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**JANA EYROVÁ – ASPEKTY FEMINISTICKÉ
A POSTKOLONIÁLNÍ KRITIKY V ROMÁNU**

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**JANE EYRE – ASPECTS OF FEMINIST AND
POSTCOLONIAL CRITICISM IN THE NOVEL**

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ABSTRACT

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The subject of this bachelor thesis is the British novel *Jane Eyre* written by Charlotte Brontë. This work aims to primarily illuminate the protagonist character of Jane, who is herself a (proto)feminist. On account of that, it introduces the concept of feminism and its inherent features in the 19th century. Another goal of this thesis is depicting the position of a governess in the society at that period of time.

The novel *Jane Eyre* leads itself to cogitate on the mysterious character of Bertha Mason, which would be herein examined as the comparison of two heroines, Jane and the enigmatic Bertha Mason. Firstly, examining Bertha's character links to assess the novel, written by Jean Rhys, *Wide Sargasso Sea*, where Bertha, known as Antoinette, provides the real viewpoint of the whole story. Secondly, as a contrast, readers of this should be also acquainted with the masculinity occurring in *Jane Eyre*, the one and only Mr Edward Fairfax Rochester. There must be also examined the connection of the character Bertha, Jane and Rochester in terms of postcolonialism, where Bertha could be seen on one hand as Jane's dark side.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION	1
1. A FEMINIST READING OF <i>JANE EYRE</i>	3
1.1 Jane Eyre – the Rebellious Child	3
1.2 Growing up a (Proto)feminist	5
1.2.1 Question of Women’s Education and Marriage in the 19 th Century.....	7
1.3 Jane Eyre vs Dominating Males.....	9
1.4 Life and Social Status of a 19 th Century Governess.....	13
2. JANE EYRE, BERTHA MASON AND MR ROCHESTER	18
2.1 Comparison of Bertha Mason and Jane Eyre	19
2.2 Jane’s love, Mr Rochester	21
2.2.1 Sense of Equality between Rochester and Jane	22
2.2.2 Rochester, Jane and Marriage	23
3. A POSTCOLONIAL READING OF <i>JANE EYRE</i>	25
3.1 <i>Jane Eyre</i> – The Postcolonial Perspective	25
3.2 <i>Wide Sargasso Sea</i> as a Prequel to <i>Jane Eyre</i>	26
3.2.1 Antoinette’s Story	28
3.2.2 Parallels in <i>Jane Eyre</i> and <i>Wide Sargasso Sea</i>	30

CONCLUSION

REFERENCES

RESUMÉ IN CZECH

INTRODUCTION

Jane Eyre is considered to be one of the most popular works of fiction by a female English novelist. Written by Charlotte Brontë, this Victorian novel was first published under her male pen name, Currer Bell, in 1847 as *Jane Eyre: An Autobiography*.

It received criticism after publishing, but many praises as well, including one from William Makepeace Thackeray, to whom Charlotte Brontë respectfully devoted the second edition. The book *Jane Eyre* exposes some important themes to its readers, namely those of the diversity of social standings, feminism, religion and sexuality. As this novel is considered to be a Bildungsroman, the story consecutively progresses, beginning with the orphan Jane, a weak and rebellious child; and ending with Jane as a mature woman.

The novel is notionally divided into four relevant parts, each taking place in different location in Northern England, where the plot is set. The story opens in Gateshead, where a ten-year-old Jane grows up with her unkind and nasty Aunt Reed and her mischievous cousins, who constantly harass her. The plot shifts to the Lowood school, where Jane is sent after Gateshead. It is a boarding school for orphans, and partly a charity school. Lowood engrains in its pupils the low position of girls in this institute. Next, having reached the position of governess, Jane proceeds to another location, the Thornfield Hall. She advertises and later works for the owner, Edward Fairfax Rochester, as a governess to his ward, little Adèle Varens. Due to unhappy circumstances, Jane leaves the Thornfield Hall. She ends up lost in the middle of nowhere without any money and almost succumbs to death. However, she luckily comes by the Moor House near Morton, where kind people – Jane's cousins, as it is later discovered – take care of her. Later, she travels back to Thornfield, only to find ruins of the mansion and the unhappy happenings of Rochester's residence.

I intend to focus on specific aspects of the novel *Jane Eyre* and present the most momentous parts of the story. In these following pages, my aim is to reveal the feminist and postcolonial points of view of the book *Jane Eyre*.

The first chapter considers the importance of females versus males in the novel and feminism in the 19th century. In the second half of this chapter, I will provide an overview of the governess theme in *Jane Eyre*.

The second chapter offers an insight into the main female and male characters of the novel.

Finally, the third chapter aims to deal with the postcolonial reading of *Jane Eyre*, especially the various connection between *Jane Eyre* and the other novel, *Wide Sargasso Sea*, with a special focus on the character of Bertha Mason – Antoinette Cosway.

1. A FEMINIST READING OF *JANE EYRE*

1.1 Jane Eyre – the Rebellious Child

Jane Eyre is the eponymous character and narrator of the whole novel. It is necessary to be aware of Jane's peculiar, unconventional, and also quite feminist character. As the novel opens, the reader meets her as an orphan who receives chidings all the time from her Aunt Reed. Once Jane said to her:

‘I am glad you are no relation of mine: I will never call you aunt again so long as I live. I will never come to see you when I am grown up; and if anyone asks me how I liked you, and how you treated me, I will say the very thought of you makes me sick, and that you treated me with miserable cruelty.’ (Brontë, p. 29)

In this, readers could label her as a passionate and resistant child. Jane was a tough girl of principles even in her childhood. The cause of this being the injustices she saw how she was treated, especially when compared to her cousins. It could be said they repress and torture her, especially her cousin, John Reed. He being the first male by whom she was sickened. One could say that because to him and the following discerning situation, her aversion to the opposite gender – to men – began.

John Reed does not only humble her all the time, but he treated her as some “slave” (Brontë, p. 6), which is shown in a few lines below. Considering the fact that he is fourteen years old and Jane only four years younger, he exploits his social status, stout-body and age to bully and punish Jane whenever he wants. They have a strong antipathy against each other, but Jane fears him as well. With this in mind, the following crucial situation happens at the very beginning of the novel, when Jane is hidden and seated cross-legged at the window-seat in the drawing room, reading her book Bewick's *History of British Birds*. John is shouting aloud and looking, but cannot find her. Jane, fearing what he wants, shows herself.

And I came out immediately, for I trembled at the idea of being dragged forth by the said Jack. ‘What do you want?’ I asked, with awkward diffidence. ‘Say, ‘What do you want, Master Reed?’ was the answer. ‘I want you to come here;’ and seating himself in an arm-chair, he intimated by a gesture that I was to approach and stand before him. (Brontë, p.5)

In moments like this, Jane feels a trembling in her body. She also feels bewildered, as she knew had John done anything to her, Mrs Reed would have nevertheless looked the other

way. From the excerpt, the readers can certainly notice evidence of John's superiority. Though that is only because of his mother, whom he knows will cover his back. On the other hand, she would punish Jane more than adequately if she did something wrong.

As he taunts how poor, insignificant and dependant Jane is, she reaches the climax of her accumulated anger and smashes her forehead on the doors while screaming out loud to John. "'Wicked and cruel boy!' 'You are like a murderer – you are like a slave-driver – you are like the Roman emperors!'" (Brontë, p.6) As she lost her mind, she highlighted John's behaviour as one of the slave-drivers, as she contemplates being oppressed and enslaved by him. The family deem her a villainous girl, although she only impeded their constant humiliation of her, as she was treated less than the rest of the family.

Looping back to how her Aunt Reed would punish her, we can illustrate that here showing the lengths she would go to. The punishment for Jane's behaviour came immediately afterwards, as Mrs Reed ordered:

'Take her away to the red room, and lock her in there. Hold her arms, Miss Abbot: she's like a mad cat.' 'For shame! For shame!' cried the lady's maid. 'What shocking conduct, Miss Eyre, to strike a young gentleman, your benefactress's son! Your young master.' 'Master? How is he my master? Am I a servant?' 'No; you are less than a servant, for you do nothing for your keep. There, sit down and think of your wickedness.' (Brontë, p. 7)

Members of Jane's guardian family did not possess much respect for her, unlike their other children. She appeared only as the rebellious orphan. Locking her in the red room was also the worst punishment Aunt Reed could ever confer on her. Everyone dreaded the room as Jane's uncle, Mr Reed, breathed his last breath there, and since his death only a few people had dared entered this strange chamber. Jane refused as much as she could to avoid going to that accursed room. "'Unjust, unjust!'" (Brontë, p. 10), she cried.

