

الاصوات المقموعة والمقاومة الداخلية: قراءة نسوية لدور المربية في رواية فيلنت لشارلوت برونتي

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الملخص

يسعى هذا البحث إلى تقديم مجموعة من وجهات النظر المتباينة حول أدب القرن التاسع عشر من خلال دراسة مفهوم المربية. كما توضح هذه الدراسة كيف صوّرت المربية في أوائل القرن التاسع عشر كضحية لظروف صعبة، تحت رحمة أرباب عمل متغربين، بل وقساة أحياناً. وبحلول منتصف القرن التاسع عشر، أثرت التحولات في السياقات الاجتماعية والاقتصادية على حياة المربيات، وبالتالي على طريقة تمثيلهن في الأدب. ورغم أن رواية "فيلنت" لشارلوت برونتي لا تهدف إلى عرض تعليمي، إلا أنها تتناول الصعوبات التي تواجهها المربيات في ظروف معيشتهن من خلال دراسة قضاياهن من منظور نسوي. تُصوّر برونتي بوضوح الحياة اليومية للبطلة، التي تُصارع باستمرار الغطرسة التي يُظهرها أرباب العمل من الجنسين. وتُدرِك البطلة مازقها بأنها عالقة بين وضع الخادمة ووضعها كفرد من النخبة. من خلال هذه الشخصية، تكشف برونتي عن الوحشية والفراغ الأخلاقي اللذين يميزان الطبقة الأرستقراطية في المجتمع الإنجليزي. وبينما تعود أصول شخصية المربية في الأدب إلى حكايات وروايات تعليمية من القرن الثامن عشر، والتي تناولت مربيات نوات مكانة مرموقة، فإن تفاعلات المربيات وحياتهن وتحدياتهن مع طلابهن لم تبدأ بالظهور في الروايات إلا مع مطلع القرن التاسع عشر. وتُعد رواية "فيلنت" من أوائل الأعمال التي استكشفت العلاقة بين المربية وتلاميذها.

الكلمات المفتاحية : النسوية، المربية، النوع الاجتماعي، عدم المساواة، أدب القرن التاسع عشر.

Silenced Voices and Inner Resistance: A Feminist Reading of the Governess in *Villette* by Charlotte Bronte

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Abstract

This research attempts to present a range of contrasting viewpoints on 19th century literature by examining the concept of the governess. This study will also clarify how a governess in the early 19th century was portrayed as a victim of challenging circumstances, at the mercy of conceited and sometimes savage employers. By the mid-19th century, shifts in social and economic contexts influenced the lives of governesses and, consequently, the manner in which the governess was represented in literature. Although the novel *Villette* by Charlotte Bronte does not serve a didactic purpose, it addresses the struggles faced by governesses' living conditions by examining their issues through a feminist lens. Bronte vividly portrays the protagonist's everyday existence. *Villette* continually navigates the arrogance exhibited by both male and female employers. The protagonist perceives her predicament as being ensnared between that of a servant and a member of the elite. Through this character, Bronte unveils the brutality and moral vacuity that characterize the aristocratic class within English society. While the origins of the governess figure in literature trace back to 18th century educational tales and novels featuring established governesses, the interactions, lives, and challenges of governesses with their students only began to emerge in novels at the dawn of the 19th century. *Villette* stands as one of the early works that also explores the relationship between the governess and her pupils.

Keywords: Feminism, governess, gender, inequality, 19th century literature.

1. Introduction

1.1 The novel of *Villette*

This study is based on the view of the role of the governess in *Villette*, a novel published in the 19th century. *Villette* is one of the most famous novels of the 19th century and was written by Charlotte Brontë, who was an English poet and novelist and was quite famous in the 19th century. Brontë was born on 21st April in 1816 in the UK and died on 31st March 1855 (Villette, 2018, pp. 1-12). Brontë was the eldest of the three Brontë sisters, and her nickname was Currer Bell. Her novels became classics of English literature while she was still young, and she generally wrote on the conception of feminism. In 1847, Brontë wrote a novel called *Jane Eyre*, the first of her novels to become famous.

Many people at that time loved *Jane Eyre* as a feminist novel, and moreover, many people now also love to read these types of novels. Apart from that, Brontë wrote several books and novels that were quite famous among in the 19th century, and those novels and books are equally famous in this generation (Baron, 2018, pp.236-242). This research is based on the idea of the governess and feminism as analyzed by Brontë in her novel, *Villette*. The research is based on the role of the governess in the novels of the 19th century. There were a lot of writers and novelists at the time who wrote many books and novels based on feminism and the character of the governess.

