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Faculty of Arts and Philosophy

Representations of Gender in Belloc Lowndes' *The Lodger*

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Firstly, a short historical/cultural background of major issues concerning gender, especially changes in the roles of women preceding and throughout the Victorian era into the beginnings of modernism should be presented. The major complications facing British women and families at the beginning of the 20th century should be emphasized. In this background also diverse issues affecting different social classes of women should be highlighted. Either in the preceding section or in another chapter, examples of depictions of these issues in noteworthy works of fiction and nonfiction (e.g. Wollstonecraft) should be briefly outlined both progressive and conservative representations of women should be exemplified; changes during the course of the Victorian era should be traced. In the longest and most important part of the BP, specific elements of the background presented in earlier chapters should be used as tools to analyse Belloc Lowndes' The Lodger. Emphasis should be placed on different ways gender is represented in the novel, concentrating e.g. both on traditional roles of women as well as on the "new woman" signifying the societal changes described above. Finally, in another section the BP author may also include a short diachronic comparison of today's depictions of gender in fiction or in the mass culture to the ways women are shown in the novel. What's changed? What hasn't?

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1. Marie Belloc Lowndes, *The Lodger*, Loyal Books, (accessed 19 January 2015), <http://www.loyalbooks.com/book/the-lodger-by-marie-belloc-lowndes>
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ANNOTATION

This bachelor thesis focuses on the life of Victorian women, gender roles, and stereotypes and shows them on the example of two heroines from books *The Lodger* by Marie Belloc Lowndes and *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Brontë. The first part of the paper deals with patriarchal concept and its influence on the everyday life of people. The difference between lives of men and women are presented. It also focuses on gender stereotypes and phenomena of The Angel in the House and The New Woman. The second part of the paper deals with finding these phenomena in the books mentioned above and description of the two female heroines from these books.

KEYWORDS

The New Woman, The Angel in the House, Victorian England, and gender stereotypes, *Jane Eyre*, *The Lodger*

ANOTACE

Tato bakalářská práce se zabývá životem žen ve Viktoriánském období, rolmi pohlaví a stereotypy a ukazuje je na příkladu dvou hrdinek z knih *Příšerný host/Podnájemník* od Marie Belloc Lowndes a *Jana Eyrová* od Charlotte Brontë. První část této práce se zabývá konceptem patriarchátu a jeho vlivem na každodenní život lidí. Taktéž zmiňuje rozdíly mezi životem mužů a žen. Rovněž se zabývá genderovými stereotypy a fenomény Anděl v domě a Nová žena. V druhé části této práce jsou tyto fenomény ukázány ve výše zmíněných knihách a popisu dvou ženských hrdinek těchto knih.

KLÍČOVÁ SLOVA

Nová žena, Anděl v domě, Viktoriánská Anglie, genderové stereotypy, *Jana Eyrová*, *Příšerný host/Podnájemník*

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INTRODUCTION

During the last two centuries society has undergone significant changes influencing everyday life of people. Much was written about industrialization, urbanization or new inventions which made people's lives easier and saved hours of hard work. The change in women's social status and their rights was one of the most prominent ones that have occurred. Not only did that change the attitude of men and women, it also greatly improved women's lives. Nowadays people could hardly imagine struggles women had to face several decades ago and therefore tend to claim the feminist movement and the phenomenon of The New Woman were, in fact, unimportant and people should not point that out. Nonetheless, it is important to stress that were it not for Victorian women, the status and position of women would definitely not be that favourable. These days women are not only allowed to vote but they may even participate in the politics. Women are allowed to own property and even apply for a job position in which they are superior to men. Yet at the end of the 19th century and at the beginning of the 20th century, women in Britain were supposed to act quite oppositely than modern women do.

The bachelor thesis is divided into four chapters in which the author points out the importance of the women's emancipation and development of their social status and position in time. Basic gender stereotypes are listed and further observed in order to allow reader obtain knowledge of the issue. The reader's attention is drawn to the change of women's attitude and behaviour. These changes are shown in the examples of New Women in literary works of British authors.

The first chapter called *Patriarchy and Its Negative Influence on Gender Stereotypes* covers the issue of patriarchal society and its influence on both genders. The concept of matriarchy is observed at the first part of this chapter and the difference between this ideology and patriarchy are stressed because of the misinterpretation of matriarchal values and its meaning. At the second part of this chapter, the patriarchal concept is described as well and the author points out the main difference between these two concepts on examples of the superiority and gender roles. Women's position and social status are examined even from the feminist point of view and the stereotypes complicating women's lives are stressed. Because of the roots of patriarchy, several of these gender oriented stereotypes have prevailed to the

modern times and even in the 21st century women are prone to suffering because of the men's superior position. At the end of the chapter women achievements are mentioned.

The second theoretical chapter of this bachelor thesis is called *Women in Victorian England* and is also divided into two subchapters. In the first subchapter called *Living Conditions of People in Victorian England*, a brief background focused on the situation of people in Victorian England is covered. The differences between living conditions of people in the three classes are pointed out as well as their rights. A tremendously important fact stressing the huge gap between the rights and position of men and women is also presented. It is also essential to mention the major social issue in the Victorian period which resulted from the lack of women's rights in the marriage and unemployment. This was of course prostitution and people seemed not to be able to solve it or at least reduce the number of prostitutes walking in the streets.

In the following subchapter called *Gender Roles of Victorian Women –The Angel in the House and The New Woman*, the two women gender stereotypes are covered. Before focusing more deeply on the two phenomena the ideology of the separate spheres is presented. The gender stereotypes of Victorian period were based on this principle as women were supposed to stay at home while their husbands should have gone go to work and meet their wives only when the breakfast or dinner are prepared. The first one of the phenomena is so-called The Angel in the House. The term used by Coventry Patmore in her poem *The Angel in the House* is described and the main features and characteristics of the angelic women are presented. The Angel in the House was, in fact, the ideal woman of the Victorian era as she possessed all the qualities society was seeking for. Angelic women were generally calm, obedient and supportive. These were the values of Victorian period people tend to point out. The other type of women was the New Woman. The New Woman was the answer to the Woman Question raised by Mary Wollstonecraft in her pamphlet called *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*. The phenomenon of the New Woman appeared at the end of the 19th century and brought many changes in the way women were perceived. The New Woman was quite the opposite of the Angel in the House as she was seeking for independence, freedom, and self-supporting. New Women tried to change their social status and position considering the male supremacy.

The last subchapter dealing with the Victorian women issues is focused on the New Woman fiction. In this chapter, the two attitudes towards dealing with the New Woman phenomenon in the literature are presented. The New Woman literature at the end of the 19th century tended to obtain rather sexual overtones. In fact, author not supporting the idea of

woman emancipation used to create characters that might be described as a parody of the real New Woman. They created sexual predators or women who could not accept their nature of sexual beings.¹ Female writers usually placed their New Women characters in a marriage in which they felt oppressed by their husbands. These characters were desperately trying to obtain a certain degree of freedom and independence and wanted to be respected as equal to men.

In the practical part of the bachelor thesis, the author uses the knowledge of the Victorian women situation and the struggles middle-class women had to face that time. The two concepts described in the theoretical chapter *Gender Roles of Victorian Women –The Angel in the House and The New Woman* are further examined on the examples of two female heroines from the books *The Lodger* by Marie Belloc Lowndes and *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Brontë. Lives of Mrs. Bunting and Jane Eyre are described so that the reader may actually observe the characteristics of The Angel in the House and The New Woman these heroines possess.

The first chapter of the practical part called *Gender Roles in The Lodger by Marie Belloc Lowndes* is focused on the heroine of this novel. The novel itself was written after the Victorian period but was inspired by the story of Jack the Ripper and therefore is placed in Victorian England. Mrs. Bunting is an older middle-class woman living in a house with her husband. She used to be a servant and she still possesses some characteristics from that time. In this aspect, she might be perceived as a real angelic woman since she tries to care about the house as much as she could. Yet she is not a typical Angel in the House since she is used to talking to her husband in a rude and disrespectful way. She is rational, mentally strong and able to put two and two together. Thanks to this she is the only one to solve the crime which occurred.

The second chapter of the theoretical part is supposed to observe the book called *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Brontë and its heroine Jane Eyre. Jane Eyre is a typical example of the New Woman literature as she possesses mental strength, she is educated, rational and she seeks for her own freedom, independence and self support. She is raised as a typical angelic woman since she goes to a boarding school in which she obtains knowledge of singing, dancing, painting and foreign languages and later on she becomes a governess. This was a typical job done by middle-class unmarried women. She finds love in her new ‘home’ but even there she

¹ Greg Buzwell, “Daughters of Decadence: the New Woman in Victorian fin de siècle,” *British Library* (2017), accessed June 20, 2017, <http://www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/articles/daughters-of-decadence-the-new-woman-in-the-victorian-fin-de-siecle>

does not act according to the gender stereotype. She dares to speak to her master in a rather open way and she even tends to criticize his actions. All the time she stresses the fact that as a living creature she should have the same rights as men and that she has all the rights to be passionate and express her feelings. In her life, she manages to overcome many difficulties and an unfortunate destiny she might be facing only thanks to her strength and endurance. Stating that, she is undoubtedly a great example of the New Woman. Her life is further examined in the last chapter.

1. PATRIARCHY AND ITS NEGATIVE INFLUENCE ON GENDER STEREOTYPES

1.1. The Matriarchal Society

In the human history, people's lives have changed and developed significantly. This was helped not only by the changes of climate and evolution but of course also because people wanted to improve their living conditions and they put an effort in it. Since the living conditions gradually improved, and people no longer focused only on how to obtain means essential for surviving, many of them started to question less basic features of their everyday life. This raised the question of power and status in society. Different spheres and positions may be found even in the oldest human groups and society dating back to the Stone Age.

The first civilizations were mother-oriented. In other words, the first societies possessed the features of matriarchy.

