A prevalent belief during the Victorian age was that the world was divided between inferior beings governed by passion and superior reasoning beings. On the political level, this idea separated inferior passion-driven natives from superior reasoning Europeans. This division contributed to the maintenance and expansion of imperialist rule in distant lands, for it suggested that Europeans had a duty to civilize primitive natives. This view of the binary opposition between the passionate and the rational operated on a cultural level in that women were believed to be dominated by emotions unlike their male counterparts, who were seen as superior to women because of their self-control and rationality. As a result of this view, women were believed to be in need of the mental and physical regulation of doctors and psychiatrists in particular and men in general. Charlotte Bronte’s *Jane Eyre* reflects her society’s belief in the dichotomy between the inferior passionate being and the superior reasoning being on both the political and cultural levels. In her portrayal of Bertha Mason, the mad Creole woman, Bronte shows the passionate Bertha to be inferior to the articulate Jane and the self-controlled Mr. Rochester. Through the relationship between Rochester and Bertha, Bronte also points to the need for the rational European to govern the unruly passionate “other.” On the cultural level, Bronte highlights and challenges the Victorian idea that due to their emotional nature women ought to be confined to domestic life, through her depiction of Jane Eyre’s struggle to ease the societal restrictions placed on women. Bronte also refutes the notion that women are in need of men’s domination through Jane’s fight against attempts by St. John Rivers and Mr. Rochester to control her. Bronte extends the theme of passion versus reason to a personal level through Jane’s struggle to govern her emotions through reason when she finds that she must leave
Rochester. Hence, *Jane Eyre* reveals the prevalence of this imperialist notion of the need for domination in Victorian society as well as Bronte’s ambivalence toward it.
The Influence of Imperialist Ideology on the Dichotomy of Passion and Reason in Charlotte Bronte's Jane Eyre

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The Influence of Imperialist Ideology on the Dichotomy of Passion and Reason in Charlotte Bronte's Jane Eyre

1. Introduction

The novel Jane Eyre, written by Charlotte Bronte and published in 1847, chronicles the life of Jane from the age of ten until her marriage to Edward Rochester approximately eighteen years later. Narrated by the heroine from her memory of events, the story begins with a depiction of Jane as a passionate child, who angrily calls her tyrannical cousin, John Reed, "a murderer . . . [and] a slave-driver" (1996, 17). As her narrative continues, she leaves the Reeds' home to go to Lowood Charity School, where she learns, from her friend Helen Burns, to answer unfair treatment with submissive silence rather than wild outbursts, characteristic of "heathens and savage tribes" (68) in non-Christian lands. At the end of Jane's sojourn there as a student and later a teacher, we see that Jane has made great strides in her struggle to overcome her passionate nature, for she tells her readers that she had "what seemed better regulated feelings" (98). Her arrival at Thornfield, where she takes a job as a governess, proves to be the main battlefield in her fight to rule her passions through reason, for it is there that she falls in love with her employer Edward Rochester, who is forced to admit to her on their wedding day that he is already married to, Bertha Mason, a mad Creole woman. Because of this, Jane is faced with the decision to run away with him (which is the advice of her passion) or flee temptation and live without love, the edict of her reason. This intense battle in which "conscience [another name for reason] turned tyrant [and] held passion by the throat" (335) takes place in Jane's mind after Rochester's confession, and she
decides to leave him. However, her submission to the voice of reason is rewarded a year later, when she returns to find the violent Bertha has killed herself in an attempt to destroy Rochester. Her death allows Jane and Rochester to marry, a happy ending to Jane's embattled life.

Clearly, Bronte's depiction of Jane's story creates a dichotomy between passion and reason. However, as I will argue, this opposition does not only exist for Jane: through her portrayal of this conflict, Bronte reveals her conviction that passion must be ruled by reason. The battle between these two forces can be seen on three levels in the novel: the political level, in which white Europeans govern the dark races, the cultural level, characterized by the European male's domination of the European female, and the personal level, manifested in the European's struggle to overcome emotionalism associated with natives. The rational Mr. Rochester's domination of the passionate Bertha represents the global aspect of the struggle between emotionality and rationality.¹ Their relationship is a microcosm of the imperial relationship between colonizing countries and the colonized ones, shaped by imperialist ideology regarding the nature of the "other." Therefore, when Bronte shows Bertha's need for domination by depicting her as having no way of caring for herself due to her madness, Bronte is reinforced by "ethnography... linguistics, racial theory, [and] historical classification" (Edward Said 1993, 108). She is also reinforced by the accounts of missionaries who return to Europe from far off countries describing the natives as being completely depraved. Her portrayal of Rochester as the long-suffering husband who does all he can to care for his mad wife also falls in with imperialist ideology, for it alludes to what
Abdul JanMohamed calls the colonizers’ perceived mission to “civilize the rest of the world” (1983, 3).

The cultural conflict which Rochester’s relationship to both Bertha and Jane represent is the Victorian notion that men, who were assumed to be reasoning beings, had the right and the duty to govern women, for just as the passionate native required domination, Victorian women, who were thought to have an “animal or uncontrolled nature” (Shuttleworth 1996, 334), needed to be “externally regulated and controlled” (97-98). This constitutes domestic colonization where the colonizer is no longer merely the European but is now the white male. Rochester plays this part with Bertha by confining her to the third floor room at Thornfield, while he dominates Jane by seeking to show his ownership of her, after their betrothal, by adorning her with jewels and dresses that are to his liking but strip her of her own identity. She expresses her discomfort with what she perceives as his attempts to change her into his showpiece, when she states, “I never can bear being dressed up like a doll by Mr. Rochester” (Bronte 301). Jane sees these ornaments as strings that turn her into his puppet, taking away her independence.

Finally, the psychological struggle between Jane’s rationality and her propensity toward passion represents colonialism on a personal level. If she is to be an acceptable English woman, she is forced to dominate her own emotions just as a European would rule over a native or a husband would govern his wife. In this way, Bronte’s depiction of Jane’s struggle to overcome her passion is a culmination of the forces at work in her society. The binary opposition, set in operation between the colonizer and the colonized

\footnote{Bronte’s description of Bertha as having “swelled and dark lips” and “black eye-brows widely raised over the blood shot eyes” (317) associates her with Africans according to critic Susan}
and between men and women, help us to understand her inner conflict as an internalization of imperialist ideology. Psychological theories of the day, such as phrenology, the study of the crania, also set this concept in motion, by separating the mind into “distinct faculties, each of which had a specific location in the brain” (Shuttleworth 1996, 17). This belief about the mind promoted the Victorians’ fragmented view of the world, and reinforced Bronte’s depiction of the rational faculties dominating the passions on a political, cultural, and personal level.

In the next section of my introduction, I turn to the works of prominent critics, who discuss imperialism on these levels. Edward Said’s arguments regarding the symbiotic relationship between scholarly texts and works of literature today and in Victorian society reveals the imperialist ideology that contributes to Bronte’s portrayal of Jane, Rochester, and Bertha and their interaction with one another. His analysis of the way in which both areas of literature reinforce one another particularly contributes to my discussion of the political implications of Rochester’s dominant relationship to Bertha. Abdul JanMohamed outlines this relationship as it relates to the colonies themselves, making clear that the binary opposition set up by imperialism was created by and for the colonizer. This confirms Said’s argument regarding European culture. Jenny Sharpe examines and elucidates Jane’s role as a dominant European, which, according to the critic, is manifested in her use of the colonized “other” as a metaphor for the social conditions of women in a patriarchal society. Jane does this in order to improve her life and that of other women. Sharpe also implicates Bronte in this practice. Gayatri Spivak demonstrates Bronte’s practice of dehumanizing Bertha in

Meyer (Imperialism at Home 1996). Therefore, I will refer to Bertha as an African.
order to show the need to civilize the non-European countries, which Bertha represents. Spivak’s analysis of Jean Rhys’ *Wide Sargasso Sea* (1965), a contemporary restructuring of *Jane Eyre*, told from Bertha’s perspective, shows how one member of formerly colonized country attempts to counteract this negative depiction of the Creole woman. Jane Miller contributes to my discussion of men’s domination of women in society when she discusses their seduction into acquiescing to the role relegated to them by a patriarchal society. This discussion, added to Sally Shuttleworth’s explanations of prominent views in the Victorian era, clarifies the imperialistic implications of the relationship between Rochester and the two women Jane and Bertha. Finally, my treatment of the personal level of imperialism, as seen through Jane’s inner struggle between passion and reason, relies on further comments by Shuttleworth along with close readings of the novel. The analysis of the psychological ramifications of imperialism is new, and there is little documentation on which to draw. Before I examine the cultural and personal levels of imperialist ideology in Victorian society and in *Jane Eyre*, however, it is necessary to turn to Edward Said’s argument for a discussion of the political aspect of imperialism.

Edward Said, noted cultural critic, has made important contributions to the analysis of imperialism in the last thirty years. Although some post-colonialists have questioned his ideas regarding the difference between truth and ideology (Dennis Porter 1994, 150), he is largely instrumental in laying the groundwork for numerous studies of the relationship of the West to the “other.” His books, *Orientalism* (1978) and *Culture and Imperialism* (1993), provide explanations of the development and survival of imperialist ideology, which provided the rational behind Europeans’ setting up colonies
in Africa and using blacks as slaves to work in these settlements. Although his discussion in both books is particularly helpful in my examination of the evidence of imperialist ideology as an almost silent shaping force in Charlotte Bronte’s *Jane Eyre*. Thus, after considering his arguments regarding the nature of imperialist discourse, which he calls, in its most familiar Middle Eastern form, Orientalism, as it is evident in the formation of scholarly disciplines and aesthetic forms in European culture, I then turn to *Culture and Imperialism* in which he emphasizes the contributions that Western literary authors have made to this discourse. Because my focus is on a Victorian novelist and one of her works, I will be relating his comments to the practices of authors in nineteenth-century England, in general, and of Bronte, in particular.

In *Orientalism*, Said explains what he means by the term Orientalism by describing the motivations behind its development:

Orientalism can be discussed and analyzed as the corporate institution for dealing with the Orient—dealing with it by making statements about it, authorizing views of it, describing it, by teaching it, settling it, ruling over it: in short, Orientalism is a Western style for dominating, restructuring, and having authority over the Orient. (3)

Its definition as a “corporate institution” that carries on a multifaceted discourse about the Orient\(^2\) demonstrates the widespread participation in this school of thought from seemingly unrelated fields within European culture. Charles Dickens’ *Bleak House* demonstrates one Victorian author’s participation in this discourse. One of the novel’s characters, Mrs. Jellybelly, neglects her family, spending all her time recruiting English families as workers in the coffee fields and as teachers for the natives “of Borrioboolagha on the left bank of the Niger”(Penguin Books 1996, 53). Although this depiction
represents the argument made by social reformists that charitable energies should be spent at home rather than in other lands, Dickens does not challenge the representation of the native as being in need of civilizing. According to the fictitious philanthropist, this far off place has “the finest climate in the world” and is no more dangerous to inhabit than Holborn, a district in London (54). Here, Dickens not only describes the natives as being in need of education, but he also depicts some well-meaning English colonials as neglectful of their daily responsibilities in pursuit of helping natives in other lands. Another writer who contributes to imperialist discourse is Charlotte Bronte. She does this by including Bertha Mason, a Creole character, into the novel, *Jane Eyre*. Bronte’s first description of Bertha’s face comes after Jane (the heroine) has unexpectedly encountered her. Jane anxiously tells Mr. Rochester, her employer and fiance, that “it was a discoloured face—it was a savage face. I wish I could forget the roll of the red eyes and the fearful blackened inflation of the lineaments!” (Penguin Books 1996, 317). Both Dickens and Bronte contributed to Orientalism through their imaginative treatment of the Orient, yet their portrayal of far off people and places reinforced the theories put forth in European universities teaching biology, anthropology, and ethnology to name a few fields. Scientists from these disciplines did not confine their influence to the classroom, but rather participated in Orientalism through books and journals through which they influenced and authorized European culture’s view of the Orient. In addition, missionaries, attempting to gain financial support for their evangelistic work in colonized countries, tended to “simplify and exaggerate racial characteristics” (*Colour, Class, and Victorians* 1978, 75) of the

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2 In *Orientalism*, Said uses the term “Orient” to indicate the Middle East, however, in *Culture and Imperialism*, he expands the meaning to include all non-European countries, which are or
natives among whom they had “settled.” Being able to represent another part of the world, without fear of dispute from that region, is in itself a sign of power. In this way, each field of knowledge that discussed the Orient in Victorian society exercised authority over it.

The notion of the West’s superiority over the rest of the world is a crucial factor in what is said about colonized countries. According to Said, no matter what aspect of the Orient is studied, the West always emerges as superior. “In quite a constant way, Orientalism depends for its strategy on this flexible positional superiority, which puts the Westerner in a whole series of possible relationships with the Orient without ever losing him the upper hand” (7). Orientalist discourse is a cultural system of relating notions regarding the Orient in such a way that it is always portrayed as being inferior. As seen earlier, Dickens demonstrated the superiority of the British over the natives by emphasizing the Africans’ need for education and civilization. In addition, Bronte pointed out the Creole’s savagery in relation to the innocent, rational English woman, who describes Bertha intelligently, while, at the same time, struck with horror at the memory of her inhuman visage. The scientific community’s assertions regarding the nature of blacks supported the notion of whites’ superiority as well. According to anthropologist, George Stocking, for polygenists, “the impulse was strong to define the dark-skinned savages of the earth as separate species” (Victorian Anthropology 1987, 49) due to their perceived inferiority to whites. Anthropologists contributed to this common belief by positing the notion of the “Great Chain of Being” (18) of which each race represented a link, stretching from the savage native to the civilized European.

have been colonized by Europe. I shall be using the term in the second sense.
Not only does the message taught by authors, scientists and other luminaries in European society reinforce Orientalism, but it is also made popular through the powerful way in which it is communicated. Said points out distinguishing features of the way in which imperialist ideology is transmitted through discourse:

Everyone who writes about the Orient must locate himself vis-a-vis the Orient; translated into his text, this location includes the kind of narrative voice he adopts, the type of structure he builds, the kinds of images, themes, motifs that circulate in his text—all of which add up to deliberate ways of addressing the reader, containing the Orient, and finally representing it or speaking in its behalf. (20)

The language and literary devices used by those whose subject of writing is the Orient indicate where writers see themselves in relation to the colonized part of the world. In scenes depicted in Victorian novels where the European character comes face to face with the native, this “location vis-a-vis the Orient” can be viewed as more than the author’s use of space. It can also be an indication of the writer’s aloofness from his or her native character. For example, Bronte’s depiction of the scene in the third floor room at Thornfield Hall, when Bertha is revealed as Rochester’s mad wife, shows Jane to be situated away from Bertha. Bronte gives two indications of Jane’s distance from the native character. First, Jane tells us, “Mr. Rochester flung me behind him”(328), indicating that she is removed from the violent Creole woman who unexpectedly springs at him. This suggests that Jane is an onlooker rather than a participant in the situation. Rochester confirms this, later in the scene, when he refers to Jane as “this young girl, who stands so grave and quiet at the mouth of hell, looking collectedly at the gambols of a demon” (329). Here, Jane, the calm observer, is not only distanced from Bertha, but she is also placed in a location from which she can watch the mad

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4 Polygenists were a group of biologists who believed that each race was a separate species.
woman as well. Jane is outside the frame of the picture that Bronte is painting in this scene, leaving the Creole woman standing alone in the center of our focus. It is from Jane’s remote location in the room that the young English woman describes Bertha:

What it was, whether beast or human being, one could not, at first sight, tell: it grovelled, seemingly, on all fours, it snatched and growled like some strange wild animal: but it was covered with clothing; and a quantity of dark, grizzled hair, wild as a mane, hid its head and face.

Jane’s calm, almost clinical, description of the inhuman beast that stands before her is a result of the distance that Bronte puts between her heroine and the Creole. Jane’s rational tone, in this passage, bears out Said’s assertion that an author’s location in relation to his or her native character effects the voice and tone used by the writer. Because of Jane’s distance from Bertha, her description of the Creole is given in the clinical voice of a scientist reporting his or her observation of an object. Timothy Mitchell argues that many Europeans “set the world up as a picture. They ordered it up as an object on display to be investigated and experienced by the dominating European gaze” (Colonialism and Culture 1995, 293). Besides remotely positioning Jane face-to-face with Bertha, Bronte demonstrates Mitchell’s assertion that Europeans put all things foreign on display for the Westerner to investigate. Bertha is clearly treated an exhibition. She alone takes center stage, having no interaction with Jane, Rochester or any of the others in the scene. They are located as a group of onlookers gathered to view a curiosity, to which Jane refers as an inhuman “it.”

This approach to natives from outside their cultural space gives rise to surface descriptions of the Orient and its inhabitants. Said calls this superficial aspect of the Orient its exteriority:
Orientalism is premised on exteriority, that is, on the fact that the Orientalist, poet or scholar, makes the Orient speak, describes the Orient, renders its mysteries plain for and to the West. What he says and writes, by virtue of the fact that it is said or written, is meant to indicate that the Orientalist is outside the Orient, both as an existential and as a moral fact. (20-21)

Jane’s vantage point being outside the scene, is an indication that she is also outside of the exotic world that Bertha represents. Therefore, Jane is able to report her observations to her readers in a supposedly objective manner, focusing only on what Bertha does. This clinical view of the Creole woman acknowledges only her exteriority. She is not viewed as a person with human emotions but rather as a subhuman monster without rationality, personality, or morality. Bronte’s belief regarding the natives’ lack of humanity leads to her superficial description of Bertha; thus, she confirms the popular belief among Victorians that natives were devoid of thought or feeling.

In Said’s second book, *Culture and Imperialism*, he turns his discussion to Victorian novels’ representations of the Orient demonstrating further ways in which their treatment of the “other” supported imperialist ideology. He argues that authors of these works reflected the ethnocentricism of their culture in their depiction of other lands and peoples. In this way, he notes, they reinforced imperialism, which he defines as “the practice, the theory, and the attitudes of a dominating metropolitan center ruling a distant territory” (9). Not only did stereotypic plots, such as “younger sons [being] sent off the colonies” (64) and the common portrayal of native characters as “unacceptable human beings” (64), strengthen notions that England had a right to rule the uncivilized natives, but these enduring images also became practically inseparable from these ideas:

I am not trying to say that the novel—or the culture in the broad sense—‘caused’ imperialism, but that the novel, as a cultural artefact [sic.] of bourgeois society and imperialism are unthinkable without each other...
imperialism and the novel fortified each other to such a degree that it is impossible, I would argue, to read one without in some way dealing with the other. Nor is this all. The novel is an incorporative, quasi-encyclopedic cultural form. Packed into it are both a highly regulated plot mechanism and an entire system of social reference that depends on the existing institutions of bourgeois society, their authority and power. (1993, 71)

In light of the close relationship between the Victorian novel and English society, it is clear that the allusions to empire made in many of these novels do more than simply entertain readers. They indicate and reinforce already existing attitudes toward the Orient. Said gives several examples of some of these cultural beliefs, which can be seen in popular eighteenth- and nineteenth-century novels. Jane Austen’s novel Mansfield Park includes a character, Sir Thomas Bertram, whose “overseas possessions . . . give him wealth . . . [and] fix his social status at home and abroad” (Said 1993, 62). Abel Magwitch, a character in Dickens’s Great Expectations, is deported to Australia where he makes the fortune that “ironically makes possible the great expectations that Pip entertains” (Said 1993, 63). Of Bronte’s depiction of Bertha, Said writes, “Bertha Mason, Rochester’s deranged wife in Jane Eyre, is a West Indian, and also a threatening presence, confined to an attic room” (63). Her work is an example of the description of the native on European soil and how that foreign character is perceived by the European. This depiction of Bertha confirms imperialist notions that natives are mad and destructive and that they require domination by ever-rational Europeans. These ideas are not expressed explicitly, but the character portrayal and plot reiterate what Bronte’s society believed about the “other.”

Said, further, asserts that such representations of natives and the Orient come from a position of power and domination. Instead of focusing his argument of the broad
subject imperialist discourse as a whole (as he did in *Orientalism*), in *Culture and Imperialism*, he narrows his argument mainly to Victorian authors of fictional novels, demonstrating that they, as well as their readers, approached the Orient from a perspective of domination. He asserts, “References to Australia in *David Copperfield* or India in *Jane Eyre* are made because they can be, because British power (and not just the novelist’s fancy) made passing reference to these massive appropriations possible” (66). In addition to these places, native characters were appropriated into novels as well. Bertha Mason is an example of an author’s ability, as a British citizen, to incorporate the “other” in her work. Although given a bigger role in the novel than the East Indians [to whom St. John Rivers goes as a minister at the end of the novel], Bertha is equally marginalized, being used mainly for added suspense. Abdul JanMohamed likens the Victorian writers’ use of the native to the administrative practices of colonials, “Just as imperialists ‘administer’ the resources of the conquered country, so colonialist discourse “commodifies” the native subject into a stereotyped object and uses him as a ‘resource’ for the colonialist fiction” (83). JanMohamed’s argument confirms Said’s assertion that Victorian authors’ utilization of other lands and peoples as mere narrative devices is in and of itself a manifestation of their position of power over the “other.” As we have seen, in the third floor room at Thornfield, Bronte, being a citizen of the most powerful nation on earth, is able to employ the character of Bertha as an object of terror. The Creole woman is little more than a spectacle of madness and horror adding drama to Rochester’s startling revelation that he has an insane wife. Likewise, the East Indians, to which St. John Rivers goes as a missionary
at the end of the novel, provide a vehicle through which he can realize his desire to "rise highest [and] to do more than others" (Bronte 1996, 419).

In these representations of the "other," the authors reinforced the prevalent European notions that empire benefited not only themselves but also the natives. In their novels, Victorian writers demonstrated that domination of other lands and peoples was natural, moral, and within Britain's right:

The nineteenth-century English novels stress the continuing existence of England. Moreover, they never advocate giving up colonies, but take the long-range view that since they fall within the orbit of British dominance, that domination is a sort of norm, and thus conserved along with the colonies. . . . The continuity of British imperial policy throughout the nineteenth-century . . . is actively accompanied by this novelistic process, whose main purpose is not to raise more questions, not to disturb or otherwise preoccupy attention, but to keep the empire more or less in place. (Said 1993, 74)

Indeed, supporters of imperialism found a great ally in Victorian authors. Their support of this institution was not expressed explicitly but rather through characters and situations, which demonstrated the morality of and the necessity for British rule. Most Victorian novelists, believing in the morality of their nation's domination of the Orient, never considered criticizing this practice. Instead, most of them portrayed imperialism as a matter of course. In this way, colonial scenes and characters within their works proved over again that domination of the "other" was necessary.

Bertha Mason's relationship to Rochester emphasizes the natives' need for domination and the Englishman's right to dominate them. In his description to Jane of his marriage to the Creole woman, Rochester gains our sympathy for being the self-sacrificing husband of a woman whose madness necessitates her confinement in
Thornfield. He tells Jane that he told himself on returning to England with his wife after four unbearable years in Jamaica:

That woman, who has so abused your long-suffering—so sullied your name; so outraged your honour; so blighted your youth... See that she is cared for as her condition demands, and you have done all that God and Humanity require of you... Place her in safety and comfort: shelter her degradation with secrecy. (347)

Bertha has a condition that requires her to be confined. Rochester states that this malady “demands” care. Since he is returning to England in order to give her the treatment she needs, it is implied that the British are most able to give natives like Bertha what they require. She is taken from Jamaica as if her needs would not be met there. Bronte’s characterization of Rochester as the long-suffering husband is also important in her depiction of the natives’ need for England’s supposed help. She must show readers that he cares for Bertha and wants to help her despite her horrific treatment of him. His genuine concern for her, representing the colonizer’s desire to help the native, validates the civilizing mission by turning domination and confinement into an act of charity that God and Humanity require of the European.

While Said discusses Western culture’s way of dominating the Orient and Victorian writers’ support of imperialist ideology through their representations of the “other,” Abdul JanMohamed examines society within the colonies and the works that emerged from the colonial experience. In Manichean Aesthetics, he argues that “we cannot adequately understand or appreciate the nature of colonial literature and the rise of the African novel until we study them within their generative ambiance” (1983, 2). The “ambiance” in which nineteenth-century authors wrote was in itself “generative” of the depiction of the colonial situations within their novels. They did not write in a
vacuum, but rather they, as well as their works, to a large extent, were products of the
time in which they lived. JanMohamed lists some of the prevalent colonialist attitudes
and beliefs on which imperialism was founded:

The colonizers’ efforts toward absolute political, economic, and spiritual
domination create in them a feudal spirit, supported by a series of
familiar rationalizations; the superiority of white races, their mission to
civilize the rest of the world, the inability of natives to govern
themselves and to develop their own natural resources, the blacks’
tendency toward despotism, their ease in reverting to atavistic
barbarianism, their lack of intelligence, their hyperemotional and
uncontrollable personalities, and so forth. (3)

The colonialists’ perception of their position in the colonial society was based on their
view of themselves not as individuals but as members of the superior white race.
Generalizations made by colonizers were applied not only to themselves but also to
those they dominated. Simply because of their skin color, all whites were seen as
superior to Africans, and all whites also had the right, indeed the mission, to dominate
blacks. Conversely, all Africans were inferior, unintelligent, hyperemotional, and had
many other undesirable traits merely because of their race. The colonial system was
founded on and reinforced by these rationalizations and the support they generated
among Europeans at home.