Furthermore, among all of the novels and books, *Villette* by Charlotte Brontë is selected in this research in order to analyze the role of the governess in the novels of the 19th century. To support this analysis, the student has used secondary methods and sources to gain information and data about the research topic. The purpose of the research is to analyze the role of the 19th century governess as portrayed in *Villette*. Apart from that, the researchers used a specific theory to understand the motif and variables of the selected novel. The story of the village novel is based on the life story of Lucy Snowe, who is the heroine of the novel (Cafiero, 2018, pp. 106-110).

Lucy Snowe is a girl who is educated but poor and not so pretty, and because of that, she had to face a lot of limitations and restrictions in the society of the 19th century. Many novels were written in the 19th century about the class struggle at that time. Brontë did not focus on the same idea; she wrote about the idea of gender inequality in 19th century society (Fatigato, 2018, p. 18). Brontë analyzes how Dr. Joan, another character in this novel, has been given limitless opportunities despite having the same social class and situation as Lucy. Because Lucy is a girl, however, she has to face hopelessness and limitations and flowers in the society of the 19th century. Thus, this research analyzes Brontë's perspective on the notion of ceremonies or governess as depicted in her novel.

Brontë analyzes 24 characters in the selected novel, *Villette*, all of whom are analyzed in this portion of the research. The novel's main character is Lucy Snowe, a young English woman, and other narratives have analyzed the third journey through Lucy in the particular novel. Brontë analyzes some strong, educated women in her novels, and just like that, Lucy is also educated and from a "gentle" but low-income family in 19th -century society (Delabastita, 2020, p.49). In addition, Lucy had an unhappy childhood without friends, family, or money. Branch described the character of Lucy as a strong, educated girl who has to face several restrictions and

limitations in the society of the 19th century that a man from the same social class and situation does not.

Apart from that, the whole story of the selected novel is the life story of Lucy and the story of what happens to Lucy in the society of the 19th century. The second important character in the novel is Polly, a distant relative of the Brettons. Polly's full name is Paulina Mary Home, and she is younger than Lucy and Graham. In addition to that, Bronte portrays Polly as an emotionally needy, sensitive, and coquettish personality (Roberts, 2017, pp. 383-395). Furthermore, Mrs. Bretton is another very important character in this novel by Bronte. She is the godmother of Lucy and the mother of John Graham Bretton. Bronte depicts the character of Mrs. Bretton as a self-confident woman who dotes upon her only son, John Graham. In addition to that, Bronte describes her as handsome, tall, and beautiful.

The other hand, Dr. John is another essential character whom Bronte analyzes in her novel. As previously mentioned, Dr John is the only son of Lucy's godmother. In addition, Bronte describes Dr. John as a good-looking young man with an energetic and generally cheerful disposition and auburn hair (Boehmer, 2017, pp. 108-115). Moreover, Dr. John has the same degree as Lucy and belongs to a gentle and low-income family in the society of the 19th century. It can be said that along with Lucy, Dr. John is another essential character and lies by Bronte in the novel. In addition to that, *Villette* analyzes the motif of gender inequality in 19th century society by comparing the opportunities that Dr. John has as a man and the limitations that Lucy has as a woman.

Therefore, Lucy and John are the most important characters analyzed by Bronte in *Villette*. Furthermore, Mrs. Home, who is Polly's mother, is another character analyzed by Bronte in this novel. The character of Mrs. Home, who has been long dead when the novel begins, is portrayed as a mother who neglected her child and indulged herself (Beauprey, 2017, pp.45-62). Along with that, Polly's mother separated from her father, and after that, she died of a cold; apart from that, the first name of Mrs. Home was Ginevra, and she was one of the sisters of the mother of Ginevra Fanshawe. In addition to that, Mr. Home, Polly's father, is another character in the novel, whom Bronte portrays as a scientific man who failed in his marriage.

Apart from that, Miss Marchmont is another character in the novel, though it was not an essential or valid character analyzed by Bronte. Her character is depicted as a wealthy lady who offered Lucy to be another companion. In addition to that, Mrs. Barrett is another important character in the novel; she is portrayed as a kind old housekeeper (Hite, 2018, p. 25). Mrs. Barrett was the housekeeper or a servant in Lucy's family before their deaths. Furthermore, Mrs. Barrett advises Lucy to live abroad, which gives Lucy the idea to do so. Another important character in the novel is Madame Beck, a competent, heartless woman who is outwardly kind. She is the proprietress at the school where Lucy works as a teacher.

On the other hand, M. Paul, a cousin of Madame Beck, is another crucial character in *Villette*. The character's full name is M. Paul Emanuel, and he is a teacher at the same school as Lucy. Besides that, Ginevra Fanshawe is another character in the novel, and she is portrayed as a selfish young woman. Furthermore, Ginevra is Polly's first cousin (Zhou et al., 2017). Lucy

meets her during the crossing to France, where she is a fellow passenger on *The Vivid*. Apart from that, another character in *Villette* is M. Isadora, another name for Dr. John, which Ginevra gives him in order to keep his identity secret. He is analyzed as the suitor genera in this novel.