Being in the red room, Jane was completely "out of herself" (Gilbert & Gubar, p. 340), which brought her to her deepest self and thoughts. While observing the crimson chamber with her eyes, she could not resist the pondering about the suffering only she was forced into. Indeed, she was the obedient one, who fulfilled every duty she had. Moreover, putting Mrs Reed's niece in the red room indicated how she hated Jane. Otherwise, she would have had to be out of her mind to drag her there, with Jane injured and her forehead

bleeding. Jane wondered how her aunt could promise to Mr Reed to take care of her, a child that she did not ever love, and rather disdained.

Jane was lost in her mind, trying to comprehend her aunt's manners. She was aware of not belonging to their family. Nevertheless, the darkness from the room brought Jane more into depression, since it gave the impression of being even more disheartening. The odd shadows moving on the wall, together with the cracking in the hearth, made her think of Mr Reed's ghost, or something else supernatural. She wanted to vanquish the fear, but she could not overpower the battle inside her and the apprehension of a ghost coming for her. She screamed out, but for Mrs Reed, she was only an actress, who was hoping to use her cunning to get out of the chamber.

The author Charlotte Brontë consciously put this situation at the beginning for some reason. It demonstrated a paradigm of the more extensive drama of the entire book – the peculiar orphaned position Jane occupies in the society, “her enclosure in stultifying roles and houses” (Gilbert & Gubar, p. 341), and her effort to evade undernourishment or madness.

1.2 Growing up a (Proto)feminist

The term proto-feminism defines the concept of being aware of feminism before it was generally known and wide-spread. That is to say, before the twentieth century. According to Koehler, feminism highlights in women their personal strength, self-assertiveness (Koehler, p. 224). On this basis, readers can notice several (proto)feminist features in the novel, as Charlotte Brontë presented the character Jane Eyre as a strong, resistant, rebellious woman since her hard childhood.

Also based on Gilbert & Gubar analysis, it could be said that the protagonist of the novel *Jane Eyre* represents a (proto)feminist character. They introduced this novel in *Mad Woman in the Attic*, as a work dealing with “rebellious feminism” (Gilbert & Gubar, p. 338). They point out also a comment from Richard Chase, who declared in 1948 that *Jane Eyre* is “feminist tract, an argument for the social betterment of governess and equal rights for women” (Gilbert & Gubar, p. 338). This makes sense when readers consider a few facts, such as how Jane was not dependant on either any man, nor any affluent family; that she was very proud and could rely only on herself, and that she made all decisions on her own. Once

she left the Gateshead Hall, she had no one but herself to count on. Jane earned her own money, and did not let anyone nurture her, unless she contributed to the work.

Jane was left on her own for almost twenty years before she married Mr Rochester. A crucial situation is also connected to him. When they meet and start working together, she was aware that she must not fall in love with her master. That is the reason why she forbade her passionate love for him for such a long time. That element also illustrates to the readers how strict she was when it came to men. She was also determined to become a great teacher and governess, and to achieve this target, she studied hard with other girls at Lowood school. Even as just a little girl, she already asserted her thoughts about the unjust punishments they underwent at the school.

Once, Jane thought of the Thornfield ladies: Mrs Fairfax, Adèle Varens and Grace Poole; commenting on the pros and cons of their characters and supposed following:

Women are supposed to be very calm generally, but women feel just as men feel; they need exercise for their faculties, and a field for their efforts, as much as their brothers do; they suffer from too rigid a restraint, too absolute a stagnation, precisely as men would suffer; and it is narrow-minded in their more privileged fellow-puddings a knitting stockings, to playing on the piano and embroidering bags. It is thoughtless to condemn them, or laugh at them, if they seek to do more or learn more than custom has pronounced necessary for their sex. (Brontë, p. 95)

In other words, this affirmation of Jane predicates the possible rebellious protest of the female in the context of the Victorian era. As Stoneman defined, this passage has been known as a feminist manifesto. These few lines unquestionably catch the attention of all readers because of its message conveying a passionate protest. From Jane's point of view, women are not a weaker group of people than men; they are equal to each other, and no sex is more or less than the other one. She also points out and comments on the essential house works, which some women tend to do and see it as their priority. Jane might have also mentioned playing the piano, because she could not play very well, seeing it as pointless just to sit behind the piano and play. On the other hand, this might have been done as she could have felt a kind of jealousy towards Miss Blanche Ingram. She was a potential future wife of Mr Rochester, and she was also gifted not only in the piano playing, but also in singing. Miss Ingram even sang a duet while playing the piano with Mr Rochester.

Miss Ingram, who had now seated herself with proud grace at the piano, spreading out her snowy robes in queenly amplitude, commenced a brilliant prelude; talking meantime. She appeared to be on her high horse to-night; both her words and her air seemed intended to excite not only the admiration, but the amazement of her auditors: she was evidently bent on striking them as something very dashing and daring indeed. (Brontë, pp. 156-157)

This may have led readers to the comparison of these two females – poor, humble, though well-educated Jane, whom Mr Rochester did not view an equal; versus Blanche Ingram, a powerful lady, acclaimed not only for her beauty but for her accomplishments. According to Correa, Jane's deficiency of pianistic skills symbolized some kind of independence for her, from the viewpoint of Jane being in a submissive role.

1.2.1 Question of Women's Education and Marriage in the 19th Century

Women were required another kind of education, also known as accomplishments. Those competencies were obtained either at the boarding school or from a governess. In those days, the middle-class ladies did not convince or tempt their male halves through their powerful household abilities anymore. Under the term an accomplishment, one would assume probably the way of using some expressions, feminine manners, or music and language skills. Importantly, knowledgeable girls had to refine their intelligence through glamour and ladylike behaviour. As Hughes described, there happened to be such designation, a blue-stocking. This depicted a woman, who nominated herself to be the unduly enthusiastic intellectual. Obviously, almost nobody desired to be called this way. These blue-stocking ladies showed many signs of being very unfeminine, and unappealing to men, as it seemed that they endeavoured to be more prevalent than their man in the fields which were under male intellectual predominance.

It could be noted that Jane also acted as a blue-stocking because she was not that attractive, and at first, she did not appeal to Mr Rochester at all. Later however, that changed as he got to know her better.

On the other hand though, if a young girl made it too apparent that the centre of her attention was getting a husband, this was not considered good manners either. This is because the status of a woman, who is too forward in the community of men, signified negative or troubling sexual drive, as Hughes said. As girls reached the age of teens, they

generally got married, normally “tying the knot” before their twentieth year. Another typical feature was that their beloved spouse was, more or less, five years older than the girl.

This wasn't the case for Jane Eyre, who was more than a few years younger compared her mature master, Mr Rochester.

These girls loved the maturity of older men and also the fact that those men were much more experienced than they were. As Hughes further explained, this way of marrying supported the natural hierarchy between genders. In the first place, young men were able to show their competence in earning money and having a responsibility to take care of their wife or if possible, their future children. Speaking of children, if the forthcoming parents made up their minds and felt that the special time to have children had already come, the permission of the girl's father was required at first. It should also be noted that not every couple could afford to walk down the aisle. There lived also the unlucky partners, who had to be patient and withstand in engagement, which could last many years. Despite that, there were religious men who decided to remain celibate until they married. For example, in greater cities, it was not challenging to find some brothels, where they paid women to have sex.

One could remark that this was the case of Mr Rochester, regarding his travels to France, where he met Celine, Adèle's mother. She was an opera singer and left her daughter to Mr Rochester.

At that time many sexual diseases became widespread; syphilis for instance. This was often caused by men passing on the infection between brothels and even to their wives completely unconsciously. As a consequence, some of these unfortunate people died painfully due to advanced stages of syphilis around the age of forty. In addition, although men could choose to either stay chaste until the wedding or not, young girls did not have this option. Hughes said that sometimes they did not even have the permission to talk to men unless they were accompanied by a married woman. The thought of some possible occupation or education was, in all respects, out of question. These prohibitions caused in most of the women an inner emotional rebellion.

1.3 Jane Eyre vs Dominating Males

Jane, as a female heroine, was living in the era of the nineteenth century, where males were primarily always the ones at the centre of all actions. In different parts of her life, there was some male, who influenced or controlled her.

The first one in the line would be John Reed, her older cousin. Already mentioned above, Jane was irritated by him several times, but Mrs Reed never said anything on the matter, nor forced him to apologize to Jane. Perhaps as a widow, she may have been fearful of facing her son, the only male left in the family. Whatever the reason, John took advantage of Jane being an orphan, and that there was no one to protect her. Between John and his mother, Jane had no chance against them just on her own. Had she obeyed John Reed's commands, her aunt might have accepted her, as these two would have had no conflicts. However, Jane could not deny who she really was, even if it meant having more troubles within her family.

