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HYPOCRISY ABOUT GENDER EQUALITY IN
CHARLOTTE BRONTË'S *JANE EYRE*

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Konya - 2023

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to Assoc. Prof. Barış Mete for his invaluable guidance, support, and expertise throughout the entire duration of my thesis. His insightful feedback, unwavering encouragement, and commitment to excellence have been instrumental in shaping the direction and quality of this research. I am truly grateful for his mentorship.

I would also like to extend my heartfelt appreciation to my dearest wife, whose unwavering love, understanding, and patience have been my constant source of inspiration and motivation. Her unwavering belief in my abilities and her unwavering support have been the driving force behind my success during this challenging journey. I am truly blessed to have her unwavering presence beside me.

Furthermore, I would like to express my deepest thanks to my mother for her endless love, encouragement, and sacrifices. Her unwavering belief in my potential and her continuous support have been invaluable in making this thesis a reality. Her unwavering faith in me has been a constant reminder of my capabilities and has pushed me to strive for excellence.

Without the support and contributions of the aforementioned individuals and resources, this thesis would not have been possible. I am forever indebted to them for their instrumental roles in my academic journey.



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	Tezin Adı	Charlotte Brontë'nin <i>Jane Eyre</i> Romanındaki Cinsiyet Eşitliğine Dair İki Yüzlülük

ÖZET

Sınıflara ayrılmış Viktorya dönemi toplumu, her bireye doğumuna, mesleğine ve servetine göre bir sosyal statü tahsis edilecek şekilde yapılandırılmış ve siyaset, ekonomi, din ve kültür gibi toplumun tüm alanlarına yayılan sabit sosyal sınıf düzenlerini sürdürmüştür. Farklı sınıflardan ve cinsiyetlerden bireyler üzerinde derin etkileri olan bu katı sınıf düzeni karşısında, Charlotte Brontë'nin *Jane Eyre* romanı, kişisel özgürlük ve toplumsal cinsiyet eşitliği davasını savunmak için toplumsal geleneklere meydan okuyan ve onları altüst eden dikkate değer bir eser olarak durmaktadır. *Jane Eyre* romanı, yüzyılı aşkın bir süredir edebiyat dünyasında pek çok akademik tartışmaya konu olmuştur. Roman boyunca Brontë, Jane ve Rochester'ın evlenmeden önce eşitliğinin gerekliliğini savunur, ancak ilginç bir şekilde, romanın sonlarına doğru birbirlerini seven çiftin sosyal konumu birbirlerinininkiyle yer değiştirir. Yazar, romanın başından sonuna kadar savunmuş olduğu cinsiyet eşitliği, Jane Eyre'in Rochester'a karşı sosyal konum olarak üstün olmasıyla son bulur. Bu durum Charlotte Brontë'yi cinsiyet eşitliğine dair ikiyüzlü bir tutuma sürüklemektedir. Bu tezde üzerine tartışılan sorulardan biri, Brontë'nin Jane Eyre'i okuyucuların düşünce ve duygularını harekete geçirmek için kasıtlı olarak Bay Rochester'a karşı üstünlüğüyle sonuçlandırıp sonuçlandırmadığıdır. Diğer bir soru ise okuyucuyu beklenmedik bir sonuçla şaşırtmak mıydı, yoksa Viktorya dönemi toplumunda yaygın olan kuralcı güç

dinamiklerini altüst etmeye çalışan ikiyüzlü bir söylemi mi çağrıştırıyordu? Bu sorulara cevap ararken, birinci bölümde romandaki cinsiyet eşitliği, ikinci bölümde sosyal kurumlar ve üçüncü bölümde ise ataerkil topluma eleştiriler ve ikiyüzlülük kavramları ele alınmaktadır. Bu çalışmaya, *Jane Eyre* romanında ataerkil yapının sebep olduğu cinsiyet eşitsizliğinin eleştirilmesine rağmen, Jane Eyre kadın karakteri tarafından benzer şekilde erkek üzerine sosyal, ekonomik ve fiziki olarak kurulan üstünlüğün daha önce savunulan cinsiyet eşitliğini ortadan kaldırmasına neden olan ikiyüzlülük konu edilmektedir.

Anahtar kelimeler: *Jane Eyre*, ikiyüzlülük, toplumsal cinsiyet eşitliği, ataerkil toplum, üstünlük, sosyal kurumlar.



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	Tezin Adı	Hypocrisy About Gender Equality In Charlotte Brontë's <i>Jane Eyre</i>

ABSTRACT

Stratified Victorian society was structured in such a way that each individual was assigned a social status according to birth, occupation and wealth, and maintained fixed social hierarchies that extended to all spheres of society, such as politics, economy, religion and culture. In the face of these rigid hierarchies, which had profound effects on individuals of different classes and genders, Charlotte Brontë's novel *Jane Eyre* stands as a remarkable work that challenges and subverts social conventions to champion the cause of personal freedom and gender equality. The novel *Jane Eyre* has been the focus of much academic debate in the literary world for over a century. Throughout the novel, Brontë argues for the necessity of Jane and Rochester's equality before marriage, but interestingly, towards the ending of the novel, the social class of the beloved couple is replaced by that of each other. The equality of the genders, which the author defends from the beginning to the end of the novel, ends with Jane Eyre's social status superiority over Rochester. This situation leads Charlotte Brontë to a hypocritical attitude towards gender equality. One of the questions discussed in this thesis is whether Brontë intentionally concludes *Jane Eyre* with her superiority over Mr Rochester in order to stimulate the readers' thoughts and emotions. Another question is whether it was meant to surprise the reader with an unexpected outcome, or whether it evokes a hypocritical discourse that seeks to subvert the

normative power dynamics prevalent in Victorian society. In seeking answers to these questions, the first section focuses on gender equality in the novel, the second on social institutions, and the third on criticisms of patriarchal society and the concept of hypocrisy. In this study, although the gender inequality caused by the patriarchal structure in the novel *Jane Eyre* is criticised, the hypocrisy that causes the social, economic, and physical superiority over men, similarly established by the female character of Jane Eyre, to eliminate the gender equality previously defended, is the subject of this study.

Keywords: *Jane Eyre*, hypocrisy, gender equality, patriarchal society, superiority, social institutions.




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INTRODUCTION

The Victorian era, an epoch defined by the period of Queen Victoria's reign from 1837 to 1901, was a time of social and cultural transformation, in England. Its stratified society had been structured in such a way that individual was allotted a social status based on their birth, profession, and wealth, perpetuating fixed social hierarchies that extended across all domains of society, such as politics, economics, religion, and culture respectively. These rigid hierarchies had profound implications for individuals of different classes and genders. Against this backdrop, Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* stands as a noteworthy work that challenges and subverts societal conventions in order to champion the cause of personal liberation and gender equality. *Jane Eyre* signifies that the novel strongly advocates for women's freedom and independence. It reflects an ardent proclamation that every individual, specifically women, should possess the right to determine their own destiny even when confronted with restrictive societal expectations. In *Jane Eyre*, the protagonist challenges oppressive social norms by rejecting the roles imposed upon her and instead follows her own path in pursuit of personal happiness and fulfilment. By doing so, the novel sends a powerful message that urges us to break free from the shackles of tradition and conformity and pave the way for a more equitable and just society.

This thesis seeks to uncover the nuanced, and often overlooked, ways in which *Jane Eyre* subverts and adapts to the dominant institutions and structures of Victorian society. In our exploration, I devote particular attention to the way in which social status was constructed during this time period, as it was deeply intertwined with class, education, occupation, and wealth. Through a rigorous analysis of the novel, I aim to paint a vivid and textured picture of how *Jane Eyre* actively disrupts traditional views on gender equality inherent in the Victorian era. By delving into Jane's own journey of self-discovery, I reveal how she ultimately emerges as a dynamic, complex, and fully realized figure whose experiences and challenges fundamentally transform the way we conceptualize the position of females in society. It is my hope that this exploration will not only offer insights into the profound impact of *Jane Eyre*, but also inspire further discussions on how literature can provide a powerful means of challenging and reconfiguring social norms.

Delving deeper into my investigation, I have a belief that it is crucial to examine the social constructions that influenced the Victorian era, as it impacted not only Jane Eyre's life but also provided a backdrop for the novel. My preliminary attention is channelled towards analysing the institutions including family, education, religion, economy, laws, government, and state. Whether education is an institution or not can be controversial, but education is a highly developed institution in contemporary countries. It has a network of laws that classify people and knowledge in the public domain. It identifies those people who fit into these groups and have the necessary knowledge. Additionally, it establishes who is eligible for coveted positions in society. Education plays a major role in people's public biographies and has a significant impact on their opportunities in life. As well, it serves as a key component of society's organizational structure, building competencies and fostering professional development (Meyer,1977). By dissecting these institutions, we can identify their individual influence on women's lives and how their role contributed to shaping *Jane Eyre* as a remarkable piece of literature. Starting with the fundamental social unit of the Victorian era, the family, we can understand the emphasis placed on domesticity and morality, with a focus on the duty of women as subservient homemakers. Conversely, the education system's lack of an accessible curriculum for girls resulted in a significant lack of opportunities for them to enter the professional sphere, contributing to Jane Eyre's personal struggles. The pervasive influence of religion on all aspects of life in the Victorian era cannot be overstated, considering its role in upholding patriarchal values. Elsewhere, the economy was undergoing a shift towards capitalism, which led to inequalities in economic access and opportunities for women. Consequently, women were wholly dependent on male relatives to provide for them or enter a carefully proscribed career path.

Examining these institutions reveals the way in which they intersected with each other in shaping the experiences of women in the Victorian era including *Jane Eyre*. The laws and government institutions, likewise, play a significant role in the novel, with Jane's journey laid in contradiction of a background of social and political upheaval. In sum, a meticulous investigation of the social institutions of the Victorian era not only enhances our comprehension of the era, but it also elucidates how the

world in which Jane Eyre lived shaped her story, making it a brilliant literary work that transcends time and place.

In analysing Charlotte Brontë's novel, I look into the protagonist's adversarial relationship with institutional power and entrenched gender norms. According to Murtiningrum (2017), she creates Jane as a woman who struggles against social conventions and the institution of marriage in the nineteenth century where women were always portrayed as the subordinates (p.338). Against the backdrop of Victorian England, the protagonist is a conduit for Brontë's critique of a society that imposes stifling expectations on women. In Brontë's literary works, the incorporation of references to marginalized and colonized races serve as a metaphorical portrayal of different aspects within the white British society. These references encompass themes such as the submissive position of women in intimate relationships, the rebellious and passionate response of women against male dominance, and the socio-economic constraints faced by women lacking familial connections and a middle-class income. This interweaving of racial allusions allows Brontë to illuminate and analyse complex social dynamics prevalent in her contemporary milieu with a nuanced and sophisticated approach (Meyer, 1989). The novel's initial focal point is on the portrayal of women as 'other,' relegated to a peripheral role in a patriarchal society. Brontë highlights the structured landscape of gender roles and the adverse effects of an unfair power dynamic that favours men. For example, in her adopted family, "Master" John abuses her emotionally and physically, and Brocklehurst expose discipline at Lowood Institution. Chen (2002) notes the following, for instance:

Her disobedience or transgression justifies his power to punish her by marking, through racialization and/or bestialization, a woman's unruly body as a freak body. On the other hand, "exhibition" also becomes a site for a woman's resistance by repositioning and enabling her to re-invent herself. Jane defies male authority by rejecting the imposed image of monstrosity but also by embracing the freak's unruly energy in her artistic imagination, creating her own spaces in which she can be a host to herself in order to express an escape from, a comment on, and finally a defiance of the subjecting power and gaze. (p.372)

Through a nuanced analysis of the character of Rochester, we explore the inherent hypocrisy and double standards that permeated interactions between men and women in this era. This exploration serves to underscore Brontë's indictment of the oppressive systems that persist and limit the potential of disenfranchised groups, even in contemporary times.

Indeed, the final parts of the book shed light on a hidden double standard present in the male-dominated societal structure, which is thoroughly examined and challenged by the author. The celebration of Jane's financial and bodily superiority as a sign of equality draws attention to deep-seated issues of gender and social injustice, which were prevalent during the Victorian epoch. The precisely refined analysis presented in this thesis highlights Brontë's ardent attempt to challenge and, in effect, dismantle the very essence of this oppressive societal framework. Her ground-breaking work played a significant role in laying the foundation for a new era, one marked by greater inclusivity, equality, and respect for individual rights, uplifting the disenfranchised and the marginalised, and pushing the boundaries of social norms. In conclusion, Brontë's novel serves as a catalyst for the development of a more egalitarian society, standing firm in the historical record as an influential work of literature that sheds light on the darker corners of the human experience while paving the way towards a brighter and more equitable future.

Is Charlotte Brontë's decision to conclude *Jane Eyre* by portraying Jane's ascension over Rochester a deliberate move aimed at inciting introspection and contemplation in the reader? In another words, does Charlotte Brontë end the novel *Jane Eyre* with Jane's superiority over Rochester to provoke the reader? This narrative choice, which positions a female protagonist in a position of power over a male character, is particularly noteworthy given the societal norms of the Victorian age. It prompts one to reflect upon the subversion of gender roles and hierarchies in fiction and in reality. Furthermore, it raises questions about the value of independence, resilience, and self-realization, and ultimately invites readers to consider what it means for a woman to establish her own identity and agency in a patriarchal society.

Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, has been the field of study of lots of scholarly debate in the literary world for over a century. One of the recurring questions raised by critics is whether Brontë intentionally concludes *Jane Eyre* with her superiority over Rochester to stimulate the readers' thoughts and emotions. This thesis aims to explore this question by analysing the final chapters of the novel and examining the possible literary devices employed by Brontë to achieve her desired effect. The conclusion of *Jane Eyre* depicts the titular character returning to Rochester after he has been blinded and lost his hand in a fire set by his insane wife. At this point in the narrative, Jane holds an advantage over Rochester, as she is financially independent and has achieved a level of self-awareness and personal growth that Rochester has not. This is exemplified in the moment when Jane tells Rochester, "I am no bird, and no net ensnares me; I am a free human being with an independent will" (Brontë,2008). This scene is an intentional attempt by Brontë to provoke the reader and illustrate Jane's superior status to Rochester. Brontë is actively challenging the societal norms of the time, which dictated men's superiority over women in marriage and relationship dynamics. By depicting Jane as a woman who resists society's expectations and prioritizes her own self-determination, Brontë subverts the traditional power dynamics between genders and implicitly encourages the readers to do the same. However, others may counter that Brontë did not intend to portray Jane as superior to Rochester in this scene. Instead, they might argue that the moment is symbolic of the union between two equals who have gone through their trials and come out the other side. Zare Bonnie (1993) notes the following:

Our impression of Rochester is softened at the end of the novel. For after his heroism during the fire at Thornfield leaves him with debilitating injuries, Rochester is kinder to Jane. As many critics have remarked, some of the couple's last exchanges resemble those between parents and children rather than lovers. For example, when Jane notices that Rochester's unruly mane needs combing and cutting, the reader is forced to recognize that Rochester's deficiencies, along with his pride (he does not want anyone but Jane to help him), will mean a "new servitude" for Jane, the new job of "mother" (p. 209).

The portrayal of Rochester in the novel undergoes a transformation, eliciting a more sympathetic response from the reader. Rochester's heroism during the Thornfield fire leaves him with severe impairments, which soften his character, leading to a marked change in his behaviour towards Jane. Jean Wyatt (1985) says that “Brontë's images, appealing directly to the level of unconscious fantasy, repeat a familiar combination of paternal strength and graceful girlhood, belying the reassuring surface fantasy of a new balance of power” (p.212). As noted by the critic, the dynamics in their relationship shift towards a more paternal-like relationship than the passionate love affair of their earlier days. This change is evidenced by scenes such as Jane noticing Rochester's unkempt hair, which requires her assistance to comb and cut, highlighting Rochester's dependence and pride that previously hindered their relationship. This realization foreshadows a new role for Jane - a "new servitude" as a motherly figure - an overwhelming responsibility that she is willing to undertake for the man she loves. The author uses this shift in character to add depth to the characters, ensuring that the readers are emotionally invested in their journey. Indeed, whilst it cannot be denied that Jane derives a certain sense of vicarious satisfaction from her role as a caregiver to the dependent Rochester, it is also true that this very position inevitably demands a significant sacrifice of her own independence. As events transpire, Jane's growing responsibilities encompass both the aforementioned adult and extend to a newborn infant in her care. Given the weight of these obligations, it is difficult to discern how she manages to navigate the demands of her own passions and personal pursuits (Zare, 1993). One may think that Brontë's purpose in writing such a scene is to highlight the growing personal connection between the two characters.

The debate over whether Charlotte Brontë intentionally ends *Jane Eyre* with Jane's superiority over Rochester to provoke the reader is one that is unlikely to ever be fully resolved. While it can be criticised that Brontë was explicitly making a statement on gender roles in society, it is also possible to argue that she was merely highlighting the strength of her two characters' bond. Notwithstanding Jane's prior vocal opposition to societal injustice and subjugation, the conclusion of the literary work in question yields a bittersweet aftermath that will undeniably resonate with the feminist community. Bette London (1991) explains this situation as:

A product of textual division, the "militant female subject" has no independent existence. "She" exists as a function of the system that both unleashes and absorbs her militancy. In the novelistic construction of her life, the younger Jane who produces the unorthodox texts of rebellion is already, in the voice of an older Jane, an authorized production invoked for narrative display. Writing her autobiography, Jane commits herself to culturally prescribed forms (p.201).

Although the gratification that accompanies the ending is largely attributable to the consummation of the romantic arc, there is a deeper underlying yearning that is being fulfilled the hope that idealistic and all-embracing love can eventually triumph over all forms of discrimination and suppression. Admittedly, this effectively imparts a sense of euphoria and vicarious satisfaction to readers, prompting them to believe in the transcendental power of affection. Zare (1993) affirms that "the pleasure of the ending mainly stems from enjoying the completion of the romance plot. Many readers enjoy the illusion that love is transcendent and takes precedence over all else" (p. 205). However, the newfound happiness is inextricably infused with a lamentable pang of agony, for it serves as a poignant reminder that Jane's relentless fight against patriarchal tyranny is far from over. Regardless of which interpretation one subscribes to, it is clear that *Jane Eyre* remains a timeless masterpiece that continues to challenge our assumptions about love, power, and gender.

One may ponder upon Charlotte Brontë's intention behind orchestrating the end of her literary masterpiece, *Jane Eyre*, with the portrayal of Jane's triumph over Rochester. Was it her purpose to take the reader aback with the unexpected outcome, or was it an evocation of a feminist discourse that sought to subvert the normative power dynamics prevalent in Victorian society? In exploring this query, it is pertinent to acknowledge the profundity of Brontë's depiction of Jane as a woman who defies conventional gender roles. The author challenges the pervasive notion of a woman's subservience to a man, and thus, in the novel's resolution, Brontë endows Jane with agency and independence. However, whether this denouement is intended as a surprise to the reader or is a natural consequence of the character's development remains a nuanced matter of literary interpretation.

