

Mid Sweden University
English Studies

Identity and Independence in *Jane Eyre*

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English C/ Special Project

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Spring 2011

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Introduction

During the Victorian era the ideal woman's life revolved around the domestic sphere of her family and the home. Middle class women were brought up to "be pure and innocent, tender and sexually undemanding, submissive and obedient" to fit the glorified "Angel in the House", the Madonna-image of the time (Lundén et al, 147). A woman had no rights of her own and; she was expected to marry and become the servant of her husband. Few professions other than that of a governess were open to educated women of the time who needed a means to support themselves. Higher education was considered wasted on women because they were considered mentally inferior to men and moreover, work was believed to make them ill. The education of women consisted of learning to sing, dance, and play the piano, to draw, read, write, some arithmetic and French and to do embroidery (Lundén et al 147). Girls were basically educated to be on display as ornaments. Women were not expected to express opinions of their own outside a very limited range of subjects, and certainly not be on a quest for own identity and aim to become independent such as the protagonist in Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*. When Charlotte Brontë published *Jane Eyre* she used a pseudonym that did not reveal the sex of the author, the name she used was Currer Bell, a name not distinctly masculine and yet not feminine. The reviews were positive and the novel became a bestseller. There was much speculation on who was behind the name Currer Bell and some more negative reviews started coming when it became known that there was a female author behind the name. To some critics it was inappropriate for a female writer to write such a passionate novel and to have some knowledge of sexuality. Charlotte Brontë wrote in the preface of the second edition 'Conventionality is not morality' to defend her novel against the critics. The character Jane Eyre can be seen as an unconventional female of the time, she is passionate and with a strong urge to fight injustice. Passion and a hot temper in a woman were not appropriate at the time and had to be repressed. The novel can be seen as a journey of Jane finding her true self. Jane fights convention by resisting the male dominance, on her quest for identity and independence she remains true to herself by putting herself first and caring for her own wellbeing, even though she is longing for love and kinship.

Aim and Approach

By a combination of feminist and psychoanalytical criticism and a close reading of *Jane Eyre* the aim of this essay is to analyze how Jane's identity evolves during her quest for

identity and independence and what influence the relationships with the male characters has on her identity. I will argue that even though Jane is longing for love and kindred she resists the male dominance and remains true to herself. The feminist criticism is used to examine power relations and patriarchal traits. It is also used to examine female identity in the novel. There are many parallels between the author Charlotte Brontë and her protagonist Jane Eyre of which some are used for the psychoanalytical analyses in the essay. I will use some of Freud's theories for the psychoanalytical criticism with the aim to examine the conscious and unconscious. There are many analyzes written on *Jane Eyre*, and I will be referring to the analysis made by Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar from their book *The Madwoman in the Attic* to compare and argue my own findings as well as a psychoanalysis made by Lucile Dooley on Charlotte Brontë. Originally, the novel was published in three parts and I found it a logical way to divide it accordingly in my analysis. This way I follow and analyze the development of Jane's identity in a chronological order.

Theories

The theories applied for the analyses are a combination of feminist and psychoanalytical criticisms. The psychoanalytical criticism applied is from a Freudian perspective which can seem to stand in opposition to feminist criticism. Freud's theories have by some feminists been condemned as a source of the patriarchal attitudes that must be fought. Freud's theory of women being castrated has been interpreted by Gilbert and Gubar as 'social castration' signifying lack of social power (Barry 125). The penis-envy that women have according to Freud's theories can be interpreted as the envy of the male position in society and the power connected with the position in society rather than the envy of the male organ itself. Interpretations such as these have helped to remove some of the anti-feminist stamp on Freud's theories.

