BECOMING VIRTUOUS: OVERCOMING THE MONSTROUS IN CHARLOTTE BRONTË'S *JANE EYRE*

by

Candice Atsavinh

A thesis submitted to the faculty of
The University of North Carolina at Charlotte
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of Master of Arts in
English

Charlotte

2022

Approved by:

_____
Dr. Mark West

_____
Dr. Paula Connolly

_____
Dr. Balaka Basu

ABSTRACT

Candice Atsavinh. Becoming Virtuous: Overcoming The Monstrous in Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre.*
(Under the direction of Dr. Mark West)

The aim of this thesis is to explore the emotional impact that three childhood environments have on the formation of Jane's identity. These spatial boundaries are how Jane develops an understanding of herself and the 'other' while discovering the answer to 'Who am I?'. My analysis focuses on three spaces. First, I explore her cognitive development in the domestic sphere of Gateshead Hall. Second, I analyze Jane's moment of introspection while confined in the Red Room and how it alters her self-image. Third, I discuss the impact of religion, her relationship with God, and the ways it prepares her for adulthood. Through this ordeal, Jane must learn the rules, explore society's purpose for her, and break those rules to become her true self. However, during this development, Jane is perceived as a monster for being incapable of conforming to society's norms. I argue that the trauma Jane experienced as an orphan did not transform her into a monster, instead gave her power through autonomy by not complying with society's demands. Moreover, her trauma grants her the ability to cross boundaries and survive in restricted environments rather than go 'mad'. Since Jane creates a different path for the 'New Woman' ideology, her narrative becomes an allegory of Victorian culture. By examining her life at Gateshead Hall, the Red Room, and Lowood Institute, I can discover specific instances in Jane's childhood to draw direct connections to the ways in which her trauma shaped her and saved her from becoming monstrous.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the best thesis committee for their continued support and encouragement; Dr. Mark West, my committee chair, Dr. Paula Connolly, and Dr. Balaka Basu. I offer my sincere thanks for their patience and guidance during this process. I am deeply appreciative for the funding received through the Ruff Graduate Research Scholarship to undertake my thesis. My completion of this project also could not have been accomplished without the support of my crew and friends, Kellyn, Randall, Hannah, Cass, Staley, Stacie, Sydney, Bri, and many more--thank you for allowing me to vent and reminding me to be kind to myself. Thank you to my family especially my mom Matrina, my nanny Mariea, and my cousin Cory for the countless times you have comforted and encouraged me during this hectic journey. Finally, to my loving, compassionate, and extremely patient husband, Scottie; thank you for always being my voice of reason. Achievement unlocked.

DEDICATION

This thesis is dedicated to the memory of my first best friend, my little brother, Justin.

Thank you for watching over me during this adventure.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

1. Being an Orphan in Nineteenth-Century England 1

2. Growing up in Gateshead Hall 14

3. Feeling Haunted in the Red Room 31

4. Coming of Age in Lowood Institute 49

5. Becoming a New Woman in Thornfield Hall 63

Works Cited 69

1. Being an Orphan in Nineteenth-Century England

It was during the Romanticism movement of the early and mid-nineteenth century that the idea of childhood was perceived as a threshold where the child traveled through a liminal space in hopes of entering adulthood as a decent and respectable individual who was beneficial to society. The methodology behind constructing this positive outcome depended on how close to the traditional structure of the Victorian household the child's family came. Since the purpose of children was to become "proper" adults, society believed children must be raised in a balanced household. According to Deborah Gorham in *The Victorian Girl and the Feminine Ideal*, the Victorian definition of a balanced household meant only those raised by a father and a mother had the chance of being successful (3). Framed in the principles of the household as a domestic refuge from the harsh public world, a balanced home was crucial. These beliefs further elevated the concept of the ideal Victorian family to a powerful position allowing it to dictate the everyday functionality of society. Moreover, it developed into a fierce prejudice against those who failed to comply with these social norms. The ideology behind the importance of family, belonging, and self-identity is something familiar to an author like Charlotte Brontë, who grew up in a time when children's and women's identities were overshadowed and dependent on the patriarchy.

Born on April 21st, 1816, Charlotte Brontë was the third oldest of six children and grew up in a society conditioned by this idolization of the 'perfect' family structure. Helene Moglen notes in *Charlotte Brontë: The Self Conceived* that "the Brontë family, with all its eccentricities, was prophetically Victorian in its structures and patterns of

interactions" (34). This structure was built upon the belief that repression and restrictions allowed them to maintain good morality. Drew Lamonica states that the ideology of what makes a Victorian family is what empowers it. The family is the "dictator of domestic regulations which becomes the dogmatic discipline that imposed limits on the self--a limitation that provided protection; it also provided inherited roles" (Lamonica 16). The roles became a hierarchy where the father was placed as the head of the house and the wife was second in command. The upkeep of the household was governed by the wife, who was responsible for caring for the home, raising the children, and providing avenues for upward mobility in the family's social status. Thus, the ideal woman was perceived as feminine with complete dependence and submissiveness to men while proving gentle, innocent, and self-sacrificing (Gorham 5). For Brontë, achieving this ideal femininity was an ambiguous concept due to her mother, Maria Brontë's illness, which left Maria incapacitated before the two could develop a relationship, and then she passed away by the time Charlotte turned five. The absence of maternal guidance resonated with Brontë throughout the remainder of her life. Later, during a private correspondence with her close friend Ellen Nussey, Brontë expressed, "I wish she had lived, and that I had known her" (Moglen 21). Naturally, there was an imbalance in the Brontë household after the death of the mother that weakened the family structure in a manner they never fully recovered from.

The loss of their mother categorized Brontë and her siblings as orphans by Victorian standards as children who lacked the required balance of two living parents. Moreover, their father, Peter Brontë, was a clergyman fiercely devoted to his ministerial duties and left the children to look after themselves. Although raised with a richness of

mental stimulation, Mr. Brontë's profession provided a competent, but limited income, forcing them to maintain a simplistic approach to other aspects of their lives from their attire to the food they ate. His unconventional and liberal mannerism was reflected in his political views and approach to childrearing, which was influenced by Jean-Jacques Rosseau's belief that childhood should be respected and revered (Moglen 24). Instead of nurturing through affection, he raised his children to be open-minded and freely granted them access to his views, journals, and library. Thus, they grew up being seen as imperfect children who lacked the elements required to become decent adults. Orphancy, as argued by Nina Auerbach in *Incarnations of the Orphan*, is seen as "a faintly disreputable and possibly bastardized offspring of uncertain parentage, always threatening to lose focus and definition, but, with the resilience of the natural victim, always managing to survive" (395). Although Elizabeth Branwell, their mother's sister, came to provide maternal influence, being orphaned at young and vulnerable ages caused the Brontë children to foster a deep dependency on each other until their own deaths, with Charlotte as the only one to make it to old age.

In 1824, four of the six Brontë children, Charlotte, Maria, Elizabeth, and Emily, were sent to Cowan Bridge, a school for clergymen's daughters. After Maria and Elizabeth died from an outbreak of tuberculosis, Charlotte and Emily were sent home before attending Roe Head, England in 1831. A few years later in 1835, at the age of nineteen Charlotte became a teacher at the same school. However, she developed a distaste for the profession saying it left her exhausted and dispirited, and in her private correspondences with friends often referred to her pupils as "those fat-headed oafs" (Brontë et al 6-7). Her growing disdain for teaching and being a governess motivated her

to find other professions to earn a living wage. Writing soon filled that need when Charlotte and her sisters Emily and Ann were able to publish a book of poems in 1846 under male pseudonyms, Currer, Ellis, and Acton Bell. Brontë explained the choice in a preface stating, "we did not like to declare ourselves women, because---without at the time suspecting that our mode of writing and thinking was not what is called 'feminine'--we had a vague impression that authoresses are liable to be looked on with prejudice" (Brontë et al 451). Being forced to write under a male pseudonym illustrates how limited women were in comparison to men, where authorship was perceived as an unwomanly profession. Moreover, those women who were openly working as authors weren't taken as serious contributors to the profession. Even hidden under a male pseudonym, Charlotte received several rejections for her first manuscript, *The Professor* (1844) and in 1846 she began to write *Jane Eyre*.

At a crucial time in her life, her traumatic experiences became the blueprint for Jane's harsh and sometimes unforgiving world. Brontë's first novel, *The Professor* novel dictates a great love affair that mirrored the longings of her reality; a one-sided love with her former headmaster Constantin Heger is rejected. Afterward, her brother, Branwell was sent home from school in disgrace with his own failed romantic tryst as the cause. At the time, Charlotte was also playing nurse to her father who was recovering from cataract surgery. Thus, with no males working, the family was facing a moment of financial recession, and getting a novel published became crucial. For Brontë, the desire to maintain realism overpowered her belief in stories that were "written as a matter of course". She chose to establish the heroine for *Jane Eyre* on the same terms as the traditional hero with attributes such as interiority--qualities of the mind, character, and

personality created a vantage point where she could explore conventional narratives and challenge them with realism (Moglen 106). Moreover, these concepts were missing components of her rejected novel *The Professor*. When the novel was first published in 1847, it was titled, *Jane Eyre: An Autobiography* under the pen name Currer Bell. The 38 chapters were originally published in three volumes, which was the standard form of British fiction during the nineteenth century. The first volume, chapters 1-15, is the section this thesis focuses on because it is the childhood portion of Jane's life.

In *Jane Eyre*, the protagonist is viewed as easily relatable due to her realistic characteristics, many of which were rehashed from *The Professor*, a book known to directly dictate Brontë's life. Published posthumously in 1957 long after *Jane Eyre*'s success, this story was seen as a reminder of Heger's rejection. Although the same love affair was the inspiration for Jane and Edward Rochester's romance in *Jane Eyre*, Brontë refined her protagonist with a deep sense of self that came off as more realistic than her previous work. Moglen comments that "it is this interweaving of wish and fact that gives *Jane Eyre* its aura of romance. Psychological realism is responsible for its depth and resonance" (107). This method of embedding reality within the protagonist was a new concept at the time. Thus, by "freeing Jane from the conventional trappings of femininity and granting her liberty to feel and express her feelings, to think and express her thoughts, and to access her 'humanness', Charlotte created the first 'antiheroine" (Moglen 106). Through Jane's relatability, Brontë captured the essence of possibility which created a refuge of hope for middle-class women searching for stability outside of the traditional female sphere ideology.

For the discussion on Jane's identity formation, I am focusing on Gateshead Hall, the Red Room, a chamber within Gateshead Hall, and Lowood Institute as the settings. These locations are the prisons that emotionally impact Jane's development during her childhood. Gateshead Hall illustrates the domestic environment where family values are taught, and she learns that she does not fit the desired social norms for little girls. This belief places Jane as an outcast and prompts uncertain feelings about herself, and her purpose in society. Thus, when she breaks those established domestic rules, Jane is punished with overnight confinement in the Red Room. This uncanny and unused chamber becomes a liminal space where she is forced into introspection and to reflect upon her actions in comparison to proper little girls like her cousins Georgina and Eliza. Moreover, readers for the first time are presented with a visual encounter of how Jane internally sees herself. Finally, Lowood Institute is the public space where she is educated on her role in society as a female orphan who will never achieve a proper marital status. In Gateshead Hall, we get examples of the perfect Victorian child. The Red Room shows the progress of Jane's trauma once realizing she has failed to achieve the defined ideal. Finally, Lowood Institute provides insight that if she wants independence her only option is to escape the social norms which starts with learning her definitions of what good and bad are and developing her spiritual relationship with God.

Gateshead Hall is a domestic space that teaches Jane the powerlessness of females through the strict rules and expectations society has for them. She is shown how she should be through the appearances and actions of her cousins Georgina and Eliza Reed, but in the end, learns she will never become them. Her situation mirrors Brontë, who at the time of writing *Jane Eyre* had experienced rejection not only professionally, but also

romantically. Moreover, Brontë's only living parent was recovering from cataract surgery which fueled feelings of discontent with the direction her life was going. These strong emotions are demonstrated in Jane's self-depreciation of feeling unloved and believing she was never going to become a 'good' person. A moment of passion lands her in trouble for challenging the patriarchal hierarchy which is the foundation of the Reed household. The Red Room allows Jane to explore her identity while in a safe liminal space. The outcome of this situation results in readers gaining second-hand insight into the extent of how her trauma from her time with the Reeds has affected her. Since the room is positioned between the domestic and public spaces Jane is trying to invade and navigate, it becomes a neutral ground where both spheres can collide. Here, she can safely explore and experiment with her identity and what it means to become a 'proper' Victorian little girl or the 'Angel in the House'. Brontë uses this environment to create a dichotomy between identity and culture to demonstrate how society's unrealistic expectations and obsession with the perfect public image can only result in monstrous self-reflections.

