England in the 1840's saw a rise of women taking on the occupation of a governess. While it was still uncommon during this period of the Victorian Age for women to work, "the position of governess seems to have been appropriate because, while it was paid employment, it was within the home" (Peterson 6). The role a governess fulfilled to teach children was a job that could be done by the mother of the house, and therefore socially acceptable. However, governesses were not always looked on favorably; the governess was not a member of the family, yet she lived with them; she was fed and housed in the home, yet she was not just a border. "No one [knew] exactly how to treat her," as she was "something made up of all" (Peterson 10).

Charlotte Brontë acknowledged this divide between classes that the governess represented during the Victorian Period in writing *Jane Eyre.* By "choosing the profession of governess for Jane," Brontë "allowed her audience to see life from both the servant's point of view and the aristocracy's point of view" (Wells). The governess was a member of the servant level because she was paid a salary; and yet, the governess was also middle-class, because she earned her own living, while also being on the same social level as the family she worked for. This class confusion was a topic of conversation during the rise of the governess in 1840's England, as shown in cartoons included in the popular satirical magazine *Punch. Punch* produced articles that jokingly suggested a sort of formal training for governesses, called "The 'Governess' Benevolent Institution" (Constable). This Institution would provide courses on "thriftiness in clothing" to mock the yearly wage of a governess, and teach classes on "how to behave at social functions"

(Constable). The governess was a subject of mockery for their mixed social class, and *Punch*'s focus on the governess' role shows what a major place the governess filled in society.

This is the role the focal character Jane fills in Charlotte Brontë's novel, *Jane Eyre.* She is hired to work as a governess for a wealthy bachelor, Mr. Rochester, and teach his "ward," a young French girl named Adéle, but Jane subsequently falls in love with him. On a visit to Thornfield, a member of Mr. Rochester's social circle and assumed love interest, Blanch Ingram, pronounces her dislike of governesses that echoes Victorian confusion over a governess's confused social role. She says that governesses are "a nuisance," and she used to "play tricks" on her own governess as a child (C. Brontë 151). Blanche claims, in front of Jane, that governesses are a "bad example to innocence of childhood" because they cause distractions and often neglect their duties in favor of spoiling the child (152). This aversion is based on an economic separation between this wealthy class of people such as Blanche Ingram and the working class of women who must work for wages; yet, these governesses also represent the gentility-- having either come from respectable and good-mannered families, or working for one. Jane does not fill a specific role in the household but rather has many vague ones: she does teach Adéle, but she also accompanies the child to special evening events during the weeks that Mr.

Rochester houses a large group from his social circle that receives a large focus in the novel. Jane also becomes a close companion of Mr. Rochester's, as he often calls Jane in his company to talk to her, and they eventually develop romantic feelings for each other, despite their twenty-year age gap, and get engaged. In addition to the socially ambiguous role that Jane fills as governess, she also fills both the roles of angel and demon, and complicates them, just as she does the role of governess. The angel/demon dichotomy are common literary archetypes present across Victorian literature, and a dichotomy existing in *Jane Eyre.*

The idea of angel present in the angel/demon dichotomy stems from Victorian writer Coventry Patmore's 1854 poem "Angel in the House," which defines the ideal wife as being maternal and caring, while also pure and selfless. The angel as focused on in this chapter is this domestic angel, but is also an ideal Christian. This pious female figure that Jane adheres to throughout the novel should reflect what is often called "The Proverbs 31 Woman," based on a passage of the Bible in the Book of Proverbs. The passage gives an example of "a wife of noble character" who is both "virtuous and capable" (*New Living Translation,* Prov. 31:10). She is "more precious than rubies" and must be taken care of and protected, while also waking "up before dawn to prepare breakfast for her household and plan the day's work" (*New Living Translation,* Prov. 31:10, 15). This woman must also "[extend] a helping hand to the poor and [open] her arms to the needy" (*New Living Translation,* Prov. 31:20). The passage continues to describe a woman whose only existence is in the household, always being prepared for anything that could happen to hurt her family, and making everything for them. This passage works to define what the ideal

Christian wife and mother is, and Jane works through the novel to shape herself to fulfill this role.

Jane narrates the novel, looking back on her life as a thirty-two year old woman. Because the entire story is from her point of view, Jane is painted as the "good guy," the heroine, growing up out-casted and tortured by her cousins and persecuted by her Aunt Reed, with whom Jane lives. Jane explains that she was left under the care of her aunt and uncle after her parents died, and when her uncle passed, her aunt was begrudgingly placed as her only guardian. Her aunt punishes her when she stands up to her teasing cousins, and calls her a disobedient liar. Jane is victimized both in the Reed house and during her first years at the charity school for orphaned girls that her aunt sends her to, called Lowood. At first glance, Jane fits the definition of "the angel": female, spiritual, and maternal. Literary critic Nina Auerbach explains that the Victorian angel is "endowed by definition with suprahuman powers" ("Woman" 64). Auerbach also points out that, because the "angel" is synonymous with "house" because of Coventry Patmore's 1854 poem *The Angel in the House,* the angel "can exist only within families" (72). Jane exemplifies the feminine, relies on her faith and pious spirituality, and shows the desire to fulfill the Victorian female duty of loving and caring housewife and mother. Jane's angelic power is highlighted even more when the reader is introduced to her husband-to-be, Mr. Rochester's, secret mad wife incarcerated in his attic. This madwoman Bertha, un-Victorian in her foreign race, her savage features, and her animalistic actions, symbolizes the demon that cannot coexist with the angel because of the angel's spiritual purity and reign over the feminine domestic sphere. And yet,

throughout the novel, Jane corrupts all three aspects of angelhood: femininity, spirituality, and Victorian marriage, and she often acts as demon.