In addition to that, another character in *Villette* is Trinettes, the nursery governess for Madame Beck's three children. Brontë also analyzes the characters of Madame Beck's three children, whose names are Desiree, Fifine, and Georgette. Desiree is the eldest child of Madame Beck, and she is analyzed as a destructive and willful girl by the novel's narrator (Piga, 2021, p. 7). Apart from that, Fifine, the middle child of Madame Beck, is portrayed as an honest and sweet child. Finally, Georgette is the youngest of Madame Beck's children, and her character is less important in this novel.

In addition, Rosine is another character who is not described as significant by Brontë. Rosine is the portresses at Madame Beck's school. In addition to that, Père Silas, a Catholic, is another crucial character in the novel. Père Silas is the Jesuit priest of French origin whom Brontë describes as Lucy's confessor. The character is also instrumental in saving Lucy when she falls on the steps of a building in the Basse-Ville (Phillips, 2021, p. 47). Père Silas is M. Paul's former tutor, and Brontë also shows that Père Silas wants to convert Lucy to Catholicism. In addition, Marie Broc is another character whom Brontë shows to be close to Lucy. Marie is a disabled girl, and Lucy cares for her during her vacations.

Along with that, Count De Hamal is another character in *Villette*. Hamal, a young man with a polished Continental appearance, is one of Ginevra Fanshaw's suitors. The character of Hamal is portrayed as different from Dr. John in manner and appearance. In addition to that, the character of Zelig St. Pierre is a materialistic and grasping teacher at Madame Beck's school (Buckley, 2017, pp. 23-26). Lucy rebuffs Zelig when she tries to become her friend. Apart from that, another character in this novel is Gotton, who is one of the servants in Madame's house. Gotton has a fondness for Lucy in the novel, as analyzed by the narrator.

2. Literature Review

The main character of *Anecdotes of Mary*; or, the Good Governess is Mary Lennox, an embarrassingly ugly child who is kept away from the public view. She is in an unhappy state because of her ugliness. This indicates that female social status was dependent on beauty and financial status during this period. Throughout the entire story, the relationship between well-being and beauty is established in order to highlight the attire of that contemporary society. Thus, compared to an ordinary woman, the social status of a governess was high, but compared to men, women were consistently underestimated. As per the view of Bodin (2020, pp. 783-802), through the character of the governess, deep economic distress has repeatedly been highlighted in several works of fiction of the 19th century. Social beauty had been a significant priority rather than the illness that is elaborated in this novel to show the sick mentality of the Victorian age .

In the 19th century, in contrast to the social and cultural approach, most early literature focused on portrayals of governesses that indicated the highly appreciable detainment towards female teachers and teaching; accompanied by several contemporary novels, social and economic changes could be found in the mid-1800s. Most of the fiction related to the establishment of female social rights used the fictional characterization of governesses to express the authors' beliefs on the subject. For instance, *The Good French Governess* (1801) by Maria Edgeworth is another work of fiction that deals with the historical position of the governess (Baring, 2021, pp. 25-28). In this novel, the female character is also described in circumstances which place her in the position of a victim. During the bloody reign of Robespierre, the main character of this novel, Mad. de Rosier, who belongs to a good family, who has to suffer through gratitude. In this novel, the character of Mrs. Harcourt, a widow, has to face several limitations of society.

On the contrary, her daughter Mad. de Rosier, being a fashionable governess, has a high place in society. Even at a time, she got the chance to get better quality-education abroad to gain the title "lady of quality". According to Jack (2019, p. 213), the eagerness genre novels were related to the other contemporary genre that focused on female development and female rights. In this novel, Maria Edgeworth tries to show the dark side of society in order to highlight the difficulties of a woman who lives with gender discrimination. In addition, the various fiction of the Victorian age also depicts a considerable difference in society's treatment of the middle- or lower-class governess and the upper-class governess. It can also be said that with a new tradition, acceptance becomes more difficult for the people, which was one of the limitations of obtaining female freedom.

As time passed, the governess question became a significant issue of social debate. Another contemporary writer, Dinah Mulock Craik, also introduced the notion of the 19th century governess in her *Bread upon the Waters: A Governess's Life* (1852) (Schreiner, 2020, p. 34). Apart from romantic novels and domestic stories in that same period with the influence of several feminists, Craik also focused on women's rights and the governess debate. The novel is committed to supplying high-quality, safe, and affordable modern education for governesses. The differences between the upper- and middle-class people and their thinking processes are highlighted throughout the novel. Due to having educational bias, a small family income quietly affects the quality of governance. Thus, compared to other women in contemporary society, the governess was paid more attention and afforded more prestige.