Furthermore, Lowood Institute is where Jane encounters religion and begins questioning her spirituality. During this phase, she must come to terms that Georgina, Eliza, and Helen are versions of females she will never become. According to Auerbach, due to their ambiguous nature orphans must "transform every great house she enters--which [her] influence destroys and restores" (408; 412). Thus, Jane's only option is to break and redefine the domestic rules before she can escape her prison and find her true purpose. Although she does develop a relationship with God, she is not as devout as Helen. Moreover, it is from Helen that Jane learns patience and how to transform her

anger and resentment so she can cross this final threshold into womanhood. The outcome of Jane's time at Lowood creates the shell of a proper woman or pseudo-woman. These were the types of women who became governesses and lived on the fringes of society, looking after, and educating children. Traditionally, they also never achieved marital status and never had children or managed a proper Victorian home. More specifically, Jane fills her shell with independence and self-awareness that empowers and establishes her as a relatable version of the 'New Woman'. Thus, as this new self-reliant woman, she is able to create a space of her own within Victorian society.

As a bildungsroman, *Jane Eyre* begins during the childhood phase of the protagonist's life and illustrates how influential Victorian concepts of gender and social class were. More specifically, their beliefs on child-rearing as an undertone through the rest of the novel. The perspective of the child was in a dichotomous tug-o-war between the Age of Innocence movement in the eighteenth century to the Romantic movement of the nineteenth century. In *Children and Childhood in Western Society Since 1500*, Hugh Cunningham argues that the concept transitioned from the Puritan belief of children being full of evil to the Romantic ideology that they were "godlike, fit to be worshipped, and the embodiment of hope" (72). The main contrasting theories were influenced by John Locke. His Puritan view believed that childhood was a space of inexperience, intellectual unawareness, and moral purity. Likewise, this idea was challenged by Jean-Jacques Rousseau's argument that childhood is the best time of life and shifted concepts toward the romantic perspective. In J*ane Eyre*, Brontë chose to engage with the Puritan and Romantic concepts of childhood. The childhood of John, Georgina, and Eliza Reed represented the romantic notion of childhood as a time of innocence. Whereas, Mr.

Brocklehurst, headmaster of Lowood Institute ruled with the Puritan belief that excessive pride in children was a sin and they needed to be raised as disciples of God. However, both ideologies connected the element of childhood as the best way to determine the success of adulthood.

During the nineteenth century, themes of children were becoming an increasingly popular topic to analyze, discuss, and write about. As the influence of the Victorian middle-class grew, so did the desire to properly define the 'how' and 'what' of childhood. The first nine chapters of Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* encapsulate the traumatic experience of Jane's childhood in three locations, Gateshead Hall, the Red Room, and Lowood Institute. Jane travels through these spaces as an orphan and child undergoing development, which leaves her susceptible to its influences. Thus, each environment represents a crucial milestone where she constructs an understanding of her purpose and identity within society. Cunningham notes that Victorians believed it was the responsibility of adults, especially the parents, to structure a happy childhood for children so that those positive experiences and qualities could be preserved into adulthood and later redeemed in the secular adult world (72). As an orphan, Jane automatically fails to meet the romantic standards because she lacked innocence and parentage. When Romanticism was adopted by the Victorians, orphans were perceived as being incapable of living a 'happy' and 'prosperous' childhood since they lacked parents to organize it for them. Thus, Jane was raised differently than her cousins under the Puritan mindset that children were incapable of rational thought and as such their opinions should be disregarded.

The strong presence of orphans in Victorian literature is an allegory to society's fears and anxieties about economy, social class, and spirituality. At the novel's start, Jane sets the precedent of how the orphan is defined by informing readers that she has been prohibited from activities with her cousins based on her behavior. Her aunt alleged that though she regretted keeping Jane at a distance it was a necessity to "exclude her from privileges intended only for contented, happy, little children" (Brontë 9). Thus, in the light of idealized notions of the social unit of the "perfect" family, the adopted or warded child was seen as an intruder, such as Jane in relation to the Reed household. Brontë, like various authors of her era, used society's curiosities about children and childhood to explore whether it was a determining precursor of how adulthood would pan out. Moreover, she used Jane's story to explore the anxieties and fears that surrounded the presence of orphans and their ambiguous identities. Jane's exclusion as a child influenced how she viewed herself and her purpose later in life, especially regarding her relationships with others. This trauma pushed her to form her selfhood in and out of societal norms. Thus, Brontë creates a protagonist who is a catalyst capable of confronting the Victorian ideology of what was considered appropriate female behavior.

Brontë made sure to embed the contradictions of gender into Jane's narrative as another obstacle to overcome especially the validity of her protagonist's femininity in comparison to other females, such as Eliza and Georgina Reed and later her classmate Helen Burns. According to Malkovich, women and children were othered to the point that society held romanticized conventions of the physical and mental characteristics attributed to them (61). These categories became a rock and a hard place for Jane's evolving identity. Her ambiguous nature as an orphan allowed her to challenge and

change the concepts of the ideal Victorian child and later woman. Amberyl Malkovich in her book, *Charles Dickens and the Victorian Child: Romanticizing and Socializing the Imperfect Child* defines Jane and other orphans with ambiguous natures as the imperfect child. The imperfect child becomes an amalgamation of their society whose "knowledge is arguably a product of a blended environment which occurs regardless of gender" (Malkovich 22). Trapped between worlds, Jane must contend with becoming an imperfect child which is the only way she can escape the imprisonment of childhood and reshape herself as the 'New Woman' when she reaches adulthood.

Before discussing the 'how' and 'why' orphans were considered a disturbance to the norms of society, it is essential to establish how this group was defined. According to Laura Peters in her article *Orphan Texts: Victorian Orphans, Culture and Empire*, for Victorians, the term "orphan" was used in a broad manner, referring to any parentless child, whether both or one parent was dead or a child that was abandoned due to circumstances such as overcrowding in the household (1). These conditions also included if a father remarried and decided to give up the parental rights from their previous marriage. Moreover, Peters notes that "an orphan was also one who was 'bereft of protection, advantages, benefits, or happiness, previously enjoyed" (1). In other words, these were children who were viewed as inferior due to lacking what society had considered the balance gained from a two-living parent household. Thus, Victorians developed preconceptions that orphans were fated to live a life of poverty and sin due to the inability to achieve society's expectations.

Breaking down the Victorian ideology, whether male or female, a proper family structure was a necessary element for an individual to grown-up successful. The

fundamental principle was that “a man could rise in the world through effort, talent, and initiative; moreover, such a rise in social status was to be commended” (Gorham 3). This concept was established by the middle-class or the working class and empowered them to restructure the social and economic hierarchy. Like the upper and lower classes, this group came with their own anxieties and fears weighed down by the strain of industrialized capitalism that they created. To escape the harsh public space, the family and an idealized concept of domesticity became a refuge. Gorham states that “the cult of domesticity helped to relieve the tensions that existed between the moral values of Christianity, with its emphasis on love and charity, and the values of capitalism” (4). Thus, by splitting their world into two separate spheres, the middle class created value in how a household and family were structured and “centralized the home as a shelter from the harsh public world (4). So, in turn, this powerful ideology fueled prejudices and constructed those that fell outside of or disrupted the household as monsters.

As previously mentioned, these romantic notions emphasized that childhood should be happy so that any qualities attained during this phase could be preserved and help redeem the adult world (Cunningham 72). Thus, a “proper” and balanced household was determined by society as the best method of curating a happy environment for a child to grow up in. For balance, this ‘perfect’ childhood required both parents to fulfill their roles in the household. The father represented the public sphere and the mother the private. This mindset created prejudices towards anyone outside of the norm, which included orphans. Since happiness for a child relied solely on having both parents, society felt that orphans were incapable of having a successful life due to lacking a proper beginning. Thus, whether their orphancy was a result of death or circumstance,

orphans became a social class of outcasts who embodied Victorian fears of being considered imperfect. Auerbach argues that like orphans, the formation of industrialism, religious conflict, and scientific discoveries orphaned the Victorian age of its sense of its own past (375). Treated as a scapegoat, orphans became a reminder to the middle class about the uncertainty of their own futures. Thus, when faced with the monsters they created, middle-class Victorians sought to tame or destroy them. The culmination of middle-class Victorian fears and anxieties centered on maintaining a 'perfect' image and not failing to become beneficial to society. This concept of failure was defined as those who could not follow what Victorians viewed as the norm resulted in them being labeled as monstrous. According to Jeffrey Jerome Cohen in his book *Monster Theory: Reading Culture*, monstrosity is "something unsightly" (3). It is a feeling or an instance that compounds itself until it becomes something that can no longer be hidden or ignored. These culturally inherited insecurities of not belonging are fostered in Jane by the environments she grew up in, which leave her feeling monstrous.

2. Growing up in Gateshead Hall

Chapters one to four of *Jane Eyre* focus on Jane's time living at Gateshead Hall. Home to wealthy relatives known as the Reeds, Jane was raised in the mansion from infancy to age ten, where her life gave readers insight into Victorian domestic expectations and rules. Although Brontë paints a picturesque setting for her protagonist to be raised in, later it becomes a contradiction of the traditional values the environment claims to advocate. She wrote Gateshead Hall as a representation of the heteronormative patriarchal society that Brontë personally fought to overcome. Naturally, this environment is the beginning of Jane's childhood and where she starts to form her identity. As noted by Cunningham, Victorian children spent most of their early years segregated from the rest of the family similar to a "quarantine before they were allowed to join adult society" (5). During their quarantine, Jane, and her cousins; John, Georgina, and Eliza Reed spent the majority of their time in the nursery. Only visited by maids and the governess, this domestic environment allowed the children to develop in an adult-controlled space that was protected from the harsh public world.

An obsession with protecting the goodness and spirituality of a child flourished during the Romantic movement. This influenced society to believe that "children were born to be messengers of God" and being so pure made "childhood the best time of life" (Cunningham 41). Thus, an environment like Gateshead Hall introduced Jane and her cousins to this concept of what is a good child versus a bad one. The basic knowledge gained during early development plays a crucial role in how well each child will adapt to adulthood when the time comes. Although the Reed children are orphans, since their father is deceased; their mother, wealth, and social class protect them from receiving the

same treatment as Jane. Moreover, due to these privileges, they are examples of "good" children and what Jane should aspire to become. She is completely parentless and inherited a low social class based on her father's background with no prospects for improvement. Thus, she was expected to follow a different set of rules even though they were raised in the same nursery. As argued by Cohen, the monsters we create show us "how we have misinterpreted what we have attempted to place…and ask us to reevaluate our cultural assumptions" (20). Jane's shortcomings led to her being ostracized as a monstrous child with those negative traits nurtured through the abuse she experienced while living with her relatives. However, eventually, readers learn that her cousins who bullied and abused her are the ones who are the real monsters.

Focusing on what it means to be an orphan from a Victorian frame of mind will lay a foundation for illustrating the ways in which Jane's treatment directly alters the perspective of her self-identity. Through interactions with her relatives and the servants, she learns the boundaries of what she can and cannot do as an outsider in this domestic environment. The rules she is presented with fluctuate between her roles as an orphan and a female depending on the situation. Moreover, Brontë uses Jane's moments of vulnerability to demonstrate how powerless children are during these formative years of cognitive development. Since Jane was parentless, the role of constructing her childhood became a collective effort from the Reed household to mold her for her role in society. Though everyone's opinions varied, the one common denominator was that she is disobedient and ungrateful. Since Jane grew up in a beautiful mansion alongside proper children, the assumption is it should have made her happier. In a conversation she had with the apothecary Mr. Lloyd, he notes, "Don't you think Gateshead Hall a very

beautiful house...Are you not very thankful to have such a fine place to live at?" (Brontë 24). His statement suggests that because the home is beautiful there is no reason for a child to feel unhappy. This proves that Jane's society placed value on beautiful things and people as a source of happiness and contentment.

Aside from learning the domestic rules, Jane is able to challenge and overcome restrictions to gain independence and individuality. This comes from the agency she acquires as an orphan. According to Cunningham, Victorian parents had a "tendency to treat children almost as objects testifying to their own status" (67). Thus, a good child was more of a testament to the success of the parent's abilities to construct a happy childhood for their children. A good Victorian child was defined as happy and beautiful and did as they were told without complaint. Jane is the complete opposite as a passionate and unhappy child who regularly voices her opinions about the injustices she suffers from her cousins and the adults she interacts with. Mrs. Abbot, a servant, explains that if Jane was "a nice, pretty child, one might compassionate her forlornness; but one really cannot care for such a little toad as that" (Brontë 26). Thus, by their definition, Jane's 'badness' is equal to "ugliness" and something nonhuman which makes her treatment acceptable. She proves that she has autonomy by standing up for herself regardless of the consequences she knows she is being mistreated. Only an orphan can have such a self-assertive trait since Victorian children possessed an unspoken sense of dutifulness towards their parents. More specifically, it was believed that children should be dutiful to their parents and God, whereas an orphan's sole duty was to establish their spiritual relationship with God (Lee). Thus, her ability to defend herself and how mistreated she is versus how pampered her wealthy cousins are illustrates society's preference for

obedience. Thus, once Jane establishes the patriarchy as the antagonist, she learns that forming her own individuality outside of the social norms will help her overcome it and earn a happy ending.

