

**“We women, if we are to be good
women..., are not fitted to reign”:
Female Literary Archetypes
Represented Through Victorian Fashion**

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Introduction: From Madwomen to New Women

During the years of Queen Victoria's reign from 1837 to 1901, fashion changed almost constantly. Each decade brought new popular styles of clothing as well as undergarments, especially for women, and with the changing costume came different ideal body types. As fashion historian Allison Lurie points out, female fashion grew throughout the period as Queen Victoria, who ascended the throne at age eighteen, grew. The constantly changing social pressures on Victorian women to not only wear certain clothes, but for their bodies to look a certain way, bled into regulations on the way women ought to act and behave.

For example, the “perfect lady” was synonymous with the “perfect wife,” as every woman was expected to marry and bear children. Women’s Studies professor and historian Martha Vicinus explains that “the perfect wife was an active participant in the family, fulfilling a number of vital tasks, the first of which was childbearing” (ix). As shown through the study of Catherine Earnshaw from Emily Brontë’s *Wuthering Heights* in Chapter One of this paper, these pressures stripped women of the freedom to make their own choices in life by placing them in a sort of domestic confinement, resulting in the crumbling of one’s self identity. Many heroines of Victorian literature, as mentioned in this project, when coming to terms with their lack of control and agency, turn to the one thing they can control—their mind—and, thus, turn to hysterics in order to gain some sense of power over their body and sense of self.

Chapter Two, then, looks at the comparison between one of these “madwomen” archetypes who turns to hysteria as a coping mechanism, and the

ideal woman of the Victorian period, the “angel of the house,” in Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre*. This “angel” is represented through not only her gentle demeanor, white British race, and “pure” Christian morals, but also through her innocent and plain clothing. The “doubling” of two female characters—in this chapter, of the demonic Bertha and the angelic Jane—is a feature present in every novel looked at in this project, to show the cultural female ideal as well as how “the woman who broke the family circle, be she prostitute, adulterer or divorcée, threatened society’s very fabric” (Vicinus xiv).

Women, not only as adults, but also as children, as looked at in Chapter Three of this paper, were brought up to be Victorian wives- and mothers-in-training, raised “to be perfectly innocent and sexually ignorant” until their wedding day (Vicinus ix). Additionally told through the story of Alice in Lewis Carroll’s *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* focused on in Chapter Three is that “all [a girl’s] education was to bring out her ‘natural’ submission to authority and innate maternal instincts” (Vicinus x). Even young girls were to wear corsets and crinoline—again, depending on the year, as clothing styles changed frequently—to always look their best, because “an ill-dressed person [was believed to be] probably dishonest, stupid, and without talent” (Lurie 118).

Other factors that went into a British woman’s identity and marriageability were her religion and her class, two qualities focused on in George Eliot’s *Daniel Deronda*. A Victorian woman, in order to be angelic, needed to be religious and to uphold Christian piety as a standard in her home. The upper-class “wife,” as the homemaker in her domestic sphere, was herself an archetype, not only charged with

creating a safe and loving domestic environment, but also with displaying her wealth. As shown through the life of Gwendolen Harleth on the marriage market in Chapter Four, definitions of women and what made a woman “marriageable” changed in the upper class, especially when it came to fashion.

Finally, this project looks at Mina and Lucy in Bram Stoker's *Dracula* in Chapter Five as an explanation of not only the Madonna/Whore archetypal dichotomy, but of the “fallen woman,” who, tempted and stumbling, turns away from the Victorian female ideal in order to pursue some sexual or moral vice. And as Victorian historian Nina Auerbach explains, “the fallen woman must writhe in tortured postures of remorse until she dies penitent at the end of her story,” as death was the only redemption for the “fallen woman” (“Romantic” 151).

As Auerbach also points out, through Victorian culture and literature, “womanhood was an idea made flesh, influencing the shapes of actual lives” (“Woman” 62). The Victorian period is an important era to study because, today, we ourselves are “Modern Victorians.” Many cultural changes happened during this second half of the nineteenth century—spanning race, gender, and religion—so that by the turn of the century, almost every aspect of British life had changed. The “New Woman” of this period brought about changes in social spheres, class separations, and, especially, in clothing. And today, “contemporary artists remake Victorian texts, histories, and cultures in an attempt to better understand both the Victorians and ourselves” (Wilson 119). We use the Victorian period to place ourselves in the present age of “history,” remaking Victorian novels such as *Sherlock Holmes* and *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* into films and television shows as more people

become interested in the morality and culture of life in Victorian England. And in my opinion, the piece of Victorian culture that is most representative of the ideals and values of the Era—that still makes sense to those who study the Victorian period today—is clothing.

"I wish I were a girl again... laughing at injuries, not maddening under them!":

Reading Catherine Earnshaw as the Archetypal Hysterical Woman

The Oxford English Dictionary defines "hysteria" as "a functional disturbance of the nervous system...usually attended with emotional disturbances." The editors of the *OED* also note that "women [are] much more liable than men to this disorder," and they connect this gender discrepancy to the "original" idea that a diagnosis of hysteria was supposedly "due to a disturbance of the uterus and its functions." The Latin etymology, as pointed out by nineteenth-century historian Rachel Maines, translates "hysteria" as "womb disease" (1). And, in fact, in 1883, the French physician Auguste Fabre wrote that "all women are hysterical[,] and...every woman carries with her the seeds of hysteria" (Showalter 287). Thus, it's not surprising that, throughout the Victorian Age, hysteria was associated with femininity.

Furthermore, feminist critic Elaine Showalter, in her article "Hysteria, Feminism, and Gender," explains that, in the nineteenth century, hysteria was linked with femininity because "women have been seen as disadvantaged in mastering Oedipal tasks and thus [are] disposed to hysterical behaviors" (287). By "Oedipal," Showalter is referencing the Freudian idea that a child feels attracted to his or her opposite-sex parent, such as Oedipus unknowingly marrying his mother in *Oedipus Rex*. Showalter argues that, in Victorian England, "hysteria [was] caused by women's oppressive social roles rather than by their bodies or psyches" (287). In other words, women could be dubbed "hysterical" because the mental disorder was assumed to be connected to their reproductive systems; therefore, men couldn't be

hysterical. For those living in nineteenth-century England, this gendered conclusion served to associate women with the hyperbolic and out-of-control emotions that supposedly created illnesses such as hysteria. Yet it was simultaneously assumed that an overly emotional woman couldn't help her hysteria, and also that she could, through indulging her feelings, actually cause her hysteria.

In the case of Catherine Earnshaw in Emily Brontë's 1847 novel *Wuthering Heights*, she is depicted as a character who causes her own hysteria after she is torn between the socially acceptable life she is offered as the wife of the wealthy and handsome neighbor Edgar Linton and the life she wishes she could have with a brutish and yet compelling childhood friend named Heathcliff. Growing up at her family's ancestral home, also called Wuthering Heights, Catherine admits to loving her adopted brother Heathcliff; but, because he is an unmannered "gypsy" with no money to his name, she also knows that it would not be wise for her to marry him; they could be destitute, and bearing mixed-race children would disadvantage them at a time when racial purity was valued. Thus, Catherine accepts Edgar Linton's proposal to be his wife because it is the "proper" thing to do to get married to a middle-class man of English heritage and to have "proper" children with him who will help to create a perfect domestic space as well as an idealized nationstate. However, the oppressiveness of Edgar's rigid Victorian expectations of Catherine as a wife and mother overwhelm her, and so she tries to look to Heathcliff as a sort of escape from these pressures to conform to her society's gender ideal. But rather than choosing between the two men, Catherine hopes to keep both of them by willing herself to become a hysteric.

Catherine's choice to make herself sick in the face of what she sees as an impossible choice turns her into a madwoman archetype—an archetype that was prevalent in Victorian literature, such as Bertha Mason in Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre*. This archetype has close affinities with hysteria and hysterics. Susan Gorsky, in her article "'I'll Cry Myself Sick': Illness in *Wuthering Heights*," explains that "many doctors," who would have been exclusively male at the time, "linked women's illnesses to their reproductive processes" (175). Women were believed to be "more vulnerable to physical and nervous (emotional) illness" such as fevers and tremors and the like, and Victorians went so far as to think that girls in "robust health" were unfeminine (Gorsky 175). Society idealized feminine delicacy, and women often fell ill to disorders such as anorexia nervosa or fainting in order to be perceived as fragile and thus beautiful. Madness was alluring. As writer and critic Alison Lurie says in her book *The Language of Clothes*, "For many Romantics actual illness was sexually exciting" (256). Such illness brought brightness to the eyes and a flush to the cheeks, which mimicked sexual arousal. Lurie also states that, in the nineteenth century, "physical slightness and fragility were admired, and what was now called 'rude health,'" or good health, "was considered coarse and lower class" (216). Many Victorian women wanted to look small and frail in order to make clear that they could only be "truly safe and happy under the protection of some man" (Lurie 215). In fact, the Victorians idealized female delicacy and fragility to the point of glamorizing and normalizing illness and affliction as a beauty standard. Allison Lurie explains, "in an emergency, the proper thing to do was faint, relying on the protection of the nearest gentleman" (218-219).

Due to the importance of beauty culture relative to the possibilities of marriage, numerous Victorian women made themselves sick, both physically and mentally. And yet, if a doctor believed that a woman was suffering from debility of the mind, it was common to “shut her up” in the hopes of fixing her (Bachman). In the case of Catherine Earnshaw Linton, she is responsible for her confinement as a result of both her desire to be wanted by both Heathcliff and Edgar and to stray from the expected social norm of marrying a wealthy white man and becoming a devoted wife and mother. Catherine shuts herself up, yet she is also shut up by Edgar. And being shut up as well as socially separated and confined because of her wild temperament makes her hysterical.

Across the whole of Brontë’s novel, Catherine is always stuck between two worlds: the path she is expected to follow of dainty, polite womanhood and her wild, headstrong nature in which she lets erotic desire and anger guide her. In one of these lives, she can choose Edgar, along with money, fine clothes, and a high social standing. The other life that would come with her “soulmate” Heathcliff, though, is one of passion and an alteration from the socially acceptable path she is made to feel she should follow in terms of being an ideal wife and mother within the domestic sphere. Heathcliff is dangerous for her because he is not the traditional Victorian man; he is described in his childhood “as dark almost as if it came from the devil,” and also as a “gypsy” (E. Brontë 36, 37). As an adult, though, and after choosing Edgar as her husband, Catherine still longs for a life with Heathcliff out of her fond memories growing up with him at Wuthering Heights, which makes her feel confined and trapped in the genteel domestic space she has chosen with Edgar,

living in Thrushcross Grange. So although Catherine attempts to follow the “right path”—meaning the path of traditional femininity—by donning the clothing of a rich wife and acting that part, ultimately her inner wildness comes out, and Catherine makes herself hysterical.

As an example of the kind of clothing befitting of a “wild woman,” we turn to the photographs of Hugh Diamond, one of the first British photographers and the Superintendent of the Female Department at the Surrey County Asylum. Diamond became famous for his photographs of some of his female patients, and believed that he could diagnose a woman’s illness based on her face or appearance, which was part of a pseudo-science called “physiognomy.” In his photographs, he features women in an asylum that often have confused or even depressed facial expressions; however, some pictures show women who look like any Victorian woman you’d see walking down the street. The difference between a “mad” and a “sane” woman seems to be represented mainly in what these women wear. For example, one female patient Diamond photographed is wearing a dark-colored and patterned dress with the waistline at the natural waist and a higher collar, the typical fashion for the time period of the 1850’s. She has her hair pulled back in a bonnet and is sitting with her hands folded in her lap. A different picture shows a woman in a very loose bodiced, light-colored dress that looks disheveled and dirty. It has a loose collar that exposes her neck, and she is wearing a big shawl around her shoulders. She looks forlornly as well as begrudgingly at the camera, and her hair is





messy and hangs around her face. The first woman is wearing the fashion of the day, and it looks like her picture could have been taken anywhere. But the second woman's clothing sets her apart from the average Victorian woman, and certain features, such as her shawl and disheveled hair, associate her with mental illness. Because of her clothing, she can easily

be labeled as a "madwoman," separated from society and confined, just like Catherine Earnshaw.

Before Catherine became this confined and hysterical woman, she was a child, and though born a girl rather than a boy, she loved to run around and play on the moors. In the Victorian Age, children were expected to be little versions of their parents, which was often represented in the way that they dressed like adults. Girls were defined as Victorian wives- and mothers-in-training, so it would not have been proper for a girl such as Catherine to be playing outside, engaging in what were seen as masculine activities. Her father often scolds her for this behavior, saying "Nay Cathy..., I cannot love thee, thou'rt worse than thy brother. Go, say thy prayers.... I doubt thy mother and I must rue that we ever reared thee!" (E. Brontë 43). In addition, he asks, "Why cannot you always be a good lass, Cathy?" (43). The housekeeper at the Heights and also Catherine's nurse, Nelly Dean, further remarks that Catherine "ha[s] ways with her such as [she] never saw a child take up before," testing the Earnshaws' patience so that they "ha[ve] not a minute's security that she wouldn't be in mischief" (42). However, Catherine also has goodness in her, "always

singing" with "the sweetest smile" (42). When Catherine starts to grow up and change her appearance to look more traditionally feminine and higher class by wearing fashionable clothes, she becomes "the queen of the country-side," but despite the feminine expectations that her clothing represents, her wild and more masculine emotions such as anger and lust often best her and reveal her as a "haughty, headstrong creature" (E. Brontë 66).

Catherine, as a child, is both feminine and masculine, "good" while at the same time "headstrong." There are multiple places in Brontë's novel where this internal war of two worlds occupies Catherine. The first notable scene takes place after she and Heathcliff, as children, travel the two miles from their home at Wuthering Heights to another household, Thrushcross Grange, to spy on the neighboring Linton children. Catherine and Heathcliff get caught spying, and Catherine is seized by one of the Lintons' dogs and has to stay at the Grange for her chewed ankle to heal. At this point she is twelve years old, and after five weeks of convalescence, she returns to the Heights. It is during these same five weeks that much changes back at home: Mr. Earnshaw dies, and Catherine's older brother Hindley and his wife take over as owners of the property. Moreover, Heathcliff hardens against Catherine and her sudden interest in the Lintons, especially Edgar.

When Catherine arrives home from her five weeks at the Grange, Hindley, helping her down from her horse, remarks that she is "quite a beauty" and she "look[s] like a lady now" (E. Brontë 53). Hindley's new wife Frances is worried about upsetting Catherine's curls, saying, "let me untie your hat," while Nelly helps Catherine inside. Here, it's made clear that Catherine is wearing a "grand plaid silk

frock" or outer dress, "white trousers," and polished shoes (53). She is very careful not to get herself dirty, staying away from the dogs that run over to her "lest they should fawn upon her splendid garments," and not giving Nelly a hug since she is covered in flour from baking (53). When she reunites with Heathcliff, Catherine also fears soiling her dress, grabbing his dirty hands and laughing at his filthy appearance before gazing "concernedly at the dusky fingers she held in her own, and also at her dress, which she feared had gained no embellishment from its contact with his" (55). Before Catherine was exposed to proper Victorian behaviors and etiquette for women at the Grange, she and Heathcliff loved to "run away to the moors in the morning and remain there all day," playing outside and getting dirty (E. Brontë 46). However, now that she has spent her days reading and sewing and conversing with the Lintons, and is on her way to being a proper Victorian lady, the idea of dirtying not only her dress but her reputation and manners by associating closely with Heathcliff does not suit her anymore; as she herself says, it would "degrade [her] to marry Heathcliff" (81). As such, Catherine's interiority as well as her exterior clothing and actions have changed from masculine to feminine; she is now thinking of her future, of other people's opinions of her, and of how to best look and act like a lady.

After her return home, the outfits that Catherine starts to wear consist of women's clothing that would have been in fashion in the 1840's. Although the novel is supposedly set in the Romantic Period, about fifty years before the book was published, this analysis will be looking at the clothing in *Wuthering Heights* through a Victorian lens because that is the time period during which the novel was written

and the author lived. As fashion historian James Laver points out in his book *Costume and Fashion: A Concise History*, it was popular during the 1840's to live in the suburbs or countryside and not the city. The Earnshaw and Linton families own large estates in the countryside, a few miles from the city of Gimmerton. It is believed that this city and the moors on which Catherine lived are based on towns in West Yorkshire, England, and the Pennine Hills where the Brontë sisters grew up and wrote their novels. It is also believed that the ruined farmhouse named Top Withens in West Yorkshire is Bronte's inspiration for Wuthering Heights. To get a glimpse of the types of clothing the women living in these countrysides would wear at this time, The Gandiva Company, a modern German company that works to research and recreate historical clothes, points out on their website that "checkered patterns in all kinds of variations began to come into fashion in the 1850s." This explains Catherine's "plaid silk frock" she shows up in when she returns to the Heights after her stay at the Grange, and that sets the standard for the types of costumes she wears for the rest of the novel, continuing with the style influenced by the wealthy Lintons. At this stage of her life, Catherine's clothing and her sudden interest in her appearance is an example of the prim and proper "Victorian side" of Catherine that is alluded to from the start but doesn't always win over her more masculine, wild side.

In the years leading up to becoming Mrs. Linton, the clothing Catherine starts to wear is a representation of traditional ideals of womanhood in Victorian England. James Laver explains some of the characteristics that defined the ideal Victorian woman during the 1840's, including women being helpless, such as needing help for

everything from dismounting from a horse to undressing (173). In the 1840's, the ideal woman was quiet and delicate, not doing anything except simple domestic tasks, and her idleness was reflected in restrictive clothing with many layers. Because of the low shoulder seams in women's clothing, the many layers of skirts, and the tight-laced corsets, women could not move a lot or be active, so a woman had to find tasks to do while sitting down, such as reading or sewing. A Victorian woman was also modest, covering up in skirts flowing all the way to the ground, to hide even her ankles, and also in bonnets, which covered the sides of her face. Additionally, the ideal Victorian woman was well-off, reflecting her family or her husband's money in the clothing that she wore, including multiple dresses in a single day. As Laver explains, there were three popular types of day dresses: a pelisse or peignoir, which was either a robe worn indoors in the morning or a morning dress, the "round dress" for the afternoon, and a redingote, which was more decorative and would be worn for a promenade or other special occasion. After all of that, in the evening, a woman of high birth would don, naturally, an evening dress, consisting of a heavily boned silk or velvet bodice that came to a point in the front and layers of skirts or petticoats. The bodice was ornately designed, often with horizontal pleats made of lace, frills, or ribbon, a low neckline, and was worn straight across off the shoulder, or with a dip in the middle to be a little flirtatious.

Despite having strict rules about the length of dresses and what was deemed appropriate in terms of modesty, it was custom for evening dresses to be "décolleté," or to have a low neckline, as that was seen as formal. Queen Victoria

herself upheld this rule; she “insisted that even old ladies must wear full décolleté to court, and bare shoulders” (Mansel 135). Officials were “posted at doors of the state apartments to remove any offending covers” (135). It was popular during the 1840’s to wear so much fabric that it made a woman look small, such as Queen Victoria, who was also petite and slender at the beginning of her reign. Women’s shoes were heelless and flimsy, and outdoor wear usually consisted of a fringed shawl. As such, these fashion guidelines are those that Catherine Linton would have adhered to, marrying the wealthy Edgar and becoming trapped in a world very different than that of the young Catherine living at Wuthering Heights and playing with Heathcliff.

The clothing young Catherine dons to try and become the expected domestic ideal restrains her both physically in the restrictive clothing of the Victorian era and also emotionally in aligning her personality with that of a delicate domestic woman; as a result of this dual confinement, Catherine’s hysteria starts to take hold. The tug-of-war between proper Victorian womanhood and her more masculine, emotional wildness is constantly fighting inside of her, and although she has “no temptation to show her rough side” in the Lintons’ company because she wants to hide her emotions from Edgar in order to look attractive and fragile, she starts to let this wild hysteria out (E. Brontë 67). In private, at the Heights, Catherine can be angry and lustful and loud and playful, even when she is no longer a child. But in front of the polite and domesticized Edgar, her masculine emotions and behaviors are seen as “wrong,” and are labeled as “hysterical” because she is a woman, and Victorian women could not have male emotions.

For instance, teenage Catherine keeps up a correspondence with Edgar Linton as they are courting, and on one particular day when she is expecting his visit to the Heights, she has a “silk frock on” and has curled her hair (69). Heathcliff pokes fun at her appearance, while expressing his annoyance at Edgar’s expected arrival, and Catherine gets very irritated with Heathcliff, letting her wicked side show by calling him “dumb” and “a baby” for never talking about or doing anything interesting. Even after Edgar arrives, she “fail[s] to recover her equanimity since the little dispute with Heathcliff...[.]whisper[ing] crossly” at Nelly for staying in the room and cleaning “when company are in the house” (71). In fact, Catherine pinches Nelly, trying to hide this act from Edgar, but Nelly scolds her loudly with Catherine’s “fingers tingling to repeat the act, and her ears red with rage” (71). Catherine, “irresistibly impelled by the naughty spirit within her, slap[s] [Nelly] on the cheek a stinging blow” as Edgar exclaims, “Catherine, love!” (71). Even though Catherine tries to restrain her temper and hide her masculine anger from Edgar, he tries to leave the Heights after this encounter. However, Catherine threatens to make herself ill, saying, “I should be miserable, all night, and I won’t be miserable for you!” She even continues, “Well, go, if you please—get away! And now I’ll cry—I’ll cry myself sick!” (72). This moment is interesting because Catherine threatens to be sick if she does not get her way, and in this moment, her untamed and masculinized emotions are transformed into the expressions of a hysteric.

The second time in the novel that Catherine threatens to make herself sick to try and get her way is years later after she and Edgar are married and after Catherine learns of Heathcliff’s romantic relationship with Edgar’s sister, Isabella

Linton. Heathcliff and Catherine get into quite an argument, with Heathcliff calling Catherine jealous, and Catherine blaming Heathcliff for courting Isabella just to destroy her and Edgar's tranquility. Nelly remarks that "the spirit which served [Catherine] was growing intractable; she could neither lay nor control it" (E. Brontë 113). After hearing the dispute, Edgar blames Catherine for it all, saying, "it is disgraceful that she should own [Heathcliff] for a friend.... Catherine shall linger no longer to argue with the low ruffian—I have humoured her enough" (113). Edgar's use of this language, claiming he has "humored" Catherine's friendship with Heathcliff before condemning it, shows that Edgar is ultimately in charge of her, and he infantilizes her by controlling her life as well as the people with whom she socializes. In this way Edgar constricts Catherine, similar to the middle-class, Victorian clothing that she is now wearing. Edgar also outright condemns Heathcliff and shows his distaste for him, calling him a "low ruffian" and wanting to keep Catherine away from him. Seeing her husband and her best friend and soulmate fight upsets Catherine to the point where she feels she has to intervene.

