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The Perception of Feminism in *Jane Eyre*

by Charlotte Brontë

A Dissertation Submitted to the Department of English as Partial Fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master in Literature and civilization

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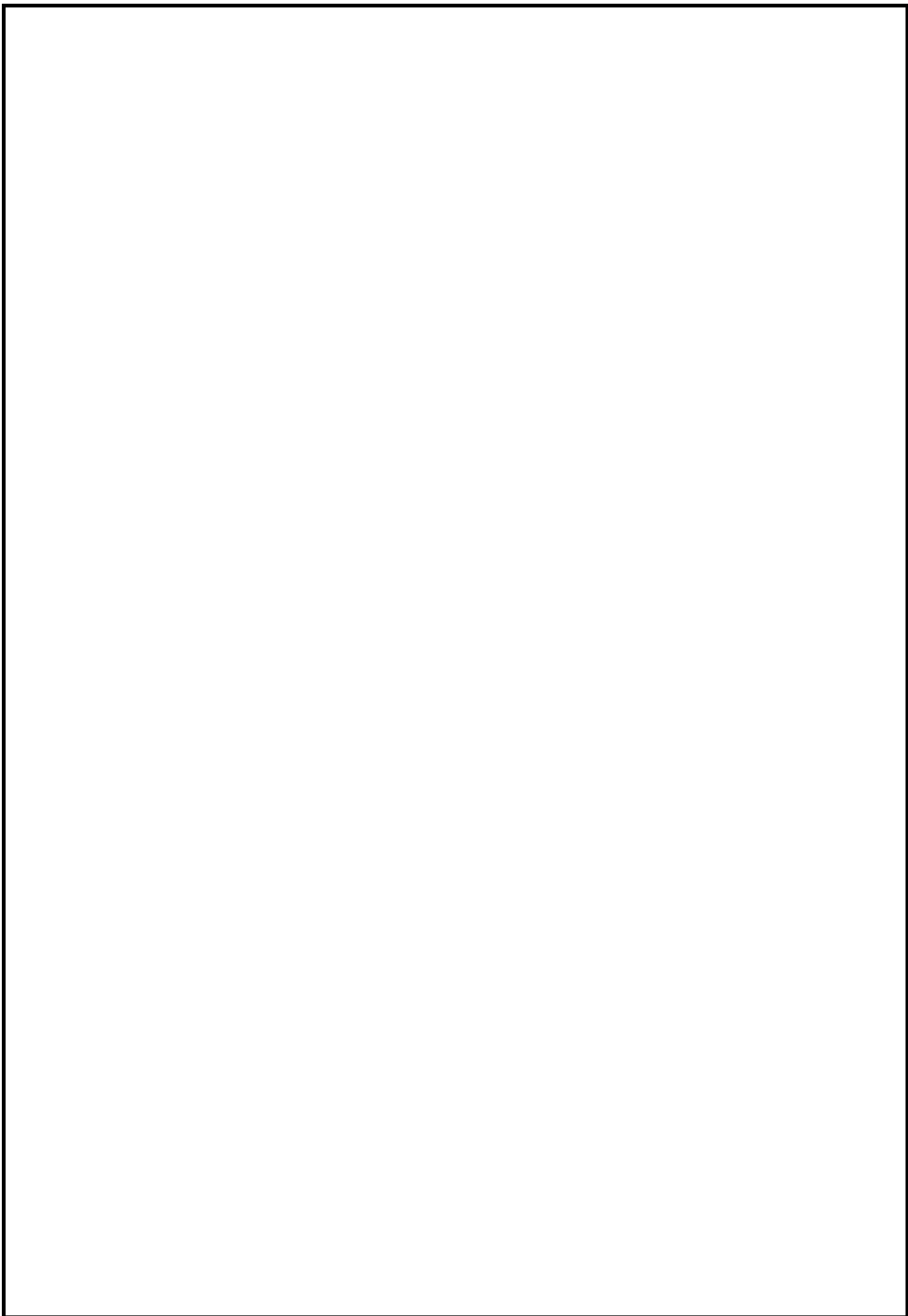
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Dedication

I dedicatethis work to my parents, sisters and all my loved ones.

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to illustrate the Feminist aspects in Charlotte Brontë's novel *Jane Eyre*. To depict these aspects from the novel, the researcher has studied the historical background of the writer, which is the Victorian era. This research shows women's status in the era. Victorian women were living under men's control, they were discriminated in a patriarchal society. Besides, the extended essay gives a definition of Feminism in order to embody the Feminist aspects of the novel. Then, it examines the themes and the characters of the novel to study the perception of Feminism through the work. From this work, the researcher has noticed that Charlotte Brontë's protagonist 'Jane' is based on her personal experiences. She is a feminist writer who contradicts the norms of her society and creates a protagonist who is also rebellious and seeking for her self-realization, in a period of time considered woman as a man's toy, who has no rights or voice, she is in man's service without any right to decide or act as she wants or feels.

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General Introduction

In the nineteenth century, women lived in a miserable situation; they were over male's control; their fathers and husbands were the authority of the society. Women's lives were characterized by inequality in rights. They had no right to vote or make their own decisions, even properties were belonging to their husbands, and they could not have custody of their children or were free in education. By the changes that came after industrialization, Britain flourished economically, politically... even society has changed and modern thoughts entered Victorian's minds. Then, the feminist movement managed to expand so as to defend women's rights, which had been neglected by the Victorians.

Victorian literature was in its most glorious time, especially the novel; Victorian writers authored the most known classics of nowadays. Among these writers, Charlotte Brontë, a strong creative woman, who defends woman's rights through her novel, *Jane Eyre*; this novel is one of the most influential English classics. She presents woman's situation by her protagonist Jane, who struggles for her rights alone without male's help. This representation includes Victorian literature, definition of Feminism, examples of Victorian writers and woman's role in Victorian era.

Jane Eyre presents important themes in Victorian period which are marriage, equality and independence. Jane is the protagonist of the novel that plays the role of an orphan who suffers from her childhood still her womanhood, but she is still strong and has self-esteem to realize her dream and live a respectful life, struggling for her equality and rights.

The interest of this research work is centered on the following questions:

1. What are the characteristics of the Victorian Era?
2. How was the situation of woman in that period, what is Feminism and the changes brought by this movement to woman's life?

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3. How did Charlotte Brontë as a writer express her perception of Feminism in her selected work *Jane Eyre*?

This research will examine the novel's events that reflect Brontë's personal experiences, and the study of the feminist aspects in the novel to describe woman's status and Brontë's message through her work. This research will be based on data gathered from printed books, online books, essays, and articles.

The research contains a general introduction, two main chapters, and the general conclusion. The first chapter will put the light on Victorian literature woman's lifestyle at that period, define the feminist approach, and mention some brilliant Victorian writers.

The second chapter will analyze the main characters and main themes of the novel in order to study the feminist aspects of the novel.

