

The Woman Question in Charlotte Brontë's Jane Eyre:  
The interaction of Romanticism and  
mid-nineteenth-century Victorian England

by

Hsiu-sui Chang

A Thesis Submitted to the  
Graduate Faculty in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of  
MASTER OF ARTS

Department: English  
Major: English (Literature)

Approved:

Signature redacted for privacy

---

In Charge of Major Work

Signature redacted for privacy

---

For the Major Department

Signature redacted for privacy

---

For the Graduate College

Iowa State University  
Ames, Iowa

1992

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
I. INTRODUCTION	1
II. WHAT CAN A MIDDLE-CLASS SINGLE WOMAN BE?	10
A. A Dependent in a Middle-Class Family?--at Gateshead Hall	12
B. A Sister?--in Lowood	17
C. A Governess? A Mad Woman? Or A Mistress?--at Thornfield Hall	20
D. A Hermit? A Worker?--at Whitcross and the Neighboring Village	33
E. A Missionary's Wife?--at Marsh End	38
F. A "Companionate" Wife?--at Ferndean	45
III. LOVE, SEXUALITY, MARRIAGE AND GOD	51
IV. CONCLUSION	59
V. NOTE	63
VI. BIBLIOGRAPHY	64

## I. Introduction

Near the end of the twentieth century, various and even contradictory literary criticisms are available. Which one is best for interpretation? Specifically, which one is best for interpreting Jane Eyre? The answers vary. Terry Eagleton, for example, declares that "there are indeed Marxist and feminist theories of literature which . . . are more valuable" (b Eagleton 204) since his hypothesis is that "literature . . . is vitally engaged with the living situations of men and women: it is concrete rather than abstract" (b Eagleton 196). What he means is that literature occurs in a social context.

I would not rush to the conclusion that his hypothesis is right. Yet feminist critics are not always attentive to the social context. For example, The Madwoman in the Attic is famous and often highly commended, but Janet Todd wishes that "Gilbert and Gubar had provided more history" (29). Toril Moi also criticizes Gilbert and Gubar's "belief in the true female authorial voice as the essence of all text written by women" (63). For Moi, the female authorial voice is a parallel of the patriarchal controlling force that feminist criticism intends to fight against. Moi declares that Gilbert and Gubar try to rebuke patriarchy by accepting "the patriarchal textual facade" (61). History, I would say, may need to be better included in feminist thinking.

For my purpose, history refers mainly to the era in which the author lives rather than his or her own personal history. The era has a strong impact on what a human being, both as a member of society and as a writer, would think and do. In addition, human situations

differ through time; therefore, the paradigm shifts as time changes. Paradigm shift is unavoidable. But in the course of shifting, paradigms converge and produce some uncomfortable results. Gender can even further complicate this issue. This kind of convergence happens both in life and in literature.

Victorian England is a typical example. In the 1830s, the coming of the railway and the rise of cities brought a brand-new era for the early Victorians. England "was well on the way to becoming a pluralistic society, a society containing not one monopolistic cultural system but a plurality of systems" (Gilbert 140). The old and new forces co-existed. With the rise of the middle classes, the forward-looking attitudes were strong. On the other hand, "despite all the advances in transport and communication, the conservatism that characterized rural attitudes persisted" (Altick 80). The gentry, which characterized that conservatism, still "set the tone of rural and small-town society" (Altick 26). Twenty-seven years after the Reform Bill the landed gentleman was still in control over the votes of his farming tenants (c Clark 210-211).

Generally speaking, in the 1830s and 1840s England remained stable because of "a network of institutions" (Harrison 146). In that network Evangelical religion was one of the most important elements. As Owen Chadwick has put it in The Victorian Church, "Evangelical religion seemed . . . to be the most potent religious and moral force in England" (i, 454). By the 1830s, though "the tide [of Evangelical revival] was ebbing, it had not been ebbed very far" (d Clark 230). "Religious values and allegiances coloured most social issues, either directly or in more subtle ways" (Harrison 122).

Kitson Clark, quoting from the 1851 Congregational Year Book, asserts that although "a spirit of infidelity is observable, strongly working in the *undercurrent* of society" (c Clark 164, emphasis added), violent attacks on religion were not prevalent until 1859 when Darwin's Origin of Species was published. The majority of the early Victorians still believed in the Bible (a Clark 97, 102; Altholz 59).

But Evangelical religion produced troubles for itself. In theology, looking at otherworldliness, Evangelicals "regarded this life as a mere prelude to the next" (Rosman 58). "[Man's] senses and passions were to be repressed, for they [made] no contribution to the well-being of the noncorporeal everlasting soul" (Rosman 52). Because of the fall, man's "'natural' 'senses, and feelings, and faculties . . . were no longer 'pleasing to the Author of our being'" (Rosman 49, emphasis added). In Evangelicalism there was a dualism between "soul and body, between the spirit and the world," as K. S. Inglis has called it (Rosman 246). In practice, however, the growing worldliness was palpable. Evangelical preachers even had "succumbed gradually to the temptation to make provision for their own comfort and status" (Gilbert 152). Alan Gilbert asserts that "Wesley's injunction, 'You have nothing to do but save souls,' was becoming increasingly inappropriate during the second quarter of the nineteenth century" (153). Doreen Rosman also points out that "biographies reveal that many [Evangelicals] read and enjoyed a wide range of secular authors" (166). Accordingly, the disparity between theology and practice is obvious in Evangelicalism.

In addition, secular works had their reading public. By the end of the first quarter of the nineteenth-century, the works of Scott and Byron had enjoyed large sales; and "after that the expansion is at break-neck speed," as Clark puts it (a Clark 88). Evangelicals accepted secular culture, but failed to "reconcile it theologically with their faith" (Rosman 196). Rosman argues that the Eclectic Review, a press both "more comprehensive in its coverage and more complimentary in its criticism" at that time (183), "on the whole disagreed with those who believed that poems [by the most controversial Romantic poet, Byron] spread moral contagion" (182).

The fact is that Evangelical clergymen in the Church of England, such as Charlotte Brontë's father Patrick Brontë, "bought the 1833 edition of The Complete Works of Byron, and subscribed to Life of Byron (Gerin 1; Gordon 93). Because of this, Byron had a strong impact on the Brontë children. According to Winifred Gerin, "beautiful ladies and romantic landscapes in Charlotte's drawings are influenced by Byron's works" (Gerin 3). Her Angrian hero, the Duke of Zamorna, is a typical Byronic hero (5). But the Byronic hero Rochester in Jane Eyre is "moralized and made fit for Victorian consumption" (Stone 117) due to the fact that Brontë became "aware of the dangers of the romantic influences" (Gerin 9).

Accordingly, I would say that both Evangelicalism and Romanticism affected Brontë in her writing. But those two "isms" co-existed inharmoniously. What Evangelicalism intended to suppress--passions and senses--was treasure for Romanticism. In Charlotte Brontë's Jane Eyre, the convergence of those two "isms" is quite obvious. As Jane Eyre came out in 1847, a time "polarised . . .

between Romanticism and social realism" (Marxist Feminist Literature Collective 189), Romanticism in this novel really became "a problem" for Brontë "because . . . its assumptions about the 'nature of femininity'" (189) were incompatible with Victorian society. In this novel, Brontë freshened both Romantic and Evangelical thinking. The inhumanity of Evangelism is humanized by passion and the senses; and at the same time, the excess of Byronism is adjusted by Evangelical thinking.

Observing the cruelty and injustice in society, Brontë, as a medium unable to remain silent, conveyed her protests and even provided some possible solutions to readers with an expectation that ideology could be changed. What Jane tells the always submissive Helen Burns in Lowood can be viewed as Brontë's intention.

. . . If people were always kind and obedient to those who are cruel and unjust, the wicked people would have it all their own way: they would never feel afraid, and so they would never alter, but would grow worse and worse. . . .

(Jane Eyre, 59-60, emphasis mine)

As stated previously, in my investigation, history is the author's era, rather than the author's personal life. However, I do not mean that the author's life has nothing to do with the work. In this project, Byron's strong influence on Brontë, which has been mentioned above, is an important background knowledge in reading Jane Eyre. In addition, Jane Eyre contains so many indispensable

autobiographical elements, readers may even categorize it as an autobiographical novel. But I give up this more common approach--the use of the biographical material to interpret the work--because even the most widely read famous biography, The Life of Charlotte Brontë by Elizabeth Gaskell, fails to account for some of the most important facets of the novel.

The most striking fact is that Gaskell does not deal with the question of the woman's sphere, which is an important feminist issue. As Suzann Bick observes in "Clouding the 'Severe Truth,'" Gaskell avoids "the issue of a woman's proper sphere" in her biography of Brontë although "throughout her career, [Gaskell] had explored [this] issue" (44-45).

Furthermore, there is no treatment of the idea of love, sexuality and marriage in this biography even though these are issues important in this analysis. As Bick puts it,

Gaskell would eschew literary analysis, substituting an emphasis on Charlotte's dutiful personal life. To win the approbation of the public, Gaskell stresses Charlotte's docility rather than her passion, her obedience instead of her outrage, and her conventional behavior at the expense of unconventional ideas. ( *ibid.* 37, emphases mine)

Conspicuously absent in Gaskell's interpretation are the Romantic "passion," "outrage," and "unconventional" ideas that constitute the concept of love, sexuality and marriage expressed in Jane Eyre. Readers may argue that the character in the work cannot be



identified with the author. But Bick argues further, Charlotte's encounter with and triumph over temptation is neglected purposefully (38). Even if this biographical material enhances appreciation of the author, it does little to further our understanding of the social and cultural context of Jane Eyre.

Moreover, authentic information about Brontë's spirituality, an indispensable element in dealing with religion as shown in this novel, is not to be found in this biography. Religion, as a vital force in the early Victorian era, is inseparable from Brontë's life and writing. Bick notices that three hundred and fifty of Charlotte's letters to her life-long friend Ellen Nussey were used as "the core of [this] biography" (35). But even "simple and very religious" (Bick 35) Ellen Nussey "was dissatisfied with Mrs Gaskell's account of Charlotte's religion" (Winnifrith 30). Gaskell's account cannot be a sensible guide to Brontë's religious ideology.

Finally, even if there are objective and comprehensive biographies available, I would still find this approach unfruitful. As John Maynard argues in Charlotte Brontë and Sexuality, the "simple equations between life and characters," an issue I just mentioned briefly, is often the result of this approach (32). Combined with psychological studies of writers, which assume that "all artists . . . are psychological cripples, struggling in their work to escape their neuroses as a fly from amber," it produces prejudice toward writers (33). Certainly, I concur with Maynard's view that without those above mentioned assumptions, the life of writers may "suggest" that writers, "like most people, suffered problems of confusion and emotional upset" (34, emphases added).

"Like most people" is, I think, the key phrase in the arguments of feminist critics. In the case of Jane Eyre, what interests me is that the protagonist Jane, instead of the writer Brontë, suffers like other middle-class single women in early Victorian England. It is this "likeness" of the same class of women that draws feminism and Marxism together.

