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The Role of Women in
Jane Eyre and Wuthering Heights

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Poděkování

Ráda bych zde poděkovala za rady a vedení mého vedoucího práce Mgr. Petra Anteného, M.A., Ph.D.

Abstract

In this bachelor thesis, I focus on the literary works of Charlotte and Emily Brontë, especially on *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering* and their depiction of independent and equal women. In regards of their reflection of independent women, I provide a brief image of the Victorian era and their family background, because these have influenced their writings. The main focus of the thesis is on the analysis of the two novels and especial focus is given on the main female characters of both novels and their struggle to gain independence. Each of the characters provided different way of finding their true identity. Charlotte and Emily's ability to depict the deepest struggles of searching for one's true self under the obstacles given on an individual by society gave them deserved place among highly respected authors.

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1. Introduction

The ideal image of a Victorian woman is a submissive, obedient, kind and moderate human being. The Brontë sisters were not keen on this image of their own peers and they contributed to the change of this perception. Their novels deal with the question of inequality and women's strive for independence. Not only did their fictional characters contribute to the change, but also the sisters themselves provided a source of inspiration as they gained respect even as female authors, although at the time such a success was unheard of.

The focus of the thesis is on the 'Woman Question' of their writings with regard to their image of an independent woman. There are characteristics of the Victorian period in which Emily and Charlotte wrote their novels and also a brief look at their family background, because the society and the family they were raised in had a huge influence on their writings.

The first part of the thesis concentrates on the background of their writings. It considers not only their lives, but also the main themes of their novels and the aspects that influenced them.

The second part of the thesis concentrates on the analysis of the main female and male characters of Charlotte Brontë's novel *Jane Eyre* and Emily Brontë's novel *Wuthering Heights*. My main focus is on the main characters and their development throughout the novels in regard to the society and their surroundings and their own individual view on their life as a journey to gaining independence and equality with their male counterparts.

Finally, I provide a comparison of *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights* in regard to their successful portrayal of gender issues in the novels.

2. Historical background of the Victorian period

The writing career of the Brontë sisters' occurred during Queen Victoria's reign. It was an era of changes and it brought a lot of new possibilities for women, as until now there was gender inequality in the society in England. Women had very little possibilities of improvement especially when concerning financial security, opportunity to be involved in political events or even to attend school. Those were all spheres dominated only by men. And even though, as Anis writes in her article, the nineteenth century was a great time for English literature, thanks to the contribution of the printing press and development of education, if women wrote, they preferred to write under pseudonyms because their writing abilities were still considered less developed than those of men.¹ Yet many female authors contributed to the emancipation of women. To name a few, we could mention women such as Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Maria Edgeworth, Elizabeth Gaskell, George Elliot, Jane Austen and the Brontë sisters. "These are the middle-class of a period which is supposed to have seen a complete eclipse in female education," Colquhoun explains.²

Patriarchal society of Victorian England was still built on the belief that women had fixed roles in the family. They were supposed to be the ones responsible for taking care of the household, children's upbringing and being representatives of their husbands or fathers, while men were the ones who had rights on making decisions on women's behalf and could participate in social and political life of the 19th century. As

¹ ANIS, Rehnuna B., "The Woman Question in the novels by the Brontë Sisters." *IUC Studies*. Vol. – 3. (Jun., 2009), pp. 19-30. *Bangladesh Journals Online*. Web. 2 April 2018

<<http://www.banglajol.info/index.php/article/view/2629>>

² COLQUHOUN, Ethel, "Modern Feminism and Sex Antagonism." *The Lotus Magazine*. Vol. 9, No. 2 (Nov., 1917), pp. 63-71. *JSTOR*. Web. 2 April 2018 <<http://www.jstor.org>>

Çağlar states, even though in 1853 there was built a college for ladies, Queen's college, and women started to get professional jobs, it was not considered helpful for the society for women to have jobs, because they were getting bad at being housewives and taking care of the household, because they left the "domestic training" and they were believed not good enough to be involved in the public life because of their temperament. This Victorian ideal of femininity of women as a housekeeper was held even concerning female teachers, who got paid three quarters of male teachers' salary, because "women's paid labour was unnatural". Still women arose and began what could be considered the starting point of feminist efforts, they became governesses and, if needed, they improved their skills in areas they lacked knowledge in, such as art or foreign languages. Educational system of the Victorian era was based on discipline as a vital part of education and teachers, governesses, were very strict. On the other hand, thanks to the rising number of female teachers, the attitude toward female workers began to change and women were given more job opportunities. Women's perception of their own role in the society started to change thanks to the governesses being role models to the young girls they taught and shaped their own self-awareness and belief that even they could join the public sphere.³

The improvement in Victorian education was not the only change that improved the lives of women in England. The other aspect was, as mentioned above, English literature that turned into a "mirror of society", where novelists wrote about people around them and their lives in their society. Women became great novelists because in their novels they depicted a life around them and created pieces of work that gave a good look

³DEMİR, Çağlar, "The Role of Women in Education in Victorian England." *WJEIS*. Vol. – 5. Issue. – 2. Article – 08. (Jun., 2009), pp. 55-59. *Journal of Educational and Instructional Studies*. Web. 2 April 2018
<http://www.wjeis.org/FileUpload/ds217232/File/08.caglar_demir.pdf>

on the contemporary life of this era. The Brontë sisters also contributed, as Anis says, to the changes of the “Woman Question” in Victorian era through their works.⁴

Though women began to realize that being a housekeeper was not the only role in the society that was meant for them and separation between man’s and woman’s work was enforced by the middle class, they were not supported by Queen Victoria, who was the only woman in the political sphere of the society, in their suffrage in 1840, which she regarded as foolish. The wish for women to gain voting rights was not heard until 1918.⁵

But women’s effort was not left completely unheard. Married woman were given the Married Women’s Property Act in 1882, which allowed them to control their own property. The issue of education was also largely approached and women and men, for example Alfred Lord Tennyson, fought for women to be allowed to study at universities. As Anis sums up, “by the end of the reign of Queen Victoria, women could take degrees at twelve universities or colleges and could study without earning a degree at Oxford and Cambridge.”⁶

Charlotte and Emily Brontë contributed to the “Woman Question” highly in their books, when they addressed a lot of the issues they, other women, and Victorian society had to deal with. Charlotte Brontë reflected the possibility for a married woman to control her property by Mrs. Reed’s character in *Jane Eyre* who uses the estate of her late husband as she wishes to.