Felicia Lyne, the protagonist of the novel, has to face tragic changes in her life because of her stepmother. After being forced to leave home by her stepmother, she takes care of her brothers by becoming a governess. Being educated and qualified, she has the opportunity to work as a daily governess. As opined by Fogolari (2021), a governess was considered one of the most respected ways to earn a woman's own living in that contemporary period. Apart from this, social decimation was present in every step of the life of a governess. Thus, female governesses had a higher social position than other women in society, but they never achieved the same position as men. In this novel, Felicia is a perfect example of a character's transition from an adolescent to a mature woman. The tragic moment she has to face is when she is crippled in an accident and realizes that she cannot live as a governess anymore.

Apart from the Bronte sisters' heroines, another famous governess character was Becky Sharp in *Vanity Fair* (1847) by William Makepeace Thackeray (1811–1863). Becky was an example of a social climber who tried to establish her place in contemporary society (O'Shea, 2019, pp. 202-216). Through the character of Becky, Thackeray successfully depicts the story of a strong-willed young woman set against the backdrop of the Napoleonic Wars. In addition, she experiences the misadventures in family, marriage, and love that lead to the turning point of her character. As it is based on describing racial discrimination and satire, the progress of the character of Becky has been elaborated in a better way. The development of the protagonist character's transformation into modern versions showed a perfect governess approach. Accompanied by several criticisms and with the help of different novels and characters, this study has been designed to provide a clear point of view about the governess of the 19th century.

3. Methodology

This study has adopted feminist theory for understanding the variables and concept of the research topic and the specific novel. Therefore, the relationship between the historical novel and feminist theory is analyzed below. The notion of feminist theory and its importance is also comprehensively analyzed in this particular research. On the other hand, *Villette* focuses on the journey of Lucy, the main character of the novel. The novel's narrator analyses the character of Lucy by focusing on her journey and the issues of gender inequality in the society of the 19th century. According to Brontë's perspective, women had to face more restrictions and limitations than men in 19th century society. Lucy is educated and from a middle-class family, and similarly, Dr John is in the same situation. Still, he has limitless opportunities in the society of the 19th century while Lucy has to face so many limitations.

4. Analysis and Discussion

4.1. Feminist Theory and Its Relation to the Story

This research is based on gender inequality in the society of the 19th century. There are many pieces of literature and novels based on feminism and gender equality in the society of this period. Among all of the novels, *Villette* by Charlotte Bronte was selected for this thesis to analyze the role of governesses in the novels of the 19th century (O'Reilly, 2021, p. 17). After that, the researcher adopted several methods to collect information and knowledge about the research topic. Furthermore, the researcher used the second data collection method and correctly analyzed all the collected data in the research. The researcher used a specific theory, namely feminist theory, to understand the variables and ideas of the selected novel. This theoretical thought and the importance of this research are analyzed below.

According to feminist theory, women should have equal rights as men in society. The purpose of this theory is to understand and analyze the nature of gender inequality in society. Furthermore, there are some key areas of feminist theory that are important for the researcher to understand the significance of the concept of the research topic and the novel. The critical areas of feminist theory are: discrimination, economic inequality, oppression, structural inequality, power, exclusion, objectification, stereotypes, and gender roles (Wulan, 2021, pp. 86-96). In addition, Bronte analyzes the idea of gender inequality in the 19th century through her portrayal of the

opportunities provided to John and the restrictions on Lucy despite the fact that they share the same social class and position. Similarly, feminist theory also focuses on gender inequality in society; therefore, the relation between the theory and the specific novel can be noticed.

There are five types of feminist theory, all of which are based on the notion of gender inequality in society. Those feminist theories are: “radical feminist theory”, “socialist feminist theory”, “multiracial feminist theory”, “liberal feminist theory”, and “postmodern feminist theory”. Among all the theories, the socialist feminist theory was appropriate for this thesis’s analysis of the perspective of Bronte towards gender inequality in the society of the 19th century (Glowacki, 2021). The socialist feminist theory is also known as Marxist feminist theory, a subtype of feminist theory. The Marxist feminist theory focuses on gender inequality and oppression in several social institutions and many other places. Moreover, the relationship between feminist theory and the features of the selected novel is analyzed in this research thesis.

In addition to that, feminist theory describes the nature of gender inequality and the importance of equal rights for women in society. According to Marxist feminism, the women of the society always have to face more difficulties and limitations than the men. There is no particular reason for women to have all those limitations and restrictions on them; the only reason for equal rights for women is they are women (Priyadharshini et al., 2021, pp. 46-59). Furthermore, there were many writers and novelists in the 19th century who expressed their perspective towards gender inequality in their novels and books. Among all the books and novels, *Villette* is one of the most famous and essential novels based on feminism and gender inequality in the society of the 19th century. In this novel, Charlotte Bronte analyzes the circumstances and hopelessness in the life of a girl who is educated.

