

The Representation of Female Anger in Persuasion, Jane Eyre, and Beloved

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The Representation of Female Anger in *Persuasion*, *Jane Eyre* and *Beloved*

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Abstract

The objective of this thesis is to analyze the manifestation of female anger in the novels *Persuasion* by Jane Austen, *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Brontë, and *Beloved* by Toni Morrison. In order to do this, I will observe, through a feminist and a psychological approach, women's response to anger in these three novels, illustrating two major reactions and their nuances: expression and repression of anger. In all three novels, I identify oppression as the main source of female anger, showing how gendered and social constructs impact women's relation to anger, and their way to express it. I will also focus on the importance of control and lack of control over one's manifestation of anger, exploring anger's various forms. My analysis will focus on the main female characters of each novel: Anne Elliot, Jane Eyre, Beloved, Sethe. I will also compare and contrast their responses in relation to anger to characters of the same sex, and of the opposite sex. In my analysis of *Persuasion*, I will focus on the role of repression, in terms of anger in the case of Anne, and of feelings in the case of Wentworth; I will also consider women's need to limit their display of anger. In the chapter on *Jane Eyre*, I will observe Jane's development of a management of anger, contrasting angry outbreaks to a controlled verbalization of anger. In *Beloved*, I will analyze the manifestation of an uncontrollable anger, highlighting its relation to revenge and love. Through this analysis, I aim at identifying the common threads in the representation of female anger in these three novels, while also reflecting on how these texts present a different approach towards female anger and its manifestation.

Dedication

To my grandmothers: Rachele and Ester

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1. Female Anger: Expression and Repression

One of the major roots of female anger is oppression. Women, in literature and life, are often exposed to injustices and restrictive gender constructions, which lead them to two possible reactions in relation to anger: expression or repression. To be socially acceptable, women need to conform to the ideals of femininities society imposes without defying these authorities, or showing signs of distress and uneasiness. Thus, based on their acceptance or resistance of these gender constructs, women either repress or express anger. However, the line between expression and repression is not so neat, as the manifestation of anger comes in different shapes and at different levels, and it can represent a dangerous threat, but also a useful tool to tackle oppression. The purpose of this thesis is to observe the representation of women's expression and repression of anger in the novels *Persuasion* by Jane Austen, *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Brontë, and *Beloved* by Toni Morrison.

In order to analyze how the women of these three novels manage anger, it is necessary to identify the main source of female anger in these stories, which is oppression. Despite the different contexts, the women in these novels are exposed to oppressive systems which limit their freedom, and which apply certain impositions and restrictions on their behavior due to gender constructs. As a result, they endure injustices and pain because of their limited agency. Their anger is therefore a resistance to such limitation.

In *Persuasion*, Anne Elliot has to repress her own anger to comply to the model of angelic, self-denying woman, in order to obtain a socially acceptable happy ending, which is her marriage with Wentworth. This notion of an ideal woman can be traced back to the production of

conduct manuals for women during Jane Austen's times. Ingrid Tague investigates how such readings intend to instruct women on their gendered role, declaring that these manuals "sought to restore traditional gender roles by describing in detail every aspect of the ideal woman" (80). Tague highlights that these notions of femininity are based on women's assumed natural disposition to obedience and submission to men, influencing women's decisions: "Their [women's] choices were seen as a crucial test of feminine behavior" (84). In *Persuasion*, Austen shows Anne's compliance to such "feminine behavior," as she obeys to her family and Lady Russell, being "prudent, self-denying" (24) in her choice of not marrying Wentworth at the beginning of the novel. Her rejection to his proposal can be therefore considered as a test of whether or not she possesses and can display her "feminine behavior." Tague also emphasizes that the objective of these manuals is training women to be as suitable wives: "Female readers were told that matrimony was their natural destiny" (84). However, Tague clarifies that conduct manuals stress the need for a sentimental marriage, asserting that love would lead women naturally to submit to men: "Women thus had to obey their husbands, and they could only obey where there was love" (86). By encouraging female readers to marry for love, conduct manuals aim at convincing women that they would be willing to accept their female role as subject to men. Hence, Tague stresses that the authors of such manuals regard women's signs of independence, or attempts to defy their husbands, as a threat to the balance of their "natural" disposition, arguing, "Obedience was natural, according to conduct literature, and women who could not cheerfully accept their natural submission to their husbands were, therefore, monstrous and unnatural" (87). Thus, these manuals perpetuated the idea that women should act in a certain way in order to achieve their appointed "natural" destiny, which is marriage. Nonetheless, these readings also attempt to encourage the pursuit of a sentimental marriage, which would lead

women to accept their submission to their husbands. In *Persuasion*, the marriage between Mary and Charles provides the example of a married couple in which the woman is unhappy and angry at her husband, perhaps implying that her distress is the outcome of a marriage which is not based on love. However, Mary is attentive in limiting her expression of her distress towards her husband. Her attitude can show an awareness of the demonized depiction that conduct manuals appoint to women who rebel, a social construct leading women to conceal their negative feelings such as rage and rebellion, in order to be socially accepted. This mechanism explains what influences Anne Elliot to repress all the feelings and thoughts that would lead her to be angry at her oppression and her oppressors. Instead, by adopting rationalization and cultivating sympathy in order to cope with her pain, Anne conforms to the ideal, quiet, and “feminine” behavior that does not allow anger to prevail on her. Nonetheless, Anne’s character goes beyond her conformity to the “ideal woman” perpetuated by conduct manuals, demonstrating her strength in her role of caregiver and quiet woman, in relation to Wentworth and to the other female characters in the text. Through her compliance to the “ideal woman,” Anne demonstrates that her feminine behavior is a strength that allows her to suppress her desires, to endure pain, and obtain what she wants, satisfying both society’s expectations and her own once she marries Wentworth after he becomes a socially acceptable partner.

Being socially acceptable gains particular importance also in *Jane Eyre*, as Jane needs to restrain her expression of anger in order to fulfill her need to be loved and accepted. In Brontë’s novel, the expression of female anger is more overt, as Brontë creates a heroine who must learn to manage her anger. Jane starts as a passionately angry child, who often displays outbursts due to her isolation and lack of love. When she grows into an adult, she is able to verbalize her anger in a controlled and calm manner, relying on moral values that lead her to a controlled approach

to anger. Conversely, Bertha does not show such a controlled expression of anger, given her madness which impairs her ability to calmly verbalize her rage, as Jane does.

While as a child Jane is dominated by her passionate outbursts, as an adult she is able to govern her anger, allowing herself to quietly recollect her moral values, which lead her to express anger through a controlled rhetoric. This transformation of anger can be compared to the character of Proserpina from the Greek classical tradition, as reimagined by Geoffrey Chaucer in “The Merchant’s Tale.” Chaucer turns Proserpina from a passive victim into an active character, and Joseph Turner describes her as “a woman who uses her voice to fight against men and the power structures that privilege them” (441). Proserpina’s attempt to defy patriarchy resembles Jane’s feminist statement, in which she argues that despite women are expected to act in a calm and quiet way, “women feel just as men feel” (Brontë 129). Turner also notes that Proserpina adopts angry rhetoric to defend herself from abuse and misogyny: “Proserpina’s angry speech both theorizes and enacts a model of defensive rhetoric that characterizes women’s speech throughout the *Canterbury Tales*” (442). Furthermore, Turner emphasizes that Proserpina’s performance of anger is tied to a wish to defy her assaulter, as he argues:

On one hand, she is the rightfully angry victim of sexual assault, and it is easy to imagine Proserpina’s “caustic voice” and “turbulent gestures,” or how a performer might imitate them. On the other hand, her speech is rhetorically calculated to take power from her husband. Geoffrey of Vinsauf’s distinction between inward and outward anger recalls medieval theories of the passions of the soul, which theorized that outward anger is accompanied by predictable somatic effects. (445)

Thus, Proserpina’s expression of anger resides on her ability to adopt persuasive and manipulative rhetoric in order to defy oppression and power dynamics, in order for the “angry

victim” to “take power from her husband.” This resembles Jane’s development of rhetorical skills in her expression her anger, through which she is no longer subject to oppression, as her self-control allows her to prevail on Rochester, for instance, when he wants to convince her to marry him once she has discovered about Bertha. This attempt to reverse power dynamics can be found also in Bertha, who through her angry outbreaks aims at defying and destroying Rochester, as shown by her burning of the house. This violent attempt to reverse power dynamics might also reflect Sethe’s murder of her baby in *Beloved*; Sethe’s act can be interpreted as an attempt to reverse power dynamics, through which she uses violence, in order to avoid that her oppressors enslave her child, achieving, to some extent, a “triumph” over slavery.

In the excerpt, Turner also cites Vinsauf’s analysis of inward and outward anger, and its relation to the “passions of the soul.” This relation between anger expression and passion can be connected to Jane’s development of rhetorical skills. She has the ability to show her anger through language, marking the difference between the passionate language which used to dominate her as a child, and her mastery of anger expression as an adult. Hence, differently from Rochester and Bertha, Jane is able to cope with her oppression learning to express her opinions in a socially acceptable way, relying on moral values which enable her to offer a quiet verbalization of her rage.

In *Beloved*, anger is explored in relation to the oppression of slavery. As if to match the intensity of this system of oppression, the manifestation of anger in this novel exceeds the boundaries set by nature and social norms, as shown by Sethe’s murder of her child. The manifestation of anger in response to the injustices and the consequences of slavery occurs through violence, sacrifice, recollection of trauma, and revenge. The excess of this expression of anger reflects the excessive oppression which women of color are subject to in this novel.

Audre Lorde suggests that responding to racism means responding to anger, emphasizing that anger is a natural reaction to racial oppression: “Women responding to racism means women responding to anger, the anger of exclusion, of unquestioned privilege, of racial distortions, of silence, ill-use, stereotyping, defensiveness, misnaming, betrayal, and coopting” (278). Consequently, Lorde identifies racism as a natural source of anger; nevertheless, she also believes that anger could be useful to fight oppression. Lorde asserts, “Every woman has a well-stocked arsenal of anger potentially useful against those oppressions, personal and institutional, which brought that anger into being” (280). Lorde suggests that anger, which is an outcome of oppression, can actually represent a useful tool itself to fight oppression and should be expressed. Lorde considers anger useful as it can bring together people, and trigger a better change in the world: “We use whatever strengths we have fought for, including anger, to help define and fashion a world where all our sisters can grow, where our children can love, and where the power of touching and meeting another woman’s difference and wonder will eventually transcend the need for destruction” (285). Thus, according to Lorde anger can be useful to build a better future, which involves equality and peace, and not destruction.

Nevertheless, in *Beloved*, anger is destructive and self-destructive, as its expression involves revenge and violence, manifested in Sethe’s murder of her own child. Morrison’s use of this kind of anger can be compared to Eurypide’s Greek tragedy, *Medea*, in which Medea gets revenge on her husband, Jason, by murdering their children. Brad Levett observes:

Medea’s tragedy (in the modern sense) is that she is so successful in appropriating the model of heroic behavior that she applies it in its most exaggerated, and ultimately, destructive, form. The complete autonomy, self-control, and strength she develops in her use and response to language results in her decision to kill her

children, and she thereby proves herself resistant even to her own better judgement.

(55)

Levett shows that Medea's revenge culminates in a destructive and exaggerated choice, which is the murder of her children. Nevertheless, Levett also emphasizes that this action requires self-sacrifice and self-control for Medea: these two characteristics can also be traced back to Jane's self-control in *Jane Eyre*, as she develops a controlled verbal expression of her anger, and to Bertha, who through her suicide, is not only committing an extreme act in response to oppression, but also enabling Rochester and Jane to be together, an act which can be read as a self-sacrifice. However, Medea's murder mostly resembles Sethe's murder in *Beloved*, as Levett argues, "Moreover, by killing her children she [Medea] is, in turn, harming herself" (64). Thus, Medea's murder of her own children is a double-edged sword, as she deprives herself of her own children in order to harm her enemy, Jason. This event resembles Sethe's act, as she seeks revenge against the slavery system and commits an act that also harms her personally, which is murdering her child. Unlike Medea, Sethe's act of murder is also influenced by the love for her child, as she wishes to save her from slavery by killing her, while also performing an act of resistance that aims at prevailing over slavery. *Beloved's* return, too, can represent both an act of revenge to defy her mother, but also as an act motivated by her love for her.

