun Jinoeleştirel Yaklaşımla İncelenmesi: Charlotte Brontë’nin *Jane Eyre*, Elizabeth Gaskell’in *North and South*, Mary E. Braddon’ın *Lady Audley’s Secret* Adlı Romanları”, Doktora Tezi, Ankara, 2021.

İngiliz kadın roman yazarları, özellikle on dokuzuncu yüzyılın başından itibaren, kadınların özel yaşam ile toplumsal yaşam alanları arasındaki karşılıklı aşmak için verdikleri mücadeleyi ve çabalarını betimleyen, edebi niteliği yüksek, çok sayıda eser yayımlamışlardır. Bu tezin kuramsal çerçevesini oluşturan “jinoeleştiri” kuramının sahibi Amerikalı kuramcı ve eleştirmen Elaine Showalter’a göre, kadınların deneyimleri tarih anlatılarının çoğunda önemsizleştirildiği, hatta kimi zaman tamamen göz ardı edildiği için, kadın yazarların eserleri kadınların yaşamları ve deneyimleri konusunda bilgi edinmek açısından son derece değerli birer kaynak olabilir. Bu görüşten hareketle bu tezde, on dokuzuncu yüzyıldan üç kadın yazarın, söz konusu dönemde gelişen farklı roman türlerinde yazılmış birer eseri incelenmektedir. Bu eserler, Charlotte Brontë’nin *Jane Eyre*, Elizabeth Gaskell’in *North and South*, Mary E. Braddon’ın *Lady Audley’s Secret* adlı romanlarıdır. Tezin amacı, romanlarda kadın karakterlerin nasıl temsil edildiğini incelemek; aynı zamanda, farklı türlerin biçim ve içerik özelliklerinin yazarlara ne gibi olanaklar sağladığını araştırmaktır. Showalter’ın kuramından, kendisinin önerdiği kültürel model bağlamında yararlanılarak yapılan inceleme sonucunda, kadın yazarların “yumuşatılmış” olarak tanımlanabilecek bir söylem tercih ettikleri saptanmıştır. Elizabeth Gaskell’in *North and South*, bir “sanayi romanı” olarak, kadın ve erkek işçilerin çalışma koşullarına odaklanmakta, böylece kadın karakterlere toplumsal yaşam içinde daha geniş bir alan açmaktadır. Charlotte Brontë’nin *Jane Eyre*, “bildungsroman” türünde bir roman olarak, kahramanı Jane’in kişisel gelişimine ve olgunlaşma sürecine vurgu yapmakta ve böylece, kadınlara biçilmiş geleneksel rollerin dışına çıkabileceğini göstermektedir. Mary E. Braddon’ın *Lady Audley’s Secret* adlı romanı ise, “sansasyon romanı” özelliği ile, fiziksel güzellik gibi geçici değerlere önem vermenin yanlışlığını ortaya koyarak kadın karakterlerinin insan yönlerini öne çıkarmaktadır.

Anahtar Sözcükler: jinoeleřtiri, toplumsal ve özel yařam, gelişim romanı, sansasyon romanı, sanayi romanı.



ABSTRACT

{Al-Khafaf Ziead}. {A Gynocritical Study of Gender in the Sub-genres of the Victorian novel: Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, Elizabeth Gaskell's *North and South* and Mary Elizabeth Braddon's *Lady Audley's Secret*}. {Ph.D. Thesis, Ankara {2021}}.

British women writers from the first half of the nineteenth century wrote not only prolifically but also managed to document and represent the ways in which the women of that time negotiated the dichotomies of the public and private spheres. According to Elaine Showalter, whose theory of gynocriticism informs the research methodology adopted in this thesis, since women's experiences were either undermined in the annals of history or completely ignored, the works of women writers can be a valuable source to learn about their exclusive experiences. For this purpose, the novels *North and South* by Elizabeth Gaskell, *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Brontë and *Lady Audley's Secret* by Mary Elizabeth Braddon, each belonging to a different genre, were chosen as the subjects of analysis. Along with the need to dissect representations of women, the study also explored whether the three different genres helped these writers to authenticate these representations and experiment with it. Using Showalter's theory of gynocriticism from a cultural perspective, it was found that women writers often chose to narrate their stories in what could be described as a muted discourse. This was a discourse which, despite complying covertly with the expected Victorian norms, perpetuated more nuanced and groundbreaking ideas in overt tones. Furthermore the different genres provided these women writers with more space to reinvent their heroines. *North and South*, an industrial novel perpetuated the idea of greater female autonomy in the public space with its emphasis on improved working conditions for both men and women. *Jane Eyre*, a bildungsroman novel with its inherent focus on the ability of self-help and self-education, allowed Jane to overcome most obstacles despite a lack of resources traditionally thought as compulsory for women. Finally, *Lady Audley's Secret*, a sensation novel, exposed the flaws of valuing superficial beauty thereby humanizing all women.

Keywords: gynocriticism, public and private spheres, bildungsroman, sensation, industrial novel

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to my supervisor Prof. Dr. N. Belgin Elbir for her endless and devoted supervision, for her kind patience, strong motivation and ample experience. Prof. Dr. N. Belgin Elbir enlightened me throughout the years of my study for my Ph.D. Besides my supervisor, I would like to thank Assoc. Prof. Dr. Zeynep Atayurt Fenge and Assist. Prof. Dr. Kugu Tekin for their informative and helpful comments and contributions in accomplishing this thesis. Last but not least, I would like to thank my dearest family (my father, Dr. Dhirgham and my mother, Ahlam) for their continues support and motivation. I would like to dedicate this work to my mother because the day she got a breast cancer, she went through a depression state and she told me that “I would like to see you the best person in this world because you are my only son, so please grant me my last wish which is, this Ph.D”. This is all for you my mother, may Allah help you in your sickness, please get well soon. I could never forget my lovely wife, Dr Zena who supported me, not only throughout my Ph.D, but throughout my whole marital life. My two dear angels, Danie and Ranie, they brought me so many coffee mugs and fruits to motivate me to do the best in my study. They took care of the house while I was away, they helped their mom, my deepest thanks to you dears. My lovely ‘king’, my son, Abdullah, is the one who gives me the inspiration with his angelic and pure smile to continue my work with ease. My dear friend Rasool, who supported me and tolerated me when I was angry, thank you from the bottom of my heart.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ÖZ.....	i
ABSTRACT	iii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	iv
TABLE OF CONTENTS.....	v
INTRODUCTION.....	1
CHAPTER 1: THEORETICAL AND HISTORICAL FRAMEWORK	14
1.1. Gynocriticism: Elaine Showalter	14
1.2. The Cultural Model of Gynocriticism	23
1.3. Culture, the Double Voiced Discourse, and Gynocriticism.....	28
CHAPTER 2: NORTH AND SOUTH	40
2.1. North and South as an Industrial Novel	40
2.2. <i>North and South</i> and the Female Culture	50
2.3. Shifting Ambitions in the Female Culture.....	69
CHAPTER 3: JANE EYRE	75
3.1. <i>Jane Eyre</i> as a Bildungsroman.....	78
3.2. The Victorian Evangelical Culture and Jane Eyre's Virtual Dissension.....	104
CHAPTER 4: LADY AUDLEY'S SECRET	116
4.1. <i>Lady Audley's Secret</i> as a Sensation Novel.....	116
4.2. Lady Audley as a Perpetrator and a Victim.....	137
4.3. Female Sexuality and Male Exploits in the Sensation Novel	146
CONCLUSION.....	155
WORKS CITED.....	168
TURNITIN REPORT	184
RÉSUMÉ.....	203

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this research study is to analyse three selected Victorian novels in the light of the theory of gynocriticism coined by Elaine Showalter in her article “Towards a Feminist poetics” (Showalter 1979: 216). The research will conduct a gynocritical feminist study of the representation of women and their changing roles in *Jane Eyre* (1847) by Charlotte Bronte, *North and South* (1854) by Elizabeth Gaskell and *Lady Audley's Secret* (1862) by Mary Elizabeth Braddon. The three novels represent conventions of different subgenres, namely bildungsroman, industrial and sensation novels of the early and mid-Victorian era.

The study will analyse three sub-genres of the Victorian novels from Showalter's gynocritical lens in order to show how different genres enable writers to voice their female characters' suppressed emotions and highlight the dominance between the debates in the Victorian period around the conditions of women and the sub-genres of the Victorian novel. The novels have been taken from the feminine phase of Victorian novels when novels were becoming very popular and women writers contributed a fair share in this period. These women writers not only highlighted the problems faced by women, but also the dominant issues of the period. Showalter identifies the feminine phase “as the period from the appearance of the male pseudonym in the 1840s to the death of George Eliot in the 1880” (Showalter 1977: 14). According to Showalter, many women emerged in this period who entered the professional zones from which they were previously barred. Many of the activities of the Victorian women “as social reformers, nurses, governesses, and novelists, either were based in the home or were extensions of the feminine role as teacher, helper, and mother of mankind” (Showalter 1977: 14).

This study assumes a very close relationship between the representation of female characters and their experiences, and the forms and plots of different sub-genres. This is in fact a two-way relationship and this will be analyzed with the help of gynocritical theory. It will also be assessed if the difference of genre and conventions enable the women writers to describe the different kinds of problems in a variety of ways. Moreover, the study will also focus on the ways the three different sub-genres of Victorian era are compared and contrasted in terms of the representation of female characters.

All the novels selected for the study have been taken from early and mid-Victorian period. This was a period when novel began to prosper and a contribution was made by women novelists such as Bronte, Brandon, Gaskell, Trollope, etc. This was also an important period for women because the debates of the woman question had ensued. The Victorian society was filled with debates about a woman's social roles and nature.

Each of the novels selected focuses on female protagonists who act as a mirror of the lives of women in Victorian society of this period. As this was the initial phase of feminism, the debates and ideologies of women also differed about the roles of women in the society. According to Nicola Thompson and Gillian Beer in *Victorian Women Writers and the Women Question*, “radical writers were as likely as conservatives to write boomerang plots that either catapult their rebellious heroines back into conventionality or show the next generation's backlash against their mothers' feminism” (190).

As stated earlier, a gynocritical approach will be the main theoretical framework in examining the various depictions of the female characters in the novels written in the modes discussed above. Gynocriticism is concerned with the assessment of the ways in which women not only read texts as women, but also write them as women. In other words, it focuses on how women use their own individuality as females and write literary pieces without being influenced by the patriarchal norms and traditions of writing. In “Towards a Feminist Poetics,” Elaine Showalter maintains that there are two kinds of female-centred literary critical works— “The first type is concerned with woman as reader - with woman as the consumer of male-produced literature... The second type of feminist criticism is concerned with woman as writer - with woman as the producer of textual meaning, with the history, themes, genres and structures of literature by women” (Showalter 1979: 216). The central aim of gynocriticism is to locate the literary works of women in which the female-centric works are brought to the limelight and are not side-lined by other literary theories. The aim of gynocriticism has been defined by Elaine Showalter as a program “ to construct a female framework for the analysis of women's literature, [and] to develop new models based on the study of female experience, rather than to adapt male models and theories” (1979: 202). In other words, gynocriticism wants feminist or gynocritical theory as well as the literary

works of female writers to gain the same status as other male-oriented works or theories.

In her essay “Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness”, Elaine Showalter has presented four such models to use when investigating novels written by women. These models are based on the differences of female body, language, psychology and culture. In her models, Showalter has not specifically included the discussion of any novel to describe the model. She simply delineates her framework “to define and differentiate the qualities of the woman writer and the woman's text; each model also represents a school of gynocentric feminist criticism with its own favorite texts, styles, and methods” (Showalter 187: 1981).

The bodily, psychoanalytic and language models focus on the difference between men and women. As this dissertation will focus more on the representation of women in the selected novels and in analyzing how the women novelists perceive and portray their female characters in the Victorian cultural setup, the analysis will be based on the cultural model. The cultural analysis would provide a wider perspective about the lives of the Victorian women. This would enable us to see what kind of life were the Victorian women living—what were they allowed to do and what were they forbidden to do. These will also help in shedding light on how the question of morality and moral values are represented in these novels. Locating these novels within their cultural context will also aid a better understanding of the significance of the particular ways in which these female characters have been presented.

In “Towards a Feminist Poetics”, Elaine Showalter argues that the literary tradition of women should be acknowledged and recognized. Showalter maintains that feminist criticism is divided in two varieties. The first type is concerned with “women as reader” in which women criticize and challenge the patriarchal mindset in literary works. The second type is gynocriticism which is concerned with the contribution of “women as writers.” This thesis is also concerned with the second phase of women as writers and aims to assess in what way did women contribute to literary tradition in feminine phase of literature in the form of different sub-genres. The thesis will also contribute to the body of critical writings that highlight the works of women writers at a time when women’s role was largely marginalized due to conversations around the public and private spheres.

“The woman question” in the victorian period and the public and private spheres

Many legal and political rights were given to the common people in the Victorian era, but these reforms completely excluded women. Middle class men were given voting rights after the Reform Bill 1832 but this right did not extend to women (Nassar 92). They did not have the right to vote or access to any political position. Women were greatly exploited in the Victorian era. Petitions were made in Parliament about the rights of women by 1840s, but women did not manage to get their rights so soon and could not vote till 1918. Many political rights were given to common men when the Second and Third Reform Acts were introduced in 1867 and 1884 respectively; however, women were not included and they had no right to vote for decades. It was ironical that women could not get legal political rights despite the presence of a queen on the throne of Britain. Even when the Representation of the People Act of 1918 was introduced for women, “it remained subject to a number of qualifications such as age and marital status” (Reed 156)

Women’s transition towards a more expansive role in the public domain did not come until significant achievements in the form of endorsing women’s rights which took place with the passing of important bills. Till 1908 when the Married Women’s Property Acts (1870-1908) was introduced, women could not divorce their husbands. “While men could divorce their wives for adultery, wives could divorce their husbands only if adultery were combined with cruelty, bigamy, incest, or bestiality” (Greenblatt 990). Even when the Married Women’s Property Bill and Marriage and Divorce Bill were introduced, both bills were seen as “an absolute challenge to the sanctity, privacy, and order provided by marital and family relations” (Miller 174). The New Woman argument began when the demand for educational and employment opportunities were offered.

The women following the ideology of New Woman were considered mannish because the New Woman rejected her role of motherhood and it was believed that women were crossing the existing gender boundaries. Such women were often represented as “simultaneously non-female, unfeminine and ultra-feminine” (Pykett 140). However, with the emergence of the New Woman, came the shifting boundaries of the private sphere originally ascribed to women and the public sphere held exclusively by men. The second quarter of the Victorian century began seeing a

lengthy process of change, shifting ideologies, political debates and reformist literature.

In the book titled *The Women of England: Their Social Duties and Domestic Habits* (1839) (a best seller of its time), the author Sarah Ellis delineated some attributes which are now also known as “domestic ideology” (Harrison 31). The ideology of the book explained the social roles of men and women and the idea that men and women should remain in their separate spheres. Ellis maintained that the social sphere belongs to men where they should work in the business sphere, government or political organizations and so on. They are the ones who should strive to give a better material life to their families. It was also upheld that this social world is full of selfishness, evilness and temptation. On the other hand, women should remain in their homes. They should be unselfish, pure and passive and should struggle to bring morality to the society (Ellis 1582). “The long-established customs of their country have placed in their hands the high and holy duty of cherishing and protecting the minor morals of life, from whence springs all that is elevated in purpose, and glorious in action” (Ellis 1582). Ellis and many other similar critics maintained that it is the moral duty of a woman to get married and bear children. Ellis even went on to say that the greatest achievement of the men of her society was the maintenance of the great morality of women (Harrison 31).

Such ideal is presented in the famous poem by Coventry Patmore known as “The Angel in the House” (Harrison 30). It is based on the theme of marriage and courtship. The poem describes womanhood in an elevated style and represents women as godly. However, feminist critics like Virginia Woolf criticized it “both for the sentimentality of its ideal of woman and for the oppressive effect of this ideal on women's lives” (Greenblatt 1839).

By the 1840s, reactions against women’s limited rights and public participation came in the form of literary pieces penned by writers such as Tennyson, Bronte, Gaskell and others. In Tennyson’s poem “The Princess” for example, Princess Ida is a revolutionary woman who renounces the world of women and founds a women university. She is a strong woman who believes in equality. For her, marriage is not an ultimate aim. Instead, she is more interested in educating women. No men are allowed in her all-girls university. In order to woo her, her fiancé (a prince) disguises as a woman and gets admission in the university. He tries to

convince Princess Ida to move back to the castle and marry her fiancé but she refuses. By the end of the poem, she eventually falls in love with the man and marries him. However, her purpose of educating women is never forgotten.

This was the first time that women were described as subjects having rights because till then women were represented as objects of beauty and morality only. Till this period, a man was considered the rightful owner of his wife who controlled her property. By mid-century, however, a number of Victorian men and women had begun the effort to “remove obstacles to women’s equality and advancement” (Harrison 31). John Stuart Mill was also one of the initial writers who wrote for the rights of women (qtd in Nassaar 96). In his *The Subjection of Women* (1869), Mill upheld that men and women are equal in every aspect and should have equal rights as well as opportunities in life. He rejected the popular idea that women were different from men. He was of the view that the difference was imposed over women by the patriarchal society itself. Mill maintained that women should be given due rights in property and they should be allowed to handle their lives and properties. Laws emerged between the years 1870 and 1908 that allowed women such privileges (Nassaar 96).

Eventually, around the mid-nineteenth century, women’s role underwent shifting modalities and this was largely due to the advent of newer identities and opportunities that brought themselves at the doorstep of ‘respectable middle class women’ in the wake of the reform Act of 1832 and the feminist political movement that picked great momentum during 1850s. Because of this shift in women’s activities the concept of the progressive middle class itself began to modify and revolve around voluntary social association, the rising burgeoning pride and governmental offices. This was also the time for heated discourses around the separate spheres for men and women. This was one of the most pervasive ideologies that shaped the roles that men and women took upon in the English society for centuries. According to literary critic Simon Morgan, the primary tenet of this ideology of separate spheres was that women’s ideal place of activity was the confined and private premises of their homes while men negotiated the public and economic spheres (Morgan 1-2).

While until the 1970’s female domesticity was regarded as the primary feature of British and American middle-class lifestyles, studies by Davidoff and Hall

have contested this common assumption. The researchers declared that not only the public success of men was buttressed by a cabal of female supporters but women's confinement to the domestic sphere somewhat over-documented since women had found ingenious ways to negotiate their private spheres for public participation (Morgan 2-4).

A crucial piece of literature that comments on the merging boundaries of the private and public sphere was the book *Family Fortunes* by L. Davidoff and Catherine Hall. It portrays the separation of the public and private spheres as the most basic tenet of the middle class mode of existence, but it also brings light to the various opportunities of reformulating these spheres that women's heightened participation in the economy through industrialization, and the bouts of philanthropy brought them.

For example, Simon Morgan claims that with the criticism that *Family Fortunes* garnered for overstressing the existence of the two spheres prompted some writers towards the until-now-undocumented existence of a third sphere: the 'social sphere'. This was the sphere where "women of the middle and lower classes were able to utilize their domestic skills outside the home in charitable or educational work and so blur the public-private distinction" (Morgan 2-4), and they were able to adapt the "language of domesticity" (Morgan 4) to justify their participation in the public sphere-a venture that Gaskell successfully masters on behalf of Margaret in her novel *North and South*-one of the subjects of this study.

The shift in the Victorian middle class organization of the public and private spheres came with the realization that the kind of education dispensed to women was insufficient for their sustenance in any practical way and this not only negatively affected the women but their future families that involved their husbands, sons, daughters and the nation at large (Milne 332-333).

This could be seen as a major tactical reflection on women's plight. On one hand this reemphasized women's duties at home, but on the other, it paved way for their increasing participation in public matters. Writers such as Thomas Broadhurst were adamant that education of a more serious order would not in any way hinder women from performing their domestic obligations since these came instinctively to women. Their primary argument rested on the belief that cultivation of intellect, instead of brewing vanity, would enable women to observe and execute their duties

in a better way. Ultimately it would come to benefit the men because knowing the demands of the public sphere would result in the women preparing their off springs to meet these challenges and accommodate their husbands emotionally (Broadhurst 2-8).

Men's participation in the public sphere was surrounded with temptations and conflicts that were inextricably tied to economic and political ventures. Writers used this fact to proclaim women's higher moral ground and the need for women to be given the chance to understand the mental turmoil that haunted their men (Ellis 39, Grey and Sherriff 3-4). It was believed that women should develop a firm understanding of science, in order to prevent the misdirection of their energies and to maximize their usefulness.

Writers began to draw on this thought to give momentum to the now surfacing image of the "enlightened and educated women as the spiritual guardians" of men without whose constant guidance they could be derailed from the path of morality and justice. Ruskin's *Of Queen's Gardens* emphasizes the difference between the public and private spheres in a way that poses both in a complementarity of sorts as opposed to a contrasting dialectic. The woman's power is for 'rule, not for battle;' while the man's aptitude is for invention, adventure, speculation, war and conquest. Even for all of Ruskin's progressive thinking, however, women's primary role still hinged on their domestic spheres (Ruskin 121-122). But at least now there perpetuated a discourse on the importance of cultivating sound intellect via serious education for women so that they could assist their husbands and nurture their families in the best way, in accordance with the changing economic, cultural and social demands of the time.

Women's contribution in the public sphere through the training and assistance of the men in their family is one instance of their indirect participation in the public sphere. But there were areas in the public sphere where they were allowed a more active role. This was the role of the reformer that came to be ascribed to women who ensured that the middle and upper class English values were transmitted to the poor of their society. Women's philanthropic duties of such kind, although prevalent traditionally, met a certain degree of revival on account of the evangelical resurgence (Morgan 41-42).

This led to the increased participation of women in the public domain and allowed writers like Gaskell and Bronte to experiment with the roles assigned to their female protagonists in the social order of the Victorian times. It is these very portrayals in the works of Gaskell, Bronte, and Braddon that the study will explore in the upcoming chapters. The novels written by the three novelists broadly fall in three distinctive categories, and the study will give a brief account of the three genres before exploring the contents of the novel itself.

The victorian novels: bildungsroman, the industrial novel and the sensation novel

In this dissertation, novels of three sub-genres have been selected in order to determine the ways in which the difference of sub-genres help the women writers define the experience of women in the Victorian era.

This chapter will shed a cursory glance on the different sub-genres while the next chapter of theoretical framework will elucidate more intensively the correlation between the theory of Gynocriticism and the genres of bildungsroman, industrial novels and sensation novels.

The first of these genres that the analysis will shed light on is the Industrial novel. Industrial novels represent the problems faced by the working class. “Largely written by middle-class writers, the novels highlight poverty, dirt, disease, and industrial abuses such as sweated labor, child workers, and factory accidents; however, they also exhibit anxiety of non-religious working-class and a fear of (potentially violent) collective action, such as Chartism and trade unionism” (Carney 1).

The social reform novels represent the suppressed feelings of the working class and act as stimuli to wake them from their oblivion and compel them to raise their voice against the cruel stratification of the society.

Industrial novels represented the condition of the country because of the rapid changes occurring because of industrialization. Population was increasing but the negative influence of this phenomenon was influencing the poor class the most. Middle class and higher class people realized that there were thousands of men, women and children working for long hours like slaves and getting very little in return. Different reform movements were made. For instance, Ten Hours Movement

was made in order to decrease the labor hours for children. The industrial novel was popular because of its element of pathos for the men, women, and children who were exploited in these factories. Women and children were especially exploited because they were forced to work more on lower wages than men (Simmons 337).

North and South by Elizabeth Gaskell was a popular Industrial novel. In the words of James Richard Simmons Jr, this novel can be considered the best example of an Industrial novel as it contains element which best describes what an Industrial novel consists of.

“In literary terms, *North and South* may be the best of all industrial novels. It is neither preachy nor didactic; the factory question is intrinsic to the action of the novel, yet the story can stand on its own; it does not rely entirely on melodrama; and the characters are vividly portrayed rather than stock villains or angels. Gaskell attempts to deal with the issues surrounding the factory in an even-handed, adult manner, and she presents both sides of the question quite well” (Simmons 349).

The second genre is the Bildungsroman in which an individual’s development is depicted from childhood to adulthood. The variables of development may include “self-realization, inner and outer directedness, education, career, sex roles, attitude toward marriage, philosophical questions, religious crisis and autobiographical elements” (Brändström 13). The term Bildungsroman was coined by Karl Von Morgenstern in 1817. This sub-genre of literature flourished through the middle of the nineteenth century in England.

Bildungsroman is a genre which is normally attributed to male writers; however, there are many female writers who represent the development of their characters in different ways through this genre. There are many similarities between the approach of male and female writers in terms of themes of bildungsroman such as “relationships to family and friends, formal/informal education, sexuality/love and the overall goal of self-development” (Brändström 14). However, there is also a strong difference between the journeys of a male or female heroine represented by male and female writers respectively. For instance, the male heroes often have a mentor while females have to go ahead in their journey on their own without the presence of a mentor. Most often, the male hero accomplishes his goal at a young age, but women seem to develop by the middle age. “Lacking proper guidance in life by a mentor, in contrast to her male counterpart who has reached the end of his

journey as well as important career choices when he is but a young man, the female protagonist's developmental quest is both procrastinated and prolonged into middle age" (Brändström 14). However, this probably happens because of the influence of the patriarchal society where men are given the opportunities while women face resistance when they want to move ahead in life.

Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* is one of the first examples of bildungsroman with a female protagonist, Jane depicting her voyage from a dependent and helpless child to a mature and independent lady amidst her love affair with Edward Rochester which enables her to stand on her feet firmly instead of looking for a male shelter and caretaker to provide for her (Thamarana 4). Brontë's novel *Jane Eyre* represents the emotional turmoil experienced by Jane and how she overcomes it with the passage of time. Jane is a sharp and intelligent girl and getting good grades is not an issue for her. However, expressing her emotions and showing her suppressed anger is something that unconsciously appears to bother her. Jane's story appears to represent a story of "emotional and psychological self-management and maturation" (Maynard 292). She is rational, but her emotional turmoil is sometimes dangerous. The character of Bertha (the madwoman in the attic) is often seen as a symbolic representation of her unconscious which is filled with suppressed anger and agony.

The last of the three genres chosen for this study, the sensation novel is a literary genre that flourished in Britain during the Victorian era in 1860s highlighting dramatic thriller events. The term 'sensation' is initially used in the novels such as *The Woman in White* (1859) and *East Lynne* (1861) (Badinjki 1). The plots of these sensation fictions revolve around dark conspiracies, crimes, murders, hidden secrets and villainous schemes. Many popular authors of the sensation novels include Wilkie Collins, Charles Rede, George Meredith, Caroline Norton, Susan Warner and Felicia Skene.

Braddon's novel *Lady Audley's Secret* was a popular sensation novel which represented sensational and criminal events not as "an accident, but it is the business of life" (Hughes 261). The conventional sensation novels of the Victorian era, the middle-class house was no longer an abode of peace and comfort. Like other classes of the society, the people and homes of the middle-class society had their own fears and heart-wrenching secrets. The focus of the novels was most often to unveil a "menacing secret that threatened to expose the identity of a prominent individual"

(Thomas 178). For instance, the focus of Braddon's novel is to uncover the criminal minded Lady Audley, and the delay to uncover her secrets "is one of the major sources of narrative pleasure, as the main plot of this novel persistently promises to get at the hidden truth of its heroine/ villain, and of woman" (Pykett 89: 2004). The middle-class was also engrained with insecurities resulting from urbanization and industrialization. In these novels, homes were the most likely places for criminal scenes abundant in sensation novels. "Not only had it been invaded by mystery and violence, by impostors like Braddon's Lady Audley, but its very foundations were rooted in secrecy and criminality" (Hughes 261). In Braddon's novel home appears to be an abode of peace, comfort and love in the beginning which is being nurtured by the apparently feminine Lady Audley, but as the novel progresses every positive thing appears to transform into something negative.

It will be interesting to note how the three novels chosen for the analysis in this study play out the complexities and social dichotomies faced by women during their time. Such an examination of women's struggles, their ways to cope with these limitations, and a collective consciousness that must arise from common cultural and social circumstances should definitely bring us a step closer to Showalter's project of examining a collective female consciousness. The four ways of assessing these consciousness were as follows: examining the differences of female body, the female psychology, the female language, and the female culture.

As was mentioned in the beginning of the chapter, the study has chosen just one of these four ways and will examine the three novels exclusively through the lens of female culture. This is because in any given day and age, culture is inclusive of all of the three modes of expression: physiognomy, psychology, and language. The next chapter of theoretical framework will discuss in detail Showalter's theory of gynocriticism, and the way the various genres help women writers manifest their female consciousness. Chapter two will analyse the novel *North and South* by Elizabeth Gaskell. Although appearing later on the publication scene than Bronte's *Jane Eyre*, the reasons for exploring the industrial novel *North and South* first lie in the fact that industrialism as a movement encompassed the general Victorian culture in the nineteenth century and in large measure determined the roles ascribed to men and women during the era. By exploring the contents of the industrial novel, the study will be able to retrieve some valuable insights regarding the general Victorian

political, social and cultural climates. These findings could be then used as a foundation supporting the analysis of the subsequent novels selected for this study, which, although belong to the different genres, are set in a similar culture.

Chapter three will explore the novel *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Bronte in the light of the gynocritical theory while the novel *Lady Audley's Secret* will be analysed in chapter four. A final chapter titled "Conclusion" will follow the analyses supplementing the research's findings.



CHAPTER 1: THEORETICAL AND HISTORICAL FRAMEWORK

1.1. Gynocriticism: Elaine Showalter

The term “gynocriticism” was coined by Elaine Showalter in her essay “Towards a Feminist Poetics” written in 1979 (Showalter 1979: 216). The writer confirms in her essay that the term has been derived from the French word “la gynocritique” (1979: 216). “No term exists in English for such a specialized discourse, and so I have adapted the French term la gynocritique: ‘gynocritics’” (Showalter, 1977: 216). Gynocriticism not only studies the status of a woman as a gender, but the consciousness of a female as an individual. Gynocriticism is a form of literary criticism which would help unveil many women authors who have been neglected by male critics. “Its subjects include the psychodynamics of female creativity; linguistics and the problem of a female language; the trajectory of the individual or collective female literary career; literary history; and, of course, studies of particular writers and works” (Showalter 1997: 216). According to Lois Tyson, a gynocritical study asks several questions such as what does the work show about a woman writer’s creativity and in order to answer this the biographical, cultural and historical information about the writer and the work is taken into account. A gynocritical work also asks “What might an examination of the author’s style contribute to the ongoing efforts to delineate a specifically feminine form of writing?” and in what way a particular work under consideration contribute to the literary tradition of writing done by women (Tyson 120). Showalter is of the view that feminist literary tradition is divided into three phases. In the first phase the female literary tradition was based on the images and perspective of the idealized woman—perfect, meek, dependent. This image was constructed by the patriarchal society in which women were seen as the oppressed “others” by the men. The first phase is the feminine phase which occurs between 1840 and 1880. According to Showalter, in this phase “women wrote in an effort to equal the intellectual achievements of the male culture, and internalised its assumptions about female nature” (1977: 217). The feminist content of feminine art is typically oblique, displaced, ironic and subversive; one has to read between the lines, in the missed possibilities of the text. The second tradition of feminist movement was a reaction to the traditional patriarchal norms of the olden times and the women protested for the rights of the women. Lastly, the most contemporary development in feminism is the

concept of the female in which the female identity is “sought free” from the definitions of female and feminine as defined by the patriarchs (Showalter 13).

The novels chosen for this study all belong to the feminine phase and as such showed noticeable traits that can be examined extensively. One of these traits was being “double bound.” They felt demeaned by the arrogant reviews of the male critics. They did not want to get any special treatment or the acknowledgement of their works. This was so probably because they feared the public sphere in which they had been considered outsiders since birth. They were so scared of the reviews of the male critics that they seemed to have been fearful of writing such content that might appear unwomanly and in consequence result in more criticism. “Part of the conflict came from the fact that, rather than confronting the values of their society, these women novelists were competing for its rewards” (Showalter 1977: 21). The only reward that they seemed to desire was of the approval of the males of the society. This is an important point that can be studied in the novels that represent different sub-genres that have been selected for this thesis. The analysis will show whether the novels are feminine as the term has been defined and whether the novelists appear to fear the backlash of the male critics. This will be revealed through the approach of their novels and seeing certain aspects. For instance, it can also be seen if the women in the novels seem to be looking for the appreciation of the male characters or do they seem satisfied with who they are without judging their lives from the perspective of the males and the Victorian society. Another point of consideration will be to see if the different women characters digress from the path of an ideal Victorian woman or not. If they do, do the characters then realize that what they did was wrong or do they simply remain confident about their actions without caring what others think about them? In addition, to what extent the various genres help these female characters with any kind of social digression, self-expression or formulation of a female consciousness? My claim in this research is that the sub-genres provide the women novelists with opportunities to use strategies by which they create a space for their heroines to undertake different roles. In a way this space is where women manifest their exclusive feminine culture.

In her book, *A Literature of their Own*, Showalter maintains that English women writers have a wide reading audience and because of that they do not need the attention of scholars and critics. However, she says that as women we still do not

know what unites women as women or whether they have a “common heritage connected to their womanhood at all” (Showalter 1977: 3). She cites John Stuart Mill’s argument from “The Subjection of Women” As mentioned earlier, she finds weight to her arguments in Mill’s writings where he speaks of a possible female consciousness. Mill was of the view that if women lived in a different country which excluded men, they would have a literature of their own. However, as they do not live in a separate place and men dominate the literary circles, the writing style of women would never be original because it will imitate the works of men. Hence, they would never be innovative and would never have a literature of their own or an important position in the literary circles. Showalter argues that Mill would never have claimed such things if women had not already gained an important position in the literary circles. This is a relevant point from the perspective of this study because this supports the idea of gynocriticism that women have a literary tradition of their own. Even if women are influenced by the works of male literary tradition but in the same manner many male writers too have been influenced by literary works created by other males. “To many of his contemporaries (and to many of ours), it seemed that the nineteenth century was the Age of the Female Novelist. With such stellar examples as Jane Austen, Charlotte Bronte, and George Eliot, the question of women’s aptitude for fiction, at any rate, had been answered” (Showalter 1977: 3). Many women writers contributed to literature in the nineteenth century which is often known as the most progressive period for the genre of novel and women writers have a fair share in it even if most male critics have not acknowledged them. In this study, three novels have been selected which belong to three distinct sub-genres. The existence of a variety of sub-genres reveal that women were writing a lot in the Victorian period and contributing to the Victorian novel in various forms. Showalter is of the view that it has been very difficult for male or rather patriarchal critics to see the works of female writers with a theoretical perspective because they tend to see them with their stereotypical views which do not allow them to see beyond a limited vision. “The Victorians expected women’s novels to reflect the feminine values they exalted, although obviously the woman novelist herself had outgrown the constraining feminine role” (Showalter 1977: 7).

Another important point to note is that there is a difference between books that have been written by women and the literature which is considered a female

literature. The latter is the type of literature “which purposefully and collectively concerns itself with the articulation of women’s experience, and which guides itself “by its own impulses” to autonomous self-expression” (Showalter 1977: 3). According to Showalter, female writers have always been very conscious about themselves, but they have not always revealed this self-awareness in their novels. Women have always been suppressed in such a manner that they never thought that their experiences and works can become a collective body of consciousness and art in the history. For instance, in the feminist period from 1880 to 1910, writers from both Britain and America often depicted Amazonian Utopian worlds which were inhabited only by women and isolated from the male world. However, even in these isolated and autonomous worlds, there was no “visions of primary womanhood, free to define its own nature and culture, but flights from the male world to a culture defined in opposition to the male tradition” (Showalter 1977: 4). All these Utopian worlds were escapist worlds where women do a lot of social work such as creating organic gardens, curing water pollution and building ideal child centers, but they never consisted of women who wrote books.

As a feminist, or rather a gynocritic, Showalter wanted to represent the female literary tradition in the English novel and to show this tradition is also “similar to the development of any literary subculture” (1977: 11). Showalter maintains that women have often been seen as the “sociological chameleons,” who often imitate the ideas, lifestyle and traditional norms of the dominant culture of their males (11). However, even if they imitate such things, these women then tend to follow the cycle which is often followed by other oppressed classes (11). Some of the relevant literary subcultures are the “black, Jewish, Canadian, Anglo-Indian, or even American” that followed the three-tiered cycle of imitation, protest and self-discovery. According to Showalter, every subculture follows a prolonged period of imitation in which the dominant traditions of the dominant culture is internalized into the social values and artistic forms. In the second phase, the groups then go through a phase of protest in which they raise voice against the dominant culture’s norms and standards and advocate the rights of the minority group. They even demand an autonomy for the minority groups. In the last phase, there is a period of “self-discovery, a turning inward freed from some of the dependency of opposition, a search for identity” (13). Showalter maintains that women have faced the same three

stages, but in respect to them, these stages can be called feminine, feminist and female. Showalter is of the view that from the perspective of the feminist movement, the feminine phase is the “period from the appearance of the male pseudonym in the 1840s to the death of George Eliot in 1880; the feminist phase as 1880 to 1920, or the winning of the vote; and the female phase as 1920 to the present, but entering a new stage of self-awareness about 1960” (13). These stages should not be considered rigid categories. “These are obviously not rigid categories, distinctly separable in time, to which individual writers can be assigned with perfect assurance. The phases overlap; there are feminist elements in feminine writing, and vice versa” (Showalter 1977: 13). These phases might overlap and sometimes one might find all of these phases not just in the entire feminist movement, but in the career of a single female writer.

For women in Britain, the consciousness of a female subculture seems to have come first through “a shared and increasingly secretive and ritualized physical experience. Puberty, menstruation, sexual initiation, pregnancy, childbirth, and menopause—the entire female sexual life cycle—constituted a habit of living that had to be concealed” (Showalter 14). All these elements were never openly discussed, but they were always “accompanied by elaborate rituals and lore, by external codes of fashion and etiquette, and by intense feelings of female solidarity” (Showalter 14). Females seem to have been united through their roles as daughters, mothers and wives and by the internalized doctrines of the Victorian society which constrained them economically, socially and legally. Many times, they were also united for a political cause as well.

Women seem to have been writing novels from a very earlier period, but as they were never critically acknowledged, people never seemed to know about them. The bulk of novels written by women is huge and it is “impossible to say when women began to write fiction” (1977: 16). For instance, by 1750, women seem to have made a huge contribution to the literary marketplace through different mediums but were not acknowledged as men were. By 1773, the Monthly Review noticed that the literary trade seems to have been taken over completely by women. Many of the eighteenth century novels were written by women and the Minerva Press even published as many novels by female writers as published by male writers. It even seems that “men were able to imitate, and even usurp, female experience” (1977:

17). Showalter mentions the point that the critic Oliver Goldsmith was interestingly of the view that many men were writing sentimental novels but were using pseudonyms so that people might not know that some man is writing about themes of marriage, cooking, childcare, midwifery and the like.

Early female writers of the feminine phase seemed to focus mostly on writing novels that Showalter would describe as belonging to the feminine phase while feminist novels were hardly touched by them. Most of these writers wrote novels in which the stereotype of a helpless female in need of a male savior was often exploited. This was done in order to “win chivalrous protection from male reviewers and to minimize their un-womanly self-assertion (1977: 17). Some of the female writers even began to write by hiding their personal identity as a tribute to the Victorian ideals and as their way of hiding from the limelight. However, many other novelists hid their identity only to assert their patriarchal ideologies and avert the unending criticism of both male and female patriarchs. Some of the consistent themes of the eighteenth century Gothic novels were the “balancing of duty and self-fulfillment in domestic fiction” (1977: 18). According to Showalter, the nineteenth century women writers “certainly” had some familiarity with Burney, Edgeworth, Radcliffe, and Austen, as well as with scores of lesser writers such as Inchbald and Holland (1977: 18). However, in the writings of novelists before 1840s there seems to be no sense of female awareness, of a desire to be different, or a yearning to challenge the patriarchy. Women seemed to imitate simply whatever they were fed by the males and the values of the society. Showalter mentions the critic Kathleen Tillotson who says that many critics gave a lot of attention to Jane Austen. However, the immense support towards Jane Austen greatly neglected the works of other female Victorian novelists. Showalter states in her book that according to Tillotson there wasn’t much influence of Austen on writers such as Elizabeth Gaskell, Harriet Martineau, the Bronte sisters and other minor Victorian novelists. Even the so-called debt of George Eliot to Jane Austen seems to be exaggerated. This was a time when the works of Austen were idealized, but the world of Mary Wollstonecraft was not read widely because the Victorians were of the view that her works are scandalous and immoral. The audience was also skeptic about the scandals surrounding her, so her work was also suspected (Showalter 1977: 18).

Most of the women writers began to take novels seriously as a form of female consciousness after 1840s when they began to use pseudonyms. It seems that they began to hide their identity because they were greatly interested in depicting such subjects which were considered taboo in the Victorian world. “Like Eve’s fig leaf, the male pseudonym signals the loss of innocence” (1977: 19). For Showalter, the use of a pseudonym signifies an important historical shift for women. “In its radical understanding of the role-playing required by women’s effort to participate in the mainstream of literary culture, the pseudonym is a strong marker of the historical shift” (Showalter 1977: 19). It was this hidden identity that seemed to give them the guts to question the patriarchal norms and to write novels which were based on female characters who were far from being feminine or who were strong enough to challenge the social world in which they were living.

According to Elaine Showalter, there were three generations of feminine novelists in the nineteenth century. The first generation of writers were those who were born between 1800 and 1820 and it included all those women who are often considered to be part of the “Golden Age of the Victorian authoress: the Brontes, Mrs. Gaskell, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Harriet Martineau, and George Eliot” (1977: 19). The novels selected for this study have also been taken from the same generation of writers. The period in which these novelists were writing corresponds to the time when the novel as a genre was progressing and it was used to address different social issues that were eminent in the British society at the time. These were the writers along with other professional writers like Florence Nightingale, Mary Carpenter, Angela Burdett who were called the female role innovators (1977: 19). They were creating new opportunities and possibilities for other women. They were breaking the iced ground of the rigid Victorian system. The second generation of writers are those who were born between 1820 and 1840 and this group included writers like “Charlotte Yonge, Dinah Mulock Craik, Margaret Oliphant, and Elizabeth Lynn Linton” (1977: 20). These were the writers who followed the footsteps of the writers of the first generation, but they seemed less dedicated, determined and original when compared to the previous group. The third generation of writers are those who were born between the years 1840 and 1860 and this group began to write sensation novels as well as children’s novels. “They seemed to cope effortlessly with the double roles of woman and ... to enjoy sexual fulfillment as

well as literary success” (1977: 20). These women were strong, confident, businesslike, different, and unconventional.

Showalter maintains that when the women of the first generation began their careers as writers, there was “already a sense of what the “feminine” novel meant in terms of genres” (1977: 20). By the middle of the nineteenth century, women had begun to adopt various genres and were producing novels based on the themes of a fashionable life, religious commitments, education and the social setting of their lives which was termed by critics as novels of domestic realism. In this study, three sub-genres of novels by three women writers have been selected. The existence of variety of these sub-genres by first generation of feminine writers suggests that women writers had already begun to adopt a variety of norms to write novels. According to Showalter, the novels by first generation feminine writers represented women as having very influential roles when they occurred in the domestic and social environment. It was this period when female writers began to write novels that seemed to present their personal and social awareness as women.

The literary criticism that developed after this period seemed to have double standards. It consisted of such critiques that viewed the writings of women with very limited terms and perceptions. “There was a place for such fiction, but even the most conservative and devout women novelists, such as Charlotte Yonge and Dinah Craik, were aware that the “feminine” novel also stood for feebleness, ignorance, prudery, refinement, propriety, and sentimentality, while the feminine novelist was portrayed as vain, publicity-seeking, and self- assertive” (Showalter 1977: 20). This is a point worth noting because this represents the gap of critical writings about the first generation of feminine writers and how their works have been viewed with a biased perspective. Showalter claims that the reviewers of these novels confessed that these feminine writers were developing a new kind of novels, but they also complained that these novels were trivial and likewise remarked on the narrowness of the feminine value system that was upheld (1977: 20).

Women writers themselves developed several artistic and personal strategies that might help them overcome these conflicts. One of the personal reactions was “a persistent self-deprecation of themselves as women, sometimes expressed as humility, sometimes as coy assurance-seeking, and sometimes as the purest self-hatred” (Showalter 1977: 21). The novelists often publicly proclaimed that they were

against the idea of The New Woman. Such approaches can also be observed in the novels which are under consideration for this study. It can be seen if the women characters of the selected novels show such attributes or do they exhibit the traits of The New Woman in an open manner without fearing the consequences of the male characters. By proclaiming themselves as anti-feminist, working in homes, preaching a suppressed attitude and self-sacrifice, and by criticizing the assertiveness of females, they “worked to atone for their own will to write” (Showalter 1977: 21). Writing was a vocation in the Victorian society, but the women could not assert openly that their novel writing was a vocation. For them, womanhood was more of a vocation than any other profession. “The evangelically inspired creed of work did affect women, even though it had not been primarily directed toward them” (Showalter 1977: 22). Like men, women were also urged by religion to contribute by working, but in the Victorian era, work for women meant work for others. This point is relevant to the study of the novels in the sense that it can be seen if there are any working women in the novels. If there are, how do the society and the men perceive the vocations of the different women characters? Are there certain vocations that are more respected than other professions or women from any public sphere is considered low and inferior by the Victorian society as depicted in the novels?

The Victorian women were part of a group where girls were trained in suppression, concealment and “self-censorship” from a very young age and this was also evident in their writings. This made their writings very inhibiting. Women writers of the time confessed that women are better than men at concealing their inner feelings because of the so-called moral training which made them suppress their emotions and hide their thoughts. As a result, women were allowed a very small range of vocabulary in which they could write their novels or else their writing was called coarse and immoral. “It could refer to the “damns” in *Jane Eyre*, the dialect in *Wuthering Heights*, the slang of Rhoda Broughton’s heroines, the colloquialisms in *Aurora Leigh*, or more generally to the moral tone of a work, such as the “vein of perilous voluptuousness” one alert critic detected in *Adam Bede*” (Showalter 1977: 25). Anything unconventional was described by the term “coarseness”. The suppressed language did not allow them a wider range of vocabulary and expression to write something that would be approved by the society. It is evident that in the Victorian society, women were compelled to develop such strategies where they

conformed to the male literary traditions yet wrote in a way that their writing did not appear too explicit otherwise they would have faced a lot of backlash (Armstrong 128). In a way, this seemed to become their talent as well where they wrote novels in which they represented more than they wrote in a language that concealed their inner feelings.

