

Charlotte Brontë's Victorian Women: A Psychological Analysis of Repression in Light of
Jungian Theory

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Nineteenth-century England attempted to answer the newly posed "Woman Question," which emerged as a major social concern in the midst of the Industrial Revolution. As a result of the Industrial Revolution, the physical location of economic production shifted from within the home into the consolidated, centralized factory building. Much more efficient than relying on multiple family enterprises to complete a multistep production, relocation of workers to the factory setting produced higher levels of output production and efficiency in the industrializing economy. Thus, the Industrial Revolution played a central role in separating the public and private spheres. Moreover, this separation resulted in the specifically gendered occupation of each of these spaces, with men leaving the home to participate in the professional realm while women gained social purpose from within the home.

The "Woman Question," then, resulted from the dissatisfaction of women in being restricted both physically and politically. Unhappy with their physical limitation within the home, women's rights activists sought to broaden the professional opportunities available to women. Equally frustrated with their lack of political rights, women fought for the right to vote and the amendment of marriage laws. Once married, a woman retained essentially no separate identity from her husband, who acquired all her property upon marrying, and furthermore, she too was seen legally as her husband's property. Unmarried women fared only slightly better, if at all, for they retained a relative amount of autonomy. This was undermined, however, by the fact that few professional opportunities were available for women, making them most likely dependent financially on another male relative, and thus they were seen as deviating from

societal gender norms by remaining unmarried. The early women's movement of the 1850s brought attention to these issues of inequality between men and women that were prevalent in Victorian society as a result of the Industrial Revolution.

The novelist Charlotte Brontë (1816-1855) writes within this social and political backdrop and incorporates issues of womanhood, female autonomy, and gender roles into her novels *Jane Eyre* (1847) and *Villette* (1853). Brontë herself was a woman who did not marry until later in her life, and she experienced first-hand the negative censure provoked by rejecting prescribed gender roles. Her female protagonists occupy similar positions, both of whom are governesses, one of the very few professional opportunities open to women. In addition to being financially independent, both of her female protagonists lack the social security provided by the family unit, coming from backgrounds of orphanage and thereby lacking patriarchal protection and supervision. Her women therefore reject, to some extent, accepted ideals of femininity and emerge as relatively subversive figures in refusing to conform to patriarchal expectations.

Yet, the degree to which her heroines are subversive can be questioned, as ultimately both women long for refuge in the patriarchal institution of marriage. Brontë's novels end in what seems to be a compromise of her more rebellious attitudes exhibited in earlier parts of the novels, suggesting that there is a limit to how far she will challenge the society around her. Negotiating issues of women's equality as well as matters of the heart, Brontë can be seen as participating in this emerging women's movement of the mid-nineteenth century by exploring what it means to be an independent woman in a society with such rigid expectations.

Interested in more than just women's divergence from gender roles, Brontë explores what effect this divergence or non-conformity has on the Victorian female mind. Whether their

non-conformity is intentional or a result of their circumstances, Brontë examines how this apparent deviance affects the psychological state of women who occupy spaces outside of societal expectations. Namely, repression emerges as a common coping mechanism through which Brontë's women hide subversive qualities or tendencies and attempt to live their lives according to the rigid social rules of Victorian society. The rich inner life of Charlotte Brontë's female protagonists reveals the sharp contrast between Victorian societal expectations and their own conceptions of the female self. This inability of Brontë's protagonists to reconcile their own thoughts and behaviors with accepted female gender roles produces intense mental discomfort, revealing the extent to which the female mind suffers from its oppressive environment. Tangible examples of these repressed thoughts and emotions are expressed in Brontë's depictions of childhood experience, creative expression, as well as dreams and nightscapes.

While much literary scholarship has focused on the idea of the repressed self in Victorian novels, more can be accomplished in this area of female psychological examination. Indeed, much of the major scholarship done in this specific area of study was completed over twenty years ago, and thus there is opportunity to reexamine what we think we know about Victorian society and the psyche as a product of that environment. For example, Gilbert and Gubar's *The Madwoman in the Attic* (1979) and Sally Shuttleworth's *Charlotte Brontë and Victorian Psychology* (1996) explore Victorian female psychology, in conjunction with issues of sexuality and insanity, to determine how Brontë's texts work within this broader structure. However, a deeper analysis can be gained from Brontë's work by applying a more specific psychological framework to these pre-existing interpretations of the Victorian female mind.

Carl Jung (1875-1961), a Swiss psychologist and student of Sigmund Freud, elaborated on these Victorian ideas of hidden or repressed impulses and helped to give them scientific validity. Specifically, Jung argued that individuals could suffer from cryptomnesia, a concept he adopted from another psychologist Theodore Flournoy (1854-1920), in which repressed memories or impulses manifest themselves without that individual's recognizing them as such. The term is derived from the Greek words *kruptos* (hidden) and *mneme* (memory).

The collection of writings by Carl Jung, compiled in *The Portable Jung* (Campbell, 1976), outlines his ideas on the hidden memory and its expression or manifestation in unexpected, or even unacknowledged, ways. Manifestations of the hidden or repressed memory appear in certain capacities like dreams or creative expression, according to Jung, and he believed these repressed emotions and desires were hidden in the unconscious mind (and were in fact evidence that the unconscious existed). Additionally, the contents of the unconscious mind include not only repressed desires, but memories from childhood deemed deviant or unacceptable in succeeding social interactions. Thus, childhood development for Jung is an important process in the formation of the unconscious mind, and a close examination of an individual's childhood can provide in-depth information about that person's adult desires and emotions that may remain beneath the surface. Dreams, creative expression, and other psychological manifestations of what Jung terms the unconscious are central elements in Brontë's work, and applying the Jungian theory to these elements in her novels will help further develop the scholarship on Brontë's illumination of Victorian female oppression.

While I will not use Jung's theories as an exclusive and comprehensive means of interpreting Brontë's works, I do believe that in the relevant instances of childhood experience,

creative expression and other instances repressed memory in Brontë's novels, an application of Jung's theories can be useful in yielding a deeper analysis of the psychological processes occurring in the minds of Brontë's female characters. Additionally, the use of his theories in this thesis will provide a specific, psychological vocabulary about repression and memory that will yield a more definitive conclusion about the nature of the female psyche in the Victorian era.

Childhood Experience

Beginning with childhood experience and the development of the mind, Brontë's *Jane Eyre* spends its opening chapters looking at the progression and development of Jane Eyre from child to adult, allowing the reader to better understand the ways in which the mind develops as a product of its environment. Jane's childhood contains painful experiences and harsh social interactions that later become repressed in her adult psyche and manifest themselves in her dreams and artwork. Additionally, Jane's childhood conditions her socially, teaching her not only how to interact with others but instilling in her a sense of her place in society. Jane's early childhood is one filled with rage, injustice, and severe punishment at the hand of a woman who despises her. An orphan who lives with her Aunt Reed and cousins at Gateshead, Jane is an outsider from a young age. Her social cues are learned from this hostile environment, where she thinks herself unloved and unwanted. To survive, Jane learns that anger and violence are tools in the necessary battle of self-preservation. For instance, the opening pages of *Jane Eyre* depict an aggressive encounter between Jane and her cousin John Reed, where Jane must implement physical force to defend herself. John Reed, the spoiled son who represents the privilege of the patriarchy under which Jane lives, presents himself as a violent aggressor, someone against

whom Jane must defend herself. Injustice reigns in this unhappy household, and Jane, as punishment for exercising self-defense, is banished to the Red Room.

Interpreted in many ways by many different scholars, the Red Room apparently begs symbolic interpretation. Seen alternately as a symbol of her rage, her emerging womanhood, or as a magnification of the blood wound she has just received, the Red Room is regardless interpreted as a space of transformation. Whatever its symbolic significance, the emotions and thoughts Jane feels in the aftermath of her encounter with John Reed are compounded and then repressed. They are reduced into a memory of her childhood that leaves her changed and transformed once she emerges from the Red Room. Before, Jane's mind was a blank slate of childhood innocence, waiting to be marked with experience. After, she is less a child, psychologically at least, as she has learned that the world in which she lives is not a fair one. Her time in the Red Room is scarring, and she represses as well as internalizes both the memory of it as well as the social lessons she learns. Aggression and anger, in a woman, are not acceptable forms of expression, and this is a lesson that will be reinforced during her time at Lowood.

Childhood experience is thus a deeply impressive and informative time in the development of the adult psyche, particularly the unconscious mind. In Brontë's novel *Villette*, childhood is equally as informative as it is in *Jane Eyre*. Lucy Snowe, like Jane, internalizes the hardships of her childhood and struggles to overcome them throughout her adulthood. Lucy Snowe, the quiet and insignificant heroine of Brontë's *Villette*, has a devastating loss during her childhood -- so destructive is this loss for her that it becomes unspeakable. Lucy has spent the majority of her childhood in Bretton with her godmother. For reasons unknown to the reader, her purpose for being at Bretton is unclear, although at some point it becomes necessary for her to

leave. Due to some unnamed family disaster, Lucy must go live with a lonely widowed woman as her companion, and the reader never learns specifically what has passed. What is certain, however, is the significance Bretton has had on the childhood of Lucy Snowe and the impact that the loss of her family holds in terms of her psychological development. Lucy tells the reader:

On quitting Bretton, which I did a few weeks after Paulina's departure -- little thinking then I was never again to visit it: never more to tread its calm old streets -- I betook myself home, having been absent six months. It will be conjectured that I was of course glad to return to the bosom of my kindred. Well! the amiable conjecture does no harm, and may therefore be safely left uncontradicted. (39)

Bretton becomes representative of Lucy's psychological landscape prior to her unspeakable loss. Its "calm old streets" speak to a mental peace, a childhood innocence, that, once lost, can never be retrieved. Indeed, Lucy says herself she did not realize she "was never again to visit it." This sense of loss, while never verbally identified, looms over her mind for the rest of her life. She briefly allows the reader to envision a happy reunion with her family, coming as close as she ever will to an explicit reference to her loss. The narrator practices this evasive technique frequently throughout the novel, allowing the reader to imagine an event that never materializes, pursuing the realm of the imaginary and thus evading the horror that is her reality. All the reader really learns from Lucy's account is that she is never able to return to her family. Like Jane, Lucy becomes orphaned at a young age and is left drifting, alone and unprotected.

Throughout the entire narrative of *Villette*, Lucy is misleading and indirect, allowing her reader to wander aimlessly in the circles she creates for herself. The period of her childhood is indeed the most vague section of the novel, with Lucy trying to avoid the direct

acknowledgement of a loss that will only resurface old pains that never healed. Lucy can only speak indirectly and metaphorically of the time following that at Bretton. She says:

Far from saying nay, indeed, I will permit the reader to picture me, through the next eight years, as a bark slumbering through halcyon weather, in a harbour still as glass -- the steersman stretched on the little deck, his face up to heaven, his eyes closed: buried, if you will, in a long prayer. A great many women and girls are supposed to pass their lives something in that fashion: why not I with the rest? (39)

The language here connotes passivity, or a death-like existence that is governed by a psychological absence. Lucy's response to severe loss is extreme retreat. The unthinking, lifeless, and apparently indifferent existence she leads for this period of eight years both numbs the pain of loss and represses any memory of it. This passive existence becomes a habit for her, as she is only a spectator in her own life. Her unfeeling, ghost-like life allows her to avoid the pain that recognition of her loss would require. The only expression she can give to the expansive void that now occupies her life is through a metaphor of a shipwreck:

However, it cannot be concealed that, in that case, I must somehow have fallen over-board, or that there must have been wreck at last. I too well remember a time -- a long time, of cold, of danger, of contention. To this hour, when I have the nightmare, it repeats the rush and saltness of briny waves in my throat, and their icy pressure on my lungs... In fine, the ship was lost, the crew perished. (39)

Naming her loss indirectly, Lucy circumvents the pain of acknowledgement in an attempt to recuperate. However, her circumvention is cyclical and repetitive, as she comes back to this loss again and again throughout the narrative, but she is always unable to acknowledge it and move

forward. Apparently a recurring nightmare for Lucy, the unspeakable loss of her childhood resides in her psychological unconsciousness and manifests itself while she sleeps and therefore unable to willfully repress the memory.