From the start of the novel, Jane can be described as "angelic." She grows up unreasonably punished and neglected by her aunt who does not like or want Jane, and she is sent to Lowood to become obedient and pious. There, she meets the only school friend she mentions in the novel, Helen Burns, who shortly dies from consumption, or tuberculosis. In recounting her experience at Lowood under the harsh and uncaring directorship of Mr. Brockelhurst, Jane initially states that he was "a harsh man…, pompous and meddline" because he "cut off [their] hair; and for economy's sake bought [them] bad needles and thread, with which [they] could hardly sew" (C. Brontë 105). The worst thing Mr. Brockelhurst could do that tarnished his reputation in the girls' eyes, the thing that Jane finds important enough to say first when asked about Brockelhurst, was that he cut off the girls' hair and bought them bad sewing materials, both of which are very feminine qualities a girl should possess: pretty hair and sewing skills.

In addition to learning feminine skills at Lowood, Jane also possesses feminine emotions and feelings. She often expresses emotion through crying, seen clearly during an encounter with Mr. Rochester. He asks Jane if she is depressed for leaving an evening gathering early, and she answers by saying she is not depressed about anything, yet he calls out that she is crying. He says, "But I affirm that you are: so much depressed that a few more words would bring tears to your eyes- indeed, they are there now, shining and swimming" (154). He goes on to describe the "bead [that] has slipped down from the lash and fallen on to the flag" (105). This is not the

only time that Jane lets a single tear fall slowly from her eye; she lets "a tear of disappointment and impatience" fall whilst waiting for Rochester to return from an engagement (236). Her "tears [gush] out" when confessing her love for Rochester by saying she does not want to move to be far from Rochester (214). She states that she "could repress what [she] endured no longer," as tears spilled out of her eyes (215).

Reflecting her traditionally feminine feelings, Jane's clothing also presents her as womanly angelic and selfless, even almost martyr-like. She describes her clothing as "Quaker trim" (110). When she first arrives at Mr. Rochester's house Thornfield, she admits to owning only three dresses- one "black stuff dress," one "of black silk," and one "of light grey" that was only worn "on first-rate occasions" (102). The materials her dresses are made out of, named here as silk, were commonly used for clothing during the Victorian period, and were not quite expensive or grand fabrics. She owns one brooch that features a single pearl, along with a "black merino cloak" or "pelisse," a "black beaver bonnet," and other pieces of traditional and commonly worn outerwear (97). Looking at these outfits compared to those of Mr. Rochester's wealthy social circle later in this paper show the blandness and simplicity of Jane's wardrobe. She does not like to draw attention to herself through the clothing that she wears, and is, in this quiet and graceful way, more angelic.

As focused on in this project, clothing was very important to society during the Victorian Age. There were many, constantly changing, rules as to what is or is not appropriate to wear on different occasions, and different economic classes wore different things. One article of clothing that was of great importance during the

Victorian Period was the glove. According to writer Erin Blakemore's article on the Victorian Glove on Daily JSTOR's website, "there were different shades, styles, fabrics, and fit for different times of day, times of year, and different activities." Gloves were worn by both men and women, but Blakemore points out that specifically for women, clean gloves were part of having a "spotless appearance," and would often be changed multiple times a day to ensure the wearer always looked neat. Richer wearers would replace their gloves if they were too worn and started to fall apart, but for poorer wearers, they would have to repair their gloves. Etiquette manuals from the Victorian period advised women to "never go out without gloves; put them on before you leave the house," and never get caught buttoning or fixing their gloves out of their house (Walton). It was a part of a lady's toilette to wear her gloves, and if she was seen without them, then she was not a respectable lady.

We see Jane's interaction with her pair of gloves during her two-day homeless period after leaving Thornfield, not knowing where to go or where she could reside. She goes into a bakery and asks if she could sell her handkerchief for a roll. When the woman in the shop refuses, Jane resorts to asking if the woman would exchange Jane's gloves for a bit of cake or bread. Immediately after telling this, Jane interrupts her recount to say, "it is not pleasant to dwell on these details," and moves on with the story (Brontë 280). It would have been a big deal for Jane to sell her gloves. As she was not rich, they were likely her only pair of gloves, as she, rather than buying a new pair if a hole was ripped in the glove, would have repaired

and cleaned these gloves many times. Without this accessory, Jane would not be viewed as a lady any longer.