The feminist literary criticism sprung from the 'women's movement' of the 60s and has evolved into different versions. There are some ideas that are common among the different versions such as that the oppression of women is a fact of life. From the start, the movement looked at how women were portrayed in literature:

The 'women's movement' has always been crucially concerned with books and literature, so feminist criticism should not be seen as an off-shoot or spin-off from feminist criticism which is remote from the ultimate aims of

the movement, but as one of the most practical ways of influencing everyday conduct and attitudes. (Barry 116-17)

The images of women in literature model the way we see women and it is important to recognize and to question these images since they provide role models and indicate what are “acceptable versions of the feminine” (Barry 117). The feminist criticism is divided between the ‘Anglo-American’ and the ‘French’ version of feminism. “The ‘French’ feminists can be seen as less conventional than the ‘Anglo-American’ feminists because they have “adopted and adapted a great deal of (mainly) post-structuralist and psychoanalytical criticism as the basis of much of their work” (Barry 119). The ‘Anglo-American’ feminists on the other hand accept the more conventional concepts of literature such as theme, motif, and realism. They treat the literature as a form of representation of women’s lives and experiences which can be compared and measured against reality. In addition to close readings of literary texts they use historical data and non-literary material for their analysis. Elaine Showalter is generally regarded as the main critic using the ‘Anglo-American’ approach. Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar are also representatives of this approach.

Psychoanalytic literary criticism is based on theories developed by Sigmund Freud (1856-1939) on how the mind, the instincts and the sexuality work (Barry, 92). Important concepts of Freud’s theories are the two part psyche; the ego and the id or the conscious and the unconscious, later he suggested his theory to include the ego, the super-ego and the id or the conscious, the conscience and the unconscious. Other important concepts are the idea of repression which refers to forgetting or ignoring important events as well as sublimation which refers to when a desire is transformed into something more “noble” or accepted than the original desire. Projection is another important concept where negative aspects of our selves are projected onto someone else. The Freudian slip is the idea referring to all that is repressed eventually comes out by the slip of the tongue, or in literature by the pen. According to Freud there is a relationship between the author and the text resembling someone who dreams. Suggesting that literature could be interpreted as dreams, because fantasy is a form of dreams the psychological state of the author is often analyzed as well as the text.

Material and Previous Research

Jane Eyre

Jane Eyre by Charlotte Brontë was originally published under the pseudonym Currer Bell in 1847. The novel was a success and became very popular; the second and third editions were prepared quickly after the release. Today, more than 150 years later, the novel is often claimed as one of the greatest and most popular works of English fiction. It is possibly one of the most read, appreciated and discussed pieces of literature of the western world. The edition I am using as my primary source for this essay was published in 1999 and contains introduction and notes by Dr Sally Minouge.

Jane Eyre is a *Bildungsroman*; it is a novel that narrates the story of protagonist's growth and internal development on her search for a meaningful existence in society. The novel also contains elements of a romance novel and a Gothic novel. It is written in the form of an autobiography and narrated by the protagonist Jane Eyre in a friendly, confessional tone. In the novel we follow the protagonist's development from childhood to becoming a young woman. An orphan, forced to battle a cruel guardian, a patriarchal society and a rigid social order.

Secondary Sources

I have mainly used *Beginning Theory* (2009) by Peter Barry and *Madwoman in the Attic* (2000) by Sandra M. Gilbert and Susan Gubar for this essay. I have also found the "Victorian web" and an article by Lucile Dooley "Psychoanalysis of Charlotte Brontë, as a Type of the Woman of Genius" helpful to get background information on the author and her life as well as some historical information.

Previous Research

Jane Eyre has received somewhat of a cult status in women's studies. There is a substantial amount of essays and analyses written on both the novel and the author. "A dialogue of Self and Soul: Plain Jane's Progress" is written by Gilbert and Gubar, which is published in their book *Madwoman in the Attic*. They argue that Jane like "everywoman in a patriarchal society must meet and overcome: oppression (at Gateshead), starvation (at Lowood), madness (at Thornfield), and coldness (at Marsh End)" (Gilbert et al 339). Gilbert and Gubar (339) see the confrontation with Rochester's mad wife Bertha as central and argue that it symbolizes Jane's confrontation with her own imprisoned "hunger, rebellion and rage" rather than with her own sexuality. While other critics have argued that Bertha symbolizes Jane and Rochester's repressed sexuality and some suggest that Bertha symbolizes the Victorian

woman locked into her house. I agree that Victorian women such as Jane were trapped in a society that did not accept angry, rebellious women who wished to escape the confines of the drawing room to a more self-fulfilling life with more action.