The idea of the white man’s burden to civilize the savages in primitive lands
often came ironically from feelings of benevolence on the part of deeply religious
writers. Patrick Brantlinger notes that Macaulay, “advocate of the Anglicization not just
of Indian education but ultimately of all things Indian, believed that the greatness of
British imperialism would be shown not in its ability to conquer and govern the dark
races of the world but in its work of conversion” (Rule of Darkness 1988, 30). This
belief is echoed in Jane’s praise of St. John Rivers at the end of Jane Eyre. “Firm,
faithful, and devoted; full of energy and zeal, and truth, he labours for his race" (501). Bronte clearly sees Rivers’ work among the East Indians as that of an apostle, working to save souls, rather than that of an avaricious colonizer.

After examining the ideology that served as a basis for colonial expansion, JanMohamed goes on to show how such imperialist notions effected the culture of the literature that came out of the colonies. He argues that “the richness and complexity of its political and ideological contradictions provides a fertile field for the study of socio-literary relations” (1983, 2). Contradictions in ideology were natural consequences of the use of rational arguments to support imperialism, which was based on irrational ideas such as the belief of Europeans’ superiority over blacks on the basis of skin color. As JanMohamed states, these instances of incongruity create richness in literary works, for they give rise to multiple levels on which to read them. Some of the contradictions that emerged from the colonial encounter were political. For example, civilized society, from which the colonizer had come, treasured individual freedoms yet supported the denial of liberty to uncivilized peoples. Also, social activists used slaves as metaphors for oppression of women and lower classes in order to fight for more equality, yet they did not extend this fight to blacks, who were often thought of as subhuman. Some activists fought for the emancipation of slaves, yet these reformers hardly ever thought of them as being humanly equal to themselves. An ideological contradiction that arose from the colonial relationship had to do with the Europeans’ missionary vision. They felt that it was their duty to civilize Africans, yet they believed that these savages were inherently evil and unable to be civilized. This contradiction worked in the colonialists’ favor, however, for it showed the need for continual domination of the “other.”
In JanMohamed's further discussion of the supposed characteristics of Africans, he makes a crucial point about the psychology behind the colonialis's tendency to find fault with their dark counterparts:

Such claims [as their inability to govern themselves, their tendencies toward despotism, their barbarism, lack of intelligence, hyperemotional and uncontrollable personalities], designed to rationalize and perpetuate the colonizer's dominant position, are not accurate appraisals of reality but rather projections of the settler's own anxieties and negative self-images. (2)

In such vilifying representations of the African, the colonialists distanced themselves from the savage. This exaggeration demonstrated a fear of what was foreign. These notions about the "other," then, were not built on reality but rather on an intense desire to distance themselves from incomprehensible aspects of their own personalities. JanMohamed's argument accurately assesses the psychology behind negative views of the "other," however, his discussion of this dynamic leaves out the basis on which these connections between African characteristics and those of the colonialis was made. Due to Victorians' rigid thinking in regard to the binary opposition between good and evil, colonials saw their own human fallibility as an indication of the presence of evil within themselves. The fear that resulted from this view led colonialists to project onto Africans the wickedness that colonialists saw in themselves. Thus, blacks were seen through the screen of the colonialis' own fears and insecurities.

The polarization of the colonialis and the African, seen in JanMohamed's discussion up to this point, is what he refers to as the Manichean allegory. This binary opposition is the basis for imperialism:

In fact, the colonial mentality is dominated by a Manichean allegory of white and black, good and evil, salvation and damnation, civilization and
savagery, superiority and inferiority, intelligence and emotion, self and other, subject and object. (4)

Although JanMohamed refers to the literal division of black and white, his comment shows that colonialists thought figuratively in terms of black and white as well. For them, most qualities were inherent in a race and could not change. There also seemed to be no gradation between one extreme and the other. This way of thinking about the profound moral difference between races explains, in part, the overreaction of the colonials to their own shortcomings, which they associated with savages. Thus, projecting such evils onto the African became a necessity if a sense of moral superiority were to be maintained.

This act of projection is the crux of my thesis’ discussion of the binary opposition between passion and reason in *Jane Eyre*. The division of the Victorian world into two groups of people—the rational dominators and the emotional dominated-- effected Bronte’s representation of the interactions between many of the main characters in the novel. As the rational European, Mr. Rochester dominates the passion-ridden Creole, Bertha Mason. He also governs her because, according to Victorian beliefs, he, as the husband, is capable of self-control, whereas Bertha, a woman, is at the mercy of her emotions.

Bronte shows that this powerful group not only dominated peoples in far off lands, but they also exercised authority over the poor and women in British society as well. These two groups were believed to share the blacks’ tendency toward being governed by uncontrollable passions. Thus, they like the African were in need of domination by the more rational group in society. Bronte portrays the domination of the wealthy over the poor at the beginning of the novel when Jane, who must depend on the
wealthy Reed family for her sustenance, is oppressed by the cruel and unfair treatment she receives. Bronte also portrays the upper classes’ domination of the poor in the character of Mr. Brocklehurst, the administrator at Lowood Charity School, who demands austerity of his pupils but allows his daughters and wife to dress ostentatiously.

Men’s domination over women is portrayed (in the novel) in John Reed, Brocklehurst, Rochester, and St. John Rivers who each govern Jane because she is woman. Mr. Rochester’s domination of her has further significance because the two become engaged, and his condescending treatment of her is a harbinger of his future role as dominator after they are married. Thus, Jane and Rochester’s relationship is depicted, in part, as a battleground in which the heroine struggles to gain equality with her perspective husband. Furthermore, in Jane’s psychological realm, she is forced to use her rationality to dominate her emotions throughout the novel if she is to be an acceptable English woman. Setting two groups in opposition to each other, as described by JanMohamed’s discussion of the manichean allegory, gives rise to a complex relationship wherein rational dominators depend on the emotional dominated for the continuation of a sense of moral superiority:

For while [the colonizer] sees the native as the quintessence of evil and therefore avoids all contact because he fears contamination, he is at the same time absolutely dependent upon the colonized people not only for his privileged social and material status but also for his sense of moral superiority and, therefore, ultimately for his very identity. (4)

One of the reasons that Europeans viewed the “other” as evil, hyperemotional, and irrational in the era of imperialism was to give themselves the opportunity to see

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2 Due to Jane’s rebellion against being oppressed, each man is only able to dominate Jane to varying levels of success.
themselves as righteous, self-controlled, and rational. Said echoes this claim when he argues that “the Orient has helped to define Europe . . . as its contrasting image, idea, personality, experience” (1978. 2 emphasis mine). Europeans’ self-image depended on the supposed characteristics of the “other” as a way of demonstrating what they were not. This dependence on inferior natives for a sense of moral superiority and identity explains in part why the “other” was portrayed as being the quintessence of evil. The worse natives seemed to be, the better Europeans felt about themselves. Jane Eyre, standing face-to-face with Bertha in the third floor room at Thornfield, is clearly defined by Rochester’s comparison of her to his mad Creole wife saying, “Compare these clear eyes with the red balls yonder—this face with that mask—this form with that bulk” (329). Up to this point, we have seen Jane as outwardly demure in her interactions with Rochester and the rest of society in most situations. Yet, Bronte is able to add to her depiction of Jane’s acceptability as an English woman by showing that she is not mad, or passion-driven like Bertha. According to another article written by JanMohamed, this sense of identity is only one of the benefits that imperialism afforded colonialists or their fellow Europeans.

In “The Economy of Manichean Allegory: The Function of Racial Difference in Colonialist Literature,” an article included in “Race, ” Writing, and Difference,” JanMohamed focuses on ways in which colonialist writers, such as Joseph Conrad, exploited the Orient. JanMohamed points out their careless disregard for accuracy in their depictions of foreign lands and peoples:

Since the object of representation—the native—does not have access to these texts (because of linguistic barriers) and since the European audience has no direct contact with the native, imperialist fiction tends to be unconcerned with the truth-value of its representation. (82)
Fearing no contradictions by knowledgeable readers or offended Africans, Conrad is able to bypass the truth in order to project "the settler's own anxieties and negative self-images [which are entirely indifferent to reality] on an individual African as well as the whole African continent—onto the 'heart of darkness.' (1983, 3). According to Susan Meyer's assertion, in *Imperialism at Home*, regarding the belief in Africans' propensity toward madness and drunkenness, Bronte's characterization of Bertha depends more on prevalent Victorian beliefs than on accuracy. The freedom to portray the "other" so as to fit the agenda of the writer is manifest in the practice of using the native as a mere literary device to enhance the narrative.

JanMohamed explains that native characters, such as the African woman in *Heart of Darkness* (and Bertha for our discussion), were used as little more than objects that added suspense to colonial novels. "The European writer commodifies the native by negating his individuality, his subjectivity, so that he is now perceived as a generic being that can be exchanged for any other native (they all look alike, act alike, and so on)" (83). The East Indians for whom St. John labors "to clear their painful way to improvement" (Bronte 1996, 501) could easily be substituted for the residents of Boorioboola-Gha, in *Bleak House*, who are in need of an English education (53). Both groups are inferior to the Europeans, requiring their intervention in order to be made acceptable human beings. Clearly, these natives were used as commodities, for they were stripped of humanity and made into objects to be manipulated in a narrative. In this way, colonialist writers supported imperialism as well, for they reinforced the notion that natives were bereft of humanity. These writers endorsed domination of the "other" in their "commodification" of the native, implicitly declaring that such
treatment of the dark races was acceptable. By allowing Bertha no verbal
communication except for maniacal laughter and “eccentric murmurs” (126), Charlotte
Bronte commodifies her native character, in part by not allowing her to describe her
own situation. Thus, she is little more than a senseless animal.

Rather than a being, Bertha is an alter ego that Jane fears she herself might
become. When the imperialist’s dark side is projected onto the native character, that
color becomes a symbol of the white’s sinfulness. Many critics, including Sandra
Gilbert and Susan Gubar, interpret Bertha’s character as an “avatar of Jane. What
Bertha . . . does, for instance, is what Jane wants to do” (1984, 359). For them, Bertha
represents Jane’s passionate nature, which the heroine constantly struggles to subdue
through rationality. This inner conflict points to Jane’s “internal rivalry.”

One exploitive literary genre, according to JanMohamed, is what he calls the
“racial romance.” He asserts that in this type of narrative, commodification of the
“other” is managed so that “the villains are always dark, evil natives . . . who are used
simultaneously as stereotypes and archetypes” (91). This is an alternative use for
savages. Instead of being projections of the evilness in Europeans, these natives are
made the villains of the narrative adding terror and suspense to the novel. In both of
these genres, the wickedness of the native is a given. JanMohamed points to the
common fate of native characters in romantic novels: “In all cases, however, [authors
of racial romances] pit civilized societies against the barbaric aberrations of an Other,
and they always end in the elimination of the threat posed by the Other and the
legitimatization of the values of good, civilized society” (91). The European character
represents ordered society, while the native represents everything that threatens order.
For this reason, the native must be destroyed at some point in the novel. In Jane Eyre, the heroine could not have entered into the socially acceptable state of marriage with Rochester without the timely death of his Creole wife. Thus, Bertha’s death brings social order to the novel. Her death is also significant in that it symbolizes the death of Jane’s destructive rage and passion. The dark side of her character having been eliminated with Bertha, Jane can become what she is meant to be—a wife and mother.

Bronte’s Jane Eyre is a novel that has questioned Feminist critiques, focusing on imperialism in the novel. In Allegories of Empire, Jenny Sharpe discusses the appropriation of images of the passionate West Indian woman and the self-denying Hindu widow in Jane Eyre. She argues that Bronte uses these images not only to reveal the binary opposition of reason against passion that exists within the character of Jane Eyre but also to show that these opposing characteristics exist within women everywhere:

As a narrator of her life story, Jane demonstrates a self-consciousness about class and gender hierarchies; however, race operates as a transparent category of self-representation. To refuse this transparency is to see that the moral agency of the domestic individual is contingent upon a national and racial splitting of femininity—one that binds ambitions and passions to the West Indian plantation woman and female self-renunciation to the Hindu. (1993, 2)

In other words, Jane focuses on the oppression of women and lower classes in English society at the expense of poor, non-white females. Instead of including them in her struggle for class and gender equality, she uses them as metaphors for the opposing sides of her (and other English women’s) character. She is able to gain moral agency through finding a healthy balance between both of these extremes. When she lashes out against John Reed, at the beginning of the novel, saying, “You are like a murderer—
you are a slave driver” (17) her passionate nature is revealed. However, when she finds pleasure at the end of the novel by “conducting [Mr. Rochester] where he wished to go” (500) she has clearly stepped from passion, represented later by Bertha, the tigress (239), to self denial manifested in the Hindu widows. As, Sharpe explains, Jane’s moral agency depends on her ability to separate (and balance) both of these sides of her character. Bronte’s use of the “other” as a metaphor for the Jane’s passion and self-effacement is used as a way to gain subjectivity with no concern for the oppression of the native women themselves.

Sharpe’s critique of the novel also explains that Bronte, having displaced these negative characteristics onto the natives, then uses those traits to show that other peoples were in need of “civilizing” by Europeans such as Jane, who is capable of helping to civilize the inferior native:

The magical resolutions that Spanish Town, Madeira, and Calcutta provide for the novel’s romantic plot suggest a mastery of a different sort. *Jane Eyre* clears a space for a new female subjectivity, the domestic individual, but does so by grounding ‘woman’s mission’ in the moral and racial superiority of the colonialist as civilizer. (2)

Bronte, being a lower class woman, belongs to the two most oppressed groups in English society. She creates the same situation for Jane, yet she is able to achieve a sense of superiority for herself and her heroine by presenting her in relation to the colonies and the colonized. In this framework, Jane is seen as having subjectivity as well, for she is shown as a capable woman who can help elevate the uncivilized. In her own culture she is in bondage to male and upper class domination, and she struggles to be liberated from it. However, at one point, she finds freedom from oppression by her belief in her own ability to “go out as a missionary to preach liberty to them that are
enslaved” (302). Because of her supposed superiority to the natives, she feels able to free them; thus, she is liberated from her own sense of powerlessness in the face of oppression.

Sharpe’s examples of colonialism—in Madeira and Calcutta—in Jane Eyre, show Jane’s sense of moral agency and superiority as well. Mr. Rochester’s erotically charged tale of his marriage to Bertha in Spanish Town turns readers’ attention to Jane’s innocence, for she is seen as pure in comparison to the lascivious Creole woman. The difference between the two women is implied in Rochester’s comment, “With less sin I might have—but let me remember to whom I am speaking” (344). He cannot tell the virginal Jane what sins he might have committed with Bertha. Madeira provides Jane with wealth, which is earned in part by the toil of slaves. This wealth, ironically, cements Jane’s superiority to them: reaps the benefits of their labor. The inheritance she receives at the death of her uncle also creates her sense of independence and equality with Rochester at the end of the novel. As she tells him, “I told you I am independent, sir, as well as rich; I am my own mistress” (483). Calcutta highlights Jane’s righteousness and religious fervor. St. John’s description of her as docile, diligent . . . and very heroic,” who as a “conductress of Indian schools, and a helper amongst Indian women . . . will be . . . invaluable” (449), elevates Jane to a position of superiority, because it suggests that as an English woman she can civilize the East Indians.

According to Sharpe, another way that Bronte uses imperialism to elevate Jane is to equate and identify her self-sacrificing role, as the wife of a blind cripple, with St. John Rivers’ altruistic missionary work in India. Sharpe asserts that Bronte does this by creating Rivers as a colonial parallel to Jane’s domestic mission as a wife and mother:
The colonial allegory that is appended to the story of Jane’s life . . . invokes the civilizing mission at the end in order to give greater value to domestic virtues. Jane’s personal victory occurs when she reinvents domestic labor in terms of the human-making enterprise of colonialism.

(12)

When Jane reaches the end of her narrative, which comes shortly after she marries Rochester, she brings us to the present temporarily when she writes that “I have now been married ten years” (Bronte 1996, 500). After this, she returns to a look at the past to recount her duties as the wife of Rochester who was blind and disabled for the first two years of their marriage. “Never did I weary of reading to him; never did I weary of conducting him where he wished to go: of doing for him what he wished to be done” (500). Three paragraphs later she describes St. John River’s work on the mission field outlining a similar life of service. “Firm, faithful, and devoted; full of energy, and zeal, and truth, he labours for his race [the human race]: he clears their painful way to improvement; he hews down like a giant the prejudices of creed and caste that encumber it” (501). Both Jane and St. John are zealous in their duties. Jane never tires of her role as helper, and Rivers works tirelessly in his self-denying enterprise. The similarities between Jane’s work as a wife and St. John’s missionary work associates her everyday duties with the grand work of a man of God; thus, she and her life become significant. Implicit in this is that the work of other English wives is worthy of respect and admiration as well.

Sharpe’s assessment of 

_{Jane Eyre_} is illuminating in that she confirms JanMohamed’s claim that the native was “commodified” by European writers, who included images of the “other” in their novels. She also confirms Said’s contention that the Victorian writer manifested domination over natives simply by writing them into
the novel. However, in Sharpe’s discussion regarding the Creole and the Hindu widow, each representing opposing aspects of the female psyche, she seems to fall into the imperialist trap of using the “other” as a metaphor. Her argument takes away from the humanity and individuality of the native widows that she speaks of in this portion of her treatment of *Jane Eyre*.

In “Three Women’s Texts and a Critique of Imperialism,” Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak begins her discussion of *Jane Eyre* by focusing on the marginalization of Jane throughout the novel. Spivak draws readers’ attention to Jane’s position as an outsider in the home of her Aunt Reed after Jane has met with her disapproval and is sent away from the drawing room, in which the rest of the family is gathered. Jane tells her readers of her subsequent actions:

A small breakfast-room adjoined the drawing-room: I slipped in there. It contained a book-case: I soon possessed myself of a volume, taking care that it should be one stored with pictures. I mounted into the window-seat: gathering up my feet, I sat cross-legged, like a Turk; and, having drawn the red moreen curtain nearly close, I was shrined to double retirement. (14)

Spivak sees special meaning in the room Jane has chosen for her retreat as well as the past time in which she indulges. According to the critic, her choice of room and occupation tell readers much more about her and her status in society than a cursory look at the scene suggests:

It seems fitting that the place to which Jane withdraws is not only not the withdrawing room but also not the dining room, the sanctioned place of family meals. Nor is it the library, the appropriate place for reading. . . . Here in Jane’s self-marginalized uniqueness, the reader becomes her accomplice: the reader and Jane are united—both are reading. Yet, Jane still preserves her odd privilege, for she continues never quite doing the proper thing in its proper place.
She cares little for reading what is meant to be read: “the letter-press.” She reads the pictures. The power of this singular hermeneutics is precisely that it can make the outside inside. (246)

Both Jane and the small room are implied to be misfits in the great house, for both she and the little room have been abandoned by the Reed family. Her association with the tiny room adds to the scene’s feeling of isolation. Furthermore, Jane goes against not only the proper use of the room but also fails to follow the conventional use of a book when she “reads the pictures” rather than the “letter-press.” Spivak’s comment about the reader being an accomplice of Jane broadens the feeling of seclusion in this scene, for the critic shows that Jane is also an outsider in relation to her fellow readers because they are reading, while she is merely looking at the pictures. Thus, all of society is doing what Jane should be doing, which makes her even more of an outcast.

Spivak goes on to say that throughout the novel Jane continues to represent what the critic refers to as the “counter-family” (246). Jane, Miss Temple, and Helen Burns make up the counter-family to the Brocklehursts at Lowood, and Jane and Rochester comprise the “illicit counter-family” (247). However, when Jane agrees to marry him, she and Rochester become “family-in-law” due to “the active ideology of imperialism” (247), which allows Jane to paint a picture of Bertha as “human/animal” (247). One purpose for Bronte’s portraying the mad Creole woman in such a light is to awaken sympathy in her readers for Jane and Rochester so that at the end of the novel their marriage will not be met with disapproval. Another objective is to show that Jane is superior to Bertha, for Jane, as a part of English society, has a duty to civilize natives such as Bertha. In this way, Bronte’s representation of the mad Creole woman also helps to counter Jane’s isolation from the rest of society. The author also uses Bertha to
represent Europe’s “not-yet-human Other” (247) in order to show that such creatures needed Europeans to civilize them and make them human beings with subjectivity. Spivak’s claim that Europeans’ supposed duty of “soul making” (248) confirms Said’s argument that “the Orientalist makes it his work to be always converting the Orient from something to something else: he does this for himself, for the sake of his culture, [and] in some cases for what he believes is the sake of the Oriental” (67). These two critics’ arguments combine to demonstrate that the well-being of the “other” was the last consideration in the practice of “soul making.” For Jane, the image of Bertha as subhuman is a benefit, as it makes Jane’s relationship with Rochester more equal because both of them are superior Europeans. This image also makes their love affair more acceptable, our sympathy having been shifted from the wronged wife to the beleaguered soul mates. There is no mention of civilizing natives until we meet St. John Rivers, and, even then, he undertakes this mission for the sake of his unlimited ambition (Bronte 1996, 419), his concern for the East Indians being secondary. The hypocrisy and destructive results of such seemingly humanitarian endeavors can be seen in a sort of anachronistic prequel to Jane Eyre, to which Spivak turns our attention in her discussion of “soul making.”

According to Spivak, one of the reasons that Jean Rhys, a Dominican writer, wrote Wide Sargasso Sea (1965) was to counteract Bronte’s representation of Bertha (called Antoinette in the novel) as only partly human. Spivak argues that “in the figure of Antoinette, whom in Wide Sargasso Sea Rochester violently renames Bertha, Rhys suggests that so intimate a thing as personal and human identity might be determined by the politics of imperialism” (250). Spivak’s argument sets up a reversal of the
dynamic that was presented earlier in this discussion by Said and JanMohamed. As we have seen, natives provided the colonizer with an identity based on the supposed differences between the two counterparts. Here, in Spivak’s argument, she demonstrates Said and JanMohamed’s assertions that those constructs were designed to promote a sense of moral superiority. Antoinette is clearly given a new identity by Rochester, who represents the colonizer. Like many of the stereotypes thrust on the “other” by Europeans, the name Bertha does not accurately represent her, for it is not her real name. Instead, it represents a dehumanizing false identity forced on her in order to demonstrate Rochester’s power over her. In chapter three of my thesis, I argue that the relationship between Rochester and “Bertha” is a microcosm of the racialized politics of the colonies. It shows the colonizer’s complete control over the colonized in relation to the native’s ineffectual, rebellious response, which lacks the power to change the dynamics of the relationship.

Jane Miller’s book Seductions (1991) continues the discussion of the unequal relationship between men and women, focusing on the role of seduction in this dynamic. However, her comments are directed to Western women, struggling with their inferior position in society. She explains the nature of cultural seduction when she writes, “Seduction comes to stand for the tensions and their dynamic inherent in the unequal relations between women and men. Its reciprocities, like its inequities, are characteristic of women’s dependencies on men and of women’s apparent acquiescence in many of the conditions of those dependencies” (22). In other words, women in a position of dependency gain the benefits of financial security, as well as a sense of self worth from surrendering to conventional roles set out for them. This makes submission
to these roles attractive or seductive to the dependent woman, who agrees to continue in her state of inequality in order to achieve the benefits of such a position. In *Charlotte Bronte and Victorian Society*, Sally Shuttleworth notes that in Victorian England “woman came to represent . . . the civilizing power which would cleanse the male from contamination in the brutal world of the economic market” (1996, 76). Bronte’s representation of Jane as being Rochester’s “civilizing power” demonstrates her acquiescence to this notion of woman’s oppressively self-sacrificing role in her society. Yet, Jane’s genuine love for Rochester shows Victorian women that they can reap the benefits of marriage without sacrificing a sense of self-worth. In addition, that Jane finds a sense of equality and independence before returning to Rochester is another indication that neither Jane nor Bronte has completely acquiesced to accepting the cultural belief that marriage is the ultimate fate for a woman.

Despite Bronte’s partial success in resisting her culture’s seductive voice regarding the belief that marriage was the way for women to find fulfillment, she, along with most of Victorian society, did not free herself from imperialism’s seduction. Nineteenth-century Europeans were seduced into supporting imperialism by “stories of strange customs and secret pleasures, of the unknowable and the inexplicable” (114). Miller explains that these tales fulfilled the function of “exciting and consoling . . . Western readers” (114). Not only did these narratives tantalize audiences, but they also diverted their attention from the oppression that imperialism caused non-Westerners. “The seduction [of imperialism] has also served to distract from the rape, from the barbarous history of invasion, theft and violence, whilst buttressing that history’s maintenance and continuation against all possible threats of its survival” (115). As a
member of an imperialist society. Bronte takes part (perhaps unconsciously) in this
distraction by including Bertha in her novel, in part, to supply mystery. Said argues
that Bronte uses Bertha as an example of the “unknowable, for, he notes that she
functions as a “threatening presence” (1993, 62) in Thornfield, providing mystery and
intrigue to the novel.