As Victorian women were expected to dress appropriately for the occasion, they must always look their best. Jane worries about upsetting her complexion, wanting to stay angel white and perfect. The author of "The Ladies' Hand-Book of the Toilet," written in 1843, explains the importance of keeping one's complexion balanced. She states, "The beauty of the skin has in all ages been an object of universal admiration," and she describes how "the skin will become dilated with heat and moisture" if "under the influence of passions and affections of the mind" (3, 5). It is very important to preserve "a serenity of temper, and an unruffled state of mind as essential to the preservation of personal beauty" (5). Good skin complexion is part of looking beautiful, and is especially important in upper class Anglo society, so Jane is conscious of her complexion throughout the novel. The Thornfield housekeeper Mrs. Fairfax points out one day that Jane looks "flushed and feverish," so she must not be feeling well (134). While living at Thornfield Jane also reminisces about her nurse when she was young, who called her "quite a lady" (133). Jane states while thinking of these memories, "I [am] a lady," believing herself to look better than she did when her nurse Bessie saw her as a child because, as she states to herself, "I [have] more color and more flesh; more life, more vivacity, because I [have] brighter hopes and keener enjoyments" (133). Because of this growth, Jane believes that she looks more beautiful and has an overall more pleasant complexion.

Jane not only looks like an angel, but she has faith like one. Growing up, Jane is taught the Bible both at the Reed house and at Lowood. When living at the Reed

house as a child, she is asked by Mr. Brockelhurst, a minister, in an interview for Lowood if she reads her Bible, and she responds, "Sometimes." She says she likes "Revelations, and the book of Daniel, and Genesis and Samuel, and a little bit of Exodus," all Old Testament books that tell the history of the Israelite people (27). When asked if she likes the Psalms, she responds, "No, Sir," much to Mr. Brockelhurst's surprise and dislike. He tells Jane that she has "a wicked heart, and… must pray to God to change it" (27). Apparently she does, because throughout the rest of the novel in Jane's adult life, she relies on strength from God during trying times by praying.

As an adult, after her marriage to Rochester is called off when the truth about his mad wife Bertha comes out, Jane despairs in her room alone for the entire day, until "a remembrance of God," and, apparently liking the Psalms now, she quotes Psalm 22:11 to herself: "'Be not far from me, for trouble is near: there is none to help'" (C. Brontë 253). After she decides that she must leave Thornfield, although she has nowhere to go, she tells the unhappy Rochester in her parting words, "Do as I do: trust in God and yourself. Believe in heaven. Hope to meet again there" (270). And throughout Jane's journey, she acknowledges that "God must have led [her] on" when she felt weak and lost (274). Jane believes that God guides her through her journey after leaving Thornfield, and leads her, after two days sleeping on the ground and begging for food, to find her cousins who take care of her. When she feels alone sleeping outside, she says she "[feels] the might and strength of God" looking at the Milky Way, and is aware of "his omnipresence" (276).

Jane's two days rambling through towns trying to find someone who will help her parallels the Bible story of Jesus' forty days tempted in the wilderness. The account of this story written in the Book of Luke describes how Jesus was "led by the Spirit," that is, the Holy Spirit, "in the wilderness" (*New Living Translation,* Luke 4:1). Here, Jesus "ate nothing all that time and became very hungry," similar to Jane's journey, where she had nothing to eat for two days (*New Living Translation,* Luke 4:2). The devil tempted Jesus to make food for himself, if he really is "the Son of God," but Jesus did not submit to the temptation (*New Living Translation,* Luke 4:3). The same story accounted in the Book of Mark describes how even though in the wilderness Jesus "was out among the wild animals…, the angels took care of him" (*New Living Translation,* Mark 2:13). For Jane, she found a house that would take her in and take care of her after two days, and as we find out after she had been staying with them for a few months, they are her cousins.

For most Victorians, the Christian religion was a part of daily life, and just as believing in God was expected of most British citizens, so was getting married. Jane, although only eighteen during her engagement to Rochester, is no exception from this societal expectation; she desires to get married and expects to in her life. She is devoted to Rochester first as his governess, and then, later in the novel, as his wife. She calls him "sir" and "master" both when she works for him, and after they become engaged. She also tells him, "I'd give my life to serve you" as both his governess and his fiancée (174). In addition, she is constantly obsessed with the way he looks; initially she describes him as broad and dark, saying, "His shape… I perceived harmonized in squareness with his physiognomy: I suppose it was a good

figure in the athletic sense of the term- broad-chested and thin-flanked, though neither tall nor graceful" (102). She even goes so far as to say "most people would have thought him an ugly man;" however, she starts to fall in love with him, and explains that even though Rochester's features "were not beautiful, according to rule…, they were more than beautiful to [her]" (149). She says that "he made me love him without looking at me," and she often stares at Rochester while he is not looking (149). She becomes obsessed with watching him and studying his features, and even draws his likeness after she has run away from him.

Jane starts to idolize Rochester in ways other than his looks, and this love starts to replace the need for religion, as Jane puts it. Jane herself says that Rochester is her hope of heaven, standing "between [her] and every thought of religion" (234). In telling Jane of the trip they will take through all the places he has been in Europe, he states "no I shall revisit it healed and cleansed, with a very angel as my comforter" (221). However, to this Jane responds, "I am not an angel…, and I will not be one till I die: I will be myself" (221). Jane says something similar a little later in this conversation when she cries, "I would rather be a *thing* than an angel!" (223). In this way, Jane starts to complicate her title as "angel" and hint that she may not be all that she seems.