Analysis

Gateshead Hall and Lowood Institution

Jane as a child is lonely without a sense of belonging and longing for kinship. While living at Gateshead Hall she is constantly reminded that she is not part of the Reed family. She is excluded from the activities of Mrs. Reed and her children even though Mrs. Reed had promised her husband, Jane's uncle, on his deathbed, to bring Jane up as one of her own children. According to Mrs. Reed, Jane was to be excluded until she "was endeavoring in good earnest to acquire a more sociable and childlike disposition, a more attractive and sprightly manner – something lighter, franker, more natural" (Brontë 3). Jane does not fit the ideal picture of a small girl at the time, she has a strong sense of justice and she questions too much; traits not suitable in a little Victorian girl who was supposed to be a pretty ornament. Jane is not a pretty little girl and well aware of it, she is as her name suggests "invisible as air, the heir to nothing, secretly choking with ire" (Gilbert et al 342). Even though Jane is like air, invisible on the outside she is like fire on the inside which will be the fuel for her quest for identity and independence.

Jane is harassed and oppressed by her cousin John Reed, when she resists his abuse she is punished. Jane is constantly harassed by her older cousin, he considers the house and all in it his because he is the male in the house. John Reed controls his mother who favors him. According to Freud's *Oedipus complex*, the son wants to take over the father's place in the family, and because John's father is dead he considers himself the head of the family. Dooley (237) argues that Charlotte Brontë's brother Bramwell was given special attention and he was the pride and hope of the Brontë family. The author's envy of her brother Bramwell's male dominance could be projected in the resistance Jane displays against John Reed. Until Jane is knocked down by a book thrown at her by John Reed she has tried to hide and endure his abuse but the anger and fear causes her to finally stand up to him verbally calling him "a murderer", "a slave-driver" and comparing him to "the Roman emperors" (Brontë 6). When he then attacks her physically and she tries to defend herself she is blamed for the whole incident. She is accused of "flying at Master John" displaying "such a picture of passion" and "she's like a mad cat" (Brontë 7). Jane's act of defending herself from further physical injury is

considered unacceptable conduct for a girl who should know her place in the social order and repress passionate feelings such as anger. “Unjust, unjust” (Brontë 11) are Jane’s words regarding the sentence of imprisonment in the Red Room without a fair hearing and without having the opportunity to defend herself. How she is punished while he walks free can be seen as a display of the unequal treatment and status of men and women as well as the unequal society at the time.

In the Red Room Jane transforms overnight from a child to a more mature person. The imprisonment in the Red Room can be interpreted as a voyage into the unconscious. When Jane looks into the mirror she sees herself looking like “a real spirit” which makes her think of one of the characters, “tiny phantoms, half fairy, half imp”, in Bessie’s ghost stories (Brontë 9). Jane realizes that she is considered different and identified as the “the other” by the household at Gateshead Hall, similar to the lonely characters of the moor in Bessie’s stories. “All John Reed’s violent tyrannies, all his sisters’ proud indifference, all his mother’s aversion, all the servants’ partiality, turned up in my disturbed mind like a deposit in a turbid well” (Brontë 10). Jane realizes that it does not matter how hard she tries to do right and fulfill her duties, she will not be accepted by the Reed household. She is “termed naughty and tiresome, sullen and sneaking, from morning to noon and from noon to midnight” (Brontë 10). Jane is trapped and imprisoned and cannot escape the confinements of the members and servants of the Reed household’s view of her or of the room. Her imprisonment can symbolize the way the women of the Victorian time were trapped in the home and their behavior was restricted by the society. Jane, like most women of her time, has no place to run; other options to escape are to die of starvation or through madness (Gilbert et al 341). She has only herself to trust; a frightening conclusion for a ten year old girl, which causes her to mature overnight. Jane has faced her fears of superstition and of being completely alone and trapped. Moreover, she faces her anger and rage, the inner demons of her unconscious. After the night in the Red Room Jane grows stronger and is less afraid to defend herself and to speak for herself.