General Introduction

General Introduction

Chapter One: Victorian Literature and Feminism

1.1 Introduction :

The Victorian Age is an era which was full of changes. Because of industrialization, people's thoughts had been changed. Thus, they tried to change some Victorian attitudes and norms like the problem of gender; whereas women's life at that period of time was for the husband and children, sitting at home under the authority of men voiceless without any control over themselves. This chapter deals with the historical background of the Victorian era in addition to the perception of Feminism and the woman's status during that epoch.

1.2 An Overview of Victorian Literature :

The Victorian literature was written during the reign of queen of the United Kingdom and Ireland; Queen Victoria who occupied the throne from 1837 to 1901. This period was preceded by Romanticism and followed by Realism. Realism is an artistic movement which is based on imagination, emotional sensitivity and individual subjectivity. Besides, this movement can be defined as an art movement that rejects imaginative idealization.

To understand a literary period, it is necessary to comprehend its historical background. The Victorian Age was an age of economic progress; poverty and exploitation were also a part of it. Cruttenden explains that defining the Victorian Age is more than just identifying a span of time from the 1830s to the beginning of the 20th century. It is a question of capturing the essence of people's lives at the time, their ideas and their culture. The period was full of contrasts and contradictions, and different writers responded to their times in very different ways (4).

The Victorians in this era lived in ambivalence, they welcomed the changes caused by the industrial revolution but at the same time they were afraid of its consequences. There were main differences between the novelists of the first half of the Victorian Period and those of

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the second half. The novelists of the first half of the Victorian Age identified themselves with their age and were its spokesmen, while those of the second half of the age were against their age; they were critical to its dominant assumptions (Grellet and Valentin 205). As Grellet and Valentin clarify:

It is now possible for us to see the Victorians more justly. They were as conscious as we are, looking back, of the tensions and contradictions of their times, the havoc caused by the industrial revolution, the presence of mass poverty, the existence side by side of what Disraeli called the two nations ; and he forties they feared revolution. The forces set in motion by the industrial revolution they did not know how to control, and the working of what seemed the iron laws of economics outraged the consciences of the best and most intelligent of the time. They were, then, thoroughly aware of the evils of their age (205,206).

Scholars divided the Victorian Period into three phases: the Early period (1830-1848), the Mid-period (1848-1870) and the Late period (1870-1901). The Early period was a hard time for the Victorians because of the quick change of industrialization; it was known as “the time of troubles”; even women and children were working in catastrophic conditions. Writers of this epoch were concerned with the poors and other social problems. Then the Mid-period, it wasnot yet the period of prosperity; it was still featured by poverty, unfairness and dangerous working conditions. In 1850, the British economic thrived and became the time of prosperity, stability and optimism. Finally, the Late period, it was an extension of the preceded period (Stephen Greenblatt et al).

The Victorian Age was an age of changes. The changes in society were caused by the development in technology and in scientific and economic thought. The population doubled and the industrial cities grew quickly. The period defined the class system that characterized the English society. There was a noticeable gap between the rich and the poor. Therefore, the poor were exploited for the rich’s labor.

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The society at that time was structured of three classes: the upper class, the middle class, and the working class. The upper class represented the wealthy and powerful people who were privileged persons. As for the middle class stood for the people who could be rich but they were not advantaged like the upper class. The other class exemplified the working class who were the laborers or the persons who were not working; the poorer persons.

The gender issue also took a place in the Victorian Era; people believed that women were weaker than men. Hence, they were created for managing the house and were responsible for the education of their children, while men had the total authority.

About literature, literature during the Victorian Epoch was in its most glorious age, especially the novel. The novelists were too close to the readers and felt that they had duties towards people. The writers, through their novels reflected the state of the Victorian society; they were interested in the relation of individual to society, and how the individual could find his place in society. They also showed both the injustice of that time and their faith to the progress; an ambivalence. Furthermore, they talked in their works about the crisis of the moral religious values.

Another genre that was shining during the Victorian Age was poetry. The Victorian poetry was influenced by Romantic works; poets used in their poems imagery to convey thoughts and emotions; they represented different themes like the struggle between religion and science. They were closely to lose their faith, and were trying to push readers towards good actions and attitudes. Moreover, they were interested in the medieval fables and legends.

Literature is the best means to represent a picture of life lived under the stable background of social and moral values, in which some themes of the era had been represented and discussed. One of the most interesting themes was the relation between religion and science that time. Some scientific researches created doubts about the religious beliefs of the

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Victorians, like the study of Charles Darwin “theOrigin of the Species”. This theory shook the basis of the Christian Church. There were other major themes such as: critiques of industrialization, nostalgia of the past, conflicts between classes and women’s rights.

1.3 Examples of Victorian Writers :

The Victorian Era witnessed the emergence of several male and female writers as well as poets and poetesses. Thus, it is of great necessity to deal with some of them. First, we begin with some male writers.

1.3.1 Male Victorian Writers:

During this era, many male writers made their names shine and be known, such as:

1.3.1.1 *Oscar Wilde:*

Oscar Fingal O’Flahertie Wills Wilde is an English author, a poet and playwright. He was born in Dublin in 1854 and died in a hotel in Paris on 30 November 1900. He is the son of Williams Wilde and Jane Francesca Wilde. His mother was a brilliant poet and journalist, and his father was an eye surgeon and a talented writer; he was writing about archaeology. Wilde married on May 29, 1884 with Constance Llyod and they had two sons (Brdnik np). Oscar Wilde was a special talented student; so he was awarded with many scholarships: the first one of Trinity College, Dublin, where he studied philosophy and classics. The other scholarship was to Magdalen College, Oxford University. There, he developed his passion of literature. Then, he moved to London and became a famous playwright. Thanks to his personality, he was integrated easily and successfully into the high society (“Oscar Wilde Biography” np).

Wilde’s literary career is varied and special, but he was well known for his plays. His most successful plays are: *Lady Windermere’s Fan* which was opened in February 1892, *A Woman of No Importance* in 1893, *An Ideal Husband* in 1895. Those plays made of Oscar Wilde one of

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the most important writers during the Victorian Era and it is still as it was at the time. In addition to his talent as a playwright, he also published *The Happy Prince and Other Tales*; it was fairy-stories for his sons, published in 1888. He wrote only one novel published in 1891 titled *The Picture of Dorian Gray* (Brdnik np).

Oscar Wilde has a witty writing style, he treated important subjects in his works and criticized some Victorian attitudes. He considered art as a reality while the real life was a fiction for him. He used elements in his writings as: imagery, irony, symbolism, metaphor... and many other elements. Besides, 'he's known for his clever curt and sly sayings, sometimes self-deprecating irony' (Nambiar 5).

1.3.1.2 Joseph Conrad:

Joseph Conrad was born Józef Teodor Konrad Korzeniowski on the third of December 1857 in Berdichev, Ukraine, and died because of heart attack on 3 August 1924 in Canterbury, England. His parents are Apollo Nałęcz Korzeniowski and Ewa Bobrowska. After the death of his parents, he was brought up in Poland by his uncle and educated there. Then, at age of sixteen, he left Poland and travelled to Marseilles, France; where he became a mariner. Conrad began his own literary career in 1895, and married Jessie George in 1896 and had two sons. Conrad treated in his major works the themes of the violent side of human nature and prejudice as well as the conflicts between human characters and the cruel forces of nature. This great writer has many brilliant works, the well known of them are: *Lord Jim*, *Heart of Darkness*, *Nostromo*, *The Secret Agent*, a short story collection and memoir entitled *A Personal Record*, *The Arrow of Gold*, and *The Rescue*. His first novel was *Almayer's Folly* and *The Rover* was his final novel, published in 1923 ("Joseph Conrad Biography" np).