In addition, Bronte also uses Bertha and her East Indian counterparts to console
Europeans by reassuring them of “Western competence, enterprise,
straightforwardness, progress and overall superiority” (115). This relationship between
the exciting yet soothing stories is another example of a seduction, for it lulls
Westerners into surrendering to the idea that imperialism is beneficial for them as well
as the colonized natives. Writers who include native characters, who simultaneously
excite and reassure the reader, must themselves be seduced (at least subconsciously) in
order to reinforce imperialism in their depictions of the “other.” This allure helps
explain JanMohamed’s argument that the colonialist writer is “seduced by colonial
privileges and profits . . . to conform to the prevailing racial and cultural
preconceptions” (1983, 82). The sense of moral superiority, and the ability to use
natives in novels as metaphors for the European’s dark side are some of the “privileges
and profits” that lulled colonial writers and authors at home in European countries to
acquiesce to imperialist ideology. From this surrender to imperialist ideology came
novels that distracted readers from the horrors of colonization.
Belief in the binary opposition between the passionate native and the reasoning imperialist was prevalent in Victorian society. It appeared in scientific journals, in missionary accounts of people in other lands, and in many novels. Charlotte Bronte demonstrates her agreement with this separation between the emotional “other” and the self-controlled European in her works as well. In fact, I assert that nowhere is this dichotomy more explicitly played out than in *Jane Eyre*, her novel that was published in 1847. I further argue that Bronte demonstrates her society’s views of the “other” when she makes it clear that the uncivilized, passion-driven native must be controlled by the civilized, reasoning European. Bronte sets up the binary opposition between the native and the colonizing country when she includes a character, named Bertha, who demonstrates the uncontrollable passion that was believed to be characteristic of the “other.” When this woman is introduced in the novel, the author leaves no question that the violent acts and unruly behavior, which had terrorized the tenants of Thornfield Hall, had been performed by a Creole (Bronte 1996, 325), who had come to England after her marriage to Mr. Rochester. It is in England that Bertha’s overindulged passionate nature is seen in relation to the self-controlled English characters: Jane Eyre, who has acquired “what seemed better regulated feelings” (98), through her years at Lowood School, and Mr. Rochester, who does not allow his desire to be rid of Bertha, to drive him to “indirect assassination” (338) by putting her in his cold, damp manor house, Ferndean. After Bronte reveals the opposing characteristics of the “other” and Europeans, she continues her, perhaps, unconscious complicity with imperialist
ideology by showing that dark non-Europeans, whom Bertha represents, must be dominated for their own good by English colonizers who can rein in the destructive tendencies of the undisciplined native. In Jamaica, Bertha proves to be unable to control herself. Rochester tells Jane that “no servant would bear the continued outbreaks of her violent and unreasonable temper” (344). Such behavior necessitated Rochester’s intervention. Taking her to Thornfield, he is able to “see that she is cared for as her condition demands” (347); thus, he fulfills the duty that “God and humanity require[s] of [him]” (347). Bronte’s characterization of Bertha’s passionate outbursts and Rochester’s care for her out of a sense of duty, implies justification for the European’s domination of the “other.”

Bronte’s implicit comparison of Bertha to Jane and Rochester reflects the way in which European cultural identity was developed during the colonial era. Said argues that “no identity can ever exist by itself and without an array of opposites, negatives, oppositions” (1993, 52). The colonized world provided the “opposite” against which Europeans could see themselves and thus form the idea of what it meant to be a European. Said asserts that in Europe’s “struggle for (and over) empires” (52), numerous geographical allusions, which Said calls a “structure of reference,” appeared in the literary works of authors like Defoe and Austen and in writings regarding history or ethnography. This literature located “socially desirable empowered space in metropolitan England or Europe and “connect[ed] it to . . . distant or peripheral worlds . . . conceived of as desirable but subordinate” (52). One of the significant elements of these repeated geographical references is that they carried with them a “structure of attitudes” about “rule, control, profit . . . enhancement and suitability” (52), which
contributed to the widespread support of empire. Said makes clear the fact that many of these references and resulting attitudes were unconscious on the part of writers when he states, “These structures do no arise from some pre-existing (semi-conspiratorial) design that the authors then manipulate, but are bound up with the development of Britain’s [and Europe’s] cultural identity, as that identity imagines itself in a geographically conceived world” (52). In other words, with its exposure to distant lands, due, to a large extent, to colonial enterprises, Europeans simultaneously developed attitudes about the “peripheral world” and about themselves and what it meant to be European. This cultural identity was not a man made phenomenon, but rather was intertwined with cultural “structures of reference and attitude.”

In Rule of Darkness, Patrick Brantlinger confirms Said’s argument that imperialist ideology was often an unconscious set of beliefs when he explains the extent to which imperialist ideology played a part in nineteenth-century English society: “Imperialism, understood as an evolving but pervasive set of attitudes and ideas toward the rest of the world, influenced all aspects of Victorian and Edwardian culture” (1988, 8). These “attitudes and ideas,” are not shown to be products of a deliberate attempt on the part of writers from different disciplines to sway Europeans to support imperialism, but rather a set of convictions woven into the fabric of their society. According to Brantlinger, novelists, being profoundly influenced by the attitudes prevalent in their culture, often unconsciously contributed to this atmosphere of imperialist fervor. He explains that “literature is inevitably social: it is written in society, by social beings, addressed to other social beings” (10). In this assertion, Brantlinger places society before the “social beings,” who produce works of literature,
demonstrating the fact that culture, in a large part, forms the views of writers. He goes on to indicate that they then communicate these ideas through their works, which are written for other “social beings.” Clearly, imperialist ideology, being pervasive in society, first became part of novelists’ thinking and was then inadvertently incorporated into their novels, especially those that included depictions of native characters.

In order to show how Bronte’s holds to her culture’s beliefs about the passionate “other,” I begin by discussing the prominent scientific views of her day regarding natives. I then point to passages in Jane Eyre in which these views are demonstrated in her description of Bertha. An examination of Bronte’s representation of Jane and Mr. Rochester, as opposed to her depiction of Bertha, further demonstrate Bronte’s agreement with experts of her day that Europeans were superior to the “other” in that they had the ability to control their natural impulses. Finally, a close look at Rochester’s relationship with Bertha makes it clear that Bronte holds to the popular Victorian belief that Europeans must rule over natives because the latter require it for their own well being. The portrayal of Bertha as being inferior to Jane and Rochester, and the subsequent conclusion that Bertha, and other natives like her, should be kept under control was in a large part due to the anthropological assertions of Bronte’s day.

The perceived physical and cultural differences between white Europeans and dark non-Europeans opened up new avenues of speculation regarding the hierarchical structure of humankind. One of the beliefs that gained new popularity in Victorian England was that of the Great Chain of Being, which was thought to link “all forms of creation in a finely graduated hierarchical series” (George Stocking 1986, 11). During the seventeenth-century, the idea of the chain allowed for the arrangement of “all of
creation on a vertical scale from plants, insects, and animals through man to the angels and God himself" (Henry Louis Gates, Jr. 1986, 8). By the eighteenth-century, however, the religious connotations of the notion of the Great Chain of Being was replaced by "the urge toward the systemization of all human knowledge . . . [which] led directly to the relegation of black people to a lower place in the [chain]" (8), due to their ignorance. It was not until the nineteenth-century that the Great Chain of Being took on a "scientific" aspect as anthropologists posited theories concerning the "human character and physical type" of each race (George Stocking, Jr. 1987, 18). For these scientists, different races were at various levels of the Chain. Not surprisingly, during the time of the Industrial Revolution, the white European was considered to be at the top of the hierarchy. The advancements in technology were seen as proof of the exceptional mental capacity that Europeans possessed, and for them this progress was evidence that they were civilized. In fact, that whites had cultivated their society into a scientifically advanced culture was seen as the greatest factor "which separated the white from the other races" (Robert Young 1995, 95). In addition, the culture's adherence to the tenets of Christianity was seen as further proof that it was civilized and provided evidence of moral superiority over the "other," who seemed devoid of spiritual understanding. Edward Said explains that the separation of races into a hierarchy is the result of the area of study known as ethnography:

With the rise of ethnography—as described by Stocking, and also as demonstrated in linguistics, racial theory, historical classification—there is a codification of difference, and various evolutionary schemes going from primitive to subject races, and finally to superior or civilized

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6 The Oxford English Dictionary defines civilize: to bring to an advanced stage or system of social development (2nd ed. 1996). From this definition it is safe to infer that Europeans viewed their technological advancements as one piece of evidence that proved that they were civilized.
peoples . . . . Such commonly used categories as the primitive, savage, degenerate, natural, unnatural also belong here. (1993, 108)

Although the hierarchy of races was supposedly based on biological and psychological differences between whites and other races, Said makes it clear that “superior” was synonymous with “civilized.” Europeans were proud of their technological achievements and turned the ability to accomplish these advancements into the “defining feature of racial capacity” (Robert Young 1995, 95), believing that the white race had inherent qualities that made such progress possible. On the other hand, uncivilized, “primitive” people were not believed to have the built-in capability to procure such technological advancements for themselves. For the “savage,” such achievements were impossible and could never happen without the aid of white Europeans.

This dichotomy between “savages” and Europeans permeated every avenue of knowledge. Other anthropological schools of thought included the belief that the dark races were entirely separate species from the white European (Stocking 1987, 49). Still others argued that after Adam and Eve’s fall from grace, the dark ethnic groups continued to degenerate, while the superior white race progressed (44). Despite the disparity between these theories, however, all agreed that the European was superior to non-European races, which did not have the capacity for improvement. In Orientalism, Said points to the basis for this study of dark non-Europeans, when he writes, “The scientist, the scholar, the missionary, the trader, or the soldier was in, or thought about, the Orient because he could be there, or could think about it, with very little resistance on the Orient’s part” (Said 1979, 7). The study of these various theories in themselves demonstrate the power that Europe had over the colonized nations. It was a desire to
maintain this position of dominance over these peoples that gave rise to such studies and influenced the scholars' findings.

The constant confirmation of the notion that Europeans were superior to natives and thus had the right and duty to govern them was, in part, a means of explaining away many of the facts of empire that threatened to undermine the continuation of Europe's domination of the "other." Abdul JanMohamed notes, "For the European settler and administrator, colonial life raises the difficulty of reconciling the notions of political freedom cherished by his home country with the actual political suppression and disenfranchisement of the colonized people. He resolves this dilemma by developing the theory of the white man's burden" (1983, 4-5). Theories regarding the natives' inferiority, posited by anthropologists, ethnologists, and others, enable colonizers to continue their domination of colonized peoples, for these views permit European colonial administrators to perceive their suppression of natives as a means of fulfilling the "white man's burden" of civilizing the "other." Without these theories, European domination could be threatened by the contradictions between the Christian values that the society claimed to possess and the actual practices of colonialism. Beliefs in the backwardness of non-white Europeans also strengthened West Indian slave owners' arguments against the emancipation of their black slaves, during the abolitionist movement of the early nineteenth-century in England. They were able to "justify their acts by persuading themselves of the supposed inherent inferiority of blacks" (Jack Gratus 1973, 250), in part, by arguing that "blacks were not fit for freedom" (233). The way in which scientists and scholars collected and interpreted data regarding the nature of non-white Europeans was crucial in maintaining Europe's
domination of other peoples, for they were able to construct a Westernized view of the other "despite or beyond any correspondence, or lack thereof, with a real Orient" (Said 1979, 5). Instead of developing descriptive theories corresponding to this non-European realm, research and the larger enterprise of knowledge was molded to support the supposed findings of theorists, who, perhaps unconsciously, reinforced Europe's claim to dominance. These scientists focused on characteristics such as savagery and depravity that their studies led them to assume were part of the natives' inherent nature.

Fortified with belief in the whites' superior capacity to create an advanced civilization, imperialists set forth to help "inferior" races to progress as Europe had. Clearly, anthropology and ethnography had done more than provide possible explanations for the discrepancy between races and cultures; these sciences had also contributed to the spread of imperialism, validating Europeans' domination of other peoples. As Said states, "There are hardly any exceptions then to the overwhelming prevalence of ideas suggesting, often ideologically implementing, imperial rule" (1993, 108). Europeans were able to use these theories to convince themselves that imperialistic domination was actually a service to the primitive "other." The group that was seen as being in the most urgent need for imperialist domination was Africans. Stereotypes about the irrational black permeated English society. Many of these popular beliefs are clearly demonstrated in Bronte's representation of Bertha Mason, the mad Creole woman whose subservience to her passions demonstrates her backward nature and need for civilization. In order to understand the similarities between characters like Bertha and the African, it is necessary to discuss what the Victorians
believed were characteristics of the black person and how novelists, such as Bronte, reinforced these views.

A prominent belief among nineteenth-century Britons was that blacks were completely devoid of morality. Missionaries, who wished to emphasize the wickedness of the native in order to gain support for work in the mission field, reinforced this notion in their descriptions of the sinful native in need of salvation. In his book, *Colour, Class, and the Victorians*, Douglas Lorimer explains that

> in their attempts to gain support for the conversion of Africans and emancipated slaves of the West Indies, missionary groups suffered difficulties [in getting people’s attention]. As a consequence, their propaganda . . . encouraged a more stereotyped conception of the Negro. (1978, 75)

Missionaries who carried images of the African back to England were convinced that they were working for the good of that race. Yet, Lorimer’s comment reveals that blacks were used as examples of savage behavior in order to show that religious work was needed in Africa, for “enthusiasm for the missionary cause relied upon a vision of the potential convert as the epitome of corrupt, unregenerate man” (78). Some of the stereotypes put forth by missionaries were that black Africans were “uncivilized, barbarous, pagan-beyond the ken of contemporary morality and civility. Mendacious and cruel, lazy and untrustworthy” (James Walvin 1986, 77). It was also reported that Africans were “incapable of all but the most limited and simple tasks and creative energies” (77).

These descriptions of the wickedness and irrationality of the native served to reinforce the theories put forth by scientists as well. These ideas filtered down to the average Victorian through scientific journals, missionary tracts, and church meetings.
With the abundant confirmation of the nature of the “savage,” it is clear to see that, for Victorians, “it took no leap of the imagination to view the Africans’ blackness as proof and confirmation of the wickedness, sinfulness, and baseness alleged to be the natural qualities of black humans” (73). In other words, the blacker the skin, the blacker the soul. These attitudes toward the African go a long way in explaining Brontë’s representation of Bertha as black. In the Victorian mind, the character’s violent behavior links her with the African. Beliefs about the evil nature of Africans also helped the rise of imperialism. Just as the missionary had posited negative views of blacks in order to emphasize the natives’ need of them, Victorians believed that the backward nature of “savages” cried out for Europe’s help to bring civilization to their lives.

Europeans as civilized and self-disciplined beings, felt it was their right as well as their duty to bring the “savage” African under control. One influential group of Victorians who, for the most part, believed in the necessity of dominating “primitive” natives was novelists. Patrick Brantlinger, in his book, Rule of Darkness, states that George Elliot’s Middlemarch reveals “the reform optimism of early Victorians” (1996, 30) to bring civilization to the “other.” According to Brantlinger, this fervor later “spilled over into numerous civilizing projects and stories about converting the savages” (30). He also refers to Harriet Martineau’s novel, Dawn Island, written in 1845, which “offers an optimistic fable of the conversion of the savages” (30). Both of these novelists not only relied on common views about the inferiority and baseness of Africans, but they also reinforced them in their portrayal of the natives’ need for Europeans to civilize them. On the whole, authors did not use the “other” in order to
protest the domination of the Oriental. In fact, Said asserts that, “In the main . . . the nineteenth-century novel is a cultural form consolidating but also refining and articulating the authority of the status quo” (1993, 77).

Novelists maintained the “status quo” by following prominent beliefs about the “other” in their portrayal of native characters. These authors did not go against these notions by representing black characters as having traits that would disprove popular imperialist ideology. Said is careful to point out that, “cultural forms like the novel . . . do not cause people to go out and imperialize” (81), yet he goes on to say, “it is genuinely troubling to see how little Britain’s great humanistic ideas . . . stand in the way of the accelerating imperial process” (81). These authors, no matter how concerned with taking civilization to the natives, did little to stem the flow of imperialist expansion, due to their confirmation of popular beliefs about the “other” in their representations of native characters. As indicated earlier, Charlotte Bronte was one author who, perhaps unconsciously, contributed to her society’s views of the dark non-European. At first glance into the novel, Bronte seems to use this character to add mystery to Jane Eyre. Bertha is not revealed until after the audience has been startled by her “mirthless” laughter (Bronte 1996, 122) and her having engulfed Rochester’s bed in “tongues of flame” (168). However, in the light of theories regarding Africans having passionate, cruel natures, it is clear that the author draws upon stereotypes regarding the “other” in order to depict Bertha as a convenient foil for both Jane and Rochester who are more noble and complex than the depraved Creole woman. The first time we are allowed to “see” Bertha is in Jane’s account of the being that had broken
into her room. When she tells Mr. Rochester her frightful experience with the unknown visitor, we are given a description of the creature:

It seemed, sir, a woman, tall and large, with thick and dark hair hanging long down her back... oh, sir, I never saw a face like it! It was a discoloured face—it was a savage face, I wish I could forget the roll of the eyes and the fearful blackened inflation of the lineaments!... This creature, sir, was purple: the lips were swelled and dark; the brow furrowed; the black eye-brows widely raised over the blood shot eyes.

(317)

If no other description of Bertha were given, the reader would have reason to believe that she is black. She has a “savage” face, which is purple and blackened with rolling, blood shot eyes. She also has swelled dark lips and black eyebrows. Critic Susan Meyer points out that Jane’s account of Bertha’s appearance “insistently and conventionally mark Bertha as black” (1996, 69). The physical description of Bertha is only one of the stereotypes Bronte employs in Jane’s report to Mr. Rochester. Meyer goes on to say:

Jane’s use of the word “savage” underlines the implication of her description of Bertha’s features, and the redness that she sees in Bertha’s rolling eyes suggests the drunkenness that, following the nineteenth-century convention, Bronte has associated with Africans since her childhood. (69)

Bronte’s account of Bertha’s visage and the implications that accompany it, as outlined by Meyer, draws a line of demarcation between Jane, the English governess, and Bertha the horrific, savage visitor. Unlike Bertha, whose passion makes her devoid of reason, Jane is able to rationally recount what she has seen. By this point in the narrative, she is the picture of reason, while Bertha depicts the ravages of uncontrolled passion that Victorians believed to be characteristic of Africans. Bronte’s portrayal of Bertha as mad, later in the novel, (Bronte 1996, 326) does not detract from Bertha’s similarity to
blacks, for as Susan Meyer notes, "[madness and drunkenness were] two of the most common stereotypes associated with blacks in the nineteenth-century" (1996, 68).

Biographer Rebecca Fraser refers to a letter written by Charlotte, after writing *Jane Eyre*, in which she explains the kind of madness from which Bertha suffers:

There is a phase of insanity which may be called moral madness, in which all that is good or even human seems to disappear from the mind and a fiend-nature replaces it. The sole aim and desire of the being thus possessed is to exasperate, to molest, to destroy, and preternatural ingenuity and energy are often exercised to that end. (1988, 263)

Bronte's reference to Bertha's mental condition as "moral madness" echoes Douglas Lorimer's discussion of missionaries' reports to Europeans that the Africans, whom they had observed, were "uncivilized, barbarous, pagan" as well as "corrupt [and] unregenerate" (James Walvin 1978, 78). Like them, Bertha is devoid of morality. Bronte's further observation that Bertha's madness causes her to deteriorate from a state of goodness and humanity to a "fiend-nature" also reflects the pre-Darwinian theory, that "savagery was a consequence of . . . degeneration in the wake of the Deluge" (Stocking 1987, 33). As Bronte's letter continues, she explicitly links Bertha with the above definition of moral madness: "Mrs. Rochester indeed lived a sinful life before she was insane, but [then] sin is itself a species of insanity" (Fraser 1988, 263).

This comment seems free of racial bias and implies Bronte's belief that any immoral person, regardless of race, is susceptible to moral madness, yet in *Jane Eyre* Rochester's description of Bertha's character directly connects her excesses, and the madness which results from these indulgences, to her Creole race. "Her mother, the Creole, was both a mad woman and a drunkard! . . . Bertha, like a dutiful child, copied her parent in both points" (Bronte 1996, 326). Bertha's excessive drinking and insanity
are both attributed to her Creole lineage, for she acquires the propensity toward both from her Creole mother. Bronte's letter, which speaks of Mrs. Rochester's madness being caused by her "sinful life," seems to indicate that Bronte is so steeped in imperialist ideology regarding the sinful nature of the "other" that in her desire to portray the ravages of "moral madness" she inadvertently uses a non-European character to demonstrate its ill effects.

Although Bronte implicitly aligns Bertha with Africans, the author explicitly tells her readers that the mad woman belongs to another, more ambiguous race. Bronte indicates that Bertha is of Creole lineage, which has caused a great deal of controversy among critics. Carl Plasa explains the ambiguity of this race, stating objectively, "The term 'Creole' can refer equally to persons born and naturalized in the West Indies of either European or African descent having, as [The Oxford English Dictionary] stresses 'no connotation of colour'"(1994, 65). This vague definition outlines the difficulty that has arisen around the unanswered question of Bertha's skin color. In "Three Women's Texts and a Critique of Imperialism," Gayatri Spivak implicitly refers to Bertha as an example of the female "other," who is deprived of the status of individualist. She asserts that during "the age of imperialism" (1988, 244) the heroine was portrayed "not only as individual but as 'individualist'" (1988, 244). Spivak goes on to assert that "the 'native female' . . . is excluded from any share in this emerging norm" (245). That Spivak makes this argument at the beginning of her critique of Jane Eyre allows readers to associate "the native female" with Bertha Mason as well as with the Hindu women to whom St. John ministers in the novel. However, in Spivak's further comments regarding the way in which the Victorian female protagonist gains
subjectivity at the expense of the "other" (Pollock 1996, 262), she describes Bertha as "a white Jamaican Creole" whom Bronte depicts as being not-quite-human (247). These opposing descriptions of Bertha demonstrate the difficulty of speaking of her race unequivocally. It is interesting to note, however, that although in one place Spivak sees Bertha as a "native female" and later claims that she is a white Creole woman, the critic consistently sees Bertha as "other."

In ``(An)Other Politics of Reading Jane Eyre,'' on the other hand, Lori Pollock argues that "Bertha's representation in the novel cannot be simplified as the Other [because of] the ambiguity of her race" (262). She argues that in Spivak's article, the critic "shifts Bertha's race to suit her purposes" (1996, 262). Pollock sees this apparent incongruity "not as a limitation of [Spivak's] critique" (263), but rather as an indication that we should "examine the political implications of our inability to categorize Bertha's position and status in the novel" (263). For Pollock, Bertha's ambiguous race makes her a "liminal and transitional figure in the novel" (263), one which "represents geographical, cultural, and racial displacement" (263). This is due to the fact that "the figure of the Creole, indeed the race itself, emerges solely from colonial ventures and is based not only on skin colour but also upon displacement from one's country of origin" (263). After making this compelling argument for seeing Bertha as an example of displacement due to her ambiguous Creole race, however, Pollock is not able to resist the temptation to assign a skin color to the Creole woman and asserts that "Bertha is most likely white" (1996, 263). Pollock backs up this claim when she argues that "Rochester marries her for her fortune, something he would not have done were she black" (263). Rochester's marriage to Bertha is a valid reason for reading her character
as being white. However, it is interesting to note that, during their courtship, Rochester sees Bertha only at parties (Bronte 1996, 343) in a society, which mirrors that of the English. Yet, she harbors the secret of her propensity toward madness and excess, which Bronte attributes to her Creole lineage (326). Thus, the author implies that, although Bertha may appear white, she is a tainted white woman.

Furthermore, Pollock’s argument that Bertha’s ambiguous race precludes her from being seen as “other” (1996, 253) is not supported by the novel. In the light of Susan Meyer’s earlier comments concerning the similarities between Bertha’s facial features and those believed to be common among Africans, it seems evident that, no matter what skin color Bronte wished Bertha to have, the author clearly associated her with the African and therefore saw her as “other.” Bronte’s use of Bertha as a villain who serves to emphasize Jane and Rochester’s virtues also points to the author’s view of her Creole character as “other.” JanMohamed notes that “in the racial and colonialist version of the [romance novel], the villains are always dark, evil natives . . . who are used simultaneously as stereotypes and archetypes” (1985, 91). JanMohamed’s explanation of the way the “other” was used in romance novels during the colonialist period sheds light on Bronte’s use of her Creole character to create sympathy and admiration for Jane and Rochester as will be seen later.