Mr. Brocklehurst is the second male character Jane stands up to. Mr. Brocklehurst appears to Jane as “a black pillar [...] a sable clad shape standing erect on the rug: the grim face at the top was like a carved mask, placed above the shaft by way of capital” (Brontë 25). Mr. Brocklehurst is the “Victorian super-ego”, he is described as a giant phallus symbol (Gilbert et al 343-44). He rules over Lowood Institution; a school for girls funded by donations. Mr. Brocklehurst uses his power to oppress the girls and

teachers at the school, to teach them to know their place in society and repress their individuality and identity. He uses religion as a tool to oppress; threatening that the naughty girls will burn in hell. When Jane, who is considered a naughty girl according to Mrs. Reed, is asked how to avoid ending up in hell she answers him: “I must keep in good health and not die” (Brontë 26). This quote suggests that Jane has a strong sense of self. She is not willing to completely change herself to fit into the way of the patriarchal society and realizes that her best option to avoid hell is to stay alive. While many of the other girls at Lowood Institution become sick and die, Jane remains strong and lives.

Jane’s longing for kinship causes her to try to find a substitute mother in first Bessie and then Miss Temple. Bessie is the only one Jane can seek some comfort with as a child at Gateshead Hall; she sings to Jane and cares for her. Bessie is the only one that says goodbye to Jane when she leaves for Lowood Institution. Bessie is the only mother figure Jane has as a child even though Jane thinks Bessie is stern and does not show any affection for her (Brontë 32). At Lowood, Jane meets Miss Temple who becomes a substitute mother to Jane. Miss Temple shows Jane, who has learned that life is unjust at Gateshead, that there can be justice. When Mr. Brocklehurst humiliates Jane in front of the whole school calling her a liar Jane is certain that all will believe him and that her life at Lowood is destroyed and that nobody will care to hear her version. Miss Temple finds Jane crying and tells her “when a criminal is accused, he is always allowed to speak in his defense. You have been charged with falsehood; defend yourself to me as well as you can. Say whatever your memory suggests as true; but add nothing and exaggerate nothing” (Brontë 60). Miss Temple is the first positive female role model that Jane encounters. She explains to Jane that she and the other teachers and students will think of Jane as what she proves herself to be. Jane is encouraged to do well in class and to excel in her studies. As an adult, Jane gives credit to Miss Temple for her acquirements; “she had stood me in the stead of mother, governess, and, latterly, companion” (Brontë 72). Gilbert and Gubar (345) argues that Miss Temple is not only an angel-in-the-house, she balances Mr. Brocklehurst; she is the good mother figure who goes against his orders and gives the girls cheese and bread when breakfast is inedible. An act she is reprimanded for by Mr. Brocklehurst, who accuses her of feeding “their vile bodies” while starving “their immortal souls” (Brontë 53). Miss Temple listens to him giving his sermon, clearly angered by his speech; she “gazed straight before her, and her face, naturally pale as marble, appeared to be assuming also the coldness and fixity of that material; especially her mouth, closed as if it would have

required a sculptor's chisel to open it, and her brow settled gradually into petrified severity" (Brontë 53). Miss Temple, as Gilbert and Gubar (345) suggest "has repressed her own share of madness and rage". Because Jane is filled with anger she can identify with Miss Temple and during her years at Lowood Jane learns rationality and how to keep her anger in control to better fit in to the patriarchal society's expectations of a young woman's conduct.

