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**The Development of Feminism in English Literature of
the 19th and 20th centuries**

Bachelor thesis

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I declare that I have written my bachelor thesis “The Development of Feminism in English Literature of the 19th and 20th centuries” independently under the guidance of my supervisor and that I used only the sources listed in the bibliography.

Olomouc

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1. INTRODUCTION

This thesis will be concerned with the development of feminism throughout the 19th and 20th centuries in English literature and will also reach outside these centuries to briefly discuss how feminism is perceived at present. Feminism is a wide phenomenon and it is still a topic to be discussed, I have been interested in it for some time now which is also why I have chosen to write about this matter. The 19th century is one of the most significant periods of British history, it was a century of changes for women, and the 20th century followed the path doing so. Throughout the 19th and 20th centuries, literature has developed as well as the society and the position of women with respect to men. Nonetheless, it was the suffragette movement that has started this revolution of equality between men and women. Feminism as a movement has developed significantly during the centuries, nonetheless, the word feminism itself may still evoke negative meaning to some.

Women in Britain have started to fight for their rights and independence since the beginning of the 19th century, the aim was to have the same opportunity for education, occupation and life as men. The perception of an independent woman has changed throughout the centuries as well, from a woman who was supposed to be a wife, mother, and keeper of a household, more precisely how Martin Luther claimed: “Women should remain at home, sit still, keep house, and bear and bring up children. A woman is, or at least should be, a friendly, courteous, and a merry companion in life, the honour and ornament of the house, and inclined to tenderness, for thereunto are they chiefly created, to bear children, and to be the pleasure, joy and solace of their husbands,”¹ to a woman who does not even need a man to find her happiness and her occupation can be whatever she wants.

The thesis will introduce four writers and explore the differences between male and female writing on the topic of feminism, due to the fact that feminism is not only related to women, one of the authors is a male writer. The examined writers will be Charlotte Brontë, Thomas Hardy, Virginia Woolf and Jeanette Winterson and the novels which will be analysed are *Jane Eyre* by Brontë, *Far from the Madding Crowd* by Thomas Hardy, *Mrs. Dalloway* by Virginia Woolf and *Oranges are not the Only Fruit* written by Jeanette Winterson. All the three female writers were considered feminists,

¹ Martin Luther. *Luther's Table Talk; Or, Some Choice Fragments from the Familiar Discourse of That Godly Learned Man, and Famous Champion of God's Truth* (London: Longman, 1832), 33-34.

however, Hardy was perceived as a misogynist by some, which the thesis will focus on as well. Different approaches to sexuality as well as to homosexuality will be also mentioned.

"For most of history; Anonymous was a woman"²
- Virginia Woolf

2. THE DEVELOPMENT OF FEMINISM

2.1 A definition of feminism

The word feminism comes from French word *féminisme* and according to the Cambridge online dictionary feminism is "the belief that women should be allowed the same rights, power, and opportunities as men and be treated in the same way, or the set of activities intended to achieve this state."³ The term 'feminism' itself is used to describe a cultural, political or economic movement aiming for equal rights for both women and men. Nonetheless, the terms 'feminism' and 'feminist' did not gain widespread meaning use until the 1970s when they started to be used in the public parlance more frequently.

The feminist movement involves sociological and political theories concerning with gender difference issues. The movement has been here for many decades, and British women have started to fight against the oppression during mid 1850s when the first feminists started to advocate their thoughts about inequality and when the first suffragette movement emerged, since then women have started working on accomplishing their goals to have the same rights and to have the same position in society as men have.

The feminist framework also indicates how problems are defined and the kinds of questions to be asked. For example, according to definition in *Theoretical Perspectives on Gender and Development* written by Jane L. Parpart et al inequality results from "the need to establish unequal incentives to motivate the most talented people to do the most important jobs efficiently in society,"⁴ other definition from the same book also says that the inequality results from "the practice of providing differential rewards to keep a less powerful working class fragmented by gender and race."⁵

² Virginia Woolf, *A Room of One's Own* (London: Penguin Books, 1993), 51.

³ "feminism," Cambridge Dictionaries Online, accessed January 29, 2016, <http://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/feminism>.

⁴ Jane L. Parpart et al, *Theoretical Perspectives on Gender and Development* (Ottawa: International Development Research Center, 2000), 53, accessed February 2, 2016, https://books.google.cz/books/about/Theoretical_Perspectives_on_Gender_and_D.html?id=6xunfW2ShQkC&redir_esc=y.

⁵ Jane L. Parpart et al, *Theoretical Perspectives on Gender and Development*, 53.

2.2 A brief historical background

Britain as well as France were among the first countries where women started fighting for their rights, education, and above all respect. Simone de Beauvoir wrote that “the first time we see a woman take up her pen in defence of her sex was when Christine de Pizan wrote *Epitre au Dieu d'Amour* (Epistle to the God of Love) in the 15th century.”⁶ However, it was not until the early 19th century when women began to achieve changes in society, it was Mary Wollstonecraft, author of the commanding *Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, who received the lion’s share of attention. Wollstonecraft was a woman who, as Arianne Chernock says in her book *Men and the Making of Modern British Feminism*, “spoke up, quite loudly, for what had been until then a largely silent section of the human race.”⁷ Scholars, even today, consider Mary Wollstonecraft to be a founding mother of British feminism and her *Vindication of the Rights of Woman* can be considered as a first unambiguous feminist work. In addition, one of the main social reformers of early 19th century was also Florence Nightingale, who was convicted that women had “all the potential of men but none of the opportunities,”⁸ she pioneered the importance of nursing schools and also advocated better education for women. Nonetheless, not only women tried to establish equal opportunities for both sexes, feminist men also helped advance women’s liberation, although there were not many of them. One of them was an English philosopher, political economist and feminist John Stuart Mill, who was inspired by his wife women’s right advocate Harriet Taylor Mill. Mill once declared: “[T]he principle which regulates the existing social relations between the two sexes—the legal subordination of one sex to the other—is wrong itself, and now one of the chief hindrances to human improvement; and that it ought to be replaced by a principle of perfect equality, admitting no power or privilege on the one side, nor disability on the other.”⁹ Mill also became the first British Member of Parliament to introduce a bill calling for women to receive the vote.

⁶ “History and Theory of Feminism,” Network GWANET, accessed January 29, 2016.

⁷ Arianne Chernock, *Men and the Making of Modern British Feminism* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010), 2, accessed February 1, 2016, https://books.google.cz/books?id=x9YqmQEACAAJ&dq=editions:e7o86O8GPvQC&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwj-wq7G_eDKAhVCo3IKHefFA88Q6AEIJTAB.

⁸ Florence Nightingale, “On Family Life” in *Suggestions for Thought*, ed. by Michael D. Calabria, Janet A. Macrae. (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1994), 125.

⁹ Emmeline Pankhurst, “Freedom or Death” in *Political Dissent: A Global Reader: Modern Sources*, ed. by Derek Malone-France. (Maryland: Lexington Books, 2012), 97.

Feminists and scholars have divided the movement into three separate waves and each of the waves is significant for the movement in achieving different goals.

The first wave refers mainly to the women's suffrage movement in the 19th and early 20th centuries in the United Kingdom and in the United States, focusing on women gaining the right to vote. Originally, the first wave focused on the promotion of equality and property rights for women and the opposition to chattel marriage and ownership of married women and their children by their husbands. As Margaret Waters claims in her book called *Feminism: A Very Short Introduction*, "for a married woman, her home becomes a prison-house. The house itself, as well as everything in it, belongs to the husband, and of all fixtures the most abject is his breeding machine, the wife. Married women are in fact slaves, their situation no better than that of Negroes in the West Indies."¹⁰ Women at that time were treated no better like servants with hardly any rights and possession. Marion Reid in her essay *A Plea for Women*, which has been described as the most thorough and effective statement by a woman since Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*, argues "if women's rights are not the same as those of man, what are they?" in one sense, she admits, "woman was made for man, yet in another and higher she was also made for herself."¹¹ Reid focuses on reasons why women should not be limited only by domesticity and that taking care of household and children should be in interest of both, the wife as well as the husband.

Many female writers and feminists argued that what they needed was recognition of what women need to fulfil their potential and their own natures and not only equality. Virginia Woolf, in probably the most notable pages of *A Room of One's Own*, states her argument about how women's talents have been wasted. Walters supports Woolf's argument and comments on it: "She contemplates a number of greatly talented women from the past, from the Duchess of Newcastle to George Eliot and Charlotte Brontë – who were deprived of experience, intercourse and travel and that is the reason they never wrote quite as powerfully and generously as they might have. Woolf also reasoned that a woman need money and a room of her own to be able to write."¹²

Nevertheless, it was not sooner than in the second half of the 19th century when organized campaigns, clubs and movements for women's rights emerged in order to

¹⁰ Margaret Walters, *Feminism: A Very Short Introduction* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 2005), 44.

¹¹ Walters, *Feminisms: A Very Short Introduction*, 42.