⁴ ANIS, Rehnuna B., “The Woman Question in the novels by the Brontë Sisters.” *IIUC Studies*. Vol. – 3. (Jun., 2009), pp. 19-30. *Bangladesh Journals Online*. Web. 2 April 2018
<<http://www.banglajol.info/index.php/article/view/2629>>

⁵ ANIS, Rehnuna B., “The Woman Question in the novels by the Brontë Sisters.” *IIUC Studies*. Vol. – 3. (Jun., 2009), pp. 19-30. *Bangladesh Journals Online*. Web. 2 April 2018
<<http://www.banglajol.info/index.php/article/view/2629>>

⁶ ANIS, Rehnuna B., “The Woman Question in the novels by the Brontë Sisters.” *IIUC Studies*. Vol. – 3. (Jun., 2009), pp. 19-30. *Bangladesh Journals Online*. Web. 2 April 2018
<<http://www.banglajol.info/index.php/article/view/2629>>

Emily Brontë also brought the light on the possibility for a woman to leave her abusive husband in her novel *Wuthering Heights*, when Isabella sees Heathcliff's true self and leaves him. Charlotte and Emily both addressed the issue of education, each of them in her own way. While Charlotte wrote about education and employment opportunities as tools for building female independence in her novel *Jane Eyre*, Emily makes her character Catherine face the problems a woman faces when she was not given an appropriate and needed education.⁷

Charlotte and Emily managed to reveal “those private passions and explore those realms of personal emotion which in another age, would have been more likely to seek expression in lyrical poetry.”⁸ They did not just reflect the society of their time but gave also an emotional side expressed in a very poetic and vivid way, which gave their works new and attractive side. Emily's brilliance can also be seen in describing the nature of the *Wuthering Heights* which strongly resemble Heathcliff's unrestrained character.⁹

To sum up, it was very difficult for women to live in the Victorian era, because they had to be the first ones to start a change for the whole society. Women fought for having diverse roles in society and female writers took charge, too. Charlotte and Emily were no different and they used their independent and individual portrayal of women in their novels to address the issues of inequality in the Victorian society.

⁷ FOREL, Boris, *The New Pelican Guide to English Literature*. 6. From *Dickens to Hardy*. Harmondsworth, Middlesex: Penguin Books Ltd., 1982.

⁸The Norton Anthology of English Literature, 1993; New York; W.W. Norton and Company Inc; Volume 2, p 1064

⁹ ANIS, Rehnuna B., “The Woman Question in the novels by the Brontë Sisters.” *IIUC Studies*. Vol. – 3. (Jun., 2009), pp. 19-30. *Bangladesh Journals Online*. Web. 2 April 2018
<<http://www.banglajol.info/index.php/article/view/2629>>

3. Brontë's sisters' life

In the following part of this thesis I provide a look on the background of the sisters' upbringing and their family background. Even though there were three female writers in the family, in my work I only concentrate on Charlotte and Emily, therefore I am not including Anna's work. As I follow Charlotte and Emily's footsteps all throughout their life I focus especially on the aspects of their life that influenced their writing careers, such as their education and their work as governesses, which proved to be fundamental to creating their masterpieces. Therefore I will be studying Charlotte's *Jane Eyre* and Emily's *Wuthering Heights*.

3.1. The family background

Charlotte (born in 1816) and Emily (born in 1818) were daughters of Patrick and Maria Brontë. They were born near Bradford, but due their father's new job as a curate, the whole family has moved to Haworth in 1820. Unfortunately, their mother, Maria, died in 1822 and Patrick was left to look after his children alone until Maria's sister, Elizabeth Branwell, moved in with Patrick.¹⁰ Even though Charlotte and Emily were from a family of six children, only four of them have gotten to an adult age: Charlotte, their only brother Branwell, Emily and Anne.¹¹ All of the family members have spent most of their lives in Haworth, even though in 1825 Charlotte and Emily joined their two older sisters, Maria and Elizabeth, at Cowan Bridge School. They have studied there until Maria and Elizabeth have both died of tuberculosis, when their father Patrick has taken them

¹⁰ ANIS, Rehnuna B., "The Woman Question in the novels by the Brontë Sisters." *IIUC Studies*. Vol. – 3. (Jun., 2009), pp. 19-30. *Bangladesh Journals Online*. Web. 3 April 2018
<<http://www.banglajol.info/index.php/article/view/2629>>

¹¹ RICHARDS, Denis, "Britain 1714 – 1851." Longmans, Green. 1961. p.381

from school and began to teach all of his children at home.¹² In 1842, both Charlotte and Emily studied abroad at the Pensionnat Héger in Brussels. Charlotte even went back to Brussels to teach there for a year, before returning back to England, where she worked as a governess just like Emily.¹³

The three sisters, Charlotte, Emily and Anne, started their writing careers with a collection of poems, which was published in 1846 under their pseudonyms, Currer, Ellis and Acton Bell. Though they have used pseudonyms to hide female authorship, they have shown that they are very determined by publishing the collection on their own expenses.¹⁴

They have shown the lengths of their determination by continuing in their writing careers even though their collection of poems was not successful and their brother Branwell returned home after he has lost his job and he started drinking. In 1847 all three of them managed to get their novels published. It was *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte, which was the most successful of the novels at the time, *Wuthering Heights* by Emily and Anne's *Agnes Gray*. They have not enjoyed the success of the publications for long, because in the following year Branwell died after he has severely damaged his health by drinking and taking drugs. Emily has not live much longer. She has died of consumption in December of 1848. Anne was the next to die of consumption in 1849. Charlotte lived on and continued on writing two more novels, *Shirley* and *Villette*. She got married in 1854, she was married until her death a year later.¹⁵

¹² ANIS, Rehnuna B., "The Woman Question in the novels by the Brontë Sisters." *IUC Studies*. Vol. – 3. (Jun., 2009), pp. 19-30. *Bangladesh Journals Online*. Web. 3 April 2018

<<http://www.banglajol.info/index.php/article/view/2629>>

¹³ HORSMAN, Alan. "*The Victorian Novel*." Clarendon Press, Oxford. 1990. p.159.

¹⁴ RICHARDS, Denis. "Britain 1714 – 1851." Longmans, Green. 1961. p.381

¹⁵ RICHARDS, Denis. "Britain 1714 – 1851." Longmans, Green. 1961. p.388

3.2. The influences in their literary works

This part of my thesis focuses on several main aspects of Charlotte and Emily's life that have influenced their writings. I concentrate on the main ones that are obviously important to their writings, especially the novels *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights*. Among these belonged the nature of Haworth, where they spend most of their lives. Then it was also their education and their job as governesses. There might have been some which were important for both of them, but also some that were more important to writings of either Charlotte or Emily.

3.3. The influences in Emily's *Wuthering Heights*

Even though Charlotte outlived her sisters, her novel *Jane Eyre* was written and published in an early stage of her life at a time when she was still around her sisters, who have influenced her. Therefore I only concentrate on the influences from her childhood.

3.3.1. The elder sister

Charlotte had to adopt a very different role in her family at a very young age. After her mother died, she was no longer just the elder sister but also "a substitute for a dead mother, (which made) her contacts with the outside world more continuous and varied than those of her sisters. Her excursions in deception into that world (...) formed in recollection the substance of all that is most interesting in her writings."¹⁶

The role of a mother was very difficult for her as Gurea mentions that she "did her best to adopt Maria's motherly attitude toward younger siblings, but she was by nature less suited to the role."¹⁷

¹⁶ FORD, Boris. "The New Pelican Guide to English Literature.6. From Dickens to Hardy." Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England. Penguin Books. 1982. p.256

¹⁷ Goreau, "Introduction." Brontë, *Agnes Grey*, p. 7-48.