In the realm of literary analysis, one of the most enduring debates amongst scholars is the extent to which Charlotte Brontë intended to surprise readers with the conclusion of her masterwork, *Jane Eyre*. Specifically, many have suggested that the juxtaposition of Jane's newfound independence and authority with Rochester's helpless and pitiable state was a calculated move on Brontë's part, designed to catch readers off-guard and challenge their preconceived notions about the nature of heroism. In this thesis, I will also explore this hypothesis in more detail, examining the ways in which Brontë crafted the novel's conclusion to subvert readers' expectations and create a bold new vision of feminist empowerment. First and foremost, it is important to note that Jane's superiority over Rochester at the novel's end is hardly a foregone conclusion. Throughout the book, Rochester is depicted as a dominant and commanding figure, capable of overpowering and manipulating those around him through sheer force of will. For example, Rochester engages in a gender game by dressing up as an elderly gypsy woman and asserting his ability to predict Jane's future. By doing so, he tried to manipulate Jane to marry him. Another example is that Rochester keeps the secret marriage of him with Bertha Mason who is mad and kept at the attic. By contrast, Jane is initially portrayed as weak and subservient, subject to the whims of her abusive guardians and the harsh realities of the Victorian social hierarchy. Yet despite these seemingly insurmountable obstacles, Jane is able to summon her resilience and forge a new path for herself, ultimately emerging as a powerful and self-assured woman with a clear sense of purpose.

It would be possible to argue that Jane's transformation was simply a natural progression of her character arc, and not necessarily intended to be surprising in and of itself. However, I believe that Brontë's use of dramatic irony throughout the novel points to a broader design on her part to upend readers' expectations. From the very beginning, Brontë sets up Rochester as the quintessential romantic hero, "Mr. Rochester in her eyes; a gentleman, a landed proprietor" (p.105), "Had he been a handsome, heroic-looking young gentleman" (p.113) complete with all the brooding intensity and enigmatic charm that readers of the time had come to expect. By contrast, she presents Jane as a plain and unremarkable governess, devoid of any of the shining qualities that typically adorn the romantic heroine. Yet as the novel progresses, Brontë

slowly but surely chips away at this image of Rochester as the ideal male figure. We learn of his past indiscretions and his dark secrets, which cast him in a decidedly less noble light. Meanwhile, Jane's strength and fortitude become more and more apparent, until she emerges as a true force to be reckoned with. As and when Rochester is left physically and emotionally shattered by the flames that destroy his home, he is no longer the hero readers thought they knew - and Jane, by contrast, has become a model of feminine power and resilience.

It is my firm belief that Charlotte Brontë did indeed intend to surprise readers with the conclusion of *Jane Eyre*. By juxtaposing Jane's newfound power and autonomy with Rochester's helplessness and weakness, she created a highly effective dramatic contrast that challenged readers to rethink their assumptions about gender and heroism. While some may argue that Jane's superiority over Rochester is simply the natural progression of her character, I see it as a bold and defiant final act, one that subverts expectations and firmly establishes Brontë as one of the great feminist voices of her time. As Emily Griesinger (2008) puts "Modern literary criticism has long recognized Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* as a pivotal text for feminists" (p.29), Charlotte Brontë effectively undermines the prevailing Victorian notion of femininity through the construction of a female protagonist, whose insatiable thirst for knowledge, audacious refusal to accept oppression, unwavering quest for independence, and unwavering pursuit of equality stand as a testament to her subversive brilliance.

The discerning reader may ponder as to why Charlotte Brontë has rendered Jane Eyre with an ending that showcases the protagonist's ascendance over the enigmatic Rochester. In a simpler way why does Charlotte Brontë end the novel *Jane Eyre* with Jane's superiority over Rochester? It is a matter that invites a nuanced interpretation, one that plunges into the depths of thematic and character profiling in the novel and contemplates an array of complex factors that converge to result in Jane's ultimate triumph. Charlotte Brontë has masterfully crafted a narrative that explores the complexities of love, power, and identity in a society that is bound by strict norms and conventions. The novel's conclusion, in particular, has been subject to significant critical debate and scrutiny. It is noteworthy that Brontë ends the novel with Jane's

superiority over Rochester, a decision that reflects the author's deep understanding of the themes she tackles in the book. The ending of *Jane Eyre* is significant because it highlights Jane's growth and development as a character throughout the story. Throughout the novel, Jane experiences a series of trials and tribulations, which test her resolve and force her to question the conventional expectations of her gender and social class. She rejects societal norms and expectations and instead follows her own moral compass. For example, Jane rejects to marry Rochester as they are not equal, or in her uncle's house, Jane rebels against John's bullying as man. Also at Lowood, she criticises the regardfulness which is shown to Brocklehurst's daughter by other teachers and employee. As a result, she emerges as a strong and empowered individual who is capable of making her own decisions and standing up for herself.

Moreover, the conclusion of the novel serves as a powerful critique of the patriarchal society in which Jane lives. According to Syring (2014) "When taking a look at the content of *Jane Eyre*, one may read it as a romance, in which Jane, the long-suffering heroine and the hero, Mr Rochester, who has brought suffering on himself, are finally reunited and married. However, it can also be interpreted as a novel that challenges and criticises power relations and class hierarchies" (p. 1). Rochester represents the epitome of male dominance, and Jane's rejection of him signifies her rejection of the societal norms that govern gender roles and relationships. Brontë's decision to have Jane choose her own path, separate from a romantic entanglement with Rochester, symbolizes her assertion of her own identity and her refusal to conform to societal expectations. Furthermore, the ending of *Jane Eyre* serves as a commentary on the importance of self-discovery and self-acceptance. Throughout the novel, Jane battles against her sense of self-worth and identity, but by the end, she has discovered her true self, and she is no longer dependent on a man's validation. In choosing to assert her independence, Jane asserts her own identity, and her superiority over Rochester conveys the importance of finding oneself and being true to oneself.

Charlotte Brontë's resolution to end *Jane Eyre* with Jane's superiority over Rochester is a testament to her astute understanding of the themes at play within the novel. It highlights Jane's advance and development as a character, critiques the patriarchal societal norms that govern gender roles and relationships, and emphasizes

the importance of self-discovery and acceptance. The novel's ending serves as a powerful statement on the value of individual identity and the importance of rejecting societal expectations in favour of personal empowerment and self-determination.

One wonders if Charlotte Brontë possessed a keen discernment of the nuanced conclusion wrought by her pen - namely, the unmistakable supremacy of her titular protagonist over the ill-fated Rochester. Such a contemplation speaks to the delicate craft of storytelling, one whose subtle implications oftentimes elude even the most perceptive of readers. The question of whether Charlotte Brontë was consciously informed about the ending of the novel which portrays how the power balance between Jane and Rochester shifted on behalf of her, remains a point of contention among literary scholars. To unravel this enigmatic query, it is essential to investigate the novel's intricate themes and contextual backdrop, against which the decision to end the story as such was made. The idea of Jane's superiority over Rochester and the implications it carries requires a nuanced approach. On one level, it is clear that throughout the novel, Jane is depicted as a character with a strong sense of self-awareness, principles, and independence. She refuses to be subservient to the male-dominated societal norms of her time, and instead, relies on her own judgment and morality. Meanwhile, Rochester serves as a complex character, initially depicted as an authoritative figure before losing his power and status through the revelation of his bigamy. It is in this light that the question of Jane's superiority arises.

There are various contextual elements that could have influenced Charlotte Brontë's decision to end the novel as she did. The feminist movement in the Victorian era marked a significant turning point in the fight for women's rights and gender equality. While the roots of feminism can be traced back to earlier periods, it was during the Victorian era (1837-1901) that feminist activism gained momentum and sparked important debates and changes. During this time, women faced numerous social, legal, and economic restrictions. They had limited access to education, were not allowed to vote, and were confined to traditional domestic roles. However, many women began to challenge these norms and advocate for their rights. Ignatius Nsaidzedze (2017) says that "Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* is the most feminist of all Victorian novels in which the "New-Woman" is well depicted. It has even been

described as a declaration of women's rights. The novel both in its own time and ours has seemed to express woman's rebellion against the limitation of her lot" (p.10). The feminist movement of the 19th century, in which Brontë was a participant, could have guided her choice to depict Jane as a strong, capable woman who surpasses the male characters in the novel. Women's main complaints throughout the Victorian era were over the vote and property rights. Other issues were those with the law, distinct domains, marriage and sex, the economy, prostitution, middle-class women, and intelligence. The idea of the 'New Woman' or "Feminism" emerged during this time, which emphasized women's power, independence, and freedom. The following literary works were hugely influential in the development of Victorian feminism. *Woman in the Nineteenth Century*, written by Margaret Fuller in 1845, served as a major source of inspiration for the American feminist movement. The first Victorian feminist novel, *Jane Eyre*, was published by Charlotte Brontë in 1847, while *Aurora Leigh*, the first and most feminist of all Victorian poetry, was published by Elizabeth Barrett Browning in 1857. George Eliot compared these two early proponents of literary feminism in her article "Margaret Fuller and Mary Wollstonecraft" from 1855. When John Stuart Mill's "On the Subjection of Women" was published, it became the most significant essay of the Victorian era and a major influence on Victorian feminism. Nsaidzedze (2017) informs that "Jane Eyre was the first major feminist novel "though there is not a hint in the book of any desire for political, legal, educational or even intellectual equality between the sexes". Rather he supports the idea that Jane merely wants recognition that both sexes are similar in "heart and spirit"" (as cited in Martin, 1966, p. 11). Therefore, this movement could have inspired Brontë to project such qualities onto her protagonist. In addition to this ideological dimension, we may look towards the literary technique employed by Brontë in concluding her story. Throughout the story, Jane is moulded by her experiences, shaping her into a wiser and more mature individual. The treatment in Reeds' home, friendship with Helen Burns at Lowood, job experience at Thornfield, fortune from her uncle, St. John's attitudes towards religion are some examples. Meanwhile, Rochester is shown to be a flawed character who must go through trials to learn from his mistakes like marrying Bertha Mason for her richness, having child from a singer in Paris, collapsing of Thornfield. Seen in this light, the

ending of the novel may be interpreted as a culmination of the characters' development, with Jane ultimately emerging as the completed and more fulfilled individual.

To conclude, while there is no definitive answer to whether Charlotte Brontë was acquainted with the superiority of her protagonist over the male characters in *Jane Eyre*, it is apparent that the novel's themes, context, and literary style could have all played a role in shaping the ending. Ultimately, the tale of *Jane Eyre* remains a masterpiece of literature that has inspired readers for generations and will continue to do so for years to come.



CHAPTER ONE: GENDER EQUALITY

1.1. Types of social status of people in Victorian Era

During the illustrious and storied Victorian era, the social fabric of society was meticulously woven with a tapestry of distinct and stratified hierarchies. A symphony of social statuses gracefully unfolded, defining the lives and aspirations of individuals throughout this era of great change and progress. Leonore Davidoff (1979) says:

The nineteenth century was the time when traditional social boundaries were being eclipsed by the rapid development of a market economy and the creation of a "class" society. All relationships including gender divisions were affected by these changes. During this period, class designations came to carry der overtones. The status characteristics associated with gentility, for example, differed for men and women; and the concepts hood and womanhood which are peculiar to the nineteenth century have very different resonances. (p.88)

Through the Victorian era, the social status of individuals was intricately tied to their birth, wealth, and occupation, emphasizing a strict hierarchical structure within society. This era, characterized by the supremacy of Queen Victoria, witnessed the prominence of class divisions and social stratification, which greatly influenced the lives of individuals. Concerning Charlotte Brontë's novel *Jane Eyre*, numerous examples showcase the variances in social status and the impact it has on the characters' lives.

The idea of societal hierarchy being interconnected, the concept of society divided into upper, middle, and lower groups, and the perception of society as a conflict between different groups have all coexisted since the late medieval period. During this time, England's society was seen as either a unified hierarchy, or as composed of warriors, priests, and workers, or as divided between landowners and peasants (Cannadine,1988). At the summit of the societal pyramid stood the noble class. Dignitaries and aristocrats, whose lineage traced back through generations of privilege and affluence, occupied this coveted echelon. Their opulent lifestyles, replete with sprawling estates, lavish parties, and access to influential networks, elevated them to the pinnacle of Victorian society. As custodians of tradition and purveyors of refined

culture, they wielded unparalleled power and held sway over the course of national affairs. In the novel, Brontë describes the characters belong to upper class who nod turbans, discuss politics and gallant speeches:

The Ladies Lynn and Ingram continued to consort in solemn conferences, where they nodded their two turbans at each other, and held up their four hands in confronting gestures of surprise, or mystery, or horror, according to the theme on which their gossip ran, like a pair of magnified puppets. Mild Mrs. Dent talked with goodnatured Mrs. Eshton; and the two sometimes bestowed a courteous word or smile on me. Sir George Lynn, Colonel Dent, and Mr. Eshton discussed politics, or county affairs, or justice business. Lord Ingram flirted with Amy Eshton; Louisa played and sang to and with one of the Messrs. Lynn; and Mary Ingram listened languidly to the gallant speeches of the other. (p. 188)

The character of Blanche Ingram serves as an exemplification of the pursuit of status and its consequences. Blanche, an attractive and affluent young woman, represents the societal expectations placed upon women during this era. Her beauty and wealth make her a desirable candidate for marriage, despite her lacking depth of character. Brontë uses Blanche as a commentary on the superficiality associated with the pursuit of higher social status, highlighting the inherent flaws within the system. Rochester and his aristocratic guests embody the pinnacle of high social status. Rochester is depicted as a wealthy and educated landowner, whose position of privilege grants him power, influence, and respect within society. The stark contrast in social status between Jane and Rochester accentuates the barriers that exist due to class distinctions during the Victorian era.

Directly beneath the nobility, the gentry embodied an exclusive and privileged social stratum. Benefiting from substantial inherited wealth and esteemed family names, these individuals enjoyed a lifestyle marked by elegance and refined tastes. With a focus on education, as Davidoff & Hall (2002) said “women's public participation in scientific and intellectual life were sometimes possible in the improving strongholds of the progressive and Dissenting middle class...” (p.444), they

were fervent patrons of the arts, contributing to the flourishing intellectual and artistic developments of the era. Their steadfast commitment to social graces and propriety propelled them onto the stages of high society, solidifying their position as the arbiters of taste and etiquette.

A notable contrast existed in the lives of the emerging middle class, who found themselves situated within a delicate balance of aspiration, ambition, and societal expectations. This burgeoning segment of society, comprising artisans, successful merchants, and skilled professionals, engaged in a tireless pursuit of upward mobility. Steadfast diligence, accompanied by unwavering commitment to education and moral rectitude, offered a gateway to attain greater social recognition and financial stability. Gradually, this upwardly mobile stratum increasingly coalesced into a vibrant and influential force, contributing significantly to the economic, cultural, and political landscape of the Victorian era.

Nestled within the broader social framework were the lower classes, a diverse amalgamation of individuals who toiled relentlessly to make ends meet. These hardworking individuals, comprising laborers, factory workers, and domestic servants, formed the backbone of Victorian society. Despite facing immense challenges and often enduring abysmal living conditions, they possessed unparalleled resilience and unyielding determination. As vital contributors to the industrial revolution, their contributions laid the foundation for future social reforms, as society gradually recognized the need for fairer treatment and improved living standards for all. One of the most prominent illustrations is through the protagonist Jane Eyre herself. Born into a lower social class, Jane experiences marginalization and struggles against the constraints imposed by her disadvantaged status. Her position as a governess further highlights her subordinate social standing when compared to the upper-class characters at Thornfield Hall. Bessie Lee and Abbot are maids employed at Gateshead Hall. Additionally, the character of Bertha Mason illuminates the consequences of societal prejudices and the exclusivity of the Victorian social hierarchy. Bertha, Rochester's mad and confined wife, is kept hidden away due to her mental illness. Her existence demonstrates the lengths to which the upper class will go to preserve their reputation, even at the expense of the wellbeing of an individual of lower social status.

Thus, the Victorian era could be characterized by a multifaceted tapestry of social statuses. From the lofty heights of aristocracy to the struggles of the working class, this era witnessed a complex interplay between aspirations, societal norms, and the relentless pursuit of progress. Nilay Erdem Ayyıldız (2017) depicts the era:

...behind Britain's shining face, there was trouble and anxiety, as well. One of its reasons was the growing imbalance among upper, middle and working classes, as a result of prospering middle class in contrast to the sinking working class. The differences among these social classes were evident in their life conditions. The upper class composed by the British aristocracy and gentry was wealthy and they played a significant role upon British politics. (pp.146-147)

The Victorian era was marked by a rigid social structure, where one's social status greatly impacted their opportunities, experiences, and interactions. *Jane Eyre* offers a nuanced portrayal of the various types of social status exhibited during this time, exemplifying the struggles and limitations faced by those lower in the class hierarchy, as well as the privileges and entitlements enjoyed by the upper class. Brontë's novel serves as a poignant critique of the social inequalities prevalent in Victorian society, inviting readers to reflect upon the consequences and complexities of social status. The echoes of these varied social strata continue to reverberate through the annals of history, serving as a reflection of the aspirations, challenges, and triumphs of a bygone era.

The central conflict in *Jane Eyre* can be viewed as an internal struggle to find balance between two opposing parts of her nature the wild and passionate side represented by Bertha Mason and the submissive and spiritual side represented by Helen Burns. Jane cannot achieve true inner harmony until she has eliminated the extreme elements of each aspect, thus enabling her to become a complete person. However, her struggle for balance is not only a personal journey but also a fight for her existence as a free and independent human being, outside of the restrictive male-controlled system that aims to have power over women's spirits, bodies, and minds. Jane's strong desire for autonomy and self-determination puts her at odds with the

prevailing nineteenth-century attitude towards women, which demanded that women conform to strict expectations of docility and obedience to patriarchal norms.

Jane Eyre's way of narrating the novel critically portrays the perception or how it is truly of social class in the 19th century Britain. Brontë successfully gives social positions to characters like the Reeds, Mr. Brocklehurst and Blanche Ingram in an unlikeable people appearance who reflect the social hierarchy in which generally they aren't rewarded or found as good people. Yildirim (2012) indicates that:

Victorian Britain, with its rigid gender roles, was a strictly patriarchal society where discrimination against women was a dogmatic practice... 'It was a society characterized by increasingly sharp category distinctions of gender and sexuality'. Victorian ideology of gender rested on the belief that women were both physically and intellectually the inferior sex. (p.46)

At this point we witness Jane's rebellion against the social hierarchy which is nourished from wealth and superiority of men in the society. Within the conception of social class, Brontë depicts the novel's themes like gender roles, patriarchy besides weakness and injustice.