Thus, Catherine locks the three of them in together to keep Edgar from calling on his "men" to help him fight Heathcliff, and she says that she wishes "Heathcliff may flog [Edgar] sick, for daring to think an evil thought of [her]" (115). Rather than taking Heathcliff on himself, Edgar calls for backup, showing himself to be less impulsive and more cautious than the rough and brutish men present at the Heights, where there is much yelling and fighting. But in this instance, Catherine is the one who is prone to violence and anger, while Edgar is more calm and

thoughtful, taking on the feminine role, while Catherine expresses masculine anger and hatred.

After this very troubling experience, Catherine whisks Nelly away to her bedroom where she “throw[s] herself on the sofa” and exclaims that she has a headache after such excitement (116). Catherine then instructs Nelly to “tell Isabella to shun” her and to say to Edgar that she is “in danger of being seriously ill,” and she wishes it would prove true (116). She says she wants to “frighten him” because she is “in no way blameable in this matter” (116). Catherine then tries to stir up all this drama with her loved ones, wanting them to think that they are to blame. She decides that if she “cannot keep Heathcliff for [a] friend—if Edgar will be mean and jealous,” she will “try to break their hearts by breaking” her own (116). Because she can’t control either man, she manipulates her heart, one of the most precious pieces to a Victorian woman since so much of femininity was, and to an extent still is, associated with feminine emotions of the heart such as love, delicacy, and piety.

As Edgar comes into her bedroom and attempts to make Catherine choose between himself and Heathcliff, she enters into a state of hysterics, but instead of taking the side of either man, she bids Edgar to leave her alone while ringing “the bell till it broke with a twang, ...dashing her head against the arm of the sofa, and grinding her teeth” (118). In this frenzied state, Catherine is able to alter her appearance, “turn[ing] up her eyes, while her cheeks, at once blanched and livid, assumed the aspect of death” (118). Thus, she enters into a state of deliberate, calculated hysterics; she locks herself in her room and, for two days, refuses to come down for meals. The only power she feels she has over this situation is her own

health because, as a woman, she cannot control the men through other means, such as argument, money, or physical strength. Rather, she is confined to the static domestic sphere of the Grange, as well as being stuck in her role as a passive Victorian woman, and because there is no way out of this dilemma, the previously strong-willed Catherine crumbles helplessly. The emotional chaos of Catherine's mind is transfigured as an illness of her physical body, thus hysteria manifests itself as both a psychological and a physical phenomenon.

Nelly calls Catherine's hysteria a "brain fever," as well as explains that she is always in a "half dream" of "strange ideas and illusions" (E. Brontë 134, 130). The local doctor Mr. Kenneth calls Catherine's illness "an alienation of intellect" (131). These terms, while not describing what Catherine suffers from but, instead, vaguely referencing that something is wrong in her mind, are all associated with the brain. As graduate student Scott Perna says in his dissertation on the diagnosis of hysteria in the nineteenth century, "because of the nature of the diagnosis it could not be traced to a specific, definitive physiological cause," and thus it was not clear how to treat hysteria (1). Many Victorian doctors didn't think that mental illnesses were real because some of the symptoms women suffered from were ones the doctors had never heard of before, such as distressing thoughts or unexplained dizziness. In order to "help" these women, doctors often shut them up in asylums, believing that confinement from the rest of the world would "fix" them. Undergraduate student Savannah Bachman explains in her thesis "Shutting Her Up: An Exploration of the Madwoman and Madhouse in Victorian Literature" how "after 1774, the law required two certificates of lunacy to confine an individual, each signed by a

'medical man'" (7). This law paved the way for many false incarcerations, allowing husbands to lock their wives in madhouses over nothing more than domestic disputes, such as what Louisa Lowe chronicled in her book from 1880, *The Bastilles of England*, which she published after her release from an asylum. However, in Catherine's case, she is the one who shuts herself up, feeling exiled by her husband Edgar and the man she loves, Heathcliff. Rather than being treated as a child with no control over anything, as most women in the Victorian Age were, in a sense Catherine stands up for herself by controlling the only thing she can: her health. As such, she slowly starts to die in order to be loved, an obvious irony.

One way that Catherine presents her image of illness is through the clothing that she wears and the altering of her bodily appearance. As the hysteria starts to claim her and as she also claims her hysteria, Catherine changes her clothes to reflect this alteration. Lurie says that thin clothing subjected Victorian women to the cold, which brought upon illness, notably the favorite Victorian diagnosis of consumption, or tuberculosis, so women sometimes actually chose to wear thin clothing to look the part of fragility and youth, despite its dangers. Lurie explains, "to some extent, fabric always stands for the skin of the person beneath it" (232). Beyond her clothing, while Catherine is hiding in her room and wondering aloud if Edgar really loves her or would miss her if she died, her hair falls in "thick entangled locks from her wasted face," giving her an appearance of an unkempt madwoman (E. Brontë 121). Nelly is convinced that Catherine is acting "a part of her disorder," and does not have pity on Catherine's many statements of her "dying" and "on the brink of the grave" since "no one cares anything about" her (121). Nelly calls her

"deranged" and tells her that Edgar knows nothing about her state because Nelly thinks Catherine is being foolish and manipulative, trying to get her way. And, indeed, Catherine goes so far as to say, "If I were only sure it would kill him..., I'd kill myself directly!" (121).

As Catherine's health deteriorates even further, Nelly explains that Catherine has been wearing a "loose, white dress, with a light shawl over her shoulders... as usual," and that her "thick, long hair" has been "partly removed at the beginning of her illness...simply combed in its natural tresses over her temples and neck" (157-58). This image creates a sense of "unearthly beauty" as Nelly describes it, seemingly angelic, yet also the image of a ghost (158). Alison Lurie explains, "all white clothing has often suggested delicacy..., perhaps because it soils so easily, or perhaps because of its long association with infancy and early childhood" (185). White clothing aligns itself with "physical infirmity or weakness, especially when the material is fragile" (185). Since Catherine is wearing both white and loose or light materials, she perfectly proves Lurie's point that thin white fabrics are associated with physical weakness and delicate fragility, just as the fabric is fragile and pure. "Ghostly thin white nightdresses" were worn by Victorian women to create a feeling of "romance" associated with the tragedy of an early death, which is perhaps why, to emulate a ghost, even today a child will wear a thin white sheet over him- or herself as a costume (Lurie 256). Catherine, fashioned in hauntingly thin fabrics and skirts which mirror "the person beneath," takes this idea of "haunting" or becoming a ghost seriously, as seen in the rest of Brontë's novel.

Indeed, *Wuthering Heights* is perhaps known best in modern popular culture through its film adaptations and their Gothic elements of ghosts and haunting spirits, especially Catherine Earnshaw. On her sick bed, Catherine seems entranced by the Gothic, telling Nelly how she's been "tormented" and "haunted" in her room. She talks of "how dreary [it is] to meet death, surrounded by [the] cold faces" of "the people *here*," in her home, who used to love her but "have turned to enemies in a few hours" (E. Brontë 122). Catherine says she sees a face in the wall, and that "the room is haunted," and she is afraid of being alone while Nelly tries to convince her that the face she sees is her own in the mirror. From here, Catherine starts to foresee the future, describing Nelly as an old woman with "grey hair and bent shoulders" (123). She sees her "narrow home out yonder," her "resting place where [she's] bound before Spring is over" in "the open air with a head-stone" (127). She also prophesies that her "soul will be on that hill-top before" Edgar lays hands on her again, all while a "maniac's fury kindle[s] under her brows" (128, 129). This archetypal hysterical, helpless and sick, takes on the power of a fortune-teller, seeing the future—which, since Ancient Greece, has been cast as a feminine role. For example, seers and oracles that interpreted messages from the gods were almost always female, and the three Fates, who not only foresaw the future but controlled it, were women. Catherine's prophesies and talk of death serve to create this feeling of Gothic haunting and a dread of the unknown in the reader, a goal that is reached in multiple scenes throughout the book.

Such scenes include moments like these: on her sick bed, Catherine describes a strong wind blowing outside, and she notices "that wind sounding in the firs by the

lattice," longing to feel it (124). The association of the "wuthering" wind with haunting spirits occurs throughout the novel, first appearing in the opening chapters when Lockwood, one of the two narrators, first arrives at Wuthering Heights, a house owned by Heathcliff, and spends a night there. Lockwood is given Catherine's childhood bedroom to sleep in, and he tells of "the gusty wind... and the fir-bough repeat[ing] its teasing sound" outside his window that interrupts his nightmarish sleep (25). In a book published in 1886 called *Phantasms of the Living Volume 1*, the author Edmund Gurney describes this "passage from sleep to waking [that] admits of many degrees; and a very interesting group of cases remain which cannot properly be classed as dreams, and yet do not appertain to seasons of complete normal wakefulness" (389). Among Victorians, this phenomenon of a state between waking and sleeping in which dreams occur was called "the borderland." It seems that this borderland state is what the narrator Lockwood experiences during his one night at the Heights. Lockwood spends his snowy night experiencing a restless, feverish sleep with many strange dreams. During his borderland experience, Lockwood reaches outside of the window to silence a recurring tapping, but rather than grabbing a tree branch, his "fingers close on the fingers of a little, ice-cold hand!" (25). The hand clings to his while the ghost of Catherine Earnshaw Linton yells "Let me in- let me in!" (25). Alison Lurie explains that in the Victorian Age, "even after life was over sexuality continued," as shown through literature's "passionate ghosts who haunt their living lovers like Catherine [trying to reach Heathcliff] in *Wuthering Heights*" (257). Catherine, in her ghost form, has power

over Lockwood because she frightens him, yet she is also powerless to help herself: a parallel to her hysteria, which is both powerful and powerless at once.

After this talk of death and being haunted while in the throes of hysteria on her sick bed, Catherine acts manic again, increasing “her feverish bewilderment to madness, and [tearing] the pillow with her teeth,” desiring to open the window in the middle of winter (E. Brontë 122). Suddenly Catherine screams, believing herself to be “at home...lying in [her] chamber at Wuthering Heights” (124). She longs to be “in [her] own bed in the old house” rather than at the Grange (124). This moment shows that, even though she has chosen this life with Edgar, ultimately she still longs for her earlier life with Heathcliff at the Heights. This scene combines both the physically manic side of the female hysterical archetype with the side of mental illness. Catherine recounts visions of being in “the oak-panelled bed at home,” and when she realizes she is actually in her room at the Grange she “[feels] so wildly wretched” (125). In her mania, she continues to yearn for her girlhood home, saying, “I wish I were a girl again, half savage and hardy, and free.... Why am I so changed?” (125). With this question Catherine seems to suggest that she only felt truly herself as a “wild child” growing up on the moors with Heathcliff, before she had responsibilities and expectations to become a Victorian woman after marrying Edgar. As a young girl, she could be “savage,” wild and masculine, which, to her, felt “free.” Catherine says she believes she could be herself again if she could only be “on those hills,” and she jumps from her bed to throw open the window (126). Being outside, able to roam and play on the moors as a little kid, is where she feels most like herself: when she is one with nature, and not molded into a middle-class

feminine shape that is almost anti-nature, with its corsets and crinolines and strict social role.

At this point Nelly, calling Catherine “delirious,” plans to “reach something to wrap about her” so she won’t be exposed to the “frosty air,” suggesting that Nelly tries to control and contain Catherine, as Edgar does (126). Looking out the open window, though, Catherine claims she can see the Heights from the Grange, despite the Heights being too far away to be in view, and she also claims to see her “room, with the candle in it, and the trees swaying before it,” watching the old servant Joseph as he waits up for her and calling on Heathcliff to venture out to come and be with her (126). Catherine says, “I won’t rest till you are with me.... I never will!” (126). Since moving from the Heights to the Grange, obviously Catherine has changed; she has lost her masculinity and the freedom that comes with what she had as a child in the wildness of the Heights, and along the way, she has lost herself.

Catherine, both as a child and as a grown woman, doesn’t feel confined at Wuthering Heights, where she has autonomy over her own body and can run and play on the moors, disobeying her father or her brother alongside Heathcliff. Her rebellion from feminine strictures is freeing instead of prohibiting, and what is called her “hysteric” behavior once she is domesticated at the Grange is mostly allowed at the Heights. This ancient, wuthered house and the people in it are all more wild, more animalistic, more “natural,” and when Catherine “wears” this house, she does not feel confined. In the Lintons’ home, though, which feels foreign to her since she married into the family, she is stuck, imprisoned, separated from the Heathcliff she longs for. She wears the Grange like she wears the new, middle-class

clothes that are stiff, appropriate, and required. She is forced into a domestic space that she feels she does not belong in, and that confinement makes her more emotional, masculine and assertive, and “hysterical.”

And then, in the middle of Brontë’s novel and after days in her sick bed waiting for Heathcliff to rescue her and/or Edgar to care for her, Catherine dies. Importantly, she dies after giving birth to her daughter, Cathy. Catherine’s doctor, Mr. Kenneth, explains that she died from “consumption.” According to *The Victorian Web*, the Victorian diagnosis of “consumption” was another term for what was later called tuberculosis. Yet the novel includes no mention of Catherine being pregnant the entire time that she was confined to her sick bed, but because she was not in this hysterical state for very long, it can be concluded that she was pregnant this whole time. In the Victorian Age, it was not socially allowed to mention or make a show of pregnancy, perhaps explaining why there was no mention of Catherine’s being with child before her baby was born. In this way, pregnancy itself is a sort of confinement for Catherine; her physical body was stuck in this state of carrying a baby—Edgar’s heir—and she was not even free to talk about it. Livia Woods explains in her article on concealing pregnant bodies during this time period that the female body was “visible proof of sexuality” in a society “that tended to idealize women’s lives as private, contained, and spiritual rather than public” (33).

That said, it’s also true that certain religious groups and individual doctors did produce motherhood and pregnancy manuals offering advice to expectant mothers. One such doctor, John West, wrote a book in 1887 called *Maidenhood and Motherhood*. In this book, he outlines appropriate clothing to wear while pregnant,

explaining that outer clothing should “be worn quite loosely” to prevent the immorality of showing off a baby bump (West). Regarding underclothes, it was common for women to continue wearing corsets throughout their entire pregnancy, with extra gores or boning to the structure of the corset to add more room for a growing belly. Combined with the popular mid-Victorian style of a very low shoulder seam that restricted arm movement and layers of petticoats to impede bodily movements, clothing offered a confinement or a “shutting up” of its own that mirrored pregnancy. Author Elizabeth Scovil in her 1896 book *Preparation for Motherhood* describes the literal period of confinement appropriate for a Victorian mother after she had just given birth. Scovil writes, “She needs perfect quiet for several hours before she is permitted to see anyone,” and is allowed five minutes to talk to her husband before she spends another nine days in bed. It is paradoxical, then, that a woman was expected to become a maternal, domestic, and loving figure, yet she was quieted and hidden from the world during her pregnancy—the very state that would allow her to claim the ideal.

During the portion of the book where Catherine can be assumed to be pregnant, her personality starts to change, and her manic episodes and “brain fever” start to worsen—and knowing the assumed common reason for a diagnosis of “hysteria” helps to explain why. In the Victorian Age, it was believed that hysteria was caused by the uterus, and doctors such as American C. Bigelow believed that “withdrawal” from “the health benefits of male emission” through lack of intercourse with one’s husband “cause[d] pelvic congestion and thus hysteria in women” (Maines 54). The diagnosis of hysteria, then, was completely wrapped up in

women's sexual and procreative lives, and thus it's only somewhat surprising, perhaps, that a common treatment for hysteria was genital massage. If hysteria was thought to be caused by "the inflamed and disconnected uterus" that was "suffocating or choking the patient," the presence of a fetus inside the uterus must have disrupted the womb even more (Maines 8). Hysteria also had an effect on fashion; prior to the Victorian period, a popular style of sleeve during the Romantic Era was something called an "imbecile sleeve," consisting of a large ballooning of fabric stuck out with padding and hoops above the elbow. The Victorians took this sleeve and combined it with the low shoulder seam, creating, essentially, a fashionable straight jacket.

After Catherine's hysteria takes her over and she gives birth and dies, Edgar is a loving yet very protective father, never letting their daughter Cathy venture beyond a certain point out onto the moors and always making her go anywhere with Nelly, who acts as her nurse. Edgar always called his wife Catherine by her full name and thus only calls his daughter "Cathy," and so will I, to form "a distinction from the mother, and yet, a connection with her" (E. Brontë 185). Nelly compares Catherine and Cathy often, describing young Cathy at twelve years old as "a real beauty in face—with the Earnshaws' handsome dark eyes, but the Lintons' fair skin, and small features, and yellow curling hair" (189). Cathy is a combination of both the Lintons and the Earnshaws, copying her mother's gentle beauty and eyes but resembling her father's soft features and light hair that Lockwood points out after viewing Edgar's portrait at the Grange. Lockwood describes how Edgar's portrait "exceedingly resemble[s] the young lady at the Heights" (E. Brontë 67). It's almost as if Cathy is

finishing the story neither of her parents could, bringing an ending to their lives that closed so tragically and healing those wounds. Cathy replaces her mother's hysteria with a happy ending for the reader, following the path to fulfill a more accepted female archetype to the Victorian reader: the angel of the house. Nelly describes Cathy as having a sweet and playful nature, compared to her mother's headstrong stubbornness. Cathy has inherited the feminine qualities her mother possessed: her beauty, her eyes, and her vanity. Yet Cathy also receives the gentle parts of her father in his soft face, light colored hair, and his love of family. She does not carry on the wild masculinity of the Earnshaws or of the Heights.

As such, Cathy lives the life her mother never could, taking advantage of her father's wealth and her protected status by living a simple and joyful childhood at the Grange. However, she often asks to explore more of the moors, having the same curiosity and playfulness as her mother, and on her sixteenth birthday when her father is away mourning the anniversary of his wife's death, Cathy pulls Nelly so far away from the Grange that they run into Heathcliff on the moors, who brings the pair back to the Heights where Cathy meets her cousin Hareton and also sees her cousin Linton, the son of Heathcliff and Isabella.

When Cathy spills the beans of her day trip to the Heights to her father, he forbids her from ever going to the Heights again, without telling her how he blames Heathcliff for her mother's death and why this man could be dangerous to Cathy. When Nelly goes upstairs to "help her to undress," she finds Cathy crying in her room over her father's negative response to her admission of meeting her cousins, since he usually allows her everything (223). She feels particularly bad for Linton

since “he expected to see [her] again,” and so they start up a secret letter correspondence for weeks before Nelly intercepts them.

At this point, the masculine wildness and willful temper of Cathy’s mother starts to become apparent in her, as Cathy tries to justify her love for Linton until Nelly throws the letters into the fire. At this point, Cathy actually screams, “I will have one, you cruel wretch!” and grabs some fragments of paper out of the burning fire “at the expense of her fingers” (227). She is so obsessed with her love affair with Linton, and this piece of rebellion is one that connects her to the forbidden Wuthering Heights. That night she doesn’t “dine,” deciding to skip a meal in protest just like her hysterical mother, and her broken love affair leaves Cathy “frightened from her little romance...considerably sadder and duller since its abandonment” (229). Thus, even within the more angelic and “appropriate” archetype that Cathy seems to embody, there lurks the spectre—the Gothic ghost—of the hysterical.

Eventually, Cathy achieves her desire to spend time with Linton, and on a visit to him, Heathcliff locks her in Wuthering Heights and forces her to marry his son so that Heathcliff will have control of Thrushcross Grange as well as the Heights, which he has won through calling in the gambling debts of Catherine’s now-dead brother, Hindley. Heathcliff keeps Cathy and Nelly in the Heights for five days before they both escape, running to the Grange just in time for Cathy to spend a few last minutes with her father before he dies.

During this imprisonment, Cathy is defiant towards Heathcliff, grabbing at him for the keys with which he locks the house and yelling at him to let them go. She exclaims, “I’m not afraid of you!” and “I wouldn’t eat or drink here, if I were

starving!" after his offer of tea (E. Brontë 270). Heathcliff grabs her and slaps "both sides of [her] head," showing his authority and masculine power over the house (271). Cathy is forced to spend a week at the Heights, and she experiences the wild, animalistic side of her Earnshaw family that she never knew. Thus, the house has its chance to claim her and change her, like her mother, into a masculine hysterick, but in the end, Cathy belongs at the Grange with her father, surrounded by books and fine clothes and her loving family—a domestic angel, yet an educated one rather than a young woman who is merely decorative. In the wild home where her mother had felt so free and completely like herself, Cathy is trapped, horrified at the way the residents of the Heights live and act. The figure of the feminine hysterick is vanquished through the existence of Cathy.

Eventually, following two years of living at the Heights with Heathcliff as her father-in-law, Cathy is able to claim her identity as the more stable, loving, and educated angel of the house. Linton dies shortly after Cathy moves in, and a year later Heathcliff passes. Living at the Heights, Cathy falls in love and marries her Earnshaw cousin Hareton, Catherine Earnshaw's brother's child. Nelly remarks how similar they both look, both resembling Catherine. They both have Catherine's eyes, but "the present Catherine has no other likeness to her, except a breadth of forehead, and a certain arch of the nostril that makes her appear rather haughty" (E. Brontë 322). Hareton, on the other hand, at twenty-three, looks strikingly similar to Catherine, and in this way both Hareton and Cathy carry on the Linton and Earnshaw legacies, both within their names, but also written on and in their bodies. The older generation is all dead; although, there are sightings of two figures

roaming the moors—Catherine and Heathcliff, finally together in death—and they carry their wildness, hysteria, brute masculinity, and freedom from the confinement of marriage and the grave back out on the moors and into nature. Cathy and Hareton have found their place at the Heights, combining the best aspects of these two families, and can finally live a proper Victorian life. Crucially, Cathy teaches Hareton how to read so that they may enjoy literature together. Cathy and Hareton are freed of the dangers of the violent Heathcliff and the hysterical Catherine—and thus, the Victorian reader is reminded of the dangers of the hysterical archetype and the possibility to be rid of it through the angelic power of a domesticated woman.

"That is *my wife*... and *this* is what I wished to have": *Jane Eyre* and the
Angel/Demon Dichotomy

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 filled to teach children was a job that could be done by the mother of the house, and therefore was seen as 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"—she was mother and servant, family member and stranger (Peterson 10).