3.3.2. Education

At first she was educated at home by Aunt Branwell, but then she later attended The Clergy Daughter's School at Cowan Bridge. As Gaskell reveals in her *The Life of Charlotte Brontë* (1857), The Lowood school is based on Charlotte's experience of the harsh conditions at Cowan bridge. Just like Jane in her novel *Jane Eyre*, Charlotte faced oppression at Cowan Bridge and she suffered a tragic loss of her two sisters, who have died on account of the conditions at the school.

In Bentley's *The Brontës and their world* (1969) we learn that the sisters were given an opportunity to study at Roe Head, because their godparents offered to pay for the fees. This experience brought homesickness to Charlotte's sisters, but Charlotte herself seemed to enjoy this opportunity. As Bentley says: "This cultured milieu must have suited Charlotte well, once she had grown used to it, in spite of her home/sickness, and it softened a character formed by the rigorous of Haworth."¹⁸ She was later given the offer to teach at Roe Head, but was very disappointed in this new role. She then left Roe head and became a governess.

3.4. The influences in Emily's *Wuthering Heights*

Emily's writing can be described as "an astonishing mixture of romantic commonplace and personal inspiration, primitive feeling and spiritual exaltation, which corresponds to potentialities of human nature otherwise unduly concealed during this period."¹⁹ It is my aim to search for aspects from Emily's life that influenced Emily into writing *Wuthering Heights* the way she did. Though Emily and Charlotte had gone through life together, Emily's different and individual personality, some events of her life had more profound effect on her writings.

¹⁸ BENTLEY, Phillis *The Brontës and their world*. 1969. p. 75.

¹⁹ FORD, Boris. "The New Pelican Guide to English Literature.6. From Dickens to Hardy." Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England. Penguin Books. 1982. p.256

3.4.1. Nature

One of the greatest influences we can see in *Wuthering Heights* is Emily's love for Haworth and the scenery of Yorkshire. "The picturesque side of their books was due to their passionate love of the scenery amidst which they spent their early years."²⁰ Emily's approach to seeing nature is different to the Charlotte's view. The difference is in Emily's ability to provide metaphorical connection between the scenery in *Wuthering Heights* and her characters. It is best seen in Mr. Lockwood's description of the Wuthering Heights, which he sees "through series of exact, vivid touches."²¹ The whole nature of Wuthering Heights is to correspond with Heathcliff's wild and unrestrained character, "we might even call it its human incarnation. Severe, gloomy, and brutal in aspect and atmosphere, (...), it is an appropriate background for the life of bare and primitive passion to which its owner is dedicated."²² In contraction, the Thrushcross Grange, where the Lintons live, is seen as more human, which corresponds with the Lintons amiability and kindness.

Emily's amazing "capacity to effect an intimate fusion between the thing seen, or the felt sensation, and its imaginative interpretation, to write the visible and tangible with the intensity proper to poetry, has enabled her to raise a melodramatic story to the level of a profoundly personal creation."²³

3.4.2. Conflict

The main climax of the story of *Wuthering Heights* is its conflict between the characters and "Heathcliff's revenge upon

²⁰ ADAMS, W.H. Davenport. "*The Celebrated Englishwomen of the Victorian Era.*" (1884). London. F.V. White and co. p.86.

²¹ FORD, Boris. "The New Pelican Guide to English Literature.6. From Dickens to Hardy." Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England. Penguin Books. 1982. p.262

²²FORD, Boris. "The New Pelican Guide to English Literature.6. From Dickens to Hardy." Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England. Penguin Books. 1982. p.266.

²³ FORD, Boris. "The New Pelican Guide to English Literature.6. From Dickens to Hardy." Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England. Penguin Books. 1982. p.262.

those who have deprived him of his proper satisfaction in life.”²⁴ As Horsman puts it, this conflict between the characters and revenge might be influenced by *Paradise lost* and eastern tales. Heathcliff is not always met with understanding for his actions, but is usually seen as the culprit of the destruction on others.

His actions might have been destructive and have brought a lot of challenges to the people around them. He even seems numb towards what he has done to them as if he did not care at all about his impact, as long as he gets his revenge. He is seen as cruel and often readers ignore what has happened to him and how he got treated when he was a child. It is impressive how easy it is to see flaws in Heathcliff, because you already expect them from his kind of character, but you not usually see them in others as they are hidden behind good manners.

3.4.3. Death

Just like Charlotte before her, Emily was strongly influenced by her losses in life. She has not only lost her mother, but also two of her sisters still while in school. These events had huge impact on Emily on religious level “not merely in the sense of the rather indefinite ‘mysticism’.”²⁵ Her strive for religious experience, which she sees as an experience of an individual, is also seen at the moments of Catherine’s death when she contemplates about heaven and her dreams “that the heaven of angels was not her home.”²⁶ Emily’s individual view of religion is best described in Heathcliff’s statement: “I have nearly attained *my* heaven; and that of others is altogether unvalued, and uncovered by me.”²⁷

²⁴ FORD, Boris. “The New Pelican Guide to English Literature.6. From Dickens to Hardy.” Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England. Penguin Books. 1982. p.260.

²⁵ FORD, Boris. “The New Pelican Guide to English Literature.6. From Dickens to Hardy.” Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England. Penguin Books. 1982. p.264.

²⁶ HORSMAN, Alan. “*The Victorian Novel*.” Clarendon Press, Oxford. 1990. p.168.

²⁷ BRONTË, Emily. *Wuthering Heights*. Harper Press paperback edition. London: Harper Press, 2010. p.352.

3.5. Summary

In this chapter I provided the look at the upbringing of Charlotte and Emily and their family. Their life was highly influenced by their childhood and all the events. They have lost their mother and had to deal with their brother who has not been really successful and has turned to alcohol for comfort. Therefore all the care around the family was left to the sisters.

Their education had also huge impact on them. Charlotte was very enthusiastic about her education even to the extent when she started teaching. The teaching was not really satisfying for her and she left after a year and became a governess. Emily on the other hand, though she enjoyed studying, she suffered of homesickness and left school early.

Though they are sisters, they had been influenced differently and every event of their life has various impact on their writings. Charlotte's main influences were her own education and work as a governess have been great inspiration for her character *Jane Eyre*. Emily's inspiring and vivid description of the nature of Wuthering Heights and its owner have been a great play with her love for nature of Yorkshire and understanding of people. It is because of these that the novels are so vividly enjoyed even in later years.

4. Jane Eyre

In this part of my theses I have a look on one of the most known novels written by Charlotte Brontë called *Jane Eyre*. My main focus is on the main character of Jane Eyre, her childhood and character development all throughout the novel.

The most influential aspects of this book are in Jane's strive for independence and equality in otherwise rather patriarchal society. Therefore in this chapter we follow her struggle with finding her own identity and trying to find her place in the society.