To be more specific, I put the main themes expressed in Jane Eyre, namely the issue of women's proper sphere along with their psychological development, and the idea of love, sexuality and marriage, into historical context. I try to let history show how feminist Jane Eyre is in its time. In due course of my interpretation, the two paradigms--Romanticism and Evangelical thinking--will be used as backbones. In addition, whenever pertinent to the interpretation, social and economic phenomena will be brought in.

For a modern reader and interpreter of this mid-nineteenth-century text, this approach depends heavily on secondary sources since mid-nineteenth-century Victorian England is so different from our time. Obtaining objective secondary sources is not easy, but it is worth trying. As Robert Scholes and Robert Kellogg put it in The Nature of Narrative, "To understand a literary work . . . we must attempt to bring our own view of reality into as close an alignment as possible with the prevailing view in the time of the work's composition" (83). Their opinion is quite compatible with my reading experience. Each new reading of this text brings additional meaning as my horizon of the historical context enlarges. By this

approach, I hope that my effort to use history to interpret the text Jane Eyre proves to be a sensible one.

## II. What Can a Middle-Class Single Woman Be?

In Brontë's society, home is the presupposed sphere for a woman. Because the man (the father or the husband) was supposed to be the protector in the family, the more free time the woman had, the higher status she possessed. Now that the man was the protector, the woman was dependent on him. The woman worked only out of necessity when misfortunes befell the family. Jane, for instance, must work because she is orphaned. However, very few working spheres were available for early Victorian women, especially for the middle-class woman due to the fact that she was untrained for any job.

In Jane Eyre, the middle-class single woman's alternative spheres in 1840 Victorian England are shown. The protagonist Jane's different periods of life struggle can be *symbolized* as the probable spheres for her counterparts. Rebellious Jane protests against conventional women's fate in society. Through an uphill struggle, finally Jane finds her own way, an unconventional way.

In structure, this novel can be divided into six sections-- Gateshead Hall, Lowood, Thornfield Hall, Whitcross and its neighboring village, Marsh End and Ferndean. Gateshead Hall is the most common and conventional sphere--the upper middle-class family. Lowood can be treated as a sisterhood. Jane's life at Thornfield is a governess's life with the possibility of becoming a mad woman or a mistress. The Whitcross section examines the feasibility of being a hermit or of seeking employment in the "Hungry Forties." In the Marsh End section Jane is tempted to enter

the glorious career of a missionary's wife. Finally, life in Ferndean is a liberal and unconventional new-found dreamland for Jane.

### A. A Dependent in a Middle-Class Family?--at Gateshead Hall

The relation between John Reed and Jane can be *symbolized* as husband and wife. The majority of middle-class married women suffered like Jane at Gateshead Hall. As June Hagen declares, "[the] abuse and physical and emotional pain of Gateshead . . . are only Jane's *initiation* into . . . realities" (29). But before observing Jane's life at Gateshead Hall, a closer look at Victorian marriage, especially marriage before 1857, in which men had absolute dominating power over women, is necessary.

In May 1847, Elizabeth Barrett Browning wrote that "'women generally *lose* by marriage,' . . ." (Basch 28). The word "lose" deserves special attention. John Stuart Mill succinctly said that the Victorian marriage system 'confers upon one of the parties to the contract legal power and control over the *person, property, and freedom of action* of the other party' (Basch16). That means once an early Victorian woman married, she was no more herself both mentally and physically. In the Anglican marriage ritual, Françoise Basch points out, a bridegroom should say 'what is yours, is mine; and what is mine, is *my own*' (20). The Victorian wife could not own anything, even her own children. "[Her] power was the fruit of subjection and submission" (Basch 6). If she did not submit to her husband, she could be made a slave or imprisoned and treated as a mad woman. The husband had entire control of his wife.

In that kind of situation, the possibility of suffering was very high since before 1857 divorce and remarriage was nearly impossible. "By most contemporary standards the law was indeed conservative, reflecting widely held. . . convictions about male

superiority and female submission in marriage" (Hammerton 271-72). In marriage, the only method the wife could utilize to sustain harmony was obedience. No equality was possible at that time. "Even after 1857, male supremacy within the couple remained overwhelming. . . . Only after 1870 did the law little by little establish some equality for the partners concerning assets, rights over children, and the grounds for divorce" (Basch 25).

Accordingly, injustice in marriage was prevailing at that time; actually, many married women became mad. "Mad women" were common figures in Victorian society. "Madness is a female malady because it is experienced by more women than men. . . . [And by] the middle of the nineteenth century, records showed that women had become the majority of patients in public lunatic asylums," Elaine Showalter observes in her introduction to The Female Malady (3). Furthermore, "[the] English have long regarded their country . . . as the global headquarters of insanity" (7). But the most striking fact that Showalter points out is that "as the nineteenth century went on, English psychiatry and English culture created new stories about the female malady" (17). Whether a woman was mad or not was decided by biased and subjective criteria which were constituted by male domination. "The label of insanity has frequently been ascribed to women who fail to perform housewives' tasks, or who deviate from the 'average' norms of expected behavior" (a Stein 125, emphasis mine).

From this perspective, Jane at Gateshead Hall is like a middle-class Victorian abused married woman. In her uncle Reed's home, Jane is isolated and abused because she is rebellious and *plain--*

plain in appearance as well as in action and speech. Jane is isolated from the Reeds because she has no "sociable and childlike disposition," or "attractive and sprightly manner" (9). Her aunt demands that "until [she] can speak pleasantly, [she must] remain silent" (9). Also she is "such a little toad," as the servant Abbot puts it (28). She lacks the feminine beauty, ignorance and falseness necessary to be rated as a pleasing woman.

What she does can never please her "master"--John Reed. When she relishes Bewick's History of British Birds, what she fears is "interruption," which "[comes] too soon" (11). Reading was far from a proper activity for the early domestic Victorian woman since the intellectual aspirations of "'bluestockings' had long been abhorred" (Burstyn 74). John Reed bullies and abuses Jane often, but she could only be "habitually obedient" because he brings not only "physical abuse" but also "terror" (12). But once she fights orally and physically, she is helpless since the servants would come to help him control her. They say, "Did ever anybody see such a picture of passion!" (13) Doubtless, he is her master because in the fight, she calls him "wicked and cruel" like "a murderer" and "a slave-driver" (13).

Due to her passion, Jane is imprisoned in the upstairs red-room, a version of an asylum. As passion is the parallel of madness, a passionate woman must be imprisoned because she is considered to be mad. Though she knows that "a moment's mutiny" results in "strange penalties," she, "like any other rebel slave," intends to be rebellious all the way upstairs (14). The servants tell her, "If you don't sit still, you must be tied down" (14). At last when she gives



in, they look at her, "incredulous" of her "sanity" (14). After the encounter with some spirit, she believes that she "saw *a light*, and [she] thought a ghost would come" (19), but her fear is regarded as a "trick," and Mrs. Reed will not let her out. Mrs. Reed tells her that "tricks will not answer" and that "it is only on condition of perfect submission and stillness that [she will] liberate her" (20). Protest, a version of rebelliousness, brings no freedom. The consequence is, ironically, "a species of fit" that brings perfect submission and stillness.

When Jane is in the red-room, she cannot answer her own ceaseless, inward questions about why she suffers so much. But "I will not say how many years" later, the narrator Jane notes, she knows that it [was] because she has "nothing in harmony with Mrs. Reed or her children" (17). Jane does not love the Reeds; and neither do they love her. No love, for Jane, means there is no meaning in life.

In addition, part of the reason for her incompatibility with the Reeds is the fact that she is an orphan. She has no family of her own before she comes to Gateshead Hall. For a single woman, no family, in the Victorian sense, means no "sphere." At Gateshead Hall, she is a sort of "relation," but she is not treated so. Or maybe she is a guest, but no one, except Bessie, in a good mood, is kind to her. John Reed tells her, "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, . . . all the house belongs to me, or will . . . in a few years" (12-13). John Reed's words reflect Victorian reality. As an early Victorian woman is powerless, her status is

determined either by her father (if she is unmarried) or her husband. Fatherless and penniless, Jane's position at Gateshead Hall is "undefined" (Peterson 9) like a governess's in a private family.

Although Jane suffers so much at Gateshead Hall, the outsiders of this house would not know her abject situation. Mr. Lloyd, an apothecary who comes after Jane undergoes that "species of fit," says, "you can't be silly enough to wish to leave such a splendid place?" (26) Jane's response is that "poverty for [her is] synonymous with degradation" (26). But she is "not heroic enough to purchase liberty at the price of caste" (27). In the Victorian era, the distinction between the middle-class and the poor working-class woman is as firm as the gender difference.

When Mr. Brocklehurst, a clergyman, comes, he will not listen to Jane's true words. As "humility is a Christian grace" (36), what he intends to do is to cultivate Jane as the embodiment of the middle-class woman's humility. In addition, he gives Jane a pamphlet entitled the 'Child's Guide' to read. He emphasizes "especially that part containing 'an account of the awfully sudden death of Martha G--, a naughty child addicted to falsehood and deceit'" (37). The inhumanity and injustice of Victorian Christianity is vividly presented. Religion is used as a tool to scare middle-class women. The attitudes and speech of an intelligent straightforward girl like Jane are treated as "falsehood" and "deceit."

### B. A Sister?--in Lowood

Lowood, the religious institution where Jane stays for eight years, can be symbolized as a sisterhood. All pupils there are female. Moreover, in Lowood, "the Victorian idealisation of womanhood, particularly [the] qualities of virginity, docility, dedication, spirituality and modesty" (Casteras, 129) used to train those pupils is quite nun-like.

Sisterhood, "a relatively recent historical possibility in England created by the conventual revival which the Oxford Movement had fostered" (Casteras 130), had its important social functions. In Brontë's society, a large numbers of unmarried--"redundant"--women constituted "a social embarrassment" (Casteras 129) as "the census for 1851 revealed that as many as 30 percent of all English women between the ages of twenty and forty were unmarried" (Murray 48). Obviously, the issue of the redundant women was serious. For these women, sisterhood provided an alternative "sphere." In 1835, in the British Magazine, John Henry Newman--one of the most influential leaders in the Oxford Movement--wrote that "sisterhoods could give dignity and independence to the position of women in society" (Casteras 131). Sisterhoods grew continually as they "served a real social need by ministering to the poor, the homeless, the ill, the elderly and the unfortunate" (Casteras135). The first sisterhood "devoted to female education and the training of sisters as teachers"--the Wantage community--was founded in 1849 (Casteras 134).

