

**MASARYK UNIVERSITY**  
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Teaching and Education in Charlotte Brontë's novels  
*Jane Eyre* and *The Professor*

Master's Thesis

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**Declaration**

I hereby declare I have worked on this diploma thesis entirely on my own, using only the sources listed in the “List of References” section. I agree with storing this thesis in the library of the Faculty of Education at Masaryk University and making it available for study and research purposes both in electronic and print form.

March 30, 2019

Bc. Jaroslava Gregorová

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## **Abstract**

The work deals with the topic of teaching and education in the first half of the nineteenth century in England as depicted in two novels *Jane Eyre* and *The Professor* written by Charlotte Brontë. The aim of the thesis is to provide a perspective on educational process in the beginning of the nineteenth century from the historical point of view and subsequently examine how the schooling and learning is pictured in the two novels. The thesis focuses on places of education, conditions of education, the participants of the process, both educators and pupils, curriculum and discipline portrayed in Brontë's two pieces of work.

**Keywords:** Charlotte Brontë, education, the nineteenth century, England, teacher, governess, pupils, curriculum, schools

## **Anotace**

Práce se zabývá tématem vzdělávání v románech Charlotte Brontëové *Jana Eyrová* a *Profesor*. Cílem této diplomové práce je poskytnout pohled na vzdělávací proces v Anglii na počátku devatenáctého století nejprve z historického hlediska a následně prozkoumat, jakým způsobem Charlotte Brontëová zobrazuje tento proces vzdělávání ve svých dvou románech. Práce se zaměřuje především na autorčin popis míst a podmínek pro vzdělávání, účastníků vzdělávacího procesu, učitele i žáky, zajímá se i o kurikulum tehdejší doby a metody udržení kázně zobrazené v obou dílech.

**Klíčová slova:** Charlotte Brontë, vzdělávání, 19. století, Anglie, guvernanka, učitel, žáci, kurikulum, školy

## Introduction

The beginning of the nineteenth century in England was a starting point for many changes in the education of children from the lowest social layers to the middle class. The author of the novels herself was born in that period of time, therefore she had rich experience with the contemporary educational process.

Charlotte Brontë was born in 1816 to a family of a clergyman. She had four sisters and one brother. Their mother had died when Charlotte was five years old. Their father sent Charlotte and her three sisters to a school for daughters of clergymen in 1824. The place was called the Cowan's Bridge. Poor conditions at the school caused the death of Charlotte's two sisters. She and her younger sister Emily returned home from Cowan's Bridge a year later. Charlotte stayed there till 1831 when she was sent to the school at Mirfield, a small school an elderly lady ran in her house and she studied there for a year. After the stay at school she taught her siblings at home. Their father fostered in his children the interest and love for reading. All of them liked to read books and they tried to write their own pieces of work, be it short poems or stories. Charlotte went back to Mirfield's school as a teacher and taught there from 1835 till 1838. Later she worked as a governess in different families. In 1842 Charlotte and her sister Emily left for Belgium, Brussels, where they enrolled in a boarding school. In 1843 she came back to Brussels alone as a teacher of English, however, she felt lonely since she fell in love with the married director of the boarding school so she stayed there for a year only. In 1854 she got married, but unfortunately her marriage lasted only a year, because she died in 1855 together with her unborn child.

Charlotte was the only one among the Brontë sisters who achieved a recognition as a writer nonetheless, her literary career was not without difficulties. In the beginning of the nineteenth century it was impossible for a woman to publish her own book under her real name. Women had to publish their works under male pen names. The novel *Jane Eyre* was issued in 1847 under the Brontë's pseudonym Currer Bell. The second novel the thesis deals with was written before *Jane Eyre* but rejected by publishers. *The Professor* was published posthumously in 1857.

The aim of this thesis is to examine the system of education in the first half of the nineteenth century as depicted in Charlotte Brontë's novels *Jane Eyre* and *The Professor*. Reading the novels a reader is usually interested in the romantic plots, as each of them depicts a beautiful romantic story. Nevertheless, the books present a great many aspects of schooling and learning in relation to their characters. The thesis focuses on the places and conditions of education, the participants of the process, both educators and pupils, the curriculum and discipline portrayed in the novels.