In her novel *Jane Eyre*, Charlotte Brontë acknowledges this divide between classes and social roles that the governess represented during the Victorian period. 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 class because she was paid a salary; and yet, the governess was also of the middle class, because she earned her own living, while also being on the same social and educational level as the family she worked for. This class confusion was a topic of national conversation during the rise of the prevalence of middle-class governesses in 1840's England, as shown in cartoons included in the popular satirical magazine *Punch*. For instance, *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," meant to mock the yearly wage of a governess, and would teach classes on "how to behave at social functions"

(Constable). The governess was a subject of mockery for her mixed social class, and *Punch's* focus on the governess' liminal social role shows what class anxieties the governess symbolized in a society where the strict class hierarchies of previous centuries were becoming more fluid.

This liminal role is what the focal character Jane fills in Charlotte Brontë's novel, *Jane Eyre*. Jane is hired to work as a governess for a wealthy bachelor, Mr. Rochester, to teach his "ward," a young French girl named Adéle, but Jane subsequently falls in love with her employer. On a visit to Thornfield, Mr. Rochester's country manor where Jane works, a member of Mr. Rochester's social circle and his assumed love interest, Blanche Ingram, pronounces her dislike of governesses, one that echoes Victorian confusion over a governess's blurry social role. Blanche says that governesses are "a nuisance," and that 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 children (152).



This aversion to governesses among the gentry is based on an economic separation between this wealthy class of people such as Blanche Ingram and the working class of women who had to work for wages; yet, these governesses also represent aspects of the gentility—having either come from respectable and good-mannered families, or working for one. Jane does not fill a specific and delimited role in Rochester's 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. Jane also becomes a close companion of Mr. Rochester's, and he often calls Jane in his company to talk to her; 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 a governess, she also fills the archetypal roles of "angel" and "demon," and she complicates them too, just as she does the role of governess. The angel/demon dichotomy is a common literary archetype across all of Victorian literature, and it's a dichotomy existing in *Jane Eyre*.

The idea of a feminized "angel" as a part of the angel/demon dichotomy stems from Victorian writer Coventry Patmore's 1854 poem "The Angel in the House," which defines an ideal middle-class wife as being maternal and caring, while also pure and selfless. The "angel," then, is a domestic angel, but is also an ideal Christian. This pious female figure that Jane tries to adhere to throughout the novel reflects what is often called "The Proverbs 31 Woman," based on a passage of the Bible in the Book of Proverbs. This passage gives an example of "a wife of noble character" who is both "virtuous and capable" (*New Living Translation*, Prov. 31:10).

This kind of wife 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 ideal woman must also “[extend] a helping hand to the poor and [open] her arms to the needy” (*New Living Translation*, Prov. 31:20). This Biblical passage goes on 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, from food to clothes to a happy home. Thus, this passage works to define what the ideal Christian wife and mother is, and, in part, Jane works throughout the novel to fulfill this role.

Jane is the narrator of her own story, 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 heroine, growing up an out-cast, tortured by her cousins and persecuted by her Aunt Reed, with whom Jane lives as a child. Jane explains to her reader 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 appointed as her only guardian. Her aunt punishes Jane when she stands up to her teasing and abusing cousins, calling Jane a disobedient liar. Jane is victimized in the Reed household, but she’s also victimized during her first years at the charity school for orphaned girls that her aunt sends her to, called Lowood.

At first glance, Jane fits Patmore’s and the Bible’s definition of “the angel”: she is feminine, spiritual, and maternal. Literary critic Nina Auerbach explains that this Victorian angel is “endowed by definition with suprahuman powers” (“Woman”

64). Auerbach also points out that, because the “angel” is synonymous with “house” due to 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 becoming a 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, who is incarcerated in his attic. This madwoman Bertha Mason, *un-Victorian* in her foreign race, her savage features, and her animalistic actions, symbolizes what Auerbach called “the demon” that cannot coexist with the angel because of the angel’s spiritual purity and idealized reign over the feminine domestic sphere. And yet, throughout the novel, it’s Jane who actually corrupts all three aspects of Victorian domestic angelhood: femininity, spirituality, and even Victorian marriage. Jane often acts as demon as much as she tries to adhere to angel.

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. At Lowood, she meets the only school friend she ever mentions, Helen Burns, who shortly dies from consumption, or tuberculosis. In recounting her experiences at Lowood under the harsh and uncaring directorship of a minister named Mr. Brockelhurst, Jane initially states that he was “a harsh man..., pompous and meddling,” because he “cut off [the students’] hair; and for economy’s sake bought [them] bad needles and thread, with which [they] could hardly sew” (C. Brontë 105). The worst things Mr. Brockelhurst

could do, and what tarnishes his reputation in the girls' eyes, is the thing that Jane finds important enough to say first when she's asked about Brockelhurst: that he cut off the girls' hair and bought them bad sewing materials, both of which represent very feminine qualities a girl should possess: pretty hair and sewing skills.

In addition to learning these sorts of feminine skills at Lowood, Jane also comes to recognize and indulge her feminine emotions and feelings. She often expresses emotion through crying, seen clearly during a later encounter with Mr. Rochester, once Jane leaves Lowood and becomes his governess. Rochester asks Jane if she is depressed for leaving one of his evening gatherings 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). Rochester goes on to describe the “bead [that] has slipped down from [Jane’s] lash and fallen on to the flag” stone of the floor (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 another engagement (236). Also, her “tears [gush] out” when confessing her love for Rochester by saying she does not want to move to be far from him when he suggests she move to Ireland (214). At this moment in the novel, Jane states that she “could repress what [she] endured no longer,” as tears spill out of her eyes (215). Jane’s ability to cry is a marker of her angelic qualities, for the angel of the Victorian house was seen as the beating heart of any family, full of compassion and emotion.

Yet Jane's womanly emotions are not the only representation of her traditional femininity; Jane's clothing also presents her as angelic and selfless, even almost martyr-like. For example, Jane 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 is only to be worn "on first-rate occasions" (102). The materials her dresses are made out of, named here as "silk" and "stuff," were commonly used for clothing during the Victorian period, and were not terribly expensive or considered grand fabrics, although they were certainly associated with middle-class status. Jane also 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). Considering Jane's outfits compared to those of Mr. Rochester's wealthy social circle 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, even more angelic.

To offer an even more specific example, let us look at a moment where Jane's angelic identity is represented through a single article of clothing: a glove. Generally speaking, the language of clothing was very important to members of society during the Victorian Age, given that this language conveyed an individual's gender, race, and class status. There were many constantly changing rules as to what was or was not appropriate for men and women to wear on different occasions, and different economic classes wore different outfits. One article of clothing that was of great importance during the Victorian period was the glove. According to Erin

Blakemore's article on the Victorian glove, "there were different shades, styles, fabrics, and fit for different times of day, times of year, and different activities" (Daily JSTOR). Gloves were worn by both men and women, but Blakemore points out that, specifically for women, clean gloves were a central part of having a "spotless appearance," and would often be changed multiple times a day to ensure that 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 one's gloves out of one's house (Walton). It was a part of a lady's toilette to wear gloves, and if she was seen without them, then she was not a "respectable lady," whether she was a "lady" by rank or by her behavior.

We see Jane's understanding of the symbolic importance of gloves during a two-day homeless period after fleeing Thornfield after Jane learns of Rochester's mad wife Bertha on the very day that Jane was supposed to marry him. Because Jane flees from the temptation to stay with Rochester as his mistress since she cannot be his wife, Jane flies from Thornfield, but without a specific destination, not knowing where to go or where she might reside. After spending a night sleeping on the moors, she goes into a bakery and asks if she might sell her handkerchief for a roll. When the woman in the shop refuses, suspicious that this "lady" is trying to barter her clothing for food, Jane resorts to asking if the woman would exchange Jane's gloves for a bit of cake or bread. Immediately after retelling this event, Jane

interrupts her own narrative to say to the reader, “it is not pleasant to dwell on these details,” before moving on with the story (Brontë 280). Jane stops the narrative because she understands that the reader understands the symbolic significance of losing her gloves. As Jane is not rich, these are 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 them many times. Without this accessory, both Jane and the reader know that she would no longer be viewed as a lady.

Yet it’s not just Jane’s tears and middle-class, feminized clothing that mark her as a character who is, at least in part, an “angel.” As middle- and upper-class Victorian women were expected to dress appropriately for any occasion, they had to always look their best, and that meant their bodies as well as their dresses. For instance, 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—just a few years before *Jane Eyre* was published—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). Here, the author contends that 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). For the Victorians, good skin complexion is part of looking “beautiful,” and it was especially important in upper-class British society to demarcate superiority, 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 Bessie who, when Jane was young, called her “quite a lady” (133). While thinking of these memories, Jane states simply, “I [am] a lady,” believing herself to look better than she did when her nurse Bessie saw her as a child because, as she says, “I [have] more color and more flesh; more life, more vivacity, because I [have] brighter hopes and keener enjoyments” (133). Because of this growth from an abused orphan into a young woman with middle-class manners and education, Jane believes that she looks more beautiful and has an overall more pleasant complexion.

So, for much of the novel, Jane not only looks like an angel—in her clothing and complexion—but she also has Christian faith like one. Growing up, Jane is taught the Bible both at the Reed house and at Lowood. When living with the Reeds as a child, she is asked by the superintendent of Lowood, Mr. Brockelhurst, if she reads her Bible, and she responds, “Sometimes.” Jane 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, though, 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). And, apparently, Jane does, because throughout the rest of the novel in her adult life, she relies on strength from God by praying during trying times and experiences.

For instance, 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

an entire day, until she quotes Psalm 22:11 to herself (apparently liking the Psalms now): “Be not far from me, for trouble is near: there is none to help” (C. Brontë 253). After Jane decides that she must flee 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 homelessness after leaving Thornfield, she acknowledges that “God must have led [her] on” when she felt weak and lost (274). Jane believes that God guides her and leads her during the two days she sleeps on the ground and begs for food, to find her cousins, the Rivers sisters and brother, who wind up taking care of her. Moreover, when Jane feels scared and alone on those two nights that she sleeps 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 food and someone who will help her actually parallels the Bible story of Jesus’ forty days when he is 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 only had a scoop of porridge meant for a pig to eat and one slice of bread over two days (*New Living Translation*, Luke 4:2). The devil tempted Jesus to make food for himself, suggesting that if he really was “the Son of God,” he could perform this miracle, but Jesus did not submit to this temptation (*New Living Translation*, Luke 4:3). The same story is accounted in the Book of Mark and 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 finds a family that will take her in and take care of her after her own two days of trial and tribulation, and as readers find out after she had been staying with them for a few months, they are actually her cousins.

So far in her narrative, Jane has described herself as adhering to the feminine and angelic qualities of emotion, meek clothing, complexion, and her Christian belief. Furthermore, the reader also learns of Jane’s traditionally feminine view of marriage. For most Victorians, Christianity was a part of daily life, and just as believing in God was expected of all 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. Jane is devoted to Rochester first as his governess, and then, by the end of the novel, as his wife. She calls him “sir” and “master” both when she works for him, and also after they become engaged. Jane also tells him, “I’d give my life to serve you,” as both his governess, and then, as his fiancée (174).

However, rather than employing her romantic relationship with Rochester as a holy sacrament, Jane views Rochester through the eyes of the “flesh.” She is constantly obsessed with the way Rochester 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). Indeed, Jane becomes obsessed with watching him and studying his features, and even draws his likeness after she has run away from him in order to try and remember him.

Jane also idolizes Rochester in ways other than his looks, and her love for him starts to replace her need for traditional religious belief, as Jane herself puts it. Through her relationship with Rochester, the reader starts to see Jane's angelic exterior crack, breaking down the image the reader has had so far of Jane. Jane herself says that Rochester is her hope of heaven, standing "between [her] and every thought of religion" (234). In telling Jane of the honeymoon trip they will take through all the places he has been in Europe, he states "now 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 role as "angel" within this novel and hints that she may not be all that she seems.

On the one hand, 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). This feminized 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, she is seen as "othered" by a Victorian society—a figure of fear and shame. Rather than having the desire to fulfill traditional Victorian roles for middle-class women, her unholy spirit is what "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, and thus the opposite of Jane—most 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 at odd moments, believing it to be, as Mrs. Fairfax claims, the servant Grace Poole. Bertha does not conform to what sounds or words are or are not appropriate to utter as a Victorian woman and the wife of a nobleman. The first time Jane sees Bertha, Bertha enters Jane's room two nights before Jane's own wedding, looks at the wedding dress, and tears Jane's veil into two pieces. Jane then explains, in recalling these 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 matted hair, hanging long, would look very unfeminine and, according to Victorian ideals of beauty, 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). It turns out that 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" within this domestic space, and is instead wearing a loose, white dress, which, as also 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 Jane and Rochester's wedding is called off, Mr. Rochester finally reveals Bertha to Jane, and to the reader, and Jane describes her like an animal in a zoo. Jane reports on Bertha's "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). It is important to note that Bertha is not fully represented here as a beast; Jane makes sure to note that, while not appropriate for an angelic, domestic woman, Bertha is still wearing clothing. However, Bertha also has the stature and hair of a beast or demon, and by describing her animalistic qualities, Jane associates Bertha's character with deviant sexuality—i.e., with that of an animal. Bertha also has the height and strength of a man, and is kept in confinement, as an animal would be in a cage; while neither Rochester nor Jane can quite define

what she looks like, both they and the reader know through the descriptions of her unkempt hair, loose clothing, and animalistic behaviors that Bertha, in all her wild ferocity and unmannered actions, is mad.

Undergraduate student Savannah Bachman, in her senior thesis on the “Madwoman and the Madhouse in Victorian Literature,” looks at Bertha’s confinement as an expression of the Victorian idea that “female madness is representative of uncontrollable, unnatural women,” and in order to help and possibly heal the madwoman, a character such as Bertha Mason, as well as some flesh-and-blood women, must be confined (34). Bachman defines such “confinement” as “shutting up” a woman, both physically through the confines 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 hiding her away in order to protect the reputation of her husband. Madwomen had to be confined to prevent “tarnishing the reputations of their husbands,” and were often put into asylums on the request of these men, in order to try and get them 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’s been tricked into marrying a madwoman. After his marriage ceremony with Jane is called off, Rochester 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 his marriage on the

deceit of Bertha's family, the Masons, 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). At mid-century, it was common knowledge that if a woman was mad, she would be "shut up" in an asylum, hidden away from the rest of humanity, to protect not only mannered citizens, but, as Victorians believed, to protect a woman from herself, with the hope that, maybe, she would get better. Victorians didn't want a madwoman out and about in society, potentially to taint the morals of other women or children.

Bertha does 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 and her situation, Bertha started to stand up for herself and speak her mind rather than mere pleasantries and "commonalities" of the day (261). Rochester also blames Bertha's madness on her "vices" that "sprang up fast and rank," only controllable through his cruelty, and her "pigmy intellect" (261). Her mother, Rochester claims, was also mad, and "shut up in a lunatic asylum," although Bertha's family originally told him that his wife's mother was dead (261).

However, in this novel, Bertha is not just a confined madwoman—she is also comparable to a demon monster. For instance, Jane describes Bertha's face by saying it looks "fearful and ghastly," and she has never seen a face like it (242). Jane calls Bertha's face "savage," hinting at Bertha's status as a part of a Creole race, further saying she has "red eyes" and "fearful blackened inflation of the lineaments,"

her features purple and swollen with bloodshot eyes, thus describing Bertha's physical differences via racist qualities (242). Jane equates her more with "the foul German spectre- the Vampyre," than with a woman, and says she has a "goblin appearance" (242, 243). In all of these ways, it's clear that, at least to Jane, Bertha Mason is less of a woman and more of a demon.

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 leaves bite marks and wounds in Mason's arm when she bites him, trying to suck his blood, like a vampire. As will become clear in the forthcoming chapter on Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, the Victorian idea of a vampire comes with a deviant sexual connotation, and Bertha's sexuality is compromised in *Jane Eyre*. Throughout the novel, Bertha is also called a "beast" rather than a human being, describing her as animalistic and completely unfeminine. In addition to the examples of how Jane designates Bertha as a "goblin" and a "vampire" above, she is also called a "clothed hyena," a "maniac," one sustaining mental defects, and 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, as well as what Victorian readers would have understood to be her "savage" race.

Rochester gives some background on Bertha and her racial circumstance. He explains that Bertha's mother was a "Creole," an outdated term meaning a person of mixed race, usually European and African, often used to reference bi-racial people

living in the British-owned parts of the Caribbean. The Caribbean is, in fact, where Rochester first meets Bertha before bringing her back to England as his wife. 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). This is how Bertha is described: as large and tall, and having a similar build to the manly Rochester. The explanation of "savage" women that Briggs gives here is what Victorians believed about people of a different, or "less civilized," race, and thus, is how Victorians would have viewed Bertha in reading *Jane Eyre*. This aligns Bertha with a demonic character type, and explains why she is actively compared to the angelic Jane by Rochester.

For instance, Rochester tries to explain how savage Bertha is in her "racialized hardness" compared to Jane's quiet, white petiteness. While showing his mad wife to the wedding party, Rochester mentions "the [only] conjugal embrace [he is] ever to know" is with an erotic, wild woman who is only half-white, i.e., a madwoman (C. Brontë 251). Rochester then shifts his attention to Jane, calling her "this young girl," using "young" to mean both innocent and virginal but also pious, a girl "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). Here, Rochester is trying to appeal to everyone's sympathy—including the white, middle-class, Victorian female reader—by claiming that he is stuck with this "beast," while wanting to be with a woman like Jane, who is seemingly the angel rather than the demon. He asks the wedding party to "compare [Jane's] clear eyes with the red balls yonder," to look at both of their faces, to compare Jane's "form with that bulk," and then to judge him for wanting Jane instead (251). By comparing these two women, Rochester also tries to evoke Christian sympathy, explaining that he deserves to be with a pious and pure, angelic woman such as Jane rather than living with a demon, who is corrupting his Christian faith and spiritual goodness. Rochester defines all of Jane's physical qualities as angelic, and Bertha's as monstrous, because Jane looks and acts like a proper Victorian woman, and Bertha does not.

Because Bertha is so unfit to be a proper and domesticated 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). As such, 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. Bertha inhabits the domestic sphere, yet she does not represent it; she is confined to a kind of domesticity, but she does not transform because of it. Rochester explains that he decided to "shelter [Bertha's] degradation with secrecy," and he hires Grace Poole, who previously worked at an asylum, to be her guardian and caregiver (263). Throughout the novel, Rochester

and his servants, such as Mrs. Fairfax the housekeeper, blame mysterious goings-on and the strange laugh Jane keeps hearing on this woman Grace Poole, when it was Bertha all along. Rochester despises Bertha so much that he completely wipes her off her identity, renaming this creature “Grace,” and keeping her completely hidden. In this way, Bertha is both a character and a symbol—she is representative of the danger that all Victorian women fear: of losing their respectability and devolving from “angels” into “demons.”

While Bertha’s description in the novel places 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 traditional “angel” and complicates her angelic qualities because of her desire for independence expressed through speech, clothing, and associations with nature. Gilbert and Gubar explain the possibility of the monster residing “within...the angel” (29). Rather than completely loving Rochester and being happy with the prospect of marrying him, Jane starts to withdraw purposefully from him during their engagement and say things to annoy him. Because Jane grows up an orphan and her only friend at school dies shortly after they meet, Jane matures without much love or tenderness in her life, which makes her relationship with Rochester hard to navigate. She starts to associate being alone with something fundamental in who she is—a loner—and so it becomes hard for her to accept Rochester’s love. 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 identifies with as “Jane Eyre” (220). Jane seems to dread getting married, and is scared of the unknowns of marriage in both how it will change her identity, and in its implied sexuality, because it was traditional for women not to know anything about sex until their wedding night. Indeed, almost immediately after they get engaged, Jane explains to Rochester that she wants “to go on as usual for another month” until their wedding, only spending time together in the evening after Rochester calls for her as he did before they were engaged (230). In fact, Jane becomes very particular, and quickly Rochester’s pet names for her turn from “love” and “darling” to “provoking puppet,” “malicious elf,” “sprite,” changeling,” & etc. (234). Thus, instead of calling Jane names that invoke traditional 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: to become his domestic angel and his savior. Rather than coming when he calls for her and being pleasant while 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, which complicates her status as a stereotypical “angel of the house.”

Jane loses even more of her middle-class femininity by diverging from a 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 just “plain” on more than one

occasion (C. Brontë 110, 354). When Jane 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, then, that Jane is rather average looking, in a time when people's personalities and character were very much surmised from the way they looked. In fact, 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 than Blanche Ingram (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 aristocratic friends, whose clothing consists of "fluttering veils and waving plumes" (141). On one particular night when Jane brings Adéle to meet

these ladies, Jane describes how tall the women are, many of whom are “dressed in white” (146). Blanche Ingram, Jane 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 fiancé with jewels and fine clothing, and tries to buy Jane 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 displays of wealth not only disinterest Jane, but they annoy 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 as though she’s not like herself. Jane prefers to be Rochester’s “plain, Quakerish governess,” rather than his “beauty” (220). No matter how much Rochester pushes her to wear the new clothes he buys for her, Jane 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 actually references 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 plain Jane Eyre any longer. In this way, although it may seem that Jane is behaving in an “angelic” way by rejecting the grandeur of fancy

clothing, Jane actually disrupts the middle-class, feminine desire and expectation of a traditional, upper-class wife. It was expected for a woman to wear rich silks and feathers and pearls to demonstrate her higher class status, but Jane rejects this feminine characteristic that Victorians constantly held up as desirable, as well as the desire to climb the social ladder.

Not only does Jane break down traditional expectations of angelic Victorian femininity through the way she dresses, but she does so by verbally speaking out against strict gender roles and, at times, defiantly standing up for herself against figures of authority in Victorian culture. Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar call this aspect of Jane's personality "rebellious feminism," or an "anti-Christian refusal to accept the forms, customs, and standards of society" (338). These two feminist critics describe how Jane "[represents] her own share of madness and rage" for so long, that her angelic exterior starts to crack, showing the demon underneath (345). This demon comes out slowly across the whole of the novel, so the people in her life only catch glimpses of it. For instance, as a child, Jane loses her temper in front of Aunt Reed, which leads her aunt 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—a "fiend" and "wicked"—invoke a loss of spirituality, as if Jane's divergence from traditional femininity makes her un-Christian. Indeed, Victorian critic Nina Auerbach points out, "[Jane] is called a witch at least as often as she is called and angel" ("Romantic" 70). And, in fact, Rochester starts to change his pet names and adjectives for Jane

from terms like “blooming” and “little wife” to “witch” and “fairy,” and he describes her after coming in from the rain as “dripping like a mermaid” (237). On this last nickname, Nina Auerbach defines the mermaid as “a Christian female demon,” or 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). Thus, even Rochester himself can glimpse the demon inside of Jane.