The female characters in *Persuasion*, *Jane Eyre*, and *Beloved*, are all subject to various forms of oppression, which cause them to manage their anger either through repression or expression. Hence, the objective of this thesis is to investigate, by adopting a feminist and a psychological approach, the manifestation of female anger as a response to oppression and mode to obtain justice in these texts. In *Persuasion*, I will focus on Anne's repression of anger; in *Jane Eyre*, I will consider Jane's development of an expression of a controlled anger, while in

Beloved, I will analyze the manifestation of an uncontrollable anger. In all novels, I will also observe how the female protagonists' relation to anger is compared to that of the characters of the same sex, and of the opposite sex. Although these novels are set in different contexts and represent anger in various forms, they all illustrate women's responses to oppression and injustice in relation to anger.

2. Anne Elliot's Lack of Anger in *Persuasion*

Anne Elliot, the protagonist of Jane Austen's novel *Persuasion*, lacks anger and its performance. This repression of anger results from the oppressive gender norms and expectations imposed on women, which restrict them from acting and reasoning in a rebellious way. This oppression influences what women show and conceal, as they are aware that the consequences of their actions can impact their financial realities and social status. These consequences are also strictly related to women's reliance on men and marriage to them, which is the reason Lady Russell's and Anne's family persuade her to reject the man she loves, Captain Wentworth. Anne's sacrifice causes her pain, but surprisingly she does not show resentment or anger towards her oppressors as she constantly rationalizes people's actions and reactions, sympathizing with those who make her suffer, instead of fostering her negative feelings and turning them into anger. By contrast, Wentworth responds to her rejection of his proposal through anger, repressing his love for her, and trying to avoid her as much as possible. Other female characters, instead, such as Mary, Elizabeth, and Mrs. Smith, verbalize their anger as a response to their oppression and subjection to men, although they only express it in the presence of a limited and safe female audience. This chapter analyzes Anne's lack of anger by focusing on Anne's response to pain. It then compares Anne and Wentworth's different kinds of relation to repression, and considers the responses of other angry women within the text such as Elizabeth, Mary, and Mrs Smith, whose anger serves as a foil to Anne's lack of it.

In *Persuasion*, there are restrictions and rules for women to follow, especially for those who, like Anne, belong to a higher social rank. For such social and financial reasons, Anne's family and Lady Russell lead Anne to renounce to her engagement to Wentworth, despite her

feelings for him. Although Anne's choice to comply with her family's wishes is comprehensible given her youth, dependence and gentle nature, she offers no outbursts of rage or resistance to their persuasion. Instead, she reacts by rationalizing other people's behavior and sympathizing with them, a feature which is consistent with Anne's character throughout the novel. While she values her own emotions, she is not strong enough to resist her authority figures, and she trusts them, thereby conforming to the model of submissive behavior imposed on women in the conduct manuals. Austen describes Anne's response to the persuasions of her family, and Lady Russell:

Such opposition, as these feelings produced, was more than Anne could combat. Young and gentle as she was, it might yet have been possible to withstand her father's ill-will, though unsoftened by one kind word or look on the part of her sister; but Lady Russell whom she had always loved and relied on, could not, with such steadiness of opinion, and such tenderness of manner, be continually advising her in vain. She was persuaded to believe the engagement a wrong thing: indiscreet, improper, hardly capable of success, and not deserving it. But it was not a merely selfish caution under which she acted, in putting an end to it. Had she not imagined herself consulting his good, even more than her own, she could hardly have given him up. The belief of being prudent, and self-denying, principally for his advantage, was her chief consolation, under the misery of a parting - a final parting; and every consolation was required, for she had to encounter all the additional pain of opinions, on his side, totally unconvinced and unbending, and of his feeling himself ill-used by so forced a relinquishment. (24-25)

Most importantly, Anne's conformity to models of ideal womanhood mean that her refusal is based in adherence to ideas of propriety as well as self-sacrifice. Anne is persuaded to refuse

Wentworth against her will because of social values which would define the marriage as “indiscreet, improper, hardly capable of success.” She chooses therefore not to cause such a scandal through this marriage, but to act according to positive behaviors she has been conditioned to see as virtues such as “being prudent, and self-denying.” The juxtaposition of these sets of adjectives reveals that Anne chooses to embrace society’s notions of femininity, being “young and gentle,” conforming to the gendered role according to which she should be pure and quiet, and therefore, not strong enough to fight the opposition to this marriage. The use of the verb “combat” suggests a gendered language associated with masculine military world, which seems to be opposed to Anne’s own “young and gentle” character with its suggestions of frailty, vulnerability, and innocence. Interestingly, however, in the depiction of Lady Russell, who has “such steadiness of opinion, and such tenderness of manner,” there is a mixture of “masculine” strength and “feminine” behavior. The authority of this character suggests that gendered terms can mislead, forging mistaken assumptions about what differentiates men and women. Nevertheless, Anne decides to conform to her assigned gender role by sacrificing her “selfish” wishes in order to be “prudent” and benefit others, putting herself and her desires on a lower level compared to the imagined advantages to Wentworth and her family. Hence, her behavior and way of reasoning suggest that she is a selfless woman, who discards the importance of her desires, and replaces them with a sense of duty which precludes her ability to feel or express anger as she is unable to acknowledge the presence of an injustice itself.

What ultimately influences Anne’s choice is not her reliance on social norms, which serve as a rational motivation for her refusal, but her love and affection for the ones she cares about; thus, her choice reinforces her role as a “woman of feeling.” The person who convinces Anne is Lady Russell, “whom she had always loved and relied on,” who is her maternal figure, and one

of the few characters in the novel who shows genuine affection for her. Anne is also choosing not to marry Wentworth because she believes to be doing this for “his advantage,” suggesting that Anne is not angry at the ones who lead her towards her pain and unhappiness because she loves them, and therefore, is unable to feel any rage towards them. About her behavior, Jeannie Sargent Judge observes, “Anne agrees to assume the traditional, or socially imposed, role of caregiver; and, more relevant to her emotional state, she internally assumes the role of psychoanalyst as she endeavors to clarify her relationship to Wentworth” (48). Judge implies that Anne as a woman is forced to balance two parts of herself, which is her acceptance to act accordingly to self-denial and her “caregiver” role, and her willingness to evaluate and reason about her feelings and relationship with Wentworth. Nevertheless, Wentworth responds very differently to Anne’s rejection, showing an active expression of his anger and injured pride, rather than a hope for a beneficial outcome for his beloved. His anger is selfish and expressed, while hers is selfless and repressed.

Thus, while Wentworth reacts to the pain inflicted by Anne’s rejection in a jealous and revengeful way, Anne does not blame the persuasion of others for her suffering, but consistently copes with her pain through calm and rationality. This response emerges in the passage in which she reasons about what Wentworth thinks of her when they meet after many years of separation, as Austen channels Anne’s thoughts, ““So altered that he should not have known her again!” These were words which could not but dwell with her [Anne]. Yet she soon began to rejoice that she had heard them. They were of sobering tendency; they allayed agitation; they composed, and consequently must make her happier” (54). Anne’s response to Wentworth’s hurtful words shows the repeated pattern in Anne’s reactions towards people who inflict pain on her, as she rationalizes and analyzes others’ behaviors through a positive attitude, in order to find a reason

for the pain which reveals a silver lining. This behavior, nonetheless, does not preclude her from enduring pain, as Austen writes:

Her attachment and regrets had, for a long time, clouded every enjoyment of youth, and an early loss of bloom and spirits had been their lasting effect. More than seven years were gone since this little history of sorrowful interest had reached its close; and time had softened down much, perhaps nearly all of peculiar attachment to him, but she had been too dependent on time alone; no aid had been given in change of place (except in one visit to Bath soon after the rupture), or in any novelty or enlargement of society. No one had ever come within the Kellynch circle, who could bear a comparison with Frederick Wentworth, as he stood in her memory. (25)

Thus, Anne does not respond to injured feelings through anger, but through reason and a deep attachment to the past, which makes her unable to love anybody else after her story with Wentworth. Thus, Anne's long-lasting pain might be a result of the lack of anger which would have allowed her to express her distress outward, and avoid turning it inward to such an extreme point that she is filled with pain for such a long time.

Conversely, Captain Wentworth projects his pain outward, as he reacts to his hurt feelings with pride and firm anger towards Anne, accompanied by the wish to overcome her rejection by finding another woman, leaving the past wound behind. While Wentworth's outward expression of anger allows him to manage pain without being overwhelmed by it like Anne, his persistent avoidance of Anne and attempt to replace her with another woman suggest that he has not overcome his pain or his love for Anne despite his attempt to tell himself he has. Austen notes:

He had not forgiven Anne Elliot. She had used him ill deserted and disappointed him; and worse, she had shown a feebleness of character in doing so, which his own decided,

confident temper could not endure. She had given him up to oblige others. It had been the effect of over-persuasion. It had been weakness and timidity. He had been most warmly attached to her, and had never seen a woman since whom he thought her equal; but, except from some natural sensation of curiosity, he had no desire of meeting her again. Her power with him was gone for ever. It was now his object to marry...He had a heart for either of the Miss Musgroves, if they could catch it; a heart, in short, for any pleasing young woman who came in his way, excepting Anne Elliot. (54-55)

Wentworth, like Anne, has not forgotten her and what happened between them; still, his reaction shows a resentment and an anger towards her which he still has neither resolved, nor fully acknowledged. In addition, the contradictions in the description of his mindset suggest that although he tries to repress his own feelings to himself, he still loves her, as he “had never seen a woman since whom he thought her equal.” His firmness in not wanting to be with Anne shows that he is not indifferent to her, and is still dealing with the suffering she inflicted on him. A potential explanation of his behavior is provided by Anne in her discussion with Captain Harville about gender differences in terms of love:

I hope I do justice to all that is felt by you, and by those who resemble you. G_d forbid that I should undervalue the warm and faithful feelings of any of my fellow-creatures! I should deserve utter contempt if I dared to suppose that true attachment and constancy were known only by woman. No, I believe you capable of every thing great and good in your married lives. I believe you equal to every important exertion, and to every domestic forbearance, so long as - if I may be allowed the expression - so long as you have an object. I mean while the woman you love lives, and lives for you. All the privilege I

claim for my own sex (it is not a very enviable one; you need not covet it) is that of loving longest, when existence or when hope is gone. (217)

Anne's reflection suggests that she believes that Wentworth has no longer "loved" her since her rejection because of her absence from his life. Anne implies that she was still able to love him for all those years even when he was not physically with her anymore because women's love lasts longer than men's. However, what she presumes to be Wentworth's lack of love is actually a lack of consciousness of love. About this, Kay Young argues:

A man needs an "object," she [Anne] claims, for his attachment to live on, present to him as the woman who loves him and who lives for him. Wentworth had lost his "object," and with this loss had gone consciousness of his attachment. With the return of his relational object, Frederick can again know himself in conscious articulation of his attachment. Yet the articulation of the attachment as Frederick's "final" coming to consciousness of his feelings happens in relation to another, before himself. Like the other gentleman's glance and the wrong lover's blow to the head, Frederick comes to articulate his attachment to Anne only after his encounter with an object outside of himself that mirrors his position or enables him to encounter himself through his identification with the object. (88)

Young implies that Wentworth needs external stimuli or objects to keep his love alive. As long as his injured pride leads him to establish boundaries between himself and Anne, he will no longer find the "object" he needs for his love to be expressed and acknowledged. Wentworth becomes conscious of his feelings only through external stimuli which make him become aware of himself, and that is when he realizes that he is in love with Anne. This can be shown by his jealousy of Mr. Elliot, which emerges in the passage in which he interrupts Anne and Wentworth:

He [Mr. Elliot] begged her pardon, but she must be applied to, to explain Italian again...Anne could not refuse; but never had she sacrificed to politeness with a more suffering spirit. A few minutes, though as few as possible, were inevitably consumed; and when her own mistress again, when able to turn and look as she had done before, she found herself accosted by Captain Wentworth, in a reserved yet hurried sort of farewell. "He must wish her good night; he was going; he should get home as fast as he could." "Is not this song worth staying for?" said Anne, suddenly struck by an idea which made her yet more anxious to be encouraging. "No!" he replied impressively, "there is nothing worth my staying for;" and he was gone directly.