Bronte further suggests Bertha’s status as “other” when Jane and her betrothed, Mr. Rochester, stand before the vicar ready to take their marriage vows. It is during this scene that we learn the true identity of Bertha and why she has been residing in Rochester’s mansion, Thornfield Hall. Mr. Briggs, a solicitor, and Richard Mason, Bertha’s brother, have heard of the upcoming marriage and have come to stop it from
going forward. After interrupting the ceremony with the proclamation that an impediment to the marriage exists (Bronte 1996, 323), Briggs steps forward and reads a statement written by the reluctant Richard Mason:

I affirm and can prove that on the 20th October, AD—(a date of fifteen years back) Edward Fairfax Rochester of Thornfield Hall, in the country of--, and of Ferndean Manor, in—shire, England, was married to my sister, Bertha Antoinetta Mason, daughter of Jonas Mason, merchant, and of Antoinetta his wife, a Creole—at—church, Spanish-Town, Jamaica. (325)

Bronte makes a point of telling her readers that Bertha is the daughter of a “Creole” woman, who, in Mason’s letter, is put in a separate category from that of her husband, the colonial merchant. Later, Rochester tells Jane that when he first knew his wife, she was “tall, dark, and majestic,” and that [her] family wanted to secure [him] because he was of a good race, and so did she” (343). This description of Bertha suggests that she is closer to the African race, for she is “dark” and wants to be part of his superior lineage.

After Bertha has been revealed as Mr. Rochester’s wife, he tells Jane what prompted the onset of his mad wife’s insanity. His explanation takes place in two scenes. At the church, on the day of the wedding, Rochester admits that the accusations of Mr. Briggs and Mason are well founded, for he is indeed married. It is at this point that he tells the stunned party gathered in the chapel that Bertha Mason has followed in her Creole mother’s footsteps in becoming a drunkard and a mad woman (Bronte 1996, 326-327). Thus, he establishes the fact that Bertha’s race has contributed to her condition to a great extent, for madness has been a feature of her Creole lineage made up of “idiots and maniacs through three generations” (326). Later, at Thornfield, Rochester, perhaps unconsciously, continues to link Bertha’s madness to her Creole
race by attributing the early onset of her madness to the overindulged lifestyle that most Victorians associated with the Creole (Michael Craton 1991, 354). He tells Jane that Bertha’s “excesses had prematurely developed the germs of insanity” (345). Bronte, clearly uses both of these scenes to emphasize the extent to which Bertha’s Creole race has contributed to her madness. In the light of this repeated use of Bertha’s lineage as an explanation for her insanity, it seems that Bronte deliberately uses a non-English woman to portray madness.

Having established the reasons behind Bertha’s madness, Bronte goes on to accentuate the character’s unruly behavior by relying on a narrative technique, or trope, commonly used by Victorian novelists; like other writers of her day, Bronte reflects her country’s domination of the “other” by treating Bertha like an animal in a zoo. Through Bertha, Bronte has introduced a mysterious “threatening presence” (Said 1993, 62) into the novel, whose strangeness Bronte seeks to emphasize. Yet, she treats Bertha like an exhibit, on the third floor of Thornfield, so that Bronte can maintain order in her narrative and at the same time can demonstrate Bertha’s inferiority. In this way, Bronte herself exercises domination over the foreign character. The author only allows readers to learn about Bertha’s character through her actions. There is no opportunity to gain access to her thoughts and feelings. This superficial portrayal of the mad woman, especially on the day her existence is revealed in Thornfield, permits the Europeans in the scene to be seen as superior, reasoning beings, while Bertha is little more than an animal specimen to be studied. When Rochester takes Jane, Briggs, Mason, and the vicar to the third floor to see Bertha, her behavior is described as being practically
inhuman. Like Africans, who were believed by many not to belong to the human race, Bertha manifests the traits of an animal:

In the deep shade, at the further end of the room, a figure ran backwards and forwards. What it was, whether beast or human being, one could not, at first sight, tell; it grovelled seemingly on all fours; it snatched and growled like some strange wild animal: but it was covered with clothing; and a quantity of dark, grizzled hair, wild as a mane, hid its head and face. (327-328)

Like a showpiece, Bertha is being watched by the English characters, who seem to transcend the scene in order to observe her. Jane records her conclusions stating that Bertha acts like a beast. Bertha, walking on all fours, snatches and growls at her examiners. Her physical appearance suggests that she also looks like an animal, for her hair is as “wild as a mane” which may appear on a ferocious lion. Jane’s observations in regard to Bertha may seem objective, yet Said’s discussion in Orientalism shows the act of domination that is taking place in this scene:

Knowledge of the Orient, because generated out of strength, in a sense creates the Orient, the Oriental, and his world. . . . the Oriental is depicted as something one judges . . . something one studies and depicts . . . something one illustrates. The point is that in each of these cases the Oriental is contained and represented by the dominating framework. (1979, 40)

In the light of Said’s assertion, Bronte’s domination of Bertha becomes clear as does Jane’s, Rochester’s, and the others’ who are observing Bertha together. She is contained in her tiny space, being judged and studied by her betters. We know that they are better than Bertha because they are represented as being rational as they look on at the mad woman’s actions. That the characters in the scene are divided between the observers and the observed calls into question Pollock’s claim that Bertha’s ambiguous race prevents her from being reduced to status of “other.” Clearly, in this scene Bronte
does just that. She shows Bertha to be no more than the native, who is different from and inferior to the English people now looking on her depraved condition with horror. As Said asserts, the Orient is created, while Europe is the creator. The latter clearly dominates the former. Yet, to Bronte, as to many of her readers, Jane’s description of Bertha seems to be without bias. The governess appears to be merely recording what she has seen. Her apparent apathy toward Bertha removes her still further from her native counterpart. This seeming objectivity supports the argument that rather than challenging notions of England’s superiority over other races, Bronte unquestioningly accepts it.

Furthermore, Said points out that what seemed like objectivity to Victorians was, in fact, a lack of sympathy for the “other” (1993, 104). Jane’s lack of empathy for Bertha is glaring in this scene. She stays aloof from the mad woman, examining her rather than showing any warmth or compassion toward her. Cultural critic Timothy Mitchell writes, “The ability to see without being seen confirmed one’s separation from the world, and constituted at the same time a position of power” (1995, 306). Not only is Jane’s observation of Bertha lacking in sympathy, but also her distance from the Creole shows that Jane is diametrically opposed to her, separate from her. Later, when Jane answers Rochester’s renunciation of Bertha, Jane appears to be sympathetic. She says, “Sir... you are inexorable for that unfortunate lady; you speak of her with hate... she cannot help being mad” (Bronte 1996, 339). Although Jane expresses sorrow over Bertha’s state of mind, in the light of Jane’s description of Bertha when the mad woman visited her room, earlier in the narrative, Jane seems to be contradicting herself. She had previously referred to Bertha as “it” (317), and told Rochester that she found
Bertha repulsive when the mad woman entered her room. She had also stood by silently on the third floor of Thornfield, as Rochester contemptuously likened Bertha’s actions to those of a demon (329). Notice that Bronte allows Jane and Rochester dominance over Bertha in that they discuss, study, and judge her without acknowledging that she has a point of view in the matter.

Jane’s lack of sympathy for Bertha, on the third floor of Thornfield, is crucial to the plot as well. Jane wears the wedding gown that she had worn to the church that morning with the intention of marrying the husband of the mad woman who is now before her. Therefore, Bronte must accentuate Jane’s moral superiority if the reader is to continue to admire her. The scene in which Bertha is revealed as the animalistic insane wife of Rochester puts Jane’s indiscretion into perspective. She has committed an error that would normally turn Victorian readers against her, but in the light of Bertha’s moral madness, she can still be regarded as the virginal governess, whose purity and self-control we have admired throughout the story. Thus, we are distracted from her brush with immorality by having our full attention turned to the ravings of the depraved Bertha Rochester.

Both Jane and Rochester exhibit a sense of “nationalist and racial superiority” (Pat MacPherson 1989, 48) in their practice of speaking for Bertha. Bronte is also speaking for the Creole woman in interpreting her actions without input from Bertha and, thus, is exercising dominion over her as well. Not only is Bronte’s portrayal of her a sign of imperialist superiority and domination, but also demonstrates that Bronte does not see her sympathetically. The author does not allow her to confide in the reader or explain the reasons behind her actions. We are not allowed inside
Bertha’s troubled mind, for, as we have seen in the views of Bronte, Jane, and Rochester, Bertha is little more than an animal. It is this attitude on the part of the author that causes her to silence Bertha. She is not given an opportunity to voice her position, but rather is limited to guttural murmurs, satanic laughter, and violent acts.

The first manifestation of Bertha’s presence in Thornfield is a “distinct, formal, mirthless [laugh]” (Bronte 1996, 122) soon after Jane arrives at the manor house. Jane is startled the first time she hears it, but as time goes by, she becomes accustomed to “the same peal, the same low, slow ha!ha!” (126). Bertha’s frightening behavior also calls attention to her residence in the great house. Shortly after Jane meets Rochester, she is awakened in the night to the same laugh she had heard before and to the sight of Rochester’s bed on fire (168). Weeks later, Richard Mason, Rochester’s mysterious visitor, is brutally attacked (236). Bertha also visits Jane’s room and tears to pieces her bridal veil, which is hung on the closet door in anticipation of Jane’s wedding day (318). The identity of the perpetrator of these acts is a mystery until after Bertha’s existence is revealed. Rochester then confirms Jane’s suspicions that it was Bertha who had been guilty of the violent behavior that had disrupted life at Thornfield. Bronte keeps Bertha under control by not allowing her to utter a word in the readers’ “hearing” at any time in the novel. The author’s silencing of Bertha keeps hidden the delusions that may be troubling her mind and, at the same time, safeguards unchallenged Victorian notions about the “other” by not allowing Bertha to contradict them.

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7 Here is another example of the “ingenuity and energy to . . . destroy,” which Bronte attributes to those who are afflicted with moral madness. See page 8.
8 Mason relates that Bertha had told him that she would “drain [his] heart” (Bronte 1996, 239) during her attack on him; however, this is recorded by Mason. The audience does not “hear” Bertha utter these words.
Cultural critic Timothy Mitchell explains an important reason why Victorian authors, and others who speak of the Orient, do not give voice to the native, when he argues that “there is [a] remarkable claim to certainty and truth: the apparent certainty with which everything seems ordered and represented, calculated and rendered unambiguous” (1995, 302). Keeping Bertha’s feelings under a cloak of unarticulated utterances keeps a semblance of order in the novel and meets the expectations of the reader. Not only is she physically confined to the third floor room, but she is also psychologically confined to ineffectual efforts of communication. The passionate is dominated by the rational in that Rochester and Jane, who are both represented as intelligent human beings, are allowed to express themselves, for they can be trusted to maintain order. Bertha, the unruly “other” must be silenced, so that her unacceptable behavior can be kept under control. However, Bronte’s tight hold on Bertha puts the reader at a disadvantage. MacPherson asserts:

What ten or twenty years in the attic . . . have contributed to Bertha’s mental health is left to our imaginations, as are her feelings and thoughts, if any, about her situation. She utters no intelligible words, has no identifiable humanity left, only animal noises and violent acts. (1989, 12)

Bertha is practically a non-entity in the novel. Her violent, mysterious outbursts can be seen, on one level, as mere narrative devices to add suspense to the story. However, because she is later revealed as Rochester’s wife, whom he has cast aside in favor of Jane, she must be depicted as subhuman if we are to continue to approve of Jane and Rochester’s love for one another after Bertha’s existence is revealed. At this point, readers can sympathize with Rochester who has lived with her behavior for fifteen years. Instead of seeing him as a monster, he is shown to be merely a man who is
denied love by his wife. Likewise, Jane is portrayed as the woman who can bring happiness and love to Bertha’s neglected husband instead of being seen as his mistress, after Bertha is revealed.

Bronte safeguards our admiration for Jane and Rochester in her portrayal of Bertha also by not allowing us to see the situation from Bertha’s point of view. As MacPherson asserts, we can only imagine what she is thinking or feeling. In addition, lacking her perspective, we are unable to ascertain how much of Bertha’s behavior is due to her madness and how much is a result of her confinement. Here again, we are kept away from any hint of the European characters’ wrongdoing in regard to Bertha. This is evidenced in Rochester’s decision to spare Bertha from a certain death at Ferndean Manor by keeping her at Thornfield Hall. In fact, we can find fault with her, for as we have seen, it was her own sinful actions, which contributed greatly to her present condition. There is also the assumption behind Bertha’s “unintelligibility” that there is nothing more to tell. Bertha cannot add to what Bronte tells us. The author has told all there is to know. Said notes, “The exteriority of the representation is always governed by some version of truism that if the Orient could represent itself, it would; since it cannot, the representation does the job for the West, and [too bad] for the poor Orient” (1979, 21). The madness brought on by Bertha’s non-European bloodline and her indulgent lifestyle, also a result of her dark race, has diminished her capacity to express herself. Therefore, the rational characters, Jane and Rochester, not to mention the intelligent author, must speak for her.

Bertha’s relegation to the silent outskirts of the narrative is accentuated by Bronte’s preferential treatment of young Jane, who, like Bertha, rebels against tyranny.
Although Jane is a child, and Bertha has not been introduced into the narrative at this point, the same violent outbursts that Bertha later exhibits are manifested in Jane. The similarity between both characters' angry reactions and the subsequent confinement of each, demonstrate how alike they are. Yet, Bronte favors Jane in that the young heroine is able to speak up for herself and to confide in the reader, whereas Bertha cannot express herself in either of these ways. Her silence prohibits her from achieving any agency or subjectivity in the novel. She is an object rather than a feeling, thinking human being. This contrast in the midst of so many similarities makes it clear that Jane, the untamed child, is English enough and reasonable enough to come to terms with her position of weakness at Gateshead, the home of the Reed family. Bertha, the “other,” however, is too primitive to decipher the importance of her situation.

When the novel opens, we see Jane “enshrined in double retirement” (Bronte 1996, 14) as she sits in the window seat of the small breakfast room at Gateshead, after being forced away from the Reeds’ family circle due to Aunt Reed’s disapproval of her “[un]sociable” (13) attitude. Like Bertha, later in the novel, Jane is marginalized from the society of those around her. She has been rejected because she is deemed unacceptable. Gayatri Spivak points out Jane’s status as a social misfit when she notes that Jane’s looking at the pictures in a book rather than reading it demonstrates that she “preserves her odd privilege, for she continues never quite doing the proper thing in its proper place” (1985, 246). Her position as the social outcast foreshadows Bertha’s position in Thornfield, for Bertha is relegated to the margins of the great estate because she does not do the proper things. Bronte seems to want her readers to see the similarity between Jane’s and Bertha’s exile, for her description of Jane’s hiding place is very
similar to Bertha’s chamber, later in the novel. Jane tells us that in the window seat she is closed in by “folds of scarlet drapery” (14), which separate her from the rest of the house. Accordingly, when Jane sits tending Richard Mason’s wounds, after Bertha’s attack, years later, the heroine tells us that the room that contained the “snarling, snatching” (235) creature was “hung with tapestry” (235). The similarity of Bronte’s description of both Jane and Bertha’s environs during their exile accentuates the fact that both women are marginalized in much the same way. That both are portrayed as being social outcasts, seems to add credence to Pollock’s assertion that “Bronte may be acknowledging implicitly the oppression inherent in both conditions” (1996, 257).

However, while the Bronte does inadvertently turn our attention to Bertha’s marginalization, the author’s own lack of sympathy for the character undermines any compassion the reader may feel for the Creole woman’s plight. As will be seen in the next chapter, Bronte’s main concern is with the ill treatment Jane suffers as a lower class young woman in Victorian society, and she uses Bertha as a metaphor for such oppression.

Jane is also similar to Bertha in that she fights against the mistreatment she suffers at the hands of her oppressor. In this case, Jane’s nemesis is her tyrannical cousin, John Reed. In the first chapter of the novel, he refers to Jane as a “bad animal” (Bronte 1995, 15). This appellation can be seen as a forerunner to Bertha’s appearance as an animal. Later, the boy throws a book at Jane eliciting a response that is equal in fervor to the behavior we have seen in Bertha. Jane tells us that

the volume was flung, it hit me, and I fell, striking my head against the door and cutting it. The cut bled, the pain was sharp; my terror had passed its climax; other feelings succeeded. ‘Wicked and cruel boy!’
said. ‘You are like a murderer—you are like a slave-driver—you are like the Roman emperors!’(17)\(^9\)

The significant difference between Jane and Bertha’s outbursts is that Jane is able to speak to her oppressor. She is not silenced, but rather she is able to stand up to him.

Feminist critic, Jenny Sharpe, notes that for Jane, “Language assumes a force of its own, transforming her former passive resistance into active and open rebellion”(1993, 13). Jane’s verbal confrontation with John Reed demonstrates that she has matured enough to speak her mind even though she speaks as a child. Bertha, on the other hand, has not grown beyond passive resistance. Although her acts are violent, she commits them in the middle of the night; she does not verbally confront those she tries to hurt.

Helene Moglen points out that by granting Jane the liberty to express her feelings and thoughts, Bronte is showing her heroine to be human (1976, 106). Readers can see that Jane’s reactions to her environment are reasonable for a person in her situation, even though her outburst is contrary to the Victorians’ view of acceptable behavior. Bertha, on the other hand, is depicted as having no intellect having “destroyed what brain she had by drink and debauchery” (Valerie Grosvenor Myer 1987, 151). That Bertha can be blamed in part for her lack of intelligibility makes her a victim of her own indulgences and, at the same time, gives readers the sense that she does not deserve to speak, for she is morally inferior to her English counterpart. Clearly, that she does not verbalize her feelings undermines Bertha’s fight for freedom and justice rather than helping it as Pollock claims when she argues that “Bertha’s incoherence may . . . be a pointed

\(^9\) In this comment “Bronte . . . clearly draws on the moral language of the abolitionists” (Jenny Sharpe 1993, 13), and, at the same time, she “represses the recent and immediate history of British slaveholding by alluding . . . to a safely remote history of Roman acts of enslavement” (Susan Meyer 1996, 64). The dual meaning of Jane’s proclamation is typical of the problems that arise in Pollock’s reading of *Jane Eyre* as a potentially anti-imperialist novel.
refusal to use the language of the oppressor” (1996, 265). As indicated, Jane’s ability to speak out provides her with a means of fighting to be treated more justly. Her refusal to endure ill treatment silently also reveals that she is a young lady who is moving toward independence. Bronte’s withholding of articulation from Bertha in order to show her rebellion is inconsistent with the author’s apparent belief that injustice is triumphed over only as people speak out against it. Bronte herself uses language to fight oppression in her portrayal of the injustices that Jane endures as a poor young woman. Bertha’s lack of verbalization, on the other hand, contributes to the readers’ lack of sympathy for the character, for she is not seen to have matured past subjection to her instincts neither is she shown to have emotions other than anger. Unlike Bertha, Jane lets readers know her thoughts and feelings, instead of being portrayed as a person who is blindly led by unruly passions like Bertha.

When Jane is confined to a bedroom, known as the Red Room, as a result of her outburst at Gateshead (Bronte 1996, 18), her sanity comes into question. The servants who put her in the abandoned room say that she is like a “mad cat”(19) and, as Jane relates, proceed to stand “with folded arms, looking darkly and doubtfully on my face, as if incredulous of my sanity”(20). In this scene, Jane’s circumstance resembles that of Bertha in that she is studied as the mad woman is later in the novel. The servants, who had not been made privy to her feelings as the audience has been, look in puzzlement at her, as we are forced to do to Bertha because we are not allowed to see the thoughts behind her attack on Rochester. Notice that the servants at Gateshead come to the same conclusion about Jane that Rochester arrives at in regard to Bertha –

10 The color red further points to Jane’s passionate nature due its association with passion.
both are seen to be insane. In Jane's case, however, the reader has an alternative source of information other than the speculating house servants. Moglen asserts that Jane's status as heroine is established "by virtue of her interiority: her qualities of mind, character, and personality" (1984, 106). Jane's inner nature is what appeals to readers. We see her rebellious reaction to John Reed, yet we know that these actions do not make up the whole of Jane. Inside, she is hurt, desperate to please, and confused as to why she is treated unfairly (Bronte 1996, 22-23). Conversely, Bertha is a one-dimensional character. There is nothing more to Bertha than meets the eye. Clearly, the author also uses her representation of Jane's inner thoughts and feelings to gain sympathy for her. Readers feel sorry for Jane who is treated unfairly by her cousin, yet when Bertha is shown to be confined and mad, and there is no reason given why we should feel bad for her. She is dominated by Rochester every bit as much as Jane was oppressed by the tyrannical John Reed, yet, as will be seen, in the relationship between Rochester and Bertha, Bronte shows the Englishman to be the sympathetic character and Bertha the villain. Beside Bronte's desire to maintain our approval of his extramarital love for Jane, as seen earlier, this dynamic demonstrates the imperialist belief that the civilized, rational European must control the primitive, passionate "other." Bronte's depiction of Rochester and Bertha's relationship not only reveals the necessity of such domination, but also the altruistic quality of it.

Rochester's revelations to Jane about Bertha's uncivilized behavior in Jamaica after their marriage (344) and how her actions degraded and embarrassed him (345) along with the revelation that it had been Bertha who had been guilty of the attack on Richard Mason (348) not only turn readers' sympathy away from Bertha, but also show
her as an example of the "other," who must be kept under control due to her depravity and savagery. Said asserts:

Neither imperialism nor colonialism is a simple act of accumulation and acquisition. Both are supported and perhaps even impelled by impressive ideological formations that include notions that certain territories and people require and beseech domination, as well as forms of knowledge affiliated with domination: the vocabulary of classic nineteenth-century imperial culture is plentiful with words and concepts like 'inferior' or 'subject races,' 'subordinate peoples,' 'dependency,' 'expansion,' and 'authority.' (1993, 9)

Said's concept that the underlying purpose for negative representations of the "other" is to validate Europe's domination of foreign lands (1979, 6) likewise confirms that Bronte's representation of Bertha's inferiority to Rochester fortifies Europeans' belief that they had a duty to "civilize" other peoples.

Conversely, Rochester is portrayed as Bertha's selfless caretaker. He understands that Bertha is mad and must be taken care of, so before he sets off for the continent he decides to return to England and "[p]lace her in safety and comfort" (Bronte 1996, 347) at Thornfield. Rochester is by no means a perfect husband, but there is no question that he does all he can to take proper care of his wife. He tells Mason, "I do my best; and have done it, and will do it" (242). Rochester represents the kind colonizers who dominated the natives out of the goodness of their hearts. By assuming the responsibility to care for his Creole wife, he reflects in part the colonizers' view of their duty to the natives. Abdul JanMohamed explains that "because the colonial writer was often involved in articulating various theories [such as the white man's burden] . . . his literature tends to be replete with ideological valorizations" (1983, 3). The way in which Bronte "valorizes" Rochester's care for Bertha demonstrates that writers at home shared the view that members of civilized
nations do have a responsibility to those in other countries, who due to their inferior mental capacity are not able to adequately care for themselves.

In conclusion, Charlotte Bronte lived in a world separated into two categories—the primitive other and the civilized European. These groups were at the opposite ends of the social and political spectrum in the Victorian era. Because of anthropological theories about the differences between the races, and missionaries' “grisly descriptions of such customs as human sacrifice” among Africans (Patrick Brantlinger 1986, 193), Bronte, like most people of her day, came to the conclusion that the “other” was beneath the European mentally and morally. However, Bronte’s depiction of Bertha as being virtually devoid of humanity in order to emphasize the virtues of her English characters, demonstrates that, in the novel, Bronte was not above “human sacrifice.”
3. The Imperialist Woman as Passionate Other in Victorian Society

The industrial revolution's relocation of production from the home to the factory created the separation of Victorian society into two realms: the “public sphere... governed ultimately by the Market and a private sphere of intimate relationships and individual biological existence” (Barbara Ehrenreich and Deidre English 1979, 10). The division of society (especially middle class society) into these two spheres contributed, in a large part, to the association of men with rationality, due to their participation in the world of commerce where there was “no room for human affection, generosity, or loyalty” (10). This is not to say that middle class men lacked these qualities but rather “only in the home, or private life generally, [could] one expect to find love, spontaneity, nurturance... which was denied in the marketplace” (10). The “private” realm where these luxuries could be found was believed to be the domain of predominately middle class women (Elizabeth Langland 1995, 46). This association of women to the loving, nurturing home contributed to Victorian society’s view of them as having “extreme emotional sensitivity, weakness of intellect [and] unlimited selflessness” (Patricia Ingham 1996, 23). These traits, seen as “marks of women’s inferiority” (23) to men, were used by doctors and psychiatrists to argue that women’s emotional and physical makeup made them too fragile for activities outside the private sphere. Barbara Ehrenreich and Deidre English explain:

Physicians were the first of the new experts. With claims to knowledge encompassing all of human biological existence, they were the first to pass judgement on the social consequences of female anatomy and to prescribe the ‘natural’ life plan for women. They were followed by a horde of more specialized experts, each group claiming dominion over some area of women’s lives, and all claiming that their authority flowed directly from biological science. (1979, 4)
These theories relegated women to the confinements of the private sphere with supposed scientific evidence that they were susceptible to insanity due to their emotional nature and their biological make up. Thomas Laycock, “one of the most pre-eminent Victorian experts on the female body” (Sally Shuttleworth 1996, 78) argued that women existed “on the border between sanity and insanity [and were ruled] not by conscious control but rather by the processes of reflex, or instinctive action” (Thomas Laycock 1840, ix).\(^{11}\) Laycock depicted women as irrational beings who operate through their instincts rather than their minds, unlike men who were believed to have control over their minds and bodies (Shuttleworth 1996, 86). Therefore, women were seen needing to be regulated and controlled by the medical establishment, as indicated above, while men were free to live more independent lives (82).