Brontë uses the fictional walls of Gateshead Hall to imprison Jane within the parameters of society's ideologies. Within those boundaries, Jane is subjected to society's prejudices towards those who were abnormal, and their anxieties and fears of not belonging. As noted in Helen Moglen's *Charlotte Brontë: The Self Conceived*, Charlotte spent the majority of her "adolescent years overwhelmed by her sense of inadequacy, denied her needs, repressed her anger, and withdrew into a womb-like world of fantasy" (42). Brontë's lived experiences as a helpless child and inadequate adult allowed her to influence her to write her protagonist as a scapegoat to highlight the dangers of nurturing the collective rather than the individual. Consistent uncertainty is the main theme in Jane's life and comes to fruition at Gateshead Hall. Considered the "scapegoat of the nursery", the suffering that Jane experiences during this time change her identity until she is unrecognizable even to herself (Brontë 17). This disconnect from herself illustrates how detrimental abuse can be to a child's developing mental state. The disruption Jane causes in the Reed household influences the formation of her identity until she mentally becomes something unrecognizable, nonhuman, and monstrous. Furthermore, Jane's fight against the patriarchy beginning such a gender-restrictive and domestic environment implies that female imprisonment is the family structure, and her selfhood must be constructed outside those boundaries. The underlying theme in this section that resonates throughout the novel is a sense of powerlessness that Jane can't seem to escape from until she's found her own individualism. The moments where she feels completely helpless

involve members of the Reed household, especially her cousin John who is the most abusive towards her. He, like the house, embodies the patriarch that Jane must overcome to gain her independence.

There is a delicate balance between how children are expected to act and how they really are. The Reed children are more unruly than Jane, yet their behaviors are excused or overlooked due to their social class. Given the circumstances, she maintains enough self-awareness to know that no matter how good she acts she is still a "bad" child because she does not fit the social norm. Before her outburst, Jane even admits to being habitually obedient to John, like everyone at Gateshead Hall simply because he was the male heir (12). Her statement implies that there are attempts to follow the rules, but she is unable to overlook the injustices she suffers. Later, she reflects on the differences between her and her female cousins. Eliza and Georgina fit the social norms of what little girls should be, and Jane comes to realize she must escape this domestic environment to not end up like them. Mrs. Abbot warns Jane to not think of herself as an equal to her cousins because she was "less than a servant who did nothing to earn her keep" (14). The details of her parentage are known, yet their deaths cause her social class to be subverted, thus leaving her disinherited. As a blood relative of the Reeds, Jane's social status increases in proximity, allowing her certain privileges most parentless children do not have. These benefits are used as a method of reprimanding Jane for not being a 'good' or grateful child. Bessie informs Jane that as an orphan, Jane was "under obligations to Mrs. Reed" as her wealthy benefactress, and "if she were to turn you off, you would have to go to the poorhouse" (14). Although Jane isn't accepted as a family member, her future is more promising than most parentless children during her time. Moreover, her social

status is continuously brought into the conversation as a reminder that while she is a fortunate orphan, she is still an orphan at the end of the day.

Being seen as different is a blessing and a curse for Jane, collectively her story stands as a testament to other children, like her cousins, as to what to avoid becoming. Individually, it is Brontë advocating hope for what women should become. This idea of becoming is defined by Paul Shorey in his work "Aristotle on "Coming-to-Be" and "Passing Away" as a state in which someone or something is in constant transition— "the process of coming to be" (341). Gateshead Hall pushes Jane to become what society wants her to be. However, the trauma she experiences during this period becomes detrimental to her developing identity. Whenever she engages with members of the Reed household, she induces anxiety with her abnormal mannerisms. Bessie comments that "there is something truly forbidding in a child taking up her elders" (Brontë 9). She is permanently placed within the margins where she remains 'in but not of' any household from Gateshead to Lowood, and later Thornfield Hall when she is an adult. According to Kristeva, this is characteristic of monsters because they do not "respect borders, positions, rules" —that which "disturbs identity, systems, order" (4). Orphans disrupt the social hierarchy set by Victorians, especially the family structure where every person is given an assigned role.

Moreover, Jane has little choice other than to become something monstrous if she remains at Gateshead Hall. As Jane's cousin John states, she is "a dependent…you have no money; your father left you none; you ought to beg, and not live here with gentlemen's children like us, and eat the same meals we do, and wear clothes at our mama's expense" (Brontë 12). Jane is unable to properly assimilate into this designated

structure which creates a barrier between what she wants to become and what she is destined to become. Her barriers are like what Cohen theorizes as how the monster is perceived as a cultural body. He states that "the monster signifies something other than itself: it is a displacement, it inhabits the gap between when it was created and it is received, to be born again" (Cohen 4). There are several instances where Jane is physically and mentally isolated from her relatives and herself. When she hides behind the curtain, enclosing herself by the window, she explains that small spaces provide protection and happiness because she is separated from her family (Brontë 10-11). This desire for protection stems from the othered role that Jane represents within the Reed household since the authenticity of her identity is constantly questioned. Her domestic knowledge provides an awareness that if she had become "a sanguine, brilliant, careless, exciting, handsome, romping child" her relatives would have been accepting and the servants wouldn't have made her "the scapegoat of the nursery" (17). Jane is in a juxtaposition where she is segregated from certain privileges yet expected to be grateful for the ones she is allowed to access to. Thus, these oppressive boundaries of Gateshead Hall fabricate this barrier around orphancy illustrating Jane's isolation from society.

The placement of the nursery is another form of isolation Victorian children experienced from their families. Set at the upper levels of the middle-class household, often in the attic space, children spent their formative years there until old enough to attend school. Medical doctors viewed the placement of a child's space within the home as vital to their development and growth (Flanders 67). They theorized placing children far away from the lower levels, especially the basement, protected them from the natural odors that often permeated these areas. More specifically, the argument that fresh air

circulation was seen as necessary for healthy development. Children were alienated from the daily functions of the household which resulted in a disconnect between parents and their children during this era (68). Thus, this involuntary separation from the family fabricated an air of mystery around the child which fueled romantic beliefs about what the perfect Victorian child meant.

Jane has a reputation for having a rebellious and unruly nature; yet copes with "the consciousness of my physical inferiority to Eliza, John, and Georgina Reed" (Brontë 9). Her statement implies she understands how society compares her cousins to herself and views her identity as monstrous for being inferior. According to Cohen, the monster is an entity that is too large to be "encapsulated in any conceptual system…[its] existence is a rebuke to boundary and enclosure" (Cohen 7). Since Jane is incapable of aligning with the idyllic Victorian child who will later become someone beneficial to society, the only solution is that she becomes a monster. Her journey reaches a point of deep introspection here she summarizes the experience as "such a dread as only children can feel" which comes after her long night of punishment in the Red Room (Brontë 20). Her statement implies there is a form of trauma experienced through only a child's perspective, and it highlights the impact of her night in this small unused chamber. More specifically, her wording 'only children can feel' separates the adults from children and proves that Jane is attempting to form her own self-identity.

Furthermore, this specific dread verifies that children can experience complex feelings when traumatized. As Jane reflects on her treatment, she declares to Mr. Lloyd, the apothecary that "Children can feel, but they cannot analyse their feelings" (24). Her growing self-awareness emphasizes how the child and childhood act as a liminal space

where trauma can be explored, understood, and possibly conquered. Moreover, Jane's knowledge about what society considers appropriate behavior illustrates how Gateshead Hall has primed its inhabitants, especially children, for the roles that society has assigned them. Since such a traumatic experience happened within Gateshead Hall, Jane is no longer able to comfortably coexist within its walls. This prompts a change within her, almost like breaking through the barrier that was confining her. The change in her is evident when she submerges from the Red Room, which results in Jane being further segregated from the household.

Since orphans, like monsters, are capable of fitting into multiple categories, they can upset or disrupt the rigid barriers that Victorians constructed to help them comprehend and explain their lives and the words around them. Cohen argues that "the monster is the abjected fragment that enables the formation of all kinds of identities" (19). Gateshead Hall is where we right witness several instances where Jane's identity is reshaped to fit different narratives. When addressing his cousin, John changes Jane's real name indicating his power to strip her of her identity and bury her personality. He uses the name "Joan" which is a variant of the name Jane but removed enough that later when he refers to her as a "bad animal" it implies he no longer considers her human (Brontë 11). Renaming Jane emphasizes how unsuitable John thinks she is for the domestic environment she is growing up in. Since the ideology of Victorian domesticity "did not consist of husband and wife alone, but of husband, wife, and children", parentless children were missing key elements to fit the norm (Gorham 5). Thus, as her identity fluctuates between human and nonhuman, it highlights how difficult it is for her to fit just one category. Jane has no wealth or status and is even seen as lazy and passionate but

holds a powerful autonomy that gives her an ambiguous figure and threatens the structure of the conventional household. Her orphancy becomes liminal which allows her to move in between private and public spaces. The in-between becomes a third category, one of becoming because it is a threshold on the margins of society. This threshold is what Cohen argues that monsters are our children who ask us to reevaluate our cultural assumptions, our perception of difference, and our tolerance toward expressions (20). They force society to explore why they have created such monsters. These monsters are passionate, independent, and yet still forced to be within the confines of the private space.

Growing up at Gateshead Hall has transformed Jane to the point that her actions and appearance are becoming synonymously monstrous according to society's definitions. Shapeless, she is mistaken for various nonhuman forms such as the nursemaid Bessie calling her "a mad cat", the "half-fairy, half-imp" she sees in the mirror in the Red Room, or the servant Mrs. Abbot referring to her as "a little toad" (Brontë 13, 16, 26). Jane's identity is demonstrated as fluid because its concept is always in transition for herself and those around her. Cohen suggests that when it comes to 'our' monsters there is always a form of resistance when it comes to placing those who don't fit the norm into a category. As such, the monster brings crisis to binaries: "the monster's very existence is a rebuke to boundary and enclosure" (Cohen 7). Since her behavior is vastly different from the romantic notions of the angelic child, Jane is monsterized by being compared to a wild animal. The purpose of continuously dehumanizing her is so the inhabitants of the Reed household can justify their mistreatment of her. Moreover, the further she is removed from her identity as Jane the child and assumes Jane the orphan, it

emphasizes the disconnect between the Reed family and Jane, more specifically Victorian society, and the orphan.

Orphans challenged another principal element in the ideology of domesticity by challenging the guidelines that dictate gender roles. In this era, all children are powerless, but males tend to gain power or agency sooner — if females gained power at all. John Reed, Jane's male cousin, is aware of the inheritance that awaits him, and the role society expects him to fulfill when he's older. He brags to Jane that "all the house belongs to me or will do in a few years" (Brontë 12). John's actions illustrate his comprehension of the power and social status he will gain when he becomes the head of the Reed household. Moreover, it connects to the Victorian hierarchy of power as a combination of social class and gender. As the patriarch, John is the sole male and heir to his family's wealth. Jane comments that "John, no one thwarted, much less punished" even though he was a terror (16). As important of a role that sons have, daughters were considered almost as invaluable to the functioning and morality of the family. Although sons helped determine the family's place in the public world, the daughters had a special significance of providing tenderness and spirituality (Gorham 6). The daughter, in a sense, was a chance for middle and upper-class families to experience social mobility through the promise of marriage.

A good marriage meant that the wealth gained from the deal could possibly sustain the family for generations. Nina Auerbach in her novel *Romantic Imprisonment: Women and Other Glorified Outcasts* states that little girls were considered "fabulous monsters" as "the purest members of a species of questionable origin…as they did the inherent spirituality of child and woman" (131-32). For Jane, Gateshead Hall and its

oppression highlighted the Victorian female struggle to become the pure little girl or ‘Angel in the House’. Without a mother to guide her, Jane’s portrayal of a little girl is perceived as problematic and sets her apart from her cousins Eliza and Georgina who fulfill their female duties properly. She states that she is a “discord in Gateshead Hall…[was] like nobody there”, thus acknowledging her failure (Brontë 17). She is isolated and mistreated for her inability to be like her cousins, which the household believes is reason enough to punish her. Laura Peters argues that, to some degree, the family contains “its opposite, in the figure of an orphan” (23). Her presence forced the residents and servants of Gateshead Hall to consider the limitations and structure of their understanding of the categories they are expected to define.

Jane and the Reed children are all orphans, and orphancy came with preconceived stigmas. Her cousins could hide behind wealth and status, especially with Eliza and Georgina's eventual potential for prestigious marriages. Jane represents freedom from restraint and becoming self-sufficient which were dangerous ideas and hopes to give females. Cohen describes ‘our’ monsters as “uncertain danger” yet simultaneously they are “realms of happy fantasy, horizons of liberation” (18). Though given the same expectations as Georgina or Eliza, who were conditioned to become proper Victorian women, it was believed that Jane would never amount to that status. Jane’s lack of concern for the traditional rules might influence her cousins, which was a fear of Mrs. Reeds. More specifically, she kept Jane separate “not wanting them to associate with her” to lessen the chances (Brontë 27). The Reed household would rather focus on Jane’s inability to achieve respectability rather than their own shortcomings. The abuse she suffered centered on the fact that “the successful middle-class family would, above all

else, manifest the quality of gentility" (Gorham 7). Moreover, Jane's monstrosity adds pressure for the Reeds to question the social constructs they abide by, which leads to implications that the orphan child needs to be tamed or destroyed to maintain the integrity of how the middle-class makes sense of the world. Thus, writing about gender politics in the domestic space gave Brontë the opportunity to expose its restrictive and hypocritical aspects.