In this way, Lucy's childhood experiences become a more obvious part of her everyday adult life than Jane's do for her. Jane, damaged by her time at Gateshead, and then later at Lowood, is in a forward progression away from these events. She internalizes her anger and frustration, repressing old memories that will later resurface, yet learning from them and progressing in a forward motion. Lucy, in contrast, is broken by these events and moves in a circular motion around them. As Mary Ann Kelly writes in her article entitled "Paralysis and the Circular Nature of Memory in *Villette*," Lucy's repression is insurmountable: "Where the sequence of events in *Jane Eyre* was spiral and progressive, events in *Villette* are merely circular and result in paralysis and stagnation for Lucy rather than progress" (342). Lucy orbits the loss of her childhood; she never directly acknowledges it, but she is governed by it and rotates around it as planets around their star.

Exploring the same mechanisms of the psychological unconscious in *Villette* as she does in *Jane Eyre*, Brontë implements those mechanisms differently in each novel and explores the possibility of a more dominant unconscious mind through the character of Lucy Snowe. For Jane, repressed thoughts and memories manifest themselves in artwork and dreams more naturally, informing her waking, conscious life without disrupting it. For Lucy, these manifestations are feared and dreaded, and she spends every waking moment protecting herself against the shadowy realm of her repressed past. In Lucy's case, repression is crippling and insurmountable. She desires the peace she had at Bretton before the loss of her family, but such a

place becomes lost and irretrievable. Kelly writes in her article on Lucy's loss, saying, "Paralyzed by deep loss and repressed pain, she craves the temporary peace and tranquility she associates with Bretton. Fear and repression, however, become habit, then compulsion, and Lucy becomes permanently locked in time, the time of her youth" (344). Repression prevents forward progression and encourages circular motion, with Lucy participating in a passive existence that prohibits psychological growth. Thus Brontë's heroines both have impressive childhood experiences that inform their adult psyche, yet the two women interact with contents of their unconscious differently, one attempting to acknowledge or uncover them and the other decidedly ignoring them. Where Jane is active, Lucy is relatively passive; where Jane struggles, Lucy often submits.

In *Jane Eyre*, psychological repression and manifestations of unconscious activity are a means to an end. They are a vehicle through which Brontë depicts the female psyche as it exists in Victorian society, and through them the reader can analyze repression as a means of survival. In *Villette* repression operates differently, with repressed memories being the dominant enemy rather than repressed emotions and desires that must be hidden because they are deemed subversive by the surrounding society. Repressed memories in *Villette* are all-encompassing, and any reading of their significance as related to the ills of a patriarchal society is minimal and reduces the issue of Lucy's stunted emotional growth. Although similar claims about the female existence and its effect upon the mind can be made using both novels, *Villette*, to a greater extent, revolves around issues of emotional development or lack thereof (Kelly 343). This difference is an important one to make, as the larger claims about the degree to which Brontë challenges or adheres to societal codes of female behavior in her portrayal of the female psyche

pertain more appropriately to the reading and analysis of *Jane Eyre*. The inclusion of *Villette* is, however, necessary and important to this analysis as it demonstrates in itself the degree to which Brontë was preoccupied with ideas of repression and the psychological unconscious.

Jane's leaving Gateshead and traveling to Lowood marks a transition from her early childhood to emerging adulthood. Jane will internalize the lessons she learned at Gateshead, which are reinforced here at Lowood, and they will become the mechanisms by which Jane represses her natural feelings of rage and anger at her situation and place in life, as well as the isolation and loneliness she feels at her lack of a real family. Lowood itself represents in microcosm the larger society of which it is a part, and the lessons learned here reveal the values held by that larger society. Mr. Brocklehurst, the man who runs this institution, is the individual figure representing the patriarchy more generally. Jane's first encounter with him is at Gateshead, yet she meets him again here and her impression of him reveals his role: "I now glanced sideways at this piece of architecture. Yes, I was right; it was Mr. Brocklehurst, buttoned up in a surtout, and looking longer, narrower, and more rigid than ever" (74). The structural language used here to describe Mr. Brocklehurst's appearance serves to explain his societal function. As a "piece of architecture," Mr. Brocklehurst's long, narrow, and rigid frame personifies a metaphorical pillar of Victorian society. He illustrates the Victorian ideals of restraint and repression.

During this visit to Lowood, Mr. Brocklehurst becomes extremely incensed at what he deems a show of excess in the form of a young girl's curly hair. One of the school teachers, Miss Temple, explains to Mr. Brocklehurst that the girl's hair curls naturally, to which he responds, "Naturally! Yes, but we are not to conform to nature" (77). A girl's natural qualities must be

reformed according to the expectations of the patriarchal institutions of which she is a part. It is all hypocrisy, however, as Mr. Brocklehurst's own wife and daughters are extravagantly dressed and even wear "a false front of French curls" (78). What nature has given to one, society reproduces for another. Brontë demonstrates how social lessons of restraint and repression are learned and internalized, while simultaneously revealing the injustice of such a system. Jane, to some extent, becomes a product of this environment and learns to adopt a veneer of compliance in order to survive.

Helen Burns, in contrast to Jane's struggle for submission, is a perfect picture of resignation. She tells Jane:

Life appears to me too short to be spent nursing animosity or registering wrongs. We are, and must be, burdened with faults in this world; but the time will soon come when, I trust, we shall put them off in putting off our corruptible bodies; when debasement and sin will fall from us with this cumbrous frame of flesh, and only the spark of the spirit will remain... (71)

Helen's speech, echoing New Testament scripture and the teachings of Christ, align her with this figure and place her on a pedestal of forgiveness and submission. Indeed, her very body language resembles that of Christ on the cross: "Helen's head, always drooping, sank a little lower as she finished this sentence" (71). Helen is all peaceful passivity and becomes a prophet of submission to Jane. She is a martyr to these feminine ideals, as later in the novel she passes away from severe fever. Yet, one cannot help but feel that Helen's death is a result of her passivity and her inability to fight. Her unwillingness to feel the heated passions of life allows her to slip into the coolness of death. Jane, at first trying to be the faithful apostle of the good martyr Helen, will

ultimately realize that her rage and anger, if channeled properly, are the very warmth of life.

Jane's childhood has taught her to repress the unfeminine qualities of anger and rage in order to survive socially, yet her adult experience will show her that in order to preserve autonomy, such qualities are absolutely necessary. Total repression of such heat only leads to an annihilation of the self. Brontë reveals that to be passive is to perish; Helen Burns is no model for Jane Eyre.

Miss Temple is another important and influential figure who contributes to Jane's development at Lowood. Miss Temple, whose name literally suggests what Mr. Brocklehurst's physical description implied, is another figurative pillar of Victorian values that upholds society. She has internalized the patriarchal values she represents and in turn teaches them to the next generation of women. Gentler and much more likeable than Mr. Brocklehurst, Miss Temple succeeds in winning Jane's favor, and, from the position of mentor and friend, is able to reinforce in her the behavioral expectations of women. It is only when Miss Temple is to leave Lowood that Jane realizes the true influence she has had over her:

From the day she left I was no longer the same; with her was gone every settled feeling, every association that had made Lowood in some degree home to me. I had imbibed from her something of her nature and much of her habits; more harmonious thoughts, which seemed better regulated feelings, had become the inmates of my mind. I had given in allegiance to duty and order; I was quiet; I believed I was content; to the eyes of others, usually even to my own, I appeared a disciplined and subdued character. (100)

For Jane, Miss Temple is the model and foundation of every ideal feminine quality; from her, Jane has internalized submission and repressed rebellion. Yet, as Jane appears to recognize on a subconscious level, these feelings are not her own; they are not natural. These acquired

characteristics are merely “inmates” of her mind, temporary residents that reveal themselves as such upon Miss Temple’s departure. These “harmonious thoughts” that she has, she feels to be really “better regulated feelings.” Self-regulation, a form of repression, buries beneath the conscious mind thoughts and feelings of anger, rage, and loneliness at her place in the world.

Although Jane can fool others with her facade of tranquility, she cannot quite convince herself of this changed nature. Lurking below her waking mind’s efforts at discipline and submission, her old emotions continue to burn in turbulent force. Jane exerts willful delusion in her effort to retain the qualities acquired from Miss Temple. To some extent, Jane realizes all of this. She says:

I imagined myself only to be regretting my loss and thinking how to repair it; but when my reflections were concluded, and I looked up and found that the afternoon was gone, and evening far advanced, another discovery dawned on me; namely, that in the interval I had undergone a transforming process; that my mind had put off all it had borrowed of Miss Temple, or, rather, that she had taken with her the serene atmosphere I had been breathing in her vicinity, and that now I was left in my natural element, and beginning to feel the stir of old emotions. (100-101)

Jane has learned to be still and confined in the presence of Miss Temple, but such is not her true nature, and, in her unconscious mind, Jane still craves that freedom, independence, and unrestraint that are antithetical to the established values at Lowood. Yet, as she says, she has undergone a transformation at Lowood. She has learned to repress the natural emotions she feels, those emotions and feelings which she has been taught are unacceptable to society. Jane’s leaving Lowood and journeying to Thornfield mark yet another transition or transformation in

Jane's life; her unconscious mind will give expression to those repressed thoughts and emotions through the different channels of artistic expression and dreams, revealing to Jane and to the reader the consequences of extreme repression.

Artistic Expression

Carl Jung's theories on art and what he termed the "creative impulse" are expansive and trend towards areas of study outside the parameters of this thesis ("The Artist" 98). For the purposes of this particular area of study, however, Jung's most pertinent idea on art and the artistic process is that the artwork itself, the product of conscious efforts on the part of the artist, is rooted in unconscious processes and reveals not only something about the individual, but also something about mankind at large. He writes in a section of *Spirit in Man, Art, and Literature*, specifically in the section entitled "The Artist," that art and the process itself can be interpreted not just in terms of how it relates to the individual artist but also in how it speaks to society at large:

The essence of a work of art is not to be found in the personal idiosyncrasies that creep into it -- indeed, the more there are of them, the less it is a work of art -- but in its rising above the personal and speaking from the mind and heart of the artist to the mind and heart of mankind. (99)

While Jung concedes that it is "undeniable that the artist's personal psychology may occasionally be traced out in the roots... of his work" ("The Artist" 98), he believes that the deepest significance of art is found in its larger societal interpretations that have meaning for humankind. Thus, by examining Jane's artwork that she reveals to Rochester at Thornfield, one can understand not only the unconscious mental repression of Jane's individual psyche but also make

larger conclusions about the society in which she lives. Jane's artwork, not merely an expression of her own mental repressions acquired through personal experience, speaks also about the psychological repression of women more generally in Victorian society.

Jane Eyre has spent much of her time at Lowood drawing, giving artistic expression to the feelings and emotions she cannot articulate aloud. The drawings she reveals are expressions of the unconscious mind, revealing the repressed thoughts she has learned to hide. When she first arrives at Thornfield Hall, Rochester demands to see her portfolio, assuming her drawings will consist of the usual schoolgirl studies pertaining to simple subjects, executed in an amateur manner. He is surprised, however, to find her drawings to be complex depictions of images that, as Jane says, come "out of my head" (149). The use of this phrase signals to the reader that these images represent the inner workings of Jane's mind and provide the reader with a glimpse of how Jane interprets the world around her. A close examination of the first of her paintings described will demonstrate this fact.