Along with that, other feminist writers and novelists have written many books and novels on the same motif, and many people loved these novels at the time and continue to do so in this generation. For example, *A Woman of Independent Means* by Elizabeth Forsythe Hailey is one such novel. In addition to that, *Aurora Leigh*, which was written by Elizabeth Barrett Browning, is another novel based on the concept of feminism and gender inequality in society. Apart from that, *All Passion Spent* by Vita Sackville is another novel which describes the restrictions that the women of the society have to face (Pender, 2021).

In *Villette*, the author develops tension and creates an unsettling atmosphere by implying that strange events are caused by supernatural beings such as ghosts or devils. In the end, reasonable explanations are offered for the unusual happenings. The produced nun in *Villette* seems to be Ginevra Fanshaw’s lover in disguise, while the monster in *Jane Eyre* is Rochester’s wife, Bertha Mason. Bertha and the nun have both been stripped of their frightening supernatural qualities. According to Durepos et al., (2017, pp. 1261-1279), feminism is the notion that women should have complete everyday financial and administrative independence. Feminism originated mainly with disagreement in Western civilizations over insufficient privileges afforded to women, although feminist philosophy has many forms and alternatives crossways the creation. The female characters in Brontë’s literature are often pent-up and repressed. For example, Jane Eyre and Lucy Snowe hide their lustful sides from the world. On the other hand, the world outside

This suppression is reflected in the enigmatic figures that appear in the story. In his book *Repression in Victorian Fiction*, John Kucich characterizes love in Bronte's works as "a decently confined animal". such as Bronte, George Eliot, and Charles John Huffam Dickens (Rosiek et al., 2020, pp. 331-346). It has a solid yearning to break away from captivity. The angry Bertha Mason and the mysterious nun are figures linked to the repression-induced doubling. Jane and Lucy are torn between their want to be independent women and their desire for marriage.

On the other hand, the author believed Dr. Reed's soul, tormented by wrongs of his sister's kid, may potentially abandon his abode-whether inside the church vault or within the mysterious realm of the departed-and rise before ME during this chamber," Jane said of the possibility of being visited by his ghost. As Lokot (2018, pp. 802-817) mentioned, the framework of Jane's thoughts about her departed uncle generates an unsettling ambience. Still, the aura is dispelled as it becomes evident that the spectra only exist in Jane's imagination. Jane's uneasiness about being locked up in her room causes her to believe that even something as innocuous as a traditional light may be an indication of a supernatural presence. The activities that take place within the bright orange are nothing out of this world. Jane's apprehension makes reality look a lot scarier than it is. At Lowood, despite Mrs. Reed's best efforts, Jane continues to defy her attempts to tame her loving nature. The research thesis is based on the role of the governess in *Villette*; this topic is analyzed below.

4.2. The Role of the Governess in *Villette*

With allusions to Jane Austen's *Emma* and Charlotte Bronte's *Villette*, the purpose of this study is to represent the social status of women in 19th century England. It attempts to demonstrate, via an examination of Victorian society's expectations of an ideal girl, that during the Victorian period, women were supposed to be obedient, dutiful, unselfish, unbiased, compassionate, and emotionally pure, particularly to their parents and spouses. In early 19th-century England, a particular political ideology of social roles and activities for females was broadly acknowledged. Per Gökçek (2018, pp. 143-155), it was thought that women were shielded from worldly ills and had an ethical impact that could remedy men's errors. According to Victorian culture, a woman's fundamental role in the male-dominated world was mental and ethical leadership, which defined a woman's role as a "better half" or mother.

Lucy argues that "To live amidst general regard... was not enough" (Bronte, 2004, p. 44). Women were considered the heavenly leaders, cleansers, and galvanizers of humankind, and their duty was to aid man in resisting the planet's ills and pleasures. During the 17th and 18th centuries, virtue became more gendered. Ladies were depicted as protective and embodying morality. They were supposed to be angels who were educated in a combination of stringent Christian ideals and rigorous training in domestic skills. Per Galán (2021, pp. 61-72), a sanctuary administered by such angels was the ideal socioeconomic class household. As a result, domesticity was seen as a symbol of female greatness. The "Angel in the House" was designed to be a safe manifestation of an animal farm and confirm materialism as a virtue. The angel's defining characteristics were extreme emotional sensibility, limitless altruism, intellectual inferiority, and a lack of sexual impulses.

It is incomprehensible that these women's flaws were classified as essential components of moral greatness. Ladies were supposed to provide precious ethical leadership to their families, and they were also expected to be free of perverted individual requirements and sensual desires (Bury, 2021, pp. 159-171). As a result, the terrible ideal of motherhood and the soul mate, the source of all morality, purity, and sagacity, emerged as part of Victorian society's rational consciousness. On the other hand, philosophers, authoritarians, and intellectuals added a global and metaphysical dimension to the lady's domestic and familial duty. The development of maternal and caring feelings into supervision of the household of morals and heterosexual monogamy was linked to the female gender. The woman who works at the UN agency develops entirely as a better spouse and mother.