Since happiness is required to have a successful adulthood, an unhappy childlike Jane is seen as a disruption and something to be hidden away. She would never fit the pillar of domestic strength that the Victorians believed their women should be. Thus, if girlhood is the definition of womanhood, then Jane's future looked bleak, unpromising, and therefore unappealing. Knowing she couldn't defeat the monster, Mrs. Reed latched onto the chance to rid herself of Jane by sponsoring her niece to go to Lowood Institute. She informs Mr. Brocklehurst that she wishes for Jane "to be brought up in a manner suiting her prospects…to be made useful, to be kept humble" (Brontë 33). In Mrs. Reed's mind, Jane needs a stricter environment where their rebellious nature can be tamed. Sarah Gilead notes "Liminality and Antiliminality in Charlotte Brontë's novels: Shirley reads Jane Eyre" that the character of Jane seems to be "the carrier of codes of behavior, values, and sensibilities that stand in need of reformulation." (304). Therefore, orphans like Jane are placed in environments where they are subjected to abuse from relatives who despise their existence. As a harbinger of category crisis, she destabilizes the domestic ideology as a representative of illegitimacy and the shattering of the ideal Victorian family (Cohen 7). However, it is Jane's monstrous form that becomes her

method of escape or deviation from Gateshead Hall and invites into the space the possibility of new paths.

This Victorian frame of mind impacted females to the point where the concept of femininity was redefined. Assigned a separate sphere and distinct set of roles, femininity was idealized as the Angel in the House — dependent, submissive, innocent, pure, gentle, self-sacrificing, emotional, possessing no ambition, no anger or hostility (Gorham 5). Thus, the quintessential Victorian woman was seen as purely female. Auerbach argues that womanhood in the nineteenth century was romanticized where the concept of women existed as spiritual extremes of angelic or demonic (64). Moreover, it became a liminal space of the magical and monstrous realm where no human norms existed (64). Hence, to be 'purely female', the actual ideal Victorian woman must be monstrous due to their inability to conform to one category or identity. Jane's femininity was always in question, especially when compared to her female cousins, Georgina, and Eliza. Mrs. Abbot states that she never saw a girl of Jane's age with so much deceit, which implies that Jane's behavior is abnormal and not like how little girls are expected to be (Brontë 14). During these vulnerable moments, Jane's gender, and identity shift while she is constructing her selfhood and purpose.

The novel sets the precedent of the Victorian girl in the form of Georgina Reed based on her astonishing beauty. Jane notes that even though Georgina is spoiled and spiteful, she was unanimously indulged by all the adults. The reason behind this treatment was Georgina's "beauty, her pink cheeks, and golden curls, seemed to give delight to all who looked at her" which granted her "indemnity for every fault" (16). On the other hand, Eliza Reed, though not as beautiful as her sister, was "headstrong and

selfish, yet, respected" (16). When compared to her cousins, Jane is forced to reflect on the differences in their treatment based on the roles that society has placed on them. Moreover, further down the same page, she notes that no matter how good she acted and "dared to commit no-fault", she was still "termed naughty, tiresome, sullen and sneaking" (16). Due to the social status of Jane's cousins, even with the death of their father, they are protected.

This is another instance where the Reed household tries to validate their mistreatment of Jane because she will never become beneficial to the family like Eliza or moreso Georgina. Mrs. Abbot reveals that if Jane were "a nice and pretty child, one might compassionate her forlornness" to which Bessie adds that "a beauty like Miss Georgina would be more moving in the same condition" (26). Mrs. Abbot and Bessie express the difficulty of caring about Jane's misfortunes because, by society's standards, she's less than perfect. Women, while capable of meeting most of the requirements, as wives and mothers had to cross the border into sexual impurity--losing their childlike innocence to fulfill their role in the family. Thus, daughters were the true representation of the 'Angel in the House'. Unlike her mother, Georgina as "a young girl could be perceived as a wholly unambiguous model of feminine dependence, childlike simplicity, and sexual purity" (Gorham 7). Hence, the quintessential Victorian woman could only be achieved within the realm of girlhood. Although an orphan she is still expected to fulfill a female role in society, not as a wife or mother, but as a governess. Thus, this profession demonstrates another way that parentless unwed women are placed in, but not of society.

Aware that she will never be acknowledged as a core member of the Reed family, Jane searches for relationships equivalent to family — a privilege that she feels robbed

of. Bessie, the nursery maid, shares a lullaby highlighting Jane's displacement as an orphan. She sings that "heaven is a home, and a rest will fail me; God is a friend to the poor orphan child" (Brontë 23). The theme of the ballad centers on God as a replacement for the caretaker or parental figure and provides orphan children with the love they need. Jane knows that she is not capable of surviving without love or kindness, which is why she feels cold and isolated in Gateshead Hall. Moreover, she attempts to prove that she is still human by voicing her desire for basic human needs. She informs Mrs. Reed "you think I have no feelings, and that I can do without one bit of love or kindness; but I cannot live as so" (35). The hunger for love creates a dependency problem which is demonstrated in orphans and briefly hinders Jane's growth of selfhood.

After being confined in the Red Room, Jane experiences a new degree of isolation which becomes the final push to help her escape the domestic environment, indicating she is leaving her childhood. When Mr. Lloyd, the apothecary, questions Jane about her unhappy disposition, her immediate response is "I have no father or mother, brothers or sisters" (Brontë 24). Jane's initial reaction to the question was to blame her unhappiness on the fact that she is an orphan. Gorham notes that for the Victorian middle class, one of the most important refuges was the family (4). As a child, family is how they begin to discover aspects of the world, without one, Jane feels displaced and her future full of uncertainty. Moreover, when Mr. Lloyd went on to comment about how lucky Jane is to be raised in "a very beautiful house" and that she should be "thankful to have such a fine place to live" it reiterates the cult of domesticity mindset that what the family has and how it is perceived is most important (Brontë 24). Although Mr. Lloyd reminds her that

she is not alone because she is with wealthy relatives, the Reeds' mistreatment is not Jane's idea of family.

The experiences Jane encounters at Gateshead Hall are an overview of where and how society interferes with and influences the construction of childhood. More importantly, her engagement with those around her and her own self illustrates the central argument of orphans as the antithesis of the society that created them. The main thought that resonates during this period of development for Jane is determining what good and bad stand for in her mind. The first question Mr. Brocklehurst, headmaster of Lowood Institute, asks her is "Are you a good child?" (Brontë 31). Jane believes that she had characteristically good traits; however, this mindset contradicts what her relatives and servants believe. Here, a key element to forming her own identity is tied to figuring out what these definitions mean to her. Jane's ability to even question the definitions given by adults like Mrs. Reed and Mr. Brocklehurst demonstrates a sense of autonomy that only an orphan who is removed from the family structure can possess. Throughout her adolescence, Jane learns about the prejudices against orphans that fashion her public image in a monstrous frame regardless of the internal 'goodness' she believes she has. However, due to her ability to reflect on herself and her environment, her childhood ends with the knowledge that although John, Eliza, and Georgina outwardly portrayed the concept of a 'proper' child, internally their shortcomings defined them as more monstrous than Jane. By the time she is ready to leave Gateshead Hall and move to Lowood Institute, Jane's self-awareness empowers her to continuously challenge and reconstruct social norms to not end up like her cousins.

3. Feeling Haunted in the Red Room

Previously, it was established that Gateshead Hall represented the domestic space where Jane learned the rules and expectations of society based on her social class and gender. More specifically, during this time, she reaches the point of reflecting on what she, as a child, is capable of mentally handling, what she needs from others, and what she desires to become regardless of her perceived shortcomings. The Red Room is the second chapter of the novel, so readers are immersed in this transition period for the main character shortly after being introduced to Jane and her structured world. However, its impact resonates throughout the remainder of the novel which keeps the importance of this childhood experience at the center of her character development for many years to come. When Jane summons the courage to stand up to John and physically fight back, she admits to feeling unlike herself. This strange emotion indicates that a change of some sort is about to happen. Thus, her retaliation against the family patriarch earns her banishment to the Red Room, an unused chamber within Gateshead Hall.

Although she is confined to this room for only one night, the trauma that she experiences prompts a period of deep introspection that becomes a point of reference she regularly mentally revisits. The Red Room is a spare room, tucked away from the main living quarters; however, it is "one of the largest and stateliest within the mansion" (Brontë 15). Moreover, it is filled with grand furniture made of mahogany, plush cushions, covers, and large velvet curtains that keep the natural light from entering the room (15). Thus, the room appears to be frozen in time as if to imply something uncanny can happen within this realm. Although the color scheme throughout was a passionate display of deep reds and stark whites, the walls were a light blush signifying a

combination of the two previous colors. Here, where opposite colors and temperatures mingled, Jane undergoes an internal transition that mirrors puberty. Since this is the most colorful scene in the novel, it creates a liminal environment where the line between reality and fiction or life and death can blur. According to Gilead*,* liminal is "classified in a double sense; first character crises of negation, alienation, and self-confrontation; and second undergoing a risky threshold of change" (303). This liminality allows Jane to conflate all the identities, human and non, that she is accused of being and attempt to figure out which one is her true self. Thus, the Red Room is a space where she can come face-to-face with all of them.

With Gateshead as the parameter of Jane's life in a domestic sphere, the Red Room is seen as a being in, but out of those domestic restrictions. The placement and condition of this room are a direct reflection of how Jane is kept within the social structure but as a neglected part of it. So, naturally, it serves as the perfect location for a child who feels unloved and mistreated to work through her feelings of discontent. Although it was in the domestic setting where she broke the rules, her punishment in this liminal space permits her to engage freely and safely with her internal conflict about herself, her identity, and the harsh world she grows up in. More specifically the Red Room is an environment being housed among and sometimes used by the living but is also a tomb for the dead. As the last resting place for Mr. Reed, relics of remembrance are hidden in a secret drawer that Mrs. Reed occasionally pays a visit to, which adds to the mortuary ambiance of the chamber. Linked to death, Jane believes this feeling is "the spell" that holds the place stagnant in time (Brontë 15). This scenario creates an opportunity for uncanny circumstances to take place, such as Jane's encounter with the

'alien' in the mirror. In his work, *The Uncanny*, Sigmund Freud argues that the uncanny is something that one does recognize, but in a strange and unexpected way (2). So, while the vision in the mirror has a monstrous appearance, it is an internal projection of how Jane sees herself.

Aside from the morbid atmosphere, the Red Room also represents how orphans are compartmentalized, especially females, which is an attempt to control them. Jane is dragged into the room by force and threatened with real restraints if she doesn't comply with the metaphorical ones. Moreover, she is further warned that her morality is up for concern if she doesn't repent and reflect on her misbehavior (Brontë 15). This moment demonstrates how traumatizing life has been for Jane up until this point. Although she experiences certain privileges of the middle-class, as an orphan there are still rules that cause her to be excluded from the same leisure activities and prospects as her cousins. The Reeds and their servants' influence on Jane's self-image is reflected in the mirror bringing the normally hidden monster out. Her confinement in the Red Room becomes the most crucial scene in the novel because after Jane's introspection of her purpose and identity, she can escape that room and Gateshead Hall, but more specifically from becoming the monstrous child society expects her to be. Moreover, it is this exact moment that continuously haunts Jane and is something she mentally recalls whenever her identity is questioned. Readers gain insight into the protagonist's internal perspective of what Jane has been subjected to and how it affects her all the way into adulthood. This access provides proof of how detrimental the oppressive regulations and high standards of society are.

During her moment of introspection, Jane's understanding of herself and her world matures enough for her to gain agency over her childhood self. When she is released from the room, her former sense of childlike wonder is gone. Things like reading her favorite fantasy novel *Gulliver's Travels* or listening to Bessie's song, no longer comforted her. These moments now fill Jane with "an indescribable sadness" which signifies a change that has taken place within her. The delusion of childhood has been stripped away and those favorite moments no longer speak to her in the same way, which indicates puberty has taken place. When meeting with the apothecary, Mr. Lloyd, Jane declares that she saw a ghost and its presence still lingers around her, but more so, that the roots of her unhappiness were examined and confronted in that room. She states, "Children can feel but they cannot analyse their feelings; and if the analysis is partially affected in thought, they know not how to express the result of the process in words" (24). This statement summarizes how complex emotions for children can be, especially when attempting to form their identity and cross the threshold to the next stage of life. Thus, the Red Room is a pause between Jane's childhood and adulthood, where she garnered self-awareness which is crucial to the journey of finding her true individual self. For Jane, the formation of her identity is manifested through several spaces that are parallel to the real world. Brontë is attempting to answer the overarching question of 'What is female?'. Her answer, according to Moglen, is powerlessness. While a woman can develop intellectual and personal capacities, her potential as a woman will be realized only within the structures of a conventional marriage which maintains her in a position of infantile dependency and subordination (Moglen 105). The suggested method for addressing this gender limitation is androgyny. The theory behind this mindset is to

demonstrate that gender ambiguity is a part of the developmental state of becoming an adult. Thus, when Jane enters this state while locked away, it indicates that she is on the verge of transitioning from child to adult.