As I mentioned, Lowood in Jane Eyre is like a sisterhood, but readers will never know what most of those pupils do after finishing

their education since Brontë did not mention it. A lot of them, like Helen, die prematurely. However, Jane survives. After her six-year education, Jane becomes a teacher there. All in all, what draws my attention is the sister-like Helen Burns, who embodies the typical ideal Victorian woman. She accepts all things "cruel and unjust" (59). "Injustice never crushes [her] too low: [she lives] in calm, looking to the end" (61). What Helen conforms to is Evangelical "otherworldliness." She tells Jane, "You think too much of the love of human beings; you are too impulsive, too vehement. . . . Why . . . should we ever sink overwhelmed with distress, when life is soon over, and death is so certain an entrance to happiness--to glory?" (72)

Jane is absolutely different from Helen in disposition. Rebellious Jane declares, "*I [am] no Helen Burns*" (68). This declaration well defines Jane herself. It is impossible for Jane to become a sister. Jane tells Helen, "If others don't love me, I would rather die than live" (72). Jane puts it clearly that the meaning of life comes from love. In Lowood, Miss Temple fills this need for love. In addition, Miss Temple also accepts what Jane deems to be sensible--the "natural" inclination and what is true to feeling. Julia's naturally curly hair is no harm. But "burnt porridge" is no good. Miss Temple even allows Jane to defend herself. "Say whatever your memory suggests as true; but add nothing and exaggerate nothing" (73)--an authentic expression of Romanticism--is articulated by Miss Temple. In Miss Temple, Christian modesty goes hand in hand with elements of Romanticism. Miss Temple is Jane's model.

When Miss Temple marries and leaves Lowood, for Jane the atmosphere of home in this charity institute disappears. What remains is nothing but artificial rules. Jane's hidden and repressed impulse to look for some wider view motivates her to go out of this charity institute. "A kind fairy" suggests to her in her sleep to advertise (89) to "seek real knowledge of life amidst its perils" (87). The real flavor of this world is provided for her when she acts as a governess at Thornfield Hall.

C. A Governess? A Mad Woman? Or a Mistress?--at  
Thornfield Hall

When Jane arrives at Thornfield, everything seems so fine to her that a feeling of sweet home arises spontaneously. Mrs. Fairfax, the housekeeper, is kind to her. "Everything appeared very stately and imposing" to her (102). For the "motherless" (Rich), fatherless, and homeless young lady, Thornfield itself is a temptation. The grandeur inspires her to think that "a fairer era of life" with "its flowers and pleasures" as well as "its thorns and toils" is beginning (101). Actually, a life with "its flowers and pleasures as well as its thorns and toils" is a true synopsis of what happens to Jane in Thornfield.

It is in Thornfield where her "restlessness" (112) is exercised to the extreme extent. Jane protests that "women are supposed to be very calm generally: but women feel just as men feel; they need exercise for their faculties" (112). She climbs the three staircases to look out to "allow [her] mind's eye to dwell on whatever bright visions [rise] before it" (112). Thornfield not only brightens Jane's physical eye but also her mind's eye--the power of her Romantic imagination. She is "weary of an existence all passive" (119); Thornfield offers her an active one. It is no wonder that she involves herself so much even though she is an outsider.

An outsider in this family, Jane the governess's involvements with Bertha and Rochester, which broaden her mental and physical faculties, really command attention. In Jane and Rochester's first conversation in Thornfield, he marvels at her "look of another world." He also thinks that he has "a right to get pleasure out of life

. . . and [he] will get it, cost what it may" (139). Rochester tells Jane, "I find it impossible to be conventional with you" (142, emphasis mine). "At the same time, this inexperienced young lady is fascinated by this Byronic hero who is old enough to be her father though she finds that the discourse is "all darkness" (141) to her. The basic reason is that he had "battled through a varied experience with many men of many nations, and roamed over half the globe, while [she had] lived quietly with one set of people in one house" (137). Their first conversation foreshadows what is bound to happen in Thornfield. Bertha (Mrs. Rochester), though mad and imprisoned, still controls Jane and Rochester. Bertha's internal and literal fire throughout the Thornfield Hall section influences them enormously.

The image of a mad woman is closely connected with that of a governess. As Harriet Martineau pointed out, "governesses formed one of the largest single occupational groups to be found in insane asylums" probably owing to "confused and contradictory behavior" resulting from "status incongruence" (Peterson 13, emphasis mine). Mary Poovey also points out that, "According to both the author of the 1844 'Hints on the Modern Governess System' and Lady Eastlake's 1847 review of the Governesses' Benevolent Institution's annual report, governesses accounted for the largest category of women in lunatic asylums" (234, emphasis mine). These two statistics reveal how governesses were destroyed in their working positions in mid-nineteenth-century Victorian England.

In the 1840s, governesses stirred great anxiety in England; doubtless because, according to Poovey's depiction, they blurred barriers both in the private family and in society. As a big portion

of Jane Eyre was devoted to Jane the governess's life in Thornfield, it was no wonder that Brontë's contemporaries attacked this novel as "a voice from . . . the *dangerous class* of oppressed or 'outlawed' women" (Pell 398, italic mine). "Dangerous" is not too strong a word for governesses in 1847, the date of publication for Jane Eyre. Governesses at that time constituted a subversive power of destruction to middle-class families and to society. Poovey observes that the governess "could not be trusted to regulate her own sexuality" in the family, so instead of "[protecting] middle-class values," she may produce moral problems. And this makes her connected with the fallen woman, since according to Henry Mayhew, a famous social commentator, ". . . any woman who lived or had sexual relations with a man outside of marriage was a prostitute" (Poovey 236). In addition, the governess's role was so like the mother's that she blurred the distinction (Poovey 234-39).

This power of breaking barriers could prove fatal to the still stable early Victorian society, in which the old conservative power remained in control. In society, the governess was feared simply because "she was a middle-class woman in . . . [the hungry forties] when women were considered so critical to social stability" (ibid. 233) as more middle-class women were forced to work out of necessity. For those women who were "untrained for any kind of work" (Crow 67), the career of a governess was the most feasible solution. The fact was "more tradesmen's daughters were entering the ranks of governess" to "infiltrate the middle-class home" (Poovey 233).



### Jane and the Rochester Family

Jane in Thornfield is closely connected with Bertha and Rochester. Especially, Jane's relation with Bertha interests critics to a great extent. Although Jane does not literally turn mad, critics have closely related her with Bertha. Bertha is Jane's "darker, monstrous, more sexual, angry self" (a Stein 136). "Bertha's existence is a possibility for Jane, her condition . . . a provocative symbol of everything which Jane must overcome" (Senf 355).

In the process of Jane's courtship with Rochester, Bertha's power of influence still exists. On the afternoon when Jane and Rochester have their second talk, ugly Rochester is no longer ugly in Jane's eyes. Jane only listens most of the time since Rochester likes "to open [himself] to a mind unacquainted with the world" (149). That night, while thinking of him, Jane cannot sleep. In a state of sleeplessness, Jane hears something that "gurgled and moaned" (151), a symbol of Bertha (who remains in the dark for her). It is Bertha who, though unknown to Jane, sets the fire in Rochester's room. Bertha's internal fire turns to a literal one. Thus it is also Bertha whose fire further kindles the fire of love between Jane and Rochester since Jane extinguishes the fire and meets Rochester again in his room. When Rochester says that he "is going to leave [Jane] a few minutes . . . [and] pay a visit to the third story," Jane is "left in total darkness" (153). She is "left in total darkness" both literally and symbolically. The symbolic darkness lingers until the disclosure of Bertha's presence. Bertha's presence legally prevents Jane and Rochester from getting married.

Once the fire of love between Jane and Rochester has been ignited, a process of courtship follows. Rochester leaves for a week-long house party, and Jane castigates herself for daydreaming about Rochester in the privacy of her room. After Rochester comes back from that week-long party, a house party for the "fine people at the Leas" takes place in Thornfield. In that party, Jane is invited to find that at "the first renewed view of him," "the germ of love" "revives." Rochester "[makes her] love him without looking at [her]" (177). Among those "fine people" Blanche Ingram is used to arouse Jane's jealousy. Further, Rochester even disguises himself as an old gypsy woman to tell those ladies in that party about their fortunes. He tells Jane, "it depends on yourself to stretch out your hand, and take it up" (202). More words of unconventional but Romantic love are articulated.

"My little friend!" [says] he, "I wish I were in a quiet island with only you; and trouble, and danger, and hideous recollections removed from me."

"Can I help you, sir?--I'd give my life to serve you."

(205)

Rochester is so full of strategies that naive young Jane helplessly falls in love with him.

Jane in the meantime also informs Rochester as the house party proceeds that Mr. Mason, Bertha's brother, has come. His stay brings a biting incident perpetrated by Bertha. "A savage, a sharp, a shrill sound [comes out of the third story,] [and runs] from end to end

of Thornfield Hall" (207) one night. The biting is so serious that Mason tells Rochester, "She (Bertha) sucked the blood: she said she'd drain my heart" (214). As Jane comes to tend to Mason's wound, she even hears, from the adjacent room, "a snarling, snatching sound, almost like a dog quarrelling," and that "goblin ha! ha!" (210) This biting incident brings a closer relationship for Jane and Rochester. After this incident, conspicuously, words of love are revealed. Jane expresses that she likes to serve him, and to obey Rochester in "*all that is right*" (219). Again and again, the governess Jane, an outsider, **unknowingly infiltrates** the Rochester family.

In Jane and Rochester's courtship, directly or indirectly, Bertha plays an important role. Both the fire and biting incident orchestrated by Bertha make Jane and Rochester become closer. But the far more important aspect of those incidents is that they reflect Bertha's clear mind. The fire incident happens after Rochester's talk with Bertha. And later, the night before the wedding, Bertha enters Jane's bedroom to tear her wedding veil. Those incidents do not happen coincidentally. That Bertha knows what is going on in Thornfield is quite possible. Her madness is therefore quite doubtful.

What Bertha has is destructive power, which not only functions in the night but exhibits itself during the daytime. As Bertha's existence is acknowledged, spectators are guided to the third floor of Thornfield. The narrator's description of the struggle between Rochester and Bertha calls for attention--

. . . the lunatic sprang and grappled his throat viciously, and laid her teeth to his cheek: they struggled. She was a big woman, in stature almost equalling her husband, and corpulent besides: she showed virile force in the contest--more than once she almost throttled him, athletic as he was. . . . At last he mastered her arms; Grace Poole gave him a cord, and he pinioned them behind her: with more rope, . . . , he bound her to a chair. The operation was performed amidst the fiercest yells, and the most convulsive plunges. (296)

As critics have noticed, Bertha attacks only men. In the above quoted "struggle," it is Rochester at whose throat she "sprang and grappled." She knows exactly who her enemy is. Certainly, corpulent Bertha could kill petite Jane easily if she intended, since she enters Jane's room when she sleeps. She even has opportunities to kill her guard Grace Poole, who sometimes was drunk.

The above facts seem to be surprising. But for such [French] feminist writers as Helene Cixous and Xaviere Gauthier, Bertha's clear mind is not uncommon since they declare that "madness has been the historical label applied to female protest and revolution" (Showalter 4-5, emphasis mine). Their declaration has its base. R. D. Laing, in The Politics of Experience, defines "schizophrenia as 'a special strategy that a person invents in order to live in an unlivable situation'" (a Stein 125).

However, if Bertha's madness is a "female protest," killing can bring no positive result for her. Bertha would still be confined. If

Bertha's madness is a "strategy" to escape the "unlivable" marriage life, nevertheless, she still cannot escape. When Jane is confined in "the red-room," Mrs. Reed's words to her reflect this Victorian phenomenon to a certain extent--"[Tricks] will not answer . . . It is only on condition of perfect submission and stillness that I shall liberate you" (20). Madness as a strategy only results in a prison life. The fact for the Victorian "angels" in the house is that only death--a state of "perfect submission and stillness"--could liberate them.