Jealousy of Mr. Elliot! It was the only intelligible motive. Captain Wentworth jealous of her affection! (174-175)

In the excerpt quoted above, Wentworth is clearly annoyed by the presence of Elliot, and reacts by abruptly leaving, not before commenting that "there is nothing worth my staying for," an allusion to his interest in Anne, which Anne catches; nonetheless, she represses her desires once more due to "politeness." Wentworth's allusion also suggests that he has a growing consciousness of his romantic feelings for Anne. This emerging feeling can also be seen in the scene in which he overhears the discussion between Anne and Captain Harville at White Hart, which begins when the question of heeding parental advice about marriage is raised by Mrs. Croft:

"To begin without knowing that at such a time there will be the means of marrying, I hold to be very unsafe and unwise, and what I think all parents should prevent as far as they can."

Anne found an unexpected interest here. She felt its application to herself, felt it in a nervous thrill all over her; and at the same moment that her eyes instinctively glanced towards the distant table, Captain Wentworth's pen ceased to move, his head was raised, pausing, listening, and he turned round the next instant to give a look—one quick, conscious look at her. (213)

In this scene, there is an emphasis on Wentworth's consciousness when he looks at Anne, who catches his interest in her, as his internal defenses collapse expressed symbolically when his pen falls: "It was nothing more than that his pen had fallen down; but Anne was startled at finding him nearer than she had supposed, and half inclined to suspect that the pen had only fallen because he had been occupied by them, striving to catch sounds, which yet she did not think he could have caught" (215). Thus, Wentworth in this scene is displaying his rising consciousness of his feelings for Anne through visible actions, perhaps rendering himself vulnerable enough for Anne to know about his feelings.

Hence, Wentworth's and Anne's ways of coping with hurt feelings seems to be attached to consciousness and repression. While Anne consciously embraces her feelings for Wentworth, responding through a rational evaluation when he hurts her and avoiding any kind of anger towards him, Wentworth represses his romantic feelings towards Anne, and attempts to conceal them through his unresolved rage, until he cannot resist them any longer. On this dynamic, Arthur Walzer suggests, "These two lovers complement each other in a decidedly gendered way: Anne is paradigmatic of female sensitivity and receptivity and Wentworth of male assertiveness and resolve" (700). Therefore, according to Walzer, the two lovers match each other exactly because of their different gendered approaches, suggesting that through this relationship, they might learn more from each other and offer compensation for each other's coping mechanisms

towards pain. Walzer therefore believes that their different approaches are a result of their gender, inferring that their attitudes comply to gendered constructs, but also that they complement each other. Hence, their relationship could enable them to learn from each other's approach, leading Anne to turn her suffering outward for release instead of fostering it for years, and Wentworth to consciously embrace his romantic feelings for Anne.

One further potential explanation of Anne's lack of rage might be the novel's society emphasis on "manners" and "self-control," leading women to govern and self-regulate their emotions, avoiding behaviors which would cause scandals or a bad reputation. Anne is repeatedly praised for her calm and her self-control; yet, other female characters in the novel express anger, though they do so in a controlled setting and to a limited audience. This controlled rage can be seen in Anne's older sister, Elizabeth, when Austen describes her injured feelings towards Mr. Elliot:

This very awkward history of Mr. Elliot, was still, after an interval of several years, felt with anger by Elizabeth, who had liked the man for himself, and still more for being her father's heir, and whose strong family pride could see only in him, a proper match for Sir Walter Elliot's eldest daughter. There was not a baronet from A to Z. whom her feelings could have so willingly acknowledged as an equal. Yet so miserably had he conducted himself, that though she was at this present time, (the summer of 1814.) wearing black ribbons for his wife, she could not admit him to be worth thinking of again. (6)

The quotation shows that Elizabeth "felt" angry towards the man; however, she is not openly expressing her pain, being overwhelmed by her pride, and deciding to repress her feelings as she "could not admit him to be worth thinking of again." Elizabeth's response resembles Wentworth's coping mechanism, and not her sister Anne's repression. While Anne represses her

own negative feelings so as not to feel any anger at all, replacing it with compassion, Elizabeth is aware of her anger, but she conceals the way she feels inside, allowing her anger to exist though not to be displayed. John E. Grant observes:

The paragraph in question begins by declaring the “anger” still felt by Elizabeth and the very sentence which appears to declare that Elizabeth was in mourning for the dead wife of Mr. Elliot also states that “she could not admit him to be worth thinking of again.” Together, these statements are hardly compatible with Elizabeth’s alleged show of mourning...Conceivably, the customs of mourning within the extended family occupying Elliot’s station in life might be so stipulative that Elizabeth would be obligated to exhibit signs of mourning for the loss of a male relative’s wife despite the fact (her private opinion) that he had “conducted himself” in the past “so miserably” that his behavior “could not be pardoned.” (284-285)

Consequently, Grant believes that Elizabeth feelings do not match the expression of them as she feels pressured to perform mourning, masking her true emotions; hence, Austen is attempting to distinguish what Elizabeth felt and what she showed. One of the means through which the author does this is by adopting clothing as a sign of Elizabeth’s performance of mourning, to demonstrate that “she was at this present time, (the summer of 1814.) wearing black ribbons for his wife.” Although Elizabeth felt angry, she selected what to feel and what to show, not acknowledging her pain; this attitude suggests that Elizabeth performs a selfless suffering for Mr. Elliot’s dead wife to mask her pain at being abandoned by him.

A different kind of controlled management of anger can be observed in Anne’s younger sister, Mary. When Mary’s husband, Charles, wishes to go to the dinner without his wife, leaving her and Anne to the care for their ill son, Austen writes:

Husbands and wives generally understand when opposition will be vain. Mary knew, from Charles's manner of speaking, that he was quite determined on going, and that it would be of no use to tease him. She said nothing, therefore, till he was out of the room, but as soon as there was only Anne to hear—

“So you and I are to be left to shift by ourselves, with this poor sick child; and not a creature coming near us all the evening! I knew how it would be. This is always my luck! If there is anything disagreeable going on, men are always sure to get out of it, and Charles is as bad as any of them. Very unfeeling!” (49-50)

This scene provides a depiction of Mary's relation to Charles, which differs from Anne's relation to Wentworth, showing that while Anne reacts to Wentworth's infliction of pain through a rational and positive attitude, Mary reacts to her husband's behavior in an aggressive and rebellious way, as she clearly verbalizes her uneasiness and distress in being left home while Charles enjoys his evening. This anger is accompanied by a gendered critique, as she asserts, “If there is anything disagreeable going on, men are always sure to get out of it, and Charles is as bad as any of them.” However, it is still crucial to note that Mary does not perform this outburst in front of her husband, but only in the presence of Anne, suggesting that, despite openly embracing anger, and acknowledging the different expectations of men and women in marriage and domestic life, she expresses it in a limited way, only in presence of a woman, while repressing it in presence of a man.

Some critics argue that Mary's behavior is due to a mismatch between her and Charles, reinforcing the ideas observed by Tague earlier in relation to conduct manuals' encouragement of marrying for love as it would lead women to obey to their husbands: “Women thus had to obey their husbands, and they could only obey where there was love” (86). William Magee

believes that the union between Mary and Charles serves as a comparison, among other couples presented in the novel, with Anne's and Wentworth's relationship, in order to emphasize the success of their match, and the failure of Mary's and Charles' marriage. Magee asserts, "Anne would have proved a better wife to Charles Musgrove than her quarrelsome sister Mary has done, but she was right to refuse this idle, empty-headed scion of the landed gentry." (203) Thus, Magee implies that Mary serves to contrast with and elevate Anne's character, but also to show, through Anne's rejection of Charles, that despite not marrying Wentworth, Anne still loved him, and could not find anyone who would make her feel the way he did. Furthermore, Rebecca Posusta observes:

When she volunteers to care for the injured little Charles, it could be said that she is selflessly stepping in where her own sister, a bad mother and difficult spouse, cannot, but Anne is not selfless in this. Instead, she is self-indulgent: "She was left with as many sensations of comfort, as were, perhaps, ever likely to be hers. She knew herself to be the first utility to the child; and what was it to her, if Frederick Wentworth were only half a mile distant, making himself agreeable to others!" (82)

Posusta suggests that Mary is "a bad mother and difficult spouse" because she is not selfless, while also identifying that Anne is not being selfless in choosing to stay home to look after her nephew as she is avoiding Wentworth's indifference, showing once again her avoidance of potential anger and her ability to turn the negative into good. Moreover, Mary's depiction as "difficult spouse" seems to be once again related to the mismatch between her and Charles, referring back to Tague's analysis of conduct manuals, which depict women who do not embrace their submission to their husbands as "monstrous and unnatural" (87). However, Mary's limitation of her expression of anger, as Austen notes that she waits "till he [Charles] was out of

the room,” shows that Mary is conscious of the depiction of women who rebel to their husbands, and therefore only expresses her distress to Anne, without openly defying Charles’ authority. Mary functions to elevate Anne’s character and highlight Anne’s better management of her feelings in accordance with gendered ideals, but it also demonstrates that a mismatched marriage can be the source of anger and dissatisfaction.

Similarly, another angry female character, Mrs. Smith, provides a further foil for understanding Anne and her position in relation to anger. Mrs Smith gives voice to her rage towards a man, Mr. Elliot, while attempting to limit her expression of this anger. When she reveals that she has known Mr Elliot and loathes him, Anne is shocked: “Anne’s astonished air, and exclamation of wonder, made her pause, and in a calmer manner, she [Mrs. Smith] added, ‘My expressions startle you. You must allow for an injured, angry woman. But I will try to command myself. I will not abuse him. I will only tell you what I have found him. Facts shall speak’” (183). The use of words such as “command myself” and “calmer manner” suggests that these controlled modes of expression are considered to be acceptable for women, even for an “injured, angry woman.” Mrs. Smith’s intervention demonstrates the social norm that, even when a woman is angry, she should still try to control herself, especially her words and tone. Valerie Shaw comments on the ways in which Mrs. Smith’s anger might have resulted in Anne’s own:

If then life offers second chances, this is due as much to luck as to the individual’s self-determining powers. Constancy is not always rewarded, the effect of influence not always softened: Mrs. Smith’s story is an exemplary moral fable which does more than recall Austen’s earlier use of inset narratives exposing the profligate; it is a heightened tale of pain and ruin that shows Anne the grim consequences persuadability can have. (301)

Therefore, Shaw's observation implies that Mrs. Smith's story serves as a moral message for Anne to understand the dangers of persuasion and being persuaded. Mrs. Smith's anger might actually help Anne to recognize that if she cannot easily express anger for being persuaded against her wishes, she must recognize the need to assert her desire to marry Wentworth against the judgement of others. In addition, Mrs. Smith's story also provides an alternative female response to persuasion, as she still feels angry about the past manipulation and persuasion of Mr. Elliot, while Anne, despite the passing of years, does not nurture anger towards the people who caused her pain and loss. Nonetheless, Anne is partly able to do this because of her feelings for Lady Russell, and because the difference between Anne's and Mrs. Smith's past involves the intentions of those who persuaded them, and their motives. While Anne was persuaded by Lady Russell, who had genuine good intentions for her, Mrs. Smith was manipulated by a deceitful man whom she believed cared for her and her husband when he was actually invested in his own interests. Thus, comparing the persuadability of Anne to that of Mrs. Smith provides a further potential reason for Anne's lack of anger, which is that her persuaders were people who genuinely cared for her, while if they were selfish manipulators such as Mr. Elliot, she might have been angry just like Mrs. Smith. The different circumstances of their subjection to persuasion also impacts their recollection of the past. Mrs. Smith recalls her memories of Mr. Elliot's deception with rage and sadness, whereas Anne recalls the past, including her susceptibility to her own persuasion, with a positive attitude. This is also shown when she is asked about her opinions on the experience at Lyme, given the hardships it represented due to Louisa's fall, and Anne responds, "When pain is over, the remembrance of it often becomes a pleasure" (169). Mrs. Smith's opposite approach, remembering the past "pain" with frustration, serves to elevate once again Anne's ability to turn negative into positive.