Theories of women’s need for sedentary lives due to their mental and physical frailties did not go unchallenged by novelists, like Charlotte Bronte, who depicts this dichotomy between self-controlled men and often-hysterical women in *Jane Eyre*. In this novel, Bronte protests against the claustrophobic life to which society has relegated women in her depiction of Jane’s unfulfilled desire for adventure as well as in Bronte’s explicit protest of the oppressive nature of such confinement. Through Jane’s relationship with St. John Rivers, Bronte sets up the binary between the austere, rational man and the emotional woman, revealing the validity of emotions. She also uses Jane’s relationship with Rochester to show a woman’s struggle to retain her autonomy as she enters a relationship with the man she loves. However, Bronte’s

\(^{11}\) Quoted in Sally Shuttleworth (1996, 87)
depiiction of Bertha, now discussed as a woman in Victorian society, strongly suggests Bronte's agreement with her society that insanity can be brought on by unbridled emotion. Before discussing each of these elements of the novel, I would like to further discuss the way in which women were seen as passionate beings in need of outer control. Beside providing important background information for my discussion of the novel, I believe it will also point to the similarities between the domination of women by men (especially doctors and psychiatrists) and the way in which colonizer maintained rule over the "other."

Women in Victorian society were not only subject to their fathers and husbands legally and socially but also to male governed medical science. Sally Shuttleworth states, "The physician’s Word on the instability of the female economy was also matched by deed, as women became increasingly the subject of medical regulation and control"(78). One of the ways in which doctors were able to control women was through study of the female body. Women’s bodies were seen by the medical establishment as “a ‘frontier,’ another part of the natural world to be explored and mined” (Ehrenreich and English 1979, 19). Women were also seen as “alien and mysterious” (18) as well as an “anomaly” and a “question” (19), for women “inhabit[ed] the other realm, the realm of private life that look[ed] from [the male’s perspective] like a pre-industrial backwater, or a looking-glass land that invert[ed] all that [was] ‘normal’ in the ‘real’ world of men” (18). Doctors’ practice of viewing women from a point of view outside the sphere in which they functioned, resembled the explorers, who looked at Africa “resolutely from the outside” (Said 1993, 99) and became convinced that “they were faced by ‘primeval man’ (100). Clearly, both
women and natives presented a picture of "other," making them susceptible to the domination of men who sought to bring them into the realm of the known through studying them.

Although women were studied as mysterious entities like natives, they were not powerless to challenge the views that scientific experts posited regarding them. Elizabeth Langland asserts:

In a reciprocal process... middle class women were produced by domestic discourses even as they reproduced them to consolidate middle class control. Such a reinterpretation of the subject of women's roles in society... forestalls a view of women as victims passively suffering patriarchal structures. (1995, 11)

Victorian women differed from the native in that they had a limited voice in metropolitan society, whereas the native had none. One way women were able to "reproduce domestic discourse" was through the novel, which became "a new cultural force" (Ina Ferris 1992, 19). Novelists such as Charlotte Bronte and Jane Austen, among others, were able to use characters like Jane Eyre and Jane Bennett to challenge notions of the weak, foolish woman. Women also differed from the "other" in that they were separated by class. This division provided middle class women with some authority over the lower classes (Alison Bashford 1998, 1). In comparison, the "other" had no voice in Victorian society. Ideas concerning the nature of the natives went unchallenged. In fact, the Orient was present in nineteenth-century Europe only through what was written about it (Said 1979, 21).

Doctors also taught that women had to be kept under control because they were subject to their bodies. The menstrual cycle was believed to effect women in such a profound way that it made women "more vulnerable to insanity than men because it
interfered with their sexual, emotional and rational control” (Elaine Showalter 1985, 55). Doctors argued, therefore, that they had to control women’s bodies by means of medication and consultation, claiming that “their authority flowed directly from biological science” (Ehrenreich and English 1979, 4). It was believed that if doctors did not help women to properly take care of themselves during menstruation, these females were in danger of suppressing menstrual flow and thus of going insane. Shuttleworth explains, “If the menstrual flow were obstructed, and hence denied its usual exit, it would, doctors warned, be forced to flood the brain and thus lead to irreparable psychological breakdown”(77). Dr. Englemann, a Victorian gynecologist, declared the danger that puberty, menstruation, and menopause posed for women:

Many a young life is battered and forever crippled on the breakers of puberty; if it crosses these unharmed and is not dashed to pieces on the rock of childbirth, it may still ground on the ever-recurring shallows of menstruation and lastly upon the final bar of the menopause ere protection is found in the unruffled waters of the harbor beyond reach of sexual storms. (Stanley Hall, 1905, 588)\(^\text{12}\)

Beliefs, such as these, led women to give control over themselves to the medical community. They agreed to curtail their activities “with dependency and trust” (Ehrenreich and English 1979, 4) in their doctors because they feared the madness that might result from flamboyant behavior.

Natives were seen as beings who were not able to control their bodily instincts, irrational beings, much like women, and like women they were seen “require and beseech domination” (Said 1979, 10) due to their “dependency” (10) on those who knew what was best for them. What separates them from women, in this instance, is the matter of choice. Women, fearful of the madness that awaited them if their bodies
were not regulated, allowed themselves to be dominated by their trusted doctors. Natives, on the other hand, were given no option as to how they would be treated by the colonizer. They also lacked what Said refers to as “hereness” (1979, 79). Whereas women were a part of society and shared, for the most part, its values, its language and its culture, natives lived in a distant land unvisited by the majority of Victorians. They inhabited another world (81) out of the sight and mind of English society.

Doctors warnings that women’s bodies and emotions could lead them to madness if not strictly regulated greatly contributed to the preoccupation with women’s need for calm activities. Bronte poignantly demonstrates the agonizing effect this type of life has on women, who long for mental and physical stimulation. In Jane Eyre, Jane is restless as she carries out her duties as a teacher in Lowood. Her society allows her to teach, but does not permit her to pursue the adventures that she longs for. Years later, Jane, the narrator, recalls her thoughts as she wandered around Lowood in an agitated state of mind:

I desired liberty; for liberty I grasped; for liberty I uttered a prayer; it seemed scattered on the wind then faintly blowing. I abandoned it and framed a humbler supplication; for change for stimulus: that petition, too, seemed swept off into vague space; ‘Then,’ I cried,’ half desperate, ‘grant me at least a new servitude! (Charlotte Bronte, 1996,99)

This passage begins with a crescendo as she indulges her pent up longing for liberty by expressing her intense need for it. The scene around her recedes to the background as she turns her attention to what she craves the most—liberty. However, the vision is gone as soon as it had come, for the light breeze that she feels, as she comes back to the reality of her situation as a young woman at Lowood, reminds her that liberty is an

12 Quoted in Ehrenreich and English (1979, 110)
impossibility for her. Knowing that her prayer had "scattered on the wind" she turns her attention to the attainable—a "new servitude." Liberty is not only denied Jane because she is a lower class teacher but also because she is a woman. In her eventual comment that women need adventure as much as men (125), which will be examined later, she explicitly connects her lack of liberty to her gender. Clearly, her desire for freedom is restrained by the Victorian beliefs that women were too fragile to be allowed new experiences. The boundary line concerning what pursuits are acceptable for women has been drawn by the male-governed establishment, and Jane is well aware of what she is allowed to do as well as what avenues of activity are closed to her. At Lowood, Jane's apparent attitude of submission is evident in her determination to find adventure within the domestic boundary to which women in Victorian society were relegated.

Although Jane grows tired of teaching at Lowood, she does not allow herself to seriously consider an occupation that would overstep the limitations that her society has placed on her. She says:

A new servitude! There is something in that... I know there is because it does not sound too sweet; it is not like such words as Liberty, Excitement, Enjoyment: delightful sounds truly; but no more than sounds for me; and so hollow and fleeting that it is mere waste of time to listen to them. But servitude! That must be a matter of fact.(87)

Jane knows that "liberty, excitement, and enjoyment" are out of her reach as a woman. She knows her culture's beliefs about the fragility of women, and she also knows that these beliefs keep the exciting life she wishes for out of her reach. She does not need to ask someone if she may go out in the world and seek adventure, for she has been inundated with the reasons women should lead quiet lives. Bronte's representation of Jane in this episode reflects the author's awareness of the limitations that society has
placed on women’s sphere. Jane’s submission to the constrictive boundaries put on her reflects her society’s belief that decent, rational women conform to society’s expectations. She is dissatisfied with her life, yet she strives to find happiness within the territory of convention.

Later in the novel, however, this submissive attitude is put aside. In Jane’s private thoughts at Thornfield, she rebels against women’s lot in English society. When Jane begins her duties as governess at Thornfield, her thoughts during her solitary walks make it clear that Jane has not overcome her restlessness despite her change of “servitude.” She is well aware that she has reached the accepted limit of her existence in the world as a single woman in her position as a governess, but this time she is not as disposed to accept this boundary as she had been at Lowood. However, she cannot contain the discontent and restlessness she feels and climbs to the battlements of Thornfield from which she looks beyond the “sequestered field and hill” (125), longing for a “power of vision which might overpass that limit and reach the busy world, towns, regions full of life” (125). That Jane’s actions are contrary to those which society deemed acceptable in young women is made apparent in the fact that she describes her movements after stating, “Anybody may blame me who likes” (125). Jane is aware that her actions challenge her society’s belief that it is in the nature of women to be content to be the angel in the house (Elizabeth Langland 1995, 41). For, rather than engaging in conventional domestic activity such as playing with Adele, who now played with her nurse, or assisting Mrs. Fairfax, who “made jellies in the store-room” (125), Jane looks longingly toward regions that are “full of life” (125): regions from which she is excluded as a woman. She also makes herself vulnerable to the blame (or disapproval)
of many in her society, when, instead of being content with domestic life, she turns to her imagination, which is "quickened with all of incident, life, fire, feeling" (125) in order to "experience" the more stimulating life that is denied her as a woman.

Having shared the restlessness and unfulfilled longing that societal restrictions had created within herself, Jane goes on to argue that the dissatisfaction that she feels is shared by many women in her society. She asserts that "it is in vain to say human beings ought to be satisfied with tranquillity: they must have action; and they will make it if they cannot find it" (125). It is important to note that Jane speaks of people in her society who are suppressed by the culture as "human beings." Using this appellation reminds the Victorians that the marginalized members of society are not things to be controlled, but are rather people who must have activity in order to be mentally and physically healthy. Jane then speaks directly to the fear that women will be given over to madness if allowed the freedom to follow their passions. She states that "women... need exercise for their faculties, 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" (125). According to Jane, it is the social relegation of women to inactive lives that causes the stunted growth of their mental faculties. This lack of development is not a result of their gender. In the light of Shuttleworth's explanation of Victorian fears that woman might be inflicted with madness if allowed too much excitement, Jane's use of the word "suffer" could also be interpreted to be a response to this notion. She intimates that it is natural for a person to want action. This implies that constriction placed on women's engagement in physical and mental exertion is against nature and prevents healthy development of the mind and body. It is
this repression that causes women to “suffer,” for it injures them mentally and emotionally.

In Jane’s subsequent discussion of the needs of women, she demonstrates her awareness of the dichotomy between society’s treatment of the self-controlled male and the potentially passion-driven woman:

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; they suffer with too rigid a constraint, too absolute a stagnation, precisely as men would suffer. It is narrow-minded in their more privileged fellow-creatures to say they ought to confine themselves to making puddings and 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.(125-26)

Jane is appealing to her “privileged fellow-creatures” who have argued that women ought to be relegated to domestic activity. These are the doctors and psychiatrists who argued that men, who were believed to be able to control themselves, were strong enough psychologically and physically to launch into broad fields of endeavor. Jane addresses the physicians who have indoctrinated society with their theories of women’s mental and psychological fragility. She is not begrudging men the opportunities to exercise their faculties, nor is she blaming her “brothers” (male Britons) for her lack of freedom to develop her mental powers. Instead, she looks to those who make the rules in her society, the scientists who, by insisting that men must control women, are responsible for women’s repression. These doctors and other experts condemn women who do not comply with convention, or they laugh at women’s expressed desire to overreach the boundaries placed on them. Patricia Stubbs argues that “one of the things which sets the major Victorian novelists apart from the orthodoxy of the minor writers
is their refusal to accept [the] dishonest and misleading representation of women” (1979, 27). Jane’s argument that women are able to do more than domestic activities demonstrates her belief that doctors’ representations of women as being physically or mentally ill equipped for more rigorous exercise are not only false but are also detrimental to the health and happiness of women. In addition, she points to the injustice perpetrated by medical men, who teach others not to take women seriously as well. Clearly, Jane speaks directly to her culture’s fear that marginalized people, especially women, will become mad and disrupt societal order if not controlled.

At the end of Jane’s protest concerning the suppression of woman in Victorian society, we are brought back to Jane’s surroundings with the startling sound of maniacal laughter and utterances coming from the deep recesses of Thornfield. She remarks, “When thus alone, I not unfrequently heard Grace Poole’s laugh: the same peal, the same low, slow ha! ha! which, when first heard, had thrilled me: I heard, too, her eccentric murmurs; stranger than her laugh” (126). This is a representation of the madness that was believed to envelop women who rebelled against Victorian society. That Bronte positions Bertha’s outburst directly after the author’s complaints regarding the treatment of women in her culture suggests that passions like those expressed in Bronte’s heated criticism of Victorian society could lead women to madness if not held wisely in check.

In addition, Jane’s observation indicates that the freedom of the laughter “thrilled her,” and this is significant to our discussion. Bertha, who we later find out is the source of the mysterious noises, is free to express her feelings in an unacceptable way rather than in the often repressed manner in which Jane expresses herself. Bertha is
not held back by convention. Madness has given her license to free herself of societal restrictions. The laughter heard is not Jane’s, indicating that she has not gone insane as a result of her anger, yet that she hears the laughter and is close in proximity to it implies that Jane has touched on madness. The eerie moment when Jane is alone with the sound of demonic laughter puts her in direct correspondence with it. This suggests that the outburst is related to Jane and to what she has been thinking about her culture.

Pat MacPherson argues:

From her first intimations of Bertha, when Jane first hears her laugh, Jane’s unacceptable . . . qualities are implicitly linked to Bertha’s. In her famous proclamation from the battlements of Thornfield Hall, Jane connects her discontent with thwarted desire and with social disapproval (1989, 15)

Jane’s complaints are positioned within the repressed Victorian social system. She connects her comments to the disapproval of her readers, as we have seen, and tries to make her arguments acceptable to her audience. This necessity to conform in order to be heard forces Jane to frame her comments in the most unobjectionable way possible. However, the thrill Jane feels when she hears Bertha’s laughter demonstrates that Jane can appreciate the freedom with which Bertha expresses unacceptable feelings. Bertha is not concerned how others see her. Her madness has destroyed her life in many ways, yet it has relieved her of the compulsion to please others, and the author is able to subconsciously appreciate the freedom from social restraint that insanity affords. In fact, Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar argue that “Bertha . . . does . . . what . . . Jane wants to do” (1979, 359). As indicated, Bronte’s portrayal of Bertha’s madness complies with her society’s belief that women are susceptible to madness. This notion about females sets up a comparison between men and women. Men’s supposed
rationality is seen in relation to women’s assumed passionate nature. In this way, women are stripped of significance in Victorian culture. They are thought to have no ability to contribute valid ideas to society.

Besides devaluing women by filling society’s consciousness with fears of women’s psychological and physical frailties, theories that set up binary oppositions between men and women elevated men to a position of master. Shuttleworth discusses Victorian ideas about men’s nature. She writes, “Manhood was articulated against and defined by its opposite: whilst the attributes of self-help were aligned with masculinity, woman was increasingly viewed an automaton threatening instability of physical forces which needed to be externally regulated and controlled”(1996, 97-98). This comparison of women to men mirrors, in some ways, imperialistic Victorian ideas about the “other” in relation to the colonizer. Said asserts that in Orientalist discourse a binary mode of identity creation is operating: “The Oriental is irrational, depraved (fallen), childlike, ‘different;’ thus the European is rational, virtuous, mature, ‘normal’” (1979, 40). In Victorian society, men’s character was seen as superior to women’s, just as Europeans were believed to be better than the “other” in every way. Therefore, just as the dark non-European was seen to require European domination in order to be civilized, so women were thought to need men’s regulation in order to be orderly members of society. Neither the native nor the woman was seen as having the ability to achieve personal progress without outside intervention from those who were thought to be their superiors—white males. The strengths that men were believed to possess were thought

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At times, Rochester demonstrates an attitude toward Jane that challenges the notion that all Victorian men felt this way. During his proposal, he sincerely agrees with Jane’s declaration that she is equal to him (Bronte 1996, 284). However, he can also be seen as a product of his
to be absent in women as well as the "other." Middle class women, however, were represented as "an inspirational model" (Patricia Ingham 1996, 21) for members of the lower class. Paradoxically, traits such as emotionality, weak intellect, and an inclination toward charity were seen as both "marks of inferiority" (23) to men and signs of "moral excellence" (23), which acted as a standard for lower class women.

Another reason that men were believed to be superior to women was that males were not controlled by their bodies like females were. Shuttleworth notes that the man was "celebrated . . . as a rational, independent actor, exercising full control over his own activities . . . and capable of rising upwards through the social ranks solely through the exertion of his own powers" (1996, 86). Notice the freedom afforded the male. He is able to climb the social ladder on his own with no help or supervision from anyone as a result of his rationality. Shuttleworth goes on to say, "Unlike women, [men] were not prey to the forces of the body . . . but rather were their own masters; not an automaton or mindless part of the social machinery [has women had been described], but a self-willed individual"(86-87). These obvious differences between the genders did not only show that men had many good qualities, but also demonstrated that men were superior to women and because of this had the right and the duty to govern them.

Susan Bordo’s discussion of the masculinization of rationality during the Renaissance demonstrates that there is a long history of demarcation between the genders. Descartes posited that in order to know truths about the external world, a man must separate himself from nature (which was associated with the female) in order to be objective (1987, 261). Just as Victorian doctors had stepped back from women in time when he unconsciously reveals his sense of ownership of Jane in his condescending attitude toward her during their shopping excursion in Millcote (301).
order to study them, so Descartes instructs those of his day to become detached from nature if they want to know the truth about the world. He argued that nature could not be rational. Instead, it was ruled by external forces and was believed to be unruly and mysterious. Bordo notes that, according to Descartes, "The new, infinite universe was an indifferent home, an alien will, and the sense of separateness from her was acute. Not only was she "other" but she seemed a perverse and uncontrollable other" (262). The correlation between nature in the Renaissance and women in Victorian society is unmistakable. Clearly, the binary opposition between the masculine and the feminine had been drawn centuries before Bronte's time, yet medical men of her day had taken the notion of the feminization of nature one step further than the mere association of women with nature.

Victorian men, on the other hand, can be seen as similar, in their emphasis on rationality, to Renaissance philosophers. Both groups were seen as being able to control their emotional responses in order to see the truth objectively. Bordo asserts that "masculine' describes not a biological category but a cognitive style, an epistemological stance. Its key term is detachment: from the emotional life, from the particularities of time and place, from personal quirks, prejudices, interests and most central from the object itself" (259). The parallels between nature as female and intellect as male demonstrate that the demarcation between male as reason and female as passion has a long history in Western thought. This notion appears in Bronte's portrayal of Jane's relationship with St. John Rivers.

After fleeing Thornfield, Jane comes to stay with Rivers, a curate, and his two sisters, Mary and Diana. The four become friends and St. John offers Jane a job as
teacher in a school for girls. When Christmas approaches, Jane closes her school for the holiday and returns to Moor House to spend this time with Rivers and his sisters. Arriving at the house a few days earlier than the two women, Jane sets to work scouring down Moor House in anticipation of their arrival. In the midst of this activity, Rivers and Jane have a discussion that not only bears out Victorian beliefs about the rationality of men versus the irrationality of women, but also demonstrates Bordo’s argument about the societal association of women with nature.

Bronte tells us that while Rivers watches Jane’s cleaning frenzy, he smiles to himself (Bronte 1996, 436) in what seems to be a condescending manner. He then tells Jane, “It is all very well for the present . . . but seriously, I trust that when the first flush of vivacity is over, you will look a little higher than domestic endearments and household joys” (436). In this scene, Jane can be seen as the emotional woman. She is happy. She enjoys what is around her, instead of transcending her immediate circumstances to look toward the future. She is excited over the return of Mary and Diana as well, and is content at this point to carry out the duties society has deemed acceptable for a woman. Jane also resembles Descartes’ view of nature in this scene. She is bound to the earth in that she sees only the here and now. The outward forces of the house needing to be cleaned and of Mary and Diana’s immanent arrival rule Jane and have a direct bearing on the immediacy of her activity and emotions.

St. John Rivers, on the other hand, is not controlled by the situation around him. In the midst of the bustle, his mind is on more serious matters, which is indicated in his admonition to Jane that she should set her sights above the current situation. He is detached from the circumstances at hand, just as Descartes had encouraged
philosophers of his day to be, if they wanted to seek the truth. He is also seen to be superior to Jane, for while she concentrates on the trivial tasks of the moment, he transcends the scene around him to look with his mind rather than his feelings toward the future. In his transcendent view of the situation, he is also in the God-like position of looking at Jane’s activity from above and outside the earth bound realm to which she is relegated. Rivers bears out the Victorian notions of manhood in his rationality and his control of his emotions, while Jane’s outlook and activities demonstrate that women are ruled by emotion and are unable to look at the world around them rationally; Rivers is, in fact, an exaggerated version of the self-controlled man. Earlier in the novel, he describes himself as a “cold, hard, ambitious man” (419), making him an unsympathetic character, whose stern nature is carried forward in the present scene. It is Jane’s loving anticipation of Mary and Diana’s return that appeals to the reader rather than Rivers’ austere rationality. In this way, Bronte demonstrates the unattractive aspect of viewing the world without emotions or warmth.

In addition, Bronte challenges the view of women’s inability to see beyond the temporal in her depiction of Jane’s leaving Rivers to return to Rochester. Jane, feeling pressured by River’s repeated marriage proposals, comes close to agreeing to be his wife. His declaration, that if she refuses his invitation to become a missionary to India as his wife she will be disobeying God, has brought her to the brink of accepting his proposal. As she stands with him trying to decide if she should give in to him, she hears Rochester’s voice calling her. Jane tells us, “Suddenly [my heart] stood still to an inexpressible feeling that thrilled it through, and passed at once to my head and extremities. . . . I saw nothing: but I heard a voice cry—‘Jane! Jane! Jane! Nothing
more”(466). Here, Jane is able to see past her present circumstance. She alone hears Mr. Rochester call, being receptive to him through her love for him. St. John Rivers, being bound by his rationality can only see the natural world. He is not able to hear Rochester, in part, because his rationality binds him to only that which can be heard with the physical ear or understood with the mind. He professes to be Jane’s spiritual guide, yet in this scene, Jane is more attuned to spirituality than he is.

Clearly, Bronte uses this scene to celebrate the power of the emotions. She demonstrates that, when kept under control, they do not hinder but rather facilitate a sense of transcendence, for through them Jane gains a more complete understanding of her present circumstance than Rivers is able to. The depiction of Jane’s activity at Moor House and her later ability to hear Rochester’s voice shows the seeming ambiguity with which Bronte views her society’s representation of women. Her portrayal of Jane as the contented woman preoccupied with the temporal world seems to reinforce the view that men are more able to transcend the physical realm through their rationality, for in this scene it is Rivers who looks beyond the present situation. Yet, through her later depiction of Jane’s ability to grasp something that is not bound to the natural world, Bronte contradicts this notion, showing that women are also able to rise above the physical world. St. John Rivers’ austere rationality compared to Jane’s more emotional nature contributes to Bronte’s depiction of sexuality throughout the novel as well. Through Rivers’ proposal in which he tells Jane that “I claim you—not for my pleasure, but for my Sovereign’s service” (448), Bronte demonstrates the sexless union that a complete disavowal of emotion affords. Conversely, through Jane’s preference of a sexually charged relationship with Rochester over a cold passionless marriage to St.
John Rivers, Bronte demonstrates the sexual fulfillment that accompanies a life of regulated emotions. Through Bertha, however, the author shows the woman is completely governed by her emotions is also led to madness by her unbridled sexuality.