Matriarchies are not just a reversal of patriarchy, with women ruling over men – as the usual misinterpretation would have it. Matriarchies are mother-centered [sic] societies, they are based on *maternal values*: care-taking, nurturing, motherliness, which holds for everybody: for mothers and those who are not mothers, for women and men alike.²

This means that not only the early matriarchal cultures did not place women as a superior gender to men. They allowed men to remain their positions in the society while still not making women submissive. There was no omnipotent male God in the society since divinity was immanent as the whole world was regarded to be divine³. In these cultures, no one dared to underestimate women because of their gender. Of course, people took differences between genders into consideration but they were not biased in favour either of men or of women.

With matriarchal cultures, equality means more than just a levelling of differences. Natural differences between the genders and the generations are respected and honoured, but they never serve to create hierarchies, as is common in patriarchy. The different genders and generations have their own dignity, and through complementary areas of activity, they function in concert

² Dr. Heidi Goettner-Abendroth, "Matriarchy," *International Academy HAGIA* (2009), accessed June 20, 2017, <http://www.hagia.de/en/matriarchy.html>

³ Goettner-Abendroth, "Matriarchy"

one other. More precisely, matriarchies are societies with complementary equality, where great care is taken to provide a balance.⁴

1.2. The Patriarchal Society and Gender Roles

The quite opposite idea is the patriarchal society. Patriarchy may be perceived as “systemic societal structures that institutionalise male physical, social and economic power over women.”⁵ This placed women to the subordinate. They were no longer considered equal to men in their social status and power and this cultural model prevailed for many centuries until these days. The concept of patriarchal society influences the view of people and raises gender oriented stereotypes such as typical roles of men and women in the society. “Traditional gender roles cast men as rational, strong, protective, and decisive; they cast women as emotional (irrational), weak, nurturing, and submissive.”⁶ The traditional roles of men are therefore those of leaders, protectors, heads of the family, judges etc. Whereas women are supposed to look after children, take care of the house and support their husbands. “Patriarchies conceptualise motherhood and use it to make women, and especially mothers, into slaves.”⁷

This led into the complete superiority of men as they were the stronger ones. What is extremely alarming for people these days is the fact that before women started to empower themselves, they had barely any rights.

In the mid-1800s, women had few rights and were expected to be subservient to men. Not only were women denied the vote, they were denied the right to own property. Cultural expectations required that women refrain from expressing themselves openly in the presence of men.⁸

Unfortunately, patriarchal culture roots influence people in so much they keep the stereotypes in their minds and are still raised with the model of how the society and family should work in order to fit the ideal situation. Even in the 21st century, girls are taught to obey their fathers’ orders rather than to take into consideration their mothers will because fathers are the heads of the families and more powerful. A great example of influencing little girls mind may be found in fairy-tales their parents read them. In traditional fairy-tales that have

⁴ Goettner-Abendroth, “Matriarchy”

⁵ Hazel Reeves and Sally Baden, *Gender and Development: Concepts and Definitions*, (Brighton: University of Sussex, 2000), accessed June 20, 2017, <http://www.bridge.ids.ac.uk/sites/bridge.ids.ac.uk/files/reports/re55.pdf>

⁶ Lois Tyson, *Critical Theory Today A User-Friendly Guide*, New York: Routledge, 2006, 85

⁷ Goettner-Abendroth, “Matriarchy”

⁸ Suzanne Dewsbury, “The Sensation Novel - Introduction”, *Nineteenth-Century Literary Criticism* (1999), accessed June 20, 2017, <http://www.enotes.com/topics/sensation-novel#critical-essays-introduction>

been told to generations, there are almost always princes playing the role of saviours who have to reverse the unfortunate destiny of a weak and helpless princess. This results in girls' brains programming to make young females be predestined to become dependent on men and not trying to succeed and seek for freedom. In this process, a girl becomes female not in the matter of biology but she is educated and raised to act as a woman since gender may be described as "something learned or acquired, rather than 'natural'."⁹

In terms of gender inequities and inequality and disadvantages it brought it is necessary to mention that not only women are influenced in a negative way regarding the gender. Women surely suffered and still suffer from inequities in their social status, pay rate (which is considerably lower for women than men even in the same job position) or in the attitude towards expressing themselves. Yet the gender stereotypes influence negatively men as well. As mentioned above, men are supposed to be strong, rational and protective. In general, men are not allowed to show weaknesses or express feelings openly, unless they want to fail their role. The traditional point of view is that men must be physically strong as well as mentally. Therefore it is forbidden for them to cry in the public, to express they feel pain or to mourn. If a man showed his weakness, he would be perceived as a disappointment in the eyes of the others. This would make him society outcast. The same would happen if he openly showed his positive feelings towards another man. After expressing the feelings he would be excluded from the society and called gay even when he, in fact, was not homosexual. In a similar way, it is unmanly to fail or not to sleep with a lot of women.¹⁰

In the contrast, if a woman acted the way men are supposed to, she would violate the stereotypical view as well and as a result she would face the possible exclusion. Women are generally more emotional but it is highly inadvisable for them to express their negative attitude towards someone or something and mainly towards men. When doing so, she faces to being called hysterical as women are believed to be prone to suffering from hysteria. A self-confident rational and successful woman always used to be called names and was forced to defend herself against men attempts to oppress her. Fortunately for women, the change in their social status, rights etc has occurred and the situation of women has been gradually improving since the time they started to fight for their rights. Feminists managed to persuade men to give women a right to vote. A woman is allowed to own property and to apply for a job she desires to do. The gender stereotypes are no longer that strict even though people are

⁹ Peter Barry, *Beginning theory: An introduction to literary and cultural theory*, (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 2009), 130

¹⁰ Tyson, *Critical Theory Today A User-Friendly Guide*, 87-88

still expected to follow and obey the rules which were made in the history. However, it is still essential to stress and point out the historical moments women lives were not that fortunate in order to fully understand the achievements they have made. One of those moments is undoubtedly the Victorian period in The Great Britain when the gap between men and women was enormous.

2. WOMEN IN VICTORIAN ENGLAND

2.1. Living Conditions of People in Victorian England

Scarcely ever in human history were differences between people's living conditions greater than in the Victorian period. The gap between the three classes we distinguish in The Great Britain was enormous. At the beginning of Victorian period, only upper-class men and middle-class men were allowed to vote. In 1867 Reform Bill was passed¹¹ allowing even working-class men to vote and in 1874, first two members of working class were elected to participate in the Parliament¹². Yet still, this meant only a little to the working class. People in working class suffered greatly thanks to their living conditions. They gained hardly any money enabling them to obtain enough food and to improve the housing. Working-class people did not own their own houses and lived in conditions so rough that many of them died because of diseases, hunger or exhaustion. On the contrary upper-class people, more precisely, upper-class men owned large family houses and mansions in which they employed servants, cleaners etc. While working-class people struggled at their work and tried to survive, upper-class people kept sitting in their halls, playing the piano, drinking wine and chatting with their friends and relatives.

However hard the conditions mentioned above might seem, it is necessary to point out the fact that women's lives in the Victorian period were even harder than men's. The changes happening in the politics as the right to vote were influencing men and had almost no effect on women's lives.

Political and legal reforms in the course of the Victorian period had given citizens many rights. In 1844 Friedrich Engels observed: "England is unquestionably the freest—that is the least unfree—country in the world, North America not excepted." England had indeed done much to extend its citizens' liberties, but women did not share in these freedoms. They could not vote or hold political office. (Although petitions to Parliament advocating women's suffrage were introduced as early as the 1840s, women did not get the vote until 1918.) Until the passage of the Married Women's Property Acts (1870 - 1908), married women could not own or handle their own property.

¹¹ Carol T. Christ et al., *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, (New York: W.W. Norton & Company), 982

¹² Leon D. Epstein, "British Class Consciousness and the Labour Party." *Journal of British Studies* 1, no. 2 (1962): 139, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/175209>.

While men could divorce their wives for adultery, wives could divorce their husbands only if adultery were combined with cruelty, bigamy, incest, or bestiality. Educational and employment opportunities for women were limited.¹³

Stating that women could not own the property and all money they gained were, in fact, their husbands', it is essential to mention the social problem it brought. As men could almost freely divorce their wives, women often had no place to live in and no money to satisfy the basic needs for surviving. This resulted in their desperate effort to gain at least some money. The easiest but the worst option they had was prostitution. Women were driven to prostitution not only by their husbands that divorced them but also because of bad working conditions and unemployment.¹⁴ Prostitution as such was considered to be one of the biggest issues in the Victorian period since the streets were crowded with prostitutes. Among them, there were not only working-class women as might be thought but even unmarried middle-class women at certain age experienced difficulties in finding a job. Another problem that rose in the Victorian period was the unbalanced numbers of unmarried middle-class women and men.

Emigration was frequently proposed as a solution to the problem, but the number of single female emigrants was never high enough to significantly affect the population imbalance. The only occupation at which an unmarried middle-class woman could earn a living and maintain some claim to gentility was that of a governess, but a governess could expect no security of employment, only minimal wages, and an ambiguous status, somewhere between servant and family member, that isolated her within the household. Perhaps because the governess so clearly indicated the precariousness of the unmarried middle-class woman's status in Victorian England, the governess novel, of which the most famous examples are *Jane Eyre* (1847) and *Vanity Fair*, became a popular genre through which to explore women's roles in society.¹⁵

During the Victorian period, middle-class women managed to establish rights in the marriage, such as the one that they could apply for a protection order which should allow them rights to their property. Women could even take degrees at twelve universities and could study without the right for taking a degree at Cambridge and Oxford Universities.¹⁶ Thanks to this the lives of women started gradually improve and even their social status started to slowly but steadily change.