Since Gateshead Hall is a traditional Victorian home, composed of gendered norms and expectations, Jane can't explore her identity outside of those preconceived conditions while stuck in that space. Like the family, the Victorian household was structured in a specific manner to signify a hierarchy of importance to the livelihood of its inhabitants. The kitchens, the source of food—nourishment, were positioned at the bottom of the house and were easily accessible while the nursery sat at the very top in the attic and was rarely ventured by adults aside from a nanny or governess. The belief was that a nursery needed to be as independent of the rest of the household as possible (Cassells). This independence allowed children to grow up in a world of their own uninhibited by the secular world until they were old enough to enter it. The Red Room is placed in between the innocent childhood space and the secular adult space which grants it liminality. In the Red Room, Jane experiences "the principle of irrationality given a form" (Cain et al. 901). When focused on how feminine she must be to be accepted, Jane realizes how far from the 'perfect' Victorian female she is. However, by mirroring Jane's mind with her own, Brontë empowered her protagonist with an androgynous concept making them capable of transmitting emotions and ideas without impediment (901). Jane's flaws are her emotions, making it impossible for her to maintain a submissive, gentle, and innocent personality. The entire Reed household prescribed the notion that "it was always in her", with 'it' referring to her monstrous nature (Brontë 58). However,

Jane's violently passionate behavior is merely a product of the environment and society she was raised in.

As a child, Jane's personality is heavily impressionable and influenced by her surroundings and the people she encounters. More specifically, the body, defined as a metaphysical representation of someone's identity, is the inspired surface of events where cultural values emerge as the result of an inscription on the body (Cain et al. 2543). Thinking about her actions as a collective body of knowledge where the knowledge stems from her society, it is no surprise that Jane eventually experiences a period of adolescent hysteria. Her psychotic break begins when she is injured by John and lashes out in retaliation. While being carried off to her prison, Jane noted that she "resisted all the way; a new thing for me" (Brontë 13). This implies that regardless of how others in the house perceived her, Jane believed she was good by her own definitions. She confesses that she was "beside" herself, or rather "outside of" herself, but once confined, those passionate emotions dissipate (13). No longer familiar or rooted in a defined body, Jane is allowed to enter the Red Room as an unknown or undefined variant. Moreover, she can freely explore the pure ambiguity of her identity outside of social and gender norms while in this liminal space.

Aware that she is unwelcome within the Reeds, Jane is forced to remain 'in' but not 'of' any household tasked with her upbringing. She must be banished from the nursery to a space away from the spaces of the house reserved for those who are capable of abiding by the rules. The Red Room is a forgotten place where no one will have to witness Jane's monstrous behavior. In this space, Jane can choose to reflect on her wrongdoings or continue to challenge the world she resides in. Kristeva notates this as an

abjection, which humans want and don't want, or being triggered by certain instances, yet engaging with them regularly. She states, "It lies outside, beyond the set" while it doesn't always follow set rules even from a removed state it still challenges us (Kristeva 230). Jane was constantly made aware of the household rules; however, according to the Reeds, she continued to misbehave. Due to this, her family and the servants misidentified her as something nonhuman since her manners were comparable to a wild animal or evil creature. Bessie describes Jane as a "mad cat" when she and Miss Abbot were dragging her into the Red Room. This label illustrates how removed from the norm Jane is that she is perceived in such a way. Moreover, her passionate behavior is seen as ungrateful for the privileges someone of her social class has been given. Jane questions John as her master and whether she is a servant; however, she fails to comply with even those standards. Bessie corrects her by stating the qualifications of a proper servant is someone who earns their keep, which Jane does not, thus making her even less worthy than one (Brontë 14). This rule sets a precedent that if someone is not directly a part of the family or upper class, they are expected to work and be helpful to their beneficiaries.

The Reed household represents Brontë's perception of the aristocracy, meaning there are some implications that come with this status. In the previous chapter, the definitions, language, and importance of the Victorian family and household were discussed and what that meant for Jane. The ideology accrues power based on common sense or general knowledge theory of socio-cultural knowledge. Moreover, since Victorian social relations and rules are integral to each other, it demonstrates how the "social world does not exist independently of our constructions of it" (Bax 30). Thus, Jane threatens the foundation of her society by not being a 'good' child nor a servant

working to earn her place within the household. Jane's petulant and unruly behaviors are the exact opposite of how a little girl is expected to act; therefore, she must be punished. Miss Abbot even declares that Jane is an "underhand little thing" and that they had never seen "a girl of her age with so much cover" (Brontë 14). Bax argues that the main source of power in ideologies lies in the fact that they are an invisible and assumed network of beliefs and values. It is more than basic principles that govern social judgment because these ideals appear logical and natural since they are socially shared and unquestioned (Bax 127). By not challenging Victorian ideologies, such as 'what is feminine', these concepts are taken as the truth, thus, making them dangerous. So, Brontë used familiar language and beliefs to set the parameters of the spaces Jane must traverse and overcome while developing her own identity. Kristeva's theories on the abject place orphans like Jane as only capable of inhabiting the fringes of society. They "disturb identity, system, and order. What does not respect borders, positions, and rules" (Kristeva 232). Essentially, abjection is a thing that disrupts normalcy, but can also be used to benefit it. Likewise, Auerbach notes that orphans in literature have the power to "pass into houses and exert powerful destructive effects which give birth to a new civilization out of the ashes" (409). Therefore, an orphan, like Jane, disrupts the environments they enter by challenging the social norms indicating change is necessary, which in turn, becomes progress that benefits society and themselves.

Locked in a constant battle between choices of good and evil, orphans became the Victorian scapegoat. explore the connection between God and man. Thus, the nineteenth-century orphan was needed as "a symbol of the detached human soul" for society to safely explore its recurrent self-identity crises (Auerbach 410). There were a lot of

questions, concerns, and overall anxiety about their moral state, and an indirect way to explore the possibilities was through characters that were traditionally marginalized in literature. Consequently, public interest in the orphan was fueled by the anxiety Victorians felt when trying to cope with many orphans and street children in their own time. As Auerbach argues, the orphan is a "myth with shifting emphases" where their malleable forms can fulfill different sociocultural needs of the society they are contained (396). For Victorians, the need for orphans was a coping mechanism pertaining to anxieties centering on various social issues: mortality, economy, and social. As such, the orphan, as one who embodied the loss of the family, came to represent a dangerous threat; the family reaffirmed itself through the expulsion of this threatening difference (Peters 2). Thus, the Victorian orphan is the soul of a society obsessed with questioning their existence and morality.

As a child, Jane only knows the constructed limitations of her world and the desires she possesses. Since the Red Room is positioned between her childhood and adulthood, she utilizes the magic essence to free herself from those preconceived restrictions. Here, Jane can construct a new version of herself more fitting to enter the public spaces outside Gateshead Hall. The hidden chamber is barely visited and frozen in time with coldness and dust marking it as not truly a part of the rest of the household. This mirrors Jane's feelings of not belonging to the Reeds, creating discontent towards them and herself. An integral part of being human is a sense of belonging through acceptance, support, and protection. According to Abraham Maslow's "Hierarchy of Needs", the desire to belong is an intrinsic part of human survival. Therefore, when someone's basic needs are not met, it affects their physical and mental health. This is

illustrated during Jane's escapade in the Red Room by portraying the introspection of herself and her shadow self. The shadow self refers to aspects of the personality that people choose to reject and repress. Jung described this action as pushing certain 'unwanted' or 'negative' traits into the unconscious psyche. Meaning this variant of an individual is composed of the repressed elements of someone's identity. Jung argued that "The shadow is a moral problem that challenges the whole ego-personality, for no one can become conscious of the shadow without considerable moral effort. To become conscious of it involves recognizing the dark aspects of the personality as present and real. This act is the essential condition for any kind of self-knowledge" (14). Readers, and Jane, encounter her shadow self when she looks into the mirror in the Red Room and the reflection within is unfamiliar and monstrous.

Before she sees her reflection, it is important to note that she mentions "the secret of the red-room" lying within the fact that it was essentially a shrine to her deceased Uncle Reed. Death hangs in the air like a thick fog, and it is death that empowers the chamber. Victorian death culture sought to remember the dead through material relics, by doing so, they believed it drew the dead nearer emotionally while symbolically lessening the impact of a psychical separation (Johnson 368). Jane describes the looking glass as if it were a death relic like the ones her aunt had hidden inside of the side table, which implies the object possesses abnormal energies. Jane notices that the atmosphere in the mirror was colder and darker than reality, which set the premise for a supernatural encounter. She states, "the strange little figure there gazing at me, with a white face and arms specked the gloom, and glittering eyes of fear moving" and further notes the inhuman aspects by declaring it "a real spirit", "tiny phantoms, half-fairy, half-imp"

comparable to the creatures in bedtime stories (Brontë 16). The fact that Jane does not recognize her own reflection indicates that she has undergone a significant amount of trauma. Rather than see her actual reflection, she sees a collaboration of nonhuman entities that are typically unwelcome or feared within a 'proper' household. Thus, this sense of detachment where she experiences alienation from her identity is a direct result of being treated as a burden on her relatives. The Victorian belief in the supernatural comes from their understanding and contempt of differences. According to Nicola Bown in *The Victorian Supernatural*, they believe the supernatural leaks from the margins of the dark into every day which allows uncanny concepts and beliefs to permeate all aspects of life (4). The Victorians desired to put the unexplainable aspects of the world into a digestible perspective. This created superstition and belief in the supernatural among citizens as they developed a deeper understanding and contempt for differences. The Victorians were increasingly "concerned about what is above and beyond the power of natural causes" specifically things capable of touching the margins or buried deep within (4). Continuously questioning the nature of things led to them uncovering the good and bad parts of society, as a whole and individually.

Jane's discovery of herself disrupts the natural balance and order of an orphan's place in society. Auerbach defines this as the orphan possessing an 'amphibious nature' in which their ability to shift through different societies and incarnations supernaturalizes them (408). By altering through life, Jane can improve her social and economic status by directly subverting Victorian regulations. As stated by Jennifer Jones and Alexandra Gray in their article *Introduction: The Female Orphan in Victorian Women's Writing*, the transitory nature of women collides with the orphan condition making it difficult for the

female orphan to assimilate into their expected gender roles (204). Thus, Jane is defined as inhuman or monstrous during these moments of her agency. The only explanation for her ability is the supernatural because children aren't meant to possess selfhood, especially female orphans. Moreover, Victorian women are synonymous with the family and all the transitions from daughter to wife followed by motherhood.

As Jane spends more time in the Red Room, she begins exploring the faults of others. According to her, the entire household had negative traits or failed to do the role expected of them; yet Jane was the only member that was persecuted for it. When comparing herself to her cousins, she sheds some light on the true nature of the so-called "proper" Victorian child. She states that "Eliza, who was selfish and headstrong, was respected", which put her at an advantage over Jane (Brontë 16). However, Eliza's mannerisms weren't viewed as the 'perfect' little girl temperament, that title was given to her sister. Georgiana set the precedent for the proper Victorian little girl even with a spoiled temper, acrid spite, and captious and insolent carriage. She was society's definition of beauty with pink cheeks and golden curls which was pleasing to everyone and "purchased indemnity for every fault (Brontë 16). Here, it illustrates how goodness was equated to beauty and anything outside of that was considered unworthy of praise. More specifically, Georgina, representing the ideal female, held an emotional power over the masses, whereas her brother John's power was physical or material wealth as the only male heir. Not only were daughters seen as a conduit for spiritual integrity, but they provided the family with a chance to secure or gain social mobility through a 'good' marriage.

Marriage was as much of a business deal for men as it was for women. Men could gain economic power in the public sphere but needed the idealized family to achieve social status. Middle-class women needed to marry well in order to acquire a social status as an adult. Moreover, the prospects of a 'good' and 'respected' marriage elevated the image of the household by association with how well the domestic environment was structured and maintained. It was believed that social class aside, "women at all levels of the middle class were responsible for assuring that the private sphere acted as an effective indicator of status in the public sphere" (Gorham 8). The status depended on the level of gentile and spirituality the woman cultivated for her family. Thus, a woman's 'power' during this time depended heavily on their femininity or at least how feminine they were perceived. Family status was one of the methods used to resolve the tension between social classes. Anyone that fell outside of these set boundaries would naturally be more persecuted than those who are simply categorized as gentle or vulgar. The main concept focuses on how others missed the mark of becoming the idea Victorian than they did.