¹² Walters, *Feminisms: A Very Short Introduction*, 96.

improve female condition in terms of education, opportunities to work outside their households, reform in laws affecting married women and, for the first time, for the right to vote.¹³ One of the first female groups was called the Ladies of Langham Palace, the name comes from their meeting place, and the movement was led by Barbara Leigh Smith. The group initiated many campaigns around issues that had already been clearly defined, for instance “women’s urgent need for better education and for increased possibilities of employment, as well as the improvement of the legal position of married women.”¹⁴ In her pamphlets Leigh Smith also discussed the problem of marriage settlements, since to that time woman would lose all her property as soon as she got married.

The activism focused primarily on gaining political power, particularly the right of women’s suffrage towards the very end of the 19th century. In Britain the Suffragettes and, possibly more effectively, the Suffragists campaigned for the women’s vote. The suffrage was seen important not only as an acceptance of women in society but also for improving women’s lives. Throughout the end of the 19th century there were many attempts to pass suffrage for women, although the parliament never passed it arguing if women had much influence in Parliament, it would lead, as Walters suggests, to “hasty alliances with scheming neighbours, more class cries, permissive legislation, domestic perplexities and sentimental grievances.”¹⁵ Even though suffragettes did not achieve many victories during the end of the 19th and the beginning of the 20th centuries they remained persistent.

The greatest figures of British suffragettes were the Pankhurst family, Emily Davison or Emily Davies. Emily Davies contributed to female education, she believed women should get the same education as men, and she managed to form a committee to further the prospects of women taking the University Local Examinations, which was established in late 1850s. In 1878 Queen’s and Bedford Colleges began awarding degrees to women, and 30 years later women at Oxford also became full members of the universities. The Pankhurst family played a major role in the suffragette movement, the leader of British suffragettes, Emmeline Pankhurst, was very politically radical and she is considered to be one of the most influential women in the British history. Also, the Pankhursts established the Women’s Social and Political Union (WSPU). The WSPU

¹³ Walters, *Feminisms: A Very Short Introduction*, 41.

¹⁴ Walters, *Feminisms: A Very Short Introduction*, 56.

¹⁵ Walters, *Feminisms: A Very Short Introduction*, 73.

effectively and most radically fought for the vote and as Christabel Pankhurst once remarked: “It is unendurable to think of another generation of women wasting their lives for the vote. We must not lose any more time. We must act.”¹⁶ Even though, initially, the WSPU was meant to be only a family organization the shift of the group was gradual, from provoking the politicians to mass marches and demonstrations in Hyde Park. Finally, in 1918 the Representation of the People Act was passed granting the vote to women over the age of 30 who owned houses, and in 1928 the right was extended to all women over the age of 21.¹⁷ Women could finally sit in the parliament after the World War I, although not many of them were elected, as late as in 1840s there were only 12 of them. However, women had been actively serving on school boards and other local bodies since the 1870s, and their numbers increased after the war.

The second wave of feminism emerged after the World War II and can be described as the women’s liberation movement, which focused on gaining legal and social equality for women, and most importantly on ending discrimination. This period was also understood as a continuation of the first wave of feminism, in fact, the term ‘first wave’ was coined after the second wave emerged. Since the second wave had slightly different goal it needed a new term. Second wave feminists saw women’s cultural and political inequalities as “inextricably linked and encouraged women to understand aspects of their personal lives as deeply politicized and as reflecting sexist power structures.”¹⁸ One of the most influential feminists of the early 20th century was Simone de Beauvoir, who is also the author of *The Second Sex* and of the very famous statement “one is not born, but rather becomes, a woman.”¹⁹ De Beauvoir distinguishes sex from gender and suggests that gender is “an aspect of identity gradually acquired. She states that gender is the cultural meaning and form that body acquires, the variable modes of that body’s acculturation.”²⁰

Women still attempted to communicate better social position in society and the feminist movements of this period defined its demands for equal education opportunity

¹⁶ Kristin Olsen, *Chronology of Women's History* (London: Greenwood Press, 1994), 196, accessed February 1, 2016.
https://books.google.cz/books/about/Chronology_of_Women_s_History.html?id=jFY3CxmHk4cC&redir_esc=y.

¹⁷ “History and Theory of Feminism,” accessed February 1, 2016.

¹⁸ “History and Theory of Feminism,” accessed February 1, 2016.

¹⁹ Judith Butler, “Sex and Gender in Simone de Beauvoir's *Second Sex*,” *Yale French Studies* No. 72, Simone de Beauvoir: Witness to a Century (1986), 35, JSTOR. Accessed February 2, 2016.

²⁰ Butler, “Sex and Gender in Simone de Beauvoir's *Second Sex*,” 35.

and equal pay, as well as free contraception and abortion if needed. The distinction from the first wave movement was that the groups were now much smaller, and the women were focusing on discussing particular issues, sharing their experiences and discovering what they have in common as women. Not only the things listed above were topics of discussion, rape played also significant role in the second wave feminism, and even today.

2.3 Perception of feminism today

The third wave feminism or sometimes also called the post-feminism begins in the 1990s and continues up to present. Post-feminism refers to the perceived failures of the second wave feminism and it continues in fighting for the same beliefs as in the previous waves. However, the movement's focus has slightly shifted; it is less focused on political processes and on laws but more on the individual self. Also, the feminists are more diverse now, the first and the second wave feminists were mostly Westers, middle-class, white women, whereas the third wave feminists are women from different ethnicities, colours, religions and social backgrounds.

Since 1990s women are more recognized in society and not only in the United Kingdom but also in other countries all over the world. In Britain women have the same opportunities for education and can have the same occupations as men and most importantly their opinions are valued and respected.

Over the several decades the feminist movement has helped women to stand for their own and to be acknowledged. However, feminism today cannot be easily defined anymore, it is not as visible as it used to be during the first wave, and some women do not want to be associated with feminism as they still perceive it as a rigid and outdated movement. Nonetheless, in September 2014 United Nations launched a new campaign called *HeForShe* whose Women Global Goodwill Ambassador became a British actress Emma Watson. Not only is Watson widely known persona but she actively participates in the campaign and her speeches at the conferences have drawn attention of many. The *HeForShe* campaign aims for gender equality, which “is not only women issue but rather human rights issue.”²¹ As Watson herself mentioned at one of the *HeForShe* conferences: “How can we effect change in the world when only half of it is invited or

²¹ “Our Mission,” HeForShe, accessed February 4, 2016. <http://www.heforshe.org/en/our-mission>.

feel welcome to participate in the conversation?”²² One of the goals of the campaign is also to lure men and boys to advocate for their own rights, not only women, which is very important because the campaign aims to make men comfortable to call themselves feminist as well. Even though, the campaign is being criticized as for being run by women exclusively, the publicity that was drawn on the feminist issue is gradual again which is a good sign, hitherto there is no country in the world where women are absolutely equal to men.

3. BRIEF BIOGRAPHIES OF THE SELECTED AUTHORS

Each of the four writers, Charlotte Brontë, Thomas Hardy, Virginia Woolf and Jeanette Winterson, are connected to feminism and approached the topic in a slightly different way. This chapter, however, discusses their lives and mentions their best-known works.

Charlotte Brontë (1816-1855), a British novelist and poet, was the eldest of three Brontë sisters. When she was five years old her mother died of cancer and she and her siblings were raised by her aunt. Charlotte and her sisters were then sent to a Clergy Daughter's School to gain an education, however, the school's poor conditions permanently affected Charlotte's physical and mental development, which she afterwards depicted in *Jane Eyre*. When Charlotte returned home from school, she acted as the oldest sibling as a mother towards her sisters and brother.

The family lived in a Haworth Parsonage which is also the place where the siblings started creating their fiction. The siblings created fictional worlds and began chronicle the lives and struggles of their characters. Charlotte with her brother Branwell wrote about imagined country Angria, whereas Emily and Anne wrote poems about the country of Gondal. Charlotte, nonetheless, continued her education and between 1835 and 1838 was a teacher and after that also worked as a governess. In 1846 Charlotte, Emily and Anne published a collection of their poems under pseudonyms of Currer, Ellis and Acton Bell. And a year later she published her masterpiece *Jane Eyre* (1847), which is inspired by the author's life and the book became an immediate success. Among her other novels are *Shirley* (1848), which concerns with the role of women in

²² “Emma Watson at the HeForShe Campaign 2014 – Official UN Video,” Youtube Video, 6:50, posted by UN Nations, September 22, 2014, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gkjW9PZBRfk>.

society, and *Villette* (1853), that deals with isolation and social repression of individual desire.

The deaths of Branwell, Emily and Anne affected Charlotte on a great scale, nevertheless, she managed to get married despite her father's disapproval. However, in 1854 while expecting a baby she caught pneumonia and after a lengthy illness she died the following year.

Thomas Hardy (1840-1928) is considered to be one of the most renowned authors of British history. He was born in Dorchester, in a rural area of Wessex, and studied architecture and consequently became an architect, however, when he came to London in 1891 he found himself to be more interested in writing poetry and fiction. Hardy regarded himself as a poet, however, his poems were not received very well during his lifetime. After publishing *Far from the Madding Crowd* (1874), which was a success, he decided to pursue his literary career and give up architectural work, nonetheless, after publishing *Tess of the d'Urbervilles* (1891), and *Jude the Obscure* (1895) he received very harsh critiques which sent him back to poetry.