One of the Victorian beliefs about women that Bronte addresses in *Jane Eyre* is that women’s sexuality was only acceptable if it was in response to their husbands’ overtures. Shuttleworth explains:

> In one of the many double-binds which characterize Victorian ideas on womanhood, a woman was deemed to be feminine (and thus truly woman) only if sexually responsive to a man; but should she disclose that responsiveness before the requisite time she would also forfeit her feminine status. Femininity was thus predicated on a condition of concealment, on a disjunction between surface control and inner sexuality. (1996, 72)

Just as women were instructed to control their bodies, even though this was seen as impossible by the male-governed medical establishment, women were also supposed to regulate their sexuality more strictly than men were asked to control their erotic nature. The male could make sexual overtures to the female without social condemnation. He was clearly thought to be in control of the sexual interaction. The idea behind this notion hearkens back to the belief that men were in control of their bodies. If they became sexually aroused, they supposedly had the strength to give in to these feelings responsibly or deny them. Thus, it can be inferred that Victorian society believed that sexual interactions would be more under control if the male were the initiator.

The woman, on the other hand, with her well-known inability to resist the body and the emotions would lack the necessary self-control if she were allowed to be the initiator of the sexual situation. Imperialist notions about the dark races’ sexuality echo
those of women’s sexual propensities. James Walvin describes Victorians’ beliefs about blacks, which reflects what we have seen as England’s views of female sexuality:

> Although it is likely that there was a multitude of attitudes toward black sexuality, it was widely believed that the black was a particularly sexual being. Indeed, from a very early date British writers commonly described the black as characterised [sic.] by lust . . . driven by powerful sexual urges. (1986, 71)

As indicated in the last chapter, Bronte represents Bertha as an African, so her sexuality is in keeping with the stereotypes enumerated by Walvin. Bertha is also a woman living in Victorian society who has gone mad as a result of giving in to her passions, not the least of which is sexual desire. Through Bertha, cultural ideas about the woman’s sexuality are linked to notions about the dark races’ lasciviousness. Shuttleworth demonstrates Victorian beliefs about female sexuality when she addresses nineteenth-century concerns over the use of chloroform on women in doctors’ visits. She tells us that it was believed that women “lying insensible under doctors’ hands, were liable to reveal unbecoming sexual excitement” (1996, 137-68). Belief in the underlying sexuality of women elicited the conviction that they needed to be kept under control.

Dr. Isaac Baker Brown, a nineteenth-century surgeon, argued that “madness was caused by masturbation and that surgical removal of the clitoris, by helping women to govern themselves could halt . . . idiocy, mania, and death” (Showalter 1985, 75). Without the suppression of their desires, women, it was feared, would reveal their innate lustfulness and would be driven to madness. For this reason, the woman was not allowed to initiate sexual contact. She was not to be trusted, so she had to stay in her place of submission and thus secure her status as a truly feminine woman. Shuttleworth’s comment relating to society’s expectation that women conceal their sex drive indicates that Victorians
were aware that women were sexual beings. Victorians saw women as time bombs ready to explode into sin and madness if their true feelings were ever expressed. In the previous chapter, we looked at Bertha’s lack of self-control from an imperialist point of view. Her erratic behavior was seen to be a result of the madness brought on by her Creole heritage and her self-indulgence. Now we see her in a different light. She now represents the woman in Victorian society who has lost her mind due to excessive behavior and uncontrolled sexuality.

After a month-long betrothal between Mr. Rochester and Jane, Bertha’s existence in Thornfield is unexpectedly revealed. At the same time, Jane learns that Bertha is Rochester’s mad wife. When she tells Rochester that she must leave now that her marriage to him is impossible, he tries to convince her to stay by painting a picture of Bertha as a lascivious woman. He relates that his wife has “a nature the most gross, impure, depraved I ever saw” (Bronte 1996, 345). He also tells her, “I had marked neither modesty, nor benevolence . . . nor refinement in her mind or manners” (344). In his description of Bertha, Bronte makes her need for outer control apparent. Bertha’s very nature is sinful. It is inherent in her emotional make up. She has no hope of changing; therefore, she must be confined by her husband. In addition to Bronte’s validation of the notion of the sexually aggressive female going insane, she also fortifies the Victorian belief that women were prone to madness. In this respect Bronte’s narrative works to confirm prevalent fears about the woman’s propensity toward insanity.

Through Rochester’s account of Bertha, and the depiction of the Creole’s irrational behavior, Bronte further reiterates the validity of the fear that the
undisciplined woman would lose her sanity unless she concealed her feelings rather than acting on them. Shuttleworth addresses the complicity of novelists and medical journalists when she writes:

Literary and medical texts played a crucial role in mid-nineteenth-century society, offering an arena where cultural meanings could be negotiated, and anxieties expressed and explored. In the constant cycle of textual exchange, social images were endorsed and modified, strengthened by repetition... Where women were concerned, textual borrowings were more likely to be used to demonstrate their animal, or uncontrolled nature. (1996, 12-13)

Bronte reflects her society’s beliefs about women through Rochester’s mad wife, Bertha, the woman driven insane through her complete submission to her passions and sexuality. This reveals two important aspects of Bronte’s complicity with Victorian beliefs in regard to women. First, her representation of the mad woman demonstrates the author’s reliance on her culture’s picture of the woman who does not keep herself under control or allow herself to be regulated by outside male influences. Pat MacPherson asserts, “In my reading, Bertha represents that species of female power and desire that is not attached by emotional obsession to a male protector. A rare woman, indeed”(1989, 21). MacPherson writes of Bertha’s power and desire as an advantageous aspect of her personality, yet Bronte does not portray the mad woman in a positive light. The author shows the dire consequences of such attributes when they are expressed without being tempered by reason and self-control. Second, Bronte uses Bertha to reiterate cultural beliefs that women were inclined toward madness. Bertha is animalistic, savage, and out of control (Bronte 1996, 317, 328), and Bronte makes clear the fact that Bertha is in part to blame for her condition. Rochester tells Jane, “[H]er excesses had prematurely developed the germs of insanity”(345). Mr. Rochester’s
words can clearly be read as a warning of what will happen to women if they do not control, or at least, conceal their passions. As we saw earlier, women were not believed to have the ability to control their bodies or emotions, yet the importance of doing just that, or letting someone else do it for them, was often repeated to women. This similarity between cultural fears about the inner life of the woman and Bronte’s representation of Bertha shows Bronte’s complicity with her society’s beliefs. She does not challenge doctors’ proclamations, for she does not show us a woman who retains her sanity despite being led by her passions. Clearly, Bronte believes that Bertha’s condition is a direct result of uncontrolled emotions for which her Creole lineage gives her a propensity.

Bronte’s use of Bertha as the embodiment of the fate of passionate women bears out the social hierarchy of Victorian society. Doctors and anthropologists declared that women were on the same level as children and savages because females were not mentally developed (Sally Shuttleworth 1996, 158). That Jane and Bertha’s natures are both passionate puts the Victorian heroine at the same level as the Creole madwoman in Victorian society in certain respects. Both women live in a male dominated society, and both were believed to need domination because of their inclination to give in to unruly emotions. As will be seen, however, Jane’s exposure to the civilizing influence of Helen Burns and Miss Temple at Lowood School help Jane to overcome her tendency toward passionate outbursts. While Jane suffers under the tyranny of John Reed and, later, Mr. Brocklehurst, Bertha is completely controlled by Rochester. The similarity between Jane and Bertha’s subservience to men is a reflection of the arguments of some Victorian women that English women were treated no better than slaves. Bertha’s
perhaps being a member of a race that was created by the mixing of nationalities in the West Indian slave trade, encourages the reader to connect her with slavery. In addition, Jane’s being the object of men’s cruelty and domination is reminiscent of abolitionists’ views of the injustice of the treatment of slaves. Critic Jenny Sharpe writes, “The slave analogy was nothing new to the nineteenth-century, but with the increased popularity of abolitionism in the 1820’s, the oppression of the European woman was more explicitly compared to the West Indian system of slavery” (1993, 14). The perceived similarity of the treatment of both the non-European native and the Victorian woman caused the latter to see their situation in terms of the oppression of slavery.

Jane, the narrator, tells us that when Jane, the child, is being put in the Red Room, she fights to get away. Jane remembers, “I was conscious that a moment’s mutiny had already rendered me liable to strange penalties, and like any other rebel slave, I felt resolved, in my desperation to go to all lengths” (Bronte 1996, 19). Clearly, Jane draws the parallel between herself and the slave. Bronte uses words charged with imperialistic meaning such as “mutiny” and “rebel slave,” to put Jane and the reader in the situation of colonialism. Her allusion to slavery is vivid, and the suggestion of the cruelty associated with it is masterfully drawn to the reader’s attention. Bronte’s allusion to slavery makes some critics view the author as complicit in imperialism in that she uses the slave’s suffering as a metaphor for her own somewhat unpleasant situation rather than drawing the readers’ attention to the cruel suffering of the slave. Carl Plasa asserts, “By means of the identification of slavery with racial ‘otherness’ these reflections [of Bronte’s on Jane’s slave-like existence] re-inscribe the specificities of history which Jane Eyre’s use of slavery as metaphor implicitly works to
obscure”(1994, 72). In other words, by alluding to situations of slavery in describing the unfair treatment of Jane, Bronte is taking the actual phenomenon of slavery and obscuring its importance by making it a metaphor for Jane’s less life-threatening problems.

Other critics see Bronte’s use of the slave images as a way to get her abolitionist message across. These writers view the inclusion of slaves in the novel as the author’s way of directing the compassion of the readers toward the “other.” Lori Pollock, literary critic, suggests, “By alluding to [slave uprisings] Bronte may be extending her support to the plight of slaves who, even though released officially from slavery at the time she was writing, remained a dehumanized and exploited source of labour in the colonies”(1996, 257). There may be a level of truth to this argument, yet comparing Jane’s societal constraints to the life-threatening suffering of the slaves shows that Bronte overlooks the wide differences between the suffering of slaves versus that of Jane. Pollock seems to see both situations as being equal, indicating that Bronte is distracted from the slavery issue by the oppression of women in her society. She, being a citizen of the richest and most powerful nation on earth, has little idea what a rebellious slave feels like or how an actual slave suffers. Her comparison of these oppressed individuals to the repressed women in Victorian England suggests her limited view of the plight of the slave.

Whether or not Bronte uses her slavery metaphor to support slaves’ struggle for freedom, it is clear that the imperialistic treatment of slaves gives Bronte an important context through which to view the repression she experiences as a woman. In The Brontes: Charlotte Bronte and Her Family, Rebecca Fraser compares Jane Eyre’s inner
conflict with society’s rigid regulations for women to Bronte’s own. Fraser writes, “the character of Jane Eyre, as many who knew her would remark after reading the book, was Charlotte herself, struggling for independence, for recognition, and for love” (1988, 265). That Jane Eyre is an extension of Bronte adds new significance to the author’s allusion to slavery. The rebel slave to whom she refers in the novel is not only a metaphor for English women everywhere, but is also a metaphor for the repressed author’s suffering. An indication of the oppression that Bronte endured as a result of being a woman was her awareness that in order to have her novels published they must bear a man’s name. In 1850, Bronte explained the reason behind the decision that she, Emily, and Anne had made regarding their assumption of a masculine nom-de-plume when she writes, “[I] had a vague impression that authoresses are liable to be looked on with prejudice” (Rebecca Fraser 1988, 250). She was not free to reveal her identity to her readers until a long time after her novels had been published, showing that she, as well as her heroine, Jane Eyre, was repressed by Victorian society on the basis of her gender. Even her merit as an author could not free her from this oppression.

The implicit interrelationship between slavery and imperialism becomes manifest in the dynamics of the interactions between Victorian women and their husbands. Jane associates Rochester’s attempts to adorn her with jewels and expensive dresses with an eastern monarch’s compulsion to be in control of his harem. As a disgruntled Jane rides back to Thornfield with Rochester after unwillingly spending the day shopping with him for expensive fabrics which were to be made into a new wardrobe for the bride-to-be, she views his proud grin with contempt:

He smiled; and I thought his smile was such as a sultan might, in a blissful and fond moment, bestow on a slave his gold and gems had
enriched: I crushed his hand, which was ever hunting mine, vigorously, and thrust it back to him red with the passionate pressure (Bronte 1996, 301)

Because of the exposure to other cultures through England’s imperialist expansion, Jane is able to make a connection between Rochester’s pride at owning her, and a sultan’s attitude toward his slaves. Jane has never traveled to Turkey to see a sultan and a harem, yet she knows enough about such the culture that she is able to associate Rochester with the Sultan and herself with the slave. Jenny Sharpe asserts:

At this moment there is a strategic shift in the slave analogy. To begin with, the master/slave relation is both gendered and Orientalized, which means that it is now a direct statement about gender hierarchies. But more important, Jane explicitly rejects the role of a slave as the sign of Rochester’s mastery over her. (1993, 23)

Jane, at this point in the narrative, is in danger of being put in the same inferior position as the harem women because or her love for Rochester and her desire to please him. Her relationship with him is Orientalized as well, for his wanting to adorn her as his property shows her to be on a similar level with the native “other,” who can be bought into slavery by the Sultan. Jane sees that the inferior position that Rochester’s desire to adorn her as his prize puts her in, and she refuses to submit to it. Even though he seems unaware of the arrogance that his expression implies and sees his offer of new garments as gifts of love, Jane becomes angry at his complacency. Her angry response makes clear the fact that, even though Jane’s situation is similar to that of the slave, she will not surrender to being humiliated by his condescending attitude. The eastern allusion makes it possible for Bronte to tell Jane’s story (Perera Suvendrini 1991, 81). It gives Bronte the opportunity to showcase another culture’s oppressive practices toward women in order to expose Rochester’s supposed generosity as an unconscious bid to
treat her as an object rather than as an equal. Many women in England would have loved to be in Jane’s situation and have a wealthy man buying them expensive things, but Jane is infuriated by such treatment, for she sees it as a bid to control her. To Jane, each of Rochester’s gifts is used to purchase her, just as the Sultan buys the slave with expensive jewels.

As the episode continues, Mr. Rochester’s association with the Sultan suggests the possibility of Rochester’s future sexual domination of Jane. He responds to Jane’s angry retort saying, “I would not exchange this one little English girl for the Grand Turk’s whole seraglio; gazelle-eyes, houri forms and all!” (Bronte 1996, 301). Rochester’s comments here are suggestive of a more physical attraction to women. His reference to their eyes and forms imply his sexual attraction to the women of the seraglio. Robert Young explains, “In the relation of hierarchical power, the white male’s response to the allure of exotic . . . sexuality is identified with mastery and domination” (1995, 108). Rochester’s declaration that he would not trade Jane for the Turk’s harem suggests that he has the option to do just that because he owns her. His whimsical declaration that he would keep Jane in preference to the seraglio suggests that he would rather control her sexually than the exotic beauties to which he refers. Having been raised in a patriarchal society, he subconsciously sees Jane is in the position of being an object to be traded, just as the Sultan views the women in his harem, although his view of them as objects stems from the fact that he has literally purchased them. This view is an echo of arguments seen earlier that the woman is on the same level developmentally as the “savage.” Suvendrini argues, “The seraglio is the acknowledged referent in the erotic and power play between Jane and Rochester, as
Jane parries her master’s “Sultan”-like munificence with her ‘needle of repartee’ during their uneasy courtship” (1991, 79-80). Just as Jane had angrily refused Rochester’s hand because of his show of pride and complacency, she fights against his referring to her as an object that he can “trade” if he so desires.

Jane’s retort leaves no question that even though Victorian society may see women as being on the same mental and social level as “savages,” she refuses to be treated like a woman whose only responsibility is to make her master happy. She replies:

I’ll not stand you an inch in the stead of a seraglio . . . so don’t consider me an equivalent to one; if you have a fancy for anything in that line, away with you, sir, to the bazaars of Stamboul, without delay; and lay out in extensive slave-purchases some of that spare cash you seem at a loss to spend satisfactorily here. (Bronte 1996, 301-302)

Jane seems to see herself as superior to the women in the bazaars of Istanbul. This will be discussed further in a later chapter; however, for the present discussion, it is necessary to see that Jane’s view of herself differs from the beliefs of her society in regard to women. She will not be bought or treated as an object or slave, and, as her next comment reveals, she will extend her passion against the objectification of the women in the seraglio as well. She tells Rochester that while he is gone, purchasing women for his harem, “I’ll be preparing myself to go out as a missionary to preach liberty to them that are enslaved — your harem inmates amongst them” (302). The rescue she plans in this passage does not only speak to the seraglio women that Rochester plans, hypothetically, to buy, but also to all women who are dominated by their husbands and seen as objects. Through the imperialist practice of missionary work, Jane has found a way to set at liberty all women who are captives to those who control
them (Perera Suvendrini 1991, 80). Bronte uses her novel in the same way. Her allusions to the Sultan point out that Englishmen who regulate and monitor women’s behavior and emotions are nothing more than despots.

Women writers, like Bronte, utilized imperialist ideology to fight her society’s oppressive treatment of women. St. John, the Victorian ideal of intellectual manhood is seen as cold, condescending, and devoid of feeling. In addition, Rochester is depicted as being controlling, proud, and patronizing. Bronte also relies on the abolitionists’ views on the cruelty of slavery. In the context of the rebel slave, she demonstrates that young Jane is treated unfairly and her fight against such oppression is understandable. She is not terrible because she will not submit to being abused. Conversely, the author confirms the Victorians’ beliefs about women’s tendency toward madness in her representation of Bertha. That Bertha is in part driven mad by her own excesses strengthens the arguments of prominent doctors. In addition, the fact that Jane hears the maniacal laughter after Bronte’s protests against the suppression of women complies with Victorian notions of the consequences of non-conformity. Her use of Bertha is indicative of the duality, if not contradiction, in Bronte’s belief about women in Victorian culture. Her representation of the self-indulgent woman who has gone insane fortifies her society’s fear that the passionate woman is in danger of madness. Yet, her depiction of the assertive young woman who can rationally challenge male domination brings into question her culture’s beliefs about women. However, her view of Bertha as inferior to Jane comes through in this portrayal of the two women. Her representation of Jane’s inner struggle to control her own passions, that we will examine in the next chapter, clearly demonstrates that Bronte agrees with her society’s beliefs that the
passions are at war with reason and must be kept under control. She also continues to
dominate her Creole character by making her a metaphor for Jane’s inner conflict.
As has been indicated, the binary opposition between passion and reason was reinforced by the imperialist view that dark non-Europeans were led by emotions rather than by rationality. This belief, as we have seen, was carried over into the domestic realm where women were linked to "the savage, the rustic, the mechanical drudge, and the infant whose faculties have not had time to unfold themselves [or develop]" (Sally Shuttleworth 1996, 87). In this chapter, the application of this belief to the workings of the mind of an individual (namely Jane Eyre) will be discussed. In this discussion of the two opposing forces, passion refers to unbridled emotions, which in Victorian society was believed to cause some people (especially those listed above) to instinctively respond to outside forces. Reason, on the other hand, takes on the meaning of mental control over the spontaneous expression of the passions. As seen in the last chapter, this type of self-control was a trait highly prized in civilized Victorian society.

Like anthropology and medical science, phrenology, which the Oxford English Dictionary defines as "the study of the shape and size of the cranium as a supposed indication of character and mental faculties" (1996), set up binary oppositions. However, the latter showed that these differing factions were within the heart and mind of each person. Sally Shuttleworth notes that "Throughout her letters, Bronte adopts a segmented view of the self, alluding to the contest of faculties, their individual recalcitrance, and the impact of well-developed organs on social behaviour" (1996, 57). Charlotte Bronte believed that opposing characteristics struggled for dominance in the psychological life of each individual, causing inner conflict. In her novel, *Jane Eyre*,

4. Jane Eyre: The Inner World of Imperialism
the author incorporates this troublesome binary opposition in her characterization of her heroine.

In order to prove my assertion, I examine the branch of knowledge called phrenology which facilitated the view of the divided self as evidenced in the arrangement of bumps on the crania of each person. I then explore Jane’s journey from childhood at Gateshead, and later at Lowood, to show the progress of her maturation and how this process of change demonstrates the Victorian view of how the savage should be civilized. Clearly, Bronte incorporates the imperial dynamic to Jane’s inner world so that the young heroine is seen as both colonized and colonizer. I then examine Jane’s relationship with Rochester and how her passion leads her into folly. A discussion of Bertha’s role in the representation of Jane’s hidden passions will add yet another aspect to the use of the “other” in Victorian literature. Finally, I discuss the conventional ending to show the successful “civilizing” of Jane.

As seen earlier, Bronte believed in the teachings of phrenology. She adhered to this belief in her own life, and incorporated it in Jane’s experiences. Anthropology had helped to establish the belief in the innate primitive nature of the savage as opposed to the natural intelligence of the European, and medical science had been effectual in separating women’s nature from that of men. Likewise, in the inner realm of the psyche, phrenology was instrumental in Victorians’ perception of the personality as divided into many fragments. The science of phrenology developed from the writings of Franz Joseph Gall in the 1790’s. His work focused on the mind, which he believed,

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14 In Bronte’s letters, discussed on page 1, she alludes to her belief in phrenology when she refers to the “contest of faculties” and “well-developed organs” which influenced social behavior. She includes this idea in Rochester’s description of Jane as having “a good deal of the organ of Adhesiveness” (1996, 280).
was divided into various personality traits. He argued that these characteristics were located physically in the brain and marked by an actual "bump" on the crania.

Shuttleworth explains:

Gall was interested in the external formation of the skull only as a means of demonstrating his theories of cerebral localization: his belief that the mind was divided into distinct faculties, each of which had a specific location in the brain. The size of each bump on the skull indicated, he believed, the strength of the individual organ lying below. (1996, 60)

Gall's theory separated the mind and personality into individual compartments. Just as they were believed to have different manifestations in the brain, so they were thought to elicit different behaviors in the individual. Note that different faculties were thought to have varying amounts of strength. This division of the faculties within one person set up the possibility for one trait to war with another for prominence. Gall's views in regard to the differing personality traits present in each individual were prominent in Victorian England. Charlotte Bronte herself was a firm believer in the accuracy of its theories, evident in Jane's battle between passion and reason.

Sally Shuttleworth also points to the function of phrenology in Bronte's novels. She writes, "Phrenology offered an explanatory structure of the experience of internal division which was crucial to Bronte's work. Her fiction draws on the vocabulary and assumptions of phrenology in exploring the relationship between physiological force and mental control" (62). The division between different parts of the personality reflects what we have seen of imperialism on a global and on a domestic scale as reflected in Jane Eyre. Here, imperialist ideology is carried to the inner personal world of Bronte's characters and the same dynamic of domination and control is in force.
An early example of Jane's experience with inner forces that she does not seem to be able to control can be seen in her retort to Aunt Reed, who had warned her children to stay away from Jane. When the young girl hears her aunt telling Eliza, Georgiana, and John, Mrs. Reed's three children, that "[Jane] is not worthy of notice" (Bronte 1996, 36), the fiery young girl rightfully replies, "They are not fit to associate with me" (36). At this retort, Aunt Reed sweeps Jane up from her position on the stairs and sits her down in the nursery, commanding her not to move. At this Jane cries, "What would Uncle Reed say to you, if he were alive?" (36). In recalling this outburst, Jane, the narrator, now older and wiser, tells her readers that this response was "scarcely voluntary." She explains this description of her youthful impassioned outcry when she writes, "I say scarcely voluntary, for it seemed as if my tongue pronounced words without my will consenting to their utterance: something spoke out of me over which I had no control" (36). Jane is not insane in this episode, yet she demonstrates the divided aspect of her nature. She does not want to verbally strike out against Aunt Reed; however, the passionate part of her nature is so strong that she has no power to control it. At this point in Jane's life, emotions hold full sway. They have not yet been tempered with self-control, so they are able to dominate her actions. Shuttleworth notes, "Bronte's portrayal of Jane's childhood draws on nineteenth-century's phrenological belief that the mind is made up of warring faculties. Each faculty is believed to be a separated source of energy" (1996, 157). Jane's desire to be a good child is not strong enough to overcome her passions, which control her. Both the knowledge of how she should behave and the emotions that direct her actions are within Jane. The conflict she experiences, at this point, make Jane seem like the savage
who has no regard for reason. Like dark non-Europeans, she gives in to passion rather than thinking before she speaks.

Yet, her later response to her own outburst shows that Jane is not happy with the way she has given in to her emotions with abandon. When Bessie, the housemaid, comes in and scolds her for the shameful behavior she has exhibited, Jane, the narrator, tells us in retrospect that young Jane partially complies with the housemaid’s assessment of her character: “she proved beyond a doubt that I was the most wicked and abandoned child ever reared under a roof, I half believed her; for I felt indeed only bad feelings surging in my breast” (Bronte 1996, 36). Young Jane’s inner struggle between what she wants to be and what she is is apparent in this comment. She feels misunderstood by Bessie, and, thus, does not agree wholly with her characterization, yet that Jane partially agrees with the housemaid demonstrates that she does not approve of her own actions. Her idea of appropriate behavior is at war with the deed she has committed. Truly, Jane is divided against herself and feels the need to dominate the part of herself that rises up against others. Jane’s remorse demonstrates the theories of phrenology, for as Shuttleworth explains, “[Bronte’s] protagonists shift constantly between a sense of power and its autonomy and its converse, a feeling of helplessness in the face of irresistible internal forces” (1996, 62). When Jane gives in to her passions and talks back to Aunt Reed, she feels a sense of power; however, when reason takes over, she sadly realizes that she has acted contrary to what she knows is acceptable behavior. She has spoken the truth to her aunt, yet she feels guilty because she has done so in a socially unacceptable way. She has not exercised the self-control that Victorians
prized. Therefore, the action that initially caused Jane to feel powerful later creates a sense of shame in the young girl.