¹³ Christ et al., *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, 990

¹⁴ Christ et al., *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, 991

¹⁵ Christ et al., *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, 992

¹⁶ Christ et al., *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, 991

2.2. Gender Roles of Victorian Women – The Angel in the House and The New Woman

‘But I hate to hear you talking so like a fine gentleman, and as if women were all fine ladies, instead of rational creatures. We none of us expect to be in smooth water all our days.’¹⁷

During the Victorian period men and women’s roles became more sharply defined than at any time in history.¹⁸

Not only did the Victorian period bring great differences and large gaps between classes, the difference between the position of men and women became also very prominent. Gender roles and tasks in the family life appeared to be strictly given.

The relationship and life of men and women together may be described as the ideology of separate spheres. This meant that husbands and wives met only at dinner or at breakfast since men spent the whole day working outside the house and the women’s position was at home. This ideology was based on the characteristics of men and women.

Women were considered physically weaker yet morally superior to men, which meant that they were best suited to the domestic sphere. Not only was it their job to counterbalance the moral taint of the public sphere in which their husbands laboured all day, they were also preparing the next generation to carry on this way of life.¹⁹

Man for the field and woman for the hearth:

Man for the sword and for the needle she:

Man with the head and woman with the heart:

Man to command and woman to obey.²⁰

This idea of women staying at home taking care of children and housework is grown in the minds of young people even these days but in the Victorian period, if a woman had not stayed at home, she has been perceived as odd. In that era, middle-class women should have been educated in order to fit their husbands the best. This meant that young girls were often put to a boarding school in which they learned music, painting, dancing, singing and foreign languages. They were said they should attract the husband not only through their domestic abilities but through their education as well. If a woman succeeded in doing so, she was called ‘The Angel in the House’.²¹ The term was used as a title of Coventry Patmore’s poem *The Angel in the House* in which she described the ideal Victorian woman.

¹⁷Jane Austen, *Persuasion*, 83, <http://www.planetebook.com/ebooks/Persuasion.pdf>

¹⁸ Kathryn Hughes, “Gender roles in the 19th century”, *British Library*, accessed June 19, 2017, <http://www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/articles/gender-roles-in-the-19th-century>

¹⁹ Kathryn Hughes, “Gender roles in the 19th century”

²⁰ Carol T. Christ et al., *The Norton Anthology of English Literature*, 992

²¹ Kathryn Hughes, “Gender roles in the 19th century”

Although Coventry Patmore's *The Angel in the House* had many Victorian admirers, most twentieth-century commentators criticize the poem for its supposedly tame subject, marriage, or treat it solely as an influential [sic] text that idealized women as domestic goddesses — and hence, in some way, represents (or even caused) Victorian England's limitation of women to the domestic sphere.²²

These angelic women were brought up in order to be picked up by a man who would not marry them unless they possessed the features and abilities they were supposed to. The ideal Victorian woman should have been calm, patient, obedient and supporting and still able to entertain her husband and his friends. Angels in the house generally were not passionate and did not seek for a better position or conditions since they, in fact, had everything they should have hoped for. The angelic women believed their destiny is at home making their husbands happy, houses clean and children well raised.

This idea was widely supported not only by men and mothers of middle-class young ladies but by the Queen herself as she wrote in a letter 29 May 1870.

'The Queen is most anxious to enlist every one who can speak or write to join in checking this mad, wicked folly of "Woman's Rights", with all its attendant horrors, on which her poor feeble sex is bent, forgetting every sense of womanly feeling and propriety... It is a subject which makes the Queen so furious that she cannot contain herself. God created men and women different - then let them remain each in their own position.'²³

Writing that the Queen herself seemed to be nothing else than a paradox. The Queen demanded women to strictly obey the rules and stereotypes given. She took Victorian values in consideration and it highly disappointed her and made her upset when women tried to emancipate. She, on the other hand, inherited after her husband's death enormous power all over the world. During her reign, new colonies were established and the British Empire became the greatest in its history. Her influence and power were unquestionable.

In spite of the general belief that woman's place is at home and she shall feel satisfied there since this is the best option for her, in Victorian era, middle-class women started to realize they, in fact, could not be completely content staying at home. The Woman Question was raised by Mary Wollstonecraft in the late 18th century in her pamphlet, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman*. Wollstonecraft attitude towards women may seem to be rather critical

²² George P. Landow, 'Coventry Patmore's Daring Subject — Marriage,' *The Victorian Web*, accessed June 20, 2017, <http://www.victorianweb.org/authors/patmore/theme1.html>

²³ Jan Marsh, "Gender Ideology and Separate Spheres in the 19th Century", *Victoria and Albert Museum*, accessed June 19, 2017, <http://www.vam.ac.uk/content/articles/g/gender-ideology-and-separate-spheres-19th-century/>

since her use of language must be observed carefully in order not to get confused. As might be read from her work, nothing is valued about being a woman:

Such is the ferocity of Wollstonecraft's rejection of conventional femininity that it can seem as if she is suggesting that there is nothing to be valued about being a woman: as Barbara Taylor observes, 'the rhetorical weight of Wollstonecraft's attack falls so heavily on her own sex as to make a reader begin to wonder whether the aim is less to free women than to abolish them'²⁴

In fact, Wollstonecraft only wanted to stress that the sex did not determine a person. She claimed that: "With respect to the culture of the heart, it is unanimously allowed that sex is out of the question; but the line of subordination in the mental powers is never to be passed over."²⁵ The Woman Question became a crucial topic to the group of not only middle-class women who tried to obtain more freedom and power. For example, Harriet Martineau urged the upper-class women to obtain a proper education to make them financially independent.²⁶ These, women of all classes who started to revolt against the stereotypes were called The New Women.

The origins of the term 'New Woman' are disputed, but it appears to have entered the language in 1894 when it was used in a pair of articles written by the novelists Sarah Grand (born Frances Elizabeth Bellenden Clarke) and 'Ouida' (the pseudonym of Maria Louise Ramé) in the *North American Review*.²⁷

The New Woman emerged as the phenomenon of the late Victorian period as women felt the urge to obtain at least some degree of independence and freedom. The New Woman put an effort in breaking the rules and stereotypical views on women.

The New Woman of the 1880s and 1890s was one nexus of the nineteenth-century debates over the nature of human beings and human society because she "challenged existing gender relations and the distribution of power." In the last decades of the century, the debate about women's nature and women's place in society intensified because of real changes in women's lives, and the New Woman who embodied these changes became the focus of a battle to control cultural change.²⁸

The New Woman possessed the characteristics of an educated, rational, passionate, emancipated, independent and self-supporting woman.²⁹ They undoubtedly managed to overcome the traditional point of view considering women as a physically weak and

²⁴ Gill Plain and Susan Sellers, *A History of Feminist Literary Criticism*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 50

²⁵ Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman with Strictures on Political and Moral Subjects*, 36, http://www.earlymoderntexts.com/assets/pdfs/wollstonecraft1792_2.pdf

²⁶ Dr. Andrzej Diniejko, "The New Woman Fiction", *The Victorian Web*, 17 December 2011, <http://www.victorianweb.org/gender/diniejko1.html>

²⁷ Buzwell, "Daughters of Decadence: the New Woman in Victorian fin de siècle"

²⁸ Lorelee MacPike, "The New Woman, Childbearing, and the Reconstruction of Gender, 1880-1900." *NWSA Journal* 1, no. 3 (1989): 368, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/4315921>.

²⁹ Diniejko, "The New Woman Fiction"

irrational. The New Woman was desperately seeking for independence and tried to break the chains of patriarchal society placing her because of her gender below men. These women were aware of their social status and their position, yet they did not accept it and they tried to improve it. In order to succeed they used their psychological strength to fight the male supremacy. Not all women succeeded and not all of them put the effort in gaining independence and freedom but it would be highly incorrect to place women in the position of victims.³⁰ This would again lead to simplification and making another stereotype. The New Women played a significant role in women's emancipation and in breaking the traditional gender roles predestined for these women.

However, the majority of upper- and middle-class women never worked outside the home. Nevertheless, although leisure time undoubtedly increased for many, the notion of idle, unoccupied Victorian ladies is something of a myth. Women ran the house, undertaking domestic work and child care themselves, as well as supervising the servants employed to cook, clean, carry coal and run errands.³¹

2.3. The New Woman Fiction

The New Woman was not only a social phenomenon.

The New Woman fiction that appeared in the 1880s and 1890s does not constitute a single literary genre but rather multiple ones with a woman as a central character.

...

New Woman novels often expressed dissatisfaction with the contemporary position of women in marriage and in society. The novels about nonconformist or rebellious women became a springboard for a public debate about gender relations that had previously been taboo. The New Woman novels represented female heroines who fought against the traditional Victorian male perception of woman as 'angel in the house' and challenged the old codes of conduct and morality.³²

Although new woman fiction was appreciated in the Victorian period, the literary critics of the 20th century, as well as Feminists, tend to claim that the new woman literature was too much focused on sex and sexuality. Greg Buzwell wrote: "Male writers tended to cast the New Woman as either a sexual predator or as an over-sensitive intellectual unable to

³⁰ Carroll Smith-Rosenberg, "The New Woman and the New History." *Feminist Studies* 3, no. 1/2 (1975): 194, doi:10.2307/3518964.