As Wong expressed, the way that John always escaped his punishment could convince readers that in this time, it was possible and socially acceptable if a man hit a woman. But that did not work vice versa, as the males were seen as the superior gender and nearly none of the women were so courageous to try. Furthermore, John never forgot to remind Jane that she was nothing, had no social position, and that he was superior to her. "You have no money; your father left you none; you ought to beg, and not to live here with gentlemen's children like us, and eat the same meals we do, and wear clothes at our mamma's expense." (Brontë, p. 6) This passage gives evidence that John saw himself to be higher with his social status than orphan Jane.

Throughout her whole life, Jane's deepest wish was to somehow reach the strength of man, and especially gain the recognition as an equal and mighty person in her own right. Once she said: "When we are struck at without reason, we should strike back again very hard; I am sure we should – so hard as to teach the person who struck us never to do it again." (Brontë, p. 48) She was persuaded that no matter who and why somebody is struck, it should be repaid one way or another. This also referred to a previous issue with her cousin John Reed. As Wong reviewed, if Jane had been older and stronger, she would have given him the lesson which he deserved. She carried this resentment into her adulthood.

Another male obstacle would be Mr Brocklehurst. When Jane first saw him at Gateshead Hall, he seemed to be "tall gentleman" with "harsh, prim large features" and

“inquisitive-looking grey eyes” (Brontë, p. 25), which were hidden under his thick eyebrows. Before leaving Gateshead and going to Lowood school, Jane internally hoped not to be considered there due to her material property. On the one hand, it was fulfilling, but on the other, the whole Lowood school was subject to the significant male-dominance of Mr Brocklehurst. He represented a struggle for almost every girl there, as he organized a setting of inconceivable condition.

He thought of Jane and her aunt, whom she met at Gateshead, very distinctively. He labelled Jane as “careless” (Brontë, p. 55) and “dreadful” (Brontë, p. 56), since she had no parents and everybody thought of her as a lower-class girl. However, he believed that Mrs Reed was a good person, using words such as “charitable” or “kindness” (Brontë, p. 56) in connection with her, because she has the same social position as him.

Mr Brocklehurst dominated not only Jane, but all the girls in Lowood school, as he set up various imbalances; for example, the girls’ hair. At school they were obliged to have their hair cut off, as Brocklehurst ordered himself. If one thinks about it, having their hair cut off could cause, for some girls, shock or even shame, as they feel being girls due to their beautiful and long hair. Meanwhile, Brocklehurst’s daughters had stylish hair, which was “elaborately curled” (Brontë, p. 55) as Jane described it. Here could also be seen the contradiction within the classes, and the immunity of the upper classes. That signified how much more independent he and his family were than the girls from lower-classes at Lowood institute. As the head of this school, Brocklehurst showed the young girls how a man could have mastery not only over them, but also over his employees – the governesses and teachers, who also had to obey his orders.

Another crucial hurdle was how dominant Brocklehurst ignored the shortage of nourishment at school. All the girls suffered from hunger, as their rations were sometimes just “a slice of bread with thin scrape of butter” (Brontë, p. 51), disgusting “burnt porridge” (Brontë, p. 37) or the “rotten potatoes” (Brontë, p. 38). Once the governesses and tutors tried to tell Brocklehurst that even for them, it was inedible, and they required something else. However, even these grown women were afraid of his reaction, as he was the person who always had to be right and only, he could give out the orders.

Even Mr Rochester, who is the next in the line of significant male characters, attempted to have control over Jane. He dissembles the real story about with his wife locked in the attic. His main goal was to keep Jane as his mistress, as he was aware of Jane’s position

of having nowhere to go. Thanks to Adèle, she was there at Thornfield Hall, and financially secured by being employed as the governess.

Rochester was displayed as a dominant, a few years older than Jane, man, and master of the Thornfield Hall, where his household keeper employs Jane Eyre as a governess to his ward, Adèle. Jane described him at their first meeting – without being conscious that it was him –, she commented that he was “handsome, heroic-looking young gentleman”, who obviously was “past youth, but not reached the middle-age, perhaps he might be thirty-five” (Brontë, p. 99). She herself acknowledged that she was not afraid of him, however she went through “a little shyness” (Brontë, p. 99). His masculinity was demonstrated as he was covered with a “fur collared cloak” (Brontë, p. 99), while he was riding a horse, and she observed he was medium height and that he had “a considerable breadth of chest” (Brontë, p. 98). One would presuppose, Jane fell for his manly benefits and somehow felt the affinity between them at their first moment, although she had no idea what could follow next.

It is important to say that Mr Rochester dominated not only as the love of her life, but also as her master and employer. Mr Rochester took for granted how docile Jane was. That stopped however when she revealed the fact about Mr Rochester being already married. He wanted her to be his mistress and that they both could live happily together. But Jane, principled and independent woman, questioned whether this disreputable man and liar would want her to be his mistress. Moreover, that was entirely out of the question, so she ran away from Thornfield. She said to him: ““Sir, your wife is living: that is a fact acknowledged this morning by yourself. If I lived with you as you desire, I should then be your mistress: to say otherwise is sophistical – is false.”” (Brontë, p. 268) He did not understand the fact that as long as he is married to Bertha, he must not marry another woman. He wanted to believe that once Jane hears the whole story, she will stay. He destroyed his reputation even more with Jane when he wished to hear her say ““I will be yours, Mr Rochester.”” (Brontë, p. 279) Jane immediately responded ““Mr Rochester, I will not be yours”” (Brontë, p. 279), because Jane – and for sure readers as well – could perceive that by this sentence Rochester thinks of her as if she were his property, and that was unacceptable for Jane.

When trying to change her mind, Mr Rochester demonstrated his power in quite an unkind way. At this point, Brontë portrayed how unmannerly Mr Rochester tries to exert his masterly power on Jane to compel her to alter the decision:

He crossed the floor and seized my arm and grasped my waist. He seemed to devour me with his flaming glance: physically, I felt, at the moment, powerless as stubble exposed to the draught and glow of a furnace: mentally, I still possessed my soul, and with it the certainty of ultimate safety. ... 'Never,' said he, as he ground his teeth, 'never was anything at once so frail and so indomitable. A mere reed she feels in my hand!' (And he shook me with the force of his hold.) (Brontë, p. 280)

Readers could note how Rochester was determined to persuade her to stay with him. He knew well that Jane had fallen for him already, so he took advantage of it partly and used his manly glance, which had often swept Jane off her feet. And since she was so fragile and little woman, he tried to demonstrate his physical power, masculinity, and dominance. It could be said these features were also some of the features that Jane liked about him. Ultimately, his persuasive tactics failed, and Jane has left the Thornfield Hall.

As Kutalinga expressed, Mr Rochester expected from Jane obedience, submission and allegiance to his commands without any hesitations, as she was employed by him as the governess. Once, Jane remarked to Rochester, "I don't think sir, you have a right to command me, merely because you are older than I, or because you have seen more of the world than I have;" (Brontë, p. 117). Jane, the one who is proud of her gender and feel dignity in it, could hardly bear his orders and commands any longer.

Finally, there is one more man in that line, St John Rivers. They first met, when Jane was running away from Thornfield Hall, suffering from hunger and weariness after a long journey. He was not as kind to the exhausted Jane as he was to his sisters, and he did not want to accept her in their house. He was persuaded that "she is some young lady who has had a misunderstanding with her friends, and has probably left them" (Brontë, p. 300). After a while, he got to know Jane more closely and began to put her slightly to work, doing what suited him. For example, Jane was planning to learn German; but for John, Hindustani would have been more convenient since he planned to become a missionary in India. Thus, he had it done so, he made Jane start with Hindustani. "I want you to give up German and learn Hindustani." (Brontë, p. 350) His dominance was also shown when the idea of marrying Jane came to him, and he began to exert a thoroughgoing pressure on Jane by constant repetition of the proposal.

As Jane was persuaded, his intentions connected to the marriage were not very appropriate or standard. "He wanted to marry me only because he thought I should make a

suitable missionary's wife... He is good and great, but severe; and, for me, cold as an iceberg.” (Brontë, p. 393) On many occasions he declared quite openly to Jane that he did not want her to marry him for love, or for her to be a wife as much as a sidekick on the missionary to India. If one imagines that Jane would accept his proposal, she still would have been nevertheless a wife, who is only helping her husband on some missionary her entire life. Only because of a foolish command made by her cousin St John, who desired to fulfil his missionary journey and did not care about Jane's life visions.