Further diverging from middle-class Victorian feminine expectations of domestic angels, Jane offers many speeches of “fiery words,” as Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar call her impassioned declarations of independence, where Jane stands up for herself in very *un*-Victorian ways (343). The first time we see this fire in Jane is when she is ten years old and living at the Reed house, after Jane stands up to her teasing cousins; but, they tattle to Mrs. Reed after Jane calls her cousin John a “wicked and cruel boy” for throwing a book at her and hurting her. Mrs. Reed locks Jane in The Red Room, an empty bedroom used by Mr. Reed on his dying day, and Jane is frightened and angry in this confinement. Young Jane recognizes “a passion of resentment” forming in her, so great that “*Speak [she] must*,” telling Aunt Reed after she is freed from her imprisonment in The Red Room, “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). Jane then 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). Jane vows she will always remember how Aunt Reed locked her in The Red Room and promises to 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 says that young Jane’s speech made her think her niece was mad, “like a fiend,” and she has never forgotten the way Jane spoke to her in that moment (197). The color red is symbolic in The Red Room for demonic fire, similar to this scene of fiery words Jane speaks against her aunt after her confinement in The Red Room, and 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 her mistreatment transforms into a more pessimistic view of gender roles and a habitually self-reliant attitude. For example, 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, at this moment, Jane believes him to be engaged to Blanche Ingram, and she tries to break free from his grasp. He compares her struggling to “a wild, frantic bird,” small and helpless, and yet she responds by saying, “I am no bird; and no net ensnares me” (216). While Jane stands up for herself when she believes Rochester is already engaged, she also acknowledges that her manner of speaking is unusual, and she prefacing 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 the normal conventionalities of the day, even though Rochester

is her “master” and a male, while Jane is an orphaned governess under his employment, and a female. Instead, Jane is honest with her emotions, 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). Jane is indignant that Rochester would beg her to stay at Thornfield and that he would try to 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, when Rochester explains that he is not actually engaged but that he loves Jane “as [his] own flesh,” and that she is his “equal,” in his “likeness,” she makes him swear that he “truly” loves her and he “sincerely wish[es]” her to be his wife; only then does Jane accept his proposal to marry him (217).

Jane’s fiery passion and fierce independence are so striking because they are entirely *un*-Victorian; in these moments Jane is not being careful of what she says; she is being honest about how she feels and what she believes is best for her. She continues to make choices *not* as an angel of the house would—that is, she is not self-sacrificing on behalf of her future husband or children. She makes choices that benefit herself, rather than others, and disassociates her character from that of an angel.

Further separating Jane from an angelic archetype is Jane’s self-reliance during the days after she flees Thornfield. After her marriage to Rochester is called off, Jane 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 as well as from Rochester, 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 before she flees Thornfield, telling him she must leave because she cannot stay and be his mistress while he has a legal, living wife under the same roof. Here, Jane has another conversation with herself; one side of her tells her to stay to keep Rochester from misery, and also because she has nowhere to go, no one who will care for her. To this reality, though, Jane decides 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). In this moment, Jane puts her own desires first when, as a Victorian Christian woman, she is supposed to care for others above herself. She understands that she must hold onto "the principles received by [her] when [she was] sane, and not mad," as yet she is "quite insane" in this instance, and must remember the "laws and principles...given by God and sanctioned by man" (270). For the duration of the afternoon on her would-be wedding day and during her evening conversation with Rochester, Jane keeps a very cool head; and, although she enters into moments of sobbing and crying, she ultimately makes the morally right decision not to stay with a married man and, in this way, chooses a better life for herself over the love of a man and the promise of a marriage.

Although Jane's decision is moral, it is *un-Victorian* in her reasoning that brought her to the decision. After her conversation with herself in her room, she

decides to sneak out of Thornfield unnoticed, before she realizes Rochester has been waiting outside her door all afternoon, because she wants to start a life for herself unattached to this travesty. She uses reason and her sense of independence to convince herself that she will be okay on her own, in a time when women were controlled, legally and physically, by their husbands, and had no right to their own property or money, let alone their bodies and personhood. Jane turns her back on the possibility of a secured future as an angel in the house, caring for her husband, to flee Thornfield in search of something else for herself. Un-anangelic, Jane sheds the Victorian angel in search of a better life for herself.

Across the whole of Brontë's novel, Jane shows that she is *un*-Victorian the more she favors her own well-being and desires above following the traditional Victorian female ideal of the domestic angel. She continues to find self-fulfillment through being outside in nature, further separating herself from the domesticated angel archetype. Jane finds safety and relief in the natural world. Throughout the novel, she compares her love for Mr. Rochester to natural elements. 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 [she is] 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 woman who 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). Jane 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). In this way, Jane associates her own feelings with the emotions created in nature, aligning her desires with the freedom that one feels in nature, rather than expressing a desire to be confined to the domestic space.

Then Jane decides that she has to leave Thornfield and Rochester, and she spends two nights “in the open air,” sleeping on the ground (296). In this portion of the narrative, Jane literally uses nature to escape the possibility of a life confined to the domestic space as Rochester’s mistress. The second night Jane sleeps “in the open air” 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 is described not as the normal girl of the marriage plot story, one who longs to be married, finds a man, and achieves her dream of a high-class marriage. Instead, Jane lets nature, rather than domesticity and traditional gender roles, drive her story, associating her

love for Rochester with the beauty found in nature as an example of fulfillment in her life.

Jane finds fulfillment in nature rather than domesticity, and in a sense, nature reflects the uncertainty of Jane's character as a merging of "angel" and "demon." Jane turns to the natural world in times of uncertainty as an emotional constant, and thus it creates for her a freeing experience. For instance, when she shows her portfolio of paintings to Mr. Rochester, the reader sees that they are all of nature scenes. Jane has painted watercolor renderings of 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). Here, 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, Jane also remembers "sketching fancy vignettes, representing any scene that happened momentarily to shape itself in the ever-shifting kaleidoscope of imagination" (198). As such, Jane uses nature in her imagination as an escape as a child from her tormenting cousins and frightening aunt, and, as an adult, she uses nature, both painting it and being in it, as an escape from the domesticity of the angel of the house.

As an adult, Jane also 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). Jane 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, will never see birds making nests in its boughs, she tells the tree that "you are not desolate: each of you has a comrade to sympathize with him in his decay" (236). This tree symbolizes Jane herself and the two halves of her as angelic and demonic, representing the competing sides of Jane that, when looked at as a whole, seem monstrous. The tree, split in half and dead, existing completely outside of the domestic space in the natural world, is also evocative of life—reminiscent of a family tree and tying together the past with future generations through the links of marriage. Just as Jane is neither one archetype nor the other, she exists in both the natural and the domestic world through her merging of archetypes.

As Jane cannot be defined solely as "angel" or "demon," the definition of the angel given by Coventry Patmore is too limiting, as is the Bible's explanation given in Proverbs 31. Jane can't be simply the idyllic angel placed on earth within a domestic setting, and instead has a "demon" in her that causes her to desire freedom and independence found in nature and in making her own way for herself. Thus, the character of Jane Eyre is one that women in the Victorian period, but also women in any age, may identify with; women across these centuries have specific expectations put upon them, but such expectations are not possible to fulfill since they are archetypes, ideals, and not of the real world. No matter the clothing Jane wears, nor the amount of money she has or the kind of wife that she might be, she can never be

a true angel. This makes Jane more compelling as a heroine of a marriage plot because she contains both the “angel” and the “demon,” she is both domestic and natural, serving and independent. This compelling quality is what has made her “reader” revisit her story over and over again, from 1847 to 2019 and beyond.

"I can't explain myself, Sir, because I'm not myself, you see": *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* and the Victorian Woman-in-Training

Since Charles Dodgson wrote *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* published in 1865 under his penname Lewis Carroll, over 55 different translations have been produced with countless adaptations worldwide, including Walt Disney's popular 1951 film *Alice in Wonderland*. Each adaptation, whether it be a stage production such as Eva Le Gallienne and Florida Friebus' Broadway show or a song written by Jefferson Airplane or Taylor Swift, portrays a distinctly different Alice. This manifold of Alices started from her very conception, when Charles Dodgson first told the tale to his child friend Alice Liddell and her siblings one day on a river in Oxford. The Alice we know today as the sweet little Victorian girl who gets lost among many confusing creatures and scenes, despite giving herself very good advice, mainly stems from Sir John Tenniel's drawings included in the 1865 published version of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* as well as her depiction in Disney's film. However, this prim and proper version of Alice is not the kind of girl we see in Lewis Carroll's first drawings in his original, handwritten manuscript of *Alice's Adventures Under Ground* from 1864, nor is it the original conception of Alice based on the flesh-and-blood girl Alice Liddell. Thus, this chapter will look at the body and clothing of the three of these Alices as represented in the different portrayals of her as a complicated version of the Victorian little girl with more agency in Carroll's original sketches compared to the Victorian woman-in-training represented in Tenniel's

drawings, while also noting Dodgson's initial inspiration for his beloved character based on an imaginary and idealized version of the Victorian little girl.

Charles Dodgson first received inspiration for his Alice stories from his child friend Alice Liddell. Alice was the daughter of the Dean of Christ's Church, Oxford, where Dodgson was a member of the mathematics faculty. Dodgson became close friends with the Liddell family and was known to make up stories for the children and take them on outings. One such outing, famously on a rowing boat along the backs of Christ's Church college, Dodgson made up what would become *Alice*, and Alice Liddell asked him to write it down for her, which he did under his penname Lewis Carroll. That book became *Alice's Adventures Under Ground*, and when Carroll decided to get it published with The Macmillan Company, he revised the book and named it *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. Thus, when referencing the writer in this project, I will cite Lewis Carroll, and when talking about the life of the writer, I will reference him as Charles Dodgson.

According to Alice in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, a book has no use unless it has pictures in it. Naturally, it was very important for Carroll when completing his original version of *Alice* to include pictures in his children's story that would enhance the text and excite the children reading the tale. As English literature professor Robert Douglas-Fairhurst points out in his book *The Story of Alice: Lewis Carroll and the Secret History of Wonderland*, although Carroll tried to illustrate *Alice* on his own, he felt that his drawings just weren't good enough. Douglas-Fairhurst critiques some of Carroll's own drawings, saying that, "Alice's head and arms [appear] to belong to different bodies," and "the caterpillar [coils]

himself up like an embarrassed snake" (142-143). Realizing his own limitations as an illustrator, Carroll asked John Tenniel, the lead cartoonist for satirical *Punch* magazine, to illustrate the newly revised and expanded *Alice's Adventures*. Interestingly enough, many of Tenniel's ideas for his Alice drawings seem to be based on earlier cartoons he produced for *Punch*, and a few of his cartoons and drawings after *Alice* were published depicting characters from the novel. Despite Tenniel's detailed and compelling drawings for *Alice*, the process had its rough patches; "after years of [Carroll] having complete freedom to illustrate his own stories, suddenly he had to deal with a collaborator who was unwilling to be treated as a skilled prosthetic hand" (Douglas-Fairhurst 143). The two had clashing ideas about how to portray the characters, which may be seen through the distinct versions of Alice that ended up being produced by Carroll and Tenniel, respectively.

Alice's Adventures in Wonderland's title character looks very different in Carroll's drawings compared to Tenniel's, but both figures represent different Victorian beauty ideals for women. Carroll's own drawings present Alice, as looked at later in this paper, in startlingly different attire than what was appropriate and fashionable for a girl her age to wear. This gives Alice a different sense of self than the Alice Tenniel drew, who is dressed in the outfit of an obedient and idyllic little girl. Tenniel's Alice will grow up to be the ideal Victorian wife and mother: an angel of the house who cares for her husband and children before she thinks about herself. As Alison Lurie explains in her book *The Language of Clothes*, early Victorian ideals of feminine beauty were small and slender like Queen Victoria, and as the Queen grew up, so did the ideal woman (64). Charles Dodgson, however, never

seemed to let the little girl go, photographing female children for most of his life and obsessing over the innocence and purity that the figure of the little girl supposedly possessed. Dodgson believed that little girls were pure members of a “species of a questionable origin,” as opposed to the ugliness and uncleanliness of little boys (Auerbach, *Romantic* 131). As literary critic Nina Auerbach states in her book *Romantic Imprisonment*, in the Victorian Age “little boys were allowed, even



encouraged, to partake of original sin; but little girls rarely were” (148).

Charles Dodgson tried to capture this idealized image of a little girl as an emblem of innocence and purity in his photographs as well as in his writing, such as in the adjacent picture of Alice Liddell. In this picture, taken in the summer of 1860 when she was eight years old, Alice Liddell is wearing a white dress with a high collar, which serves to give a sense of

modesty and also of spirituality or purity. Her hair and face are soft to represent the innocence of childhood and she is looking straight at the camera, which reflects Alice’s bravery and curiosity against her other traditional feminine traits.

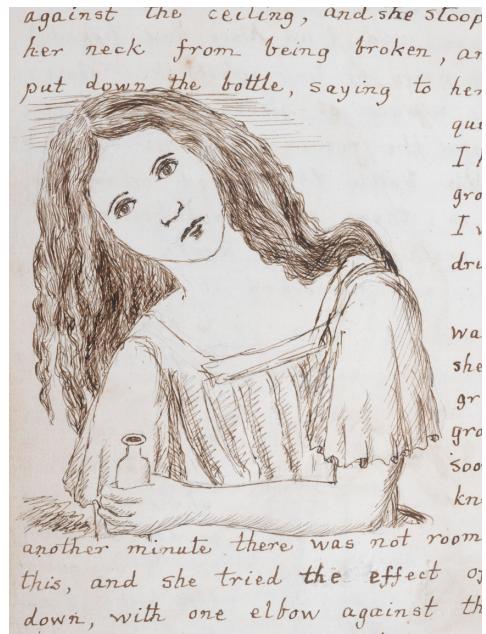
Yet in Carroll’s drawn version of Alice, we see a girl, as Nina Auerbach argues, more reminiscent of the pre-Raphaelite drawings of fallen women that were well-known in 1860s England. The concept of the pre-Raphaelite style of painting started when the art critic John Ruskin, whom Lewis Carroll photographed twice, “called for artists to take nature as their source” (King). Many of these pre-Raphaelite painters,

such as Dante Gabriel Rossetti and William Holman Hunt, were obsessed with drawing the female face and figure, cloaked in the melancholy of a tortured soul and representing the complex beauty of the natural world. For only about a twenty-year period in the middle of the nineteenth century, these male artists produced paintings focused on women inhabiting medieval and historical scenes, occasionally nude but always “enlightened” to some greater significance in life, such as in William Holman Hunt’s *The Awakening Conscience*, which depicts someone’s mistress. This female figure has long, flowing hair and many loose and thin layers of clothing, which was representative of the Pre-Raphaelite style. Prostitutes were a common figure in many Pre-Raphaelite paintings, such as in *Found* by Dante Gabriel Rossetti from 1854. These Pre-Raphaelite artists seemed enamored with portraying the effects of prostitution on women because it played with the idea that these immoral women still had agency of their bodies, but were still trapped within the confines of society. Most portrayals of prostitution, and most Pre-Raphaelite paintings in general, showed women in some state of death or illness, such as in Sir John Everett Millais’ *Ophelia* from 1852. And this idea of a Victorian woman having both agency and passivity simultaneously is also represented in Carroll’s depictions of Alice, reflective of the style of the Pre-Raphaelites with her loose clothing and long hair. Carroll’s drawing of Alice in this way makes her seem more adult; the clothing she wears is more befitting of an older girl. This works to give her more agency over her sense of self as well as her body in a time when little girls were only seen as miniature adult women.



This version of Alice may be seen in the left-hand picture, where she is looking at a door in a tree that will lead to the beautiful Wonderland garden that she has longed to be in. Her outfit is plain and hangs loosely off of her body. The sleeves, which end at her elbow, look a little old for a girl her age. They are flowing and limp, similar to her skirt with its very low waistline that falls above her hips, contrary to the popular style of the 1860s of clothing fitted at the natural waist. This serves to elongate Alice's torso, accentuating her flat chest and limp shoulders.

In turn, the following picture (adjacent) shows a more detailed drawing of Alice's bodice than can be seen in the first illustration. Alice's neckline is quite low for a young, Victorian girl to be wearing during the daytime. In addition, the style of her sleeves does not reflect the popular style during the 1860's, which was either a short puffed sleeve sloped low on the shoulder which limited movement, or a long, ruffled sleeve, keeping with the "melting" shoulder effect of a low shoulder seam. Alice's neckline here is square and low instead of rounded and close to the neck (as seen in Carroll's photograph of Alice Liddell), and her bodice is loose and



flowing to suggest the absence of a corset that young girls wore to improve posture and prepare them for adult societal fashions. Carroll's own depiction, then, serves to set Alice apart from the usual fashion of the day, and thus the traditional role of a young girl to fill. Traditionally, little girls were seen as Victorian mothers and wives in training, dressing in the same clothing as their mothers that was both morally restrictive as well as physically constrictive. Because Carroll's Alice is not dressed in the expected fashion, nor is she wearing a corset, this original version of Alice is noticeably set free from the traditional role of the little girl. This depiction gives her more agency and authority over herself and the way she dresses.

In addition to the way Carroll designed Alice's dress in his original manuscript, another notable trait of Carroll's Alice is her hair. The first Alice in *Under Ground* has long, flowing hair that falls in her face and moves with the wind rather than sticking in place. This feature is perhaps what best ties Alice to the image of pre-Raphaelite fallen women, whose loose hair symbolizes their loose bodies.



In turn, Carroll's Alice is vastly distinct compared to Tenniel's drawings of Alice and her clothing, which are clearly seen here in the well-known image of Alice drinking from a bottle marked "DRINK ME" that makes her shrink. In Tenniel's depiction, Alice's outfit is much more appropriate for a Victorian little girl in the 1860s to wear than Carroll's. Her skirt is shaped with

crinoline underneath, puffing out from her natural waist. The bodice of Alice's dress is tight and close to her body, with her short sleeves extending from a low shoulder seam to restrict movement. Alice has a high neckline with a little collar, and she is looking very proper in her petite black shoes. Most notably, Alice is wearing what has become her very iconic apron, or "pinafore," that prepares her to clean anything at the drop of a hat without getting her dress dirty, and her now-blonde hair is slicked back away from her face rather than having it loose and flowing. All of these visual cues set up Alice to be the model of the perfect wife and mother in training. With this "DRINK ME" illustration at the beginning of *Alice's Adventures*, Alice has just embarked on her mysterious journey through Wonderland, and it turns out that she will be very ill-prepared for her adventures because of her impractical shoes for running from the Red Queen, the restriction of shoulder movement from her sloping sleeves which will restrict her ability to move freely, and tightly bodiced dress.

Children's books during the Victorian era were used to teach traditional lessons to children about the way they should act, including adhering to strict gender roles. Many children's books, as well as books for adults, used "this emphasis on reading as a means towards faith" and to teach "proper moral and social behavior" (Lam "Be Good"). Jacqueline Banerjee, Professor of English and contributor to *The Victorian Web*, writes about the role children played in nineteenth-century literature. Banerjee says that "the image of the child as innocent and redemptive can be found in many works of the Victorian Period;" although, she points out, "their innocence equates with piety" rather than a Romantic definition of innocence ("Ideas of Childhood").

The Victorian Period also produced a separation of readers according to gender by publishing “Books for Boys” versus “Books for Girls.” Reading for girls often consisted of novels that were “charmed by domestic scenes,” compared to boys’ books that were “presented with racy tales of adventure at sea and at war” (Lam “Boys Will Be Boys”). This separation of readerships was because “critics feared that girls would be dissatisfied with their prescribed domestic role” that was often outlined in “Books for Girls” to prepare them to grow up to be a mother and a



wife (Lam “Boys Will Be Boys”). In addition, “girls’ serials emphasized lady-like behavior, religious conviction, cheerfulness under adversity and familial obedience” because these were qualities that Victorian girls should have to prepare them for their future roles as wives and mothers (Lam “Boys Will Be Boys”). Books depicting little girls were an example to girls on how they should act and be, and the Tenniel images of Alice that were included in the publication of *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* were an example of how little girls should dress.

In addition to the drawing of Alice drinking from a bottle, many other scenes Lewis Carroll drew for his original version of *Alice’s Adventures Under Ground* are also depicted by Sir John Tenniel. One such scene takes place after Alice eats a cake with the words “EAT ME” written on it. In this scene, Alice eats the entire little cake and quite suddenly shoots up “more than nine feet high” so her head hits the ceiling (*Under Ground 8*). In Carroll’s drawing of this moment, Alice is

standing with her hands tucked in and her head bowed, looking quite forlorn. Her hair is starting to fall and is covering parts of her face, but her outfit looks unchanged. She still has the low, square neckline and unusual sleeves, and her skirt still falls, deflated, to her knees. Her whole body, however, has become elongated, not just her neck, and she looks startlingly thin. Her dress in this picture has a bit more texture to it than in other images, with sleeves looking ruffled and almost feather like. This drawing depicts a defeated Alice, an emotion that will soon lead to her tsunami of tears that she will let loose a page later. It seems that although Carroll's depiction of Alice here represents an independent rule breaker, she also knows that children should be seen and not heard, and when Alice messes up and grows too big for her own good, she worries about disappointing the authority. In this scene, Alice worries about upsetting herself, saying goodbye to her feet as they grow farther and farther away and worrying about who will take care of them and put shoes on them. She plans how she will send them new boots for Christmas in the mail, and then she scolds herself for crying, saying "You ought to be ashamed of yourself...[,] a great girl like you... Stop this instant, I tell you!" (*Under Ground* 12). In this way, Alice makes herself the authority figure that she has to answer to, which winds up empowering Alice with the control of her own fate and body, in a time when women did not have control over their bodies but instead were expected to use them only to please their husbands and for the rearing of children.