What complicates the issue of madness is cultural standards.<sup>1</sup> According to Rochester, Bertha is "a wife at once intemperate and unchaste" (309). It is these "excesses" that "had prematurely developed the germs of insanity" (309). An intemperate woman like Bertha was doomed to be confined in the attic, a version of the asylum, since she was supposed to be insane in the Victorian era, as I mentioned at the outset. Women were so powerless legally in the early Victorian era that "a moment's mutiny . . . rendered [them] . . . strange penalties," as Jane puts it well (14).

In the above quoted passage, words like--"viciously," "big," "corpulent," and "virile"--oppose the Victorian norms of femininity. "Athletic as he [is]," Rochester has difficulty simply to control Bertha, since she is so powerful and unfeminine. This struggle epitomizes the marriage life between Rochester and Bertha. Because unfemininity violates the Victorian norm, Bertha is doomed to be confined in the attic. Unable to meet the standard cultural criteria, she is assessed to be "mad."

However, whether Bertha is mad or not is not the main concern in this novel. That Bertha is a victim of a loveless Victorian marriage is the main focus. What Bertha has is "schizophrenic excitement" (Hare 192). Patients like Bertha need to be loved. But marriage offers no love; instead, it worsens her condition. Like the monster in Mary Shelley's Frankenstein, unable to obtain love, Bertha has the power to destroy the one who makes her what she is. Through Bertha, Brontë protested against loveless Victorian marriage as a weapon of destruction.

Female madness is such a common phenomenon that Brontë used it as a critique of marriage and the law. According to Rochester himself, Bertha "was the boast of Spanish Town for her beauty, a "tall, dark, [and] majestic" beauty (307). But this beauty turns out to be a "maniac" (295), a "lunatic" (296) confined in the attic. Does not the marriage institution make her so? Rochester suffers too. This marriage is such an "infernal union" (306), which brings him a life in hell, that he even intends to commit suicide (310). As Rochester tells Jane how he had been cheated into marrying Bertha, how he has suffered and yet could not end the miserable marriage legally (309), the cruel, rigid, and ridiculous Victorian law is vividly shown. In a nutshell, it is mad Bertha who prevents Jane from becoming one of the mad women herself.

### Jane and Rochester

Actually, all of Bertha's destructive power has been unknowingly present in Jane's mind. As mentioned previously, before the house party in Thornfield, Rochester leaves for a week-long

party. During that time, Jane, castigating herself in privacy, asserts something that describes what happens between Bertha and Rochester, and between Rochester and herself.

It is madness in all women to let a secret love kindle within them, which, if unreturned and unknown, must devour the life that feeds it; and, if discovered and responded to, must lead, *ignis-fatuus*-like, into miry wilds whence there is no extrication.

(163, emphases mine)

It is love that connects Bertha and Jane since every woman needs to be loved. However, instead of being loved, Bertha is imprisoned by Rochester.

Confinement for women is social injustice. But as the case of Bertha's imprisonment shows, confinement is so culturally determined that it is inescapable. Cultural influence always functions in one way or another. Even in the unusual relationship between Jane and Rochester, convention still functions. "Mr. Rochester offers Jane wider horizons than any she has known; travel, riches, brilliant society"; he intends to "make her his object, his creature" (Rich 100). To objectify women is itself part of Victorian culture. Walter Houghton, in The Victorian Frame of Mind, concisely discusses this issue. "The boy was taught to view women as objects of the greatest respect and even awe. . . . He was to consider nice women (like his sister and his mother, like his future bride) as creatures more like angels than human beings" (354-55).

Rochester functions as a domineering male to control the woman with whom he intends to have a union. Jane, however, refuses to be controlled. When she finds that Rochester and Blanche would marry not for love but for money and status, she intends to leave Rochester.

". . . . I would scorn such a union: therefore I am better than you--let me go!" (255)

"Jane, be still; don't struggle so, like a wild, frantic bird that is rending its own plumage in its desperation."

"I am no bird; and no net ensnares me; I am a free human being with an independent will; . . . " (256)

What Rochester expects is a "still" "bird" that he can control. To become a still bird Jane would lose her self. When the still bird struggles, it is similar to Bertha, who protests vainly and is doomed to be imprisoned longer. "A free human being with an independent will" is what Jane intends to be. However, obviously, "an independent will" in an early Victorian woman is unsuitable for a domineering male. Jane refuses to be a traditional woman and to be confined in a house.

Moreover, after Jane agrees to marry him, Rochester asserts his wealth and power over her again, enslaving and debasing her in false luxuries. Those ornamental objects only give Jane "a sense of annoyance and degradation" (270) because she wants to be herself, free from bondage; therefore, she asserts, "I am not an angel, . . . ,



and I will not be one till I die: I will be myself" (262). "You must neither expect nor exact anything celestial of me" (262). Besides, "'finery' and 'the fallen woman'" are often connected together (Valverde 169). Jane tells Rochester, "I will not be your English Celine Varens" (272). To retain a true self for Jane is indispensable in a sexual relationship.

Cultural influence is so strong that not only Rochester but also rebellious Jane follow some aspects of social convention. The concept of "conventional morality" (Basch 171) is "internalized" (ibid.; Figs 114) in Jane. Rebellious and unconventional in some respects, Jane is still affected by what the society and culture expect from an ideal woman. In her extreme romantic life with all its "flowers and pleasures," God is not absent, but just hidden. Evangelical moral influence still impacts Jane. As the existence of Mrs. Rochester is uncovered, Jane falls into mental "miry wilds" in which all the "flowers and pleasures" in her life "[lie] stark, chill, livid corpses . . . that could never revive" (298). At this point, God comes out from her conscience to exert influence. "Conscience [turns] tyrant, [holds] passion by the throat" (299). Conscience acts as a proxy for God. If it were not for "a remembrance of God" that begets "a muttered prayer"--"Be not far from me, for trouble is near: there is none to help," (298-99), Jane could not be extricated.

Jane's passionate love is far from compatible with the law, which allows no bigamy. Though Jane knows the cruelty of the law, she does not have the power to violate it. To be Rochester's wife is the most impossible thing for her. And although Rochester asks her to be with him as his mistress in France, she could not agree since

although culturally rebellious and unconventional, she is still religious. To act against the law would be disobedient to God and would go against her own conscience. She "will keep the law given by God; sanctioned by man" (319). At this moment, the moon, a sign of God's presence, comes to help her. Since what Jane sees in the moon is "a white human form [that] shone in the azure" (321), she promises, "Mother, I will" "flee temptation" (322). Rochester's passionate love is "temptation," according to Evangelical Christianity. Jane must leave Thornfield although her heart is still haunted by Rochester. The influence of Evangelicalism is so enormous that Jane must sacrifice her own desire to meet the demand of the law which is "given by God." But doing so is torture to herself. In her "flight" from Thornfield, she "abhors" herself and can find no solace from "self-approbation," even from "self-respect" (323). To follow the law, she loses her self. However, since the law is "given by God," she has no alternative. But in her mind, God is not a tyrant to control passion only. He is a guide to lead her to keep going in her life journey. Later, obviously, God functions when she arrives at Whitcross--the physical "miry wilds," where Jane also confronts extreme mental "miry wilds."

#### IV. A Hermit? A Worker?--in Whitcross and the Neighboring Village

With God's guidance in leaving Thornfield, after two days Jane finds herself arrived at Whitcross--"a stone pillar set up where four roads meet" (325). Alone and "absolutely destitute" in the wilderness, Jane feels "objectless and lost" (325). "Not a tie holds [her] to human society," she has "no relative but the universal mother, Nature: [she] will seek her breast and ask repose" (325). Even in this wilderness, she still could not forget the bond of human love.

However, Jane is, unlike the hermit in Wordsworth's poetry, not part of nature any more. For Wordsworth, man has a strong affinity with nature, from which his/her mind is healed, guided and nurtured. But in Jane Eyre, Jane's "search for strength and selfhood in Nature [can only] be a troubled retreat" (b Griffin 173, emphasis mine). Population had increased greatly. The rise of cities had changed the landscape. And with the change of landscape, the concept of nature shifted.

William Wordsworth's poetry can be used as a comparison and contrast. For Wordsworth, a hermit in seclusion can always find shelter in Nature. In 1798, in "Tintern Abbey," Wordsworth wrote,

The day is come when I again repose  
Here, under this dark sycamore,. . . (lines 9-10)

With some uncertain notice, . . .  
Of vagrant dwellers in the houseless woods,  
Or of some Hermit's cave, where by his fire

The Hermit sits alone. (lines 19-22)

For Wordsworth, one can "repose" in nature. The oxymoron "vagrant dwellers" encourages us to believe that there exist in the "houseless woods" not only "houseless" "houses" but also "houseless" "homes," since the Hermit's "fire" gives us the atmosphere of a sweet home. The hermit "sits alone," but he would not feel alone as he is part of nature.

For Jane, there is no "home" in Nature. "Nature [seems] to her benign and good" (326). But she could not stay long in Nature,

. . . I wished I could live in it and on it . I saw a lizard run over the crag; I saw a bee busy among the sweet bilberries. But I was a human being, and had a human being's wants: I must not linger where there was nothing to supply them. . . . Life, however, was yet in my possession: with all its requirements, and pains, and responsibilities. The burden must be carried; the want provided for; the suffering endured; the responsibility fulfilled. . . . (327, emphases mine)

For one thing, Nature's nurturing power decreased as population increased. Malthus's theory did not go too far. Further, the Victorian sense of duty also prevented an early Victorian from retreating to Nature. Lingering too long in nature, Jane thinks herself "an outcast" (332). Besides, "Solitude would be no solitude--

rest no rest--while the vulture, hunger, thus sank beak and talons in [her] side" (330). Jane is homeless in the "Hungry Forties."

Jane could not repose in Nature. She says--"I must struggle on: strive to live and bend to toil like the rest" (328)--people's common effort in the "Hungry Forties." She enters the neighboring village to seek employment. Work was encouraged in the Victorian era. Both Evangelicalism and Utilitarianism promoted the ethics of work. Norman observes that the ethics of work was a common liturgy. The following passage quoted from Evangelical Magazine (1804) is a good example.

Religion promotes industry, industry gains respect, respect gains recommendation, recommendation gains business, business gains wealth; and thus religion itself naturally leads to prosperity. (Quoted in Norman 33)

However, in the 1840s the working opportunity was slim. Ironically, this Evangelical ethic could not work out for people at that time any more. "What [Jane begs] is employment: but whose business is it to provide [her] with employment?" (331) Moreover, the fact that she is a woman even further slims the opportunity.

"Did Mr. Oliver employ women?"

"Nay; it was men's work." (329)

Mr. Oliver did not employ women because middle-class women "were totally untrained for any kind of work" (Crow 67) though not a few of

them were forced to work anyway in the dire forties. Still making an effort to strive on, guided by a dimly shining light, Jane arrives at Marsh End.