Joseph Conrad was concerned by the theme of morality, he is 'as a sort of moral sage'. Davies explains: 'it is this shifting narrative style, that resists the simple linear development

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of the popular realist novels of the preceding century, that has marked Conrad out as a distinctly Modernist author within an accepted literary canon''(1).

1.3.1.3 Wilkie Collins:

Wilkie Collins is one of the most known figures from the Victorian Age. His full name is William Wilkie Collins. He was born on 8 January 1824, in London, England, and died on 23 September 1889 in London. "Wilkie Collins, the author of *The Woman in White* and *The Moonstone*, has been hailed as 'the father of the detective story' and 'the novelist who invented sensation '" (M. Clarke xi). He is the son of a famous painter William John Thomas Collins. His first school was the Maida Hill Academy, in 1835. He began his career as a storyteller in England, when he was studying in a boarding school at Highbury Place. Collins was a law student at Lincoln's Inn, but he adopted literature. He was a close friend to Charles Dickens after their meeting in 1851. They were also practising many activities together as travelling and writing (Freudenberg 1). His major works including: *The Woman in White*, *The Moonstone*, *Antonina*, *Rambles beyond Railways*, in addition to other short stories, plays and essays.

Wilkie Collins is an author known for his different ideas, styles, and genres, his career is full of plays, novels, guidebooks... (Mangham np).

He was concerned for social issues and embodied that by his characters (Rentay 7).

Like the male writers, there rose several female writers during the Victorian Period. Nonetheless, we limit ourselves to some of them who are of great caliber and high repute.

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1.3.2 Female Victorian Writers:

Among the writers who were well-known during this period of time are the following.

1.3.2.1 *Elizabeth Gaskell:*

Elizabeth Cleghorn Gaskell is an English novelist who was born in Lindsey Row, Chelsea, on 29 September 1810; and died on 12 November 1865 near Alton Holybourne, Hampshire, England. Her father is William Stevenson; he was a treasury official and a journalist. Her mother Elizabeth Holland died on 29 October 1811, when Gaskell was just 13 months. She was sent to live with her aunt Hannah Lumb, who lived in Knutsford in Cheshire. Elizabeth spent her childhood with her aunt who was like a mother for her. She lived comfortably with her. Her father married again when Elizabeth was four years and her stepmother, Catherine Thomson, was a sister of the Scottish miniature artist, William John Thomson. The latter was the one who painted the famous portrait of Elizabeth in 1832.

In 1832, Elizabeth Gaskell married William Gaskell, and they had three daughters and only one son but he died of fever when he was still nine months. Her husband encouraged her to write a novel to overcome her grief, and distract herself from thinking about her loss. Gaskell was an active, busy woman; a woman that had a sociable life; although she was that busy woman she had always the energy for charity works and helping the poor. Her life in Manchester gave her the inspiration which is reflected in her novels, she talked about various social concerns; because Manchester was at that time a centre of different activities and changes. One of her most concerning themes was the relationship between workers and employers, and between the upper and low classes; she was supporting the better understanding and respect between them; in addition to criticising the Victorian attitudes. Gaskell's major works are: *Canford*, *Wives and Daughters*, *Mary Barton*, *Cousin Phillis*, *Ruth*, *North and South*, and *Sylvia's Lovers* ("Elizabeth Gaskell Biography" np).

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1.3.2.2 *George Eliot:*

George Eliot, her real name is Mary Ann Evans, she was born on 22 November 1819 in Nuneaton, Warwickshire, England, and died on 22 December 1880, London. She is a famous Victorian novelist. Her father is Robert Evans, and her mother is Christiana Evans. Mary Ann was educated in a private school but she left it at age of 16, when her mother died. Mary's father was always encouraging her to read and learn more. Unfortunately, the relationship between them was corrupted as a result of Mary's friendship with Charles and Cara Bray; they were the reason that made her faith in Christianity weak. In 1847, her father became ill, so she took care of him until his death in 1849 and she remained agnostic after that until her death.

In London, she worked as an assistant editor of the Westminster Review, and met George Henry Lewes, who was married at that time. There was no chance of divorce, so they travelled to Germany and lived together as a married couple until Lewes' death in 1878. In 1880, she married the American John Walter Cross.

Eliot was concerned about the themes of humanity and about the good and bad in social relationships. Hence, she showed that in her novels. Her major works are: *Adam Bede*, *The Life of Veil*, *The Mill on The Floss*, *Silas Marner*, *Romola*, *Felix Holt*, *The Spanish Gypsy*, *The Legend of Jubal*, *The Middlemarch* and other poems ("Silas Marner George Eliot" np).

1.3.2.3 *Marie Corelli:*

Marie Corelli, her real name is Mary Mackay; she was born in May 1856 in London, England, and died in 1924. She is the daughter of Dr. Charles and Mrs Elizabeth Mills. Marie's books are imaginative and philosophical in which she talks about the social issues

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(“An Introduction to The Works of Marie Corelli” np). Her works are a mixture of different genres, like the historical, romance, and society novels. Her style of writing was special and exotic. She published volumes of short stories, poetry, and essays (MacLeod 1). She published her first work in 1886, titled *A Romance of Two Worlds*, which made her the high selling author in England, and also made her Queen’s Victoria favourite one. Besides, she is reputed of her numerous other interested works like: *Thelma*, *Wormwood*, *Barabbas*, *The Sorrows of Satan*, *The Master Christian*, *Temporal Power*, *The Life Everlasting*, and *The Secret Power* (“An Introduction to the Works of Marie Corelli” np).

1.3.2.4. Charlotte Brontë:

Charlotte Brontë was a famous English novelist and poet. She was born on the 21 of April 1816, in Thornton, Yorkshire. She is the eldest daughter of Maria and Patrick Brontë; her sisters are Maria, Elizabeth, Emily, Ann and only one brother Branwell. In 1820, the Brontë family moved a few miles to the village of Haworth. Unfortunately, the mother Maria died on 15 September 1821, because of cancer and left her children to their father and her sister Elizabeth Branwell (TheFamousPeople-“Charlotte Brontë” 3). Charlotte Brontë is a great writer who left behind her a rich legacy of written works which includes classical novels like ‘*Jane Eyre*’, ‘*Shirley*’ and ‘*Villette*’. She was a strong well known ambitious woman from a young age; she was someone rebellious who refused strongly to follow the norms which were imposed on women by society during her time. According to the authors “she was a fiercely independent woman who introduced to the literary world a new kind of heroine who defined age-old societal expectations to emerge as a courageous and virtuous individual in her own right”.