Through a conditioned control of anger due to gender expectations, Elizabeth, Mary, and Mrs Smith respond to gender constructions and injured feelings through different approaches to anger. They react very differently from Anne, who responds to pain with compassion and sympathy, rationalizing the infliction of pain and thinking about the intentions of others, cultivating empathy rather than self-interest. Although these three women react to pain by embracing and expressing anger, Anne's lack of rebellion due to her reliance on sympathy and selflessness does not, in the end, define her as weak. Arthur Walzer asserts that Anne's feminine qualities constitute her major strength, arguing:

Anne is, furthermore, the embodiment of the female ethic of service to others--a model "daughter" to Lady Russell, sister to Mary, aunt to her nephew. She rushes to console when Mary needs cheering, to serve as a nurse when a child needs care, and willingly plays the piano when others wish to dance and flirt. But her disciplined subordination of self to the needs of others does not bring her what the conduct books call "compensations" for women who fulfill their ordained role...But the organizing ironies of Persuasion are that Anne, who is perceived as the weakest character in the novel, is in fact the strongest and that her strength evolves from stereotypically feminine qualities. Indeed, it was precisely her strengths- an affectionate heart and a strong, resilient will-- that made her persuadable by Lady Russell. Anne was attempting to meet a range of obligations that she felt. (700)

Walzer suggests that, ironically, Anne's "feminine qualities," which seem to define her as weak and susceptible to persuasion, enable her to overcome her suffering, and accomplish her happy ending. Anne's clear strength and management skills find their expression when Louisa falls, and Anne is the one who handles the situation. Her command comes from her role of "caregiver" as

she takes the lead and coordinates everyone in order to assist Louisa, while Wentworth is helpless and ineffectual. As Austen writes, “Anne, attending with all the strength and zeal, and thought, which instinct supplied, to Henrietta, still tried, at intervals, to suggest comfort to the others, tried to quiet Mary, to animate Charles, to assuage the feelings of Captain Wentworth. Both seemed to look to her for directions” (101). In this episode, everyone relies on Anne’s “directions,” showing that she is the one in charge, and that thanks to her ability to look after others, she achieves the role of leader in this circumstance. This event clearly shows that her selflessness is actually a strength rather than a weakness, elevating her compared to the other characters whether male or female. Hence, Anne proves that her ability to look after others, which is a feminine characteristic, is what allows her to be strong in moments in which the other characters who claim to be tough, such as Louisa and Wentworth, are paralyzed.

In conclusion, in *Persuasion*, anger is strictly related to injury and pain. Anne represses anger by reacting through rationalization and empathy to pain, unlike Wentworth, who reacts to injured feelings through expression of anger and repression of his feelings. Other female characters in the novel, such as Elizabeth, Mary, and Mrs. Smith, balance a partial expression and repression of anger in response to their pain, and their approaches function to highlight Anne’s own particular response. Still, these characters are unable to develop a proper satisfying way to embrace anger and manage it, while the main female character shows a resistance to anger’s existence itself and its expression. While in *Persuasion* there is an emphasis on Anne’s repression of anger, in *Jane Eyre*, Jane embraces and acknowledges her anger, and the focus is on her development of a proper way to control her expression of anger.

3. *Jane Eyre* and Mastering Anger

While female oppression leads women to repress and limit their anger in *Persuasion*, in Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* there is a need to develop a mastery of anger expression, as shown by Jane's development. At the beginning of the novel, when Jane is a child, she is overwhelmed by anger because of people who despise her and depict her as bad, and she responds to this oppression through passionate outbursts. As she grows into an adult, she learns to manage her anger, becoming self-controlled in her reactions to injustice. Jane's development can be seen as the balance of the two extremes of anger expression in the novel, exemplified by the characters of Helen and Bertha; while Helen represses anger by relying on faith and spirituality, Bertha expresses her rage through violent outbreaks. Furthermore, Jane's ability to master her anger can be contrasted with Rochester's expression of anger. The source of Rochester's anger is his family's deception which led to his marriage with Bertha. He responds to this injustice by projecting all his rage onto Bertha. Bertha's anger, instead, derives from her oppression as outcast imprisoned in a room, and she violently displays her rage through her angry outbreaks. This chapter will illustrate how Jane, Rochester, and Bertha respond to injustices through different forms of anger.

Jane Eyre is driven by the need to be loved, and her lack of affection at Gateshead leads her to nurture anger. Jane believes that she cannot be loved by the Reed family because she does not conform to them:

I was a discord in Gateshead Hall; I was like nobody there; I had nothing in harmony with Mrs. Reed or her children, or chosen vassalage. If they did not love me, in fact, as

little did I love them. They were not bound to regard with affection a thing that could not sympathise with one amongst them; a heterogeneous thing, opposed to them in temperament, in capacity, in propensities; ...I know that had I been a sanguine, brilliant, careless, exacting, handsome, romping child—though equally dependent and friendless—Mrs. Reed would have endured my presence more complacently. (19)

Jane therefore believes that she does not conform to anyone at Gateshead, and therefore, nobody loves her, fantasizing that if she were “sanguine, brilliant, careless, exacting, handsome, romping child,” she would have been more appreciated more. As Jane does not conform to them, Mrs. Reed and her cousins despise her and unfairly condemn her, making Jane grow desperate and fearful, but also very angry. Her first memory of an outburst is directed against the injustice of a tyrannical and spoilt male, her cousin John Reed. Her revolt leads to her isolation in the red room, a confinement which mirrors Bertha’s own. Jane’s isolation exacerbates her rage and fear towards injustice, which she expresses through ferocious outbursts or desperate complaints, mainly directed at her aunt, Mrs. Reed. When she is about to leave for Lowood, Jane confronts her aunt, declaring:

I am glad you are no relation of mine. I will never call you aunt again as long as I live. I will never come to see you when I am grown up; and if anyone asks me how I liked you, and how you treated me, I will say the very thought of you makes me sick, and that you treated me with miserable cruelty... You think I have no feelings, and that I can do without one bit of love or kindness; but I cannot live so: and you have no pity. I shall remember how you thrust me back - roughly and violently thrust me back - into the red-room, and locked me up there, to my dying day, though I was in agony, though I cried out, while suffocating with distress, ‘Have mercy! Have mercy, Aunt Reed’ And that

punishment you made me suffer because your wicked boy struck me - knocked me down for nothing. I will tell anybody who asks me questions this exact tale. People think you a good woman, but you are bad, hard-hearted. You are deceitful! (44)

In this passage, Jane loudly expresses her anger towards her aunt, blaming her for her lack of affection and pity, condemning her for the lies she supports about her niece. Jane shows a passionate fury in her expression of anger, lacking self-control or self-restraint in her confrontation with her oppressor. Her outbursts are a consequence of the injustices Jane endures in a family which neither loves nor sympathizes with her, but rather constantly and unfairly attacks and ostracizes her because she cannot conform to either theirs or society's expectations.

As Jane matures, she develops a calmer temper in her confrontation with her aunt, relying on the Christian importance of forgiveness, despite her aunt's harsh words. However, in the dialogue between Jane as an adult and Mrs. Reed, Jane still acknowledges her aunt's mistakes, despite confronting her in newly controlled and peaceful tone. Brontë writes:

“I could not forget your conduct to me, Jane - the fury with which you once turned on me; the tone in which you declared you abhorred me the worst of anybody in the world; the unchild-like look and voice with which you affirmed that the very thought of me made you sick, and asserted that I had treated you with miserable cruelty. I could not forget my own sensations when you thus started up and poured out the venom of your mind: I felt fear as if an animal that I had struck or pushed had looked up at me with human eyes and cursed me in a man's voice. - Bring me some water! Oh, make haste!”

“Dear Mrs. Reed,” said I, as I offered her the draught she required, “think no more of all this, let it pass away from your mind. Forgive me for my passionate language: I was a child then; eight, nine years have passed since that day...My disposition is not so bad as

you think. I am passionate, but not vindictive. Many a time, as a little child, I should have been glad to love you if you would have let me; and I long earnestly to be reconciled to you now: kiss me, aunt." I approached my cheek to her lips: she would not touch it. She said I oppressed her by leaning over the bed, and again demanded water. (275-276)

Mrs. Reed is consistent with her dislike of Jane, considering her unnatural and inhuman.

Interestingly, she compares Jane's expression of anger to an "animal" who cursed her in "a man's voice." This comparison shows not only a dehumanization of Jane, but a gendered assumption about appropriate feminine behavior. The comparison establishes that her conduct was wrong and brutal because it resembled a "man." Arnold Shapiro observes that Mrs. Reed is angry at Jane because she does not conform to others, and this dislike for her is exacerbated by Jane's passionate temper and behavior, leading Mrs. Reed to isolate Jane, locking her in the red room. Shapiro argues:

In the first few pages of the book we learn that the Reeds do not like Jane because she is different from them, because she does not try to keep up appearances and lets her feelings be made known . . . Her problem is that she is a child, but does not act like a child, or the way that everyone thinks a child should act. Society has standards for even its youngest members, and one must comply or be cast out. (685)

Shapiro implies that Jane needs to conform to social standards and codes of behavior in order to be socially accepted and appreciated. Jane starts developing such characteristics only once she leaves Gateshead, acquiring a quiet tone and good manners, learning to manage and express her anger differently.

Unlike Mrs. Reed, whose opinion and manners towards Jane do not alter, adult Jane responds in a merciful way to her aunt's attacks, without any excess of rage, but asserting her

wish to reconcile with her, and relying on forgiveness and repentance. While Jane's need of love has not changed, her expression of anger has, as she accompanies anger with forgiveness, probably sympathizing with Mrs. Reed as Anne Elliot might do. Bossche comments that what differentiates adult Jane from the child she used to be is that her rebellion occurs in a more socially acceptable way. Bossche argues:

If Jane's rebellion ends when she learns to tell her story with "less of gall and wormwood," then the remainder of her story, from the time of her arrival at Lowood until its conclusion, would, indeed, represent submission to established cultural institutions. Yet she continues to rebel, against being labeled a liar by Brocklehurst, against the tedium of her career as governess, against being made a mistress by Rochester, against being sacrificed to St. John Rivers's ambitions. (47)

Bossche emphasizes the dichotomy of Jane's submission to social conventions and her rebellion against others' imposition. Hence, Jane's change does not involve a lack of anger, but an acquisition of a socially acceptable expression of anger, which relies on self-control and calm, through which she can share her opinions and feelings without risking to be socially ostracized. Jane's awareness that she is performing a role emerges in her feminist statement:

Women are supposed to be very calm generally; but women feel just as men feel; they need exercise for their faculties, and a field for their efforts as much as their brothers do; they suffer from too rigid a restraint, too absolute a stagnation, precisely as men would suffer; and it is narrow-minded in their more privileged fellow-creatures to say they ought to confine themselves to making puddings and knitting stockings, to playing on the piano and embroidering bags. It is thoughtless to condemn them, or laugh at them, if they

seek to do more or learn more than custom has pronounced necessary for their sex. (129-130)

Jane believes in an equality of men and women, acknowledging that the disadvantaged position of women is not based on a scientific or sexual basis, but on a gendered construct which imposes certain expectations on women that are unfair and unnatural to humans. Jane asserts, “Women are supposed to be very calm generally; but women feel just as men feel,” arguing that women and men are more similar than the way “custom” depicts them. Jane believes that women are excessively restricted and repressed, and this repression would make men suffer too if they were subject to it. She is arguing that women’s uneasiness towards restraint is not a gendered reaction, but a natural and human consequence of unjustified restraint. This argument about gender dynamics itself is an example of how Jane’s mastery of anger is developing, because her rebellion against the system is expressed rationally. She is angry at gendered assumptions, but she argues her point in a calm and controlled manner. Thus, similarly to Anne Elliot, Jane learns to comply with the code of behavior which the system assigns to women; however, her compliance is just a performance functional for her to express her anger about injustice so as no longer to be labelled an outcast.