Maggie Berg, author of Portrait of a Life, claims that "when Jane Eyre is wandering on the heath totally abandoned (God the Father is very far away and Mother Nature barely supports her) . . . , she clearly represents a fundamental Victorian state" (4). I do not agree with her because the majority of early Victorians believed that God was inseparable from them. For Jane, God's existence in Nature is even far more palpable.

. . . We know that God is everywhere; but certainly we feel His presence most when His works are on the grandest scale spread before us: and it is in the unclouded night-sky, where His worlds wheel their silent course, that we read clearest His infinitude, His omnipotence, His omnipresence. . . . (326)

In this wilderness, where there is really "none to help," Jane "struggles to retain a valueless life" simply because she knows or believes that Mr. Rochester is still living (332). She asks God to "sustain [her] a little longer!" (332). For Jane, God "sustains" love. After four days of struggle in the wilderness, if not guided by some "dim light"--some presence of God--she could not have reached Marsh End. "The light is *yet* there: shining dim, but constant, through the rain" (333, emphasis added). It is God who brings hope for Jane

to go on with her life even though that is so difficult for the present.

Jane's suffering in the Whitcross wilderness refers quite specifically to life in England in the 1840s. At that time, nature's nurturing power had decreased, and a reclusive life was not available for a middle-class parentless woman even if she intended to be a hermit. Yet employment was not easy to get because of the dire social conditions. Besides, as she was untrained for any job, her working opportunity was further curtailed. But with the existence of God, there was hope to reach Marsh End.

### E. A Missionary's Wife?--at Marsh End

Marsh End means an absolute new beginning for Jane.

But in my first reading, I was simply disappointed and wondered how this Marsh End episode could be connected to other parts of this novel. June Hagen's article really throws some light on one point that I had missed completely. "A sphere of work, a place of her own, financial independence, and her own family to give her a social place in the world and a loving community"--all these needs Jane has are met when she is at Marsh End (30). Accordingly, were there no Marsh End episode, Jane would remain with no outlet for further development.

Saved by the Rivers family, Jane thinks, "I [feel] no longer outcast, vagrant, and disowned by the wide world. I [dare] to put off the mendicant--to resume my natural manner and character. I [begin] once more to know my-self" (339). A sense of security and the "love of human beings" are regained. In the wilderness of Nature with no home and no human beings around, Jane is lost; whereas, in the Rivers household, her self, which she esteems so highly, comes back.

Enjoying the sisterly love of Diana and Mary Rivers, Jane revives again. They share a mutual love of reading and an appreciation of nature. Sisterly love even empowers nature. In this moment Jane can "[cling] to this scene (of nature) . . . [She can] comprehend the feeling and share both its strength and truth" (352). She obtains not only enjoyment but guidance from the Rivers sisters, especially from Diana. This intimacy, however, does not extend to



St. John Rivers although with his help Jane teaches in a school at Morton opened for local girls.

A typical Evangelical, St. John contributes "a large proportion of his time . . . to [visit] the sick and poor among the scattered population of his parish" (353). St. John's devotion to his "vocation" is a natural phenomenon, but it is inhuman in the eyes of Jane because he is so lacking in "humanity" in many aspects. St. John's "otherworldliness" is in strong conflict with Jane's worldliness.

Like many Evangelicals in the early Victorian era, St John is, as he describes himself, "a cold, hard, ambitious man" (377). His "vocation" is the "foundation laid on earth for a mansion in heaven" (376). In order to have a full mental and physical devotion to God, St. John would give up all the enjoyment of senses. As St. John is always looking at heaven, "the humanities and amenities of life [have] no attraction for him--its peaceful enjoyment no charm" (395). Even "the appreciation of nature," "the one pleasure in whose innocence all Evangelicals believed, and which many happily indulged" (Rosman 129), is not to St. John "that treasury of delight it [is] to his sisters" (353). St. John even tells Jane,

**Reason, and not Feeling, is my guide; my ambition is unlimited; my desire to rise higher, to do more than others, insatiable. I honour endurance, perseverance, industry, talent; because these are the means by which men achieve great ends, and mount to lofty eminence.**

(377, emphasis added)

St. John is really a man without affection toward the senses. Guided by reason, his ambitious goal is heaven. Jane comments that "if [St. John] is insane, however, his [is] a very cool and collected insanity" (380).

St. John's "insane" fervor was not abnormal. "The ministry was a full-time activity," as Alan Gilbert puts it (151). During the period between 1791, when John Wesley died, and the 1840s, there was a "professionalisation" of the ministry (Gilbert 151). Josef Altholz also mentions that the Evangelical revival changed the clerical profession; as a result, the nineteenth-century ministry became a "vocation" (60).

The Evangelicals insisted that clergymen be serious, attend to their religious duties, and expand the definition of those duties until they were capable of absorbing their entire time and energy: two sermons on Sunday, weekday services, frequent visiting of the poor.

(Altholz 60)

St. John's devotion is demanded by his "vocation," but for Jane, a person guided more by feeling, this vocation is a murderer of nature. St. John seems to imply that God has given human beings the power to suppress our inclination when he tells Jane, "It is hard work to control the workings of inclination, and turn the bent of nature: but it may be done, . . . God has given us . . . the power to make our own fate" (363). As Robert George puts it, "St. John concedes

that religion cannot destroy nature but he implies that it would be nice if it were possible" (101).

However, to suppress nature, St. John suffers a lot. St. John tells Jane, "A year ago, I was myself intensely miserable, . . . , [the ministry's] uniform duties wearied me to death. I burnt for the more active life of the world" (363-64). Even though he acknowledges that "God [has] an errand for [him]," "galling soreness" is left for time to heal (364). In face of "the ideal of beauty" Rosamond, whom "nature had surely formed . . . in a partial mood" (370). St. John represses his love toward her. The longer he looks at her portrait, "the firmer he [holds] it, the more he [seems] to covet it" (374); however, St. John will not show his love though Rosamond is not only beautiful but also "so good-natured" (381). What he cares for is his vocation, which leads to heaven; even Rosamond, "the Rose of the world," is nothing to him.

Evangelical theology has killed the humanity of St. John, who does not care for any sensual enjoyment of this world. St. John's love for Rosamond is but "a love of the senses" (395) for him; therefore, it needs to be suppressed. St. John himself is inflexible, more like an object than a human being. When Rosamond invites him to her home, Jane observes that he refuses her and speaks "almost like an automaton" (367). His handsome featured face is like "chiselled marble" (380).

When the news reveals that the Rivers' dead Uncle John actually is Jane's uncle also, and that Jane has inherited twenty thousand pounds of legacy from this uncle, she intends to share the money with her cousins. But St. John at first cannot believe that the

family bond can be so strong for her. This kind act cannot be relished by this fervent Evangelical. As Christmas approaches, Morton School is closed; Jane goes back to Marsh End to clean and decorate. However, domestic pleasures, which Jane cherishes as "the best things the world has," are nothing to him. St. John tells Jane, "I trust that when the first flush of vivacity is over, you will look a little higher than domestic endearments and household joys" (393).

If St. John only suppressed his own nature to pursue his vocation, Jane might not object to him. But the fact is that he intends Jane to be his wife simply because he thinks that she can bear all the hardships required of a missionary. The woman he intends to marry is not the one he loves, but the one who can suit his vocation. St. John even tells Jane previously, "It is strange . . . that while I love Rosamond Oliver so wildly . . . I experience at the same time a calm, unwarped consciousness, that she would not make me a good wife" (376). To be a missionary's good wife, one must be "a sufferer, a labourer, a female apostle." Actually, St. John's idea of a good wife is not uncommon in his vocation. As Rosman points out, "Jabez Bunting hesitated before proposing to his future wife because (among other shortcomings) her dress was 'by far too gay and costly and worldly'" (Rosman 86). A woman who is too worldly cannot be a good missionary's wife.

St. John even uses God as a threat to convince Jane to kill herself to be his wife. "God and nature intended you for a missionary's wife. . . . [You] are formed for labour, not for love," St. John tries to persuade her (405). Jane shudders at the idea of going to India,

however. She thinks, "If I join St. John, I abandon half myself: if I go to India, I go to premature death" (407). The missionary's wife must lose her self to suit her husband's vocation. But for Jane, to lose her self is impossible. Jane reflects,

. . . at his side always, and always restrained, and always checked--forced to keep the fire of my nature continually low, to compel it to burn inwardly and never utter a cry, . . . , this would be unendurable. (410)

Jane agrees to go to India with St. John only as a curate, because in that case she can still possess her own "natural unenslaved feelings with which to communicate in moments of loneliness" (410).

Marriage without love is impossible for such a motherless woman who craves to be loved. Jane refuses St. John, saying, "If I were to marry you, you would kill me. You are killing me now" (415). For the early Victorians who thought that women were supposed to sacrifice themselves, Jane's words were really "violent, unfeminine, and untrue," as St. John retorts (415). Jane's declaration--"If I am not formed for love, it follows that I am not formed for marriage" (418)--is very unconventional.

Unconventional though religious, Jane almost relinquishes her refusal because God is used by St. John again and again to force Jane to be his wife. She responds,

. . . were I but convinced that it is God's will I should  
marry you, I could vow to marry you here and now . . .

(422)

As she entreats God to guide her, she hears "a voice somewhere cry-  
-Jane! Jane! Jane!" (422) Later she recognizes that that is  
Rochester's voice. Through God's help, Jane leaves St. John to find  
Rochester. This fact reveals that St. John, an Evangelical, seems to  
use God as an excuse to build his own accomplishments in his  
vocation.

## F. A "Companionate" Wife?--at Ferndean

Meeting Rochester in Ferndean, Jane is independent rather than controlled. She "arrests" the blind and crippled Rochester's wandering hand, and "prisons" it in both hers (437). Her act of arrest reacts against what Rochester says, when they are still in Thornfield, when they have just come back to Thornfield from their jewelry shopping--"[Once] I have fairly seized you, to have and to hold, I'll just--figuratively speaking--attach you a chain" (272). However, now in Ferndean, she tells him,

. . . I am independent, sir, as well as rich: I am my own mistress. (438)

This state shown above appears only in Victorian women's dreamland, but never in their real life.

It is no wonder that "Brontë's publisher, George Smith, brought out two new editions [of Jane Eyre] within six months of the first" (Maynard, 145-49). Part of the reason is that Brontë actualizes a woman's (and women's) dream in this novel. A woman's claim to "independence" in early Victorian England was quite unbelievable because a woman was supposed to be her husband's mistress. This declaration is a sharp contrast to this couple's relationship when they are in Thornfield, where Rochester asks Jane to be his mistress. Coming back to Rochester's side, Jane claims herself to be her own "mistress." As her own mistress, Jane can avoid the traditional women's fate. She herself is the maker of her destiny.