If Jane is the angel, then Bertha, her literary counterpart within the narrative and world of the novel, is her archetypal parallel: the demon, or the monster. Feminist critics Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar explain, "the angel's necessary opposite and double" is "the 'monster' in the house," as opposed to "the angel in the house" (17). The monster represents otherness, expressing "her own

'presumptuous' desires rather than the angelic humility and 'dullness' for which she was designed" (Gilbert and Gubar 28). The monster is wild, abiding by her own rules rather than those of a society or culture. She does not seek marriage, children, or any domestic qualities, and, because of this, is seen as "othered" by a Victorian society. She has her own unique spirit within her, rather than the desire to fulfill traditional Victorian roles, and this spirit rules her in place of God. Bertha, Mr. Rochester's secret wife who has been confined in the third floor of the Thornfield mansion for almost fifteen years, perfectly fits the description of this demon monster.

Bertha is a demon because she is entirely un-Victorian in her femininity, notably in the way she looks and dresses. The first time Bertha is indirectly mentioned, Jane hears her maniacal laugh in the room above hers. Jane describes the laugh's "low, syllabic tone," and its "odd murmur" (C. Brontë 91). Jane continues to hear Bertha's laugh, believing it to be, as Mrs. Fairfax claims, the servant Grace Poole. Bertha does not conform what sounds or words are or are not appropriate to utter. The first time Jane sees Bertha, Bertha has entered Jane's room two nights before her wedding, looked at her wedding dress, and torn Jane's veil into two pieces. She explains, in recalling the events to Mr. Rochester, that she had never seen this person before: a woman, "tall and large, with thick and dark hair hanging long down her back" (242). It was customary in the Victorian period for women to oil their hair in order to slick it into curls and ringlets piled atop their head or framing their face. Women also used adornments such as clips or pins to add some flair; so,

Bertha's long and matted hair, hanging long, would look very unfeminine and hideous.

Jane continues to describe Bertha's clothing to Rochester; she says, "I know not what dress she had on: it was white and straight; but whether gown, sheet, or shroud, I cannot tell" (C. Brontë 242). Bertha is wearing the outfit of a madwoman, not needing to dress fashionably or acceptably, because she is confined to her attic room where none but the servant who cares for her, Grace Poole, sees her. She does not need to look appropriate, and is instead wearing a loose, white dress, which, as shown through Catherine Earnshaw's depiction in *Wuthering Heights,* is associated with illness, both physical and mental. Once more Bertha's appearance is described when, after the wedding is called off, Mr. Rochester finally shows Bertha to Jane, like an animal in a zoo. Jane reports on her "shaggy locks,… purple face—those bloated features" (250). "She [is] a big woman, in stature almost equaling her husband," groveling on all fours while she growls "like some strange wild animal: but it [is] covered with clothing; and a quantity of dark, grizzled hair" (250). Bertha is not fully beast; Jane makes sure to note that while not appropriate for a woman, Bertha is still wearing clothing. However, she has the stature and hair of a beast, and by describing her animalistic qualities, Jane associates her sexuality with that of an animal. Bertha also has the height and strength of a man, and the cage of an animal; while Rochester and Jane can't quite define what she looks like, they know that Bertha, in all her wild ferocity and unmannered actions, is mad.

Student Savannah Bachman, in her senior thesis on the "Madwoman and the Madhouse in Victorian Literature," looks at Bertha's confinement as the Victorian

idea that "female madness is representative of uncontrollable, unnatural women," and in order to help and possibly heal the madwoman, she must be confined (34). Bachman defines "confinement" as "shutting up" a woman, both physically through the restraint of an insane asylum or similar prison, and by "the suppression and prevention of her free speech" (Bachman 5). Similar to Catherine Earnshaw's confinement in *Wuthering Heights,* Bertha is incarcerated both "for her own good" in order to heal her, while also protecting the reputation of her husband. Madwomen must be confined to prevent "tarnishing the reputations of their husbands," and were often put into asylums on the request of their husbands, in order to "adhere to conventional feminine behavior and morals" (6-7).

Mr. Rochester explains to Jane that he confined his wife on account of her madness, hoping he could move on with his life and marry someone else, because he feels as though he had been cheated into marrying a madwoman. He tells the wedding party, "I invite you all to come up to the house and visit Mrs. Poole's patient, and *my wife!* You shall see what sort of a being I was cheated into espousing," blaming the marriage on the deceit of Bertha's family who did not tell Rochester that the woman he was marrying was mad (C. Brontë 249). Rochester assures Jane that as soon as "the medical men had pronounced her mad she had of course been shut up" (262). It was common knowledge that if you were mad, you would be "shut up" in an asylum, away from the rest of humanity, to protect not only mannered citizens, but, Victorians believed, to protect a woman from herself, and maybe even to get better. Victorians didn't want a madwoman to morally taint other women, or children.

Bertha did not fit the idea of a wife that Rochester had in mind; he explains that shortly after they got married, Bertha's "character ripened and developed with frightful rapidity," meaning, perhaps, that as she learned more about herself, she started to stand up for herself and speak what she thought rather than through pleasantries and "commonalities" of the day (261). Rochester also blames her madness on her "vices" that "sprang up fast and rank," only controllable through cruelty, and her "pigmy intellect" (261). Her mother, Rochester claims, was also mad, and "shut up in a lunatic asylum," when Bertha's family originally told him that her mother was dead (261).