The research will also look at how the different subgenres provided women with varied levels of cultural and theoretical conventions to express themselves and negotiate their freedom in the public sphere. It will be given to scrutiny whether a subgenre was more useful in helping the writers to break away from orthodox and dated perceptions of women's role in the society than another.

As stated earlier, the main premise of this thesis is that the different subgenres allow them to assert what they want, what they can achieve, what suppresses them, what empowers them, and so on. Below the dissertation attempts to delineate why Showalter's gynocritical theory is perhaps the best literary lens to assess these genres from, and why amongst the four models of analysis provided by Showalter in her theory of Gynocriticism, the study relies on the cultural model.

The Introduction chapter delineates and justifies the choice to exclusively rely on the cultural model to explore the novels selected for the study. Below, the study will examine the cultural model of Gynocriticism in detail and reveal how it can help us advance Showalter's gynocritical project.

1.2. The Cultural Model of Gynocriticism

As stated earlier, Showalter's first three models relate to body, language and psyche and put forth the question of investigating whether these aspects of women play out differently as sources of imagery. Without refuting the credibility of any of these models, relying solely on the imagery evoked by one's physiognomy, language or psychology would require an extreme examination from a close-ended perspective. On the other hand, all of the afore-mentioned aspects of female consciousness are integrated in the dynamics of culture. Which is why the study has chosen to gynocritically analyse the three novels using Showalter's cultural model.

Elaine Showalter herself maintains that the theory based on the culture of women writers can provide a more persuasive and better way "to talk about the specificity and difference of women's writing than theories based on biology,

linguistics, or psychoanalysis” (Showalter 1981: 197). Showalter suggests that this model includes cultural and historical experiences of women. It also studies the influence of historical and cultural events on the writings and lifestyle of women. Culture is basically the main element which dominates and influences the other three models above such as how women perceive themselves, what kind of language they use according to the culture they live in and what psyche is assumed by them in different cultural settings.

The dissertation will take some help from Raymond Williams’ analysis and definition of culture, and use it to justify Showalter’s insistence on the use of the cultural model to assess and interpret works of women writers.

In his essay titled “The Analysis of Culture”, Williams begins by stating three different definitions for the term culture meeting different ends.

According to the first definition, “culture is a state or process of human perfection, in terms of certain absolute or universal human values” (57). Williams describes this definition as ideal and could be employed for the understanding of a cultural setting if the objective is the tracing of a timeless order via locating those absolute values that outperform temporal strictures. These values can be found in the thoughts and works of lives lived.

The second definition involves the documentary “in which, culture is the body of intellectual and imaginative work, in which human thought and experiences are variously recorded” in detail (57). This definition is somewhat compatible for Showalter’s cultural model in gynocriticism since both argue for the need of a criticism that describes the “nature of thought and experience” and the “details of the language, form and convention in which these are active” in the “best that has been thought and written” (Williams 57). With this definition of culture, anthropologists and critics are allowed to access and evaluate individual pieces of intellectual and creative works and place them in some historical time-frame with the hopes of retrieving something about the societal traditions, its essence and valuation.

Williams’ last definition of culture is what he terms as the social definition of culture. According to this definition, culture is a description of a “particular way of life” (57). Cultural analysis from such a lens would involve a historical criticism of not only intellectual and creative works in historical reference but also relate these

elements that, according to other definitions, may not be cultural at all, for example, the means of production, the institutional structures etc. (57-58).

According to Williams, each definition is valid and serves different purposes but his own inclination, when it comes to defining and assessing culture, is towards an amalgamation of the best and most valid elements in each of the three definitions. This amalgamation is described by Williams as “the structure of feeling” (64). The dissertation, then would draw on this concept of culture being so tangibly firm as formulating some kind of “structure” on one hand and yet seeping into the most delicate of societal practices and activities. This understanding of culture will prove most fruitful in the unveiling of a female culture (inclusive of the implications of language, body and psyche of women), which according to Showalter, is linked most intricately with the complex social ideals and cultural forces (197). Interestingly, here one can find a common ground between Raymond’s cultural materialism and Showalter’s gynocriticism.

Williams’ cultural theories provide us with a way to approach history through a cultural materialist orientation that allowed him to timelessly help leftists and feminists carve out and sustain for themselves a sense of oracular vocation in a period of perpetual demoralization and marginalization of progressive thinkers. Like many feminists of today, Williams was preoccupied with visceral issues of death, despair and disempowerment in the face of defeats, setbacks and societal constraints and as Christopher Prendergast pointed out in his book *Cultural Materialism: On Raymond Williams*, he understood that any revolutionary activity was also a matter of “feelings as facts, imagination as organization and agency as analysis” (xi). His preoccupations with vital communities and traditions reflected on the need to analyze how ordinary people dealt with setbacks and defeats in their everyday life, and he further broke down these analysis on the basis of race, colour, gender and sexual orientation. In a way, this was also the primary agenda of feminism in general and gynocriticism in particular. By following the visceral impulses and connectedness of women with the prevalent traditions and neighborhood networks, gynocriticism hopes to determine the various ways in which women were and still are empowered and equipped to face the various obstacles that are culturally and socially planted in their paths.

The cultural element is therefore the most important part in the model of gynocriticism. According to Elaine Showalter, this is the aspect which controls the other three models. “Indeed, a theory of culture incorporates ideas about woman’s body, language, and psyche but interprets them in relation to the social contexts in which they occur. The ways in which women conceptualize their bodies and their sexual and reproductive functions are intricately linked to their cultural environments” (Showalter 197). Showalter is of the view that be it the language of the writer or the biological description of different characters, or the female psyche, or the biological identity—cultural setting plays an important role in determining how women view themselves. If a culture is liberating, women will use culture as a touchstone to compare themselves with. They will see themselves as liberated and happy in an open-minded cultural setting, but if the culture is oppressive they will feel as sinners in different social and personal settings (Showalter 197).

This model will analyse how culture plays a strong role in the lives of different writers. It will explore whether culture helps them represent suppressive or frank language, psyche and biological representation or whether culture prompts them to be passive or active. The study will keep connecting the culture of Victorian era Britain to the cultural setting of the selected novels.

According to Showalter, defining this aspect would also contribute to the history of women. Previously, history has been primarily written by male writers about males, but now many writers are trying to recreate the history by writing about the life and consciousness of women in different time periods. Recent historians often ask such questions as why women are excluded from history and what is the history of women? “Who are the women missing from history? Who are the women of achievement and what did they achieve?” (Lerner 5). Cultural study of females will help in adding to the history of women in different periods.

In *The Creation of Patriarchy*, Gerda Lenner notes that history-making has included an exclusive cabal of male historians for its formation until the last century (5). Women’s contribution to history has been left ignored and un-interpreted by these male historians. The documented ways of primarily the masculine subject are what have come to be called history and the historian continues to beg universality for it. Lenner believes that documentation that refuses to give value to more than half

of humankind is distorted, in that it tells the story from the viewpoint of the male half of humanity only.

Where Lenner's arguments share a common point with that of Showalter's is in the refusal to garb female experience under the blatant typecasting of "victimized". Just because women are under-represented, it does not automatically make them into victims, since their contributions have been essential to the making of the society as we currently see it. There is however a tension between what is "women's actual historical experience and their exclusion from interpreting that experience". Lenner calls it "the dialectic of women's history" [6]. The project of gynocriticism is to trace this very dialectic by reassessing the work of female literary artists and the way they reconstruct the meaning-giving process of interpretation to the long obscured centrality and active participation of women in the making and shaping of history, societies and cultures.

Lenner is of the view that the failure by historical anthropologists to cater to the experiences and exclusive history of women has resulted in giving rise to the argument of women's biological inability to consider abstract thoughts (such as philosophy), having been preoccupied with nurturance and emotions. As Lenner puts it, just as the biological difference between men and women cannot be denied, similarly, one cannot forget that the implications and value emanating from this biological difference are actually cultural in essence (6).

Lenner's 10-point breakdown of the general nature of patriarchy and the systematic neglect and dispossession of women is of some importance and relevance to the project of gynocriticism. It could be summarized in the following way:

Subordination and appropriation of women's sexuality occurred prior to archaic state formation. The culture of subordination or the conquering of a nation by another has its roots in the subordination of women and enslaving women of conquered countries (Lenner 8).

The earliest law codes and states worked in cahoots to institutionalize the subordination of women by expelling them from roles that could enable independence among them. Respectability among men came to be associated with the extent of access to the means of production while for women, it is tied to being attached to one man (Lenner 8-9).

Finally, with the introduction of Hebrew monotheism, the status ascribed to the female goddess of the earlier times was displaced since now creativity and procreativity came to be ascribed to an all-powerful God. Eventually, Lenner believes that the “contract between God and humanity assumes as a given the subordinate position of women and their exclusion from the metaphysical covenant and the earthly covenant community”. This exclusion is at the heart of western civilization and responsible for promoting patriarchy for around 25000 years [8-10].

If, for the sake of this thesis, we assume Lenner’s analysis of the institutionalization of patriarchy to be true, it would be worth factoring how conscious were the writings of the female novelists under consideration of this mode of patriarchy’s institutionalization and the ways they sidestepped this institutionalization by giving voice to the female subject and challenging the fundamental tenets of patriarchy. These tenets, as far as Lenner’s study goes, were grounded more in culture than in biology and retained at the helm of the religious injunctions, women’s marital status, and their connection with means of production.

1.3. Culture, the Double Voiced Discourse, and Gynocriticism

The cultural model of Showalter’s gynocriticism is rooted in a similar purpose of unveiling the reasons behind and the formulations of the collective female consciousness and would serve as the perfect lens to assist in objectively facilitating this study that confirms the existence and prevalence of a female culture propagated in what Showalter terms as “the double-voiced discourse” (201) and its contribution to de-institutionalizing patriarchy as it was shaped historically.

Showalter gives way to the idea of a “double voiced discourse” by borrowing from the anthropological works of Edwin Ardener and his wife Shirley Ardener. Edwin Ardener establishes in “Belief and the Problem of Women and the Problem Revisited” that anthropological studies have systematically neglected the inclusion of women. Ardener draws on Levi-Strauss’s statement that “words do not speak while women do” (qtd. in Ardener 48). The way Ardener explains this is by declaring that women are only allowed to speak in a male-perpetuated medium (Ardener 48). This resounds the idea that women have to speak in a ‘muted’ discourse.

In her essay, “Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness”, Showalter introduces her own cultural model for the interpretation of women’s literary achievements in

which she agrees with Ardener's analysis around the muted discourse categorizing it as the problem of "language and of power" (Showalter 200). According to Showalter, ideas are perpetuated by both the dominated and the muted groups but since the social structures are under the control of the dominant group, it is only their discourse that takes precedence. If the muted group desires to be heard, it must mediate its opinions and beliefs via the cultural mediums imposed by the dominant structures. Drawing on Showalter's designated 'wild' zone, she argues that feminist critics see this women-centered sphere as the space where a purely female criticism, theory and art will manifest itself. The purpose of this criticism is to "bring into being the symbolic weight of female consciousness" (201).

An extremely important dichotomy with regards to this analysis of a muted group is that of an existing abstraction. Showalter recognizes this dichotomy when she declares that the concept of "of a woman's text in the wild zone is a playful abstraction...women's writing is a "double-voiced discourse" that always embodies the social, literary, and cultural heritages of both the muted and the dominant" (201). Women's writings, therefore, can only be understood in the form of these "complex and historically grounded cultural relations" (202). The double-voiced discourse takes an important place in Showalter's cultural model and will be used by this dissertation in the exploration of the novels under discussion.

The three novels chosen for the study, *North and South*, *Jane Eyre* and *Lady Audley's Secret*, belong to the industrial, *bildung* and sensational traditions in novel writing during the Victorian period. Since one of the objectives of the research is to focus on how each of the genres help advance the gynocritical project of documenting and expanding the female consciousness, it would be worthwhile to see if there exists any considerable correlation between the genres and theory of gynocriticism itself.

It must be noted that the thesis makes use of the term industrial novel as opposed to the more generic term of 'condition of England novel'. Richard Simmons Jr. classifies the industrial novel as a paramount sub-genre of the conditions of England novels (336). The condition of England novels came about with the growing interest which the early nineteenth centuries witnessed in the 'lives and labour of the populace' (Simmons, 336). The repeal of the corn laws, the Chartist uprising, and the

public prominence of the proletariat, along with pauperism and its scattered vignettes provided writers and journalist with a gold mine of content to excavate from.

Amid the general category of novels that depicted the conditions of England during the nineteenth and early twentieth century, the industrial novels were particularly concerned with the 'factory question' (Simmons 338). For this reason, Simmons terms industrial novel as 'paramount' since as much as 38% of the English population worked in factories, 18 % of which were females (Humphries 41). The reason, Simmons believed that the stories of workers in the factory and the explosive urbanization proved such a lucrative and provocative business for writer of the condition of England genre was the increasing pathos associated with the exploitation of women and children. The condition of England novel, therefore, became a product of a number of legal, economic and literary influences (337).

As stated earlier, chief amongst the general topics addressed in the condition of England novel was the factory question. Up until the late eighteenth century, children as young as three and four years old were employed in factory work. As factory conditions drew interest from reporters and welfare workers, reports of egregious working conditions, worker abuse, child labour, extreme working hours, education, and lodging came to the fore (Hutchins and Harrison, 1-3). This eventually gave prominence to those condition of England novels that were particularly interested in the factory question, hence the name industrial novel. Since one of the novels chosen for this study also deals primarily with the workers' conditions in the factories, the dissertation prefers the term 'industrial novel' over 'condition of England novel'.

Breakthrough for the Victorian industrial novel came about with two important publications: a) *Fleetwood: or, the New Man of Feeling* (1805) by the radical philosopher William Goldwin and b) the autobiographical account of an illiterate factory worker who had witnessed first-hand the abuses of life in the factories as a child by John Brown called *A Memoir of Robert Blincoe* in 1828 (Simmons, 339).

From here the baton was passed mostly to female authors that became interested in documenting the miseries of the English urban proletariat. According to Simmons, there was almost a semblance of a literary war over the conditions of factories by the mid-eighteenth century. While writers such as Tonna, John Walker,

Caroline Bowles and Caroline Norton came around with highly sensitised novels about the misery and abomination that the factory life had become for workers, writings by journalists such as Edward Baines and Andrew Ure painted an almost idealized portrait of the conditions for workers in the factories. These journalists dismissed the writings of the aforementioned novelists as highly melodramatic and propagandist (340-341).

Most of this changed with the publication of Frances Trollope's *The Life and Adventures of Michael Armstrong, The Factory Boy*, when the mainstream Victorian audience was aroused into a state of agitation over the conditions of children, men and women in the factories of the increasingly urbanizing and industrialising cities of the English city sides. One of the reasons why Trollope's account of the malign factory owner, the manhandled Michael and his naïve mother became more than a figment of hyper imagination was the almost journalistic research that Trollope put into the construction of her characters and events. Trollope scampered across the dingy streets of several factories in Manchester to personally interview workers and get a first-hand account of their circumstances. This brought a measure of credibility and 'verisimilitude' to Trollope's . In fact, it is taken as the first ever industrial novel to be widely read by the Victorian audience (Simmons 342).

While Trollope's novel is taken as the first ever industrial novel to address the factory question in general, Tonna's *Helen Fleetwood*, surfaced as the first novel ever to explore the working conditions in the factories with regards to women. Tonna was, therefore, the first social-problem novelist to document the plight and exploitation of women in the expanding industrial settings (Wheeler 19).

With improvement in the lot of the children after the passing of factory laws that prohibited maltreatment via overworking children, there came a shift in the focus of the primary subject of these novels from children to adults. According to Simmons, the shift from a street-driven, haggard-looking child to a street-driven and ambling adult brought with it the problem of evoking the kind of pathos that would lead the audiences to invest their time and sympathies in their stories (344).

There, hence, appears to be some connection between the growing number of female characters associated directly or indirectly with factories in the industrial novels that were also mostly being penned by female writers and the increasing

popularity of the industrial novel during the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries.

According to Simmons, more women than men were employed in the factories during the industrial boom of the nineteenth century and their participation in the factories has been under-documented (337). Women were thought to be more manageable and warranted lesser wages for the owners. But this also brought them a degree of independence that was denied to them through domestic chores, although not to the point where they could mostly survive without marriage. In most cases they were contributing to the family income but their increased participation in the public sphere was a stark contrast with the neatly demarcated public and private sphere on which the entire edifice of the Victorian cultural constitution rested. It is obvious that writers such as Gaskell and Trollope who were keen in bringing a degree of veracity to their writings and thus drawing on real life examples and scenes were inspired to make use of several female characters such as Helen, Peggy Higgins and Mary Barton in close association with the factory question in their novel.

Eventually, Simmons believes that the condition of England novel became a 'victim of its own success' (350). With more laws having passed advocating better treatment of men, women and children, the situation did in fact improve and the public began to lose the incentive to invest their time and money in the industrial novel. Although abuse still existed, it was neither as egregious as before, nor worse than what the lower order, employed outside of the factories, suffered. Moreover, the changing dynamics around the role and place of women in the society emerged as perhaps the greatest natural consequence of both industrialization and its very rampant documentation by the female writers (350-351).

Simmons quotes a passage from the Edinburgh Review that depicts just the kind of change in thought that would lead to the feminist concern with 'the new women'.

Servant-girls and foot-boys cannot dress as the factory lads and lasses may – [they have] not the daily stimulus and amusement of society of their own order... The maidservant must have "no followers," while the factory-worker can flirt to any extent. Servant-girls rarely may marry, while factory-girls probably always may, whether they do or not . . . Public opinion among the class is in favour of the

independence of factory and other day-work . . . In one word, it is independence against dependence. (Anon. 1862: 414).

The industrial novel, therefore, was the name of a project concerned with documenting the realities of the factories and industries in which more than a quarter of the English population laboured away its days and nights. But if reality and experiences are subjective and grounded in one's entire personhood, which in turn is the product of one's gender and cultural experiences that differ on the basis of that gender (Showalter 102), then it stands to reason that the application of the gynocritical theory can perhaps best aid readers in understanding the Victorian industrial culture and women's place in this culture.

Assessing the works of those female writers that depicted a female protagonist at the helm of the changing Victorian industrial culture by means of a gynocritical analysis is perhaps the easiest way to understand the role of women and the changing societal expectations and perceptions of them.

It will also aid in understanding the contribution of industrialism and its related literary influences, in the form of the condition of England novel in general and the industrial novel in particular, in paving way for a distinctive female literary trajectory and the role this trajectory performed in granting women the new kind of independence that the Edinburg review spoke about.

In a similar way, the Bildungsroman became a viable medium for women writers that helped them experiment with their female character's autonomy. Bildungsroman is a form of novel whose original purpose was to allow novelists to explore issues of representation, an individual's place in society and their relationships with societal tenets and other individuals. Paramount among these is also the question of subjectivity and its relationship with society and aesthetics.

For this reason, the genre was popularized amongst female novelists to carve their own historical trajectories that were often ignored outside of fiction. Carol Weiss in "The Female Bildungsroman: Calling it into Question" almost sees Bildungsroman as a 'literary tool' (17) that allows women to propagate a dominantly female literary canon. The term 'female Bildungsroman' has been adopted amongst ranks of front-tier feminists in the 1970s. Like gynocriticism, the genre provided female critics a medium to comprehend, historicize and analyse works of eighteenth

and nineteenth century female writers. For the most part, the novels by female writers focused on documenting the ‘suppression of female autonomy, creativity and maturity by patriarchal gender norms’ (Weis 17). And as with most literature produced by women during the time, it was not long before critics of female bildungsroman began to witness the strain of that “anxiety of authorship” that Sara Gilbert and Sandra Gubert speak of in their seminal work *The Mad Woman in the Attic: The Women Writer and the Nineteenth Century Literary Imagination*. As Carol Lazzaro-Weis states, this anxiety occurred because both the female novelists and the female critics were (and are) subjected to the pressures of ‘male judgements, expectations, criteria, and prejudices that generic categories harbour’ (16).

Historically prevalent generic categories commit the malpractice of indulging in those generalisations that is grounded in some kind of ‘universal sensibility’ (Weis 16). The problem with such sensibilities is that they blatantly ignore traditional gendered issues that has been the primary tenet of the feminist movement and which they have striven so hard to fight for and highlight. This is a blight against the practice of harbouring generic categories of which Frederic Jameson is equally suspicious. In his book *The Political Unconscious*, Frederic Jameson declares how ‘any attempt to temporalize and historicise generic categories’... have never felt the need to incorporate, acknowledge and give tribute to Women’s writing (105)’. The only time when women’s writings are taken into account is under the ‘rubric of flawed imitation’(Weis 16). This has also been the integral concern of gynocriticism.

The problem with Bildungsroman that feminist critics began to note early on is that the genre appears to serve separate purpose for male and female writers. As opposed to male writers, female Bildungsroman seems to only provide women (especially of the eighteenth and nineteenth century) with ‘models of growing down’ (Pratt 14). To this end Weiss cites the work of Marianne Hirsch, Elizabeth Langland, and Elizabeth Abel who patronized Woolf’s ‘The Voyage Out’ as the ‘earlier manifestations of the genre’ in which the female body can hardly do more than frustrating her spiritual and artistic cravings (17).

On the other hand, Hirsch, Langland and Abel analyse Bildungsroman in opposition to Pratt’s devaluation of the female model. According to Hirsch et. Al, writers use the female Bildungsroman to expand and flaunt the inherent limitations of the genre with the end result of emerging triumphant (Weis 17). Hirsch et al.

believe that an important tenet of the female Bildungsroman is the 'formation of a coherent self' (14). This coherent self is not necessarily autonomous or freed from the suppressing patriarchal structures, but autonomy is not the main thematic disquiet of the Bildungsroman for Hirsch et al, it is the main subject's personal development.

Frye's analysis of the Bildungsroman is along similar lines. He believes that the purpose of the Bildungsroman is to flaunt the possibility of developing a 'coherent self' (79-80). While critics such as Annis Pratt suspected the female bildungsroman as working in cahoots with patriarchal structures in strengthening the oppression levied by the latter and which prevents women from attaining a complete personal development, Frye presents a somewhat different definition of what formulates a 'coherent self' (79). Frye believes that women in the bildungsroman are engaged in multiple realities. This engagement in more than one reality allows women to subvert the self that patriarchy imposes upon them and move toward their own autonomy (79).

The concept of multiple realities and subjective experiences that are exclusively comprehensible and matter to the person who experiences those is not new but is steeped in the humanist tradition, where the subject is the source of self-knowledge. The concept of experience grounded in one's personhood and gender is also the edifice on which the entire gynocritical criticism is erected, since it aims to generate a female literary tradition that is purely the creation of women's literary genius and experience. Frye's term of 'protective coloration' is used for the kind of camouflage under which women move towards the attainment of this autonomous self (Frye 79-80).

Although Weis is suspicious of the validity of the theory of multiple realities and a criticism that is based on gender, Showalter, the founder of gyno-criticism claims that since writing is an activity that involves one's entire personhood, it is not unlikely that Women's experiences and creative imagination may deflect from men's in certain respects being products of the 'unconscious strictures and strictures of gender identity' (102) and bildungsroman as a genre captures exactly that kind of deflect and subjective experience.

For this reason, Frye believes that the bildungsroman has a privileged place amongst the leading ranks of feminists for offering this 'experiential base of feminist

criticism' (79) and presenting critics and novelists with an urgency of creating a formal self-definition.

Bildungsroman is seen by feminists as the final resort to perpetuate experientially based feminist critique. This criticism believes in the possibility of representing in women's writing a subjective and exclusive female criticism, and locating a female identity which is only a step away from the project of gynocriticism.

Martin Swales in *The German Bildungsroman from Wieland to Herse* (98-102) discusses how the purpose of the Bildungsroman is fulfilled with the 'questioning of the narrator's and ultimately the readers' capacity for reflexivity and its concern to articulate the values and assumptions upon which human experience rests' (98-102). This is also something that Bronte and other women writers appear to be striving after in such works of Bildungsroman as *Jane Eyre* and *Shirley*.

Both the German bildungsroman and the female bildungsroman have the tendency to 'substitute inner concentration for active accommodation, rebellion and withdrawal-something that Eyre also does at various points (Weiss 20). The subjects of these twin variants of the bildungsroman genre are typically an ostracised social outcast, whose constantly debilitating relationship with religion and nature creates a great threat of self-destruction and implosion. This crippling relationship also manifests itself in *Jane Eyre*, a classic bildungsroman that is chosen for the gynocritical analysis (Weiss 20-21).

Bildungsroman was originated in order to assess the questions of representation, the relationships of an individual with a group and the essence of the subjective experience. This experience is documented in the bildungsroman in social and aesthetic terms. Not long after, women writers set their eyes on the genre to flaunt its embedded contradictions and thematic disquiets to document their subjective culture and literary history instead of subverting the patriarchal structures that are associated with generic historical categories. In describing one's experience and respective reality, writers of the bildungsroman take an epistemological stance instead a teleological one. Unsurprisingly, the 1970s saw the recruitment of this genre amongst feminist ranks for the purpose of defending their right to describe a subjective reality exclusive to women, legitimise this reality and highlight the ways this contrasted with the reality of their male counterparts. Since this is exactly the

project of gynocriticism, it appears as the most pertinent literary lens to analyse and interpret the female bildungsroman.

Like the bildungsroman, the sensation novel was a 'literary and cultural phenomenon' that soon became a public rage in the 1860s. According to a review in the Fraser's Magazine (1863), 'A book without a murder, a divorce, a seduction, or a bigamy, is not apparently considered worth either writing or reading (qtd in Hughes 260).' Brandon's *Lady Audley's Secret*, the quintessential sensation novel chosen for a gynocritical analysis, exhibits all of the aforementioned sensation features.

Titillating scenes of crime and seduction are as much part of the sensation novel as its unequivocal heroines. The sensation novels evoked extreme emotions amongst the public and in most cases had palpable designs on their physiology causing them to feel actual emotions of nervousness, terror, and even sexual arousal. (Hughes 261). These emotions became all the more intriguing because now, instead of unfolding in the exotic locales of the Apennines, the plot of murder and illicit relationships began to take place in the 'cheerful country house and the busy London lodgings' (James 10).

In a way the sensation novel displaced the sanctity that had come to be associated with the middle-class home and which had occupied such a central spot in the Victorian culture. It was no longer capable of providing a safe haven against the brutalities of expanding industrialization and urbanization, but instead had begun to virtually give shelter to blood churning mysteries of murders and disloyalties. The sensation novel thereby exposed the middle class existence for being rooted in crime, secrecy and deception (Hughes 261).

What is of special interest to this study is the way in which the sensation novel contributed to toppling and then reconstructing the image, perceptions, and expectations of women in the society. In almost every other sensation novel, the central role belonged to a woman dabbling simultaneously in crime heinous in nature on one hand, and playing the angel of the house on the other. With the rise of the sensation novel the 'angel in the house' morphed into a relentless adventuress (Hughes 261).

The more this 'angel' aligned with the Victorian feminine ideal, the greater was the implication of a tacit perversion and false pretentiousness. In all instances,

however, the novel came as providing a relief from the overused image of the damsel in distress. The damsel now took the matters in her own hands and did not rely on any kind of assistance from the men; although it is very telling that the shift from the image of the passive protectress of her purity to an active participant of the plot came for the females at the cost of such perverted implications as those of being a murderess, a bigamist, or an adulteress (Hughes 262). Female activities had now come to be feared by mid-century Victorian novelists and readers as posing a very tangible threat to the entire institutions of the middle--class household and family. As Hughes puts it, 'in literary terms, the sensationalists were engaged in picking at the apparent seamlessness of the mainstream realist novel as well as that of the Victorian culture and society it purported to represent (263).

Many of the fantasies of feminine novels in general and sensation novels seem to be related to materialistic gains, social mobility and power in life. Although there were many feminine novels in which the assertive heroines were punished for their ambitious natures, many writers often represented women as the reasons behind the success of many men. "The woman's man... was often a more effective outlet for the "deviant" aspects of the author's personality than were her heroines, and thus male role-playing extended beyond the pseudonym to imaginative content" (Showalter 1977: 27). The male characters often reflected the inner turmoil and desires of the writer who was writing these novels. The sensation novels increasingly came to be seen as providing women writers with that outlet.

The women were gradually pushing back the boundaries of their language and were starting to openly demand their rights. The women novelists especially presented the ideas that their profession not only required excessive freedom of language, but also movement and action. Writers of sensation novels such as Mary Braddon, Rhoda Broughton, and Florence Marryat especially exhibited this need. The women clearly developed a transitional phase which included themes of protest against marriage and a strong retaliation against the economic repression of women. These novels were still in the "framework of feminine conventions that demanded the erring heroine's destruction" but overall they served as transitional novels (Showalter 1977: 29).

With the groundwork laid, the upcoming chapters will render a critical analysis of the three novels from the cultural gynocritic lens and assess the ways in

which these novels proved transitional bridging the limited expected roles of women in the feminine literary phase and the more active and rebellious consciousness of women in the feminist one.



CHAPTER 2: NORTH AND SOUTH

The study will begin its analysis with the novel *North and South* penned by Elizabeth Gaskell in 1854. The choice to begin the gynocritical examination of the three nineteenth century publications with an industrial novel is steeped in the great impact that industrialism had over the shifting cultural, social, and religious practices in England during this time. The previous chapter of theoretical framework has already shed some light on the close connection between the rise of industrialization and women's increased participation in the public field. Since the analysis concerns itself with the collective consciousness of women during this time, it is befitting that a context is established beforehand for what the cultural, social and religious expectations were like for women and how it manifested in the different genres, starting with the idea of the "New Woman."

The debates of New Woman flourished greatly when industrialization grew and women who were previously limited to the domestic sphere came out in the public sphere. "The "New Woman" of the last two decades of the nineteenth-century is clearly a product of the industrial culture in as much as its economic and educational effects created opportunities for women outside the domestic sphere and the outworn marriage plot of middle-class respectability" (Childers 94). More women entered the industrial sphere and contributed to the economy of the country. As more women came out to work in factories, the demand for better education and financial independence for women also increased. In this period, "the issues informing the "Woman Question" of the last third of the century closely resembled many of the "Condition of England" issues of the 1840s" (Childers 94). Debates about voting rights, better education and morality came to the surface again but this time the debates were gendered and focused on the rights of women. Women even demanded that instead of pressurizing women, the sexuality of men instead of women should be policed.

2.1. North and South as an Industrial Novel

Women's heightened activity in the public sphere, although initially exclusive to the working class, was in direct contrast to the prevalent discourses on women's biological and cultural spheres. In *The Victorian Period: The Intellectual and Cultural Context of English Literature* (1993) Gilmore declares how, for the

Victorians, conflation of science, literature and theology was of little consequence and there was little attempt to separate one from the other (Gilmour 2014). Biological revelations too, instead of contradicting theological and intellectual commentary on women's natural inferiority, seemed to promote them.

Paul Brice, for example, quotes how Women's intellectual inferiority stemmed from their physical and mental inferiority, making them, on average, "a little less intelligent than men" (qtd in King 28). Similarly, Professor Hubbard went so far as culturally limiting Women's role to the domestic and maternal sphere by pronouncing that the "Almighty" seems to have designed the entire female anatomy around the uterus. (qtd in King 28-29). In Hubbard's comments therefore, we see the cultural practice of narrowing down Women's intellectual faculties to matters of biology, that is simultaneously using theology and religion as its basis. Again, Jeannette King, in *The Victorian Women Question in the Contemporary Feminist Fiction* quotes the first definition of gynaecology published in 1849 which spoke of the physiology and ontology of the female reproductive system as key to understanding the "mental, psychological and moral nature" of women (28). There was then a general tendency among the Victorian culture to limit a female's intellectual, spiritual and social spheres to matters of biology. With the industrial revolution and the consequential rise of the industrial novel, this cultural practice of limiting females' physical and mental capabilities to her biological and domestic sphere was displacing. The industrial novel and its popularity was both the product of this cultural shift and the agent behind it.

A dominant and almost integral pattern found in the industrial fiction produced by both men and women, at the time was the use of feminine discretion, compassion, benevolence and empathy as the antidote to the ills of a largely masculinized industrial economy harboured around the principles of utilitarianism and individualism. Gaskell it appears had been writing both in tow and against this current. Surely, Gaskell has, more than once, been credited for ascribing women spheres and roles that well contrasted with conventions of the time. The thesis would first ascertain the ways in which *North and South* conforms to this literary tradition of carving out women as the saving grace of the society through the machinations of self-sacrifice. Thornton's humanisation through Margaret's feminine influence is vastly in alignment with the reformist literature popular during the

industrial revolution, but such an appraisal of Margaret's philanthropy would be blatantly shortsighted. The primary aim of the industrial novel was to give 'a human face' to the suffering and injustice of the capitalist and laissez faire economy of the industrial revolution (Womack 107).

The study begins its analysis by elaborating how Gaskell inverts many of the cultural stereotypes for women, which the earlier chapters shed light on, in her novel *North and South*. Margaret Hale is ordinary looking and this idea has even been endorsed by her suitors. In the opening of the novel Margaret stands charmed at the 'lovely posture of Edith that could rival that of 'Tatiana' herself. (Gaskell 3) wondering as to how could her beauty amount to anything other than a life filled with love and admiration. The solemn dwelling on Edith's beauty would almost lead one to believe that it is Edith and not Margaret whose life chapters are about to unfold.

In carving the female protagonist out of plainer features, and making a point of informing her readers of this defect of her female hero, Gaskell begins to debunk some of the cultural myths of the Victorians who readily equated beauty with inner goodness. Her second act of resistance was embedded in the need for Margaret to leave the confines of the private sphere more often than would be deemed proper for a woman of her stature.

However, there would hardly be an industrial novel that is devoid of a female character acting as a moral resuscitate, a spiritual guide, the mediator between different classes and the saviour of the debilitating industrial society. When Rebecca Davis deviated from the dominant discourse by drawing out Margret Howth, a female worker of an American textile industry, who refuses to take on this role of savoir, the publisher refused to accept the work until the novelist revised the plot by introducing the somewhat ill-fitting conventions of marriage and general reform (Womack 106). Margret Howth, the American foil of Margaret Hale, some have argued, is a more realistic depiction of the kind of role women were playing during the economic revolution. Both suffer from a fall in the social status resulting from paternal ineptitude. But where Margret Howth employs herself in actual labour to prevent the family from falling into a state of pecuniary, Margaret Hale retains her aristocratic demeanour and high principles. This was important to grant Margaret the

voice and agency needed for the character to play the reformist that by now has become a norm.

Margaret's sombre carriage and bearing of manner, despite the depreciating family economics, do not only appear misplaced to the readers and critics but also to the very characters populating the novel. One reason why Mrs. Thornton takes a great dislike to Margaret is because of the mismatch between Margaret's ways of polished social decorum and the family's debilitating economic status. She is what Mrs. Thornton describes as the 'penniless girl' (Gaskell 130) for whom her son Mr. Thornton must have no business pining after.

Margaret's demeanor, however misplaced, could not be helped either by the character or by the creator herself. Gaskell seems to have modelled Margaret after herself. As a missionary's wife, Gaskell came into direct contact with the destitution which was the by-product of the industrial shift as opposed to writers who only learnt of these from reports or second-hand sources. She was the observer of the poor working class's minute but everyday struggles. While in *Mary Barton*, Gaskell endeavours to narrativize this struggle from inside the afflicted community, in her novel *North and South*, her position is that of a journalist decoding the aftereffects of the revolution on the poverty-stricken masses.

The economic fall of the Hales was a necessary mechanism to bring Margaret into direct contact with the working-class poor, and through her, the vastly middle-class readership. On the other hand, retaining Margaret's social privilege on account of her greater education, was customary to keep intact the *deus ex machina* of a female mediator who would bring respite to the hopeless situation between the masters and the workers.

There was a visible tendency amongst middle class novelists to instrumentalise women's role, especially educated middle class women, as a diffuser of the impending threat of a revolution or an outbreak of violence at the very least, owing to the working-class' egregious social conditions. Women did this by peacefully resolving what seemed like social cul-de-sacs potentially threatening the entire societal constitution. This threat of a violent outbreak was extremely tangible during the Chartist period of 1840-1860, the period that simultaneously produced the most impressionable works of the industrial novel genre.

And it was through such an instrumentalization that feminist critics such as Catharine Gallagher, Constance Harsh, and Rosemarie Bodenheimer began advocating a rereading of the genre to decipher the endless possibilities contained in the depiction of radical females and the troubled ideology of the “separate spheres” (Womack 108). Such criticism as opposed to the general analysis to which the reform novels of this era are submitted, allow critics to look past what appears their overtly didactic narrativization of the poor man’s suffering.

Likewise, the embeddedness of a romance plot involving the unification of people representing contrasting ideological beliefs was a leitmotif in many industrial novels. This unification was often a metaphorical announcement of the unification between masters and the workmen to boot. This romance plot, along with the quite simplistic notions and arguments were presented as holding the key to the resolution of the prevalent social turmoil which were, it is true, quite complex and reforming which would require more than the benevolent hand of one master pacified under the gentler impulses of a woman.

Margaret’s marriage to Mr. Thornton is merely what Lyde Cullen Sizer describes as the rhetoric of unity: a narrative tendency amongst the writings of the American civil war’s women authors (Sizer 75-77). The matrimony between Margaret and Thornton on one hand represents the unification of various kinds of opposites: north and south, public and private spheres, masculine stringency and feminine compassion etc., on the other hand this unity, bringing together opposing ideologies, also serves to defuse the growing surge of revolt amongst people at the time of the industrial revolution. According to Ruth Bernard Yeazell, the ability to employ the sentimental convention of introducing a final marriage plot helps to curb ‘social and political anxieties (127). This was important to drive the readers’ attention away from the exigencies of the working-class poor in times when there seemed no apparent or immediate solution. Women and the roles played by them, it appears, could easily lend that distraction. After the riot for example, the focus of the narration shifts abruptly to Mr. Thornton’s proposal to Margaret and the complexity of their love with the latter’s refusal. By the time the readers are taken back to the rioters, their fury is largely transformed into bitter disappointment. Then it becomes easier for Margaret to slip back into her role of the pacifier. Through this occasional slippage, industrial novelists, and definitely Gaskell, keeps the machinery of her plot

for the industrial novel running which, as this dissertation ascertained earlier, is best sustained by institutionalising the domestic values of the female realm in the public sphere. According to Raymond Williams, this collation of the southern girl's sentimentalities with the practicalities of the northern manufacturer was the targeted end of the novel and is stated in noticeable terms (Williams 94) when Mr. Thornton is described as moving back to Milton "to have the opportunity of cultivating some intercourse with the hands beyond the mere cash nexus" (Gaskell 525).

As far as the novel *North and South* is concerned, Margaret's female essence makes her the perfect symbol of the southern values of compassion and greater good of humanity and this symbolism justifies Margaret's presence for a possible reformation in the north. The south symbolizes tranquility and serenity which mirrors the calm of a domestic household. The north is riddled with the jarring noise of the machinery which is representative of the male dominated public sphere. People of south are characterized by the genteel notions of aristocratic complacency, northerners are restless with their plight. The south tries to stifle any ideas of ambition, while ambition is the driving force behind the lives of both the workmen and traders whose shift to the industrial side of the country was marked by a desire to improve their financial status. The southern workmen, despite surviving on starvation wages, choose to make peace with their suffering, while the north is rampant with threats of violent strikers whose pulsating self-esteem exhorts them to take practical action against anyone who threatened to diminish their wages.

The south's passive admittance of its ascribed status, its apparent inability to release itself from the shackles of traditional ideas of aristocratic immobility, country clergy and Hampshire squires (Gaskell 199) and its insistence of replacing ambition with greater values of societal compassion and humanity, even as it invokes a case of social dependence of one class over another, makes the place a somewhat feminine subject.

On the other hand, the northern Milton is where people strive to take matters in their own hands. There is not a single place in Milton that offers the peace and quite similar to that which the south offers. All around are cries of impatience, change, ambitious gratification and individual accession that is both "unchristian and isolated" (Gaskell 214). In its everyday mode of aggression, the north forms a masculine subject of study. It makes sense for Gaskell to have chosen a female figure

as representative of the southern values and a male spokesperson to sympathise with those of the north. The female figure is that of Margaret, whose bold defiance of admitting Mr. Thornton as a man worthy of the epithet of a gentleman on account of him being a manufacturer resonates with the southern notions of prepossessed gentility. One can see the traces of the feminine streak in Margaret's characterization. Mr. Thornton, on the other hand, is the male spokesperson-a sympathiser of the industrial revolution that has initiated the culture of individualism and societal competition, "which makes us victorious over material resistance, and over greater difficulties still" (Gaskell 606). Mr. Hale's drawing room is where these two characteristic forces of south and north come into contact, not necessarily to prevail upon one another but to complement and complete where the other is lacking.

As Margaret loses her social status, she forgoes most of her dreams that a woman living in the charmed and sentimental household in the fashionable London society, such as the one Margaret lived in, would cherish. And she forgoes it to negotiate the public sphere of which she has had no practical experience and against which she possessed only a set of prejudice. While the yearning of writers like Benjamin Disraeli and members of the Young England Movement was after the regeneration of the chivalrous and feudal times of the former England, writers like Gaskell somehow yearned to make peace with the increasing industrialisation in a way that would benefit the majority masses. There is a great chance that this advocacy of making peace with the process of industrialisation resulted more from a growing sense of independence than it seemed industrialisation would somehow bring to women than the inevitability of this capitalist economy overrunning feudalism.

In the novel *North and South* The social plummeting of the Hales bring them to the point where they can only afford one servant. Without the services of a male servant who could render chores that take one outside of the house, Margaret had no choice but to perform these excursions herself. At one point, she even likens herself more to "Peggy the laundress" than "Margaret the lady" (Gaskell 115). Nevertheless, Margaret was successfully able to retain this title, and it was an unstated attachment of this epithet to her bearing that kept Mr. Thornton, a potential suitor, friends with Mr. Hale, from hoping to court her, to the great agony of his mother who had her own definition of what constituted a 'lady'.

The cultural setup of Milton North differed drastically from that of Hampshire South. Margaret came from the land of the gentry, where 'ladies' did not speak garrulously in the streets and men did not take the liberty to make pointing remarks toward ladies, especially those with whom they were narrowly acquainted.

Describing the stream of men inundating the streets of Milton from various mills around evening hours, Gaskell writes:

They came rushing along, with bold, fearless faces, and loud laughs and jests, particularly aimed at all those who appeared to be above them in rank or station. The tones of their unrestrained voices, and their carelessness of all common rules of street politeness, frightened Margaret a little at first. The girls, with their rough, but not unfriendly freedom, would comment on her dress, even touch her shawl or gown to ascertain the exact material (119).

These were cultural oddities that baffled Margaret. However, it was the behaviour of the workmen that caused her greater perplexity. More than once Margaret was in a position to take offense at the audacity of these workmen who ventured to make bold remarks not just on her appearance, but on her looks. Shocked at first, Margaret refrains from being thoroughly repulsed. Gaskell comments that the very freedom with which these remarks were directed in Margaret's way indicated a purpose devoid of any sinister intention but an innocent bemusement arising from the fine and friendly spectacle of a lady. Milton's industrial culture that required women and children to work alongside, albeit for fewer wages, paved way for what was to be one of the most important revolutionary waves in the history of women's rights. In Margaret's endorsement of the cultural difference of the north, it is clear that Gaskell was advocating, in shrouded tones, the need to review the changing cultures and ways "women were negotiating barriers to entry in the public sphere" (qtd in King 21).

Margaret Hale surfaces as the strong reformist female heroine who is eager to make a change with her benevolence and enthusiasm for social welfare. Although she rarely comes out of her domestic sphere. It is interesting to note how Margaret, despite paying only a few calculable visits into the dingy Milton streets is able to leave a tangible impact on the lives of many Miltoners.

Owing to her better upbringing and possessing the sentimentality of a woman, Margaret not only feels entitled but also responsible to perform such works of charity that ease the strain between the masters, represented in the character of Mr. Thornton and the 'hands' characterised in the person of Mr. Higgins.

For the greater part of the novel, Mr. Thornton, the emerging factory owner, shows a bleak indifference to the miseries of his workers in the factory. Margaret, for reasons explained later in the study, comes to keenly sympathise with the plight of the factory workers and sets about to reform the growing anguish and hostility between the masters and the workers in her own way. Just as how Austen's Elizabeth Bennet could not have moulded out the uncompromising and brittle Mr. Darcy for the better, had she not been the owner of her own set of uncompromised principles, so does Gaskell's Margaret merit applause for battling Mr. Thornton's unwarranted principles of disregarding personal connection within the cash nexus by her own equally tenacious principles of compassion and benevolence. Mr. Thornton's arguments were embedded in a heavily masculine culture of trade and economy that made people into automatons and the questions of human compassion and suffering were thrown out of the window. On the other hand, Margaret's own female culture populated with the everyday interactions between female accomplices from different class societies germinate her criteria of a relationship balanced upon a mutual dispensation of compassion, understanding and work ethics.

Through the agency of Margaret, the masters and the workmen come to understand that it is indeed the lack of communication and man-to-man dialogue that is responsible for the seemingly unbridgeable rift between the two classes. What Margaret has been able to achieve within the dynamics of the female culture, through her unification with Mr. Thornton, she is able to pass it to her husband: the ability to see through the "mere cash nexus" (Gaskell 525). Also, of importance is the understanding that this unification is achieved by Margaret on her own terms. It is unlikely that Margaret would have been able to exert such an influence over Mr. Thornton had she chosen to compromise on her own beliefs and judgements. Although for much of the later section Margaret mulls over her misjudgment of Mr. Thornton's character with due compunction, she never wishes to revisit the episode where Mr. Thornton asked for her hand in marriage. Margaret's refusal to court Mr. Thornton is hinged more upon the ideological differences between the two than

anything else. And although towards the end of the novel she completely overturns her prejudices against the manufacturing community, she still does not wish for any revision of her original stance regarding marriage. What she feels for Mr. Thornton is a keen sense of respect for his decision to alleviate her case despite her former transgressions against his feelings. She is not inclined to marry Mr. Thornton until it becomes apparent that through her patronage and unification with Mr. Thornton, Margaret would be able to better employ her agency and do the greater good that she hitherto could not help. And here lies another latent message, that of the nobility and final reward of uncompromised principles. Even before marrying Margaret, her influence has been enough to force him into arranging an occasional communal dinner where he shares the delicacies of the “hot pot” with his workmen (Gaskell 554), an arrangement which was high unlikely before.