The first chapter is devoted to educators. It depicts the education of educators, including the changes occurring in the system at that time. It notices the process of getting a job as a governess and a teacher and the financial aspect of teaching, i.e. salaries, providing a variety of examples from both novels. Moreover, the differences on evaluation between a male teacher and a female teacher or governess are mentioned. The figures of governesses and teachers are introduced as well with emphasis on their role and position in the society.

The second chapter surveys the receivers of education, i.e. pupils. It is divided according to different educational institutions dealt with in the books – Lowood Institution, the church boarding school for girls, Morton village school for daughters of farmers and lower-class families, Thornfield and an infant pupil Adèle who stands for a private, individual home education by a governess. Since the thesis focuses solely on the educational system in Great Britain in the beginning of the nineteenth century, the pupils in the novel *The Professor* are omitted from the second chapter.

The third chapter examines the places where education takes place, i.e. school buildings, schools and establishments and explains the system of monitors which was introduced to the educational process in the nineteenth century. As for the reason already mentioned above, the Belgium Institutions in the novel *The Professor* are excluded from this part of the thesis.

The last chapter concentrates on the educational process in the novels. It describes the subjects taught at different schools in that period, considers the topics of curriculum and introduces the ways of teaching and punishment to gain discipline.

# 1 Educators

Any teaching requires three elements: an educator – be it a teacher, a tutor or a governess, a learner and a subject. This chapter brings into focus the educators, their education, the process of acquiring a job and payments for it.

## 1.1 Education of Educators

To become a governess in the beginning of the nineteenth century did not require any formal education or to get any formal training in teaching. The reason was obvious: the girls who were taught by a governess were not expected to have formal knowledge, it was sufficient to know the basics. Brandon in her book confirms that governesses were mostly partially educated women, saying: “The governess, herself only partially educated, could teach only as much as she herself had learned” (2). Nevertheless, some governesses were responsible and tried to improve themselves.

Jane Eyre tries to self-educate herself – she learns German and St. John’s sisters who work as governesses learn at home as well. “We resumed our usual habits and regular studies...while Mary drew, Diana pursued a course of encyclopaedic reading she had (to my awe and amazement) undertaken, and I fagged away at German” (*Jane Eyre* 455). Diana and Mary read a German book with a dictionary and discuss their knowledge of the German language with their housemaid Hannah: “We don’t speak German, and we cannot read it without a dictionary to help us.” - “And what good does it do you?” - “We mean to teach it some time—or at least the elements, as they say; and then we shall get more money than we do now” (*Jane Eyre* 382). It seems that being able to teach German means earning more money.

Hughes analyses the subjects taught by governesses taking into consideration the age of the pupil:

Depending on the age of her pupils, the governess could find herself teaching ‘the three Rs’ (reading, writing and arithmetic) to the youngest, while coaching the older girls in French conversation, history and ‘Use of the Globes’ or Geography. If her pupils were older teens, the governess would also be expected to instruct them in key ‘accomplishments’ such as drawing, playing piano, dancing and deportment (i.e. how to conduct oneself properly), all designed to attract an eligible suitor in a very crowded



marriage market. The governess might also be in charge of small boys up to the age of eight, before they were sent away to school. (“The Figure of a Governess”)

The range of subjects to educate young ladies with the expectation to become a governess is presented in the book *The Complete Governess, a Course of Mental Instruction for Ladies with a notice of the Principal female accomplishments*, written by an unknown author and published in 1826. Charlotte Brontë “makes reference to this issue. Reflecting on the list of 'qualifications' ... 'She is qualified to teach the usual branches of a good English education, together with French, Drawing, and Music' – Jane comments, in an aside, '(in those days, reader, this now narrow catalogue of accomplishments, would have been held tolerably comprehensive)’” (“The Complete Governess”). The guide in the introduction enumerates the ranges essential for young ladies where the accomplishments comprising of “music, drawing and painting” are included as one of the subjects.

Charlotte Brontë depicts the level of education provided to female pupils in the beginning of the nineteenth century in a short Jane’s advertisement saying “she is qualified to teach the usual branches of a good English education together with French, Drawing, and Music” (*Jane Eyre* 99).

Although not specifically stressed anywhere, the importance of knowledge in a foreign language must be mentioned as well. Frances as first a pupil and later a female friend and a wife of William, the main character in *The Professor*, would have never found a job if she had not spoken English. Neither Jane nor William would have got their jobs if they had not spoken and understood the French language well since in the stories Jane has to teach a little French girl and William teaches boys, whose first language is French, English and Latin. No formal certificate of knowledge and teaching skills existed in the beginning of the nineteenth century, governesses and teachers needed to provide references confirming their qualities.