1.2. Development of gender equality understanding in *Jane Eyre*.

In examining the persona of Jane Eyre, it is unmistakable that Charlotte Brontë has crafted a heroine who is acutely aware of her own desires and aspirations. Although some might view her as a passive or submissive figure, there can be no doubt that Jane is a woman who is constantly struggling to assert her own identity and to free herself from the constraints of a patriarchal society.

One of the key arguments of the novel is the idea of selfhood, and it is in this struggle for self-realization that Jane finds herself cast. Despite the fact that the many obstacles stand in her path, Jane is always conscious of her need to be free and to live her life on her own terms. Whether she is dealing with the oppressive demands of her cousin John Reed, the strictures of Victorian society, or the towering presence of Rochester, Jane is always striving to assert her own individuality and to avow her right to get the point "herself". At the same time, Jane is also very much aware of the dangers

that surround her. She knows that there are forces in her world that would seek to restrict her freedom, “therefore, she creates Jane Eyre as a strong woman character shifting the class barriers, in this context, the social and economic restrictions upon her” (Ayyıldız, 2017). Whether she is fleeing Rochester's mad wife in the attic or confronting her own feelings of insecurity and vulnerability, Jane is always facing down the spectre of death and danger, and yet she never loses her resolve or her determination to be free. *Jane Eyre* distinguishes itself from others as it portrays the female protagonist not as the traditional angelic, self-sacrificing figure but rather as a woman who values her independence and asserts her autonomy. In the novel, Jane's strength and heroic traits are showcased when she resolutely chooses to shun societal norms and refuse to become a mere object of a man's desire, as Sandra M. Gilbert (1988) argued “rebellious stepchild/orphan becomes the servant of a princely master, falls in love with him, and desires him intensely, even while finding herself used and abused by him” (p.358). This depicted rebellion is at once relatable and inspiring as it underscores the urgent need to redefine and reassess women's roles in society. Nevertheless, the novel is not solely a protest against the oppression of women but rather a thoughtful meditation on their condition. It does not seek to reject femininity completely but instead advocates for its redefinition and reconstruction to empower women (Zare, 1993). Of course, as a marginalized figure in Victorian society, Jane has also the consciousness of the many societal expectations and conventions that govern her life. She struggles with her lack of power and her inability to fit in with the norms and expectations of the world around her. Yet even in the face of these challenges, Jane remains a fiercely independent and assertive figure, always striving to break free from the limitations that society would impose upon her.

Overall, then, it is clear that Brontë's writing style is one that is deeply concerned with issues of identity and selfhood. She crafts a narrative that is both engaging and thought-provoking, and which challenges readers to consider the complexities of being a woman in a male-dominated world. Through her skilful use of language and imagery, she invites us to enter the world of Jane Eyre and to join her in her quest for freedom and self-realization. During the Victorian era, a prevailing belief permeated society, asserting that individuals were not inherently born with equal

worth. This notion spawned a divisive dynamic between those occupying high social standings and those who found themselves in the lower echelons of society. Men, particularly, were regarded as superior beings, while women were systematically treated as subservient and unequal counterparts. Jane, a woman entrenched within this societal fabric, bore the brunt of such discriminatory customs on a daily basis. Haiyan Gao (2013) argues the necessity of gender equality addressing Charlotte Brontë's aim:

People in Victorian age have the idea that people are not born equally, people in high rank despise people in low rank and men are superior to women. Consequently, women like Jane are treated unequally in every field. When Jane realizes the unfair situation, she rebels constantly for the basic right of equality. It well reflects Jane's resolution and persistence in struggle for self-realization..." (p.927).

However, she possessed an extraordinary awareness, which unveiled to her the inherent injustice she faced. This awakening catalysed an unwavering rebellion within Jane, a tireless pursuit for the fundamental right of equality. Her relentless defiance against the omnipresent inequality was a striking reflection of her resolute determination and inexorable will in her fight for self-realization as a feminist woman.

1.3. What kind of gender equality is there in *Jane Eyre*?

Jane receives Rochester's reprimand as a release and starts to behave to him as if they are equal and show close personal relationship by getting rid of the dialect and restrictions established by societal rules. Jane speaks to Rochester truthfully and sincerely, even this sometimes reaches nearly to the point of offence. Nevertheless, normally we expect Rochester to be offended but he appears to discover Jane's frank point of view inspirational. He every so often comments that her doings and viewpoints are, when Jane is considered, weird. Jane states herself in a way which looks like as if she is negating the strict teaching methods that she experienced during her educational development times. As their talks continue, they start to feel more comfortable near one another, a unique change happens in the content and the way of their dialogues. First, their conversation is mainly centred on societal criticism and scholarly thoughts, their reactions to each other develop obviously coquettish.

Although the subject of their conversations stays virtuous, the context of their talks goes to a way that are practically gayful chat in the novel:

“I thought not. And so you were waiting for your people when you sat on that stile?”

“For whom, sir?”

“For the men in green: it was a proper moonlight evening for them. Did I break through one of your rings, that you spread that damned ice on the causeway?”

I shook my head. “The men in green all forsook England a hundred years ago,” said I, speaking as seriously as he had done. (p. 122)

These kind of gayful chats go on all over the text, he ridicules her ethereal personality, and she responds with swift humour and nice spirit. These coquettish chats both work as the institute to societal fairness in their relations and act as a type of content setting. Though, instead of suffering from being restrained or limited, Jane discovers an amount of independence in voicing herself through her discussion with Rochester. In rejecting to present to the restrictions of conversation based on social classes and by lasting to participate in these kinds of evocative conversations with Rochester, Jane acquires a notch of independence which is similar to a somewhat different sexuality. She creates a perception of subjectiveness, and it stands obvious that Rochester considers the debate she presents like a societal arranger. When Bertha Mason is revealed as Rochester’s wife, Jane left destitute.

Witnessing Bertha Mason fact hardens Jane’s entrenched concern of letting herself be controlled by lovesickness. Previously in the book, once first recognizing her emotions for Rochester, Jane admonitions herself:

Look on your own accursed senselessness! It does good to no woman to be flattered by her superior, who cannot possibly intend to marry her; and it is madness in all women to let a secret love kindle within them, which, if unreturned and unknown, must devour the life that feeds it” (p. 161).

In her insightful exploration of marriage, Charlotte Brontë skilfully redefines the union as a confining and oppressive institution for individuals of all genders. Employing a

masterful utilization of gothic devices like locked down mad wife, obscure mason, fire, she artfully unveils the far-reaching repercussions of coverture, exposing marriage as a breeding ground for abuse and perpetuation of power imbalances. Lay (2015) notes the following:

Charlotte Brontë reframes marriage as an imprisoning institution for both genders. I concentrate on Brontë's uses of Gothic devices to expose the consequences of coverture, to expose marriage as an institution that fosters and perpetuates abuse, and to expose the devastating consequences of marriage on both husband and wife when divorce is legally difficult or impossible. Rochester's marriage to Bertha becomes a compelling argument against coverture, specifically for instances when spouses should be allowed to escape the confines of the institution. (p. 13)

Moreover, Brontë exposes the agonizing aftermath that ensues when divorce becomes a formidable legal obstacle, leaving both the husband and wife ensnared in a web of anguish. Particularly compelling in this regard is Rochester's ill-fated marriage to Bertha, which emerges as a compelling argument against the institution of coverture itself. Through this narrative, Brontë powerfully advocates for instances in which spouses should be granted the autonomy to liberate themselves from the confinements of an institution that relentlessly stifles their growth and well-being. By skilfully weaving together these themes, Brontë casts a piercing light on the devastating consequences that traditional marriage can inflict upon individuals, regardless of their gender, ultimately inviting readers to question the entrenched norms and limitations that society imposes in the name of matrimony. Right now, seeing this precise "madness" in Bertha Mason, she has really stared into the eyes of her ruins, of the one she can be if she lets herself descend a situation of surrendering to Rochester in any case, it can be even as his wife and even as his equivalent.

Rochester assesses Jane and Bertha in terms of their characteristics:

That is my wife...such is the sole conjugal embrace I am ever to know—such are the endearments which are to solace my leisure hours! And this is what I

wished to have...this young girl who stands so grave and quiet at the mouth of hell, looking collectedly at the gambols of a demon” (pp. 293-294).

On the contrary, we cannot say that Bertha Mason and Jane the governess are quite different as Rochester imagines. We remember that Jane was once locked down in the Red Room when she was with Reed family, it was because of her ardent rejection to accept masculine power of her cousin. Similarly, Bertha was locked down at the attic. Bahreldin Haroon Guma Abaker (2019) explain this connection:

“...Bertha, the madwoman in the attic whose state resembles Jane’s in the red room, is the dark side in the life of Rochester and the Victorian man. Readers strongly believe that Charlotte Bronte presents the character of Bertha as a symbol of the Victorian woman, who is considered as a “lesser” member of society, without rights of their own, that is to say, Victorian women were literary locked up from participating in a society which is dominated by men. (p.54)

Jane possesses her identifiable ability of address and her power of interacting with others limited by patriarchal authority of Mr. Brocklehurst who is in charge at Lowood. Besides being a probable image of what Jane could become, Bertha is an obvious reminder of the dreads of Jane’s own life.

The novel prompts us to question the limitations of gender-centric feminism and advocates for a broader understanding of equality that encompasses racial dimensions. By acknowledging the paradoxes and complexities within the text, we can further appreciate the profound social commentary that Brontë weaves into her work, driving us towards a more inclusive and progressive mindset. In deconstructing *Jane Eyre*, one cannot overlook the complex and subtle layers that contribute to its overall narrative. While the work may be perceived as a pioneering feminist text, an astute examination reveals the presence of Bertha Mason, the "hidden" woman behind the walls of Thornfield Hall, which poses a challenge to the covert feminist undercurrents within the story. Bertha's portrayal, primarily as a white working-class woman, simultaneously serves to undermine the notion of a unified feminist struggle (Reavis, 2005). When analysing the novel, it is imperative to acknowledge the intricate and

nuanced elements that contribute to its overarching narrative. Although often regarded as a groundbreaking feminist work, a meticulous analysis uncovers the existence of Bertha Mason, a concealed individual residing within the confines of Thornfield Hall, which presents a formidable obstacle to the covert feminist currents that run throughout the story. Bertha's depiction, particularly as a white woman of the working class, concurrently serves to undermine the concept of a unified feminist endeavour.

The marriage between Jane Eyre and Edward Rochester, which seemingly establishes a sense of gender equality by the novel's end, is inherently flawed by the expense of another woman - Bertha. Through the occurrence of an detained woman who serves as a mirror reflexion of Jane herself, Brontë forces the reader to confront the intrinsic differences in their racial backgrounds. It is this engagement with the absence of the West Indian woman that exposes the enigmatic nature of the liberal movement within *Jane Eyre*, compelling us to consider the need for a progressive racial movement and mindset as well. Far from detracting from the significance of the feminist struggle, the inclusion of Bertha Mason in the narrative serves as a catalyst for a more intricate analysis of power dynamics and intersectionality in the novel. By unravelling the layers of Brontë's portrayal, we come to realize that the victory achieved through Jane and Rochester's marriage is not a true triumph for all women, but rather a manifestation of privilege that perpetuates the marginalization of another.

CHAPTER TWO: SOCIAL INSTITUTIONS IN THE NOVEL

2.1. Analysis of family, education, religion institutions in the novel.

In the beginning of the novel, our protagonist Jane is presented as a someone who is fond of reading and not rebellious against family understanding of Victorian Era yet. Furthermore, this family is without a male patriarch, Jane is raised in this family whose patriarch is Mrs. Reed. Mrs. Reed headed her family without now showing motherhood or feminine traits. This situation makes Jane less willingness to portray her aunt from feminist perspective. Another interesting point is that we witness an absent personality, Uncle Reed. We cannot learn anything about how he is fond of Jane, if there is, or concern about Jane. This absent figure is only used by Mrs. Reed to punish Jane for her controversial behaviours. Especially, Uncle Reed's deathbed is the tool that is used as a punishment device. When Jane is confined in a chamber previously occupied by Jane's kind-hearted uncle, who held a prominent position within the family. The reason for this imprisonment seems to be a means to make Jane feel remorseful for her actions and induce a change in her behaviour through embarrassment. By placing her in the same hall once inhabited by the former father of the family, who handed Jane in the hearth and home, it is presumed that she will conform to societal norms once again. Axén (2016) puts the case for:

The chamber was previously occupied by Jane's benevolent uncle who used to be the head of the family. The reason for incarcerating the protagonist within this particular chamber is likely an attempt to make Jane atone for the error of her ways in shame; by detaining her in the residence of the former family patriarch, who brought her into the family, she is expected to revert to an acceptable behavior. (p. 4)

An enlightened analysis of this passage suggests that during the Victorian era, family institutions were strategically utilized to reinforce patriarchal values. The deliberate act of confining the protagonist within the chamber, once home to the influential male family head, seeks to highlight the power structures at play. By inducing Jane to atone for her transgressions within the confines of her ancestral household, which symbolizes male dominance, it becomes evident that traditional

family institution was employed as a mechanism to maintain patriarchal control in that era.

Other institutions occur in the novel are religion and morality. Brontë produces a wide sequence of different types of Christianity using different characters. In spite of the fact that these people are devotionally religious, their practicing or way of living of Christianity is different from each other. At the beginning of the novel, we meet Helen who shows malleable and passive sides of Christianity. Helen tells Jane about the New Testament and merciful God, but she has a belief that she must be patient against whatever happens to her. Jane cannot interiorize this passive way of Christianity; however, she learns a lot from it and Helen taught Jane how to control her feelings when it is necessary. Another character is Mr. Brocklehurst, who shows a hypocritical side of Christianity, and Brontë portrays him in a negative way by criticizing of this form of Christianity. Brocklehurst tries to talk about a God who only humiliates the poor people, but he closes his eyes to the way of living rich people. In other words, he behaves in a contradictory manner when we think about his philosophies. When we look at another religious character, St. John, it is similar to Helen's understanding of Christianity. He is hard and cold because of his Christianity teachings he learned. In order to achieve moral duty, St. John chooses to reject emotional fulfillment. On the other hand, Jane refuses to live such a religious life. But we cannot say that she abandons morality, spirituality, or faith in a Christian God. She only differentiates herself from the other way of religious beliefs, though she is faithful, she chooses a life which is independent from her religion.

Charlotte Brontë captivates readers with their compelling exploration of the intersection between Christian faith and the predicament of women within both religious institutions and broader society. Throughout their novels, Brontë skilfully merges a poignant portrayal of spiritual conviction with a searing critique of women's inequality. Notably, the female characters in their works often express their inner spiritual strength through visionary experiences, yet simultaneously expose the pervasive misogyny and oppressive authority within religious traditions using the same visionary lens. Scott (2016) observes that:

One trait of the Brontës' works that has made them so important for the last century and a half is that the novels bring together a poignant enactment of Christian faith with concerns about women's inequality in the religious institution and women's inequality in society as a whole... We see a bodily reaction from women in religious spaces throughout the novels. ... Women's marginalization from the institution is strongly conveyed through sensory reaction to space. Jane Eyre also critiques the religious institution through her depiction of religious spaces but does so through imagery. Jane describes her two main oppressors, Mr. Brocklehurst and St. John Rivers, in terms of the architectural images of the dark pillar and the white column. These images can be strongly linked to biblical tradition, yet they undercut both textual and architectural components of the religious institution by suggesting that these powerful men may assume an air of religious authority over Jane but their patriarchal power is superficial in comparison to God's empowering love. (pp. 241-242)

Jane Eyre, while echoing these concerns, takes a slightly different approach by using vivid imagery to critique the religious establishment. The eponymous protagonist associates her despots, Mr. Brocklehurst and St. John Rivers, with symbolic architectural elements: the "dark pillar" and the "white column" respectively. Drawing upon biblical symbolism within these descriptors, the novel subtly undermines both the textual and physical aspects of the religious institution. By contrasting Jane's patriarchal oppressors' ostensible religious authority with God's empowering love, Brontë asserts that the apparent power wielded by these men is but a superficial façade, ultimately eclipsed by the ineffable force of divine compassion. Through evocative sensory details, the Brontë effectively convey the plight of marginalized women within the religious institution. Brontë's work transcends the mere exploration of character and narrative, delving deep into the intricacies of faith, gender, and power dynamics. Her adept writing showcases a sophisticated analysis of the religious institutions of her time, effectively deconstructing the oppressive structures that perpetuated women's marginalization. By intertwining spiritual empowerment with critique, Brontë creates a lasting legacy that continues to resonate, compelling readers to question the inherent

inequalities within religious systems while appreciating the strength and resilience of women who navigate this complex terrain.

In this novel, we witness supernatural events and Brontë chooses to tell these events to form gothic scenes which contain mystery and qualm. Even though there are one maybe two supernatural events that Brontë can't explain or prefers not to explain, she picturizes many of the supernatural events as natural events. Rochester's voice reaching Jane across the miles is a supernatural occurrence that underscores the deep connection between the two characters. The fact that they are able to communicate and understand each other's thoughts and feelings without physical proximity emphasizes the spiritual and emotional bond that exists between them. This supernatural element adds a sense of magic and destiny to their union and suggests that their love is fated to be. Brown-Wheeler (2004) puts this situation as:

As radical as such an equitable conception of marriage was for the nineteenth century, it is fitting that such a partnership should be instigated on a supernatural level, with Rochester's voice reaching Jane across the miles. But the supernatural quality of their union ends there. In fact, the occurrence of Jane's marriage to Rochester is remarkable for its lack of the supernatural, especially on Jane's part (p. 74).

However, the supernatural quality of their marriage ends with Rochester's voice. In fact, the occurrence of Jane's marriage to Rochester is remarkable for its lack of the supernatural, especially on Jane's part. Jane is not a passive participant in her marriage but an active agent who makes her own decisions based on her values and beliefs. She does not rely on supernatural forces to guide her choices but instead relies on her own moral compass and sense of self-worth. She mostly tends to present reasonable reasons to supernatural events by connecting them to the natural causes. Furthermore, this makes supernatural things more ominous as they happened in the real setting, normally we expect them to happen in an imaginary world. The marriage between Jane, protagonist, and Rochester, antagonist, in *Jane Eyre* is remarkable for its equitable and radical nature, as well as its lack of reliance on supernatural forces. The supernatural element of Rochester's voice reaching Jane adds a layer of mystery and destiny to their

union, but ultimately it is Jane's agency and independence that define their relationship. By emphasizing personal choice and individualism, Brontë challenges the social norms and conventions of her time and creates a timeless story of love, self-discovery, and empowerment.

Another aspect that shapes the novel's progress is education, such that education is a way to obtain wealth and power in society; so, it will help them to live better life. It is very important factor for Brontë as she tries to tell the importance of education in the novel. Also, Brontë directs Jane to take adequate education. As we know, Jane has a poor economic situation and education is a safe way to harbour from asperity of the society she lives.