Jane's artwork offers the reader a glimpse into the unconscious mind of Brontë's heroine, demonstrating an unintentional release of repressed images and memories onto paper. One hint that these images represent more than mere artistic ability or feminine accomplishment is the fact that Brontë herself explored creative outlets as a way to escape the dull reality of her daily existence. For Brontë, drawing and writing were escape mechanisms that allowed her to explore freely the depths of her mind without restraint or judgment (Harman 103). One finds that Jane's images serve a similar purpose. Descriptive and emotionally evocative, Jane's watercolor prints do more than just display her endeavors in feminine accomplishments, although this would have been necessary in securing a position as a governess. Jane's artwork, as will become evident,

displays repressed memories and emotions that have been stored in her unconscious mind since her childhood, allowing her to exist in an oppressive, confining society with a relative lack of mental discomfort. These images, apparently only a shadow of what Jane envisions in her mind's eye, reveal her feelings of isolation, desolation, and oppression in a society where there is seemingly no place for a single, poor woman.

The first time Jane shows her artwork to anyone is at Thornfield, when Mr. Rochester requests to see her portfolio. The significance of Jane's exposing her artwork to the male gaze is twofold, demonstrating both the masculine authority to which feminine creativity is subjected as well as the extent to which masculine authority penetrates the female psyche. Jane, in revealing her artwork to Rochester, assumes a humility and modesty common to the female artist of the time:

While he is so preoccupied, I will tell you, reader, what they are; and first, I must premise that they are nothing wonderful. The subjects had, indeed, risen vividly on my mind. As I saw them with the spiritual eye, before I attempted to embody them, they were striking; but my hand would not second my fancy, and in each case it had wrought out but a pale portrait of the thing I had conceived. (149)

In her investigation of female psychology and its regulation by male authority figures in the nineteenth century, Beth Tressler argues that Brontë's writing demonstrates most clearly how the female psyche is subject to perpetual penetration and shows how self-control becomes an essential factor in nineteenth-century "moral management" (1). For Tressler, Brontë's writing addresses the two prominent developments in nineteenth-century psychological discourse, what she terms the "practice of moral management and the pseudo-science of phrenology" (1).

Tressler defines moral management as the ability to self-regulate and points to the self-control and rigid fortitude with which one ought to endure one's circumstances. Imagination, according to Tressler, was branded as a nineteenth-century indication of excess and indulgence that leads to insanity. Thus, Jane's artwork, which emblemizes the creative process and free thought, becomes a misconceived harbinger of impending insanity within her culture, demonstrating the point to which Jane's oppressive circumstances weigh on her mentality.

Before examining the specific visual language of Jane's artwork, it is first important to understand how these expressions of creativity are psychologically revealing and in what ways gender affects the way one can interpret her creative vulnerability. Tressler's ideas on imagination, how imagination and creativity interact, and what this means in terms of Jane's artwork are important beginnings, but Tressler cites Sally Shuttleworth's *Charlotte Brontë and Victorian Psychology* at great length in her own analysis, an indication that Shuttleworth's insights take the reader to the very root of the issues at hand in nineteenth-century psychological discourse. Tressler's ideas on self-regulation and mental excess originate in Shuttleworth's work, which argues, "Selfhood no longer resided in the open texture of social act and exchange, but within a new interior space, hidden from view, inaccessible even to the subject's own consciousness" (Shuttleworth 9). Jane's artwork as a representation of this interiority becomes, according to this statement, both an imaginative creation as well as an unconscious one. The selfhood embodied in her artwork is one that she herself is not entirely aware of, further emphasizing the fact that repressed emotions and memories come to life in the creative expression that is art. Mental excesses in the forms of creativity, imagination, and even nightmares could be indicative of potential insanity in women, according to popular

nineteenth-century social beliefs, and the ability to detect these possible symptoms, to penetrate the seemingly impermeable psyche, becomes a specifically male privilege during this time. Rochester's request to see Jane's art, then, is not a mere interest in her artistic abilities but an attempt to unveil that concealed interior.

Rochester's perusal of Jane's portfolio becomes a male intrusion into her inner psyche, an examination of both her conscious and unconscious desires. An extremely invasive act, Rochester's scrutinizing gaze, what Tressler terms the "oppressive eye" (15), is already evaluating Jane's art according to male standards and male expectations of what female creativity ought to look like. Jane's trepidation is no surprise, and she humbly confesses that her drawings are not what she had hoped, shrinking under the intensity of this penetrating male gaze.

In depicting what has arisen in her "spiritual eye," Jane captures the repressed emotions and memories stored in her unconscious. Representing the shadow of her unconscious mind, Jane struggles to depict a visual language that has become imprinted but consciously forgotten since her early childhood. As Mr. Rochester later says after surveying her works, Jane has secured the "shadow" (151) of her thoughts. He also comments that, while creating these pieces, Jane was lost in a kind of "artist's dreamland" (151) that allowed her to create the things she both felt and thought. The idea of shadows and dreams connect Jane's art strongly to the realm of the unconscious mind, as Carl Jung identifies dreams as revealing to the individual the contents of the unconscious mind. He writes, "Dreams contain images and thought-associations which we do not create with conscious intent. They arise spontaneously without our assistance and are representatives of a psychic activity withdrawn from our arbitrary will" ("The Relations Between the Ego and the Unconscious" 75). Jung further writes about the relationship between the

unconscious mind and dreams, saying, “The main source, then, is *dreams*, which have the advantage of being involuntary, spontaneous products of the unconscious psyche and are therefore pure products of nature not falsified by any conscious purpose” (“The Concept of the Collective Unconscious” 67). Jane’s artwork can thus be interpreted on a similar level as dreams, allowing the reader to analyze them as windows into the unconscious mind.

Furthermore, Jane’s artwork is not a mere feminine accomplishment meant to be shown off in the drawing room to potential suitors (although this scene does mock this convention). Her watercolors offer a glimpse into the repressed thoughts of Jane’s mind, emotions and longings hidden below the surface that now come to light:

The first represented clouds low and livid, rolling over a swelled sea; all the distance was in eclipse; so, too, was the foreground, or, rather, the nearest billows, for there was no land. One gleam of light lifted into relief a half-submerged mast, on which sat a cormorant, dark and large, with wings flecked with foam; its beak held a gold bracelet, set with gems, that I had touched with as brilliant tints as my pallet could yield, and as glittering distinctness as my pencil could impart. Sinking below the bird and mast, a drowned corpse glanced through the green water; a fair arm was the only limb clearly visible, whence the bracelet had been washed or torn. (149-50)

Jane’s first painting conveys a sense of isolation and loneliness. The description of the water is ominous and foreboding; her “low and livid” clouds seem to suggest oppression, representative of an intense overcast that both threatens and intimidates. Her “swelled sea” is no less threatening, as the body of water in which the half-submerged ship sits possesses the capability of destruction. Then, her simple statement that “there was no land” communicates her isolation,

as this landless landscape reveals an uprootedness or a drifting that is so frequently associated with the sea. Jane's image is one that doubles as a psychological landscape, offering the reader a glimpse into the turbulent waters that are Jane's thoughts and emotions. A double meaning is reflected in these turbulent waters, however, as they may also represent the threatening position Victorian society takes on in relation to the isolated woman, envisioned here as a drowned corpse. The image described here reflects Jane's own sense of her position in her society, the loneliness and isolation she feels as a single, relatively poor woman in Victorian England.

The uprootedness embodied in the statement "there was no land" demonstrates both the intensity of Jane's isolation, as she is a woman of low social status with no family, no connections, and no money. Her movements thus far in the novel can be classified as wanderings; she has no aim but mere survival. The expansiveness of the sea Jane depicts represents her feeling that her existence is a vast expanse, untied and unrooted to any connections of family or friends. Additionally, her society is one in which women are expected to anchor themselves, navigate these treacherous waters with the help of a husband, who offers shelter and support from the dangerous waters. Any land would provide a sense of groundedness, of belonging. This sense of uprootedness can be linked back to the fact that Jane is an orphan and exists outside the protective family unit. Jane is also a single woman, and marriage would offer a potential solution to her place as a drowned corpse in a hostile society. As the traditional family unit is the essential building block of patriarchal society, Jane therefore lacks male protection and stands outside the accepted bounds of her society. She is a woman alone and unprotected in a society that requires its women to be sheltered and safeguarded.

Using Jung's theories, one could interpret this element of Jane's art as repressed memories of childhood loss coming to the forefront, imposing themselves on Jane's unconscious state and coming out unintentionally in her art. According to Jung's theories, artwork functions on a similar level with dreams, expressing the "spontaneous products of the unconscious psyche" ("The Concept of the Collective Conscious" 67) and revealing the repressed thoughts and desires of the creator. If one applies Jung's theories regarding creativity to these elements, one understands that Jane's creative expressions through drawing are manifestations of her unconscious mind. They are repressed memories and hidden thoughts coming to the forefront, unbeknownst to Jane, and reveal things about her childhood and her oppressed position in society.

The other objects described in the drawing are more complex and less easily interpreted. The bird and the corpse illustrated in the drawing carry psychological significance as symbolic expressions of mental processes, both representing parts of Jane that she is unable to explicitly articulate in words. Jane is often metaphorically described as a bird throughout the narrative, making one assume that this is another instance of that connection. For instance, in the very first chapter of the book, Jane is found reading a copy of Bewick's *A History of British Birds*, claiming that she was more intrigued by the images of the birds rather than their physical descriptions. Additionally, this scene poses a sense of contrast between what appears to be the freedom of the winged creatures and the confinement of the little girl, who hides behind the curtains dreaming of escape. Jane, then, becomes the caged bird who has wings she cannot use and sees a landscape over which she cannot fly. This sense of imprisonment follows her into adulthood, yet clearly originating here in her childhood, the early formative years that can define

a person so strongly. At one point in the narrative, Jane herself declares, “I am no bird; and no net ensnares me; I am a free human being, with an independent will” (297), asserting her independence and autonomy.

Yet one is also tempted to say that the corpse is a representation of Jane, who feels like she is drowning in the vast expanse of her existence, lonely and isolated from her fellow humans. Then one is drawn to the bracelet. What does it mean? The corpse’s single piece of finery is being stolen away from it in death, leaving it plain and dismal in the openness of the waters. One might argue that the corpse and the bird represent the split self, the duplicity of Jane’s character that consistently moves between sinking and soaring -- between transcending her circumstances and collapsing beneath them.

The drawing might be also interpreted as a transformative, metamorphic image in which Jane flees the old self that sinks beneath its loneliness and isolation and soars above the abyss to a higher, more fully realized sense of self and one’s place in the world. The bracelet might be seen as a gem of her past, taken with her as a token to remind her of her old life. Whatever this image means, it is clearly a representation of inner psychological processes, of which Jane herself is partly unconscious, and through which she articulates the repressed memories that haunt her as well as the oppressed nature of her existence in Victorian England.