Jane’s inner conflict is also a reflection of imperialist beliefs in regard to the passionate nature of the “other.” Jenny Sharpe argues that “Jane must control her anger as she matures from the animalistic child to a respectable adult. Unchecked emotions are identified with savages. Jane has to find a way of balancing her fight against oppression with socialization” (1993, 17). Just as the colonizers sought to regulate “savages” in order to help them follow reason rather than passion, Jane must curtail her own emotional responses to the outside world if she is to be the good child that she wants to be. In her rebellion against her aunt, Jane shows readers her similarity with races that were believed to be primitive, for, as Sharpe points out, Jane’s outburst is animalistic in that it operates from the level of instinct. Miss Abbot, one of Mrs. Reed’s servants, exclaims that Jane is like “a mad cat” (Bronte 1996, 19) as Jane fights against being confined in the Red Room. As the narrative continues, the negative consequences of her outburst is seen in her expulsion from the Reed household and her admittance to Lowood, a charity school for girls.

After Aunt Reed sends Jane to Lowood, the young girl meets someone who will help her learn to control the passions that threaten to destroy her. Helen Burns is the first girl with whom Jane converses at Lowood. The next time Jane sees Helen, the girl’s demeanor puzzles her, for Helen’s behavior, while being punished for a minor misdeed (62), is completely different from the impassioned outburst with which Jane had responded to Aunt Reed’s chastisement at Gateshead. As she looks on at Helen’s apparent calm, Jane, the narrator, tells her readers:
I expected she would show signs of great distress and shame; but to my surprise she neither wept nor blushed: composed, though grave, she stood, the central mark of all eyes. ‘How can she bear it so quietly—so firmly?’ I asked myself. ‘Were I in her place, it seems to me I should wish the earth to open and swallow me up. (62)

Up to this moment, Jane has not known of any alternative response to injustice than to yield to rage and lash out against the persecutor. She has been tied to her emotions in such a way that she cannot see beyond the discomfort Helen must be suffering. Jane’s concern is that Helen is in anguish, and she is surprised to see that her young classmate does not show “signs of distress and shame.” This apparent calm makes no sense to Jane, who cannot see beyond the current circumstance. She then tries to make sense of the situation by describing what her own response to such humiliation would be. Here is a picture of the “savage” Jane, who is not able to rise above a temporal view to see beyond the present circumstance. True, she has spoken out against oppression in each of her outbursts, yet Jane’s difficulty with passion lies in the way she is carried off by emotion. Her impassioned protests regarding the injustice she has experienced reveal the limitations of her reason up to this point. Although it has awakened her to the realization that her oppressor’s treatment of her is unjust, it has not led her to temper her fight against oppression with socialized behavior. Helen can see beyond her present circumstances; thus, she is able to provide an example for Jane of seeing past the injustices of this present life.

After remarking that she would ask the earth to swallow her up, Jane’s attention is turned once again to Helen, who seems to be oblivious to the humiliating experience she is enduring. An older Jane recalls her thoughts as she looked at Helen:

She looks as if she were thinking of something beyond her punishment—beyond her situation: of something not round her nor
before her. I have heard of day-dreams—is she in a day dream now? Her eyes are fixed on the floor, but I am sure they do not see it—her sight seems turned in, gone down into her heart: she is looking at what she can remember, I believe; not at what is really present. I wonder what sort of a girl she is—whether good or bad. (62)

Helen’s mind is clearly not on her present situation. She seems to be preoccupied with thoughts that take her away from the present moment. Reason is in control rather than her emotional reaction to her punishment. Her eyes, fixed on the floor as she stands quietly and firmly in the center of the room, reveal a deliberate effort to overcome her emotions with reason. Helen does not stand lethargically as if she is unaffected by her punishment, but rather she stoically forces herself to fix her thoughts on a world beyond her present circumstances. Adrienne Rich describes Helen and her influence on young Jane:

Helen Burns is strong of will, awkward and blundering in the practical world yet intellectually and spiritually mature beyond her years. Severe, mystical, convinced of the transitory and insignificant nature of earthly life, she still responds to Jane’s hunger for contact with a humane and sisterly concern. . . . Jane experiences Helen’s religious asceticism as something impossible for herself. . . . yet Helen gives her a glimpse of female character without pettiness, hysteria, or self-repudiation” (1979, 94-95)

Helen has learned to quit vacillating between her emotions and her reason; thus, she is no longer subject to hysteria as Jane is. In addition, she is free from the self-recrimination that Jane had experienced in her remorseful memories of her own bad conduct at Gateshead. The reason that Helen is able to free herself from the ravages of uncontrolled passion is that she sees beyond the temporal world. Unlike Jane, Helen is aware of the insignificance of wrongs when compared to glories that await her in heaven. However, while this focus on her reward in heaven makes her quiet submission to oppression possible, it also represses the anger that is hidden within her. According
to Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, the name Burns is significant, for “burning with spiritual passion, she also burns with anger” (1979, 346). This argument is based on Helen’s own admission, in regard to her life at Lowood, that “I make no effort; I follow as inclination guides me” (Bronte 1996, 68). For Gilbert and Gubar, this lack of initiative is a sign of Helen’s resentment toward the unjust punishments she receives. This is the way she has unconsciously chosen to fight back. As Jane looks on the “subdued” Helen, at the center of the room, however, she does not understand the subjugation of passion that is taking place within Helen’s heart as she stands in the center of the room. Because Jane is accustomed to spontaneously expressing her emotions, she interprets her friend’s calm as a lack of feeling.

The next day, Helen is punished again. Miss Scratcherd, a tyrannical teacher, flogs Helen for not washing her hands, despite the fact that the water used for that purpose had frozen in the basin (Bronte 1996, 64). When Jane observes this injustice, she declares her outrage to Helen saying, “And if I were in your place I should dislike her: I should resist her; if she struck me with that rod, I should get from her hand; I should break [the rod] under her nose” (66). Here is Jane’s propensity to strike out against injustice in an unruly passionate manner. Being the child she is, she reflexively reacts to what her intellect shows her to be true. Helen has been wronged, so she should exact revenge. Jane is instinct’s servant and does not question the rightness of any action done to fight injustice. Later in their conversation, the two girls discuss the merits of the kind school superintendent, Miss Temple, and Jane asks Helen if she behaves in the kind teacher’s class. Helen answers in the affirmative, but quickly adds,
“There is no merit in such goodness” (68). Jane cannot understand Helen’s refusal to accept praise for this exemplary behavior. Jane replies:

A great deal: you are good to those who are good to you. It is all I desire to be. If people were always kind and obedient to those who are cruel and unjust, the wicked people would have it all their own way . . . When we are struck at without a 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 so again. (68)

In Jane’s mind, the world is a place where people struggle for survival. She focuses on nothing other than getting the treatment that she deserves; therefore, she advocates striking back against the unfair practices of those who are in power in order to show them that they cannot get away with treating less powerful people unfairly. For Jane, the morality of an action depends on what that action is in response to. If she behaves badly against someone like John Reed or his mother, that is justified because their unfairness has elicited such a response. Thus, it is their fault that she behaves badly. Jane does not see, at this point, that, although her hatred of injustice is justified, she must also take responsibility for her own actions.

In fact, it is clear to Helen that Jane re-acts rather than acts. This is why Helen states, “You will change your mind, I hope, when you grow older: as yet you are but a little untaught girl” (68). Helen’s comment demonstrates how much further ahead in development she is than Jane. As Sharpe points out, “For Jane, Christian endurance means being positioned as a victim to be saved; for Helen, it means suffering in this life to reap the rewards of heaven” (1993, 16). Helen sees Jane’s rebellious attitude toward those in authority as an indication of immaturity, for the young child is still directed by her emotions rather than by reason. Sharpe points out that Jane feels that she is a victim who must be rescued, and it is clear that she believes that she must deliver herself from
her persecutors. For Jane, a fight for social justice is not only necessary for survival, but also a normal part of life. She tells Helen, "[Striking out against those who persecute me] is as natural as that I should love those who show me affection, or submit to punishment when I feel it is deserved" (Bronte 1996, 68). Jane is the uncivilized savage. She has no inkling of what it is to subdue passions through rationality. Sharpe's later comment concerning slaves who revolt against their masters shows that Jane's unruly behavior puts her in this category. "The figure of the rebel slave . . . lacks the cognition on which moral agency is based" (1993, 16). Helen's reply confirms that her young friend's attitude resembles that of the primitive "other," when she says, "Heathens and savage tribes hold that doctrine; but Christians and civilized nations disown it" (Bronte 1996, 68). As a resident of a civilized society, Jane is expected to overcome her passionate, instinctive responses. Helen is pointing this out to Jane as she challenges Jane's rebellious attitude. Instead, of behaving like someone who comes from a country that adheres to Christianity, Jane's desire to reward only kind people with affection demonstrates the supposed primitive characteristics of the native. At this point in Jane's development, the challenge to her behavior comes from without rather than from within, yet as time goes by, Jane clearly takes the struggle inward as she appropriates many of Helen's beliefs to her own behavior.

The effects of Helen's instruction on Jane become apparent when Mr. Brocklehurst, Lowood's schoolmaster, pays a visit to the school. Adrienne Rich gives a telling depiction of the man and his school:

It is a school for the poor controlled by the rich, an all-female world presided over by the hollow, Pharisaical male figure of Mr. Brocklehurst. He is the embodiment of class and sexual double-standards and of the hypocrisy of the powerful, using religion, charity,
and morality to keep the poor in their place and to repress and humiliate the young women over whom he is set in charge. He is absolute ruler of this little world. (1979, 94)\textsuperscript{15}

He rigidly and coldly preaches the same message of the importance of overcoming the natural inclinations with reason and Christianity as Helen has, but his cruelty turns this lesson into a way to dominate the young students. As Rich states, Brocklehurst has an agenda that is beyond that of saving the girls’ souls. To him, they are female and poor and as such must be controlled, for as we saw earlier, both of these groups were associated with “savages” in Victorian England. The tenets that Helen communicates to Jane are coupled with the Victorian belief in the sinfulness of human nature expressed by Mr. Brocklehurst. However, in his view any expression of the self is wicked and must be discouraged, while according to Helen, the temporal world of the flesh must be transcended in order to gain one’s goal of a home in heaven. The first character sees the doctrine of the sinfulness of human nature as a way to keep the girls ashamed of themselves and under his control. Helen, on the other hand, operates out of love for the prize that is set before her.

On one of Brokelehurst’s visits to Lowood, he reveals his contempt for his charges when he notices a girl whose hair is curly. He asks the superintendent of the school, Miss Temple, why the girl’s hair is curled. When she answers that the child’s hair curls naturally, he replies, “Naturally! Yes, but we are not to conform to nature: I wish these girls to be children of God”(Bronte 1996, 75). In this response, Brocklehurst is pointing out a popular Calvinist belief in the sinfulness of human nature (Helene

\textsuperscript{15} Jane, the narrator, is aware of Brocklehurst’s many evils, for she depicts him in such a way that his severity, hypocrisy, and contempt for his impoverished charges are obvious. The child, Jane, however, is only aware that he is cruel and unfair in his treatment of herself and her classmates.
He, thus, divides the inner life of the girls between the natural and the state of Grace. In that human nature and divine Grace are seen as opposites, it is clear that any outward manifestation of nature whether in physical features or expressions of feelings is considered unacceptable. Helene Moglen argues, "Brocklehurst is an effective agent of [depriving the girls of individuality and humanity] insisting that their hair be cut off... and that they all be clothed in the same dreary, childish attire"(113). Operating under the prominent Victorian assumption that women are slaves to their nature, Brocklehurst keeps the girls under control by depriving them of those things that are natural such as curly hair or the desire to dress according to their preference.

These young girls belong to another segment of the English population associated with uncivilized savages as well—the poor. Brocklehurst's repressive treatment of the girls demonstrates his agreement with the Victorian view of the poverty-stricken masses as having corresponding traits with dark non-Europeans. Clearly, he is the domestic version of the imperialist, who seeks to force civilization on to the native-like destitute girls. Brocklehurst's treatment of the young women reveals that he sees them as inferior to himself as a man and a member of the upper class. When he talks of overcoming nature with God's grace, he not only calls their attention to the evilness of human nature, but he also points out their tendency to live according to primitive instincts like the native. In his view, they are not operating according to reason. Therefore, he must force them to put away their natural inclinations, for just like the "savage," they are incapable of doing this themselves. We have seen this inclination in Jane, but Bronte makes it clear that Jane's reactions are a consequence of
her untrained childhood rather than her socio-economic level. However, as will be seen, she is more than able to control her own passions.

Later on this visit, when Brocklehurst warns the other girls to stay away from Jane, he states the argument put forth by phrenologists that outward behavior in and of itself is not an indicator of the nature of the whole person (Sally Shuttleworth 1996, 61). Brocklehurst tells the teachers and students of Lowood:

You see she is yet young; you observe she possesses the ordinary form of childhood; God has graciously given her the shape that he has given to all of us; no signal deformity points her out as a marked character. Who would think that the Evil One had already found a servant and agent in her? Yet, such, I grieve to say, is the case. (Bronte 1996, 78)

According to the schoolmaster, Jane’s appearance belies the wickedness that is lurking within. There is nothing in her looks or demeanor that points to her sinful nature, yet she is completely without goodness and must be avoided at all cost. He even compares her with the primitive native when he says, “this girl, this child, the native of a Christian land, worse than many a little heathen who says its prayers to Brahma and kneels before Juggernaut—this girl is—a liar” (78). Jane is worse than the primitive “other” because her alleged actions do not reflect the “Christian” nation to which she belongs. She has not been civilized like Brocklehurst or Miss Temple. Instead, she is believed to exhibit traits that demonstrate her inclination toward the uncivilized act of lying. On the surface, Jane seems to be the direct opposite of Brocklehurst and all other civilized English people. He is clearly in control and must keep her from falling further into the snare of her own making.

As this episode continues, however, we are given a glimpse inside of Jane’s mind and emotions and can clearly see that she is divided between the propensity
toward passionate outbursts and the desire to bring her emotions under control.

Standing on the stool, to which Brocklehurst has relegated her for a half an hour for punishment, Jane experiences an inward battle between the two sides of her character. Older Jane later writes, “I mastered the rising hysteria, lifted up my head, and took a firm stand on the stool”(79). Her hysteria fights for mastery of her as she endures her punishment. Clearly, it represents the passionate part of her, which seeks to control her. There is another part of Jane, however, and it is in direct opposition to the hysteria, which struggles to break free. Jane is able to master the rising emotions because she is giving herself over to the part of her that is able to subdue troublesome feelings. Linda Hunt argues, “She learns the value of ‘self-regulation,’ an important tenet of the feminine ideal from Helen Burns... for her own self-preservation. Jane’s capacity for self-restraint does not extinguish her capacity for intense feeling”(1988, 59). Jane’s suppression of her feelings is clearly not done out of submission to Brocklehurst or to the punishment that he as meted out to her. Instead, she knows from her experience at Gateshead that open rebellion hurts only herself. Therefore, as Hunt says, Jane prevents further humiliation by making herself quietly stand on the stool. Because she turns herself over to the less emotional, more rational part of herself, an indication that she is beginning to mature, she is able to lift her head in pride over her accomplishment, rather than berate herself for being a bad child as she had at Gateshead. Jane’s use of the word “mastered” is also telling in that young Jane is put in the position of the imperialist who dominates the primitive native. She is able to repress the savage part of herself that had been allowed to run free at Gateshead. In this way, she is her own colonizer.
Jane's ability to control her instincts has not come from Mr. Brocklehurst, who tries to enforce self-control from the outside, but rather she has learned from Helen Burns and Miss Temple how to bring her feelings into subjection from the inside, from her own will. Jane later recalls for her readers the profound effect Lowood had had on her after Miss Temple got married and moved away:

From the day she left I was no longer the same: with her was gone every settled feeling, every association that had made Lowood in some degree a home to me. I had imbibed from her something of her nature and much of her habits: more harmonious thoughts: what seemed better regulated feelings had become the inmates of my mind. I had given allegiance to duty and order; I was quiet; I believed I was content: to the eyes of others, usually even to my own, I appeared a disciplined and subdued character. (Bronte 1996, 98)

Jane is now eighteen. Eight years have passed since she spoke those childish, passionate words to the longsuffering Helen, who in the interim has died of consumption. Jane's maturity is seen in the subdued tone and the rational view she has of Miss Temple's influence on her and of her life at Lowood. Rich explains the significance of this influence on Jane:

The discipline of Lowood and the moral and intellectual force of Helen and Miss Temple combine to give the young Jane a sense of her own worth and of ethical choice. Helen dies of consumption... and Miss Temple later marries and leaves Lowood. Thus her separation from these two... enables Jane to move forward into a wider realm of experience. (1979, 95)

Thanks to Helen's passion for the next world and Miss Temple's inner nature, Jane is given the desire to incorporate quietness and self-regulation into her own life. Clearly, rationality has gained a still more prominent place in Jane's life, but it has not completely destroyed her passionate nature. She implies this fact, when she tells her readers she appeared disciplined and subdued. Bronte does not seem to be saying that
passions are wrong, for Jane does not berate herself for feeling the way she does. The author, however, does seem to convey that passion must be controlled through reason, just as Miss Temple and Helen Burns learned to do.

As she writes of her sorrow at being separated from Miss Temple, she reveals the tenuous hold reason has over her. As she wanders introspectively around Lowood on the day of Miss Temple’s wedding, emotions that she seemed to have discarded come back to her, threatening to destroy the harmony of thought that she believed she had found:

I walked about the chamber most of the time. I imagined myself only to be regretting my loss, and thinking how to repair it; but when my reflections were concluded, and I looked up and found that the afternoon was gone... another discovery dawned on me: namely that in the interval I had undergone a transforming process; that my mind had put off all it had borrowed of Miss Temple—or rather that she had taken with her the serene atmosphere I had been breathing in her vicinity—and that now I was left in my natural element; and beginning to feel the stirring of old emotions. (Bronte 1996, 99)

Jane’s contentment had depended on the presence of Miss Temple, although she was not aware of this. Now, in the absence of the schoolmistress, Jane feels the resurgence of the “natural” feelings that she had believed were behind her.  

As the more regulated feelings subside and the “old emotions” begin to “stir,” Jane experiences a more balanced inner life than she had ever known. Pat MacPherson asserts that Charlotte Bronte used the character of Jane Eyre to “rewrite Victorian woman into a whole, to include intellect and feeling, passion and reason, rebellion and propriety” (1989, 9). This argument implies that Bronte’s society saw these elements of the psyche as being opposed to one another. With passages such as this, in the novel, Bronte, however, is

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16 Her opinion of human nature seems to agree with Mr. Brocklehurst in this instance, for ‘natural feelings’ seem to be at odds with her more regulated feelings.
able to show that the two can co-exist in a psychologically healthy woman. One trait does not have to be annihilated by the other. That Jane recognizes the change that has come over her since Miss Temple's departure demonstrates that she has not completely returned to the days when she exercised no control over her reactions. Her feelings, although threatening to undermine much of what Jane had learned from Miss Temple, are not able to completely control Jane, for she can now detach herself from them enough to understand that some of her former feelings are returning. Conversely, Jane's emotions are not ignored as she matures. She recognizes their importance in her life. In her future home at Thornfield Hall, her rationality will be challenged by her all-consuming love for Mr. Rochester. It is this passion that will threaten to rob Jane of her will to control her emotions through the rigid restraint of her reason.

The first romantic encounter she has with Rochester follows Bertha's attempt to burn down his bed. As Jane and her employer stand in the water soaked, blackened room, he lets her know his feelings for her (171). Jane has never heard expressions of love like those Rochester imparts. The passion in his eyes awakens the fervor that has always been near the surface of her personality. This newly awakened romantic passion is evident in Jane's feelings when she returns to her room. The struggle that arises within her due to this new sensation is also apparent:

Till morning dawned I was tossed on a buoyant but unquiet sea, where billows of trouble rolled under surges of joy. . . . now and then a freshening gale wakened hope, bore my spirit triumphantly towards the bourne: but I could not reach it, even in fancy,-- a counteracting breeze blew off land, and continually drove me back. Sense would resist delirium: judgment would warn passion. (172)

Here is a classic battle between Jane's passion and her reason. Her ardor for Rochester and her realization that he loves her fills her heart with ecstasy. She feels "surges of
joy” and feelings of hope at the thought of having a romantic relationship with him. Yet, the “billows of trouble” that conflict with the swells of happiness are what brings Jane back to earth. She determines that her sense would resist her “delirium” and her judgment would warn her not to yield to her desire for him. The split in Jane’s psyche is seen here. She has judgement and sense, on one hand, and delirium and passion on the other, and she determines that the two former qualities will govern their counterparts.

The next day Rochester leaves to visit friends in a nearby county and a short time later brings them back to Thornfield to continue their festivities there. One day, Rochester leaves after explaining to his company that he has business to tend to and will return in the evening. In the meantime, as his guests visit in the parlour, a servant announces that a gypsy has arrived and has offered to read the fortunes of all the single young women gathered there. After some discussion, it is agreed upon, and one by one the pretty young visitors emerge from an interview with the palm reader. To Jane’s surprise, she too is summoned to the library to see the gypsy who has refused to leave until “she” has seen every single woman in the house. Having been told to kneel before the fire so that her face can be read, Jane’s personality is described in such a way that her inner division between passion and reason is highlighted. The gypsy, who is later discovered to be Mr. Rochester, says “The passions may rage furiously, like true heathens, as they are; and the desires may imagine all sorts of vain things; but judgement shall still have the last word in every argument, and the casting vote in every decision”(277). Passions and desires are, clearly, associated with Jane’s emotions. The natural instinctive young woman is seen to rage against her reason’s strict rule, yet,
Rochester is aware that this part of Jane is weakened by her determination to govern her life by rationality and judgment. Rich writes, “It is clear, in this scene, that Rochester is well aware of the strength of Jane’s character and uneasy as to the outcome of his courtship and the marriage he is going to propose to her” (1979, 100-101). The strength of Jane’s character, of which Rochester is aware, is not only a deterrent to the young heroine’s passions, but imperils his desires as well. He does not refer to his own feelings in this observation, however. It is her emotions that are compared to heathens rather than his. His association of the primitive “other” with Jane’s ardor echoes Helen Burns’ comparison of Jane’s uncivilized desire for retribution to the supposed attitudes of “savages” in other lands. Rochester’s comment that the passions are “true heathens” confirms the arguments of Said and other critics that, during the Victorian age, natives were closely associated with the lack of control of the passions. It is clear that just as Jane must rely on her judgement to keep her from being led astray by her love for Rochester, so the natives depend on the civilized colonizer for moral guidance. The child who had struck out passionately against ill treatment years before at Gateshead, has clearly grown into a woman who has learned to overrule her desires with reason. Jenny Sharpe demonstrates Jane’s further resemblance to “savages” in Bronte’s representation of the heroine’s process of inner maturity. “Jane’s development from a rebellious child into a self-assertive woman is represented by her movement from the instinctive rebellion of black slaves toward assuming the moral responsibility of a cognizing individual” (1993, 16). Imperialistic ideology is clearly a profound influence on the depiction of Jane’s personality and also on the way in which Bronte represents her heroine’s increasing self-control.
Imperialism also provides the author with a picture of the opposition between passion and reason in the relationship between the colonizer and the dominated natives. Rochester’s comment that these intense emotions are under the rule of Jane’s reason demonstrates her role as tyrant to her primitive passions.

The judgment and reason that Rochester perceives are also engaged in a battle with her intense emotions later in the story when he tells Jane that she will have to leave Thornfield because he plans to get married within the month. Jane, devastated by the news, tries to react dispassionately, but her ardor does not allow it. She later recalls, “The vehemence of emotion, stirred by grief and love within me, was claiming mastery, and struggling for full sway; and asserting a right to predominate: to overcome, to live, rise, and reign at last; yes—and to speak” (Bronte 1996, 283). Again, Bronte depicts Jane’s inner conflict. At this point in the novel, these passions are threatening to take charge of Jane, despite her conscious struggle to suppress her fervor. The battle is full blown. Bronte’s treatment of Jane’s emotions in revolt against her effort of self-control is also reminiscent of the slave rebellions that terrified Victorians. These emotions, which have been associated with natives throughout the novel, are now represented as revolting within Jane’s psyche—rebelling against the rigid rule of her reason. The strength of her feelings overpowers her endeavors to maintain control, and she tells Mr. Rochester that she loves him. Rochester, in turn, reveals his love for her and asks her to marry him (283-286). The breakdown of Jane’s domination over her feelings reaps dire consequences later in the novel, for throughout their month-long betrothal, Jane’s passion robs her of the ability to discern the truth of her situation.