Only through displaying a characteristic and almost masculine refusal to admit ideological fluctuations in matters of stout principle, it appears, women can use their agency to produce tangible results, although they might still employ the services of a male intermediation. This is the act of instituting of ‘women’s domestic values into the public sphere’ (Womack 122) whereby they occasionally overwhelm the general culture by bringing into the very open the dynamics of their domestic female culture. By doing so, they allow themselves and the men whom they put into action on their behalf, to treat the gaping wounds of the poor working class with some kind of balm.

And once again Margaret feels ameliorated by indulging her urge for voice and agency. Her reform work, that never discontinues, even as she moves back to London comes into full force once she decides to purchase the Marlborough mills by now pressed under severe economic distress. Through becoming Mr. Thornton’s landlord and later his wife, she gains an undeniable access to the mainstream public sphere that makes her not the first female character of Gaskell who is able to negotiate her way into the public realm. Nevertheless, one must not forget that it is not simply her slipping into fortune and possessing the mills that changes the plight of the poor, but the long contending arguments that pass between Margaret and Mr. Thornton over her sewing desk and her ability to salvage from abstractions the most important elements of the female culture while instituting it in the public sphere that

culminate into the ideological regeneration responsible for the peace of the general public.

Uncovering the presence of this female culture is the primary task of gynocriticism and it is also what the later half of the analysis chapter will be dedicated to.

The unveiling of the existence and essentialism of a female culture tasks the dissertation with unravelling what Showalter call the double-voiced discourse, that is, a corpus where the dominant and the muted discourse flow side-by-side. It is the argument of this thesis that Gaskell's use of the double-voiced discourse becomes a great narrative technique that allows her to question and regale her readers on the role and perceptions of women and modify these in the wake of a complimentary female culture which, at least at the time of the novel's creation, was making itself known in subtle and muted tones.

2.2. *North and South* and the Female Culture

In the instance where one looks for the double-voiced discourse that Showalter speaks of in texts scribed by women, Elizabeth Gaskell's industrial novel, *North and South*, surfaces as a valuable resource. The essence of the double-voiced discourse is embedded in the underlying theme of a social, cultural and historical female perspective "muted" under the sheer weight of the dominant social and cultural discourse (Showalter 201), and what better way to expound it than in the culturally elusive times of the Industrial Revolution, whose documentation by the novelists of the time became a precedence of change both within the social as well as gendered spheres.

The common tendency of subjecting the industrial novel to the exclusive critical lens of the Marxist school has resulted in asking primary questions pertaining, almost exclusively, to economy and its impact (Donovan 441). The most that such a criticism does for the female experience includes a discourse on how conditions of women became more egregious than their male counterpart. If anything, a Marxist, deconstructionist or some other perspective of literary criticism of the industrial novel genre only reinforces the narrative of female victimization. Even a feminist analysis would only give a feminist account of the rights denied to women, a criticism based on two forms of dependency that Showalter abhorred:

protest and approval from the male counterparts (217). It completely undermines the prevalence of a “muted” (199) discourse that, according to Showalter, is commonly undercut by the dominant discourse. It is therefore the project of gynocritics to demystify the ‘muted discourse’ and look at the novel and the genre’s contribution in displacing cultural myths about the female consciousness during a time which inadvertently became conducive to such a displacement.

The methodology section prevails upon the use of two kinds of discourses when documenting the culture of the female. In her essay, “Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness” Showalter draws on the works of Ardener and Lerner to maintain how the dominant discourse has long been formulated and perpetuated by males, designed exclusively to accommodate a most androcentric relationship between the signifier and the signified, and taken de facto as the lingua franca of all agentic species. The muted discourse, according to both Ardener and Showalter, is not necessarily silent, but garbed under the pretence of a seemingly androcentric conformity (Showalter 200), i.e., while women’s writing, especially from the feminine phase may appear to comply with the traditional roles ascribed to men and women, there is always a secret (and suppressed) note of rebellion in them that has to be read between the lines. This suppression is an anomaly, and if not in the regular medium of assertion, must make itself known in ways more hidden than opaque, more evasive than direct. As Ardener puts it, in response to the question of expression for the ‘symbolic weight of the other mass of persons’, the muted discourse must be detected in female art and ritual (48).

North and South perfectly situates itself for such a critical scrutiny. Published in 1854, the novel is the direct product of a literary tradition that has been compartmentalised as the feminine phase in the female literary curve. The phase is marked by the painful and often conspicuous internalisation of the andro-conformist ideas of culture, history gender expectations and society (Showalter).

Gaskell’s protagonist of *North and South* is a young girl of twenty who has lived most of her life alternately within the confines of her cousin’s stately home in London and the limited landscape of Hampshire. Following the struggles, occupations, and interactions of her feminine world, one is almost surprised how easily the novel lends itself to a social realist scrutiny. Indeed, it is almost in the wholesomeness of the novel’s thematic implications and commentary on the

deepening polarity between the working class and the Masters, juxtaposed with the somewhat limited society of Margaret, populated mostly with female companions, that we come to endorse Lerner's belief in the equanimity of the female culture. According to Lerner, one must not think of the consciousness of the female world as a subculture. The culture of the majority must not and cannot be subjugated. While the female experience might be marginalised in the masculine tradition for its otherness, women have resorted to remodelling this relation by turning this otherness into a complementarity of sorts, thereby redefining it. That is, a female's experience might be different, but not necessarily inferior to a man's. It is complimentary, not deviating (Lerner 229).

Surely such a perspective makes it easier for one to understand how novels, such as the one under discussion, lend so willingly an insight into the general social dynamics when they apparently confine themselves to the occupations, and consciousness of a female protagonist.

The primary plot of the novel *North and South* revolves around the tensions and the climactic strikes that Milton workers put up against the diminishing factory wages. The Preston Lockouts of 1853 were probably the inspiration behind the Miltoners' strike in Gaskell's novel. Gaskell's tone is reformist and conciliatory, as opposed to accusatory and vindictive. The reclamation of suffering, especially on the part of the Milton workers, however abject and pathetic, resonates strongly with that of a similar reclamation that female writers have long indulged in. This appears to be one reason why Margaret is more ready to side with the Milton workmen than sympathize with the robust and, admittedly self-righteous declarations of Mr. Thornton. As Lambert points out, there is seemingly a "resonance" between the difficulties that Gaskell has faced in making her voice heard as a novelist and the ones that the poor working class of her novels face in making theirs matter (124).

One of the main motives for the author of *Mary Barton* and *North and South* in penning these works of classics was to use the medium of novels to disclose the grim reality of the poor lives of the working class, during the time of the Victorian revolution, to the middle class which formed the greatest bulk of her readership and was widely ignorant of the former's egregious circumstances. In her novel *North and South*, for example, Margaret's association with Bessy Higgins from the working class was a way to make the readers 'see the individual reality behind the

amorphous and anonymous mass of the poor who elbowed them daily in the streets' (Lambert 122) but from whose consciousness the somewhat privileged stood visibly aloof.

But it was more than that. It was not just the reality of the poor. It was the reality through the often marginalised lens of a middle class woman who chose to play the part of a reformist despite the limitations of her 'resourcefulness' for being one. Bessy's miseries appear compounded under the sheer weight of the economic wrongs wrought upon the poor in general, and her self-imposed state of muteness before her father about her personal sufferings brought on by the conventions of gender on which the study will shed ample light shortly. In such a state Margaret alone comes to bring Bessy, a lower class factory worker, some respite from the shackles of public injustices and private conventions. Within the greater economic spectrum that the industrial novel hinges upon, the female consciousness is often marginalised. It must be noted that the most common referential standpoint from which industrial novels are subjected to literary criticism is essentially Marxist and once again committing the mistake of placing the male consciousness at the centre of mankind's experience (Donovan 441-442). Gaskell's project however was bigger than that. It was akin to her motive behind writing the first industrial novel *Mary Barton* (1853). Critics have long argued that *Mary Barton* was a product of Gaskell's need to give vent to her personal grief of losing her infant son. Critic Christine Krueger has some interesting comments with regards to that. According to Krueger, taking Gaskell's writings as a grieving mother and missionary's wife's "therapeutic exercise" appears just to be society's way to garb, under the robe of convention, the literary achievements of a woman whose "political convictions forced her to circumvent masculine social and literary authority" (Krueger 169).

In other words, Gaskell's andro-conformist and self-approbatory language is a way to a) criticise the long prevailing forms of consciousness that is thoroughly masculine, especially within the scope of social economy, b) materialize female political power that was almost non-existent in practice, c) create a female community or in the words of Showalter, give a more tangible form to the female culture, and most importantly amongst all, d) 'feminize political discourse', or in other words, normalize the participation of women in political discourses and evaluate politics from the perspective of women as well as men.(Lambert 125).

Gaskell does this by putting women's consciousness and experience, both menial and serious, at the centre of her novel. The audience becomes familiar with Margaret's world occupied with "ladies' business" (11).

Fairly early in the novel, readers are nudged with hint of self-approbation, quite akin to the indulgence in Showalter's reclamation from before. In response to Henry Lennox's comments on ladies' business being unlike men's business, "which is true law business" (Gaskell 11), Margaret has this to say: "Ah, I knew how you would be amused to find us all so occupied in admiring finery. But really Indian shawls are very perfect things of their kind" (Gaskell 11).

Inconsequential as the episode is, Margaret's admission of Mr. Lennox's somewhat disparaging remarks on women's occupations and her modification of this disparagement into an instance of masculine ignorance calls to mind Ardener's "no-man zone" (qtd in Showalter 200). This is a zone from which the male consciousness is distinctly barred, and in which female consciousness undergoes unique development.

It is in episodes such as these and others, precisely one where Margaret and Thornton enter into a gruelling debate on the relationship between Masters and workmen (208), that the feminine and feminist traits intertwine almost inextricably in the female writing.

Often in the novel, femininity, the weakness of Margaret's sex, also becomes her strength. For example, her impulse to send Thornton into the raging crowd of the protestors first, realization of the mistake she made, and the decision to protect Thornton by throwing her physical form between the manufacturer and the rioters is a keen reminder of her social inexperience but one which the society cannot put her at fault for.

Confined to her modest household, befriended with a single, poor but righteous Higgins' family, and filled greater ideas of sentimentality than practicality, one could hardly have expected anything different. Yet who is she answerable for her conduct and the possible fatality of incidence? Certainly not to either Mr. Thornton or the rioters. Her mortification for this incidence stems purely from the gossips that follow between Fanny and her maid, where the former pronounces her act too "bold and forward" as to suit a lady (Gaskell 328).

The discourse here is once again embedded with duality of implications. On the surface is the dominant discourse, whereby Margaret is both inexperienced and impulsive. While Mr. Thornton is unfazed by the “infuriated multitude” (Gaskell 311) of the rioters who seemed to be looking for the “taste of blood” (Gaskell 311) following the betrayal brought on by recruiting the Irish hands, Margaret loses composure. This is the discourse in conformity with the dominant one of Hubbard, Laycock and similar Victorian biologists who believed that females must be frail and incapable of taking upon the weight of the practical world (King 8-30).

There is, however, another discourse prevalent. The muted discourse. The spectacle is too much for Margaret because, unlike Mr. Thornton, Margaret has befriended one of the strikers’ kind, the sickly and wan Bessy Higgins. While the general culture keeps the masters and the workmen at bay, the norms of social separateness between classes become less stringent in their applicability upon females. While Mr. Thornton’s business and culture of social dominance and hierarchical discord makes it impossible for him to befriend strikers on a personal level, Margaret, being a woman from the peaceful county of rural Hampshire, has no such restrictions.

Her acquaintance with Bessy, a result of the latter’s fanciful attachment to Margaret who bequeaths her a set of roses, was an acquaintance of solicitous admission on the part of the Higgins. It was a friendship grounded in the notions of compassion, sympathy and a sisterly affinity between the two. Difference of status didn’t regale Margaret because, as a female and daughter of a church dissenter, she didn’t have much to assume either.

Fulfilling the role of nurturer and caretaker that nature has ascribed to the female sex, Margaret takes it upon herself to nurse Bessy intermittently during the final days of the former’s consumption. This sisterly bond brings her into the domesticity of a life much alienated to her and the general public of her social class.

Friendship between members of the two classes was not prohibited in any written form. Indeed, Margaret’s own father befriends both the Higginses and the Bouchers on Margaret’s behalf, but when he does so, he does it in the capacity of a former missionary who desires to bring relief among the people of his parish. The walls, erected out of class consciousness, somehow remain transfixed. Margaret, however, is able to transcend the abstract walls of class-difference because the

dynamics of the female culture allow her to do so. Her attachment to the Higginses arises, on the one hand, out of an innocent need on Margaret's part to provide relief to another human of her kin who would rather find solace in a distant female friend than the rough, albeit well-meant, injunctions of her father, while on the other hand, there is a kind of female consciousness at play. This once again calls for an inspection of the female culture that Ardener, Lerner and Showalter spoke of.

As opposed to the general culture, which is marked by a communication rupture between different classes, the female culture is more accepting of it. The master-worker relationship was a relatively newer type of working relationship during the beginning of the industrial revolution when compared with the mistress-servant relationship that had a long prevalent tradition in the Victorian culture (Gavin and Oulton 54-55). A short detour into the understanding of this culture that contains the special dynamics between mistresses and female servants is absolutely necessary to examine Margaret's "theatricalised dissension" (Hadley 2) of the convention exemplified in the exposure of her form to the rioters' violence.

The industrial revolution and the resulting movement of the rural classes to the urban hoods, gave rise to a distinctive group of white-collar salaried employees, traders, manufacturers, retailers, artisans, intellectuals and professionals who began to restructure the social position of the masses. Although this shift was publicly seen as taking place with the advent of the newer occupations and businesses that came with the plantation of industries, the changes were also part of the private domestic spheres largely occupied by the females. Women, "especially middle-class mistresses and their female servants, played a crucial role in defining the social distinctiveness and character of this new, diverse group of individuals" (Chamberlain 53) and this is exactly the kind of redefining that leads Margaret to befriend and understand Betsy on a personal level.

During the Victorian times, domestic servants coming from the working-class poor were largely female for two reasons. Females were seen more serviceable, mouldable and obedient than their male counterparts and warranted smaller salaries in comparison to male servants. Mistresses of the houses, therefore had ample experience in supervising servants and overlooking all related matters. Since men rarely intervened in matters of domestic nature, servants were kept under the close

scrutiny of their female masters, who were likely to form a close attachment with their servants.

It was therefore part of the female culture to forge a more personal bond with the servants of the lowest order as opposed to the general norm prevalent amongst their male counterparts. It is easy to see how the mistress-servant relationship was in strong contrast with the master-workmen relationship where the primary dynamics of mutual dependency were almost the same.

Just as how, the mutual dependency between the master and the workmen meant that a refusal to work on the part of the latter could result in the dormancy of the entire public institution, a similar power was ascribed to the female servants in the private sphere. The mistresses understood this role of the servants and novels were written, such as Howitt's *Work and Wages*, where female servants chose to mimic their mistresses while in reality they were sometimes taken to be mistresses themselves (Burnett 171). Female servants therefore were allowed a lot more indulgence by their mistresses than we see granted to the workmen by their masters. This is one reason why Margaret fails to understand Mr. Thornton's refusal to disclose upon the workmen the real reason for not raising the salaries as had been promised. According to Margaret, the tension between the masters and the workmen were futile and insensible since "the two classes were dependent on each other in every possible way" but each regarded "the interest of the other as opposed to their own" (Gaskell 208) but this relationship of mutual dependency, understood as a natural course of things in the female culture, remains incomprehensible to Mr. Thornton until Margaret changes him for the better.

Mr. Thornton does not admit of any necessity of indulging workmen by disclosing to them the ins and outs of manufacturing. Whereas Margaret alludes to the divine injunction whereby masters are bound to the welfare of their workmen. It has been a common custom within the novel for Margaret to voice opinions that are either steeped in the biblical passages or either in a self-proclaimed show of ignorance. Both seem to be stemming from the necessity of veiling female political convictions under the fabric of a convention that is more acceptable to the society. Since women were not expected to have strong political opinions, by referencing biblical passages, Margaret's opinions seem to appear less like a woman's overt participation in matters of politics and more like biblical injunctions that Margaret

was only forwarding. It is obvious that Margaret uses the divine injunction only to prove a point which is originally steeped in the experience of her female culture.

In the public sphere, where the norm was for the masters to regard the workmen as mere 'hands' and thus reduced to a dehumanizing metonymy, there did not appear any reason to indulge them to such a level and apprise their personal lives up close. In the private sphere, on the other hand, mistresses allowed the female servants room to assert their consciousness by and by. This is why Margaret, time and again, struggles to understand the lack of communication between masters and the workmen. But class consciousness was an important determiner when it came to the master-workmen relationship. Amongst the females, it is easy to see now, why this consciousness had always been less enforced. This also explains why Margaret decides to go out of her way in befriending Bessy Higgins. Close companionship between middle class and working class was less of an anomaly among women than men and it was steeped in the unique dynamic of the female culture of mistresses and their servants from the working-class poor. Margaret's friendship with Bessy, the natural product of the female culture that is more accepting of inter-class friendships, was also a convenient medium for Gaskell to bring to surface the troubles of the working-class poor during the industrial time.

The close affinity between the two females discloses to Margaret what she would wish for Mr. Thornton and others to see for themselves. Chained to the bed, Bessy one day explains the gruesome sobbing of the neighbouring Mr. Boucher, whose family of a sick wife and seven under-fed children can no longer rely on the scanty provisions following the strike.

Distraught and sorrow-ridden over such misery, Margaret immediately refurbishes provisions for the family, but the incidence makes its mark. She can no longer act as a bystander. Mr. Thornton, and indeed other men of power could not have known the intensity of the workers' helplessness whose decision to strike was but another act of misjudgment.

Spotting Boucher amidst the rioters, for whose arrest Mr. Thornton has sent the soldiers, Margaret's actions of throwing herself upon Mr. Thornton are less likely to be interpreted as impulsive. It seems convincing that Margaret is "guided by her womanly instincts" (Gaskell 352) to protect not only one gentleman from the

‘violence of numbers’ but also the ‘the numbers’ from their own misconstrued violence (Gaskell 352).

The female culture, the no-man zone spoken of earlier, formed from the close alliance of Margaret and Bessy Higgins, is what informs the latter of the intense domestic catastrophes that would have made the rioters only more miserable. Mr. Thornton’s world, the world of polarized masters and workmen, could not have allowed him that insight nor the resulting compassion.

Indeed, Margaret’s actions, somewhat injudicious, prevent major catastrophe by protecting the Irish workmen from the impending violence and thereby averting arrests that most likely would have resulted had the strike continued for even a few more minutes. A gynocritical interpretation of such kind brings validity to the idea of understanding a complimentary female culture rather than an inferior or marginalised subculture within the dominant culture of the male consciousness. If it were inferior, the implications of the sisterly communion between Margaret and Bessy would have failed to make their mark on the general order of things. As it were, Margaret’s sacrifice is an inadvertent display of female resilience to the trampling and all-encapsulating force of the male culture. This is an act which Whitney A. Womack would most likely have described as “instituting” the domesticities of the female culture in the public sphere (133).

Margaret may have been inclined, in the fashion of her male counterparts, to take the side of one party than another. However, it is owing to the female culture of the Victorian times that Margaret abstains from making such an error. Earlier, the thesis proved how within the general culture of the industrial revolution that was marked by a clear tug-of-war between different classes for economic control, the female culture housed a degree of neutrality. This culture made it easier for Margaret to refrain from taking sides or jump to conclusions too soon.

Having been part of and lived among the gentility all her life, Margaret could not sympathise with Mr. Higgins’ vehement disregard for biblical injunctions of what Margaret would call as “God’s order for what kind of life” it is to be (Gaskell 154). Indeed, in trying to reconcile Mr. Higgins with the idea of accepting his fate and quitting the strike she was closer to the convictions of Mr. Thornton than Mr. Higgins. In fact, more than once she almost takes the manufacturing lords’ standpoint in justifying the economic downturn that kept the masters from increasing

the labourers' wages. However, the female culture of economic dependency and the gruelling social and psychological constraints that result from these make it easier for Margaret to understand the "cause" of the workmen (Gaskell 320), something Mr. Thornton and other manufacturing masters were unable to do. For Margaret, acknowledging their interdependency was the way forward for both the classes and she was left perplexed as to why this should be so difficult to achieve. But what was easily impressed upon Margaret in the limited scope of the female culture, became the great conundrum in the male dominated economic setup.

Gaskell hence ingeniously segues back and forth between the dominant and the muted discourse, where the former has economic discrepancy as its subject matter and the latter has female intuitive adequacy as its thematic concern. While the dominant discourse revolves around what were definitely perceived as matters of masculine aptitude, the latent or muted discourse does not pass without the hint that masculine wit is as prone to misjudgment as feminine wit was thought to be and that where men have seemed to apparently fail, Women's intellect may be given a try.

And it is given a try, as far as the novel is concerned. Margaret's marriage to Mr. Thornton is happily aligned with the improved lot of the workmen and a general sense of economic and social bliss in the end. The change in Mr. Thornton's opinions in the matters of economy should not be deemed as the prevalence or triumph of one gender over another. Gaskell has, in the fashion of other women writers of her time, taken great pains to adjudicate the cause of a mutual regard for the opposite gender's opinion by putting the female protagonist at the mercy of a male saviour more than once. In fact, it seems as though every time Gaskell becomes so bold as to put her female protagonist into the carcass of a warrior or a protector, she quickly compensates for it by bringing in the motif of 'the damsel in distress'. When Margaret steps out of her defined sphere of feminine delicacy by taking a hit in place of Mr. Thornton which results in "grazing (her) forehead an cheek" (Gaskell 320), Gaskell apparently gives more heroic credit to Margaret's guts than the Victorian audience of her time would give credit for. Immediately in the next moment, however, Margaret goes back to her ascribed feminine status by getting caught up in a fainting spell arising more out of a shock that proves too much for her feminine constitution than any physical harm.

Similarly, her somewhat audacious disregard for Mr. Thornton's feelings and marriage proposal is rightly reprimanded when Mr. Thornton becomes the magistrate for resolving a case in which she and her brother become accidentally embroiled. In line with the general Victorian expectation, Mr. Thornton comes as Margaret's saving grace and rescues her from what would have been a matter of great personal and public mortification. And it is somewhere around this time that Margaret submits her judgement to an open endorsement of Mr. Thornton's nobility of character, his better sense of judgement and his social superiority. She feels a sense of "anxiety and a pang of sorrow" (Gaskell 630) over losing him. Indeed, Gaskell goes so far as putting Mr. Thornton's opinions "alongside with the displeasure of God" for Margaret's shortcomings, and this marks as one of the most blatant internalization of the Victorian expectations. (Gaskell 512). Nevertheless, it is an internalization that is not free of the suggestions of female aptitude thereby pioneering change.

In another way, the duality of discourse can be located between the narration of Gaskell and the actions of her male and female creations. As stated earlier, Margaret more than once admits the inadequacy determined by her sex to understand matters of the male world order. Mr. Thornton's assessment of the relationship between workers and their masters, and his reverence for self-made manufacturers who make their fortune from the "straightforward honesty of their hands" (Gaskell 216) than proprietors by destiny is tangential to Margaret's principles but the latter slowly warms up to the former's notions. Margaret's conformity, albeit belated, to the androcentric notions of the greater male wisdom and acumen suggests the internalisation of the dominant discourse. This becomes a paradox when one remembers that the words ascribed to both the somewhat naïve Margaret, and the more informed Mr. Thornton, Mr. Hale and other men have all stemmed from the penmanship of a female author.

Henceforth, the apparent chain of actions, from Mr. Hale's indulgence of religious doubts, to Mr. Thornton's deft role in acquitting Margaret from a serious charge and thus saving her from immense distress conform neatly to the phallogocentric dominant discourse. What's interesting is that in gratifying her male characters with greater social power and self-indulgence, Gaskell is simultaneously conforming to and running against the current of convention.

On the forefront, Mr. Hale's sagacity, his bold insistence on indulging religious doubts however depreciating, his fortitude in prioritizing his conscience over a worldly semblance of missionary infallibility, all conform to the conventional notions of male authority and consciousness. Readers of Gaskell's time would have found a man's act of religious dissension based on deep rooted question of philosophy, though not ideal, tolerably digestible. In the muted discourse, however, we see Mr. Hale's actions and arguments as merely an inflection of the author's intellectual thought processes. Through the medium of Mr. Hale, Gaskell was able to advocate the need of questioning religious autocracy. As part of the muted discourse, this becomes Gaskell's way of pioneering the need to question conflated mesh of theological, biological and cultural assumptions which not only germinated the long-embedded concepts of class division but also women's role within the gendered sphere. (Chamberlain 53-56). Even by today's standard, and definitely in Gaskell's time, this must have been a bold declaration on the part of a woman.

Before *North and South*, Gaskell's publications of *Mary Barton* (1848) and the subsequent publications of *Ruth* (1853) and the *Life of Charlotte Bronte* (1857) garnered both praise and massive disapproval. Copies of her work were publicly burnt by the congregation of which her husband was a member and she simultaneously received threats of legal actions. *North and South* appears to advocate similar principles of the need of bringing respite to the working class as she previously vouchsafed, but in a more subdued tone. And it is in the unravelling of the dominant discourse in order to salvage the muted discourse that the complete understanding of Gaskell's *North and South* can be secured.

Mrs. Gaskell has been described as a woman bestowed with a compassionate understanding of the difficulties faced by the working class that few could surpass (Williams 98). With regards to both *Mary Barton* and *North and South*, her works are appraised as documenting the miseries faced by the working-class poor for the purpose of reform. While *Mary Barton* seems to exemplify these miseries from the perspective of the oppressed sections of the society, *North and South* takes up the subject of "changing attitudes towards this class" (Lambert 53-54). Where *Mary Barton* materializes the growing need amongst the working class for an outlet that is more than capable of taking on a violent façade, *North and South* scrutinises middle

and upper class' role in damping, and if possible, purging any such need of a violent protest from amongst the poor working class.

In this regard, it is easy to confuse Gaskell's sympathies for the poor workmen for an advocacy against the superiority of the southern values over the north. Far from it, Gaskell in fact advocates the need for both the north and the south to curb their immoderate exigencies and take from the other what it lacks in its primary constitution. The problems of south, as become obvious from Mr. Thornton's visceral condemnation, and Margaret's inability to reject these, are complacency and lethargy. These characteristics, according to Mr. Thornton (and by implication according to Gaskell herself) were counterproductive in a time when ideas of pre-possessed wealth were starting to become more and more questionable. Margaret's own decision to marry Mr. Thornton is in strong contrast to her insistence in the earlier sections that she likes people whose "occupations have to do with land" (Gaskell 26). Mr. Thornton was to Margaret what she described as 'her first olive' digesting which was not possible without "making a face" (Gaskell 298). Her mostly middle class readers of the time, who must sympathise with Margaret and grow in intellectual wisdom with her ideological growth, have no choice but to take the similar course of abandoning southern regard for accidental nobility in favour of nobility that is earned.

At the same time, it is likely that the inability of the working class to make their voices heard in the industrial revolution has a strong resonance with the inability of females to make their voices heard in the general culture. There appears to be a link between Gaskell's struggle to have her voice heard as a legitimate authority and that of the lower classes and it is easy to see why many deem the industrial novel as a predecessor of the feminist works that appear in great numbers later in the century (Balkaya 20-22).

The muted discourse of Gaskell's *North and South* therefore advocates for the necessity of this discourse to be unmuted. For the female characters, voicing their innermost concerns, opinions and troubles in silent tones results not only in plot complications, from the perspective of literary aesthetics, but also keep the men from partaking from this female culture. Like the lower order in general, women of all tiers in the Victorian were remarkably restricted in giving vent to their internal struggles in forms of concrete verbal aberrations.

Therefore, for females belonging to the lower classes, suffering multiplied with their immobility and an absence of an outlet. While the poor workmen rioted and cursed, women could hardly do more than assuaging and partaking from their men's grief. Bessy, regaled by the state of her own consumption, worries interminably of her father's hopes and fears over the strike. Although suffering from the final stages of tuberculosis, Bessy never condemns her father for smoking despite it aggravating her condition. Once, in a fit of miserable panic, she describes the distress her father's perpetual smoking causes to her health. Shocked over the pain he had been unwittingly causing her daughter in her final days, but unable to withdraw from the addiction, Mr. Higgins leaves the house to smoke outside. Even this small incidence creates a moment of great alarm for his daughter. The fact that Bessy critically vilifies herself for inadvertently forcing her father out of the house discloses the need for women to suppress their own discomfort for the sake of their men. This was evidently part of the larger Victorian culture (Ellis 23-24). Margaret herself often shrouded her fears over her father's dissension, her mother's ailing health and her brother's safety, who was still persecuted for mutiny, by means of muting her thoughts into secrecy. Her mother's ill-health made it hardly advisable to make her the confidante of her secrets. Lambert has written extensively over the medium of silence as playing an instrumental role in the lives of Gaskell's female characters (Lambert 94-100). In Gaskell's earlier novels, especially *Mary Barton*, silence performed a number of functions. At times the female characters' inability to speak becomes a medium of self-defence. This was the case with Mary from *Mary Barton* who would resort to silence whenever she felt herself entwined in a conversation she didn't wish to be a part of or when she felt that the words would fail to convey the feelings she wished to express, for example, when she bit her lip hard enough to bleed in trying to keep the angry words against her father from surfacing or at the time of Jem's proposal to her. Silencing their sentiments, however, would result in rupturing these characters' mental health and physically exhausting them.

Mrs. Hale's failing health appears as much a result of her inability to ease her troubled mind over her son's absence, as it is due to the smog driven air of Milton north. Mrs. Hale's discovery of her own chronic illness and the decision to keep it a

secret from her family arises from a similar need that keeps Margaret hushed over voicing her opinions in front of her family.

This practice of silencing in the female culture is somewhat contended in Gaskell's writing, at least where *North and South* is concerned. Gaskell makes it obvious how the fewer opportunities given to the females for the change of air and occupations, compounded with their inability to give full vent to their private troubles, is what aggravates the condition of the vulnerable female health. Bessy, Mrs. Hale, and, at one point, Margaret too become the victims of this self-imposed case of silence. More than once Mr. Hale has been tormented at the sight of Margaret's wan cheeks and flailing physiognomy. However, it never occurs to him that his daughter's depreciating health could stem from some kind of mental fatigue and the expectation to curb her own consciousness for the peace of her family, to "give strength (to them) out of her own scanty stock", and "act the part of a Roman daughter" (Gaskell 436).

Bessy Higgins from working-class poor has attracted consumption from inhaling fluff from the cotton factory. Her situation is aggravated because of her father's tenacious smoking, yet she chooses to not alarm her father as much as possible. Bessy's case calls to mind Rosemarie Thomson's comments on the inevitability of female disability to instill the idea of destitution in industrial literature. This destitution, arising from self-imposed silence becomes a part of the collective female consciousness. The physical disability of women in such novels "operates as a badge of innocence, suffering, displacement and powerlessness that renders the disabled woman sympathetic and alarming figures of vulnerability" (Thomson 557).

This is in conformity with the general Victorian culture. Women of England were supposed to feel proud when they served their men and created a nurturing environment in their homes while simultaneously forgetting their own comfort. They provided care to their men and denied themselves in making them comfortable. When such duties were assigned to wives, mothers and daughters then "innumerable channels (were) opened for the overflow of those floods of human kindness, which it (was) one of the happiest and most ennobling duties of women to administer to the weary frame, and to pour into the wounded mind" (Ellis 23). According to Ellis,

women should have three characteristics. They should be swift in their actions, have “energy of thought” and should have a very benevolent attitude.

It is interesting how Ellis’ account of a true woman’s duties did not fundamentally take into consideration the question of women’s comfort. So, consuming herself with devotion towards the family, women are almost goaded into accepting a life of servile self-denial. In the case of the women of *North and South*, this self-denial and the all-too consumptive roleplay of the “angel of comfort” (Gaskell 450) achieved by curbing the urge of voicing their deepest fears and expectations, takes a great toll on their physical and mental health.

When Margaret’s mother passes away, she must suppress her own grief so that her father and brother can freely alleviate their passionate sorrows by giving them vent as she bustles about to make arrangements for the funeral. When the cup of suppressed emotions become too brim-full for the heart, she lets some of it spill by “hiding her face in the cushions that no one might hear her cry” (Gaskell 452) over the departed and then doubles over the loss that must not be spoken of. Only Dixon, her female servant catches her in this vulnerable state and strives in any measure to make her feel better.

Under such circumstances of silencing oneself, harbouring thoughts of secrecy or sharing them with a close female companion surfaces as an important part of the female culture and by extension their collective consciousness. Women have to rely on the companionship and confidence of other women characters who are, almost exclusively, same-gendered and outside of their immediate family circle.

For Mrs. Hale, the outlet is Dixon, her long-time family servant. Margaret’s meetings with Bessy, too, were meetings that took place as part of committing to this culture. Apparently, these were meetings desired by Bessy and granted by Margaret as a token of compassion for the chronic patient in her final days. However, it would be a mistake to think of these as bringing one-sided respite. Margaret equally benefitted from these meetings. Indeed, she occasioned them during times that were most crucial to her own family. What then, one wonders, could promulgate Margaret’s expeditions under such emergency?

Bessy’s irrecoverable health, the Bouchers’ desperation and Mr. Higgins’ restlessness over the apparent dormancy resulting from the strike provided rueful

moments when she could forget her own troubles for once. The spectacle of distress and fading hope were solemn reminders of millions suffering from a worst plight than her own. For someone who has been barred from the relief of confiding her troubles, visits to Bessy gave her the chance to act, for once, as a solicitor than a victim. Nor was it that Bessy and Margaret were strictly confined to the roles of interlocutors and auditors. There were times when Margaret too found a listener in the person of Bessy for her deepest contemplations. Her yearning for Helstone, a topic she seldom reverted to before her own family, her own mother's irrecoverable health and the absence of a confidante were matters of grief that she disclosed to no one but Bessy. Indeed, the latter learnt of the fatality of Mrs. Hale's illness through Margaret even before Mr. Hale did.

More than once Margaret prevents giving vent to the accumulating emotions of grief and sorrow to ease the minds of her father and brother. The necessity to conform to society's expectations of being a source of domestic solace compels Margaret to prioritize the comfort of her family over her own. Twice we see Margaret assume these roles in the midst of great domestic turmoil. First relates to Mr. Hale's decision to quit the church of England on account of admitting "painful and miserable doubts" around ecclesiastical theology (Gaskell 53). The blow is a great one to Margaret, but she must suppress her own fears and perturbations for her family's sake. In the instance where Mr. Hale refuses to break the news of his religious dissension to his wife, Margaret steps up to take the responsibility. She must spare her father the "humiliation" (Gaskell 56) of being vilified by his wife over his theological mutiny while trying her best to reconcile her mother with the fresh blow and pacify her as much as possible. During the family's departure neither Mr. Hale nor his wife, the family heads, take charge of overseeing the move. Margaret assumes the charge of the packaging of the furniture and even settlement of the family in Milton. In this episode, as in the ones that populate the novel later, Margaret surfaces as the ultimate picture of sacrifice and domestic solace.

One cannot help but notice how Gaskell, in conforming to the dominant discourse of feminine nurturing, subdued the tone of this dominant narrative with another one of muted suggestions. Margaret's ability to subdue her grief for her family's sake while conforming to the Victorian expectations, in another way, goes completely tangential to the other dominant of feminine inaptitude. That is, it goes

against the discourses of Professor Hubbard, Paul Broca, and Thomas Laycock who, in the words of the latter, were of the belief that “females have less capability than men for dealing with the abstract in philosophy, science and art due to smaller frontal convolutions” (quoted in King 21). Margaret’s understanding of her father’s need to resign from the Church, her desks that are clustered with the copies of the dictionary and the *Paradise of Dante*, her shrewdness in deciding matters of family settlements, her ability to subdue her own fears for the comfort of her family, and later, her keen insight into the discord between masters and workmen and the real nature of capitalistic social order are diametrically opposite to the cultural assessment of female aptitude in the Victorian times.

This has been the special pedigree of female Victorian writers from the first and second phases of the female writing tradition. It is well that Gaskell’s novel belongs to the industrial genre but has a female protagonist, without much experience of industrialisation, at the centre. The uniqueness of this combination makes it easier for a gynocritic to discern the muted discourse under the garb of the dominant, to account for apparent feminine ineptitude by placing it within the oppressive dominant discourse that constricts the number of opportunities for females. And by doing both of the above, prove how writers, such as Gaskell, have ingeniously used the genre as a medium to advocate the similarity of ambitions, dreams, fears and desires between the two sexes making them more similar than different.

When talking to Mr. Thornton on the subject of the master’s treatment of their workers, Margaret is at the same time both in and out of her element. The more Margaret questions Thornton on account of her admitted inexperience in the matter, the more she inadvertently reveals the making of a better manufacturer in her own person. This is another instance where the muted discourse extricates itself from the chains of the dominant narrative and comes out in full bloom.

It is clear from the conversation between Margaret and Mr. Thornton on the subject of the relationship between masters and the workmen, that the masters do not think of the workmen as anything more than servants, reducing them to an even more denigrating epithet of being the masters’ “hands” (208). Margaret is quick to notice the arrogant but misplaced dismissal of the rights and opinions of the workmen. Her line of reasoning is thus: “I don’t know—I suppose because, on the very face of it, I

see two classes dependent on each other in every possible way, yet each evidently regarding the interests of the other as opposed to their own; I never lived in a place before where there were two sets of people always running each other down” (Gaskell 208).

It is obvious that Margaret not only owns greater compassion than Mr. Thornton, she also has the makings of a better manufacturer since she is so easily able to pin down on the very crux of capitalism, whose aftereffects had still not fully appeared before either the public or the economic speculators. Gaskell seems to be advocating the need for the two classes to come together through the channel of dialogue. Many novelists, writing about the condition of England at that time, argued in favour of better communication between masters and servants (Baklaya 2015). Moreover, in Gaskell’s novel this thesis is rendered by a young lady who has lived a very short life amongst industrial people. The fact that she is able to assess the situation of interdependency, a situation that neither the workers nor the masters are able to see and the fact to which Mr. Thornton will eventually submit, shows how women, if put under the experience, have the faculty to understand and interpret larger subjects of economy, industry, and society as well as any man if not better.

2.3. Shifting Ambitions in the Female Culture

Margaret, being the spokesperson for this mass of unheard voices comprising both the lower order and the muted women of the Victorian times, has her limitations. Although her status as the daughter of a gentleman situates her in a better place than the indistinguishable hoard of factory workers, she must still find a way to break through the conventions to which her sex subjects. Almost every time, Mr. Thornton and Mr. Hale take up a discussion, Margaret has to make use of the feminine art of embroidery or lacemaking to admit herself into the discussion. Secure behind the pretense of taking up some leftover piece of sewing work, Margaret can easily eavesdrop into the conversation that passes between Mr. Thornton and Mr. Hale. Her interjections are crafted to give the semblance of questioning all that she has ‘overheard’ instead of consciously listened to with the aim of understanding the workings of the manufacturing city and negotiating the cause of the poor classes.

Gaskell seems to have the tendency of choosing what Lambert (2018) calls a gendered activity for the defense of her female characters. This gendered activity

performs a significant role in the female culture. In her novel *Mary Barton*, this gendered activity took the form of singing. According to Lambert, “Alice Wilson’s mother sings to her and this becomes a metaphor for the love that follows Alice and sustains her throughout her difficult life” (128). Mary herself resorts to singing in order to distract herself from thinking too deeply about Jem and the persecution of Harry Carson. Song became Women’s weapon for voicing their innermost thoughts-thoughts that were forced to keep veiled. In *North and South* this gendered activity comprised of sewing.

Margaret mainly takes to sewing in the drawing room to disguise her apparent need to intervene in the men’s conversations around manufacturing, strikes, and the treatment of the workers. Conversations in which females didn’t find any apparent need to participate. The act of Margaret “sitting at her work” (212) of embroidery while Mr. Hale welcomes Mr. Thornton into the quarter of his modest drawing room is almost mentioned as a formality of sorts. It is obvious that without this façade of female occupation, Margaret’s admittance into the conversation would appear out of place to both the gentlemen and the readers. Margaret’s act of taking up sewing has also been described as a pretence by Gaskell herself who wanted to make clear the activity necessary to simultaneously feminize Margaret’s masculine endeavours of understanding industrialism and challenging Mr. Thornton’s- an established industrialist-understanding of it. The act of sewing thus becomes one way for Margaret to “negotiate the barriers to the entry into the public sphere” (King 21).

In the Victorian times, sewing had always served an integral purpose in the female culture. It was thought as women’s exclusive weapon. Within the domestic sphere it became an expression of female consciousness and outside of it, the art paved way for some respite from dependence. So exclusive was sewing a female enterprise that even when it was taken into the male dominated confines of the textile and lacemaking factories, young and adult female employees completely outnumbered male employees. In fact, machines were designed, such as the Jenny’s wheel which could best be operated by the small and nimble fingers of young females. During the first half of the nineteenth century, the lacemaking industry became responsible for providing a minimal level of independence where possible, and in households where these females contributed to the mainstream economy of a

male head, the family was able to fairly rise out of destitution (Stephen and Oxley 723-749).

Not only then sewing becomes a woman's way to disguise her other passionate motives under the garb of a humbler enterprise such as Margaret's rendezvous into the public realm, it also brings Margaret respite when she needs them. Every time it becomes difficult for Margaret to face Mr. Thornton, sewing would become her excuse to deny conversations on account of being visibly occupied. Similarly, her little project to make a lace apparel for her cousin Edith's baby brings her both comfort and distraction from the domestic and public worries of Milton. Interestingly, sewing, a largely feminised and gendered ritual, especially during the Victorian times, also becomes Gaskell's way to break against the bounds of this very convention. When Mrs. Thornton comes to pay a visit to the Hales, she is left without bemusement over Margaret's finesse in lacemaking. "Flimsy useless work" (Gaskell 165) is what she terms Margaret's little artistic advent. Margaret, it seems, is in her most valuable and productive element when she chooses to take her place in the public sphere. Her bouts in the private sphere are, although aesthetically pleasing, devoid of practical use. In the similar fashion of Gaskell's earlier creation, Libbie Marsh from *Sketches Among the Poor, No 1*, who must "look about (herself) for somewhat else to do" since God seems to have kept her "out of Women's natural work" (quoted in Lambert 126), Margaret, too, both mocks the internalised conventions of the female sphere and is successfully able to break through them.

The female culture of which Margaret and her domestic affairs are a part, is intricately woven by Gaskell within the larger cultural pattern of the English industrial revolution.

This, according to Caroline Lambert, was a tendency prevalent amongst various female writers of the industrial genre. Writers such as Martineu, and even Trollope and Gaskell, "placed women more centrally" within the economic theory and its practice (Lambert 125). While men, both as manufacturers and workmen, were the active instigators of the economic upside, the industrial novels penned by women depicted women as the passive lubricators. It is obvious that Mrs. Thornton has modelled her son after her own indomitable principles of fortitude and resilience. During the strike, Mrs. Thornton is as contemptuous of the strikers as her son. On the

other hand, Bessy, despite her state of consumption, echoes her father's sentiments with regards to the relationship between the masters and the workmen.

Since the genre of the novel is industrial, the question of a derailing economy and its after-effects takes precedence over other themes, including the prevalent theme of a collective female suffering.

There is, hence, a tendency prevalent amongst the females of *North and South* to live vicariously through their men in this general culture. Mrs. Thornton gloats proudly over her son for having accomplished what she undoubtedly would have accomplished for herself had her sex been allowed the social freedom.

Similarly Margaret, barred from the world of power and ambition in the general Victorian culture, seems to savour the taste of ambition in the boastful discourses of the men around her. During a party at the Thorntons', Margaret is pleasantly amused by the show of garrulous conviction from the powerful Milton masters talking amongst themselves:

She was glad when the gentlemen came, ...she could listen to something larger and grander than the petty interests which the ladies had been talking about. She liked the exultation in the sense of power which these Milton men had. It might be rather rampant in its display, and savour of boasting; but still they seemed to defy the old limits of possibility, in a kind of fine intoxication, caused by the recollection of what had been achieved, and what yet should be (291).

This short passage is one of many that lends itself to several hypocritical angles of scrutiny all at once. The mastery with which Gaskell segues from Margaret's distaste for her female companions' "petty interests" (Gaskell 291) and appreciation for the gentlemen's "exultation in the sense of power" (Gaskell 291) suggests both an internalization and a reproof of the traditional concepts of the feminine and the female.

While there is a mass of the other person whose toil in the Victorian times did not involve a sphere outside of the immediate household domesticities, there were women like Margaret who delighted in the exultation of power that were practically enjoyed by her male counterparts. And she enjoys it not for the ignoble reasons of egoistic gratification that such an exultation must bring to its sentient moulds. She enjoys it because it seems to "defy the old limits of possibility" (Gaskell 291). Gaskell's remarks on how, with the rise of the manufacturing class, so much has been achieved and so much is yet to be achieved reflect a sense of progress that may

as well come to the aid of the female sex itself. Already Margaret has begun to exult over the slow erosion of traditional limitations. Was female exclusion from participation in the general social sphere not one such limitation? And is it not probable to think that through Margaret's expectation of all that is yet to be achieved, Gaskell is almost hoping for the time when humanity will come to play on an equal field. It is doubtful that in this instance, Gaskell's assumptions of the progressive humanity, free from traditional and dated constraints, would bar females from the circle.

It is also important to understand that Gaskell does not morph all of her women characters into heroes capable of the power to subdue the menfolk with their intellect and passion. If anything, the female population of *North and South* shows as much plurality of character as is possible within the scope of some hundred pages. Mrs. Hale is indecisive, Fanny is giddy; Mrs. Thornton lacks temperament when it comes to sentimentalities and Bessy is devoid of any will. Most of these characters, however, have some redeeming qualities.