In 1848, the changes in society brought about changes in the education of governesses. Queen’s College and Bedford College were founded to raise the educational qualifications of governesses. Queen’s College in London, was established to provide education for governesses and to give them “a training that would elevate their self-esteem, make them better teachers, and increase respect for them” (Peterson 21). The College also accepted women who did not want to become governesses implying that the situation in life and need of money might force them to think of taking such a job later. It also stressed the fact that the

College “prepares future wives and mothers for a better performance of their traditional role” (Peterson 21). The public was to expect the benefits from “the improved mode of instruction that the ignorant and unqualified will no longer be able to compete with the wise and good” (Peterson 22).

The concept of a formal system of teacher’s training was a novelty at the beginning of the nineteenth century. Prior to this time, the teachers of the upper and middle classes had Oxbridge degrees and clerical status, for the teachers of the lower classes literacy and numeracy were sufficient. A growing number of children in organized elementary schooling led to a growing demand for new teachers. It resulted in the introduction of “a brief and basic form of school-based training in which existing and aspiring teachers alike were able to learn the practical mechanics of the monitorial system” (Robinson 21). Throughout the 1820s, 30s and 40s a formalized network of residential teacher training colleges was established “to meet the growing demand for qualified teachers. Training was, however, brief with minimal emphasis upon academic and intellectual stimulation” (Robinson 21). The British government was aware of the fact that well-educated teachers meant well-educated young people. To support it “the first state-sponsored teacher-training scheme followed in 1846” (Evans). A new system of training was created – the pupil-teacher system – which was designed to cope with the growing demand.

Pupil teachers were usually apprenticed for five years, commencing at the age of thirteen. In effect, the pupil-teacher system operated a closed system of schooling and professional training ... Bright, aspiring elementary pupils could learn on the job, through classroom observation and practical experience of supervised teaching, whilst at the same time receiving further personal instruction from the head teacher of their school. (Robinson 22)

To have the teaching process under control, “Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools were first appointed for this purpose in 1839” (Evans).

## **1.2 Job Hunting**

According to the study of both literary works, in the end of the eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century it was not easy to get a job as a governess or a teacher. Even if a governess was supposed to provide teaching, she was also, as Kathryn Hughes

emphasises “expected to look after pupils’ moral education too. As well as reading the Bible and saying prayers with them, she was to set a good example of modest, moral behaviour” (“The Figure of a Governess”). That was the reason why employers put a great accent on hiring governesses sharing their religious affiliation. A teacher whether a man or a woman could not simply come to a house or a school and apply for a job. Peterson in her work demonstrates the most usual ways of seeking a job in those times: “the task of finding a situation was taken up through a variety of channels. The first source of aid was the help of relatives and friends who might know of a family seeking a governess. If such help was not available or effective, a woman was forced to turn to public agencies newspaper advertisement or a placement service” (Peterson 11).

To find a vacancy was only one aspect of the process since an applicant needed something important – a recommendation. It had to be provided by an appropriate institution or a person of a higher social status, an upper-class family with previous positive experience or a person honoured among the upper-class society. Moreover, the ethical virtues and integrity of moral had to be proven.

Even though Jane Eyre places an advertisement with her abilities “to teach the usual branches of a good English education, together with French, Drawing, and Music” (*Jane Eyre* 99), it is not enough for her employer to accept her. As it is evident from the answer, a job applicant is required to prove his or her abilities and, as it has already been mentioned, not only the abilities for teaching: “If J.E., who advertised in the ---shire Herald of last Thursday, possesses the acquirements mentioned, and if she is in a position to give satisfactory references as to character and competency” (*Jane Eyre* 101). In Jane’s case it is a rather long procedure, about a month. She has to ask Mr. Brocklehurst and the members of the committee of the Lowood Institution to permit her “to mention them as references” (*Jane Eyre* 101). Mrs. Reed, her aunt, is to confirm that she has allowed Jane to change her position. That has to be checked by the committee again and only after that “the formal leave was given” to her (*Jane Eyre* 101). The level of moral behaviour has to be added as well, as “a testimonial of character and capacity” (101), has to be signed by the representatives of the Lowood Institution. Having received all the documents and passed them over to her new employer, she can be and is accepted.