The reason why Jane might choose to balance a restrained expression of anger and a rebellious spirit is that she is persecuted by the need to be loved and appreciated. This need emerges when she reveals to Helen Burns:

No; I know I should think well of myself; but that is not enough: if others don’t love me, I would rather die than live. I cannot bear to be solitary and hated, Helen. Look here; to gain some real affection from you, or Miss Temple, or any other whom I truly love, I

would willingly submit to have the bone of my arm broken, or to let a bull toss me, or to stand behind a kicking horse, and let it dash its hoof at my chest. (83)

The quotation highlights the extent to which Jane, as child, is willing to sacrifice everything in order to be loved. However, once she grows, her need to be loved is challenged by her care for moral values.

The way in which moral values make Jane reconsider her need to be loved is shown by her decision to leave Rochester, an event in which Rochester reveals his own anger. Both Jane and Rochester's anger is the outcome of family oppression, as Jane is isolated at Gateshead, and labelled as "evil" by her aunt and cousins. Rochester, instead, is forced to commit to a marriage by his father and brother, who do not warn him about the presence of madness in Bertha Mason's family. Rochester feels trapped by this unwanted marriage and wife, and reacts by trying to repress and conceal the existence of this marriage, isolating Bertha, locking her in the attic, so that he can be "free" to continue his life. He conceals his marriage to everyone, including himself. Furthermore, Rochester and Jane are angry for similar reasons, as both want to be loved and appreciated. When Rochester reveals the truth about Bertha to Jane, she represses her anger towards Rochester for having lied to her, and sympathizes with him after learning his story. Rochester, instead, expresses through rage his grief about Jane's decision to leave him, because he would lose her companionship:

"Oh, Jane, this is bitter! This - this is wicked. It would not be wicked to love me."

"It would to obey you."

A wild look raised his brows - crossed his features: he rose- but he forebore yet. I laid my hand on the back of a chair for support: I shook, I feared - but I resolved.

“One instant, Jane. Give one glance to my horrible life when you are gone. All happiness will be torn away with you. What then is left? For a wife I have but the maniac upstairs: as well might you refer me to some corpse in yonder churchyard. What shall I do, Jane? Where turn for a companion, and for some hope?”

“Do as I do: trust in G_d and yourself. Believe in heaven. Hope to meet again there.”

“Then you will not yield?”

“No.”

“Then you condemn me to live wretched, and to die accursed?” His voice rose.

“I advise you to live sinless, and I wish you to die tranquil”

“Then you snatch love and innocence from me? You fling me back on lust for a passion - vice for an occupation?”

“Mr Rochester, I no more assign this fate to you than I grasp at it for myself. We were born to strive and endure - you as well as I: do so. You will forget me before I forget you.” (364)

The dialogue between Rochester and Jane shows their different approaches towards anger. Jane appeals to forgiveness and mercy, referring to Christian values which enable her to regard with optimism what she believes to be the proper choice, which is leaving Rochester. Jane’s approach resembles Anne Elliot’s relinquishment of Wentworth, assuming this sacrifice would be positive for both, and that enduring pain is necessary. She also asserts, “You will forget me before I forget you,” a quotation which resembles Anne’s argument that women’s love lasts longer than men’s. Rochester reacts to Jane’s decision to leave him through fury, displaying it both physically and verbally, a reaction which resembles Captain Wentworth, pleading with Jane not

to leave him. Jane, on the other hand, relies on divine providence and religious principles, as she declares:

I will keep the law given by G_d; sanctioned by man. I will hold to the principles received by me when I was sane, and not mad - as I am now. Laws and principles are not for the times when there is no temptation: they are for such moments as this, when body and soul rise in mutiny against their rigour; stringent are they; inviolate they shall be...His [Rochester's] fury was wrought to the highest: he must yield to it for a moment, whatever followed; he crossed the floor and seized my arm and grasped my waist. He seemed to devour me with his flaming glance: physically, I felt, at the moment, powerless as stubble exposed to the draught and glow of a furnace: mentally, I still possessed my soul, and with it the certainty of ultimate safety. The soul, fortunately, has an interpreter - often an unconscious, but still a truthful interpreter - in the eye. My eye rose to his; and while I looked in his fierce face I gave an involuntary sigh; his grip was painful, and my overtaxed strength almost exhausted...I had dared and baffled his fury; I must elude his sorrow: I retired to the door." (365-366)

Hence, Jane's reaction emphasizes her religious sentiment and her reliance on laws and principles, maintaining a control over her emotions when she is "mad." She considers this moment when she has to give up the man she loves as a test for her compliance to those principles and codes. She also traces a difference between her physical and her mental state, showing that the major evolution in her management of anger is her ability to let her soul prevail over her body, as she identifies in the soul the power which her body lacks when exposed to negative feelings, and in this case, to Rochester's fury. A further feature which emerges is her empathy, as she sees that Rochester's fury is caused by his pain; however, just as she mastered

her anger towards him, she controls also her expression of empathy, reaffirming her decision despite his pain and rage.

It is crucial to notice that Rochester's anger is not fueled by Jane's decision not to marry him, but by his marriage with Bertha. Indeed, his anger is traced back to the maneuvering which led to his marriage, particularly, the deception which has left him with a "mad" wife. As Rochester tells Jane:

"These were vile discoveries; but except for the treachery of concealment, I should have made them no subject of reproach to my wife, even when I found her nature wholly alien to mine, her tastes obnoxious to me, her cast of mind common, low, narrow, and singularly incapable of being led to anything higher, expanded to anything larger - when I found that I could not pass a single evening, nor even a single hour of the day with her in comfort; that kindly conversation could not be sustained between us, because whatever topic I started, immediately received from her a turn at once coarse and trite, perverse and imbecile - when I perceived that I should never have a quiet or settled household, because no servant would bear the continued outbreaks of her violent and unreasonable temper, or the vexations of her absurd, contradictory, exacting orders - even then I restrained myself: I eschewed upbraiding, I curtailed remonstrance; I tried to devour my repentance and disgust in secret; I repressed the deep antipathy I felt...Bertha Mason, the true daughter of an infamous mother, dragged me through all the hideous and degrading agonies which must attend a man bound to a wife at once intemperate and unchaste."

(352-353)

The passage reveals that, although Rochester admits his dislike towards Bertha, he firstly repressed his own feelings towards her, attempting to tolerate her outbursts, before eventually

locking her up as a way to repress her existence in his life. Thus, Rochester's anger can be understood as a consequence of his repression, a habit he forms from the beginning of his marriage with Bertha. At first, Rochester attempts to restrain his own disgust and dislike towards his wife; when this fails, he eventually represses Bertha's presence in his life, and his anger towards her, by confining her into a room, thereby literally and figuratively concealing the source of his distress. Nancy Pell suggests that Rochester unfairly projects his anger onto Bertha herself:

Rather than his father or elder brother, however, the primary object of Rochester's rage is Bertha, who is actually his fellow - victim in their arranged marriage... Bertha Mason has become such a monster to Rochester because she receives a doubly displaced resentment, more correctly directed against the economics of primogeniture and Rochester's own compromised self. Adrienne Rich makes the precise observation that in agreeing to marry Bertha "Rochester makes no pretense that he was not acting out of lust. Yet he repeatedly asserts her coarseness, 'at once intemperate and unchaste,' as the central fact of his loathing for her." He says that he continues to care for Bertha because he is disinclined "to indirect assassination, even of what I most hate." How much more complex than this his involvement with her is, in fact, appears when twice in the novel Rochester deliberately identifies himself with symbolic Berthas-women who are social outcasts and yet possess peculiar powers over other people. (413)

Thus, Pell argues that Rochester's anger towards Bertha is a projection of all his rage, even though she is a victim as much as he is. Pell identifies as another reason for Rochester's anger towards Bertha the financial reasons which led to their marriage. Furthermore, Pell emphasizes that this outcast woman has power over him, as he keeps caring for her despite her madness. This

“care” is another source of his anger, which leads him to try to reassert power dynamics by relegating Bertha to a room, attempting to limit her power through oppression.

Rochester’s oppression of Bertha fuels her own, and she expresses her anger in violent outbreaks. Although due to madness, Bertha’s actions allude to her fury towards Jane and Rochester, as her performance of violent acts can be read as attempts to defy her own marriage, such as the ripping of Jane’s wedding veil. Brontë writes:

“Did you see her face?”

“Not at first. But presently she took my veil from its place: she held it up, gazed at it long, and then she threw it over her own head, and turned to the mirror...Sir, it removed my veil from its gaunt head, rent it in two parts, and flinging both on the floor, trampled on them.”

“Afterwards?”

“It drew aside the window-curtain and looked out; perhaps it saw dawn approaching, for, taking the candle, it retreated to the door. Just at my bedside, the figure stopped: the fiery eyes glared upon me - she thrust up her candle close to my face, and extinguished it under my eyes. I was aware her lurid visage flamed over mine, and I lost consciousness: for the second time in my life - only the second time - I became insensible from terror.” (327)

Bertha’s violent ripping of the veil alludes to both her anger at the impending wedding of Jane and Rochester as well as anger about the terms of her own marriage and desire to destroy it.

Bertha’s anger can be read as a form of justice seeking through revenge and infliction of fear, as Jane feels terror when Bertha’s “fiery eyes” stared at her. Bertha’s anger is made visible to Jane, and her fiery eyes act both as warning to Jane and as a form of revenge on Rochester; this way, Bertha is expressing both her anger and sense of injustice. She attempts to overcome the restraint

of her enclosure into a room and into her madness itself, which is yet another prison impairing her ability to express herself completely. However, Bertha's madness is also a manifestation of uncontrollable anger which goes beyond human control and cannot be managed rationally. This excess of anger is also expressed ironically by the reference to supernatural elements within the text, many of which are related to the gothic notions of horror and terror associated with Bertha's character, who is perceived as a spirit by Jane. Her "madness" too can be considered "supernatural" in the sense that it is extraordinary and inexplicable, surpassing the boundaries set by social conventions and nature. Peter Grudin claims:

Thus, madness is enclosed in a Gothic context and linked to supernatural horror because the specifics it really represents are literally indescribable, and essentially foreign to the world of "polite" fiction... Both Bertha's license and her insanity represent the tyranny of passion over intellect, and for a mind like Charlotte Brontë's, which found all sin "a species of insanity," and the lack of restraint proper to each made the difference between them only one of degree. The very mode of Bertha's most terrifying violence reinforces this analogue. (148)

Grudin identifies in Bertha's madness the "tyranny of passion over intellect," which is the key factor differentiating her from Jane. Although as a child Jane is described as passionate, her development of a mastery over her anger allows her to repress her passionate expression of rage, enabling her to acquire a socially acceptable management of her feelings; she is no longer the "beastly" outcast she was labelled when she was a child. This achievement leads Jane to turn her anger into a constructive force element. She starts relying on spiritual hope, learning how to relate to the world's negative aspects. Differently, Bertha does not have the chance to detach from her oppression and her role as ostracized "madwoman," and her rage is associated with

destruction, as shown by her violent outbreaks, particularly when she burns down Thornfield Hall.