Contrastingly, Tenniel's drawing of Alice from this same scene is much more comical as well as traditional in its presentation of gender. Alice's proportions are more or less realistic except for her giraffe-like neck, highlighting her collar that has

risen to cover more skin, as more has suddenly appeared, to preserve modesty. Otherwise her dress and apron are unchanged, giving more pouf to her sleeves and skirt and daintiness to her hands and feet. Alice's eyes are wide with surprise, and it's her expression that differs here perhaps the most from Carroll's original, hand-drawn version. Alice does not look small and scared and penitent but instead amazed, with her hair sticking out like she just got electrocuted. Tenniel shows an Alice completely in the hands of another power, as Alice refuses to take fault for causing her own size to change. Notably, her clothes stay the same, leaving the imprint of a Victorian woman-in-training on her, despite her body's different appearance. She can't break free from this mold. Even as a Victorian woman changes and grows, she has the same duties to fulfill as a wife, a mother, and as an idealization of middle-class, female domesticity.



Despite this mold, the world of Wonderland does give Tenniel's Alice an opportunity to change this embodiment of a "pure" Victorian woman, as she is given a chance to explore her identity as her body changes size. As Nina Auerbach points out, other little girls traveling through fantastic literature such as Dorothy in *The Wizard of Oz* ask, "Where am I?" However, Alice is constantly asking herself, "Who am I?" She gets quite confused during her journey, being mistaken for someone named Maryanne by the White Rabbit and for a predatory serpent by the pigeon,

which leaves Alice quite distressed as her sense of self is disrupted. Her journey through Wonderland is also a journey to find herself as a future Victorian woman, and to give Alice an opportunity to be something other than an angel in the house. This investigation is most clearly seen in the famous scene between Alice and “a hookah-smoking caterpillar” in Chapter 5 (Jefferson Airplane).

In the published version of Carroll’s story, *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*, after coming upon a curious mushroom, Alice “stretche[s] herself up on tiptoe” to see a “large blue caterpillar” sitting there (*Wonderland* 26). After looking “at each other for some time in silence,” the Caterpillar “addresse[s] her in a languid, sleepy voice,” saying, “Who are *you*?” (27). Alice, having just fallen “miles” down “near the center of the earth,” almost drowning in a sea of her own tears, coming across many strange creatures she’s never seen before, and changing size three times, has no idea who she is at this point (2). In fact, her experiences have been much closer to the literary adventures that Victorian boys were allowed to have, rather than Victorian girls. And so Alice answers, “I—I hardly know, Sir, just at present—at least I know who was when I got up this morning, but I think I must have been changed several times since then” (27). When asked by the Caterpillar to explain herself, she replies, “I can’t explain *myself*, I’m afraid, Sir, because I’m not myself, you see” (28). But the Caterpillar doesn’t see, and Alice is forced to explain further how she “can’t understand” herself “to begin with; and being so many different sizes in a day is very confusing” (28).

Just as Alice complains to the Caterpillar, throughout her journey of self-discovery in Wonderland, Alice changes size seven different times, five of which are

a result of her own doing. Alice either eats or drinks a foodstuff to make her change, until the last scene, in which she starts growing, although not of her own accord. In almost every case in *Wonderland*, Alice herself is the cause of her changing size. No outside force results in her metamorphosis, but actions Alice does lead to her changing proportions. Alice is both the act and the instigator of the act. She floats away in a sea, and yet is the one who cries tears to create that sea; she changes size, and yet she makes the choice to drink, or eat, to cause that change. This seems to give Alice agency—to upset traditional notions of what a Victorian girl can and cannot do. But at the same time, *Wonderland's* Alice's clothes don't change but instead stay the same alongside her changing body, revealing the trace that conventional little girlhood leaves—and will continue to leave—on her life. At some level, she is forced to conform to the little girl stereotype instead of having her own authority and freedom to grow as a human being. Her size changes but her clothes don't, thus the stamp of a Victorian woman is always on her. Alice is forced to grow up to be the proper Victorian woman who wears the proper clothing, the angel of the house, and to follow this script of Victorian society, rather than writing her own story.

Alice has the potential to become something more than the societal definition of a Victorian woman as represented by what she wears, however. It is possible for her to do more with her life than living within the confines of a house, caring for her children while dressed in an apron and with kempt hair. One important way that *Wonderland's* Alice defies such conventions is through her attempt at self-improvement via knowledge and education. For instance, throughout her literal and

psychological journey, Alice constantly references facts from places she has read about them. She tells the King of Hearts that the Cheshire Cat is allowed to look at him because “a cat may look at a king,” which she “read [about] in some book” (*Wonderland* 57). This same situation happens to Alice again when she is in the trial of the Knave of Hearts who stole the tarts, and despite it being her first time in court, Alice “[has] read about them in books, and she [is] quite pleased to find that she [knows] the name of nearly everything there” (*Wonderland* 73). She then goes on to name everything she sees, “being rather proud of it: for...very few little girls of her age knew the meaning of it at all” (*Wonderland* 73). Alice again uses this kind of literary knowledge when she points out that she’s read in newspapers that in trials there is “some attempt at applause,” but it is “immediately suppressed by officers of the court” (*Wonderland* 77). She also says something similar when she proves to the Duchess that the croquet game they are watching is improving “by everybody minding their own business” because she remembers that that’s what “somebody said” (*Wonderland* 60). Through all of her reading and misremembering, the Alice of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland* shows the reader that she is trying to become more learned and, thus, more adult, and that she has the potential to be something greater than an innocent and passive little girl, having more power over her life. She doesn’t want to be seen and not heard, as was custom for children to be during the Victorian Age, but is trying to give herself a voice through applying her knowledge of the world.

This was typical in the Victorian Age, for children to have a separate place from the world of adults. Young boys were sent away to boarding school, or as it

was called, “public school,” for their education. These schools were Protestant and connected with the Sunday School Movement of the Victorian period, which taught middle- and working-class boys and girls how to read the Bible for church and home worship. It was also common for children and young adults to read etiquette books designed to teach them how to improve their behavior as well as their morals. One such publication entitled “Practical Hints to Young Females,” written by an “evangelical Christian woman” Ann Taylor, “deals with the duties of a wife and mother” (The British Library). This book taught young Victorian women how to keep a home and “bring gentleness, unselfishness, fortitude, cool temper, and unlimited support into the home” (The British Library). These traditionally feminine ideas were taught to girls at a young age through the teaching of Sunday School lessons and in reading books about manners and etiquette, such as this one by Ann Taylor. These are the expectations put upon young Alice as the role she, as a Victorian woman-in-training, must fill, to spend one’s childhood learning how to be the proper homemaker.

Throughout the novel, Alice tries to recite her own lessons “properly” as an attempt at overcoming the societal pressures. The published version of Carroll’s book, *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*, is riddled with recitations, or published verses, memorized by Alice that mimic common Victorian poems and verses used to teach children moral behavior. Because Victorian families had to save money to send their children to school, most boys went to school, but girls weren’t as widely educated, because “daughters’... schooling seemed less important” (Mitchell 178). Girls “did not need preparation for public life” since they “would grow up to be a

married woman" like their mothers, and they "were thought to need more social and moral protection than boys," so they were often educated at home under a governess, if middle class (Mitchell 178). This mode of education is reflected in the opening scene of *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, when Alice's sister is sitting with her by the riverbank reading a book with no pictures. Later on in the narrative, Alice tries to recite "How doth the little—" to prove to herself that she has not "been changed for Mabel," her less intelligent friend; but, Alice gets it wrong, and rather than reciting, "Against Idleness and Mischief" by Isaac Watts, she recites her own made-up version: "How doth the little crocodile" (*Wonderland* 9). Realizing that she has recited all the wrong words—words that make the poem out to be a frightening tale of a predatory crocodile rather than a lesson in keeping oneself busy as a domesticated "busy bee" to stay out of mischief—Alice is disheartened to think she must be silly Mabel after all, with her "poky little house" and "next to no toys" (*Wonderland* 10). So even though Alice does not try to recite "How doth the little" for a teacher or governess, the purpose of trying to recite her lessons is to prove to herself, and to some greater power, that she is smart—which connects to the idea of class status as well as intelligence; that is, actual wealth, but also a figurative "wealth" of knowledge.

But, readers come to realize that, although Alice gets the recitation wrong, she is so much more capable of rote knowledge, because she, in this dream that she herself has formed, has written this brand-new version of "How doth the little." Alice herself has created all of the incorrect poems within this book, just as she created all of the characters who recite them—because this is *her* dream. Alice is, in her own

way, an author, capable of showing off her creative knowledge, but she is so obsessed with finding herself and proving that she has intelligence that she doesn't acknowledge her creativity: it's up to the reader, probably a little girl herself, to realize that Alice is powerful as an artist in her own right. And since Victorian little girls didn't have much room to explore their curiosities because they "began their 'apprenticeship' very young, by looking after babies and helping their mothers with the laundry or needlework," Lewis Carroll's portrayal of Alice as a deeply creative thinker is one way in which he disrupts the gender norms of his time (Mitchell 178).

This Alice in the narrative of *Wonderland* is trying to, in searching for herself, be more than a Victorian woman-in-training, but ultimately, Tenniel's drawings of her and her clothing place Alice in this archetype that has been the surviving depiction of Alice in Wonderland.

In comparing pictures of the three Alices—Alice Liddell, Dodgson's Alice from *Under Ground*, and Tenniel's Alice from the published *Adventures*—we see



reflected these contradictory images of an innocent and idealized child, against a mold-breaker who attempts self-improvement through gaining knowledge and applying it through writing, and a perfect and proper Victorian woman-in-training. In the adjacent photograph of Alice Liddell taken by Charles Dodgson in the summer of 1858, he depicts

a quiet little girl, again wearing a light color to give a sense of spirituality. What's notable is she is not looking at the camera but instead looking away, seemingly lost

in thought, or possibly embarrassed or shy or maybe daydreaming. She looks very young and frail here, something Dodgson perhaps wanted to preserve as a picture of childhood sacredness. This is a staged, idyllic image of the beauty and innocence of the Victorian little girl—one that does not exist

in reality, but can be created through a photograph. Comparatively, one of Carroll's drawing of Alice in *Alice's Adventures Under Ground*, adjacent, has a different effect. Here, Alice does not look shy but instead powerful, looking out over the ocean of her own tears, with



the wind blowing through her long hair. Her feet are tucked up under her to present an idea of properness and neatness, so she is still conventional, but the focus, similar to the picture of Alice Liddell, is solely on Alice and her person because she, too, is not looking at the "camera." In this scene in the novel, Carroll describes Alice as "sorrowful and silent" because all of the birds had just flown away from her after she talked about her cat Dinah loving to eat birds (32). However, Alice "recover[s] her spirits quite quickly" and moves on to the next adventure in her journey.

Opposed to his photographs of the actual Alice Liddell, Carroll's drawings of Alice show a more self-aware and strong character who is able to do make her own decisions as the authority over herself. This Alice complicates the assumed role of the little girl as a Victorian woman-in-training, giving the child Alice agency over herself as the authority. Tenniel also drew a picture of Alice in the same pose, pictured in *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*. Pictured below, she is looking back at

the White Rabbit as he scurries away down a long hallway. Alice has just landed



after her long fall and does not know where she is, and in this drawing, she looks very feminine, with her hand under her chin in a state of surprise. Her torso is tucked in close as she tries not to take up too much space, and her face isn't too expressive as to not make a scene with her emotions. Her left arm is extended to try and grab on to something as she is not feeling

stable, and her skirt is perfectly splayed out around her knees while her feet are tucked in under herself. This image of Alice is quite distinct from the other two Alices because here, she makes herself very small, while keeping a very properly feminine pose.

These three pictures of Alice appropriately represent the three types of a little girl each artist depicted: a shy and quiet girl who epitomizes childhood female innocence, a Victorian rule-breaker who has her own sense of agency, and the domesticated, idealized Victorian woman-to-be. Despite the different portrayals of Alice that mimic the many changes the character Alice goes through in her journey through Wonderland, as Carol Long states in her article on Alice's many adaptations, "through all of the confusion, however, Alice neither forgets her manners nor loses her sense of humanity" (133). In *Alice's Adventures in Wonderland*, Alice's whole body changes repeatedly, and she is subject to commands and to mocking from the tenants of Wonderland, but she is usually polite, not wanting to be rude to the ugly

Duchess, for instance, even when her pointy chin is cutting into Alice's shoulder, and Alice always looks the part in her perfect dress and slicked back hair.

It would seem as though Tenniel's drawings have survived and persevered as the single example of what Alice looks like because his version of Alice is the most "appropriate" form for the Victorian woman-in-training that the story follows—a form that Walt Disney perpetuated in 1950s America, when Victorian notions of idealized femininity were laminated over American ideas of post-war housewives and mothers. Charles Dodgson's original depiction of Alice as a free, contemplative girl with agency gets replaced by Tenniel's polite and tidy version of Alice that's preparing her for an adulthood as a middle-class wife and mother. Tenniel's one-dimensional Alice is the less "accurate" portrayal of Carroll's Alice, who, outlined in the text, is a character that complicates the archetype of the Victorian woman-in-training. But Tenniel's version, the version that has survived and was popularized by Disney, tells the reader that, for a Victorian middle-class girl, along with the prospect of marriage looms the death of childhood, so we must hold onto the image of childhood innocence as long as we can, by reading about young Alice over and over again to keep her alive.

“Such Passions Dwell in Feminine Breasts Also”: The Marriageable Girl in George Eliot’s *Daniel Deronda*

In 1840 when Queen Victoria married Prince Albert at twenty years old, she wore a white wedding dress, which was uncommon for the time; usually women donned their “best dress” for the big day, which could be in any color. However, by wearing white to her wedding, Queen Victoria started a tradition that people still carry on today. Women during the Victorian Period, mainly of the upper class, copied this style; rich white silks and satins were chosen to highlight the ornate lace involved, and upper-class women were able to afford this expense. However, lower-class women would usually just wear their best dress. According to images from Victorian editions of *Harper’s Bazar*, a popular American fashion journal, wedding gowns were essentially ornate versions of the style of dress that was common during that period. The wedding dresses from different decades represented in the magazine are white, ornately decorated with lace, and include a long train and floor-length veil, while the dress silhouette is whatever was popular during each distinct period in the Victorian Age. The adjacent picture is a fashion plate of a wedding dress from an 1875 edition of *The Englishwoman’s Domestic Magazine*,



Magazine, a publication run by a husband and wife editorial team from 1852 to

1879. As discussed later in this chapter, this style is very reflective of the popular silhouette of the time, featuring a closely fitted bodice and a bustle with drapery and decoration. This dress looks very similar to the style of a travelling dress during the



mid-1870's, while the following fashion plate depicting a wedding dress in 1876 from the French publication *Magasin Des Demoiselles* is similar to the popular style of an evening gown during this period.

George Eliot's 1876 novel *Daniel Deronda*, a novel containing and critiquing the Victorian marriage plot, describes two different wedding ceremonies: one of the upper class, and one of a Jewish, middle-class couple. The story follows a girl

named Gwendolen Harleth, and on the day of her wedding to the noble Mr. Grandcourt, the narrator explains, "half [of the town of] Pennicote turned out to see it, lining the pathway up to the church" (298). It was traditional, then, to be married in a church, and the narrator notes the presence of bridesmaids. The ceremony is described similarly to traditions of today, with the bride's father—or in Gwendolen's case, her uncle—"giving" the bride away. Gwendolen is stunning in "her bridal white," but after the ceremony, she changes into a "travelling dress" for the ride to her honeymoon destination (300). She is defined by the wedding guests as "worthy to be a 'lady o' title" by marrying a Grandcourt, as the family was extremely wealthy (300). But, the narrator notes, Gwendolen does not "present the

ideal of the tearful, tremulous bride," but is rather confident and "intoxicated" with the grandeur of the party (299).

Comparatively, Eliot's novel ends with the wedding of the title character, Daniel Deronda, a member of Gwendolen's social class, to a young woman named Mirah, a "Jewess," who marry for love rather than social wealth and status. Mirah's "bridal veil" hides "no doubtful tremors—only a thrill of awe at the acceptance of a great gift which required great uses" (693). The Jewish bride and groom marry under a "velvet canopy," drink from "the sacramental marriage-wine," and receive a "marriage-blessing" according to the "Jewish rite" (693). Their wedding includes guests of all social classes, as their friends and family belong to all different classes of wealth, and they enjoy a "humble wedding-feast" (694). Compared to Gwendolen's marriage, it is clear that Mirah and Daniel's wedding is much more simple, and encompasses a wider scope of status markers. The comparison of these two women and the economic class and values they each represent is a constant throughout Eliot's novel, especially when it comes to their marriages.

In Eliot's novel, the story focuses on the idea of the marriage plot, circulating around Gwendolen's position on the marriage market. The reader follows as Gwendolen, in her adolescence, learns that "marriage is the only happy state for a woman," and that she must marry well in order to be happy (22). Gwendolen, then, is presented as the "marriageable girl" archetype: a female character who spends the whole novel on the marriage market, waiting to be wed. Gwendolen is beautiful, wealthy, and comes from a Christian family—all attributes that made one more attractive on the marriage market in Victorian England. Comparably, Mirah is

middle- and working-class, plain, and Jewish, but she is presented as the ultimate archetype of “wife—” a character type that, no matter how hard she tries to be, Gwendolen is not. Thus, Eliot forces the reader to change his or her ideas about the “marriageable girl” as Mirah receives her happy ending instead of Gwendolen. Mirah happily steps into the role of “wife” as an “angel in the house,” while Gwendolen, who views marriage as a stripping of freedom and a sort of confinement, cannot change her opinions on marriage enough to become a “wife.”

Despite being on the marriage market, Gwendolen has negative opinions about marriage; additionally, she is unlike the other female archetypes focused on in this project, even the married ones, because she is upper class, and marries into nobility. Therefore, aspects of courtship and marriage in *Daniel Deronda* look different than those of the middle- or working-class characters. Once a Victorian woman married, “all of a woman’s property reverted to” the husband, so Victorian men and women of the upper class “were careful not to lead the other on unnecessarily,” since so much money and property were at stake (Hoppe). Marriages of the nobility were largely planned as an economic transaction to preserve bloodlines and to consolidate wealth. Among the British aristocracy, there were many specific rules about how to be introduced to someone of the opposite gender, and when it was appropriate to call at someone’s house with or without notice, amidst other courting rules, all of which are present in *Daniel Deronda*. The upper class met their marriage prospects at “social events throughout the season,” which was a period of frequent parties and social gatherings that lasted “from April to July” (Hoppe). Thus, George Eliot depicts Gwendolen attending many evening

events, dances, and archery meetings, at one of which she meets Mr. Grandcourt, a member of the nobility who starts to court her.

Put simply, upper-class marriages in Victorian England were not about love. Gwendolen talks of her dislike of marriage throughout the novel. For example, the narrator explains that Gwendolen's "thoughts never [dwell] on marriage as the fulfillment of her ambition," and although "marriage was social promotion," the "dreary state" of marriage requires a woman to "not do what she liked" (Eliot 30-31). Ultimately, Gwendolen does not want to "renounce her freedom" by marrying someone, because, as she says, "I never saw a married woman who had her own way," and Gwendolen wants to have the freedom to make her own choices in life, looking for fulfillment in activities such as archery and gambling, rather than through a marriage (110, 57). At first, she decides only to accept Grandcourt's proposal because "she would most probably be able to manage him thoroughly," and thinks that she will be able to control and lead him rather than be controlled or led (115). However, eventually, Gwendolen will come to realize that her fantasy of control is just that: a fantasy.

Gwendolen also thinks that she can learn to love Grandcourt, as long as she can control him. But when she meets his ex-lover and the mother of four of Grandcourt's illegitimate children, including a male heir to his fortune, she learns quickly that Grandcourt is uncontrollable. "Gwendolen's constitutional belief in the power of her own will, heretofore unchallenged within her small sphere," is confronted by Grandcourt's "sadism and love of mastery" (Miller 87). When learning of Grandcourt's sexual indiscretions, Gwendolen at first turns his marriage

proposal down because of his defiance of traditional Victorian values in having children with his lover Lydia Glasher, and his refusal to marry her to “fix” his mistake. Additionally, the reader gets a glimpse into Grandcourt’s selfish and haughty character at this point in the book. For example, the narrator points out that “Grandcourt prefer[s] the drama” in situations, and chooses to court Gwendolen because “Grandcourt [gets] more pleasure out of [winning her] than he could have... out of winning a girl of whom he was sure that she had a strong inclination for him personally” (266, 269). He enjoys chasing Gwendolen because he knows she does not have strong feelings towards him, and he wants to conquer her because of that.

Knowing more about Grandcourt’s character, Gwendolen planned to turn down his marriage proposal. However, after Gwendolen receives word from her mother that her family has lost their entire fortune, and Gwendolen will have to work as a—gasp!—governess or else marry Mr. Grandcourt to save herself and her family from financial ruin, Gwendolen changes her mind. Gwendolen does try to fight the monetary loss by suggesting her family go to court over it, but her mother assures her that “one must have a fortune to get any law: there is no law for people who are ruined” (Eliot 199). After some advice from her uncle that marriage is “a duty here both to [herself] and to [her] family,” Gwendolen figures that she can’t “help what other people have done,” and consents to marrying Grandcourt after all (199, 283). Instead of getting her way, then, Gwendolen falls into a trap of being used by Grandcourt to cover his past mistakes. Their marriage pushes Lydia Glasher even further from her own happy ending of marrying the father of her children, and Gwendolen is placed in the position of needing to produce a legitimate male heir to

receive Grandcourt's name and fortune in the place of his bastard son with Lydia.

Thus, instead of being in control, Gwendolen becomes a pawn.

Similarly, after Gwendolen commits to marry Grandcourt, she realizes that no matter how hard she tries to take control in her marriage, she must submit to the archetype of "wife." While this archetype has the same foundation amongst classes as an "angel in the house," certain attributes of the "wife" change for the upper class, as noted later in this paper. As explained through conversations between characters in Eliot's novel, Victorian marriage provided specific roles for the husband as well as the wife. Gwendolen, in her marriage to Grandcourt, tries to don the role of "wife," but she is only ever the "marriageable girl" because of not only her beauty, but her desire to be in control of her husband. But in Victorian England, the husband was seen as the "head of the household" and was responsible for making big decisions for the good of the family, and it was the wife's job to follow the husband's plan. For instance, when discussing gender matters relating to the topic of gambling, Daniel Deronda says to Gwendolen that it is more regrettable that she should gamble as a woman because, as he says, "we need that you should be better than we are," i.e., that men assume women will help men become "good" in order to be a strong leader and a good husband (Eliot 285). But in Grandcourt's eyes, he does not view women as "better" than men, as Daniel does. Grandcourt instructs Gwendolen that "as [his] wife, [she] must take [his] word about what is proper for [her]," believing it is his role to tell her what to do with her life, and to control her activities and actions (507). He constantly exerts control over her because "he [means] to be a master of a woman who would have liked to master him," getting more pleasure out of the fact

that he makes her “kneel down like a horse” to accept him rather than if she had actually been in love with him (270, 269). Grandcourt, then, refuses to let Gwendolen step into this wifely archetype, as the “wife” is a loving reminder to the husband to be a “good” man; and since Gwendolen does not adhere to the role of the “wife” because she does not want to give Grandcourt control over her, Grandcourt has no one to be a good man for. Grandcourt does not have a reason to uphold Christian morality, as he doesn’t care how his personal life will affect Gwendolen, and instead wants her to follow the decisions he makes for their family in order to have power over her, rather than on the basis of trust.