The ideology behind 'what is feminine' was as ambiguous as it was contradictory during this era where women were either 'the New Woman', 'the Fallen Woman', 'the Angel in the House', or a mixture of the three. During Jane's childhood, readers are presented with Georgina as the example of the 'Angel in the House' term. This variant of a woman was seen as a domestic goddess incapable of any impurities which placed her as the beacon for spirituality within the family. Gorham argues that the idea of feminine purity was implicitly asexual, which negates adult women from achieving this status (7). Since women were expected to fulfill their wifely duties, such as having marital relations with the intention of procreating, they were incapable of maintaining the required purity.

This meant that little girls, such as Georgina, were the quintessential ‘Angel in the House’ because they were a “wholly unambiguous model of feminine dependence, childlike simplicity, and sexual purity” (7). While both Eliza and Georgina were prime examples of what a proper little girl should be, Georgina was the ‘perfect’ one based on her appearance mirroring how Victorians wished to be viewed. Moreover, both girls were flawed in the same fashion that Jane is persecuted for; however, their status still complied with the social narratives that it put them in more favorable odds than an orphaned, poor, and plain child.

Stating her cousin’s flaws in comparison to her own demonstrates an awareness of her mistreatment. Jane begins by labeling herself as a “revolted slave” and that her “disturbed mind” can conjure all the grievances she’s had to deal with (Brontë 14). During this time of introspection, she goes through different stages while working through the trauma of being an unloved child. She knew she was suffering due to the environment she was raised in yet blamed herself for not meeting certain expectations. Jane labels herself as a “discord in Gateshead Hall” and was “like nobody else there”, thus admitting there was little love lost between herself and the Reeds (17). Moreover, further into a self-analysis, she begins referring to herself as a ‘thing, such as “useless, heterogenous, noxious thing”, thus placing herself in a nonhuman category. This is Jane’s attempt to dissociate herself from the traumatic situation by separating personalities. There is the ‘monstrous’ side that antagonizes her relatives and the household, and then, the side that tries to follow the rules and believes she “commits no fault and strove to fulfill every duty” (16). These two sides, the monster, and the “proper” Victorian little girl are in a pseudo-juxtaposition where at first glance they seem like a stark contrast.

Shifting between these personalities helps Jane navigate the trauma moments she has been subjected to by her family. As a child, she barely has control over her developing emotions, which can result in a lot of grief or guilt. Rose-Emily Rothenberg argues that not loving a child can result in feelings of rejection "that one has done something wrong or has been found totally unacceptable" (106). The way she is being treated is unjust, according to Jane during her introspection, which prompts her to briefly contemplate starvation as a solution to her peril. She maintains enough self-awareness to know what she lacks in comparison to her cousins is not something easily gained. She contemplates the fact that if she were a "sanguine, brilliant, careless, exacting, handsome, romping child--though equally dependent and friendless" then her presence would have been endured and accepted (Brontë 17). This mediation proves that Jane is knowledgeable of society's expectations and comprehends why she is being mistreated even if she doesn't agree with them. At this moment, she makes note of the time change and shift in the weather, which, in theory, personifies the transitions in Jane's mood while sorting through her trauma.

Brontë utilizes certain terminology to imply the weight of the protagonist's growing depression as she comes to the realization of never being loved, at least in the Reed household. Jane states that she experiences habitual humiliation, self-doubt, and forlorn depression; moreover, "all said I was wicked, and perhaps I might be so" (17). She continues to determine her thoughts about starvation being a crime but is uncertain if she were fit to die. The fact that she entertains death, such as suicide, which was heavily frowned upon, implies a lack of spirituality and condemns her to a bad afterlife. This is another sin being committed because the spiritual well-being of a family was considered

a feminine responsibility (Gorham 7). Piety and purity were core elements of how Victorians perceived femininity, placing a woman's role as the religious cornerstone of her family. Moreover, the most desirable women to marry were the pinnacle of femininity and spirituality. Women came to be perceived as, essentially, "moral mothers," not only in relation to their children, but also in their other major supportive and didactic roles as teachers, charity workers, and sentimental writers (Bloch 120). This evangelical perspective on motherhood placed mothers as the curators of morality due to being the virtuous gender. Since Jane had no mother, her morality was hopeless from the beginning, she had to build a relationship with God on her own.

Later, Jane begins to reflect on her uncle's death, she does it in a more considerate and gentle manner than she has shown any of her other relatives. Though she feared that his ghost would visit her in the Red Room, she believed he meant well and had he lived her life would be drastically different. She notes that he was the one who took in a penniless infant and his death wish was for Mrs. Reed would "rear and maintain" Jane as one of her own (Brontë 17). These complicated feelings with an unfamiliar deceased family member, whose influence would have altered the narrative, are parallel to what Brontë experienced. Losing her mother early on, as previously mentioned, left her and her family at a major disadvantage. As Jane works through the depression and anxiety of not having parental protection or guidance, her trauma defects to forgiveness of Mrs. Reed, or excuses for her treatment. She acknowledges her aunt's behavior but exonerates her misdeeds based on the expected nature of a wealthy woman. She contemplates how her aunt probably believes she fulfilled her husband's dying wish, to which Jane adds, "and so she had…as well as her nature permitted her" (17). Jane decides her aunt's

actions are permissible because it was Uncle Reed who took her in; therefore, she was his responsibility, not her aunt's. Moreover, his death severed the marital ties that connected Mrs. Reed to her niece. Jane considers herself "an uncongenial alien permanently intruding on the Reed household" (17). She believed her aunt's mannerisms were conventional with Mrs. Reed's main concern being rightfully invested in their children, rather than an outsider.

However, the closer Jane followed the social norms and modeled herself after Eliza or Georgina, the more monstrous she would become. This is due to the "ideal" little girl or woman being impossible to realistically achieve. Thus, the concept of femininity and womanhood becomes a liminal state of its own and is arguably an "imaginative scheme [that] does not believe in a human woman (Auerbach 64). Since females are synonymous with angels and demons this essentially positions them in between a magical and monstrous realm. Cohen, in his first thesis, notes that "the monster's body is a cultural body" born at a cultural moment's metaphoric crossroads (9). This body becomes an embodiment of unpredictable nature appearing at a crossroads of indecision. Similarly, the identity that Jane is attempting to establish within the Red Room symbolizes the fears, anxieties, desires, and even fantasies of her society. So, in this liminal prison, Jane can recreate or reshape the Victorian historical, social, and cultural context. Thus, forming a new independence from the 'Angel in the House' category and ascending to the "New Woman".

Jane has no choice but to create her own path in life, which without adult assistance deemed her success rate low. This method of embedding hope within the text allows the text to function as a reminder of the Middle-Class manifesto of valuing hard

work and determination over birthright and inheritance. Indeed, no girl or woman could raise her own status through effort in the world of work, because earning money, for a girl or woman, meant a loss of caste (Gorham 8). Again, this ideology places women in contradiction because they lose the option of being an Angel in the House when they leave the domestic space to work, which results in forming the New Woman variant. Becoming an embodiment of the New Woman is necessary for Jane to transition to the next part of her journey at Lowood Institute where her opinion of religion and class are further developed.

4. Coming of Age in Lowood Institute

Jane's experiences with institutionalized education take place in chapters five to ten at Lowood Institute where she spends her formative years of ages ten to eighteen. After the overnight confinement in the Red Room, Jane's identity evolves into something pliable. The lesson in what it means to feel powerless as an unwanted and unloved child has left an imprint on her mental state that she never fully recovers from. Before she can fully escape Gateshead Hall, Jane must prove that she is capable and worthy of attending this school. After a brief discussion with Mr. Lloyd, Jane meets Mr. Brocklehurst, the school's headmaster, who as a "black pillar" represents the hypocrisy of religious believers of Victorian society (Brontë 38). While in this environment, the headmaster is the Victorian patriarchy in a new form and becomes a minor antagonist that she must overcome to gain passage to the next stage in her life. In his novel, *The Writer's Journal: Mythic Structure for Writers*, Christopher Vogler describes these characters as "threshold guardians" whose sole purpose in the narrative is to test the protagonist's commitment to their journey. He states, there is a "symbiotic nature" between these characters who assume the role of villains and allies to keep the unworthy out (Vogler 51). Mr. Brocklehurst, who controls the education that Jane receives attempts to oppress her and the other children at his school with evangelical zealotry. This chapter will highlight the trauma that Jane experienced during her time in Lowood. Since she inherited an ambiguous social class from her deceased parents, Jane's growing connection to religion is considered appropriate with God becoming a replacement for a guardian or parent.

Mr. Brocklehurst based his strict and unforgiving teachings on religion with the motive of fashioning proper and valuable women. From their first meeting at Gateshead

Hall, his opinion of Jane is heavily influenced by Mrs. Reed who informs him that her niece "has not quite the character and disposition I could wish" (Brontë 32). Influenced by Mrs. Reed's opinion, Mr. Brocklehurst condemns Jane as a child possessing monstrous traits. He believes that "deceit is, indeed, a sad fault in a child" (33). Due to Mrs. Reed's social status, Mr. Brocklehurst is more inclined to believe everything she says about Jane. This demonstrates the power that Mrs. Reed's social class, which is seen as pious and charitable by Mr. Brocklehurst, has over her niece, who is considered sinful and unhappy. More specifically, Jane represents the lower class, which automatically discredits her ability to be able, to tell the truth. Mr. Brocklehurst informs the entire school that Jane was "worse than many a little heathen who says its prayers to Brahma and kneels before Juggernaut---this girl is---a liar!" (63). When Jane is humiliated and discredited by Mr. Brocklehurst as an adult and a clergyman, the school takes his word over hers. In the article *"*Nineteenth-Century Education", John Ruskin states that he believed it was important to educate, not to cause discontent, but create pride in their role in society. In his opinion, this began with making "children capable of honesty is the beginning of education" (Ruskin 34). Thus, they would be more disciplined and receptive to the knowledge that followed. In this restrictive environment, Jane's individual character is brought into question as she is consistently singled out as a strong-willed child with a tendency towards deceit. Later, when Jane finds the courage to stand up for herself against him and is proven to be telling the truth, she earns a measure of respect for herself from the other students and teachers (Brontë 69). Instead of accepting his doctrine, she finds fault in him and questions and condemns most of Mr. Brocklehurst's mannerisms and beliefs.

The headmaster's overbearing and oppressive mannerism illustrates society wanting to tame the 'monster' that it believed women could become if left to their own devices. Cohen describes it as a kind of desire because as fascinated by the monster we are, there is equally as much fear. He states that "we distrust and loathe the monsters at the same time we envy its freedom" (17). Jane's agency is seen as dangerous in a place like Lowood where diversity and individualism are frowned upon. Mr. Brocklehurst is written as a religious zealot who is prideful as a man of God, unrelenting in his demands for respect, and forces salvation among all his pupils. His character is used as an exploration of the hypocritical aspects of Victorians with strong religious beliefs. Moreover, he teaches Jane that religion goes beyond simple conceptions of truthfulness and compassion and that true nature centers on order, power, and the shame of sins. Through Jane's growing self-awareness, her identity begins to fill the spaces between how society perceives her and how she wishes to be perceived. Cohen refers to this as the monster's ability to inhabit the gaps between when the disruption and when it was received (4). The language used in this chapter begins to reflect how society structures who are monsters and how they should be treated. At one point, she voiced concerns about the poor to Mr. Lloyd stating, "poverty looks grim to grown people; still more so to children" and that she "could not see how poor people had the means of being kind" (Brontë 25). Jane's beliefs about the poor are a product of her environment where even she gains some prejudice against the lower class. Although she has some traits of her society imprinted on her, it's not enough to fulfill a role like Georgina. According to John Ruskin in his lecture "Sesame and Lilies. Lecture II.—Lilies: Of Queens' Gardens", women should look to Queen Victoria as inspiration and follow her virtue. He states that

the only person that should be placed before the husband is a woman's relationship with God (162). Since she has no other purpose, by her standards, Helen's extreme faithfulness becomes her undoing and downfall.

Helen's unrelenting devotion mimics Ruskin's theory but disproves it as unrealistic at the same time. Mr. Brocklehurst's beliefs regarding gender and social class mirror those of John Ruskin. Eagles note that Ruskin argued against the middle-class ideology of hard work to improve one's social status. He theorized that rather than liberate peasants, education should bring a sense of self-purpose and happiness to their place in society (52). Like Ruskin, Mr. Brocklehurst did not want to undermine the overall value of education, but he didn't want it to result in social mobility either. It was Ruskin who also believed that women should be not only content but proud of their place. He sought to prove the importance of everyone, especially women, seeing the value in staying within their set roles. Ruskin states, "The woman's power is for rule, not for battle, —and her intellect is not for invention or creation, but for sweet ordering, arrangement, and decision" (line 32). So, while men are the rulers of the outside space, Ruskin is reminding people that women rule the private space. Furthermore, this is the underlying ideology for Lowood to ensure that submissive and proper governesses are produced.