Bertha is often interpreted as Jane's double. Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar believe that the encounter between Jane and Bertha enables Jane to face her own anger, arguing:

Most important, her [Jane's] confrontation not with Rochester, but with Rochester's mad wife Bertha, is the book's central confrontation, an encounter . . . not with her own sexuality, but with her own imprisoned "hunger, rebellion, and rage," a secret dialogue of self and soul on whose outcome, as we shall see, the novel's plot, Rochester's fate and Jane's coming of age all depend. (339)

Thus, encountering Bertha's madness enhances Jane's "dialogue of self and soul," which allows her to undergo a development and a processing of her own anger, as Bertha mirrors her own repressed rebellion and rage. Gilbert and Gubar therefore suggest that Bertha represents the repressed anger of Jane, as they continue:

Bertha, in other words, is Jane's truest double: she is the angry aspect of the orphan child, the ferocious secret self Jane has been trying to repress ever since her days at Gateshead . . . Specifically, every one of Bertha's appearances—or, more accurately, her manifestations—has been associated with an experience (or repression) of anger on Jane's part . . . Jane's unexpressed resentment at Rochester's manipulative gypsy-masquerade found expression in Bertha's terrible shriek and her even more terrible attack on Richard Mason. Jane's anxieties about her marriage, and in particular, her fears of her own alien "robed and veiled" bridal image, were objectified by the image of Bertha in a "white and straight" dress, "whether gown, sheet, or shroud I could not tell." Jane's profound desire to destroy Thornfield, the symbol of Rochester's mastery and of her own

servitude, will be acted out by Bertha, who burns down the house and destroys *herself* in the process as if she were an agent of Jane's desire as well as her own. (360)

Hence, Gilbert and Gubar suggest that Bertha reflects Jane's unexpressed wishes for destruction. Nonetheless, Jane's expression of anger can be interpreted as an evolution of a controlled manifestation of rebellious sentiment, instead of the repression of an anger which needs to be represented by Bertha's character. Thus, according to this different reading of Jane's anger expression, it is possible to consider Bertha's anger as a foil to Jane instead of a double to her, Bertha displaying the potential destructiveness of an overwhelming anger, juxtaposed to Jane's actual mastery of anger.

What differentiates Jane and Bertha's expression of anger is their relation to isolation. At Gateshead, Jane is sent to the "red room" when she misbehaves, a place which terrifies her and isolates her. Once she leaves Gateshead, she encounters other people and places, still being subject to anger; however, thanks to her interactions, she learns how to handle rage. Helen Burns is a clear influence on Jane's mastery of anger; Helen is a very spiritual girl, who reproaches Jane for being angry or worried about others labelling her as evil or liar, as she declares:

"If all the world hated you, and believed you wicked, while your own conscience approved you, and absolved you from guilt, you would not be without friends . . . you think too much of the love of human beings; you are too impulsive, too vehement: the sovereign Hand that created your frame, and put life into it, has provided you with other resources than your feeble self, or than creatures feeble as you. Besides this earth, and besides the race of men, there is an invisible world and a kingdom of spirits: that world is round us, for it is everywhere; and those spirits watch us, for they are commissioned to guard us; and if we were dying in pain and shame, if scorn smote us on all sides, and

hatred crushed us, angels see our tortures, recognise our innocence . . .Why, then, should we ever sink overwhelmed with distress, when life is so soon over, and death is so certain an entrance to happiness - to glory?"

I was silent: Helen had calmed me; but in the tranquillity she imparted there was an alloy of inexpressible sadness. (83)

Thus, Helen's little regard for the material world compared to the spiritual world leads Jane to be silent and calm, realizing that just as these values quiet Helen, they quiet her distress too.

However, Jane also notices the sadness of Helen Burns; thus, similarly to Anne Elliot, Helen Burns might show how repressing anger and discarding distress involve deep pain and sadness. This might also explain why, even though Jane's mastery of anger expression is influenced by Helen's morality and quietness, she still retains her rebellious spirit and she knows that she is not Helen Burns as she says to herself, "Still I felt that Helen Burns considered things by a light invisible to my eyes" (67).

Therefore, by leaving Gateshead, Jane is able to develop a mastery of anger, differently from Bertha, who remains relegated to a room; nonetheless, they both share a rebellious sentiment which is mostly directed at society's patriarchal structure. Wyatt identifies a similar pattern in Jane's and Bertha's rebellious spirit, as he believes that they are both motivated by a wish to fight female oppression, although in different, and potentially, complementary ways.

Wyatt argues:

Jane's repeated refusals to be contained within gender categories can inspire her reader with a similar determination to make the fantasy of autonomy a reality in her own life. If Jane's verbal defiance of patriarchal restrictions presents the reader with an appealingly noble image of herself as brave resistance fighter, Bertha satisfies the reader's anger

against patriarchal constraints on a more primitive level. Bertha raging in triumph on the battlements of the burning house, Rochester pinned beneath by its falling pillars, must gratify a female reader's repressed rage against her father and the whole patriarchal family structure that limits female aspiration. This combination of Jane's verbal protest with Bertha's vivid action is only one example of the way Brontë uses Bertha and Jane to lodge a powerful protest against women's oppression at all levels of her reader's psyche. Bertha, appropriately preverbal (she groans, screams, mutters, and laughs, but never speaks) addresses the quirks of a female unconscious through images of painful incarceration and fiery revenge. (207)

Wyatt demonstrates how Bertha and Jane both fight patriarchal oppression in a complementary way, showing that while Bertha rebels through a violent physical approach, Jane relies on a verbal fight against her oppressors. Nonetheless, it can be argued that Bertha, the isolated madwoman, represents the potential of what Jane could have become if she had not left Gateshead, where she was despised and often isolated, just as Bertha is in Rochester's house.

In conclusion, the manifestation of anger in *Jane Eyre* is related to the major characters' endurance of oppression and injustice. Jane evolves, developing a constructive and controlled expression of anger, while Rochester attempts to repress his rage and negative feelings towards Bertha through concealment, and Bertha expresses her distress at injustice through violent destructive outbreaks. Nonetheless, Bertha's lack of control over a "supernatural" anger culminates in the destructive and self-destructive act in which she burns down Rochester's house. Although tragic for Bertha, this act of rage also allows for regeneration, enabling Jane and Rochester to overcome society's oppression and injustice through marriage to each other. Bertha can be read as a sacrificial lamb much like the character of Beloved in Toni Morrison's novel, as

both characters disrupt in the main characters lives, and when they vanish, they restore a calm and hopeful future. Hence, both Bertha's and Beloved's disappearance could represent a sacrifice which allows the other characters a better future.

4. Uncontrollable Female Anger in *Beloved*

While Bertha's character is mistakenly perceived as a supernatural entity in *Jane Eyre*, in the novel *Beloved*, Toni Morrison includes an actual supernatural character, Beloved, a ghost of a murdered child. The inclusion of supernatural elements is necessary to represent the anger that slavery generates and which Morrison attempts to capture in the novel. The anger expressed in the story is excessive, overcoming natural boundaries in order to match the surpassing of human limits by the racial and gender oppression of slavery. The novel conveys this excess of anger through Beloved, which is understood to be the ghost of Sethe's murdered child, but who is also a representative of slavery itself, the terrifying system that shapes and haunts the characters of the novel. Beloved's ghost does not just express her own trauma and anger at being a murdered baby, but also awakens the traumas and the anger that the characters feel for the injustice they endured as slaves. The novel also shows how gender impacts the perception of trauma and anger, as shown by Paul D's comments on Beloved, and on Halle. The central key event of the story is Sethe's murder of Beloved, which shows a complex manifestation of anger which is fueled both by love and revenge. As child murderess, Sethe can be compared to the classical figure of Medea, who murders her children as an act of revenge against her husband. However, Sethe's murder of her baby is more complex, as it is motivated by revenge and resistance to slavery, but also by her love for her baby, whom she wants to protect. This chapter will analyze the manifestation of anger in this novel in form of Beloved's conflictual feelings towards Sethe, Paul D's resistance and unsolved traumas, and Sethe's attempt to resist and defy slavery's oppression.

Beloved's complexity resides in her duality, as she represents both an oppressed figure-- the reincarnation of Sethe's murdered child-- but also an oppressive entity herself, haunting the characters, and making them relive their traumas related to slavery, which trigger their anger. Like the return of their repressed past, Beloved disrupts their lives, but is also a character herself who needs to cope with her own traumas. The beginning of the novel emphasizes the presence of a "baby's venom," which suggests her poisonous need to express her revenge and anger.

Morrison writes:

124 was spiteful. Full of a baby's venom. The women in the house knew it and so did the children. For years each put up with the spite in his own way, but by 1873 Sethe and her daughter Denver were its only victims. The grandmother, Baby Suggs, was dead, and the sons, Howard and Buglar, had run away by the time they were thirteen years old—as soon as looking in a mirror shattered it (that was the signal for Buglar); as soon as two tiny hand prints appeared in the cake (that was it for Howard). (3)

Hence, the opening of the novel immediately alludes to the central event of the novel, which is Sethe's murder of her own child, and the return of her specter in the form of Beloved. The people mentioned who are subject to this "baby's venom" are "the women in the house," highlighting the absence of both Howard and Buglar, Sethe's male children, who could not bear its presence. Therefore, just as Anne Elliot emphasized the endurance of women in *Persuasion*, this novel presents other female characters, Sethe and Denver, who, unlike the men, Howard and Buglar, are able to endure for longer time the haunting and painful presence of the "baby's venom."

Barbara Schapiro interprets the opening of the novel as a representation of infantile rage, emphasizing a return of the past that overcomes death. Schapiro comments:

“124 was spiteful. Full of a baby’s venom.” The opening lines of the novel establish its psychic source: infantile rage. A wounded enraged baby is the central figure of the book, both literally, in the character of Beloved, and symbolically, as it struggles beneath the surface of the other major characters. Even the elderly grandmother is significantly named “Baby,” and the ferocity of a baby’s frustrated needs colors the novel’s overt mother-child relationships as well as the love relationship between Sethe and Paul D and that between Beloved and her sister Denver. “A baby’s frustrated needs” refers here not to physical needs but to psychic and emotional ones. The worst atrocity of slavery, the real horror the novel exposes, is not physical death but psychic death. The pivotal event, or crisis, of the novel is Sethe’s murder of her baby daughter Beloved. (194-195)

Schapiro associates the novel’s “wounded enraged baby” not only to Beloved, but also to Baby Suggs. The connection between these two characters, the elder and the child, might function to show the longevity of slavery and its inability to be laid to rest easily even when characters who suffer from it die. The past returns through the ghost of Beloved, making characters face their troubled histories, and the years of slavery and violence they endured, suggesting that although they attempt to repress these traumatic events and bury them, their consequences cannot be buried.

Although Schapiro infers that both Beloved and Baby Suggs represent the enraged child, Beloved is a figure of ambiguity, as she has a baby’s need for her mother as well as a need to get revenge for having been killed by her as a child. This ambiguity emerges in the confrontation between Beloved and Sethe:

She [Sethe] smiles at me and it is my own face smiling. I will not lose her again. She is mine... You are my face; I am you. Why did you leave me who am you?

I will never leave you again
Don't ever leave me again
You will never leave me again
You went in the water
I drank your blood
I brought your milk
You forgot to smile
I loved you
You hurt me
You came back to me
You left me
I waited for you
You are mine (254-256)

In this passage, Beloved is both wishing to join her mother, as she does not want to “lose” her again, but she is also communicating to Sethe her pain for having been murdered by her. Her suppressed anger is expressed in the form of an argument between herself and her mother. Sethe’s statement, “I love you,” is countered by Beloved’s response, “You hurt me,” and in the following exchange, “You came back to me,” is matched by “You left me.” The juxtaposition of Sethe’s interpretation of her murder and Beloved’s interpretation show Beloved’s intrinsic relation of anger and love, as Beloved wishes to join her mother whom she loves, and at the same time, she is angry for what she has done to her.