Jane intends to be Rochester's companion, but she finds her expression too unconventional. Jane tells Rochester, "If you won't let me live with you, I can build a house of my own close up to your door, and you may come and sit in my parlour when you want company of an evening" (438). She decides to "wait on [Rochester], to be eyes and hands to [him]" (438). When she notices that her words shocked Rochester, she thinks, "Perhaps I had too rashly overleaped conventionalities; . . . I had indeed made my proposal" (438). Indeed, she is unconventional, and even "avant-garde" in the early Victorians' eyes. Jane's suggestion that she may "build a house of [her] own close up to [Rochester's] door" is exactly what some New Women, who didn't appear until toward the end of the nineteenth century, did.

Jane in *Ferndean* is an unconventional wife because Rochester is not a protector any more. That their reunion in *Ferndean* results from Rochester's "cry" for help through God's aid is striking. Definitely, it is because of Providential aid that Jane and Rochester meet again. But in this spiritual process, Rochester's cry implies that it is he, not she, who needs help. Rochester himself has admitted, "If any listener had heard me, he would have thought me mad; I pronounced them with such frantic energy" (450). Rochester's cry for help destroys the traditional Victorian ideology that required a man to be a protector.

As Rochester is no longer powerful enough to be the protector, instead, the husband and wife relationship in *Ferndean* is a newly created one. What happens in the end of chapter 37 is a powerful depiction of this brand-new relationship.



Then he stretched his hand out to be led. I took that dear hand, held it a moment to my lips, then let it pass round my shoulder: being so much lower of stature than he, I served both for his prop and guide. We entered the wood, and wended homeward. (451)

In Brontë's society, for a man to be his wife's companion was impossible; since he had the authority to control her, he would not have any willingness to "[stretch] his hand out to be led." At that time, a woman could not possibly be her husband's "prop and guide." Brontë's manipulation of the plot of Jane Eyre is a turning point to enter this dreamland, since only a blind and crippled man would stretch his hand to be his wife's companion. This crippling and blinding symbolically and literally destroy Rochester's authority and domination. Only when male authority and domination are destroyed can this companionate love come true.

Male domination demands women's submission. In "Victorian Marriage and the Law of Matrimonial Cruelty," Hammerton uses 1857, the year when the Matrimonial Causes Act appeared, as a demarcation to show the evolution of judicial rulings "to illuminate some of the meanings of companionate marriage in Victorian society" (271). One of his examples before 1857 is that "[in] 1844 Judge Lushington, refusing Lady Dysart's plea for separation from a marriage with a long history of violent quarrels, commented that a wife could secure her own safety 'by lawful obedience and by proper self-command.'" But "[when] James Wilde . . . dismissed Mrs.

Hudson's plea for separation from a drunken husband in 1863, his advice to her was not that she must submit to her husband but rather that she seek 'such remedies as may be found in the force of the natural affections and domestic ties . . . ' (ibid., 275, emphases mine). There was an obvious shift in vocabulary in judicial dealings. This shift, moreover, shows that there was an emergent expectation for a woman to have a companionate husband rather than a patriarchal one, and that the law recognized that demand. As the rule goes, often, no demand, no supply. To express that demand is an act of redemption.

I would think that Charlotte Brontë's Jane Eyre was a strong declaration of companionate love though no "gender equality" is conveyed. Without such a declaration, mid-nineteenth-century Victorian England would not recognize women's need for love because, as historical facts show clearly, love was not thought to be a necessary component of marriage in Brontë's society. This kind of declaration was necessary to change social ideology. In Jane Eyre, there is an announcement of "a higher form of conjugal companionship." Terry Eagleton also declares that Jane and Rochester share "spiritual equality" (a Eagleton, 29) in their marriage. Brontë seemed to be a promoter of this companionate love. As Hammerton points out, "companionate marriage [did not] necessarily imply gender equality" (269); "throughout the nineteenth century the advocates of a more vaguely defined notion of 'companionate marriage' argued less for legal equality than for a higher form of conjugal companionship, founded on mutual restraint, forbearance, and respect" (Hammerton 270, emphasis mine). All in

all, Jane in Ferndean is no longer treated as a "still bird" to be controlled. That is, Jane is a free individual. Rochester needs both her body and her soul.

Interestingly, the turning point of Jane's metamorphosis from "a still bird" to a companionate wife results from Rochester's own submission toward God. Before Jane comes to Ferndean, Rochester has been transformed into a would-be companion for her by Bertha. The fire that Bertha sets brings Rochester's repentance. Besides, far more importantly, the fire also makes Rochester a would-be companion for Jane, since as Rochester's old butler tells Jane, when Rochester "[ascends] through the skylight on to the roof . . . [the butler and several witnesses] heard Rochester call 'Bertha!'" (431). It is the first time in this novel that Bertha is seen as a human-being in Rochester's eyes. It is in that fire that Rochester first recognized his wife as a woman. However, to follow convention, Bertha is doomed to die to make a condition suitable for Jane and Rochester's union. Only if the ex-wife dies can Jane marry Rochester. Only after the fire can Rochester become Jane's companion both legally and psychologically.

To follow convention further, Rochester in Ferndean is no absolute Byronic hero, who always fights against God. In The Romantic Impulse in Victorian Fiction, Donald Stone observes, "Rochester is a Byron moralized and made fit for Victorian consumption" (117). Rochester's submission to God really suits early Victorian religious people's requirements. Rochester confesses to Jane,

I, in my stiff-necked rebellion, almost cursed the dispensation: instead of bending to the decree, I defied it. . . . I was forced to pass through the valley of death. . . . Of late, Jane--only--only of late--I began to experience remorse, repentance; the wish for reconciliation to my Maker. I began sometimes to pray: very brief prayers they were, but very sincere. (449-450)

The rebellious Byronic hero acknowledges that his previous action came from "stiff-necked rebellion"; therefore, he sincerely submits to God. Because of his "remorse" and "repentance," God can extend His grace to Rochester. And it is because of his sincerity toward God that Rochester's anguished cry for help can function in this spiritual meeting with Jane. Rochester's submission to God is the turning point in reunion with Jane, whom he longs for "both with soul and flesh" (450).

In addition, the fact that Jane is "much lower of stature than he" reflects convention too. This can be explained by both physical appearance and social status. Physically speaking, this is a story of love between a big man and a petite woman. Legally speaking, the fact that Rochester still possesses a higher status than Jane conforms to the Victorian woman's common "status-seeking" (Basch, 26) strategy in marriage. Anyhow, despite his decline, Rochester still belongs to the class of landed gentry who control their tenants.

### III. Love, Sexuality, Marriage and God

Jane's whole process of struggle in the six sections of Jane Eyre is not an easy one. The first five sections represent the possible conditions of Jane's counterparts in the 1840 England. However, those conditions are not possible for her because her "avant-garde" ideas are in conflict with her living environment.

In the middle-class family at Gateshead Hall, there is no love for Jane to live in harmony with the Reeds. She is only a dependent who is not pleasing because she is ignorant and plain. Due to her idiosyncrasy of manners--lacking humility and submission--Jane must be turned out.

In Lowood, though Jane obtained love and a feeling of home because of Miss Temple, her "restlessness" is only repressed, not extinguished. Evangelical rules in that charity institute go against her grain since she is totally different from her good friend Helen Burns, who can always accept injustice and live (and die) in calm. As long as there is injustice, for Jane there is a need to speak out. Jane is a seeker for love and home, and a fighter against injustice. The fact that religion is institutionalized in Lowood to suppress female inclination is intolerable for Jane. When Miss Temple leaves, Lowood becomes an unliveable place for her. Those Evangelical rules drive her out to stretch her faculties.

In Thornfield, Jane's faculties are exercised to the full extent. She loves and is loved by Rochester; however, the passionate love between Jane and Rochester makes it impossible for her to stay there. The first reason is that Rochester, like other males in early

Victorian society, is exerting his domineering power over her. If she succumbs, she will lose her self. At the expense of the self to get "fitful passion" (not "real affection") (298) from Rochester is the last thing she would do. The other reason is that the existence of Mrs. Rochester--Bertha--makes her union or stay with Rochester as a mistress impossible because to be Rochester's bigamous wife or mistress would violate the law which is "given by God." The moral impact of Evangelicalism is so strong on her that to act against the law would be to go against her own conscience. In face of the conflict between love and God, Jane must choose the road guided by God. Jane tells Rochester, "I do love you . . . more than ever: but I must not show or indulge the feeling" (305). No matter how rebellious an early Victorian woman was, she could not dispel Evangelical thinking. Jane must leave Thornfield; but it is in doubt where or whom she can turn to. The cruel fact is that in 1840 in England, the middle-class single woman "must either be a governess . . . or a prostitute" (Crow 68).

Wandering in the wilderness follows Jane's life in Thornfield. Feeling like an "outcast," alone and insecure, Jane struggles on for her love of Rochester. She cannot stay long in nature because there is no love and there are no human beings around her; she cannot find security there, or an atmosphere of home. Loveless and homeless, Jane can be only an "outcast" in nature. Besides, nature has already lost her nurturing power because of drastic population increases. Even though Jane tries to find a job, she cannot find any because she is untrained and because it is in the "Hungry Forties."

At Marsh End, Jane obtains independence, money, and family love. However, she cannot get sexual love from St. John Rivers, who uses God to propose to her. For Jane, marriage with St. John equals marriage without love, a condition that would be killing to her. Besides, if she goes to India to be St. John's good wife, she will lose her self too. As a matter of fact, St. John is "a potential murderer [for Jane] both of the mind and the body" (Rigney, 25). Life in India would exhaust Jane to premature death. A marriage without love and self for Jane is impossible. However, as mentioned above, since Jane would always follow God's guidance, St. John's excuse that it is God's intention that Jane must marry him is a torture for her. But God's providential power functions to make her meet Rochester again.

For Jane, this motherless middle-class woman, to have a home and to be loved by people around her is the most important thing. To have a home, marriage seems to be the most accessible medium; however, conventional Victorian marriage is in conflict with love since married women were often confined instead of being loved. For Jane, to be loved means to be recognized as an individual who has her self, her freedom and her passion (or sexuality). But all those were denied by early Victorian society. As Moglen points out, "Sexual relationships followed a . . . pattern of dominance and submission. . . . Mutuality was extraordinarily difficult, if not impossible, to achieve" (30). In addition, "Passion in women baffled Victorian society" (Calder 144). A good woman was supposed to have as little passion as possible. Sex was usually a taboo. Female sexuality was suppressed. According to Lorna Duffin, "girls,

especially those in boarding school, were given inadequate diets" because some particular foods, for example "spicy foods and meat, were thought to arouse sexual appetites" (39). In Jane Eyre Brontë does not point out whether the inadequate meals in Lowood are a means of controlling female sexuality; but Jane abhors Mr. Brocklehurst's policy of suppression of "the flesh." For Jane, how to fulfill her wishes and still be religious is problematic.

In Jane's whole struggle God is not a tyrant, however. Whenever Jane is helpless or in trouble, some spirit or other sign of the presence of God always appears to rescue and guide her. It is Providential power that leads Jane to leave Gateshead Hall, Lowood, Thornfield, Whitcross, and even Marsh End. God fulfills this rebellious, unconventional (in some aspects) woman's dream--home, love, independence, and a companionate husband. A woman's rebelliousness, unconventionality and passion for love surprisingly are accepted by God although they violate Victorian and Evangelical ideology. In the realm of this novel, God knows well a woman's needs. God is a means to fight against injustice toward women.