19th century Britain shows clear effects of Capitalism and Industrialization which bring intimidating conditions for working class. However, the Chartist movement rebels against these unfair working conditions, also Jane Eyre can be seen as an endorsement of this movement. The Chartist movement fights for equal rights of working class with wealthy class and of course better working conditions. In the meantime, it is possible to see Jane Eyre as a voice of oppressed people in 19th century. Correspondingly, Brontë's work tries to take attention to the middle class and women constitution, therefore Jane Eyre can be interpreted as "feminist manifesto". Her character sarcastically criticizes patriarchal society and women's position. However, the term Feminism was not widely known and was a new understanding. Brontë set against solid aspects of social hierarchy, women constitution and even the humbug of parts of Christianity in 19th century. It made this novel very controversial when it was published.

2.2. The striving of Jane Eyre to resist Victorian Institutions and Gender-associated Behavioural Basis in *Jane Eyre*.

Victorian women had been expected to accept their economic and societal situation in life and be thankful if marriage made it better. Furthermore, Victorian society interiorize the importance of women desiring and cherishing children. Victorian era accepts that maintaining virginity before marriage was crucial, and after childbirth, women were expected to adopt a saintly, Madonna-like quality. Lastly,

Victorian woman should appear apathetic about sex, unable to express desire or repulsion towards it. Jackson (2000) shows her thoughts about this issue by expressing:

A woman should accept her financial and social position in life and be pleased and grateful if marriage improved it. She should want and cherish children. It was of paramount importance for a woman to maintain her virginity before marriage, and then to cultivate a saintly, Madonna-like quality after the birth of her children. A Victorian woman should appear to be apathetic about sex, which meant she could express neither desire nor repulsion for the sexual act. (p. 3)

In the novel *Jane Eyre*, we can observe elements of these gendered behavioural norms. Jane Eyre, as a female protagonist, challenges some of the expectations placed upon women during the Victorian era. For instance, she does not conform to the traditional role of being solely focused on marriage and motherhood. Jane desires independence and seeks personal fulfilment, rather than relying solely on a man to improve her financial and social status. This defiance of societal norms is evident in her decision to reject marriage proposals that would compromise her personal values and sense of self. Furthermore, Jane's refusal to conform to conventional gender expectations is also reflected in her attitude towards sex. While she acknowledges her own desires and yearnings for emotional intimacy, she does not present herself as apathetic towards sexual desires. Jane's engagement with Rochester is characterized by a complex exploration of her own sexuality and her refusal to be defined solely by societal expectations.

Against John's trying to control Jane, Jane always holds out on his masculine threats, however, this situation is seen as feminine submissiveness that is not expected from a Victorian girl. As a result, Mrs. Reed comes to a decision to send Jane to Lowood School wherein only girls take education. Unfortunately, Jane here will have to deal with another patronizing masculine character Brocklehurst. Godfrey (2005) says that "Brontë carefully portrays Brocklehurst as one who, like the owners of mines, sees femininity as a construct afforded by the middle-class luxury and working-class androgyny as a necessary, though clearly distinct, part of the hierarchical social order" (p. 857). Lowood is a place where all the girls are expected to both physically and

socially be traditional feminine characteristics, so they need to leave behind their upper-class background. Because it is seen that femininity is an upper-class act, the way of dressing, conduct and attitudes which are not affordable for lower-class and luxuries. The girls at Lowood are trained and dressed like military staff in terms of their dress fashion. This strange situation is very remarking for Jane and she says:

A quaint assemblage they appeared, all with plain locks combed from their faces, not a curl visible; in brown dresses, made high and surrounded by a narrow tucker about the throat, with little pockets of holland ...tied in front of their frocks, and destined to serve the purpose of a work-bag: all, too, wearing woolen stockings and country-made shoes, fastened with brass buckles. Above twenty of those clad in this costume were full-grown girls, or rather young women; it suited them ill, and gave an air of oddity even to the prettiest. (pp. 46-47)

At Lowood, the girls are presented as if they are emotional robots, as they don't represent any feminine casual things, these things are all designed to be functional. Brontë portrays this school and environment with "plain", "brown", and "quaint" words, and she evokes readers to feel the school's likeliness to prison and undistinctive of the gender roles. Also, all the students' social class is removed, and we cannot see any dressings that marks their social class. Brocklehurst describes the school a place where all the girls will have cultivated humility and Christian characters. Indeed, Brocklehurst argues that these things are the necessary traits that the women are expected to have. "I should wish her to be brought up in a manner suiting her prospects...to be made useful, to be kept humble" (p. 34) Mrs. Reed confirms this thesis by adding this claim. Furthermore, Brocklehurst give instance by narrating his own daughter:

Oh, dear papa, how quiet and plain all the girls at Lowood look, with their hair combed behind their ears, and their long pinafores, and those little holland pockets outside their frocks—they are almost like poor people's children...they looked at my dress and mama's, as if they had never seen a silk gown before. (p 34)

We know that she didn't study at Lowood and this means that Brocklehurst interiorized this idea. To define what is "femininity" like something upper-class and middle-class women can obtain, some Brocklehurst minded men can describe women from working-class as opposite to it by isolating them from femininity and classifying these women in a divergent species. In his article, Godfrey (2005) says that "Brocklehurst seems to suggest that if class divisions were made impermeable, then the danger of gender ambiguity could be isolated, exploited, and controlled for middle class advantages" (p.867). From the begging of the novel, we see that the upper-class women are delineated as different human beings unlike Jane. Brontë correlate the beauty with upper-class and unfeminine traits with working-class, and this becomes impulse for Jane that she seeks self-assurance through the whole novel.

When we talk about the setting of the novel, especially Thornfield Hall, we can say that Brontë describes the estate as it is not modern Victorian manor. When Jane travels to there, she thinks that although it has Junoesque nature, it seems as if nobody know there is a building like this. This estate lives at memories of the past, has become old-fashioned by day by and it is used when Rochester is absent for long time. Also Mrs. Fairfax points out that:

It is a pretty place; but I fear it will be getting out of order, unless Mr. Rochester should take it into his head to come and reside her permanently—or at least, visit rather oftener. Great houses and fine grounds require the presence of the proprietor. (p.100).

When Rochester has gone for long trips, few servants stay there by neglecting many parts of the estate. Jane remarks the past's relics that many rooms have:

The furniture once appropriated to the lower apartments had from time to time been removed here, as fashions changed...bedsteads of a hundred years old...stools still more antiquated, on those whose cushioned tops were yet apparent traces of half-effaced embroideries, wrought by fingers that for two generations had been coffin-dust. All these relics gave to the third story of Thornfield Hall the aspect of a home of the past---a shrine of memory. (p. 105-106)

Brontë describes “the third floor” of the estate and this urges to feel images of eradication, in other words, eradication of feminine decorative. Although the estate belongs to masculine figure, the items described by Brontë show a kind of femininity fact, also embroidered cushions besides changing fashions are recognizable. Anyone may think that these stuffs belonged to upper-class women like girls from Brocklehurst family or Blanch Ingram. Furthermore, someone removed these stuffs from the other used things, and now “antiquated relics” have become stuff of the “shrine of memory.” During a foreshadowing moment, Brontë says “one would almost say that, if there were a ghost at Thornfield Hall, this would be its haunt” (p. 106). As readers we find the “shrine” is place where Bertha Mason has been locked up by Rochester.

Charlotte Brontë's efficacious work *Jane Eyre* is widely regarded as a landmark in feminist literature. For the reason that the novel is constructed upon telling the narrative of a young woman's exertion to assert her independence and achieve equality in a world dominated by patriarchal values. Despite this, it is possible to criticise that the novel reinforces gender stereotypes and ultimately undermines its own feminist message. At its core, *Jane Eyre* is a story about a woman's journey to find her place in a world that seeks to limit her potential. Throughout the novel, we see Jane confront numerous challenges and obstacles that are specific to her gender. From her abusive childhood to her struggles to assert her independence as an adult, Jane is forced to navigate a world that is hostile to women who seek to live life on their own terms. In many ways, Jane embodies the qualities of a feminist hero. She is intelligent, ambitious, and determined, and she refuses to be held back by the constraints of her gender. Her desire for independence and equality is evident from the beginning of the novel when she rejects the expectations that others have placed upon her and sets out to create her own destiny. The dramatic portrayals of marriage through the pantomimed and bigamous instances, and the revelation of Bertha's existence, strongly indicate that marriage is not a natural or immutable institution. The symbolism of the torn veil serves as a metaphor for the unravelling of the social construct that has been stitched together over time. The text loses its depth as Jane returns to Rochester, as Brontë restricts her characters to societal norms and traditional gender roles. It appears that Brontë lacks inspiration when it comes to exploring the possibilities of alternative

lifestyles beyond what is deemed "normal" in society. These limitations in the text draw attention to how restrictive societal norms can be in shaping individual lives and emotions (Zare,1993). However, it is criticized that Jane Eyre ultimately reinforces traditional gender roles and patriarchal values. They point to the novel's ending, in which Jane submits to Rochester's authority and becomes his wife, as evidence that the novel is not as feminist as it initially appears.

In this novel *Jane Eyre*, the central character, Jane, demonstrates a remarkable ability to restrain her thoughts and emotions regarding her beloved Rochester. One may ponder, how does she manage to do so? Interestingly, Jane's unwavering devotion to the principles of gender equality acts as a hindrance to her exhibition of passionate love for her suitor. Despite harbouring deep-seated feelings for Rochester, Jane's internal struggle to reconcile her heart and mind causes her to make some fateful choices that will undoubtedly impact her future and imaginary life. Notably, the revealing of Bertha Mason's existence constitutes a pivotal moment in the novel that dramatically influences Jane's sentiments for Rochester. Upon learning of Rochester's previous marriage and his mentally afflicted wife, Bertha, on their wedding day, Jane is forced to confront the harsh reality of Rochester's past. Consequently, she makes a wrenching decision to part ways with her beloved. One cannot help but be struck by the profound impact that Bertha's revelation has on the course of the narrative, the development of Jane's character, as well as the exploration of gender relations and social class in Victorian England. Grudin (1977) analyses this situation with supporting how Brontë fictionalizes the novel to be consistent for Jane's redlines and adds that when Jane makes her crucial decision and leaves Rochester, this message is clear in "her stated and unqualified rationale" (p.145) for behaving so, and it is implicit in the shape of the following action, which is designed to show that her decision was not a mistake. However, clarity is not "persuasiveness, and an argument that would forbid a romance as compelling as this one must be persuasive indeed" (p. 145). In condition that the outcome of the story, Jane's being rich, independent, marriage, and motherhood, shows the practicality of her initial choice, the effectiveness of the theory that emphasizes this decision is never verified. The novel never really "justifies its premises; it merely and flatly asserts that Jane is correct" (p.145). The arguments

unequalled rhetorical mode of *Jane Eyre*, modern readers would be made to accept a rather inconclusive and limited vision. However, Charlotte Brontë's thoughts on passion and restraint are not implicit to dictum and transparent parable as modes of expression (Grudin, 1977). According to Grudin (1977) the specific significance of her argument is such that it cannot be displayed with a literal way, and thus she feels obligation to present it figuratively "As the figurative representation of something unspeakable and as a projection of Jane's own dark potentials, Bertha is used to show why Jane must act as she does and why, despite the strength of opposing arguments and sympathies" (p. 145), Jane decides to leave her beloved man when his prior marriage is revealed. The intricate and nuanced complexities of the human psyche are often shrouded in a veil of mystery and ambiguity, rendering even the most astute of observers at a loss for adequate words to describe them. Such is the case of Jane, whose thoughts about Rochester have long been the subject of much speculation and study. How does she manage to restrain her thoughts about him, concealing her true emotions beneath a veneer of stoicism and restraint? While it is true that Jane harbours deep and abiding feelings for Rochester, there are certain factors that make it difficult for her to express these sentiments openly. For one, her legitimate obsession with equality between men and women has instilled in her a staunch commitment to egalitarianism, which compels her to suppress her more passionate feelings towards Rochester. This internal conflict between her mind and her heart often leaves Jane in a state of indecision, for she recognizes that the choices she makes will have far-reaching consequences on her future and imaginary life. At the centre of the concern, lies the dispute of independence and equality between Jane and Rochester, a fact that must be explored with great depth and rigor. It is this very fact that constitutes an obstacle to the beloved couple's becoming one flesh. Prior to their marriage decision, Jane has already exhibited a dignified stance, acknowledging the need for them to be true to their individual selves, come what may. Such is the nature of their relationship, fraught with a delicate balance of competing interests, that requires both parties to exercise utmost caution and respect, lest they jeopardize the fragile bond that unites them. Brontë (2008):

Do you think, because I am poor, obscure, plain, and little, I am soulless and heartless? You think wrong!—I have as much soul as you,—and full as much heart! And if God had gifted me with some beauty and much wealth, I should have made it as hard for you to leave me, as it is now for me to leave you. I am not talking to you now through the medium of custom, conventionalities, nor even of mortal flesh;—it is my spirit that addresses your spirit; just as if both had passed through the grave, and we stood at God’s feet, equal,—as we are!(p. 253).

It is with a measure of regretful observation that it must be stated that the aforementioned point went amiss in the argument, and the fault may rightly be attributed to Rochester. Invoking this pertinent quotation, lends his staunch support to the stringent principles enshrined in the Jane Right Act (Pell, 1977). He avers that the depth and profundity of fervent emotion transcends the confines of a feckless communal understanding. He posits, however, that in the aftermath of moments of felicity, Jane's perception tends to be somewhat blurred, as if perceiving only a sliver of truth. Notwithstanding the foregoing, the disclosure of Rochester's bigamous escapades brings about a seismic shift in Jane's estimations, yet it does not impinge on the fervor of her love for him. Instead, it serves to underscore the intransigence of social stratification and the unbridled power it exerts over even the most ardent of devotions. Pell (1977), thus, asserts that this is a manifest example of the abject hegemony of “social position exerts over even the most passionate devotion” (p. 409). The inadmissible circumstance at hand had left Jane with little recourse. In order to align herself with the core tenets set forth by Brontë within the novel, Jane deemed it necessary to undertake a decisive course of action. It was imperative that she not contradict the prevailing themes and underlying messages imbued within the narrative. As such, Jane made a judicious choice borne out of a desire to preserve the sanctity of the novel's message. In her insightful analyses, astutely explores the causal nuances of the tumultuous events set forth by Bertha Mason in *Thornfield* (Pell, 1977). Indeed, the abrupt and cataclysmic revelation of her existence should not be solely credited as the root cause of the subsequent disturbances. Rather, Pell (Pell, 1977) illuminates a broader, societal context wherein countless women - as Charlotte ingeniously portrays

- are ensnared by inescapable oppressions (p. 419). As if personified, Bertha serves as a haunting metaphor for the plight of these women, perceived undoubtedly as socially dead and bereft of any agency. Yet, in defiance of such constraints, Bertha asserts herself by audaciously wreaking havoc within the confined parameters of her husband's estate. Inexplicably driven to undermine her oppressor, Bertha attempts to immolate her husband in his own bed, destroys Jane's wedding veil and, in a final act of defiance, ignites Thornfield to the ground. Therefore, in presenting Bertha as a marginalized figure, perpetually denied of her rightful agency, Pell (1977) provides us with a profound insight into the feminist dimensions of Brontë's undeniably revolutionary work. In examining the moral rationale behind Jane's departure from Thornfield and Rochester, it is pertinent to take into account the prevailing norms of Victorian society and the overarching ideals of Christianity. As posited by Grudin (1977), the impetus behind Jane's decision is unequivocal. While she is inevitably tethered to Rochester through the threads of romantic love, sexual passion, empathy for his plight, and anxiety over his fate, she determines that an obligation to depart looms in order to uphold what is right. The dichotomy between affinity and penitence is finally resolved upon the foundation of principle, showcasing the presence of an orthodox Christian conscience within Jane. Hence, the interplay of moral considerations and religious beliefs fuse together to effectuate Jane's ultimate act of self-denial (Grudin, 1977). In the face of insurmountable struggles to extricate herself from her dire straits, the protagonist arrived at the sobering realization that her adherence to divine tenets, ordained by mortal authorities, was non-negotiable. Consequently, her resolve to follow a righteous path, dictated by God's sacred edicts, prompted her to embark on a journey away from Rochester. The immutable mandate, unequivocally forbidding adultery, even when one's predicament suggests a possible exemption, remained a steadfast deterrent, underscoring the gravity of the protagonist's decision.

On the surface, the ending of the novel does seem to contradict Jane's earlier assertions of independence and self-determination. However, it is important to consider the context in which the novel was written. Charlotte Brontë was a woman living in Victorian England, a time when marriage was often seen as the only viable

option for women who wanted to achieve social and economic security. In this sense, the ending of the novel can be seen as a realistic portrayal of the limitations that women faced during this time period. At the same time, it is important to acknowledge the ways in which the novel does perpetuate gender stereotypes. Throughout the novel, we see Jane portrayed as a passive and emotional character, particularly in her interactions with Rochester. While this may be seen as a reflection of the societal norms of the time, it nonetheless reinforces the idea that women are irrational and emotional beings who must be controlled by men.



CHAPTER THREE: CRITICISM ON PATRIARCHAL SOCIETY

3.1. How does it undermine the prevailing power structures of men over women in Victorian Era?

With her novel, *Jane Eyre*, Brontë represents feminine strength and independence as Rochester and Jane are finally married and they are equals in the end. Jane is no more Rochester's mistress. Jane tries to be equal in terms of independence and wealth, furthermore her claim is not to be depended on Rochester. When we get the end of the novel, gender roles somehow become reversed, and Rochester became needy-indigent person:

I know no weariness of my Edward's society: he knows none of mine, any more than we each do of the pulsation of the heart that beats in our separate bosoms; consequently, we are ever together. To be together is for us to be at once as free as in solitude, as gay as in company" (p. 450).

All through the novel, Brontë struggles to find some ways to get rid of dominant male figures who show offensive manner abandon her morals and feelings. Every male character Jane met in the novel acts dominant and controlling way to execute male power on Jane as a woman. These facts can be said the way that Brontë challenges this man centric culture through the character of Jane makes the novel satirical and disparaging of the job of ladies in the nineteenth century. Jane stands out against pessimistic John Reed and thereby religious insincerity. Also, Jane stands out against to be mistress of Rochester since his behaviours are very rude for her. Jane's struggle doesn't end, and she rejects a stony-hearted marriage with St John Rivers, thus this marriage can only be a rape. Finally, Jane marries Rochester because she finds him as her equal, since, at the novel's ending, Rochester becomes vastly depended on Jane as a result of the accident. In her journey towards self-realization, Jane not only seeks emotional fulfilment but also strives for financial independence. By pursuing her own professional success, she empowers herself to contribute on an equal footing within her ultimate marriage to Rochester. This intention to generate her own wealth signals a remarkable departure from the societal conventions of the era, where women were often confined to economic dependence on their husbands. The androgynous portrayal

of Jane Eyre as an intellectual equal to both Rochester and St. John Rivers demonstrates her transcendence of gender boundaries and societal expectations. Her attainment of financial independence serves as a catalyst in fostering a union built on equality, emphasizing the subversion of traditional power imbalances and offering a profound critique of gender roles within the framework of marriage (Kuhn, 2013). Jane shows very great efforts against these male characters who represent commonly dominant notion of Victorian age.