The area of Wessex had a huge influence on him, as most of his fictional works are set there. He created a semi-fictional region of Wessex based on one of the kingdoms of Anglo-Saxon Britain. His works are influenced by Romanticism, especially William Wordsworth and Charles Dickens. Hardy was a Victorian realist and in his novels he tried to depict the social constraints on the lives of those living in Victorian England, he also criticized beliefs relating to marriage and religion, which limit people's lives and cause sadness.

Hardy was married twice, however, the death of his first wife affected him tremendously and in many of his poems he is dealing with her death. Hardy himself died in January 1928 and is buried in the Poet's Corner in Westminster Abbey.

Virginia Woolf (1882-1941) was an English writer, philosopher, critic and foremost modernist of the 20th century. At the age of six she was sexually abused by her brother and the memory of this incident became only more permanent after her mother suddenly died. As a result of that she suffered from nervous breakdowns and anxiety. In her twenties, after the death of her father, she moved to Bloomsbury and became a member of the Bloomsbury Groups. The group consisted of many influential figures; writers, intellectuals, and artists, who were united by a belief in the importance of the arts. In 1912 she got married to Leonard Woolf, a member of the Bloomsbury Group,

however, she kept a romantic relationship with Vita Sackville-West. Woolf was known for her mood swings and deep depression, and she committed suicide in 1941, in her late fifties.

She pioneered a new style of writing – the stream of consciousness, which she applied in most of her novels. In her writings, she explores problems of personal identity and relationships, love, isolation and change. Woolf's highly acclaimed novels are *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925), *To the Lighthouse* (1927) and *Orlando* (1928).

Nonetheless, Woolf was not only a novelist but also a feminist and she is also known for her essays, especially for *A Room of One's Own*, which is an extended essay defending women's rights. The essay also includes the very famous quote "A woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction."²³

A contemporary English writer Jeanette Winterson, born in August 1959 in Manchester, is known for her quirky and unconventional novels. She was strictly brought up by her religious mother who intended her to be a missionary, however, at the age of 16 Winterson identified herself as a lesbian and moved to London. After gaining diploma from St. Catherine's College, Oxford, she had various jobs while working on her novels. After publishing *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* (1985) the novel received high acclaim and won a Whitbread Award for the best novel. Among her other novels are *The Passion* (1987), that is inspired by her affair with her literary agent, and *Sexting the Cherry* (1989), which is considered to be very important for women as it deals with position of women in patriarchal society.

In 2006 Winterson was made an officer of Order of the British Empire for her services to literature. Her novels are very popular and many of them were also adapted for television.

4. COMPARISON OF MALE AND FEMALE WRITERS ON THE TOPIC OF FEMINISM

Writing about feminism and women's attitudes was slightly different for female and male writers during the 19th and 20th centuries. Several female writers, Charlotte Brontë was among them, were even writing under a pseudonyms because they felt intimidated to write under their real name, and as for Brontë she was using the pen

²³ Woolf, *A Room of One's Own*, 3.

name Currer Bell. Women at the beginning of the 19th century were rather insecure to write explicitly about their problems in society, thus they used male pseudonyms, because men's opinions were much more respected and they also wanted to avoid the influence of prejudice of the society against female writers. Feminism at that time was not outright spoken and passed rather through literature. Literature was the primary medium to communicate ideas and thoughts about this topic, it was also one of the means of communication because literature could spread around the world when people travelled.

What also influenced writers during 19th and 20th centuries was the rise of sexual freedom, which was part of the general European Enlightenment. However, because sexuality had been so little studied, it is difficult to know to what extent its ideals had spread in other countries, nevertheless, it is obvious that it has been gradual since the Middle Ages.²⁴ Moreover, the 19th century and more precisely the Victorian era, from 1840s to 1900, was the time of two motifs; sexuality and subordination. The subordination is related to lack of power and political ignorance of women. In order to fight against this, feminists began to construct an ideology of their own, a new basis of thinking about relationships, sexuality and masculine power.²⁵

The Victorian era witnessed changes in thinking about women in society, concerning women's education, right to vote, marriage and sexuality. The second part of the 19th century was the time when the most radical and far-reaching change of all happened; the change of women's role in society. Number of opportunities becoming available to women in the male-dominated world increased, there were new improvements of educational and employment prospects for women, and marriage followed by motherhood was no longer seen as the inevitable route towards securing a level of financial security. According to Greg Buzwell's essay *Daughters of decadence*, a woman of the 19th century was embodiment of the New Woman, "she was free-spirited and independent, educated and uninterested in marriage and children."²⁶ The New Woman became a phenomenon, in real life she was a feminist fighting for female

²⁴ Faramerz Dabhoiwala, *The Origins of Sex: A History of the First Sexual Revolution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), 100.

²⁵ Susan Mendus and Jane Rendall, *Sexuality and Subordination* (London: Routledge, 1989), 2, accessed March 22, 2016,

<https://books.google.cz/books?id=qevbIJSe4cEC&lpg=PP1&pg=PR3#v=onepage&q&f=false>.

²⁶ Greg Buzwell, "Daughters of decadence: the New Woman in the Victorian fin de siècle," *British Library*, accessed March 22, 2016, <http://www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/articles/daughters-of-decadence-the-new-woman-in-the-victorian-fin-de-siecle>.

suffrage and in literature she was a woman who focused on her own aspirations but she also functioned as a mirror of the current society. She was no longer described as a loving wife devoted to her husband but as a dignified woman who does not have to submit to a man. However, Buzwell also claims that female characters were sometimes described either as “sexual predators or oversensitive females who cannot accept their nature as a sexual being.”²⁷

During the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century a new literary style emerged – modernism. That meant that literature was more naturalistic and the authors had more freedom to express sexual content. However, it was no sooner than after the World War II when there was a shift in attitudes in sexuality and gender. The sexual revolution started in 1960s and lasted up to 1980s and the effect this movement caused was enormous, the revolution has changed traditional behaviour related to sexuality and to relationships in general. The sexual liberation caused that not only heterosexual relationships were accepted, but also homosexual or polygamous. There was also increased acceptance of public nudity, pornography or legalization of abortion and contraception. Many significant literary works were written during the sexual revolution and it was due not only to the historical turn in the Victorian scholarship but also to the increased number of women writing in that period. Subsequently, most scholarly work has incorporated to some extent attention to gender and sexuality, emerging primarily from the women’s movement as well as from civil rights.²⁸ The literature during this period was born out of feminist interests and focused primarily on middle-class white women. The writings tended to privilege the history of feminist activism and consciousness and attempted to recover forgotten literary history of women’s writing. As Pamela K. Gilbert says in her book *Gender* the early literature of this era also focused largely on “reading women writers’ resistance to patriarchy and on the representation of female characters.”²⁹ In general, this period was marked by sexual exploration and queer culture, as is also reflected in *Mrs. Dalloway* or in the latter novel *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*.

²⁷ Buzwell, “Daughters of decadence: the New Woman in the Victorian fin de siècle,” accessed March 22, 2016.

²⁸ Pamela K. Gilbert, “Gender,” *Oxford Bibliographies*, accessed March 22, 2016, <http://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/view/document/obo-9780199799558/obo-9780199799558-0076.xml>.

²⁹ Gilbert, “Gender,” accessed March 22, 2016.

Nonetheless, this chapter focuses on the four writers already mentioned in the introduction; Charlotte Brontë, Thomas Hardy, Virginia Woolf and Jeanette Winterson, each of them writing in a different decade, or even century, Charlotte Brontë in the first half of the 19th century, Thomas Hardy in the second half of the 19th century, Virginia Woolf in the first half of the 20th century and Jeanette Winterson in the second half of the 20th century. Women were still perceived as wives, mothers and keepers of the household at the beginning of the 19th century, nevertheless, the repulsion and the need of independence started to be apparent. As the development of feminism has evolved during the centuries, even writers projected their characters with more liberation and freedom.

3.1 Charlotte Brontë

Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* was published under her pen name Currer Bell in 1847, which was a period when women were still oppressed, had no rights nor were respected among men. The publication caused both high acclaim and harsh criticism because of how the author dealt with the topic of sexuality. In the infamous Elizabeth Rigby's review of *Jane Eyre* is even suggested that if the book was written by a woman "she would forfeited the society of her own sex."³⁰ The puritan Victorian readership criticized the author's sex, suggesting that such behaviour is not appropriate for a woman, female character of even a female writer. The harsh critiques advocated that Jane's description as a strong, self-sufficient woman with no obligations to men is a quality only belonging to men, thus is unnatural for women. Jane's passionate rebellion was perceived by some as absolutely unacceptable suggesting that women are supposed to be subordinate to men. Bulwer Lytton in her letter on *Jane Eyre* even complains that "British females are intense men worshippers – and in their disgusting books the young ladies make all the advances – and do all the love-making – and this flatters the hoggish vanity of English men."³¹ In spite of the criticism the novel was still a success.