The second image likewise depicts a desolate landscape, interjected with a dismal figure that seems to speak sorrow and desperation:

The second picture contained for foreground only the dim peak of a hill, with grass and some leaves slanted as if by a breeze. Beyond and above spread an expanse of sky, dark blue as at twilight; rising into the sky, was a woman’s shape to the bust, portrayed in tints

as dusk and soft as I could combine. The dim forehead was crowned with a star; the lineaments below were seen as through the suffusion of vapor; the eyes shone dark and wild; the hair streamed shadowy, like a beamless cloud torn by storm or by electric travail. On the neck lay a pale reflection, like moonlight, the same faint lustre touched the train of thin clouds from which rose and bowed this vision of the Evening Star. (150)

Similar to her previous picture, Jane represents the figure of a woman, this time seemingly much more a part of the landscape rather than overcome by it or submerged beneath it. Here, unlike the first image, the vast landscape seems to represent a sense of freedom, rather than an expansive loneliness. The reader can interpret from these conflicting messages that Jane at once feels lonely in the wilderness yet longs for its freedom; she feels restrained and confined in the domestic settings of Thornfield and Lowood, both of which represent and reinforce the patriarchal values of femininity, yet she feels she has no ties, no family links, and thus she is a drifting wanderer lost at sea.

The woman in this image, unlike the first, is very much alive and perhaps even threatening with her eyes that “shone dark and wild.” Furthermore, her hair that “streamed shadowy,” while descriptive of the Evening Star’s untamed appearance, bears a resemblance to the description later given of Bertha Mason, who also has wild eyes and dark, streaming hair. Jane’s early premonition of Bertha Mason’s appearance suggests a self-identification with the woman in the attic, as Jane sees in herself the repressed, entrapped figure. The Evening Star, like Bertha, is a woman of the night, both in the literal sense that this is when she first appears to Jane, but also in the way that she represents the unconscious, or what is repressed. The setting of

the image reinforces this idea, with its sky as “dark blue as at twilight,” suggesting the end of a dream and the awakening into conscious daylight.

Jane’s third and final image continues themes expressed in the previous images, apparently similar in subject matter and composition. She continues to place a female subject in hostile surroundings, again giving expression to the emotions and thoughts she has repressed in her unconscious mind. She provides a description of the third image for the reader, saying:

The third showed the pinnacle of an iceberg piercing a polar wintry sky; a muster of northern lights reared their dim lances, close serried, along the horizon. Throwing these into distance, rose, in the foreground, a head, a colossal head, inclined toward the iceberg, and resting against it. Two thin hands, joined under the forehead, and supporting it, drew up before the lower features, a sable veil: a brow quite bloodless, white as bone, and an eye hollow and fixed, blank of meaning but for the glassiness of despair, along were visible. Above the temples, amid wreathed turban folds of black drapery, vague in its character and consistency as cloud, gleamed a ring of white flame, gemmed with sparkles of a more lurid tinge. This pale crescent was the ‘likeness of a Kingly Crown’; what it diademed was ‘the shape which shape had none.’ (150)

In order to understand the full psychological implications of Jane’s artwork as an adult, one must examine the scenes of her childhood to discern how these images reveal repressed memories of her past. As a poor governess of no connections and little travel, the reader might be wondering how Jane knows of these seas, vast landscapes, and arctic settings she so vividly describes.

Bewick’s *History* provides a similar scene to the one Jane has created here, perhaps informing and inspiring her “polar wintry sky.” Jane’s childhood reflections on the images in Bewick’s

History demonstrate that she has indeed, to some extent, drawn upon these images either consciously or unconsciously for inspiration:

Nor could I pass unnoticed the suggestion of the bleak shores of Lapland, Siberia, Spitzbergen, Nova Zembla, Iceland, Greenland, with ‘the vast sweep of the Arctic Zone, and those forlorn regions of dreary space -- that reservoir of frost and snow, there firm fields of ice, the accumulation of centuries of winters, glazed in Alpine heights above heights, surround the pole, and concentrate the multiplied rigors of extreme cold.’ Of these death-white realms I formed an idea of my own -- shadowy, like all the half-comprehended notions that float through children’s brains, but impressive. The words in these introductory pages connected themselves with the succeeding vignettes, and gave significance to the rock standing up alone in a sea of billow and spray; to the broken boat stranded on a desolate coast; to the cold and ghastly moon glancing through bars of cloud at a wreck just sinking. (12-13)

The images Jane has created seem to be almost direct copies of the ones found in Bewick’s *History*. This fact alone confirms that Jane’s childhood memories, repressed and forgotten with age, resurface in her artwork and take on new meaning as her adult self reinterprets their significance in accordance with her own circumstances. Indeed, Jane’s artwork adheres almost directly to what Jung describes as the personal unconscious, representing memories that “became unconscious either because they lost their intensity and were forgotten or because consciousness was withdrawn from them (repression)” (“The Structure of the Psyche” 38). Jane’s incorporation of childhood images, either remembered intentionally or unconsciously, further confirms the fact

that these artworks reveal her repressed emotions of anger and isolation and her unconscious desire for both love and independence.

The hostile, icy environment described in Bewick's *History* serves as a reflection of the environment in which Jane lives. Enclosed behind a protective curtain in the window-seat as a child, Jane escapes the harsh cold of the physical elements as well as the hostile chill offered by her own relatives. Aligned here with the birds in Bewick's *History*, Jane is, in a sense, learning about her own habitat. Like the landscapes of Jane's previous paintings, the land here is barren, threatening, and ominous. The landscape described in Bewick's *History* is almost exactly copied in Jane's third painting, reflecting the extent to which she has internalized this desolate, isolated imagery. The words used to describe this landscape -- "bleak," "dreary," and "extreme cold" -- not only mirror her home environment and societal surroundings, but they also stand in stark contrast to the hot, fiery rage that leads to Jane's banishment to the red room. John interrupts her private reading in the window-seat and proceeds to violently attack her until she is bleeding. As a result, Mrs. Reed exiles Jane to the red room. Jane's resistance to her imprisonment is fierce and unyielding: "I was conscious that a moment's mutiny had already rendered me liable to strange penalties, and, like any other rebel slave, I felt resolved, in my desperation, to go all lengths" (17). The blood, the desperation, and the burning color of the red room contrast the "frost and snow" (12) that exist both within the book and outside the window.

Furthermore, while Jane's drawing appears to be an almost direct copy of the image she saw as a child, it appears to be a subconscious copy, as Jane herself says in recounting the childhood incident claims the "death-white realms" are "shadowy, like all half-comprehended notions that float dim through children's brains, but strangely impressive" (12). The image of

this arctic tundra has been committed to the young Jane's unconscious, the repository of her repressed memories that later come to light in her adult artwork. Jung himself interprets the repressed mind as a "childlike unconsciousness" (3), and argues that childhood is the beginning of the period of becoming fully conscious, emerging from "the far-flung darkness" (7) into a broader understanding and knowing.

While the landscape in the third painting itself appears to be a manifestation of the imagery existent in Jane's unconscious, the "colossal head" of the woman would seem to be either an original creation or a conflation with some other memory. The figure, with its "bloodless" brow and a gaze that is blank except for its "glassiness of despair," conveys once again the sense of isolation but also the emptiness of death. The black drapery above the woman's head, along with the "ring of white flame" seem to confirm the impression of death, suggestive in their description of a kind of quiet submission. In this way, the figure recalls Helen Burns, the indifferent and passive martyr of Jane's childhood. Helen's persistent passivity, her inability to fight her circumstances or her illness, result in her inability to survive. As Jane says herself, "I was asleep, and Helen was -- dead" (98). Throughout the Lowood section of the novel, Helen serves as the calming contrast to Jane's fiery rage. Indignant at Helen's punishment, and even more frustrated by her apparent lack of emotion, Jane flies to Helen to remove the sign "Slattern" from her forehead: "I ran to Helen, tore it off, and thrust it into the fire; the fury of which she was incapable had been burning in my soul all day..." (88). This pent up aggression and rage, so evident in Jane throughout her early childhood years, appears to disappear with Helen's death and in the unrecorded eight years following.

These images that Jane shows to Mr. Rochester at the beginning of her stay at Thornfield represent a submission, passivity, and a loss of her childhood rage that have been repressed and submerged by her icy, hostile surroundings. Jane has learned from her experience that rage works against her. The society around her expects submission, and, in order to survive, Jane represses the rage she feels so that she can exist in her own environment. Submission, however, as one can see in her paintings, leads to destruction. Jane's artwork thus comments not only on her own personal experiences but also on the commonality of female existence in the nineteenth-century and the psychological repression that manifested as a result of the patriarchal environment. Jane's artwork, in its reflection of her own personal feelings, also comments more generally on the female position in society and highlights the isolation, loneliness, and desperation they felt. Jane's artwork also becomes a therapeutic means of expressing herself, allowing her to explore the depths of her repression in a socially acceptable manner. Through her artwork, Jane is recovering the repressed thoughts and emotions that she has learned to hide so well. During her stay at Thornfield, she recovers her inner rage that will allow her to survive rather than submit to her oppressive, hostile surroundings.

In Beth Tressler's article "Illegible Minds: Charlotte Brontë's Early Writings and the Psychology of Moral Management in *Jane Eyre* and *Villette*," she examines moral management and its role as a force of self-regulation in nineteenth-century psychological discourse. She highlights the imagination as being potentially dangerous to this ideal of self-restraint, as free thought was seen as a form of self-indulgence and therefore counter to self-restraint. Tressler explores imagination more thoroughly in her analysis of daydreaming and nightmares, two instances in which the mind roams freely, unrestrained by conscious, waking thought. However,

the idea of imagination and mental indulgence can be tied to artwork as well, since artwork incorporates imagination through the creative process.

Artwork, like dreams, allows the mind to wander and reveals the contents of the unconscious mind, a realm free from the control of the conscious mind. Indulgence through imagination, then, is a sign of an individual's inability to control oneself. According to Tressler, the lack of self-control prefigures mental insanity in the nineteenth century (1). Thus, the entire section exploring and describing Jane's artwork is a precursor to her meeting with Bertha Mason, as Jane's own creative endeavors signal to the nineteenth-century reader a susceptibility to mental insanity, with imagination and creativity being seen as indulgences into the realm of mental unrestraint.

The creative woman, then, foreshadows the mad woman, and thus the lengthy description of Jane's artwork, its psychological significance in revealing her social and economic marginalization, and her budding relationship with Rochester (who subjects her artwork, and by extension her psyche, to male interpretation and evaluation) all set the stage for Bertha Mason's entrance onto the scene, a figure who has consistently been aligned with Jane and her psychological processes in previous analyses.

Unlike the role of painting in *Jane Eyre*, with creative expression translating directly from unconscious thoughts, the paintings found in *Villette* cannot be interpreted as direct expressions of the unconscious mind for the reason that these pieces are not Lucy Snowe's own creation. Lucy accompanies Dr. Bretton, also known as John Graham, on his errands around the city, and, occasionally, while he is completing these errands, Lucy waits for him in an art gallery, quietly contemplating the works around her. As Lucy says herself, she finds contentment in

“examining, questioning, and forming conclusions” (225) about these paintings. Jane’s drawings and paintings, in contrast to these pieces, can be analyzed in terms of what they reveal about Jane’s unconscious mind and the repressed thoughts that reside there because they were made by her own hand. This difference does not mean, however, that the works Lucy views cannot tell the reader something about her mind and the society in which she lives. The conclusions Lucy makes about the pieces she sees are revealing, as her personal interpretations do much to uncover Lucy’s own unconscious thoughts and emotions.