The Brontë siblings grew up reading and supporting each other, among the authors that they were reading their works: Sir Walter Scott and William Wordsworth (TheFamousPeople). They enjoyed writing to spend their time and created their special imaginative world. Charlotte and her

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sisters were sent to the “Clergy Daughters School” at Cowan Bridge. In 1831, she became a pupil at the school at RoeHead. The next year, she left the school to teach her sisters at home. In 1835, she returned to the same school as a governess. Then, in 1838, she left the school again and accepted to be a governess in the Sidgewick family in 1839 and left again to be a governess in 1841, in the White family but she left after nine months (Cody np).The preceded year, Charlotte and her sister Emily travelled to Brussels to study in a boarding school, but they did not last long because their aunt died that year (SlideShare 4).

The Brontë sisters were writing under pseudonyms in order to veil their gender, they changed their names during writing from Charlotte, Emily and Ann to Currer, Ellis and Acton. The sisters collaborated together and published their collection of poems in 1846 (SlideShare 5). In 1848, within eight months, Charlotte lived a tragedy, the death of three members of her family; her brother Branwell and her two sisters Emily and Ann because of health issues (SlideShare 9).

Arthur Bell Nicholls was a poor man who worked with her father proposed Charlotte to marry him but her father refused his proposal because of his financial situation, but he accepted later and married (12). After marriage, at the age of 38, she became pregnant but her health deteriorated, and died with her unborn child on 31 March 1855 (13).

1.4. Feminism :

During the Victorian Age, the theme of feminism received the lion’s share. But, before tackling this point, it is quite necessary to deal with its various definitions.

1.4.1 Definition of Feminism:

Generally speaking, feminism is a range of political, social, economic movements and theories. The definition of this term can differ from one theorician to another. For example, there are diverse definitions in the Encyclopedia of Feminism. The term is usually defined as the

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advocacy of women's rights based on a belief in the equality of the sexes, and in its broadest use; the word refers to everyone who is aware of and seeking to end women's subordination in any way and for any reason ...Feminism originates in the perception that there is something wrong with society's treatment of woman (Qtd in Beasley 27).

Another definition in *The Penguin Dictionary of Sociology*, in its second edition, in 1998, that says, "Feminism is a doctrine suggesting that women are systematically disadvantageous in modern society and advocating equal opportunities for men and women" (27). E. Porter defines it as follows, "Feminism is a perspective that seeks to eliminate the subordination, oppression, inequalities and injustices women suffer because of their sex." (27). Whereas R. Delmar saw that it is possible to construct a baseline definition of Feminism and that many would agree that at the very least of feminist is someone who holds that women suffer discrimination because of their sex, that they have specific needs which remain negated and unsatisfied, and that the satisfaction of these needs would require a radical change... in the social, economic and political order (27-28).

Though these definitions are varied but the idea is the same, Feminism is a reaction against oppression and women suffering. Feminists tried hard to change society and make a better life for women, and be equal with men. Tandon also explains:

"Feminism has always meant independence of mind and spirit and body. Feminist effort to end patriarchal domination should be of primary concern precisely because it insists on the eradication of exploitation and oppression in the family context and in all other intimate relationships. Its theory is that men and women should be equal politically, economically and socially" (23).

Feminism had another aim to reach characterized in having people's support for the movement against injustice. Charlotte Bunch has pointed out that Feminism is not about adding in women's rights, but about transforming society, so that Feminism may be called

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transformational politics. Because everything affects women, every issue is women's issue and there is a feminist perspective on every subject (qtd in Tandon 32). In other words, Feminism is absolutely anti-men; it was also from some points of view anti-family because feminists considered family as women's prison, putting their intention towards working outside to achieve liberation (24).

Indeed, feminists always seek the equality between the sexes to eliminate the differentiation between man and woman in order not to be oppressed and marginalized. This is the reason why Karren Offen presents Feminism in terms of male domination as the crucial issue for feminist politics. Feminism was a critical analysis of male privilege and women's subordination within any given society and a political challenge to male authority and hierarchy in the most profound sense (qtd in Thompson 54). Teresa Billington Greg had the same point of view about Feminism; she believed that it was a movement that aimed to reorganize the world by abolishing men priority on women and to fix women's position in society as a human being not inferior because of their sex (qtd in Tandon 32). It can be said that Feminism is the expression of women's needs and interests from different classes, regions...etc

1.4.2 Brief History of Feminism:

According to Offen, the term Feminism barely existed before the twentieth century. Originated in France, it only began to be employed in 1890s. In other words, it is a relatively new term within the long history of western social and political theory and in this sense suggests a new framework (qtd in Beasley xiii). Cott and Moses said that the word Feminism refers to political activism by women on behalf women; it is originated in France and used in that place and that time to refer to those who defended women's rights (qtd in McCann 1).

Likewise, the feminists took in the United States and the United Kingdom. In the UK, Mary Wollstonecraft published *A Vindication of the Rights of Women* in 1792 where she supported

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women's rights and the social and moral equality of the sexes. While in the United States, the leaders of this movement were Elizabeth Cady and Stanton and Susan B. Anthony (A. Shukla 8).

Joan Cassell in her analysis of the women's movement in the United States in 1970s, said: "when a woman's consciousness is raised, she perceived herself and other women as members of a degraded group is committed to altering this state" (qtd in Legates 2). Hence, we can say that the history of Feminism has been splitted into three time periods: The First Wave Feminism, the Second Wave Feminism, and the Third Wave Feminism; each wave was concerned with a particular aim.

1.4.2.1 The First Wave Feminism:

It is the period of time in which feminists were active to gain their rights during the 19th century and the early 20th century in the United Kingdom and the United States (Rampton 1). Feminists believed that they should be politically powerful so as to establish an honourable place in the society. Therefore, they focused on gaining the right of women's suffrage. The term First Wave Feminism was not yet used at that time. After the emergence of the second feminist wave, the name of the term came automatically to describe the first and second wave separately (A. Shukla 7). The efforts of women in this period of time were focused on the women's right to vote, because they were interested in reaching the equality between the sexes (20th century 3). Another characteristic of the First Wave Feminism is that it was stranded to white, middle, and upper middle class women (Goodwin and M. Jasper 377). The First Wave had social and political goals, and desires for women to get higher education and liberation from oppression because of their sex, and other various reforms.

1.4.2.2 The Second Wave Feminism:

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It refers to an era of feminist activity beginning in the 1960s. It was concerned with independence and greater political action to improve women's rights (A.Sukla 8). Similarly, it gave the importance to equality between the sexes economically and making women able to have careers and have the right to choose decision of motherhood to have children or not(9). Goodwin and M.Jasoer explain that The Second Wave Feminism had its limitations in its early years though feminists included women of colour, and of working class background (377).

1.4.2.3 The Third Wave Feminism:

A.Shukla said that this feminist movement began in the early 1990s; it seeks to challenge and expand common definitions of gender. It addressed and overthrew a perceived oppression by patriarchy and instead emphasized equality between the sexes(11). Besides, feminists of this wave confirmed that Feminism was still active until they achieved the equality between man and woman(11).