Brontë first introduce Jane to reader while she was hiding herself, from the danger of her cousin John, behind the curtains. The window is an opening door to outside world for Jane. Jane describes these lines; “Folds of scarlet drapery shut in my view to the right hand; to the left were the clear panes of glass, protecting but not separating me from the drear November day” (p. 8). Brontë uses this part to show reader how Jane has consolation to escape from rigid wealth home states to unrevealed freedom of the outside world. But it is always ruined by John who is the first instance of masculinity we see in the novel. It is obvious that he is far away from being gentlemen of Victorian Era. Besides, John uses his male strength over Jane with insane force by claiming his ineluctable ownership of the house. He always states this situation to establish his hegemony in the house because of being only male inheritor. Also, we can see that he feels the joy of setting obstacles to Jane. Jane cannot access anything freely in the Reed estate. John says:

You have no business to take our books: you are a dependent, mama says; 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, and wear clothes at our mama’s expense. Now, I’ll teach you to rummage my bookshelves: for they are mine; the entire house belongs to me, or will do in a few years. Go and stand by the door, out of the way of the mirror and the windows. (pp. 10-11)

Jane has two few pleasures; one is expectation of freedom which is enabled by the window, and second one is the mirror that shows a reflection who is the only friend in the Reeds estate. In another word, freedom waits Jane in the outside world and

trustworthy self-reflection. However, John wishes to stand between Jane and her two humble pleasures. Brontë show us John as first man that uses masculinity to deprive Jane of the things she wants to have. But, of course, he will be not the last. Nonetheless, Jane is not affected by John's states, masculinity, wealthy or social status. She goes one a step further and says, "You are like a murderer—you are like a slave-driver—you are like the Roman emperors!" (p.11). Jane accuses John being a tyrant human being. This discourse shows us that masculine power is not the thing, on the contrary, Jane's secret reading indicates that she cares about intellectual power and wisdom. So, she continues to read secretly.

In *Jane Eyre*, author Charlotte Brontë crafts a narrative where various male personalities, including John Reed from Gateshead Hall, Reverend Brocklehurst from Lowood, Edward Rochester from Thornfield, and St. John Rivers from Moore House, can be seen as symbolically seeking to subjugate Jane and assert their dominance. It is clear from these comments by Cybulski (1999):

John Reed, Reverend Brocklehurst, Edward Rochester, and St. John Rivers each make an attempt on Jane's life from which they hope to derive some energy transfer which validates their dominance and masculinity by metaphorically killing Jane into intellectual, physical, emotional, or spiritual submission, thereby redefining her active, intelligent, and passionate self as silent, submissive and passive. (p. 40)

Intriguingly, their attempts at suppressing her spirit manifest in different forms, aiming to rob her of her vitality in intellectual, physical, emotional, or even spiritual realms. By metaphorically attempting to render Jane passive and submissive, they endeavour to redefine her once active, intelligent, and passionate self as one that abides in silence and meekness. This underlying theme not only reflects the societal expectations placed upon women during the era in which Brontë wrote, but also delves into the complex dynamics between gender and power.

Rochester starts to summon Jane more often, requesting her corporation on the pretext of a longing for encouraging discussion as their "friendship" grows. He claims, "I'm not fond of the prattle of children...nor do I particularly affect simpleminded old

ladies...I am disposed to be gregarious and communicative tonight...it would please me to draw you out – to learn more of you—therefore speak” (p. 129). In Spite Of his absence of curiosity in societal standards or rules, he even does employ his status of authority over Jane to intimidate her into communicating with him, because Rochester is her master, and she is obliged by nice practices to join to him. But, by claiming authority, Rochester thinks that his being above her is not realistic in societal terms, rather in the big differentness concerning their life knowledges. To make himself clear he says “I do not wish to treat you like an inferior: that is (correcting himself), I claim only such superiority as must result from twenty years’ difference in age” (p. 133). In the novel, the concept of experiential knowledge is valuable when it is compared with societal or financial position, and it turn out to be a great balancer for Jane and Rochester, since their wishes for one another requires a link between their divergences in order to be reasonable:

The Lowood constraint still clings to you somewhat; controlling your features, muffling your voice, and restricting your limbs; 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 with me, as I find it impossible to be conventional with you; 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. (p. 138)

Rochester reaches the conclusion of difficulty to be traditional against Jane, he stops the socially created obstacles between “master” and servant to carry out honest conversations with Jane. There is a perception that when we start a conversation with someone it needs to consider a societal hierarchy. Furthermore, there are subjects and behaviours of language that are limited to one class or between men of the same social class. Obviously, in this speaking, Rochester is really suggesting Jane to be more open and normal against him.

3.2. Expectations from female society of Victorian Era.

During the Victorian Era, it was very hard to fulfil their personal achievement both psychologically and intellectually. Zare (1993) contends that:

...rendering the thoughts of characters with a new psychological depth, especially the feelings of women in this period who struggled with a sense of inferiority, who had confusion about desires which conflict with their socially constructed role, and who needed the love of men to provide them with social status and economic survival.” (p. 204).

The world portrayed in the novel accurately reflects the world of nineteenth-century women. These women were brought up in a society that expected them to sacrifice their will to fulfil the desires of men. This expectation was strictly adhered to, and women rarely challenged it openly as it was the only path to marriage, maternity, and security. Women were prohibited from owning property, holding professional positions, or traveling alone. Education was limited to developing skills that could please a husband and were considered respectable in society. Unfortunately, these accomplishments involved little intellectual stimulation, independence, or free thinking (Cybulski, 199). The creation of virtues such as modesty, gracefulness, purity, delicacy, and so on contributed to the angelic image of women, perpetuated by the patriarchy. Women were expected to read in genres that reinforced social norms and only placed in positions to ensure the continuity of these ideals. The paradoxical status of women was that despite being in a subservient role, they were elevated as idols and revered for their chaste perfection.

While Jane's fight for equality is evident throughout the novel, her fulfilment and creativity seem to diminish in the latter parts. The narrative of her marriage to Rochester is presented in a matter-of-fact tone, with a hurried return of his partial vision and the sudden birth of their child. This brevity implies a lack of enthusiasm or joy, making the life at Ferndean seem claustrophobic instead of effulgent. Jane's inability to describe her married life in a tapestry of words, as she did in the earlier parts of the novel, further reinforces the idea that a woman's communication may cease once she becomes a wife. Zare (1993) makes the point that:

It takes only a few paragraphs for Rochester to gain back part of his vision and for Jane to bear a baby, and this shrinking time frame, with its matter-of-fact tone, implies a shrinking of fulfilment and creativity - life at Ferndean feels claustrophobic rather than effulgent. It is telling that Jane does not create a tapestry of words to describe her married life. In the pattern of most eighteenth-century heroines, once she is wed her communication stops. The disturbing suggestion is that once women are wives, they do not see their experiences as individuated enough to merit description. (p. 213)

In this literary passage, we witness a compressed narrative of pivotal life events for the two protagonists in the story. The brevity of the description, coupled with the objective, almost indifferent, tone conveys a sense of diminishment of their potential and vitality. Life at Ferndean is portrayed as oppressive rather than radiant, and this portrayal is reinforced by the absence of embellishment and lyricism in Jane's account of her marital life. This suppression of her voice in the aftermath of her marriage is consistent with the prevailing pattern of eighteenth-century female characters, whose agency and self-expression were often subjugated to their marital role. The disturbing implication here is that once women assume the role of wives, their lived experiences become homogenized and undifferentiated, lacking the depth and complexity that warrants verbal articulation. Such an observation poignantly suggests a bleak and fatalistic outlook regarding the limits of female identity beyond the institution of marriage. This disturbing implication emphasizes the societal expectations placed on women to conform to traditional motherhood roles, even if they fight against gender inequality in other aspects of their lives.

The act of veiling one's face carries profound symbolism, as it represents not only a physical covering but also a metaphorical concealment of the true essence of the self. In the novel *Jane Eyre*, the character of Rochester seeks to veil Jane's face with an ostentatious display of artificial grandeur on their illusory wedding day. Isbell (1997) puts that:

Veiling the face is tantamount to hiding the self. Rochester wants to veil Jane's face with artificial grandeur on their artificial wedding day. Jane, however,

prefers a plain veil for her plain face and self. Through Rochester's attempts to decorate Jane with jewels and fine clothes, Brontë shows how Victorian men view marriage as an act of appropriating a woman as a possession. Jane is regarded as plain by conventional standards, but Rochester determines that she will be a beauty. Jane recalls his declarations to transform her through his power. (pp. 182-183)

However, Jane resolutely desires a simple veil that mirrors her unadorned countenance and authentic self. By Rochester's relentless efforts to adorn Jane with precious jewels and extravagant garments, Brontë deftly illustrates the prevailing Victorian mindset that perceives marriage as an opportunity for men to assert dominance and possess a woman as mere property. Rochester tells his intention by saying "I will myself put the diamond chain round your neck, and the circlet on your forehead,—which it will become: for nature, at least, has stamped her patent of nobility on this brow, Jane..." (p. 259) and he continues with "I will make the world acknowledge you a beauty, too... will attire my Jane in satin and lace, and she shall have roses in her hair; and I will cover the head I love best with a priceless veil" (p. 259). Although society deems Jane as plain according to conventional standards, Rochester takes it upon himself to decree her transformation into a vision of beauty. These declarations and attempts made by Rochester to shape and mould Jane serve as poignant reminders of the extent to which men of that era wielded their power to redefine and assert authority over women's lives.

3.3. Portrayal of Women as Others

In today's context, we can evaluate Jane Eyre with post-colonial perspective by focusing on Bertha Mason who is victim 'Indian Creole' of British colonization and imperialism. She was forced to marry Rochester who was from very different culture and country, also she was compelled to move from her home country. The critics that criticize Jane Eyre from Post-colonial perspective argue that racist ideology demonized Bertha Mason by keeping her behind the locked doors only because she was from different culture, not being mad. By endowing Bertha, the character with a Creole background, with perceived feminine flaws and juxtaposing them with Jane's

supposed British virtues, Brontë adeptly unveils her superiority (and by extension, English women in general) in overcoming these shortcomings. In this deft manner, Brontë adeptly challenges the prevailing patriarchal notions within her society regarding women's presumed tendencies towards intellectual, emotional, and ethical frailties (Dietrich, 2005). It never hurts to say that British colonialism devastated Bertha's life and it is a symbol according to post-colonial criticism. Also, Jane and Rochester's marriage is fulsome racism as Bertha Mason's displacement enabled them to marry. Being both 'Feminist Manifesto' and exposé of English Colonialism, Jane Eyre was challenger against patriarchal society of England, and it brought about wide controversial criticism and immense compliment.

Accepting that Rochester has never previously employed the influence of his fortune and fame, in other word, his family tittle and prosperity would be awkward. Rochester confesses that he had practiced his prosperity and social classes in order to entice Celine Varens, who is an opera singer in Paris, and we can accept that also the marriage between Rochester and Bertha Mason was planned by using his fame. As I said in these examples, he was seduced and manipulated unkindly by persuading him to be reluctant about using his power against Jane, and it is very reasonable in his search of a rightful and truthful relation with Jane. Nevertheless, he cannot completely disguise the dark things he lived before from Jane. In a deftly crafted linguistic composition, Jane posits a counterargument to Rochester's French mistress, who had eagerly agreed to receive board and lodging in exchange for a sexual relationship. As a paragon of English virtue, Jane takes pride in her innate sense of morality, independence, and sexual equality, and refuses to be compromised by yielding to Rochester's material incentives. Thomas (2016) argues how Jane portrays Celine as other and says:

Jane argues that, unlike Rochester's French former mistress, she will not accept board and lodging in Rochester's home while having a sexual relationship with him. As an English woman, she will continue to work as a governess even though they are now in love. In these few sentences, Jane ties her morality, independence, and sexual equality to her Englishness. She creates an English woman/French woman binary that asserts the English woman's moral

superiority in contrast to French women; this English moral superiority then forms the basis for the English woman's independence and sexual equality (p.1)

In so doing, she draws a sharp dichotomy between the English and French sensibilities. By asserting the moral superiority of the former, Jane affirms her own integrity, and her right to a life of empowered independence and gender equality, even in the face of love.

On every occasion the conversations between Jane and Rochester turn in the direction of physicality or to the ambiguous "pleasures" that he often mentions to, they turn out to be far less private in their wordplay and space themselves till they move back to the protection of customs. Rochester repetitively turns their naughty chat into these nastier, more erotic areas, nearly a kind of spoken caressing. Afterward Rochester initiates commenting about ambiguous "sweet, fresh pleasures" which he is enthusiastic to acquire, and he says:

It is not its cure. Reformation may be its cure; and I could reform—I have strength yet for that—if—but where is the use of thinking of it, hampered, burdened, cursed as I am? Besides, since happiness is irrevocably denied me, I have a right to get pleasure out of life: and I will get it, cost what it may. (p. 136)

He maybe foreshadows the loss of his house and prosperity so that he can rightfully chase her. She sanctuaries into customs to prevent the conversation that is quickly developing more romantic and sophisticated than she was trained before to talk about. She responds, "To speak the truth, sir, I don't understand you at all; I cannot keep up the conversation, because it has got out of my depth" (p. 136). Although she discovers pleasure in engaging openly and fairly with Rochester, as the discussion turns to stuffs that she is unacquainted or inexperienced with, she starts to sense lower beneath the supremacy of experience that Rochester radiates and moves back to the modesty she was accustomed to states.

We can learn Bertha Mason's background only through Rochester's anecdotes of doubtful consistency, he introduces us with a weird picture of utter oppression

merged with utter independence. His wife is rough and unfettered, “whether beast or human being, one could not, at first sight, tell: it grovelled, seemingly, on all fours; it snatched and growled like some strange wild animal: but it was covered in clothing, and a quantity of dark, grizzled hair, wild as a mane, hid its head and face” (p.293). She is obviously free of charge from any public concerns or demands, as she is further like an animal than human being in her actions and clothing. Nonetheless, she is restricted and imprisoned in the attic, deprived of all individual freedoms and independence, handled as if she is an animal, too. She has no influence of speaking and this is probable frightening to Jane. Bertha cannot express her thoughts or feelings; she just snarls and assaults physically to Rochester with a rough manly power.

The underlying principle of the novel that suggests that man-sanctioned principles do not persist merely through thoughtless repetition. It achieves this analysis by specifically focusing on the character of Bertha and her portrayal in the novel. Ultimately, it argues that when a woman violates the sexual norms established by society, she risks falling into a dangerous and unredeemable abyss. Grudin (1977) describes this as:

The novel insists that principles "sanctioned by man" do not persist simply out of mindless repetition. Through the figure of Bertha this book insists that when a woman moves beyond the parameters society has established for sexual behavior, she steps off into an abyss, or, as Jane puts it in speaking of unrequited love, she follows an ignis fatuus into ". . . miry wilds, whence there is no extrication". (p. 155)

The use of Bertha as a figure is particularly significant in this analysis because she challenges the established gender roles of the Victorian era when the novel is penned. By breaking free of the social conventions that dictate her behaviour, she is seen as stepping into the unknown, as is vividly described through the reference to the "abyss" and "miry wilds". The comparison to Jane's experience of unrequited love through an "ignis fatuus" underscores the danger and futility of any attempt to break free of societal norms. On the whole, this paragraph offers a nuanced analysis of the themes and ideas presented in the novel, specifically regarding the challenges women face

when they attempt to challenge the established gender roles of society. It suggests that the consequences of such challenges are often severe, and that society's expectations cannot easily be overthrown.

3.4 Hypocrisy of Patriarchy

In real life, the person, who is responsible for charity works, is expected to be helpful gentleman, but surprisingly, Brocklehurst is not helpful towards Jane. Even he isolated Jane from the others, and he doesn't allow them to speak with Jane which dispossesses Jane's ability of speaking. This means that Brocklehurst, just like John, tries to prove his masculine dominance over Jane. Unexpectedly, to be respected Brocklehurst relies on his power which is granted by his social class thanks to be wealthy man, but as a normal person he should have got respect and appreciation because of his wisdom or experience, and this can be appealing for the girls at Lowood. Brontë picturizes Brocklehurst an awkward complex; when he sees a girl with wavy hair he says "Naturally! Yes, but we are not to conform to nature... I have again and again intimated that I desire the hair to be arranged closely, modestly, plainly. Miss Temple, that girl's hair must be cut off entirely" (Brontë 64). This statement shows that while Brocklehurst should praise God's will, he wants to change what God created naturally. Once again Brontë reveals Brocklehurst's humbug, by compelling him to make concessions from religious standards for his trying to desexualize these girls at Lowood and eliminate the possibility of tempting the wealthy men in upper-class.

The inescapable truth encapsulated within these sentiments is undeniably profound. Should Jane decide to unite with Rochester in matrimony, she would witness the gradual erosion of her subjective essence, ultimately metamorphosing into a mere extension of her husband. According to Cybulski (1999), in marrying Rochester Jane's subjective self will die as she becomes a mere extension of her husband. Rochester furthers his aim of consuming Jane's true identity by purchasing and fettering her with expensive jewels and clothes (p. 55). Rochester, with relentless determination, actively perpetuates this consuming process, firmly imprisoning Jane's authentic identity by indulging her with opulent jewels and ravishing garments that both serve as shackles and symbols of his possessive dominance. The implications of such a union go far

beyond surface appearances, delving into the intricate dynamics of power, autonomy, and the profound sacrifices one may be coerced into making in the name of love.

As their capability of talking so honestly with each other is a good balancer in their relationship, Rochester's fraud, which is the hiding of Bertha in the upper floor, occurs as an unbelievable shock for Jane and causes a disparity in their relationship:

Oh, never more could I turn to him; for faith was blighted—confidence destroyed! Mr. Rochester was not to me what he had been; for he was not what I had thought him. I would not ascribe vice to him; I would not say he had betrayed me; but the attribute of stainless truth was gone from his idea". (p. 296)

Rochester constantly argues to wish Jane to voice her independence and free herself, but he recently struggles to persuade her staying with him and to compel her to stay in the prison which Thornfield and Bertha stand for him. By his despair and anger, he converts to somewhat like John Reed and Brocklehurst, insulting her and trying to remove her liberty so as to preserve his manly power. He returns back to orthodox language, "Jane, you understand what I want of you? Just this promise—I will be yours, Mr. Rochester." Jane reacts back dramatically "Mr. Rochester, I will not be yours" (p. 316) because he has neglected the tongue of equality and shared admiration for evoking masculine proprietorship and power on her in order to stop her employing her independence. Despite the fact that she refutes that she even now loves Rochester at all, the disparity in equivalence and knowledge is not henceforward the thing which she can use as a bridge between them.