Mrs. Hale may not be the most resolute person, but she fulfils the traditional feminine expectations of possessing the kind soul of a nurturer. Mrs. Thornton is the complete opposite. Firm and tenacious, she does not mistake principles for compassion. The woman, despite her keen dislike for Margaret, shows the latter what compassion her principles warrant during times of distress. Bessy, the quintessential female specimen of the working class, may lack the will to look for happiness in her definitive state of chronic illness, at least manages to garb her suffering in the presence of her father. The plurality of female characters in itself calls out the fallacy of lumping together the concept of female in the one important difference of being the other sex.

The industrial novel in fact played a decisive role in eradicating much of the traditionally debilitating ideas of femininity. While Margaret is Gaskell's protagonist- her outlet for the muted discourse, at times, her sentiments are resourced in male spokesperson. A very lengthy debate that ensues between Margaret and Mr. Thornton on the differences between north and south can be taken as Gaskell's commentary on the recidivist policies of the south and the forward looking vision of the north disclosed by the latter. And it is Margaret who warms up to the latent truth

in Mr. Thornton's discourse around this matter. In a way then Mr. Thornton's progressive and ambitious ideas become a conventional outlet for Gaskell's own.

As the Hales move from the south to Milton northern, the city becomes a metaphorical meeting point of traditional notions of divine aristocracy and the industrial world's progressivism. Barring, for one minute, the exceptional cost of this progress, it is obvious that Gaskell sees the inevitability of such a revolution taking over England sooner and later, and perhaps for the greater good.

A number of critics have remarked how, in advocating notions of class equality, the industrial novel set the precedence for the upcoming fight for Women's rights. In fact, at one point, R. Simmons enunciated how the industrial novel became a "victim of its own success" (350) and brought into the mainstream such discourses as feminism and socialism:

(A)s legislation enacted reforms and the working-class enjoyed improving conditions, other issues such as socialism and feminism (as in the "new woman" novel of the 1890s) came to the fore. Nevertheless, the condition of England novel played an important part in the development of Victorian literature, and more generally in Victorian politics and culture (350-51).

It is interesting how the industrial novel became a successor of issues such as feminism and socialism. But it seemed only natural that the discourse of class equality should narrow down to that of gender equality within classes after the first purpose was achieved. Although class equality is still widely debated, the insistence amongst academic, political and intellectual circles on debating what had previously been understood as de facto pioneered a change of ideology with regards to gender as well.

CHAPTER 3: JANE EYRE

The second genre that this dissertation attempts to explore in regards to women's writings is the Bildungsroman. Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* has been regarded as the "quintessential novel of female bildungsroman" (Green 5) and the following analysis will attempt to determine how the particular genre helped Brontë stretch the boundaries of female agency, how it helped to position the female culture within the larger public context, and how its treatment of women as an autonomous being of action is different from the preceding genre of the Industrial novel. Before the study dives into seeking the answers to the questions posed, it will be of some importance to the study and to understand the history and evolution of the Bildungsroman, especially for women writers.

Amongst the canonical genres of English Literature, Bildungsroman has always held a disputed place. There has been much debate around the origins of the genre with the most widely accepted notion taking the genealogy back to Johann Wolfgang von Goethe's *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* (1795–6).

This form of the novel, derived from Goethe's *Wilhelm Meisters* as an originary text, was first transplanted into the English soil by Thomas Carlyle with his English translation of the novel by the name of *Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship* (Graham 5). It is said that while some writers such as Scott, Edward Bulwer-Lytton, and George Eliot possessed an appreciable scholarly interest in German literature, others, such as Dickens and Charlotte Brontë, were acquainted with its translations. Susanne Howe, in her pioneering study of the *Bildungsroman*, identifies a whole body of texts produced throughout the nineteenth century that starkly resembled some common motif identified by Howe herself for being stolidly *Bildung* in essence.

Chief among the motifs identified by Howe is the sane and corrective power of action. This, according to Carlyle, was a moral lesson that must be emulated by fans of the genre. But Howe was against an empirical reduction of the novel's chief essence to moralistic or pragmatic functions. She chose to emphasize the need amongst dandified upper-class protagonists of some Bildungsroman novels, such as Disraeli's *Contarini Fleming* (1832), to give room for one's aesthetic and poetic growth in harmony with the pragmatic functions of the society (Howe 82-100). In

many ways, De Winton's advice to Contarini to "Act, act, act; act without ceasing, and you will no longer talk of the vanity of life" (qtd in Salmon 62), resonates *Jane Eyre's* many philosophical ponderings on the need for humans to avoid becoming prey to stagnation and idleness. Action, the kind that gives vent to one's mental and spiritual growth remains the chief conflict in *Jane Eyre*, and this alone is reason enough to constitute the novel as "the quintessential female bildungsroman" (Ellis 168).

The popularity that the genre of Bildungsroman garnered for itself during the nineteenth century neatly coincided with the emergence of the discourse on self-help and self-culture (Salmon 65). While the two terms might seem to be directed at odds against one another, their appearance as far as the genre was concerned, was confounded. Self-culture, the aesthetic dimension of a harmonious social development was not possible without mental and physical labour of the more pragmatic kind. This is because some exponents of self-help, in particular Samuel Smiles, did not see a "life of manual employment" (Smiles 28) as incompatible with high intellectual development. Smiles, in fact believed that the spirit of self-help, openly responsible for the noticeable intellectual growth in humans, emanated directly from the sections of poverty. A life trained in physical hardihood provided characters with the ingredients needed for the constitution of resilience, empathy, and responsibility in the wake of social mobility (Salmon 65-68). These critics believed that culture achieved without the discipline of labour was indeed futile and failed to equip a person with any worthwhile intellectual growth. This intertwined concept of self-help and self-culture is significant not only for its ubiquitous prevalence in almost any novel characterized as bildungsroman but also for the way it manifests itself in Brontë's *Jane Eyre* and ties neatly with the proto-feminist agenda that can be dissected from a gynocritical perspective.

A number of critics have already dissected Brontë's *Jane Eyre* for being a classic bildungsroman based around the female agency. The purpose now of subjecting the novel to a gynocritical reading is to uncover how the intrinsic motif of self-help and self-culture enabled the work to emerge as the pioneering proto-feminist work that it is celebrated as in modern English criticism. What makes the reading of *Jane Eyre* from a gynocritical lens so relevant is that the bildung themes of self-help and self-culture are very similar to the gynocritical themes of

apprehending the female culture by studying women's "occupations, interactions, and consciousness" (Showalter 27). In "A Literature of Their Own", Showalter emphasized how the history of women's creation saw an evolution from male imitation to creating a subculture within the larger framework of the society where both the women writers and their female characters were united by their values, conventions and experiences in an attempt of direct self-expression. It is easy to see the common concerns that govern both the genre (*Bildungsroman*) and the critical lens (Gynocriticism) that will be used to inspect the novel.

Bronte's *Jane Eyre* covers the life trajectory of its titular protagonist from her disconsolate childhood spent in the unwelcome wards of her indifferent Aunt, condescending Reed sisters and their tormenting brother John Reed. In the classic *bildung* vein, Jane is seldom brought respite from the cruel and at times inexplicable contradictions of her limited world until she comes of age and fosters an agency that learns to be somehow resilient to the mentally and physically truncating social institutions. At the same time she also finds, through alternative employment of the qualities of self-help and self-culture, room for personal growth and contentment. A close gynocritical scrutiny of the novel will enable the study to form some kind of a judgment on Bronte's depiction of the female culture in the background against which the narrative unfolds. It is obvious that the exclusive culture of the females will inform the way discourses of self-help and self-culture are taken up and exploited by the women of the time for personal development and an upward social ability. Like most protagonist, Jane Eyre's journey towards personal development is a natural consequence of discontent, undue suffering, and an innate knowledge of bigger horizons that offer one more than the superficial preoccupations of lace frills, the so called higher society and dandified pastimes enjoyed by the cultured upper-class gentry. As a woman, Jane's apparent rejection to stay content with her lot was perhaps the first of its kind and becomes the starting point of exploring the possibility of women's activity. At the same time, this discontent and suffering is the leitmotif of the *bildungsroman* and it is taken to be the experience of both failures and suffering that is thought as the real experiential base of all education (Grandchamp 2). Hers has been the life of toil and yet it's the hope of a greater toil that sends her on the impulsive bout of advertising herself as a governess in the newspaper. It is the same yearning for agency that convinces her, a single woman of

eighteen, to pack up and vacate her lodgings for a tedious journey alone into the unknown moors of a county she's never tread before nor heard of. The feat in itself should be somewhat of a rarity for a woman belonging to the time as Jane was, but it was a feat indispensable in the novels of development that instead of putting knowledge at the disposal of its protagonist, must knock the latter about amid the tumult of the unknown. Thus, begins the journey of self-help and self-culture. Without aid and inwardly afraid, Jane Eyre must overcome all adversities to find the purpose that is to give meaning to her troubled life and resolve all incongruences with an epiphany that could not have come to her had she chosen the less daunting but more idle course of physical and mental stagnation. And she must do it all within the means society ascribes to her on account of her female sex.

3.1. *Jane Eyre* as a Bildungsroman

The incongruences, spoken of earlier, begin at a significantly early period of her life when the mind is at its most impressionable and firmly engraved by the slights of the past for future references.

What makes Jane Eyre's circumstances more egregious than would otherwise be, is that her suppression comes both at the hands of the more traditional forms of patriarchal control as well as the members of her own sex. In a way, Jane's suppression, even during the earliest formative years of her mental and physical development, are tainted with the politics of gender. Jane is marginalized from both her family and her surrounding not so much because she is a girl but because she lacks the three things that society values most in a girl: beauty, prestige and place. Jane does not belong with the Reeds. So much is instantaneously clear from the way she is treated by John Reeds whom many critics, such as Sarah E. Maier, believe to be a childhood semblance of the suffocating patriarchy waiting for her more adult years. (320)

The opening scene regales readers with the crucifying libel of "a rat" (Brontë 41) that John rewards Jane with and dictating her 'habitually obedient' (Brontë 42) self to appear before him. Leaving her deceptively transparent window space, Jane puts her bearing before John to hear him declare how she had "no business to take our books; you are a dependent . . . you have no money; your father left you none; you ought to beg and not to live here with gentlemen's children like us, and eat the

same meals we do' (Brontë 42). Too acquainted with her cousin's brutal vilification by now, Jane's only response is to stand by the door to which she is ordered and sustains an attack from the boy. When she chooses to retaliate, the consequences are dire. In the true classical sense of the genre, the backdrop of physical and mental isolation and a deliberate search for a caregiver that can dress the child's mental and physical wounds are apparent in the novel's opening scene. John's wild screeches as she flings both herself as well as her imprecations at him are enough to bring his sisters at his aid, who in turn call forth their mother. Her arrival at the scene does little to bring any respite to Jane who by now is bleeding in the clutches of Mrs. Reed's son. In fact, it does quite the opposite. Instead of condemning her son for his physical perpetration, Mrs. Reed orders Jane, currently a "picture of passion" (Brontë 9), to be locked away. This is not the first time Mrs. Reed, a failing matriarchal figure, displays her complicity in instituting a systematic form of female suppression. Even earlier, Mrs. Reed has displayed her contempt for Jane's questioning disposition. She does not admire "cavillers or questioners" (Brontë 5) alluding to the now commonly accepted notion that women's place, like that of the children's in the Victorian society, allowed them to be seen but not heard. Jane being both female as well as a child (not the family's own) understandably makes her plight so much worse. It is her failure in assuming a more "sociable and childlike disposition, a more attractive and sprightly manner—something lighter, franker, more natural" (Brontë 5) that bars her from partaking into the privileges that the lady of the house claims to be reserved for only "contented, happy, little" (Brontë 5) children.

What Mrs. Reed fails to notice is that Jane's plight offers something of a paradox. Mrs. Reed refuses to hear Jane out until she begins to discipline her emotions into that of a "happy" and "contented" child. But it is precisely the lack of a mother figure who is ready to lend her emotions an ear that shoves Jane into such discontentment. And any show of discontent over not being heard and treated with fairness evokes the sentiments of "unnaturalness" in Mrs. Reed's mind. In the strict Victorian context, this seems a probable episode since the Victorian values dictated quite submission, especially for young girls, regardless of the cause that may prompt in them such outburst. The typical trend amongst Bildungsroman to plant the protagonist's journey amongst the social and historical movement was first detected by Mikhail Bakhtin.

In his renowned essay “Bildungsroman and Its Significance in Historical Realism”, Bakhtin commented on how a man’s individual emergence is inseparably linked with the historical emergence, which is a course in opposition to those of the historical philosophers (Bakhtin 23). While the latter impose a “story” onto “history” through a grouping of critical phenomenon under abstract categories correlated on dialectical principles or those of entelechy, the novel of education shows history “puls(ating) through ordinary objects” (Boes 275). In the course of Jane Eyre’s journey from self-deferral to self-affirmation, it is poignant to look at the historical scenarios and Victorian values that were shaped, inhibited, or even inverted by these historical social forces.

Bronte does a commendable job of questioning these Victorian values when the household servants find Jane Eyre’s miserable plight a natural consequence of her gender and circumstance when pondering how if “she were a nice, pretty child, one might compassionate her forlornness; but one really cannot care for such a little toad as that” (Bronte 40). We also see an inversion of these values upon noticing how the slightest display of discontent yields such dire punishments for Jane but “Eliza, who was headstrong and selfish, was respected. Georgiana, who had a spoiled temper, a very acrid spite, a captious and insolent carriage, was universally indulged. Her beauty, her pink cheeks and golden curls, seemed to give delight to all who looked at her, and to purchase indemnity for every fault” (Brontë 21). Sarah Maier in her research “Portraits of the Girl-Child: Female Bildungsroman in Victorian Fiction” declares that Jane’s troubles, even during the earliest period of her life were three-fold. “From this opening scene,” declares Maier, “there are three main influences which Jane must combat in her childhood years which centre on her inherent sense of justice: the prescribed and accepted societal repression of females, the unquestioned right of male governance, and the complicit women who have been incorporated into the patriarchal system” (321).

On this complicity of females in the suppression of their own kind, Sarah Stickney Ellis had much to say in her essay “The Wives of England: Their Relative Duties, Domestic Influence, and Social Responsibilities”. Ellis narrates how, amid the chain of indulging boys with a sense of superiority from their very childhood, placing them in public schools where the very word “woman” was synonymous to “contempt”, being nurtured by “foolish and indulgent mothers” and being afterwards

“associated with sisters who were capricious, ignorant, and vain”, it is a wonder they should not be even more tyrannical and selfish than were thought to be (Ellis 60). In this instance, the cultivation of proper male education seemed to be inextricably tied with proper female nurturing, in the absence of which, male personages such as John Reeds were bound to occur.

Being a female, Jane’s toil and troubles, her share of that classic formative struggle that must push her male equivalents from similar traditions to construe their own sense of identity, self-worth and uncompromising ways of social assimilation, are decidedly different. Her departure to “Lowood” and the subsequent chapters in this history shed light on the contrasting nature of male and female suffering in the bildungsroman tradition. Since it is a gynocritical study, the focus of the research is less on the comparative and contrasting elements between male and female bildungsroman, or if the novel should even be described as one, and more on Jane’s mechanism of dealing with the inward and societal turmoil so necessary for self-formation. In her earliest years, Jane’s ways of finding solace and comfort, amid the psychological and physical afflictions of Gateshead, mirror those of an adult and children simultaneously. Her brief rendezvous to the little quite corner is one where she can read Bewick’s ‘History of British Birds’ and lose herself amid “the haunts of sea-fowl... the coast of Norway, studded with isles from its southern extremity, the Lindeness, or Naze, to the North Cape...or the bleak shores of Lapland, Siberia, Spitzbergen, Nova Zembla, Iceland, Greenland, with ‘the vast sweep of the Arctic Zone, and those forlorn regions of dreary space” (Bronte 9-10). Her deep interest, and a natural admission of finding such esoteric foreign accounts fascinating can be seen as Bronte’s ways of only naturalizing the concept of female admiration for readership and adventure. Alternately, Jane professes to keep one discarded doll as the sole object of her love with her at all times. While the latter is the more accepted and natural mechanism for a child to deal away with the grief of being unloved, Jane’s reasons here are both thought-provoking and perhaps departing from the traditional interpretation. Jane reverts to her doll out of a need amongst “humans” to love and without “worthier” objects of “sensations” (Bronte 22) she chooses to bequeath the inanimate object what love and affection she can muster in the cold recesses of her bed.

Instead of seeking love from these “worthier objects of sensation” (Brontë 22), Jane begins to brace herself for the characteristic journey that brings the opportunity of both self-help and self-culture for the dependent prodigy. Her decision to anticipate her departure from Gateshead towards Lowood is inspired by her desire to partake from some of the accomplishments that the Victorian society so ostensibly dotes on. No “appalling” (Brontë 38) stories of school discipline could deter her from beginning to marvel on the ability to execute flawless rendering of beautiful landscape, immaculate knitting, and stunningly performed renditions of transcending musical pieces. These are all had women nurture, and the mastery of which allowed these women to assume the epithet of a “lady.” She was thereby ready to take the “long journey” (Brontë 38) that is to open the gates and allow the “entrance into a new life” (Brontë 38). What Jane is yet unaware of is that Lowood, a quintessential Victorian social establishment, with institutional suppression, humiliation and undermining of its female scholars is to spark anew the flames of rage, discontent and vengeance that she expected to leave behind at Gateshead. The school’s principal, Mr. Brocklehurst is the “epitome of the patriarchal phallus” (Maier 322) whose oppressive finger exclusively emanates sentiments of fear and undue suppression from each target that it chooses to publicly humiliate.

In much the same fashion as Dickens’ Mr. Bumble in *Oliver Twist*, Brontë’s Mr. Brocklehurst is an appalling caricature of hypocritical Victorian social workers and evangelists who not only failed to dole out relief to the very victims that were supposedly in charge of, but also remained blind to the misery that this hypocrisy wrought amongst their parishes. While Mr. Brocklehurst is no beadle, he still reserves the prestigious title of being head of a public welfare institution that runs on charity and seems to be openly embezzling funds to indulge his own daughters whose gaudy attires are always a grim contrast to the simplicity he preaches and instills amongst the female scholars of Lowood. Once again it is the complicity of the women in the project of institutionalizing the silent suppression of women that throws Jane almost in a frantic search of a female companion and a role model she can look up to. The first comes in the form Helen Burns. It becomes obvious to a sensitive reader that Burns’ admirable tolerance of the public humiliation unleashed at her by her teachers is not meant to inspire any Victorian sense of awe and approval. Quite the contrary, it is Burns’ silent acceptance of the social oppression

that further aggravates her failing health and sends her into an early departure from this world. Her despondency failing health seems almost a result of her inability to give vent to the utter sense of and despair, a trait exhibited by the female characters of Gaskell's *North and South*, such as Betsy Higgins and even Margaret Hale.

Helen Burns's Christ-Like perseverance and resolve to take in any and every kind of abuse with patience does not reciprocate any reward in this world. Her only solace is to rise victorious in the Hereafter for her patient suffering and join the league of similar martyrs who have gone before her. Her early death after a troublesome, oppressive existence within the confines of Lowood is a metaphor for Brontë's rejection of the idea of passive acceptance that the patriarchal structures and their complicit females have reserved for women. Jane Eyre too, openly denies Helen's passive reception of her public harassment and mistreatment at the hands of her teachers. For Helen, the oppression and overwhelming "distress" (Brontë 59) that both she and Jane suffer are the natural exchange for the life of happiness that is waiting for them beyond "death". In spite of all her words of wisdom that exhort Jane to quench her passion, it is easy to see that when the reward for such silent suffering is only a release from it that comes with "the separation of spirit from flesh" as Helen puts it, (Brontë 59), the suffering remains unjustified and must be questioned and disposed of. But such questioning comes through a kind of agency and activity that is, so far in the novel, quite vehemently denied to women.

In a way Helens too is complicit in implementing the dominant structures which fail to provide women with the vehicle that allows them the drive towards greater functions, ways of self-expression and valuable occupations. In light of Helen's constant humiliation by her teachers, Jane declares that she would rather die than to be "hated" so (Brontë 113). As Jane flies in a comprehensible rage over Helen's silent acceptance over her grim fate and its possible repercussions on her health, she is instantly berated by her friend for being "too impulsive, too vehement." (Brontë 113) And that "the sovereign hand that created your frame, and put life into it, has provided you with other resources than your feeble self, or than creatures feeble as you" (Brontë 113). Helen's biblical allusion to one's subordination before trial is supposed to resound the widely popular Victorian sentiment of one's plight being divinely ordained, but Brontë has obviously designed for Burns' speeches to evoke an unsettling feeling among the readers. One can almost sense the prevalence

of a “muted” discourse spoken of earlier that manifests itself in the contradiction between Helen’s glorious acceptance of her state and the sad realization on the readers’ part that some activity and a severance from the Victorian model of female passivity would perhaps be a better response. Brontë, however, refrains from openly declaring so. The most she does is give vent to the “alloy of inexpressible sadness” (59) that Jane cannot help feeling despite the tranquility that comes from Helen’s heroic insistence of silent suffering.

At the same time, it is easy to see that Jane and Helen’s close attachment provides readers with a simulacrum of a female culture in the close confines of the Lowood establishment. And while Helen may be more in tune with the male-generated doctrines of female passivity, in the security of this female culture, Jane can at least give vent to the kind of passion that would completely dis sever her from the society should she choose to make them visible there.

The second female role model comes in the guise of Miss Temple, the superintendent of the seminary. To her alone, Jane dedicates the “best parts of (her) acquirements” (Brontë 137). So invested was Jane in the companionship that brewed between herself and Miss Temple that her retirement from Lowood triggers the onset of the kind of discontent that will spur her into undertaking a self-expanding journey. Together with Miss Temple and Helen, there forms a sisterly community that allows these women a way of self-expression and a healthy exchange of intellectual empathy that is free of the gripping and controlling forces of the patriarchal figures, the most phallic representation of which is in the form of Mr. Brocklehurst, whom Jane’s impressionable young eyes solidified as “a black pillar” (Brontë 48). Miss Temple too, with all her intellectual superiority and a desire to nurture the same into her students through doses of mild disciplining and a recourse to affection, stays hapless before the afflictions dispensed by Mr. Brocklehurst’s constant reprimands. Silent mutiny is all she can display before Mr. Brocklehurst when he chooses to castigate her for her generosity in allowing Lowood pupils breakfast portions that were slightly better than the burnt porridges he was wont to dispense:

Miss Temple had looked down when he first began to speak to her; but she now gazed straight before her, and her face, naturally pale as marble, appeared to be assuming also the coldness and fixity of that material; especially her mouth, closed as if it would have required a sculptor’s chisel to open it, and her brow settled gradually into petrified severity. (Brontë 95)

Insinuations of a rebellious defiance resound in her stance but she knows it best to not give them a more audible semblance. At the same time though, phallic perpetrations seemed to melt away outside the walls of the sisterly communion-that female culture which appears to be the no-man zone. Quite literally in this case, the no man zone is the office chamber of Miss Temple where she entertains Helen Burns and Jane Eyre with delectable treats and a refreshing acceptance of their talents past their apparent shortcomings. Up till now, Jane Eyre's account of Helen's perpetual castigations at the hands of her Lowood instructresses lent the reader a suspicion of her dismal inadequacy which cannot help but result in her open ostracism, but once within the secure confines of that female constituency that leaves all Victorian principles of propriety outside, Helen is able to slip into the real persona. This is where Jane, and through her the readers, see Helen's merits for the first time. No "clumsy", forgetful waif is she, but in an exchange with Miss Temple, reveals the unlimited capacities of her young mind. Helen is more than able to retain in the feeble recesses of her wit the legacies of nations and times past, of discovering the secrets of nature that are at best simply "guessed at" (Brontë 119), but it is only apparent to one who is willing to look past the frail superficialities of the classic Victorian accomplishments and prejudice, and cares to take notice of the superior intelligence that is indiscriminate of its bearer. It is also telling that Helen would not admit outsiders, even women, such as Mrs. Scatcherd who often humiliated her publicly, complicit in upholding artificial Victorian standards, into her intellectual realms. This goes to show that the qualifications of being admitted into the female culture go beyond putting the robe of the female sex. The female culture, that no-man zone is a place for women to discard the social artificialities and indulge their more visceral impulses. It is obvious that chief of these, at least in the Victorian times, was to partake from the working of the world around them that was almost secretive to them on account of their inability to admit themselves into any higher social institution. In *North and South*, Bessy Higgins and Margaret's exchanges, relating to both the personal and public took place under similar circumstances. These exchanges brought upon Margaret the keen awareness and insight that was lost on even the men. Just as how Margaret would look for an exclusive corner to give vent to her personal grief or intellectual bouts, Jane Eyre cherishes the memory of retiring to the woods "like gypsies" (Brontë 126) onto some secretive feminine adventure. Here in the woods, the stony corner becomes her safe haven on which she

settles next to another chosen comrade Mary Ann Wilson. Once again Wilson is described as a “shrewd, observant personage” (Brontë 126) whose perceptive mannerism and wit provided ample opportunities for Jane to indulge her curiosity. There now seems to be a common pattern in Brontë’s *Jane Eyre* and Gaskell’s *North and South* of retiring to literal regions of no-man zones when looking for the opportunity to quench their intellectual and adventurous appetite.

In the same way, Burns’ capacity and retrospective ability comes to full bloom only when she is sure of no prying eyes chastising her understanding of the world and no vain ear berating her philosophies of life for falling short of superficial Victorian utility. Within the close confines of Miss Temple’s ward, who treats Helen with an intellectual equality that is unseen before, does it dawn upon Jane what intelligence the tranquil retreats of her mind contain:

They conversed of things I had never heard of; of nations and times past; of countries far away; of secrets of nature discovered or guessed at: they spoke of books: how many they had read! What stores of knowledge they possessed! Then they seemed so familiar with French names and French authors: but my amazement reached its climax when Miss Temple asked Helen if she sometimes snatched a moment to recall the Latin her father had taught her, and taking a book from a shelf, bade her read and construe a page of Virgil; and Helen obeyed, my organ of veneration expanding at every sounding line. (119-120)

Helen’s flawless rendering of Virgil might have spurn a vein of unmistakable admiration amongst Jane, but the same could be hardly concluded for the generic Victorian audience of the time, where, as Sarah Stickney Ellis describes in her essay “The Women of England”, husband did not quite care for the fact that their wives could perform perfectly vocalized renditions of Virgil without a dictionary (60) and where the only education seen as befitting a woman is that which prepares them for a lifelong course of disinterested kindness (21).

The idea of disinterested kindness is exactly the one that Jane is incapable of internalizing and no amount of schooling can prepare her for that. The slightest of infringements settles an ashy taste of vengeance upon her soul and during times like these, preoccupying her restless mind with thoughts of activity of a more superior kind are her only consolations. Brontë’s *Jane Eyre* therefore advocates separating the socially acceptable accomplishments for women from the more visceral needs of a female sect. Every now and then Jane Eyre bursts into long passionate soliloquys on the inadequacy of the society and women’s more privileged counterparts, the men, to

assume that they ought to be content without this agency, even declaring at one point that they will “make it (action) if they cannot find it (Bronte 180).”

While education and good company undoubtedly helps Jane become a better and more socially acceptable woman of accomplishments, there still remains some inherent contradictions that forbid Jane from living an almost passive life of a school teacher. For one, her reasons for cherishing the “excellent education” of Lowood and zealously dispensing her responsibilities once she is vested with the office of teacher lose their meaning with Miss Temple’s departure. What once appeared to her as years of fruitfulness since they were not “inactive” (137), begin to weigh on her shoulders as invoking stagnation. Once again, through the intervention of a male figure, Rev. Mr. Nasmyth, whose matrimony with Miss Temple results in the removal of the latter from Lowood, Jane’s left with feelings of abandonment and loss. Here’s another muted discourse of what marriage can do to female communion beyond the obvious unification of a woman with her newfound duties. Miss Temple’s matrimony proves a great discord in Jane’s tranquil life as she realizes that those eight years that apparently brought her some contentment were merely her mirroring the attitude of a woman she regarded so highly. Jane realizes that instead of being contented, she was simply imbibing Miss Temple’s tranquil influence. The thought of one so worthy being in her vicinity was reason enough for her to persevere in her duties and oblige her responsibilities with utmost dedication. But the departure of Miss Temple from Lowood becomes a premonition for an unsettled feeling of losing all associations that made Lowood a home to her. From that time, it only takes Jane an afternoon of contemplation to realize that she is completely transformed by the occasion of Miss Temple’s marriage and her subsequent departure. Left “in her natural element” (139) and no longer under the tranquilizing and stabilizing influence of her female companion, the same old discontentment resurfaces.

The passage is suggestive since it appears to be both going along and against the Victorian sentiment of women’s education being there, for the most part, to enable her better perform her feminine duties of being a loving and doting maternal figure. Jane’s education does precisely just that. It replaces that bitter aggression in her with more harmonious thoughts of giving allegiance to obligation and duty. But where it slightly subverts is where 1) the allegiance is towards a sisterly community of female scholars residing at Lowood and thus undermines the necessity of women

only finding worth in obliging their strictly maternal duties. Second, women possess the ability to wilfully spill their cup of affection but it requires for the other party to be worthy of this indulgence as well as reciprocate the same with similar affection and regard. As soon as Jane loses both through Miss Temple's removal from Lowood, she simultaneously retracts all show of contentment with her life at the seminary. Bronte takes some pains to describe this need in a passionate soliloquy from Jane where she justifies the growing feelings of unsettlement by alluding to that intrinsic desire in humans (not just women) to pine for objects worthier of their devotion.

It is in vain to say human beings ought to be satisfied with tranquility: they must have action; and they will make it if they cannot find it. Millions are condemned to a stiller doom than mine, and millions are in silent revolt against their lot. Nobody knows how many rebellions besides political rebellions ferment in the masses of life which people earth. Women are supposed to be very calm generally: but women feel just as men feel; they need exercise for their faculties, and a field for their efforts, as much as their brothers do; they suffer from too rigid a restraint, too absolute a stagnation, precisely as men would suffer; and it is narrow-minded in their more privileged fellow-creatures to say that they ought to confine themselves to making puddings and knitting stockings, to playing on the piano and embroidering bags. It is thoughtless to condemn them, or laugh at them, if they seek to do more or learn more than custom has pronounced necessary for their sex. (Brontë 180)

When Jane breaks a case for human beings' needs to quench their passion and look for meaningful life of activity, she does so without succumbing to the use of gendered pronouns, at least in the first half of her soliloquy. Here is Bronte's effort to make a case for women's activity on simply humanistic grounds. This is what precisely makes her work a seminal proto-feminist piece. Here is embedded the message of moving past the notion of women as an object of household adornment and admit their agency, but Bronte does not state this message directly. She implores to the perceptive ability of her readers and exhorts them to take a more humanistic standpoint when debating on the prescribed sphere for women. The study has already made ample commentary on the role of women and the dichotomy between the public and private spheres in Chapter 1. Clearly Jane is in the mood of denouncing and rejecting this dichotomy. In fact, there is something of a suggestion towards a complimentary female culture where women would want to seek a life beyond the domestic subscription, and "exercise their faculties" the same way their male counterparts are wont to do. In the doom of a stagnated and stiller life, Bronte casts men and women together. She does not discriminate between the trials and

tribulations of the two sexes and feels apologetic for anybody cast to a “stiller doom” be it man or woman. We see the precedence of an almost even playing field. A gynocritical perspective allows us to see how Bronte has almost turned the tables of literary critique. As opposed to the long-standing tradition of male-writing either broaching for or against women’s cause in the absence of a formidable female spokesman, women have begun broaching the cause of men on their behalf. In this regard, Bronte’s *Jane Eyre* can rightly be seen as a proto-feminist work written in the vein of a female bildungsroman. (Schor 172-173).

Bette London in her essay “The Pleasures of Submission: Jane Eyre and the Production of the Text” contrasts Ellis’s traditional response towards woman’s vocation as steeped in silent suffering with Bronte’s poetic self-entitlement. Bronte, declares London, “transforms the duty of silent suffering into the site of pleasure and passionate investment” (198). This coincides with Showalter’s view in “Toward a Feminist Poetics” that “the reclamation of suffering is only the beginning; its purpose is to discover the new world” (Showalter 32). This becomes especially easy in a bildungsroman tradition where difficulty and suffering are the primal base from and upon which the best education and the finest endowments are erected (Smiles 1-2). And it is precisely during this suffering that the protagonist is hit by an epiphany to find a vocation for him/herself where they can put to use what learning came to them through those trying times.

Nor does Jane fall precariously short of a suitable vocation to put her on this journey of self-expansion. Critics have long commented on the intrinsic discrimination of the bildungsroman when it comes to undertaking an expansive, self-reflective journey by its protagonist based on gender. It is often, and rightfully noted that female bildungsroman does not offer much space for women to explore and implement the concepts of self-help and self-culture (Abel, Hirsh and Langland 3-12, Annis Pratt 39). This is a natural repercussion of the limited means available to women in the nineteenth century to provide sustenance for oneself independent of a male intervention. For Jane Eyre, however, it only takes an afternoon of racking her brain to come up with the most pragmatic solution that will send her off to a precarious adventure she so longs for. Securing the post of a governess is what she deems to be her only way of getting out of the stagnation of Lowood and exploring the county on her own. Keeping true to her words of “making” room for adventure

and activity where she could not find it, Jane places an ad in the wants section of the newspaper offering her services.

Neither is Jane without premonitions. She has heard grim accounts of the way governesses are treated by host families. There is clearly a dilemma here for the Victorian readers, who despised manual labour among genteel women but also expected them to be financially stable at the same time. Through the character of Jane, we can see that Brontë's depiction and treatment of the subject of governesses is mostly in an empathic light. Jane is a hard worker, possesses apt skills in languages, art, and other subjects, and, being patient, merits the qualities of a good teacher. Traditionally, this can be ascribed to the true *bildung* treatment of manual labour as superior and qualified for the making of a civilized and enculturated being ready for a successful assimilation within the society. Another perspective enables one to see how Brontë, in a gynocritical sense, does away with the politics of rebellion and victimhood, two forms of female dependency, and paves ideas of self – sufficiency for women in the nineteenth century. The two perspectives are not necessarily in opposition to one another and might in fact be complimentary.

One of the reasons why this genre works so well with the concept of female agency is its primary insistence on the value of self-help and self-culture that the study spoke of earlier. Jane's position as a governess in Thornfield Hall somehow situates her in a similar or only slightly better capacity than Mrs. Fairfax the "housekeeper/manager" (Brontë 164). Both work for and are financially dependent on Mr. Rochester, owner of the Thornfield Hall. This explains the warm reception that comes Jane's way and which gets her curious as to how the stories of colder treatment of governesses did not match with her own experience. Her subsequent encounters with Mr. Rochester and his kind, however, soon puts her abreast of the place the Victorian society designated for governesses. For the audience of that time, this was sure to pose a dilemma of a paradoxical kind. On one hand, there seemed to be an unwritten rule for ladies of the upper-class gentry to not indulge in the manual labour of any kind. For a woman like Jane who could not boast of prior connections, working as a governess was the only respectful means of providing sustenance for herself. But so occupied, she was automatically removed from the possible list of suitable matches for men (Maier 317-321), such as Mr. Rochester whose circle involving the likes of Miss Ingram disdained manual participation in a chore of even

an intellectual kind. Jane's inability of presenting herself as a suitable match for Mr. Rochester is a paradox because her otherwise excellent education and philosophical bent of mind makes her the best candidate amongst any potential match that later appears at Thornfield Hall. Jane herself is evidently aware of being the perfect match and this confidence is enough to prevent her from assuming societal airs and a false persona that does not match her own.

There is a palpable awareness lingering of her superiority on account of her more active life experience and incredible schooling. Jane even refuses to see Miss Ingram as a rival, considering her a "mark beneath jealousy" on account of her lack of empathy and intellectual depth (Bronte 306). If later, the Ingrams refuse to assimilate or even acknowledge Jane's presence, she adequately reciprocates the sentiment. The animosity between the tall, dark and gorgeous Miss Ingram and the plain, diminutive governess is apparent to all-even to Mr. Rochester, who plays with the former's sentiments quite liberally in order to jealously drive Jane to confessing her feelings for him. Once again this does little to deter Jane's aspirations for a life of new ventures with Mr. Rochester. She might be of a lower order in the social hierarchy of the nineteenth century, but in the *bildung* tradition of self-help and self-culture, she surely comes across as the more accomplished and integrated love interest for somebody of the likes of Rochester who, like Jane, value nothing more than stretching one's limit to find action even if it were at the expense of manual fatigue. Jane does a commendable job of reclaiming her past and present suffering for being short of the qualities of wealth, beauty and prestige, and creating something of value out of them. This valuable entity is a sense of self-assurance, and self-sufficiency, something which her rival Miss Ingram, despite her dashing and daring countenance, could not achieve. The lesson of course is an inversion and reassessment of desirable traits in female. Miss Ingram possessed all of the celebrated Victorian traits of a true lady; beauty, prestige and position. But, almost on account of these very traits she lacked traits that Jane believed indispensable in a woman who proposed to be match for Mr. Rochester. In Jane's own words, Miss Ingram was "too inferior to excite the feeling (of jealousy)" in her (306). Jane then proceeds to explain the paradox. She thinks of Miss Ingram as a

mark beneath jealousy (because)... She was very showy, but she was not genuine: she had a fine person, many brilliant attainments; but her mind was poor, her heart barren by nature: nothing bloomed spontaneously on that soil;

no unforced natural fruit delighted by its freshness. She was not good; she was not original: she used to repeat sounding phrases from books: she never offered, nor had, an opinion of her own. She advocated a high tone of sentiment; but she did not know the sensations of sympathy and pity. (Brontë 306-307)

In other words, the attributes that the Victorian society prided itself on contributed nicely (and paradoxically) in the making of the kind of woman who was incapable to exhibit disinterested kindness and life lived for “the service of others” (Abrams) and thus far from the ideal “angel in the house. Brontë dialectically advocates how, on the contrary, exposure to real challenges along with an excellent education (and not beauty and prestige) are the ingredients that allow a woman to assume the semblance of “busy, able and upright figure who drew strength from her moral superiority and whose virtue was manifested in the service of others” (Abrams).

Samuel Smiles’ understanding of the bildungsroman, as discussed by Salmon, implies the necessity of poverty as a “material basis” of all organic growth (65). Just like David Copperfield, that ideal bildungsroman figure, Jane too draws strength from traumatic experiences which made her who she was. Her equally mortifying experiences at Lowood under the harsh, inflicting eyes of Mr. Brocklehurst, whose sight would never miss the slightest transgression for public castigation prepares Jane tremendously for the rebuking gazes of the guests at Thornfield who, for one reason or another, takes a dislike to Jane’s presence. Jane herself recollects as much when she declares how, once removed from the toxicity of the Brocklehursts, she lost no moment of appreciating the exclusive opportunity of excellent education that came her way, and so excelled in her commitment to reciprocate with an enculturated transformation when she was later vested with the teacher’s office. Her restrained disciplining at Lowood, combined with her vindication from filial responsibilities on account of being an orphan, and an ambitious soul seeking agency prepare her as the perfect protagonist for a bildungsroman novel that follows the exhaustive course of spiritual fortification and self-realization through manual drudgery as a governess and a yearning to learn and be the best. Brontë makes it clear that such vocation was open to women, that it was in fact sought by women and the latter must be allowed to indulge in a modicum of such drudgery to hone their faculties to the utmost.

Her earlier tribulations help develop a philosophy of life that results in precisely this kind spiritual fortification that even strengthens her feet in open

defiance before St. John towards the end of the novel. A spiritual reconstruction of the self that comes from experiencing the highs of a self-filling journey and the lows of earlier privations is what allows Jane to come across as a superior being and therefore a better match for Mr. Rochester, and perhaps even superior to Mr. Rochester if spiritual fortification is to be the criterion. This is because Jane's self-reconstruction comes through her own agency and desire to better oneself through activity, while Mr. Rochester's spiritual reconstruction occurs through the agency of Jane. In one sense Jane performs the classic feminine role of calming the turbulent mind of a male persona through her enlightening and bettering influence and here once again we see the complementarity of the male and female cultures. There are various references in the novel where subtle insinuations foreshadow Rochester's reconstruction through Jane. One instance is during the conflagration of Mr. Rochester's room by his mentally unstable wife Bertha Mason. Jane arrives at the rescue and, in tellingly biblical terms, describes the scene of his rescue that foreshadows his later spiritual resurrection: "I rushed to his basin and ewer; fortunately, one was wide and the other deep, and both were filled with water. I heaved them up, deluged the bed and its occupant, flew back to my own room, brought my own water fetch a water-jug, baptized the couch afresh, and, by God's aid, succeeded in extinguishing the flames which were devouring it." (246).

The Christian allusions to an all-extinguishing deluge and baptism hint at a religious resurrection of Rochester that must be performed by Jane and this is precisely what she does later in the novel. The more she acts as an agency of security and tranquility for Rochester, the more the novel explores the capacity of women as active agents who given the right education could become capable wives to their husbands and assist more successfully in matters of the family. Like the industrial novels, female bildungsroman can be seen as paving way for heightened female activity in both public and private spheres as a means to aid men in their everyday struggles. There is then a possibility of a subversive intent in the creation of characters such as Margaret, whose guiding hand nurtures feelings of compassion and sympathy in an overly-hardened Mr. Thornton, and Jane whose comprehension of Mr. Rochester's need for a self-filling agency and constant displacement, finally instills a sense of home and tranquility in the latter. On the outside these characters appear in conformation with the roles of nurturers that the Victorian society was so

wont to scribe to the women. The subversive intent here is of providing women with the kind of education and freedom of activity that could bring them at par with their male counterpart and, for once, allow them the opportunity to operate on a more level ground.

Elaine Hauffman Baruch in her research “The Feminine Bildungsroman” speaks of the possibility of a modern interest among the interiorization of women as responsible for the production of a more delicate sensibility among men. With women allowed to explore the domestic and private sphere per will, and female writers on the rise, there developed a growing interest in the private sphere. With this came the necessity of variety in characterization and a more nuanced comprehension of sentiments and complex characterization that men owe to women. Quoting De Stael, Baruch claims that it was women who “discovered the self” (qtd. in Baruch 338). If, for the sake of arguments, De Stael’s claims are taken as true, and it was in fact women and their private world that originated the novel of formation or education, it is easy to see why self-culture and self-help became the primary tenet of this genre. Since self-help and self-culture were exactly the practices that women yearned for the most within the confines of their domestic sphere. Difficult as it was for the men, for women it appeared almost exclusively dependent on the institution of marriage, with all other institutions of higher educations closed to them. To this subject, the analysis would return shortly. For now, however, it is easy to see why, as a genre, the female bildungsroman favors a gynocritical project. Bildungsroman has, as its subject of interest, one’s life trajectory, private culture and the way the protagonists integrate with society at large, and gynocriticism seeks precisely the same thing for its female subjects.

It is imperative to understand that women’s heightened mobility is never characterized by Bronte as impinging on the territory of their male counterparts. Centered on more humble aspirations of putting one’s distinctive faculties to a more productive cause, the greatest accomplishment for these female protagonists still remains their ability to generate appreciation in their male counterparts by proving a valuable tool in their lives.

This much is evident from the episode where Jane “baptizes” Mr. Rochester and subsequently saves him from the conflagration. Coming out of the scene and overcome with the happenings of the night and more formidably, what could have

ensued had she not been there, she vehemently declares how that one night alone could weigh over all other nights lived during the eighteen years of her life:

The incident had occurred and was gone for me: it was an incident of no moment, no romance, no interest in a sense; yet it marked with change one single hour of a monotonous life. My help had been needed and claimed; I had given it: I was pleased to have done something; trivial, transitory though the deed was, it was yet an active thing, and I was weary of an existence all passive. (Brontë 191)

For Jane to unabashedly declare the precedence of the night she rescues Mr. Rochester over the eight years lived at Lowood, first in the capacity of a student and then as a teacher; over the toils inherent in acquiring an excellent education, and over the years that fostered her deep attachment to Miss Temple says all that there is about a Victorian women's motives in wanting greater agency. Hilary M. Schor declares how for the typical Victorian society, Jane's ideas of self-sufficiency and undertaking a self-discovering journey were quite feminist and progressive for her time. (174). Brontë seems to have taken great care in garbing these in more socially believable undertones and most importantly removing any threat of such progress toppling the dominant hierarchy and family institution. With Jane's most prized memory being her salvaging Mr. Rochester from getting scorched by the flames set up by another woman, Jane's character assumes an overt complicity that emphasizes her femininity and outs her in sharp contrast with the prevalent discourse around the non-complying "New Woman."

The New Woman who, according to the Victorians, looked for agency beyond the confines of her home appeared masculine and unholy for jeopardizing the sanctity of family and home. The New Woman, in her "unnatural" and selfish pursuit of independence and leisure was far removed from the ability to show "disinterested kindness" and a sacrificial negation of self which was proclaimed the elemental characteristic of a desirable woman (Cunningham 2-5, Smith Rosenberg 156). But Jane displays all of these, despite, holding some of the more progressive views of the New Woman. With two men of higher caliber and social prestige as her potential suitors, Jane clearly subverts the myth of the New Woman being unattractive and undesirable to men. Gaskell's Margaret was similarly ambitious but clearly more careful in giving vent to her vocation. Her greatest tool had been the ability to live vicariously through the ambitious men, such as Mr. Thornton, whom she had a socially acceptable access to. Brontë's Jane is similarly passionate and the author

does not hold back in experimenting a bit more with this idea of the New “active” Woman. In contrast to Margaret, Jane refuses to reconstruct a sense of self and impart the same to her male counterpart simply by breathing. Hers is a more active role till the very last moment of her decision to go back to Mr. Rochester. No amount of imploring, threatening, and reminders of her spiritual duties can exhort Jane to take a course that she, in her mind, decides not to tread. Being a woman, Jane’s active participation in carving out her own destiny becomes understandable when rendered in the conventions of the *bildungsroman*. Readers familiar with the genre understand and sympathise with the “temporal retrospection of the protagonist, her drive to fulfil autonomous creative, professional, and spiritual needs, and her eventual reintegration within an established social hierarchy” (Salmon 69) all of which classical traits are exhibited by Brontë.