However, in this novel, Bertha is not just a confined madwoman—she is comparable to a literal demon monster. Jane describes her face by saying it looks "fearful and ghastly," and she has never seen a face like it (242). She calls Bertha's face "savage," hinting at Bertha's different race, saying she has "red eyes" and "fearful blackened inflation of the lineaments," her features purple and swollen with bloodshot eyes, describing Bertha's physical differences as racist qualities (242). Jane attributes her more to "the foul German spectre- the Vampyre," than to a woman, with a "goblin appearance" (242, 243). Bertha is also described as vampyric after she stabs her brother, Mr. Mason, who comes to visit Rochester. Mason recalls to Jane how Bertha "sucked the blood," saying "she'd drain my heart" (181). Bertha had left bite marks and wounds in Mason's arm when she bit him, trying to suck his blood, like a vampire. As studied in the chapter on Dracula, the Victorian idea of a vampire comes with a sexual connotation, and Bertha's sexuality is quite ambiguous in *Jane Eyre.* Throughout the novel, Bertha is also called a beast rather than a human

being, describing her sexuality as animalistic and completely unfeminine. She is called a clothed hyena, a maniac, one sustaining mental defects, is described as living in a wild beast's den and a goblin's cell, and, of course, she is outright called "a monster" (264). This monstrousness embodies both the animalistic sexuality Bertha is described as promoting, and her savage race.

Rochester gives some background on Bertha and her race. He explains that Bertha's mother was "the Creole," an outdated term meaning a person of mixed race, usually European and African, used to reference people in the Caribbean. The Caribbean is in fact where Rochester met Bertha and brought her back to England. Laura Briggs, a professor of women's studies at the University of Arizona, explains in her article on nineteenth-century obstetrics that in the Victorian period, citizens believed, based on ideas that stemmed from British imperialism, that people of other races were "savage," especially women who had been diagnosed with hysteria. These "savage" women had specific characteristics, notably that they were "hypersexual" and "hardy," "[giving] birth easily and often," compared to how white women were "overcivilized,… [avoiding] sex and were unwilling or incapable of bearing many, or any, children" (Briggs 249). Bertha is described as large and tall, having a similar build to Rochester, and is, in fact, actively compared to Jane by Rochester.

Rochester tries to explain how savage Bertha is in her "racialized hardiness" compared to Jane's quiet petiteness. While showing his confined wife to the wedding party, Rochester defines "the conjugal embrace [he is] ever to know," as he is confined himself to this marriage to a madwoman (C. Brontë 251). He then shifts to

Jane, saying, “this young girl,” using young to mean both innocent and virginal but also pious, “who stands so grave and quiet at the mouth of hell, looking collectedly at the gambols of a demon,” explaining that he “wanted her just as a change after that fierce ragout” (251). He’s trying to appeal to everyone’s sympathy, that he is stuck with this beast, while he wants to be with a woman like Jane. He entreaties the wedding party to “compare [Jane’s] clear eyes with the red balls yonder,” to look at both of their faces, compare Jane’s “form with that bulk,” and then to judge him for wanting Jane instead (251). By comparing the two women Rochester also tries to entreat Christian sympathy, explaining that he deserves to be with a pious and pure woman such as Jane rather than living with a demon, who could corrupt his Christian faith. Rochester defines all of Jane’s physical angelic qualities, as well as Bertha’s monstrous form, because Jane looks and acts like a proper Victorian woman, and Bertha does not.

Because Bertha is so unfit to be a proper Victorian woman, Rochester must shut her up to cover his mistake in marrying her. He tries to hide her and her un-Victorianness, replacing her identity with that of the servant Grace Poole. Rochester says himself, “I took care that none should hear of [her]—or of her under [her] name” (C. Brontë 248). Rochester is trying to replace his first, demonic wife with an appropriate angel of the house; but it is ironic that the location of this demon is in his house already. She inhabits the domestic sphere, yet she does not represent it; she is confined into domesticity, but she does not transform because of it. Rochester explains that he decided to “shelter her degradation with secrecy,” and he hired Grace Poole who worked at an asylum to be her guardian and caregiver (263).

Throughout the novel he and the other servants, such as Mrs. Fairfax the housekeeper, had blamed mysterious goings-on and the strange laugh Jane kept hearing to Grace Poole, when it was all Bertha. Rochester despised Bertha so much that he completely wiped her identity, renaming this identity Grace, and kept her completely hidden to clear his mistake of marrying her.

While Bertha's description in the novel fits her distinctly on the side of monstrous demon, Victorian critics Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar explain that Jane "has repressed her own share of madness and rage, that there is a potential monster beneath her angelic exterior," lying somewhere between angel and demon (345). Jane starts to diverge from the path of the angel, and complicates her angelic qualities. Gilbert and Gubar explain the possibility of the monster residing "within… the angel" (29). Rather than completely loving Rochester and being happy marrying him, she starts to purposefully withdraw from him and say things to annoy him. Because Jane grows up an orphan and her only friend at school dies shortly after they meet, Jane grows up without a lot of love in her life, which makes her relationship hard to navigate. She starts to associate being alone with being who she is, and it becomes hard for her to become accustomed to Rochester's love for her. Jane describes how it "seem[s] natural; it seem[s] genial to be so well-loved, so caressed by him," yet she states after seeing the name "Jane Rochester" on her luggage tags that this woman "[does] not exist," and is a different person than who she is as Jane Eyre (220). She almost dreads getting married, and is scared of the unknowns of marriage in both how it will change Jane's identity, and in its sexuality, because it was traditional for women not to know anything about sex until their