Getting a job abroad, as it is described in *The Professor*, is accompanied by the same procedures as in *Jane Eyre*. William would have never received a job as a professor in

Belgium if he had not firstly been recommended by Mr. Hunsden “a manufacturer and a millowner” (*The Professor* 21) and afterwards by Hunsden’s Belgian friend Mr. Brown, a “business-like and respectable looking” (*The Professor* 49) man who was “acquainted with the Director of a large establishment who is in want of a Professor of English and Latin” (*The Professor* 50). Mr. Brown emphasizes that his friend Mr. Pelet would not refuse a professor recommended by him (*The Professor* 50). Although William is a respectable teacher in Mr. Pelet’s school and later also in Miss Reuter’s boarding school, having quitted both jobs, he is still dependant on someone’s recommendation to gain another working place, however, he does not want to ask his previous employers for a reference. Fortunately, during a student’s party he saves the drowning son of “a rich, respected and influential” Mr. Vandenhuten (*The Professor* 176). That is the reason why he can afford to ask the rich man for help. Still, it takes some time to be accepted. Not merely is William in that book longing for finding a good job as a teacher. Similarly Frances would have never gained a reference but her achieved mastery of the English language enables her to show a broad range of knowledge while attending the family of an English lady from high society who afterwards recommends Frances for a job of a teacher in “the first English school in Brussels” (*The Professor* 160).

### 1.3 Financial Aspect of Being an Educator

Women in the end of the eighteenth and in the beginning of the nineteenth century were expected to take care of their husbands and children. During that period of time it was generally agreed that

a man should be able financially to support his wife and children. Women should not have to earn a living: a married woman should be economically dependent on her husband; and a single woman should be provided for by a male relative. Furthermore, women should not have to deal with financial matters: so husbands took over the property of their wives at marriage, and wives were increasingly excluded from the running of family businesses. (Gordon and Nair 791)

Despite the presented facts, it is necessary to remark that not all the families were the same. The financial situation even in the families with a middle-class of higher social status might differ a lot. Therefore, the fates of their children were not influenced only by the property, but also by the number and gender of their siblings. In that era, as it was mentioned above,

women financially depended on their husbands or male relatives and it was a consequence of the rule that all the property was always left to a male offspring. In that case, the only possibility for young women to be financially secured was to marry a wealthy man, sometimes much older than the young lady. Brontë deals with such a situation in Chapter XXII when Jane comments on her cousin's successful marriage "Georgiana made an advantageous match with a wealthy worn out man of fashion" (*Jane Eyre* 276). Nevertheless, not all women were successful in looking for a suitable husband. They had no money and without any dowry they were reliant on a mercy or indifference of the male relatives. In logical sequence, if their male relatives were not willing to help them, the women were forced to take care of themselves. Since it was not socially acceptable for them to work as maids, because they were educated, they often became governesses or teachers. Those kinds of jobs had their positives, because a governess usually received with the job an accommodation and meals. Therefore, middle-class women as governesses practically fulfilled the expected role of a Victorian woman, since they took care of the children – although not of their own, and stayed in a household – albeit not with their husbands.

For a man coming from a middle-class family who was not an heir to the family property and who was not supported by his relatives in a different way, becoming a teacher or a tutor was one of the few possibilities to provide for himself.

Women in the times of Jane Eyre had quite a lot of opportunities to work as a governess or a teacher since men were not interested in such occupations because of low earnings. "The pay being poor, men preferred not to take up teaching jobs" (Prasad). Elizabeth Rigby comments on the earnings of governesses in her review. She criticises the families hiring a governess because of "throwing all the labour of the teacher and many of the chief duties of a parent upon the shoulders of a young woman, for the remuneration of thirty or even twenty pounds a year" (Rigby 508). She also explains that the governesses due to their situation had to accept the salary as they "had no escape" (508). Women even though educated but without any means had no choice and had to accept work even if they were wrongly paid to ensure themselves an income and accommodation. To imagine what wages were common those times we can look at the overview used in the Peterson's work, where she states an average salary of a governess to be between £20 and £45 a year, housemaid's salary to be between £11-£13 and nursemaid's between £11- £12 (12). She also equals the salary "of an informed but not accomplished governess with that of footman, and that of a highly