The Victorian image of domesticity and its connotations inside the values of fashionable society included the idealization of woman as nurses and galvanizers of humankind (Carlson, 2020, pp. 13-26). Because they were supposed to avoid even addressing sex, women were viewed as the moral compass of the house and a representation of sexual transparency. They were required to hide their sexuality. The Victorians placed a high value on women's household concerns. Because of these factors, it was considered impolite for a girl to discuss sex in the 19th century. Men will also come to feel that it is their responsibility to protect women from sex. The hidden writing of traits was reflected in 19th-century novels for girls, and these works developed ethical standards. As a result, there is no discussion of sex in Victorian fiction.

For this reason, *Emma*, as a representation of the 19th-century book, avoids any reference to sex. Mr. Knightley, for instance, "loves Emma", but there exist no emotional attachments which lead to sex; however, *Villette* has a sex-related chapter and a rebellious feminine figure resembling Lucy (Cohen, 2017, pp. 171-194). These characteristics of the work make *Villette* a revolutionary novel that defies the conventions for this category of novel during the era in which it was printed. In early 19th-century England, women were not permitted to improve their circumstances via education, employment, or emotional maturity. A woman had little chance to develop her abilities, especially in the early 17th century, because she was only allowed to attempt specific achievements that did not need expertise. For example, women were permitted to play the piano, sketch, and speak, but they couldn't put too much pressure on themselves.

Bronte explains that "A dependent and a novice , I soon found myself humbled" (Bronte, 2004, p. 119). Nineteenth-century society believed that women's purity and maternal impulses would be spoiled by increased education. They also thought that a clever female was a result of nature's mistake. As a result, educated women were despised in society. Despite biases and challenges, the vocation of letters had been available to women since the turn of the century. However, the women were intrigued by the idea of writing like a novelist, so the "Bronte sisters" were forced to assume pennames. Even those who did not employ aliases, such as Jane Austen, were required to write their works down. People in early 19th-century England were inclined to assume that learning was unnecessary for women since civilization did not approve of intelligent women.

In this case, girls could therefore only attend schools that promised to prepare them for marriage. Accordingly, they were taught the fundamentals of French, reading, writing, and mathematics in these institutions. As suggested by Newman (2017, pp. 15-25), since the women were illiterate,

there was little hope for them in the operational categories. Women were not allowed to attend universities or obtain degrees. Because a college education was only available to elite men, university instructors were also men due to the Victorian belief that women were incapable of the continuous intense labour required by university courses. It was about the mid-19th century that community universities for women started to be built with the assistance of revolutionaries who supported these universities in order to help women improve their social status.

This act allowed female instructors to establish themselves as both coaching figures and intellectuals. These colleges offered a rising quantity of subordinate instruction positions for women. The dissatisfaction of upper-class households with the educational options for their daughters led to the establishment of broad public women's colleges. Families of affluence taught their girls around the turn of the century by employing governesses or enrolling them in private schools run by the result in need of funds. Per Mohammed (2019), because neither type of education provided a proper education for girls, public colleges for women were established. The Education Act of 1870 gave non-inheritable women additional job options, the right to vote, and the final seat on university boards.

In the late 19th century, women could only acquire the right to take "regular university" tests and attend lectures given by tutors and professors of men's institutions. By the 1990s, most provincial universities and undergraduate schools had removed their restrictions on female students. Significant numbers had a small but growing number of female instructors, mostly in music, French, and English literature. According to Carroll (2017, pp. 33-47), women were deprived of employment opportunities due to the lack of suitable vocations for them. "All liberal professions were closed to women", especially those from lower social classes. Teacher, servant, nurse, or writer were the roles that aligned with the conventional interpretation of a woman's character, and none of them typically paid well. "The career of letters" was only open to a small number of talented girls who managed despite their limited education. Only seven social class girls are listed as working in the 1851 census, with the majority working as teachers, authors, or painters.

Lucy criticizes the Victorian tradition by saying "women are supposed to be very calm generally" (Bronte, 2004, p. 132). In the early 19th century in England, women were deprived of many opportunities. They faced many problems and did not have the right to improve social conditions through emotional experience, education, or employment. During this period, parents also believed that education was unnecessary for their daughters and that their role was to be ideal wives. The parents were more focused on preparing their daughters to be perfect in doing household duties. Women in this period were also deprived of their legal and social rights, as their legal condition was based on Roman laws. These laws favored men and vested legal existence in the head of a family and did not provide any rights to the women. Additionally, women didn't have enough job opportunities, as there were limited professions available to them. Middle-class women suffered greatly, and the liberal professions were closed to them.