Helen Burns presents the opposite of Jane but becomes a close friend. She is portrayed as a quite pathetic character, she never stands up for herself and she sees it her duty to endure the injustices in life, believing that she will see justice in heaven (Brontë 47). Jane likes Helen but she does not understand how she endures the punishment she receives from some of teachers without defending herself. "And if I were in your place I should dislike her; I should resist her. If she struck me with that rod, I should get it from her hand; I should break it under her nose" (Brontë 46). Jane is rebellious and her rage wants out when she sees injustice such as when Helen is struck for not washing her hands because the water was frozen. Helen teaches Jane to come to terms with the past and to not dwell on injustices of the past, to be happier in the present (Brontë 49). In a sense Helen is like a mother figure for Jane because she comforts her, counsels her, feeds her and embraces her (Rich 1973 cited in Gilbert et al 346). Nevertheless, Helen is not a possible role model for Jane due to her way of self-surrendering and her longing for death and heaven. Helen is portrayed as an-angel-in-house; one extreme image of female identity. "A woman writer must examine, assimilate and transcend the extreme images of "angel" and "monster" which male authors have generated for them" and the author must kill both since they kill the female creativity (Gilbert et al 17). My suggestion is that Helen's death could symbolize the death of the "angel" to free Jane from surrendering to the identity of the angel-in-the-house and the male dream of the ideal woman. Further, it could symbolize the unconscious of the author's wish to free herself from the ideal of the angel-in-the-house.

Thornfield Hall

Jane grows restless after Miss Temple leaves Lowood and finds employment as a governess at Thornfield Hall, rather than easing the restlessness it grows even stronger. Jane stayed on at Lowood as a teacher for a couple of years after finishing her studies. However when Miss Temple leaves and takes "the serene atmosphere" with her, Jane finds herself "left in my natural element, beginning to feel the stirring of old emotions"

(Brontë 72). Miss Temple had a calming effect on Jane, with her gone, Jane wants more from life, her restlessness which has been suppressed in her unconscious surfaces and she wants to see more of the world outside of the Lowood confines. The position of a Victorian governess was difficult; not belonging to either family or servants and receiving conflicting messages regarding their status in the household made it an ambiguous and possibly lonely position (Gilbert et al 349). Jane needs to be around people that she finds stimulating, who she can have interesting conversation with. However, at her employment at Thornfield before Mr. Rochester arrives she finds no intellectual stimuli and soon her feeling of restlessness becomes even stronger:

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. (Brontë 95)

This quote shows an unconventional and radical feministic view of men and women during the Victorian, patriarchal, time of Brontë. It displays Jane's longing for equality and independence; a rebellious feminism considered an "irreligious dissatisfaction with the social order" by Victorian critics of *Jane Eyre* (Gilbert et al 369). The quote is also a way for the author to vent her repressed longing for a less restricted life and her feministic view through her protagonist. Jane's restlessness is however to be eased by the Master of Thornfield's arrival.

Mr. Rochester rides in to Jane's life as a fairy tale dark prince resembling a Byronic hero. He makes a quite dramatic entrance in the novel."It was exactly one form of Bessie's Gytrash – a lion-like creature with long hair and a huge head: it passed me however, quietly enough, not staying to look up, with strange pretercanine eyes, in my face, as I half expected it would: The horse followed, - a tall steed, and on its back a rider" (Bronte, 97). Rochester appears the very essence of patriarchal energy (Gilbert et al 351). According to Chase (Gilbert et al 351) the Brontës were obsessed with the

universe of male sexuality, which is further displayed in the way Jane is repelled by Mr. Mason due to his “too relaxed” features and “the life looking out of” his eye “was a tame, vacant life” (Brontë 166). Rochester is however not as strong as a Byronic hero would be and shows immediate weakness by hurting himself when his horse takes a fall, thus needing the help of Jane. Further, he will show more signs of weakness in regard to his hidden mad wife. Shortly after Jane learns who the Master of Thornfield is and gets to know him she becomes intrigued and affected by him, she feels as they have a mental connection. “I felt at times as if he were my relation rather than my master [...] I ceased to pine for kindred: my thin crescent-destiny seemed to enlarge; the blanks of existence were filled up; my bodily health improved; I gathered flesh and strength” (Bronte, 128). Rochester adds interest to Jane’s life with the intellectual stimulus of their evening conferences, which she was lacking before he entered the scene. Jane and Rochester can be considered quite equal intellectually, however to begin with many inequalities exist.