educated governess with that of a coachman or butler” (12). Another source provides a historically documented annual salary of “a schoolmistress in a Tottenham charity school, who was being paid £28 a year (apart from the usual 'two chaldron of coals')” in the early nineteenth century (“The Education of the Working Classes to 1870”). To get acquainted with what amount of money per year was needed to live at that time, it was necessary to study the article *London History - Currency, Coinage and the Cost of Living* to find out that “£15 to £20 per year was a low wage ... a working family needed an income of at least 18s. to 21s. a week, or around £50 a year, just to get by, and 22s. to 30s. a week (£57 -£78 per annum) to be "comfortable". The middling sort required much more still and could not expect to live comfortably for under £100 per year, while the boundary between the "middling sort" and the simply rich was in the region of £500” (Emsley et. al.). It is evident that the gap between a governess’ salary and expenses for a comfortable life of a middle-class woman was immense.

The topic of money – salaries and costs of living – is mentioned in the books as well. It seems that it corresponds with the reality of those days as Brontë provides a vivid picture of the poor earnings in *Jane Eyre* and confirms the amount of money they earned. Nevertheless as a governess Jane earns more money than she had as a teacher in Lowood Institution where she “only got £15 per annum” (*Jane Eyre* 101).

In Thornfield she doubles her salary since she is offered to get “thirty pounds per annum” (*Jane Eyre* 100). Moreover, she has a place to live without any further costs. After she leaves Thornfield having no money, her chances to get a well-paid job are very low. Without any property and with no recommendation, it is almost impossible to find a job as a teacher. Fortunately, she meets St. John Rivers who is a parson in a small village and after he realizes that Jane is a well-educated young woman, he offers her a job in a school for girls with the salary of “thirty pounds a year” (*Jane Eyre* 407) with an accommodation in a small simple furnished cottage near the house where the school is situated. It means that according to the book there is no difference in a financial evaluation of an educated governess working for an upper-class family and a teacher teaching in a small village school.

*The Professor* deals with salaries of teachers since the author does not deal with a position of a governess there. William Crimsworth quits a well-paid job “£90 a year” (*The Professor* 16) of a clerk in his despotic brother’s factory in England and becomes a professor in the school for boys in Brussels. The salary “is fixed at one thousand francs per annum,

besides board and lodging” (*The Professor* 51). After a short time he starts to teach also in a girls’ school in the neighbourhood and he earns five hundred francs per year there (*The Professor* 66).

To have a clear notion what equivalent those amounts of money are to a sum in pounds, it is necessary to take into consideration William’s illustration of his income after it is cut off when he quits his job in Mrs. Reuter’s establishment. He says: “I had voluntarily cut off £20 from my yearly income; I had diminished my £60 per annum to £40” (*The Professor* 151). Therefore we know he had thousand francs in the boys’ school and five hundreds francs in the girls’ school. As he gave up his job in the girls’ school and therefore cut off £20 from his income, it means that £20 was equal to five hundred francs and £40 was equal to one thousand francs in that period of time. The great improvement of his income comes after he is accepted as an English professor “with a salary of three thousand francs per annum” in “College, Brussels” (*The Professor* 178) and after a year and a half he is “earning eight thousand francs a year” (*The Professor* 206-207), which is an amount equal to £320 a year.

To see the difference between William’s salary and the salary of a female teacher in Brussels, earnings of Frances Henri from the book *The Professor* are taken into account. Frances Henri has to concentrate her effort on earning some money because her parents died and nobody among her relatives can support her financially. There is no reference to Frances’ earnings during her stay in Mrs. Reuters’ boarding school, but the reader is acquainted with the information that salary was paid quarterly (*The Professor* 143). After working hard to improve her education and knowledge of the English language, Frances gets a recommendation from a family of a high social rank and is accepted as a teacher in the first English school in Brussels for six hours a day with the salary of “twelve hundred francs per annum” (*The Professor* 160), which is approximately £47.

Although this thesis does not deal with gender differences, it is necessary to look closer to the above mentioned fact that there is a quite big difference between the salaries of men- teachers and governesses and women -teachers. Although Frances as well as Jane Eyre work hard, there is not any increase in their salaries as it is in William’s case. “There was no justice in salary between male teachers and female teachers...” explains Demir in his essay (56). The disproportion in wages between men and women occurred not only at the very beginning of the nineteenth century. Lydia Murdoch presents an example of the imbalance in the men’s and women’s wages later in the Victorian period:

No matter what the job, women faced a set of common obstacles in the workplace. The wages for female workers varied tremendously, as did the nature of their work, but in practically all professions, women earned less than men. In 1883, for example, the School Board of London specified that the salaries of female teachers should be three quarters of those for male teachers of equal qualifications and experience. In 1890, male assistant teachers had an average annual salary of 117 pounds, while women earned 88 pounds for the same work. In addition to their subordinate status in relation to men of their profession, all women workers shared the experience of being judged by the evolving, contradictory Victorian gender ideal of femininity, which held that women shouldn't work outside the home and that women's paid labour was unnatural. (qtd. in Demir 56)

As for the cost of living, it is not specified in *Jane Eyre*. Yet, *The Professor* offers a nice analysis as regards the different value of money for living in England and in Belgium. It seems to be an allusion to the British opulent lifestyle:

Two persons whose desires are moderate may live well enough in Brussels on an income which would scarcely afford a respectable maintenance for one in London: and that, not because the necessities of life are so much dearer in the latter capital, or taxes so much higher than in the former, but because the English surpass in folly all the nations on God's earth, and are more abject slaves to custom, to opinion, to the desire to keep up a certain appearance, than the Italians are to priestcraft, the French to vainglory, the Russians to their Czar, or the Germans to black beer. I have seen a degree of sense in the modest arrangement of one homely Belgian household that might put to shame the elegance, the superfluities, the luxuries, the strained refinements of a hundred genteel English mansions. In Belgium, provided you can make money, you may save it; this is scarcely possible in England; ostentation there lavishes in a month what industry has earned in a year. More shame to all classes in that most bountiful and beggarly country for their servile following of Fashion; I could write a chapter or two on this subject, but must forbear, at least for the present. Had I retained my £60 per annum I could, now that Frances was in possession of £50, have gone straight to her this very evening, and spoken out the words which, repressed, kept fretting my heart with fever; our united income would, as we should have managed it, have sufficed well for our mutual support; since we lived in a country



where economy was not confounded with meanness, where frugality in dress, food, and furniture, was not synonymous with vulgarity in these various points. But the placeless usher, bare of resource, and unsupported by connections, must not think of this; such a sentiment as love, such a word as marriage, were misplaced in his heart, and on his lips. Now for the first time did I truly feel what it was to be poor.  
(*The Professor* 162-163)

Based on the quotation above and comprehending the message of the William's presentation of approaches to the particulars of the life in Britain which were strongly influenced by sticking to the customs, opinions and snobbism, it can be assumed that the value of earnings of all working classes including teachers diminished and destroyed their expectations and economic background for materializing a dignified personal and family life.

## 1.4 Governesses

Jeanne Peterson explains in her study the usage of the term "governess" in the beginning of the nineteenth century "the term "governess" could refer to a woman who taught in a school, a woman who lived at home and travelled to her employer's house to teach (called a "daily governess"), or a woman who lived in her employer's home and who taught the children and served as a companion to them" (8).

The Victorian period was the time of social hierarchy. The social status was extremely taken into consideration. As Huff notices in her essay: "Though the qualified governess differed very little from the typical middle class lady, her status could no longer be equivalent to that of her upbringing" (1). Traditionally, a governess was employed by upper-class families and aristocracy, however, during the nineteenth century the financial situation of the middle-class families improved a lot and they "as the newly rich English middle classes did their best to imitate aristocratic lifestyles" (Ruth Brandon 1) including having a governess as an educator for their children, especially young girls. As Peterson confirms, having a governess was something highly prestigious, even when the family did not treat her as an equal they did not hide her before their wealthy companionship and displayed her "as a symbol of economic power, breeding and station" (9). Hughes adds that "employing a governess sent a signal that the lady of the house was too 'genteel' to teach her daughters herself. Just as she employed servants to clean her house, she paid another woman to raise her children. Hiring a governess became a status symbol" ("The Figure of a Governess"). A governess was usually a daughter

of a middle-class family, at least partly educated, who “had neither a husband to support her nor money of her own” (Brandon 1) and had no male relatives to care of her. According to her social status it was not possible for her to work as a maid or in a factory, thus being a governess “was almost the only way in which society allowed her to earn a living” (Brandon 1). As it has already been mentioned, in the Victorian society the position of a governess was very important for women who were without any means as Jane Eyre was.