wedding night. Almost immediately after they get engaged, Jane explains that she wants "to go on as usual for another month" until their wedding, only spending time together in the evening after he calls for her like he did before they were engaged (230). She becomes very particular, and quickly Rochester's pet names for her turn from "'love' and 'darling'" to "'provoking puppet,' 'malicious elf,' 'sprite,' changeling,' &c" (234). Instead of calling Jane names that invoke romance and femininity, he turns to words that describe a sort of pagan and fickle nature. It is almost as if Jane is losing her angelic quality as she diverts from submitting to what Rochester wants her to do. Rather than coming when he calls for her and being pleasant, calling him "sir" and "master," Jane tries to annoy Rochester, at one point crying openly because "if the flood annoy[s] him, so much the better" (258). It is almost as if she wishes they would not get married, and doesn't want to be with him.

Jane loses more of her femininity by diverging from the traditionally feminine interest in clothing and fashion. She doesn't care to look the part of a wealthy woman as the women in Mr. Rochester's social circle do. As an adult, Jane describes herself as "too close and plain" or "so plain" on more than one occasion (C. Brontë 110, 354). When she draws a self-portrait, she entitles it, "Portrait of a Governess, disconnected, poor, and plain" (137). Adéle tells Jane that Rochester described her as "rather thin and a little pale" (101). He also compares her to a nun, "quaint, quiet, grave, and simple" (112). It is clear that Jane is rather average looking, in a time when people's personalities and character were very much surmised from the way they looked. The novel constantly references physiognomy, which, according to the Oxford English Dictionary, is "the study of the features of the

face, or of the form of the body generally, as being supposedly indicative of character." Since Jane not only thinks, but is also constantly told how plain and quiet she is, her self-esteem dwindles. When Mr. Rochester invites a large group of his social circle to stay at Thornfield, he gives extra attention to the twenty-five year old Blanche Ingram, which starts to make Jane jealous. She scolds herself, saying "*You*… a favorite with Mr. Rochester?.... *You* of importance to him in any way? Go! Your folly sickens me" (136). She calls herself a "poor, stupid dupe" because she should "be ashamed" to think herself greater and more suited for Mr. Rochester (136). To try and cure herself of this pride, she compares her self-portrait to a drawing of Blanche Ingram, painted with her "freshest, finest, clearest tints" on a piece of "smooth ivory," and tells herself to "take out these two pictures and compare them" any time she starts to think Mr. Rochester fancies her (137).

Jane's small and bland wardrobe is quite limited when compared to Mr. Rochester's rich friends that stay at Thornfield, whose clothing consists of "fluttering veils and waving plumes" (141). On one particular night when Jane brings Adéle to first meet the ladies, she describes how tall many of the women are, many of whom are "dressed in white" (146). Blanche Ingram, she notes, has a "noble bust… a graceful neck, dark eyes and black ringlets " (147). However, the longer Jane is at Thornfield, the more clothing she starts to acquire. After she agrees to be Mr. Rochester's wife, she finds her face "no longer plain," and puts on a "clean and light summer dress" rather than a dark and "Quakerish" outfit like she normally would don (219). Mr. Rochester wants to spoil his new wife with jewels and fine clothing, and tries to buy her rich silks and satins with which to make clothes. But Jane

explains that “the more he [buys] me, the more my cheek burn[s] with a sense of annoyance and degradation” (229). The fancy clothes and use of money on such trivial fashions not only disinterests Jane, but it annoys her. She says incredulously, “jewels for Jane Eyre sounds unnatural and strange: I would prefer not to have them” (220). Jane does not want to be dressed up and spoiled because, as she says, it makes her feel not like herself. She prefers to be his “plain, Quakerish governess,” rather than his “beauty” (220). No matter how much Rochester pushes her to wear the new clothes he buys for her, she insists that if she dresses “in satin and lace,” with “roses in her hair,” she says “then you won’t know me, sir; and I shall not be your Jane Eyre any longer, but an ape in a harlequin’s jacket” (221). This description of roses and satin and lace reference the outfit of a prostitute, and it seems that Jane associates the adornment of the body with the selling of one. Jane’s plainness is so much a part of her that if she dresses grandly and, thus, changes her clothing to look fashionable, she cannot be Jane Eyre any longer. In this way, Jane disrupts the Victorian desire and expectation to be a traditional, upper-class wife.

Jane continues to break down traditional Victorian femininity by speaking out against strict gender roles and standing up for herself. Gilbert and Gubar call this “rebellious feminism,” or an “anti-Christian refusal to accept the forms, customs, and standards of society” (338). The feminist critics describe how she “[represses] her own share of madness and rage” for so long, that her angelic exterior starts to crack, showing the demon underneath (345). It comes out slowly, so the people in her life only catch glimpses of it. As a child, Jane loses her temper in front of Aunt Reed, which leads her to call Jane a “fiend,” meaning an evil spirit. As an adult, occasionally

Mr. Rochester teases Jane, calling her "wicked" and saying after they have been reunited, "the wickedness has not been taken out of you, wherever you have sojourned" (C. Brontë 373). These names for Jane invoke a loss of spirituality, as if Jane's divergence from traditional femininity makes her un-Christian. Victorian critic Nina Auerbach points out, "she is called a witch at least as often as she is called and angel" ("Romantic" 70). Rochester starts to change his pet names and adjectives for her from terms like "blooming" and "little wife" to "witch," "fairy," and describes her after coming in from the rain to be "dripping like a mermaid" (237). Nina Auerbach defines the mermaid as "a Christian female demon," a "hybrid form becoming the standard type of female demon," who hides underwater "not to negate [her] power, but to conceal it," ("Woman" 93, 7). Even Rochester himself can see the demon inside of Jane.