³¹ Marsh, "Gender Ideology and Separate Spheres in the 19th Century

³² Diniejko, "The New Woman Fiction"

accept her nature as a sexual being.”³³ Even Dr. Diniejko admits that “New Woman fiction dealt frankly with sex and marriage as well as women’s desires for independence and fulfilment.”³⁴

These two topics may be described in the examples of Lucy Westenra and Jane Eyre. Lucy Westenra, a character from Bram Stoker’s *Dracula*, represents a sexual predator who desires for three husbands and after being bitten by Dracula, her characteristics get even worse. Not only does she seduce men, she hunts children without any sign of maternity. In this case, she becomes a parody of the New Woman and represents the critical view of people not supporting the idea.³⁵

The other case of Jane Eyre from Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre* represents less radical and extreme New Woman. Jane sees no point in seeking for sexual adventures. In fact, for her, it is her freedom, independence, and self-confidence that is tremendously important. Charlotte Brontë in her book created a mentally strong, independent woman who despite facing unfortunate destiny manages to overcome problems and as a free, passionate yet still rational human being won the heart of her beloved one and readers as well. It might seem surprising that the author, in reality, was not overtly radical in her social views and even did not approve of women voting, she rather stressed women should be allowed to work.³⁶

³³ Buzwell, “Daughters of Decadence: the New Woman in Victorian fin de siècle”

³⁴ Diniejko, “The New Woman Fiction”

³⁵ Buzwell, “Daughters of Decadence: the New Woman in Victorian fin de siècle”

³⁶ Sally Shuttleworth, “Jane Eyre and the 19th-Century Woman”, *British Library* (2014), <http://www.bl.uk/romantics-and-victorians/articles/jane-eyre-and-the-19th-century-woman>

3. GENDER ROLES IN *THE LODGER* BY MARIE BELLOC LOWNDES

The Victorian period was definitely one of the most important eras in human history since it brought many new discoveries and changes in people's lives. As mentioned in the theoretical part, the status of middle-class women changed significantly as middle-class women started to discover, embrace and express their value in society. The development of women from "The Angel in the House" to "The New Woman" will be examined using the example of Mrs. Bunting from *The Lodger* by Marie Belloc Lowndes and Jane Eyre in Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre*. Both these heroines were brought up and expected to act according to their social status and obey the rules given by the patriarchal society. However, these characters decided not to fit in "The Angel in the House" stereotype. The first chapter will focus on Mrs. Bunting from *The Lodger*. Her change is not the most obvious one but Lowndes presents important hints.

Before describing her development, it is essential to mention that Mrs. Bunting, in fact, did not become a demonic woman, since she still possessed some characteristics of the angelic woman. Mrs. Bunting's becoming The New Woman had begun even before the story took place because she was always a critically thinking, open-minded and strong woman, but when the murders begin to appear, her role of The New Woman appears to be even more obvious. As her thoughts and behaviour changes, she doesn't fit in the middle-class woman stereotype anymore.

Mr. and Mrs. Bunting belong to the middle class and they may be considered a great example of middle-class people since their jobs and social status enabled them to rent a house in which they provide lodgings to people who need them. "A casual stranger, more particularly one of a Superior class to their own, on suddenly opening the door of that sitting-room, would have thought that Mr. and Mrs. Bunting presented a very pleasant cosy picture of comfortable married life."³⁷ Unfortunately, for Mr. and Mrs. Bunting this could not be farther from the truth since Mrs. Bunting stayed at home and Mr. Bunting lost his job as a man-servant. They both still maintained the appearance of servants although they were no longer employed and therefore were on the edge of poverty:

³⁷ Mary Belloc Lowndes, *The Lodger*, Loyal Books, accessed June 20, 2017, <http://www.loyalbooks.com/download/text/The-Lodger-by-Marie-Belloc-Lowndes.txt>

Bunting, who was leaning back in a deep leather arm-chair, was clean-shaven and dapper, still in appearance what he had been for many years of his life--a self-respecting man-servant.

On his wife, now sitting up in an uncomfortable straight-black chair, the marks of past servitude were less apparent, but they were there all the same--in her neat black stuff dress, and in her scrupulously clean, plain collar and cuffs. Mrs Bunting, as a single woman, had been what is known as a useful maid.³⁸

The lack of money greatly complicated the lives of Robert and Ellen Bunting. Their friends from the same class were no longer willing to interfere with them. Buntings had to sell some of the house equipment which they used to cherish. Mr. Bunting quit smoking although this was one of the privileges of middle-class men. They also had to learn to go hungry and slowly they were forced to learn to go cold, but the thing that hurt Robert the most was the fact that he should not buy newspapers anymore. A middle-class man should not be prevented from buying his papers and so Bunting bought ones even though they had only enough money to pay the rent.

Mrs. Bunting acts differently than her husband and rationally saves every penny she can. She does so not because of her but because of the well being of both of them and mainly her husband's. Her behaviour represents an ideal Victorian middle-class woman – the so-called “The Angel in the House”. She kept the house clean, did the shopping and tried to do her best to feed her husband and herself even though she never demanded nutritious and delicious food in their poverty. This may be seen, when a new lodger comes to their house and she offered him a sausage. “It was a very nice sausage, and she bought it that same morning for Bunting’s supper, as to herself, she had been going to content herself with a little bread and cheese.”³⁹

Mrs. Bunting definitely loved tasty food and a comfortable life full of the privileges of the middle class but she was willing to admit that they were gradually falling among the poor people of London. Although she could go hungry for many days, she wanted her husband to feel as well as he was able to in their situation. Therefore, one day she bought him a pack of Virginia tobacco to make him happy. In fact, she always put the needs of others on the top of her own. Whenever their new lodger, Mr. Sleuth, rang, she hurried as much as she could to serve him and obey any commands and wishes he had. “At twelve, however, the drawing-room bell rang. Mrs. Bunting hurried upstairs. She was painfully anxious to please and satisfy Mr. Sleuth.”⁴⁰ Moreover, as a humble woman, she deeply respected men’s eccentricities.

³⁸ Lowndes, *The Lodger*,

³⁹ Lowndes, *The Lodger*

⁴⁰ Lowndes, *The Lodger*

“And Mrs. Bunting willingly fell in with his wishes. In spite of her prim manner and love of order, Mr. Sleuth’s landlady was a true woman--she had, that is, and infinite patience with masculine vagaries and oddities.”⁴¹

Her “Angel in the House” characteristic was not only that she wanted to please her husband and their lodger. She was also really quiet, calm and well behaved as well. She never wanted others to see what she feels or thinks. An observer might say her way of thinking about women and their behaviour was rather similar to the men’s point of view. She perceived showing emotions as a weakness and she definitely did not want to be considered to be a weak woman. “Staid Mrs. Bunting seemed to make but one leap down the stairs. In the hall, however, she pulled herself together, and tried to still her agitation. She had always disliked and despised and show of emotion, she called such betrayal of feeling ‘making a fuss’.”⁴² It is also essential to mention that she did not express herself too often not only for the fact that she might have felt weak but she did not want to make her husband and their visitors to feel uncomfortable or afraid for her as well.

“Yes, the gentleman said I’d have to buy some things for him to-morrow. And, oh, Bunting, he’s so well spoken, I really felt that--I really felt that--“ and then Mrs. Bunting, taking a step or two sideways, sat down, and throwing her little black apron over her face burst into gasping sobs. Bunting patted her back timidly. “Ellen?” he said, much moved by her agitation, “Ellen? Don’t take on so, my dear--“ “I won’t,” she sobbed, “I—I won’t! I’m a fool—I know I am! But, oh, I didn’t think we was [sic] ever going to have any luck again!”⁴³

Robert Bunting, the husband of Ellen Bunting usually thought about her stillness, calmness and silent nature rather critically. There were situations when her character even made him angry. One of the moments was definitely when their young friend Joe Chandler who worked as a police officer came to their house to talk to Mr. Bunting about the Avenger’s murders. From the beginning, Mr. Bunting was eager to hear and read about the terrors but his wife used to feel the opposite. She did not want to know anything about such horrid things. This corresponds to her character, but this is about to change as the Avenger’s murders start to occur more and more frequently and she begins to feel a deep interest in them. She began to find them both terrifying and fascinating. “Almost in spite of herself, Mrs. Bunting had become keenly interested in the amazing series of crimes which was occupying the imagination of the whole of London’s nether-world.”⁴⁴

⁴¹ Lowndes, *The Lodger*

⁴² Lowndes, *The Lodger*

⁴³ Lowndes, *The Lodger*

⁴⁴ Lowndes, *The Lodger*

Unfortunately, this new fascination brought not only a new part of Mrs. Bunting to life but was getting on her nerves as well. Mrs. Bunting gradually became more and more afraid and terrified. New stories about murders made her feel sick.

“Yes,” she said dully. “I heard a word here and there. There’s been another murder, hasn’t there?”

“Two other murders,” he said soberly.

“Two? That’s worse news!” She turned so pale—a sallow greenish-white—that Bunting thought she was again going queer.

...

His wife, with a curious sighing moan, had slipped down on the floor, taking with her the tablecloth as she went. She lay there in what appeared to be a dead faint.⁴⁵

This is caused mainly by her ability to think rationally and the growing suspicion in her mind. Since Mr. Sleuth, came to them, when the murders start to appear and he acts quite strangely, because he goes outside on foggy nights, she starts to observe his activities in a thorough way. This completely changed her because she was the only one who put two and two together and saw a connection between the murders and Mr. Sleuth’s night walks. Her suspicion slowly grew into certainty and this filled her heart with thrill and terror. Unlikely for a person that knows a murderer, she kept her thoughts in secret and did not share them with her husband or their friend Joe Chandler. Her loyalty to Mr. Sleuth was unquestionable. She did not plan to ever say anything. He was the one who saved them before they might experience more unfortunate destiny. Yet still, his appearance and the fact that his behaviour might be described as the gentleman’s one, his company comforted her.

Somehow she was beginning to feel better. It comforted her to be up here, talking to Mr. Sleuth, instead of thinking about him downstairs. It seemed to banish the terror which filled her soul—aye, and her body, too—at other times. When she was with him Mr. Sleuth was so gentle, so reasonable, so—so grateful.

Poor kindly, solitary Mr. Sleuth! This gentleman surely wouldn’t hurt a fly, let alone a human being.⁴⁶

As a result of this unfortunate situation, which happened to them before Mr. Sleuth’s arrival and the Avenger’s murders, Mrs. Bunting gets really tired and starts to see her husband and his daughter Daisy in a different light than she used to. Her mind and thoughts become more open and critical, therefore she gets angry or irritated easily. Since her husband fits in the middle-class men stereotype, he is not used to helping her at home very much. He does help her and wants her to be comfortable but Ellen needs more help than her husband thinks. The daily tasks are therefore Mrs. Bunting’s burden. As a maid, she was used to it when she

⁴⁵ Lowndes, *The Lodger*

⁴⁶ Lowndes, *The Lodger*

was younger, but as an older woman, she definitely could use some help from the stronger person of the Buntings family. Her husband is used to helping her with shopping and he has made her a cup of tea each morning since they got married, but he still enjoys reading newspapers in his comfortable armchair quite often. This is found to be extremely annoying for Ellen.