Brontë developed a type of heroine who was fearless, firm, independent and did not need to depend on a man, yet who calls for true love and for equality. Brontë created a character that is unlike any other, Jane Eyre seeks dignity and respect, and throughout the book the reader see the evolution of the protagonist. Jane describes herself as: "I am

³⁰ Elizabeth Rigby, "A review of Vanity Fair and Jane Eyre," *The London Quarterly Review*, No. CLXVII (Dec., 1848), 82-99, accessed March 22, 2016, <https://www.d.umn.edu/~csigler/Rigby.html>.

³¹ Zoe Brennan, *Brontë's Jane Eyre* (London: Continuum International Publishing Group, 2010), 100.

no bird; and no net ensnares me: I am a free human being with an independent will.”³² Even though Jane was always strong, her maturation throughout the novel gives her the ability to cope with unfortunate events in her life more readily. When she found out that the man she loved was already married, she was able to control herself, and even though leaving Mr. Rochester made her feel miserable, betrayed, and her sorrow was overwhelming, she was still able to break free.³³ Jane did not perceived her life to be fulfilled only if she got married, that is also reason why she left Mr. Rochester, and despite loving him she was strong and independent enough to continue working as a governess and teacher although this occupation was no better than being a servant.

Due to the fact that this masterpiece is inspired by the life of the author herself, the book is considered to be very influential during the time it was published, and it also represented the modern view of women’s position in society. Though many agree that Charlotte Brontë was a feminist and *Jane Eyre* is a feminist novel, there are some who claim that Brontë’s only intention was to point out the social structure of that time. However, this following quote from the book suggest that Jane was truly a woman fighting for her own values, and in this excerpt Brontë also addresses the issue of sexual equality. The quote shows Jane’s fighting for her individuality and her emphasising on the fact that she will not behave upon conventions but rather upon her free will, pointing out that she is not a ‘machine’. This is a female’s attempt to break free of the conventionalities and customs that society has attempted to set her in. Even though Jane fell in love and she embraced the notion of being loved, Brontë projected the protagonist as an independent woman who will not sacrifice her morals and dignity for any man. Nothing can change Jane’s values, not even love, money or status.

“Do you think I can stay to become nothing to you? Do you think I am an automation?—a machine without feelings? and can you bear to have my morsel of bread snatched from my lips and my drop of living water dashed from my cup? Do you think because I am poor, obscure, plain, and little, I am soul and heartless? You think wrong! – I have as much soul as you, – and full as much heart ... I am not talking to you now through the medium of custom, conventionalities, nor even of mortal flesh; — it is my spirit that addresses your spirit; just as if both had

³² Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre* (London: Wordsworth Editions, 1992), 223.

³³ “Feminism on Jane Eyre,” Club Esayos, accessed March 9, 2016, <https://www.clubensayos.com/Acontecimientos-Sociales/FEMINISM-ON-JANE-EYRE/663567.html>.

passed through the grave, and we stood at God's feet, equal, – as we are!”³⁴

Brontë put a strong voice into her protagonist when she was expressing the inequality and limitations of women's roles in society, and especially the following quotation from the novel brought a great deal of criticism.

“Women are supposed to be very calm generally: but women feel just as men feel; they need exercise for their faculties and a field for their efforts as much as their brothers do; they suffer from too rigid a restraint, too absolute a stagnation, precisely as men would suffer; and it is narrow-minded in their more privileged fellow-creatures to say that they ought to confine themselves to making puddings and knitting stockings, to playing on the piano and embroidering bags.”³⁵

This particular passage was considered scandalous to the conservative puritan readers, as Elizabeth Rigby addressed her indignation in her scathing review of *Jane Eyre*. In her review she took a strong dislike to the sexual ambition of Jane who ends up marrying into the household where she is employed. The figure of the governess was disturbing, especially in literature, and according to Katryn Huges, “it drew attention to the fact that not all Victorian women were as sexless as suggested.”³⁶

The novel depicts Jane as a firm, independent heroine who is also described with strong desires. In the scene when Jane is courted by St. John Rivers, she fears that if they marry, he would “scrupulously observe all the forms of love”³⁷ while the spirit of love would be absent, in other words he would offer sex without romantic love, and Jane feels this would force her to “burn inwardly and never utter a cry,”³⁸ as Sally Shuttleworth remarked in her essay *Jane Eyre and the 19th Century Woman*. Even though the author herself probably did not even have much knowledge about men, the relationship between Jane and Mr. Rochester is depicted as very passionate and the sexual tension is apparent. They wittily test each other and every time Jane speaks with Mr. Rochester he tries to read her expression and she usually leaves him baffled.

³⁴ Brontë, *Jane Eyre*, 223.

³⁵ Brontë, *Jane Eyre*, 95.

³⁶ Katryn Huges, “Gender Roles in the 19th century,” British Library, accessed March 10, 2016, <http://www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/articles/gender-roles-in-the-19th-century#sthash.uFd1Juyz.dpuf>

³⁷ Brontë, *Jane Eyre*, 378.

³⁸ Sally Shuttleworth, “Jane Eyre and the 19th Century Woman,” British Library, accessed March 22, 2016, <http://www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/articles/jane-eyre-and-the-19th-century-woman>.

The fervour between them is palpable in almost every conversation they have; “‘what, are you quitting me already, and in that way?’ He paused; gazed at Jane: words almost visible trembled on his lips—but his voice was checked”³⁹ this scene hardly fits the puritan Victorian stereotypes as it continues with Mr. Rochester asking Jane to stay with him alone at night in his bedroom, in their bedclothes. The relationship between them is a taboo because of Jane’s status, she is a governess, while Mr. Rochester is her employer. As Mr. Rochester keeps Jane unsure of telling her his feelings; “He would sometimes pass me haughtily and coldly, just acknowledging my presence by a distant nod or cool glance, and sometimes bow and smile with gentle - man-like affability,”⁴⁰ he keeps being very engaged and flirtatious in their conversations.

Brontë created not only a new type of heroine but also a male character who represents a Byronic hero, he is dark and mysterious but also loving and tender. It was his love for Jane that made this novel so sensual and intense, at the end of the novel when he declares his love for her; “every atom of your flesh is as dear to me as my own: in pain and sickness it would still be dear,”⁴¹ he states that he will love her even if she went mad because he loves her for who she is, which makes him irresistible.

In general, Charlotte Brontë focused on female characters that were simple, yet they were aiming to provide fulfilment in their lives and who concentrated on living a life by their own rules focusing on respecting themselves, rather than on what society dictates. Charlotte Brontë created a woman, in all respects plain, modest, morally strong and intelligent. Like the author, Jane does not need a man to make her feel worthy; instead, she carries her self-worth in her mind and determination. Ellen Moers in her book *Literary Women* states that through Jane Brontë exhibits “resentment toward a society that has scorned her while maintaining a detachment toward humanity as a whole.”⁴² In this novel Brontë contradicted the Victorian society, speaking for oppressed and disrespected women, therefore, the author can also be considered to be one of the first modern writers of her time. As Lucile Dooley remarked in her essay *Psychoanalysis of Charlotte Brontë, as a Type of the Woman of*

³⁹ Brontë, *Jane Eyre*, 142.

⁴⁰ Brontë, *Jane Eyre*, 122.

⁴¹ Brontë, *Jane Eyre*, 122.

⁴² Ellen Moers, *Literary Women* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1972), 18.

Genius, it was through her words that Charlotte Brontë “created a woman of intellect and a strong moral character; the same traits Brontë herself possessed.”⁴³

3.2 Thomas Hardy

The second part of the 19th century was the era when women started to realize that being a wife and mother without having the opportunity to study or to have a proper job is not acceptable. The term feminism was not coined yet, nor there were any female groups supporting women’s rights, however, Hardy portrayed some of his female characters as feminists. *Far From the Madding Crowd* (1874) is not considered to be Hardy’s masterpiece, nonetheless, the protagonist, Bathsheba Everdene, is portrayed as a feisty feminist, who as she says: “Well, what I mean is that I shouldn't mind being a bride at a wedding, if I could be one without having a husband.”⁴⁴ It was not only the protagonist in *Far From the Madding Crowd* who is a feminist, but also other characters in Hardy’s novels, such as Tess in *Tess of the d’Urbervilles* or Sue in *Jude the Obscure* can be perceived as feminists. Even though the female characters in Hardy’s books seem to be radicals, and in this case Bathsheba Everdene does have strong feminist attitude and is provocative, outspoken and always seems to be ahead of her time, some claim that Hardy was a misogynist. However, as states Alisar M. Duckworth in her essay *Women and Sexuality in the Novels of Thomas Hardy*, Hardy was seemed misogynist predominantly to Victorian readers. Mainly because he “neglected to provide comforting portraits of women finding the proper outlet for their energy in marriage,”⁴⁵ nonetheless, Duckworth also claims that these critiques lead to conclusion that Victorian novels “points to sexist ethics of a bourgeois society that had domesticated the political oppression of earlier social structures.”⁴⁶ More recent readers have already started to identify themselves with more modern point of view.

