

During Winter and Spring Quarter of 2018, I conducted my senior honors thesis in the English Department. I decided to focus on my favorite novel, Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, for this project. I began by formulating a plan for my project with my thesis advisor, who also mentored me in the MURALS Program the prior year. While I originally wanted to analyze how the affective emotion of sympathy works in relation to the novel's main character, Jane, I quickly realized that a minor character, Bertha Mason, had a much more interesting relationship to sympathy, both in the novel itself and literary criticism written about the novel.

Because *Jane Eyre* has been analyzed extensively by literary critics, my advisor, Dr. Kathleen Frederickson, recommended that I begin by reading a broad range of historical literary criticism beginning with Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar's 1979 work, *The Madwoman in the Attic*. I found most of these sources the old-fashioned way: checking out books from the UC Davis Library. In this famous work of literary criticism, Jane Eyre and Bertha Mason are locked in a Freudian exchange of psychological "doubling" revealing problems embedded within patriarchal gender ideologies. However, more recent post-colonial readings of the novel in the wake of Jean Rhys' novel *Wide Sargasso Sea*, such as Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak's work, address the issues of race within the novel through uncovering the systems of inequality created by colonialism. Using this historical analytic approach, I was able to see how the history of literary criticism has changed over time and how I might bring something new to the table of research. After reading the work of multiple theorists, such as Sianne Ngai, Rae Greiner, and Lauren Berlant, I developed a theoretical framework that brings these two interpretations together using affect theory, focusing on how these authors' theories of envy and sympathy uncover how these emotions address fundamental issues of disparity.

My next task was to incorporate more historical analysis, looking at how the rise of sympathy and sentiment in the 18<sup>th</sup> century might have influenced Brontë. I began by examining Adam Smith's *The Theory of Moral Sentiments*, Mary Stickney Ellis' *The Daughters of England*, and various slave narratives like Frederick Douglass's autobiography. I also wanted to look at newspaper periodicals the Brontës might have read, such as "The Anti-Slavery Reporter" that circulated in Britain around the 1820's. I gained access to this particular newspaper through *ProQuest*, an online database available through the UC Davis Library.

In addition, I sought to develop my analysis of envy and sympathy in the Victorian Era through reading more recent secondary works written in the last ten years by literary critics, such as William Cohen, Lara Freeburg Kees, Deanna Kreisel, and others. My mentor recommended multiple databases for finding secondary sources, all of which could be accessed through the library. For instance, I utilized the MLA International Bibliography, which has scholarly articles, academic papers, and dissertations in worldwide languages and literatures. It is a great tool for finding periodicals, peer-reviewed journals, and cutting-edge, academic information on a vast body of literary criticism. I also used the JSTOR database to find multiple articles for my research. JSTOR has a wide range of essays and journals on various topics in the humanities and was extremely useful for finding most of my sources on topics specific to my research, such as articles on sympathy in *Jane Eyre* or other nineteenth century fiction. Additionally, the Eighteenth Century Collections Online database has access to materials from the time period just before the Victorian Era. It gave me access to books published in the 18<sup>th</sup> century, such as Adam Smith's work, that provided greater historical context for my research. Another database that my mentor recommended was Project Muse, which contains various peer-reviewed journals and other scholarly material on the Victorian Era. My search terms for these databases varied

depending on the topic, but they typically included words or phrases like “sympathy”, “envy”, “nineteenth century literature”, and/or “Bertha Mason”.

After finding my sources through various means, I began to put them into conversation with each other and the novel. During this process, I found that the concept of affective mirroring through performance, as seen in theoretical explorations of sympathy and envy, might provide a new perspective that joins together the historical interpretations of second-wave feminist and postcolonial theories. Additionally, I uncovered that, while scholars have extensively studied how Brontë uses the abolitionist rhetoric of sympathy to talk about Jane’s racialization, they have not discussed how the author strategically denies sympathy to the novel’s woman from the British colonies, Bertha Mason. Thus, my research adds to a long history of literary criticism by revealing how literary critics have historically overlooked this crucial aspect of Brontë’s novel.