As mentioned above, she as a middle-class woman possesses almost an infinite patience with men and their vagaries and oddities. This applies mainly to their lodger Mr. Sleuth but not to Mr. Bunting. Ellen as a typical woman who was brought up and used to be angelic tries to undergo any problems in a calm way, not expressing her worries and doubts and she has always used to support her husband when it was expected from her. Although she always used to be a mentally strong and open-minded woman letting her husband know it, when she talks to him quite sharply, her irritation, anger, and feeling to be strongly upset gradually become more and more apparent.

There was something queer about her, and he couldn't make it out. He didn't mind it when she spoke sharply or nastily to him. He was used to that. But now she was so up and down, so different from what she used to be! In old days she had always been, but now a man never knew where to have her.

...

Ellen always had her own notions about everything under the sun. Ellen was a woman who thought for herself—a clever woman, not an everyday woman by any manner of means.⁴⁷

This represents the nature of Mrs. Bunting as a really smart and self-reliable person that has her own mind and is not likely to be influenced by the world in which men are the more powerful gender. She always strictly adheres to her principles and does not want to do anything differently. When she feels sick and almost loses her consciousness, she still sharply says to her husband and his daughter that she will not touch a drop of alcohol which might help her, since she is an abstainer. In fact, she is rather critical towards people who show any kind of weakness. “Not but what it's a good thing if these murders have emptied the public-house of women for a bit. England's drink is England's shame—I'll never depart from that!” She was also sharply irritated when her husband pointed out the fact, that she was taken bad and showed that she might not be healthy and she should let him and his daughter help her. Her quotation is a great example of The New Woman characteristics when these women want to have a right to say what they think and act as they want to. “I won't have you doing nothing of that sort!” cried Mrs. Bunting, speaking almost as passionately as her stepdaughter

⁴⁷ Lowndes, *The Lodger*

had done. “Haven’t I a right to be ill, haven’t I a right to be took [sic] bad, aye, and to feel all right again—same as other people?”⁴⁸

Although Ellen Bunting was always used to serve people and obey their commands, in her house she wants to be her own master and have the right to decide for herself. She is devoted to her husband Robert, yet still, she prefers being equal partners and having the same power. The book suggests that in some time, it is Mrs. Bunting who becomes the head of the family in a way, as her husband feels afraid for her and does not want to make her upset and therefore is really careful and kind to her. She also tries to maintain the characteristics of an angelic wife, but Mrs. Bunting’s psychological state influences her so much that she is no longer able to stand her ground and suppress her feelings and suspicions taking over her. Ellen still tries to remain calm and supporting, but it is more and more difficult for her when nobody can help her with her horrifying secret. She is both – angry with her husband but thankful for having him. Even though she does not feel well, she still tries to make him think that she is. “ ‘I like doing my own business in my own way, and not in someone’s else way!’ she snapped out, and then more gently, for Bunting really looked concerned, and she did feel very far from well, ‘I’ll be all right, old man. Don’t you worry about me!’ “⁴⁹

Her desperate attempt to hide away Mr. Sleuth’s horrid crimes makes her in a way quite demonic. As she tries to convince herself and the others that the lodger of Mr. Bunting’s and hers cannot even be taken into consideration while talking about the murders, she begins to act rather sharply and coldly not even to her husband, but to Joe Chandler as well. “And poor Joe became quite serious. This was the first time that Mrs. Bunting had ever spoken really nastily to him, ...”⁵⁰ As a woman of her own strict principles, she is even willing to violate them and she does so when she lies. She lies to Joe and she lies to her husband. In the end, tried as she might, her lodger as a matter of bad luck finds out he might be one of the suspects and he supposes that it was his landlady that denounced him. The last words he says to her are a threat:

“A [sic] last word with you, Mrs. Bunting.” The lodger’s face was still distorted with fear and passion. “Do not think to escape the consequences of your hideous treachery. I trusted you, Mrs. Bunting, and you betrayed me! Put [sic] I am protected by a higher power, for I still have much to do.” Then, his voice sinking to a whisper, he hissed out “Your end will be bitter as wormwood and sharp as a two-edged sword. Your feet shall go down to death, and your steps take hold on hell.”⁵¹

⁴⁸ Lowndes, *The Lodger*

⁴⁹ Lowndes, *The Lodger*

⁵⁰ Lowndes, *The Lodger*

⁵¹ Lowndes, *The Lodger*

The story of Mrs. Bunting represents a troubling shift between an angelic woman and the demonic one. As a middle-class woman, she was always seeking for more respect and she, fortunately, found a man that let her gain a certain degree of freedom and power. She never possessed the will to become the head of the family or completely independent. This indicates that she actually did not fit any stereotypes. She was neither The Angel in the House nor The New Woman as such. She definitely represents demonic women in terms of her natural critical thinking and the way she talked to her husband. She even disobeyed the rules given by police and did not denounce The Avenger. On the other hand, she still maintained angelic characteristics. She always wanted to please her lodger. The house of their family was clean and she was willing to give preference to her husband when they were in troubles. Mrs. Bunting was a caring and loving woman who did not want to trouble anyone but she also had her rebellious side.

4. GENDER ROLES IN *JANE EYRE* BY CHARLOTTE BRONTË

‘I am no bird, and no net ensnares me, I am a free human being with an independent will, which I now exert to leave you.’⁵²

Another well known female character who might be considered a proper example of the women’s development from *The Angel in the House* to *The New Woman* is Jane Eyre. The attitude of Jane and her thoughts are expressed in the very first infamous quote which became popular among the large female society and even feminist movement. *Jane Eyre* is a gothic novel by Charlotte Brontë and focuses on the life of a young woman with an unfortunate destiny. Jane Eyre is forced to deal with two parts of her personality that collide almost daily. Jane was brought up to act obediently and to patiently complete all of her duties. Despite the fact that she is supposed to follow orders and keep the rules in her mind all the time, she seeks for independence and adventure. In the end, it is always up to her which of her two characters she allows to prevail.

In order not to get confused, it is essential to mention that Jane possessed the nature of *The New Woman* even in her early childhood and therefore she actually never experienced the switch between the two phenomena. This led to the disappointment and anger of the authorities that could not make young Jane respect them and obey their orders. The first conflicts appeared because of Jane’s aunt Mrs. Reed with whom Jane lived as a young child. Jane’s destiny was not one of those fortunate ones. Being a baby, Jane lost both parents and therefore she was an orphan. As an orphan, she could have either been sent to the orphanage or been taken care of by her relatives. Jane’s uncle, Mr. Reed, decided to take care of her as if she was his own child. Unfortunately, little Jane lost him as well, when he died because of a disease. Mrs. Reed was not that happy and glad to be forced to promise the same to her beloved husband. Actually, she found that to be extremely difficult for her, because in fact, she never felt positive about the young orphan living in her house.

The Reed’s family possessed a fortune that enabled them to live comfortable lives. They had a large house and servants. Mrs. Reed gave birth to three children. She had two daughters and a son. The son’s name was John and he was extremely spoilt. The two daughters were Eliza and Georgiana. This all made her really happy and satisfied with her life. She loved her children greatly and she wanted the best for them. Her almost perfect life

⁵² Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre*, (London: Harper Press, 2010), 256

had only one mistake and that was little Jane Eyre who made her angry and upset all the time. This was a burden she was forced to accept when her husband was dying. Although she never liked it, she kept her promise to take care of her niece.

Jane was said to be a problematic child. In fact, she was never evil, rude or disobedient but she sometimes experienced difficulties to respect the authority of people who hurt her. Despite the fact that all living members of Reed's family did not really like Jane, there was one of them who hated her. His name was John Reed and he always acted badly towards Jane. He made her seem even worse than she actually was. This made little Miss Eyre angry because she did not like it when people made her wrong. The whole story begins with one of those moments when John tried to show his authority and wanted Jane to act obediently. He claimed that she had no right to borrow one of his father's books and he even pushed her so much, she fell on the floor. A young well behaved lady would do nothing but Jane Eyre felt offended and she tried to defend herself against his attack. She attacked him back. Of course, it brought her to problems as she was sent to the "red room" in which her uncle died.

"I resisted all the way: a new thing for me, and a circumstance which greatly strengthened the bad opinion Bessie and Miss Abbot were disposed to entertain of me. The fact is I was trifle beside myself, or rather out of myself, as the French would say: 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 all lengths.

'Hold her arms, Miss Abbot: she's like a mad cat.'

'For shame! For shame' cried the lady's-maid [sic]. 'What shocking conduct, Miss Eyre, to strike a young gentleman, your benefactress's son! Your young master.'

'Master! How is he my master? Am I a servant?'⁵³

These days nobody would consider it strange. In that era, it was completely inadmissible for a girl or a woman to defend herself when she was attacked or harassed by a man. However, in this situation, it was just Jane's nature to protect herself and to try to show that she was made wrong and it was not her mistake. When she realized she could not do that and that she would get punished for a fault of her cousin, she became angry and mad. This was the very beginning of her journey to become an independent and free woman. Even she herself was surprised, as may be found out in the paragraph but she soon started to see herself in a different light.

Mrs. Reed's hatred towards Jane escalated after the incident and she decided to send her to school to Lowood. She sent for Mr. Brocklehurst to come to take a look at little Jane

⁵³ Brontë, *Jane Eyre*, 6

and to make arrangements. Despite the fact that Jane was not actually evil and only tried not to be bullied by her family, Mrs. Reed claimed, that Jane was a naughty child and a liar.