Moreover, rebellious Hardy refused to follow the dictate of the society, hence the tragic ending of *Jude the Obscure* and *Tess of the D’Urbervilles*, and even though the ending of *Far From the Madding Crowd* was happy, he disputed the idea that marriage is the only goal of a woman’s sexuality. The author also criticized the

⁴³ Lucile Dooley, “Psychoanalysis of Charlotte Brontë, as a Type of the Woman of Genius,” *The American Journal of Psychology* Vol. 31, No. 3 (Jul., 1920), 222, JSTOR. Accessed March 10, 2016.

⁴⁴ Thomas Hardy, *Far From the Madding Crowd* (Massachusetts: Trajectory Classics, 2014), 35.

⁴⁵ Alistar M. Duckworth, “Women and Sexuality in the Novels of Thomas Hardy,” *The Georgia Review* Vol. 43, No. 3 (Fall 1989), 616, JSTOR. Accessed March 10, 2016.

⁴⁶ Duckworth, “Women and Sexuality in the Novels of Thomas Hardy,” 616. Accessed March 24, 2016.

Victorian patriarchy by the critique of the legal system, he did not agree with the fact that a woman should hand over all her property to her husband after getting married, which Hardy also illustrated very well in the following quote:

“It appears that ordinary men take wives because possession is not possible without marriage, and that ordinary women accept husbands because marriage is not possible without possession; with totally differing aims the method is the same on both sides. But the understood incentive on the woman's part was wanting here. Besides, Bathsheba's position as absolute mistress of a farm and house was a novel one, and the novelty had not yet begun to wear off.”⁴⁷

Hardy's *Far From the Madding Crowd* promotes a feminist ideology that suggest that women are as strong and capable of having power in work and romantic relationship as men are,⁴⁸ which shows Hardy's approval of female autonomy. Bathsheba, as independent as she can be, encounters three men throughout the book who affect her and each of them represent different values to her; farmer Gabriel Oak represents domesticity and equal partnership, wealthy William Boldwood is offering her high status in society but is attracted to the idea of love more than to Bathsheba, and Sergeant Troy is driven to Bathsheba by passionate love and her money. As these men gradually walk into her life her own perspective of life changes. There is apparent Hardy's argument for love, he prefers love based on equality and friendship which shows the relationship of Bathsheba and Gabriel Oak, rather than based on superficial love which shows the marriage of Bathsheba and Sergeant Troy.

The relationship between Gabriel and Bathsheba is mutually beneficial and positive, they both change their opinions on each other throughout the whole book, which also develops into their marriage. Even though Gabriel thought of Bathsheba that she is vain and superficial and she declined his first proposal, at the end of the novel they finally found a way how to be together. Nicole Miller argues in her analysis of the novel that Hardy depicts Bathsheba as “a self-reliant and a strong woman whose strength only increases in the face of adversity.”⁴⁹ The feeling of independence is also very important for the female protagonist, her courtship to Gabriel and her refusal to

⁴⁷ Hardy, *Far From the Madding Crowd*, 152-153.

⁴⁸ Nicole Miller, “Hardy's Feminism: An Analysis of Gender Portrayals and Relations in *Far From the Madding Crowd*,” *Indiana University South Bend Undergraduate Research Journal* (2014): 125, accessed March 11, 2016.

⁴⁹ Miller, “Hardy's Feminism: An Analysis of Gender Portrayals and Relations,” 128.

move away and give up her farm shows that she never loses her individuality or personal integrity.⁵⁰ Hardy depicts her self-sufficiency, independence and youthful frivolity as her strengths.

As Alistar Duckworth says in her analysis there is apparent approval of women's sexuality and implicit erotic implications in Hardy's novels.⁵¹ Duckworth also states that in Hardy infiltrates his "subversively erotic descriptions of Bathsheba's sexual nature in metaphoric sequences that barely conceal their sexual content,"⁵² as in descriptions of Bathsheba's sexual desires and receptivity. The most sexual scene of the novel is the encounter of Bathsheba and Sergeant Troy in a forest. The scene is outrageous and explicit and Bathsheba's longing for Troy is palpable; "She felt powerless to withstand or deny him. He was altogether too much for her. [The kiss] brought the blood beating into her face, set her feet stinging as if aflame to the very hollows of her feet and enlarged emotion to a compass which quite swamped thought... She felt like one who has sinned a great sin."⁵³ The encounter leaves Bathsheba breathless and confused as she never felt such desire for a man before.

On the other hand, the relationship between Bathsheba and Gabriel Oak was different, it was not only about desire but about mutual partnership, support and affection as it is demonstrated in the following excerpt:

"Theirs was that substantial affection which arise when the two who are thrown together begin first by knowing the rougher sides of each other's character, and not the best till further on, the romance growing up in the interstices of a mass of hard prosaic reality. This good-fellowship—*camaraderie*—usually occurring through similarity of pursuits, is unfortunately seldom superadded to love between the sexes, because men and women associate not in their labours but in their pleasure merely. Where however happy circumstance permits its development the compounded feeling proves itself to be the only love which is strong as death – that love which many waters cannot quench, nor the floods drown, beside which the passion usually called by the name is evanescent as steam."⁵⁴

⁵⁰ Miller, "Hardy's Feminism: An Analysis of Gender Portrayals and Relations," 129.

⁵¹ Duckworth, "Women and Sexuality in the Novels of Thomas Hardy," 618. Accessed March 24, 2016.

⁵² Duckworth, "Women and Sexuality in the Novels of Thomas Hardy," 618. Accessed March 24, 2016.

⁵³ Hardy, *Far From the Madding Crowd*, 220.

⁵⁴ Hardy, *Far From the Madding Crowd*, 466-467.

Essentially, the story is about ‘breaking’ or ‘taming’ Bathsheba, before the marriage she wanted to prove everyone that she is capable of everything; “I shall be up before you are awake, I shall be afield before you are up... In short, I shall astonish you all”⁵⁵ but after marrying Gabriel she became convinced that to rely on somebody is beneficial and that it does not ultimately mean losing her independence. This fact demonstrates that Hardy projected her with female and male characteristics; she is a brilliant businesswoman, she can take a man’s job yet she also shows her feminine self. Bathsheba’s argument: “It is difficult for a woman to define her feelings in language which is chiefly made by men to express theirs”⁵⁶ also suggests that Hardy was ahead of time because this quote has been used many times since then and supports a feminist viewpoint. Hardy shows that both sexes are capable of embodying masculine and feminine strengths and weaknesses,⁵⁷ and that women do not have only feminine virtues.

3.3 Virginia Woolf

The 20th century brought a new style into literature which was modernism, and Virginia Woolf was very influenced by that, she also pioneered the stream of consciousness narrative technique which was very typical for her. Woolf was also an experimenter with psychological and emotional motives of characters. She was a foremost feminist and a very significant figure during the beginning of the 20th century, however, as Plan and Seller states in their book *A History of Feminism Literary Criticism*, some thought she was “overly genteel, far too ladylike to be taken seriously, part of effete Bloomsbury, and even those who praised her, like David Daiches, agreed her art was ‘limited.’”⁵⁸

Nonetheless, Woolf is considered to be a feminist and feminist themes are dominant in her books, her focus on the topic even arose after the World War II. She is also an author of critical essays about feminism, for instance, the very influential *A Room of One’s Own*. Bhaskar A. Shukla suggests in her book called *Virginia Woolf – An Introduction* that Woolf focused mainly on women and that “she developed innovative literary techniques in order to reveal women’s experience and she

⁵⁵ Hardy, *Far From the Madding Crowd*, 96.

⁵⁶ Hardy, *Far From the Madding Crowd*, 308.

⁵⁷ Miller, “Hardy’s Feminism: An Analysis of Gender Portrayals and Relations,” 131.

⁵⁸ Gill Plain and Susan Sellers, *A History of Feminist Literary Criticism*, 120.

attempted to find an alternative to the male-dominated views of reality.”⁵⁹ Woolf is also the author of a quote: “As long as she thinks of a man, nobody objects to a woman thinking,”⁶⁰ which is from her novel *Orlando*, that applies also to the British society of early 20th century, when women were still very oppressed not taken seriously and were not able to work in higher occupations. She wanted to point out sexism and criticize the patriarchy through her writing.

The beginning of the century was a breaking point for the feminist movement, the word feminism itself was more frequent in society then and women started the fight for suffragette and for the right to earn the living in general. Plain and Sellers also state that during this period “female writers were attacking patriarchal attitudes, cultural misogyny and the ingrained belittlement of women,”⁶¹ and it was not only Virginia Woolf who was concerned with this topic, but also Charlotte Perkins Gilman or Simone de Beauvoir.

Mrs. Dalloway (1925) is one of Woolf’s best-known novels, which is very experimental in the style of writing. The novel tells a story about Clarissa Dalloway who is attempting to organize a party but the story focuses also on events from Clarissa’s life, which is depicted in a form of a mosaic portrait; random visions from the past and present put together. As James Schiff states in *Rewriting Woolf’s Mrs. Dalloway*, “the novel is about what it feels like to be alive—to be a self-passing through the moments and hours of a day,”⁶² it also deals with a question of searching for self and with the ambiguity of sexual identity and desire. The period when the novel was published gone through a shift in public attitudes towards sexual orientation, hence it was more acceptable to criticize patriarchy and to be more sexually open than before. Nonetheless, the novel also focuses on the London’s society and people’s behaviour.