3.5 How does Brontë portray Rochester as the product of a patriarchal society?

Jane is very curious character and she ask some question about Rochester to Mrs. Fairfax because she hasn't met Rochester yet. Mrs. Fairfax tries to talk about him by regarding social status of Rochester and says "The family have always been respected here. Almost all the land in this neighborhood, as far as you can see, has belonged to the Rochesters time out of mind." (p.104). But Jane is unconcerned with neither his social traditions nor conventions. On the contrary, she wants to learn his personality or individuality not about Rochester's social markers. Jane answers "Well,

but leaving his land out of the question, do you like him? Is he liked for himself? [...] What, in short, is his character?" (p. 105). In most of Victorian novels, women give importance to a man's wealth, physical appearances and social conventions. However, Jane is not interested in Rochester's social status, and it is opposite of typical Victorian women. Brontë depicts Jane as an unimpressed girl from social borders of upper-class, as they hinder to reach equality spiritually and intellectually. These are the things she always searches for. Jane tries to describe her thoughts:

There are people who seem to have no notion for sketching a character, or observing and describing salient points, either in persons or things: the good lady evidently belonged to this class; my queries puzzled but did not draw her out. Mr. Rochester was Mr. Rochester in her eyes; a gentleman, a landed proprietor— nothing more: she inquired and searched no further, and evidently wondered at my wish to gain a more definite notion of his identity. (p. 105)

By this description the identity of Rochester and his social ranking, Brontë opposes the Victorian understanding about a man's wealth and status when it comes to choose a husband.

If the estate is a "shrine" or a jail has still to be noticed by Jane, but its gothic, virtually funereal ambience is obvious. The estate is a natural indication of generations of public standards and accessories long neglected, inherited by generations to its existing landlord, Rochester. It's obviously an estate of a gentleman, a tag which Brontë does not attribute it to Rochester. Additionally, Criticizer Robert Kendrick (1994) disproves this representation of Rochester equally a Victorian gentleman and says "Brontë's Edward Rochester, far from being a man who quite unproblematically occupies the position of Victorian patriarch...represents a man who is quite at odds with the dominant narrative of being an 'English Gentleman'" (p. 247). Rochester stays isolated both bodily and emotionally from Thornfield and all the things it symbolizes, preferring to disconnect himself from the social and generational burdens and humiliations that it represents. Thornfield embodies a specific sort of power, precisely patriarchal, male fortune that was maintained by previous generations of prosperous landlords through colonialist British heritage. When Jane arrives to

discover, Rochester does not approve this kind of power, however, yet he stays caught by it by his ownership of Thornfield.

Once Jane first sees Rochester in the flesh, her understanding of his personality gets an additional change from Victorian criteria as it grows to observe his physical appearance also. Rochester doesn't match the conventionally attractive model of the Victorian unmarried man in a lot the identical sense that Jane differs from the pleasant and modest loveliness of the Victorian protagonist. She dares to indicate that "Had he been a handsome, heroic-looking young gentleman, I should not have dared to stand thus questioning him against his will and offering my services unasked" (p. 113). Enquiringly, despite the fact that, so far, we have never witnessed that Jane has been impressed by a male character's physical presence, it is Rochester's bodily aberration from the traditional Victorian protagonist that lets her to draw near to him as an equivalent person by putting away anxiety of judgment, because she feels a kind of implicit commitment through their mutual absence of similarity to social canons of beauty. Jane feels relaxed as a consequence of his nervous and judgmental stare, somewhat probably since this occurred the first aspect of males that she had grown familiar with in her childhood. Gilbert and Gubar (1979) indicate their first meeting is also as an unusual fact given that Jane is compelled to presume the status of the conventional protagonist, assisting Rochester to ride again to his horse and questioning regarding his welfare (p. 351-52). After she puts aside Rochester cross the way, she doesn't still realize Rochester's fortune or the societal influence that it causes and reveals not only his bodily presence but also the effect of his personality. This also caused interrupting the boredom of her daily life, this is a smaller amount of romantic moment.

When Jane and Rochester start their first dialogue, it becomes turning point for Jane's life. Because Jane experiences a new awaking as Lowe (2015) says "It is not until Jane and Rochester have their first conversation --a moment that I will identify as the beginning of Jane's metaphorical 'sexual awakening'--that the deviation from traditional Victorian era society novels becomes obviously apparent" (p. 17). Firstly, Jane thinks inferior herself when she understands that, with Rochester, she is supposed to be involved in an interaction in a socially straight manner and Kendrick (1994)

describes this moment as “her meager provisions in feminine apparel prove problematic when she is summoned to meet Rochester officially at Thornfield”(p. 858). Jane’s first replies to Rochester are respectful and practiced, obeying exactly to the standards of the moment. Jane shows modesty as taught her at Lowood, but it is instantly chided by Rochester and he says “Oh, don’t fall back on over-modesty!” (p. 121). We understand that he is, like Jane, indifferent to public sensitivities. Nonetheless, his societal position and his situation as a influential masculine character needs him to be an individual to declare it apparently to establish the mood and tone of his speech for their conversation. Jane experiences a new male character who doesn’t directly try to passivize or evacuate Jane’s ability of speaking so that he can maintain his supremacy over her. Furthermore, Rochester efforts to let Jane speak by denying retreating herself into the shell of obedient feminine modesty once she was taught to behave at Lowood.

The relationship between Jane and Rochester is centred upon sincerity and openness, which advantages Rochester more than Jane, because he is the one who has experiences to share. Jane possesses not much to be frank about, prevent her responses and comments on Rochester’s feats. He is honest with Jane concerning his triumphs and about Adele’s kin to him, so he sees that Jane will not consider judging his personality in accordance with conventional social norms of what a man should be. As an Alternative, Jane sees Rochester as a casualty of incidents from which Jane thinks that he can rise up and improve himself not for people's sake but for his personal inner peace:

Yet I had not forgotten his faults; indeed, I could not, for he brought them frequently before me. He was proud, sardonic, harsh to inferiority of every description: in my secret soul I knew that his great kindness to me was balanced by unjust severity to many others...but I believed that his moodiness, his harshness, and his former faults of morality (I say former, for now he seemed corrected of them) 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 developed, education instilled, or destiny encouraged. I thought there were excellent materials in him; though for the

present they hung together somewhat spoiled and tangled. I cannot deny that I grieved for his grief, whatever that was, and would have given much to assuage it. (p. 146)

Just as she herself is a casualty of facts, the Reed home and at Lowood shaped her, Jane thinks that Rochester is just a sufferer of the past events. In a sense, Jane idealizes Rochester in a manner that it could portray him nearly as a traditional Victorian hero. However, she is conscious that her odour of him is deeply affected by their private relationship. She accepts it as a duty to cure him, to appease his selfish tendencies with her womanly humbleness, efficiently wishing to allay his conservative excessive masculinity with her accustomed execution of femininity.

Another point that Brontë's approach to describe Rochester as product of patriarchy is when paradoxically, Rochester envisions Jane as a feathery creature carelessly shredding her plumage or peering through the narrow confines of confinement, yet he remains stubbornly ensnared within his own rigid perception of the female gender. Zare (1993) states that:

Ironically, he sees her as a bird rending its feathers self-destructively or glancing through the close-set bars of a cage, but he cannot break out of his own caged view of women and instead seeks to lock the door to Jane's freedom. With each new appearance Rochester reveals that he is obsessed with proving his absolute power over women. (p. 207)

His actions betray a stifling desire to restrict Jane's autonomy, rather than liberate her. Rochester's recurrent displays of control betray an unsettling obsession with dominating and conquering the women in his life, revealing a disturbing lack of empathy and respect for their rights and wellbeing.

Representation of Rochester as a product of a patriarchal society serves to undermine the dominant power structures that prioritize men over women during the Victorian era. Brontë initiates Rochester's character as socially superior to Jane, not only in terms of financial affluence but also with regard to patriarchal influence. In order to establish this thesis on a solid and substantiated basis, it is essential to

comprehend the perception of women within the Victorian society as well as the societal expectations placed upon them during that era. Dobrovic, (2006) says that:

The moral influence of women upon man's character and domestic happiness is mainly attributable to her natural and instinctive habits. Her love, her tenderness, her affectionate solicitude for his comfort and enjoyment, her devotedness, her unwearying care, her maternal fondness, her conjugal attractions, exercise a most ennobling impression upon his nature, and do more towards making him a good husband, a good father, and a useful citizen, than all the dogmas of political economy (as cited in Peter Gaskell, 2001). (p. 1)

As evident from the citation, the designated role for women was constrained to that of a nurturing figure, confined to bearing children and tending to domestic duties while catering to their husband's comfort. The society that promulgated such gender-specific conventions was unequivocally beholden to the hegemonic rule of patriarchal forces. In the incipient stages of the narrative, preceding Jane's sojourn to boarding school, an illuminating exchange between Jane, subjugated by the patriarchy, and Brocklehurst, a symbol of male domination, starkly outlines the uphill battle that women with their nascent innocence must confront in transcending the systemic pressures of their milieu to achieve a semblance of personal fulfilment.

“No sight so sad as that of a naughty child,” he began, “especially a naughty little girl. “Do you know where the wicked go after death?”

“They go to hell,” was my ready and orthodox answer.

“And what is hell? Can you tell me that?”

“A pit full of fire.”

“And should you like to fall into that pit, and to be burning there forever?”

“No, sir.”

“What must you do to avoid it?”

“I deliberated a moment; my answer, when it did come, was objectionable: “I must keep in good health, and not die.” (p. 32)

Brontë possesses an extensive comprehension of the societal constructs that envelop her existence. With the employment of her literary masterpiece, *Jane Eyre*, she adeptly navigates the boundaries of social norms and expounds upon the disparate treatment of men and women. Within the novel, a poignant passage illustrates the oppressive burden that women are forced to bear under a patriarchal culture.

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. (p.109)

This also shows that Jane will challenge against general understanding about the women throughout the novel. Rule (1985) argues that the endeavour between Jane and Rochester is based not only on economics, or class, or moral codes, but also on the essential nature of the relationship between man and woman the struggle for a settlement of opposites that are correlative and equal (p 166). The genesis of the novel, *Jane Eyre*, written under the male pseudonym of Currer Bell, bespeaks a societal understanding that persistently subjugated women to a secondary and inferior position. Against this challenging backdrop, the novel necessarily assumed a rebellious tenor, gracing its readers with a bold and unapologetically unchained critique of the grim social class system. Furthermore, the novel firmly advocates for women's rights, a crucial milestone that remains a ubiquitous subject of discussion. The examination of these foundational schisms serves as a formidable launchpad for the exploration of this literary work. For the novel's notion Godfrey (2005) says that the novel besides examining gender identities, it can do more than simply changing power from the patriarchal hands of Rochester to the weaker hand of Jane, and it does more than “feed

post-Butlerian critical perspectives” (p. 853) and the text clearly shows the concerns and intricacies of the Victorian perception of gender by “paradoxically dismantling and reifying nineteenth-century notions of masculinity and femininity” (p. 853). Brontë, the acclaimed sociologist, ingeniously employs the character of *Jane Eyre* as a vehicle to illustrate how a woman can transcend the confining boundaries of societal precepts through access to education and financial independence. Her eloquent prose unravels an indomitable spirit in *Jane Eyre*, who overcomes the constraints imposed upon her by patriarchal norms of the time, thereby laying bare a scathing critique of gender inequality rampant in society. Brontë's masterful storytelling skilfully impels her readers to confront the weighty implications of limited access to education and financial opportunities, crafting a narrative that remains as poignant and compelling today as it did when it was first penned.

3.6. Hypocrisy in the end of the novel

Once Rochester demands Jane to speak with him, she says “Very few masters would trouble themselves to inquire whether or not their paid subordinates were piqued and hurt by their orders” (p. 134). Coquettishly, Rochester tries to act to charm Jane to himself and he exclaims “What! You are my paid subordinate, are you? Oh yes, I had forgotten the salary!” (p. 134). Despite generally harvesting the advantages of his social and financial prosperity for getting his superiority over Jane, Rochester barely searches for doing it quite intentionally. As discussed by Zare (1993):

To our delight, her writing, sense of privacy, and active response indicate that by the end Jane has gained not only a fortune (which gives her a family, home, and comfort) but more resolve to determine her own path. Unfortunately, these are the only elements that allow us to emphasize the conclusion's empowerment of the female hero, despite Jane's apparent desire to convince us that the couple's relationship metamorphoses into an ideal one. (p 211)

It brings us great pleasure to affirm that Jane's writing has portrayed her as a woman of great tact, poise, and a strong sense of independence. Her ability to maintain her privacy in the face of adversity and her proactivity in responding to challenges are indicative of her tremendous growth as a character. Undoubtedly, her newfound wealth

has brought her a sense of familial security, comfort, and a place to call home. Nevertheless, we lament that her personal strength and conviction are the only tangible results that enable us to assert her empowerment as a female protagonist. In fact, her effort to present her connection with her partner as an idyllic one, despite evidence to the contrary, suggests her desire to convince herself and others that she has attained fulfilment in love. However, this superficial portrayal of her romantic life does not diminish the triumph of her individual progression and determination to carve out her own destiny.

A new page is opened for Jane to experience masculinity power when Jane agrees to live with St. John. She is subjected once again to the authoritarian and dictatorial masculinity that she had experienced before her relations with John Reed and Mr. Brocklehurst. Although St. John has not tendency to the vicious bursts of John or the double standards of Brocklehurst, St. John still tends to limit Jane's freedom by using the institution of marriage. Whereas he is socially and financially Jane's equivalent, he considers her as an inferior because of her gender and his assertion of divinity through the Christianity. Lowe (2015) evaluates this situation as "While their life together would be stable and arguably content, Jane feels no passion for St. John, whose constant references to her as "partner" and "sister" effectively sterilized their relationship of any potential passion and any sort of personal freedom" (p. 28).

Though Jane resides without the burdens of Rochester and St. John, she even survives with no entire independence, she uses the name of "Jane Elliott", and it indicates that she still lives under the impact and control of a controlling masculine character. Jane is currently doing the job she dreamt of, and she runs a schoolhouse that she mentioned about it to Rochester previously in the novel. However, we cannot say that she is doing as she wished and so it instantly loses its charm. She gets her way of break in the shape of her inheritance, which enables her both escaping from St. John unregretfully and eventually claiming complete control over her private individuality antecedental. "I broke from St. John...it was my time to assume ascendancy. My powers were in play and in force" (p. 420). Jane departs from Marsh End completely with the intention of reviving her relationship with Rochester, but she is now in a different social position that Rochester cannot claim masculine authority. Syring

(2014) puts that “It has already been discussed that contemporary reworkings critically explore the ending of the novel in new ways and thus scrutinize Jane's abandonment of her rebellious characteristics in favour of the supposedly safe and conservative choice of getting married” (p.1). Brontë finishes the novel with Jane's returning to Rochester as a psychologically and economically free lady. Jane permits herself to go back to Rochester only when she has achieved this inheritance to negotiate her standards and reputation.

When we examine the dynamics between Jane and Rochester in the text, we can see that there is a significant difference in their embodiment. While Jane is fully present in her physical form, Rochester is not. In fact, his disembodiment actually serves to enable Jane's embodiment. This is evident in the fact that Jane is summoned to Rochester's side by his disembodied voice. It is important to note that Rochester is quite literally disembodied in the text, having lost his hand and been blinded in the fire that destroyed Thornfield. Brown-Wheeler (2004) indicates that:

“But whereas Jane is fully embodied at this point in the text, Rochester is not, and his disembodiment enables Jane's embodiment. It is significant that she had been summoned to Rochester's side by his disembodied voice, for he had been quite literally disembodied in the text, having lost his hand and been blinded in the fire that destroyed Thornfield.” (p.75)

From a Freudian perspective, we can interpret Rochester's disfigurement as a symbolic castration. He is concerned that his infirmities make him an unfit partner for Jane, and this is a reflection of his own insecurities regarding his masculinity. However, it is precisely Rochester's disfigurement that allows for the marriage to take place. By becoming figuratively, a part of Rochester, Jane is able to overcome the societal expectations of gender roles and create a union that transcends physical appearance. Overall, the disembodiment of Rochester serves as a catalyst for the embodiment of Jane, and ultimately enables a deeper connection between the two characters. It is through their shared experiences of loss and transformation that they are able to find true love and acceptance. Brown-Wheeler (2004) assesses that:

In becoming Rochester's vision, Jane does for him exactly what she has done as narrator for the reader throughout the text: "He saw nature -he saw books through me; and never did I weary of gazing for his behalf, and of putting into words the effect of field, tree, town, river, sunbeam . . ." (quoted in *Jane Eyre* 476). Thus, Rochester's blindness allows Jane to occupy the subject position in the narrative of their marriage, signified by her direct declaration of agency: "Reader, I married him" (quoted in *Jane Eyre* 474). As Rochester cannot see Jane, she is no longer the object of his gaze, his narrative; rather, she is the subject, he the object of the narrative of their lives together. (pp. 75-76)

The above quotation suggests that Jane, through her narrative powers, becomes Rochester's eyes and ears, allowing him to experience the world in a new and profound way. It is through Jane's descriptions that Rochester is able to see the beauty of nature and the power of literature. Furthermore, the quotation suggests that Rochester's blindness allows Jane to take on a new role in their relationship: that of the subject, rather than the object. This shift in power dynamics is significant because it allows Jane to assert her agency in a way that was not possible before. As the object of Rochester's gaze, Jane was subjected to his desires and expectations. However, with Rochester's blindness, Jane is able to take control of the narrative of their lives together. By marrying Rochester, Jane declares her agency and her willingness to guide him through the world. In many ways, Jane's role as Rochester's guide mirrors her role as narrator of the novel itself. Throughout the text, Jane describes the world around her in vivid detail, allowing the reader to experience it alongside her. By becoming Rochester's guide, Jane takes on a similar role, describing the world around him and allowing him to experience it in a new way. Broadly, the above quotation highlights the power of narrative and the ways in which it can shape our understanding of the world. Through her narrative powers, given Jane's aversion to instability as a person, one of Jane's impulses as a narrator is to narrate fixity: despite depicting Jane's progression from an ambiguous social position before she receives her inheritance and marries Rochester to her final position as Rochester's wife, Jane's narrative would have the reader believe that what she eventually becomes "a lady" is what she has always been and the previously completed story permits assertions of a "sincere (fundamental)

identity as Rochester's equal in social status and emotional make-up (Fletcher, 1991), Jane is able to guide Rochester through the world and assert her agency in their relationship. This means that she is now then in charge of shaping their lives. Rochester is no more in control for his life and dependent to Jane about every aspect of his own life. This demolishes the equality between them. In doing so, she becomes both his vision and his guide, and ultimately, the subject of their shared narrative.