“Mr. Brocklehurst, I believe I intimated in the letter which I wrote to you three weeks ago, that this little girl has not quite the character and disposition I could wish: should you admit her into Lowood school, I should be glad if the superintendent and teachers were requested to keep a strict eye on her, and above all, to guard against her worst fault, a tendency to deceit.”⁵⁴

Never in her childhood did Jane Eyre lie to anyone. After her aunt said that, Jane actually felt a need to finally tell her aunt what she thought and not to suffer from oppression anymore. She spoke to her aunt as if they were the same age and position. Even though she was only ten years old, Jane was able to use logical arguments and examples to prove that she was not the one who should be perceived deceitful and rude.

“Ere I had finished this reply, my soul began to expand, to exult, with the strangest sense of freedom, or triumph, I ever felt. It seemed as if an invisible bond had burst, and that I had struggled out into unhopd-for liberty.”⁵⁵

Jane’s having problem with authorities should have been broken in Lowood. Actually, after several months of struggling, Jane started to act as she was supposed and was able to submit to the teachers and rules of the school. In return for her behaviour, she became one of Miss Temple’s favourites and gained a great amount of knowledge in various subjects and activities. Moreover, she felt an urge to please her teachers and especially those she liked. This was the moment Jane seemed to possess the angelic woman features. She became obedient and she tried to do her best in order to succeed in her education. She managed it and even became the best in the class. She was well behaved and she could speak French, paint and in the end became a teacher herself.

It would not be Jane Eyre if she felt content with the situation. She soon realized she could not be happy as a teacher in Lowood and she felt a need to challenge herself somewhere else.

It is my 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.

...

Women are supposed to be very calm generally: but women feel just as men feel, they need exercise for their faculties, and a field for their efforts as much as their brothers do, they suffer from too rigid a constraint, too absolute a stagnation, precisely as men would suffer, and it is narrow-minded in their more privileged fellow-creatures to say that 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

⁵⁴ Brontë, *Jane Eyre*, 29

⁵⁵ Brontë, *Jane Eyre*, 32

they seek to do more or learn more than custom has pronounced necessary for their sex.⁵⁶

Not only does this paragraph represent the internal belief of Jane Eyre herself, it is also a great example of New Women's opinions and even the basic foundation of feminism. Jane finds women to be completely equal to men, to possess the same psychological strength and having same needs and passion. Jane herself has always been a really passionate person who struggles to hide her thoughts and feelings towards people and everyday problems.

Despite the fact that Jane is a quite unusual Victorian woman because of her beliefs, thoughts, and acting, she still remains an angel-like person in many features of her personality as said before. As a governess, she dresses in a plain way and she does not require fortune or a high social status. Yet, she still is a lady in her manners and in the eyes of people with a lower status such as servants, coachmen or stable boys and merchants.⁵⁷ Being a teacher means that the person has a certain degree of respect and should be treated well. Knowing that, Jane actually feels like a lady even though she cannot compare her to her master, Mr. Rochester. Apparently, she is only a middle-class young woman whereas her master is an upper-class man in his middle age. Not only was he incomparably richer, his life experiences were also beyond comparison, as Jane was only nineteen years old. She kept the difference between them in her mind and tried to focus on it because she unwillingly fell in love with him.

'You have nothing to do with the master of Thornfield, further than to receive the salary he gives you for teaching his protégée, and to be grateful for such respectful and kind treatment as, if you do your duty, you have a right to expect at his hands. –be sure that s the only tie he seriously acknowledges between you and him: so don't make him the object of your fine feelings, your raptures, agonies and so forth.'⁵⁸

A complete opposite to Jane and her character may be found in Miss Ingram. Miss Ingram is said to be Mr. Rochester's wife-to-be. She is an upper-class woman brought up in a wealthy respectable family. She looks gorgeous and behaves according to her social status. She can play the piano perfectly and her voice is as beautiful as the nightingale's one. It is also necessary to mention her ability to entertain her companions and to be in the spotlight. Undoubtedly, Miss Ingram is a wife each upper-class man could dream of since she is a real Angel in the House. She possesses the qualities Victorian men were seeking for and she was brought up to be chosen as a wife to a wealthy upper-class man.

⁵⁶ Brontë, *Jane Eyre*, 109

⁵⁷ Brontë, *Jane Eyre*, 157

⁵⁸ Brontë, *Jane Eyre*, 163

Miss Ingram was a mark beneath jealousy: she was too inferior to excite the feeling.

...

She was very showy, but she was not genuine: she had a fine person, many brilliant attainments, but her mind was poor, her heart barren by nature: nothing bloomed spontaneously on that soil, no unforced natural fruit delighted by its freshness. She was not good, she was not original: she used to repeat sounding phrases from books: she never offered, nor had, an opinion on her own.⁵⁹

This paragraph stresses the difference between Jane and Miss Ingram. Although Jane Eyre grew up in a cruel boarding school and was never perceived as beautiful, she undoubtedly could take pride in being smart, passionate and original. That is why she wins the sympathy of readers and her master, Mr. Rochester. Considering Mr. Rochester's position towards Jane, it is quite unusual what relationship appears between them. It was not considered ordinary for an upper-class man to fall in love with a middle-class woman whose character, in addition, may be seen as shocking for that era. In fact, he was eager to see her from the first time they met. And unconditionally fell in love with her because of her original mind and behaviour.

'Impatiently I waited for evening, when I might summon you to my presence. An unusual-to me-a perfectly new character I suspected was yours. I desired to search it deeper, and know it better. You entered the room with a look and air at once shy and independent: you were quaintly dresses-much as you are now. I made you talk: ere long I found you full of strange contrasts. Your garb and manner were restricted by rule: your air was often diffident, and altogether that of one refined by nature, but absolutely unused to society, and a good deal afraid of making herself disadvantageously conspicuous by some solecism or blunder, yet when addressed, you lifted a keen, a daring, and glowing eye to your interlocutor's face: there was penetration and power in each glance you gave, when plied by close questions, you found ready and round answers.'⁶⁰

Taking into consideration the job relations and the social gap between the governess and her master, it might seem as a paradox how Jane Eyre talked to Mr. Rochester. As mentioned above, she knew about the difference between them and she was aware of the fact that she should show Mr. Rochester respect and act politely. However, when she realized that his feeling had the nature of love as hers, she enjoyed talking more openly to him. There were several moments she even dared to tease him or made quite sharp comments about him. This represents another feature of The New Woman and that is not admitting the male superiority. Jane did not hesitate to express her attitude and let Mr. Rochester know she did not respect him as her master. In most cases, it would have been absolutely unacceptable if a governess

⁵⁹ Brontë, *Jane Eyre*, 186

⁶⁰ Brontë, *Jane Eyre*, 317

had spoken to her master in such a way as Jane did. Fortunately, Mr. Rochester loved Jane greatly mainly because of her behaviour and character. Therefore he preferred when she did not act according to her social status and the rules created by society. The greatest paradox in their relationship was the fact that Mr. Rochester as an upper-class man encouraged a middle-class woman to speak to him in a rude way, as he enjoyed her passion. And Jane also preferred him not flattering her but making mean comments about her.

‘Excellent!—Now you are small—not one whit bigger than the end of my little finger. It was a scandalous disgrace to act in that way.’⁶¹

He continues to send for me punctually the moment the clock struck seven, though when I appeared before him now, he had no such honeyed terms as ‘love’ and ‘darling’ on his lips: the best words at my service were ‘provoking puppet’, ‘malicious elf’, ‘sprite’, ‘changeling’, etc. For caresses, too, I now got grimaces, for a pressure of the hand, a pinch on the arm, for a kiss on the cheek, a severe tweak of the ear. It was all right: at present I decidedly preferred these fierce favours to anything more tender.⁶²

Thanks to unfortunate past of Mr. Rochester and his wife whom he kept hidden in the attic all the time, his and Jane’s love could not have been sealed. However, Mr. Rochester claimed that he had no wife and wanted to marry Jane and therefore break the law. At that moment the contrast in Jane’s mind between what she would have liked to do, and what she felt she was supposed to do, was enormous. On one hand, she felt an urge to obey his commands and wishes even though she knew she would break the law given by God. On the other hand, she was raised as a Christian woman and she was proud of herself enough not to fail because of her heart and feelings towards him.

This was true: and while he spoke my very conscience and reason turned traitors against me, and charged me with crime in resisting him.

...

Who in the world cares for you? Or who will be injured by what you do?’

Still indomitable was the reply—‘I care for myself. The more solitary, the more friendless, the more unsustained I am, the more I will respect myself. I will keep the law given by God, sanctioned by man. I will hold the principles received by me when I was sane, and not mad—as I am now.’⁶³

The whole Jane’s principle of being proud of herself when she had to take care of herself alone and was not dependent on others’ favours appeared to be useful, when Jane left Thornfield. As a homeless person with no money, she still did not admit being a beggar. In this case, she even tried to survive without begging. The primary thought of her was to find a job to obtain the means for life. She was eagerly trying to find a job to avoid asking people for money or food. It was truly shameful for her when she in the end inevitably experienced

⁶¹ Brontë, *Jane Eyre*, 265

⁶² Brontë, *Jane Eyre*, 276-277

⁶³ Brontë, *Jane Eyre*, 320

such hunger she had no other choice than to beg for villagers' leftovers. Never would she have thought she would be forced to show such a weakness.

Fortunately for Jane, her suffering did not take a long time and she found a help. As soon as she was able to stand up again and was rested enough, she came to her saviours to ask for a job and whether they needed some help at their house. She spent other several weeks there and made new friends. Yet still, it was essential for her not to be dependent on their help and therefore she felt relieved when Mr. Rivers, her saviour, and the local priest, finally found her a job position as a village teacher for young children. Being told she most likely would not be content with the job since she was obviously more ambitious and used to more prestige environment⁶⁴, she still gladly accepted the offer. However, Jane's character and mind once more showed her, she could never experience a real happiness doing such a job.