1.4 Life and Social Status of a 19th Century Governess

In general, a governess could be defined as an intelligent, well-educated and unmarried woman from a middle-class family, who was taking care of children from upper-class families. Oxford dictionary defines the term governess: a woman employed to teach children in a private household (especially in former times).

The purpose of a governess was to teach them. Mothers of children from these families could be able to teach them as well, since they were educated and had plenty of time. Although the mothers perhaps wanted to, it was inappropriate for their social status to teach them on their own. The key thing to remember is that all governesses were single. As Hughes said, if they wished to get married, that would mean the end of their carrier as a governess. They were not hired just by one family for their whole life, but they continued to another family after a couple of years when the children had been already grown-up. The possible reason for becoming a governess could be a lack of money as a result of family business failure or death of one of the parents. In order not to lose the middle-class status, they advertised as governesses to earn some salary on their own. Jane was taught to become a governess, and basically, she had no other choice on how to earn money for living.

‘Mr St. John, when he grew up, would go to college and be a parson; and the girls, as soon as they left school, would seek places as governesses;’... ‘their father had some years ago lost a great deal of money by a man he had trusted turning bankrupt.’ (Brontë, p. 303)

The case of parents' death could be connected to Mary and Diana Rivers, who became governesses as well after their father suffered a loss of money and they had to take care of themselves together with their brother St John Rivers.

What is important, at the beginning of the nineteenth century, enormous economic destitution and poverty predominate, including various bank collapses in the course of Napoleonic wars. As Hughes further reviewed, Welfare state did not exist and as a consequence of these facts, numbers of middle-class families happened to be left and abandoned over one night. Furthermore, for young men from these families a possibility occurred – to leave school and commence to go to a job unaccompanied by the disgrace for their family. It was even so achievable for them, to earn back family's wealth. On the other hand, their sisters had it much more complicated regarding their social position. They could not work with other working-class girls in work factories or be a shop assistant in a shop. To put it in other words, they were ladies after all, well-educated from influential families. It would cause an immense humiliation and scandal for the whole family. They had to choose from three options – first, to get married to a mighty and powerful man and obtain back their social position; second, to find a proper job as a teacher; third, become a governess in some wealthy and prosperous family.

From the point of view of *Jane Eyre* as a governess novel, the author and friend of Charlotte Brontë William Makepeace Thackeray published in the same year as *Jane Eyre* was released, in 1847 – 1848, an English novel with the title *Vanity Fair*. Becky Sharp represents in this novel the central character, also a governess. As Chauhan & Kathleen said, she is denoted as a very vivid, adventurous, amoral and ambitiously competent lady, who managed to marry into her employer's family. However, just from this brief introduction and description of Becky Sharp, it is quite apparent that in fact, this was Jane's total opposite. Jane, an unobtrusive, withdrawn and not so enthusiastic woman had not in mind to marry her master, Mr Rochester. Jane's purpose was not the same as Becky's, to climb up the social ladder in order to feel that she is seen in other people's eyes as a mere governess.

These two heroines were both governesses, except that Jane married her master, and Becky married the son of her master. On the other hand, there were couple of things they had in common. Becky and Jane were both not as beautiful as one would suppose. This fact, as Rigby examined, should prove how little a pragmatic woman needs to handle all vices of the world. Beyond this, there was no other resemblance at all. These ladies thought and behaved in absolutely opposite ways. Becky was displayed as a smart, humorous, intelligent and accomplished lady, who was quite early married to a man who loved her – actually, she did not love him neither her own child, just herself. Whereas in *Jane Eyre*, the two major

figures, Jane and Rochester, are portrayed in a different way – characters of the kind just to be put together in the end, as some readers could have in mind.

According to Elizabeth Rigby, governesses were not equal with anybody, and that is why they did not feel harmony or had no affinity with other employees. They were seen as burdens and social restraints. Governesses also had the nickname of a tabooed female, men despised them, and for other women they represented only a so-called pain in the neck. Servants abhorred them, as governesses were dependant on them but superior in that way when serving food to family and them as well. The children, governesses took care of, could like them, show interests in them, but all in all, they could never be friends because there always was some line between them as an employees and the child's parents, their employers.

These women could be denoted as predecessors of contemporary modern Au-Pairs. However, the Au-Pairs are not hired as tutors like governesses, but only for looking after the children and sometimes also for the housekeeping. Nowadays, to have an Au-Pair is not a symbol of richness and power, but ordinary, trivial part of British lives. It is caused because of the short time of the maternity leave.

Hughes examined that records from the year 1851 indicate that in England approximately 25 000 women were employed as a governess. Governesses were employed primarily by upper-classes families. That marked the high social position of the family. Besides, these families hired housekeepers and cooks as well as they employed the governesses. The family provided to governess accommodation, fare and they paid them small wages. What is important to say, they were not counted as a member of the family, nor of servants. The author Charlotte Brontë herself tried to be a governess and a teacher in her life. However, in a few letters, which she wrote to her brother and editor, in which she pointed out “that women who take on the role of a live-in governess can never be happy” (Smith, 2000, pp. 63 – 6; Smith, 1995, pp. 316 – 7).

The social life of governesses was not so miscellaneous as one would guess. One could say, they belonged nowhere. Even though they were surrounded by so many people, they could feel truly alone. They had no children but raised the others. According to Hughes, servants perceived them as they were nothing more than they but did not fit among them either. On the contrary, the family members were much more superior to them, so they deemed them as some inferior person. The loneliness dominated mainly in the evenings,

nevertheless they spent these nights doing their hobbies, for instance, painting, sewing or reading books. The education of governess, as well as other skills they managed to attain, were quite beneficial and useful for their life as governesses after they left the school.

To teach as a governess was not as that easy as it may seem to be. Hughes noted that the children, who governesses taught, were especially girls approximately from five to eighteen years old. Sometimes not only girls, but even boys were educated by them, till they reached the age of eight. Then it was time for leaving home and going to school. As Hughes said, they taught them the three R's, reading, writing and arithmetic or Use of the Globes. An essential part of teaching included education of foreign languages, for example, French or Italian. To the older children, the governess had to enlighten the key accomplishments, such as drawing, dancing or piano playing. The governess was also in charge of the children's moral education, which involved reading the Bible and saying prayers. Because of this, it was necessary for employers that the governess preferred the same denomination as the family did; for example, Church of England, Methodist or Baptist.

For instance, Jane had the skills to play the piano and to draw. To play the piano she was not very fond of, but regarding her paintings – they were really great. For example, St John Rivers commented on her painting of Miss Oliver, whose resemblance he clearly figured out: “‘A well-executed picture,’ he said; ‘very soft, clear colouring; very graceful and correct drawing.’” ... “‘It is like!’ he murmured; ‘the eye is well managed: the colour, light, expression, are perfect. It smiles!’” (Brontë, p. 329) Even John was able to praise Jane for her amazing paintings – she enjoyed it, and in the final form of the portraits, it was indeed to be recognized. As Correa reviewed, Jane's paintings could be denoted as a kind of precious self-expression.

It is evident that the female role mattered at this time, for there were not as many relevant jobs for female as today. Jane's purpose was to be a governess to a little girl. In *Jane Eyre*, she was not part of her master's social life at first, rather she was for him just an employee. She could be thought of as an orphan in society, but she was a real orphan. These two social positions – governess and orphan – enabled to expose how society really worked. As Hughes said, Brontë also highlighted her thoughts about working women through the major heroine. Those who are talented should not just sit at home and do nothing useful, they ought to be involved in some more meaningful work. As Jane stated not in those pointless and ineffective activities “fellow-puddings, a knitting stocking, playing the piano

and embroidering bags” (Brontë, p. 95). It is already said there that the status of being governess was nearly the only possibility for talented young ladies from middle-classes to gain some money and experiences for their future life.

As far as the novel of *Jane Eyre* is concerned, Jane as the main character is referred to as neither a proper example of a romantic heroine, nor as a governess novel. The already mentioned providence was plain to be seen in the last part of the book when “Jane thanks for her deliverance from the temptation of an illicit union with Rochester” (Correa, p. 99). The main emphasis is also put on her extraordinary and decent character rather than on her abilities as a governess, teacher. However, some readers incorporate *Jane Eyre* to the governess novels because of the vast popularity those days. Moreover, one part of the book leads the readers to be under the impression that it really could be a governess novel. It presents to the readers the not very enjoyable opinion of Blanche Ingram and her mother regarding the governesses.