In addition to having decisive and protective control over the family, specifically for the upper class in the Victorian Era, it was a husband’s job to buy expensive things for his wife, and the wife’s job to not only enjoy them, but to display them. Especially in the middle- and upper-classes, the wife had to look the part of “wife,” clad in fashionable and expensive attire, and “[take] on the part of marriage,” as if it were a role in a play (Eliot 500). And in a way it was: through this focus on material goods and fashionable attire that reflected the husband’s wealth, the wife herself was objectified along with the objects that adorned her. Regarding this expectation, Grandcourt scolds Gwendolen for her independent attitude about herself and tells her, “you will either fill your place properly—to the world and to me—or you will go to the devil” (284). In this way, he threatens her into acting as he wants her to as his wife, controlling her. Literary critic Meredith Miller explains this process of objectification by explaining, “the critique of marriage throughout [*Daniel Deronda*] exposes this economic and national interest in the use of young women,

and the role that fictional romance plays in reproducing the ideological effect that perpetuates it" (87).

Additionally, marriage was seen as a sort of life fulfillment for a woman, as Gwendolen's mother, Mrs. Davilow, explains that "marriage is the only happy state for a woman" (Eliot 22). Especially in upper-class society where a solid economic future was at stake, a noble marriage was one to be idolized. It didn't matter if there was no romantic love when there was so much money involved. And according to Gwendolen's uncle Mr. Gascoigne, "she ought to make a first-rate marriage" based on her looks (Eliot 28). The narrator explains that "no youthful figure... was comparable to Gwendolen's"; Gwendolen not only looked beautiful and dressed well, but her beauty attracted a specific type of man, as the Rector says, and her looks alone "have people fall[ing] in love with [her]" (34, 73). Miller explains that the way Gwendolen is viewed, with her looks placing her ahead of other girls in the race to get a good marriage, "specifically equates young women with market commodities," as Mr. Gascoigne buys Gwendolen a horse and sets her up in a grand house to make her even more marketable to wealthy men (89).

In the Victorian period, many factors went into a woman being "marriage material;" she not only had to act as the archetype of "wife," but to look the part of one as well. This project has already discussed the Victorian ideal of the angelic, middle-class wife who puts her children and husband first, always selflessly serving the family. But in addition to a maternal character, a Victorian woman on the marriage market had to meet the fashion standard of an upper-class nobleman if she wanted to be a part of the nobility. An October 1876 edition of *Harper's Bazar*

explains that, in the 1870's, "the ideal at present is the greatest possible flatness and straightness: a woman is a pencil covered with raiment," or clothing (77). When *Daniel Deronda* was published, it was in fashion for women to look very thin and straight, with the bustle starting to go out of style by the mid-1870's. During the period



of *Daniel Deronda*, the "cuirasse bodice" became popular, consisting of close-fitting fabric that extended below the natural waistline, requiring a tight corset and a narrow skirt. The result was a dress that included more drapery than underskirts or petticoats, and new styles such as asymmetry and darker colors. In the above picture of a walking dress from an 1876 edition of *Harper's Bazar*, it is easy to see the slenderness of the silhouette and incredibly close-fitting fabric; it is no wonder that Gwendolen often needed her mother to help her undress. Adorned in this style of dress, Gwendolen's body would be on display for the men around her to look at and judge her, as if she were a prized pig in a contest. In this way, Gwendolen is sexualized as an object for upper-class men to decide whether or not she is marriage material.

As an upper-class woman of marriageable age, Gwendolen is required to look appropriate at the many evening parties and daytime events she attends. And luckily for her, even among the gentry, ready-to-wear fashion was becoming more popular and accessible for women to buy pre-made instead of having to wait long

amounts of time and spend more money on something custom-made. In cities “everywhere, the big department store was the apotheosis of shopping in the second half of the nineteenth century” (Wilson 147). And while clothing stores up until this point in time had been attended by male shop employees, now, “a new emphasis on respectability” brought in many female workers who created an experience of great refinement for the customer (Wilson 149). In the new department stores, “bourgeois culture was on display,” depicting “the proper household and correct attire” for visitors to familiarize themselves with as new fashions and innovations came into vogue (Wilson 150). In a way, the department store also freed women from the confinement of the home and allowed them to be independent when shopping. Similarly, Gwendolen sought freedom through self-expression in clothing, as seen later in this paper; but, because of her place on the marriage market, her freedom is taken away as her clothing becomes a factor in her marriageability.

Gwendolen would have been familiar with the latest fashions on display in these new department stores, and her closet would have been up to date. There are a few particular mentions of popular articles of clothing that Gwendolen dons throughout Eliot’s novel. For example, before departing for home from her gambling vacation after she hears of her family’s financial ruin, the narrator mentions that Gwendolen is wearing “her gray travelling dress” and a “felt hat,” as it was essential to wear the right kind of dress for each time of day (Eliot 12). Gwendolen also wears a riding dress at different points in the book, as she loves to hunt and ride her horse. The narrator even remarks that Gwendolen “always [feels] the more daring for being in her riding-dress” during the day instead of wearing the appropriate

morning or afternoon attire (278). She uses her clothing to express her desire for freedom to make her own choices instead of decisions influenced by the social rules of the time, such as wearing certain outfits at certain times of the day. When out of doors, Gwendolen is frequently seen wearing a burnous, which was a sort of woolen cloak that was fashionable at the time. Another particular outfit that was necessary for a specific event is the archery dress; the narrator describes that Gwendolen's archery outfit is a "white cashmere with its border of pale green," a jacket to cover the shoulders and arms, and finished with "a thin line of gold round her neck" (Eliot 96).

Gwendolen wears green not only to archery meetings, but frequently throughout the novel. The first time the narrator describes Gwendolen at the gambling house, a spectator is comparing her to a serpent, "all green and silver, [winding] her neck about a little more than usual" (Eliot 7). The onlooker remarks that "woman was tempted by a serpent: why not man?" (7). This is an allusion to the Biblical story of The Fall, when Eve was tempted by Satan in the form of a serpent to eat the fruit from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil that the Lord told her not to eat of. She then convinces her husband Adam to sin as well, thus dooming the rest of humanity to be born sinful creatures. The comparison of Gwendolen to the archetype of the "temptress" Eve explains how Victorian fashion was often used as a statement to other people rather than an expression of the person wearing the clothing. For instance, Gwendolen carries a fan in certain scenes of the novel, and during the Victorian period, a woman would hold her fan a certain way in order to signal something to the man she was with. For example, if a woman held her fan

open in her left hand, she was signaling to someone to come and talk to her. And in Gwendolen's case, her green clothing makes a statement about her to those watching: that she is a temptress, and any man might fall into her trap of beauty. Thus, what people wore during the Victorian Age closely correlated with trying to get a partner—especially a marriage proposal. Gwendolen tries to catch the eye of tempted men in her stunning green at evening parties as well as daytime events. She dons "pale green velvet and [the] poisoned diamonds" of her husband's ex-lover to an evening show at her friend Sir Hugo's house (475). Snake imagery and poisonous venom are connected to Gwendolen throughout the novel as she wears green almost exclusively while on the marriage market.

However, once the weight of Gwendolen's confinement inside her marriage dows on her, she almost exclusively wears black as a representation of her giving up her dreams of autonomy. While Gwendolen still wears green to evening parties, she chooses black fabrics when at home or in times of distress. For example, Gwendolen asks Daniel to call on her and, while contemplating her confinement in her marriage and "the thought that [Grandcourt's] death was the only possible deliverance for her," Daniel shows up to Gwendolen and Grandcourt's house. Gwendolen had chosen a black dress that morning "with a half-admitted reference to this hour" when Daniel would be present, but she notices her "white pillar of a neck," and hurriedly decides to cover it with "a large piece of black lace[,] which she snatch[es] and [ties] over her crown of hair so as to completely conceal her neck" (Eliot 520). Fashion writer Allison Lurie explains that black, "like white,... is associated with the supernatural, but with the powers of darkness rather than those of light" (187).

Black has for a long time been “the traditional hue of mourning,” and is associated with sorrow (187). In this scene, Gwendolen attempts to cover up her “nervousness” with this black lace to shroud herself in a physical representation of the despair she is feeling at her confinement in her marriage.

In addition, the daytime dresses Gwendolen wears at home are often “black silk, cut square about the round white pillar of her throat” with a “square-cut bodice,” possibly to connect her with the deep seriousness that the color black recalls (65, 214). Gwendolen herself explains that “black is the only [thing to] wear when one is going to refuse an offer,” using her clothing to portray her haughty personality (251). In this way, Gwendolen admits to using clothing to make a statement to other people as its own language; she wants her dress to do the talking for her. Gwendolen believes that clothing can be used to convey how the wearer feels or thinks, or to get a point across without having to say it. Professor and author Elizabeth Wilson explains that, because of the prevalence of uniforms worn in factories and other “forms of classification that burgeoned with the triumph of industrial culture...,” dress became the vehicle for the display of the unique individual personality” (155). In the 1870’s, men and women’s dress were strictly different, although each gender used dress “as display or mask—or both” (Wilson 156). Gwendolen often uses her clothing to articulate how she is feeling, or to convey a message about how she is supposed to feel.

In addition to being aware of her clothing at all times, Gwendolen is also often concerned about being too flirty or coquettish, reminiscent of the temptress Eve, and Daniel Deronda himself often thinks she is acting the coquette. For

instance, while on a trip with the Grandcourts, Daniel Deronda remarks that he is “always uneasily dubious about his opinion of [Gwendolen],” although the narrator assures the reader that “there [is] not the faintest touch of coquetry in the attitude of her mind towards him,” despite her obsession with talking to him about her conflicted feelings (Eliot 355). To explain Gwendolen’s actions, Daniel says to himself, “perhaps she is a coquette” (Eliot 354). Gwendolen does not want to be viewed as a tempter of men, or as one that enjoys male attention, because being a coquette was not seen as attractive to a possible male suitor. While Gwendolen can dress in green to recall the tempting serpent, she cannot be outright flirtatious with men, or else she would be at risk of looking like a coquette, which was not a quality of the ideal “wife,” and definitely not one of the “marriageable girl.”

Professor and author Catherine England gives some insight on the balance between “coquette” and “marriageable girl” present in the marriage plot. She explains that for heroines depicted in Victorian novels, “a damaged reputation may be worth more... than a pristine one” (109). With this controversial statement, England means that “flirtation... always jeopardizes a nineteenth-century woman’s reputation” (109). Gwendolen, after she “falls” from her place in high society when her family had wealth and she was an incredibly high choice on the marriage market, becomes more sympathetic as a heroine. After she becomes “damaged” in her confining marriage, she becomes more interesting. England explains how the Victorian marriage plot tells the story of a woman who is saved “*after* being socially damaged,” as opposed to the traditional story of the salvation of a damsel in distress before she gets hurt (110). Therefore, “it is not the threat of harm but an actual

social taint that triggers a rescuing project,” a story that’s also told through Gwendolen’s financial ruin being the trigger for her marriage to Grandcourt (England 110).

When she marries Grandcourt, it looks as if Gwendolen has been saved from the worst nightmare imaginable for the upper class—financial ruin, and thus, the ruin of one’s social status—but, as seen in the progression of the novel, her independent spirit and self-seeking attitude prevent her from submitting to her husband like he wants. Gwendolen refers to marriage as “bondage,” and, as Meredith Miller says, “Eliot poses her critique of the economic subjugation of European women and their lack of personal liberty through a problematic metaphorical conflation of white women with colonial slaves” (88). In Daniel’s one conversation with his mother that’s narrated in the novel, she explains to him, “You are not a woman. You may try—but you can never imagine what it is to have a man’s force of genius in you, and yet to suffer the slavery of being a girl” (Eliot 541). Eliot additionally uses Gwendolen’s marriage to highlight “the reality of sexual exploitation and abuse,” since Grandcourt’s power over Gwendolen is disguised sexual abuse (Miller 91). For instance, after Grandcourt forces Gwendolen to meet with his friend whom Gwendolen strongly dislikes, Mr. Lush, the narrator tells us that Grandcourt thinks to himself, “She is in a desperate rage... But the rage was silent, and therefore not disagreeable to him” (Eliot 510). Grandcourt acknowledges that it’s pleasurable for him when Gwendolen is angry and indignant, yet silent, since it displays his power over her. In fact, it is agreeable for her to be angry with him, as long as she suffers quietly, like a slave might. Grandcourt then “[turns] her

chin and [kisses] her, while she [keeps] her eyelids down, and she [does] not move them until he [is] on the other side of the door" (511). This encounter tells the reader that Gwendolen is forced to commit sexual acts with Grandcourt, as well as put up with his verbal and psychological abuse, and she does so silently and aggrievedly, although her resentment builds up inside her.

Before marriage and due to her beauty and social status, Gwendolen is used to getting her way; yet, being forced into this abusive relationship that feels like "bondage" to her causes her sense of self to crumble. For example, when Grandcourt and Gwendolen arrive at one of their vacation homes in the Ryelands the night of their wedding, she receives a package that contains diamonds as, she believes, a gift from Grandcourt, yet there is also a letter from their previous wearer. Grandcourt's ex-lover, Lydia Glasher, sent them to Gwendolen at Grandcourt's request, but she includes a note that tells Gwendolen how "the man [she] married has a withered heart" because his love still belongs to Lydia, and the diamonds she will don once belonged to her (Eliot 303). The narrator explains how Gwendolen is "spell-bound" after reading this letter, and she lets the "poisoned gems" fall to the ground, reminiscent of the poisonous apple from *Snow White* and the ruining of an innocent princess (303). When Grandcourt knocks and enters the room "dressed for dinner,... Gwendolen [screams] again and again with hysterical violence,... shrieking as it seemed with terror" (303). This very alarming scene explains the effect this sinful history of Grandcourt's has on her, and explains Gwendolen's thinking of the diamonds as "poisoned" and her refusal to wear them. Rather than wearing these

diamonds as a symbol of her beauty and high-class status, Gwendolen receives this jewelry as a chain that symbolizes her bondage in her marriage to this slave master.

During her marriage, Gwendolen reaches for any sort of power she can exert over her husband, and when he tightens his grip on her and she can no longer act on her own accord, she controls the one thing she can still grasp at—her mind. As seen through the characters of Catherine Earnshaw Linton in *Wuthering Heights* and Bertha Mason in *Jane Eyre*, when headstrong women in the Victorian Era are conquered by men, they sometimes use hysteria as a strategy for getting men to do their bidding. Thus, Gwendolen adopts the actions of the “hysterical woman” to gain control over her own life in a marriage that has stripped her of any power. While Gwendolen keeps up appearances and attends grand parties and a yachting trip with Grandcourt, the narrator details her hateful thoughts towards her husband and herself, showing that her mind, at least, is still under her control. Gwendolen acknowledges that “any romantic illusions she had in marrying this man had turned on her power of using him as she liked. He was using her as he liked” (Eliot 511). Gwendolen thinks of running away, telling herself, “I will insist on being separated from him,... then, I will leave him, whether he consents or not” (515). Ultimately, Gwendolen stays married to Grandcourt, but continues to harbor ill feelings towards him. She instead tries to be happy in her miserable situation, hiding the misery of her marriage from her mother and going to Daniel Deronda for advice on how to become a better person, the “lesson” most Victorian women had to learn in order to achieve becoming “the angel of the house.” Gwendolen remains the archetype of the “marriageable girl” even though she is already married, because she doesn’t know

how to transition into “wife.” Gwendolen calls on Daniel asking for him to visit her, and when he comes to her house she tells him, “I have always been thinking of your advice, but is it any use...? I am afraid of getting wicked. Tell me what to do” (521). The reader learns later that by “wicked,” Gwendolen is referencing her desire to either leave her husband, or to hurt him.

On a yachting trip that Grandcourt forces Gwendolen to accompany him on, the couple is involved in a boating accident that pushes Grandcourt into the water, and, surprisingly, drowns him. Luckily, Daniel happens to be on the shore when the boat comes in, and he meets Gwendolen, dripping and wide-eyed, as she comes off the boat. When he visits her in her room, Daniel finds Gwendolen “seated with a white shawl wrapped round her,” a Victorian symbol for women in bad mental and/or physical health, reminiscent of Catherine Earnshaw in her “brain fever” state, also wearing white (Eliot 590). Gwendolen explains to Deronda that she had a hand in the death of her husband; a gust of wind knocked Grandcourt into the water, and he called for Gwendolen to throw him the rope, but, as her “heart gave a leap as if it were going out of [her],” she stood there with the rope stationary in her hand (596). Daniel assures her that it was shock that kept her from moving, and the fact that she jumped in after her husband shows that she did care for him and is not guilty for his death, but Gwendolen asks him, “do you think a woman who cried, and prayed, and struggled to be saved from herself, could be a murderer?” (591). Despite Daniel’s assurance, Gwendolen can’t help but think that her crying and praying to be delivered from the misery of her marriage played a part in causing Grandcourt to die. As Gwendolen is no longer married, she has no chance to adhere

to the qualities of the “wife”; but also, because of her hysterical condition, she has thrown away the title of “marriageable girl,” and thinks of herself as a “murderer.”

Gwendolen can no longer be the “marriageable girl” now that she has ruined her reputation on the marriage market through her fatal marriage to Grandcourt. However, Eliot, in *Daniel Deronda*, also tells the story of another possible “marriageable girl”: Mirah. Mirah is a young “Jewess” whom Daniel saves one night from drowning herself in the river. Mirah had run away from her controlling and spendthrift father who tried to force her to sleep with someone for money, and she is on a journey to find her mother and brother, whom her father took her from. Daniel puts Mirah in the care of his middle-class friends, the Meyerick family, who take her in and support her interest in music, while learning to overlook the fact that she is Jewish, something Victorian readers would have struggled with as well.

In Victorian England, members of religions other than Anglican, such as Jewish people, did not receive the same opportunities as the members of the Church of England. As historian Sally Mitchell explains in her book *Daily Life in Victorian England*, “a man was required to assent to the Thirty-Nine Articles of Faith in order to sit in Parliament, enter a university, or become a military officer” (241). Mitchell also explains that the “Jewish population was extremely small” in Victorian England, and Jewish people did not have the same rights as members of the Anglican Church, such as not being allowed to attend university (244). In the 1870’s when *Daniel Deronda* takes place, surges of Jewish immigrants were arriving in England from Eastern Europe, which forced Victorians to face their prejudices about Jews.

The narrator of *Daniel Deronda* explains the cultural dislike and distrust of the Jewish people through the way characters talk about and interact with Mirah. In her first conversation with Daniel, Mirah explains that she “know[s] many Jews are bad,” alluding to the stereotypes of the Jewish people at this time (Eliot 164). Mirah gives some insight into these stereotypes though, by explaining the “cunning in the men and beauty in the women” (183). In talking about Mirah, one of the members of Gwendolen and Daniel’s social circle, Mr. Klesmer, corrects Mrs. Meyerick after she says that Mirah is an angel; he says, “no... she is a pretty Jewess: the angels must not get the credit of her. But I think she has found a guardian angel” (Eliot 416). Klesmer essentially explains that Mirah cannot be an angel because she’s a Jew, but he’s sure she has someone else watching over her to bring her good fortune. Daniel himself explains how he “could not escape (who can?) knowing ugly stories of Jewish characteristics and occupations,” but through his connection with Mirah, his opinions of Jewish people change (176).

Daniel cares for Mirah because of her strength in overcoming her past misfortunes and for her “goodness”; because “whatever reverence could be shown a woman, he was bent on showing this girl” (Eliot 192). In many ways, Mirah is described similarly to Jane Eyre in her innocent piousness; however, Mirah is devoted to her Jewish faith, and Jane to her Protestant beliefs. Daniel, in being so attracted to Mirah’s goodness, tries to find Mirah’s brother named Ezra and her mother, and eventually, Daniel comes across a Jewish pawnshop owner named Ezra Cohen and his family. Through Daniel’s relationship with the Cohens while trying to figure out if they are Mirah’s family, Daniel is confronted with his existing prejudices

of Jewish people. The narrator explains that Daniel sees “every common Jew and Jewess in light of comparison with [Mirah],” and when Daniel, who grew up never knowing his real parents, receives an invitation from his mother to meet with her and finds out that he is actually Jewish too, he is very excited (Eliot 322). Daniel does find Mirah’s brother, a sick man who goes by the name of Mordecai and lives with the Cohen family, and Daniel unites the siblings, while learning all about the Jewish religion and the Hebrew language from Mordecai. Mordecai explains the connection that the Jewish religion creates for Daniel and himself, as “[their] souls know each other” because “the life of Israel is in [their] veins” (489). This connection creates a bond between Daniel and Mirah as well, because Mirah has always said she would only marry a Jew, and now Daniel and Mirah’s feelings for each other can be made public.

In the novel, Mirah is described as extremely kind, simple, and childlike; or, in Victorian terms, the ideal woman to marry as the “angel in the house.” She is very graceful and slow to anger, except when she is defending her faith. But notably, in comparison with Gwendolen, Mirah works *for* the upper class to earn her wages; she is not a member of the upper class. When Daniel finds Mirah about to drown herself, he hears her story of being forced to work as an actress by her father for money. But Mirah refuses to sell herself and, instead, runs away from him. Comparatively, when faced with a similar dilemma of a decision between selling oneself or wealth, Gwendolen chooses the money, and sells her body to Grandcourt in order to maintain her social status. In this way, Gwendolen takes on the archetype of the “whore,” while Mirah, the poor Jewess, is on the path of the wifely angel.