The genre, therefore, comes wonderfully to Brontë’s aid as she explores the workings of a female world. It is passionate and craves activity, just as the men’s world. In fact, for being a no-man zone, it might not be all that different than that of the men’s but involves limited mechanisms to achieve what its occupants crave.

Mr. Rochester’s apt comprehension of Jane’s dilemma also comes as an aid against any protestation of dissipating femininity. Her paintings of the dark cormorant boasting the gold bracelet that it separated from the fair arm of a submerged corpse below the green waters, and “the pinnacle of an iceberg piercing a polar winter sky” (Brontë 208) were representations of her own restlessness and hopelessness of any relief from it. They are obviously interpreted for what they exactly are and yet Mr. Rochester only describes them as “peculiar” for a school girl, along with being curious to know whether she was “happy” with the renditions. It is precisely Mr. Rochester’s unquestioning response to her ways that draws Jane into his confidence. Mr. Rochester, the powerful and central male figure is also her ally setting her cause into motion. He is the first and only male figure to understand her reservations and sympathizes with her plight of confinement that has often sent Mr. Rochester himself on escapades. He describes Jane as a “vivid, restless, resolute captive” (Brontë 230) but does not fault her for this restlessness.

—I see you laugh rarely; but you can laugh very merrily: ...; and you fear in the presence of a man and a brother-or father, or master, or what you will—to smile too gaily, speak too freely, or move too quickly: but, in time, I think you will learn to be natural...; and then your looks and movements will have more vivacity and variety than they dare offer now. I see at intervals the

glance of a curious sort of bird through the close-set bars of a cage: a vivid, restless, resolute captive is there; were it but free, it would soar cloud-high. (Brontë 230)

In that one speech, Mr. Rochester lays bare the historical and long-standing dynamics between men and women, masters and servants, private and public spheres during the time Brontë penned *Jane Eyre*. His admission of the conventional order of things in a Victorian society being of a disadvantageous nature to women immediately sets him out as an ally and a close confidante for Jane who begins seeing the former in much the same light. The possibility for somebody like Mr. Rochester, a man so removed from the company of women, to so perfectly understand Jane's private inhibitions is a clear indication towards a gradual acceptance of women's culture and expanding activity in the general Victorian culture of the time. There is thus a clear junction between Jane's yearning for a more experiential learning and the need for a spiritual reconstruction that Mr. Rochester seeks through marriage to Jane. If Margaret was a representative figure of the more controlled kind of femininity, Jane contrives the depiction of femininity of more varied kind. Jane is visibly more vocal in her sentiments and growing affection for Mr. Rochester. One might even conceive of her confessions as quite bare and passionate for the more subdued countenance typically scribed to women. But just as there are stark contrasts between varying male agencies, the same can be said about women. Jane frequently alludes to the growing need of Mr. Rochester's presence in her life. She has no qualms in yielding her admiration for this male figure of greater pragmatic awareness. Once again, Jane's need for activity does not encroach upon that of the men. She listens to Mr. Rochester's enchanting narratives with relish. One may drive the implication that, where admiration is befitting, a woman of knowledge will not hold back in releasing it. Mr. Rochester's presence at Thornfield becomes an interest of which Jane becomes utterly thankful. She finally confesses that she was "so happy, so gratified ... with this new interest added to life, that I ceased to pine after kindred: my thin crescent-destiny seemed to enlarge; the blanks of existence were filled up; my bodily health improved; I gathered flesh and strength" (242). This admission can virtually be taken for a harmonious co-existence of men and women coming from equal intellectual faculties; for a complementarity of cultures spoken of earlier.

Jane's insistence on Mr. Rochester's presence yielding a vigorous effect over her fragile form is a clear admission of her dependency on the former, despite her earlier claims of being a captive with dreams too big to contain her within the confines of any household. Brontë is clearly at work here in normalizing a relationship based on a more equal footing. Jane, who barely warms up to strangers, let alone her superiors, allows herself to make this one exception sensing an opportunity to finally meet an intellectual equal after a long time. Mr. Rochester too, with his sympathetic treatment of Jane's reclusive nature, paves the ground for a later period of frankness. The open admission, especially by someone whom Jane perhaps saw as just another symbol of phallic dominance, of the injustices that patriarchal institutions like Lowood can hurl upon women, and the problem of being female within strictly patriarchal structures comes as a breath of fresh air. And Jane doesn't disappoint in reciprocating his intellectual superiority with an equal admiration and understanding of his troubles. "...I had not forgotten his faults; ...He was proud, sardonic, harsh to inferiority of every description....But I believed that his moodiness, his harshness, and his former faults of morality ... had their source in some cruel cross of fate. I believed he was naturally a man of better tendencies, higher principles, and purer tastes than such as circumstances had." (243)

Despite being in awe of almost every aspect of his enchanting persona, Jane's own superior education and experiential learning allows her to retain fairness in her judgements. While she is generous in her admiration of Mr. Rochester, Jane can easily identify the faults where they lie and is sensible enough not to look past these due to these new feelings of admiration and attachment. But her education and life philosophy simultaneously allow her to note that the faults may owe themselves to some "cross of fate" (Brontë 243) since he had, from time to time, displayed greater merits and the breeding of a true gentleman. Jane's retrospective nature and faculty for observation allows her to dissect Mr. Rochester for exactly the kind of man he is. Just as he can see through Jane to decipher her real persona beyond the grim wall she momentarily erects before each encounter with him. But being a woman, and socially inferior to her love interest, Jane is not devoid of complexes and premonitions. In one especially fitful episode, Jane, under the impression that Mr. Rochester possesses matrimonial designs for Miss Ingram, she reprimands herself more severely than might be due. Her speech here lends an insight into a largely female perspective of

relationships outside the bounds of matrimony. It is also suggestive of how, in a society such as that of the Victorian age, being plain was something akin to a failure for women and they were somehow meta-cognizant of this fact. Jane fervently reminds herself of the audacity of assuming herself to be the object of adoration for someone in a much superior position. The only punishment she deems fit for such audacity is to place herself before a glass and sketch out each irregularity of her feature, softening no harsh line and making such a faithful rendition as would remind her of her glaring inferiority of beauty. It is very telling that other than the transgression she makes in assuming herself to be the object of interest for Mr. Rochester, her greatest flaw is being plain. It illustrates the severity of the situation for women when one remembers that Mr. Rochester himself is not what one would describe as a “beauty” and is proclaimed as less than flattering by Jane herself around several occasion. At one point she even ascertains that “most people would have thought of him as an ugly man” (Bronte 219). Even for someone as intellectually sound and mentally grounded as Jane, the thought of her own physical inaptitude is too overwhelming. Her self-castigations, executed in solitude, are solemn reminders of the pressures women have faced and continue to, in subscribing to the standards of true femininity set by the Victorian society.

The two women who meet these standards are shown as ostensibly complying with the discriminatory societal practices for they are nicely poised at the receiving end of the difficultly attained standards. The first of these is Miss Blanche. Jane’s rival for Mr. Rochester’s name and a potential suitor. Ms. Blanche exemplifies the quintessential Victorian femininity that Jane so devoid of. Tall, dark and gorgeous, Miss Blanche has a superior talent for the piano and the poised humour of a lady who lives to entertain. It is also clear that Miss Blanche is too invested in the idea of winning over Rochester through the facade of her contrived charm that Jane’s observant eyes instantly unmask. There also seems some unspoken exchange between Miss Blanche and Jane that sets the two apart from the absolute start. Miss Blanche could be reminding Jane of all the hypocrisies of childhood that she hoped to discard through her departure from first Gateshead and then Lowood. For one, she is conceitedly gorgeous like her vain cousin Georgina, and Jane could almost delineate the potential of indulging that vanity which is suppressed behind her carefully carved smile. Miss Blanche Ingram’s characterization clearly honours the

kind of female complicit who enjoys the prestige their beauty grants them since, as in the words of Miss Ingram herself, “loveliness (was)...the special prerogative of woman— her legitimate appanage and heritage (Brontë 296)!” For the many whom such adage puts at a perpetual disadvantage, Miss Ingram and her likes would not have much to say. In some other form of the novel, Miss Ingram could have been a formidable rival, but within the bildungsroman, where the discourse of self-help and self-culture retain such value, Miss Ingram comes across as blatantly short of the right resources that should make her a befitting wife for any worthy male suitor.

She also appears to be mirroring the hypocrisy of the Brocklehurst daughters in her sheer disparagement of governesses. Ms. Ingram’s indictment of governesses either being “detestable” or simply “ridiculous”, and “all incubi” (Brontë 291) is another instance of some women’s complicity in restructuring the confining ward of self-expansion for women. It is also obvious that she does not possess the intellectual width to separate personal associations with the subject and cast upon it a more neutral eye: one that would appreciate the availability of a singular respectful vocation for females that allows them self-provision and a freedom from male-intervention.

Ms. Ingram, with all her apparent accomplishments falls obviously short of the qualifications that would make her a suitable match for Mr. Rochester, and the latter, for being a man of superior understanding, is willing to look past her more superficial charm to avoid “twelve months’ rapture (that) would succeed a lifetime of regret” (Brontë 626). From a gynocritical perspective, Ms. Ingram’s inability to become a suitable partner for Mr. Rochester is Brontë’s way of undercutting the Victorian standards of femininity and ideas surrounding the materials for a good wife and husband. Mr. Rochester clearly mirrors the sentiments of Mary Wollstonecraft and the nineteenth century novelist Stendhal (Marie-Henri Beyle). The former advocated opportunities of equal education for women so as to equip her with the resources that would make her “good mothers” and “faithful wives”. Stendhal took a similar standpoint when he perpetuated the debate that equal education would render women as more desirable and lovable companions than artificial graces (qtd. in Baruch 336).

Ms. Ingram’s problem is not the lack of education but her failure to incorporate that education in the reconstruction of herself, the thriving motive of a

bildungsroman tradition. She seems to be a living embodiment of the Victorian institutionalization of artifices and outwardly acquirements. As such, she misses the incarnation of that “inarticulate Self-consciousness (which) dwells dimly in us; which only our works can render articulate and decisively discernible’ (Salmon 61). Unfortunately, for Miss Ingram, such incarnation of the self is only possible through the annihilation of one’s vainer fantasies and labour. On the other hand, her prior associations with prestige and place makes the acquiring of such a labour literally impossible for her. The qualifications of a good wife seen from a gynocritical perspective, lent to a novel of education, instead place *Jane Eyre* more favourably.

As opposed to critics such as Annis Pratt, who could only see a possibility of doom, societal uproot and models of “growing down” (39) in the female bildungsroman, Bronte saw an opportunity to use the conventions of the genre for highlighting the female cause, value of female agency and the feminine retrospective ability. It is easy to see why it is only when one assesses the bildungsroman from a gynocritical perspective that one sees the possibility of a distinct female trajectory of retrospective learning and experiential expansion within her own distinct female culture.

It is virtually not possible for conventional bildungsroman to curtail the opportunity of such an experiential learning that was based on labour for women since such learning would have been desired mostly by women who were deprived of the means through which more privileged women like Miss Ingram sought self-culture: namely worldly associations and prestige. For women who came from more socially subordinate positions, the only way to acquire self-culture was through an indulgence in manual labour and a commitment to self-help. Ironically, although the job of a governess required high level of intellectual skills, it was still seen akin to labour. This is one reason why Jane so readily splits her new found income towards the end amid her new found family. She detests the thought that her cousins, Diana and Mary who were governesses, were “slaving among strangers” (Bronte 651). But concepts of self-culture, mostly through self-help and a sheer admission of making the most from one’s privations are concepts celebrated the most by this genre (Maynard, John R 290-292, Salmon 60-68). This is why Jane, despite lacking beauty, place and prestige, easily manages to prevail upon the formidable Miss Ingram and poses as a much more suitable match for Mr. Rochester. Had *Jane Eyre* been penned

in some other vein, Mr. Rochester's decision to marry Jane instead of the more socially suitable match, Miss Ingram, could have evoked sentiments of extreme incredulity amongst the readership. And while such might still be the case, these sentiments are mostly assuaged through the narrative technique of the author who emphasizes the importance of self-help and self-culture and sets the precedence of the triumph of these over any other social acquirements for later chapters.

It is for the same reasons that Miss Oliver, despite her unmatched loveliness, remains incapable of wooing St. John. The latter, unlike Mr. Rochester, is a more representative figure of the patriarchal kind. He's brought into Jane's life as an evangelical relief when she was lying deadbeat at the steps of his house looking for shelter after having fled from Thornfield. In a strange mix of events, it is found that St. John and his two sisters, Diana and Mary Rivers are cousins to Jane.

Grim and stoic, St. John is the epitome of the Victorian religious values that despise the demands of the flesh in favour of the education of the soul. St. John favours Jane over Miss Oliver, because unlike most men he's looking for qualities in his potential partner that may quench his "insatiable" (Brontë 629) desire for eminence. He finds Jane a "specimen of a diligent, orderly, energetic" woman (Brontë 629). But the missionary takes the Christian tradition of self-imposed suffering to newer extremities where abnegation is almost synonymous with self-sacrifice. While Jane, with all her achievements in self-education and self-help along with her somewhat romantic inclinations, is simply looking for abnegation of a more fulfilling kind. This is why Mr. Rochester turns out to be a much more suitable match for Jane, despite St. John's repetitive insistence on their matrimony on account of joint interests.

Elaine Hauffman Baruch in her insightful study based on the conventions of the female bildungsroman, speaks of the role of marriage in the self-expanding journey of the genre's female protagonists. Citing several cases in point, one of which happens to be Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, Baruch illustrates how, as far as the female bildungsroman are concerned, the institution of marriage played a pivotal role in providing females with the agency with which they advanced their projects of expanding their knowledge, acquiring newer skills and partaking from the adventures of the world. So far as *Jane Eyre* is concerned, the importance of marriage as her ultimate destiny cannot be denied. Nor is it that Jane's desire for independent growth

is great enough to seek a solitary life. Jane, in the true feminine tradition, has wanted to live for one separate from her own self, provided that separate being is deserving of her affections and ability of self-abnegation that has taken her years of toil and perseverance to inculcate.

Most nineteenth century novels featured women who hoped to seek a marriage that would bring them into a closer contact with education of a more experiential kind, hoping also to exert this influence beyond the confines of the immediate domesticity. It is understood that traditionally manhood is measured by a man's capacity of doing away with these guides, a woman's womanhood is modeled on her ability to procure the right man for her (Baruch 339-340). One might wonder if it was indeed a literary convention exploited for the longest or simply a differently angled lens of criticism.

To categorize a female's association with a man as purely a design benefitting the latter and sought by the same in a greater measure is adjacent to dissecting these texts from the kind of male-centered approach that the texts set out to combat. It is unfair to cast celebrated female heroines such as Austen's Emma and Gaskell's Margaret Hale in the same lot of women proving their femininity through acquiring prestigious matches, when in fact, as in the case of both Emma and Margaret, it is typically the men who come up first with the design of matrimony, and faced their share of rejections. A gynocritical reading of the texts would rather be appreciative and sensitive to these women's corrective influence incentivizing the men in need of an equality in marital relationship and *Jane Eyre* makes for a similar case in point.

Bronte's *Jane Eyre* is especially original in its depiction of womankind's capability to lift more than their fair share of the burden, especially one acquired with an increased participation in the public sphere, when they could have taken a much easier route. In Jane's case, this easier route would have been to stay at Thornfield under Mr. Rochester's generous patronage. In the dominant literary tradition, before *Jane Eyre*, a woman would be rescued, via marriage, right before she plummets herself further down the most difficult recesses of her self-expanding curve (Baruch 338). Jane Eyre, the protagonist, takes the opposite route. She chooses to leave behind the safety of a shelter when she is quite clearly without alternative resources, and finally decides to revert to Mr. Rochester when she had both financial independence and the possibility of claiming a worthy suitor in the

person of St. John Rivers. In fact, Jane Eyre's decision to reject St. John's offer of marriage shrouded in deeply evangelical overtones has long put critics on either side of the interpretative divide. As opposed to the novel's overt sympathies with polite liberality and a woman's right for a self-defined vocation, themes that would have been quite questionable in its time, *Jane Eyre*, makes some strong religious articulations and close connections to strictly evangelical overtures. Being raised in a conservative evangelical family, it is likely that Bronte shares some of her sect's theological views and even proceeded to vehemently defend her novel against charges of "immorality and anti-Christian" sentiments (Lamonaca 3). How can then one atone for Jane's blatant disregard for St. John's clearly religious invocations in favour of a more worldly one? The answer may once again lie in a gynocritical dissection of both her thoughts and the actions that are informed by the latter.

3.2. The Victorian Evangelical Culture and Jane Eyre's Virtual Dissension

Parama Roy in his article "Unaccommodated Women and the Poetics of Property" believes that *Jane Eyre* was one of the first texts to advocate religious autonomy and radicalism for women (713). This most definitely marked an important turn of events for women, for steeped in the orthodox Christian doctrines were sentiments of a natural hierarchy. Works of writers such as Milton, whose sentiments, "He for God only, she for God in him", were fervently quoted by evangelical priests and clergymen to popularize ideas of conjugal love being a representation of the union of all divine principles that emanate from the most supreme to the lowest sources (Lamonaca, 247). It wouldn't come as a surprise that the supreme source came to be vested in the guise of husbands while the wives came to represent that lowest state which constantly needed the spiritual lubrication from its more worthy and understanding counterpart in order to function properly. In this marital hierarchy then, women were advised to seek men of "understanding" and men to seek women who loved most this understanding in him. In other words, the man must seek God, and women must seek the God in him.

When St. John refuses to tie the knot of matrimony with the enchanting Rosamund Oliver in favour of the much plainer Jane, he does so on purely religious grounds. It is precisely this very act of rejecting worldly bliss, which came in the guise of a beautiful suitor, that affirms St. John's description "rigid, patriarchal, and gloomy" (Lamonaca 245). He represents the unbendable doctrinal controversies of

the Victorian times that this novel set out to contest through a depiction of independent female agency. Accordingly, Jane's rejection of him is consequently seen as a rejection of piety and the Christian worldview by some (Lamonaca 245) while others, such as Gilbert and Gubar interpret it as Jane's defining resistance to getting assimilated into the "patriarchal religious value system" (366) in favour of a more equalized marital relationship with the "reformed and chastened" (Rich 490) Mr. Rochester. Bronte herself defends Jane's virtual dissension as simply an act of "pluck(ing) the mask from the face of the Pharisee" as opposed to raising an "impious hand to the Crown of Thorns" (Bronte 3). Bronte's choice of words are extremely suggestive. The object of the epithet of "Pharisee" cannot be vested into the singular mould of one Mr. John. *Jane Eyre* definitely intended to criticize the self-righteous and hypocritical Victorian society of her time that denied women any intelligence independent of that which has been granted to her during the course of her meagre schooling, but expected her to be well-disposed enough to attach herself to a "man of understanding" (Baruch 336).

When St. John proposes to Jane, his linguistic form is quite ostensibly garbed under the weight of biblical injunctions and religious vocations. In fact, not only he but Mr. Rochester too allows himself the indulgence to align his wish for matrimony with God's will. In refusing both, Jane thus rejects the rigid patriarchal structures that rest on the marital hierarchy apparently sanctified by divinity itself. This was the autonomous female spiritualism that is best suited to the bildungsroman genre. Jane's rejection of Mr. Rochester earlier and St. John in the later section of the novel superimpose women's need to find a balance between the precarious course of human idolatry that either suitor impersonated, albeit in widely different ways but furnishing the similar end of a badly mediated relationship between a woman and her God. It also sets forth the tradition of female evangelism, where women could decide for themselves their divine calling.

We know that Jane's love for Mr. Rochester, something of innocent infatuation with his roguish charm and imperfect mannerism, morphed very quickly into a blinding passion. From an interest for whose presence Jane was thankful, it evolved into an object of necessity whose removal from Thornfield eliminated all joy, finally to become that poisonous well whose "divine" (288) drops are willingly consumed by the thirsty wanderer. At one point, she openly confesses to be

‘worship(ping)’ (Bronte 526) Mr. Rochester despite his imperfections. Two cases of female agency arise at this point. Bronte’s narration here of Jane’s voluntary rejection of Mr. Rochester’s proposal is extremely consequential because it simultaneously battles two longstanding attributes that the Victorian society had come to assign women; first: the attribute of the reformer discussed aptly during the analysis of *North and South*, and second that of naivety in religious vocations.

Mr. Rochester’s passionate pleadings before Jane to intertwine in a polygamous bond with him, unchristian as they sound, are delivered by Mr. Rochester under conditions of agony. In the fashion of other celebrated heroes, such as Mr. Thornton and Mr. Darcy who ultimately come to seek the support of a female agency in order to operate as a more functional and integrated members of the society, Mr. Rochester also vehemently appeals to Jane as the only person withholding his redemption. He beseeches her “good, gifted and lovely” nature (Brontë 525) to revoke his past “youth and manhood passed half in unutterable misery and half in dreary solitude” (Brontë 525). Here is the perfect opportunity for Jane to act the role of the nurturer that for the Victorians was best ascribed to the female sex by nature and which most fulfills her feminine charm and place in society. Further adding to the egregiousness was Mr. Rochester’s pseudo-allegation that Jane’s refusal to accept his hand in a polygamous marriage would drive him to a sinful life “fling(ing) (him) back on lust for a passion--vice for an occupation (Brontë 528)”. Jane alone could salvage him from his misery in the name of matronly affection disinterested of purely personal gratification. But, in an unprecedented turn of events, not only Jane refuse to do so, but flees from Thornfield embarking on a solitary journey while being friendless and without any resources. It is obvious Mr. Rochester has to find light through his own suffering. Or once, his education, reformation, and moral rectification must come without the aid of a woman. Since, here’s a woman who must look to her own rectification before she embarks on a mission to do others any good.

In a way Bronte is perpetuating a cause on behalf of women that is in direct contrast to the Victorian evangelical teachings. Women, as Jane professes, must be given the chance to fulfil their right of self-proclamation and self-contentment before they are taken up with the task of relieving others from the burden of social obligations and moral injunctions. There have been a legacy of female heroes

forgetting their own woes in the face of a family calamity. Selfless figures, such as those of Margaret Hale, have populated the novels of the Victorian times in earnest. For these women, relief only came in the obscured corners of their households where their own grief must be secretly disposed lest they may have to step down from the pedestal of the angel in the house- a defining idea for women throughout the nineteenth century (Hogan & Bradstock 1-5). Jane takes the novice step of expanding that exclusively feminine zone to a more generic sphere shared both by males and females. There does come a time when Jane is almost overwhelmed by that matronly duty of putting the family before their own selves that is inadvertently ascribed to women by the Victorians. One cannot blame her for that fragility of decision since for most women, comforting their partners came as a calling. Jane almost gets sucked into adopting a similar vocation. Her entire conscience and reason turn traitors against for refusing to enter into a polygamous affair, goading her to “comply...(t)hink of his misery, think of his danger...remember his headlong nature; consider the recklessness following on despair-soothe him; save him; love him (Brontë 529)” . And right when she is on the verge of questioning who would reprimand her for her one misstep given the life she could save in return, she is reprimanded by her better judgment. “Who in the world cares for you? Who will be injured by what you do? (Brontë 529)”. She proceeds to ask herself, and herself she answers:

I care for myself. The more solitary, the more friendless, the more unsustained I am, the more I will respect myself. I will keep the law given by God; sanctioned by man. I will hold to the principles received by me when I was sane, and not mad—as I am now. Laws and principles are not for the times when there is no temptation: they are for such moments as this, when body and soul rise in mutiny against their rigour; stringent are they; inviolate they shall be.... Preconceived opinions, foregone determinations, are all I have at this hour to stand by: there I plant my foot. (Bronte, 529)

In a classic act of reversal, perhaps the first of its kind for a female, Bronte inverts the application of the very Victorian principles whose stoic implementation was the sole staple of the partially bent patriarchal structures that produced them. Bronte shows how, provided a more level playing field (as in the case of a symmetrical literary genre) those “preconceived opinions” and “principles” such as the ones perpetuated by Miltonic clergymen (Baruch 335-337) can be made to apply to women in the same fashion as their more privileged counterparts. It is just as well that Jane adheres to her evangelical upbringing in sanctifying her need to find a

different and more noble vocation than uplifting a married man from the pits of despair, it allows her to doge any accusation of selfishness, unnatural repudiation, and a self-centeredness that is too wanton in a woman (Wollstonecraft 12-15). And although women have been gratifying their personal whims in that no-man zone that this study spoke of earlier, Jane Eyre expands this zone to that of her more privileged counterpart, apprising the latter of the need for women to find their own voice and vacation before they can help others find theirs. It has been commented by many how earlier commentators and champions of female education veiled their cause under the more admissible garb of greater familial good. This was why, under the banner of female education rendering woman as endearing wives and noble mothers, Mary Wollstonecraft proposed the opening of all public vocations to women (Wollstonecraft 69-75). Brontë seems to be keeping in tow of a similar mechanism in place. By molding her vocation as a divinely ordained injunction, Jane assigns a high degree of legitimacy and validity to the destiny she chooses for herself. By doing so, she also saves herself from two-fold sin of blind idolatry of her lover, and entering into a sacrilegious polygamous marital relationship with a man. We thus see Jane escaping the convoluting commitments of the patriarchal structures by the very token which sanctified these structures in the first place.

If Mr. Rochester's proposal presented with a trial of passion, St. John's proposal presented one of reason. In a way, refusing St. John's offer of iterating the role of a missionary's wife and reformer, bringing back the verdict of God in wretched locales, proved a much greater test for Jane. Moreover, Jane was chosen by St. John for the very virtues, principles, and qualities that, till now have enabled Jane to erect her rare *bildung* trajectory; virtues that helped her prevail over the dashing Ms. Ingram and the enchanting Ms. Oliver. Now these very qualities were being called upon to influence via its mettle the evangelical preaching to which St. John himself was disposed. It was easier for her to summon her "preconceived opinions" and "foregone determinations" (Brontë 529) in the face of Mr. Rochester's unholy temptations, but here was the noble mission of a stoic and upright Christian. So gifted is St. John to his cause, "he will sacrifice all to his long-framed resolves" (Brontë 599) and what's more is that he truly understands Jane's need for stimulus. But although Jane understands that there is no other suitor for her and by marrying

St. John, she can expand her missionary influence far and wide, she refuses his proposal.

Jane's rejection of her second suitor can be understood on the grounds that she was able to descry hints of patriarchal self-approbation in St. John's "long-framed resolve" that was not completely unlike those of one Mr. Brocklehurst, but while the latter's dilemma was sheer hypocrisy, the former's verged on hubris. What makes St. John's particularly "rave in (his) restlessness" is his inability to go on harsher ventures as his "ordained minister" instead of being "buried in morass", "pent in with mountains" (Brontë 598). Gubar and Gilbert sense a hint of "masculine self-aggrandizement and domination" (366) in St. John's religious agenda. Taking the allegations as true for the sake of argument, it is possible that Jane could have descried these flaws in him before the reader could and foresaw the very stifling monotony of a missionary's exertions looming before her, which she originally set out to contest by leaving Lowood. A telling episode foreshadowing this draining servitude that Jane despised more than anything occurs when Jane comes to feel stifled in his presence owing to his demands and expectations. When she finally belches, he immediately pronounces her as "unfeminine" (Bronte 693). To a woman so given to the cause of carving her own destiny and speaking freely to like-minded intellectual epicures, St. John's "exacting" (668) influence becomes strangely suffocating.

By degrees, he acquired a certain influence over me that took away my liberty of mind: his praise and notice were more restraining than his indifference....I could no longer talk or laugh freely....because ... vivacity (at least in me) was distasteful to him. I was so fully aware that... in his presence any effort to sustain or follow any other became vain... I fell under a freezing spell. When he said "go," I went; "come," I came; "do this," I did it. But I did not love my servitude. (Bronte, 668)

St. John's appraisal of Jane's constituency and merits is deprived of the two-tiered understanding of the female journey of self-formation. For women, their *bildung*/formative journey must meet the two-fold objectives of leading a more experiential lifestyle, while allowing them to fulfill their domestic vocation by exercising their more feminine charms.

Reading Jane's powers from a strictly masculine view, St. John can only think of one vocation suited to her, that of uncompromising, backbreaking labour in the guise of a missionary's wife. He completely fails to understand Jane's refusal to

tread the laborious path of leading an evangelical mission under the scorching Indian sun. From the patriarchal vantage point, a plain-looking woman like Jane who has been subjected to toil from early on, cannot be built for love but labour and fulfilling the latter vocation should be sufficient for her. A gynocritical perspective, however, allows us to exclusively reach into that no-man zone of which St. John is obviously short. In this no man zone, Jane is perfectly able to exhibit her truest nature, inclusive of what St. John and even Mr. Rochester failed to descry. What is also important to notice here is that more than once, Jane purports to bring St. John within the premises of this exclusively feminine zone but the latter remains under a state of exile. This also poses a question of a more gynocritical nature. Are men innately without the ability to venture into the no-man zone on account of the biological difference of sex and its related manifestations or is this a form of self-imposed exile?

When St. John fails to comprehend Jane's too willing and "gleeful" (Brontë 656) abdication of her post as the mistress of the village school she takes up towards after her departure from Thornfield, he ponders as to what occupation could be of more interest and consequence to Jane. The latter's long explanation of the domestic nature of affairs that seem waiting for her attention strikes strange to the missionary. They are strange because they seem so inconsequential and menial when compared with the more noble vocation of imparting education. But, before the arrival of her cousins Mary and Diana following the opportune disclosure of Jane's inheritance, Jane's goes into a long speech of "clean(nig) down Moor house from chamber to cellar...rub(bing) it up with bees wax...till it glitters... keep(ing) up good fires in every room... beating of eggs, sorting of currants, grating of spices, compounding of Christmas cakes, chopping up of materials for mince-pies, and solemnizing of other culinary rites" (Brontë 656). Her new vocation as Jane herself describes is to "have all things in an absolutely perfect state of readiness for Diana and Mary before next Thursday" (Brontë 656) and her ambition is to "give (the girls) a beau-ideal of a welcome." To this illumination St. John has but a forced smile of dissatisfaction as a reaction and despite seeing the "flush of vivacity" (Brontë 656) with which she proclaims her newfound vocation, he does not shrink back from reminding her that whatever her motives for the present, she must prepare herself to "look a little higher than domestic endearment and household joys (Brontë 657)."

When Jane replies that the latter are “the best things the world has” (Brontë 657), it makes clear Jane’s need to leave Lowood first and then Thornfield Hall. Her destination, the final end of that mission of self-help and self-culture goes beyond the escape from a monotone existence. She has been on the lookout of a home filled with love and wisdom, and where her passion for intellect and knowledge, far from being thwarted, should suffice for the home’s very protection and progress. In a way then, the end of Jane’s journey of self-formation is not very different from the end that the society prescribed for Jane, but what Brontë accomplished here is the depiction of how the desire amongst females for agency and newness is not necessarily tangential to the duties and obligations of the domestic life.

By activity, it must be noted, Jane does not necessarily connote a backbreaking chore amid the vilifying temperaments of the unforgiving seasons, the uncouth trails, the unpredictable courses of nature, and the unforgiving vicissitudes of time. Her definition of activity is simply a meaningful life and it is not exclusive to the public domain but can be found in the private wards of one’s household. This meaningful existence, a life lived and spared for both the society and wellbeing of those to whose service the most solemn bond of unconditional love subjects one was the only thing keeping her at Lowood in the guise of one Miss Temple and later at Thornfield in the form of Mr. Rochester. We can therefore draw a parallel between her decision to leave both establishments. The onset of her journey from Lowood was triggered by a realization brought about by Miss Temple’s removal, that the person for whose approval she toiled day in and day out was no longer there to recompense her efforts. In a similar vein, Jane chooses to leave Thornfield knowing that in the presence of Mr. Rochester’s maniacal wife, matrimony between the two is impossible and once again, with the object of her toils removed, she chooses to leave.

From another perspective Jane’s journey of formation becomes a caravan of which the many men and women she comes into contact are now a part. It is not only she who undergoes experiential education, but her closest associates too. Mr. Rochester and St. John make for two such instances. Her final rejection of Mr. Rochester’s advances are on grounds of religious impropriety and she only returns to a more chastened Mr. Rochester when no legal, ethical, religious or moral obstructions prevent a nuptial union between the two. This Mr. Rochester, that the

readers encounter towards the end of the novel is quite a contrasting picture against the imposing Mr. Rochester from the earlier pages. And it is to the service of this spiritually improved Mr. Rochester that Jane marks her return.

Similarly, St. John's virtual apotheosis towards the end of the novel has been given to several interpretations but in the light of this study, this apotheosis can be taken as a sign of St. John's reformation from religious-patriarchal to a complete evangelical preacher. "St. John is unmarried: he never will marry now. Himself has hitherto sufficed to the toil; and the toil draws near its close. No fear of death will darken St. John's last hour: his mind will be unclouded; his heart will be undaunted; his hope be sure; his faith steadfast." (Brontë 764).

St. John's has been a lesson of resignation to his solitude missionary transformation. His nonchalance towards and even antipathy against Jane's vivacity and love for domestic endearments is carved into the mould of a patriarchal imposition resting on the plinth of self-aggrandizement. Upon this plinth, there is room for only a single form to stand erect which is the bust of St. John himself. In aligning herself to this mission, Jane will have to uproot "half her self" and go to a "premature death" (680). Had she chosen to subscribe to this fate, one could have seen Annis Pratt's widely proclaimed model of "growing down" at work but it is not so. By living a life of activity, Jane never implies self-immolation but self-affirmation. She is ready to perform the services of an evangelical preacher as St. John's cousin but not his wife. This is because the latter status would give St. John the complete authority to command Jane's entire constitution and the protagonist's experiential education has sufficed enough to bring her this metacognition. She is prone to agency but not blind subservience.

Although Jane is conscious of the fact that the emotional chasm created by the removal of Mr. Rochester could best be supplanted by an occupation that "God assigns... of noble cares and sublime results", she shudders at thought of performing these duties under the watchful eyes of St. John whose regard for Jane barely equates that which a soldier reserves for "a good weapon and that is all" (Brontë 680). Brontë seems to be implying that while worldly and spiritual accomplishment by means of subscribing others around him to blind slavishness could be a man's end, it is not a woman's. Jane abstains from making these sentiments known to her cousin St. John, the veil of a muted discourse being on her, her narrative ponderings make things

clear to the reader. To St. John, Jane's most passionate denials are only manifested in her intentions of giving her "heart to God" (Brontë 683) since he "do(es) not want it" (Brontë 683). Jane is never quite able to completely inform St. John of her sentiments either for fear of being understood or thought unnatural for a show of cognition that is supposedly not meant for feminine sensibilities. This is one reason why her persistence in refusing St. John's offers are ultimately labelled as "unfeminine" (Brontë 694) by him. This calls to mind Ardener's divisions of muted and dominant discourses. It appears as though women, at least in the Victorian times, were inadvertently devoid of the ability of making themselves precisely comprehensible to their more privileged counterparts, the men. If and when such comprehension begins to take root, it is not without the allegations of unnatural severity and an unfeminine constitution. St. John is unable to pass the check imposed on him by Jane's suggestion that marrying him would mean killing herself. His response, instead of probing into the nature of such a declaration, is to regard her as "violent, unfeminine, and untrue" (Brontë 694). All he can fathom from such stark show of refusal is that Jane must be in possession of "an unfortunate state of mind: they merit severe reproof: they would seem inexcusable (Brontë 695)." In the dominant discourse therefore, women cannot let their more intense emotions reign loose without being misunderstood.

This fear of being misunderstood, although leaves her "heart-wrung" (Brontë 695), does not stop her from self-realization. It is this realization that not only appraises Jane of her own limits but also others. Reading St. John's restless disposition on one occasion, Jane goes into a frank admission of all the qualities that prevent him from becoming a "good husband (Brontë 680)." This judgement is engraved in his "lofty forehead, still and pale as a white stone (Brontë 660)." While she stipulates other reasons for her suspicions of St. John, this description of him evokes a pallid, unfeeling sentiment. The charge here is of a lack of emotions and sentiency that is completely aversive to Jane. However, in the fashion of many of the other female protagonists, such as Elizabeth Bennet of *Pride and Prejudice* and Margaret Hale of *North and South*, Jane does not go about the project of rectifying St. John. This is his own course to take. In fact, Jane hardly points it out as a flaw needing alteration. His disposition is one fitted best for the vocation he has chosen; she sensed him to be "of the material from which nature hews her heroes...her

lawgivers, her statesmen, her conquerors: a steadfast bulwark for great interests to rest upon; but, at the fireside, too often a cold cumbrous column, gloomy and out of place (Brontë 660).” There is an apt conglomeration of praise and rebuke in this description of St. John. In short he possesses a steely temperament fit for the public domain but not so much for the private. And since the latter will account for much of Jane’s occupation, she rightfully rejects the idea of taking him as a husband.

On the other hand, St. John’s approval of Jane’s faculties, his generous admission of her powers, resoluteness, control, tractability, untiring assiduity and perseverance seem to suggest that she herself possesses the qualities that have allowed men of greater ambition to quench their passions. They are also qualities one can detect in a diligent governess, but Jane’s primary contention was with his apparent judgment that her constitution, so disciplined, renders her more eligible for labour than love. Why should a woman, made of stronger sensibilities and tougher material, be excluded from the joys of love, warmth and feeling? Brontë makes it clear that feminine dreams of marital bliss and mutual affection are not necessarily incompatible with a female’s desire of fulfilling her vocation. She can prove to be both a diligent labourer as well as a beloved wife. She could step propitiously in both public and private spheres without needing to alter any of her natural temperament. Too often woman of ambition has been regaled as unnatural, unfeeling and devoid of the qualities that could fashion her into the homemaker. St. John, too, seems to be operating on a similar belief. Jane’s vivacity and an insistence on enjoying the warm joys of a homely establishment, sisterly communion and little endearments cause severe consternation to her cousin, who thinks such a feminine comportment incommensurable with the life he has planned out for her. But, as a woman, Jane has clearly shown herself to be able to do both. She can both make for a healthy home, as well as undertake the hardships of an estranged public life of constant toil, but on the condition that the latter does not require any form of self-erasure, since doing so would be synonymous to an importune early death. St. John failing to reconcile to this awareness of female sensibility and agency marks the cue for Jane’s retreat back to Mr. Rochester. The latter, with his newfound religious, social and moral permit to court Jane, becomes a much more suitable match. His character marks the social progression of accepting women’s dichotomous ability. He perceives in Jane the

vivacious spirit needed to keep pace with his own restive one, as well as the gentle care that would complement the same.

Jane, too, remains on the receiving end of this mutually beneficial marriage. Her experiential education and toil have finally brought her at the helm of a marital harmony which, instead of integrating her into society in a more subdued comportment, unites her with all the resources that bring her the freedom to deploy her aims even further. Far from being an agitated soul forced into unwilling submission either in Lowood, as Mr. Rochester's mistress, or as St. John's missionary wife in India, Jane escapes all for what could be many Victorian women's end from the beginning: to find a place filled with life, movement and liberty.



CHAPTER 4: LADY AUDLEY'S SECRET

Mary Elizabeth Braddon's *Lady Audley's Secret* was a sensational success in her time. The novel, being penned by a female writer in close acquaintanceship with Edward Bulwer-Lytton, whose wife herself had experienced the debilitating effects of being locked away under charges of insanity, traverses the story of another "seemingly" mad woman with the cause of unraveling her secret. Braddon's *Lady Audley's Secret* is the third text that this study has chosen to interpret owing to a possibility of significant cultural revelations pertaining to women's aberrations in the Victorian times once it is subjected to a gynocritical scrutiny.

The Sensation novel seems to be one of the most befitting genres for a gynocritical analysis for several reasons. The most pertinent of these is the subject matter that this genre exploits and the goal of gynocriticism. Gynocriticism, as has been established numerous times by now, deals with the problem of exploring the existence and possibility of an innately female culture that exhibits itself most in what has been described as "the no man zone". As such, this zone must entail attitudes, beliefs, experiences and aspirations that are exclusive to women, a woman's "secret" of sorts. And since women's "secrets and secrecy" are the primary edifice on which most sensation novels are erected, it makes sense to analyze one of the best-selling and most popular sensation novels in light of the gynocritical theory.

4.1. *Lady Audley's Secret* as a Sensation Novel

Literary experts have often defined the sensation novel in close association with the Gothic tradition. The only difference lies in the setting where these Gothic elements of sensationalism, murder, betrayal, uncontrollable love and vengeance unfold. No longer unravelling amid the forsaken castles of the moors, the forbidden sensationalism is now brought into the drawing rooms of respectable upper and middle class English gentry. The fact that the most hideous of crimes and secrets are performed and embedded within the confines of the domestic sphere has inadvertently made the woman responsible for the demise of middle-class English respectability and sanctuary. Far from being the angel in the house, the woman has now transmogrified into an uncontrollable monstrosity who is both sexually and socially perverted. According to Jill Matus in "Disclosure as Cover-up", the vile actions of these female hero-villains of the Sensation novel formulated an "other" for

the Victorian society which could then be used as a warning, a cautionary tale and a symbol of the plight of the recalcitrant woman to keep the good and moderate Victorian women in check (Matus 334). By following these actions, one can possibly draw conclusive evidence around the cultural expectations of morally, socially, and religiously integrated women of those times.

The problem here is that the Sensation novel, as a genre, is more warped than its counterparts in separating the vile from the virtuous. It is by conflating the two that authors like Mary Elizabeth Braddon were so successfully able to lure, regale, divide, and traumatize their audiences. A simple declaration of vice as vice and virtue as virtue would not lead to the kind of emotional jolts that made these novels such a hit. As is the case with *Lady Audley's Secret*, often the aberrations of women in these novels are contextualized in a manner that prevents the perpetrators from taking the full blame for their actions, or as Adrienne Gavin put it in her article "The Work of a She-Devil" and at times even making the criminal its heroes (224). The social, institutional, religious, biological and patriarchal duress is often the most palpable causes responsible for deviance amongst the heroines. It must, however, be borne in mind that writers often do not expose this duress in stark and vivid terms. These forces are subtle, even as they operate in the real world, and to detect their prevalence and extent, readers must have a keen and interpretative eye. Since most sensation novels often deal with female deviance, analyzing this text from a female oriented cultural theory appears to be the most sensible route.

This chapter will thus attempt to uncover, through a close gynocritical examination, these very constricting cultural practices and expectations of the Victorian times and women's response to them. In doing so, the study will hopefully draw important links between popular literature by women of those times and the female cultural setup during the Victorian age. The premise of this chapter is that the genre of the Sensation novel brought female writers an unprecedented opportunity to document the problems with the general Victorian culture at large where women were concerned, along with the existence of an impenetrable, exclusionary female culture that sometimes allowed women to get around these in ways that the society either willfully denied or deported perpetually into concealment under the guise of insanity.

Lady Audley's Secret is a quintessentially sensation novel as it centers around the existence of a morally turbulent and catastrophic secret. The main plot circles around the unravelling of this secret and the novel approaches its conclusion once the secret is uncovered. However, the social and economic conditions of the protagonist, our Lady Audley, make it more than a simple case of uncovering a gruesome murder plot. Precisely because, as Lady Audley puts it, there was no gruesome murder to begin with. So, when Lady Audley gets roped into becoming a killer, a bigamist, an arsonist and finally a madwoman, the questions that arise revolve around corroborating whether these crimes were premeditated, resulted from the inevitable fate of a woman with unchecked morality, and reflected an innate capacity within a woman to elicit vile, almost demoniacal traits that get subdued within the general Victorian culture but surface in that strict no-man zone of unbridled female expression.

Lady Audley, previously known as Lucy Talboys descended from a drunken veteran father and a mentally unhinged mother. With such humble prospects, there was not much that Lucy could have anticipated in life except for one unmistakable asset: her exceedingly beautiful form. Having grown in a society that placed disproportionate premium on women's beauty, it seemed plausible that Lucy should retain hope of a brighter future. Her plans to marry well and escape the destitution, poverty, and humiliations from her past fail to materialize when she weds George Talboys, the kindly but somewhat inept descendant of a wealthy patriarch and landlord, disowned by his father. When she is abandoned by her husband, who leaves behind a note about abandoning her to find his fortune in Australia and not returning unless he has had his luck, lady Audley decides to take matters into her own hands. The moment she takes the initiative to supplement her family's income by taking the position of a governess in a wealthy and respectable neighborhood, the plot of the story begins to make its advance forging an intricate subject matter that is open to various interpretations. Lady Audley does not escape the chance of taking a second wealthier husband, Sir Audley who is much older than her, thereby performing the first of a series of crimes: bigamy.

As it is Showalter's theory of gynocriticism in general and the female culture in particular that is informing this analysis, the focus of this chapter is less on the nature and atrocity of crimes committed by Lady Audley and more on the cultural

elements that force her into such stark aberrance. It will also focus on the society's response to women of the likes of Lady Audley and its eventual repercussions for other women.

Interestingly, Showalter herself has performed an analysis of Braddon's *Lady Audley's Secret* in her extensive book titled *The Female Malady*. However, her analysis is vastly limited to the question of madness amongst the general Victorian public and its portrayal in the novel. Madness, is undoubtedly an important subject not just in Braddon's novel in particular but in the sensation novel at large and this analysis will also shed some light on depictions of madness, or precisely the female madness, but with the end result of tying this so called constitutional insanity amongst women to a flawed Victorian bias that only fully reveals itself once we look at women not as a biological category but as a culturally and socially colonized sub-domain.

To do the latter, one must take Showalter's gynocritical theory dealing with "women's writings and women's culture propounded in her article "Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness" (197) into account. The idea manifested by Showalter in her famous book *Feminist Criticism in the Wilderness* foregrounded the existence of a particular dynamic between the ways in which women conceptualize their bodies and their sexual and reproductive functions and their cultural environment. The female psyche and language too, according to Showalter, are a construct of the society (190-195). But the greatest advantage of using Showalter's cultural model is that it admits the interventions of race, class, nationality and history in these constructions. Indeed, as far as the novel under question is concerned, female roles and expectations are as much a product of the Victorian culture's assessment of class and history as they are of the assessments of gender. By bringing in the question of class into the collective female experience for the Victorian women, the analysis will follow a certain point of departure from Showalter's analysis of the novel.