Such indirect revelation is characteristic of Lucy’s narrating style. Her narration is, from the very beginning of the novel, highly questionable and unreliable. She avoids revealing her own thoughts or emotions and frequently engages in willful self-deception in her recounting of the events of her life, most likely to avoid uncovering old wounds and dealing with the pain that originates from her initial loss. As a result, Lucy projects what she feels and thinks onto other characters in the novel, infusing those around her with the pain, sorrow, grief and even at times jealousy that she feels, all so that she can present herself to the reader as the cool and collected Lucy Snowe. The reader finds one instance of this at the beginning of the novel, when Lucy is a child and staying with her godmother in Bretton. One day, a young girl who is a distant relation of Mrs. Bretton comes to stay with them, her father having to leave for the continent on business. The little girl, Paulina, suffers heavily from the perceived loss of her father, crying and moping about the house. In recounting these events, the narrator Lucy is projecting her own sense of loss and sorrow onto the young girl, attempting to differentiate her own coolness and apparent emotional detachment from Paulina’s acute pain. Despite this attempted differentiation, Paulina serves as a double for Lucy and indirectly reveals the pain Lucy feels at the loss of her own

family. Thus, such indirect revelation of thoughts and emotions is not uncommon for the narrator and is exhibited once again in her contemplation of the paintings in the gallery.

Because Lucy never provides direct evidence of what she is feeling or thinking, the reader must use the indirect expressions she provides to interpret her unconscious mind. Lucy's "conclusions" (225) that she makes about the paintings in the galleries can be seen as expressions of her unconscious mind; she is giving oblique expression to the things she would rather keep hidden below the surface. Although there are many paintings in the gallery, Lucy spends the most time contemplating the one entitled "Cleopatra." She provides the reader with a very telling description of the painting:

It represented a woman, considerably larger, I thought, than the life. I calculated that this lady, put into a scale of magnitude suitable for the reception of a commodity of bulk, would infallibly turn from fourteen to sixteen stone. She was, indeed, extremely well fed: very much butcher's meat -- to say nothing of bread, vegetables, and liquids -- must she have consumed to attain that breadth and height, that wealth of muscle, that affluence of flesh. She lay half-reclined on a couch: why, it would be difficult to say; broad daylight blazed round her; she appeared in hearty health, strong enough to do the work of two plain cooks; she could not plead a weak spine; she ought to have been standing, or at least sitting bolt upright. She had no business to lounge away the noon on a sofa. (227)

If restraint, regulation, and, as Gilbert and Gubar term it in their *The Madwoman in the Attic* (1979), "self-surveillance" (409), are the doctrines by which women are to live, the repulsion and aversion that both Lucy and M. Paul feel towards the "Cleopatra" become natural responses to such excess and overindulgence. The "Cleopatra," literally and figuratively exceeding those

limits placed on her female viewers, becomes an object of disdain and contempt, for she breaks the bounds of the prescribed female roles and faces no obvious consequences.

Gilbert and Gubar offer a slightly different perspective on the painting: “Of course the paintings are meant to examine the ridiculous roles men assign women” (420). Assuming that the painting was indeed completed by a male artist, this analysis of the image could be true as well. Yet, the painting seems to do more than just examine or scrutinize women’s “ridiculous roles;” it seems as though the painting exposes hidden insecurities and even desires in both male and female viewers that each would prefer to remain hidden. Gilbert and Gubar continue their analysis of the painting, saying, “[A]nd thus the chapter is arranged to maximize the reader’s consciousness of how varying male responses to female images are uniformly produced by the male pride that seems to control women” (420). Indeed, M. Paul’s reaction to the “Cleopatra” would appear to corroborate such a statement. His astonishment at finding Lucy calmly contemplating the picture is apparent: “How dare you, a young person, sit coolly down, with the self-possession of a garçon, and look at *that* picture?” (228) Apparently such an image is one he would deem inappropriate for Lucy’s viewing, and she shares his dislike of the painting. M. Paul’s repulsion towards the “Cleopatra” reveals his own prejudices against women who dare to exist in excess, who defy the limitations imposed on them. Lucy’s similar feelings suggest the internalization of such misogynist values.

Additionally, Lucy’s heated response to the overindulged woman reveals that hidden emotions exist underneath her seemingly cool facade. The ironic, critical tone she takes towards the painting discloses more than just animosity towards a woman who is her exact opposite. Her criticism of a woman who lives in such unapologetic extravagance reveals her insecurity at her

own inconspicuousness. Small, plain, and rather unnoticeable, Lucy Snowe is uncertain of herself and angry at her own insignificance. The painting itself explores the possibilities of what a woman can be; it is a metaphorical mirror into a world that Lucy cannot know. The image reflects confidence, self-assurance, and even poise amidst a chaotic background. Lucy, repelling such reflections, feels aversion towards a woman who she could never be.

Exploring more forms of artistic expression in *Villette* than she does in *Jane Eyre*, Brontë also examines the role of dramatic performance in expressing repressed thoughts and emotions, and the use of an adapted role in uncovering the feelings that would otherwise be left unarticulated. Dramatic performance, like the paintings she sees in the gallery, offers Lucy an indirect form of self-expression and the opportunity to communicate repressed feelings. Lucy accompanies Mrs. Bretton to the theater one night, with John Graham telling Lucy who is to perform. Yet, withholding information as she usually does, Lucy neglects to provide the name of the performer to the reader. She says, “And he mentioned a name that thrilled me -- a name that, in those days, could thrill Europe” (288). In the absence of the woman’s real name, Lucy provides her own name for the actress: “I had heard the woman termed ‘plain,’ and I expected a bony harshness and grimness... What I saw was the shadow of a royal Vashti: a queen, fair as the day once, turned pale now like twilight, and wasted like wax in a flame” (291). Although Vashti’s appearance seems similar in description to Lucy’s own self-description, as Lucy often refers to herself as plain and rather unattractive, Lucy associates the plainness of Vashti with regal splendor. It seems as though Lucy somehow identifies with Vashti, seeing her as some kind of psychological double, and projects all the emotions she wishes she could express onto Vashti. The rage and energy that Vashti embodies are forms of self-expression that Lucy herself seems

incapable of, so she uses Vashti as a means by which she can project these feelings and express her own repressed emotions. In this way, Vashti and the “Cleopatra” fulfill similar purposes and are both types of creative expression through which Lucy expresses her own repressed emotions and feelings indirectly.

In both *Jane Eyre* and *Villette*, then, Brontë is exploring artistic expression and its ability to reveal repressed thoughts and emotions. In *Jane Eyre*, artwork is a direct expression of the repressed contents that dwell in the unconscious, and makes broader claims about the psychological state of women in Victorian society. In *Villette*, artwork is examined from a different angle, as Lucy Snowe is more of an observer of life than a participant in it, and thus artwork is shown to be significant through the interpretations it generates. Lucy’s conclusions about the paintings reveal in an indirect manner the contents of her unconscious mind, while the descriptions of Jane’s paintings reveal more directly her repressed thoughts. Either way, Brontë uses creative expression as a critical aspect of each novel in understanding the inner workings of the female unconscious mind.

Dreams and Nightscapes

In addition to art and forms of creative expression, Brontë explores dreams and nightscapes as windows into the unconscious minds of her characters. In *Jane Eyre*, such exploration of nighttime happenings occurs at Thornfield. Yet, before examining the figures that occupy Thornfield, one must first consider the significance of the structure itself. More than just an old, remote manor house, Thornfield is a complex psychological metaphor for Jane’s mind, which itself is representative more broadly of the female mind as it exists in Victorian England. Despite the fact that Mr. Rochester owns Thornfield, the house itself is run and inhabited

primarily by women, hence Jane's initial mistake that Mrs. Fairfax is the house's owner. Female domesticity becomes an important theme in relation to Thornfield, as expectations surrounding contemporary feminine behavior and domesticity oppress both the female body and mind. The house becomes a prison that makes everyday existence for these women both monotonous and restricting. Mentally, women repressed the thoughts and emotions that were considered unfeminine. These women wore convincing social masks that smothered their true thoughts and emotions, and Charlotte Brontë, specifically in this section of *Jane Eyre*, illuminates this stifling oppression.

Thornfield, with its clear division between public and private rooms, stands as a metaphor for the split identity women felt as a result of their hidden thoughts and emotions. The social mask, or the performance of domesticity, finds its place in the downstairs rooms that are public and meant for display. Its upper attic regions represent the unconscious mind. Here one finds the hidden thoughts and emotions that domesticity fosters, otherwise known as the contents of the unconscious mind.

This clear division between public and private, conscious and unconscious, leads to psychological disturbance and discomfort that is examined as through Jane's exploration of the upper regions of the house. Mrs. Fairfax's introduction and subsequent tour of the house emphasizes the role that ideals of feminine domesticity play in the psychological terrain of the female mind. Her position as housekeeper epitomizes this issue of domestic confinement and represents the extent to which female bodies and minds are confined by the physical structure of the home and the social standards it embodies.

The scholar Eugenie DeLamotte in her book *Perils of the Night: A Feminist Study of Nineteenth Century Gothic* (1990) investigates the extent to which the ideal of feminine domesticity becomes an element of horror in what she terms the modified nineteenth-century Gothic genre. Thornfield, in addition to its metaphorical significance as Jane's psyche, is also the physical embodiment of the societal institutions that oppress the female psyche and restrict it. DeLamotte sees Brontë's novel as contributing to the creation of a new kind of Gothic genre, one where the dangers to which the heroine is subjected are not deadly pursuit or entrapment in a nunnery, but rather "the deadliest but most ordinary peril of a woman's life" (195). DeLamotte further presses this point, arguing that Brontë's *Jane Eyre* equates domesticity with Gothic peril:

The mixture of everyday realism and Gothic atmosphere here means that from the beginning of Jane's stay at Thornfield the usual boundary in Gothic romance between the everyday world and the oneiric world -- a boundary ordinary equated with the Gothic threshold itself -- is blurred. (200)

The housekeeper is an emblem of the domestic confinement to which Jane is about to resign herself, and her ensuing tour of Thornfield translates into a perusal of her own prison. The tour of Thornfield shows how the structure is not only a representation of the domestic confinement to which women were subject in nineteenth-century England, but also how the house doubles as a psychological representation of the heroine's mind, with both conscious and unconscious spaces to be explored or repressed alternately.

Jane's inner dialogue at Thornfield further reveals its function as a psychological metaphor. She says, "When we left the dining-room, she proposed to show me over the rest of the house; and I followed her up stairs and down stairs, admiring as I went, for all was well

arranged and handsome” (125). The public rooms of the house are representations of the conscious, waking mind. A comfortable exploration of these rooms is possible because everything is “well arranged” and fitting with social expectations. No discomfort arises, because everything in these rooms aligns with the values and beliefs of the society in which they exist. The conscious female psyche, embodied in these public, well ordered rooms of the first floor, not only creates this public persona but also participates in it, repressing behind this facade all of the emotions and thoughts that might perhaps be disruptive to these well-arranged rooms. Yet above all this order and neatness are disorderly, hidden rooms that embody Jane’s unconscious mind, and as she explores them she becomes more familiar with the extent of that repression.

The movement to the third floor then suggests a progression beyond consciousness, movement from a space that has been fully examined to something more inaccessible and carefully hidden. Jane’s perusal of the third floor reveals how the space functions as a psychological representation of the unconscious mind:

All these relics gave to the third story of Thornfield Hall the aspect of a home of the past -- a shrine of memory. I liked the hush, the gloom, the quaintness of these retreats in the day; but I by no means coveted a night’s repose on one of whose wide and heavy beds -- shut in, some of them, with doors of oak; shaded, others, with wrought old English hangings, crusted with thick work, portraying effigies of strange flowers, and stranger birds, and strangest human beings -- all of which would have looked strange, indeed, by the pallid gleam of moonlight. (125)

Brontë’s intentional use of the phrase “a shrine of memory” indicates that the attic rooms function as the metaphoric unconscious mind where past memories have been hidden away. This

“home of the past” that Jane now occupies and explores will reveal to her the repressed memories of her childhood, along with feelings of anger and rage that will resurface.