Charlotte Brontë encapsulates the supremacy changing aspects of both patriotism and feminism. In particular, the portrayal of England as a superior nation to others, along with the presentation of the protagonist Jane as a superior figure to her male counterpart Rochester, highlights the intricate relationship between national identity and gender hierarchy. Consequently, the novel employs an inverse power dynamic in Jane and Rochester's relationship, positioning Jane as the dominant agent and Rochester as the inferior, both morally and physically. Rochester's eventual dependency on Jane for his livelihood serves as further proof of the complexity of their power dynamics. Thomas (2016) puts considerable evidence to support that:

In addition, the power dynamics of nationalism and feminism in *Jane Eyre* are of note. Just as England is presented as a superior nation to France, Canada, India, and all the countries in the Middle East, (English) woman, represented in Jane Eyre's character, is positioned as superior to man, as represented in Rochester's character. As a result, frequently in the novel, Jane's relationship with Rochester is presented as an inverse of the conventional male-female power hierarchy. For example, not only is Rochester morally inferior to Jane, but he is also impoverished, blinded, and maimed at the end of the novel, all of which necessitates his moral, physical and financial dependence on Jane. The modern subjectivity of *Jane Eyre* is not able to conceive of alternatives to hierarchical gender dynamics. (p. 29)

The novel's modernist subjectivity points to the inherent limitations of Jane's understanding of alternative gender dynamics. Despite her rebellious nature, her ideas about gender hierarchy remain entrenched in the same binaries that govern the society around her. By positioning Jane as the superior figure to Rochester, the novel confronts

the traditional gender hierarchy and offers an alternative perspective. However, in doing so, *Jane Eyre* also exposes the impenetrability of deeply ingrained societal norms and assumptions. The authority changing aspects between patriotism and feminism in *Jane Eyre* prove to be a compelling element of the novel. The inversion of traditional gender roles in Jane and Rochester's relationship opens a space for alternative modes of gender expression and identity. Nonetheless, it also serves as a reminder of the profound and ingrained nature of hierarchical dynamics in society, and the complexity of dismantling and rebuilding such systems.

Thus far, I have made attempts to empathize with the character of Jane, yet a salient query arises regarding the consistency of her convictions surrounding the matter of equality. Specifically, I question whether Jane remains truly committed to equality, considering the novel's conclusion wherein she assumes a superior position to that of Rochester. Moving forward, the trajectory of my thesis centred upon an analysis of the notion of equality posited by Brontë. Notably, as Wyatt (1985) stated following, the culminating chapter of the novel takes on a paramount significance, as it serves to bring the various moral quandaries, aspirations, and challenges to their denouement:

Brontë's acute awareness of social and economic issues makes her resolution more complicated than a simple fairy tale ending. Jane has acquired a fortune that makes her the economic equal of a Rochester diminished by the destruction of Thornfield; and Rochester's loss of hand and eye leaves no doubt that he needs Jane as much as she needs him. She is Rochester's "guide" as well as his "prop," "leading" him as well as "waiting on" him: Brontë articulates precisely the degree of control in Jane's help that distinguishes it from her former service to her "master." The balance of power has shifted so that their relationship no longer recapitulates, on the political surface, the asymmetries of a father-daughter relationship; yet on the personal level Rochester still embodies the patriarchal strength a girl can depend on (p.212).

Following Jane's departure from Thornfield, a chain of events was set in motion by none other than the mysterious Bertha Mason, culminating in the utter destruction of

the estate and her tragic demise. Rochester's heroic efforts to rescue all the servants amidst a raging fire were met with heartbreak as his attempts to save Bertha too were ultimately thwarted by her shocking decision to take her own life. The devastating aftermath of this catastrophe has left Rochester irrevocably scarred, both physically and emotionally. His final condition is with being lost an eye and a hand, and now faces the daunting challenges of navigating life with the remaining eye that has left him blind. In light of the literary interpretation that is pervasive throughout consideration of Charlotte Brontë's novel, *Jane Eyre*, it may be apt to perceive the fate that befalls the character of Rochester as a form of retribution for his past transgressions. Critic Grudin (1977) typifies this perception with his suggestion that Rochester's suffering is metaphorical manifestation of the punishment that is biblically designated for his offense. An ending that may be deemed as justifiably deserved. As such, we may observe that Rochester is no longer the same person at the culmination of the novel (p.154). His loss of an eye and a hand, coupled with his blindness in the remaining eye bears testimony to his ultimate transformation and the physical repercussions that he suffers as a result of his actions. Anyhow he is punished, he is humiliated, and he is represented as overpowered by, as Grudin (1977) puts, "Christian law and a Christian God at the end of a novel which, in direct opposition to *Wuthering Heights*, seems to end by subjugating romantic individualism and paganism to Christian doctrine" (p. 156). Grudin's viewpoint, whilst seemingly plausible, remains open for reasonable doubt upon deeper examination. Upon gaining an understanding of the circumstances surrounding Rochester, Jane elects to reconcile with him, bolstered by newfound affluence and personal independence. Remarkably, in comparison to Rochester, Jane boasts a superior financial standing. Furthermore, she appears more robust than her counterpart, being able to provide nursing care to him in his time of need. Most notably, Jane's return to Rochester is marked by a remarkable metamorphosis, as she emerges as a distinct and transformed persona in the novel:

"And you do not lie dead in some ditch, under some stream? And you are not a pining outcast amongst strangers?"

"No, sir; I am an independent woman now."

"Independent! What do you mean, Jane?"

"My uncle in Madeira is dead, and he left me five thousand pounds." "Ah, this is practical-this is real" he cried: "I should never dream that" (p. 434).

At first glance, one may be inclined to assume that the two protagonists have attained not only a relational parity but are now inherently and unconditionally equal. A young girl's aspirations, as declared in *Jane Eyre*, come to fruition, as Jane and Rochester are finally on equal footing as humans. Underlying this equalization is the fundamental sameness of their essence, the part of themselves which they both hold in common. Thus, Rule (1985) perceives the literary work not merely as a chronicle of an individual's yearning fulfilled, but as a social revolution realized, one in which both genders are on equal footing. Furthermore, a section from Shelley's *Prometheus Unbound*, found at the culmination of its third act, may elucidate the cause of some readers' discomfort, particularly those philistines of the Victorian era, who found the novel's tone and subject matter challenging or impertinent to certain power structures. The reason Victorian readers might have perceived this literary work as disobedient or groundbreaking in its manner and themes could be due to its resemblance to the vision conveyed by Shelly (1820), in Act III of *Prometheus Unbound*, "When the "painted veil" called life falls, the human being will appear "Scepterless, free, uncircumscribed, but man / Equal, unclassed, tribeless, and nationless, / Exempt from awe, worship, degree, the king / Over himself " (as cited in Rule, 1985). The inquiry that arises is whether the equity between a man, who has been afflicted with the loss of an eye and a hand, as well as complete blindness in one eye, and a woman who wields commensurate wealth to the man she chooses to wed is indistinguishable. In this context, it is only rational to assert that the standard for equilibrium between partners ought not to hinge on fiscal, educational, or societal backgrounds, rather their physical aptitude must be the fundamental criteria for comparison. It is discernible that this aspect is devoid of attention in the novel, *Jane Eyre*. The denouement of this literary work accentuates the exceptionalism of Jane, as she both attains and retains ascendancy over Rochester. "...I love you better now, when I can really be useful to you, than I did in your state of proud independence, when you disdained every part but that of the giver and protector" (Brontë, 2008). It is espoused a distinctly different

perspective on the subject at hand, positing that the trials and tribulations facing *Jane Eyre* are unequivocally manifest and, with a yearning to serve as a governess and bask in the warmth of love within a realm where individuals are harmoniously aligned, the protagonist is beset by numerous hurdles (Rich, 1979). Notably, Charlotte Brontë's oeuvre does not lend itself to facile solutions to the intricacies of human existence, and even the author herself appears to lack insight into the full gamut of vexations that plague humanity. All of her concern, which is bigger for being restricted, goes into the argument, "I love," "I hate," "I suffer . . ." (Rich, 1979). In analysing Brontë's literary genius in *Jane Eyre*, it can be discerned that she artfully crafted the protagonist's narration to be "I" oriented, possibly with intention. Through this ingenious approach, Brontë emphasized the primacy of Jane's perspective, constructing the entirety of the plot around her benefit and worldview. This is particularly evident through the novel's iconic ending lines, wherein Jane boldly declares "Reader, I married him." Such a declaration prompts readers to wonder how Jane could possibly be content, leading some to ask why the novel can be considered as having a happy ending.

Upon Jane's return to Thornfield, readers encounter a stark reality, wherein she discovers Rochester - the object of her love - in a woeful state, his left hand severed, and the fire caused him to be blind that resulted from his attempt at saving his mad wife's life. In this sense, Brontë skilfully departs from the conventional idea of the "happy ending" as Rochester is flawed and Jane must accept him as such. Therefore, it can be gleaned that the novel is not without conflict or tension, but rather it exposes the true nature of love and how it can be persevered. As previously alluded, Rochester has aptly expiated his transgressions. Through a sincere and concerted effort to remedy his past wrongdoings, he has emerged from the shadow of his past misdeeds and restored his honour. His commendable atonement has duly earned him a newfound respect and admiration in the eyes of those who once held him in contempt. At this point Rich (1979) asks a question; "Discarding phallic-patriarchal notion of Rochester's ordeal, we can then ask, what kind of marriage is possible for a woman like *Jane Eyre*?" (p. 481). This inquiry evinces my preoccupation with the termination of the novel. For the protagonist, Rich (1979) introspectively poses a query and subsequently negates the prospect of matrimonial union with an individual who is

either impotent, telepathic or physically flawed (p. 481). Rich's (1979) response alludes to a nuanced understanding of the importance of interpersonal compatibility and the futility of entering into alliances that are bereft of mutual and holistic fulfilment:

“The wind that blows through this novel is the wind of sexual equality in terms of spiritual and practical. The passion that Jane feels as a girl of twenty or as a wife of thirty is the same passion that of a strong spirit demanding its counterpart in another”. (p. 481)

This poignant quotation serves as a crucial framework for comprehending the overarching thematic implications of the novel's conclusion, which is centred around Jane's bodily and financial superiority over Rochester. Indeed, it is imperative to recognize that the implications of this denouement are far-reaching and extend beyond the explicit events of the novel. To unlock the complex and nuanced subtext of *Jane Eyre*, one must read it through the lens of its intrinsic psychological and social contexts. By doing so, the reader can attain a more sophisticated understanding of the multifaceted messages and symbolic meanings embedded in the novel's finale.

Nonetheless, this disparity is a substantial thing in preventing Jane from yet seeing him to be her equivalent. Even though Jane is able to ignore his prosperity to see the spirit in his flesh, she actually does not prefer to bring herself to say it a lot soon after the time when Rochester completely loses his prosperity. We can say that it is because she cherishes independence beyond everything, also especially prosperity or wealth which is controlled by influential men is always used as a crate to keep her away from independence. Although Rochester does not portray a man who consciously uses power against her, Jane's marriage with Rochester, once they stood economically unequal, would be a tender to get the authority of his manor or prosperity and all its zealotry antiquity.

In conclusion, while *Jane Eyre* can be seen as a feminist novel for its portrayal of a strong, independent female protagonist, it is not without its flaws. The novel's ending, in which Jane submits to Rochester's authority and becomes his wife, has been criticized for undermining its supposed message of gender equality. Additionally, the

novel perpetuates gender stereotypes that may be reflective of the societal norms of the time but nonetheless reinforce patriarchal values. Despite these criticisms, however, *Jane Eyre* remains a powerful and important work of feminist literature that continues to inspire readers today.



CONCLUSION

Comprehensively exploring the necessity of equality in the novel, it is vital to consider the humanistic nuances of the Victorian epoch and the pervasive issues faced by women during this epoch, as these elements fundamentally contributed to the creation of *Jane Eyre*. Despite the fact that Brontë advocates for equality between Jane and Rochester prior to their marriage, it is intriguing to note that the novel concludes with an exchange of their respective social statuses. This raises the question of why the story ends with Jane emerging as superior to Rochester financially and physically, if the central theme is purportedly about achieving equality in a romantic partnership. To address this inquiry, several salient questions must be probed in detail. Specifically, it is critical to examine how Brontë portrays Rochester as a by-product of a patriarchal society, and how this portrayal challenges the prevailing power paradigms that favoured men in the Victorian era. Additionally, a robust understanding of the societal attitudes and expectations imposed upon women during this era must be established to construct a sound thesis. Further, it is imperative to explore Jane's internal struggle with her feelings towards Rochester, as her dogged pursuit of gender equality tends to restrain her from expressing her love fervently. This struggle between heart and mind causes her to make consequential choices that dictate the course of her future and imaginary life. Such decisions speak to the themes of independence and equality that are central to the character of Jane and her relationship with Rochester. Finally, a key question to ponder is how Jane is able to find lasting happiness, and what makes the novel's ending qualify as "happy." This query raises the issue of whether a woman who is wealthier than her male partner can be considered equal to him, despite the fact that he may have physical limitations such as blindness or disability. In this regard, the principle of equality between couples should not be solely tied to financial, educational, and social considerations. Rather, it must also take into account bodily autonomy and equality, which may be an element that is overlooked in *Jane Eyre*. This thesis aimed to provide a nuanced exploration of these questions and offer a sound explanation for the apparent conflict around Jane's superiority over Rochester, culminating in a cogent argument for how the work speaks to the broader issue of gender equality.

The manner in which Brontë masterfully portrays Rochester as a product of a patriarchal society evokes a profound contemplation on the prevailing power structures that perpetuate male dominance during the Victorian era. By positioning Rochester as socially superior to Jane, Brontë effectively highlights the interconnectedness of financial affluence and patriarchal influence. To establish this thesis with unwavering conviction, it becomes imperative to grasp the intricate nuances surrounding women's perception within Victorian society, as well as the stringent societal expectations thrust upon them. In this era, women were primarily valued for their moral influence on men's character and domestic bliss, harnessing the power of their inherent qualities: love, tenderness, affectionate solicitude, devotedness, unwavering care, maternal fondness, and conjugal allure. These qualities, often celebrated for their transformative impact, played a pivotal role in shaping men into exemplary husbands, fathers, and contributing members of society, eclipsing the teachings of political economy. However, women were unquestionably confined to the domain of nurturing figures, tasked with childbearing and tending to domestic duties while dutifully catering to their husbands' comfort. This societal structure, which championed such gender-specific conventions, was unreservedly beholden to the overwhelming dominance of patriarchal forces.

In the opening stages of the narrative, prior to Jane's transformative journey at the boarding school, an enlightening exchange between the disempowered Jane and the symbol of male domination, Brocklehurst, explicitly underscores the arduous battle that women, burdened with their nascent innocence, must endure in order to surmount the systemic pressures that hinder their personal fulfilment. This poignant encounter starkly exposes the uphill struggle women face in their efforts to break free from the constraints imposed by a rigid and oppressive milieu. Through this vivid illustration, Brontë magnifies the profound challenges faced by women striving to surpass societal expectations, ultimately seeking personal emancipation. In a conversation between Brocklehurst and Jane Eyre, it was intrigued by the contrasting perspectives on morality and punishment. As the dialogue unfolded, Brocklehurst highlighted the sorrowful aspect of a misbehaving child while specifically emphasizing the wrongdoing of a little girl. Reflecting on the concept of damnation, he questioned Jane

about the destination of wicked individuals after death. Quick to respond, she adhered to conventional beliefs by stating that they go to hell. Intrigued, Brocklehurst further inquired about the nature of hell, to which Jane confidently asserted it as a fiery pit. At this point, it can be noted the significance of Jane's disinterest in eternal condemnation, as she firmly expressed her aversion towards falling into the fiery pit and enduring eternal damnation. Nonetheless, when asked how to prevent such a fate, Jane's response of maintaining good health and not dying was deemed objectionable, provoking contemplation on the role of morality and personal responsibility in her understanding of salvation.

Brontë's astute portrayal of Brocklehurst serves as a powerful tool to dismantle the prevailing power dynamics, ultimately undermining the deeply entrenched hierarchical structures that marginalize women in the Victorian era. Her deliberate exploration of gender roles and societal constructs not only exposes the injustices faced by women but also galvanizes a reflection on the overarching inequalities that permeate society. Brontë's sophisticated depiction of Brocklehurst's character as a product of his patriarchal environment urges readers to confront and question the inequities engrained within their own societal frameworks, beckoning a transformation towards a more egalitarian future.

Brontë exhibits a profound grasp of the intricate web of social constructs that entangle her own existence. In her literary magnum opus, *Jane Eyre*, she deftly manoeuvres through the confines of societal norms, shedding light on the stark disparities in treatment between men and women. Evident within the novel is a poignant passage that vividly illustrates the oppressive burden imposed upon women under the patriarchal framework. Countless individuals suffer a fate even more stifling than Jane Eyre's, while multitudes silently revolt against their predetermined destinies. Unbeknownst to many, there simmer myriad rebellions, not solely of political nature, but brewing within the very fabric of human existence. Although societal expectations dictate women should possess an unwavering calmness, the truth remains that they experience the same depth of emotions and require the same intellectual and physical outlets as men. They, too, endure the consequences of an oppressive and rigid restraint, just as men would in their position. It is an expression of narrow-mindedness on the

part of their more privileged counterparts to claim that women ought to confine themselves to domestic activities such as cooking or knitting, to the limited scope of piano playing and sewing. It is thoughtless and cruel to condemn or ridicule women for aspiring to achieve more or broaden their knowledge beyond what a restrictive tradition has deemed permissible for their gender. Also, evident that the fierceness with which Jane Eyre challenges societal norms throughout the novel. Brontë skilfully associates the personal and individualistic relationship between Jane and Rochester with the broader, universal dichotomy between the sexes. Their tumultuous journey together, therefore, transcends mere economic considerations, class divisions, or moral codes and delves into the very essence of male-female associations which is a relentless struggle to reconcile intrinsic differences that are inherently equal.