Traditionally, the most common jobs that women were involved in during the Victorian period were governess, nurse, servant, and teacher. Unfortunately, however, these jobs did not provide them with an adequate salary to sustain their lives. According to Gibson (2017, pp. 189-200),

few middle-class women in England were employed, and governess was among the most popular professions for English women. Although the profession of the governess was not respectful, the governess had to deal with humiliation most of the time. The author of this novel, Bronte, once worked as a governess and experienced many disadvantages and humiliations. As stated by Bronte, she felt like an isolated and reserved person among a group of strangers in a large family and was in misery while dealing with these proud and wealthy families. She struggled while communicating with them, and it was a painful experience for her. According to another contemporary woman writer, Elizabeth Gaskell, who also worked as a governess, she experienced humiliation and torment and agreed with Bronte.

Villette by Charlotte Brontë is a novel that mainly focuses on the life and the journey of character development of the protagonist, Lucy Snowe. Through this character, Brontë portrays the social status of Victorian women who worked as governesses. The protagonist moves from England to the fictional city Villette to teach at Madame Beck's school. The novel reveals various hardships intellectual women encounter in a society that provides limited educational and working opportunities. Lucy represents the character of an intelligent and independent woman. The novel shows through M. Paul, a representative of traditional Victorian men, that intellectual women are outcasts from society, as he could accept the primary goal of Lucy to learn and establish herself in a male-dominated society. M. Paul considers that a "woman of intellect" is a "lusus naturae", which refers to an error of nature. Intelligent women were not wanted either as a wife or as workers. M. Paul expects women to be mediocre.

The novel is a mirror of the early 19th-century society where even female characters are not educated, which shows the educational status of women in the Victorian period. Through the character of Lucy Snowe, the author reveals the limited rights and opportunities that were available to women. Women like Lucy had no opportunity to work other than being a governess, servant, teacher, or nurse to earn money. Lucy, an orphan, has to be financially independent; thus, she starts her career as a nurse who takes care of an old lady and then becomes a governess and teacher in Madame Beck's school. The journey of her career development is stated by Lucy herself when she says, "Yes, I'm raising character, once an old lady's companion, then a nursery governess, now a school teacher" (qt. in *Villette*). Although quite ironic, the statement makes fun of the limited professions available for women. She knows that neither the profession of a governess nor the teacher's job is better than the profession of a nurse cum helper of an old lady in terms of the social status of women, but she still she describes her character as "raising".

Like the author, Charlotte Bronte, Lucy does not like her job while working as a governess. She considers her job to be a "hybrid between governance and lady maid" (qt. in *Villette*). This reveals that her profession is quite humiliating for her. There are multiple reasons behind her statement. While working as a governess for three children at Madam Beck's School, Lucy is asked to fulfill various responsibilities unrelated to her profession, such as dressing them. She also dislikes her profession because even though she is a hardworking governess, her profession does not allow her to be educated; she feels excluded and isolated from social life. Her profession imprisons her in domestic affairs and prevents her from having the opportunity to explore her full potential as a human being.

As stated by Simionato (2020, p. 31), due to the limited job opportunities for women during this period, as the novel reveals, most English men prioritized marriage over a job. Hence, the institution of marriage was an essential factor in society. On the other hand, per Haque (2017, pp. 1-11), most women in Victorian society had the perspective that marriage was an ideal opportunity to be more included in society. They also believed that marriage could provide them with a route to freedom to make life decisions and have complete control over their lives, as they were deprived of fundamental rights in their own homes. However, their idea of marriage was a delusion; the only change during a marriage was that the father's control over his daughter shifted to the husband's control over his wife. Lucy is portrayed as quite a different character because she prefers working over marriage, and her goal is to be financially dependent, unlike most Victorian women. Although she does not like her job, she tries to be happy while working as a governess and a teacher by dedicating herself to her profession. She accepts this job because she believes it will allow her to explore her capabilities and give her the opportunity to be more productive and positive in her life.

CONCLUSION

Based on the entire study, it can be stated that governess became popular in the Victorian period. In the 19th century, the governess was an employed woman who instructed pupils in a private household. This study is based on Charlotte Bronte's novel *Villette*, and comprehensively describes the motif of the governess. In the 1840s, the thought of the governess was a topic of debate (Markland, 2018, pp. 179-195). This state of debate continued through the end of the 19th century, indicating a dark side of that period. Women from low-income or middle-class family backgrounds were most likely to face the situation of a governess. Thus, the governess was the most common and renowned character in mid-Victorian life, frequently appearing in English literature by writers from this period. The 1851 Census revealed that nearly 25,000 women in that mid-Victorian age earned their living and met their expenses by teaching (Fenn and McGlynn, 2019). The Bronte sisters were supporters of feminism because they had also faced the cruel side of that contemporary society.