When Daniel finds Mirah and gives her a second chance at life, Mirah decides that she wants to be a singer, which was looked down on as it was viewed as essentially selling her body; but, through Daniel's connections, Mirah is able to sing and perform at the high-class parties Gwendolen and Daniel attend. In this way, Mirah's singing is seen as high art, rather than a form of low entertainment. For her first private concert, Mirah insists that she doesn't "want anything better than this black merino, some white gloves, and some new bottines" (417). Much to the Meyerick sisters' chagrin, Mirah would rather wear the plain black woolen dress that she wears all the time and some new slippers to her first concert than buy a fancy new outfit. However, the Meyericks eventually convince Mirah to let them buy her "a black silk dress such as ladies wear," because that is what Daniel would like for her, and, as she says, "I wish to do what Mr. Deronda would like me to do" (419). This scene is even more reminiscent of Jane Eyre in her aversion to being adorned with jewelry and rich fabrics by Rochester. But, ultimately, Mirah succumbs to the fine outfits because it allows her to be seen as part of the upper class as an artist—not as an object, like Gwendolen.

Indeed, Mirah is described as wearing common clothes for an English lady, but her outfits are nothing like the extravagance of Gwendolen's. The fashion of these two women sets them apart; Gwendolen is rich and used to getting what she wants, as shown through her colorful and ornamented clothes, while Mirah works for her wages, and is very quiet and kind, and the clothes she decides to wear are meant to avoid attention. In this way, women's clothing is a representation of morality in the novel; Mirah is conservative and traditional in both dress and her

religious values, while Gwendolen's frivolity and ornamentation place her in a morally tainted marriage.

After Mr. Grandcourt dies and Gwendolen is left a widow, those in her social circle assume that Daniel will propose to her, and they will get married, in an attempt to redeem Gwendolen as the "marriageable girl." Gwendolen seems to assume the same, or at least that Daniel will always be there for her to talk with her and make her feel better; the narrator says of Gwendolen that "her imagination had not been turned to a future union with Deronda by any other than the spiritual tie which had been continually strengthening; but also it had not been turned towards a future separation from him" (660). The narrator makes it clear that Daniel never really views Gwendolen with any romance, much to the shock of most Victorian readers. Daniel acknowledges that, much like he rescued Mirah from killing herself, Gwendolen "too need[s] a rescue," but "a rescue for which he himself [feels] helpless" (478). And, ultimately, Daniel realizes that he feels personal love for Mirah and only "self-martyring pity" for Gwendolen (637). Mirah, in a spin on the Victorian ideal of a "wife," becomes the perfect "angel in the house" with one major difference from the traditional ideal—she is Jewish.

The socially preferred marriage between the two wealthy members of the upper class is ignored in favor of a marriage between an upper-class Jew and a middle-class, working Jewess. Although Mirah is not viewed at first as the "marriageable girl" archetype within the context of the novel because of her Jewish faith and working-class status, Daniel chooses her over anyone else because she is the best marital choice. Gwendolen, although throughout her whole adolescence she

spoke of marriage as a bondage that takes away women's freedoms, crumbles without a husband and without Daniel.

When Daniel tells Gwendolen that he is going to get married and move away to pursue the Jewish faith, Gwendolen claims that she has been "forsaken" by Daniel because she is a "cruel woman," and once more makes everything about her (Eliot 690). Gwendolen "[bursts] out hysterically" in fits of crying and passion after Daniel leaves her, but by Daniel's wedding day, she makes amends through a letter to him, claiming that she is only better because of him and stating over and over again, "I shall live!" (691, 692). Gwendolen could never have been an option for a marriage to Daniel because she has been ruined by the death of her first husband and the loss of her wealth. Instead, she remains within the archetype of the beautiful, vain, and frivolous woman on the marriage market: a gambler, as she is introduced in the first scene. The novel instead concludes with a happy ending for the unmarriageable Jewess, Mirah.

Gwendolen, in some ways, is representative of the female archetype that is to come in Victorian culture: the New Woman. This woman felt fiercely independent and did not want to succumb to a traditional marriage that would strip her of her freedoms, much like Gwendolen's desire to be in control of her own life, rather than submitting to a husband's control. The "New Woman" that emerged in the decades after *Daniel Deronda* challenged the traditional gender roles that were prominent in Victorian culture. The New Woman fought for "emancipation from the Victorian cult of true womanhood" by stepping out of the domestic sphere and protesting female gender roles (Ardis 2). This fight consisted of the suffragette movement, women

moving into the workplace, and women who “defied the Victorian social code by speaking out in public” over issues like animal rights and better conditions for prostitutes (Ardis 15). In regard to marriage, ideas started circulating that gave women more agency over themselves in an institution that was previously all about serving someone else: one’s husband. This new movement allowed “the ‘pure woman’ [to be] transformed” and created room for expressions of women’s sexuality (Ardis 60). Authors during this period in Victorian history “expose[d] the contradiction of romantic love as they question[ed] the plausibilities of the marriage plot,” and bridged the divide between the “pure” and the “fallen” woman (Ardis 61). However, in 1876, these ideas weren’t circulating widely in the Victorian popular culture yet, and Gwendolen did not know how to handle her desire to upset cultural tradition by refusing marriage. She instead fell into an unfulfilling and corruptive marriage to save herself from accepting the low social status of financial ruin. Meanwhile, ideas that would blossom into the emergence of the New Woman were stirring, and by the time Bram Stoker wrote of Mina Harker’s interest in female independence in *Dracula* in 1897, the idea of the New Woman was extremely popular and would change British gender roles profoundly.

"If ever there was a woman who was all perfection, that one is my poor wronged darling": The Madonna/Whore Archetype in *Dracula*

In the year 1851, it is estimated that there were over 8,000 prostitutes on the streets of London (Roberts 63). Citizens of London knew of the existence of this occupation, and usually avoided talking about it. Prostitutes and loose or immoral women, or "the fallen woman, as Victorians liked to call the victim of seduction," were the subject of many Pre-Raphaelite paintings of the period (Roberts 63). The Pre-Raphaelite period, an era in art history that deals largely with nature and "enlightened," or spiritually aware, women, occurred during the 1850's and included many famous male painters depicting fallen women, such as in Augustus Egg's painting "Past and Present No. 1." This image, the first of three paintings by the artist that chronicles a wife's journey in infidelity, depicts the moment a



husband finds out his wife is an adulterer. He holds in his hand a crumpled-up letter as his wife lies prostrate at his feet, her hands clasped as if in shackles. Lying next to her is half an apple, harkening back to the Biblical Fall of Man when the wife Eve tempted her husband Adam to eat of the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, while the half that represents this husband still lies on the table, stabbed through the center. While the husband stares with an empty expression out into the room, the

couple's two children are futilely building a house of cards. All of this symbolism is meant to heighten the shock of the sin the woman has committed as the entire family feels the effects of her unfaithfulness. This woman, who is begging for forgiveness at her husband's feet, has fallen into a temptation of which there was no redemption because of the corruption of the pure domestic space she is supposed to maintain as the Victorian wife. And because of this unforgiveable crime, she must eventually leave the family and the idyllic home, hence the mirrored image of an open door awaiting her departure. As Victorian literary critic Nina Auerbach says of the fallen woman, "her imaginative resonance justifies the punishment to which she is subjected," which is "an exile from woman's conventional family-bounded existence" ("Woman" 157, 150).

If the Victorian fallen woman is a result of a fleeting but disastrous temptation, the "whore," though, is a woman who chooses to live promiscuously because she enjoys it, or she doesn't care what people think of her. This "whore" does not "fall" into evil, but willingly walks into it, and her sexuality makes up her very nature, rather than being changed as the result of a falling into temptation, as the fallen woman is. There is a distinction, then, between the two archetypes, because the "whore" is seen as pushy and forceful for sex, while a fallen woman could be any woman who accidentally or momentarily falls into temptation.

The opposite of "the fallen woman" in the Victorian period was the "angel in the house." This archetype can be traced to the poem *The Angel in the House* by Coventry Patmore in 1854, in which he describes "in great detail the many wonderful qualities that make... the protagonist a perfect bride and wife" (Kühl 172-

173). The “angel of the house” was “modest, chaste and innocent,” submissive to her husband while supporting him, and cared for her children (Kühl 173). Nina Auerbach describes this domestic Victorian angel in her book *Woman and the Demon*. She says, “angels were thought to be meekly self-sacrificial” as “pious emblems” (7). Victorian ideology cast “angels as irrefutably female and by definition domestic” (“Woman” 64). Referencing Patmore’s poem, Auerbach says it supports the idea that women were “enveloped in family life and seeking no identity beyond the role of daughter, wife, and mother” (“Woman” 69).

An “angel of the house,” then, was represented as chaste and modest, selfless in regard to her husband and children, and invested in her spiritual life. She and her innocence were protected by being kept “away from any potential bad influences and temptations” through her confinement in the domestic sphere (Kühl 173). In this way, the “angel of the house” is similar to the “virgin,” ignorant of sex until “the day of [her] wedding,” since “chastity was expected and idealized as a female virtue” (Kühl 174). The “virgin’s” innocence must be protected to keep her from being seduced by the sinful nature of the world or the allure of sex and male attention; falling into these temptations would mark her as a fallen woman.

Similar to the concepts of the “angel of the house” and the “virgin” is the Madonna archetype. The ideal Victorian, middle-class woman was the curator of domestic bliss. “Sentiment’s favorite domain in Victorian times was near the warm cozy heart of the home where the wife... waited patiently for the return of her husband” (Showalter 48). It was the ideal wife’s job to create a warm and loving home, to be sweet and graceful. As research assistant Katharina Mewald outlines in

her article “The Emancipation of Mina,” “the prototype of the ideal Victorian woman” was to be “devoted to her future husband,” and “to become a good wife and mother” as an “angel of the house” (1). This “Madonna” is very “focused on marriage” and contains “overflowing emotionality” (1, 2). The “Madonna” is pure, even if she is not a virgin, because she only uses her sexuality in service of child bearing within matrimony. Thus, the “Madonna” embodies all of the characteristics of the three archetypes discussed: she is caregiver, devoted wife, and angel.

With all of these archetypes and the expectations of women that had developed over the sixty-some years of the Victorian Age, during the decade that Bram Stoker writes *Dracula* in 1897, the New Woman emerged. This figure and the movement it espoused pushed for redefining the traditional role of the woman as women’s constrictive clothing, women’s lack of the right to vote, and separate spheres for women were challenged. Women started to be more active outdoors, and “the old, rigid society mold was visibly breaking up” (Laver 211). This New Woman was “uninterested in marriage and children” as traditional values started to decline (Buzwell). As these “New Woman” ideas gained popularity, so did the Aesthetic movement, which highlighted “art for art’s sake” as “[fulfilling] important ethical roles” that “unsettled and challenged the values of mainstream Victorian culture” (Burdett). The term “‘decadence’ was in use as an aesthetic term across Europe” that meant “a process of ‘falling away’ or decline” (Burdett). Overall, these ideas of social change upset the traditional Victorian values that had been in place for the last century.

These progressive ideas affected fashion, as women needed less-restrictive clothing to accommodate for their more active lives. Bicycling outfits and other types of sporting costumes became more available, consisting of a divided skirt and bloomers made out of dark colors and materials such as tweed. In evening wear, the waistline fell to just above the hips, and the skirt lost its bustle. Women donned long suede gloves with multiple buttons, and would accessorize with fans, jewelry, and furs. Overall, the silhouette was slimmer than in years past, with a straighter, bell-shaped skirt which required fewer petticoats than the years leading up to the 1890s.

In Bram Stoker's *Dracula*, the story follows Mina Harker and her childhood friend Lucy Westenra as they encounter the vampire Count Dracula. Mina outright condemns the "New Woman" in her diary that narrates much of the novel, disapproving of their ideas that she sees as outrageous, like the idea "that men and women should be allowed to see each other asleep before proposing or accepting [marriage]," and if "traditional" women like Mina are not careful, Mina thinks that soon it will be the women who propose (Stoker 87). In this way, Mina is set up to be anti-confrontational and complacent with the traditional and accepted role she must play. Her traditional values are not uncommon with those of other women throughout the Victorian Era. For example, in a manual entitled *The Ladies' Hand-Book of the Toilet, A Manual of Elegance and Fashion* published in 1843, the author explains, "the healthy and delicate tints of the complexion are liable to be seriously injured by too much exposure to the sun and air" (7). The author warns women not to spend too much time outside for fear of ruining their complexion. At the time that the "New Woman" emerged, these traditional ideas of female seclusion were still

held by many Victorians. But, as student Sarah Kühl explains, the “New Woman” emerged as a third option to the “angel of the house” and the “fallen woman.” She explains, “this new category provided a way out of this confining opposition and allowed women to slowly redefine who they wanted to be” (177). While neither Mina nor Lucy ever completely adopt the ideas of the “New Woman,” throughout the novel, their characters don’t stay within the confines of their separate archetypes. Stoker complicates their set paths, mainly through the interference of Count Dracula.

Dracula follows the stories of two women: Lucy Westenra, a wealthy young girl who is the first to be preyed upon by Dracula, and her childhood friend Mina Harker, a schoolmistress; as well as five men: Jonathan Harker, who works as Dracula’s solicitor; Dr. Seward, Lucy’s doctor and admirer; Dr. Van Helsing, Seward’s mentor and vampire expert; Quincey Morris, another one of Lucy’s admirer’s; and Arthur Holmwood, Lucy’s third admirer and eventual fiancé. Jonathan is sent to Castle Dracula in Transylvania to help Dracula buy a house in London. However, Jonathan immediately notices something is wrong when Dracula forces him to write a letter to his fiancé Mina, telling her everything is fine and that he will be staying with Dracula for a while. Jonathan is then confined in the castle, and witnesses horrible scenes such as Dracula climbing down the castle wall like a spider, and three vampire women visiting him at night and trying to suck blood from his neck. During this period that Jonathan is incarcerated before he escapes, Mina lives with Lucy in Whitby, while Lucy enjoys the affections of her male suitors.

Within the course of a few days, Lucy has many male suitors pining for her attention. She first talks of a Mr. Holmwood in a letter to Mina, saying that he "often comes to see" her and gets on well with her mother (Stoker 56). Lucy then immediately tells of a doctor who Mr. Holmwood introduced her to, and states how well he would suit Mina, if she were not already engaged to Jonathan Harker. Lucy flirts with the idea of having two men at once and, thus, normalizes this desire. Lucy goes on to describe how handsome, clever, and fancy the doctor is, being resolute and calm. But immediately following her description of this doctor, which we learn in another letter is Dr. John Seward, she states that she loves Arthur Holmwood, and is "blushing" as she writes the letter to Mina (57). She explains, much like a child would in a diary, "Oh Mina, I love him; I love him; I love him!" (57). She finishes the letter with a P.S.: "I need not tell you this is a secret—" much like an adolescent would say in a note to their best friend slipped under the classroom table (57).

In Lucy's next letter to Mina, she surprises her with the news that, although she "shall be twenty in September, and yet [has] never had a proposal," she has, in one day, received three (57). For about half a page Lucy rambles on about how great it is to be engaged, and how lucky they both are when some girls their age aren't. Finally, she tells Mina the names of the three men: Arthur Holmwood, Dr. Seward, and Mr. Quincey Morris from Texas in the United States. Lucy expresses concern at Mina's opinion of her and her fear that Mina will think her "a horrid flirt," but Lucy seems to be too excited at having three marriage proposals in one day to worry too much about that (59).

While excited by the idea of three prospects, Lucy does not outright trespass the boundaries of feminine propriety that Victorian society has set for her. Her dialogue about the men is not predatory or greedy, but it affirms the feminine societal expectations that Lucy aligns with. She wants to get married, as she states by telling Mina, "I don't want to be free," and she is relieved at having three opportunities to fulfill this desirable societal requirement (Stoker 61). Many readings of Lucy in *Dracula* define her as the "whore," hungrily soaking up the male attention as she revels in her coquettishness. But as Ph.D. student Leah Davydov explains in her thesis, "Lucy is consistent with Stoker's subservient feminine ideal" by narrowing "her matrimonial choices by informing Seward and Morris that her affections already belong to another" (9). In relaying the three proposals, Lucy explains how upset they made her because she would have to turn two men away "looking all broken-hearted" (58). She does not lead the men on, but instead feels bad for crushing their hope to be with her. Lucy even goes so far as to ask, "why can't they let a girl marry three men, or as many as want her, and save all this trouble? (60). She states this not because she wants three men all to herself, but because she doesn't want to make them feel bad, caring more about the men's feelings than her own. Davydov explains, "Lucy's phrasing clearly indicated that the romantic desire at play... is not her longing for multiple men but rather multiple men's longing for her" (10). In turning down Quincey Morris's proposal, Lucy describes how she "burst into tears," looking into his eyes while "crying like a baby" (60). She cries in her letter to Mina, "why are men so noble when we women are so little worthy of them?" (60). Lucy told a similar story when she turned down Dr.

Seward, involving many tears and him feeling bad for upsetting her. Through these stories relayed in letters to Mina, we see Lucy's "emotional hypersensitivity rather than her sexual appetite," as Lucy cares about the men in her life rather than using them as toys for her own desires (Davydov 10). Lucy is not the "whore," but rather, as we will see shortly, she is the "fallen woman."

Lucy's sexual desire is starting to become complicated. While Lucy has good intentions in wishing to marry all three men so none of them have to be turned away broken-hearted, she still flirts with the idea and adores all of the male attention. She also admits to kissing Quincey Morris after she turned down his proposal. She also kisses Arthur Holmwood, her fiancé; it is notable that Lucy kisses more than one man. This shows that Lucy is easily seduced; while she wants to stay "pure" and does her best to be the proper Victorian woman in courtship, she has been "Victorianized" to be weak, which makes her vulnerable not just to male attention, but also to Count Dracula.

Even after Lucy accepts Arthur Holmwood's marriage proposal, the other two men don't stop pining for her. Quincey Morris explains this when he refers to Lucy as "that poor pretty creature that we all love" (Stoker 138). And in a sense, all three men—plus, eventually, Dr. Van Helsing—get their moment to "marry" Lucy through the transferal of their blood into her veins. Lucy mysteriously becomes ill whenever she wakes up in the morning, and the only idea anyone has as to what she is sick with is Arthur's declaration of a "disease of the heart" (104). Dr. Seward invites his mentor Dr. Van Helsing to come to London to help with Lucy's case, and when he arrives, he declares that Lucy needs a blood transfusion. Van Helsing tells

Arthur “you are the lover of our dear miss,” and he is the only one who can help her (113). Even though Arthur is very nervous, he says, “if you only knew how gladly I would die for her” before he lets Van Helsing hook Arthur up to a transfusion machine. Arthur is very weak after he gives so much blood to Lucy, yet “life” comes “back to poor Lucy’s cheeks” as Arthur, “the brave lover,” lies down and wins a kiss from the sleeping Lucy (115). The image Stoker paints is almost one reminiscent of the classic fairy tales of Snow White and Sleeping Beauty, whose handsome princes steal a kiss from the sleeping maidens.

After this moment of triumph though, Van Helsing notices “two punctures” on Lucy’s neck that look connected to her loss of blood, and it is because of this wound that Lucy once again finds herself on the verge of death three mornings later (115). When Drs. Seward and Van Helsing find Lucy “more horribly white and wan-looking than ever,” this time Arthur is not present, and John Seward donates blood. This description of Lucy harkens back to the often-repeated fairytales, describing Sleeping Beauty, essentially dead, as so beautiful that the Prince must kiss her lifeless body. There is this almost grotesque attraction to lifeless femininity, fetishizing the dead as a Gothic trope of femininity. And as Seward eagerly volunteers to share his blood with Lucy, he comments that “it was with a feeling of personal pride that I could see a faint tinge of color steal back into the pallid cheeks and lips,” because “no man knows till he experiences” the feeling of “his own life-blood” transferring to “the veins of the woman he loves” (119). Van Helsing does more to prevent Lucy’s blood loss after this, putting a wreath of garlic around her neck to ward off evil spirits. But despite all of the doctors’ preparations, Lucy’s

incompetent mother removes the foul-smelling flowers in the middle of the night, and Lucy once again wakes up almost dead. This third time, Van Helsing himself donates his blood, as Dr. Seward is “weakened already” (124). And finally, a fourth time Lucy greets the morning sun in a weakened state after the presence of a wolf in her bedroom, and the arrival of the Texan Quincey Morris offers himself as a fresh prospect to donate blood, since the two doctors are exhausted after a night caring for Lucy, and her fiancé is not there.

In this way, all four men share their blood with Lucy, and doing something that Van Helsing initially said should only be done between a man and his lover. All four men’s blood runs in Lucy’s veins, and she is now a part of all of their bodies. Later in the novel, Van Helsing refers to Arthur giving blood and asks whether “the transfusion of his blood to her veins had made her truly his bride? If so that, then[,] what about the others? Ho, ho! Then this so sweet maid is a polyandrist,” or being married to more than one man at a time (158). As “the vast majority of England’s residents professed some variety of Protestant Christianity,” a common value was for marriage to be between one man and one woman, as described in the Bible through the first marriage of Adam and Eve (Mitchell 239). This scandalous portion of the book, then, could only be included during this “decadence” period in late Victorian history when traditional sexual values and gender boundaries were being usurped.

However, overall, the women in *Dracula* adhere to traditional Victorian femininity by being very frail and emotional, freely showing “feminine” emotions such as sadness, fright, or empathy. We see this in not only Mina and Lucy, but in the

character of Lucy's mother. The men trying to heal Lucy from her strange illness constantly keep information from her elderly mother in order to "save" Mrs. Westenra from shock. Van Helsing explains that the men must "say no word to Madame" because they "know how it is with her! There must be no shock; any knowledge of this would be one" (Stoker 114). Mina, in a diary entry, reveals that Lucy's mother's "heart is weakening," and "a sudden shock would be almost sure to kill her" (92). Of course, Mina has not told Lucy that her mother is sick, because she doesn't want Lucy to worry or be upset. The most ladylike and appropriate diagnosis for a proper Victorian woman seems to be an ailment of the heart, given to both Lucy's mother and also Lucy at the end of their lives. But, unfortunately, despite everyone's tiptoeing around Mrs. Westenra, she receives the biggest shock of her life when she unknowingly and blindly walks into Lucy's bedroom one night to comfort her and starts at the "crash at the window," rips the garlic off of Lucy's neck, and dies from fright at the appearance of a "great, gaunt grey wolf" in the middle of the bedroom (131).