Although Ruskin preached about education for all social classes and genders, Ruskin maintained a conventional mindset concerning what was being taught. By promoting the separate spheres doctrine in education in his essay "Nineteeth-Century Education", Ruskin demonstrated the Victorian frame of mind that boys and girls not only learned differently but were expected to value different things. While on one hand,

Ruskin advocated for “a girl’s education to be as serious as a boy’s” yet contradicted himself within the same lecture by discussing women’s intellect as being not suited for “invention or creation, but sweet ordering, arrangement, and decisions” (line 32). Ruskin's contrasting declarations about the education of girls are synonymous with the Victorians' impossible standards for the ‘perfect’ Victorian woman. Subjected to vilification, young girls were destined for failure since the quintessential woman was a myth, a monster, and unattainable by humans.

Religion is a monster; however, Mr. Brocklehurst weaponizes the concept to rule over Lowood Institute. He believes it is his duty to guide lost souls, especially children with wicked hearts who do not enjoy reading the bible (32). As a clergyman, he exercises his power to condemn Jane for her lack of spirituality implying she is a lesser human for not being devout. Moreover, he belittles Jane’s grievances since she was raised in an upper-class home, which mirrors Mr. Lloyd’s previous mindset that wealth leads to a good life. By weaponizing Jane’s poverty, not only does Mr. Brocklehurst deny her a ‘happy’ life, but it also robs her of her femininity. Womanliness”, according to Nina Auerbach, “is not an emotional state, but a series of difficult journeys and passages" (187). This school is one of many passages for Jane as she develops her identity and progresses through life. Lowood is not a space where femininity is allowed to thrive; this is illustrated in the way the building is compartmentalized and the girls are oppressed. Helen’s passiveness, endurance, and acceptance of her treatment also demonstrate the restrictiveness of the environment. Though Jane develops a love and respect for Helen, the pair have drastically different ideas about the injustices they are subjected to. While Helen believes in love and forgiveness, based on Christianity, Jane prefers self-respect

and fairness. Her definition of fairness is being good to those who are good to her and disliking those who are not (Brontë 54). While Jane admires Helen for her piety, she is aware that her friend is someone she will not become.

This concept of what is good and what is bad is something that Jane continues to struggle with, but Lowood is where she fully forms her opinion about it. When Jane first arrives at the school, a teacher named Miss Miller comments that she hoped Jane would "be a good child" (41). This statement poses the question of what the institution's definition of is good and bad in order for Jane to know where the line is drawn between the two. The ideology of molding children into 'good' people is mirrored in Puritan beliefs of the original sin beginning in childhood. This created an anxiousness among adults in reference to the child and became anxiety that was projected onto the child (Cunningham 66). The answer to how society defined the term 'good' is illustrated in a conversation between Helen Burns and Jane. She asks Helen whether Mr. Brocklehurst is a good man. When questioned, Helen replies "He is a clergyman, and is said to do a great deal of good" (Brontë 48). Since he is a man of God, Mr. Brocklehurst is associated with good morals based on Victorian moral values whether he is a good person. Here, characters are judged solely on their achievements and what Victorians value, which is God regardless of whether Mr. Brocklehurst is a good person. The differences between Helen and Jane demonstrate the belief that the orphan is situated between heaven and hell, which portrays the battle of morality that Victorians felt trapped within. The identity constructed during Jane's time at Lowood is a product of lessons dictated through a biblical cadence where she learns "right from wrong, good from bad, lies from truth and deception from revelation" (Auerbach 404). Thus, learning how to assess her own ideas

about what is right and what is wrong will give her the strength to become more assertive in her gender. Although Jane is defined in different ways, if she is at Lowood, she is incapable of becoming the 'New Woman' and gaining her independence.

Lowood Institution becomes an environment where Jane can explore the Victorian ideology behind social class and religion while learning the role society expects her to fulfill in adulthood. She travels to school alone which sets the precedent that as an orphan she's expected to traverse environments as an individual. There are several instances during her journey to Lowood Institute where people commented on her young age and being allowed to travel alone. Additionally, this alludes to her ability as an orphan to be able to escape before the age it was considered appropriate for young girls to leave the household. The symbolism of her passage taking place at night while heading towards an unfamiliar destination reflects the journey from childhood to adulthood. During this time Jane begins to reflect on her life stating, "Gateshead was her past floating away", Lowood as "the present was vague and strange", and her "future she could form no conjecture" (Brontë 46). This moment of liminality is portrayed through the changes in the land and weather mimicking the ongoing changes in Jane's mood and her life.

Thus, arriving in the cold dead of the night highlights her uncertainty about what is to come and implies that she is not quite free of the restrictions and prejudices of society. Elizabeth Gargano in *Reading Victorian Schoolrooms: Childhood and Education in Nineteenth-Century Fiction* reflects on the French Philosopher Michel Foucault's theory of the physical and mental barriers of Victorian schools. She states that "discipline, Foucault writes, sometimes requires enclosure…it is a protective space of

disciplinary monotony" (28). Lowood is rectangular and enclosed, giving the impression of imprisonment and conformity. Jane notes that she "passed from compartment to compartment from passage to passage, of a large and irregular building" (Brontë 41). So, her first impression of the school feels secretive and hidden, and the act of transitioning from the relatively spacious Gateshead Hall to the cramped Lowood Institution mimics her shift in social class.

This new environment gives insight into what society believed was important for girls of Jane's social class to learn. The accomplishments taught at Lowood Institution, such as music, art, and language result in constructing proper governesses which is the only way a female can manage to gain some individual status without marrying. Once away from the Reeds, her social class reflects her new location where girls are prepared to become working women. Since traditionally upper and middle-class women weren't allowed to work, this is where Jane moves from the "Angel in the House' concept towards becoming the 'New Woman'. She discovers that education is the dividing factor separating her further from her cousins Eliza and Georgina by allowing her to improve their prospects and gain some social mobility. Thus, Lowood represents the public sphere where Jane must contend directly with the harsh expectations and regulations of society to find her purpose. The main point of tension is social class because Mr. Brocklehurst purposefully creates a divide between himself and his family versus the teachers and students at Lowood Institution. He believes that "conformity and Christian grace" is a core part of cultivating the proper mannerisms from children like Jane to which his second daughter Augusta comments that girls at Lowood are "quiet and plain…and

almost like poor people's children" (33). His daughter's reaction is a testament to how strict Mr. Brocklehurst is with his students and how close to poverty these girls are.

Jane experiences institutionalized education for the first time and learns about her purpose in the public sphere. As a child with no wealth to her name, her only trajectory is a charity school where social class and gender are stripped away so she can be reshaped into something beneficial. Jane witnesses Mr. Brocklehurst enforcing his reign of conformity by demanding the girls' curls be cut and acknowledges that natural hair does curl, but these girls "are not to conform to nature...these girls are to be Children of Grace" (60). Removing key identifiers, such as long beautiful hair, that Victorians value, implies that the poor, especially orphans, are a lesser class and need stricter guidelines to be controlled. This school is drastically different from the one that the Reed children will be sent to. Jane learns from her classmate and best friend Helen Burns that the school was an "institution for educating orphans", also called "charity children" (47). This is the first time Jane is a part of a group of individuals who share the same social class as her. Thus, Moglen considers Lowood as a paradox where Jane is oppressed by Mr. Brocklehurst yet provided with a supportive environment. She states, "it is important for her development that the school is exclusively female, and the students share social and economic background" meaning she is no longer an outsider (Moglen 114). Although the Reeds were upper-middle-class, as an orphan Jane is forced to form her own roots or background.

Like the Reed children at Gateshead Hall, Helen is the proper example of how an orphan and their morality should be. Cohen theorizes that "the monster of prohibition exists to demarcate the bonds that hold together that system of relations we call culture"

(13). Thus, Helen becomes as much a teacher for Jane as the adults by encouraging her not to be controlled by her anger like she was at Gateshead. She urges Jane to not be like a heathen or a savage who rules through emotions, but rather a Christian and a civilized person who can overcome them (Brontë 54). Rather than Jane as the example, it is Helen who is a warning to Jane and what she could become if she concedes to Mr. Brocklehurst and his patriarchal oppression. Mr. Brocklehurst proves this by stating that it is his "mission is to mortify in these girls the lusts of the flesh; to teach them to clothe themselves with shamefacedness and sobriety" (61). Helen embodies this evangelical form that the headmaster strove to create among all the girls at Lowood.

As orphans, these students are stigmatized for having difficult personalities that require limitations, and only through salvation will they be formed into proper adults. The way religion is introduced at school reflects the general mindset about orphaned children as burdens and threats to the norms of society. Based on Mr. Brocklehurst's teachings, he attempts to make moral sense of the monstrous using religion to legitimize and justify the mistreatment of the orphans charged in his care. Lowood Institution becomes the third environment where Jane's identity undergoes crucial development. Within these spatial boundaries, she is subjected to and ostracized by strict educational and religious practices. Known as a charity school, the supervisor Mr. Brocklehurst structures the environment based on 'Christian grace and duties" (33). Likewise, the duties that children naturally feel towards their parents, orphans feel inclined to be loyal to God. Regular and Charity or Ragged schools were meant to teach people, especially children, their duties to family and society. These duties revolved around children becoming an integral part of a functioning economic unit, through labor or marriage

depending on the family's social class. Moreover, they were trained and disciplined to promote the well-being of themselves and their family (Flanders 69). The formal education that Jane receives at Lowood influences her life and self-identity in resemblance to society's norms for orphan girls. Helen outlines the definition of orphans as having one parent, mother, or father, deceased, and the terms for those who are admitted to Lowood as charity children (Brontë 47). By this definition, it did not matter what background the girls came from, if they were attending Lowood then by default, they were an orphan. The children at Jane's school are sponsored by outside benefactors but give the impression that once their education is completed, they are expected to repay that 'kindness' through work as governesses.

Brontë uses Lowood as an environment to expose the misguided value that Victorians placed on their religious beliefs. Even Helen is written as an extreme example of conformity and resignation where often Jane notes their differences in moments when Helen remained silent during their abuse and Jane would have spoken out (51). Helen is imprisoned eternally by her resignation, and she sees no reason to escape her fate. Moreover, her death becomes an example of martyrdom where she acknowledges that by dying young, she will escape a life of suffering since she lacked the preferred qualities of society to create worthwhile prospects (76). She symbolizes the Madonna or Virgin Mary a female whose piety is otherworldly. As Nina Auerbach theorizes in *Woman and the Demon: The Life of a Victorian Myth*, a real woman can only exist as a myth. She states, "the Victorian woman is an angel…the definition of superhuman powers" with false promises of "freedom of the spheres" (64). Helen's piety and selflessness should give her a good life; however, she can never truly escape the sphere of Lowood. More

specifically, she does not want to escape to the physical world, but rather the spiritual one. Essentially, Helen, as the Madonna and poor orphan dies to encourage Jane to become better than her by living life the right way.

At Lowood, Jane's emotions deepen when she experiences death directly for the first time. It is important to note that Brontë chose not to give her readers insight into the thoughts going through Jane's mind. It touches back on Jane's former declaration that children can feel, but cannot always process, and express those feelings (Brontë 24). Thus, the death of her first and only friend is so devastating that Janes' thoughts are obscured even to the author. When Helen passed, Jane showed restraint and was passive with her emotions, which mirrors her former friend as a tribute to their value. Moreover, Jane is mourning the loss of her friend, but tears or her usual vocal reactions would be considered disrespectful to such a quiet and reserved little girl. Death was common in schools, especially among the poor, and Brontë who managed to outlive all her siblings knew death all too well. Although death was something Jane was familiar with, her parents and uncle had all passed before she could form a proper relationship with them. This mimics Brontë not forming a relationship with her mother or a deeper one with her older sister who felt a sense of loss and longing for something that never happened. She writes Helen's death as a pivotal lesson for Jane and her developing identity to not become imprisoned. Moglen notes that "Helen is a good girl who identifies herself completely with authority…she participates in the power of the oppressor by accepting his punishment and assuming his blame" (116). Yet, being a 'good' girl did not grant her a better position while living, so she remained rich in devotion and helped benefit Jane's character development. However, Helen dies the "right way" by having a strong

relationship with God. Helen's reaction to death remains steadfast, resolve, and pious, seeing it as the chance to be with God whom she describes as a "mighty universal parent" (Brontë 76). Her devoutness grants her an orphan to die with dignity and a promise of a better life in the afterlife. Whereas Jane is the opposite, which is illustrated in her connection to the physical natural work rather than the spiritual. Although Jane is incapable of becoming like Helen, she instead forms a tentative relationship with God that is uniquely her own. When Helen passes away, it awakened a psychological and moral growth that allowed Jane to thrive within Lowood Institution and later outside of it once she escaped.