Invoking a divergence from Victorian feminine expectations, Jane starts to declare many speeches of "fiery words," as Gilbert and Gubar call her impassioned declarations of independence, where Jane stands up for herself in a very un-Victorian way (343). The first time we see this fire in Jane is when she is ten years old living at the Reed house, after Mrs. Reed has told lies about Jane's disobedience and deceitful behavior. Young Jane recognizes "a passion of resentment" forming in her, so great that "*Speak* [she] must," telling Aunt Reed, "I am not deceitful: if I were, I should say I loved *you*;… I dislike you the worst of anybody in the world" (C. Brontë 30). She goes on to explain her dislike of her cousins, and that "the very thought of [Aunt Reed] makes [her] sick, and that [Aunt Reed] treated [Jane] with miserable cruelty," so much so that Jane says she will never visit her aunt when she is grown

(30). She vows she will always remember how Aunt Reed locked her in the red room, and will always be honest when speaking about her aunt that she is a "bad, hard-hearted… deceitful" woman (30). Her aunt is stunned, and tries to offer Jane water or a rest after her trembling, impassioned speech, but years later when Jane does indeed visit her ailing aunt at her aunt's request, Mrs. Reed declares that Jane's speech made her think Jane was mad, "like a fiend," and she has never forgotten the way Jane spoke to her (197). The color red can be symbolic in the red room for demonic fire, possibly figurative for Aunt Reed's use of the word "fiend" as how Jane's incarceration in the red room brought evil to Jane's spirit.

As Jane grows up, her fiery anger at mistreatment morphs into a more pessimistic view of gender roles and habitually self-reliant attitude. On the night that Rochester proposes to Jane, the two are sitting on a bench in the Thornfield gardens together, and Rochester takes hold of Jane and tries to profess his love for her. However, she believes him to be engaged to Blanche Ingram and tries to break free from his grasp. He compares her struggling to "a wild, frantic bird," small and helpless, and she responds by saying, "I am no bird; and no net ensnares me" (216). Jane stands up for herself and her feelings when she believes Rochester is already engaged. However, she acknowledges that her manner of speaking is unusual, and she prefaces her declarations by saying, "I am not talking to you now through the medium of custom, conventionalities, nor even of mortal flesh- it is my spirit that addresses your spirit" (216). Here, she defines her soul as a divine entity that is entreating Rochester's, and so she does not have to speak with normal conventionalities of the day. Instead, she is honest, and cries, "Do you think, because

I am poor, obscure, plain, and little, I am soulless and heartless? You think wrong!- I have as much soul as you,- and full as much heart!" (216). She is indignant that Rochester would beg Jane to stay at Thornfield and that he would kiss her when, as she believes, he is engaged to another woman; she claims that neither her physical appearance nor her class status change her soul or her heart. She states, "I am a free human being with an independent will; which I now exert to leave you" (216). Finally, Rochester explains that he is not engaged, but he loves Jane "as [his] own flesh," and that she is his "equal," in his "likeness," and after she makes him swear that he "truly" loves her and he "sincerely wish[es]" her to be his wife, Jane accepts his proposal to marry him (217).

Jane's fiery passion and fierce independence are so striking because they are entirely un-Victorian; in these fits Jane is not being kind or careful of what she says; she is being honest about how she feels and what is best for her. She continues to make choices not as an angel of the house would— that is, for her husband or children—but for herself. After her marriage is called off, she hears a voice in her mind telling her to "leave Thornfield at once"; and, even though it is hard to rip herself away from the only home she's ever known, she finds that she "must leave him decidedly" (254). She tells herself, "none shall help you: you shall, yourself" leave on her own accord (254). She realizes that no one can aid her now, and she must do it all herself. Jane has a similar moment when saying her goodbyes to Rochester, telling him she must leave because she cannot stay and be his mistress while he has a legal, living wife under the same roof. She has another conversation with herself; one side of her tells her to stay to keep Rochester from his misery of

Jane leaving him, and because Jane has nowhere to go, no one who cares for her. To this she replies in a very un-Victorian way, "*I* care for myself. The more solitary, the more friendless, the more unsustained I am, the more I will respect myself" (270). She puts herself first when, as a Victorian Christian, she is supposed to care for others above herself. She understands that she must hold onto "the principles received by me when [she was] sane, and not mad," as she is "quite insane" in this instance, and must remember the "laws and principles… given by God and sanctioned by man" (270). This entire time Jane keeps a very cool head; and, although she enters into fits of sobbing and crying, she ultimately makes the morally right decision to not stay with a married man and, in this way, chooses herself over the love of a man and the promise of a marriage.