‘My dearest, don’t mention governesses; the word makes me nervous. I have suffered a martyrdom from their incompetency and caprice. I thank Heaven I have now done with them!’ ... ‘I suppose, from the answer elicited, it was a reminder that one of the anathematised races was present.’ (Brontë, pp. 154-155)

In this scene, most of the readers would be conscious of the disdain, total aversion and disgust of the governess from the point of view the posh and genteel Blanche and her mother. They speak on behalf of those from the higher society than Jane comes from. For these classy people, their governesses were only a burden – Miss Blanche Ingram described herself how they hated them and harassed them on purpose, for instance, the poor Madame Joubert. They did all nasty things knowingly, that is to say spilling a tea, throwing and spreading books everywhere it was possible. ““You should hear mama on the chapter of governess: Mary and I have had, I should think, a dozen at least in our day; half of them detestable and the rest ridiculous, and all incubi – were they not, mama?”” (Brontë, p. 154) This incongruous criticism and humiliation of governesses are even more increased by the unpleasant traits, which mother of Blanche Ingram used when describing the negative experience, which they underwent.

2. JANE EYRE, BERTHA MASON AND MR ROCHESTER

The novel *Jane Eyre* introduces readers to the main heroine, Jane Eyre immediately. However, the other heroine, Bertha Mason, is only slightly mentioned in the story, as she is hidden by the one of the servants, Grace Poole. Later, Bertha becomes a full part of the storyline. One would claim, the feminist character of Jane was portrayed as quite obedient, and (in most cases) passive in her demeanour. This is juxtaposed by the character of Bertha, the preposterous and out of control woman, who was locked in the attic, and was said to be mad. She was imprisoned by Mr Rochester at Thornfield Hall for years. He declared that she “‘came of a mad family; idiots and maniacs through three generations’” (Brontë, p. 257) as he discovered right after they married. It must be said that Bertha was not able to speak on her behalf. She was silenced in the background of the plot, and readers figure out the acquaintance of her character from Mr Rochester’s words or from Jane’s considerations about Grace Poole – later about Bertha.

The first reference to Bertha Mason appears as soon as Jane accepts the position of governess at Thornfield Hall and after she is introduced to little Adèle, and she notices strange laughter. Her first impressions of the laugh were that it was “‘curious, distinct, formal, mirthless’” (Brontë, pp. 92-93). On this occasion, Mrs Fairfax tells Jane that this was the laugh of one of their servants, namely from Grace Poole, who sews in the older room and is sometimes heard having fun with another servant.

Right from the beginning, Jane asked Mrs Fairfax about possible ghosts or something else supernatural in the house. Mrs Fairfax and other members of that household denied and suppressed any probability of mad Bertha living in the attic and being guarded by Grace Poole. Later on, when she and Mrs Fairfax meet Grace, Jane observes her a bit, but thereafter she simply accepts the fact that she just laughed that loudly. However, there was something telling Jane that there was maybe something else. Perhaps, something supernatural which even Mrs Fairfax and the rest did not want to talk about; thus, she turned any conversation towards another topic. Later however, Jane cannot stop thinking about it, as she still wondered about Grace’s behaviour.

‘Only one hour in the twenty-four did she pass with her fellow-servants bellow; all the rest of her time was spent in some low-ceiled, oaken chamber of the second story: there she sat and sewed – and probably laughed drearily to herself, – as companionless as a prisoner in his dungeon.’ (Brontë, p. 143)

As Gilbert & Gubar expressed, this mystery regarding the strange servant, Grace Poole, alludes to Jane that this mystery is about her life. To put in in another way, the question of Grace Poole's position at Thornfield Hall leads to the question of Jane's life there, where she belongs, the equality between her and Mr Rochester and much more.

2.1 Comparison of Bertha Mason and Jane Eyre

It is relevant to compare these two heroines, since readers could think of their resemblance, but differences as well. In terms of diversity between these women, since Bertha has the Caribbean origin, she portrayed as temperament, passionate and wild woman with strong sexual desires. In other words, she is the complete opposite of Jane and her depiction in the novel. Jane concealed her feelings and longing deep inside her, most of the time she was very restrained and held herself under the control.

Moreover, readers find out more about Bertha's mother just when Mr Rochester and Jane are going to be married. Rochester said: "her mother, the Creole, was both a madwoman and a drunkard" (Brontë, p. 257). He also stated that Bertha was the "true daughter of an infamous mother" (Brontë, p. 270) and added that "Bertha, like a dutiful child, copied her parent in both points" (Brontë, p. 258). By Rochester's words, readers could note that he possesses an ironic prejudice about Bertha, just because of his viewpoint to her and her not-so-happy family.

In terms of appearance, Mr Rochester said of Bertha that she is a seductive and beautiful woman with black hair and tanned skin; whereas Jane was pale, small, but reserved and conservative most of the time. Gilbert & Gubar describe Jane as "poor, plain, little, pale, neat and quiet, whereas Bertha as rich, large, florid, sensual and extravagant, and once beautiful in the style of Blanche Ingram" (p. 361). Another difference would be the wedding with Mr Rochester. He accepted to be married to Bertha due to a sum of money he received from her father. However, Rochester said to Jane, when he explained to her the whole story, that he had "a charming partner – pure, wise, modest: you can fancy I was a happy man" (Brontë, p. 258). So, it was a marriage chiefly because of money, but Rochester liked Bertha at least a bit at first.

Whilst with Jane, she and Rochester were not that attracted each other at first, as it was not the love at first sight. However, after some time they came together in similar ways and became interested in each other.

As soon as Jane beheld Bertha, she spoke about her in the third inanimate person – she exemplified her as a “figure running backwards and forwards” (Brontë, p. 258). She was not sure “whether it was beast or human being, as it grovelled, seemingly, on all fours; it snatched and growled like some strange wild animal” (Brontë, p. 258). She saw that Bertha possessed a lot of dark hair, “the shaggy locks” covering her “purple face and bloated features” (Brontë, p. 259). Jane had never seen anything like this in her life and could not believe her eyes that this “animal” is Rochester’s wife. That might have been the reason why she marked her as a beast, for it was essentially her female enemy.

As far as the resemblance of these two women is concerned, not many readers of the novel *Jane Eyre* would suppose that the figures of Jane and Bertha could be compared in some way. Paradoxically, they can, and one would say have to be juxtaposed, since they have also so many things in common beyond their differences. It is more than possible that Bertha Mason was Jane’s covert and enigmatic alter ego. According to Gilbert & Gubar, Bertha is typified as “Jane’s truest and darkest double” – in other words, this polar opposite of her is also known as the angry aspect of the orphan. The savage Jane’s self, which she has endeavour to repress ever since she resided at Gateshead. It is a strange situation because Bertha does what Jane would wish to do. For an illustration of this, in the wedding scene Jane does not like the clothes, primarily the vapoury veil. Bertha “saves” Jane and tears it up for her. Then, on the day of the wedding Jane panics, fearing the whole concept of the inescapable marriage, as she is just a young girl. However, Bertha destroys her wedding veil, since she is Rochester’s first wife.

The facts about both heroines’ parents are also significant. Jane’s parents died, and she had no one except her pseudo-aunt. Likewise, Bertha felt alone, as her stepfather and mother kept quite a distant relation from her. Although she did grow up with her family at least for part of her life.

However, a relationship between these two could be signified as an alarming one. While Bertha does all of Jane’s deepest imagination, she also provides Jane with a beneficial life lesson on how not to act. Something which not even Miss Temple would have been able to teach her. Importantly, Bertha and Jane are almost identical with regard of their acting. Bertha, who is imprisoned in the attic, running on all fours, and being mad refers to the beginning of the novel, where the little ten years old Jane is also imprisoned in the red room by her aunt. Where she screamed so loud and made a dreadful noise like a bad animal. With

this in mind, Jane's Aunt Reed once spoke with her and Jane explained it to readers as "she gazed at me as if she really did not know whether I were child or fiend" (Brontë, p. 21). The fiendish madness brings the readers back to Bertha. The designation of monsters, as Rochester also called Bertha, makes a reference in parallel to Jane, as she is asking herself if she is a monster or if there is a possibility Mr Rochester would like her (Gilbert & Gubar, p. 362).

Furthermore, Jane resents "the new mastery of Rochester and she wishes to be his equal in size and strength, so that she can battle him in the contest of the marriage" (Gilbert & Gubar, p. 359). However, she was still weak and little, and could not battle him. Bertha could however, as Jane characterized her to be "a big woman, in stature almost equalling her husband, and corpulent" and showing "virile force in the contest" (Brontë, p. 259). Also, the conflagration, which Bertha set off to burn down the Thornfield Hall down – that was also Jane's deepest secret and desire: to ruin Rochester's residence, which emblemizes not only Rochester's mastery, but Jane's slavery. Bertha commits suicide in this action.