Jane’s relationship with Rochester is complicated with a power imbalance. The relationship between Jane and Rochester is unequal on many points; he is twenty years older than her, much more experienced, he is from a higher social group, he is rich and she is poor and he is her master, inequalities that were a major barrier at the time. Due to their master employee relationship she only can talk to him when he calls for her and cannot seek his company whenever she wishes. During their evening conferences Jane shows strength by standing up to Rochester: “I don’t think, sir that you have a right to command me, merely because you are older than I, or because you have seen more of the world than I have; your claim to superiority depends on the use you have made of your time and experience” (Bronte, 117). Even though Rochester makes it clear to Jane that he is older and more experienced, Jane still stands up to him and questions his right to command her during their discussions. Rochester, with his seniority of 20 years and his superior power, appears as a “father-man”. He could be the projection of the author’s longing for her ideal man which was a “father-surrogate” (Dooley 241). Jane’s unconscious could be looking for a father surrogate to compensate her fatherless childhood. Rochester tests Jane by spreading a rumour that he will marry Blanche Ingram causing Jane to feel insecure in regards to her looks. Blanche is a beautiful woman and Jane is aware of how the society and men rate women regarding how beautiful they are; beautiful women have a higher value than unattractive women. Beauty in a woman is regarded more important than intellect, because a woman was expected to be an ornament without much opinion. When Rochester intends to marry

Jane even though he already has a wife and is not able to enter another legally binding marriage it is a way of trying to exploit her. During the wedding preparations Jane realizes the great social difference and how she is to be financially dependent on Rochester; Rochester reminded her of a “sultan”, who “bestow on a slave his gold and gems” (Brontë 237). When the marriage is stopped Jane turns down a comfortable life as Rochester’s mistress because even though she loves him and wants to be with him she will be dependent and in a sense imprisoned as a slave. To Jane independence is very important and she will not sacrifice her integrity and dignity.

The madness Jane experienced in the Red Room as a child re-emerges at Thornfield through Bertha Mason; the estranged mad wife, locked in the attic by Rochester can be regarded as the demon-woman. She is portraying the other extreme female identity, the opposite of the angel-in-the-house. Bertha is Creole, a foreigner, the other, not accepted by society. ”Thornfield’s attic becomes a complex focal point where Jane’s own rationality and her irrationality (her “hunger, rebellion and rage”) intersect” (Gilbert et al 348). Bertha is argued to be Jane’s alter-ego, the unconscious, the repressed mad, raving angry part of Jane which she has learned to repress during her years at Lowood by Miss Temple. Bertha is the obstacle to Jane’s happiness because she does not only represent Jane’s repressed rage; Bertha is also the impediment to Jane and Rochester being able to marry. To free Jane, the demon-woman must die, which happens after Jane has left Thornfield and found her good relatives and sense of stability and belonging and identity she long have wished and searched for.

Marsh End

Jane finds her relatives and finally belongs to a family. After running away from Thornfield, Jane is homeless and without any possessions, she wanders lonely, freezing and hungry. I agree with Gilbert and Gubar that Jane’s situation symbolizes “the nameless, placeless and contingent status of women in a patriarchal society” (364). Jane does however stumble on the home of her cousins at *Marsh End*, the name representing the end of her search; she will be able to find her identity and place in the world at last. The wailing infant of Jane’s recurring dream (Brontë 194, 263) is finally silenced. The dream she had while at Thornfield could symbolize Jane that cannot be comforted, representing the suffering and loneliness she has experienced in her childhood which she carries with her into adulthood. Staying with her newly found good relatives helps her to heal and find a stable ground; she overcomes the anger she has regarding the

abuse she suffered as a child living with her bad relatives; the Reed family. At *Marsh End*, some of her wishes come true; she finally belongs to a family, she is intellectually stimulated by studying together with her cousins Diana and Mary, and her dream of starting a small school comes true with the help of her cousin St. John Rivers, who seeks her company more frequently and to begin with seems to offer a viable alternative to the life offered by Rochester.