For Woolf herself as well as for *Mrs. Dalloway* the importance of independence is vital. The author also depicts Clarissa’s loneliness and agony, which can be understood as a result of her sexual repression and submission to the social

⁵⁹ Bhaskar A. Shukla, “Virginia Woolf – An Introduction,” in *Feminism: From Mary Wollstonecraft to Betty Friedan* (Delhi: Sarup & Sons, 2007), 57.

⁶⁰ Virginia Woolf, “Orlando: A Biography,” in *Selected Works of Virginia Woolf* (London: Wordsworth Editions Limited, 2005, 530.

⁶¹ Gill Plain and Susan Sellers, *A History of Feminist Literary Criticism* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 120.

⁶² James Schiff, “Rewriting Woolf’s Mrs. Dalloway,” *Critique: Studies in Contemporary Fiction*, October 15, 2015, accessed March 26, 2016
<http://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/00111619.2004.11644152>.

norms. “It was not beauty; it was not mind. It was something central which permeated; something warm which broke up surfaces and rippled the cold contact of man and woman or of woman together.”⁶³ This refers to what Clarissa lacks, and that is her sexual lack of interest to men and her denial to realize her affection towards Sally. Clarissa feels frustrated, she cannot forget the love for Peter nor the passionate kiss she shared with her friend Sally; “The most exquisite moment of her whole life. Sally stopped; picked a flower; kissed her on the lips. The whole world might have turned upside down!”⁶⁴ These moments with Sally evoked notion of female desire in her and she started questioning monogamy and heterosexuality. With the romantic friendship Clarissa-Sally Woolf reacts to the prejudicing society in which lesbian relationship was a taboo and she also tries to criticize the patriarchy. Nonetheless, Woolf also illustrates the importance of independence in the relationship with Clarissa’s friend Peter Walsh, with whom she has been in love with since she was young. She claims that if she had married him, he would have suffocated her and restricted her soul, and at the beginning of the story she gives reasons for rejecting him and marrying Richard; “For in marriage a little licence, a little independence there must be between people living together day in day out in the same house; which Richard gave her, and she him (where was he this morning, for instance? Some committee, she never asked what.) But with Peter everything had to be shared, everything gone into”.⁶⁵ That is to say, Clarissa rejected Peter in the past and married Richard mainly because what she craved was freedom to do anything she wanted.⁶⁶

The motif of homosexuality is not only apparent in the relationship between Clarissa and Sally, but also between Miss Kilman and Clarissa’s daughter Elizabeth. “Miss Kilman could not let her go! This youth that was so beautiful, this girl, whom she genuinely loved,”⁶⁷ this quote depicts Miss Kilman’s burst of emotions and homosexual desires for Elizabeth. As an unmarried working woman, Miss Kilman is seeking human connection, however, unsure of her homosexual feelings she is unable to express herself and is rather repressed. Nonetheless, Woolf pulls out of the depths of Miss Kilman’s subconscious focus on what would otherwise be a meaningless

⁶³ Virginia Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway* (London: Wordsworth Editions Limited, 1996), 24.

⁶⁴ Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway*, 26.

⁶⁵ Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway*, 6.

⁶⁶ Soumia Bouzid, “The Use of Stream of Consciousness in Virginia Woolf’s *Mrs. Dalloway*” (Ph.D. diss, Kasdi Merbah University, 2013), 30.

⁶⁷ Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway*, 96.

physical gesture: “Her large hand opened and shut on the table,”⁶⁸ this slight movement of Miss Kilman’s hand holds a significant meaning. Her repression manifests itself physically, perhaps in a different era she could have grabbed Elizabeth’s hand – as the confines of societal convention. Elaine Fulton suggests in her article *Mrs. Dalloway: Sexuality in post-war London* that Woolf uses Miss Kilman’s hand “to indicate her homosexuality as the focus on Miss Kilman’s hands is depicted as one of her masculine traits.”⁶⁹

The focus on feminism and sexuality was major, however, Woolf also tried to concentrate on society, especially on the English upper middle class which is represented by the Dalloways and their friends. She is criticizing the superficial way of living which at the same time has a wider significance in the fact that many of the characters are people who are the leaders of their society. For example, the character of Hugh Whitebread who works at the Court and represents what is most detestable in the English middle class. He, as Soumia Bouzid claims in *The Use of Stream of Consciousness in Virginia Woolf’s Mrs. Dalloway*, “has read nothing, thought nothing.”⁷⁰ Even the life of Clarissa Dalloway is rather shallow and meaningless as Woolf depicts her in: “half the time she did things not simply, not for themselves, but to make people think this or that; perfect idiocy she knew for no one was ever for a second taken in.”⁷¹ Mrs. Dalloway is not only the representative of her social environment, she is somewhat different from the others, although the fact of living among them has made her adopt the superficial view of life of a society hostess and what she admires is the mere surface of life in that society and described in this passage of the novel: “In the people’s eyes, in the swings, tramps and trudge; in the below and the uproar; the carriages, motorcars, omnibuses, vans, sandwich man, brass bands, barrel organs; in the triumph and the jingle and the strange high singing of some aeroplane overhead was what she loved; life, London, this moment of June.”⁷²

The themes of feminism and homosexuality are strong throughout the whole novel, mostly because both of the themes were part of Woolf’s life as well and it affected both her life and her writing. Woolf portrayed her female characters in

⁶⁸ Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway*, 96.

⁶⁹ Elaine Fulton, “Mrs. Dalloway: Sexuality in post-war London,” *Examiner*, November 17, 2011, accessed March 27, 2016, <http://www.examiner.com/article/mrs-dalloway-sexuality-post-war-london>

⁷⁰ Bouzid, “The Use of Stream of Consciousness in Virginia Woolf’s Mrs. Dalloway,” 34.

⁷¹ Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway*, 8.

⁷² Woolf, *Mrs. Dalloway*, 4.

conflict with society. The gender roles in the first part of 20th century demanded certain firmness, although Woolf pushed the boundaries when writing about marriage life, relationships, and love.

3.4 Jeanette Winterson

Jeanette Winterson is an English writer who has dealt with the topic of lesbianism and sexuality in her novels very often, and the highly acclaimed semi-autobiographical novel *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* (1985) also focuses on representation of lesbian characters. The motif of lesbianism already brought up Virginia Woolf in her novel *Orlando: A Biography* but also in already mentioned *Mrs. Dalloway*, where Clarissa Dalloway has a relationship with Sally Seton. However, despite the protagonist is a lesbian the author herself does not agree with the fact that it is a lesbian fiction. Winterson said that she “never understood why straight fiction is supposed to be for everyone, but anything with a gay character or that includes gay experience is only for queers.”⁷³ Not only are the themes of homosexuality and accepting oneself the core of the novel but also the theme of love. For Winterson love is something very special and it has been treated that way in all of her seven novels, Winterson even says: “love is a condition that is painful, but it is the cross we all have to bear, and this goes beyond overcoming prejudices against homosexuality, because love is held up as transcendent and unavoidable.”⁷⁴

The second part of the 20th century was a period of the second wave of feminism, women won the fight for the suffragette, although they still fought for the same opportunities and social position as men had. The period after the World War II has gone through shift in attitudes in sexuality and gender. The sexual revolution in 1950s and 1960s and the effect of feminist movement changed the way men and women related to each other socially and culturally. Therefore, the book was well accepted even though it is revolting against the conventional heterosexual life and family values. Winterson herself addressed in the introduction that the book openly engages in political debates and challenges the stereotypical family life; “Oranges is a threatening novel. It exposes the sanctity of family life as something of a sham; it

⁷³ “Books: Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit,” Jeanette Winterson, accessed March 14, 2016, <http://www.jeanettewinterson.com/book/oranges-are-not-the-only-fruit/>.

⁷⁴ Elizabeth Russell, “Jeanette Winterson and the Power of Love,” in *Loving Against the Odds*, ed. Elizabeth Russell (Bern: Peter Lang, 2006), 105.

illustrates by example that what the church calls love is actually psychosis and it dares to suggest that what makes life difficult for homosexuals is not their perversity but other people's."⁷⁵

The novel deals with themes of injustices between homosexual and heterosexual women, disposing prejudices about homosexuality, hetero-patriarchal society, and self-awareness and finding one's own space. And as Elizabeth Russell states, the novel also explores "the concept of a normal sexuality and refuses the prejudice against loving the 'wrong' or 'right' sort of people."⁷⁶ It illustrates a love story between adolescent girl Jeanette and her lover Melanie, Jeanette does not understand what is wrong about loving someone of the same sex, however, the religious society surrounding her strictly disagrees with her sexuality and they believe that she is possessed. When the pastor of the church where Jeanette goes to asks her: "Do you deny you love this woman with a love reserved for man and wife?" she replies: "No, yes, I mean of course I love her,"⁷⁷ this points out the presumptions that love is reserved only for a 'man and wife'. Winterson tries to illustrate the injustice between homosexual and heterosexual relationships and the prejudices about homosexuality. She declines to accept homosexual relationship to be an imitation of the heterosexual one.