On the night before the wedding, somewhere deep in herself, Jane was still not believing the real equality between her and Mr Rochester. She restrained what she really wanted, but this time, Bertha expressed it very passionately, destroying Jane's wedding dress and simultaneously making Jane a favour, as she was not that sure about the whole wedding. That is one of the examples why this novel played an important role in the literature of the nineteenth century, and as a fiction showing the significance of females.

2.2 Jane's love, Mr Rochester

An integral part of the novel *Jane Eyre* is centred around a male character named Edward Fairfax Rochester. He is displayed as a mighty man, twice older than Jane, master of the Thornfield Hall, where Mrs Fairfax employs Jane Eyre as a governess to Rochester's ward, Adèle. Jane herself described him at their first meeting, admitting that he was "handsome, heroic-looking young gentleman" (Brontë, p. 99). Jane pointed out also other features of his visage, namely that he possessed "a dark face with stern features and a heavy eyebrow", and that these eyes and "gathered eyebrow looked ireful and thwarted" (Brontë, p. 98). One would presuppose, Jane fell for his sympathies and manly benefits at just this first moment.

Jane and Rochester's first encounter could be viewed as a fairy tale meeting, as Gilbert & Gubar reviewed. The author Charlotte Brontë emphasizes the mythic elements, such as rising moon, depicting Rochester as some Prince Charming coming on his horse from far away, but filled with a "patriarchal energy" (Gilbert & Gubar, p. 351). Later on, as Jane and Rochester were looking back on their first meeting, Rochester himself noticed when speaking to Jane, that something magical must have been there, saying "when you came on me in Hay Lane last night, I thought unaccountably of fairy tales, and had half a mind to demand whether you had bewitched my horse..." (Brontë, p. 106). He had said this, as the day at Hay Lane, he had difficulties with his horse, who threw him down. Jane offered to help him and Rochester leaned against Jane's shoulder, remarking that "necessity compels me to make you useful" (Brontë, p. 100). Nonetheless, these two began their relationship as a master and servant, in other words as not fully equal humans.

2.2.1 Sense of Equality between Rochester and Jane

To Jane, Rochester was not just her master. Once he was looking at her drawings, and with the way he made commented on them, she began to fall in love with him. She saw in him the one and only competent critic of her art, or of her soul. She declared that the "ease of his manners freed me from painful restraint: the friendly frankness, as correct as cordial, with which he treated me, drew me to him. I felt at times as if he were my relation rather than my master..." (Brontë, p. 128). Somehow, she begins to perceive him in another way than just her master or a superior. They understood each other, even if it did not seem like it at first.

As the story flows, he figured out that he requires Jane's strength, help, and equality. Significantly, as Gilbert & Gubar further examined, there are a couple of occasions where this could be seen. For example, as Jane rescued Rochester from the flames, which were burning his bed almost him too; or when she is a helping hand, when he rescues injured Richard Mason from the wounds of Bertha Mason. From these scenes, most readers are conscious of their mutual sense of equality, which confirms the next scene, where Rochester pretended to be an old gypsy woman, and only Jane is not deceived by him out of all the young girls. As she mentioned a playful remark on Rochester: "With the ladies, you must have managed well... You did not act the character of a gypsy with me." (Brontë, p. 176) To put it in another way, she is able to see him through his various disguises, whether it is a

costume of a gypsy fortune-teller or his daily masque as her master. Likewise, he is capable of seeing the true Jane beyond her everyday governess disguise. In addition to the gypsy lady, this pursuit could be elucidated as “a semi-conscious effort to reduce this sexual advantage” (Gilbert & Gubar, p. 355), which provided Rochester with his masculinity. The moment when he dressed up in woman’s garments connoted that he put on the women weakness.

2.2.2 Rochester, Jane and Marriage

Circumstances prior to the betrothal and wedding ceremony made Jane have some doubts about her dream man, Mr Rochester. His life and character gave rise to several barriers to marriage with Jane. Interestingly, according to Loomba, Bertha Mason was burnt to death at Thornfield Hall in order to clear the way for Jane and Rochester’s matrimony.

It is important to remind, that Jane loves Rochester – as a man, although she poses several doubts about him, even before she finds out about the secret that Rochester imprisoned Bertha in the attic. Jane noted that the equality of people gives way to the despotism and inequalities of marriage:

‘For a little while you will perhaps be as you are now, - a very little while; and then you will turn cool, ...’ ‘I suppose, your love will effervesce in six months, or less. I have observed in books written by men, that period assigned as the farthest to which a husband’s ardour extends.’ (Brontë, p. 229)

Rochester immediately reacted on this and rejected these words, arguing that Jane ““pleases him and masters him””; he felt ““influenced and conquered”” (Brontë, p. 229).

As Rochester called her with her forthcoming name Jane Rochester, she suddenly felt dizzy. According to Gilbert & Gubar, this is how she defined her inner impressions for the first time that Rochester said her name: “I did, and I could not quite comprehend it: it made me giddy. The feeling, the announcement sent through me, was something stronger than was consistent with joy – something that smote and stunned: it was, I think almost fear.” (Brontë, p. 227) As he was completely in love with her, he intended to buy Jane a large amount of jewellery, including a diamond chain, circlet, and also dresses of the best materials, such as lace and satin. Through these accessories, Rochester wanted to flatter Jane as much as he could, but this was not the way to Jane’s heart. She said:

‘And 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 – a jay in borrowed plumes. I would as soon see you, Mr Rochester, tricked out in stage-trappings, as myself clad in a court-lady’s robe...’
(Brontë, p. 228)

She would not have felt comfortable in these garments. It was completely out of the question for Jane, even though he believed it would reveal Jane’s beauty to the world.

What is more, Rochester then affirmed “to women who please me only by their faces, I am the very devil when I find out they have neither souls nor hearts – when they open to me a perspective of flatness, triviality, perhaps imbecility, coarseness and ill-temper” (Brontë, p. 229). He proclaimed with these words that no matter how beautiful a woman is, it is necessary for her to show him also a less appealing disposition, and not just to be the perfect woman. Thus, Jane still had mixed feelings about how Rochester wanted to change her.

With that in mind, Jane could not be blamed for her anger or fear of Rochester’s or society’s marriage concept, because her entire life was a pilgrimage. Rochester’s loving oppression brought to Jane’s mind John Reed’s cruel oppression and despotism. The fear and anger strengthened and figuratively speaking, it is pulling her back into her past to re-experience the perilous “sense of doubleness” (Gilbert & Gubar, p. 357) which had begun in the red room. One of the signs is the recurring dream, in which she was a child. This re-dream had begun as she turned into her romance with Rochester. The wraith of a child happened to be “a symptom of dissolution” (Gilbert & Gubar, p. 359) that Jane was undergoing in the days before marriage. In the morning of the wedding day Jane was looking at herself in the mirror and thought of being “a robed and veiled figure, so unlike my usual self that it seemed almost the image of a stranger” (Brontë, p. 253), which should commemorate readers of the moment in the red room, where everything “looked colder and darker...than in reality” (Brontë, p. 8). This symbolized the separation of Jane’s selves, chiefly Jane as a child splitting off adult Jane, and Jane Eyre parting from Jane Rochester. It is not a surprise that such a creature, which Jane called “a vampyre” (Gilbert & Gubar, p. 359), burst into Jane’s room and tore a wedding veil of an unknown person – future Jane Rochester.

3. A POSTCOLONIAL READING OF *JANE EYRE*

In addition to a feminist reading, the novel of *Jane Eyre* is a text that is often devoted as a post-colonial criticism. In general, the postcolonialism is the term for literary theories, “which traces European colonialism of many regions all over the world, its effects on various aspects of the lives of the colonized people and its manifestations in the Western literary and philosophical heritage” (Hamadi, p. 39).

Charlotte Brontë published her novel *Jane Eyre* in the year 1847, which was that period when the British colonialism was expanding. The importance of ensuring a cheap workforce and may new markets abroad being the driving factors. As Münzner reviewed, this wealth was consequently pivotal for the economic advancement of Britain, as it provided the possibility for the Industrial Revolution to take off, along with the increased political and military control over great parts of the globe.

The postcolonial theme is represented in *Jane Eyre* mainly by a few significant characters – Bertha Mason, St John Rivers, and Jane’s uncle. First, Bertha Mason is relevant because of her Caribbean descent – she comes from Jamaica, and thus the West Indies, a former British colony. Regarding St John Rivers, he is connected to postcolonialism by his desire to go to India for missionary purposes – India was British colony as well. Moreover, Jane’s uncle, John Eyre, lived and worked as a merchant in Madeira, which was occupied by the British Empire, and thanks to whom Jane inherited a vast fortune.