Throughout this novel, Jane does not do anything that might violate God's intention since she has a strong belief in God. She believes in God so deeply that when love, the most precious thing for her, is in conflict with God's law or intention, she would give up love. This striking fact is shown both in her decision to leave Thornfield, and in her willingness to marry St. John if this marriage is God's intention. What Jane follows is God instead of "narrow human doctrines" however. Just as Brontë points out in her preface to the second edition of Jane Eyre, "[Narrow] human doctrines . . .



should not be substituted for the world-redeeming creed of Christ" (Jane Eyre, vi). To understand how God can combine Jane's idea of love, sexuality, and marriage, her theology needs to be examined.

For Jane, to be religious does not mean to be Evangelical. Mr. Brocklehurst in Lowood uses religion as a tool to "mortify in [those] girls the lusts of the flesh" (67). But his daughter, Augusta, after visiting Lowood, comments that those girls are so "quiet and plain" that they "looked at [her] dress . . . as if they had never seen a silk gown before" (36). Brocklehurst uses theology to suppress those parentless girls' senses; but interestingly, in practice, he cannot apply this theology to his daughter. For instance, his daughter wears a silk gown, but these girls in Lowood can have only one clean tucker in a week (65). This inconsistency in the practice of theology and the disparity between theology and practice are criticized here. However, the most conspicuous evidence that shows Jane's disagreement with Evangelicalism is embodied in St. John, who upholds Evangelical dualism--the strong distinction between this world and heaven. St. John's otherworldliness, suppression of his inclination, and absolute rejection of the enjoyment of the senses are incongruous to Jane. As St. John's and Jane's ideas of marriage conflict with each other, obviously Jane's theology is shown as vividly different from St. John's. St. John's God is a murderer of love; whereas, Jane's is a promoter of love.

Jane's trust of her senses is not an impediment to approaching God. On the contrary, it is often through senses that Jane gains rescue from God. For example, in the wild Whitcross, Jane deems that when it is night, and when "His worlds wheel their silent

course," she can feel God's presence most (326). That is because in the stillness of night the senses can function well. Here, Jane's perception of God is very Wordsworthian. In addition, when Jane is at Marsh End, it is when "[all] the house is still; [and] . . . the room was full of moonlight" (422) that Jane hears Rochester's anguished cry--"Jane! Jane! Jane!" In the case of Rochester, when he pronounces that cry, it is when it is deep night (perhaps between eleven and twelve o'clock), when he is "in [his] own room, and sitting by the window, which was open; it [soothes him] to feel the balmy night-air" (450). Some distance is between nature and human beings as Victorian people were no more part of nature. As stated before, their retreat to nature is "a troubled retreat"; however, in Jane Eyre, nature's inspiring power still exists. The moon--the presence of God in nature--appears throughout this novel to guide and teach Jane. My feeling is that this frequent appearance of the moon is quite a Victorian woman's experience of God in nature. As the Victorian woman spent most of her time in the house, her distanced contact with nature would often be the moon seen through the window. What I intend to say is that the senses seem to be the direct medium in Jane's theology although they are looked down upon by Evangelicalism. Jane's theology seems quite similar to Wordsworth's natural one. However, because I have not found any relevant sources so far I would hesitate to say that Wordsworth directly influenced Brontë, though this influence is quite possible.

In Wordsworth's theology, through the senses, the power of the mind perceives God in nature and gets inspiration from it. What Wordsworth emphasizes is the power of the mind. But in Jane Eyre,

the means to perceive God is different. What happens to Rochester is a good example for explanation. In Thornfield, Rochester tells Jane that he was tempted to "err," and then "remorse [became] the poison of life" (139). The cure that Jane offers is "repentance." Indeed, in Jane Eyre, repentance is the means to perceive God. For twenty years, Rochester could not start a new life simply because he could not repent; instead, he says that it is because "fate wronged [him]" (139). But in Ferndean, because of his repentance, Rochester is justified. Repentance results in a new life for him. In addition, when Jane decides to leave Thornfield, she tells him, "Do as I do: trust in God and yourself. Believe in heaven. Hope to meet you there" (318) "I advise you to live sinless: and I wish you to die tranquil" (319), she adds further. In Jane's opinion, what you do decides your destiny. That is, by "works--a moral life, acts of charity, the sacrament" (George 9), justification is obtained. Robert George also points out that Jane's strong belief in works to get justification is "an entirely opposed theological stance" (10) in comparison with Evangelicalism, in which justification can be obtained only through conversion. The idea of conversion has not been treated in Jane Eyre; rather, repentance and works are the main concern.

Rochester, a sinner in his previous days, is justified. Human beings are allowed to be "fallible." In Jane Eyre, one basic element in Evangelical doctrine--original sin--is not mentioned. What is revealed is a critique of Evangelicalism--"The human and fallible should not arrogate a power with which the divine and perfect alone can be safely entrusted" (141).

In Jane's theology every Christian can be justified and saved as long as he/she repents if sin is the obstacle and follows the law of God to perform good "works." Jane's love toward Rochester can be sustained by God because she follows the law "given by God" to leave Thornfield. Passionate love is not in conflict with God as long as it is "right." The senses, through which a moral person perceives God, are acceptable. In this theology, there exists no gender distinction; therefore, Jane can tell Rochester, "[We] stood at God's feet, equal" (255). Because man and woman are equal "at God's feet," Jane's declaration of self can be sensible. Accordingly, Jane's idea of love, sexuality and marriage is in harmony with God's intention. It is "narrow human doctrines" that ignore Jane's needs.

#### IV. Conclusion

Through a process of struggle, with God's help, Jane avoids the common Victorian woman's fate. Finally, a motherless, fatherless, and homeless girl grows to be a free and independent woman with a companionate husband. Brontë showed readers how a mid-nineteenth-century woman could make a little breakthrough; and at the same time, she also showed this woman's limitation in the process of the struggle. Women are so confined by culture. That is why Rich declares that Jane Eyre is "the life story of a woman who is *incapable* of saying *I am Heathcliff* . . . because she feels so unalterably herself" (91). Some compromises with the living era are necessary for the whole struggle.

The law in the early Victorian period was so cruel and inflexible that, unable to change the law "given by God," Brontë could only make some compromises. Brontë could not let the protagonist Jane rebel absolutely since moral influence in early Victorian society was so strong; but some rebellion toward injustice was necessary for change. Her idea about marriage expressed a woman's need to be loved by a companionate husband, with some sort of "equality" between husband and wife. To make a "companionate" husband possible, crippling and blindness are assigned to Rochester to reduce his authority. Bertha's madness is used to criticize the inhumane Victorian laws and marriage institution. To promote her ideas, Brontë needed to follow some conventions; otherwise the audience--the religious early Victorians--would not listen. The rich and independent Jane's passion toward Rochester must operate

within a marriage. Brontë could not let her protagonist become a fallen woman, since as K. Hickok observes, "[the] emphasis on female chastity . . . showed little sign of lessening among the middle classes before the turn of the century" (93). Death is the only alternative for Bertha to make Jane's union with Rochester possible.

In that rigid patriarchal society, Brontë's claim for women's self was really a rebellious leap. As Rich puts it, the protagonist "Jane's sense of herself as a woman--as equal to and with the same needs as a man--is next-door to insanity in England in the 1840s" (98). By modern standards, women in Brontë's society were almost like slaves except that they possessed a different sphere from slaves'; and actually "the image of the slave" occurs in Gateshead Hall, Thornfield, and Marsh End (Rigney 21, 25). However, when one of the oppressed dares declare some right, he/she deserves commendation since that declaration is a sign of change. Maybe that declaration will be thought of as an act of madness because it is out of the society's expectation; however, it may also be a starting point for some new situation.

Gilbert and Gubar, in The Madwoman in the Attic, mention that Brontë "was unable clearly to envision viable solutions to the problem of patriarchal oppression" (369). But it seems to me what Brontë wanted to express is how far a mid-nineteenth-century struggling woman could go, and by what process ideology could be changed. In this novel, Brontë, with keen observation toward the cultural phenomena, tested all possible spheres for her contemporary middle-class single women. The result was that all those possibilities were found to be unsuitable, and Brontë was

forced to create a dream-land. If this dream-land is not a "viable" solution, it is because the whole ideology in her society needed to be changed.

Evangelicalism was very influential in Brontë's society; however, she saw clearly that religion and God were often used to control women. In Jane Eyre, Brontë showed God's intention was totally different from "narrow human doctrines." Some rights were assigned to Jane; and at the same time, Brontë attracted a great number of Victorians, if not the majority of them, to listen. It is no wonder that Jane Eyre was a great success.

In addition, the idea of universal salvation expressed in this novel is heartening. In the dire 1840s, the awful fact was that in Haworth village, Brontë's hometown, "between 1838 and 1849 41.6 per cent of the population died before reaching the age of six" (Winnifrith 32). Death was so frequent that the theology presented in this novel was a saving power for Brontë's contemporary readers. Everyone wanted to be saved; and to the question of who could be saved, Brontë's answer was--everyone could be saved. In a letter to Miss Wooler (14 Feb. 1850), Brontë wrote, "I am sorry . . . that the Clergy do not like the doctrine of Universal Salvation; . . . [but] I believe [it] to be the truth!" (quoted in Gordon 83). What Jane says-- "Do as I do: trust in God and yourself. Believe in heaven. Hope to meet you there" (318)--was a panacea to cure those early Victorians' fears. Both the man and the woman could shape their own spiritual destiny.

As a whole, Jane Eyre reflects aspects of early Victorian social and economic phenomena. If history were not considered,

misreading would be quite probable. Especially in dealing with the woman question, the social conditions should not be neglected since women are so controlled by their living era. What the writer Brontë and the protagonist Jane could do depended on the times in which they lived. What seems to be conservative in modern times was rebellious in the mid-nineteenth century. What Brontë achieved in Jane Eyre was a foundation for later feminist development.



## V. Note

1. Throughout this novel mad Bertha is depicted more like an "animal" than a human being. Cultural standards, such as the ideal of passionless womanhood, have definite impact. Passion in the Victorian woman was fatal to herself because it was not allowed in a good woman. Moreover, the issue of race is an important cultural factor because racism in the Victorian era was so prevalent. As Bertha is a woman of mixed blood, she is impure. Because of her sexuality and her race, Bertha is far from being considered a decent female human being. Accordingly, Bertha is sacrificed not only for ideal womanhood, but also for racism. As Parama Roy also points out, Jane Eyre should be read not as "coherent, unambiguous feminist discourse" (720).