Winterson also uses very few male characters by which she points out women's superiority. In *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* Jeanette's father does not play big role in her life, her mother is the dominant one, she either controls her husband's life or she ignores him completely. Jeanette herself says about her father that "he was never quite good enough."⁷⁸ The protagonist grew up hearing only negative opinions on men and even the time when she was an adolescent her life was predominantly surrounded by women, the church she attended with her mother was also kind of matriarchy because except the male pastor there were only females. From the beginning of the story Jeanette prefers women to men and she cannot understand why liking a woman is not normal and that it is considered as a sin. "As far as I was concerned men were something you had around the place, not particularly interesting, but quite harmless. I had never shown the slightest feeling for them,"⁷⁹ as is suggested

⁷⁵ Nick Bentley, *Contemporary British Fiction* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press Ltd, 2008), 109.

⁷⁶ Russell, "Jeanette Winterson and the Power of Love," 105.

⁷⁷ Jeanette Winterson, *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* (New York: Grove Press New York, 1985), 103.

⁷⁸ Winterson, *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*, 11.

⁷⁹ Winterson, *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*, 127.

in this quote, she was never interested in men nor she has never had an intimate relationship with a man and from her early age she always reacted with rage towards men, even when a postman offered her sweets, she refused it. Her whole life she was surrounded by strong, independent women who were negatively speaking about their husbands, thus she does not consider a marriage with a man to be necessary to fulfil her life as Jeanette explains in this passage: “Romantic love has been diluted into paperback form and has sold thousands and millions of copies. Somewhere it is still in the original, written on tablets of stone. I would cross seas and suffer sunstroke and give away all I have, but not for a man, because they want to be the destroyer and never the destroyed.”⁸⁰

Nonetheless, her relationship with Melanie, her lover, was very natural for her and she did not feel guilty when they were accused of being possessed by the Church. Melanie was of a different opinion and she ended the relationship, moved away and got married. According to Sonia Front and her book *Transgressing Boundaries in Jeanette Winterson's Fiction*, “for Melanie this lesbian experience was a part of her transitional stage in her sexual development,”⁸¹ however, Jeanette felt that her sexual orientation is nothing she should be ashamed of although her family and the whole society ostracized her. The only person who accepted Jeanette was her neighbour Elsie Norris, who was also a lesbian, she became a role model for her, and she supported her and listened to her.

Nonetheless, Jeanette’s strict mother experienced having feelings for women as well, when Jeanette and her go through old photo albums Jeanette spots a beautiful woman and asks about her, her mother pretends that it is no one important, however, next time Jeanette looks through the album the photo is gone. This repressed sexuality and fear of unacceptance of society made her mother marry a man and adopt a child as she was not even interested in having sex with her husband. For Jeanette’s mother sex is a taboo, hence she never talk about it with Jeanette, that is also due to the fact that she is very religious.

⁸⁰ Winterson, *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit*, 170.

⁸¹ Sonia Front, *Transgressing Boundaries in Jeanette Winterson's Fiction* (Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang, 2009), 114, accessed March 20, 2016, <https://books.google.cz/books?id=R8S6C0qmBLIC&printsec=frontcover&dq=Transgressing+Boundaries+in+Jeanette+Winterson%27s+Fiction&hl=en&sa=X&ved=0ahUKEwiMoKLZzIPMAhWHbxQKHYYIDpUQ6AEIHDA>

The community in the novel ostracizes the homosexuals in the village, and it is not only Jeanette but also two other older women, they avoid contacting them, or as for Jeanette the community tries to change her mind about her own sexuality. The fact of being a homosexual is not portrayed as disturbing, it is rather the fear of the other people's reaction to it. Winterson also addresses this in the introduction of the novel: "what makes life difficult for homosexuals is not their perversity but other people's."⁸²

Through this novel Winterson escapes from gender stereotypes, as Sonia Front claims: "it is not an attempt to determine between the essentialist and constructionist source of Jeanette's orientation, but the novel emphasizes her approval of it."⁸³ The main message of the novel is present in the protagonist herself, as she fought for her justice and against the society when she was accused of possession. Jeanette remained as strong and rational as she was even when her mother or the church tried to persuade her and change her mind, she developed her own judgement and endured the influence of others. The protagonist's journey and persistence highlight the oppression and the injustice of homosexuals and it offers a permanent deconstruction of the male/female binary.⁸⁴

⁸² Front, *Transgressing Boundaries in Jeanette Winterson's Fiction*, 114.

⁸³ Front, *Transgressing Boundaries in Jeanette Winterson's Fiction*, 114.

⁸⁴ Front, *Transgressing Boundaries in Jeanette Winterson's Fiction*, 114.

CONCLUSION

The aim of this thesis was to explore the development of feminism in Great Britain. I focused on the history of the phenomenon and also mentioned the perception of feminism today, nonetheless, the main focus was given on the differences of writing of writers each from a different time period. The novels I have chosen to examine were Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847), Thomas Hardy's *Far From the Madding Crowd* (1874), Virginia Woolf's *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925) and *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* (1985) by a contemporary writer Jeanette Winterson.

The first chapter focuses on the development of feminism in Great Britain since the first half of the 19th century up to the present. The aim was to explain feminism from its start, from the meaning of the term to the gradual development throughout the 19th and 20th centuries with mentioning the major figures of the movement. The most important figures mentioned were Mary Wollstonecraft, who is considered to be a founding mother of the movement, Florence Nightingale and the Pankhurst family. The chapter depicts the first and second wave of feminism, where women fought for their suffrage, education, and above all equal opportunities and independence. The first wave of the movement, lasting from the 19th century up to early 20th century, was primarily about fighting for the suffrage and for recognition in society. The Pankhurst family was very important in the suffragette movement towards the end of the 19th century, the leader of British suffragettes Emmeline Pankhurst was very politically radical and she is considered to be one of the most influential women in British history. Virginia Woolf also addressed the issue of equality in her influential essay *A Room of One's Own* during this period. The second wave of feminism was understood as a continuation of the first wave, however, it was then focused more on women's liberation movement and on social equality for women. There were attempts to communicate better social position in society and the feminists of this period defined its demands for equal education opportunity, equal pay and contraception and abortion. The first chapter also depicts the perception of feminism today, this period is sometimes called the third wave and it continues up to present since the 1990s. The movement now reacts to the perceived failures of the second wave of feminism and equal rights but not only in Great Britain but all over the world.

In the second chapter I briefly introduced each of the four writers; Charlotte Brontë, Thomas Hardy, Virginia Woolf and Jeanette Winterson. The aim was to present the writers and their most recognizable writings, as well as to address their surroundings and possible influences on their style of writing because each of the writers published the novels in a different period with different social standards and norms.

Charlotte Brontë was affected by the Haworth Parsonage where she grew up along with her siblings. The Brontë children were educated by their father and during the spare time they were writing, they created fictional worlds and chronicle the lives of their characters. *Jane Eyre* is inspired by the author's life, in spite of the fact that Brontë herself did not have many experiences with men, she read many books, which probably influenced her writing.

Thomas Hardy is known to be influenced by the English countryside, especially Wessex which he incorporated in many of his novels, and *Far From the Madding Crowd* is also set there. He was a Victorian realist who tried to depict the social constraints on the lives of those living in Victorian England, he also criticized beliefs relating to marriage and religion, which limited people's lives.

Virginia Woolf was majorly affected by modernism and she was also a pioneer of the stream of consciousness. A great influence on her style of writing was also her own life, she was a feminist and a member of the Bloomsbury Group, she suffered from severe depressions, and she was also bisexual which is also depicted in *Mrs. Dalloway*, in the relationship of Clarissa and Sally.

Jeanette Winterson's *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* is a semi-biographical novel, Jeanette, the protagonist, is from a religious family and is a lesbian, which are motifs the author shares with the protagonist.

The third chapter focuses on the differences of writing and perception of sexuality of the four writers. The conventions changed during the centuries, therefore, the writing of the authors changed as well. The topic of individuality and sexuality was more often and the writers projected their characters with more liberation and freedom.

In *Jane Eyre* Brontë developed a heroine who was self-reliant and fearless but also wanted to find true love and equal relationship. The book depicts the evolution of the protagonist and the relationship with Mr. Rochester, in which the reader can see the call for independence and the need for equality. The author also wanted to contradict the

Victorian society when describing the limited opportunities for women and lack of respect.

In Hardy's *Far From the Madding Crowd* Bathsheba is also portrayed as a self-reliant and feisty outspoken individual. The author is focusing on suggesting that women are as strong and capable as men are, which he portrayed in the protagonist herself, as she is not depending on anybody. However, as love gradually enters Bathsheba's life her attitude changes and Hardy essentially shows that both sexes are capable of embodying masculine and feminine characteristics.

Mrs. Dalloway by Virginia Woolf deals with the question of a search for self and sexual repression. Woolf explored the topic of homosexuality in the relationship of Clarissa and Sally, as well as Clarissa's agony and loneliness which can be understood as a submission to the social norms. The author also criticized the current middle class society and patriarchy through Clarissa's thoughts.

The last novel, *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* by Winterson also deals with the topic of homosexuality. The protagonist is a young homosexual girl from a religious family, her family along with the people surrounding her disapproves of her sexuality. Winterson tries to illustrate the judgemental society and the injustice of homosexuals who are sometimes ostracized by others.