4.1. Childhood

Jane lives with her aunt Mrs. Reed and her cousins at Gateshead. She faces many difficulties in their family, because though she was a member of the family, she was not really accepted by Mrs. Reed and her children. Mrs. Reed is presumably the head of the family as her husband has died, but her son John is the one who has actual control over the family, because he is very manipulative, even towards his mother and sisters.²⁸ He expresses his superiority by demanding to be called 'Master Reed' by Jane. Her immediate reaction to John's violent and dominant behavior is patience which she maintains for a while. But when John does not stop with his insults and even attacks her physically, she finally stands up for herself. As a result she calls him "Wicked and cruel boy, murderer, slave-driver, Roman emperor."²⁹

After she is unrightfully locked up in the red room, because she has hurt John, Jane's sense of inequality and feeling that she does not really have a place in Reeds family starts gaining its power. She realises that she is not accepted by

²⁸PELL, Nancy. "Resistance, Rebellion, and Marriage: The Economics of Jane Eyre." *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, Vol. 31. No.4. pp. 397-420. (Mar., 1977) University of California Press. *JSTOR*. Web. 11 April 2018.
<<http://www.jstor.org>>

²⁹BRONTE, Charlotte. *Jane Eyre*. 1847. Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions Limited. 1992. p.6

anyone in the family, not even the servants, and is only met with dislike.³⁰ She shows a huge amount of bravery and realization of her feelings is very striking in her conversation with Mrs. Reed: “What would Uncle Reed say to you, if he were alive? (...) My Uncle Reed is in heaven, and can see all you do and think; and so can papa and mama: they know how you shut me up all day long, and how wish me dead.”³¹ This reaction might be surprising coming from a ten year old child, but it shows appropriate reaction of a self-conscious person who has been given limited freedom and is being controlled. By this statement she shows her dissatisfaction and confusion with the oppression she was given by her relatives.³² Her extraordinary ability to stand up for herself and face her tormentors is very surprising for such a young child; we often don’t find such strength among adults, and is strongly developed in early years of her life. She continues on her self-defence and confronts Mrs. Reed: “*Speak* I must: I had been trodden on severely, and *must* turn: but how? What strength had I dart retaliation at my antagonist? I gathered my energies and launched them in this blunt sentence – ‘I am not deceitful: if I were, I should say I loved *you*; but I declare I do not love you: I dislike you the worst of anybody in the world except John Reed; and this book about the liar, you may give to your girl, Georgiana, for it is she who tells lies, and not I.’”³³

4.2. Lowood

During her stay at Lowood she encountered another oppressive patriarchal authority. This time it was Mr. Brocklehurst. Under his orders, the girls at Lowood lost a lot of

³⁰PELL, Nancy. “Resistance, Rebellion, and Marriage: The Economics of Jane Eyre.” *Nineteenth-Century Fiction*, Vol. 31. No.4. pp. 397-420. (Mar., 1977) University of California Press. *JSTOR*. Web. 11 April 2018.

<<http://www.jstor.org>>

³¹BRONTE, Charlotte. *Jane Eyre*. 1847.Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions Limited. 1992. p.21

³² GILBERT and GUBAR, “A Dialogue of Self and Soul: Plain Jane's Progress.” *The Madwoman in the Attic*. pp. 336-372.

³³BRONTE, Charlotte. *Jane Eyre*. 1847.Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions Limited. 1992. p.29

their feminine side and individuality, because he made them wear simple dress, cut their hair, give them very little amount of food which also led to starvation and weight loss that made their body lose their feminine like figures. In this feminine suppressed environment, she meets two different female figures – Miss Temple and Helen Burns. According to Gilbert and Gubar, in Jane's eyes they represent 'different but equally impossible ideal to Jane.'³⁴ She is highly amazed by Miss Temple's character of which she is aware that she would never manage to control her manners and rage like Miss Temple does in a very much like "ladylike silence."³⁵

Helen Burns has different impact on Jane than Miss Temple. Though Helen is very easy to accept the unjust treatment she receives. She is more striking for her spiritual notion on freedom and independence, which attracts Jane.³⁶ While Helen has great control over her emotions, Jane is struggling with this kind of strength and admits: "I was no Helen Burns."³⁷ Even when Helen finds peace over her dying, she says: "By dying young, I shall escape great sufferings."³⁸ Gilbert and Gubar assume that both Helen and Mrs. Temple play a kind of mother figure in Jane's life. They all are united by their sense of liberty, though each of them has different approach to it. Jane way of dealing with world around her is through "fiery rebellion, not Miss Temple's way of ladylike repression, not Helen Burn's way of saintly renunciation."³⁹

³⁴ GILBERT and GUBAR, "A Dialogue of Self and Soul: Plain Jane's Progress." *The Madwoman in the Attic*. pp. 336-372.

³⁵ GILBERT and GUBAR, "A Dialogue of Self and Soul: Plain Jane's Progress." *The Madwoman in the Attic*. pp. 336-372.

³⁶ LAMONACA, Maria, "Jane's Crown of Thorns: Feminism and Christianity in Jane Eyre." *Studies in the Novel*. Vol. 34, Iss., (Fall 2002), pg. 245; 19pgs. Denton. *Literature Resource Center*. Web. 11 April 2018 <<http://go.galegroup.com>>

³⁷ BRONTE, Charlotte. *Jane Eyre*. 1847. Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions Limited. 1992. p.55.

³⁸ BRONTE, Charlotte. *Jane Eyre*. 1847. Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions Limited. 1992. p.70.

³⁹ GILBERT and GUBAR, "A Dialogue of Self and Soul: Plain Jane's Progress." *The Madwoman in the Attic*. pp. 336-372.

The impact Helen and Mrs. Temple had on Jane is best described in her attitude towards the end of her Lowood life. She is still very keen on liberty and independence, which she knows she will not gain yet, but has learned the importance of compromise in one's life, when she leaves Lowood and has only one wish for change to "Grant me at least new servitude!"⁴⁰

4.3. Jane as Governess

Jane gained new social position when she accepted on a role as a governess in the Rochester family. As Gilbert and Gubar say, she might have start earning money as a working woman; on the other hand she was put into another family where she did not have an equal position in the family because she was a governess, therefore not a member of the family, but she also was not regarded as a servant.⁴¹ Stone states that: "Governesses contrasted and complicated middle-class notions of femininity."⁴² The governesses had feminine and masculine side to their work, as taking care after children was viewed as a women's job but masculine aspect of the work could be seen in working for living and having power in the society. Governesses' were given the power in the middle-class society by the fact that they were basically raising the new generation.⁴³

4.4. The role of marriage and independence

All throughout the novel, Jane shows great sense of integrity and independence. She maintains her integrity despite the burst of feelings towards the Thornfield master, Mr. Rochester. No matter how much they loved each other, the revelation of Mr. Rochester's secret crashed Jane's hope for genuine love and decent marriage. Even though, Mr. Rochester

⁴⁰ GILBERT and GUBAR, "A Dialogue of Self and Soul: Plain Jane's Progress." *The Madwoman in the Attic*. pp. 336-372.

⁴¹ GILBERT and GUBAR, "A Dialogue of Self and Soul: Plain Jane's Progress." *The Madwoman in the Attic*. pp. 336-372.

⁴² STONE, Laurie "Why Charlotte Dissed Emily." *Literary Review*. Vol. 49, Iss. 3. (Spring 2006) pp. 63-70.