Not surprisingly, Brontë exposes Jane Eyre, the governess, to several situations where the differences in the social status are strongly perceived. Not only are the governesses called “the tribe” (*Jane Eyre* 203), but also a variety of malice aimed at them is introduced as an immense entertainment for young ladies in high society. The reaction of the young lady Ingram to an allusion to governesses is as follows:

Oh, don't refer him to me, mama! I have just one word to say of the whole tribe; they are a nuisance. Not that I ever suffered much from them; I took care to turn the tables. What tricks Theodore and I used to play on our Miss Wilsons, and Mrs. Greys, and Madame Jouberts! Mary was always too sleepy to join in a plot with spirit. The best fun was with Madame Joubert: Miss Wilson was a poor sickly thing, lachrymose and low-spirited, not worth the trouble of vanquishing, in short; and Mrs. Grey was coarse and insensible; no blow took effect on her. But poor Madame Joubert! I see her yet in her raging passions, when we had driven her to extremities—spilt our tea, crumbled our and butter, tossed our books up to the ceiling, and played a charivari with the ruler and desk, the fender and fire-irons. (*Jane Eyre* 202-203)

It is apparent that the family replaced many governesses, because they were not any proper teachers for them, they were toys for their spoiled young girls only. Prejudice against the intellect and education of governesses is evident in the dialogue between two ladies preparing a game for the visitors of the mansion where Jane works. One of the gentlemen proposes that Jane should be invited to play the game with them, but the lady answers: “She looks too stupid for any game of the sort” (*Jane Eyre* 208). Diana and Mary Rivers who work as governesses experience similar humiliation and treatment. They are governesses “in a large, fashionable, south-of-England city” in families “by whose wealthy and haughty members they were regarded only as humble dependants, and who neither knew nor sought out their innate excellences, and appreciated only their acquired accomplishments as thy appreciated the skill of their cook or the taste of their waiting-woman” (*Jane Eyre*, 404). Luckily, not all young

ladies in the literary work are unsatisfied with their educators. Jane's small female pupil Adèle is not spoilt in her character and is not affected by the prejudices as "she was quite a child, perhaps seven or eight years old" (*Jane Eyre* 115).

The Victorian period was also the time of defining the role of women in the society. As shown above, women in the end of 18th and in the beginning of 19th century were expected to take care of their husbands and children. Holcombe sees that governesses to some extent fulfilled the required and destined role:

By devoting herself to the care and education of children, even for hire, a lady could fill the role for which nature had intended her; and by living at home and going out into other homes as a daily governess, or by working as a resident governess in a girls' boarding school or in her employers' household, she would still enjoy that sheltering abode deemed to be her proper sphere. Every woman was by nature a teacher. (Holcombe 12)

Jane Eyre herself is not a mere governess. Although she is able to provide "tuition ... of a good English education, together with French, Drawing and Music" (*Jane Eyre* 99) as stated in her advertisement, in Thornfield she does not provide only educational activities. She spends a lot of time with her pupil despite the fact that little Adèle has a French nurse Sophie. The reason is that Jane not only feels as a member of the family, which she confirms by her words: "I felt a conscientious solicitude for Adèle's welfare and progress, and a quiet liking for her little self: just as I cherished towards Mrs. Fairfax a thankfulness for her kindness, and a pleasure in her society" (*Jane Eyre* 124-125), but as she comments on her impression of Sophie, Jane does not experience any pleasure of talking with her: "with Sophie I used to talk French, and sometimes I asked her questions about her native country; but she was not of a descriptive or narrative turn, and generally gave such vapid and confused answers as were calculated rather to check than encourage inquiry" (*Jane Eyre* 126). It is understandable that little Adèle, curious as every child, prefers to spend her time with educated Jane who can provide her a variety of information. Holcombe in his work presents the governesses as "usually expected to act as nurses and maids as well as teachers for the children, and to make themselves generally useful whenever needed" (*Jane Eyre* 13-14).

In contrast, an extraordinary mutual relationship between Jane and Adèle develops while spending time together beyond the Jane's call of duty. "I stayed out a few minutes longer with Adèle and Pilot – ran a race with her, and played a game of battledore and shuttlecock. When

we went in, and I had removed her bonnet and coat, I took her on my knee; kept her there an hour, allowing her to prattle as she liked” (166-167). Kathryn Hughes in her article labels a governess as “a surrogate mother who had no children of her own” (“The Figure of a Governess”). The picture of Jane putting her little pupil into bed described by Brontë: “I looked at Adèle, whose head leant against my shoulder; her eyes were waxing heavy, so I took her up in my arms and carried her off to bed” (*Jane Eyre* 192-193), clearly proves Hughes’ statement. A usual mother-child evening scene takes place, in fact the mother is substituted by the governess. On the other hand, Hughes comments on the Victorian governess as “a family member who was sometimes mistaken for a servant” (“The Figure of a Governess”), but analysing the novel *Jane Eyre*, only one situation could be found extraordinary - when Jane “worked the whole day in the storeroom, helping (or hindering) her and the cook; learning to make custards and cheesecakes and French pastry, to truss game and garnish desert-dishes” (*Jane Eyre* 187).