Denoting the outset of a novel authored under the masculine pseudonym Currer Bell, the genesis of Jane Eyre signifies a society that systematically subjugated women, relegating them to an inferior and secondary position. Against this backdrop of societal oppression, the novel necessarily adopts a rebellious tone, courageously offering readers an unapologetic critique of the oppressive class system entrenched within society. Moreover, Jane Eyre emerges as a powerful advocate for women's rights, traversing the boundaries of time to remain an omnipresent subject of discourse. By scrutinizing these foundational schisms, the novel ushers readers into a profound exploration of a literary work that transcends the mere transformation of power dynamics from the patriarchal hands of Rochester to the seemingly weaker hand of Jane. It surpasses the realm of post-butlerian critical perspectives and instead provocatively dismantles and reaffirms the nineteenth-century notions of masculinity and femininity. Employing her incisive sociological lens, Brontë ingeniously employs the character of Jane Eyre as a vehicle to illustrate how a woman can transcend the stifling confines of societal expectations through access to education and financial independence. Through her eloquent prose, she unravels an indomitable spirit within Jane Eyre, allowing her to defy the shackles imposed upon her by patriarchal norms of the era. In doing so, Brontë delivers a scathing critique of the pervasive gender inequality plaguing society. Her masterful storytelling undeniably compels readers to confront the profound ramifications of limited access to education and financial

opportunities, crafting a narrative that remains as poignant and captivating today as it was upon its initial conception.

In the novel *Jane Eyre*, Charlotte Brontë presents the central character, Jane, as a woman of exceptional self-restraint when it comes to expressing her emotions for Rochester, her beloved. This intriguing aspect of Jane's character prompts us to question how she manages to maintain such control. Interestingly, it is Jane's unwavering commitment to gender equality that acts as an obstacle to the passionate love she feels for Rochester. Though harbouring profound feelings for him, Jane's internal struggle to align her heart and mind leads her to make choices that will undoubtedly shape her future and imaginary life. Crucially, the revelation of Bertha Mason's existence stands as a pivotal moment in the narrative that dramatically impacts Jane's sentiments towards Rochester. Upon learning of Rochester's previous marriage and his mentally afflicted wife, Jane is forcefully confronted with the harsh reality of his past. As a result, she is compelled to make the wrenching decision to part ways with her beloved. The profound impact of Bertha's revelation on the course of the story, the development of Jane's character, and the exploration of gender relations and social class in Victorian England cannot be overlooked. Brontë deftly fictionalizes the novel, creating a world that aligns with Jane's ideological redlines. When Jane makes her crucial decision to leave Rochester, her rationale is explicitly stated and unquestioned. However, while her decision is clear, its persuasiveness is not. An argument that seeks to forbid a romance as compelling as Jane and Rochester's must be convincingly persuasive. In this case, the practicality of Jane's choice is seemingly verified by the subsequent outcome of her being rich, independent, married, and a mother. Yet, the novel fails to adequately justify the underlying premises on which this decision is based, instead simply asserting its correctness. In the absence of a comprehensive justification, *Jane Eyre* presents an inconclusive and limited vision. The novel lacks the persuasive power to fully support its arguments through reasoning alone. Without a compelling rhetorical mode, modern readers might be left to accept a vision that remains partly unresolved and lacking in its exploration of various perspectives. Ultimately, the novel declares Jane's correctness without fully validating

the theory underlying her decision, leaving readers with an unresolved and restricted understanding.

However, the thoughts on passion and restraint expressed by Charlotte Brontë transcend mere dictum and transparent parable as modes of expression. The intricate layers of significance within her argument require a more nuanced approach, one that goes beyond literal interpretation. Brontë, therefore, feels compelled to present her ideas figuratively, using the character of Bertha as a representation of something unspeakable and as a projection of Jane's own hidden desires. Through Bertha, Brontë illustrates why Jane must act in a particular manner and why she chooses to leave her beloved man upon the revelation of his prior marriage, despite conflicting arguments and sympathies. The human psyche, with its intricacies and complexities, often remains veiled in mystery and ambiguity, leaving even the most astute observers at a loss for suitable words to describe it. Jane's own thoughts about Rochester have long been subject to speculation and study, as she navigates the delicate balance between restraint and passion. How does she manage to keep her thoughts concealed, masking her true emotions beneath stoicism and restraint? Jane's deep and abiding feelings for Rochester are undeniable, yet several factors make it challenging for her to openly express these sentiments. Her genuine obsession with equality between men and women has instilled in her a steadfast commitment to egalitarianism, compelling her to suppress her more passionate emotions towards Rochester. This internal conflict between her mind and heart often leaves Jane in a state of indecision, fully aware that the choices she makes will have profound consequences on her future and imagined life. At the core of this concern lies the crucial question of independence and equality between Jane and Rochester, a matter that demands thorough exploration with great depth and rigor. This very issue acts as an obstacle to the couple's unity, preventing them from becoming one flesh. Prior to making any marital decision, Jane takes a dignified stance, acknowledging the importance of staying true to one's individual self, regardless of the potential outcomes. Their relationship is characterized by a delicate balance of competing interests, requiring both Jane and Rochester to exercise utmost caution and respect, lest they endanger the fragile bond that unites them.

In reflecting upon the discourse at hand, it is discernible that a regretful observation must be made, a point that was crucial to the argument has gone amiss, and the fault falls squarely upon Rochester. It becomes evident that the depth and profound nature of fervent emotion surpasses the boundaries of a futile communal understanding. Despite this, Rochester posits that in the aftermath of moments of felicity, Jane's perception tends to be somewhat obscured, as if catching only a fleeting glimpse of the truth. Nevertheless, the disclosure of Rochester's bigamous escapades engenders a seismic shift in Jane's estimations, yet it does not diminish the ardour of her love for him. Rather, it serves as a poignant testament to the stubbornness of social stratification and the unrestrained power it holds over even the most zealous of affections. In the profound conversation between Jane Eyre and Rochester, Jane fervently disputes the notion of her being devoid of emotions due to her impoverished, unremarkable appearance and diminutive stature. Jane passionately declares that such an assumption is erroneous, asserting her possession of an equally profound soul and an equally beating heart as Rochester himself. Regardless of her lack of physical beauty or vast wealth, Jane claims that if she were blessed with such attributes, she would make it exceedingly arduous for Rochester to part from her, just as she now struggles with leaving him. This dialogue transcends the boundaries of societal norms, conventions, and even mortal limitations. Through the ethereal connection of their spirits, Jane's spirit addresses Rochester's spirit, as if they both have traversed the realm of death and stand before the divine, levelled and equal in their essence. This exemplifies the evident supremacy social position exerts over even the most passionate devotion which is a manifestation of abject hegemony. The inadmissible circumstance at hand leaves Jane with scant recourse. To align herself with the fundamental principles presented by Brontë within the novel, Jane deems it necessary to undertake a resolute course of action. It becomes imperative not to contravene the prevailing themes and underlying messages embedded within the narrative. Consequently, Jane's astute analyses explore the causal intricacies of the tumultuous events orchestrated by Bertha Mason in Thornfield. The abrupt and cataclysmic revelation of her existence should not solely be attributed as the root cause of subsequent disturbances. Instead, it can be illuminated within a broader societal context, wherein countless women, as Charlotte ingeniously portrays, are ensnared by inescapable oppressions. Personifying

this struggle, Bertha becomes a haunting metaphor for the plight of these women, indubitably perceived as socially dead and devoid of agency. However, in defiance of such constraints, Bertha asserts herself audaciously, wreaking havoc within the constricted parameters of her husband's estate. Driven inexplicably to undermine her oppressor, she attempts to immolate her husband in his own bed, destroys Jane's wedding veil, and in a final act of defiance, ignites Thornfield to the ground. Thus, by presenting Bertha as a marginalized figure, perennially denied her rightful agency, Brontë offers a profound insight into the feminist dimensions of her undeniably revolutionary work. Delving into the moral rationale underpinning Jane's departure from Thornfield and Rochester, it becomes essential to consider the prevailing norms of Victorian society and the overarching ideals of Christianity. The impetus behind Jane's decision is unequivocal. While inevitably bound to Rochester through threads of romantic love, sexual passion, empathy for his plight, and anxiety over his fate, she determines that the obligation to depart looms in order to uphold what is right. The dichotomy between affinity and penitence is ultimately resolved based on principles, showcasing the presence of an orthodox Christian conscience within Jane. Hence, the interplay between moral considerations and religious beliefs fuse together, effectuating Jane's ultimate act of self-denial. In the face of insurmountable struggles to extricate herself from her dire straits, the protagonist arrives at the sobering realization that her adherence to divine tenets, ordained by mortal authorities, is non-negotiable. Consequently, her resolve to follow a righteous path, dictated by God's sacred edicts, prompts her to embark on a journey away from Rochester. The immutable mandate, categorically forbidding adultery, even when one's predicament suggests a possible exemption, remains a steadfast deterrent, underscoring the gravity of the protagonist's decision.

Thus far, my attempts to empathize with the character of Jane have been met with intriguing questions regarding the consistency of her convictions surrounding the matter of equality. The novel's conclusion raises doubts about whether Jane remains committed to true equality, as she assumes a superior position to Rochester. Moving forward, the trajectory of my thesis centres on a meticulous analysis of the notion of equality posited by Brontë. The culminating chapter of the novel holds paramount

significance as it brings various moral quandaries, aspirations, and challenges to their denouement. Brontë's acute awareness of social and economic issues adds complexity to the resolution, defying a simplistic fairy tale ending. Jane, having acquired a fortune equivalent to Rochester's diminished state, and with his loss of hand and eye, clearly demonstrates her necessity to him just as he needs her. She becomes both Rochester's "guide" and "prop," assuming control over their relationship. While the balance of power no longer echoes the asymmetries of a father-daughter relationship on the political surface, Rochester still symbolizes patriarchal strength, which Jane relies on personally. After Jane's departure from Thornfield, a series of events unfolds, set in motion by the enigmatic Bertha Mason, ultimately leading to the destruction of the estate and her tragic demise. Rochester's heroic endeavours to save all the servants are ultimately met with heartbreak, as Bertha's decision to take her own life thwarts his attempts to rescue her. The devastating aftermath of this catastrophe leaves Rochester irreversibly scarred, both physically and emotionally. With the loss of an eye and a hand, Rochester now faces the daunting challenge of navigating life with limited vision. One may interpret this fate as a form of retribution for his past transgressions, as if his suffering were a metaphorical manifestation of biblical punishment, fittingly deserved.

Rochester undergoes an ultimate transformation, and the physical repercussions he endures serve as a testimony to his actions. However, upon closer examination, it remains plausible to doubt this interpretation. Despite his punishment and humiliation, Rochester is depicted as overpowered by Christian law and doctrine, contrasting the romantic individualism and paganism observed in *Wuthering Heights*. Yet, while this interpretation may hold some merit, it is not without its reasonable doubts. Upon gaining a thorough understanding of the circumstances surrounding Rochester, Jane chooses to reconcile with him, bolstered by newfound affluence and personal independence. Notably, Jane surpasses Rochester in terms of financial standing and appears more robust, as she provides nursing care for him in his time of need. Her return to Rochester marks a remarkable metamorphosis, as she emerges as a distinct and transformed persona within the novel. In the midst of their conversation, Rochester's astonishment and relief were apparent as *Jane Eyre* revealed her newfound

independence. She queried him with a mix of anxiety and concern, wondering if he had met a tragic fate. Emphatically, she reassured him that she was not lying lifeless in some forsaken place or enduring solitude amongst unfamiliar faces. Jane confidently declared herself as an independent woman, explaining that her late uncle in Madeira had passed away, leaving her a substantial inheritance of five thousand pounds. Rochester, overwhelmed by the practicality and authenticity of this news, expressed his disbelief, acknowledging that he never anticipated such a turn of events.

Upon initial observation, one might be tempted to assume that the two central characters in the novel, Jane Eyre, have not only achieved a sense of equality in their relationship but have also become inherently and unconditionally equal. The aspirations of a young girl, as explicitly expressed in *Jane Eyre*, come to fruition as Jane and Rochester finally stand on an even playing field as human beings. This equalization is underpinned by their shared essence, a fundamental sameness that they both possess. Consequently, one can perceive this literary work not solely as the chronicle of an individual's fulfilled yearning but as a realized social revolution, where both genders are brought to an equitable position. This leads to an inquiry about whether the equality between a man, plagued with physical afflictions such as the loss of an eye, hand, and blindness in one eye, and a woman possessing comparable wealth amounts to indistinguishable parity. In this context, it is rational to assert that the criterion for equilibrium between partners should not rely on financial, educational, or societal backgrounds; instead, their physical aptitude must be the fundamental basis of comparison. It becomes apparent that the novel *Jane Eyre* overlooks this aspect, as the denouement accentuates Jane's exceptionalism, with her attaining and retaining ascendancy over Rochester. By stating, "...I love you better now, when I can really be useful to you, than I did in your state of proud independence, when you disdained every part but that of the giver and protector," (Brontë, 2008) a markedly distinct perspective is espoused. This positions *Jane Eyre* as a protagonist beset by numerous hurdles, striving to serve as a governess and find love within a realm where individuals harmoniously align.

Charlotte Brontë's oeuvre, though not offering simplistic solutions to the complexities of human existence, portrays these trials and tribulations faced by Jane Eyre in an unequivocally manifest manner. The protagonist's yearning to serve as a governess and find love is hindered by numerous obstacles. It is notable that Brontë's work does not provide easy answers to the vexations that plague humanity, and even the author herself seems to lack a comprehensive understanding of these complexities. Her focus seems to revolve around personal concerns, expressed through phrases such as "I love," "I hate," "I suffer...". Upon analysing Brontë's literary genius in *Jane Eyre*, it becomes evident that she masterfully crafted the protagonist's narration to be centred around "I," potentially by design. This approach highlights Jane's perspective, constructing the entire plot around her experiences and worldview. This can be seen most prominently in the novel's iconic ending lines, where Jane boldly proclaims, "Reader, I married him." Such a declaration invites readers to question how Jane could possibly find contentment, leading to inquiries about whether the novel can genuinely be considered to have a happy ending.

Upon Jane's return to Thornfield, readers are confronted with a stark reality that unveils a cascade of emotional turmoil. It is in this climactic moment that Jane discovers her beloved Rochester, the object of her unwavering affection, in a woeful state. His left hand has been severed, a tangible reminder of the sacrifices he made in his valiant attempt to save his mad wife from the clutches of a destructive fire. Brontë, with her remarkable prowess, masterfully deviates from the conventional notion of a "happy ending," forcing readers to grapple with the complexities inherent in love and its acceptance of imperfections. Through this poignant revelation, the novel exposes the true essence of love – that it is not without conflict or tension, but rather a force that can endure and overcome. Jane must confront the harsh reality of Rochester's flaws and accept him as he is, highlighting the depth of her love and her capacity for forgiveness. It is through this lens of acceptance and understanding that Brontë challenges societal norms and invites readers to reevaluate their own notions of love and happiness.

Rochester, in his admirable quest for redemption, expiates his past transgressions. With sincerity and unwavering commitment, he emerges from the shadows of his misdeeds, actively seeking to restore his honour. In doing so, he gains newfound respect and admiration from those who once held him in contempt. This transformation represents a profound journey of self-discovery and growth that warrants recognition and praise. However, it is imperative to move beyond the surface-level analysis of Rochester's personal journey and shift our focus to Jane's own path and the possibilities that lie before her. The termination of the novel prompts a crucial inquiry into the kind of marriage that is feasible for a woman like Jane Eyre. This introspective question challenges conventional notions of matrimony, dismissing the notions of impotence, telepathy, or physical flaws as determinants of a successful union. Instead, it converges on the idea of spiritual and practical equality in the pursuit of passion, underscoring the importance of interpersonal compatibility and holistic fulfilment. Jane's unwavering passion, whether she is a young girl of twenty or a mature wife of thirty, reflects a persistent yearning for a kindred spirit that matches her strength of character. This profound desire for a deep emotional connection underscores a nuanced comprehension of the essentiality of mutual understanding and fulfilment in any form of alliance. It serves as a vital framework for unlocking the overarching thematic implications of the novel's conclusion, specifically Jane's physical and financial ascendancy over Rochester. The denouement of *Jane Eyre* encompasses a profound socio-psychological tapestry that extends far beyond the confines of the explicit narrative. It compels us to view the novel through a lens that considers its intrinsic psychological and societal undercurrents. By delving deeper into these contexts, readers can attain a heightened and more sophisticated understanding of the novel's multifaceted messages and the symbolic significance embedded within its finale.

In the closing chapters of *Jane Eyre*, an intriguing suggestion arises, intimating that Jane finds contentment in her circumstances. By marrying Rochester, Jane enters into a union marked by affection and respect, wherein she not only discovers her true self but also acquires the ability to care for others. However, it is arguable that these modest displays of parity do not constitute an unequivocal attainment of gender

equality. Throughout the narrative, Jane grapples with inner turmoil and external adversities until the moment she weds. There exists an implicit insinuation that her happiness hinges upon conformity to the submissive societal expectations imposed upon women, namely, becoming a wife. Moreover, the matter of Rochester's infirmity presents an additional complication. Prior to his incapacitation, his treatment of Jane fails to manifest true equality. Yet, this dynamic changes in the aftermath of his debilitation. It is plausible that the perceived equilibrium Jane experiences alongside her husband derives primarily from situational circumstances rather than genuine parity. Consequently, an unanswered query lingers within Jane's marital bond: Would she still have enjoyed the same degree of purported equality had Rochester not been entirely reliant upon her? Furthermore, the fleeting encounter with another male outside the confines of her home swiftly disrupts Jane's perceived equality, illustrating that self-perception alone does not wholly determine her treatment by others. It becomes evident that genuine equality eludes Jane, yet she manages to secure the closest approximation to such ideals that her contemporary milieu permits.

In synopsis, we bear witness to Jane's arduous plight for parity between herself and Rochester, a struggle that verges on the broader question of equilibrium between the genders. Despite facing numerous impediments, Jane remains steadfast and determined in her pursuits. By the novel's end, she is depicted as holding the reins to their matrimonial union, presiding over their life together with Rochester. Initially, Rochester seemed to hold more dominance, but his disposition underwent a transformation towards the book's finale. Our antagonist lost his property, his hand, and his vision to the inferno, rendering him financially and bodily inferior to Jane. More critically, the exposure of his past faults and misdeeds led to a significant moral inferiority to Jane. In attempting to fathom the reasons for the novel's emphasis on parity, I endeavoured to examine the cultural milieu and the numerous impediments women faced during the Victorian era that prompted the production of *Jane Eyre*. Additionally, I sought to develop empathy and grasp why Brontë emphasised the cruciality of parity between Jane and Rochester before their wedlock. In this context, I would posit that if equality between partners is sought, it should not be in terms of financial, educational, or social criteria. The equalisation of the beloved couple's social

status at the book's culmination, with Jane's physical, financial, and spiritual superiority over Rochester, can be elaborated in psychological terms, spiritual and practical equality. In view of such considerations, a pertinent query emerges: can a woman, who is more affluent than the man she marries, ever be regarded as his equal if his fortune is spent on his prosthesis or corrective measures for his missing hand and blindness? Regrettably, we see this aspect absent from the portrayal of Jane and Rochester's relationship in *Jane Eyre*.



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