The passage also emphasizes the repetition of the term “mine,” suggesting that the dynamics of family and the system of slavery share a concern about ownership. Beloved’s name

herself is grammatically related to property or ownership, and to the sense of belonging, being someone's object of love. Beloved is both a projection of others' "love" and a character who needs to be analyzed in her relation to the other characters of the novel. This emerges in the passage in which Morrison notes:

Beloved

You are my sister

You are my daughter

You are my face; you are me

I have found you again

You have come back to me

You are my Beloved

You are mine. (255)

In the excerpt, Beloved is defined as a sister, a daughter, a face, but most importantly, her definition is always preceded by the possessive adjective "my." The urge to "own" Beloved reinforces the need to interpret Beloved's character in relation to other characters and to the larger system they have all suffered under, which considered them "property" rather than human beings. Lynda Koolish interprets Beloved as a personification of the characters' past histories and traumas related to slavery. Koolish observes:

Despite the richly ambiguous suggestions about who Beloved is, Morrison is explicit in describing Beloved as a projection of the thoughts and feelings of every character who actually sees her... It is for this reason that Beloved's given name, although referred to explicitly by Denver, is never revealed in the novel: Beloved is everyone's Beloved.

Beloved's lack of name signifies that she is everybody, the powerfully loved baby, while it simultaneously suggests a figure of absence, loss, and powerlessness. (177)

Hence, Koolish argues that Beloved is a projection of other characters' own interior thoughts, feelings, experiences, which accounts for her lack of a name besides the adjective "Beloved." Beloved has therefore the purpose of reflecting other people's histories and traumas, by representing their sense of "absence, loss, and powerlessness," all traumatic aspects which are related to the pain inflicted by slavery. Sethe's murder of her own child can be read as an act of resistance which aims at defying a dehumanizing system which deprived people of color of the "ownership" of their bodies and of their family members. Ironically, Sethe murders her child in order to "own" her, perceiving this as an act of love and protection which would allow her to "own" her child, while actually expressing her anger toward the abuses of slavery, and losing her daughter not to endure her being taken away from her, just like her milk.

Although the character of Beloved is often interpreted as a metaphorical personification, or as a psychological projection, she is still an actual character who operates in the novel's events, and who feels anger herself. An instance of her rage emerges when Denver begs her not to tell Sethe who she really is, as Morrison notes:

Suddenly Denver, who was sitting cross-legged, lurched forward and grabbed Beloved's wrist. "Don't tell her. Don't let Ma'am know who you are. Please, you hear?"

"Don't tell me what to do. Don't you never never tell me what to do."

"But I'm on your side, Beloved."

"She is the one. She is the one I need. You can go but she is the one I have to have." Her eyes stretched to the limit, black as the all-night sky.

"I didn't do anything to you. I never hurt you. I never hurt anybody;" said Denver.

“Me either. Me either.”

“What you gonna do?”

“Stay here. I belong here.”

“I belong here too.”

“Then stay, but don’t never tell me what to do. Don’t never do that.”

“We were dancing. Just a minute ago we were dancing together. Let’s.” (89)

Beloved immediately reacts in a defensive tone to Denver’s request, responding, “Don’t tell me what to do. Don’t you never never tell me what to do.” This urge to reject any form of imposition on her can be seen as the result of Beloved’s own trauma, being murdered by her mother, an event where Beloved was helpless. Her earlier powerlessness might explain why now she is unable to stand other people imposing on her, claiming the agency she lacked when she was murdered. Beloved also states, “She [Sethe] is the one. She is the one I need. You can go but she is the one I have to have,” alluding that her target—for both love and revenge—is her mother. Beloved’s desire to “have” Sethe is both threatening and needy, expressing both a desire for love and a need to triumph over her mother. Although Sethe’s act of murder was motivated by the intention of saving and protecting her child, Beloved was still a powerless victim subject to the oppressive authority of Sethe, an authority which Beloved now claims on her return as the child’s ghost. Beloved’s need for a confrontation with her mother can be compared to Jane Eyre’s need to confront her aunt, Mrs. Reed, after the pain that she inflicted on her. However, while Mrs. Reed’s response to Jane is motivated by her hatred and disgust towards her niece, Sethe perceives her murder of Beloved as an act of love, aimed at protecting her child.

Beloved’s disappearance at the end of the novel can be compared to Bertha’s suicide. Once Beloved is gone, the characters apparently start recovering from their traumas after having

had the chance to face them through Beloved. The community unites to vanquish the ghost of Beloved and readmit Sethe to their circle. Similarly, after Bertha's suicide, Rochester and Jane are able to be reunited, and start a new life. While Bertha is a clear permanent absence in the lives of the characters after she dies, Beloved's absence, at least in her role as representative of slavery, might be just temporary, as Morrison asserts, "Down by the stream in back of 124 her footprints come and go, come and go . . . Take them out and they disappear again as though nobody ever walked there" (324). Thus, while Bertha's absence represents the actual death of the character, enabling the marriage of Rochester and Jane, Beloved's presence is more complex to eradicate, perhaps because her character also represents the traumas of slavery, which are undeniable. Although Beloved is gone and forgotten by the end of the novel, her "footprints come and go," alluding to her not having completely vanished, and just like the traumas of slavery, she might come back, and then disappear, and people would forget her as if she was never there, once again. This uncertainty about Beloved's disappearance is another element emphasizing the return of the past, and its haunting of the characters. However, Beloved's absence is necessary to restore calm, and allows the characters to overcome their traumas and move on to a new beginning. Clifton Spargo observes:

It is surely a deliberate irony of Beloved that not only must history return against the grain of desire and through a figure of haunting, but, once it returns, it must be defeated. This is the very ambiguity of the specter of an injustice or what Morrison elsewhere refers to as the "specter of enslavement," for, as long as she lives within her trauma, Sethe is not only a witness to the past but also a pariah in the community. The ending of the novel poses what is at best a highly ambiguous resolution to a highly problematic

historical truth, as the community's intervention in Sethe's and Denver's trauma requires an exorcism of a past that refutes the ironic witness of the trauma. (124)

Spargo argues that Beloved, and therefore the representative of "history" must return, but must also be "defeated." Thus, to overcome their traumas, the characters, especially, Sethe, need to face them, hence Beloved's presence is crucial to awaken them. However, Spargo also clarifies that it is eventually necessary for Beloved to disappear, suggesting the characters' triumph over their traumas. However problematic Sethe's role as "pariah" and her community's acceptance seem to Spargo, the vanquishing of Beloved enables Sethe to reunite with her society, implying that this reintegration is possible through "the exorcism of a past that refutes the ironic witness of the trauma." Thus, Beloved's presence and absence function as a personification of the psychological recovery of the characters from their past trauma.

That recovery is triggered by the appearance of Beloved who also awakens the characters' past, along with the anger that is embedded in their personal histories with slavery. This issue can be found in Paul D's relation to Beloved, as he deeply dislikes her, and is unable to endure her presence; Lynda Koolish infers that Paul D hates Beloved because of his unwillingness to face his past, which she represents. Koolish argues:

Paul D's response to the ghost, which, as for the other characters, reflects his own repressed emotions about the past, about his personal history, is to inquire, "Good G_d... what kind of evil you got in here?" His memories are so suffused with terror, humiliation, and physical, sexual, and emotional violation that it is not surprising that his response to something associated with his feelings about the past, and his own capacity to remember as well as to feel, is simply to condemn it as evil. (172)

According to Koolish, Paul D's rejection of Beloved is a rejection of the personification of the "evil" that governed his past, which he repressed, just as he repressed his feelings about it. Thus, Paul D shows a resistance to the confrontation with the negative feelings which his past caused him, similarly to Wentworth, who attempts to avoid his past pain until his "object" is again physically before him.

Another reason for Paul D's anger towards Beloved seems to be related to the fact she was "shining." He is disturbed by her appearance, and from what emerges from the text, he is angry at her because she does not struggle as the other people of color who endured slavery and war. After he provokes her about her shoes, inquiring how she had come to their house, he then reflects on why he was so bothered by her:

This girl Beloved, homeless and without people, beat all though he couldn't say exactly why, considering the colored people he had run into during the last twenty years...Who, like him, had hidden in caves and fought owls for food; who, like him, stole from pigs; who, like him, slept in trees in the day and walked by night; who, like him, had buried themselves in slop and jumped in wells to avoid regulators, raiders, paterollers, veterans, hill men, posses and merry-makers...Her shining, her new shoes. It bothered him. Maybe it was just the fact that he didn't bother her. Or it could be timing. She had appeared and been taken in on the very day Sethe and he had patched up their quarrel, gone out in public and had a right good time-like a family. Denver had come around, so to speak; Sethe was laughing; he had a promise of steady work. 124 was cleared up from spirits. It had begun to look like a life. And damn! a water-drinking woman fell sick, got took in, healed, and hadn't moved a peg since. (78-79)

The reason why Paul D is so bothered by Beloved's presence seems to be that, differently from the other people of color, she does not belong to the community of people with whom he can share similar past experiences, and she seems to threaten this fragile happiness. Although she is a woman of color who would have potentially been subject to the same violence and discrimination Paul D and Sethe suffered, she was dead before she experienced any of it. Hence, Paul D cannot endure the presence of a "shining" character who has not suffered as he has. Beloved disturbs Paul D as he identifies the ambiguity in her being "homeless and without people," and yet an established powerful presence in Sethe's family. Morrison writes "Her shining, her new shoes. It bothered him. Maybe it was just the fact that he didn't bother her." Thus, Paul D is disturbed by Beloved's apparent power, particularly the power she has over him. Hence, Paul D tries to resist her power although he does not succeed, as shown by his reaction when Beloved orders him to have sex with her:

As long as his eyes were locked on the silver of the lard can he was safe. If he trembled like Lot's wife and felt some womanish need to see the nature of the sin behind him; feel a sympathy, perhaps, for the cursing cursed, or want to hold it in his arms out of respect for the connection between them, he too would be lost. (Morrison 137)

Paul D in this scene is attempting not to feel like Lot's wife, a helpless and lost "woman," suggesting that Beloved's power is inverting the gender dynamics of power between them, perceiving her as superior, and him as inferior. He seems, as Morrison describes, to want to indulge to a "connection between them," although he knows he would be "lost" if he does, and see the "sin behind him." This concept of "sin" can be read as an allusion to the sin Sethe committed in murdering the child, Beloved; hence, his connection with her through this sexual act might also imply a need to investigate more closely Sethe's sin, incarnated by Beloved.

An important dynamic of the novel is the characters' need to have a connection with others. Just as Beloved needs to reunite with Sethe again because of her love and her need to defeat her, Paul D needs to be rejoined with Sethe to share his traumas with her, which he cannot share with Beloved. Steven Daniels claims:

Both Sethe and Paul D “got to choose,” and in their subsequent lives they are haunted by the choices they made. But in their suffering, their acceptance of responsibility for their opposing choices, lies the measure of their dignity. If we take events in their narrated (rather than chronological) sequence, there is for both Sethe and Paul D an escape attempt, indeed a richly reported heroic escape, before the account of their crucial choices . . . Sethe is pulled forward, despite a physically abused body and the absence of a guide, by the emotional bond to her children . . . Paul D, at least initially, by “the power of the chain” that binds him for success or failure to the bodies of forty-five other men. Paul D reaches freedom alone, while Sethe joins her family and a welcoming community of free, freed, and fugitive Blacks. (350)

Thus, both Sethe and Paul D are able to move on despite their traumatic past thanks to the bond they have with other people. In addition, Sethe and Paul D suffer together and share their own painful experiences, which, although different, can be traced back to a similar outcome for both, which is their impossibility to escape the traumas of their past. This shared experience can explain why Paul D is able to bond with Sethe as they share a similar experience of slavery which Beloved did not know because she was murdered. This can also serve as an example of the negative repercussions which Sethe did not consider when murdering Beloved, which is Beloved's lack of a community given by her lack of shared experiences.