St. John offers Jane to become his wife and helper as a missionary in India, however tempted Jane is to accept the proposal, she realizes that such a loveless union will shorten her life. St. John is the opposite of Rochester in many ways. He is cold and without passion, and he aims to suppress Jane's personality and independence. "I could no longer talk or laugh freely when he was by, because tiresomely importunate instinct reminded me that vivacity (at least in me) was distasteful to him" (Brontë 352). Women at the time were brought up and conditioned that men were powerful and women followers that suppressed their own identity. Jane's eagerness to please a product of that she has never before felt true belonging could be one of the reasons why she has such difficulties to fend herself from St. John's increasing power over her. "I felt his influence in my marrow – his hold on my limbs" (Brontë 359). Jane agrees to follow him to India to become a missionary as his helper but not his wife as she feels that he does not love her, she feels as he rather hates her and marrying send her to a premature death (Brontë 365). His persistence is strong and she is getting "hard beset by him" but in a different way she had been by Rochester, to yield would have been an error of judgment (Brontë 370). St. John is using arguments such as "God and nature intended you as a missionary's wife" (Brontë 356). His arguments of duty and service called by God are difficult to object to for Jane, conditioned by her years at Lowood where religion had an important role to educate the girls to obey patriarchal leaders. While on the verge to give in to St. John's persistence, Jane is saved by Rochester's call for her. His call which she imagines to hear, I interpret to be her unconscious protecting her from committing a terrible error of entering a loveless marriage and future leading to a premature death.

When Jane re-unites with Rochester she is independent and the power balance between them have shifted. During her stay at *Marsh End* Jane finds out that she has inherited a large sum of money after her uncle in Madeira. When Jane re-unites with Rochester she is financially independent and Bertha is dead. The fact that she now has relatives is another factor that makes her more equal because she is no longer alone in

the world. Rochester hurt himself in the fire while trying to rescue Bertha and became blind and he now needs Jane to be his eyes and care for him. Jane and Rochester finally enter a marriage of two equals which was unheard of at the time. I agree with Gilbert and Gubar (369) that this could be the reason why they live isolated in the forest without any social life to speak of. I also think that it was clear that Jane did not care for the superficial social life she was forced to be an observer of at Thornfield when Rochester was putting on his show of courting Blanche. In the end Jane found her place in life: “No woman was ever nearer to her mate than I am [...] To be together is for us to be at once as free as in solitude, as gay as in company” (Brontë 399). Jane found the love and kinship she longed for without sacrificing her own identity and independence.

Conclusion

Jane stays true to herself during her quest for identity and independence. The frightening night in the Red Room causes her grow up over night and having experienced true fear she is no longer afraid to stand up for herself against the patriarchal society. Miss Temple teaches her to repress her rage. Through the death of Helen and Bertha Jane is freed from the male ideal of female identity; the angel-in-the-house and the demon. Jane’s quest for identity and independence comes together at Marsh End. She finds her good relatives at Marsh and overcomes the injustices by the bad relatives at Gateshead. Jane finds a stable ground and overcomes the rage repressed in her unconscious.

To free herself in the patriarchal society Jane meets and overcomes: oppression by the Reed family and Mr. Brocklehurst, starvation at Lowood and during her wandering before reaching Marsh End, madness in the Red Room and at Thornfield and coldness by being lonely and by the way St. John treated her. Even though she longs for love she does not let Rochester or St. John exploit her and in the end she finds the equal relationship she longed for.

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