Definitively, a “shrine of memory” functions as a repository of repressed memories or emotions that here remain hidden beneath the surface in broad daylight; in other words, this “shrine of memory” is Jane’s unconscious mind. “The hush, the gloom” that Jane describes suggests that these rooms, like her psychological unconscious, are not frequently explored. She does not wish a “night’s repose” here because to sleep here would mean to let her unconscious loose, to more fully explore the mechanisms of her repression.

To suggest nighttime is to suggest the unconscious, the time when conscious control is lessened and repressive tendencies are weakened. Significantly, Jane’s most revelatory experiences on the third floor of Thornfield happen at night. The strange noises she hears, her direct encounters with Bertha Mason, all of these things happen at night, indicating a close affinity with dreams and unconscious activity. Until now, the repressed memories and emotions that exist in Jane’s psychological unconscious have only been revealed to the reader through the medium of art. Through this art, one was able to decipher more specifically the exact thoughts and emotions that Jane repressed. Now, through an examination of her dreams and nighttime encounters, one can more directly understand the inner workings of Jane’s unconscious mind. Carl Jung describes dreams as being “the most important and most obvious results of unconscious psychic processes obtruding themselves upon consciousness” (“The Structure of the Psyche” 27). He also argues that dreams “have the advantage of being involuntary, spontaneous products of the unconscious psyche and are therefore pure products of nature not falsified” (“The

Concept of the Collective Conscious” 67). Thornfield offers the reader an opportunity to examine Jane’s dreams as direct revelations of her unconscious mind and all that is hidden in it.

Similar to Jane’s artwork then, her dreams and nighttime episodes at Thornfield reveal to the reader the repressed feelings which dwell in the distant and difficult-to-reach region of the psychological unconscious. As she wanders the staircases, the halls, and the various rooms of the third floor, she is exploring her own mind as a product of nineteenth-century social institutions.

The impending threat of night also suggests that the full meaning of these rooms is not readily apparent in the daylight. Jane’s examination of the third floor during the daylight points at a budding acquaintance with her own unconscious, an acknowledgement, perhaps, of its existence, although with only a dim understanding of what it holds. When she references the beds that she sees in the attic, saying she “by no means coveted a night’s repose on one of whose wide and heavy beds” (125), it indicates nighttime, sleep, and an unconscious state of mind, foreshadowing the fact that this space will reveal the inner workings of her unconscious mind.

The image conjured here is one of dreams and nightmares, unconscious roamings of the mind that explore and reveal the dreamer’s repressed thoughts and emotions. The bed itself is a symbol of imprisonment, with its large doors of oak that trap the dreamer in her sleep, and represents the elements foreign from the conscious self -- the “strange” images Jane sees are manifestations of the unconscious that come to the forefront in dreams. Jane fears the nighttime as a state of unconsciousness and therefore her lack of ability to repress what would be seen as her unfeminine desires.

With its emphasis on dreams and nighttime happenings, then, Thornfield emphasizes more heavily than any other section in the novel the Gothic elements that DeLamotte argued

Brontë intentionally incorporated. As a physical representative of the domestic repression under which women suffered, Jane's bodily entrapment at Thornfield exemplifies what DeLamotte termed "the deadliest but most ordinary peril of a woman's life" (195). The traditional Gothic mansion, filled with spectres, ghosts, and villainous keepers, is here transformed into the everyday. Thornfield's worst horror is its ability to ensnare women into the repetitive, never ending chores of domesticity. It is this threat of the domestic that causes Jane to reflect on the plight of women and their feelings of confinement in Victorian England:

Women are supposed to be very calm generally; but women feel just as men feel; they need exercise for their faculties, and a field for their efforts, as much as their brothers do; they suffer from too rigid a restraint, too absolute a stagnation, precisely as men would suffer; and it is narrow-minded in their more privileged fellow-creatures to say that they ought to confine themselves to making puddings and knitting stockings, to playing on the piano and embroidering bags. It is thoughtless to condemn them, or laugh at them; if they seek to do more or learn more than custom has pronounced necessary for their sex.

(130-31)

It is no accident that upon Jane's arrival at Thornfield she begins to have feelings of discontent and discomfort at her constricted and confined situation. Thornfield, an emblem of the traditional Gothic mansion in which the heroine is trapped, represents the societal architecture of Victorian England and its foundations of sexist inequality. The "restraint" and "stagnation" Jane describes are not only restraints on her physical person but on her mental faculties as well; she is unable to exercise complete freedom in either capacity. She is restricted to certain areas of the house, just as she is restricted mentally, only allowed to comment or have opinions on certain subjects.

Indeed, Jane identifies concretely the topics on which women are allowed to have thoughts and which they might pursue wholeheartedly.

More than merely identifying women's bondage within the home, Jane argues that women are equal to men, saying that if men were put under the same physical and mental restrictions, they would suffer just as women do. Such thoughts and emotions are the very ones she has been struggling to repress since childhood, learning at Lowood that submission and passivity are the ideals of femininity. The resurfacing of her old feelings of rage and anger at her position in relation to men are therefore in opposition to feminine ideals and have been duly repressed. Yet, as Jane continues to explore the third floor of Thornfield, and comes closer to meeting her psychological double, such thoughts become more frequent, as Jane becomes more familiar with the contents of her unconscious.

Additionally, the use of the word "creature" in this passage is an interesting reversal on a typically feminine label. Women are frequently characterized as fascinating, enchanting, or bewitching creatures in Victorian literature, identifying them as both separate from and unequal to men. Even in her own writing, Brontë explores female as creature when Lucy in *Villette* refers to Paulina as "it" (10), denying her the interiority or depth that acknowledgement of personhood grants. As objects of observation and ownership, creatures may be admired by men without consideration of their thoughts, emotions, and desires. As a creature, as an object that lacks interiority and depth, a woman has none of these things. Brontë here reclaims this word and reverses its meaning, labeling men as the "creatures" who have no emotions or feelings, who lack the depth it would require to acknowledge women as their equal.

The word “creature” also draws on the Gothic tradition of the strange, alien being that occupies a separate sphere from the normal or the everyday. The creature that lurks in the shadows, the monster that threatens the heroine, manifests itself differently in Brontë’s modified take on the Gothic. The creature or the villain in this updated version is perhaps more threatening, more menacing, because he is not identified as such. The villain and the hero become one, and, to the reader’s dismay, the heroine falls in love with him. Rochester, as the owner of Thornfield and the wielder of these Gothic traditions of feminine endangerment and male empowerment, is the creature that both forbids Jane her freedom and entices her further into his lair. Functioning in this instance as a Gothic villain, Rochester is the creature that threatens Jane’s sense of self, her individuality, and her bodily and mental freedom. He condemns or laughs at women’s attempt to better themselves, because for them to do so is a threat to his own masculine power and an attempt at overthrowing the inherent authority he maintains.

Furthermore, the “creature” is something within, or a part of, Jane. Significantly, right after this passage of women’s confinement and bondage in domesticity, Jane thinks of the laugh in the attic. She thinks, “When thus alone, I not unfrequently heard Grace Poole’s laugh: the same -- the same peal, the same low, slow ha! ha! Which, when first heard, thrilled me; I heard, too, her eccentric murmurs, stranger than her laugh” (131). Jane mistakenly identifies the laugh as belonging to Grace, as she is not yet aware that there is another person in the attic, but already Jane identifies with this creature, and is “thrilled” by the sounds she makes. Coming right after Jane’s reflections on her solitary confinement and the plight of women in Victorian England, Bertha’s mocking, demonic laugh can be heard throughout the house. Seemingly an ominous

challenge to the walls that enclose her, the laugh permeates throughout and overcomes her visual seclusion. Yes, Bertha is hidden from sight, quite literally trapped in a domestic setting, yet she remains heard. This laugh, this assertion of her personhood, of her authenticated selfhood, excites Jane.

Bertha is the literal embodiment of the domestic confinement Jane describes and functions as her psychological double. This scene is the first of many in which Jane and Bertha are paralleled or identified as two sides of the same coin. Jane's discovery of Bertha, although she does not yet recognize that this is what it is, represents the beginning of a deeper self-discovery, one that will ultimately lead to an examination of Jane's repressed, unconscious emotions and a break with Rochester. DeLamotte discusses this discovery of the "Other Woman" as a discovery of the self, saying, "The heroine's discovery of such Other Women is in the one case an encounter with women's oppression -- their confinement as wives, mothers, and daughters" (153-54). Jane's reflections on the plight of women, so closely followed by the sounds of Bertha's laughter, confirm this assertion, revealing to the reader the perils of domesticity and the threats of Victorian marriage.

One particular element of this scene that challenges an overtly feminist reading and calls into question women's complicitness in perpetuating patriarchal values is the fact that Grace Poole emerges from the room, the individual to whom Jane mistakenly attributes the laughter. In her analysis of Brontë's work, Shuttleworth foregrounds the role of surveillance in maintaining the repressive instincts necessary for the stabilization of Victorian society. Shuttleworth argues that, in Brontë's fiction, "Surveillance and interpretative penetration are not represented... as innocent activities" (17). Similar to Rochester's intrusive examination of Jane's artwork, Grace's

surveillance of Bertha Mason imposes the patriarchal dominance over the female mind and body. As Shuttleworth sees it, Grace Poole functions on the personal level to reinforce an institutional operation of surveillance (219), one that represses displays of excess, with the madwoman being the most prominent example of a figure of excess in the Victorian era. Thus, while Brontë displays the internalization of repressive instincts on the female psyche as a result of Victorian social values, she also exposes the hypocrisy inherent in women's causes, as women themselves undermine their own efforts in perpetuating patriarchal principles.

Dreams and nighttime antics also play an important role in revealing the inner workings of the unconscious mind in *Villette*. Nighttime itself is significant throughout the entire novel, as it becomes a metaphor for dreaming, with the onset of night marking one's entrance into the world of the unconscious. The repression imposed by the conscious mind during the day on the unconscious mind is temporarily suspended, and the unconscious mind experiences a freedom of expression normally prohibited. Thus, when the reader encounters the chapter entitled "Cloud" towards the end of *Villette*, he or she is aware that we are entering the realm of shadows.

Lucy has recently learned that the object of her growing affection, M. Paul, will be leaving Europe on a long voyage for an indefinite amount of time. Eagerly awaiting his arrival so that she might bid him goodbye, Lucy finally receives written communication from M. Paul that he will come to her before he leaves. Madame Beck, wanting to stop such a meeting because of her own jealousy and feelings for M. Paul, drugs Lucy in her sleep so that she will miss her last chance at seeing him. Madame Beck operates similarly to Grace Poole in *Jane Eyre*, imposing restrictive forms of surveillance on Lucy's mind and body in order to maintain social order. However, rather than calming her mind for a quiet sleep, the drug has a stimulating effect. Lucy

says, “I know not whether Madame had over-charged or under-charged the dose; its result was not that she intended. Instead of stupor, came excitement... Imagination was roused from her rest, and she came forth impetuous and venturous” (506). In the drugged wanderings that follow, both Lucy’s unconscious mind and her body are allowed freedom from repression. The imagination that is awakened in her is thus a sign of mental unrestraint and an absence of self-surveillance. In this nightscape scenario, Lucy’s fears are hidden yet also confronted, as her fears regarding M. Paul’s allegiance to her become seemingly confirmed.