Jane has shown that she is un-Victorian the more she favors her own well-being and desires above following the traditional Victorian female figure. She continues to find self- fulfillment through nature and the physical world, further separating herself from the angel archetype. She finds safety and relief in the natural world. When Jane, still working as Rochester's governess, returns to Thornfield after a visit to her dying Aunt Reed, she desires the driver to drop her off in town so she can walk the remaining miles to Thornfield. She walks the old road to Thornfield: a road which lay chiefly through fields" (C. Brontë 207). Jane explains that she feels glad walking to Thornfield, and contemplates why, as it is "not to [her] home [she is] going, or to a permanent resting-place, or to a place where fond friends looked out for [her] and waiter [her] arrival" (207). Yet Jane's notions of home have been changed because of her time at Thornfield and because she is "thinking of another"

person, of Mr. Rochester, and she desires to see him when she gets "home" (207). She desires to get to Thornfield "to have the privilege of again looking on Mr. Rochester," and during this musing she also comments on the nature around her: the haymakers in the meadows, the "fair and soft" June evening, the hedges full of roses of which she has "no time to gather any" because, as she states, "I want to be at the house" (208). She chooses Mr. Rochester over the nature surrounding her and hurries "home," telling him later, "wherever you are is my home- my only home" (209).

Jane is more a woman of nature than of the domestic or Christian space. She compares her love for Mr. Rochester to natural elements throughout the novel. She constantly talks of his looks drawing her gaze to him and his presence, saying that "he make[s] me love him without looking at me" (149). Jane later attributes his presence to the sun, hoping that he would keep Jane, Adéle, and Mrs. Fairfax "together somewhere under the shelter of his protection, and not quite exiled from the sunshine of his presence" (210). She also believes that "nature must be gladsome when [I am] so happy" being engaged to Mr. Rochester. Just as nature reflects when she is happy and in love, the physical world surrounding Jane reflects torment and anguish when she is away from Rochester. After Rochester calls off the wedding when the truth of his existing wife comes out, Jane sneaks off to her room in Thornfield, where she sits in solitude. She looks "on her cherished wishes, yesterday so blooming and glowing" that now lay as "stark, chill, livid corpses" (252). The Jane Eyre, she comments, that had almost been a bride is now a "cold, solitary girl again," and Jane attributes the feeling of loss to "a Christmas frost [that]

had come at midsummer; a white December storm [that] had whirled over June," and "drifts [that] crushed the blowing roses" (252). She feels all of this loss inside her as a "hay-field and corn-filed" in a "frozen shroud," on "lanes which last night blushed full of flowers" but "today were pathless with untrodden snow" (252). Jane decides that she has to leave, and she spends two nights "in the open air," sleeping on the ground (296). The second night it starts to rain, and the ground is too damp for Jane to sleep on, and it is too cold. She remembers that "the night-wind swept over the hill and over me, and died moaning in the distance; the rain fell fast, wetting me afresh to the skin" (282). This whole time Jane is longing to be with Rochester, and it is almost as if nature is pushing her towards him while also warning her to turn back.

Jane obviously enjoys being in nature, and in a sense it guides her throughout her journey. Jane starts to turn to it in times of uncertainty as a constant, and it creates for her a freeing experience. When she shows her portfolio of paintings to Mr. Rochester, we see that they are all of nature scenes. She has painted watercolor renderings clouds over a sea featuring a bird atop a sunken ship, a hill at twilight with stars in the shape of a woman, and the northern lights illuminating an iceberg held up by a "colossal head" and hands (107). It is clear that Jane has a vast imagination, and dreams of scenes in nature that she has never witnessed, places she has never visited. In recalling painting as a child, she remembers "sketching fancy vignettes, representing any scene that happened momentarily to shape itself in the ever-shifting kaleidoscope of imagination" (198). She uses nature in her

imagination as an escape as a child from her tormenting cousins and frightening aunt, and, as an adult, from her mundane daily life.

As an adult, Jane retreats to nature for a sense of equilibrium. The night before her supposed wedding, she explains that she feels "feverish" with the "anticipation of a great change" and this "new life" she will receive (235). In an attempt to flee from this anxiety, she seeks the orchard, "driven to its shelter by the wind" that "seem[s] to augment its rush and deepen its roar" (235). She recalls, "it was not without a certain wild pleasure I ran before the wind delivering my trouble of mind to the measureless air-torrent thundering through space" (235). She compares her relationship with Rochester to the remaining halves of the split chestnut tree. Even though the two pieces will never grow leaves again, never see birds making nests in its boughs, she tells it "you are not desolate: each of you has a comrade to sympathize with him in his decay" (236). Jane uses the split tree to teach herself that although, preparing for marriage, she may feel like she is dead, she has another person to share her lifeless life with and is not alone. She will have her husband, if no one and nothing else.

The definition of the angel given by Coventry Patmore is too limiting, as is the Bible's explanation given in Proverbs 31. Jane was a modern wife; she didn't have to be perfect all the time, because she wasn't; she was human. She could not constantly provide for others above herself, because sometimes, she needed to make decisions regarding her own health and safety above caring for other people's needs. Jane can't be the idyllic angel on earth, and instead has this demon in her that has corrupted everyone since the fall of Adam and Eve. The character of Jane is one that

women in the Victorian Period, but also women in any age, can identify with; they have specific expectation put upon them, but they are not possible to fulfill. No matter the clothing Jane wears or the amount of money she has, or the kind of wife that she is, she can never be an angel. But throughout the novel, we see her trying to be as "good" as she can—as faithful, and selfless, and caring as possible. And that's all anyone can really do.

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