However, despite their bond, Sethe and Paul D experience their rage and their ability to sympathize with others' anger differently. Their discussion about Halle, Sethe's husband, reveals their different relationship to a shared history and to anger. Morrison writes:

"What'd he leave then if not me?"

"I don't know, but it wasn't you. That's a fact."

"You don't know that."

"Then he did worse; he left his children."

"He was there."

"He wasn't there. He wasn't where he said he would be."

"Then why didn't he show himself? Why did I have to pack my babies off and stay behind to look for him?"

"He couldn't get out the loft."

"Loft? What loft?"

"The one over your head. In the barn."

Slowly, slowly, taking all the time allowed, Sethe moved toward the table.

"He saw?"

"He saw." (81)

This dialogue between Sethe and Paul D reveals that Sethe still feels resentment towards her Halle's absence in her life and in that of their children, and the pain of his absence becomes a further injustice she has to endure. However, she seems to shift her tone once she realizes that, as Paul D suggests, the reason for his absence is related to his inability to recover from witnessing Sethe's violation. Morrison continues:

"He told you?"

“You told me.”

“What?”

“The day I came in here. You said they stole your milk. I never knew what it was that messed him up. That was it, I guess. All I knew was that something broke him. Not a one of them years of Saturdays, Sundays and nighttime extra never touched him. But whatever he saw go on in that barn that day broke him like a twig.”

“He saw?” Sethe was gripping her elbows as though to keep them from flying away.

“He saw. Must have.”

“He saw them boys do that to me and let them keep on breathing air? He saw? He saw? He saw?”

““Hey! Hey! Listen up. Let me tell you something. A man ain’t a g_ddamn ax. Chopping, hacking, busting every g_ddamn minute of the day. Things get to him. Things he can’t chop down because they’re inside.” (81)

Besides showing her shock and inability to fully accept that “He saw,” Sethe reasserts her anger towards Halle, which earlier was attributed to his absence, and which now is directed at his failure to protect her. Her surprise turning into anger suggests that she has a gendered expectation according to which her “man” should have saved her and defeated the people who hurt her. Paul D. catches this feeling in Sethe’s words, and he gets angry with her, challenging her to reassess her gendered assumptions about Halle’s behavior. Paul D. wishes to demonstrate to Sethe that a man is not an “ax,” alluding to her incapacity to sympathize with the traumatic consequences which Halle experienced, impacting his consequent behavior. Sethe’s inability to fully recognize Halle’s suffering might be caused by the excessive rage she feels because of what she endured, impairing her ability to acknowledge Halle’s suffering as well.

To cope with this traumatic event, in which she was violated but also deprived of her milk, Sethe attempts to save her children by attempting to kill them, and she succeeds in murdering Beloved, with whom she becomes obsessed. The appearance of the ghost of her daughter triggers her memories, but somehow, it also allows her to gradually recover from her traumas.

As Sethe explains to Beloved that she had killed her to save her from slavery, she revisits the traumas and violations she endured, showing the strong association between ownership and motherhood that influenced her decision to murder Beloved. In the twentieth chapter, Morrison provides Sethe's perspective, and writes:

BELOVED, she my daughter. She mine. See. She come back to me of her own free will and I don't have to explain a thing. ... I won't never let her go. I'll explain to her, even though I don't have to. Why I did it. How if I hadn't killed her she would have died and that is something I could not bear to happen to her. When I explain it she'll understand, because she understands everything already. I'll tend her as no mother ever tended a child, a daughter. Nobody will ever get my milk no more except my own children. I never had to give it to nobody else--and the one time I did it was took from me--they held me down and took it. Milk that belonged to my baby ... There was no nursing milk to call my own. I know what it is to be without the milk that belongs to you; to have to fight and holler for it, and to have so little left. I'll tell Beloved about that; she'll understand. She my daughter. The one I managed to have milk for and to get it to her even after they stole it; after they handled me like I was the cow, no, the goat, back behind the stable because, it was too nasty to stay in with the horses. But I wasn't too nasty to cook their food or take care of Mrs. Garnet. ... Oh, but that's all over now. I'm here. I lasted. And my girl

come home. Now I can look at things again because she's here to see them too. After the shed, I stopped. (236)

Sethe reasserts several times that she owns Beloved, through the various expressions, "Beloved, she my daughter. She mine," "She my daughter," "My girl." These terms, which refer to property and ownership, demonstrate Sethe's sense of having defeated slavery by killing the child, as she obtained revenge on those who took her own milk from her, which is an event to which she alludes in her stream of thoughts about Beloved. By murdering her own daughter, Sethe takes agency and establishes ownership over what is hers. She resists being robbed of her daughter by killing her. Hence, she believes that by telling Beloved how she was deprived of what was naturally hers, her milk, which was destined to be given to Beloved, she will understand her mother's reasons for murdering her: "There was no nursing milk to call my own. I know what it is to be without the milk that belongs to you; to have to fight and holler for it, and to have so little left. I'll tell Beloved about that; she'll understand." Thus, by recollecting her memories of her loss of her own milk, describing how she had to fight for what was rightfully hers, Sethe is convinced that her daughter will understand her motives. She perceives hers as an act of love through which she was attempting to avoid being robbed of her own daughter, and have her daughter's life robbed by slavery.

Sethe's murder of Beloved can also be interpreted as the way she obtains justice by overturning the relationship between her white oppressor and black oppressed. She becomes the one who is hurting and killing, and no longer the victim of a violent white system. Nancy Jesser observes a parallel between Sethe's attempt to kill her children to save them from slavery and a "Judgement Day," as she argues:

When Sethe attempts to kill her children rather than see them brought back into slavery, Morrison clearly points to Revelations-four horseman come riding down the road and enter the yard. The day of reckoning comes in the form of a tremendous violence, the flowing of blood, and a disruption of the maternal relationship that suggests the upheavals of Judgment Day. The unleashing of Sethe's wrath is like that of the G_d of righteousness. She has been betrayed not only by the evil of white people and the world they rule, but also by the pride of her own people, who turn their backs and worship false idols... Sethe tries to "out hurt the hurter," to disrupt the narrative by employing the outrageous; love in the form of a handsaw. (337)

As a consequence of her endurance of abuse, Sethe adopts violence herself to "out hurt the hurter." Ironically, Sethe inflicts violence on her daughter in order to save her from experiencing abuse and violence at the hands of her white oppressors, expressing her anger in an extreme act of resistance. As Amanda Putnam argues:

. . . many of Morrison's female characters turn to violence—sometimes verbal but more frequently physical—and, in doing so, attempt to create unique solutions to avoid further victimization. This process demonstrates the ways in which violence itself can become an act of rebellion, a form of resistance to oppressive power. Ranging in age from children to adolescents and adults, these female characters choose violence to find an escape—a disruption of the multifaceted oppression they have suffered within a white patriarchal society where black women are tormented and subjugated by social and racial domination, exclusion, and rejection. Their choices of violence—often rendered on those within their own community or family—redirects that powerlessness and transforms it. Wreaking havoc on societal expectations for their behavior and thoughts, these violent

actions establish a new vision of African American femininity and femaleness. Black women are not powerless or without options; instead, they can create new patterns and refuse socialized gender and racial identities that attempt to constrain them. (25-26)

Putnam's ideas reinforce the interpretation of Sethe's murder as an attempt to resist and reinterpret the roles of oppressor and oppressed. Through violence, Sethe is able to somehow defeat her oppressors; nevertheless, the biggest price is still the one she is forced to pay, as she needs to give up to her own daughter to ensure she will not endure slavery. Thus, Sethe's act can also be interpreted as a sacrifice, as like Anne Elliot, she gives up the person she loves, her "Beloved," because of imagined benefits to her.

In conclusion, *Beloved* explores the manifestation of an uncontrollable female anger which is the outcome of oppressive discrimination and violence endured by people of color. The expression of rage is experienced in a dual way by Beloved, whose attachment to Sethe is characterized by both revenge and love. Paul D's anger instead is characterized by his resistance towards his unsolved traumatic past. Sethe, instead, displays her anger and rebellion through violence in her murder of Beloved. Thus, in this novel, both the repression and expression of anger reach the extremes of their manifestations, as the characters overly-repress their traumas, and consequent anger, or overly-express their anger, through violence and revenge.

5. Conclusion

The novels *Persuasion*, *Jane Eyre*, and *Beloved*, represent different manifestations of female anger, exploring the various levels of expression and repression of rage. The major source of female anger in the three novels is oppression, as the female characters endure pain and distress because of restrictions and social constructs which unfairly oppress women, leading them to respond by either repressing or expressing their anger. Hence, the female characters of these stories manage anger in three different ways; by repressing their negative feelings in order to avoid anger, by developing a controlled way to express anger, or by expressing uncontrollable manifestations of anger, which culminate in extreme outbursts. Women's anger in these novels is also positioned against the expression of anger of male characters, which invites gender comparisons about anger expression and effect.

Anne Elliot reacts to pain and injustice by repressing any sign of rebellion or distress that would lead to feel anger, adopting a positive approach which enables her to turn negative events or words into something good. She sympathizes with those who hurt her rather than rebelling or seeking revenge. Her repression of anger and tendency to self-sacrifice could be considered a lack of reaction towards her oppression as well as an adherence to conventional gender norms for women. However, Austen shows how Anne's ability to sympathize with others and care for them render her a strong character. Her positive approach to pain allows her to develop an inner strength and resilience over time, while preserving her tenderest feelings, as even in remembered pain, Anne can find pleasure. Her approach is opposed to Wentworth, who shows his anger but represses his vulnerability. Anne's repression of anger is also juxtaposed to angry female characters in the novel, who attempt to conceal before others what they feel, and display their

distress in their reactions to injustice in a limited way, conscious of their audience, their rhetoric, and male authority.

In Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, Jane's character takes a step forward in her relation to anger, showing a development of a strategic expression of anger which would avoid her designation as outcast or monstrous. Jane shows an evolution in her expression of anger, as during her childhood she expresses it through passionate outbursts, while in her adulthood she develops inner control, relying on her sense of moral rightness to process and communicate her rage. Her development is juxtaposed to Bertha's lack of anger management, as her oppression is so excessive that she does not have the chance to develop control over her own anger, which explains her violent outbreaks. Rochester vilifies Bertha and unfairly projects the anger he feels at the deception of his family onto her. Bertha's anger and wish for revenge culminate in her burning of Rochester's house, in which she dies too, an act that can be read also as a sacrifice that allows for regeneration, enabling Jane and Rochester's reunion.

The manifestation of anger in Toni Morrison's *Beloved* assumes a supernatural form, as the character of Beloved is both an actual angry woman within the text, and a ghost who symbolizes the traumas and oppression of slavery endured by the characters of the novel. Thus, Beloved is an entity who reflects the other characters' traumas and who awakens their anger, but she is also the reincarnation of Sethe's murdered child, who seeks revenge, while simultaneously, wishing to be reunited with her mother. Paul D's anger, instead, is based on his inability to cope with his past traumas, which he attempts to bury and which Beloved unearths, triggering his hatred for this character. Sethe, instead, merges love and resistance to oppression in her manifestation of anger that results from the murder of her daughter. Hence, *Beloved* portrays an extreme manifestation of repression and expression of anger.

In conclusion, although these three novels are set in different historical periods and contexts, they all show the presence of a gendered oppression on women, to which they respond in various ways in relation to anger. Still, it can be argued that the female characters in these novels respond differently to anger because of the essential characteristics of these various settings, representing an evolution of the manifestation of female anger through time, which starts from repression due to social constructs, and culminates in the uncontrollable rage caused by traumatic oppression. Thus, although women in these novels are subject to different forms of oppression and respond in various ways in relation to anger, female anger represents in all three novel a response to oppression and an attempt to seek justice.

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