⁴³ STONE, Laurie, "Why Charlotte Dissed Emily." *Literary Review*. Vol. 49, Iss. 3. (Spring 2006) pp. 63-70.

hurt her deeply, she remains true to her own self and fights for herself.

“Do you think because I am poor, obscure, plain, and little, I am soulless and heartless? You think wrong! – I have as much soul as you, - and full as much heart! And if God had gifted me with some beauty and much wealth, I should have made it as hard for you to leave me, as it is now for me to leave you. I am not talking to you now through the medium of custom, conventionalities, nor even of mortal flesh; - it is my spirit that addresses your spirit; just as if both had passed through the grave, and we stood at God’s feet, equal, - as we are!”⁴⁴

Jane has very well-formed opinion on marriage. As Pell states “Charlotte Brontë presents marriage in the context of equality between the partners.”⁴⁵ Jane’s idea of marriage is based on equality and the possibility of a happy and equal marriage with Mr. Rochester is very doubtful. Jane herself recognises the problem while she listens to the conversation between Mr. Rochester and his guests when they were discussing the role of courtship which “promises to end in the same catastrophe – marriage.”⁴⁶ Most of Jane’s actions are based on her fear of losing her integrity and all her hopes for gaining real independence. It is clear that she is not ready and fully aware of her own self and strength, therefore luckily there were some obstacles, due to Mr. Rochester’s secret, that made it impossible for them to get married at the time. Gilbert and Gubar prove this opinion by saying that there is sort of ‘impediment’ in Jane’s doubts and Mr. Rochester unwillingness

⁴⁴BRONTE, Charlotte. *Jane Eyre*. 1847.Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions Limited. 1992. p.223.

⁴⁵PELL, Nancy. “Resistance, Rebellion, and Marriage: The Economics of Jane Eyre.” *Nineteenth-Century fiction*. Vol. 31. No.4. pp.394-420. (Mar.,1977). University of California Press. *JSTOR*. Web. 12 April 2018. <<http://www.jstor.org>>

⁴⁶BRONTE, Charlotte. *Jane Eyre*. 1847.Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions Limited. 1992. p.174.

to tell Jane the truth.⁴⁷ Jane's fear of becoming inferior to her husband makes her realise few things about him, and that: "For a little while you will perhaps be as you are now, - a very little while; and then you will turn cool; and then you will be capricious; and then you will be stern, and I shall have much ado to please you: but when you get well used to me, you will perhaps like me again, - *like* me, I say, not *love* me. I suppose your live will effervesce in six months, or less."⁴⁸ Jane here points out that one of her fears is that in time she will lose Mr. Rochester's love and she starts to realise how her idea of real marriage is unrealistic and that there is an inequality between the two of them, which Mr. Rochester has chosen to ignore.

The inequality between Jane and Mr. Rochester is demonstrated on several levels. One of them, as Gilbert and Gubar state, is the social inequality which considers the marriage of a master and a governess as inappropriate.⁴⁹ Another difference, according to Stone, is their age difference about which Stone says: "They appear to reinforce the subservient role of the female as child, as student, as victim, and the dominant role of the male as father, as teacher and as aggressor."⁵⁰ As they get engaged, Mr. Rochester starts to treat Jane as an inferior doll, to which Jane responds with: "I shall not be your Jane Eyre any longer, but an ape in a harlequin's jacket- a jay in borrowed plumes."⁵¹ There is also inequality in their sexual experiences as we can see on Adèle Varens, who is Mr. Rochester's daughter, and because Jane does not have this kind of experience, Gilbert

⁴⁷ GILBERT and GUBAR, "A Dialogue of Self and Soul: Plain Jane's Progress." *The Madwoman in the Attic*. pp. 336-372.

⁴⁸ BRONTE, Charlotte. *Jane Eyre*. 1847. Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions Limited. 1992. p.229.

⁴⁹ GILBERT and GUBAR, "A Dialogue of Self and Soul: Plain Jane's Progress." *The Madwoman in the Attic*. pp. 336-372.

⁵⁰ STONE, Laurie, "Why Charlotte Dissed Emily." *Literary Review*. Vol. 49, Iss. 3. (Spring 2006) pp. 63-70.

⁵¹ BRONTE, Charlotte. *Jane Eyre*. 1847. Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions Limited. 1992. p.228.

and Gubar continue on seeing Mr. Rochester as superior to Jane.⁵²

After the real obstacle of Mr. Rochester's other wife, Bertha Mason, Jane decides to leave Mr. Rochester, despite her true feelings for Mr. Rochester and she declines his offer to be his mistress. By leaving she shows that she does not accept such bond and that she remained true to her beliefs. "Still indomitable was the reply – *I care for myself.*"⁵³ As Gilbert and Gubar argue, Jane's decision to leave is important for both, Jane and Mr. Rochester, because they both need time to discover what they truly expect from each other and that to get to understand each other they have to get rid of their past which burdens them. According to Gilbert and Gubar, Bertha plays a huge role in the way they can get rid of their past, through Bertha destroying Thornfield, which can be seen as 'the symbol of Rochester's mastery and Jane's servitude'.⁵⁴

After her departure, she finds shelter at the Moor House, where she discovers her true identity through finding out that they were her relatives. She finds a family she did not know she had and also financial independence, because she inherited money from her uncle. Thanks to the inherited money she gains independence from patriarchal dominion, but according to Gilbert and Gubar, this independence is not the only thing she needs to learn. She is once again faced with patriarchal authority in St. John. His proposal to her is different to the one of Mr. Rochester as it is based on spiritual sacrifice more than passion. "Like Salome... Jane must symbolically, if not literally, behead the abstract principles of this man before she can finally achieve

⁵² GILBERT and GUBAR, "A Dialogue of Self and Soul: Plain Jane's Progress." *The Madwoman in the Attic*. pp. 336-372.

⁵³ BRONTE, Charlotte. *Jane Eyre*. 1847. Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions Limited. 1992. p.280.

⁵⁴ GILBERT and GUBAR, "A Dialogue of Self and Soul: Plain Jane's Progress." *The Madwoman in the Attic*. pp. 336-372.

her true independence.”⁵⁵ Jane realizes that if she married St. John, his coldness would oppress her passionate soul and would be a life threat for Jane as she mentions in: “If I were to marry you, you would kill me. You are killing me now.”⁵⁶

Her newly gained independence leads her to Femdean and finds out what had happened to Mr. Rochester. She is now an independent woman not only thanks to her uncle’s money, but also through Mr. Rochester’s loss of superiority. According to Gilbert and Gubar, Jane and Mr. Rochester are finally free from their past and now they can have a ‘marriage of equality’.⁵⁷ And even though Mr. Rochester was severely injured in the fire and is afraid that she would sacrifice herself in order to help him, which would be something she has not done for the domineering Mr. Rochester, not even St. John, she clarifies her persuasion: “Sacrifice! What do I sacrifice? Famine for food, expectation for content. To be privileged to put my arms round what I value – to press my lips to what I love – to repose on what I trust: is that to make a sacrifice? If so, then certainly I delight in sacrifice.”⁵⁸

Consequently all her battles with patriarchal figures in Jane’s life have lead her to realization of her true self, her independence, which she gained also through heritage, but moreover she gained the freedom to decide on her actions according to her own will.