There's an interesting inversion when it comes to documenting women's history. As Gerda Lerner maintains in her book *The Majority Finds Its Past: Placing Women in History*, women on the whole have been largely under-documented in history but "not because of the evil conspiracies of men in general or male historians in particular, but because we have considered history only in male-centered terms. We have missed women and their activities, because we have asked

questions of history which are inappropriate to women.” (Lerner 140). But while they are under-documented in the general historical evolution of the English people, there is one area where they suffer from over-documentation, and it is the public asylum. Now since the question of madness, what Showalter described as the “female malady”, is so centric to the sensation novel, and the question of its cultural significance for women is equally centric to the theory of gynocriticism, this chapter will first begin with accounting for this “female malady”, also detected in our protagonist Lady Audley, by placing it into women’s cultural subtext that allows not only a discussion of their biological and gender differences but also the existing historical and class dichotomies.

It is important to note that when we evaluate women’s culture, the focus must not solely rest on the “the roles, activities, tastes, and behaviors prescribed and considered appropriate for women” but also those activities behaviors, and functions actually generated out of women’s lives (Showalter 198)”. The need for understanding the female culture came about as the androcentric models of understanding women began to fall short of and prove inadequate to make sense of different female experiences. Everything that these androcentric models could not accommodate was immediately cast aside as “deviant” or “ignored” (Showalter 199). For a long time, these external observations have failed to bring veracity to the female experience and it became more and more clear that what the society needed was an insider’s perspective. For these, analytics and critics turned to women’s diaries, their anecdotes, creative arts and novels. For a similar purpose, the study turns to Braddon’s *Lady Audley’s Secret*.

The most exploited subject within Braddon’s novel is the exact nature of Lady Audley’s secret. On the outset, it appears that her secret is bigamy alone which soon evolves into a potential murder. But in the almost climactic and thoroughly dramatic declaration by Lady Audley before Robert Audley, her terrific secret all along was in fact her madness. Interestingly, many critics and analysts, including Showalter herself, have chosen to discard Lady Audley’s madness as the climactic secret of the novel. Jill Matus in her study “Disclosure as 'Cover-up': The Discourse of Madness in Lady Audley's Secret” takes great pains to maintain how Lady Audley’s real secret is not that she is mad but that there is an underlying tone in both her actions and behavior that suggest that she is in fact “not mad” (Matus 350). In

this way, the reader receives an emotional jar similar to the one experienced by Lady Audley herself when she recognizes her extradition from England into an asylum in France. However, the reader's reason for experiencing this jolt would be different from Lady Audley's. For the protagonist, the idea of lifelong confinement within the wards of lunatics should be a severe emotional and psychological blow. For the readers, the blow comes from the recognition that the unnatural bestiality and brutality of the female protagonist that an androcentric model of female culture would simply discard as deviance arising from madness, as Andrew Mangham explains in his book *Violent Women and Sensation Fiction* (44), is very much a latent and dormant force perceived easily by other women. This is one reason why Lady Audley's female servant becomes an immediate complicit to her mistress's secrecy and her daughter-in-law Alicia Audley remains suspicious of the woman despite having no concrete reason to justify her mistrust. The reason why the women in the novel seem to share, albeit unwittingly, the understanding of an indescribable secret, when the men in the novel are either unaware or come to the same conclusion through an arduous and laboring journey involving heavy-handed detective work could be attributed to "the broad-based communality of values, institutions, relationships, and methods of communication" that is the essence of the female culture (Showalter 198).

The men on the other hand account for this "secret" or lady Audley's moral deviance through the long-standing androcentric discourse about the female madness. And it appears that Lady Audley herself assimilates this discourse to escape a much crueler fate.

In the nineteenth century, the discourse on madness was rampant in England. The English were particularly concerned with how madness manifested in males and females. Thus, alongside the English malady, there was the female malady. There prevailed an androcentric and patriarchal view to account for madness in men and women even when the symptoms were similar. Men's madness appeared to have been a failing of their intellectual and economic conditions while madness in women resulted mainly from their unbridled sexuality and something more innate to the biological constitution of women. The nineteenth century biological discourse in England focused relentlessly on the essential "vulnerability" (Showalter, 7) amongst women to experience insanity. Their madness was described as "feminine" and they

were thought to experience it in ways that were different from the way men experienced them. A close gynocritical scrutiny of Braddon's text, however, suggests the possibility of a similarity between the madness experienced by men and women and this is because its cultural model chooses to look at women's conditions outside of their biological confines admitting alternative and plausible reasons for their social breakdown.

On the outset, it appears that Braddon was penning the novel in support of these prevalent discourses on women's madness. In her final confession before Robert Audley of her sin and apparent moral deviance, Lady Audley appears to attribute the hereditary taint of madness in her to the prevalent discourses around puerperal insanity or post-partum depression. She claims, "'My mother had been, or had appeared sane, up to the hour of my birth ... the only inheritance I had to expect from my mother was—insanity!'" Talking about her husband's desertion, Lady Audley continues,

I looked upon this as a desertion, and I resented it bitterly. ... I did not love the child, for he had been left a burden upon my hands. The hereditary taint that was in my blood had never until this time showed itself by any one sign or token; but at this time I became subject to fits of violence and despair ... for the first time I crossed that invisible line which separates reason from madness. (Braddon 540).

In short, Lady Audley suggests that she had become insane on account of giving birth to a child under egregious circumstances. But convoluted and then completely gleaned over in her confession is the discourse of class.

There was no apparent fits of madness and she did not hurt her child. In a way, she did exactly what her husband did: deserting the family in search for a fortune and not returning until that fortune was found. Two important conclusions can be drawn here: the first is that Lady Audley was not mad, simply desperate to alleviate her poverty, and second, that in fleeing from her duties as a mother she causes an aberrance that, in the eyes of the Victorian era is akin to madness. Let's dissect both of these in greater detail.

In *The Female Malady*, Showalter speaks of how the Victorian society slowly worked towards the "domestication of insanity" (28) and its "feminization" (28) coincided with assimilation in the Victorian institutions. The nineteenth century England saw a predominant number of females confined in its mental wards than the

males. This was the time when it became a statistically verifiable phenomenon and with it emerged several attempts to explain the predominant trace of madness amongst women. What is crucial to note is that before 1845, there was the opposite trend. Men were recorded to have outnumbered women by at least 30 percent within the asylums but this changed with the passing of the Lunatics Act. The number of mad women in the asylums began to increase and had begun to outnumber the male counterpart a decade later. Then ensued a fierce debate around the reasons for the predominance of this female malady (Showalter 4-10).

Amongst the various theories that surfaced, the most widely accepted was one that attributed this malady amongst women to their puerperal and biological condition, the one also assimilated by Lady Audley.

While contrasting views surrounding poverty, illnesses and dependency made rounds and seemed to even hold weight, Victorian psychiatrist lost no time in attributing the female malady to what they thought was their biggest fear: a constitutional inaptitude in the female sex owing to a malfunctioning of their reproductive systems. These they believed interfered with their emotional, sexual, and rational qualifications making them more vulnerable to bouts of insanity. Thus the “biological crisis of the female Lifecycle—puberty, pregnancy, childbirth, menopause—during which the mind would be weakened” (Showalter 57) became responsible for giving rise to what seemed like a theory of latent insanity in women. A number of terms emerged whose sole purpose was to qualify madness as primarily a feminine or even female condition. Terms such as “reflex insanity in women” (Storer 78) that was the “special law” (Storer 78) of nature making women the “victim of periodicity” (Storer 78) and an illness that found “neither homologue nor analogue in man.” The periodic mental illness, to which women were naturally subjected on account of their biology, came with the process of pregnancy, post parturition, during lactation and during the time of menopause. Psychiatrist were confirmed of a “sympathetic connection” (Blandford 69) between the brain and women’s uterus. This for the Victorians manifested itself as an explanation of female malady as clear an undeniable as broad daylight. Doctor George Man Burrows wrote in his book *Commentaries on Insanity*: “The functions of the brain are so intimately connected with the uterine system, that the interruption of any one process which the latter has to perform in the human economy may implicate the former (235-236)”.

Given this disposition of the Victorian public, doctors and lay men alike of the inherently flawed constitutionality of women, Showalter almost finds it a wonder that most women could actually experience a lifetime of sanity (56). Indeed, there were psychiatrists who found it boggling that more women did not experience madness at least once during their lives.

However, if we look at the circumstance of Lady Audley's crime of fabrication and bigamy, she starkly exhibits characteristics that were in contradiction to the prevailing narratives of puerperal disorders. For one, Lady Audley does not turn to infanticide. The worst feelings that she harbours towards the baby are feelings of frustration. Lady Audley, then Lucy Talboys, understood very well the plight that awaited women who were deserted by their husbands. In many cases they were worse off than middle-aged unmarried single women whom the Victorians unanimously treated as a social problem. They were often stigmatized as "redundant" and "superfluous" and once Dinah Mulock Craik argued in her book *On Sisterhoods* how the Anglican sisterhood was a salvation to these women who were left behind to be burdens. The choice remained between a convent and a mental asylum (Craik 147-148). Lady Audley's plight was worse because she was not only "left behind" and shunned by the society, she also had a mouth to feed. For a brief period she does seek the refuge commonly available to the women of her time and finds employment in a female convent. But the vocation must have fallen short of her expectations and she leaves the establishment to find a position in a wealthy family as a governess.

There's no telling whether procuring a vacancy so close to Sir Audley's establishment was a delightful happenstance or work of qualified premeditation. Given her determination and ability to carve out her destiny through carefully plotted steps, it is altogether dismissible that she had strategically chosen the post. The vacancy she filled at Mr. Dawson's was only to serve as a stepping stone until she was eligible to fill the vacancy of being the mistress of the Audley Court. There are several reasons to believe that this was her motive from the beginning and one she was able to successfully pull off. And if one is to go by this route, it is unlikely that the crimes were instinctive and a product of her latent insanity. As Dr. Mosgrave acknowledges towards the end, Lady Audley really had the "cunning of madness" (Braddon 582) instead of madness per se: two completely and terrifyingly different

assessments and one that he will eventually withdraw for the conventional plot resolution.

In other words, Lady Audley's deviance can be understood to be as much a product of a socially and economically restrictive English society as it was the result of an innate moral aberration within her. This is what Showalter meant, when she proposed understanding women's madness from an insider's perspective.

Earlier, the study briefly elucidated how psychiatrists made sense of the increasing number of women in mental wards by attributing it to women's biological functions. There were contrasting theories to boot and it would do the study well to shed some light on these. While there were some scientifically backed reasons to believe that puerperal violence amongst women was a function of their biology this was only half the truth. Clinging exclusively to this one dimensional assessment of women's plight did them most harm because it failed to take into account the much prevalent social problems of female stigmatization, poverty, destitution, female dependency, shocks and psychological adjustments to their new found maternal roles (Showalter 59). Categorization of the female deviance, violence or incompetency as an exclusively biological phenomenon and a natural product of women's nature not only cast the entire female sex in the mould of incompetency but also discouraged the possibility of acknowledging the social slights sustained by them and moving towards rectification.

It called for the assistance of some moral managers to check the social error that so many psychiatrists failed to correct. The error of limited vocational and intellectual pursuits. Some psychiatrists admitted to the maddening influence of enormous restrictions that could be as mentally debilitating as a biological disorder. Experts such as Reverend William Moseley in his book *Eleven Chapters on Nervous and Mental Complaints* openly lamented the lack of any considerable exercise that could help women hone, nurture, and train their mental energies and put them to productive use. Another expert, W.A.F. Browne agreed in part maintaining that while one could not deny women's constitutional vulnerability, their imperfect and almost useless education could be blamed in part on the undue duress on certain mental faculties and the callous and willful neglect of the other resulted in a mental and bodily perversion that strongly arrested healthy development, "spewed forth sickly refinement, weak insipidity, or absolute disease" (Browne 43).

It is imperative to note that the vocations taught to women were not an outlet for the mind's craving but for simply display. And it is this need for display, of the apparent show of wealth and accomplishment that came as the part and parcel of upper-class English society which became the undoing of Lady Audley. So that she was trapped in the insidious loop of a system that did not provide women with the internal resources and self-discipline that checks moral insanity and the need to perpetually remain on display to constantly run the chance of experiencing a public fall.

But whether the increasing madness in women was attributed to their biological function or sociological dystopia, their accounting remained purely androcentric as discussed in *The female Malady* (Showalter 200) and the final verdict had always something to do with the training of the will. There was a lack of discourse on how this so called madness produced conflicts of the feminine role as well as an insider's perspective on how madness was experienced by women. Questions that would be intrinsic to a gynocritic study such as, how did women feel about their various biological problems, how were they treated by the asylum workers and caretakers, and how did women working at these asylums perceive the puerperal mania, etc., were completely ignored by these androcentric models of women's behavior. The pages of the professional journals that recorded the statistics and symptoms of women's behavior were largely inaccessible to women.

For these, critics from the gynocritical school have had to turn towards the letters, journals and diaries of profound women, such as Florence Nightingale, Charlotte Bronte and Mary Braddon's sensational and psychological fictions for a more in-depth and a more multi-dimensional understanding of women's problems. And indeed these writings reveal that madness amongst women stemmed from far more complex conditions including a strict moral, social, and religious conditioning than simply biological.

In fact in *The Female Malady*, Showalter is of the view that the rise of the madwoman was Victorian society's "self-fulfilling prophecies" (Showalter 73). The economic and vocational restrictions imposed upon women, and stemmed in falsely prevalent and calculatigly exaggerated accounts of women's irrationality, childishness, and sexual instability worked together to produce the kind of deviance in women that allowed the largely male occupation, psychiatry and clinical

assistance a highly lucrative opportunity: one, it was noted time and again, that the husbands, brothers and other males relatives of the families did not feel shy of exploiting. Male custodians of the public sphere leached on to this psychological frailty amongst women to keep them out of public vocations, property rights and any meaningful indulgence conflating medicine with politics (Showalter 124-125). In the doling of the moral management by these social institutions one could read the cultural attitudes of the Victorian people of the time towards women with increasing demands. And although the study agrees with Showalter's assessment of this madness, it goes a step further to declare that it also brought ambitious women a chance to manifest their greater cunning and psychological predominance under the garb of some innate frailty of nature.

In other words, the gynocritical study of the novel dictates how the sensation novel as a genre brought forth the chance to Victorian writers like Braddon to bring forth the secret of women's madness in the Victorian times out in the open. The duplicity, cunning, and psychological manipulating exhibited by Lady Audley are not signs of moral insanity but moral degeneracy of an extremely clever and cunningly opportunistic women. Residing latent within such an assessment is the message of threatening female intelligence that women mostly shroud under the garb of innocence and childishness to procure their wants and satisfy their ambitions. This duplicity Lady Audley achieves in the following elaborate and carefully plotted and conducted ways.

On the outset, Lady Audley has been described as the embodiment of feminine traits of the highest and most cherished order. Indeed many a times, the praise of Lady Audley's unmistakable femininity and profound beauty verges on the sense of comicality. The exaggeration and unbridled focus on her outward innocence and elegance only reinforces an unsettling feeling of the mystery and murkiness that lays hidden underneath. The double-edged meaning of her writings is prevalent not only in her description of Lady Audley but what becomes her eventual establishment-the Audley Court. The novel begins with an assessment of the archway leading up to Audley Court. The clock tower at one end featured a "stupid, bewildering clock, which had only one hand--and which jumped straight from one hour to the next--and was therefore always in extremes" (Braddon 3). The suggestions become more and more palpable as the reader makes his way into the

establishment itself. According to Braddon, the house was a “noble place; inside as well as out, a noble place--a house in which you incontinently lost yourself if ever you were so rash as to attempt to penetrate its mysteries alone; a house in which no one room had any sympathy with another” (Braddon 3). Also, lying some twenty paces from the house was “an avenue so shaded from the sun and sky, so screened from observation by the thick shelter of the over-arching trees that it seemed a chosen place for secret meetings or for stolen interviews; a place in which a conspiracy might have been planned, or a lover's vow registered with equal safety” (Braddon 5). Braddon’s comic insistence on the oxymoronic qualities of nobility and wayward secrecy lays the foundation of some gruesome mystery lying in wait. The calm seems to await some sort of storm which eventually manifests itself with the arrival of Lady Audley.

Braddon continues to work with her double entendre in the categorization of Lady Audley. The undue stress on her childlike demeanor compounded with the reinforcing of her obscure background is anything but assuring of her angelic disposition, and yet she is, at least ostensibly the epitome of the angel in the house.

Lady Audley had, in becoming the wife of Sir Michael, made one of those apparently advantageous matches which are apt to draw upon a woman the envy and hatred of her sex. She had come into the neighborhood as a governess in the family of a surgeon in the village near Audley Court. No one knew anything of her, except that she came in answer to an advertisement which Mr. Dawson, the surgeon, had inserted in *The Times*. She came from London; and the only reference she gave was to a lady at a school at Brompton, where she had once been a teacher....it was a part of her amiable and gentle nature always to be light-hearted, happy and contented under any circumstances. Wherever she went she seemed to take joy and brightness with her. In the page 7 / 665 cottages of the poor her fair face shone like a sunbeam.... For you see, Miss Lucy Graham was blessed with that magic power of fascination, by which a woman can charm with a word or intoxicate with a smile (Braddon 8).

This is not the only description of its kind that puts Lady Audley on an impossible pedestal declaring her to be the “sweetest girl ever” (Braddon 8). Numerous times in the novel, Braddon does not shy from educating the readers on the immense charm and fascination exhibited by the protagonist that can beguile any onlooker. But the writer’s select insistence on the words “intoxication”, “charm”, and “fascination” carry the unmistakable tone of deception. There seems to be a suggestion that instead of possessing an untainted beauty, her real magic lay in charming and intoxicating others into believing that she is a woman of such profound

gifts. Ironically, the insistence on her childish disposition would make her onlookers appear more innocent than the object of this admiration itself. Her employer Mr. Dawson, her husband Sir Audley, and his nephew Sir Robert Audley are equally beguiled at one point or another by her charm, beauty, and outward show of purity imposing more of a question on male susceptibility as opposed to female infirmity. It becomes quite apparent later in the novel, although Braddon does not dare pronounce it in any obvious manner, that the men were easily duped by the cunning women and failed to display the kind of sensibility and judgment that was celebrated as the exclusive asset of the male sex as was the general perception about men and women in the Victorian times (Pykett 11).

Lady Audley masters the classic art of transforming her decisive feminine asset into a lethal weapon. One that she uses to subjugate any with the exception of Sir Robert Audley, who appeared to come in her way towards upward mobility. When she manages to make Sir Michael second-guess his respectable first marriage on account of this “fever” he described as love for Lady Audley, it reflects the impressionability of men like Sir Michael Audley who makes the fatal error of confounding love with infatuation for physical beauty, while on the other it manifests the importance of beauty amongst women to have any meaningful connection in life. Totally smitten with “the tender fascination of those soft and melting blue eyes; the graceful beauty of that slender throat and drooping head, with its wealth of showering flaxen curls; the low music of that gentle voice; the perfect harmony which pervaded every charm” (Braddon 9), Sir Michael Audley briskly calls recalls his first marriage as “a dull, jog-trot bargain” (Braddon 9) that was kept alive by a “a poor, pitiful, smoldering spark, too dull to be extinguished, too feeble to burn” (Braddon 9). Braddon cruelly inverts this premium that the Victorian society placed on women’s physical aptitude and the stark error they make of taking their surface perfections to be symbolize their moral profundity. As beautiful as Lady Audley is on the outside, she completely fails to complement it with an equally flattering character that resides within her and it is a shame that Sir Audley’s first wife’s memories suffer a humiliating reduction to pitiable epithets of dullness and jog-trotting bargain in the wake of another woman’s dubious charm. This remains a common pattern amongst heroines of sensation novel to invert their apparent beauty and charm with bouts of sometimes horrendous and incorrigible and sometimes high-

strung behavior that surface in secrecy revealing the passionate and deviant women that lie underneath (Dallas 8). In a way then, sensation novels, perhaps did more than any other medium of public correction in displacing this disproportionate weight placed on female's outward beauty and the unquestioning association of the latter with an unsustainable moral character. This is one instance of the double-voiced discourse. In the introduction, the study made it clear how women writers made use of what Showalter called the double-voiced discourse. The idea itself was borrowed from the works of anthropologist Edwin Ardener and his wife Shirley Ardener. In their work "Belief and the Problem of Women and the Problem Revisited", women have historically been speaking in a male-perpetuated medium and that "words do not speak while women do" (Ardener 48). In other words, what these anthropologists have been holding out is the idea that women have to confirm to a strict set of rules and expectations while voicing their opinion. In Braddon's case, one can see the same veiling of opinions under the garb of socially acceptable norms.

The Victorians cherished the idea of the untainted and uncorrupted lady who grew up in the society imbibing only its best aspects and remaining impervious to all the worst. This was obviously a horribly skewed expectation and one that women had to go through great lengths to uphold. The sensation novels now exposed a possibility of how, even where these expectations seemed to be so innocuously lived, there was always the possibility of fabrication and unprecedented falsification. Doing so, there spread an undercurrent of the need to revisit and restructure the roles, expectations, and potential of women in the Victorian society. This was achieved by unmasking the duplicity of women like Lady Audley and Phoebe Marks, who, trained in the social norms of their surrounding, managed to successfully pull the chameleonic wool over the eyes of men and women alike without actually aspiring to the incredibly bolstered ideals. Around the same time as the sensation novels became a major hit, there was seen a significant rise in the newspaper publications of heinous crimes unfolding in domestic settings making the Victorian nightmare come true. Stories of atrocious crimes and skeletons in the closet of the respectable English gentry, a thing unimaginable at one time, became somewhat of an expected occurrence. So that while the Victorian reader was understandably aghast at some of the sexual and moral transgressions that the genre so openly exploited and critics such as Robert Buchanan could not hide their disdain over this appeal "not to the

sympathies of the educated few, but those of the general public” (136), the latent understanding of these crimes actually unfolding in the middle and upper-class dining rooms was what kept the public glued to these novels (Pykett 48).

The narrative of the madwoman in the attic came to be replaced with the narrative of the vengeful and spiteful woman who was too clever for her own good and paid the price for her higher intelligence with feats of absolute cunning. However, it would be a blatant dismissal to the more feminist interpretations of Braddon’s novels to simply suggest that the author opposed the notion of greater female intellect by posing them as innately cunning and only capable of using their astounding wits to pull off immoral acts. Far from it, Braddon only seems to be preaching the cause of finding a middle-ground for women of lower classes to make their way into society with dignity and self-sustenance.

To prove that Braddon was neither critical of, nor apologetic for some women’s greater intellectual capacity and ambitious derive could be seen in the persons of two other important characters in the novel: Alicia Audley and Clara Talboys. The first of the two, Alicia Audley is the headstrong, educated, and self-driven daughter of Michael Audley from his first marriage. Unfortunately for Alicia, most of her traits are appraised in the novel through the eyes of Robert Audley who ostensibly disapproves of Alicia’s assertive and dominant force. Robert, himself lethargic and devoid of purpose for the greater half of the novel, shies miserably from the idea of courting Alicia who has taken an obvious liking to her cousin. What, however, is noteworthy in Braddon’s writing is that she does not cave into the satisfaction-inducing trope of seeing a shrewd woman gets tamed by a man. Alicia is possibly aware of her overbearing force that unhinges Robert in ways he cannot iterate, but she makes almost no effort to change these traits in order to make herself a more suitable and appreciable partner for Robert. In this way, she mirrors the force of characters such as Margaret Hale and Jane Eyre who denounce the idea or even possibility of undergoing a major change of character or ideology in order to court approval of their male counterparts. It’s a refreshing notion of mutual regard for the temperament of the other without skewing the expectations of changing oneself in favour of a particular sex. Alicia Audley, with her definitive stance and forward-thinking gladly lands herself Sir Harry Towers after realizing that her personality is as unsuitable for Robert Audley as his lethargy and snobbery are for her. Instead of

entering into a grueling struggle of changing one another, the characters display a mature recognition of the differences between them and opt out of unnecessary strife.

But it is precisely Alicia's moral strength and emotional equilibrium that prevents her from succumbing to the disappointment of not having married her first choice. In the words of Sir Harry Towers, Alicia Audley is a "gal who knows what she is talking about" (Braddon 200).

On the other hand, Clara Talboys assumes in the novel the classic position of the "angel in the house." As the daughter of the eccentric Mr. Harcourt Talboys and sister of the whimsical George Talboys, Clara's role is that of a peacemaker. In her own words, Clara has always traversed a precarious route of indulging the idiosyncrasies of her father and the dismissal of the latter by her brother. It's clear that to Clara and women like her, their chief role is in assuaging the flaring tempers of their male counterparts within the house. Clara then becomes the epitome of the female sacrifice spoken of in the earlier chapters. Like Margaret Hale, who must suppress her own emotional fatigue in order to relieve her family of the same, Clara Talboys has learnt to suppress the anxiety emanating from having to straddle the unwarranted course of settling the father/son animosity. Clara's figure is a close idealization of female aptitude that works its way by ensuring that it doesn't ostensibly override the patriarchal beliefs. Unlike her brother Robert, who outwardly and blatantly disregards his father idiosyncratically controlling and oppressive manners, Clara Talboys learns to devour her suffering within herself but has the presence of mind to initiate a silent rebellion of sort. Clara Talboys is the amicable product of the upper class English cultural apogee that prides itself on the regulated and nicely managed roles of males and females.

As the head of the family, Clara's father has the role of a patriarch. Robert, who transgresses his authority, suffers visibly. In fact, one may say his suffering is almost endless, for despite being able to raise a fortune and ensuring his financial position in the Victorian society, he'd live as somewhat of an emasculated man, shunned first by his father as completely inept to carry his legacy, thus the disinheritance, and then by the desertion of his wife. This emasculated identity, more than anything, is what governs his eventual decision to relocate outside of England. The absence of her brother further brings the burden of ensuring a functional family down on Clara's shoulders. She must silently approbate her father for his oppressive

administration within the family but likewise stay by his side to assuage the wound inflicted from a son's disappointment. Clara cannot make a show of her own remorse for various reasons. Unlike Robert, who even if scrapped off from all inheritance, is still in a position to earn a livelihood for himself, Clara would be left completely destitute were she to go against the unflinching rules of her father's establishment. Clara is the quintessential representation of women who are "the ultimate model of maternal devotion and silent submissiveness" (King 10).

We must bear in mind that in depicting the plight of women, sensation novels serve differently from the other genres analysed earlier, especially the *Bildungsroman*. The latter, due to its innately embedded themes of self-help and admiration of a life of trials and tribulations, gives one more room to experiment with their liberties. In the sensation novels, however, it is precisely when they tend to tamper with their liberties that the entire edifice of their economic and social status comes plummeting down. So, while Jane Eyre escaped from the psychological and physical abuse of the Reeds in the name of starting the quintessential bildung journey of self-help, Clara Talboys is left more restricted in a novel that thrives on exploiting the individualistic ventures of females regardless of how seemingly innocent they are.

Clara's position is especially precarious for two reasons. Escaping from the holds of the Talboys establishment is unlikely to bring her any prominent relief unlike Jane Eyre. Not only was Jane Eyre without fortune, being an adopted and unwanted child in the family, she barely had a reason to want to profess gratitude or loyalty to her unwilling benefactress. While here, Clara Talboys is tied to the oath of loyalty on account of the very filial relationship she bears with her own benefactor: the relationship of a father and daughter. It does cast the Victorian order in a dubious light when we notice that a daughter's obvious acrimony against the repressive regime of her father would fail to yield her any substantial degree of favour from the audience. Much better for her to imbibe her suffering as a natural state of her existence than to take matters in her own hands, unlike her foil Lady Audley. Moreover, coming from a genteel upper-class family, it wouldn't serve her the honour to work as a governess, the only relatively noble profession reserved for women in those days. Choosing one such route would have cast her in a worse state because women who took up jobs as governesses seeking refuge under middle class

shelter appeared to reflect the failure of the fathers or husbands to accommodate the female subjects of their family. Doing so, would have been considered a greater moral transgression than anything her brother committed. So despite the growing malcontent over her family's affairs she chooses to "stifle" and "dwarf" any mounting agony. While trying to convince Robert Audley to continue his pursuit of the person responsible for her brother's disappearance, Clara Talboys reveals the matters of her heart to her interlocutor in clear terms.

I have grown up in an atmosphere of suppression," she said, quietly; "I have stifled and dwarfed the natural feelings of my heart, until they have become unnatural in their intensity; I have been allowed neither friends nor lovers. My mother died when I was very young. My father has always been to me what you saw him to-day. I have had no one but my brother. All the love that my heart can hold has been centered upon him. Do you wonder, then, that when I hear that his young life has been ended by the hand of treachery, that I wish to see vengeance done upon the traitor? Oh, my God," she cried, suddenly clasping her hands, and looking up at the cold winter sky, "lead me to the murderer of my brother, and let mine be the hand to avenge his untimely death (Braddon 310).

This passionate outburst from Clara Talboys is quite reminiscent of Lady Audley's fervour who's had, by now, plenty of passionate speeches of her own. This brings us an interesting opportunity to compare and contrast these two protagonists of the sensation novel as a foil to each other and reflection of the moral opprobriums and validations prevalent in the Victorian times.

In her sheer determination and thirst for blood and vengeance, Clara Talboys is hardly different from Lady Audley who's shown similar symptoms of uncontrollable passions and thirst for drastic measures of vengeance. However, the response of both the writer as well as the characters is completely different. When Clara Talboys makes the passionate request of assuming the garb of an avenger, Robert Audley betrays nothing but the fondest emotions for the urge and degree of love she reserves for her brother.

Robert Audley stood looking at her with awe-stricken admiration. Her beauty was elevated into sublimity by the intensity of her suppressed passion. She was different to all other women that he had ever seen. His cousin was pretty, his uncle's wife was lovely, but Clara Talboys was beautiful. Niobe's face, sublimated by sorrow, could scarcely have been more purely classical than hers. Even her dress, puritan in its gray simplicity, became her beauty better than a more beautiful dress would have become a less beautiful woman (Braddon 311).

It owes to the cunning of a gifted writer such as Braddon to give to the outbursts of women's unbridled emotions whatever mould she deems fit for them to

assume. Clara Talboys, is oblivious to her brother's role in bringing about his eventual fate. But a reader cannot, given a fair sense of judgment on their part, vindicate George Talboys from any responsibility whatsoever. It wouldn't do to have one's complete sympathies for a deserter and it appears that Braddon did not mean it to be so. In fact, in leaving behind her child and acquiring a new trade for herself, Lucy Talboys, now Lady Audley, was not completely different from her husband. She is no more a deserter, an adventurer, and an idealist than he is. But while the social conditioning grooms one to be more acceptable of a man absconding from their primary duties, this is clearly not the case for a woman. Even when it is obvious that Lady Audley has not completely deserted her child. She secretly funds a decent living for her baby and her father from the proceeds of the Audley estate, reserves a clipping of the baby's yellow lock and a little dainty shoe, and checks up on the estate of her prior family occasionally.

Although the primary antagonist of the novel, there are several scenes that cast Lady Audley in a more pitiful light making her not only an embodiment of remorseless villainy but a representation of women jilted by tribulations of time. The scene where Luke Marks and Phoebe comes across the relics of her baby is one such strongly emotive scene of Lady Audley's vulnerability and maternal humanity that serve to cast her in a lenient light. Critic Andrew Mangham performed an interesting analysis of the scene where Phoebe allows her then boyfriend Luke Marks inside Lady Audley's private chamber and probe around her possessions. Mangham senses a metaphoric sexual undertone to this violation.

He went on cutting and chopping at a rude handle he was fashioning to the stake. [...] 'It's a mortal dull place, Phoebe', he said. [...] 'I've heard tell of a murder that was done here in old times'. 'There are murders enough in these times, as to that, Luke', answered the girl. [...] Luke uttered a cry of wonder when he saw the ornaments glittering on white satin cushions. He wanted to handle the delicate jewels; to pull them about and find out their mercantile value. [...] 'What's this?' he asked presently, pointing to a brass knob in the framework of the box. He pushed it as he spoke, and a secret drawer, lined with velvet, flew out of the casket. [...] There was not much in it; neither gold nor gems; only a baby's little worsted shoe rolled up in a piece of paper, and a tiny lock of pale and silky yellow hair, evidently taken from a baby's head. Phoebe's grey eyes dilated as she examined the little packet. [...] 'I'd rather have this than the diamond bracelet you would have liked to take', she answered; 'you shall have the public-house, Luke' (Braddon 45).

According to Mangham's intense analysis, on one hand the scene is evocative of a violent penetration of a woman's privacy. He declares that the scene has been

characterized with “Luke as a penetrating force and Lady Audley’s possessions as various parts of the female sexual body...The jewelry box produces tokens belonging to a baby and reflects, crudely, how the female sexual organs produce infants” (102). There is additionally the imagery of death and murders surrounding the scene. According to Mangham, as Phoebe and Luke continue to talk of murder past and present and alternate the conversation with the sighting of the baby’s shoe and hair-clippings, the scene must have evoked imageries of “infanticide and child mortality” (92) thereby linking female sexuality to death and morbidity. At the same time, however, there may be a parallel understanding of this scene and its repercussions on both the plot of the novel later and reader’s sympathies.

While the scene is definitely redolent of the imageries of death and grief, it is not exactly clear how they are tied to female sexuality other than the slow nit-picking of certain suggestive terms. Mangham likens the glass knob on the box framework to the female genitalia, the baby shoe and hair a crude reminiscence of the female organs that are responsible for the birth of the child, etc. (Braddon 45). But this once again seems to take an andro-centric point of view of a woman’s private chambers and all of its associations. The truth of the matter is that most readers would be less aware of the sexual undertones of the passage that directly link female sexuality with death and destruction but to woman’s maternal instinct to keep close a relic of her baby when the actual baby must be kept away. Other than evocative of the Lady Audley’s bigamy, the scene is also rife with innocent and extremely vulnerable images of an infant’s possession that have obviously come into the wrong hand. So while one may describe the scene as portending the doom that must sooner or later result from female transgressions, it can also be interpreted as suggesting the doom that results from a forceful penetration and exposition of a woman’s privacy. In addition, the vulnerable images cast a softer light of a still intact maternal attachment within Lady Audley so easily gleaned over due to the enormity of her crime. The scene with Luke Mars and Phoebe exploring the secret possessions of Lady Audley is one of the many that, ironically, casts Lady Audley in a different light: as a mother and now a vulnerable woman under the power of a dangerous man whose mercenary designs will not stop from blackmailing her with the exposition of her secrets.

In fact, Lady Audley seems to have been as much under the control and power of the various men about her as she seems to influence them. For the longest

time, critics, such as Andrew Mangham, Richard Fantina, and Deborah Wynn, have dissected Lady Audley's character as one of extreme cunning, "a childlike murderess" (Wynne 4), "capable of assuming a new identity at a moment's notice" (Wynne 59). She seems to have the ability to lure and beguile almost whoever chances to set his eyes on her. This is especially true of her male counterparts. For most critics or readers, the story of Lady Audley is perhaps the story of an extremely vile woman ready to go whatever lengths it requires her to clinch a social status and ambition that someone of her stature does not have a right to. Her story is that of luring into her trap first a naïve but genteel George Talboys in the hope of securing for herself some kind of financial standing. When that scheme fails, she steps towards her next victim, this time the reverential Mr. Audley of the great and mysterious Audley establishment. And finally, when the threat of exposure becomes too palpable owing to the relentless bout of Mr. Robert Audley, she tries once again to dupe him into believing her innocence and at one point tries to rid herself of him via false allegations of his unwanted advances.

Except that Lady Audley's story, although true, is hardly complete. A one-sided focus on the number of her male victims while completely gleaning over her own miseries is too cruel and unfair a refusal of her plight. A gynocritical examination of the lady shows her as much to be a victim of predominantly female-exclusive culture that is set to drive any woman of ambition to insane lengths. As researcher Jill Matus puts in her study, Lady Audley's first and major crime was the ascension to a social status that her legitimate means did not ascribe to her (350). In order to acquire this status, Lady Audley grabs her chance at whatever legitimate or illegitimate opportunity that she can avail. She is "moral but sane" which is not the same as moral insanity (Matus 350). Compound this with egregious financial circumstances and you get a recipe for total moral breakdown. But Lady Audley commands the reader's sympathies in other ways.

4.2. Lady Audley as a Perpetrator and a Victim

During her confession, Lady Audley speaks of the insane humiliations and bouts of deprivation that she as the daughter of a debauched veteran soldier suffered. She reveals the episodes of poverty and destitution that she suffered before coming to Audley Court and the anguish that followed her after. Hearing her account of the earlier tribulations and the faint hope of one day escaping the miseries that come

with poverty, readers are bound to sympathize with her fate and lessen their judgment on her other moral and sexual transgressions. The episode of her confession in a way comes as a commentary that makes sense of a woman's capacity to commit crimes that, to the Victorians, went far beyond her capacity. By unraveling the episodes that guide and govern the later course of actions, Braddon tries to make sense of an apparently noble woman's waywardness. This was important because one of the premises of the sensational genre was to make sense of the social and moral deviations in women. Many writers claimed to have derived the genre out of a successful collusion of gothic and realism.

Deborah Wynne, in her book, *The Sensation Novel and the Victorian Family Magazine* speaks of the precarious standpoint taken by many writers of the sensation fiction that was seen as alarming by the public. These writers appeared to make an "attempt to align the novel (by now well established as a legitimate art form) with journalism, particularly the sensationalism of the popular penny press" (Deborah 5)

Once actual crimes and misdemeanors had received initial exposure in the newspapers, sensation writers reworked them, suitably disguised and embellished, into their fictional plots. The fact that so many sensation novels were serialized in magazines appeared to confirm a link between middle-class literary tastes and the working class periodical press (Wynne 6).

Wynne noticed a marked relationship between the use of real-life sensations and the criminality of females. Many novels from this genre sensationalize deviance in women who come from respectable well-to-do families. These women were modeled after the image of figures such as Madeleine Smith (a woman of genteel roots who was charged with poisoning her lover), Constance Kent (the notorious woman from middle-class gentry who confessed to taking away the life of her young brother) and Madame Rachel Leveson (the known beautician from London who was accused and imprisoned for brothel-keeping and blackmail) (Wynne 109). In a letter written to Edward Lytton, Braddon herself admitted to diving into the old catalogues of *Newgate* (a book keeping a record of England's worst criminals) to come upon substance for her novels (Wynne 1)

Critic H.L. Mansel was similarly and disdainfully suspicious of the genre's obscure references to real life crimes, scandals, and tragedies in his article "Sensation Novels" in the "Quarterly Review". It riled the critic greatly that the novel took for its muse the contemporary events and newspaper reports. His primary argument

hinged around the fact that this rueful collusion of middle-class entertainment with working class press was pandering to base tastes. To Mansel, it appeared that the Sensation novel was targeted towards readers whose “ravenous appetite for carrion, this vulture-like instinct which smells out the newest mass of social corruption, and hurries to devour the loathsome dainty” (487). This collusion between sensation novels and realism brought a great shock to the rising bourgeois who already appeared to be suffering “from a nervous’ debilitation which the genteel classes, forced to keep up with the ‘frantic’ pace of modern urban life, were believed to be experiencing” (Wynne 7). Critic W.E. Houghton in *The Victorian Frame of Mind* quotes Arthur Helps who went so far as suggesting putting up a statue to “worry” given how predominantly this trait was rife and how it came to symbolize “the marks of haste, anxiety, and agitation” (61). Right at the height of this fever pitch came along the works of Braddon who unashamedly and abrasively proclaimed her novels to be steeped in the daily scandals of the English bourgeois.

Andrew Mangham quotes an extract from the letter written by Braddon to her friend and supervisor Edward Bulwer-Lytton and the content makes it clear that Braddon had various reasons to seek inspiration from realistic but extreme events. She states,

I am racking my own brain – or trying to rack it – in search of a rag of plot whereon to hang three volumes of words. The worst part of the business is that the books with murders in them – Lady A. & H. Dunbar – the whole interest centering [sic] in the murder – sell better than any others, & the critics say Thou shalt do no murder. However, I think this time I shall once more make my dip in the lucky bag of the Newgate Calendar (Mangham 87).

At another time in her letters, Braddon stated that so long as the sensation novels continues to sell preferably, and she remained in need of financial assistance, she’ll continue to exploit the titillating scope of the genre for lucrative purposes. Once free of the financial toll and having carved a name for herself as an established novelist, she’d defer to the more classic and genteel writing (qtd. in Wolff 10). It is clear that Braddon saw two main incentives in using the spice of sensationalism in her works: to sell her works and to reflect upon those sections, parts, and events of the Victorian culture that the society would rather they remained obscure instead of treating them to their root causes and look for long-term healing.

The sensation novels were therefore considered an extension of realism. And as such writers would go through great lengths to prove highly outrageous plots as

probable. Examples would be quoted by them to prove how at such and such a time real-life figures engaged in similar criminal activities. The character of Lady Audley herself appears to have been inspired by similar figures of history. The Central Criminal Court in 1863 found itself recording the story of Mary Payne who slit the throat of her baby due to strains of motherhood. Even more preposterous than our fictional Lady Audley, she chooses to end her life by throwing herself from the balcony. Then there is Ms. Madeleine Smith, who, when asked why she possessed the arsenic used to poison her lover, replied that she used it to improve her complexion (Wynne 110). There have been instances in the novel, where Lady Audley too, caught in seemingly innocent preoccupations, betrayed undertones of perfidy and some sinister conspiracy brewing. Here is one such example of Lady Audley engaged in a seemingly innocuous engagement rendered more and more obscure in its effects as Braddon continues to elaborate.

Surely a pretty woman never looks prettier than when making tea. The most feminine and most domestic of all occupations ... a witchery to her every glance. The floating mists from the boiling liquid in which she infuses the soothing herbs; whose secrets are known to her alone.... At the tea-table she reigns omnipotent, unapproachable (Braddon 343).

The passage is one of many that draws sensationally on home being a feminine dominion, but its supervision under the female care does not automatically imply sanctity, safety, or purity of purpose. The fact that crimes under the garb of seeming innocence were already becoming rampant produces the exact mix of Gothic and realism that sent shockwaves down many and served to understand and reevaluate public and private spheres.

Undoubtedly, the blend of realism and sensation allowed Braddon and other writers of Sensational fiction a chance to use entertainment with social education. Both Braddon and in much greater measure Read, were sympathetic to the discriminating plight of female victims whose rights were often undermined under the guise of treating their inherent insanity or weakness of disposition. While Read was ostensibly more tolerant of female transgressions and suffered great criticism for what appeared like his lack of moral judgement, Braddon had been operating in a more covert manner. This was important because as a woman writer of the sensational fiction, Braddon had already come under the scathing criticism of the Victorian critics who did not approve of women speaking on subjects that were considered outside of their appropriated scope (Pykett 33). Matters such as bigamy,

the conversations of men in exclusively male settings, and murders were considered subjects too preposterous to be engaged into by female writers of fiction (Fantina 24-27). It makes sense that Braddon would ostensibly condemn Lady Audley for her violent transgressions, gruesome secret, and unmistakable cunning. But while she does so, it is almost always compounded with some sort of justification.

Her eager marriage to George Talboys has been justified on account of her earlier poverty and state of sheer destitution. There was nothing in her demeanor or in the reflections of Talboys, as he was happily aboard the ship heading back to England, that betrayed a disagreeable feeling of aversion for her bad ways. After successfully finding his fortune in Australia, George wastes no time in boarding the ship back to his wife. While his eagerness to unite with his wife and family suggests that regardless of the temporary desertion, he had the family's best interest and remained a faithful husband in his own right, it also reflects on the goodness of Lucy Talboys (Lady Audley) as a wife. It is obvious that before the abandonment, Lady Audley did not give any reason, in the capacity of a spouse, for George Talboys to persist in his abandonment. On the contrary, George remembers her as his "gentle, innocent, loving little wife" (Braddon 26) and subsequently makes an admission of his desertion. His account should surely dispel a certain degree of alarm and disgust over Lucy Talboys's eventual mechanism to cope with the abandonment. To make matters worse, Lucy was at the time a mother of an infant and without any financial support.

While Braddon never makes a case of Lucy Talboys' despair, at least not in her own narration of the woman's career in housewifery, George's incessant infantilization of his wife seems to be something of a muted discourse based around the haplessness of a woman in such a perilous situation. Readers cannot denounce the bigamy of a woman with the same ferocity when she brings with her a rueful story of abandonment without any hope of her husband's return and a social cul-de-sac that denied woman most of the respectable means to sustain herself or her family. We likewise see a muted discourse on the part of the author that accompanies Lady Audley along every course of her transactions. This is important because the entire edifice of the sensation novel is predicated on what has been described as her madness, mono-mania or moral insanity. In hindsight, Lady Audley seemed to have been motivated by what appeared a social and financial cul-de-sac. What her gender

truly determined for her was not a biological and mental frailty, but social and economic strictures. As researcher Jill Matus puts it, her truly real crime was to not choose to settle with these limitations (Matus 335).

If Lady Audley's marriage to Mr. Audley was backed exclusively by financial reasons, her redemption here lies in the fact that she does not keep this a secret from her about-to-be-husband. When proposed by Sir Audley, Lady Audley makes it clear to her suitor that she is not in a position to put the proposal down, and that this acceptance had less to do with love and more to do with her determination to avoid the trauma emerging from destitution in the past. One cannot make the argument of Lady Audley's duplicity in marriage with Sir Audley, when she made it clear, to her own husband first and foremost, that her reasons for marriage were more economic than emotional. And it was completely up to Sir Audley to take her as his wife despite knowing where her affections actually lay. It is equally true, that if it were not for Robert Audley's interventions and her eventual subjection to the threat of getting exposed, Lady Audley might have continued to live as a docile and dedicated wife and mistress of the Audley estate. After Robert's interventions, however, Lady Audley was subjected to incessant threats from around three pursuers who all happened to be male and therefore quite devoid of any real understanding or sympathy for her predicament. The three pursuers happened to be the detective Robert Audley, her husband who made a sudden return into her life George Talboys, and her blackmailer Luke Marks.