Equally, feminists tried to listen to the third world women, and understand their needs. This wave engrossed on the same important values as gender equality, identity and ending violence against women. Identity means that every woman from any background all over the world should be heard and understood. Then, ending violence against women is to fight for women's safety and security against oppression, because, for example, some women in all parts of the world were victims of being married as children, abused, or forced into labour (Demarco np).

1.5. Victorian Woman's Role:

By the beginning of the Victorian epoch, gender issues became a part of the British society.

According Black et al :

Throughout the nineteenth century, there was much debate concerning the proper place and the proper characteristics of femininity. The traditional roles of wives, mothers and daughters, the structure of the family, and the nature of marriage, these were all open for

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examination by both men and women. In a nation ruled by a female queen who supported education for women but not female suffrage, the lines between traditional masculine and feminine realms were often blurred, and many writers and thinkers voiced their opinions on how such tensions and inconsistencies should best be reconciled (96).

Again, some authors claim that gender consciousness was also central to Victorian England's political scene. At the start of the Victorian age, middle-class women did not have the chance to be educated or work in higher institutions or professions, they could not vote, they had only few legal rights(xlii). Black et al also add and explain:

The common law doctrine of coverture ensured that a woman's legal identity was subsumed in that of her husband upon marriage. In effect, the law of coverture regarded the husband and wife as "one person": the husband. This meant that upon marriage the husband had full control of his wife's personal property and any earnings she acquired during the marriage; he had absolute authority over their home and children; and he could legally use physical force to discipline the members of his family. If he deserted his wife, she could not sue for divorce and had no custody rights to their children. No viable legal mechanism was available to an average woman to contest her husband's decisions since husband and wife were "one body" under the law(xlii).

Thompson confirms that the feminine is represented and contained as passive otherness to be a part of familiarization(62).

The Victorian Age was characterized by denying women by society all the rights and the political privileges were only for men. On the other hand, the widows and single women were enjoying better rights than the married ones, except the right to vote. They could own properties legally by law and they were also obliged to pay taxes to the state; the same taxes as men. For Murdoch "they could inherit personal property such as household goods from deceased parents, but siblings and their descendants received prior claim to all real property land and states". Furthermore, the author adds "...Women were also excluded from most churches and government offices with notable exceptions...but could not until later in the century gain accreditation to practice medicine or law(3).

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Women were oppressed and lived with an omitted personality; the feminist reformer Barbara Leigh Smith Bodichon says that “a married woman has no legal existence. A man and wife are one person in law; the wife loses all her rights as a single woman, and her existence is entirely absorbed in that of her husband. He is civilly responsible for her acts; she lives under his protection or cover, and her condition is called coverture”(qtd in Murdoch 3-4). The married woman was also deprived of other several rights; she could not sign her contracts or be responsible for her debts, she could not either sue or be sued unless under the name of her husband, even if her husband died, the wife could not obtain the right of custody to her children(4).

The key to the financial independence was to have a good education and find a proper job, but these opportunities were allowed only for the middle-class women. The situation of women knew few changes in the late decades of the century; women took places in respectable professions. As an example, by the 1870s, secretaries and clerks were not spread or well known but twenty years later, a huge number of females were employed thanks to these capacities in addition to teaching and nursing and they entered the domain of business and commerce as well (Owen 2-3).

The 1882 Act gave married women both rights and duties. After that year, married women had the right to control their properties, gain other rights and had other responsibilities as the unmarried women (3). To sum up, women during the Victorian period were supposed to lead a highly restrictive life, centered around their husbands and their children.

1.6 Conclusion:

This chapter has been concerned with the examination of the Victorian period in order to understand the Victorians' way of living and find women's position during that era. Besides, it has tried to make a link between Feminism and gender issue because Victorian women needed to struggle for their rights to prove themselves as human beings, to make their voices heard by

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voting, making their own decisions and controlling their properties and lives; these purposes are some of the characteristics of Feminism. Thanks to that consciousness, they managed to gain their struggle of living as human beings with rights and duties like men to some extent.

Chapter Two: The Study of the Perception of Feminism in Jane Eyre

2.1 Introduction:

In Charlotte Brontë's novel *Jane Eyre*, there is a reflection of women's lives and position in society; women were discriminated, marginalized and over controlled by men. Brontë shows women's situation and their main issues through her characters, like Bertha, the madwoman, who symbolized the Victorian woman because she was locked in a room by her husband, and Jane, the protagonist who had been oppressed during her life but she was not a quitter to her miserable circumstances and contradicted the norms of society and men's authority. Brontë's novel has aspects of Feminism and shows that the writer was influenced by the Feminist Movement, which appeared in her story and embodied in her heroine Jane who is close to Charlotte Brontë's personality. This chapter deals with the main characters of the novel; its main themes and the perception of Feminism ending with Brontë's purpose from her work.

2.2 Summary of the Novel:

Jane Eyre, a ten- year orphan girl who lives at Gatshead with her aunt Mrs.Reed and her daughters Georgiana and Eliza and another son John. The Reeds were ill-treated Jane who was too young to handle this situation but she was able to do nothing. The Reeds hated the girl; they always reminded her of her poor situation; at that she was a useless orphan. One day, Jane fought with her cousin John because he saw her reading his own book; therefore, her cruel aunt punished her by locking her in a room where her Jane's uncle died. This room was called the 'Red-Room'. Jane sees the room as a frightening room, she is extremely scared and starts screaming and begging her aunt to open the door and open the door because she thinks that she sees her uncle's ghost in the room; but her aunt refuses, then she is fainted. When she wakes up, she finds the servant Bessie and Mr. Lloyd taking care of her suggesting

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to Mrs. Reed to send Jane away to a school because the girl is clearly neither happy nor living comfortably in that house.

Consequently, Mrs. Reed sent her to a boarding school for orphans; Lowood School; which is managed by Mr. Brocklehursts, a hypocritical abusive man. In this school, the students were living in poverty in bad conditions; they did not have enough food, living in freezing rooms and wearing poor clothes and shoes; because he was stealing to be a wealthy man. At school, Jane makes two friends; Miss Temples and Helen Burns. These two friends influence Jane positively; she becomes an excellent student and learns from them piano-playing, drawing, French and singing. Because of the catastrophic conditions the girls were living in half of them died including Jane's friend Helen. After this tragedy, Mr. Brocklehursts was expelled from his position. As a result, the school's conditions become more acceptable for living and Jane's life improves and after six years she becomes a teacher at that school.

After two years of teaching, Mrs. Temple got married and left the school; Jane felt the school different without her friend; thus she plans to leave Lowood and become a governess. She finds a job in Thornfield to teach a French girl named Adèle Varens. Jane likes the house and feels comfortable because they welcome her nicely, she thinks that she will work for Mrs. Fairfax but she is just the housekeeper because her real employer is Mr. Rochester a dark mysterious man. Days later, Jane was going to Millcote, in her way she helped a horseman, then she discovered that this horseman was Thronfield owner ; her employer.