At this period of my life, my heart far oftener swelled with thankfulness than sank with dejection: and yet, reader, to tell you all, in the midst of this calm, this useful existence—after a day passed in honourable exertion amongst my scholars, an evening spent in drawing or reading contentedly alone—I used to rush into strange dreams at night: dreams many-coloured, agitated, full of the ideal, the stirring, the stormy—dreams where, amidst unusual scenes, charged with adventure, with agitating risk and romantic chance, ...⁶⁵

Despite the fact it might seem that Jane finally became an independent woman, which was helped by her inheriting a huge amount of money, she, in fact, was still under the influence of her cousin, Mr. Rivers. Mr. Rivers possesses a great ability to persuade people into doing what he believes God wants from them. Exactly this happened to Jane. Jane was inconspicuously made learning Hindustani. Jane followed the orders of Mr. Rivers and started learning Hindustani. In fact, she was again trying to please him and to do her best to make him feel satisfied with her. This stole her freedom and independence and made her feel really uncomfortable. Jane even claimed she lost her liberty of mind. Yes still, she could not resist him and she did what she was told to. The fight she was fighting took place only inside her mind and as a result, she appeared to obtain angelic features and to completely lose all her rebellious tendencies. For some time she could not be considered The New Woman. She was seeking for an independent life but in fact she kept acting submissively, admitted to be under the influence and she took care of the house.

I know no medium: I never in my life have known any medium in my dealings with positive, hard characters, antagonistic to my own, between absolute submission and determined revolt. I have always faithfully observed the one, up to the very moment of bursting, sometimes with volcanic vehemence, into the other, and as neither present circumstances warranted,

⁶⁴ Brontë, *Jane Eyre*, 360

⁶⁵ Brontë, *Jane Eyre*, 373

nor my present mood inclined me to mutiny, I observed careful obedience to St. John's directions, ...⁶⁶

Were it not for the following event, Jane would most likely remain the angelic woman but because of her psychological strength and will to be free, she finally managed to resist St. John's orders. She gave preference to her needs and when Mr. Rivers asked her to join him in his missionary mission as his wife, she refused. She would have joined him if she had not been asked to marry him. It is necessary to stress that Jane was raised to be a Christian woman and as such, she was highly religious. She could have imagined travelling to completely foreign and unknown countries with environment and climate in which she would be prone to die soon. She found that to be her possible destiny but it was the marriage proposal that drew her attention to the fact she could never feel happy or content there with Mr. Rivers as her husband. This brought her to the breaking point resulting in revolt.

I should suffer often, no doubt, attached to him only in this capacity: my body would be under rather a stringent yoke, but my heart and mind would be free. I should still have my unblighted self to turn to: my natural unenslaved feelings with which to communicate in moments of loneliness. There would be recesses in my mind which would be only mine, to which he never came, and sentiments growing there fresh and sheltered, which his austerity could never blight, nor his measured warrior-march trample down: but as his wife—at his side always, and always restrained, and always checked—forced to keep the fire of my nature continually low, to compel it to burn inwardly and never utter a cry, though the imprisoned flame consumed vital after vital—this would be unendurable.⁶⁷

After this Jane was determined not to go with St. John and from the bottom of her heart sought independence, freedom, and power again. Finally, did she break his chains and as a new woman, powerful, proud and free reclaimed her life. She might have violated the God's will but she escaped a really unfortunate destiny and premature death. Once again she regained her pride and her mind finally cleared and enabled her to live as she wanted.

Jane's life was full of moments her angelic and rebellious sides collided and she went through several periods when either *The Angels in the House* or *The New Woman* became prominent and took over but in the end, she still possessed both of these characteristics. It was the combination of them that allowed her to live a fully content life and break the predestined future.

⁶⁶ Brontë, *Jane Eyre*, 407

⁶⁷ Brontë, *Jane Eyre*, 414

5. CONCLUSION

To conclude the thesis, the aim of it was to describe the life and gender roles in the Victorian period using the example of heroines of two infamous books focusing on the lives of middle-class women living at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. In order to do so, the author decided to choose *The Lodger* by Marie Belloc Lowndes with its heroine Mrs. Bunting and Jane Eyre from *Jane Eyre* written by Charlotte Brontë. Applying knowledge gained from the secondary sources, the lives of these two heroines were described and the stereotypical gender roles pinpointed.

During the Victorian period differences between people's living conditions and their social status were enormous and the gap between social classes became wider than any time before. Despite new inventions and industrialization, it was still extremely difficult for people from the working class and some from the middle class to obtain enough money to satisfy the basic needs. During the reign of Queen Victoria, British Empire became the world power. It might seem as a great paradox that at the beginning of Victorian period working-class people living in The Great Britain, in fact, did not have the power to influence the politics and improve their lives. Fortunately, the situation changed for the working-class people as they gained the right to vote. Moreover, they were allowed to participate in the parliament. Yet still, the differences remained immense.

The upper-class people were the most fortunate ones as they possessed a great property including luxurious villas, a huge amount of money and other estates. This allowed them to hire servants and enjoy a life full of meetings with friends, alcohol and extraordinary food. The upper-class men experienced no difficulties finding a job.

The middle-class people's lives were undoubtedly less fortunate, however, they still could have owned houses and they had enough money to live quite a comfortable life. The middle-class people might have experienced difficulties while finding a job but usually they could find it quite well.

The lives of the working-class people were beyond doubt truly difficult as they gained hardly any money. Their living conditions were harsh since they had no chance to own their own houses; therefore they usually ended up renting small and old flats in which whole

families lived together. These unfortunate people had to take any job offered because when they had none it might have resulted in death.

The bachelor thesis also stresses an essential aspect of people's lives in the Victorian period which is the great difference between men and women. Never in the history seemed gender roles to be that strictly distinguished and position of men and women to be that greatly different. It is essential to again mention the fact that people's lives as described above could not be perceived as easy mainly for the working class and middle class but women's lives were even harder since they lacked privileges men had. In the Victorian period patriarchy was unquestionable and the superiority of men the most obvious. Women in the Victorian era were not allowed to vote and they could not own property. Therefore all the money they earned belonged to their husbands. It was also forbidden for them to divorce their husband unless they were hurt by them.

The lives of Victorian women also differed regarding their social class. Upper-class women did not have to work since their position was at home. This brought the phenomenon of The Angel in the House. This meant that women should have been educated, obedient, calm and in fact, spend the whole day taking care of the house and children. This was also applied to middle-class women. Even these women were expected to stay at home and take care of it. Of course, middle-class women could not hire servants to help them with the burden. Working-class women had to go to work so that the family had enough money to feed children and rent a flat. Most of them struggled to find a job because there were not enough job positions and that resulted in the raising problem of prostitution since that was often the only option to earn some money.

Because of the growing dissatisfaction of British women, a new phenomenon emerged and it was the phenomenon of The New Woman. The New Woman was the answer to the male supremacy as these women started to emancipate. The New Woman was independent, free, usually well educated and mentally strong. These women revolted against given stereotypes and gendered position. They were seeking for equality of genders and thanks to them the women's situation began to steadily improve.

The aim of the practical part of this bachelor thesis was to show the characteristics of The Angel in the House and The New Woman on the examples of Mrs. Bunting and Jane Eyre. In the first part, the author examined the character of Mrs. Bunting from *The Lodger* by Marie Belloc Lowndes. Mrs. Bunting is an older middle-class woman living in a house with her currently unemployed husband. Ellen used to be a servant as well as her husband did. She stays at home and takes care of it. She greatly supports her husband. These characteristics

make her an ideal Victorian woman, in other words, The Angel in the House. She always puts the needs of her husband's before her own needs and she tries to let him live as he was used to. In order to complete this task, she tends to be starving so that her husband can eat at least some meat. When a new lodger arrives, she puts all the effort in satisfying him and taking care of his comfort. This is another aspect making her angelic. But Mrs. Bunting is not only an angelic creature. She possesses the characteristics that may be found in a typical New Woman. She does not consider her husband to be more powerful and therefore she speaks to him in an open way and she does not allow him to make her feel weak. She even dares to lie to the police and thanks to her rational thinking she is the only one to solve the crime when no man has a clue who might be the murderer.

The character of the second novel, Jane Eyre, has had an unfortunate destiny since her childhood when she was taken care of by her aunt who hated her. When she is sent to a boarding school her suffering continues and she is raised there to obtain all the characteristics young lady should have. She is taught French, playing the piano and other skills which middle-class young ladies were supposed to have. When she gets a job a governess which is the best job she as an unmarried middle-class woman and orphan could get, she might be considered again an angelic woman. She behaves as she is supposed to; she is well educated and obedient. However, everything changes when she meets her master. She fights the internal fight between the 'good' and obedient Jane she was brought up to be and her true nature that is more likely to be the one of The New Woman. Jane is naturally rational, clever, self-confident and passionate. Therefore she dares to speak to Mr. Rochester as if they were equal. Another time her two characteristics collide is when she meets St. John and he asks her to obey his orders. She does so. Once again she becomes the angelic woman as she follows the orders of a man and she tries to learn new things. She even considers going to Asia with him to become the right hand of a missionary. Yet when told to marry him, she again feels she would lose her freedom and she revolts.

These two characters undoubtedly nicely illustrate the characteristics and phenomena of both The Angels in the House as well as The New Women. The change between these two states is more noticeable in the case of Jane Eyre. She used to switch between these two stereotypes, whereas Mrs. Ellen Bunting combines both of the characteristics most of the time. Both these women however usually violated the Victorian woman stereotype and therefore became popular heroines among not only women but men as well.

6. RESUMÉ

Cílem této práce je seznámit čtenáře s problematikou postavení a života žen ve Viktoriánské Anglii. Za účelem toho byla vybrána literatura a internetové články zaměřující se na genderovou problematiku a ženské stereotypy té doby. Tyto stereotypní pohledy poté byly ukázány na dvou příkladech, a to na paní Buntingové z knihy *The Lodger* od Marie Belloc Lowndes. Touto knihou se inspirovalo několik filmových adaptací. V naší zemi se můžeme setkat s filmem *Příšerný host* z roku 1927 či novější adaptací *Podnájemník* z roku 2009. Druhým příkladem je potom postava Jany Eyrové ze stejnojmenné knihy od Charlotte Brontëové.