4.5. Male characters

All throughout the novel we encounter various male characters, but all of them have the same patriarchal superior point of influence on Jane’s life. They make her face oppression and her inferiority to them.

⁵⁵ GILBERT and GUBAR, “A Dialogue of Self and Soul: Plain Jane’s Progress.” *The Madwoman in the Attic*. pp. 336-372.

⁵⁶ BRONTE, Charlotte. *Jane Eyre*. 1847. Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions Limited. 1992. p.365.

⁵⁷ Gilbert and Gubar, “A Dialogue of Self and Soul: Plain Jane’s Progress.” *The Madwoman in the Attic*. pp. 336-372.

⁵⁸ BRONTE, Charlotte. *Jane Eyre*. 1847. Hertfordshire: Wordsworth Editions Limited. 1992. p.394.

As Gilbert and Gubar point out, Mr. Brocklehurst and St. John can be representatives of the “personification of the Victorian superego.”⁵⁹ Mr. Rochester, at first seen as a patriarchal superior master, goes through his own character development. He gains his power and sense of superior figure through his social status and his inability to admit his own mistakes, even after his secret has been revealed. He struggles with his own guilt for what he has done to Jane and his image as a master which he is not willing to give up on, Pell says that through this struggle we can see “the contradiction between his inward suffering and outward dominance which makes his position essentially false.”⁶⁰

Other aspects that bring changes to Mr. Rochester’s life are his injuries he got in the fire. They might have two different representations. One of them would be that they can be seen as a punishment for his previous actions. The other suggests that his injuries make him less powerful and more vulnerable, which brings more equality to his relationship with Jane. Becoming blind might be seen as a form of punishment as Stone puts it: “Although Rochester’s sight is eventually restored, Jane marries him – blindness being the plain woman’s revenge on the beauty-addicted man.”⁶¹

4.6. Summary

To sum up, one of the greatest talents Charlotte has provide in her novel, according to Gilbert and Gubar, was that she “was able consciously to define the full meaning of achieved freedom.”⁶²

⁵⁹ GILBERT and GUBAR, “A Dialogue of Self and Soul: Plain Jane's Progress.” *The Madwoman in the Attic*. pp. 336-372.

⁶⁰ PELL, Nancy. “Resistance, Rebellion, and Marriage: The Economics of Jane Eyre.” *Nineteenth-Century fiction*. Vol. 31. No.4. pp.394-420. (Mar.,1977). University of California Press. *JSTOR*. Web. 12 April 2018. <<http://www.jstor.org>>

⁶¹ STONE, Laurie “Why Charlotte Dissed Emily.” *Literary Review*. Vol. 49, Iss. 3. (Spring 2006) pp. 63-70.

⁶² GILBERT and GUBAR, “A Dialogue of Self and Soul: Plain Jane's Progress.” *The Madwoman in the Attic*. pp. 336-372.

All throughout her life, Jane searches for independence in various ways, according to Pell, she does not just settle down for the kind of independence she perceived from people around her. Though she is very admiring of Helen Burns kind of patience, Jane does not accept Helen spiritual independence as her own. She rather forms her own idea of independence.

The moment she comes back to Mr. Rochester, Jane is no longer obedient doll-like lady. She is now independent woman, who decides to take care of her injured and blind man, not because she believes that that is her duty, but because she truly loves him. Thus, she really managed to gain her independence for which she so much strived for.

5. Wuthering Heights

This following chapter now focuses on the novel *Wuthering Heights* by Emily Brontë. As this thesis is about the role of women in these novels, I concentrate mainly on the character of Catherine Earnshaw and her relation to men in the novel.

Before I get to my interpretation of Catherine's character, I will provide a look on the structure the novel is written in, because it is also very interesting and special for the novel.

5.1. Structure of the novel

The novel *Wuthering Heights* is very complicated in regards of its structure. It seems to be built on a duality. The story takes place at two places, *Wuthering Heights* and *Thrushcross Grange*, there are two different narrators, Mr. Lockwood and Nelly. The characters also show duality between the times when they were young and when we meet them for second time. This provides the possibility reveal some information to the reader which later turns out to be completely different. Milles defines this dualism of Emily's novel as followed: "The time shifts, multiplications of narrators, narrators within narrators, double plot... are used to invite the reader step by step by way of a gradual 'penetration' of Brontë's strange vision of life."⁶³

As the novel has been divided into two parts when Heathcliff returns back to the *Wuthering Heights*, there has been a lot of criticism that the second part of the book is just retelling the same story over again. Pywett even adds that: "Most notably recent feminist critics have argued that the novel does not simply repeat the same story. But that it revises it, rewriting the Gothic first generation plot as a Domestic novel."⁶⁴

⁶³MILLER, J. Hillis. "*Wuthering Heights: Repetition and the 'Uncanny'*". Brontë, *Wuthering Heights*. pp.378-393.

⁶⁴PYKETT, Lynn. "Gender and Genre in *Wuthering Heights*" *Contemporary Critical Essays*. pp. 86-99

5.2. Theme and genre

To closely define the theme and genre of *Wuthering Heights* is an uneasy target. The novel is usually simply viewed as a romantic story which is the only what the public expected to come from female author. But *Wuthering Heights* is a way more complicated novel than just a love story. It deals with the question of gender issue, marriage and differences in femininity and masculinity. N.M. Jacobs focuses on the question of gender issue in the *Wuthering Heights* and mentions that in Emily's work there is some kind of 'sameness' between men and women and that "to them (Emily and Anne), gender is a ragged and somewhat ridiculous masquerade concealing the essential sameness of men and women."⁶⁵ Jacobs does not really agree with this opinion and suggests that female characters at that time were usually used to express emotions that were not considered appropriate for a man's behaviour but were accept in women. Emily's male characters in fact rather contradict with this opinion.

Her characters are more complex than that simplistic view. Her female characters are not only feminine like and they have characteristics of a man. There is not really any huge difference in behaviour of her characters concerning only gender point of view. Her characters have to face violence, crudity and brutality equally regardless if it is a male or female character. This type of a violent writing is even more shocking when coming from a woman especially in this time period as Jacobs states: "Dealing with 'coarse' subject matters, was seen by the Victorians as a masculine activity, unnatural to woman."⁶⁶ To put it differently, the society had difficult times to accept a female writer, but accepting a female writer who was writing about violence and coarseness was something unheard off.

⁶⁵JACOBS, N.M. "Gender and Layered Narrative in *Wuthering Heights*." *Conetemporary Critical Essays*. pp. 74-85.

⁶⁶JACOBS, N.M. "Gender and Layered Narrative in *Wuthering Heights*." *Conetemporary Critical Essays*. pp. 74-85.