In her chapter entitled “*Villette*: ‘The surveillance of a sleepless eye,’” Shuttleworth discusses ideas of moral management and social surveillance (219) that contribute to Victorian ideals of restraint and self-control. In this environment, Lucy’s masked surveillance becomes an important mechanism by which these values are enforced; in her drugged wandering, the reader sees Lucy as both the surveyor and the object of surveillance. According to Shuttleworth, the lack of surveillance causes excess and indulgence, and even more frighteningly, the dissolution of the border between the “conscious and unconscious self” (35), leading to the destruction of the repressive forces that maintain societal order. For fear of the chaos that could potentially result from such liberty, control in all areas was valued as a social caution. Such rigid control is maintained through repressing the unacceptable thoughts and feelings that attempt to reach the surface of one’s conscious mind. Shuttleworth claims, “All had to remain vigilant against the momentary slippage of the social mask” (221). The social mask, as Shuttleworth terms it, is a protective cover that hides the hidden or subversive thoughts that threaten social order.

Jane and Lucy’s similar struggle with repression operates on a personal and social level. *Jane Eyre* examines the consequences of both internal and external repressive forces, focusing

on the individual female mind and the larger social atmosphere as products of patriarchal values and the inherent repression that accompanies those values. *Villette*, in contrast, explores repression more as a coping mechanism through which one might deal with trauma. Making far fewer claims about the social implications of repression as a way to hide subversive thoughts and emotions, *Villette* explores repression as a personal struggle that originates in childhood loss. Despite this difference, Lucy's narrative lends valuable insight into the mechanisms of repression and demonstrates the extent to which Brontë was exploring it as a way to deal with her own society. Additionally, both novels explore dreams and nocturnal wanderings as products and direct revelations of the unconscious mind.

Conclusion

Towards the end of *Jane Eyre*, Jane is given the unique opportunity to revisit the social and emotional circumstances of her childhood, allowing her to confront the issues of the past that have caused psychological distress in her adult life. The figures at Moor House mirror those of Jane's childhood at Gateshead, but from the beginning of her stay at Moor House Jane's experience and interactions with these people are entirely different. Initially, Moor House appears to be a warm, nurturing environment in which Jane can psychologically heal from the trauma sustained at Gateshead. Throughout the course of the novel, Jane has exhibited psychological growth since her childhood at Gateshead and has seemingly overcome the oppressive surroundings of her society. Her time at Thornfield, in particular, allowed Jane to explore her repressed emotions and grow psychologically. Now, as the novel progresses into its final sections, the reader can determine to what extent Jane has overcome her oppressive surroundings.

At Thornfield, Jane is aligned with the madwoman as an exercise in self-discovery. Until Jane knows Bertha, she cannot fully know herself, and this process of uncovering Bertha's hidden existence leads to psychological growth and a kind of self-realization for Jane. As Shuttleworth notes, "Our first sight of Bertha is not, significantly, as the beast grovelling on all fours, but rather as a woman gazing into Jane's mirror" (167). There is an act of self-reflection happening here, one in which Jane begins to discover and acknowledge the full extent of her psychological repression as a result of nineteenth-century Victorian society. Bertha is a physical representation of her own psychological imprisonment, a result of the patriarchal institutions that surround them. Jane, in her defiance of Rochester and her leaving Thornfield, seems to have successfully rejected the patriarchal structures that defined her psychological conflict and hindered growth. This moment, however, merely marks the pinnacle of Jane's psychological growth. Her time at Moor House calls the progress made at Thornfield into question, challenging the extent to which a woman can truly conquer the patriarchal institutions and values that sustain female psychological oppression.

Moor House operates as a mirror into Jane's childhood, allowing Jane to reexperience her position in childhood and attempt to redefine her identity in relation to this family unit. The figures there reflect the ones at Gateshead, giving Jane the opportunity to confront her past and move beyond the conflicts that led to her psychological repression of rage. Yet, St. John, who mirrors her childhood cousin John Reed, looms larger than ever, bullying Jane and attempting to control her both physically and mentally. He, like Rochester, embodies the patriarchal authority under which Victorian women live. And despite the fact that Jane has just defied one such figure, fleeing Thornfield in an assertion of her independence, it is surprising to find her so ill-equipped

to defend her personal autonomy. It is as if, rather than allowing her adult experiences and growth to reframe her childhood experiences, she psychologically reverts to a child: she is helpless and dependent. Confronted with the figure of St. John, Jane devolves psychologically and falls back into her old habits of submission and repression. His dialogue towards Jane is harsh and demanding, his demeanor in her presence menacing and overbearing. Jane says,

He had not kept his promise of treating me like his sisters; he continually made little, chilling differences between us, which did not at all tend to the development of cordiality; in short, now that I was acknowledged his kinswoman, and lived under the same roof with him, I felt the distance between us to be far greater than when he had known me only as the village schoolmistress. (458-59)

He is John Reed reincarnated, but this time he wields more power over Jane's personal situation. Jane, despite the psychological growth she has experienced up to this point in the novel, begins to unravel psychologically and allows St. John to manipulate her mind.

In addition to the mirroring of childhood figures that occurs, old insecurities generated at Gateshead resurface. Jane's eagerness to earn her keep, to demonstrate to the Rivers that she is not a helpless dependent, stems from this childhood insecurity instilled in her at Gateshead. Before being thrown into the Red Room, Bessie tells Jane, "No; you are less than a servant, for you do nothing for your keep" (17). This sense of inferiority impressed upon her at such a young age makes Jane eager to earn her keep now; her sense of duty and her yearning to demonstrate her gratitude make her overly eager to please. Such eagerness sets her up for manipulation, whereas at Thornfield she felt no similar sense of indebtedness: she earned her keep as a governess, and thus felt she deserved the room in which she slept. Here, however, the childhood

position of dependency she once occupied emerges again, and the fear of becoming a burden makes her more malleable to St. John's exacting demands.

The extensive control St. John wields over Jane's person is evident when he tells her to give up learning German and take up Hindostanee instead. He exerts the same control over books, and thus the acquisition of knowledge, that John Reed did when he said, "You have no business to take our books; you are a dependent" (15). The terror instilled in her by John Reed comes back to her while in the presence of St. John, and Jane feels unable to refuse him: "St. John was not a man to be lightly refused; you felt that every impression made on him, either for pain or pleasure, was deep-graved and permanent" (460). Jane's relationship with St. John is informed by her childhood relationship with John Reed, and just as she obeys St. John's every command now, Jane was equally as pliant to the demands of John Reed: "Habitually obedient to John, I came up to his chair" (14). Jane's reversion to her childhood behavioral patterns represents psychological regression. Despite the fact that this is a new family, albeit one that mirrors childhood familial relations, Jane is unable to adopt a new psychological disposition towards its individual units. Carl Jung in his chapter "The Stages of Life" addresses this kind of psychological backsliding:

Whoever protects himself against what is new and strange and regresses to the past falls into the same neurotic condition as the man who identifies himself with the new and runs away from the past. The only difference is that the one has estranged himself from the past and the other from the future. In principle both are doing the same thing: they are reinforcing their narrow range of consciousness instead of shattering it in the tension of opposites and building up a state of wider and higher consciousness. (10)

Jane, according to Jung's reading of this kind of situation, thus estranges herself from the future and renders herself unable to progress psychologically. This estrangement translates into a narrower consciousness, according to Jung, and ultimately returns Jane's psychological state to one of repression and evasion. In the presence of St. John, she once again represses her emotions of rage and passion and eliminates her sense of self in the process. St. John manipulates her mind and oppresses her sense of free will in order to shape her as his partner in service. And Jane, surprisingly, bends to his will.

This psychological regression becomes most apparent when one compares the independent strength Jane exhibited in her relationship with Rochester and the reliant, subordinate behavior she adopts towards St. John. Jane reflects growth and independence when leaving Thornfield, saying, "Meantime, let me ask myself one question -- Which is better? To have surrendered to temptation; listened to passion; made no painful effort -- no struggle; but to have sunk down in the silken snare..." (416). Yet, she does not struggle so vehemently now. As a man not to be "lightly refused" (460), Jane's apparent desire to please St. John allows him to control her person in a way that Jane has not permitted anyone to do since her early days at Gateshead. She says,

... I wanted employment; my present life was too purposeless, I required an aim; and I suppose by way of deficiencies, he prolonged still further my lessons in Hindostanee, and grew more urgent in requiring their accomplishment; and I, like a fool, never thought of resisting him -- I could not resist him. (463)

Her position as a governess at Thornfield allowed her to feel a sense of purpose and justified her position there since she was employed. At Moor House, however, she feels dependent, which is

the result of a lingering insecurity from childhood. Moor House, a place that ought to have been the final site of psychological growth and self-realization for Jane, becomes instead a space of regression and mental relapse, telling the reader that Jane cannot easily overcome the oppressive circumstances that surround her.

Confronted once again with this oppressive force of her childhood, Jane is unable to surmount the overbearing presence. St. John represents the larger patriarchal authority that controls Jane's world, and her distress under his tutelage illuminates the extent to which she feels controlled both physically and mentally. Despite the psychological growth she has exhibited over the course of the novel, Jane's interactions with St. John derail that progress to a large extent, forcing the reader to question the psychological independence Jane can truly have in this stifling environment. Brontë seems to be telling the reader that a woman can never truly escape these deeply entrenched patriarchal values, and that rather she must merely pick her poison. Jane understands the limitations of her independence and knows the choices before her. She has the privileged ability to choose to marry or to remain single. Compared with most women at the time, the fact that Jane even has such a choice is a rare freedom. She has gained financial independence through inheritance, and thus is afforded the luxury of not having to marry. The situation is nuanced, however, as her inheritance does not free her from the patriarchal values that surround her but rather further indebted her to them, as it is her uncle's fortune that provides her with this new financial freedom.

Investigating childhood experience and its resurfacing throughout adulthood, Brontë explores this question of psychological growth and progression at the end of *Villette* as well. Similar to Jane in her inability to move beyond her childhood experiences, Lucy Snowe ends the

narration of her story with language that harkens back to the metaphor of a shipwreck used to refer to the loss of her family. Expecting the imminent return of M. Paul from his long voyage, Lucy reverts to despair as she relates the events of an apparent shipwreck. Vague and elusive as she has been throughout the entire narrative, Lucy's recounting of events is unclear and leaves the reader with only an impression of what has transpired. She says:

That storm roared and frenzied for seven days. It did not cease till the Atlantic was strewn with wrecks: it did not lull till the deeps had gorged their full sustenance. Not till the destroying angel of tempest had achieved his perfect work, would he fold the wings whose waft was thunder -- the tremor of whose plumes was storm... Here pause: pause at once. There is enough said. Trouble no quiet, kind heart; leave sunny imagination of hope. Let it be theirs to conceive the delight of joy born again fresh out of great terror, the rapture of rescue from peril, the wondrous reprieve from dread, the fruition of return. Let them picture union and a happy succeeding life. (555)

Lucy echoes the language used to describe her original loss, once again indirectly referring to it and unable to explicitly identify and articulate that loss. Such evasion prevents growth, and, at the end of the novel, Lucy continues to be an emotionally and psychologically stunted individual who cannot move beyond the trauma of her childhood. It has informed her entire existence as an adult and suggests that the ghosts inhabiting her unconscious mind will continue to haunt her.

Yet, Lucy experiences a different kind of psychological reversion than that of Jane's regression, as the two experiences are defined by different contexts and perspectives. Brontë examines psychological regression in both characters but distinguishes between the cause of such regression. For Lucy, her psychological relapse into repression and evasion is caused by

emotional trauma, making her mental processes somewhat more removed from the social realm. Jane's experience, in contrast, is defined by the social environment and her regression happens as a result of patriarchal authority and oppression. Thus, while the two women both exhibit instances of psychological regression after apparent progress has been made, both revert back to childhood modes of repression but for different reasons and in different contexts.