Her only confidante is her servant Phoebe, while the only other women, Alicia Audley and Clara Talboys, who possess any considerable depth of character remain incapable of extending sympathy to the nature of her circumstances, her crime and the due punishment on account of the class divide, driving home the fact that even within the female culture, questions of class remain as significant as in the general culture and it is one of the determinants for understanding the ways, motivations and natures of women. But Phoebe Marks, having come from a working class, is a different story altogether. Lady Audley's well-planned and almost perfectly executed duplicity could not have been brought about without her close ally and companion Phoebe Marks. Phoebe is one woman in whom Lady Audley has confided her most atrocious secrets. Her relationship with the female servant almost parallels that between Margaret and Bessy Higgins. On several occasions, Phoebe

becomes Lady Audley's emotional bulwark and partner in crime. Like Lady Audley, Phoebe bears a promising comportment and doesn't appear weak of nature. Robert Audley surmises as much when he chances to run into her at her husband's inn. "That...is a woman who could keep a secret" (Braddon 208), says Robert to himself and adding later that it would take a "clever lawyer to bother her in a cross-examination" (Braddon 210). Once again the woman who possesses the excellent wits that can potentially outsmart a clever lawyer in the courtroom is portrayed as a threat to the social and moral well-being of the society. She is depicted as stringent and inflexible. The type that the Victorian society perhaps found the most problematic. Clever and duplicitous, Phoebe Marks is a person who is "silent and self-constrained", taking "no color from the outer world" (Braddon 208). It is imperative to note that Phoebe's stringency and self-containment are a threat to the Victorian social structures created for women because they immunize her from the moral disciplining that the Victorian women were subjected to.

Clara Talboys, on the other hand, serves as a foil to Lady Audley and it would do the study some good to draw some parallels between the two women for what insights it may give regarding the prescribed roles of women. On one hand the novel features Clara, the silent sufferer, the angel in the house, and the source of that compassionate influence which the Victorian novels would go to great lengths to idealize, uplift, and document. Clara Talboys is drawn somewhat in the image of Virgin Mary, emblem of self-sacrifice and female nurturing. She is tasked with ensuring the machinery of the house, no matter how rusty with outdated and oppressive administrations, keeps running. What is most fascinating is the effect Clara has on Robert Audley. What many may find exaggerated when compared with the standards of realism, Robert's meeting with Clara casts a spell of complete character alteration upon him. Once incriminated always for leading a life rife with the genteel class's worst attributes: lethargy, smugness, and purposelessness that comes with too much privilege, Robert Audley instantly transforms into a man of action. And it's Clara Talboys who brings about this change in him within a single meeting when the year-long service of Robert's cousin Alicia could bear no fruit. And yet, the qualities in Clara that Robert so expediently detected and seemed to have fallen for were not very different than those exhibited by Alicia Audley. Why then, one must wonder, should one woman be able to goad a change of heart the likes

of which other women could never bring about? The writer recalls Clara's effect on Robert in the following way.

...but Clara Talboys was beautiful. Niobe's face, sublimated by sorrow, could scarcely have been more purely classical than hers. ... "Miss Talboys," said Robert, after a pause, "your brother shall not be unavenged. He shall not be forgotten. I do not think that any professional aid which you could procure would lead you as surely to the secret of this mystery as I can lead you.... She left him half bewildered by the passionate energy of her manner, and the noble beauty of her face (Braddon 310).

It is unlikely that it is beauty alone that moves Robert Audley so disproportionately. If it were so, Robert would have been taken by her at first sight. But it is only after she goes into long and passionate speeches about finding the woman responsible for her brother's disappearance and leaving no stones unturned in this pursuit that Robert is suddenly receptive to her charms. Clara directly implores Robert to lead her "to the murderer of my brother, and let mine be the hand to avenge his untimely death." Her emotions in this case are not any less wild than those of Lady Audley for having already rendered similarly wild desires for execution. But where they verge on signs of moral insanity and monomania in Lady Audley, they become perfectly understandable, even noble in Clara Talboys. Moreover, it is unlikely to believe that most readers would dispute Braddon's assessment of Clara's nobility.

Lady Audley herself seems to be a woman of the same metal as her, living similar emotions of vengeance on her enemies and ready to pay any price in order to suit her desires. But while these traits, other than being classified as immoral come to be labeled as symptoms of her insanity, the same come to be celebrated in Clara Talboys. Braddon's novel is rife with passionate woman. Alicia is passionate in choosing a husband of substance and not just settle. Her passions, however, are simply seen as the whims of a woman too headstrong for her own good. Clara Talboys on the other hand is suffering from the agony and fire of vengeance but her passions are understandably treated with sympathy making her both beautiful and noble, the reincarnation of Niobe. Lucy Audley's desperate desire to escape poverty and the accompanying shame and her subsequent rage over having found herself the victim of various male's relentless pursuit of hers classify her insane. There is then an undertone of the Victorian era's hypocrisy when it came to the treatment of women's roles, feelings, and ambitions. Earlier it was described how the Victorian

society in general was distasteful of female passion. They seemed to be emanating from bodily malfunction and were often discarded from being steeped in irrationality. Braddon's female characters reveal in their own ways how that is often not the case.

Each of the female character populating the novel exhibits a certain trait of defiance and to a certain extent there is a justification for each one of their actions regardless of whether they are classified as morally insane, headstrong, or beautifully noble. Alicia's aggression against Robert's lethargy is justified in the light of Robert's self-admission of this trait of weakness in him. What then lends weight to Alicia's perpetual berating of Robert's ways, his lack of any practical work and real pre-occupation for the exercise of the mind is that every time Robert is met with these allegations from Alicia, he is genuinely met with compunction. Robert's awareness of his professional inaptitude is what ultimately saves Alicia from the harsh criticism that would otherwise come to her for her passionate outbursts and outspoken ways. The readers are further given the assurance of another male counterpart, the noble and hopeful suitor Sir Harry Towers, who admires Alicia's qualities of social awareness and maturity deeming them to be the right constituencies for a woman of caliber. Male approval then becomes the prerequisite that gives validation and legitimacy to the unconventionally meddlesome ways of women like Alicia. This is a subtle but important message that undercuts the apparent themes of the novel. Even notions of madness in women had come to be exclusively defined and treated by men during the later half of the nineteenth century. Showalter notes that "at the same time as doctors established a monopoly on the treatment of the insane, women were denied access to medical education.... Matrons, female nurses, and attendants... were regarded as less reliable" and "any effort to equalize their status encountered intense opposition" (Showalter 54).

It was undoubtedly the case for women to be understood for their actions, feelings, and emotions based on how they were exclusively perceived by the men around them not only within their own family but also in the important social institutions that defined legitimate passions against bouts of insanity. This is one reason why Clara's adamant insistence on avenging the death of her brother is cast in a completely different light. In her case, the person to determine the nature and origin of her grief and anger was cast in a similar predicament as hers. Robert Audley was

as keen on finding the murderer as Clara. With that, the two become allies with the same goal in mind. He is obviously not threatened by Clara's rage, nor is he the recipient for it. Seeing Clara so fraught with grief and riled with the speech of vengeance gives Robert a reason to continue his expedition, something that he had lately been inclined to call off seeing the possible repercussions the discovery would have on the family name. But once goaded by the tormented mind and heart of George's sister, no scruples about family, name, or reputation can keep him from exposing the truth.

So while Clara is likened to Niobe for her passions of rage and vengeance, Lady Audley's crime was as much embedded in the fact that she failed to find a male endorsement for her actions from the beginning as much as the actual series of actions by her.

This is where the question of sexual and moral policing of women by men comes in. The sensation novel indeed depicts how women, despite their cunning and wit, run a greater risk of getting policed and controlled than their male counterparts due to the many social cul-de-sacs designed for them while the same restrictions also bring greater opportunities for male exploits.

4.3. Female Sexuality and Male Exploits in the Sensation Novel

In the sensation novel, female sexuality is invariably linked to the commercial male exploits. As stated earlier, in a way Lucy is exploited by at least three men that she voluntarily and involuntarily surrounds herself. More often than not, these exploits have a sexual undertone. The first of these is George Talboys. Although Lady Audley's exploitation by George is more subtle and really requires one to look beyond conventional ways of looking at the question of gender roles and abandonment, George's actions still remained commercially motivated and performed at her expense. Talking to a fellow passenger on the ship, George narrates how it was three years ago that he had "deserted" his wife leaving behind nothing more than a "few blotted lines" (Braddon 26) explaining why her faithful husband was leaving her. Despite the abandonment, he hoped to be received by his wife upon his arrival in England without any suggestion of a possibly induced acrimony. Lady Audley may have committed the crime of bigamy in his absence, but it must be unfair to think that she would sit around waiting and hoping that her husband, now

off to another continent in the pursuit of something that was highly unlikely to happen, would return to her miraculously someday bringing all the fortune she could hope for.

In fact, George Talboys' return after finding his fortune is already one of the biggest twists in the novel's plot although this is where the story only begins unfolding. Right from the onset of the plot, the reader is possessed by a subtle feeling that Lady Audley is in fact the wife of George and now that the husband has returned his past actions of abandonment will cease to matter in any significant way leaving Lady Audley in a very difficult position. Hence, there is hardly any talk of why Lady Audley would commit the crime of bigamy in the first place by characters who are after the relentless pursuit of hers. George's rendezvous in Australia is one of the first instances of male commercial exploits that takes place at the expense of women. George is easily able to justify his abandonment in the name of saving his family from a financial predicament, but does not realize that had he not lucked out, like the many in a similar pursuit as his, his desertion would have left and for some time did leave, his wife in extreme financial duress, to escape which, she would have had to go to great lengths of tragedy and humiliation. Had Lady Audley chosen to suffer so, instead of taking on a benefactor in the guise of a second husband, the woman would have been both the object of everyone's pity and one of the truest specimens of femininity. When suffering in silence becomes the primary role ascribed to a woman, her defiance and rejection of such a fate becomes a transgression in its own right. Nevertheless, as Richard Fantina puts it, it is clear that Braddon created Lady Audley's character "to be admired" to a certain degree (Fantina 129).

Historically, women who showed defiance in matters of social, economic or sexual oppression were treated as mentally unstable by mostly the male dominated social institutions around her condemning her to treatment for insanity in mental institutions that were again dominated by the men. In his book *The Victorian Sensational Fiction*, Richard Fantina depicts how laws and legislation were customarily designed to suppress the working class, the brunt of which eventually fell on the women. He writes

...The new legislation emerged out of sociological studies by Henry Mayhew and, earlier, G.C. Stonestreet and became a weapon used primarily against the working classes. One need only note the Criminal Law Amendment Bill of 1885. Labeled as "an Act to make further provision for the Protection of Women and Girls, the suppression of brothels, and other purposes," the bill

continued a trend begun with the Offences Against the Person Act of 1861 and the Contagious Diseases Acts of 1864, 1866, and 1869, all of which imposed new penalties for specific sexual offences including abortion, bigamy, prostitution, and male homosexuality, or any “gross indecency” whether “private or public.” (Fantina 3).

In other words, while the transgressions of the working class were openly and publicly reprimanded and punished, this was not the case for the rich. The study titled *Enclosure Acts: Framing Women's Bodies in Braddon's Lady Audley's Secret* by Marlene Tromp, Pamela K. Gilbert, Aeron Haynier depict how, ironically, public display and social enclosures went hand-in-hand in the Victorian era amongst the genteel classes. On one hand, it was important to display the intrinsic wealth of the establishment by holding public gathering at the house, loading the private chambers of the rich houses with the most exquisite finery available and parading the inmates of the house as perfectly in charge and control of a cabal of servants that overlooked the management of the house. These public gatherings, ostensibly expensive decorations, and a string of servants was a way for the upper classes to profess dominance and power but the paradox arrived when women were required to somehow remain private despite the apparent public show of wealth and prestige. According to Elizabeth Langland, while the house, the apparent symbol of safety and enclosure became a public site, it was women's bodies that became the site of enclosure (Langland 8). This took place by undermining their social, sexual, economic and moral autonomy. In the previous analysis on the industrial novel, it was explained how working class women enjoyed greater social and sexual autonomy than woman from the upper classes. Seeking an independent lifestyle and possessing unconventional views on marriage, bachelorhood, and love were treated as off-limits much more for privileged women than women from the working classes. Consequently, it was the working classes that came under fire for tarnishing the respectability of the English Bourgeois.

Richard Nemesvari in his essay, “‘Judged by a Purely Literary Standard’: Sensation Fiction, Horizons of Expectation, and the Generic Construction of Victorian Realism”, notes how in the middle of the nineteenth century, the Victorian novel was on the verge of “an epistemological crisis” (15). This was the time when the bourgeois emerged as the dominant class and began with a carefully construed system of moral, permissible, and non-permissible fiction groping towards ways of accurately and artistically depicting themselves in literature. For the middle class, the

bourgeois became the self-proclaimed carriers of the English values that served as an apogee of civilization. Then initiated a process of convincing both others as well as their own selves of their superiority in art and literature to communities from other civilizations past and present, and their immediate predecessor in the eighteenth century. They followed a strict policing and regulation of the arts. For the bourgeois, the new realism detailing lives with an adequate amount of censorship became the highest form of art to which any nation must aspire and the rise of the sensational fiction with its uncensored frankness, debatable moral messages, and unconventional thematic concerns began to plant holes in this venture. In the study titled, "Victorians and Africans: The Genealogy of the Myth of the Dark Continent", Patrick Brantlinger quotes how "the development of the sensation novel marks a crisis in the history of literary realism" (27). And Walter M. Kendrick in *The Sensationalism of The Woman in White* goes a step further in declaring that one of the major significances of the sensational fiction was the demonstration that novels could be successfully, even brilliantly written according to principles which seemed to contradict those of realism" (19). According to Richard Fantina in *Victorian Sensational Fiction*, decades of "rapidly expanding literacy, revolutions in the publishing industry, and a series of debates over intrinsic merit versus popularity, idealism versus realism, and the proper function of art and literature in general, what is now known as Victorian realism emerged triumphant in the closing years of the nineteenth century" (12).

Consequently, extremely popular writers from other genres such as Charles Reade, Mary Elizabeth Braddon, Rhoda Broughton, Sheridan Le Fanu and Wilkie Collins were sidelined and some of them even blended in relative obscurity when compared with other Victorian writers included in the academic and popular literary circles. The policing of female sexuality then began with a scrutiny and censorship of the authors in whose hand was the key to explore questions around women's biology, function and moral capability. Like Braddon, Charles Reade and Wilkie Collins received open criticism for producing the kind of literature that was ostensibly tolerant of sexually active and morally deviant women (Fantina 82). Collins with his sympathy-inducing characters of Anne Cathetrick and Laura Fairlie, who were both unfairly confined to mental asylums against their wills at some point and suffered from visibly debilitating effects, makes a case in point. Charles Reade, another

famous writer of Sensational fiction in his time, received even more backlash for what appeared a great degree of tolerance for the sexual aberrations in his female characters. Reade himself laments this fact taking sides with Thackeray's views in the preface to *Pendennis* (1851) in which he writes, "Since the author of *Tom Jones* was buried, no writer of fiction among us has been permitted to depict to his utmost power a MAN. . . . Society will not tolerate the Natural in our Art (Fantina 82).

Nevertheless, the writers of the sensational genre continued to show increasing preoccupation with women and associated with them strong titillating elements. At the same time, the works of such writers are redeemed from accusation of sexism or base carnality because of their overt and covert endorsement of greater autonomy for women and their activity. Reade's women, just like Braddon's, show traits of passion and corporeality that would directly undermine the Victorian emphasis on the angel in the house. What Michael Hammet had to say about Reade's portrayal of women in *Plays by Charles Reade* can be directly applied to the characters populating Braddon's novel since her characters, just like Reade's, "are not represented as morally perfect, indeed they can be suspected of falling short of perfection in sexual matters," but none of them "are incompetent, while some of his men are" (34). Braddon's writing also contains the "laudatory judgment of women and pejorative judgment of men" (Hammet 74). Eventually, the sensational writers came to admire women who were competent, adventurous, and assertive. At the same time, the men populating their novels also defied the Victorian standards of what it means to be a man.

Now the male exploits spoken of earlier, showcase the same laudatory traits of self-service in women while the men come off as dependent in hindsight. The greatest example of this anomaly is the character of Luke Marks. The orthodox caricature of the manly man from the working class whose visceral engagement in blue collar jobs, unusually robust form, and uncouth mannerisms make him a prime example of what manhood without the effects of gentility looks like, is only able to erect some kind of a financial foundation for himself by exploiting Lady Audley's weaknesses. It's not so much as his uncouth manner, greed, and lack of compassion and respect for women around him that makes him such a rueful character, but the fact that despite being an able-bodied man of traditional values, he does not feel emasculated by taking advantage of a woman financially. According to Mangham in

Violent Women and Sensation Fiction, even the readers, instead of feeling sympathy for his murder in the arson scene, almost applaud his death (90). But to admit such a sentiment is admitting an interesting fact about our so called standards of morality for men and women. The horror of his murder is somehow assuaged by the fact that he extorted money by blackmailing the mistress of his wife. This lack of manhood and self-sufficiency appears a bigger crime on his part than the crime of arson on the part of Lady Audley. Like women, men too must adhere to a certain standard of what is truly moral for a man and failing to subscribe to those standards become the greatest aberration they can perform.

If violence and insanity were the private battles of women's biology, then the pressures of successful financial excursions were those of the males. It is true that Braddon subscribes to the Victorian assessment of there being some latent insanity and unnaturalness in women that must be checked and reigned in all times. That women who failed to keep their hereditary flaws of biology under check were prone to becoming something akin to a monster and thus capable of injecting harm beyond rationality. But then Braddon was subscribing to any notion that would make her novel a friendly read for all classes. In her letter to Edward Bulwer-Lytton, Braddon once writes how she is struggling to please two masters. 'I want to serve two masters', she admitted to Bulwer in 1863, 'I want to be artistic & to please you. I want to be sensational, & to please Mudie's subscribers' (Mangham 86). Her passages that allude to the possibility of secret insanity verging on monstrosity then seems to be in tow with her struggle to make her piece both sensational in the common understanding of the term and artistic in the literary understanding at the same time. Here's a passage from the novel depicting and thereby reinforcing female carnality, rage and insanity as one example where the author chooses to ride the wave of popular assumptions about female biology and female sexuality and reworking them into a highly sensationalized imagery for her novel.

The red blood flashed up into my lady's face with as sudden and transient a blaze as the flickering flame of a fire, and died as suddenly away, leaving her more pale than winter snow. [...] With every pulse slackening, with every drop of blood congealing in her veins, [...] the terrible process [...] was [...] transform[ing] her from a woman into a statue. [...] An unnatural crimson spot burned in the centre of each rounded cheek, and an unnatural lustre gleamed in her great blue eyes. She spoke with an unnatural clearness and an unnatural rapidity. She had altogether the appearance and manner of a person who has yielded to the dominant influence of some overpowering excitement (Braddon 482).

But, as Mangham puts it, on one hand she leaves the notions about the intrinsic link between insanity, unnaturalness, and female biology unchallenged, then she also makes a point of exposing the relationship between this link and the commercial exploits of men. What she appears to be advocating is the notion that fortunes built upon such distorted foundations are “doomed to be as pathological as the women they exploit” (92) and Mangham even goes so far as to state that this was the theme she was more or less preoccupied with before delivering her bestseller.

The dilapidated inn of whose master Luke Marks becomes through the extortion of Lady Audley appears run-down and doomed for destruction. When she describes the establishment, there is an air of dejected misery which cannot go unnoticed past the reader. One can almost predict the disaster that awaits Luke as owner of the unfortunate establishment. Similarly, George Talboys’s fortune, having derived at the expense of abandoning his wife does not come to the kind of avail the adventurer was hoping for. The fortune that he hoped would help him begin a fresh, financially stable lifestyle with Lady Audley is only useful in aiding his departure from England forever. Just as how the passions of women are not validated unless endorsed by the male judgement, similarly, the financial endeavours of men do not amount to much when not endorsed by the women around them or were the result of exploiting women. This, in a way, evokes the complementarity of cultures that is the essence of a balanced and mutual coexistence between males and females.

This is one reason why Robert suffers a much different fate from his counterparts in the novel. In a way Robert’s pursuit of the truth behind George’s murder and lady Audley’s secret serves as another instance of male exploits at the expense of women. This is not because Robert wishes to avenge a wrongful death per say. As George’s friend he possesses every right to do so but there are other factors motivating him in this pursuit. Clara Talboys is one of them. The moment he is too afraid to come at the truth and tries to vaguely discard responsibility by calling his obsession with Lady Audley’s secret a fragment of his monomania, he is beckoned into unraveling the mystery in a sanctimonious vow of vengeance extorted by Clara Talboys.

Moreover, it’s as much his successful unraveling of Lady Audley’s secret as it’s Clara noble influence that catapults his career as a barrister. In fact, it was not until Robert had begun to take an uncanny interest in the mystery of his friend’s

disappearance and Lady Audley's questionable ways, that he ever seriously began pursuing a career in crime investigation. What's interesting is that any scruples that Robert had over inadvertently bringing down the family reputation are quelled when Clara enters the picture.

Robert Audley had been torn between his allegiance to the good name of the Audley establishment and his loyalty to his dear friend George Talboys. At some point, Robert is overwhelmed by the idea of stripping the case of his friend's disappearance down to its barest bones. In reality he suspects the truth and realizes the shame, bewilderment and heartache it will cause to the occupants of the Audley estate. As he begins to weigh the pros and cons of seeing the case to its conclusion, Robert weighs in favour of letting the mystery be. The hints of male inaptitude become transparent when he begins second guessing himself accusing his own lack of judgment and "monomania" to be responsible for horrific parallels he continues to draw between Lady Audley's maneuvers. A number of times he even appears thwarted by Lady Audley's wits. At one time, as he spots her taking a coach in a questionable setting, he feels considerably overwhelmed by what cunning she could be brewing with her mysterious visits. Between his admiration for Lady Audley's beauty and his worries for the secrets she is withholding, Robert Audley betrays the sentiment of self-doubt and low self-confidence. There's also the danger of defamation that his pursuits may bring on his own extended family and relations. All of these fears however get assuaged as soon as Clara walks onto the scene. Robert realizes his newfound admiration of Clara is stronger than both his self-doubt and the fear lurking in his self-conscious. Hers becomes the hand that, according to him, had been beckoning him to unravel the mystery all along. Here we see Clara playing a role akin to the one played by Margaret Hale in *North and South* and the titular character Jane Eyre. Just as how Margaret reforms Mr. Thornton of his uncompassionate and prudish ways and Jane Eyre guides Mr. Rochester to find a purpose and new way of life, similarly, Clara Talboys assumes the role of the guide, the caretaker, and the reformer.

Under Clara's positive influence, Mr. Robert Audley restructures his life around newer, more noble purpose. His investigative exploits of pinning down Lady Audley's sexual and moral transgressions, which he had almost shunned halfway owing to his self-doubt and innate fears, are perhaps the only male exploits in the

novel that do not perish away without bearing fruition. Not only does Robert Audley successfully unravels the mysteries of Lady Audley's ignoble past, he is also able to found a thriving and respectable career for himself on account of this exploit of his that started as an amateur's persistent curiosity.

There is almost a set pattern with the male exploits and the pathological failures these are accompanied with. Both Luke Marks and George Talboys meet unprecedented disasters of great proportion because they were too androcentric both in their aims and goals as well as the mechanisms to achieve them. In a way both disregarded how their financial exploits would affect the women around them. Luke's treatment of Phoebe fails to internalize in her the obligatory sense of wifhood needed for the machinery of family to operate glitch-free. Luke's coarse dismissal of Phoebe's happiness or concerns remain responsible for the fact that her sympathies always lay with her mistress instead of her husband. And however unknowingly, Phoebe has had a hand to play in bringing ruin upon their house in the climactic arson scene of the novel. In the same way, George Talboys insistence on finding a way to come into fortune no matter how great the cost completely disregarded the burdens of misery it would cast on the family he was leaving behind. When the wife comes into her own, the fabric of the family falls apart.

In contrast, the endorsement of Robert's exploits by Clara makes them happily commensurate. And it is in this endorsement that we see a complementarity of the male and female cultures. At least in the Victorian society, where the male culture predicated itself on an honest employment of one's faculties in the public domain, while the female culture comprised of sustaining the foundations of the private sphere providing the men a safe haven to fall back on, the rise of the happy bourgeois family was heavily indebted to a mutual co-existence of men and women participating in their separate spheres with an understanding that these were bound to overlap more often than not, proving that one was not a sub-culture embedded within another but remained a distinct field of operation in itself. The Sensation novels, such as Braddon's *Lady Audley's Secret* did go above and beyond in driving home the idea of the chaos that ensues when both men and women choose to usurp, exploit, and undermine the fundamental tenets of one another's fields of operations with an orthodox, androcentric dismissal of the complementarity of these fields.

CONCLUSION

The study examined three novels, *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Bronte, *North and South* by Elizabeth Gaskell, and *Lady Audley's Secret* by Mary Elizabeth Braddon in the light of Showalter's gynocritical theory to find answers to the intrinsic questions related to the depiction of women and women's culture in three distinctive subgenres, namely, the bildungsroman, the industrial novel, and the sensation novel. Related to the first question of women's culture was the need to analyze how the three different genres allowed the afore-mentioned women writers to negotiate the roles of women and promote a changing attitude towards their freedom. Examining the three novels in the light of the gynocritical analysis has uncovered some recurring patterns in writings by women that seemed inextricably linked to both the representation of women as well as a movement for their greater autonomy. The study shed light on the accepted Victorian norms and its contrasts to the female culture; it scrutinized the expected beliefs around female activities, the public and the private spheres and females' role in the Victorian family and public setup.

Since the questions that the study concerned itself with pertained to women's culture, roles and expectations, Showalter's theory of gynocriticism was employed to determine the specific attributes and dynamics of women's culture and women's writing. Showalter had professed in her theory centered on women's culture and women's writings in her essay "Towards a Feminist Poetics", as well as other works, that there was a need to incorporate within writing representations of women's language, women's body and women's psyche. The study was predicated on Showalter's premise that the Jacksonian and Elizabethan models of separate cultures of men and women admitted of no overlap between the two and women's culture was seen as subordinate. According to Showalter, this was obviously not true and the shift happened when cultural critics and anthropologists like the Ardeners and Gerda Lerner began to argue for both the documentation as well as the admission of a female culture that is not subordinate to the general culture but overlaps it and whenever the subordination appears to encroach on women's autonomy, the latter devises new models and ways of integration and expressions.

The study discussed how the three novels portrayed this integration of the female culture into the general Victorian culture and how women negotiated and

adapted to these social restrictions in a way that was favourable to them and the general Victorian society.

To identify these patterns the study had to review how “women's beliefs find expression through ritual and art, expressions which can be deciphered by the ethnographer, either female or male, who is willing to make the effort to perceive beyond the screens of the dominant structure”(Showalter 200). In other words, the study was cognizant of the prevalence of a muted group and by corollary a muted discourse that could be found by reading between the lines. This was the discourse that allowed women to express themselves in socially approved mannerisms and structures. The focus of the study then was on the unveiling of the muted discourse, and revealing the underlying messages that were part of the writers as well as the women's subconscious, or suppressed consciousness during those times. The study landed some interesting findings and recurrent patterns through the application of the theory on the three novels *North and South* by Elizabeth Gaskell, *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Bronte and the *Sensational Novel* by Mary Elizabeth Braddon. Each of the three novels belonged to a separate genre and were marked by their distinctive traits.

Findings from the analysis of north and south

Unravelling the muted discourse within the novel *North and South* by Gaskell brought forth newer revelations of the mental toll that the expectation of being the “angel” in the house took upon women. By creating the character of Margaret Hale as a quintessentially dedicated woman of domestic affairs, Gaskell managed to keep much of the critique against her not-so-conventional actions at bay. In fact, her most public actions were also described as acts of instituting the domesticities of the female culture in the public sphere by researchers like Whitney Womack, such as the public intervention during the riot and protection of Mr. Thornton against the mob, thereby mitigating the possibility of disapproval from the genteel circles. Within the domestic boundaries too, Margaret exhibited qualities of self-sacrifice and self-denial. She took on the role of the protectress and supervisor by taking over the affairs of relocation and house management, shielding her parents from the additional freight of social obligations when they were troubled by affairs of their own. Margaret remains a bulwark for the family when her deported brother risks his life by coming back to England. Gaskell's portrayal of Margaret is both in tow with

the expected Victorian attitudes, as well as brimming with an underlying message of its own. This way *North and South* becomes one of the best examples of literary documentations of women's culture working in complementarity with that of their male counterparts.

The industrial novel and documentation of women's culture

With regards to the question of how the genre helped in both representing as well as advocating the ways in which women negotiated through the inhibitions and served the society, the research explored the societal elements that germinated the Victorian industrial era.

It was determined how one of the more unprecedented effects of the rise of the industrial age was a greater autonomy for female workers. As in the words of Simmon Richards, working class women were afforded more social freedom and financial independence than their upper-class counterparts (414). This resulted in the normalization of certain attitudes which most definitely helped in advocating greater social and political freedom for all women. The representation of the Higgins family was a simulacrum of what lives for the under-privileged looked like during the Victorian times. But this plight of the working class people was documented through the eyes of Bessy Higgins and Margaret Hale who, through their own communal sisterhood perpetuated the cause of the entire working class. The analysis had established how the documentation of females had been marginalized, underrepresented or simply ignored for the longest time. Gaskell, through her novel, casted the much needed light on the role of women during the Industrial Age, the effects of industrialism on women of different social classes, and the ways the attitudes and beliefs regarding women began to undergo a shift.

The industrial novel, therefore allowed room for certain experimentation with female participation in the public field that novels from other genres would have struggled to capture. The analysis established how the friendship between Bessy Higgins of the working class from the North and Margaret Hale, the genteel middle-class lady of the South, paved way for a deeper connection and understanding between the master and workers for at least a single industrial setup. The novel *North and South* became a metaphorical middle ground where the feminized South with its emphasis on the values of gentility, decorum, and propriety tasseled with the

masculinized values of self-fulfillment, individualism, and social competition promoted in the North. In another way, the South embodied the values sympathetic to the female culture while the North's was predominantly a masculine one but it was the overlap between the two that germinated the blissful happenstance of social equality and rectitude of long-prevailing problems of class and gender.

The analysis made clear how Gaskell's writing advocated a need for greater women's participation in the public sphere, since the female culture, with its sisterly communality of values, institutions, relationships and methods of communications, served greater good for the general Victorian culture. It was through one such sisterly relationship between Bessy Higgins and Margaret Hale that the questions of class and gender became more fluid. As the analysis began to draw certain parallels between male and female cultures, it was found how women negotiated questions of class somewhat differently than men, and the difference, however subtle was one that resolves the novel's main conflict.

One of these differences had to do with the relationships that men and women of the upper and middle class households fostered with the working classes. Being an intricate part of the public sphere, both Mr. Thornton and Margaret's father Mr. Hale found themselves forging relationships predicated on either service or obligations with the people of the working order. There appeared an unsurmountable divide when upper and middle class men tried to associate with men from the working class. The stringent divide and lack of compassionate intimacy was obvious between Mr. Thornton and his relationships with his employees whom he referred to as "hands" (Gaskell 55) but it was also prevalent when the philanthropic Mr. Hale tried reaching out to the Higgins. According to the narrative of *North and South*, a certain sense of obligation and duty kept even Mr. Hale from thoroughly immersing himself in the lives and ways of people like the Higginses who embodied the values and attitudes of the lower class. This invisible divide appeared to have been the roots cause of much that was warped between the workers and the masters.

On the other hand, the women from the middle class appeared to have completely different dynamics when it came to forging relationship with their less privileged counterparts. The analysis established how mistresses were less stringent about the class difference between themselves and their female servants and were more involved with their subordinates than their male counterparts. Men, it was easy

to assume from the actions unfolding in the novel, could never admit the kind of intimate connections with their subordinates as the women were wont to do. Mistresses were more likely to confide, trust, and share time and space with their female servants. The novel depicts it to the point where the housemaid Dixon is let in on secrets by Mrs. Hale even before Margaret is and the protagonist has to fight her way against the female servant to claim her spot as the closest associate to her mother. It seemed as though a greater indulgence of the female servants by their mistresses was a part of the women's culture during the Victorian times and might have been rooted in both the mistresses as well as their servants' dependence on the male provider. The reason why this became an important finding was because it is the same tenet of greater indulgence that results in the resolution of the simmering conflict between the masters and working class in the novel.

When Margaret befriends Bessy Higgins, there's no reservations stemming from formalities of obligations and decorum. In a way a dependent herself, Margaret easily understood and sympathized with the plight, toil and troubles of Bessy Higgins. She could not only sympathize but also identify with Bessy's dual difficulty of supplementing the family income as well as looking after the domestic affair. Working long hours in the factory and poor conditions along with the mounting domestic troubles ended up afflicting her with an incurable lung disease. Both Margaret as well as her mother exhibited similar traits of debilitating health due to the unavailability of any emotional social outlet for the piling anxieties. Margaret's close affinity with Bessy however, became an important plot device because it is through these periodic meetings of Margaret and Bessy that the former learned about the true nature of duress that the working order was under. One reason why this revelation was not possible, or at the very least, difficult to attain for Margaret's male counterpart was because of the inability of the former to look past the role of the "master" or the "employer" and bring themselves on the same footing as their workers. The intimacy of Margaret and Bessy's relationship worked wonders in surfacing the intensity of the workers' situation and as soon as Margaret learned of these she resolved to do whatever it takes to improve the situation between the workers and Mr. Thornton the factory owner. This resulted not only in the blissful happenstance of improved conditions for the workers towards the end of the novel but also in the education of the Victorian audience simultaneously.

The readers learn to grow with Margaret, who undergoes an impressive transition from reserving prejudice against the hardcore social values of the self-made middle class families to valuing the ability of paving one's own fate of greater autonomy, financial independence, and self-service through hard work and use of intelligence. The analysis therefore established how, in promoting the cause of the working order through a female agency, Gaskell simultaneously promoted the cause of greater female participation in the public sphere. Since the novel *North and South* belonged to the industrial era, Margaret's private and public triumph became a triumph of women's culture and roles in both of these spheres simultaneously.

Findings from the analysis of jane eyre

Charlotte Brontë's classic novel *Jane Eyre* comprised the second novel that underwent a gynocritical scrutiny in this study. *Jane Eyre* has long been deemed as a quintessential female bildungsroman by writers such as Sarah Stickney Ellis and the study revealed how the genre once again served the cause of heightened female activity in the public sphere in its own ways.

The study analyzed how the primary tenets of the bildungsroman worked wonderfully in normalizing certain events and plot developments that might have been pronounced as too unrealistic had they been part of an entirely different setup altogether. But the primary characteristic of self-help and self-education that is the part and parcel of a bildungsroman plot, as explained by the work of Salmon Richard, helped the study to determine both the possibility of growth for women, as well as the ways in which they negotiated the social, cultural and economic inhibitions thrown in the way of a woman who did not have family or finances to fall back on.

The bildungsroman novel and the female culture

The gynocritical analysis of Brontë's *Jane Eyre* lead to some interesting findings that countered propositions by writers like Annis Pratt who claimed that the female bildungsroman, instead of giving women models of growing up, gave them models of "growing down" (Pratt 39). One reason for the denial of such a charge is that Jane's progress in the novel is far from a debilitating one. A more accurate proposition would be that the genre highlighted vehemently the limited prospects of

self-help for women than men in the Victorian society. At the same time, a woman's journey of self-help does not necessarily have to be one without the influence and interventions of the men around her. Once again, the question arises of the complementarity of culture as in the case of the male bildungsroman, and it was found out how women's culture was neither separate nor subordinate to the men's but one that overlapped worked the general culture and worked best alongside it.

One of the recurring patterns found in *Jane Eyre* early on in the analysis was the prevalence of the sisterly communion such as the one forged by Margaret and Bessy Higgins, and which was the source of the character development that could be traced in the protagonist. In this case, the communion was forged between Jane, her best friend at the Lowood establishment Helen Burns and her teacher Miss Temple. This all-female, sisterly communion was essential because it served to reevaluate and revise the embedded expectations of women in the general Victorian culture. Jane's friend Helen who suffered her humiliation silently at the hands of what the researcher Sarah Maeir described as the "complicity of women" (321), obviously took the toll of it all as her physical health worsens. On the other hand, the ingenious and intelligent conversations between Ms. Temple and the girls symbolized the potential among women to learn and aspire to know more, put their knowledge to use, and participate in the general sphere. The most prominent contribution that the bildungsroman novel like *Jane Eyre* made to women's plight was reinforcing how women's aspirations and culture overlap with those of the men and therefore need to work alongside rather than being subjugated.

The study determined how the genre of female bildungsroman made it easier for women to reclaim suffering and transform "the duty of silent suffering into the site of pleasure and passionate investment" (London 198). Eventually, Jane's sufferings, toils and tribulations elevated her into a more reformed and self-substantiated being that was the perfect match for the temperamental and adventurous Mr. Rochester. It was revealed how the genre of the novel, with its intrinsic focus on the importance of self-help and self-culture, allowed Jane to transcend the shortcoming of social status, family wealth, repute and prevail upon her much more socially and physically formidable rivals such as Ms. Ingram and Ms. Oliver. Both *North and South* by Gaskell and *Jane Eyre* by Bronte undermined the excessive emphasis placed on physical beauty for women by the Victorian society. In

carving their heroines out of planer features, the focus inadvertently shifted to their mental aptitude and abilities. This was more vehemently the case with Bronte's novel where Jane was devoid of both the physical as well as social attractions. However, thanks to the tenets of the genre, physical and social attributes were not exhibited as the determiners of characters, rather, one's character determined the latter. This gave Bronte the room to experiment with the other qualifications needed in a woman, elevating Jane Eyre into a woman of ambition, character, and self-service thereby revolutionizing the idea of female aptitude. Like Margaret, Bronte's Jane may be a silent sufferer for some time but after she learned to invest her energies into these suffering and train herself to turn her suffering into moments of opportunities, she was met with new and better propositions.

The analysis depicted how Jane reclaimed her suffering transforming them into sites of pleasure. Jane did this first with her unwilling departure to the miserably regulated establishment of Lowood. Here she became more determined than ever to go the route of self-help and self-culture and be the most accomplished teacher she could be. With Ms. Temple's removal she once again found herself on the road, this time finding a flame that would ignite new passions and ambitions in her. When she found herself unable to fulfill these on account of unsavory circumstances, Jane learned to overcome temptations and set about looking for a new vocation for herself, thereby finding herself a new family altogether and only came back to Mr. Rochester when both Jane and Rochester had gone through the full cycle of self-help and character development. Towards the end of the novel, Jane Eyre's journey of self-help and self-culture reached a newer level of elevation where she could choose to decipher her religious vocations and injunctions without the intervention of male, in her case, St. John. By refusing to assimilate her identity as a missionary's wife for a long and arduous journey of self-denial and religious commitment, and choosing instead to devote her energies to the domestic affairs that calmed her anxieties and gave her a sense of belonging, Jane Eyre once again shed light on how women's culture was not a subordinated culture to be erased or appropriated by the male or general culture but a complimentary one. One did not have to necessarily assimilate into another. As the analysis depicted, both St. John and Mr. Rochester had to learn to continue on the path of life without necessarily submitting Jane to their whims.

Needless to say, *Jane Eyre*, propounded some revolutionary ideas of women's autonomy, women's culture, and their role in the general Victorian culture and this the novel achieve through the aid of its genre that sublimated the concepts of self-help and self-culture above every other Victorian attribute for women.

Findings from the analysis of lady audley's secret

Mary Elizabeth Braddon's novel *Lady Audley's Secret* was the final novel given to study. The novel belonged to the genre of sensational fiction that predicated itself on heightened suspense, exaggerated plots and melodrama intended to appeal to the emotions. Just like the two novels discussed earlier, Braddon's *Lady Audley's Secret* served a number of purposes under the garb of its plot conventions.

The study revealed how, by choosing to engage in the sensational genre, Mary Braddon was already treading a precarious course of public disapproval. Women's involvement with sensational themes appeared indecent to the Victorian public and Braddon often talked about trying to please the public and the connoisseur of art at the same time. While this was not easy to achieve, the study revealed how the novel is riled with the prevalence of a muted discourse that appears to counter most of the surface arguments made in novel.

Women's culture and the sensation novel

Like Gaskell's *North and South* and Bronte's *Jane Eyre*, Braddon's *Lady Audley's Secret* also has the plight of women and a sisterly communion comprising exclusively of females as its key variable for scrutiny. By focusing on the desires, roles and expectations of women, the novel shed light on women's culture in the Victorian times, the social restrictions facing them, and the limited means to overcome this. Out of the three genres, perhaps the sensational was the most effective in dispelling some of the long-standing expectations of women due to the fact that these exaggerated plot were often claimed to have been steeped into reality and there came about the new concern of the genre of sensationalism mixing up gothic elements with realism to create some kind of a distorted journalistic work as depicted by Deborah Wynne in her works. Nevertheless, the genre allowed Braddon and other writers of the Victorian times to reevaluate some of their common

assumptions about the roles of women as well as the implications of confining women to a hyper-scrutinized set of values.

The analysis revealed how the question of class and economy was as crucial to women as the questions of ethics and morality. The age during which the novel was written was the age that fervently supported the idea of female mental debility owing to their biological functions. Biological female functions such as birthing, menstruation and menopause became responsible for most mental illnesses identified in women as explained by researchers such as Mulock Craik and Showalter. Most importantly and unfortunately for women, immorality and mental perversion came to be conflated so that morally corrupt women were seen as just a different kind of mad women.

The study showed how Braddon's *Lady Audley's Secret* played on the same beliefs about women in the Victorian age drawing the readers towards its content and drove massive success. At the same time however, using the themes of female madness and perversion in her novel, Braddon brought to light the fundamental flaw in the Victorian understanding of women and women's culture. The analysis made it obvious how Lady Audley's perversion was a direct result of the conflicts of class and her precarious finances than any latent germs of madness. Any reader following the novel closely will not fail to identify the incredible wit and cunning possessed by Lady Audley, signs that deny the possibility of her crimes being the exclusive result of her madness. Towards the end of the novel, the doctor's refusal to make admission of Lady Audley's madness and then a vague subscription to this proposal at Mr. Richard Audley's insistence showed as much. Lady Audley's real secret was that she was not really insane but chose to present herself as such to escape a more detrimental fate. So while Braddon never pronounced it in obvious terms, the readers must come to the understanding that if Lady Audley was not insane, there must be a reevaluation of what kind of palpable effects women's passions and ambitions may result in a society where being too passionate was seen as a sign of latent madness in itself.

The novel therefore made a case of how questions of class and social status were as intrinsic to women as they were to their male counterpart, and women, owing to the social inhibitions, devised their own ways to achieve their aims. Since the sensational genre valued the display of emotion, most of the women populating

the novel were passionate with a mind of their own. The analysis revealed how, through characters such as Alicia Audley, Lady Audley, and Clara Talboys, Braddon made transparent the hypocrisy of the general Victorian culture to label women's passions as noble or eccentric based on whether they aligned with the passions of their male counterparts. This was the reasons why Clara Talboys's desire for murder and revenge of her assumedly dead brother resulted in her appearing noble and beautiful but a similar passion was described as insane, unnatural and ignoble in Lady Audley. Later, the analysis also explored the presentation of the bridled female sexuality and the exploits of men in the novel. For all those commercial exploits that took place at the expense of women, there seemed to be a social cul-de-sac. On the other hand, the only exploits to meet success were the ones that were endorsed by women, thereby advocating the need for women and men to work in a form of a complementarity instead of a competition where one undermines the desires, ambitions and expectations of the other.

It is safe to conclude that the women writers of the Victorian age were writing in dual tones. The overt tone was the one in sync with that of the general Victorian culture where women best fit the domestic roles, served as the angel in the house, and did not compete against men for power or autonomy in the public domain. While the covert or the muted tone was that which perpetuated contrasting ideas of greater female autonomy and women's ways of coping with economic and social oppression by making women's collective culture the focal point of their writing. By employing various genres, these writers were able to advocate women's liberation in various fields of economy, biology, religion etc. For example, in *Jane Eyre* Helen Burns' Christ-like perseverance and mute acceptance of her plight might be in sync with the dominant narrative of female sacrifice but her ostensibly deteriorating health is a representation of the havoc that suffering in silence wreaks upon the female sect. Similarly, Jane finding newfound love in the domestic affairs of her new home at Moor House is in tow with the concept of the private sphere as exclusively a feminine place, but it also imparts her with the power to boldly declare her new vocation and refuse St. John's proposal of following him as his wife. Jane's domestic duties then become her gateway to an unprecedented level of freedom bringing her greater autonomy and a different purpose. In this way, the differing subgenres helped the writers to explore the contrasting natures of problems of women and the

shortcoming of confining women's problems and roles to the domestic sphere. Most importantly, by focusing on women's culture and psychology, these writings revealed how the culture of females intrinsically overlapped with the general Victorian culture and that the overlap often resulted in positive and productive consequence for the general culture.

The gynocritical analyses of the three novels revealed how, regardless of the distinctions made and separations promoted made between the domestic and public sphere, both were essentially interlinked making it difficult to operate successfully in one when the other remained dysfunctional. Through these novels, women were represented as more assimilated in the public sphere, albeit indirectly, than the Victorian society or the history of women had ever been willing to admit. The first two novels, *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Bronte and *North and South* by Elizabeth Gaskell both explored the freedom granted to women in the changing Victorian times. Margaret's public exploits in *North and South* were made digestible due to the particular genre of the novel that was made compatible with the changing attitude towards women in the public sphere. The novel established how industrialism, through its emphasis on greater female mobility in the factories and advocacy for human rights became a precedent of change for the plight of women. Similarly, It was established how the bildungsroman, with its intrinsic focus on the concepts of self-help and self-culture, allowed Charlotte to experiment with Jane's public exploits. Jane Eyre was surely a progressive character for her time, but any form of incredulity or disbelief over Jane's insistence on her own freedom and her prevalence over more intimidating rivals by her suitors was suspended in the wake of the novel's genre that focused on qualities of self-help and grooming that was a tangent to the prevalent attitudes towards women at the time. The sensation novel, *Lady Audley's Secret*, also explored the possibility of co-dependence between both the public and the private sphere, or the male and the female culture, but where it stands unique is that it did so through the caricature of the hollow English gentility which placed disproportionate premium on outward beauty and overt accomplishments. By highlighting the horror that lay beneath Lucy Audley's beautiful and extremely feminized outer façade, and drawing such passionate and strong women characters as Alicia Audley and Clara Talboys, Braddon, it did much to disperse the unquestioning association of outer female meekness with moral goodness. The three novels from

the three different genres then highlight the change that began to take place during the first half of the nineteenth century in the attitudes towards women and may serve as a backdrop to modern discussions on the dynamics between the male and female cultures as they operate in the 21st century.