As the whole feminist movement has developed over the centuries, the style of writing has changed as well, and the need to address new themes; for example sexuality, homosexuality, the importance of freedom, became more apparent. During the 19th century writers have started addressing the topic of importance of independence for women, their need for acknowledgement and freedom. Whereas in the 20th century, when women finally gained their right to vote, became respected in society and were more equal to men, writers wrote about new topics more openly which is also one of the main differences in the development of literature. Some of the topic of the 20th century literature would probably even be perceived as taboos in the 19th century, however, among them were for instance rejection of religion, homosexuality and sexuality in general.

RESUMÉ

Cílem této bakalářské práce bylo popsat vývoj feminismu ve Velké Británii, v práci jsem se zabývala nejen historií tohoto hnutí ale také přístupem k feminismu dnes, nicméně, hlavní důraz byl kladen na rozdíly v psaní čtyř vybraných autorů. Romány, na které jsem se zaměřila, jsou *Jane Eyre* (1847) od Charlotte Brontë, *Far From the Madding Crowd* (1874) od Thomase Hardyho, román *Mrs. Dalloway* (1925) Virginie Woolf a *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* (1985) od současné spisovatelky Jeanette Winterson.

V první kapitole jsem se zabývala vývojem feminismu ve Velké Británii od první poloviny 19. století až po současnost. Cílem bylo vysvětlit podstatu feminismu, od samotného významu slova, až k vývoji během 19. a 20. století s důrazem na nejdůležitější protagonisty, kteří se podíleli na vzniku a průběhu hnutí. Mezi tyto osobnosti patřily Mary Woolstonecraft, která je považována za zakladatelku feminismu, dále Florence Nightingale a také rodina Pankhurstových. V této kapitole se zaměřuji na první a druhou vlnu feminismu, kde největším úkolem feministek bylo dosáhnout hlasovacího práva, vzdělání, a především stejných možností a svobody jako měli muži. Během první vlny feminismu, trvající od 19. století po začátek 20. století, bylo primárním cílem boj o hlasovací právo, rovnoprávnost a uznání ve společnosti. V této době hrála velkou roli rodina Pankhurstových, Emmeline Pankhurst byla lídrem hnutí sufražetek a je považována za jednu z nejvýznamnějších žen v Britské historii. Virginie Woolf se také zabývala otázkou feminismu a rovnoprávnosti, a to zejména ve své eseji *A Room of One's Own*. Druhá vlna feminismu byla pokračováním té první, nicméně se více zaměřovala na emancipaci žen, snahu o lepší postavení žen ve společnosti, dosažení stejných možností na vzdělání jako měli muži a možnosti antikoncepce a potratu. V první kapitole jsem se také zabývala vnímáním feminismu dnes, toto období je označováno jako třetí vlna feminismu a trvá od roku 1990 až dodnes. V dnešní době se feministické hnutí snaží reagovat a napravovat předešlé neúspěchy a také usiluje o dosažení rovnoprávnosti žen, a to nejen ve Velké Británii ale po celém světě.

V druhé kapitole mé bakalářské práce jsem stručně představila autory, na jejichž romány jsem v následující kapitole zaměřila. Cílem bylo krátce popsat jejich život, zmínit nejznámější díla, a také se zaměřit na možné faktory, které mohly mít vliv na

jejich styl psaní, ať už to bylo jiné období, ve kterém každý ze čtyř autorů knihu publikovali, či odlišné společenské konvence té doby. Charlotte Brontë byla ovlivněna místem, kde vyrůstala se svými sourozenci a strávila zde své dětství, Haworthem. Vzdělání sourozenců z části zajistil jejich otec a během volných chvil se Charlotte s ostatními sourozenci bavila psáním. Spolu se sestrami Emily a Anne a bratrem si vymysleli vlastní imaginární světy a ve svých knihách popisovali dobrodružství smyšlených hrdinů. Román *Jane Eyre* je inspirovaný samotným životem autorky a navzdory faktu, že Charlotte neměla během svého života moc zkušeností s muži, v románu popisuje vše velmi živě. Anglický spisovatel Thomas Hardy je znám tím, že se jeho díla často odehrávají na venkově v oblasti Wessexu, což je také případ románu *Far From the Madding Crowd*. Hardy byl realistou a snažil se zachytit a popsat svazující společnost, své romány také využíval jako prostředek ke kritice manželství a náboženství. Virginie Woolf byla z velké části ovlivněna příchodem modernismu a byla průkopnicí psychoanalýzy v literatuře. Woolf také velmi ovlivnily události jejího života, sama byla feministkou a členkou Bloomsbury Group, mimoto trpěla depresemi a byla bisexuálkou, což také znázorňuje vztah Clarissy Dalloway se Sally. Částečná autobiografie *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* od Jeanette Winterson se ihned po publikování stala hitem. Hlavní postava, Jeanette, je z náboženské rodiny a je lesbičkou, což jsou hlavní motivy, které má protagonistka románu stejné s autorkou, a v románu je a tyto motivy kladen velký důraz.

Třetí kapitola se zaměřuje na odlišnost ve stylu psaní a jiné vnímání sexuality výše zmíněných spisovatelů. Společenské konvence a normy se v průběhu let měnily a s tím i přístup k různým námětům v literatuře. Témata individuality a sexuality se během 20. století začaly objevovat častěji a autoři začali své hrdinky vyobrazovat jako emancipované ženy.

Charlotte Brontë vytvořila hrdinku, která je naprosto soběstačná a nebojácná, která ale hledá pravou lásku a rovnocenný vztah. V románu je popsán vývoj hlavní hrdinky a její vztah s panem Rochestrem. Autorka v knize také popisuje rozpory ve viktoriánské společnosti, když ženy byly stále chápány jako ženy a matky v domácnosti, které nemají žádné možnosti.

Hlavní postava Bathsheba v Hardyho románu *Far From the Madding Crowd* je také vyobrazena jako soběstačná, nezávislá žena. Hardy se charakteristikou Bathsheby snažil poukázat na fakt, že ženy jsou stejně silné a schopné jako muži. Nicméně, láska

změnila Bathshebě postupně život i její životní postoje, autor tímto chtěl ukázat, že obě pohlaví mají mužské i ženské vlastnosti.

Mrs. Dalloway od Virginie Woolf se zabývá otázkou hledání sebe sama a potlačování vlastní sexuality. Woolf se v románu zabývala motivem homosexuality, což také vyobrazila ve vztahu mezi Clarissou Dalloway a Sally, také je zde patrný motiv osamělosti a vnitřního utrpení, který si lze vyložit jako podřízení se společenským konvencím. Autorky v románu prostřednictvím Clarissiných myšlenek také kritizuje střední třídu a patriarchální společnost.

Poslední kniha, *Oranges Are Not the Only Fruit* od Jeanette Winterson se také zabývá tématem homosexuality. Hlavní hrdinkou je zde mladá Jeanette, která pochází z náboženské rodiny a zároveň je lesbičkou, její rodina a okolí ale s její sexualitou nesusouhlasí, což je hlavním tématem celého románu. Winterson se snaží ilustrovat přespříliš kritickou společnosti a nespravedlnost k homosexuálům, kteří bývají společností vyloučeni.

Jelikož si celé feministické hnutí prošlo velkým vývojem, tak i styl autorů se během 19. a 20. století výrazně změnil. Autoři se začali zabývat novými tématy, a to především sexualitou, homosexualitou a důležitostí osobní svobody. Během 19. století začali spisovatelé více psát o tématech, která se zaměřovala na ženy a na jejich snahu získat si jistou svobodu a respekt ve společnosti. 20. století zaznamenalo velký vývoj ve společnosti, ženy v této době už měli možnost hlasovat a začaly být více uznávány ve společnosti. Témata, kterými se zabývali autoři ve 20. století, mezi ně patří odmítnutí náboženství, homosexuality a sexuality celkově, by byly zřejmě považována za tabu, vzhledem k tomu, že společnost ještě nebyla tolik otevřená a právě tady je patrný největší rozdíl.

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Annotation

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The aim of this thesis is to analyse the development of feminism in English literature of the 19th and 20th centuries. The thesis focuses on four books written by different authors, each from a different period of time, the first half of the 19th century, the second half of the 19th century, the first half of the 20th century and the second half of the 20th century. The authors analysed will be Charlotte Brontë, Thomas Hardy, Virginia Woolf and Jeanette Winterson. The main purpose of this thesis is to compare the development of relationships between men and women and the perception of sexuality over the course of the two centuries.

Anotace

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Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá vývojem feminismu v anglické literatuře 19. a 20. století. Práce se soustředí na čtyři knihy od různých autorů, od Charlotte Brontë, Thomase Hardyho, Virginie Woolf a Jeanette Winterson. Každá z analyzovaných knih byla napsána v jiné době, první román byl publikovaný v 1. pol. 19. století, druhý v 2. pol. 19. století, třetí v 1. pol. 20. století a poslední v 2. pol. 20. století. Cílem bakalářské práce bylo porovnat vývoj vztahu mezi muži a ženami a vnímání sexuality během 19. a 20. století.