3.1 *Jane Eyre* – The Postcolonial Perspective

In the novel *Jane Eyre* readers could be aware of a few postcolonial features. One of them is bounded to the figure of Bertha Mason, a white Creole, whose wedding with Mr Rochester was at her home country, Jamaica, where lived a mixed population and which showed that the racial difference depicted diversity within a single species, “rather than different species altogether” (Loomba, p. 116).

The term white Creole represents, according to Oxford Dictionary, a person of mixed European and black descent, especially in the Caribbean. Thanks to Bertha’s mother, they were regarded as white Creole, since she was a French.

Furthermore, Jane’s cousin St John Rivers nearly managed to force Jane for a missionary trip to India, which was at that time a British colony and a whole range of pieces of works were set in India. However, not with respect to the story of missionary work. It

must be said that “the missionary activities” increased more and more, as yet colonialism forged ahead. (Loomba, p. 115)

As the story flows further, Jane encountered St John Rivers, who turns out to be not only a clergyman, but also her cousin, as she discovered after a while. St John proposed Jane, however, only to be his fellow – “he prized her as a soldier would his weapons” (Brontë, p. 358). He did not take her into account as a full-featured and beloved wife. Significantly, at the end, Jane dedicated her last thoughts of the novel to her marriage with Rochester and to St John Rivers. She said that St John left England and thereafter, they exchanged only a few letters. St John fulfilled his words – he went to India to be a servant of his Lord, whom he was so devoted, as he was a clergyman. India could remind readers of West Indies, which was British colony, as it is already mentioned. This could direct readers back to other central figures, Bertha and Rochester, who have their connections to the West Indies.

Furthermore, Jane thought that St John would never get married. She felt pity together with some kind of joy because “his mind will be unclouded, his heart will be undaunted, his hope will be sure, his faith steadfast” (Brontë, p. 401). This was all true, since he chose the missionary way of life in India and loyally followed his Lord. Jane described St John’s words of a vow: ““My Master has forewarned me. Daily He announces more distinctly, - “Surely, I come quickly!” and hourly I more eagerly respond, - “Amen; even so come, Lord Jesus!””” (Brontë, p. 401) Jane saw St John Rivers as a pilgrim and an apostle, who wants to serve his God and people in the right manner. This could lead readers to Jane, who was some kind of ‘servant’ to Mr Rochester, a good one, intelligent and hardworking. St John knew it, and that was one of reasons why he wanted her to come with him to India.

3.2 *Wide Sargasso Sea* as a Prequel to *Jane Eyre*

The novel titled *Wide Sargasso Sea* is written by Jean Rhys in 1966, who meant it to be a postcolonial reading and a prequel to the Brontë’s novel *Jane Eyre*. Readers, who desire to discover more about enigmatic Bertha Mason, should undoubtedly read this story by Rhys, as it shows the ‘other side’ of Bertha’s and Rochester’s life. It primarily deals with the peripheral character to *Jane Eyre* – Bertha Mason, a.k.a. the young Antoinette Cosway, who lives with her mother, brother and nurse at Coulibri – family estate, in Jamaica. They have quite a difficult situation since both white and black people despise them. The white people judge them for being former slaveholders, whereas the black exclude them because of their

poor white Creole descent. Because of the death of Antoinette's father, their family has several financial problems and following this, the mother marries a wealthy planter. The main twist in the storyline comes when she is married to some foreigner, an Englishman, who came to the West Indies to gain some fortune. That mysterious gentleman is nobody else but Mr Edward Rochester. At first, it seems to be a good choice to have underwent the arranged marriage, as Rochester and Antoinette contend together. Things begin to change though, when Rochester receives a letter from Antoinette's stepbrother, claiming that there are serious mental and sexual challenges in Cosway family for generations. Antoinette's nurse Christophine uses obeah ritual and helps Antoinette with seducing Rochester by means of some drugs. Afterwards, Rochester despises Antoinette, and as a revenge, he sleeps with a servant. Antoinette seems to him as if she has gone absolutely mad. He begins to make plans to leave their country and go back to his home in England. Here he locks her in the attic, and had her guarded by a "bribed" servant Grace Poole, declaring to everyone that Bertha is completely insane.

Nevertheless, Jean Rhys pointed out to the postcolonial issues to a limited extent in her novel *Wide Sargasso Sea*. Rhys depicted Bertha's troubles with madness as torment together with oppression of woman, whose origin is of white Creole and who had to marry for her fortune of plantations to an English man, who afterwards ran away with her from the Caribbean home and locked her in England.

As Hamadi further reviewed, it was believed that in spite of the fact that Jane Eyre was seen as a new feminist ideal, "the study of the novel in this process disguises the attempt of the novel to naturalize Western dominance" (Hamadi, 2014, p. 43). Bertha, as the other is juxtaposed with the novel's protagonist Jane Eyre, whose side readers are on and with whom they sympathize the most.

On the other hand, Benita Parry criticized Bertha's figure for that she is not the real "woman from the colonies" (Loomba, p. 83) in this novel. She stated that Antoinette, later named by Rochester Bertha, is a "white mistress of Christophine" (Loomba, p. 83), presenting her as a quite important figure living next to Bertha's side. Christophine was black, enslaved as part of the plantation, and was also exploited. Christophine's aim was to provide to readers the prototype of a female's strengths and freedom. In other words, the state of independence from whichever male character in the novel. However, readers note that a character of this type did not appear in the novel of *Jane Eyre* at all. Charlotte Brontë

avoided creating this character, and it is worth remarking that none of the figures of Brontë's novel would ever reach that aspect, independence from males and more power to equal them, though Jane wished that so much.

Antoinette and Christophine were quite close to each other, and Antoinette entrusted her: “‘Christophine, he does not love me, I think he hates me.’” (Rhys 2011, p. 82), when she was wondering about Rochester's love. Christophine, representing quite a feministic character, made clear later her opinion about men. She said “‘If you love them, they treat you bad, if you don't love them, they after you night and day bothering your soul case out.’” (Rhys, p. 82) She advised her to leave her husband and be free and, on the whole, be happy. However, as Münzner further expressed, Antoinette felt obliged to him and could not abandon him. However, as Christophine has listened to the story that Rochester profited all Antoinette's dowry, she again highlighted her viewpoint:

‘All women, all colours, nothing but fools. Three children I have. One living in this world, each one a different father, but no husband, I thank my God. I keep my money. I don't give it to no worthless man.’ (Rhys, p. 83)

She did not want to go away from him, since she wishes to see the real England. But on the contrary, as she is so sorrowful and confused by Rochester's side that she actually did not know what to do, that is why she required advice from her, as from an experienced woman.

3.2.1 Antoinette's Story

There is some intertextuality between these two novels, *Jane Eyre* and *Wide Sargasso Sea*. Jean Rhys is inspired by Charlotte Brontë's work, and pens this prequel to *Jane Eyre*, and creating a colonial text, and filling in the gap of Bertha's past. This lets readers see her background, and how she ended up on the third storey, or what made Rochester hold her locked in the attic.

At the onset of the *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Antoinette laments life as a young girl in Jamaica. She provides readers with an overview of what it feels like to be a white Creole, who were ostracized by society most of the time, whilst displaying all the crucial nicknames they were addressed with. There was a Martinique girl employed, Christophine, the only servant who stayed with them and who allegedly did the obeah rites. Importantly, Antoinette's mother got engaged to Mr Mason, “a very wealthy man” (Rhys, p. 13), which cause even more uprising in their neighbourhoods. It culminated in their enemies putting

their house ablaze. Due to this exposure, the younger brother of Antoinette, Pierre, died there, which drove her mother to madness.

It should be noted that the first part was narrated by Antoinette, but on the contrary, the second part is narrated from Rochester's point of view. Gradually, while being on honeymoon, all of the people around them began to convince Rochester that his wife is a mad woman. This fact is only further strengthened, as he received a letter from Antoinette's stepbrother saying that all their family is somehow mentally ill. Thanks to all these circumstances and mainly to Rochester together with local people, Antoinette is simply driven into insanity just as her mother was. One day he made a decision he cannot live there and like that anymore. He packed his things and departed to England with Antoinette, who was no longer in her senses. There he concluded the best choice was to lock her up in the attic, as he believed that every single person would thoroughly neglect her.