Talking about the genre of *Wuthering Heights* it is usually described as ‘Female Gothic’ genre, which is different to the Gothic genre of the eighteenth and nineteenth century. The difference is seen in the spot the women have in the novel as, according to Pykett, they might be seen as a way to escape reality, which he sees especially in “representation and investigation of women’s fears about the private domestic space which is at once refuge and prison.”⁶⁷ This kind of imprisonment that Pykett is talking about might be seen in Catherine’s change of manners after she spent some time at Linton’s. In a way, when she started acting as a lady, her very liberal and wild spirit got trapped.

5.3. Gender concern

Catherine is a character with the greatest development of a persona. She starts by being a wild Catherine Earnshaw whose whole universe circles around Heathcliff. She goes to changing the central spot from Heathcliff to Linton whom she marries. Catherine then finds her way back to being herself as she was when she was with Heathcliff through her daughter. This short look on Catherine’s life suggests that the novel might actually be about Catherine’s evolution.

5.3.1. Catherine

The true self of the little Cathrine reflects itself early on in the novel when after the old master of the *Wuthering Heights* asks them what they want them to bring from town. Hindley, Catherine’s brother, requested a fiddle, which does not really reflect a powerful household master-to-be. Catherine on the other hand asked for a whip which can be seen as “a powerless younger daughter’s yearning for power.”⁶⁸ As Gilbert later explains it, after she finds her friend in crime, Heathcliff, she

⁶⁷ PYKETT, Lynn. “Gender and Genre in *Wuthering Heights*” *Contemporary Critical Essays*. pp. 86-99 .

⁶⁸ GILBERT and GUBAR, “Looking Oppositely: Emily Brontë’s Bible of Hell.” *The Madwoman in the Attic*. pp. 248-308.

gained the power of her whip in a form of Heathcliff's character. With Heathcliff on her side they outnumbered Hindley and could fight his ascendancy. Together they also faced Joseph, who was responsible for their Bible studies. Cathrine soon started to resemble Heathcliff. She was wild, stubborn, unyielding and whenever she was around him she felt secure and strong. She needed him in her life in the extent that "she was much too fond of Heathcliff. The greatest punishment we could invent for her was to keep her separate from him."⁶⁹

She was never typical Victorian little girl, who were supposed to be obedient and calm. She much more resemblances the boys' characteristics of longing for power. Though these seems to be stronger in her behaviour after she is bond with Heathcliff, she in fact has always had these hidden inside her soul and Heathcliff only helped her to find her identity and true nature of her spirit. It was at this time when she was truly independent and powerful, when she was happy with being free to be herself.

She got injured at her last exciting adventure with Heathcliff. She was bitten by Linton's dog and she has spent her healing process at the Thrushcross Grange, where she began her transformation to a young, well-behaved Victorian lady. During her stay at the Thrushcross Grange, she got treated as "a 'young lady' cossets a wounded (but still healthy) girl as if she were truly and invalid."⁷⁰ Her transformation begins at their house and it marks her fall and her detachment from her true self as she was no longer guided by Heathcliff. She has not changed completely, though, because despite her changes she is still keen on keeping her bond with Heathcliff. Nelly makes a remark on how surprising the change was: "Instead of a wild, hatless, little savage jumping into the house and rushing to squeeze all

⁶⁹BRONTË, Emily. "*Wuthering Heights*." Harper Press. London. 2010. p.43

⁷⁰GILBERT and GUBAR, "Looking Oppositely: Emily Brontë's Bible of Hell." *The Madwoman in the Attic*. pp. 248-308.

breathless, there alighted from a handsome black pony a very dignified person with brown ringlets falling from the cover of a feathered beaver, and a long cloth habit which she was obliged to hold up with both hands that she might sail in.”⁷¹ At this point she still was not fully changed beyond the possibility to find way back to her true self. She completely lost this possibility when she married Edgar Linton.

Her admiration of Edgar goes beyond her true feelings and starts to resemble the brain-washing of the era when young ladies were taught that their true goal of life was to get married and be devoted to their husbands. Catherine herself talks about her obsessive love to Edgar in her conversation with Nelly, when she admits that she loves “the ground under his feet and the air over his head and everything he touches and every word he says – I love all his looks and his actions and him entirely, and altogether.”⁷² This opinion reflects her naive point of look on love, when it is obvious that she has not really thought about her perception of love and marriage as if she is not considering the future. During her conversation with Nelly she herself realises that she is not really in love with Edgar but she is truly in love with Heathcliff, because later she states that: “I love him because he (Heathcliff) is more myself than I am.”⁷³ And later in the conversation she adds: “I *am* Heathcliff.”⁷⁴ She admits that her intention is to help Heathcliff get away from Hindley’s cruel behaviour, even if it meant that she would lose her own independence.

Catherine marriage marks her definite imprisonment of soul and body. Her marriage weakens her personality as she lives in calm and uneventful Thrushcross Grange household which is exact opposite to the storm inside her soul. Jacobs explains that “her years as Mrs. Linton before Heathcliff’s return pass in a

⁷¹BRONTË, Emily. “*Wuthering Heights*.” Harper Press. London. 2010. p.55.

⁷²BRONTË, Emily. “*Wuthering Heights*.” Harper Press. London. 2010. p.83.

⁷³BRONTË, Emily. “*Wuthering Heights*.” Harper Press. London. 2010. p.85.

⁷⁴BRONTË, Emily. “*Wuthering Heights*.” Harper Press. London. 2010. p.87

sort of somnolence, a most un-Cathy like acquiescence and calm, as she acts out the ideal of a flower-like woman without desires and passions.”⁷⁵ After Heathcliff’s return she realizes what she has given upon by marrying Edgar. She relives the storm of emotions in a long lost unfeminine-like little girl, who was full of passion and this realization causes her mental and physical decline. Pyckett describes the situation as followed: “Gothic plot involves her imprisonment in increasingly confined spaces: the house, her room, and finally ‘ (Brontë, E., 2010, p.172), her body, from which she longs to escape as she does from the womanhood itself.”⁷⁶ She then experiences several mad scenes and starvation which are her way out of her misery of marriage and womanhood itself, because to her it means just powerlessness and thorough obedience. She longs for the little girl she once used to be as she tells it to Nelly, that she: “I wish I were a girl again, half savage and hardy and free; and laughing at injuries, not maddening under them.”⁷⁷ Though she realised her mistake, she can no longer undo it. At this point she is very close to her dying day. The last time she sees Heathcliff she complains that her downfall is his and Edgar’s fault. But some of Heathcliff’s last words to her express the true nature of downfall: “Why did you betray your own heart, Cathy? You deserve this. You have killed yourself.”⁷⁸ Catherine died few hours later.

Catherine’s death is not caused by Edgar or Heathcliff. She is responsible for her own actions as it was her who went on an hunger strike. As Heathcliff stated in above mentioned quote, she is the one who caused her own death.

⁷⁵ JACOBS. “Gender and Layered Narrative in *Wuthering Heights*.” *Contemporary Critical Essays*, pp. 74-85.

⁷⁶ PYKETT, Lynn. “Gender and Genre in *Wuthering Heights*” *Contemporary Critical Essays*. pp. 86-99 .