The majority of the features of the novel were related to governesses and women's right to establish a favorable position in contemporary society. The main focus of the fiction was to create a framework for female development. The case for women's rights was based on socially intermediate positions, salary, employment, gender discrimination, violence, argument, and social status. By sharing several characteristics of argument and expression, fiction was an important path-breaking element of the governess debate. It has repeatedly been observed that no governess character in the mid-Victorian age was portrayed without any difficulties or social ups and downs.

Most of the novelists of the 19th century hardly tried to establish the importance of being educated to create a unique place for women. Through the several governess stories, the writers always tried to encourage and support the women of the Victorian age to engage in education. According to McLelland (2018, pp. 6-16), several modern romances supported and co-operated

with the Victorian governess novel genre to develop the social viewpoint. The Bronte sisters were some of the most well-known supporters of feminism and the campaign for women's rights. In majority of their fiction and novels, they focused on establishing powerful female protagonists to highlight the importance of female dictation and social rights. Through the character of Lucy, the Bronte sisters portrayed a different side of contemporary society. In Victorian culture, women had a lower place than men. Bronte revealed a cruel area of gender discrimination that needs to be removed from the security.

During the time of the development of sensational novels, due to the current social negligence toward women, there was a need to motivate women to achieve their social rights. The main character of this novel Lucy is portrayed as an enigmatic character who is identified as a highly-qualified American governess. The adverse situation of a governess's work was only due to social differences and gender discrimination. Even in many functions of social violence could be happening against female rights. Due to the significant difficulties faced by real governesses, authors often portrayed female characters who chose to earn their livelihoods by working as governesses.

The Victorian era is considered a period of change in politics and technology and a revolutionary period in society with the mental development of the middle-class family. In addition, the foundation of the Labour Party also took place at the end of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century. As Binfield and Christmas (2018) stated, the Victorian period involved the introduction of step-by-step changes in society. All the functions and novels served to encourage the process of hiring governesses, with the intention of increasing the number of educated women. The governess was a symbol of wealth and social status in the 19th century. Besides this, the images represented in the contemporary novels are portrayed from society's point of view to understand the cultural stimuli.

With the girls' desire to reform themselves, the story's path takes another direction. The role and importance of children's development are mentioned and highlighted throughout the story. The writer wanted to establish a positive view towards governesses in that contemporary period. As opposed by Fraser (2018, pp. 663-684), 18th century womanhood and feminist are highlighted in the novel. Thus, due to strong social stigma, several types of limitations come in the way of the girls' transformation. In the 19th century, the number of governesses increased rapidly in response to the imbalanced ratio of women to men. All the novels written on the idea of feminist or feminism has considered as encouraging key element to engage more females in the journey of governess. Thus, it had become difficult for women to establish their independence against the strong social stigma.

As the entire study was primarily conducted by focusing on the Bronte's novel to identify the role of governess from her point of view, the study has described the protagonist of the novel. The Bronte's actual goal was to make the governess's plight visible to the English public so other women and reformists would identify these problems and feel compassion for them, which might lead them to reform. According to Capska (2021, pp. 1-17), books about women as workers helped increase the number of governesses and devote an ample space of profession in the 19th century. They have played a role in the path-breaking activity of assisting contemporary women

in thinking about education and fighting for equal social rights to men. This was identified as one of the most equitable steps in the mid-Victorian age to manage social discrimination.

An essential feature of the 19th century governess is the progress towards maturity to improvement to stabilize women's status throughout the character of the heroine of the novels. The majority of the female characters are imperfect and experience less social injustice, but all are created as the center of attraction, and the readers' sympathy is with them. These have been identified as valuable features of the character of the governess. Bohlin (2021, pp. 831-845) observed that an essential aspect of the fictional characterization is that the governess will remain marginalized to direct others. The position of the majority of governesses in several novels is depicted as a wage-earning middle-class woman. From that lower level, the rising and development of the female character is the essential principle of the Victorian age. To affirm negative social status, most of the protagonists become governess heroines from their social sphere.

Whatever novels of the 19th century related with a mystery, gothic, and romance; the governess's character remains in the home. In the character of Lucy, the reader finds her struggling to implement her dream of leading the "life of a governess". Thus, in the 19th century, the governess was an ideal character for examination. According to Turpin (2019, pp. 353-370), social violence, gender discrimination that was identified as the most vital feature of 19th century society has been described throughout the character of Lucy. Thus, it is a love story novel, but it embraces kindness and empathy toward the novel's protagonist. In this respect, the Bronte sisters highlighted women's social position in the contemporary period. In addition, Charlotte Bronte's *Villette* also analyzed the struggling female character of Lucy, who experiences many phases of life.

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