Readers see the third part through Antoinette's bewildered and mad eyes. It took place already in England at the Thornfield Hall, where a deranged and mad Bertha is locked in the third storey. She is guarded by a servant Grace Poole, who took the job only because Rochester offered to "double the money" (Rhys, p. 141). Grace herself did not wish to be a witness to the possible death of that mad woman. Grace stated before accepting that guard job: "Now that I see her I don't know what to think. She sits shivering and she is so thin. If she dies on my hands who will get the blame?" (Rhys, p. 141) Bertha did not even believe anybody that she is in England, as she is persuaded that "we lost our way to England...I don't remember it, but we lost it" (Rhys, p. 144). She could not understand why is she there and why 'he' never came to visit her at all, saying: "He didn't come. Even if I was asleep, I would have known. He hasn't come yet." (Rhys, p. 145) She was so out of her mind that she was no able to remember what she had done – she estimated it was only a dream, not a reality. The reason for this is that she had some kind of bifurcated mental state. After reminding by Grace Poole, what had she done and asking for reasons why she had done this and that, she managed to reminisce – but unfortunately, as always it was too late. She was madly waiting when her dream about burning down Thornfield become a reality.

In *Wide Sargasso Sea*, the perception and self-perception of the Creole identity is a very crucial concept of the novel. Barely even at the starting point, Antoinette listed all the people in her life and just right behind these lines, she divulged about diverse kinds of humans, who hated them because of being white Creoles. She revealed that she "never

looked at any strange negro, they hated us...One day a little girl followed me singing, 'Go away white cockroach, go away, go away'. I walked fast, but she walked faster'" saying "nobody want you, go away'" (Rhys, p. 8). By this nickname, being a cockroach, they were called by black slaves. Otherwise, as Özyon expressed, the English ladies and gentlemen addressed them as white niggers, because they had no clue where they belong to. As Antoinette herself said: "I've heard English women call us white niggers. So, between you I often wonder who I am and where is my country and where do I belong and why was I ever born at all.'" (Rhys, p. 76) Here the readers could comprehend how she was confused and disoriented about not belonging anywhere.

There was a servant girl with the name Amélie, who once sang a song about white cockroach. Antoinette immediately recognized it was meant for her and since it was sung by a servant girl, who was inferior to her, it was a very offensive and crucial hint. Antoinette told Rochester: "It was a song about a white cockroach. That's me. That's what they call all of us who were here before their own people in Africa sold them to the slave traders.'" (Rhys, p. 76) Nonetheless, as Rochester did not love her or appreciate her, he could not understand it at all. The author Jean Rhys was also in a similar position as Antoinette, being a white Creole of European and Caribbean descent. She was the daughter of a Welsh doctor and Dominican mother, and she came to England at the age of sixteen. Thus, Rhys experienced all of the difficult conditions in every respect as Antoinette did.

3.2.2 Parallels in *Jane Eyre* and *Wide Sargasso Sea*

There are a few conspicuous parallels, which befell in the plot of these two novels. From the outset in *Jane Eyre*, readers are made familiar with the fact that Jane is a shabby orphan at the Gateshead, where, as she said, she is only a "discord" and that she had "nothing in harmony with Mrs Reed or her children, or her chosen vassalage" (Brontë, p. 10). In comparison, Antoinette did not have a father, as he had drunk himself to death; however, she had a mother, who wanted to be almost all the time alone at glaxis to be with her sick younger son Pierre. That caused how much Antoinette felt alone, "abandoned, lied about and helpless" (Rhys, p.7), as she was totally "useless" (Rhys, p. 5) for her mother. In practicality, Antoinette was almost as much of an orphan as well.

It is fascinating for readers, observing the parallel between the beginning of Brontë's novel, when Jane screamed "unjust, unjust" (Brontë, p.10) as she was being locked in the

red room, and the conversation Antoinette had with Rochester nearly at the end of the Rhys' novel, where she stated that "there is no justice" (Rhys, p. 115) in that world.

Under the circumstances, as Jane was imprisoned in the red room, she was persuaded she confronted something supernatural, which she could not properly define. As she was following the light that "gleamed on the wall" (Brontë, p. 12), she could not say, where it came from, since the "moonlight was still" (Brontë, p. 12). She was having the thought that it could refer to a "herald of some coming vision from another world...", later "something seemed near" her (Brontë, p. 12). This kind of supernatural powers is delineated also in the novel *Wide Sargasso Sea*, where Antoinette believes in obeah, which was kind of sorcery customarily practiced in the Caribbean. Once as she was waiting for her nurse Christophine, she was certain she would discover some objects for the obeah's ceremony in the servant's room, which she depicted as "dead man's dried hand, white chicken feathers, a cock with its throat cut, dying slowly, slowly...the blood was falling into a red basin..." (Rhys, p. 15)

Eventually, with respect to their names, both figures Jane and Antoinette resisted receiving a new name. In Jane's case, Jane Rochester, as mentioned above, she was facing the feeling about completely unknown person, named Jane Rochester. She confronted being an inferior wife to Mr Rochester. On the other hand, Antoinette had to stand up the renaming, which her husband Rochester had created for her and which is not as "good" as Jane's new surname, because it is quite savage, but meaningful – it is in relation to her mother's name, as Bertha claimed "he has found out it was my mother's name" (Rhys, p. 86). As she declared "he never calls me Antoinette now" (Rhys, p. 86). Then she opposed this nickname, and she inquired Rochester why does he call her Bertha, as that is not her name. Calm and uninterested, Rochester answered her that "It is a name I am particularly fond of. I think of you as Bertha." (Rhys, p. 105) It is important to say, that Jane faced this renaming as much as she could and she flees from Rochester for a while. In comparison to Bertha, who did not fight this battle and utterly succumbed Rochester's manipulation, letting him called her Bertha. "Bertha is not my name. You are trying to make me into someone else, calling me by another name. I know, that's obeah too." (Rhys, p. 115)

The way how is Antoinette 'precious' for him, not mentioning that he considered her to be 'a thing', is symbolized by him addressing her by another name. This shows the fact that he did not respect her as an individual at all and wanted to change her personality.

CONCLUSION

This bachelor thesis examines the novel of *Jane Eyre*, written by Charlotte Brontë. As the title of this work says, this thesis was designed to focus on the feministic and postcolonial point of view of the novel *Jane Eyre*. The first part of the feministic section introduced the young rebellious Jane and her first feministic and unruly thoughts in connection to her naughty cousin. Attention was paid also to the essential feministic features of the novel, which was supported by thoughts and supposes by Gilbert & Gubar, or by Hughes. This provided a general view of the relevant aspects of education and marriage by women in the 19th century. Crucial to this were the possible feministic dispositions of Jane – when or how did she act in a feminist way. Right at the beginning, little Jane and her first rebellious and feminist behaviour were shown to readers. The feminist topic was interconnected to the topic of governess, which has demonstrated how an “popular” occupation it was in these times for young ladies. The feminist issue provided further consideration of Jane as a female opposed to the major male characters, causing her various obstacles in her life.

Besides this, the other task was to convey primarily the possible resemblance of the protagonists Jane Eyre and Bertha Mason. This was later guided to the love triangle of these two heroines together with Mr Rochester, the key male figure of both novels. This aroused a question of the equal relationship between Jane and Rochester.

The last part of the thesis was concerned about literary field – the postcolonial perspective of *Jane Eyre*. Thanks to the novel *Wide Sargasso Sea*, readers uncovered the true story of Bertha, a.k.a. Antoinette, as its author, Jean Rhys, wrote it as a prequel to Brontë’s novel. After finding out about the *Wide Sargasso Sea*, many would reconsider whether was Rochester as “innocent” as he might have seemed at first in *Jane Eyre*, for concealing the truth about Bertha being imprisoned by him in the attic. Eventually, as proof of intertextuality in *Jane Eyre* and *Wide Sargasso Sea*, parallels between these two novels were provided to conclude the whole thesis.

Overall, the preceding pages of the thesis are relevant both to feminist and postcolonial links and relations primarily between Jane Eyre, Bertha Mason, Mr Rochester and many other main characters.

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RESUMÉ IN CZECH

Předmětem této bakalářské práce je román *Jana Eyrová*, jehož autorkou je Charlotte Brontëová, slavná anglická spisovatelka z období 19. století. Hlavním cílem této práce je představit protagonistku díla – Janu Eyrovou, (proto)feministku, a také guvernanku u majetného Edwarda Rochesterera.

Tato práce také poukazuje na neodmyslitelnou postavu románu, a to Berthu Mason. Čtenářům je poskytnuto porovnání Berthy a Jany, s ohledem na propojenosti k dílu Jean Rhysové, *Šíře Sargasového Moře*, které je věnováno především reálnému pohledu na svět Antoinetty, tedy Berthy, prolínající se s Rochesterovým pohledem na příběh. Rochester mnohdy představoval pro obě hrdinky překážku jak v lásce, tak v jiných sférách života. Samotný závěr práce díky *Šíři Sargasového Moře* přináší postkoloniální aspekt díla, ale také znaky postkolonialismu v díle *Jana Eyrová*, kde je Bertha považována za Janino temné a potlačené alter ego.