Jane and Rochester find themselves close and like each other, he tells her that Adèle is not his daughter and he takes her because her mother abandoned her. Jane knew that there is another secret hidden in Thornfield. Every night, she hears weird laughter from the third floor but she did not know who was laughing; she asks Mrs. Fairfax to tell her that it is a servant who has drink problem named Grace Pool, but Jane stays with her doubts in her mind.

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One night Jane smelled a smoke from Rochester's room, she entered to find his room and bed on fire; she rescued him and he blamed Grace Pool on this incident and told her not to tell anyone; nonetheless Jane felt that there was something mysterious about this story wondering that if it was Grace the person who caused this arson, why Rochester did not do anything to solve these improper actions of this servant.

Following this incident, Rochester invites his rich friends to stay at Thornfield including a young beautiful woman named Blanche Ingram; purposely Rochester makes Jane jealous and thinks that he will propose to Blanche. Richard Mason shows in the party; Rochester is confused and uncomfortable by seeing him. One night, the man gets attacked and stabbed mysteriously; Rochester brings him a doctor and the next morning sneaks him from the house in order not to let anyone know about the incident.

Jane leaves Thornfield for a month before discovering the truth of this story; she goes to her aunt who was on deathbed, and forgives her about mistreating her when she was a child. Before her death, Mrs. Reed gives Jane a letter which never let her know that it exists, the letter was from John Eyre; Jane's uncle, who wanted to adopt Jane and made her his heir. Jane returned to Thornfield, and Blanche left the house with Rochester's friends. Jane thinks that Rochester will propose to Blanche but he proposes to Jane unexpectedly, so she accepts his proposal. Before their wedding, Jane sees nightmares; two days before the wedding, a strange woman enters Jane's room and rips her wedding veil. Jane was happy to marry the man she loves but after that night, she becomes afraid; she knows that that woman was not Grace Poole as Rochester tells her but she does not know who that bizarre woman is.

The day of the wedding arrives, Jane thinks that this will be her happiest day ever but unfortunately it is not. Two men show and declare that Rochester is already married to another woman, Bertha Antoinetta Mason; Rochester trying to justify his action takes them to

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Thronfield to see his wife locked in a room in the third floor with Grace Pool who is Bertha's nursemaid. Bertha is an insane woman, she was responsible for the weird incidents which happened in Thronfield; she was the laugher, she tried to burn Rochester alive in his room, ripped Jane's wedding veil and stabbed Richard Mason, her brother. Rochester explains that his father forced him to marry Bertha when he was in Jamaica because of her money; Rochester tried to live with her as a husband and wife but he could not for she was an insane woman; it was impossible to live with her, that's why he locked her in the third floor and brought her a keeper.

Rochester could not divorce Bertha because of the conditions in the Victorian Period; he asks Jane to travel with him to France where they can live as a married couple but she refuses and runs away from the house at night. She travelled without money to an unknown direction away from Thronfield. Her life was not easy; she starves, begs, sleeps in streets until being taken by the Rivers' family who live at Moor House; she lives with the Rivers' siblings Diana, Mary and St. John, yet she wants to earn her own money; for this reason, St. John finds her a position as a teacher at the school of the village. Jane soon knows that her uncle John Eyre died and becomes his heir. Moreover, one other fact, she discovered that the Rivers are her cousins; hence she decided to share her inheritance with them.

Then, St. John decides to go on a missionary to India; he proposes to Jane to marry him and asks her repeatedly to accompany him. She refuses his suggestion but accepts to go with only as his cousin not as his wife. Nevertheless, he is still trying to convince her; she is about to accept when one night surprisingly and unnaturally, she hears Rochester's voice calling her; the next morning, Jane leaves Moor House in order to go and search her real love Rochester; she goes to Thronfield to find her burned and destroyed as she saw her in her dreams before; she also discovers that one night, Bertha burned the house and Rochester

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saved the servants and tried to save Bertha too but he failed. In this incident, Rochester has lost his eye and a hand. Jane goes to Rochester and offers her help to him as a nurse or a housekeeper but she wishes if he asks her for marriage; and so does he. The couple get married and live happily, Rochester's sight returns to him gradually and they have a son after two years of their marriage.

2.3 Novel's Review:

Jane Eyre is one of the most famous novels of the famous writer Charlotte Brontë; it is also considered as an autobiographical novel; it was first published in 1847. The novel was written under the pseudonym Currer Bell. The story was about a young woman's life named Jane Eyre. The book was a real success in the nineteenth century. Some critics saw that the story contains some events that a young woman in the Victorian Age was not allowed or accepted by society with such ambitions such as female independence and equality between man and woman, For example, De Groot explains:

In *Jane Eyre*, Brontë provides us with a range of portraits of women. Nevertheless, the first thing that needs to be said is that Jane is an atypical female character. She is a virtuous girl but she does not reflect at all the perfect image of the well-balanced woman since she is proud, makes her own way and proclaims she is equal to everybody else (3).

The author explains too: "Brontë illustrates some mid-century ideas in her book, for instance, the position of the governess, education and different aspects of the marriage debate (divorce, the rights of the wife)" (3). Thence, we can say that Charlotte Brontë was defending woman in her book, embodied through the characters and the themes. Now, it is high time to deal with the analysis of the main characters.

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2.4 Main Characters' Analysis:

There are several characters in this novel, the main characters are as follows:

2.4.1 Jane Eyre:

The protagonist and the narrator of the novel is an intelligent, honest girl who lived an abused childhood because she was an orphan living with her aunt and cousins. She faced a lot of oppression and inequalities in her life. It is worth saying that Charlotte Brontë depicted herself through the life of Jane Eyre, and used her fictional characters as one who modeled and also mimicked Brontë as a person. Eyre possessed the same strong drive in seeking equality and independence as a woman. Her refusal in accepting the conformities of the same time mirrors Brontë (Trivett 1).

Jane was an example of few women that were against the reality of considering woman as an inferior creature in comparison to man. She embodies the struggle women faced in the Victorian Age in order to change their position in society. Jane's passion through reading, her love to education and diligence enabled her to succeed and release herself from her miserable situation. Education is important for Jane to offer her a suitable position in society, and build her self-confidence and realize her independence. Rebellion was also the main to prove herself and made her own identity, for example she stood against her aunt's mistreatment and refused Rochester's desire to make her his mistress, and St. John's desire to be his wife ("Jane Eyre" np). Consequently, we can notice that Jane's attempts aimed to realize the equality between man and woman, and refused society's norms.

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2.4.2 Bertha Mason:

Bertha Mason represents the madwoman in the story; Bertha is Edward Rochester's wife; he noticed her insanity and considered her a « maniac », the fact which incited him to lock her in the third floor of Thronfield with a nursemaid to pay attention to her. Bertha was dangerous and attacked people in the house. “Bertha embodies female desire, which was seen as barbarian and dangerous in Victorian times. Women as sexualized creatures were seen as liable to outbreaks of insanity. This point of view is portrayed in Bertha becoming insane as soon as she gives in lust and passion” (Balogh 4). Bertha is an important figure in the novel; she is the antagonist. The scene in which Bertha appeared made a noticeable change in the events of the novel; she appeared few times but when she did, she created new stories and events. She is a mysterious character; she doesn't appear in the beginning of the novel.