První část této bakalářské práce je zaměřená na problematiku matriarchální a patriarchální společnosti. V této kapitole je popsáno, jak matriarchální a patriarchální společnost funguje, její hodnoty a negativa, která přináší. Je zde taktéž zdůrazněn fakt, že matriarchální společnost ve skutečnosti nepřinášela nadvládu žen, nýbrž spíše vzájemnou spolupráci obou pohlaví a důraz na roli matky. V této společnosti neměl nikdo převahu na rozdíl od společnosti patriarchální. Patriarchální koncept vystřídal matriarchální, avšak v tomto konceptu jde již o rozdělení rolí, při kterém dochází k zvýhodňování mužského pohlaví. Muži jsou v patriarchální společnosti vnímáni jako nadřazené pohlaví vůči ženám, jelikož jsou fyzicky silnější a dle velikosti mozku byli posuzováni i jakožto inteligentnější. Toto jim propůjčovalo roli vůdce, ochránitele a hlavy rodiny. Ženy naopak zastávaly roli manželky, matky a prakticky hospodyně. Jejich údělem bylo muže poslouchat, podporovat a vychovat mu děti. Tyto stereotypní pohledy na role mužů a žen zapříčinila právě patriarchální společnost vyzdvihující úděl muže.

Druhá část se již zabývá přímo životem a situací žen ve viktoriánské Anglii. Zprvu je poskytnut pohled na život lidí v této době a jsou zdůrazněny rozdíly v podmínkách, kterým musely nejen ženy dennodenně čelit. Rozdíly a sociální propast totiž ve Viktoriánské Anglii byly výraznější než kdy předtím. Život lidí z vyšší třídy a pracovní třídy se nedal srovnávat. Muži z vyšší třídy vlastnili honosná sídla, zaměstnávali si sluhy, kteří pomáhali s obstaráním domu a dětí a v neposlední řadě tito muži neměli nikdy problém získat práci. Muži ze střední třídy si taktéž mohli dovolit vlastnit dům, ne však již tak drahý, a neměli sluhy. Práci taktéž byli schopni získat bez větších problémů. Nejhorší situaci museli čelit muži z dělnické třídy. Tito lidé nevydělávali dostatek peněz, aby si mohli dovolit vlastní dům, a proto většinou

skončili v pronajatých starých bytech, jejichž kvalita by se dala popsat jako velmi pofiderní. Pracovní podmínky a pozice, které tyto muži vykonávali, byly nezáviděníhodné. Zpočátku Viktoriánské doby dokonce muži z této třídy neměli právo volit a nijak se zapojovat do politického života v Anglii. Toto se změnilo v letech 1867, kdy muži z dělnické třídy získali právo volit a v roce 1874 se první dva dokonce dostali do parlamentu. Tím se jejich postavení ve společnosti částečně zlepšilo. Nutné je ovšem zdůraznit, že veškeré změny se týkaly výhradně mužů.

Postavení žen ve Viktoriánské Anglii bylo mnohem horší než postavení mužů. Ženy také neměly stejná práva. Na počátku Viktoriánské doby ženy neměly dokonce povoleno ani vlastnit majetek. Veškeré peníze, které si vydělaly, tak patřily jejich manželům. Ženy neměly právo se s manželem rozvést, na rozdíl od jejich manželů, kterým stačilo říci, že je žena podvedla. Díky tomu se i mnoho žen ze střední třídy octlo bez domova jako prostitutky, jelikož přišly o všechno. Problém prostitutek byl v této době za hranicí únosnosti, jelikož množství prostitutek bylo enormní. Dalším právem, které bylo ženám upřeno, bylo právo volit. Toto všechno se týkalo žen bez rozdílu tříd. Rozdíly mezi životy žen z různých tříd však byly také propastné. Ženy z vyšší třídy nepracovaly. Jejich postavení bylo výhradně doma, kde měly dohlížet na chod domácnosti, rozkazovat sluhům, co mají udělat, a starat se o výchovu dětí. Ženy ve střední třídě taktéž zůstávaly mnohdy doma a samy se staraly o domácnost a děti. Ženy z dělnické třídy pak byly nuceny chodit do práce, jelikož by jinak rodina neměla dostatek peněz na obživu.

V této kapitole jsou taktéž zmíněny dva ženské fenomény Viktoriánské doby. Prvním z nich byl tzv. Anděl v domě. Tyto ženy byly vzdělávány v oblasti hudby, zpěvu, umění, hry na piano apod., aby muže nezískaly pouze díky svým schopnostem postarat se o domácnost, ale aby je mohly rovněž zabavit. Anděly v domě byly ženy inteligentní, podporující, mírné a klidné. Opakem pak byla Nová žena, kterážto se snažila vymanit ze stereotypu. Nové ženy byly inteligentní, mnohdy vášnivé a racionálně uvažující. Tyto ženy byly psychicky velmi silné, a vyžadovaly, aby byly uznány rovnými mužům. Nové ženy se snažily získat svobodu, nezávislost a možnost se zabezpečit samy, bez pomoci mužů.

Ve třetí kapitole jsou tyto dva ženské extrémy ukázány na postavě paní Buntingové z knihy *The Lodger*. Paní Buntingová je žena ze střední třídy žijící s manželem v jejich vlastním domě, ve kterém poskytují pokoje k pronájmu. Paní Buntingová se stará o domácnost a plně podporuje svého manžela, jehož potřeby klade vždy před své. Díky nepříznivé situaci, kdy jsou oba nezaměstnaní, je ochotná sama hladovět, aby její manžel měl dostatek jídla. S příchodem nového podnájemníka se paní Buntingová změní v opravdu

andělskou ženu, když se začne navíc starat ještě o potřeby pana Sleutha (jejich podnájemník). Na druhou stranu nemůže být paní Buntingová striktně zařazena do kategorie Andělů v domě, jelikož oplývá i vlastnostmi typickými pro Novou ženu. Ačkoli paní Buntingová plně podporuje svého manžela, chová se k němu jako sobě rovnému. Pan Bunting na toto přistoupí, a proto se ani nesnaží své ženě dokazovat jeho nadřazenost díky pohlaví. Díky tomu s ním paní Buntingová mluví otevřeně a nezdráhá se manžela okřiknout, či kritizovat. Dokonce se jednou odváží i zalhat policii, aby kryla svého podnájemníka. Paní Buntingová je totiž psychicky velmi silnou ženou s dobrým úsudkem a značnou inteligencí, a díky tomu je jako jediná schopná vyřešit záhadné zločiny a odhalit tak vraha.

Poslední kapitola této práce se věnuje postavě Jany Eyrové, u které jsou taktéž popsány vlastnosti jak ženy andělské, tak nové. I Jana Eyrová je ženou ze střední třídy, avšak sirotou. Díky tomu se o ni v dětství starala teta, která ji nesnášela, a tehdy přišly první problémy s autoritami. Z toho důvodu je odeslána do internátní školy. Poté, co dostuduje, stává se Jana andělskou ženou v pravém slova smyslu. Jana je inteligentní žena znalá umění, hudby a cizích jazyků, konkrétně francouzštiny. Taktéž je pečlivá a poslušná vůči autoritám. To dokazuje její chování vůči panu Rochesterovi, když přijede do Thornfieldu a později její chování vůči Janu Křitelovi. Avšak ani Jana Eyrová není pouze andělskou ženou. Ve své mysli svádí neustálý boj s tím, že chce od života něco víc, než být pouhou vychovatelkou. Jana prahne po nezávislosti, dobrodružství, svobodě a soběstačnosti. Brzy taktéž zjistí, že se do sebe s jejím pánem zamilovali, a dovoluje si tak jej popichovat a otevřeně kritizovat. Tím se vzepře stereotypnímu postavení pán a jeho zaměstnankyně. Později se vzepře i Janu Křitelovi, když po ní vyžaduje, aby se za něj provdala, což by pro ni znamenalo ztrátu svobody. Jana se nebojí prát se za svá práva a dokázat, že i ženy mají cíle, sny a hlavně city. Díky tomu se stala oblíbenou hrdinkou nejen žen.

Obě hrdinky patří do střední třídy, což jim umožňuje alespoň určitou možnost volby při hledání zaměstnání, a taktéž jim to povoluje zůstat doma. Obě hrdinky mají vlastnosti, kterými se v určitých chvílích řadí buďto mezi Anděly v domě či mezi Nové ženy. Co je u nich rozdílné, je nejenom jejich věk, ale také to, jak s těmito dvěma protichůdnými stereotypy v jejich životě nakládají. U paní Buntingové je přechod mezi ženou andělskou a novou ne tak znatelný, jelikož úspěšně zvládá syntézu obou během svého života. Díky tomu během svého života stále spojuje vlastnosti a chování jak podporující manželky a ženy v domácnosti, tak ženy silné, nezávislé a inteligentní, která je rovna svému manželovi. U Jany Eyrové je rozdíl mezi těmito dvěma fenomény mnohem markantnější, jelikož, jak sama v knize přiznává, tíhne

k extrémům. Díky tomu je vždy buďto ženou andělskou, nebo se vzbouří, a stane se tak ženou novou. Jana Eyrová není tudíž na rozdíl od paní Buntingové schopná spojit obojí.

Charlotte Brontëová i Marie Belloc Lowndesová ve svých dílech stvořily ženy silné, nezávislé a odporující konvencím. Díky tomu jsou jejich knihy i po letech mezi čtenáři populární a dočkaly se i nejednoho filmového zpracování. Fenomén Nové ženy bojující za svá práva umožnil současným ženám vykonávat pozice, na kterých jsou nadřizenými mužům a získat práva, díky kterým si po letech jsou s muži téměř rovny.

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