## VI. Bibliography

- Altholz, Josef. L. "The Warfare of Conscience with Theology." The Mind and Art of Victorian England. Ed. Josef L. Altholz. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota Press, 1976. 58-77.
- Altick, Richard D. Victorian People and Ideas. New York: Norton, 1973. Taipei: Shuang-yeh, 1983.
- Basch, Françoise. Relative Creatures: Victorian Women in Society and the Novel. New York: Schocken, 1974.
- Berg, Maggie. Jane Eyre: Portrait of a Life. Boston: Twayne, 1987.
- Bick, Suzann. "Clouding the 'Severe Truth': Elizabeth Gaskell's Strategy in The Life of Charlotte Brontë." Essays in Arts and Sciences 11(Sept 1982): 33-47.
- Bjork, Harriet. The Language of Truth: Charlotte Brontë, the Woman Question, and the Novel. N.P.: Lund, 1974.
- Blom, M. A. "'Jane Eyre': Mind as Law Unto Itself." Criticism 15(1973): 350-64.
- Brontë, Charlotte. Jane Eyre. New York: Penguin, 1982.
- Burstyn, Joan N. Victorian Education and the Ideal of Womanhood. London: Croom Helm, 1980.
- Calder, Jenni. Women and Marriage in Victorian Fiction. New York: Oxford U Press, 1976.
- Carlton-Ford, Cynthia. "Intimacy without Immolation: Fire in Jane Eyre." Women's Studies: An Interdisciplinary Journal 15(1988): 375-86.
- Casteras, Susan P. "Virgin Vows: The Early Victorian Artists' Portrayal of Nuns and Novices." Religion in the Lives of English Women, 1760-1930. Ed. Gail Malmgreen. Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana U Press, 1986. 129-60.

Chadwick, Owen. The Victorian Church: An Ecclesiastical History of England. Vol. 1. New York: Oxford U Press, 1966. 2 vols.

- a Clark, G. Kitson. "Religious and Intellectual Developments." An Expanding Society. Australia: Melbourne U Press, 1967: 87-106.
- b ---. "Romanticism." An Expanding Society. Australia: Melbourne U. Press, 1967. 107-25.
- c ---. The Making of Victorian England. 2nd ed. Cambridge: Harvard U Press, 1963.
- d ---. "The Romantic Element--1830 to 1850." Studies in Social History: A Tribute to G. M. Trevelyan. Ed. John Harold Plumb. 2nd ed. New York: Books For Libraries Press, 1969: 211-39.
- e ---. Churchmen and the Condition of England, 1832-1885: A Study in the Development of Social Ideas and Practice from the Old Regime to the Modern State. London: Methuen, 1973.
- Crow, Duncan. The Victorian Woman. London: Allen, 1971.
- Crump, R. W. Charlotte and Emily Brontë, 1955-1983: A Reference Guide. Boston: Hall, 1986.
- Duffin, Lorna. "The Conspicuous Consumptive: Woman as an Invalid." The Nineteenth-Century Woman: Her Cultural and Physical World. Ed. Sara Delamont and Lorna Duffin. New York: Barnes & Noble, 1978. 26-56.
- Dunn, Richard J. "The Natural Heart: Jane Eyre's Romanticism." Wordsworth Circle 10 (Spring 1979): 197-204.
- a Eagleton, Terry. "Jane Eyre." Myths of Power. London: Macmillan, 1988. 5-32.
- b Eagleton, Terry. "Conclusion: Political Criticism." Literary Theory: An Introduction. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1983. Taipei: Bookman, 1985. 194-217.

- Figes, Eva. "The Suppressed Self." Sex and Subterfuge: Women Novelists to 1850. London & Basingstoke: Macmillan, 1982. 113-38.
- Foster, Shirley. Victorian Women's Fiction: Marriage, Freedom and the Individual. London: Croom Helm, 1985.
- George, Robert Francis. "The Evangelical Revival and Charlotte Brontë's Jane Eyre." Doctoral Diss., U. of Florida, 1981.
- Gerin, Winifred. "Byron's Influence on the Brontës." The Keats-Shelley Memorial Bulletin 17(1966): 1-19.
- Gilbert, Alan D. Religion and Society in Industrial England: Church, Chapel and Social Change, 1740-1914. New York: Longman, 1976.
- Gilbert, Sandra M., and Susan Gubar. "A Dialogue of Self and Soul." The Madwoman in the Attic. New Haven and London: Yale U Press, 1979. 336-71.
- Gordon, Felicia. "Religion." A Preface to the Brontës. London and New York: Longman, 1989. 73-85.
- . "Reading and Literary Influences." A Preface to the Brontës. London and New York: Longman, 1989. 86-94.
- a Griffin, Gail B. "Once More to the Attic: Bertha Rochester and the Pattern of Redemption in Jane Eyre." Nineteenth-Century Women Writers of the English-Speaking World. Ed. Rhoda B. Nathan. Westport: Hofstra U Press, 1986. 89-97
- b Griffin, Andrew. "The Interior Garden and John Stuart Mill." Nature and The Victorian Imagination. Ed. U. C. Knoepfelmacher and G. B. Tennyson. Berkeley, Los Angeles and London: U of California Press, 1977. 171-86.
- Hagen, June Steffensen. "Jane Eyre at Fourteen, Twenty-Four and Forty-Four." Literature of the Depressed 1(1987): 22-33.
- Hammerton, A. James. "Victorian Marriage and the Law of Matrimonial Cruelty." Victorian Studies 33(1990): 269-92.

- Hare, Edward. "Schizophrenia in Fiction." British Journal of Psychiatry 133(1978): 192.
- Harrison, J. F. C. The Early Victorians: 1832-51. New York: Praeger, 1971.
- Hickok, K. "The Fallen Woman." Representations of Women: Nineteenth-Century British Women's Poetry. Westport: Greenwood, 1984. 92-97..
- Houghton, Walter E. The Victorian Frame of Mind, 1830-1870. 2nd ed. New Haven: Yale U Press, 1959.
- Jay, Elisabeth. The Religion of the Heart: Anglican Evangelicalism and the Nineteenth-Century Novel. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1979.
- Keefe, Robert. Charlotte Brontë's World of Death. Austin: U of Texas Press, 1979.
- Lawson, Kathleen Tosh. "Charlotte Brontë and Christianity: The Heresy of Desire." Doctoral Diss., U. of Toronto (Canada), 1988.
- Marcus, Steven. "Mr. Acton of Queen Anne Street, or, The Wisdom of Our Ancestors." The Other Victorians: A Study of Sexuality and Pornography in Mid-Nineteenth-Century England. 3rd ed. New York: Basic Books, 1966. 1-33.
- Martin, Robert Bernard. "Jane Eyre." The Accents of Persuasion: Charlotte Brontë's Novels. New York: Norton, 1966. 57-108.
- Marxist Feminist Literature Collective. "Women's writing: 'Jane Eyre,' 'Shirley,' 'Villette,' 'Aurora Leigh.'" 1848: the Sociology of Literature, Proceedings of the Essex Conference on the Sociology of Literature. Ed. Barker Francis et al. Colchester: U. of Essex, 1978. 185-206.
- Maynard, John. Charlotte Brontë and Sexuality. Cambridge: Cambridge U Press, 1984.
- Miller, Margaret. "Happily Ever After: Marriage in Charlotte Brontë's Novels." Massachusetts Studies in English 8(1982): 21-38.

- Moi, Toril. "Women Writing and Writing about Women." Sexual/Textual Politics. London & New York: Routledge, 1985. 50-69.
- Moglen, Helene. Charlotte Brontë: The Self Conceived. New York: Norton, 1976.
- Murray, Janet Horowitz. Strong-Minded Women: And Other Lost Voices from Nineteenth-Century England. New York: Pantheon, 1982.
- Myer, Valerie Grosvenor. "The Maiming of Edward Rochester." Charlotte Brontë: Truculent Spirit. London: Vision and Barnes and Noble, 1987. 154-73.
- Norman, E. R. Church and Society in England 1770-1970: A Historical Study. Oxford: Clarendon, 1976.
- Pell, Nancy. "Resistance, Rebellion, and Marriage: The Economics of Jane Eyre." Nineteenth-Century Fiction 31(1977): 397-420.
- Peterson, M. Jeanne. "The Victorian Governess: Status Incongruence in Family and Society." Suffer and Be Still: Women in the Victorian Age. Ed. Martha Vicinus. Bloomington: Indiana U Press, 1972. 3-19.
- Pollard, Arthur. "The Brontës and their Father's Faith." Essays and Studies 37(1984): 46-61.
- Poovey, Mary. "The Anathematized Race: The Governess and Jane Eyre." Feminism and Psychoanalysis. Ed. Richard Feldstein and Judith Roof. Ithaca: Cornell U Press, 1989. 230-54.
- Rich, Adrenne. "Jane Eyre: The Temptations of a Motherless Woman. On Lies, Secrets, and Silence: Selected Prose 1966-1978." New York: Norton, 1979. 89-106.
- Rigney, Barbara Hill. "'The Frenzied Moment': Sex and Insanity in Jane Eyre." Madness and Sexual Politics in the Feminist Novel: Studies in Brontë, Woolf, Lessing, and Atwood. Madison: U of Wisconsin Press, 1978. 13-37.

- Rosman, Doreen M. Evangelicals and Culture. London and Canberra: Croom Helm, 1984.
- Roy, Parama. "Unaccommodated Woman and the Poetics of Property in Jane Eyre." SEL: Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900. 29.4 (Autumn 1989): 713-27.
- Scholes, Robert, and Robert Kellogg. "Meaning in Narrative." The Nature of Narrative. New York: Oxford U Press, 1966. Taipei: Wen-he, 1978. 82-159.
- Semmel, Bernard. The Methodist Revolution. New York: Basic Books, 1973.
- Senf, Carol A. "Jane Eyre: The Prison-House of Victorian Marriage." Journal of Women's Studies in Literature 1(1979): 353-59.
- Shapiro, Michael David. "Sexual Conflict in the Victorian Novel." Doctoral Diss., State U. of New York, 1980.
- a Stein, Karen F. "Monsters and Madwomen: Changing Female Gothic." The Female Gothic. Ed. Juliann E. Fleenor. Montreal: Eden, 1983. 123-37.
- b Stein, Sondra Gayle. "Woman and Her Master." Doctoral Diss., Washington University, 1976.
- Showalter, Elaine. The Female Malady: Women, Madness, and English Culture, 1830-1980. New York: Pantheon, 1985.
- Stone, Donald D. "Charlotte Brontë and the Perils of Romance." The Romantic Impulse in Victorian Fiction. Cambridge: Harvard U Press, 1980. 99-132.
- Todd, Janet. "Early Work." Feminist Literary History. New York: Routledge, 1988. 17-33.
- Valverde, Mariana. "The Love of Finery: Fashion and The Fallen Woman in Nineteenth-Century Social Discourse." Victorian Studies 32(1989): 169-88.
- a Vicinus, Martha, ed. A Widening Sphere: Changing Roles of Victorian Women. Bloomington: Indiana U Press, 1977.

b ---. Suffer and Be Still: Women in the Victorian Age. Bloomington: Indiana U Press, 1972.

Winnifrith, Tom. "Heaven and Hell." The Brontës and their Background: Romance and Reality. London: Macmillan, 1973. 28-47.

---. "The Brontës' Religion." The Brontës and their Background: Romance and Reality. London: Macmillan, 1973. 48-75.

Woodward, F. B. A. The Age of Reform, 1815-1870. 2nd ed. London: Oxford U Press, 1962.