Bertha is the symbol of the Victorian woman in some aspects. For example, Bertha is a repressed wife as woman in the Victorian time. Women were not allowed to enjoy many rights, especially the married ones; they were also been locked, so their feelings of fear developed and became mad wives as a result of this mistreatment. Some also construed Bertha as a symbol for the way that Britain, at the time, turned a blind eye to the cultures and people they were educated in, or could not understand. It has also been said that Bertha expressed all the feelings that Jane does not. (“Analysis of the character Bertha” np). Finally, Bertha has an important role in the novel as the authors elucidate: “she contributes a lot to the story and the plot of ‘Jane Eyre’ would be significantly different if it were not for Bertha. She gives the novel danger and drama along with tension and secrets. She also, indirectly gives us the happy ending we crave.” (“Analysis of the character Bertha” np).

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2.4.3 Mr. Edward Rochester:

Mr. Rochester is the person who was able to gain Jane's heart and Bertha's wife, despite his stern personality. He is not an ordinary character; he is not like the known heroes of the fairy tales. Mr. Rochester is a dark character; his family sacrificed him to marry a madwoman (Bertha) because of her fortune; for this reason, the man feels trapped, and lost trust of people and developed as a distance from society, in addition, he could not divorce her wife because of her madness since that was the law in the Victorian Age. In this case, he solved this problem by locking in his wife in a room.

He loved Jane and wanted her to be his wife without taking into consideration his marriage with Bertha. Before his meeting with Jane, Mr; Rochester was a passionate man who followed his senses more than his rational mind. After Jane's entering his life, he tried to change his lifestyle; "Rochester's goal is self-transformation, a reformation to be enacted through his relationships with women. Longing for innocence and purity, he wants Jane to be the good angel in his life". Jane was the person who changed Rochester and led him to correct his attitudes. ("Jane Eyre" np). Now, it is about time to tackle the analysis of the main themes.

2.5 Main Themes' Analysis:

The novel has dealt with some themes but the main ones are independence, marriage, and equality respectively.

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2.5.1 Independence:

The protagonist of the novel 'Jane', has an aim which is to quest for independence; she has an inner strength that gives her the ability to survive and achieve independence. Taking into account the historical background of the novel, we can notice that in this period of time; women were born for the domestic sphere and had no rights. They were considered mentally inferior compared to men; thus they could not have a higher education as it was exclusively for men. Women should just draw, sing, read, play piano... "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 their own identity and aim to become independent such as the protagonist in Charlotte Brontë's Jane Eyre" (Andersson 2).

According to Andersson, "the novel can be seen as a journey of Jane finding her true self. Jane fight's convention by resisting the male dominance, on her quest for identity and independence; she remains true to herself first and caring for her own wellbeing" (2). Besides, Gilbert and Gubar argue that Jane is as every Victorian woman who wants to abolish the patriarchal system of society; she faced oppression at Gateshead, starvation at Lowood, madness at Thornfield, and coldness at Marsh End (qtd in Andersson 5). Rochester's wife Bertha was locked in a room exactly like Victorian women; it is a symbol of woman status in society at that era; women are dependent on men. On the other hand, Jane is a rebellious woman who wishes to lead a different life and escape from the Victorian norms which are not acceptable in society (Andersson 5-6).

From the beginning of the story, Jane seemed to have been abused by her aunt Mrs.Reed; she did not treat her as her children; she was certainly sure that Jane would not be

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accepted in society. There is another symbol of the quest of independence, when Jane's cousin, John, tried to mistreat her because he thought he was the male of the house and the dominant person, she defended herself and did not accept to be over his control (7). Jane is not that beautiful woman who has a high social class, she needs to prove herself and gain her independence and stands alone without depending on any wealthy man. Some authors clarify:

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 woman of the Victorian time, has no place to run; other options to escape are to die of starvation or through madness'' (qtd in Andersson 7)

Another male character who oppressed women in the story is Mr. Brocklehurst, he teaches the girls that their places in society are limited; he pressed them in order to control them, but Jane did not accept that abuse, she is not the type of girls who follow the norms of the patriarchal society, she is also a person who has strong desire to keep her own personality and prove herself; this is a symbol of the quest of independence. An independent woman has numerous characteristics; those include helping others, being happy by themselves, not being controlled by others, not requiring or relying on something or someone else and being free.

In chapter thirteen, Jane helps Mr. Rochester when he has an accident with his horse. Mr. Rochester says, "...necessity compels me to make you useful...". This attests that Jane is an independent woman who can help others ("Independence in Jane Eyre" np). Jane showed her strength and independence when she said 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 "(Brontë 117).

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Independence is very important for the protagonist Jane; she refused to Rochester's mistress and left him because she believed that in that way she would be his slave. When she came back to him she was financially independent and accepted to marry him. Finally, "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" (14). The second theme is marriage. This is what the following point seeks to try to cover.

2.5.2 Marriage:

The novel also talks about marriage during the Victorian epoch. "The theme of marriage in the novel is based entirely on Brontë's view of marriage" (Quinn 16).

The authors explicate as well:

The first example of Brontë's view on the role of passion is in Rochester's marriage to Bertha; this marriage is based on passion, because he entraps himself in an unsatisfying marriage. Through Rochester's choices, the reader can see that Brontë asserts that marriage decisions based on passion and ignoring the role of duty will bring more than loss of passion, it will bring an abundance of what you failed to factor into the decision, duty" (17).

Rochester's marriage to Bertha was arranged; she is a well-off woman; their marriage is lacking in passion; they lived emptiness in their relationship with no emotions; consequently, Rochester sacrificed his youth and independence because of his wrong decision of marrying Bertha. Jane believes that marriage should be decided because of passion and inevitably the couple will carry their duties to each other (19). When she left after Rochester's marriage to Bertha revealed, she needed to clear her mind and her heart from the fear of marriage; she wanted to stand alone on her own feet (20).

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Charlotte Brontë in this novel gives a negative viewpoint about marriage, aiming at showing the struggle of the protagonist during the story because of factors such as sacrifice, duty, and religion, and shows her belief that a successful marriage should be built on compatibility, morals and utter devotion; in this case marriage will not be a negative experience, like the marriage of Rochester and Jane, because of their passion to each other, while the proposal of St. John to Jane was for his duty as a Victorian man who should marry and produce children (“Jane Eyre”1). At last, we come to embark on the last theme which is equality. The Victorian woman had to fight for achieving it.

2.5.3 Equality:

Jane wants to reach equality in her relationship with Rochester. Although she loves him and they are both intellectually equal, she cannot completely feel happy because she knows that they are from different social classes, which is an important manner in the Victorian Age (Quinn 22-23). Rochester offers Jane expensive dresses and jewels but she refuses; she doesn't want to be dependent on him and inferior than him; she wants to ascertain herself and be equal to him (25). Jane says to Rochester, “... and can bear to have my morsel of bread snatched from my lips, and my drop of living water dashed from my cup? Do you think, because I am poor, obscure, plain and little, I am soulless and heartless? You think wrong” (Brontë 284). It also means that Jane is expressing that women are also human beings who have hearts and feelings as men do; she means that even she is not well-to-do as he is, she is not inferior to him.