Like her mother, Lucy also adheres to the fragile Victorian female ideal, adhering to a culture of moral sentiment through her "feminine" emotions, most often represented through crying and her empathy. It was popular in Victorian England for a woman to seem fragile and small. Allison Lurie, writer and critic, attributes this ideal to gender roles. She says that "in an emergency" a woman must rely "on the protection of the nearest gentleman" because a woman was seen as too weak to do things herself (219). A Victorian woman wanted to be "saved" from the loneliness of a single life and poverty by a man who would marry her and bring her

domesticity and comfort through his wealth. Lucy explains this desire in a letter to Mina: "I suppose that we women are such cowards that we think a man will save us from fears, and we marry him" (Stoker 59). In turning down her suitors, Lucy also cries while talking to them, and when she tries thinking about it all later, she cries writing her letters to Mina while telling of her crying. She is also afraid to be left alone, hoping one night "that Dr. Seward was in the next room—as Dr. Van Helsing said he would be—so that [she] might have called him" if something scary happened (Stoker 130-131). Obviously, Lucy is a conventional Victorian woman: dependent on men and emotionally expressive.

Yet Lucy is also infantilized by the men in her life because of the way she acts. When turning down Quincey Morris's marriage proposal, he grabs her hands and says, "That's my brave girl" (60). He calls her "little girl" two more times during their conversation, and asks, "Won't you give me one kiss?" (60). Lucy herself admits to "crying like a baby," and appreciating how sweet Quincey is with her (60). Later, while Lucy is on her sick bed, Van Helsing gives her a wreath of garlic "flowers," explaining that they are "not for [her] to play with," treating her as a child would not be allowed to play with a dangerous object, such as a knife. Dr. Seward directly calls her his "child," and as she is "sick and weak" she must be taken care of (144). And when Dr. Seward calls Mina "little girl," Mina understands that it's a sign of his good feelings of friendship towards her because they are "the very words he had used to Lucy" (204). Thus, Lucy is infantilized as the "virgin" archetype would be: innocent, yet capable of corruption and seduction. This view of her as both innocent and

seducable, i.e., like a child, is also seen through the clothes she wears throughout the novel.

In her letters and diary, Lucy talks a bit about her attitudes towards clothing. It can be assumed that because she is wealthy and obsessed with love and boys, she would be very into fashion. But in a letter to Mina, she states, "I do not... take



sufficient interest in dress to be able to describe the new fashions" (Stoker 57). She even goes so far as to say, "dress is a bore," stating this fact as a secret she is revealing to Mina (57). It is so surprising that Lucy is not interested in clothing that she says Dr. Seward wants to do a "psychological study" on her (57). However, this does not mean that Lucy does not try to look her best, because Mina describes Lucy's "beautiful color" that makes her look "sweetly pretty in her white lawn frock," a dress similar to the one pictured above (Stoker 65). White lawn is a thin cotton or linen fabric that Lucy is associated with. The white clothing and thin fabric serves to paint Lucy as innocent or childlike because of the color white's "long association with infancy and early childhood," thus suggesting "delicacy, and even physical infirmity or weakness" (Lurie 185). This makes Lucy seem not only delicate and fragile, but vulnerable.

There are also specific mentions of the clothing Lucy wears during her encounters with Count Dracula that align her with a more erotic and racy implication than that of pretty and innocent white. The night that Mina wakes up and notices Lucy missing, Mina infers that, because Lucy's dressing-gown, which

"would mean house," and her dress, which would mean "outside," are still in their places, Lucy is only in her nightgown, an outfit similar to this "dressing sack" pictured here, and must not be far from her bedroom (Stoker 87). Mina explains that "the clothes [Lucy wears] might give...some clue to her dreaming intention," as Lucy is prone to sleep walking (87). This explains the importance of wearing "appropriate" clothing during the Victorian era. When Mina finds the hall door wide open, she knows Lucy must be outside, and she grabs "a big, heavy shawl" for Lucy to wear (87). The description that follows paints a scene in stark black-and-white because of "the bright, full moon, with heavy black, driving clouds, which [throws] the whole scene into a fleeting diorama of light and shade" (87). Mina finds Lucy, "a half-reclining figure" on the bench of the church-yard, "snowy white" (88). As she approaches, Mina thinks she sees "something dark..., long and black" standing over "where the white figure" of Lucy sits, but when she gets to Lucy she finds her alone (88). Clothing writer and historian Anne Hollander explains, "black and white used together have a dramatic beauty without the need of symbolism," something accomplished in this scene (369). And in "European society, where the symbolism of each is important, they both cancel and support each other" (Hollander 369). Lucy is embodying both the whiteness of the "angel" and the blackness of the "whore."



b

This contrasting symbolism is apparent within the icon of the white nightdress and the dark shawl. In her diary, Mina notes that Lucy, still asleep, instinctively “[pulls] the collar of her nightdress close round her throat,” and Mina throws the “warm shawl” over her and fastens it with a safety pin (88). Mina is very concerned about Lucy’s “unclad” appearance and bare feet, and she hopes no one notices their state of undress as she helps Lucy home, who, even in her chilled and unclad state, does “not lose her grace” (89). Mina’s concern aligns with the author of *The Ladies’ Hand-Book of the Toilet* in believing that “an unruffled state of mind is essential to the preservation of personal beauty,” and she wants to preserve Lucy’s (5). But she can’t: Lucy is out in public in nothing but her nightdress and bare feet. Mina attempts to protect her with the adornment of a shawl, a popular Victorian outer garment. Writer Allison Lurie says that women in the Victorian Era “were redefined as something between children and angels,” seen through the way the men in *Dracula* treat Mina and Lucy with wariness and reverence (216). “The more... helpless a woman looked,” such as Lucy unable to care for herself while she is sick and sleepwalking, “the more elegant and beautiful she was perceived as being” (Lurie 216). Thin clothing such as shawls subjected women to sicknesses like cold and consumption, or tuberculosis, and despite Mina’s attempt to warm Lucy with the use of a shawl, it would not be as effective as clothing made out of a thicker material, or a coat. Additionally, the fact that Lucy is wearing a nightgown in this scene when she comes face-to-face with the deathly villain Count Dracula automatically links her to illness because “ghostly thin white nightdresses” such as what Lucy is wearing in this scene connect to sickness and sensuality (Lurie 256). In

the Victorian Age, “illness was sexually exciting” and white nightdresses were a symbol of sickness and death (Lurie 256). Lucy is available to the night, nearly naked in her nightgown, walking through the town. She is completely vulnerable in her nightgown, and because of her weakness and Victorian female fragility, Lucy aids her seduction by Dracula. Because of this symbolism, Lucy’s resulting death is hinted at, and its erotic nature is foreshadowed.

As mentioned previously, the sharing of blood between Lucy and her “harem” of men is sexualized, and it means Lucy essentially had sexual relations with all of them. In a similar way, Count Dracula feasting on Lucy’s blood and sucking it from her neck is portrayed in an erotic sense, painting Lucy as the “whore,” because she has “had sex” with multiple men. And, in fact, nowhere in the book does a reader see a vampire feast upon a human of the same gender. In the beginning of the novel, Dracula does not molest Jonathan, but rather sends his three female vampires to feast upon him. These same females come back at the end of the novel to tease and try to coerce Dr. Van Helsing to come to them, calling Mina their “sister” (Stoker 317). Dracula, on the other hand, only drinks blood from women, and in this portion of his long life, we only see him drink from Lucy and Mina. Dracula himself associates drinking one’s blood to “being one” with them, as seen when, in Mina’s account of his molestation of her, he says, “you are now to me, flesh of my flesh, blood of my blood, kin of my kin” (252). These phrases are taken from the Biblical account of when God made Eve from Adam’s rib, and Adam says these same words to her as his wife. In this way, Dracula links himself and Mina in a matrimonial connection. Literary critic Phyllis Roth explains that “only relations with vampires

are sexualized in this novel," and the relationships between Lucy and her three suitors, and then between Mina and Jonathan, "are spiritualized beyond credibility" (414). Therefore, Roth points out, vampirism is equivalent to sexuality.

Because Dracula is a vampire, and it is known through folklore that vampires are nocturnal, he only comes to Lucy during the night, and always in her bed while she is sleeping. He has a hold on her, controlling her dreams and forcing her to sleepwalk to him. Because Lucy no longer has control over her choices and is essentially a different person as one of Dracula's vampire women, she has been taken over as a "whore." Right before her death, she looks at her fiancé Arthur "with all the soft lines matching the angelic beauty of her eyes" (Stoker 146). And yet, suddenly, Lucy's demeanor changes, and "in a sort of sleep-waking, vague, unconscious way" she eagerly asks Arthur to come kiss her "in a soft, voluptuous voice" (146). Lucy is teetering on the divide between two selves: "she is all silly and sweetness in the daylight, but as Dracula's powers invade her, she becomes a florid predator at night" ("Woman" 22). Lucy is very seductive, overcome with her vampire instincts and subject to their desires, as a Victorian prostitute would have been viewed. Victorian critic Nina Auerbach puts the "fallen woman" within the context of Victorian prostitution and writes how prostitution was seen as morally corruptive, because "once cast into solitude, the fallen woman... is irretrievably metamorphosed" ("Woman" 160). Lucy has been pushed over the edge, so to speak; she has shared enough blood and been intimate with Dracula enough times to be "too far gone," and transforming into both a "fallen woman" and a vampire. It's important to note that "only when Lucy becomes a vampire is she allowed to be

'voluptuous'" (Roth 414). Thus, she must die, because "death does not simply punish or obliterate the fallen woman: its ritual appearance alone does her justice" ("Woman" 161). Lucy has to be redeemed through death, but she cannot yet find this redemption because she is now "undead," as Van Helsing points out. Lucy cannot be redeemed from her whoredom because she is not truly dead. As Van Helsing says, "it is only the beginning!" (Stoker 147).

The four men then set out to kill Lucy: a difficult task, as they all love her. But the men read in the newspaper of how a beautiful woman is roaming the streets at night, stealing children and almost killing them. It is no coincidence that the humans that the vampire Lucy goes after are children; in life, she desired to fulfill the Victorian female expectation of marriage and domestic bliss. Lucy never got married, and she never had any children, and thus she is trying to fulfill that need in death. A fallen woman is subject to "exile from woman's conventional family-bounded existence," according to Nina Auerbach, and vampire Lucy is protesting this subjection ("Woman" 150). The men are able to track her movements, find her vampire body in her casket "more radiantly beautiful than ever," and drive a stake through her heart and cut off her head (Stoker 178). They create a Christian ceremony out of killing Lucy, who is wearing the blood of innocent children that "stain[s] the purity of her lawn death-robe" (Stoker 187). The men fill Lucy's mouth with garlic and place holy communion wafers around her grave. This undead spin on the tale of Sleeping Beauty is notably different because the men are not killing the "Lucy" they know and love, as she is no longer Lucy, but a vampire. She is no

longer the “fallen woman,” but takes on the embodiment of “whore” while she no longer controls or owns her own body.

Van Helsing explains that Lucy’s body, in her vampire state, “is her body, and yet not it... you shall see her as she was, and is” (190). Van Helsing is saying that as Lucy finally dies, she is no longer a vampire, but once again her “sweet and pure” self (192). The tempted, vulnerable girl has long been dead; but, since the vampire is finally gone as well, so is the “whore.” She is no longer a fallen woman because she has been redeemed from her transgressions through death. By dying, Lucy’s sins as a fallen woman pass away with her. Her fiancé does not see her anymore as the “whore,” but mourns her death as his sweet fiancé Lucy. And throughout the rest of the novel, whenever anyone references Lucy, they do so with reverence and love, calling her “poor dear Lucy” in forgiveness of her forced whoredom (202).

Every Victorian novel discussed across this project has contained a doubling of female characters, and *Dracula* is no exception. Stoker uses Lucy as the corruption of the possibility of a proper Victorian woman, but he uses Mina to represent both the “Madonna” archetype and the “angel of the house.” In the beginning of the novel when the reader first hears of Mina mentioned in Jonathan’s diary, he explains her fragility and innocence, saying that “it would shock and frighten her to death” if he were to tell her of the horrible things he’s seen while at Castle Dracula (Stoker 45). She shows the same emotional capacities that Lucy has, crying very often and openly. Mina explains in a letter to Lucy how she “cried, Lucy dear, as Jonathan and the old man clasped hands,” and later how “a cry does us all good at times” (140, 162). Reading Jonathan’s journal that he kept while in

confinement in Dracula's castle, she cries again, and recalling the turmoil he experienced, she becomes hysterical (165). However, it's important to note that Mina is not as vulnerable as Lucy is, despite all these tears. From the very beginning of the novel, Mina is engaged to Jonathan, and never wavers in her choice or flirts with other men.

Following her marriage to Jonathan, Mina spends her days concerned for her husband during his recovery from his "brain fever" and traumatic trip to Castle Dracula (161). She finds comfort in "sitting by his bedside, where [she] can see his face while he sleeps" (99). She prepares dinner for him, worries about his mental health, and makes sure she looks good for him (168, 303, 166). Mina is ever the caregiver, not only for Jonathan, but also in watching after Lucy while Lucy is ill. While spending the night with Lucy, Mina wakes up to find her missing, and goes outside looking for her. Mina finds her in the churchyard next to Lucy's house, but she also sees "something dark" bent over Lucy's figure (Stoker 88). When she gets to Lucy, her friend is alone, and Mina pins a shawl around her shoulders. In her journal, Mina writes that she is "filled with anxiety about Lucy, not only for her health," but also for her "reputation" (89). Mina continues to care for and watch over Lucy for the next few days, until she leaves to be with Jonathan to care for him. In this way, Mina acts as the "Madonna—" the pure and selfless mother and caregiver.

Mina also plays the archetype of the "angel of the house" as a devoted wife. Jonathan describes her as "so good and so brave," and she always puts Jonathan first (Stoker 254). When he is happy, she is joyful; she explains in her diary that once he is not "weighed down with the responsibility of his new position" at work, she

"rejoice[s]" (160). Mina is able to offer Arthur Holmwood comfort that he has not experienced since the death of his beloved Lucy; Mina comments that there must be "something in woman's nature that makes a man feel free to break down before her and express his feelings on the tender or emotional side without feeling it derogatory to his manhood" (203). According to her wisdom, "no one but a woman can help a man when he is in trouble of the heart," and she is determined to fulfill this proverb (204).

However, Mina not only carries these feminine qualities of the heart, but she possesses male attributes of the mind. Despite her own critique of the New Woman, Mina embodies some characteristics of this movement as a corruption of traditional Victorian female values. Mina is a working woman, as established in her first letter to Lucy, and throughout the novel, she serves the vampire-killing men through her masculine knowledge and skill in typing and keeping notes. During the Victorian period, men traditionally worked in secretarial positions, so Mina's skill with a typewriter and duty as the group's scribe would have been seen as masculine. Van Helsing even goes so far to say, "she has a man's brain... and a woman's heart" (207). Mina and her morals are not wavering; she possesses a feminine emotional capacity, as Lucy does, by feeling, caring, and crying often, but Mina is not depicted as weak and vulnerable. The men care for her, but she never has romantic interest in any of them, showing that her heart is not easily swayed or vulnerable to seduction.

Mina spends weeks typing up Dr. Seward's phonographic diary and pouring over all of the records and information they have about Count Dracula, working hard to benefit the group. Additionally, Mina's own writings, in her diary and her

letters, become a part of this record that makes up the text of *Dracula*. However, the men deliberately decide to leave Mina out of the plans they make on their journey to find and kill Dracula, because she is “too precious to [them] to have such risk” (213). They ask her to “let us men do the work,” feeling that they are protecting her from the horrors of hunting Count Dracula (218). They decide that there is certain work a woman should be allowed to do to aide and support the group, but at another level, Mina cannot handle too much information, similar to the patronizing way the men treated Lucy and her mother. Because of this disjunction, the men end up putting her in danger through their complacency.

While the group is staying at Dr. Seward’s house making their plan to find Dracula, Jonathan notices that Mina “looks a little too pale” (Stoker 230). Mina continues to look sickly and act disinterested during the day, instead fretting over Jonathan’s secret missions and his safety, and then one night the group breaks into Mina and Jonathan’s room to find “a tall, thin man, clad in black” and Mina’s “white nightdress... smeared with blood” and her face forced against the man’s bosom (247). Chaos ensues as the figure turns into “a faint vapor,” and Mina let out a “scream so wild, so ear-piercing, so despairing,” and Jonathan wakes from his stupor as everyone relays what has happened (248). Mina, “a pearl among women” and “all perfection,” has been forced to drink Dracula’s blood and has become “unclean!” (194, 270, 248). Even this angel figure, who holds so much masculine knowledge and skill, is overpowered and, essentially, raped by this monster. However, there is a vital distinction to be made: Mina is not seduced; she does not possess a weak and vulnerable heart like Lucy did, and this provides Mina with the possibility of

redemption in life, rather than in death. While Lucy transformed completely into the “whore” as she became undead, Mina teeters on the divide between being fallen and a whore, and can thus be redeemed without having to die.

Literary critic Christopher Craft describes the sexual nature of Mina’s assault by Dracula. He explains that this scene is “the novel’s only explicit scene of vampiric seduction..., important enough to be twice presented” (457). By forcing Mina to drink of his blood while also drinking hers, Dracula “introduces her to a world where gender distinctions collapse, where male and female bodily fluids intermingle terribly” (457). By drinking Dracula’s blood “spurting” from his chest, it acts as both “a symbolic act of fellation and a lurid nursing,” and Mina is unable to give the “fluid” that leaves his breast a name (Craft 457). Mina instead recounts the assault by describing how she “must either suffocate or swallow some of the—Oh, my God, my God! What have I done?” (Stoker 252). Mina describes being forced to drink his blood as a mother cat leading its kitten to a saucer of milk, interfusing “masculine and feminine functions, as Dracula here becomes a lurid mother offering not a breast but an open and bleeding wound” (Craft 458). There is no doubt that Mina has been raped, forced against her will to drink of Count Dracula’s tainted blood, while also giving up to him some of her own. It contrasts the Catholic holy communion ceremony that tells the story of Jesus’ Last Supper with his disciples before his death; rather than a communion of bread and wine representing Christ’s body and blood, the blood Mina drinks is that of the devil.

After a moment of despair, the group decides that “Mina should be in full confidence, that nothing... should be kept from her” (253). Although, this attitude

doesn't last for long, as they later take that privilege away. Reflective of common ideas of women during the Victorian Age, men often didn't trust women with large amounts of information or heavy topics such as politics and money. But Mina shows that she can handle a lot of stress and be calm under pressure; almost immediately after Mina's traumatic encounter, her husband falls apart, and she is forced to speak rationally and lovingly to him. She says to Jonathan, "Do not fret, dear. You must be brave and strong, and help me through this horrible task" (250). She has to give him even more advice later on when she tells him to give Dracula grace, because one day "[she] too may need such pity" if she turns into a vampire for good (269). And even when the men get close to catching Dracula but don't, they come home to Mina, and she immediately opens her arms, saying, "I can never thank you all enough," encouraging them, "all will yet be well, dear!" (268). She pulls Jonathan's head to her breast in a maternal way, giving the men encouragement and comfort, while she is the one slowly turning into a vampire. Mina constantly muses over "poor dear, dear Jonathan, [and] what he must have suffered," even through her own ordeal of molestation and transformation into a vampire (303). Even in this state of uncleanliness, Mina still acts as the angelic Madonna, complicating the definition of what it truly means to be unclean.

Mina's encouragement and positive attitude cause the men to "honor her bravery and unselfishness," and Dr. Seward comments with amazement that, because she is unclean with vampire blood, "she, with all her goodness and purity and faith, [is an] outcast from God" (268). Despite the fact that she is separated from God through her alignment with Count Dracula, Mina relies on strength from God

and her Anglican faith throughout her struggle. She wants Jonathan to read the Catholic “Burial Service” over her in case she dies, and she has to insist that he does it because he protests initially, deterred by the Catholic symbolism that the group has to use to fight Count Dracula and his “ancient evil” (288). But despite all of Mina’s goodness and purity, she is still unclean with the taint of vampire blood. Dracula has a hold on her mind and body all the time, similar to the way he controlled Lucy, except for short periods at sunrise and sunset. Dr. Sewald points out, “sunrise and sunset are to her times of peculiar freedom; when her old self can be manifest without any controlling force subduing or restraining her,” proving that Count Dracula has not completely taken over Mina as he had Lucy (Stoker 286).

This starts to complicate both the black-and-white archetypes of “Madonna” and “whore” as well as Mina’s pure femininity because now Mina is being used by Dracula, and she does not have control over her own body. Despite all of her spiritual purity as an angel and love for her husband as his wife, she is “outcast from God,” and starts to adhere more to the “fallen woman” archetype (Stoker 268). Dr. Van Helsing attempts to say a prayer over Mina and touches a piece of the “Sacred Wafer” to her forehead, and unknowingly burns a scar into her flesh as the holy item sears her tainted skin. She lets out a “fearful scream,” followed by tears as she realizes what this means (259). However, Van Helsing remarks that “that scar shall pass away when God sees right to lift the burden that is hard upon us,” and the scar remains throughout the rest of their journey to defeat Dracula as a reminder that Mina is now a fallen woman.

By the end of this journey to find the Count, the group finally slays Dracula after a battle with the vampire's gypsy minions, and while Quincey Morris is lying on the ground dying after being wounded, he shouts, "Oh, God! It was worth this to die! Look!" as Mina's scar fades before their eyes (326). The sun sets "upon the mountaintop" as Mina becomes "bathed in rosy light," as if she is the setting sun, with everyone watching as the evil within her fades away (326). Finally, Mina is redeemed as she takes her rightful place as the angelic Madonna, holding Quincey's hand as he dies.

Thus, despite the traditional Victorian belief of "once fallen always fallen," both Mina and Lucy break out of their respective character types to be redeemed. Lucy, the "whore," is redeemed through the love of her friends and through the death of the "fallen woman." Mina, the angelic "Madonna," becomes not a victim of seduction but a victim of sexual violence. She does not weaken, and through her godly faith and selfless love for her husband and friends, she too is redeemed. And, despite Mina's disapproval of the New Woman beliefs, she, in a way, becomes a figure of this "New Woman" archetype through her embodiment of both feminine and masculine qualities.

Through Mina's domination by Count Dracula, she experiences the roles of each archetype and, in a way, embodies all of them. Mina doesn't shed the role of wife and mother during her vampiredom, just as many women in the Victorian Age did not want to change their traditional role as Victorian women in order to become "modern" and independent. By the end of the Victorian period, women were fighting for more say in their place in society, and started to emerge into the public sphere,

rather than being confined to the domestic space. This change manifested itself in different ways for different women; some took place at the forefront of the New Woman movement and protested for women's political and social rights and suffrage, while some participated in smaller revolutions by engaging in sports or wearing athletic or cycling outfits. But as the Victorian Age made way for the turn of the century and a change in mindset about fixed gender roles and sexual limitations, women had more freedom to choose their place in society, as well as to choose what they wanted to wear.

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