⁷⁷ BRONTË, Emily. “*Wuthering Heights*.” Harper Press. London. 2010. p.132.

⁷⁸ BRONTË, Emily. “*Wuthering Heights*.” Harper Press. London. 2010. p.173.

5.3.2. Male characters

There are two male characters strongly connected with Catherine's destiny. Those are Heathcliff and Edgar. At first sight, Edgar is presented as exact opposite to Catherine. He is calm and sensitive, which is described especially in the times of Cathy's madness, when he is being very considerate. Jacobs highlights that though "Edgar Linton is certainly not a violent man, he is equally ready to assert control over his household."⁷⁹ His intervention against reunion between Catherine and Heathcliff confirm this opinion.

On the contrary, there is Heathcliff whose appearance suggests him being a very powerful man, who can be even heartless on his way to revenge the cruel behaviour he has experienced. Catherine has played crucial role in his life as well as he had played in hers. If his role was to help her find her true self, she helped him to connect with his emotional, more feminine-like side. As Jacobs explains; "after Cathy's death, Heathcliff is incapable of any 'feminine' sort of emotion."⁸⁰

All throughout his life, he has experienced a lot of downfalls just like Catherine. His past is not known to him, he is left alone and betrayed by his closest friend and love, he has faced disgust from people around him. This kind of injustice, loneliness and betrayal made him change into the brutal and heartless man we end up seeing.

5.4. Summary

All in all, I believe that Emily's intention of her book was not to give more value to either women or men, though it could be seen as it reflects a lot of clashes between the two. She tried to express the opinion that both women and men can gain their independence through equality.

⁷⁹ JACOBS. "Gender and Layered Narrative in Wuthering Heights." *Contemporary Critical Essays*, pp. 74-85.

⁸⁰ JACOBS. "Gender and Layered Narrative in Wuthering Heights." *Contemporary Critical Essays*, pp. 74-85.

She has also strongly shown that according to her it was not a degrading action for a man to show his emotions, thus, Heathcliff's inability of such expression lead to his downfall. On the other hand, Emily made also very clear point that woman's greatest mistake is to deny herself which in Catherine's lead to her self-destruction.

6. Conclusion

In past centuries women all over the world had a lot of opportunities to fight for their independence and position in society, especially regarding their work opportunities. Though their ways to fight for their emancipation were limited, one of the possible ones was through writing. The Victorian Era evoked a movement of writings concerning the 'Woman Question'. Women were not seen as initiators of the writings that would be of the same value as those of their male peers, but women were more likely to be the inspiration for characters of someone else's novels.

The Brontë sisters were among the contributors to 'Women Question' and their work had a remarkable impact on the women and their changing point of view of themselves. Thereafter my first goal of the thesis was to provide a look at their family life and major aspects of their life that contributed to their critical thinking and a remarkable ability to address the issues of independence and equality in the novels *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights*.

Though Charlotte and Emily had different point of view on the issues of the Victorian society and they both reflected it in diverse ways, I found several common themes of their novels. Among these themes there is the question of dysfunctional marriage and the struggles that women had to go through in order to find integrity and independence. Some other aspects that can be found in both of the novels are the setting, which resembles the Yorkshire moors where they spent the most of their lives, the influence of dealing with a family member's death, as they both faced the deaths of their mother and two sisters, and their brother Branwell's struggle with his decline through alcohol.

The most striking thing about their writings is that none of them had any real experience of marriage of her own. Charlotte

was the only one who got married, but even her *Jane Eyre* was published before she got married. Therefore they used a considerable amount of imagination in their novels as they did not get any opportunity to observe the real life of a married couple as their own mother had died when they were very young.

In conclusion, *Jane Eyre* was very beneficial for the 'Women Question' in the way Charlotte conveys the struggle of gaining independence and equality all throughout Jane's life. Some people might suggest that Jane does not really gain equality in her marriage, because they might think that by making the stronger male character physically weak, there is no real equality between them. In my opinion, by weakening the stronger character we create a balance between the two.

The most shocking aspect of Emily's *Wuthering Heights* is its dark, coarse and scandalous description of the characters and the society of Victorian era. The dualism of the novel also provides a more thorough look at the characters; as we do not follow them step by step as we did with Jane, we can concentrate more on the differences between their younger selves and adults. The ending of the novel, unlike in Charlotte's novel, suggests that there is a possibility for an equal partnership through understanding without the need to weaken one of them. Emily also reflects on the issue of the impact that the society we live in has on our lives. If men are not allowed to express their emotions (as in Heathcliff's example) and women are forced to hide their true spirits and desires (Catherine's sacrifice), they are inevitably doomed to fall and be destroyed by the society which has put such requirements on them.

To sum up, Charlotte and Emily both came to the conclusion that any woman should be able to gain her independence if she fights for it. But it will not be easy for

anyone and it will take a lot of time to get there. Maybe even a lifetime.

My hope is that my work will help those people interested in the 'Woman Question' and the gender equality issue to gain better understanding of the novels that have had influence on their readers for decades and hugely influenced the fight for equality of the Victorian period. And that the readers might be attracted even more to Charlotte and Emily's extraordinary talent to depict such an important issue despite their own lack of experience.

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ANOTACE

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Rok obhajoby:	2018

Název práce:	Role žen v knihách <i>Jana Eyrová</i> a <i>Na Větrné hůrce</i>
Název v angličtině:	The Role of Women in <i>Jane Eyre</i> and <i>Wuthering Heights</i>
Anotace práce:	Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá analýzou ženských postav v knihách <i>Jana Eyrová</i> a <i>Na Větrné hůrce</i> a otázkou nezávislosti žen a jejich rovnosti s muži.
Klíčová slova:	Nezávislost, rovnost, feminismus, žena, Brontë, <i>Jana Eyrová</i> , <i>Na Větrné hůrce</i>
Anotace v angličtině:	The thesis focuses on the analysis of the female characters of the novels <i>Jane Eyre</i> and <i>Wuthering Heights</i> and on the question of independence and equality.
Klíčová slova v angličtině:	Independence, equality, feminism, woman, Brontë, <i>Jane Eyre</i> , <i>Wuthering Heights</i>
Přílohy vázané v práci:	
Rozsah práce	44
Jazyk práce:	Anglický

RESUMÉ

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá literární tvorbou Charlotte a Emily Brontëových a to především jejich nejznámějších děl *Jana Eyrová* a *Na Větrné hůrce*. Především jejich vyličení nezávislých a rovnoprávných žen. S ohledem na jejich pohled na nezávislé ženy, uvádím i stručný pohled na Viktoriánskou Anglii a jejich rodinné zázemí, protože toto byli dva aspekty jejich života, které ovlivnili jejich literární tvorbu. Hlavním zaměřením této práce je analýza samotných románů a především jejich hlavních ženských představitelk a jejich snaha získat nezávislost. Každá z nich hledala svou vlastní identitu jiným způsobem. Schopnost Charlotty a Emily popsat nejskrytější boj utváření lidské identity i přes překážky, které jednotlivci předala společnost, se zasloužila o jejich zasloužené zařazení mezi vysoce respektované autory.