Other ideas that express that Jane search for equality is when she discovered Rochester's secret about his marriage to Bertha, she refused to be his mistress, and chose to leave him and follow the path that could lead her to realize her equality. Then, she inherits from her uncle

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and becomes equal to Rochester, now she can go back to her love and takes the decision to marry him.

The following point aims at showing that Charlotte Brontë was influenced by the Feminist Movement. The latter did combat for reaching some of women's rights like independence, equality, the right of voting and so on.

2.6. Charlotte Brontë Influenced by the Feminist Movement:

Women during Charlotte Brontë's time were pressed and oppressed, maltreated by men, considering themselves as superior to women who should take no important place in society for their places were at home serving their husbands obediently, giving birth to children and carrying the domestic work until the emergence of the feminist movement. Mitchell expounds:

Feminism altered the course of Victorian Literature by challenging the literary conventions that governed the portrayal of women and women's experience. More importantly, writing by feminists and those influenced by their ideas formed part of the movement that led to expanded opportunities, increased independence, and fundamental shifts in attitudes towards women, and ultimately changed women's lives(297).

All the way throughout this era, female writers took the chance and used their pens to describe and try to solve this women's issue of marginalization and lack of importance and rights. No doubt it is noticeable that Charlotte Brontë had been influenced by the feminist movement which is quite clear in her works. She contradicted society through her writing, speaking of the discriminated women in a men's dominance period, where woman has no right to voice her opinions and express herself freely.

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“Read Charlotte Brontë’s Jane Eyre and Villette as covert expressions of feminist anger, and Jane Eyre in particular was perceived by Victorian readers as expressing female passion in an unseemly way ”(Mitchell 296). The writer received a huge number of critics among the Victorian readers, because it was a novel written in different style, treating different subjects of Victorian society, precisely feminist subjects. Gao argues, “Jane Eyre is the first, also the most powerful and popular novel to present the modern view of women’s position in society... It was a representative work reflecting women’s call for equality... The female consciousness of Jane Eyre challenges men’s authority” (926-927).

Jane Eyre is an unusual heroine in the Victorian time. This period was known for its social structure, every person’s thoughts, desires or dreams are relying on its social class. The Victorians believe that people are born unequal, besides to the idea of men’s superiority to women. Jane refuses the unfair situation, as a feminist woman; she rebels and struggles to reach her self-realization by independence and equality. She lives a tough infancy and continues her life facing several issues and bad circumstances to form her strong personality thanks to her hard work and self-respect. Gao confirms:

“Jane is a feminist through four aspects, her pursuit of esteem, independence, equality and true love. In the guidance of feminist beliefs, through her persistence and brave rebel and pursuit, Jane Eyre finally gets esteem, independence, equality and true love she aspires after for a long time ”(926).

2.7 The Message of Brontë through the Novel:

After reading Brontë’s novel, Jane Eyre, we can learn some lessons which are addressed to readers. The writer used a touch of her personal experiences to make the reader feel close to the story thus can understand it better and see between the lines. She treated some conflicts

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that the society of the Victorian time had witnessed. Therefore, the writer used the novel as a tool to make the reader receive important messages.

The protagonist Jane is an orphan girl who grows in an abusive environment; she does not feel love or happiness in her aunt's house, but she is brave enough to declare to her aunt that she does not accept that way of living and it is unfair to her. In addition, when becoming a mature woman and meeting Rochester, she refuses being his mistress because she feels inequality and that she will be dependent to him without an identity, she sticks to her principles and to her desire of self-realization and refuses to marry without love that is the reason why she chooses Rochester instead of St. John.

To summarize, Brontë's novel shows that woman should always make her own voice and realize her own identity, struggle for her rights and stand after every fall to prove herself and create a respectful life and position.

2.8 Conclusion:

To conclude this chapter, it can be ascertained that Charlotte Brontë's novel *Jane Eyre* is an influential work, in which the writer tells a story of an orphan who has a high self-esteem and a strong sense of right, she is a rebellious woman in a time that forces women to be prisoners at home, depending on their husbands and taking care of their children without an identity or rights. Brontë's main themes are: independence, marriage and equality; those are what Jane wants since her childhood. Finally, she succeeds in realizing her dreams and becoming independent and equal to the man she marries by love after her inheritance from her uncle. Charlotte Brontë writes this novel to criticize the bad conditions in which women are living. Besides, she tries to deliver a message that women should be hard workers to realize

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their aims and be respectful and impose themselves to take their places in society to abolish the patriarch society.

General conclusion

To conclude, this memoir has described Victorian Literature and Victorian society, particularly the Victorian woman's role, and shown how literature deals with the question of woman's position, taking as an example to study the case of Charlotte Brontë's novel, 'Jane Eyre'. The Victorian Period is a period of changing of many fields because of industrialization; but woman's status stayed as it was, a housewife or a mother not a working woman who could enjoy her rights. Literature at that time flourished and treated many Victorian subjects. Many brilliant male and female writers made their pens for the purpose of writing about Victorian attitudes like: Oscar Wilde, Joseph Conrad, Wilkie Collins, Elizabeth Gaskell, George Eliot and Marie Corelli. Among the subjects that were important to write about is woman's question. Women during the Victorian Era were oppressed and voiceless, women did not have the chance to be educated or work in higher situations or professions, they could not vote, they had only few legal rights. They were denied in society, they did not have the right of custody to their children or have any possession.

Moreover, the Feminist Movement came to defend woman's rights which was first emerged in France and then expanded in the United States and United Kingdom. It came to prove that there is something wrong with society's treatment of woman. This movement has been splitted into three waves: The First Wave Feminism, The Second Wave Feminism, and The Third Wave Feminism. Finally, Feminism realized the mission because of its wrong influence over the world. Charlotte Brontë is a famous writer among the writers influenced by the Feminist Movement. She expressed her feminist thoughts during this research through her work *Jane Eyre*. This research also focuses on the themes that are considered as feminist characteristics from the depicted work *Jane Eyre*. Besides, the chapter shows the background of Brontë. Therefore, this analysis has shown that there are common points between Jane's life and her creature Brontë. Through the analysis of the characters and the main themes, it is

General conclusion

possible to depict the author's thoughts and principles, also realize that she is influenced by the feminist movement and her desire of seeing independent woman enjoying their rights.

Women during the Victorian age had no right of possession, they were unequal to men and dependent to them, they were not free in education; in addition, Victorian society was structured by classes that made people unequal. But in the novel, Brontë with her protagonist challenged all these social values. Despite the fact that Jane was an orphan, she was able to become an educated woman who wanted to prove herself and achieve her aim as well as to become equal to the man she loved and the whole society. Furthermore, she inherited from her uncle and realized her dreams and ended the story marrying by love and having money to reach equality.

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