17 In an attempt to induce jealousy in Jane, Rochester feigns feelings for Blanch Ingram and encourages speculation that the two will marry (Bronte 1996, 281).
During her engagement to Rochester, she encounters situations that seem to be warning her of danger ahead. The day after Jane and Rochester agree to marry, Mrs. Fairfax, who had seen them embracing the night before, warns Jane to “try and keep Mr. Rochester at a distance: distrust yourself as well as him” (298). Jane, far from taking the warning seriously, is happy to have the conversation interrupted by Adele, her charge. Jane is so much in love with Rochester that she closes her mind against anything that may suggest that marriage to Rochester will not be as happy as she hopes. Sharpe argues, “The force of emotions [in Jane] . . . ‘masters’ her good sense when she falls in love with her employer” (1993, 17). The above episode in which Jane’s passion insists on being heard begins a downward spiral for the heroine. She becomes divorced from her reason to such an extent that she is no longer attuned to its promptings, for during her engagement to Rochester, she continually ignores reason’s warnings that all is not well with her fiancée. For example, during her shopping trip with Rochester and Adele, alluded to in the previous chapter, Jane is unhappy at her beloved’s attitude of ownership toward her. She tries to assert her independence by promising to buy her own garments. She suspects that he will dominate her once they are married, but she puts these concerns aside, still intending to be his wife. In addition, two dreams that Jane has forewarn her of the consequences of marrying Rochester. Later, when she relates her dreams to her fiancée, she tells him that after going to bed, she “experienced a strange, regretful, consciousness of some barrier dividing us” (Bronte 1996, 315). Her dream contains a disturbing image of a child that she later tells Rochester “clung to my neck in terror and almost strangled me” (316), as, in her vision, she falls from the thin wall she has climbed, “eager to catch one glimpse of [Rochester] from the top” (316).
This dream is a warning of separation and despair that awaits Jane if she continues her relationship with Rochester, yet her love for him makes her oblivious to its message. Even Bertha’s terrifying visit to Jane’s room just days before her wedding is not sufficient to subdue her passion for Rochester, or to cause her to objectively examine the situation she is in (315-520). In each of these instances, Jane practically abandons reason in order to realize her desires. She does not even listen to her subconscious mind, which tries to tell her through dreams that her situation with Rochester is not as it seems.

On her wedding day, however, Jane is forced to face the truth when Mr. Briggs and Richard Mason proclaim that Rochester is already married. Alone in her room, after coming face to face with Bertha, Jane comes to the painful realization that she must leave the man she loves. What follows is a battle between passion and reason, which rages within her. When the thought first comes to Jane that she must leave Rochester, she inwardly replies:

That I am not Edward Rochester’s bride is the least part of my woe... that I have wakened out of most glorious dreams, and found them all void and vain, is a horror I could bear and master; but that I must leave him decidedly, instantly, entirely, is intolerable. I cannot do it. (335)

Jane, who was strong as she stood on the stool at Lowood and asserted herself to Rochester in her quest to maintain her independence during their engagement, has now become weak through her submission to her passion and desires. She sinks into self-pity, instead of showing willingness to do what is right. This feeling is understandable for a woman whose heart has been broken, but after the many instances of courage that we have seen in Jane’s past experiences, her expression of this attitude seems out of character. She knows that she has the fortitude to do what she must, but the strength to
do this comes at the expense of her passions, and she seems unwilling to relinquish the
dreams that she has harbored for so long. Bronte’s portrayal of reason’s answer to
passion’s plea further demonstrates the weakening of character that Jane’s submission
to passion has caused her:

But, then, a voice within me averred that I could do it; and foretold that I
should do it. I wrestled with my own resolution: I wanted to be weak
that I might avoid the awful passage of further suffering I saw laid out
for me; and conscience, turned tyrant, held passion by the throat, told her
tauntingly, she had yet but dipped her dainty foot in the slough, and
swore that with that arm of iron, he would thrust her down to unsounded
depths of agony. (335)

As this passage begins, Jane battles with the unnamed voice within her that tells her
that she has the power to do what is right. She gets no sympathy from the inward
utterance. It does not seem to care that Jane is heart broken. Its only concern is that
Jane does what is right. The voice sounds just as Jane had when she insisted on buying
her own clothes, rather than letting Rochester dress her up like a doll. It is decisive and
determined. Jane, on the other hand, is daunted by the task before her. She realizes that
the voice has become a resolution inflicted on her by another part of her personality—
the side governed by reason. The passionate side of her wrestles with this decision as if
it comes from an outside source. Indeed, this resolve does come from outside of her
emotions; it is an edict that comes from Jane’s reason and dictates to her passion
against her will, and, as will be seen, triumphs over desire as it has throughout her life.

In addition, Bronte’s depiction of Jane’s conscience as being “he” and her
passion as personified as “she,” in the above passage, is significant in that the male is
shown to be strong and rational, while the woman is depicted as powerless, foolish, and
in need of domination. Here is another example of the author’s inclination to confirm
Victorian beliefs that women are passionate while men are reasonable. In order for Jane to overcome her emotional resistance to leaving Rochester, an attitude that is seen here as feminine, she must take on the rationality and strength of a man. This implies that few women can achieve such self-control. Only men are strong enough to resist passion.

Bronte’s imperialist ideas are also evident in this passage depicting Jane’s inner struggle, for conscience resembles a powerful European country, which uses its force to civilize the primitive “other.” The personification of passion, held in contempt by the “tyrant” conscience, parallels the disgust Victorians felt at the supposed depraved behavior of natives. Said asserts that an important feature in the relationship between Europe and the Orient “was that Europe was always in a position of strength, not to say domination” (1979, 40). This domination is not only seen in the “literal” relationship between Rochester and Bertha, but it is also seen in the unequal figurative interaction between reason and passion. Said confirms that the latter is associated with the “other” when he writes, “The Oriental [or other] is irrational, depraved (fallen), childlike, ‘different;’ while the European is rational, virtuous, mature, ‘normal’” (40). In the allegory between conscience and passion, the former, associated with reason and thus with the European, is in control. Passion, on the other hand, is shown to be powerless against Conscience, aligned with reason; she has no recourse against the strong-armed bully who seems to have determined that she must be taken in hand. Therefore, the part of Jane’s personality that corresponds with the passions, and the natives, must be kept under control. Jane’s lifelong struggle to be guided by “sense” and judgement rather than emotion suggests that she shares her society’s view that civilized people must
control their feelings. Her practice of expressing her feelings openly, however, demonstrates that she does not agree with the Victorian notion that feelings must be repressed.

Jane’s passionate side is not only represented by Bronte’s allegory, but is also manifest in Bertha as well. Jane’s battle with her passions has been fought up to this point in our discussion on a conscious level. Now, in our exploration of Jane’s struggle, we can see Bertha’s violent behavior can be viewed as a manifestation of her subconscious intense emotions. Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar argue that Bertha functions as “Jane’s dark double throughout the governess’s stay at Thornfield” (1984, 360). According to their assertion, the Creole madwoman takes on a metaphorical dimension, becoming Jane’s alter ego. The two critics point to the timing of Bertha’s attacks on Rochester and Mason as proof that the Creole mad woman acts out Jane’s agitation. They argue, “Specifically, every one of Bertha’s appearances—or more accurately manifestations—has been associated with an experience (or repression) of anger on Jane’s part” (360). The following incident, to which we have already alluded, bears out the accuracy of this argument.

In one of their conversations, Rochester confides in Jane the story of his romantic attachment to Celene Varens, the mother of his ward, Adele. Later, when Jane goes to bed she finds that she cannot sleep, for her thoughts are on Mr. Rochester. Jane later writes, “Though I had now extinguished my candle and was laid down in bed, I could not sleep, for thinking of his look when he paused in the avenue” (Bronte, 1996, 167). Jane thinks that she is merely curious about Rochester and his past. She is not aware that she is falling in love with him, never having been in love before. She is
unable to recognize her sexual attraction toward Rochester. As Jane thinks of her employer, she hears a familiar sounding laugh in the corridor outside her room. When she leaves her chamber to seek out the housekeeper, Mrs. Fairfax, she sees a surprising sight in Mr. Rochester’s room. Jane later writes, “Tongues of flame darted round the bed: the curtains were on fire. In the midst of blaze and vapour, Mr. Rochester lay stretched motionless, in deep sleep”(168). On the surface, Bertha’s act seems to have nothing to do with Jane. The destructive scene that confronts Jane as she emerges from her room appears quite different from her quiet chamber, yet as will be seen, Bertha’s violent behavior represents the subconscious upheaval, which takes place within Jane’s subconscious mind beneath her calm exterior.

Pat MacPherson links Jane’s agitation to Bertha’s attempt to destroy Rochester by burning him in his bed:

As Jane is drawn closer to Rochester, focusing upon him the desires and aspirations, which before were undefined yearnings, she has a concrete sense of Berthe’s [sic.] presence—and the danger it represents. The night on which she first admits to herself the centrality of Rochester to her own happiness . . . is the same night that Berthe sets Rochester’s bed aflame. (1989, 125)

The presence of Bertha is revealed by her familiar laughter outside of Jane’s room. It is this noise that interrupts Jane’s thoughts about Rochester. She has just pondered over how empty Thornfield would seem if he were to leave (167), showing that she is becoming attracted to him, although she may not be aware of the depths of her feelings. However, Bertha’s setting fire to Rochester’s bed, at this point, highlights Jane’s underlying rebellion against patriarchal domination, as the mad woman unleashes violent rage at Rochester. MacPherson asserts, “[Berthe] is the menacing form of Jane’s resistance to male authority, her fear that sexual surrender will seal her complete
dependence in passion. Berthe’s joyless laugh is a metaphor for sensuality without mind, feeling without control”(1989, 127). Two assumptions about the “other” are operating in this representation of Bertha. First, as we have seen, her stereotypical violent propensities confirm the Victorian belief that passion and instinct make up the “other’s” character. Bertha is also treated as a thing, a metaphor for how the Englishwoman is feeling. The fact that critics are able to point to this function of the Creole madwoman demonstrates that Bronte successfully communicates the idea that in some ways Bertha is a mere manifestation of Jane’s dark side. This use of the native character in nineteenth-century novels was not uncommon.

Said argues that this use of the character of the dark non-European was common among writers in the Victorian era. He states that Orientalism is a “kind of Western projection onto and will to govern the Orient”(1979, 95). Projecting Jane’s violent anger and passion onto the Creole woman in the novel allows Bronte to illustrate the feelings that rage within the heroine, without undermining her character as an Englishwoman. Abdul JanMohamed echoes this argument when he explains that “[the] emotive as well as the cognitive intentionalities of the ‘imaginary’ text are structured by objectification and aggression”(1985, 84). As he continues his discussion of this literary genre, he reveals Bronte’s use of Bertha as an expression of Jane’s passion:

In such works the native functions as an image of the imperialist self in such a manner that it reveals the latter’s self-alienation. . . . The “imaginary” representations of indigenous people tend to coalesce the signifier with the signified. In describing the attributes or actions of the native, issues such as intention, causality, extenuating circumstances, and so forth, are ignored (84)

In each of the aspects of Bertha we have examined, Bronte has not focused on Bertha’s situation. Instead, we saw her used, in the first chapter of our discussion, to confirm the
rational Englishwoman's superiority over the primitive "other." In the second section, Bronte's use of Bertha as a warning of the madness that awaits women who do not curb their passions was also demonstrated. Now Bronte utilizes her non-European character to act out Jane's subconscious unruly feelings. Indeed, Bertha not only demonstrates uncontrolled emotions, but she also embodies intense passion. This bears out JanMohamed's argument that the "other" becomes the signified and the signifier. Because of Bertha, Jane does not have to face her hidden anger or her repressed passions. The Creole takes on Jane's "savage" emotions and in the end is destroyed so that Jane can enjoy wholeness.

When Jane returns to Thornfield, after being gone for a year, she finds that the grand manor house is now a ruin. When she asks the keeper of a nearby inn what had happened, he tells her that Bertha burned the house down shortly after Jane had left:

On this night, she set fire first to the hangings of the room next to her own; and then she got down to a lower story, and made her way to the chamber that had been the governess's . . . and she kindled the bed there . . . and [Rochester] went up to the attics when all was burning above and below, and got the servants out of their beds and helped them down himself—and went back to get his mad wife out of her cell. . . . We heard him call "Bertha!" We saw him approach her; and then, ma'am, she yelled, gave a spring, and the next minute she lay smashed on the pavement. (Bronte 1996, 476)

Bertha's passion had contributed to her madness, and now it takes her life. The fire she uses to create destruction symbolizes the passion she feels and its all-consuming properties. As a metaphor for Jane's passion, Bertha is destroyed so that Jane can be free to have a healthy, happy relationship with Rochester. JanMohamed explains, "In all cases, however, [the colonialist version of the romantic novels] pit civilized societies against the barbaric aberrations of an Other, and they always end with the elimination
of the threat posed by the Other and the legitimation of the values of the good, civilized society" (1985, 91). Jane cannot enter the acceptable role of wife and mother until her unruly passions have been destroyed. Bertha also must free Rochester from his commitment and from his pride through his humiliating scars. Thus the death of the Creole woman facilitates the harmony of married life for Jane and Rochester. Jane writes, "I have now been married ten years. I know what it means to live entirely for and with what I love best on earth. I hold myself supremely blest—blest beyond what language can express; because I am my husband’s life as fully as he is mine" (Bronte 1996, 500). Clearly, Jane’s observations about her relationship with her husband affirm the Victorian ideal for women—marriage. This is ironic considering the battle Jane has fought with patriarchal domination all her life. Gilbert and Gubar argue, "In all [Bronte’s] books . . . she was able to act out that passionate drive toward freedom which offended agents of the status quo, but in none was she able consciously to define the full meaning of achieved freedom" (1984, 368). In other words, Bronte is only able to express freedom and equality for a woman in terms of marriage. She cannot conceive of a single woman living a fulfilled life free from oppression by men.

In conclusion, Jane’s inner realm is a reflection of the Victorian view that the world was divided between the civilized European and the primitive native. The passionate part of Jane resembles stereotypes of the “other,” for (especially in her youth) Jane’s verbal outbursts against oppression seem to be results of an instinctive response, though a just one. We see this aspect of Jane at Gateshead where she “involuntarily” accuses Aunt Reed of cruelty, and later, when she declares that the powerful, who mistreat the lowly, should be treated with cruelty in return: an attitude
that Helen Burns declares is no better than that shared by uncivilized natives. Rochester also compares her passions to "heathens," for he sees that they "rage furiously" within her.

Her reason, on the other hand, is learned from Helen Burns and Miss Temple. It is not automatic like her instinctive passions. She does not learn control over her emotions from Brocklehurst, who uses his powerful position to repress the "savage" lower class girls. Unlike Helen and Miss Temple, who represent the human side of self-control, Mr. Brocklehurst demonstrates rigid, cold reason untempered by compassion. Jane's reason also frees her from her entanglement with Rochester into which her passions had led her. In this instance, reason is characterized as strong, masculine Conscience, who bullies weak, feminine Passion into submission. As indicated, this unequal relationship between the two reflects men's domination of women and the colonizers' tyranny over the "other."

Bertha, the example of the "other," who has appeared in each chapter, is seen here as "Jane's dark double." As is common in Victorian novels, it is the "other" who acts out Jane's subconscious anger and repressed passions, for Europeans made a habit of projecting their evils onto natives in strange lands. Thus, Jane, the English woman, is able to maintain decorum and an appearance of self-control. At the end of the novel, Bertha meets the fate of many other native characters in nineteenth-century literature, for she destroys herself making it possible for Jane and Rochester to marry. In this way, Bertha's death facilitates the furtherance of social order.

This examination of Jane Eyre demonstrates the far-reaching prominence of imperialist ideology. Far from being confined to political thought, it made its influence
known in gender relations and psychology as well. Often imperialist notions crept insidiously into matters that seemed to have nothing to do with imperialism, such as sexuality and religion. That this ideology appears in Bronte's novel is not surprising, and neither is her view that the civilized English person is superior to the primitive native since much of Bronte's outlook is a product of her environment.
5. Conclusion

*Jane Eyre* demonstrates the way in which the political, cultural, and personal levels of society are undermined by imperialist ideology. One of its most debilitating features is that of viewing humanity as divided into separate, unequal categories. Bronte’s novel serves as an example of how the binary opposition between the rational white European and the irrational native has a detrimental effect on European society as this ideology becomes a rationale for dominating groups within that culture as well. In the first chapter of our discussion, the seeming advantages of imperialist ideology were laid out. The benefits focused on were mainly offshoots from the central idea that Europeans were superior to natives in every way. Operating under this assumption, scientists such as anthropologists and ethnographers put the latter into one category of inferior human beings then posited theories, showing why the dark races belonged in this group. Their lack of mental capacity and self-control was highlighted in order to rationalize Europe’s political rule over them by demonstrating the inherent superiority of the European over the “other.”

Stereotypes about the native as being depraved subhumans allowed Bronte to use her Creole character as a metaphor for Jane’s subconscious reactions to domination. Bronte was also able to highlight Jane’s moral superiority by focusing on Bertha’s “moral madness,” which turned the already immoral woman into a fiend. In addition, the author could distract readers from the potential immorality of Jane’s relationship to the married Mr. Rochester by showing Bertha as the beast, which had victimized both Jane and Rochester. Clearly, Bronte not only learned to see the “other” as inferior but also learned to rationalize the European’s unjust treatment of the native. Bronte’s use of
the character of Bertha as a commodity in the novel rather than as a human being highlights one of the consequences of imperialist ideology that is still seen today—that of putting people into categories rather than emphasizing their complexity as constructed subjects. That Said has to tell twentieth-century readers, at the end of *Culture and Imperialism*, that “labels like Indian... or Muslim... are not more than starting-points, which if followed into actual experience for only a moment are quickly left behind” (1993, 336) demonstrates the strength and longevity of imperialist ideology. For this way of seeing the world created a fragmented view of humanity, which is still with us today. Our examination of the origin of the reinforcement of these ideas reveals the irrational, often contradictory, views of the native and the European, which gave rise to such a view of the world.

*Jane Eyre* not only provides an example of imperialism’s separation of different races but also of different genders and classes as well. As indicated in chapter two of this discussion, women and the lower classes were also victims of Victorian society’s tendency to group individuals into separate factions. Just as this practice led to the unjust treatment of the “other,” so it also led to oppression at home as these groups were seen to share the inclination toward emotionalism, the lack of mental development, and the irrationality of natives in colonized lands. Bronte, being a member of both of these dominated groups, allows the reader a glimpse into the suffering that she endures as a result of the fragmented view of society through the character of Jane Eyre. Jane begins her memoirs by showing that she is a marginalized member of the Reed family with whom she is unable to have a loving relationship due to her status as an outsider. Rebelling against the injustice of being seen as only an
inferior member of society, she is confined to the Red Room much like her Creole counterpart, who is relegated to the third floor room of Thornfield due to her rebellious behavior later in the novel.

In making the similarities between Bertha and Jane clear, Bronte also shows that Jane’s position has shifted from that of the dominant European over the “other” to that of the oppressed lower class woman. Bronte uses the similarity of the two women’s situation to reveal the severity of Jane’s suffering rather than to show readers the extent of Bertha’s misery. Jane is the woman kept from “liberty.” She is the one who longs for mental stimulation but is denied because of her gender. Bronte shows little concern for Bertha’s suffering until the author sees that it is similar to Jane’s. This apparent oversight is indicative of the way in which imperialist ideology blinded Victorians’ minds to the realities of the native’s suffering even in an age of abolitionist fervor. This is demonstrated by the fact that Jane’s references to the hardships of slavery are made in order to show the severity of her own suffering. Because dark races had been categorized as irrational primitives and put in binary opposition to whites, the latter group (often unconsciously) failed to look on the former as individual human beings. Thus natives, like Bertha, could be used in novels to highlight the suffering of European heroes and heroines with little attention paid to the actual pain of the “other.”

It is not until Jane is on the lower end of the social hierarchy of her culture that the assumption of superiority becomes problematic for her. At times when men such as Mr. Brocklehurst oppress her, St. John Rivers attempts to pressure her into submission, or Rochester, perhaps unknowingly, treats her like a possession they are seen in a position of superiority and she assumes that of inferiority. In fact, as Shuttleworth
explained earlier, women in Victorian society were deemed subhuman beings, who were unable to control their emotions and bodies. Bertha, whose “moral madness” resembles that of the condition doctors warned would come over women if not controlled by men, is also shown to require outward regulation. However, Bronte is able to highlight Bertha’s inferiority to Jane by making Bertha’s madness, in part, a racial issue because it is brought on by the self-indulgent nature she has inherited from her mad, drunken Creole mother. Thus, Bronte maintains Bertha’s inferior position in relation to Jane the innocent governess. Women’s exclusion from the dominant position in Victorian society despite the prominent belief that all Britons were superior to the “other” is still another example of imperialism’s way of fragmenting a society. Men and women, who share a sense of dominance over the native, are separated from each other on the social level, and women are relegated to the position of “other.” The manichean allegory, characterized by the oppositions of “superiority and inferiority, civilization and savagery, intelligence and emotion, [and] rationality and sensuality” (Abdul JanMohamed 1986, 82) can clearly be seen to separate the male from the female and the upper class from the working class as well as separating the rational European from the passionate native. Thus, many of the dynamics present in colonialism can be seen in European society.

Bronte’s desire to extricate Jane (and possibly herself) from her inferior position in society compels her to perpetuate her culture’s belief in the depravity of the native. Gayatri Spivak speaks of Bronte’s lowering Bertha to the subhuman level as an example of how the “other” is shown to be in need of civilization (1985, 247). This need elevated Victorian women like Jane, for they were seen as capable of civilizing
those who were inferior. This sense of being needed by the native also supplied women with agency, for they could operate independently of men in their endeavor to civilize the native. Bronte also increases the status of women’s domestic work by placing her description of Jane’s marriage directly before her reference to St. John’s valiant missionary work. This demonstrates that the agency, which is gained in the “soul making (248) or conversion of the natives, can also be achieved by wives and mothers when their family is seen as the mission field for which women must tirelessly work. These uses of the “other” to elevate women’s position in society have often been overlooked by modern Western readers who were born into a culture in which imperialist ideology has outlived colonialism. In the introduction to this work, Jenny Sharpe was quoted as saying “race operates as a transparent category of self-representation” (1993, 2). This comment brings up two interesting points. First, as we have seen, there was a tendency among writers to use the native as a metaphor for the inner conflicts of the European. Secondly, this commodification of the “other” can often be “transparent” to us who still live with the vestiges of imperialist ideology. This last point makes clear the value of re-examining a text such as Jane Eyre. The dehumanizing way in which Bronte depicts Bertha calls to our attention the ill treatment of the native in works that have been highly influential in society, and calls into question the views of the “other” these works have created.

Jane’s conflict, in the last chapter, is a powerful demonstration of the personal consequences of separating the world into opposing categories. Bronte (perhaps inadvertently) shows us that this idea cannot help but make its way into the inner workings of the mind. Although she shows through Rivers’ character that the emotions
are a crucial part of the human being, she also demonstrates Jane's struggle to maintain control over her intense feelings of anger and love. We have been shown the consequences she suffers, even when provoked by injustice, when she is led by her instincts to lash out at her oppressors. Her desire to be loved and accepted causes her remorse, which eliminates the feeling of triumph after Jane has spoken out against Aunt Reed's treatment of her. We have also seen the agony she undergoes as her mind becomes the battleground between her passions and her "Conscience" (or rationality) on the day she learns that Rochester is already married. Pat MacPherson's argument that Bronte uses Jane to "rewrite" the Victorian woman as a whole being in whom passion and reason can co-exist (1989, 9) makes clear the fact that Jane is never meant to be a passive, repressed woman. In fact, Bronte uses her passionate nature to protest the unfair confinement of women to lives devoid of mental and emotional stimulation. In addition, Bronte employs Jane's longing for experiences beyond her reach to demonstrate the important role of imagination. Like Romantic poets such as Wordsworth and Shelley, Jane turns to the "bright visions" (Bronte 1996, 125) that her mind presents to her for refuge from her troubled world. The science of phrenology is partly to blame for Jane's fragmented vision of herself, yet, as we have seen, this notion goes hand in hand with the imperialist practice of setting up binary oppositions in the world and in society.

Studying novels like *Jane Eyre* not only make us aware of the suffering and injustice which results when the world and society are fragmented into essentialized groups, but also helps us to realize ways in which these divisions have persisted to the present day. Examinations of these texts are also useful, for they reveal the fallacies on
which such divisions are based. In addition, they reveal how a society can be so
inundated with confirmations of these erroneous ideas that people can become unaware
that these notions have become a part of their own attitudes toward people who are
“different.” One of the disadvantages of these studies, however, is that in focusing on
the imperialist Victorians’ transgressions, which often was a result of theories that are
now known to be false, there is a temptation to see ourselves, ironically, as their
intellectual superiors. Therefore, we may (paradoxically) be blinded by such studies to
our culture’s continuing practice of upholding views about those who are “other” in the
world and in society, that were developed from such erroneous ideas. Thus, we could
be distracted from the fact that the world is, in many ways, still divided between “us”
and “them” (Said 1993, 336).
Bibliography


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