WORKS CITED

- Abel, Elizabeth, Marianne Hirsch, and Elizabeth Langland. "Introduction. The Voyage In: Fictions of Female Development." Ed. Elizabeth Abel, Marianne Hirsch and Elizabeth Langland. Hanover, NH: UP of New England for Dartmouth College (1983).
- Abrams, Lynn. "Ideals of womanhood in Victorian Britain." BBC History 9 (2001): 1-9.
- Abrams, Meyer Howard, and Geoffrey Harpham. *A glossary of literary terms*. Cengage Learning, USA, 2011.
- Arata, Stephen, et al., eds. *A companion to the English novel*. John Wiley & Sons, 2015.
- Ardener, Edwin. "Belief and the problem of women and the 'problem' revisited." *Feminist anthropology: A reader*, Oxford: Blackwell (2006): 31-65.
- Ardis, Ann. "Organizing women: New Woman writers, New Woman readers, and suffrage feminism." *Cambridge Studies in Nineteenth Century Literature and Culture* 21, Cambridge University Press, (1999): 189-203.
- Armstrong, Nancy. "The rise of feminine authority in the novel." *Novel: a forum on fiction*. Vol. 15. No. 2. Duke University Press, 1982.
- Auerbach, Nina. "Why Communities of Women Aren't Enough." *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature*, University of Tulsa, 3.1/2 (1984): 153-157.
- Badinjki, Tahir. "The Sensation Mania and the Victorian Psychological Underworld," *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 3(2), 2013, pp. 1-4.
- Bairoch, G., et al. *La population active et sa structure.-The working population and its structure*; sous la direction de P. Bairoch; avec la participation de G. Lefevre, G. Thorn, et G. Vandenabeele. Université Libre de Bruxelles, 1968.
- Bakhtin, Mikhail M. "The Bildungsroman and its Significance in the History of Realism." *Speech genres and other late essays*, Parasitic Ventures Press, 10 (1986): 21.

- Balkaya, M., 2015. *The Industrial Novels: Shirley, Hard Times, North And South*. [online] Academia.edu. Available at: https://www.academia.edu/41219574/The_Industrial_Novels_Shirley_Hard_Times_North_and_South
- Barry, Peter. *Beginning theory: An introduction to literary and cultural theory*. Manchester university press, 2017.
- Baruch, Elaine Hoffman. "The Feminine Bildungsroman": Education through Marriage." *The Massachusetts Review* 22.2 (1981): 335-357.
- Baruch, Elaine, Elaine Hoffman Baruch, and Lucienne J. Serrano. *Women analyze women: in France, England, and the United States*. NYU Press, 1991.
- Benzoukh, Halima. *The Victorian Novel: A Sociolinguistic Study Charles Dickens's Novel Hard Times as a Case-Study*. 22 January 2012, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/259184208_The_Victorian_Novel_A_Sociolinguistic_Study_Charles_Dickens's_Novel_Hard_Times_as_a_Case-Study. Accessed [31 Oct. 2019].
- Berg, Maxine. "Women's property and the industrial revolution." *The journal of interdisciplinary history* 24.2 (1993): 233-250.
- Berg, Maxine. *What difference did women's work make to the industrial revolution?*. No. 2068-2018-802. 1991.
- Boes, Tobias. "Modernist studies and the Bildungsroman: A historical survey of critical trends." *Literature Compass* 3.2 (2006): 230-243.
- Bouchier, David. *The feminist challenge: The movement for women's liberation in Britain and the USA*. Macmillan International Higher Education, 1983.
- Braddon, Mary Elizabeth. *Lady Audley's secret*. Broadview Press, 2003.
- Brändström, Camilla. "Gender and Genre": A Feminist Exploration of the Bildungsroman in *A Portrait of the Artist As a Young Man* and *Martha Quest*, Hogskolan i Gävle, University of Gävle (2009).
- Brantlinger, Patrick. "Victorians and Africans: The Genealogy of the Myth of the Dark Continent." *Critical Inquiry*, Vol. 12, No. 1, University of Chicago Press (Autumn 1985): 166–203

- Brennen, Bonnie S. *Qualitative research methods for media studies*. Routledge, 2012.
- Broadhurst, Thomas. *Advice to Young Ladies on the Improvement of the Mind and the Conduct of Life*. Longman & Company, 1810.
- Brown, Julia Prewitt. "The moral scope of the English Bildungsroman." *The Oxford Handbook of the Victorian Novel*, Oxford University Press, 2013.
- Browne, William Alexander Francis. *What asylums were, are, and ought to be: Being the substance of five lectures delivered before the managers of the Montrose Royal Lunatic Asylum*. Edinburgh, 1837.
- Buchanan, Robert. "Society's looking-glass'." *Temple Bar* 6 (1862): 129-37.
- Burnett, John. *The annals of labour: autobiographies of British working-class people, 1820-1920*. Indiana University Press, 1974.
- Burnette, Joyce. *Gender, work and wages in industrial revolution Britain*. Cambridge University Press, 2008.
- Burrows, George Man. *Commentaries on the causes, forms, symptoms, and treatment, moral and medical, of insanity*. T. and G. Underwood, 1828.
- Burstein, Miriam Elizabeth. "'Not the Superiority of Belief, but Superiority of True Devotion.'" *Silent Voices: Forgotten Novels by Victorian Women Writers* 200, Praeger Publishers, (2003): 1.
- Carney, Bethan. *Social-problem Novel*. Oxford University Press, 2015.
- Çelik, Seda Coşar. *Feminist Ambivalence in Mary Elizabeth Braddon's Lady Audley's Secret*. HUMANITAS-Uluslararası Sosyal Bilimler Dergisi 6.12, Turkey (2018): 215-234.
- Chamberlain, Erin. *Women in Service: Private Lives and Labour in Mary Howitt's Work and Wages: 1840s and 1850s*. (2018). 10.1007/978-3-319-78226-3_4.
- Childers, Joseph W. "Industrial culture and the Victorian novel". *A Companion to the Victorian Novel*, Cambridge University Press (2002). 77-96.
- Cook, Sylvia J. *Working women, literary ladies: The industrial revolution and female aspiration*. Oxford University Press, 2008.
- Craik, Dinah Mulock. *On Sisterhoods*. Routledge, 2019.

- Cunningham, Gail. *The new woman and the Victorian novel*. Macmillan International Higher Education, 1978.
- Dahiya, Anuj. "Feminist Criticism in Wilderness." UGC NET English. <http://ugcenglish.com/literary-theory/feminist-criticism-in-wilderness-elaine-showalter/895/>.
- Dallas, Eneas Sweetland. "Lady Audley's Secret." *The Times* 18 (1862).
- David, Deirdre, ed. *The Cambridge companion to the Victorian novel*. Cambridge University Press, 2012.
- Davidoff, Leonore, and Catherine Hall. *Family fortunes: Men and women of the English middle class 1780–1850*. Routledge, 2013.
- Davis, Rebecca., 1990. *Margret Howth. A Story of To-Day*. New York: Feminist Press.
- Dickens, Charles. *Bleak House*, New York: Bantam, 1985
- Dolin, Tim. *Mistress of the House: Women of property in the Victorian novel*. Routledge, 2016.
- Donovan, Josephine C., ed. *Feminist literary criticism: explorations in theory*. University Press of Kentucky, 2015.
- Donovan, Josephine. "Women and the Rise of the Novel: A Feminist-Marxist Theory." *Signs*, vol. 16, no. 3, 1991, pp. 441–462. JSTOR, www.jstor.org/stable/3174584. Accessed 12 Nov. 2020.
- Dublin, Thomas. *Transforming women's work: New England lives in the industrial revolution*. Cornell University Press, 1995.
- Elliott, G. H. "Receipt for a Sensational Novel." *The Powder magazine* (1869): 267-270.
- Ellis, Lorna. *Appearing to Diminish: Female Development and the British Bildungsroman, 1750 1850*. Lewisburg: Bucknell UP, 1999.
- Ellis, Mrs. *The Women of England, Their Social Duties, and Domestic Habits*. Prabhat Prakashan, The Caxton Press, 1841.
- Ellis, Sarah Stickney. *The Daughters of England: their position in society, character and responsibilities*. Appleton, 1842.

- Ellis, Sarah Stickney. *The women of England*. Vol. 1. HG Langley, 1845.
- Ellis, Sarah Stickney. *The wives of England: Their relative duties, domestic influence, and social obligations*. Appleton, 1843.
- Fantina, Richard. "Sensation Fiction and the Emergence of the Victorian Literary Field." *Victorian Sensational Fiction*. Palgrave Macmillan, New York, 2010. 11-38.
- Fisk, Nicole P. "Lady Audley as sacrifice: curing female disadvantage in Lady Audley's Secret." *Victorian Newsletter* 105 (2004): 24-28.
- Fonseca, V., et al. "Novel influenza A (H1N1) virus infections in three pregnant women-United States, April-May 2009." *Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report* 58.18 (2009): 497-500.
- Fraiman, Susan. *Unbecoming women: British women writers and the novel of development*. Columbia University Press, 1993.
- Frye, Joanne S. *Living stories, telling lives: women and the novel in contemporary experience*. University of Michigan Press, 1986.
- Gail, Stewart. *Victorian England*. Reference Point Press, 2013.
- Gaskell, Elizabeth. 'Libbie Marsh's Three Eras.' 1847. *The Works of Elizabeth Gaskell: Vol.1: Journalism, Early Fiction and Personal Writings*. Ed. Joanne Shattock. London: Pickering & Chatto, 2005.
- Gavin, Adrienne E. "[T] he work of a she-devil': Sensation Fiction, Crime Writing, and Caroline Clive's Paul Ferroll." *British Women's Writing from Brontë to Bloomsbury, Volume 1*. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham, 2018. 211-228.
- Gavin, Adrienne E., and W. Carolyn, eds. *British Women's Writing from Brontë to Bloomsbury, Volume 1: 1840s and 1850s*. Vol. 1. Springer, 2018.
- Gilbert, Pamela K. "Madness and civilization: generic opposition in Mary Elizabeth Braddon's Lady Audley's Secret." *Essays in Literature* 23.2 (1996): 218.
- Gilbert, Sandra M. Gilbert and Gubar's, *The Madwoman in the Attic after Thirty Years*. University of Missouri Press, 2011.
- Gilbert, Sandra M., and Susan Gubar. *The madwoman in the attic: The woman writer and the nineteenth-century literary imagination*. Veritas Paperbacks, 2020.

- Gilmour, Robin. *The Victorian period: the intellectual and cultural context of English literature, 1830-1890*. Routledge, 2014.
- Golban, Petru. *An Attempt to Establish a Bildungsroman Development History*, Humanitas, 5(10), 2017, pp. 1-31.
- Goodman, Charlotte. "The Lost Brother, the Twin: Women Novelists and the Male-Female Double Bildungsroman." *Novel: A Forum on Fiction*. Vol. 17. No. 1. Duke University Press, 1983.
- Graham, Sarah, ed. *A History of the Bildungsroman*. Cambridge University Press, 2019.
- Grandchamp, Stephen. *Accounting for failure: Arrested development and the British Bildungsroman, 1805–1891*. Michigan State University, 2016.
- Green, Laura M. "Bildungsroman." *The Encyclopedia of Victorian Literature* (2015): 1-7.
- Greenblatt, Stephen, ed. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, W. W. Norton & Company, 2011.
- Hadley, Elaine. *Melodramatic Tactics: Theatricalized Dissent in the English Marketplace, 1800-1885*. Stanford University Press, 1995.
- Hamilton, Susan, ed. *Criminals, Idiots, Women, & Minors*. Broadview Press, 2004.
- Hammet, Michael. "Introduction." *Plays by Charles Reade. Edited by Michael Hammet*. London: Cambridge University Press, 1986. 1–37
- Harrison, Antony H. "1851." *A New Companion to Victorian Literature and Culture*, John Wiley & Sons (2014): 19-34.
- Harrison, Kimberly, and Richard Fantina, eds. *Victorian Sensations: Essays on a Scandalous Genre*. Ohio State University Press, 2006.
- Heilbrun, Carolyn G. "A Response to" Writing and Sexual Difference"". *Critical Inquiry* 8.4 (1982): 805-811.
- Hogan, Anne, and Andrew Bradstock, eds. *Women of Faith in Victorian Culture: Reassessing the Angel in the House*. London: Macmillan, 1998.
- Horatio R. Storer, *The Causation, Course, and Treatment of Reflex Insanity in Women* (1871; reprint ed., New York: Arno Press, 1972).

- Howe, Susanne. *Wilhelm Meister and his English kinsmen*. Columbia University Press, 1930.
- Howell, Samantha. "The Evolution of Female Writers: An Exploration of Their Issues and Concerns from the 19th Century to Today." (2014).
- Hughes, Winifred. "The Sensation Novel." *A Companion to the Victorian Novel*, John Wiley & Sons (2002): 260-78.
- Humphries, Jane. "'Lurking in the Wings...': Women in the Historiography of the Industrial Revolution." *Business and Economic History*, Cambridge University. (1991): 32-44.
- Hutchins, B. Leigh, Amy Harrison, and Amy Harrison Spencer. *A history of factory legislation*. No. 10. PS King, 1907.
- Igwenagu, Chinelo. *Fundamentals of research methodology and data collection*. LAP LAMBERT Academic Publishing, 2016.
- Ittmann, Karl. *Work, gender and family in Victorian England*. Springer, 2016.
- James, Henry. "Miss Braddon". Aurora Floyd. Broadview Press, 1998.
- Jameson, Fredric. *The political unconscious: Narrative as a socially symbolic act*. Routledge, 2013.
- Joannou, Maroula. "The Female Bildungsroman in the Twentieth Century." *A History of the Bildungsroman*. Ed. Sarah Graham. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, Cambridge (2019): 200-216.
- Kendrick, Walter. M. "The Sensationalism of The Woman in White." *Nineteenth Century Fiction*, Vol. 32, No. 1 (June 1977): 18–35.
- Kielmann, Karina, Fabian Cataldo, and Janet Seeley. "Introduction to qualitative research methodology: a training manual." United Kingdom: Department for International Development (DfID) (2012).
- King, Jeannette. *The Victorian woman question in contemporary feminist fiction*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.
- King, Jeannette. *The Victorian woman question in contemporary feminist fiction*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2005.

- Kitch, Sally L. "Feminist literary criticism as irony". *Rocky Mountain Review of Language and Literature* 41.1/2 (1987): 7-19.
- Kitchener, William. *The Housekeeper's Oracle*. London: J. Moyes, 1829. Lee, Amice. *Laurels & Rosemary: The Life of William and Mary Howitt*. London: Oxford University Press, 195
- Klein, Herbert G. "Strong women and feeble men: upsetting gender stereotypes in Mary Elizabeth Braddon's *Lady Audley's Secret*." *Atenea*, vol. 28, no. 1, June 2008, pp. 161+. *Gale Academic OneFile*, link.gale.com/apps/doc/A190942227/AONE?u=anon~74f17bf6&sid=googleScholar&xid=99c57ca4. Accessed 23 Sept. 2021.
- Klein, Herbert G. "Strong women and feeble men: upsetting gender stereotypes in Mary Elizabeth Braddon's *Lady Audley's Secret*." *Atenea* 28.1 (2008): 161-175.
- Kovačević, Ivanka, and S. Barbara Kanner. "Blue book into novel: The forgotten industrial fiction of Charlotte Elizabeth Tonna." *Nineteenth-Century Fiction* 25.2 (1970): 152-173.
- Krueger, Christine L. "The Evangelist of Reconciliation: Elizabeth Gaskell." *The Reader's Repentance: Women Preachers, Women Writers, and Nineteenthcentury Social Discourse*. Chicago: U of Chicago (1992): 157-233.
- Kuckartz, Udo. *Qualitative text analysis: A guide to methods, practice and using software*. Sage, 2014.
- Lambert Carolyn. "The Female Voice and Industrial Fiction: Elizabeth Gaskell's *Mary Barton*". In: Gavin A., de la L. Oulton C. (eds) *British Women's Writing from Brontë to Bloomsbury, Volume 1. British Women's Writing from Brontë to Bloomsbury, 2018. 1840-1940, vol 1*. Palgrave Macmillan, Cham. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-319-78226-3_9
- Lambert, Carolyn. "The Meanings of Home in Elizabeth Gaskell's Fiction." Brighton: *Victorian Secrets*, 2013. 122–24.
- Lamonaca, Maria. "Jane's Crown of Thorns: Feminism and Christianity in" *Jane Eyre*." *Studies in the Novel* 34.3 (2002): 245-263.

- Langland, Elizabeth, Elizabeth Abel, and Marianne Hirsch. "The Voyage In: Fictions of Female Development." (1983): 112.
- Langland, Elizabeth. "Enclosure Acts: Framing Women's Bodies in Braddon's *Lady Audley's Secret*." *Beyond Sensation: Mary Elizabeth Braddon in Context* (2000): 3-16.
- Lapp, Anna. *The Victorian Pseudonym and Female Agency*. Diss. The Ohio State University, 2015.
- Lazzaro-Weis, Carol. "The Female Bildungsroman": Calling It into Question." *NWSA Journal* 2.1 (1990): 16-34.
- Lecaros, Cecilia Wadsö. "The Victorian Heroine Goes A-Governessing." *Contributions in Womens Studies* 200 (2003): 27-56.
- LeCompte, Margaret D., and Judith Preissle. "Qualitative research: What it is, what it isn't, and how it's done". *Advances in social science methodology* 3 (1994): 141-163.
- Lenard, Mary. "Deathbeds and Didacticism." *Silent Voices: Forgotten Novels by Victorian Women Writers* 200 (2003): 67.
- Lenner, G., n.d. [online] Garrafeminista.files.wordpress.com. Available at: <https://garrafeminista.files.wordpress.com/2018/04/gerda-lerner-the-creation-of-patriarchy.pdf>
- Lerner, Gerda. "Placing women in history: Definitions and challenges." *Feminist Studies* 3.1/2 (1975): 5-14.
- Lerner, Gerda. *The majority finds its past: Placing women in history*. UNC Press Books, 2005.
- Lewis, Michael D. "Democratic Networks and the Industrial Novel." *Victorian Studies* 55.2 (2013): 243-252.
- London, Bette. "The Pleasures of Submission: Jane Eyre and the Production of the Text." *ELH* 58.1 (1991): 195-213.
- Louis, Tyson. *Critical Theory Today*, Routledge, 2006.

- Mahajan, Priyanka, and Randhawa Jaideep. "Emergence of 'New Woman': A Study of Origin of the Phrase in the West from Historical Perspective." *IOSR Journal Of Humanities And Social Science* 21.3 (2016): 01-04.
- Maier, Sarah E. "Portraits of the Girl-Child: Female Bildungsroman in Victorian Fiction 1." *Literature Compass* 4.1 (2007): 317-335.
- Mangham, Andrew. *Violent Women and Sensation Fiction: Crime, Medicine and Victorian Popular Culture*. Springer, 2007.
- Mansel, Henry. 'Sensation Novels', *Quarterly Review*, 1863 487
- Matus, Jill. "Disclosure as 'cover-up': The discourse of madness in Lady Audley's Secret." *University of Toronto quarterly* 62.3 (1993): 334-355.
- Maynard, John R. "The Bildungsroman." *A companion to the Victorian novel 1*. Black Well Publishers, (2002): 279-301.
- Mays, Kelly J. "The publishing world." *A Companion to the Victorian Novel*, Black Well Publishers (2002): 11-30.
- Mazul, Kathrin. *Women's literature in the 19th century*. Diss. Josip Juraj Strossmayer University of Osijek. Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences., 2015.
- McKee, Alan. *Textual analysis: A beginner's guide*. Sage, 2003.
- Mill, John Stuart. *The subjection of women*. Vol. 1. Transaction Publishers, 1869.
- Miller, Renata Kobetts. "Imagined Audiences: The Novelist and the Stage." *A Companion to the Victorian Novel* (2002): 207-24.
- Milne, John Duguid. *Industrial and Social Position of Women in the Middle and Lower Ranks*. [By JD Milne.]. Chapman & Hall, 1857.
- Moi, Toril. *Feminist, female, feminine*. Belsey, Catherine, and Jane Moore, eds. *The feminist reader: essays in gender and the politics of literary criticism*. Palgrave Macmillan, 1997.
- Moi, Toril. *Sexual/textual politics: Feminist literary theory*. Routledge, 2003.
- Montwieler, Katherine. "Marketing Sensation: Lady Audley's Secret and Consumer Culture." *Beyond Sensation: Mary Elizabeth Braddon in Context* (2000): 43-61.

- Moretti, Franco. *The way of the world: The Bildungsroman in European culture*. Verso, 2000.
- Morgan, Carol E. "Women, work and consciousness in the mid-nineteenth-century English cotton industry." *Social History* 17.1 (1992): 23-41.
- Morgan, Simon. *A Victorian woman's place: public culture in the nineteenth century*. Vol. 40. IB Tauris, 2007.
- Morgenstern, Karl, and Tobias Boes. "On the Nature of the Bildungsroman." *PMLA/Publications of the Modern Language Association of America* 124.2 (2009): 647-649.
- Morris, Robert J. "Samuel Smiles and the genesis of Self-Help; the retreat to a petit bourgeois utopia." *The Historical Journal* 24.1 (1981): 89-109.
- Moseley, William Willis. *Eleven chapters on nervous or mental complaints, and on two great discoveries, by which hundreds have been, and all may be cured, etc.* 1838.
- Mothersole, Brenda. *Female philanthropy and women novelists of 1840-1870*. Diss. Brunel University School of Sport and Education PhD Theses, 1989.
- Nassaar, Christopher S. "Introduction to the Victorians: A Major Authors Anthology." *The Victorian Novel*. Edited by Harold Bloom., 2004.
- Nicholas, Stephen, and Deborah Oxley. "The living standards of women during the industrial revolution, 1795-1820." *Economic History Review* (1993): 723-749.
- Nouri, Azadeh, and Fatemeh Aziz Mohammadi. "A gynocritical study of The Company of Wolves by Angela Carter." *International Letters of Social and Humanistic Sciences* 48 (2015): 100-106.
- Offen, Karen. "Defining feminism: A comparative historical approach." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 14.1 (1988): 119-157.
- Olaussen, Maria. "Feminist criticism as ethical criticism". *Critical Survey* (1993): 83-91.
- Patmore, Coventry. "The Angel of the House." Cassell's National Library. (1887).

- Peterson, M. Jeanne. "The Victorian governess: Status incongruence in family and society." *Victorian studies* 14.1 (1970): 7-26.
- Plate, Liedeke. "Gynocriticism." *The Wiley Blackwell Encyclopedia of Gender and Sexuality Studies* (2016): 1-2.
- Power, Henry. *Epic into Novel: Henry Fielding, Scriblerian Satire, and the Consumption of Classical Literature*. Oxford University Press, USA, 2015.
- Pratt, Annis, et al. *Archetypal patterns in women's fiction*. Vol. 272. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1981.
- Pratt, Annis. *Archetypal Patterns in Women's Fiction*. UMI, 1992.
- Preissle, Judith, and Margaret D. *Le Compte. Ethnography and qualitative design in educational research*. Academic Press, 1984.
- Prendergast, Christopher, ed. *Cultural Materialism: On Raymond Williams*. Vol. 9. U of Minnesota Press, 1995.
- Preston, Edwina Mary. "'Unlocked Doors': correspondence as female-centric writing practice." (2017).
- Purchase, Sean. *Key concepts in Victorian literature*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2006.
- Pykett, Lyn. *Sensation and the Fantastic in the Victorian Novel*. na, 2001.
- Pykett, Lyn. *The "Improper" Feminine: The Women's Sensation Novel and the New Woman Writing*. Psychology Press, 1992.
- Pykett, Lyn. *The "Improper" Feminine: The Women's Sensation Novel and the New Woman Writing*. Psychology Press, 1992.
- Reed, John R. "Laws, the Legal World, and Politics." *A Companion to the Victorian Novel* (2002): 155-71.
- Rich, Adrienne. "Jane Eyre: The temptations of a motherless woman." *On Lies, Secrets, and Silence: Selected Prose 1978* (1966): 89-106.
- Richardson, L. A. "On the Face of the Waters." *Silent Voices: Forgotten Novels by Victorian Women Writers* 200 (2003): 119.
- Ruskin, John. 'Sesame and Lilies II: Of Queen's Gardens', in E.T. Cook and A. Wedderburn (eds.), *The Works of John Ruskin*, XVIII. London, 1905.

- Salmon, Richard. "The Bildungsroman and Nineteenth-Century British Fiction." *A History of the Bildungsroman*, edited by Sarah Graham, Cambridge University Press, Cambridge, 2019, pp. 57–83
- Sanders, Valerie. "Marriage and the antifeminist woman novelist." *Cambridge Studies in Nineteenth Century Literature And Culture* 21, Cambridge University Press (1999): 24-41.
- Schatz, SueAnn. "Class Counts." *Silent Voices: Forgotten Novels by Victorian Women Writers* 200, Greenwood Publishing Group, (2003): 91.
- Schor, Hilary M. "Gender Politics and Women's Rights." *A Companion to the Victorian Novel*, Black Well, (2002): 172-188.
- Shanti, Mishra and Alok, Shashi. *Handbook of Research Methodology*. Educreation Publishers. 2017.
- Sharpe, Pamela. "The female labour market in English agriculture during the Industrial Revolution: expansion or contraction?." *The Agricultural history review* (1999): 161-181.
- Shea, Victor, and William Whitla, eds. *Victorian Literature: An Anthology*. John Wiley & Sons, 2014.
- Showalter, E., n.d. *Toward A Feminist Poetics*. [online] Historiacultural.mpbnet.com.br. Available at: http://historiacultural.mpbnet.com.br/feminismo/Toward_a_Feminist_Poetics.htm
- Showalter, Elaine, "Towards a Feminist Poetics". *Women Writing and Writing about Women*. Ed. Mary Jacobus, London: Croom Helm, 1979.
- Showalter, Elaine. "A criticism of our own." *Feminisms Redux: An Anthology of Literary Theory and Criticism*, Rutgers University Press, (2009): 92.
- Showalter, Elaine. "Feminist criticism in the wilderness." *Critical inquiry* 8.2 (1981): 179-205.
- Showalter, Elaine. "The female malady: Women, madness, and English culture, 1830-1980.", Penguin Books, (1987).

- Showalter, Elaine. "Towards Feministic Poetics." *Women writing and writing about women*. Londres: Croom Helm (1979): 22-41.
- Showalter, Elaine. *A literature of their own: British women novelists from Bronte to Lessing*. Princeton, Princeton University Press, 1977.
- Siebers, Tobin. *The ethics of criticism*. Cornell University Press, 2018.
- Silver, Anna Krugovoy. *Victorian literature and the anorexic body*. Vol. 36. Cambridge University Press, 2002.
- Simmons Jr, James Richard. "Industrial and "Condition of England" novels." *A companion to the Victorian novel*. Malden: Blackwell (2002): 336-352.
- Sizer, L., 2000. *The Political Work Of Northern Women Writers And The Civil War, 1850 1872*. [online] Google Books. Available at: https://books.google.com/books/about/The_Political_Work_of_Northern_Women_Wri.html?id=NbSYFO1YREQC
- Smiles, Samuel. *Self-Help; with illustrations of character and conduct*, London, 1866.
- Smith-Rosenberg, Carroll, and Carroll Smith-Rosenberg. "The new woman as androgyne." *Feminism: Feminism and modernity 2*, University of California, (2001): 156.
- Snodgrass, Mary Ellen. *Encyclopedia of feminist literature*. Infobase Publishing, 2014.
- Stolpa, Jennifer M. "" I Am Not Esther." *Silent Voices: Forgotten Novels by Victorian Women Writers 200*, London, Praeger, (2003): 155.
- Struve, Laura. "The Perils of Representation in Shirley: Portrayals of Women and Workers in Charlotte Bronte's Industrial Novel." *Victorians: A Journal of Culture and Literature* 130 (2016): 58-78.
- Sussex, Lucy. "The Detective Maidservant." *Silent Voices: Forgotten Novels by Victorian Women Writers 200* (2003): 57.
- Sutton-Ramspeck, Beth. "Shot out of the canon: Mary Ward and the claims of conflicting feminism." *Cambridge Studies in Nineteenth Century Literature And Culture* 21 (1999): 204-222.

- Ten Have, Paul. *Understanding qualitative research and ethnomethodology*. Sage, 2004.
- Tennyson, Alfred. "The Princess." Project Gutenberg (1997).
- Thamarana, Simhachalam. "Origin and Development of Bildungsroman Novels in English Literature". *International Journal of English Literature, Linguistics and Humanities*, 3(4), 2015, pp. 1-6.
- Thompson, Nicola Diane. "Responding to the woman questions: rereading noncanonical Victorian women novelists." *Cambridge Studies in Nineteenth Century Literature And Culture* 21 (1999): 1-23.
- Thomson, Rosemarie Garland. "Benevolent maternalism and physically disabled figures: Dilemmas of female embodiment in Stowe, Davis, and Phelps." *American Literature* 68.3, Duke University Press, (1996): 555-586.
- Tyson, Lois. *Critical theory today: A user-friendly guide*. Routledge, 2014.
- Vickery, Amanda, 'Golden Age to Separate Spheres? A Review of the Categories and Chronology of English Women's History', *The Historical Journal*, 36 (1993), 383–414.
- Voloshin, Beverly R. "The limits of domesticity: The female bildungsroman in America, 1820–1870." *Women's Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal* 10.3 (1984): 283-302.
- Wallace, Diana. *The woman's historical novel: British women writers, 1900-2000*. Springer, 2004.
- Waters, Mary. *British women writers and the profession of literary criticism, 1789-1832*. Springer, 2004.
- Wells, Susan. "Self-Cultivation, Political Reaction, and the Bildungsroman." *Minnesota Review* 13.1 (1979): 71-97.
- Wheeler, Michael. *English Fiction of the Victorian Period, 1830–1890*, New York and London: Longman, (1985).
- Williams, Raymond. *Culture and Society*, The Hogarth Press, London, 1st ed. (1958) pp.94-99.

- Wollstonecraft, Mary. *Thoughts on the Education of Daughters: With Reflections on Female Conduct, in the More Important Duties of Life*. J. Johnson, 1787.
- Womack, Whitney A. "Rebecca Harding Davis's Rewriting of the Industrial Novel." *Our Sisters' Keepers: Nineteenth-Century Benevolence Literature by American Women* (2005): 105.
- Wynne, Deborah. "Critical Responses to Sensation." *A Companion to Sensation Fiction* (2011): 389-400.
- Wynne, Deborah. *The sensation novel and the Victorian family magazine*. Springer, 2001.
- Yeazell, R. *Why Political Novels Have Heroines: "Sybil, Mary Barton", and "Felix Holt"*. *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction*, 1985. 18(2), p.127.
- Yeo, Eileen Janes, 'Some Paradoxes of Empowerment', in *Radical Femininity: Women's Self-Representation in the Public Sphere*, ed. Eileen Janes Yeo, Manchester University Press, 1998, pp. 1–24.
- Young, Arlene. *Culture, Class and Gender in the Victorian Novel: Gentlemen, Gents and Working Women*. Springer, 1999.
- Zahra, Abeer. *The Construction of Womanhood in Victorian Sensation Fiction*, 1860 – 70. 12 April 1990,
http://etheses.whiterose.ac.uk/2334/1/Zahra_A_English_PhD_1990.pdf.
 Accessed [31 Oct. 2019].

TURNITIN REPORT

A GYNOCRITICAL STUDY OF GENDER IN THE SUB-GENRES OF THE VICTORIAN NOVEL

ORIGINALITY REPORT

6%

SIMILARITY INDEX

5%

INTERNET SOURCES

3%

PUBLICATIONS

2%

STUDENT PAPERS

PRIMARY SOURCES

1

Submitted to Atilim University

Student Paper

<1 %

2

id.scribd.com

Internet Source

<1 %

3

onlinelibrary.wiley.com

Internet Source

<1 %

4

www.enotes.com

Internet Source

<1 %

5

link.springer.com

Internet Source

<1 %

6

Richard Fantina. "Victorian Sensational Fiction", Springer Science and Business Media LLC, 2010

Publication

<1 %

7

digitalcommons.lsu.edu

Internet Source

<1 %

8

dokumen.pub

Internet Source

<1 %

9	silo.pub Internet Source	<1 %
10	docshare.tips Internet Source	<1 %
11	open.metu.edu.tr Internet Source	<1 %
12	Submitted to University of Lincoln Student Paper	<1 %
13	epdf.pub Internet Source	<1 %
14	ebooks.lpude.in Internet Source	<1 %
15	lume.ufrgs.br Internet Source	<1 %
16	Submitted to Doncaster College, South Yorkshire Student Paper	<1 %
17	Mothersole, Brenda. "Female philanthropy and women novelists of 1840-1870", Brunel University School of Sport and Education PhD Theses, 2010. Publication	<1 %
18	pure.royalholloway.ac.uk Internet Source	<1 %

[hdl.handle.net](#)

19	Internet Source	<1 %
20	tampub.uta.fi Internet Source	<1 %
21	epdf.tips Internet Source	<1 %
22	lib.uzedu.uz Internet Source	<1 %
23	"British Women's Writing from Brontë to Bloomsbury, Volume 1", Springer Science and Business Media LLC, 2018 Publication	<1 %
24	Jesse Rosenthal. "Good Form", Walter de Gruyter GmbH, 2017 Publication	<1 %
25	eprints.ucm.es Internet Source	<1 %
26	orca.cf.ac.uk Internet Source	<1 %
27	Submitted to Higher Education Commission Pakistan Student Paper	<1 %
28	www.lib.uin-malang.ac.id Internet Source	<1 %

29	Deborah Wynne. "The Sensation Novel and the Victorian Family Magazine", Springer Science and Business Media LLC, 2001 Publication	<1 %
30	Submitted to University of Reading Student Paper	<1 %
31	fau.digital.flvc.org Internet Source	<1 %
32	ijellh.com Internet Source	<1 %
33	www.degruyter.com Internet Source	<1 %
34	Ishaq Tijani. "Male Domination, Female Revolt", Brill, 2009 Publication	<1 %
35	Submitted to University of Bedfordshire Student Paper	<1 %
36	b-ok.cc Internet Source	<1 %
37	digitalcommons.linfield.edu Internet Source	<1 %
38	etheses.whiterose.ac.uk Internet Source	<1 %
39	ir.canterbury.ac.nz Internet Source	<1 %

40	scholarsbank.uoregon.edu Internet Source	<1 %
41	www.globalgrey.co.uk Internet Source	<1 %
42	www.nothankswerebooked.com Internet Source	<1 %
43	summit.sfu.ca Internet Source	<1 %
44	www.ncgsjournal.com Internet Source	<1 %
45	mafiadoc.com Internet Source	<1 %
46	docplayer.net Internet Source	<1 %
47	Andrew Mangham. "Violent Women and Sensation Fiction", Springer Science and Business Media LLC, 2007 Publication	<1 %
48	cronfa.swan.ac.uk Internet Source	<1 %
49	lra.le.ac.uk Internet Source	<1 %
50	opus.uleth.ca Internet Source	<1 %

51	theses.ubn.ru.nl Internet Source	<1 %
52	www.cambridge.org Internet Source	<1 %
53	Submitted to Highlands School Student Paper	<1 %
54	Submitted to Southern New Hampshire University - Continuing Education Student Paper	<1 %
55	Submitted to UC, San Diego Student Paper	<1 %
56	Submitted to University of Leicester Student Paper	<1 %
57	Submitted to University of Warwick Student Paper	<1 %
58	blog.lrb.co.uk Internet Source	<1 %
59	brage.bibsys.no Internet Source	<1 %
60	eprints.soas.ac.uk Internet Source	<1 %
61	etd.library.vanderbilt.edu Internet Source	<1 %
62	hss.ulb.uni-bonn.de	

Internet Source

<1 %

63 pdxscholar.library.pdx.edu

Internet Source

<1 %

64 publikationen.uni-tuebingen.de

Internet Source

<1 %

65 Submitted to Iowa Lakes Community College

Student Paper

<1 %

66 theses.gla.ac.uk

Internet Source

<1 %

67 Submitted to Salisbury University

Student Paper

<1 %

68 qspace.library.queensu.ca

Internet Source

<1 %

69 www.scribd.com

Internet Source

<1 %

70 Submitted to Edge Hill College of Higher Education

Student Paper

<1 %

71 Submitted to Sheffield Hallam University

Student Paper

<1 %

72 Simon Morgan. "A sort of land debatable': female influence, civic virtue and middle-class identity, c 1830- c 1860[1]", Women's History Review, 2004

<1 %

73	dollsbooksthingsthatmatter.blogspot.com Internet Source	<1 %
74	etd.aau.edu.et Internet Source	<1 %
75	researchspace.bathspa.ac.uk Internet Source	<1 %
76	"Historiography of women's cultural traditions", Walter de Gruyter GmbH, 1987 Publication	<1 %
77	0-literature.proquest.com.fama.us.es Internet Source	<1 %
78	Submitted to University of Nottingham Student Paper	<1 %
79	Submitted to Wake Christian Academy Student Paper	<1 %
80	www.encyclopedia.com Internet Source	<1 %
81	www.mohamedrabeea.com Internet Source	<1 %
82	books.openedition.org Internet Source	<1 %
83	digitalcommons.bard.edu Internet Source	<1 %

84	duap.du.ac.bd Internet Source	<1 %
85	ir.uiowa.edu Internet Source	<1 %
86	repozitorij.unios.hr Internet Source	<1 %
87	www.duo.uio.no Internet Source	<1 %
88	www.scipress.com Internet Source	<1 %
89	"Companion to Women's Historical Writing", Springer Science and Business Media LLC, 2005 Publication	<1 %
90	"The Lure of Illustration in the Nineteenth Century", Springer Science and Business Media LLC, 2009 Publication	<1 %
91	Submitted to National University of Ireland, Maynooth Student Paper	<1 %
92	academic.oup.com Internet Source	<1 %
93	archive.org Internet Source	<1 %

94	ateneum.edu.pl Internet Source	<1 %
95	digitalcommons.gardner-webb.edu Internet Source	<1 %
96	eltlt.org Internet Source	<1 %
97	etheses.qmu.ac.uk Internet Source	<1 %
98	libres.uncg.edu Internet Source	<1 %
99	media.proquest.com Internet Source	<1 %
100	sociology.sunimc.net Internet Source	<1 %
101	www.123helpme.com Internet Source	<1 %
102	www.diva-portal.org Internet Source	<1 %
103	www.highbeam.com Internet Source	<1 %
104	Andrea Jacobs. "Examinations as Cultural Capital for the Victorian Schoolgirl: 'thinking' with Bourdieu", Women's History Review, 2007 Publication	<1 %

105	alessakai.wordpress.com Internet Source	<1 %
106	digitalcommons.liberty.edu Internet Source	<1 %
107	discovery.ucl.ac.uk Internet Source	<1 %
108	dspace.library.uu.nl Internet Source	<1 %
109	ecommons.luc.edu Internet Source	<1 %
110	econterms.net Internet Source	<1 %
111	ir.library.osaka-u.ac.jp Internet Source	<1 %
112	oro.open.ac.uk Internet Source	<1 %
113	othes.univie.ac.at Internet Source	<1 %
114	repositories.lib.utexas.edu Internet Source	<1 %
115	repository.library.cofc.edu Internet Source	<1 %
116	soar.wichita.edu Internet Source	<1 %

117	tesi.cab.unipd.it Internet Source	<1 %
118	unsworks.unsw.edu.au Internet Source	<1 %
119	wilkiecollinsociety.org Internet Source	<1 %
120	www.oxfordbibliographies.com Internet Source	<1 %
121	www.randomhouse.com Internet Source	<1 %
122	"The Palgrave Handbook of Steam Age Gothic", Springer Science and Business Media LLC, 2021 Publication	<1 %
123	"The Palgrave Handbook of Women and Science since 1660", Springer Science and Business Media LLC, 2022 Publication	<1 %
124	Barton Hacker, Margaret Vining. "A Companion to Women's Military History", Brill, 2012 Publication	<1 %
125	Dorice Williams Elliott. "'The care of the poor is her profession': Hannah more and women's philanthropic work", Nineteenth-Century Contexts, 1995	<1 %

126	Dorothee Birke. "Writing the Reader", Walter de Gruyter GmbH, 2016 Publication	<1 %
127	Hollows, Joanne. "Domestic Cultures", Domestic Cultures, 2008 Publication	<1 %
128	Letherby, Gayle. "EBOOK: Feminist Research in Theory and Practice", EBOOK: Feminist Research in Theory and Practice, 2003 Publication	<1 %
129	Submitted to The College of New Jersey Student Paper	<1 %
130	Submitted to University College Falmouth Student Paper	<1 %
131	Winifred Hughes. "The Maniac in the Cellar", Walter de Gruyter GmbH, 1981 Publication	<1 %
132	academicworks.cuny.edu Internet Source	<1 %
133	arts.studenttheses.ub.rug.nl Internet Source	<1 %
134	blog.yalebooks.com Internet Source	<1 %
135	dalspace.library.dal.ca Internet Source	<1 %

136	digitalassets.lib.berkeley.edu Internet Source	<1 %
137	digitalcommons.spu.edu Internet Source	<1 %
138	dspace.iup.edu Internet Source	<1 %
139	dspace.library.uvic.ca Internet Source	<1 %
140	ecommons.cornell.edu Internet Source	<1 %
141	encore.lib.gla.ac.uk Internet Source	<1 %
142	es.scribd.com Internet Source	<1 %
143	etda.libraries.psu.edu Internet Source	<1 %
144	getd.libs.uga.edu Internet Source	<1 %
145	helvia.uco.es Internet Source	<1 %
146	homepage.mac.com Internet Source	<1 %
147	ir.lib.uwo.ca Internet Source	<1 %

148	kclpure.kcl.ac.uk Internet Source	<1 %
149	openscholarship.wustl.edu Internet Source	<1 %
150	pdfs.semanticscholar.org Internet Source	<1 %
151	publishing.cdlib.org Internet Source	<1 %
152	repository.wellesley.edu Internet Source	<1 %
153	thebabblinggypsy.home.blog Internet Source	<1 %
154	trace.tennessee.edu Internet Source	<1 %
155	ugcenglish.com Internet Source	<1 %
156	waterstonebasbookclub.blogspot.com Internet Source	<1 %
157	wrap.warwick.ac.uk Internet Source	<1 %
158	www.asclibrary.nl Internet Source	<1 %
159	www.creativeprocess.info Internet Source	<1 %

160	www.encyclopedias.biz Internet Source	<1 %
161	www.espch.salford.ac.uk Internet Source	<1 %
162	www.librarything.com Internet Source	<1 %
163	www.litcharts.com Internet Source	<1 %
164	www.tandfonline.com Internet Source	<1 %
165	www.utupub.fi Internet Source	<1 %
166	www.worldscientificnews.com Internet Source	<1 %
167	zodml.org Internet Source	<1 %
168	Arianne Chernock. "Men and the Making of Modern British Feminism", Walter de Gruyter GmbH, 2010 Publication	<1 %
169	Mollie Schwartz Rosenhan. "The creation of patriarchy", History of European Ideas, 2012 Publication	<1 %
170	eprints.utas.edu.au Internet Source	<1 %

171	"Handbook of the English Novel, 1830–1900", Walter de Gruyter GmbH, 2020 Publication	<1 %
172	"The History of British Women's Writing, 1830–1880", Springer Science and Business Media LLC, 2018 Publication	<1 %
173	Ana Alicia Garza, Lois Burke, Christian Dickinson, Helen Williams, Lucy Barnes, William Baker. "XIII The Victorian Period", The Year's Work in English Studies, 2019 Publication	<1 %
174	dukespace.lib.duke.edu Internet Source	<1 %
175	wbnsou.ac.in Internet Source	<1 %
176	Submitted to CATS Academy Boston Student Paper	<1 %
177	Gero Bauer. "Houses, Secrets, and the Closet", Transcript Verlag, 2016 Publication	<1 %
178	Submitted to Lusher Charter School Student Paper	<1 %
179	Omar Sougou. "Writing Across Cultures", Brill, 2002 Publication	<1 %

180	Submitted to South Pasadena High School Student Paper	<1 %
181	Tijana Matijevic. "From Post-Yugoslavia to the Female Continent", Transcript Verlag, 2020 Publication	<1 %
182	Submitted to University of Houston System Student Paper	<1 %
183	Submitted to Wingate University Student Paper	<1 %
184	en.wikipedia.org Internet Source	<1 %
185	shodhganga.inflibnet.ac.in Internet Source	<1 %
186	Submitted to Florida Southern College Student Paper	<1 %
187	Katie Garner, Rebecca Munford. "Feminism", Wiley, 2010 Publication	<1 %
188	Submitted to King's College Student Paper	<1 %
189	Submitted to King's High School Student Paper	<1 %
190	Submitted to Marriotts Ridge High Student Paper	<1 %

Exclude quotes On

Exclude matches Off

Exclude bibliography On

RÉSUMÉ

Name and Surname: Ziead Al-Khafaf

Education:

Degree	Field	University	Year
Undergraduate	English Language	Al-Mustansiriya	2003
Graduate	English Literature	Pune	2007

Work Experience:

Work Place	Position	Year
Al-Iraqia University	Instructor	2011-2016
Al-Farahidi University	Instructor	2020-

Foreign Languages: English (very good), Turkish (very little) and Spanish (very little)

Publications: The Catastrophic Consequence of the Psychological Obsession in Sons and Lovers, 2014. The Dilemma of the Human Nature Hovering between Civilization and Savagery in *Lord of the Flies*: A Psychoanalytic Study, 2015. *The Return of the Native* According to Hegel's Theory of Tragedy: Analytical Study, 2016. A Study of Hegemony and Class Conflict in Gaskell's *North and South*, 2021

Date: 24/11/2021