In Gateshead Hall, Jane is surrounded by beauty and wealth, yet she can't fully indulge because none of it belongs to her. At first, she wants to become the ideal Victorian woman; however, she learns that to achieve this she must transform into something nonhuman. Auerbach states that the orphan "reflects the culture it simultaneously embodies and repudiates" (395). Thus, their bodies are composed of all the anxieties and fears of their culture. In this sense, the orphan is a shapeshifter that can manipulate their identity, yet gender is still relevant to what limitations they must face. Jane's moment of introspection in The Red Room is used to illustrate her powerlessness through confinement in a grand room that was rarely used, which highlights the room's uncanny nature. Lowood Institution becomes a space where Jane can fully form an identity strong enough to withstand the public world. Moreover, since women and orphans are seen as capable of representing the human and nonhuman, she is tasked with figuring out which, if either, is her true self. Instead of becoming the perfect Victorian woman, Jane discovers that she must become the 'New Woman' if she wants to be free.

However, before she can enter this phase of womanhood, she must leave her previous identity behind and become ambiguous within society. As Jane prepares to enter the next environment on her journey, her emotional maturing has reached a point where it is strong enough to withstand the harsh public world where Thornfield Hall is located. The school, though rigorously constructed, prepared Jane to engage with the world as she did. Every experience up until this point has been more internal and confined to the domestic and childhood spheres, so leaving Lowood Institute is synonymous with her becoming an adult.

5. Becoming a New Woman in Thornfield Hall

The orphan, in many stories, allows authors to establish a narrative that challenges and transcends the boundaries of reality and fiction. Their ambiguous forms embody the reputation of their societies and often force their creators to confront their greatest fears. Jane's childhood consisted of three main settings or thresholds that hindered and influenced the formation of her identity. This question of "Who am I?" resonates and connects the novel's beginning when Jane is vulnerable and uncertain of her place in society to the end where she asserts her independence from the restrictive patriarchy. Bronte used the orphan story as a conduit to highlight the problematic and hypocritical ideology of her society. Like the author, Jane struggled to fit into the restrictive mold that Victorians adhered to, especially for young girls. This topic touches on a deeper conflict between nature and society that comes to fruition in the monstrous forms of those who attempted to or were defined as proper children and women.

My first chapter established the importance of the separate spheres' doctrine and its powerful influence over how Victorians lived their daily lives. A fundamental principle of this ideology centers on the domestic space where the family and structure of the household mandated a person's success or failure as a benefit to society. The Victorian child was powerless and lacked the agency to be heard or listened to by the society they were raised in. Placed at the bottom of the family structure, children were important as an enhancement of adult behavior and treated almost as objects testifying to the status of their parents. Gateshead Hall is where Jane's story begins and defines what it means to be a middle-class orphan in Victorian society. Moreover, most of her time with the Reeds was spent in the nursery where its placement at the top of the house indicates

the separation that the children had from the rest of the family. In this confined space, Jane constructed the initial concepts of her selfhood in relation to her gender as a female and social class as a middle-class orphan. Though viewed as someone who possessed little to no prospects in life, as a middle-class orphan Jane was granted some protection of never being homeless. However, since Jane didn't contribute to the Reed household and only benefited from it, she was considered unappreciative and at the bottom of the hierarchy, even lower than the servants. The abuse she experiences is based on these initial qualifiers of her identity and the preconceived notion that since she is not the ideal Victorian little girl, she is incapable of becoming an ideal Victorian woman.

In my second chapter, I analyzed Jane's imprisonment in the Red Room and her mental state during that time as an outsider or monster. When she enters the Red Room, Jane is passionately angry at what happened between her and John; moreover, how she was treated in the aftermath. Later, her temperament subsides to a disquiet introspection forcing her to reflect on her shortcomings in comparison to the Reed children. The Reeds represent a tangent of the ideal aristocratic Victorian family. Although the head of the house, Mr. Reed has passed, John Reed secures the family's future as the male heir. Moreover, the presence of Georgina and Eliza indicates the potential of good marriages to further ensure the family will continue to survive. Essentially, the roles of a proper family are being fulfilled by the Reed children. Jane is an infringement of this structure by being a threat to the social stability of the household. Jane's exclusion as a child affects how she views herself later in life, especially regarding her relationships with others. Ambiguous in concept, parentless children traverse in and out of the family structure able to blur the normative binaries. Jane, a child yearning for love, desires to

assimilate into society but fails to achieve Eliza's intellect or Georgina's beauty. Due to the abuse that Jane is subjected to from her relatives, she struggles to define her fluid identity. During her imprisonment, she undergoes an identity crisis at an age where her selfhood is still vulnerable and developing. Thus, these emotions provoke and influence her to become something monstrous and unrecognizable even to herself.

In my third chapter, I examined Lowood Institution where Jane spent the remainder of her formidable childhood years. Since all the children attending are of similar social class and gender, it neutralizes key identifiers by creating a nonbinary space. To mediate the battle for the orphans' souls, Mr. Brocklehurst made sure Lowood was a structured environment with strict rules, and only through God would they transform into proper citizens. Orphans were a conduit used to safely explore the mysterious connection between God and man. From Gateshead Hall to Lowood Institution, Jane's passage has been a series of unfortunate events implying that the more she tries to fit into the social norms she must transform into something nonhuman. Thus, their bodies are composed of all the anxieties and fears of their culture. In this sense, the orphan is a shapeshifter that can manipulate their identity, yet gender is still relevant to what limitations they must face. Jane must reform her old rebellious ways to be granted redemption and acceptance into society. This reform through religious education ensures that submissive and proper governesses are produced which creates variants of the ideal Victorian woman who is charged with assisting in curating proper childhood for wealthy established children.

Historically, the fascination with monsters and monstrosities has always been integral to how societies structured and governed themselves. However, the definition of

what a monster is changes based on the cultural norms of that era. At the end of his work, Cohen poses the question, “Do monsters really exist? Surely they must, for if they did not, how could we?” (20). Whenever I look at a society like the Victorians, a collective obsessed with categorizing and idolizing themselves and aspects of their lives, I think of what monsters were fabricated due to their quest for perfection. Monsters, in this definition, were synonymous with anyone who fell into the margins outside of the social norms. As an adult and coming to terms with her flaws and being incapable of conforming to certain roles, Jane asks Alice Fairfax, the housekeeper at Thornfield, “Why!--am I a monster?” (Brontë 238). This question touches on the fact that she is continuously defined in terms that dehumanize and often belittle her. From childhood, she had to contend with her cousins, especially Georgina who was seen as the epitome of a young Victorian girl born with wealth and beauty. Later, she encounters her friend Helen who exhibits a devout piety that places her salvation higher than even the clergyman, Mr. Brocklehurst. And finally, she contends with the mysterious Bertha Mason, the madwoman in the attic and Edward Rochester’s first wife. All these versions of females provide examples of what Jane could become if she concedes to fit the role society wants to become. Especially Bertha, who represents an unhappy ending if Jane is incapable of resolving her insecurities and forming an identity that grants her complete independence.

Bertha’s imprisonment symbolizes a doubling to Jane and even Bronte herself that Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar argue about in their feminist criticism book *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth-Century Literary Imagination*. Bertha is a monstrous and powerful woman who continuously attempts to

burn down Thornfield Hall and disrupts Rochester's desire to taint Jane's virtue by making her a mistress. There was no place for women writers in the nineteenth century to earn a living and be taken seriously. Thus, female creativity was categorized as "madness" whenever it became too hard to handle which is mirrored in Bertha's situation. The society Bertha and Jane grew up in warned women that "if they do not behave like angels, they must be monsters" (Cain et al 1932). Thus, Bertha as a character, with her outright disregard for social norms and gender roles, is arguably Bronte's most blatant conviction toward Victorian society.

Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre* highlights her personal discontent with the rigid and problematic ideas of Victorian society. The main points of the story revolved around how society influenced Jane's identity formation through the social and gender trauma she experienced. Orphans were seen as monstrous because they tapped into the fears that the middle and upper classes held about the impoverished. This stigma affected how they were treated when taken into a household. As a social class that was incapable of tracing their parentage, they had no family roots to identify by meaning they needed to form their own. Jane, while at Gateshead Hall attempted to become the 'Angel in the House' like her cousin Georgina. However, her failure to achieve this forced her into a moment of introspection in the Red Room where she was confronted by all the forms of identity, human and nonhuman, she had been categorized as. It was not until she reached Lowood Institute that Jane began to properly develop her identity. This environment was educational not only for her future as a governess but for her definitions as a female. Jane learns she would never fit within the domestic sphere, thus forcing her to become either a

victim or a rebel. By choosing the rebel, she paves the way for her evolution into the ‘New Woman’.

Works Cited

Auerbach, Nina. “Incarnations of the Orphan.” *ELH*, vol. 42, no. 3, Johns Hopkins University Press, 1975, pp. 395–419, https://doi.org/10.2307/2872711.

---. *Women and the Demon: The Life of a Victorian Myth*. Harvard University Press, 1982.

---. *Romantic Imprisonment: Women and Other Glorified Outcasts*. Columbia University Press, 1986.

Bax, Stephen. *Discourse and Genre: Using Language in Context. Perspectives on the English Language*. Palgrave Macmillan, 2010.

Bloch, Ruth H.. "American Feminine Ideals in Transition: The Rise of the Moral Mother, 1785–1815". Volume 4/1 Domestic Ideology and Domestic Work, edited by Nancy F. Cott, Berlin, Boston: K. G. Saur, pp. 3-28, 1992. https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110968859.3

Boone, Troy. *Youth of Darkest England: Working-Class Children at the Heart of Victorian Empire.* Routledge, 2005.

Bown, Nicola., et al. *The Victorian Supernatural*. Cambridge University Press, 2004

Brontë Charlotte and Deborah Lutz. Jane Eyre : An Authoritative Text Contexts Criticism. Fourth ed. W.W. Norton & Company 2016.

---, and Margaret Smith. Selected Letters of Charlotte Brontë. Oxford University Press, 2007.

Cain, William E., et al., editors. The Norton Anthology of Theory and Criticism. 2nd ed., WW Norton, 2010.

Cohen, Jeffrey Jerome. "Monster Theory: Reading Culture." *NED-New edition*, University of Minnesota Press, 1996, http://www.jstor.org/stable/10.5749/j.ctttsq4d.

Cunningham, Hugh. *Children and Childhood in Western Society Since 1500.* Pearson Education Limited, 1995, 2005.

Flanders, Judith. *Inside the Victorian home: a portrait of domestic life in Victorian England*. WW Norton & Company, 2004.

Floyd, David. *Street Urchins, Sociopaths, & Degenerates: Orphans of Late-Victorian and Edwardian Fiction.* University of Wales Press, 2014.

Gargano, Elizabeth. *Reading Victorian Schoolrooms: Childhood and Education in Nineteenth-Century Fiction*. Routledge, 2008.

Gilead, Sarah. "Liminality and Antiliminality in Charlotte Brontë's Novels: Shirley Reads Jane Eyre." *Texas Studies in Literature and Language*, vol. 29, no. 3, 1987, pp. 302–22. JSTOR, http://www.jstor.org/stable/40754831.

Gorham, Deborah. *The Victorian Girl and the Feminine Ideal.* Indiana University Press, 1982.

Gray, Alexandra, and Jennifer Diann Jones. "Introduction: The Female Orphan in Victorian Women's Writing." *Victoriographies*, Volume 9 Issue 2, pp.101-111, 2019. https://doi.org/10.3366/vic.2019.0336/

Johnson, S. L. "Christina Rossetti's Ghosts, Soul-Sleep, and Victorian Death Culture." *Victorian Literature and Culture*, 46(2), 381-402, 2018. https://doi.org/10.1017/S1060150318000062

Jung, Carl Gustav, et al. *Symbols of transformation*. Routledge, 2014.

Kristeva, Julia. "Approaching Abjection, from Powers of Horror: An Essay on Abjection." *Classic Readings on Monster Theory*. Amsterdam University Press. Pp. 67-74, 2018.

Lee, Imogen. *Discovering Literature: Romantics & Victorians Ragged Schools*. 2014, https://www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/articles/ragged-schools.

Malkovich, Amberyl. *Charles Dickens and the Victorian Child: Romanticizing and Socializing the Imperfect Child.* Routledge, 2013.

Moglen, Helene. *Charlotte Brontë: The Self Conceived.* University of Wisconsin Press, 1984.

Peters, Laura. *Orphan Texts: Victorian Orphans, Culture and Empire*. Manchester University Press, 2000.

Rothenberg, Rose-Emily. "The Orphan Archetype." *Psychological perspectives* 14.2: 181-194, 1983.

Ruskin, John. Purton, Valerie, editor. *John Ruskin and Nineteenth-Century Education*. Anthem Press, 2018. JSTOR, https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctv1t8c98.

---. "Sesame and lilies." Sesame and Lilies. Yale University Press, 2008.

Shorey, Paul. “Aristotle on ‘Coming-to-Be’ and ‘Passing Away.’” *Classical Philology*, vol. 17, no. 4. pp. 334–52. JSTOR, 1922. http://www.jstor.org/stable/263008.

Weinstock, Jeffrey Andrew. *The Monster Theory Reader*. University of Minnesota Press, 2020.