Returning to Jane's situation, marriage becomes a question not of necessity but of emotional happiness and social acceptability. Again, it is a rare freedom that marriage for Jane can be seen as an optional choice, but that freedom is qualified by the fact that her fortune was gained through her uncle. Additionally, life as a single woman would be extremely lonely for Jane, and, in addition to exploring the economic and social facets of marriage, Brontë also explores marriage as an emotional outlet through which women might, if lucky, find companionship.

Regarding the question of her marriage to St. John, Jane sees marrying him as equal to a life of servitude. She realizes the consequences such a union would have and says, "Alas! if I join St. John, I abandon half myself... No! such a martyrdom would be monstrous" (468-69). His exacting demands of her as well as the loveless relationship they would have, Jane knows, would quite literally kill her. Jane is an emotional being and understands that she has emotional needs that can only be fulfilled through a marriage of love, despite the concessions to patriarchal values that marriage would require. She says, "But in my opinion, if I am not formed for love, it follows that I am not formed for marriage" (481). Marriage, according to Brontë, is a prison sentence for women if it does not mean the union of two equals who love one another. Jane understands the dangers surrounding a loveless marriage and knows what would come of her

union with St. John. For Jane, being single is a more viable option than sentencing oneself to marital imprisonment. Yet, as a school mistress at a lonely and remote village cottage, Jane has experienced the isolation and emotional emptiness that the choice to be single would bring. In this dilemma, Brontë illustrates the difficult choices facing women who must marry for economic reasons and implicitly argues for a reformation of the patriarchal institution of marriage.

Jane thus returns to Thornfield in search of what she has lost, but is scared of what she might find. What she finds, however, are the ruins of the burned Thornfield and the wandering housekeeper, Mrs. Fairfax. She describes the sight saying, “I looked with timorous joy toward a stately house; I saw a blackened ruin” (491). The ruins of Thornfield suggest something more than the destruction of a once great manor house. Embodying the multiple meanings of patriarchal societal values and female psychological oppression, the ruins of Thornfield, while offering the hope of a new beginning, also suggest that the destruction of patriarchal society as it exists is necessary for the type of marital bliss Jane ultimately finds. The fact that Brontë’s image of an ideal marriage occurs away from Thornfield, the representation of Victorian society and its values, suggests that her vision is not realistic outside the novel.

Jane’s marriage is hopeful and an illustration of what ought to be, yet it also seems to be a compromise of the rebellious, progressive values she embodied earlier in the novel. Its idealistic quality is underlined by the fact that their union must occur at the remote and isolated Ferndean. As Shuttleworth notes in chapter on *Jane Eyre*, “The brooding, dank atmosphere of Ferndean, with air so ‘insalubrious’ that Rochester had declined to place Bertha there, forms a setting which ill accords with Jane’s attempts to claim happiness for all” (181). And, speaking of

Bertha, her conspicuous absence in the closing scenes of the novel reminds the reader of what had to transpire in order for Jane to obtain such marital bliss. Bertha's death represents the form of self-destruction that all women suffer in the patriarchal marriage she endured, and, problematically, her timely death facilitates the new beginning her husband receives. Jane, who is apparently content to forget the woman who embodied her own inner struggles, accepts the severance of the invisible chord that once bound the two women and diverges from the path of rebellion and dissent. She is, as she says "absolutely bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh" (522). Jane is, in essence, no longer her own person. Once characterized by the inner psychological conflict she endured and the struggle to unleash her repressed emotions, she immerses herself in her marriage and in doing so loses much of the self-definition she has fought for over the course of the novel.

Marriage is just one of the many patriarchal institutions of Victorian society that fosters female psychological repression and social inequality. Brontë addresses the institution with apparently conflicting values, seeing both the potential of what it could be as well as desiring to expose it for what it actually is. Additionally, in her two novels *Jane Eyre* and *Villette*, Brontë demonstrates a shifting attitude towards the institution, perhaps as a result of her own life experience and personal growth that occurred between the time *Jane Eyre* was written and then later when *Villette* was finished. The publication date for *Jane Eyre* is 1847, and it reflects Brontë's own idealistic views towards marriage. Young, and as of yet relatively inexperienced, Brontë's writing of *Jane Eyre* embodies the hope and optimism she had towards an institution that needed reform in favor of women's equality.

At the time when Brontë was writing *Jane Eyre*, she herself had experienced the hardships of governessing, a fate imposed upon her as the result of her being a poor, lower class woman with no other viable opportunities to provide for herself. In her biography on Charlotte Brontë, *Charlotte Brontë: A Fiery Heart* (2015), Claire Harman describes Brontë's despair at having to exist in what she considered to be misery, and how she used her writing to escape the reality in which she lived (103). Harman characterizes Brontë as living in "two realities" (103), escaping into the visionary and dream-like world of her writing in order to better cope with the world around her. With this biographical context in mind, one can see the parallels between author and protagonist as Jane navigates her multifaceted oppression. The ending of the novel can be seen as not only a call to reform one of the many patriarchal institutions perpetuating women's oppression but also as representative of Brontë's own hopeful outlook for a better future, one with emotional fulfillment and financial autonomy.

Years later, while writing *Villette*, Brontë reflected on her own experience of the pain of unrequited love and the reality of what a woman's place in her current society was, and thus *Villette* reflects a much different idea of marriage and its function within society. Claire Harman in her biography on Brontë notes the similarities between Brontë's own life and the stories she tells, making it clear that her jaded perspective on love and women's position in marriage was altered through her own life experience (190). Brontë spent years pining after the married M. Heger, the husband of the schoolmistress for whom she worked in Brussels. This time in her life closely parallels the plot trajectory of *Villette*, as Brontë obsessed over a man who was unavailable, and seemingly used her writing to both relive and cope with that loss. Like her protagonist Lucy, Brontë seems to have developed an attachment to a man *because* he was

unavailable, allowing her to nurse an obsessive love that would never materialize, safely detached yet desperately committed. Thus, *Villette* offers the reader a much more pessimistic view of marriage and the capacity it has to fulfill an emotional void. Because each novel explores the different functions of marriage and how its role plays out in a woman's life, this thesis has focused primarily on the novel that examined marriage as a function of the larger patriarchal society and how it promoted and perpetuated women's oppression and inequality.

Jane Eyre, with its rebellious beginning and somewhat accommodating ending, explores marriage most thoroughly as an institution of women's oppression and ultimately proposes a reformed vision of marriage in which men and women come together on more level footing. Marriage, by the end of *Jane Eyre*, fulfills strictly an emotional void in Jane's life as she is at this point financially and socially autonomous. To have had Jane, a woman of low social status as well as deep feeling, completely reject the societal institution of marriage would have been untrue to her emotional depth and capacity for passion. Additionally, Brontë sees marriage in its ideal form as the ultimate fulfillment of emotional desire. For Brontë, marriage serves emotional and social purposes, as well as giving a woman in this time period a permanent place in the world around her. Brontë seems to be qualifying her position on marriage as she progresses through the novel, and rather than a radical overhaul of what she sees as a social institution with purpose and meaning, she is arguing for a reformation of its unjust tenets, namely the inequality that it fosters between men and women.

Jane's marriage to Rochester is one defined by love and a union of equality, yet Brontë intentionally removes the marriage from the site of Victorian society, Thornfield, as a concession to the fact that her vision is idealistic. She also understands that such an ending, to a large extent,

compromises the fire and passion so central to Jane's character for most of the novel. As Shuttleworth notes in her closing remarks on *Jane Eyre*, "Brontë's novels move reluctantly, defiantly, towards a conventional ending in marriage whose harmony and stasis suggest, to an individual defined by conflict, a form of self-annihilation" (182). Brontë rejects specific values of patriarchy while continuing to work within its larger framework.

On a different note, Brontë, in *Villette* demonstrates an evolution in her views on marriage and sees it as fulfilling a different purpose in society. In this novel, Brontë explores the institution as relational to the family unit. Marriage, for Lucy, is not a question of her relationship to a man but rather a question of her relationship to the potential family that would result as a consequence of such a union. Lucy spends her entire narrative attempting, and failing, to move beyond the initial loss of her childhood family. For her, marrying and beginning a new family would mean acknowledging her loss and moving forward from it. Continuously stuck in her cyclical evasion and repression of loss, one gets the sense that, at the close of the novel, Lucy is relieved at the revelation that M. Paul will never return. Constantly afraid of reexperiencing her initial loss and feeling pain, Lucy progresses through the novel as a ghost, a mere shadow of a person who is too afraid to experience emotion. As long as her relationship with M. Paul exists in the imaginary realm, Lucy feels safe. At the end of the novel, she says, "M. Emanuel was away three years. Reader, they were the three happiest years of my life" (552). M. Paul is at this point only a dream, an imaginary possibility that requires no commitment and no emotional investment. When she realizes that his ship has wrecked, she can live happily in the delusion that he might return, continuing her pattern of self-deception that forms a barrier between her and harsh reality. She says to her readers, "Let them picture union and a happy succeeding life"

(555). She can forever await a return that will never materialize and perpetually envision a family that can never be lost. Marriage, for Lucy, is a fantasy that promises healing only in her isolated world.

Because these two novels approach the topic of marriage so differently and use it as a means to explore different types of repression, this thesis has focused primarily on the novel that addressed marriage in relation to women's social oppression. While *Villette* uses marriage to plunge into the depths of Lucy's repression of loss, *Jane Eyre* explores marriage as an institutionalized practice of women's oppression and addresses the psychological problems that arise in women as a result of such oppression. While the novel sees women as oppressed in multiple spheres of society, Brontë uses marriage to show how, at times, women are complicit in their own oppression in their search for emotional fulfillment. Compromising values of independence and an autonomous self, Brontë sees marriage at the time as a virtual prison sentence that serves to keep women subservient and inferior. As has already been noted, Brontë seems to shift her radical perspective as *Jane Eyre* progresses, conceding that there is an emotional fulfillment in marriage that complicates its other social and economic purposes. Ultimately, Brontë proposes an idealistic and optimistic version of marriage that seems to be able to only take place outside the realm of Victorian society.

Stepping back from Brontë's novels to view them within the context of nineteenth-century British society, one finds her dealing with the question that this thesis opened with, namely the "Woman Question," and what women's place in society ought to be. Brontë's novels address the anxiety over defining women's role in society, their emerging presence in the public sphere, and issues of their equality in relation to men. In depicting working women who

must make their own way to survive, Brontë's heroines are inherently subversive. Jane Eyre specifically voices a kind of rage and intense emotion over her plight as a woman that was counter to the patriarchal ideals of femininity. Repression, therefore, is a necessary coping mechanism through which women are able to exist in a society that oppresses and subjugates. Brontë explores this psychological mechanism from various perspectives, examining the ways in which repressed thoughts and emotions are expressed. Additionally, she looks at repression and its effects of the female psyche overall, noting that such repression leads to a split in the self that is difficult to reconcile with societal expectations.

In conclusion, Brontë argues that, while women ought to rebel against such intense oppression and assert their right to political and social equality, there is an extent to which the structure of society can be challenged, and, at some point, women must seek happiness and success within that existing framework. Using her writing as a creative outlet to express her own rage and frustration at her position in life, Brontë's heroines voice the intense anger she felt and duly repressed, while simultaneously embodying that inherent hope that weaves throughout her stories, looking forward with an optimistic attitude that, one day, women will have their Ferndean. Her rebellious attitude is tempered by the reality of the climate around her, yet her spirit is not shattered, and the reader is left with the assurance of the words, "I am no bird, and no net ensnares me" (297).

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