## 1.5 Teachers

Jane knows several teachers in Lowood Institution. There are enough teachers to deal with eighty pupils in four smaller groups. While reading, the reader meets the teachers and learns who they are, what characteristics they have and what they teach. There is Miss Miller, “an under teacher” who very often instructs the monitors and teaches the smallest children (*Jane Eyre* 50), Miss Smith who “attends to the work, and cuts out – for we make our own clothes, our frocks, and pelisses, and everything” (*Jane Eyre* 57) and is a teacher for handwork. Miss Scatcherd who “teaches history and grammar, and hears the second class repetitions” (57) is a very strict teacher. As Helen describes her, it is better not to annoy her (57). The truth is that she is the only teacher who punishes the pupils. All the punishments described in this thesis are ordered by Miss Scatcherd. Madame Pierrot is of French origin, therefore she gives the lessons of French language and she is “not a bad sort of person” (57). The best teacher who “is very good, and very clever: she is above the rest, because she knows far more they [other teachers] do” (*Jane Eyre* 57) is Miss Maria Temple, a superintendent of Lowood institution. The last teacher, the reader gets acquainted with in Lowood, is Jane Eyre herself.

Since the entire society in that period of time focuses on hierarchy, in *Jane Eyre* the author concurrently presents the picture of hierarchy within the educational system in Lowood. Mr. Brocklehurst as a man is a manager of the Institution. The most educated teacher, Miss Maria Temple, is a superintendent of the school. Then, there are some “upper teachers” (*Jane Eyre* 52) such as Miss Scatcherd or Madame Pierrot as well as “under teachers” (52), for example Miss Miller (see the text above). The monitors, older pupils who help with teaching aids, are on the scale of importance under Miss Miller.

The position of the teachers is reflected in the way of clothing. As Jane notices “one of the upper teachers, a little and dark personage [is] smartly dressed” (*Jane Eyre* 53). Furthermore, Miss Temple, a superintendent, dresses according to the fashion:

on each of her temples her hair, of a very dark brown, was clustered in round curls, according to the fashion of those times, when neither smooth bands nor long ringlets were in vogue; her dress, also in the mode of the day, was of purple cloth, relieved by a sort of Spanish trimming of black velvet; a gold watch (watches were not so common then as now) shone at her girdle. (*Jane Eyre* 53)

The clothes of the under teachers are not commented upon, meaning they do not catch Jane’s attention, probably being ordinary.

The teachers in Lowood are all Misses since after the marriage, a contemporary woman quits her position of a teacher to be able to take care of her own children and husband as it was in the case of Miss Maria Temple who after getting married “removed with her husband (a clergyman, an excellent man, almost worthy of such a wife) to a distant county, and consequently was lost” (*Jane Eyre* 96).

Not much is said about Jane’s position as a teacher in Lowood Institution even though she spends two years teaching there. However, she has a great example of a teacher there, Miss Maria Temple, from whom she gains “better-regulated feelings ...allegiance to duty and order ... [and] disciplined and subdued character” (*Jane Eyre* 96). Jane utilizes her teaching skills and knowledge obtained in Lowood as a governess in Thornfield as well as a teacher in a village school of Morton.

As a governess teaching Adèle, Jane is more or less upbringing her. As she mentions “as she was committed entirely to my care” (*Jane Eyre* 124) and emphasizes the difference of her attitude to her little pupil in contrast with that of Mr. Rochester’s and the rest of the family members and the importance of her influence as an educator saying “no injudicious

interference from any quarter ever thwarted my plans for her improvement” (*Jane Eyre* 124). It is evident she is aware of her ability to provide quality education. Moreover, she describes her success in her doings “she soon forgot her little freaks, and became obedient and teachable” (*Jane Eyre* 124). Working with Adèle, Jane also takes into consideration that she is not used to any “regular occupation” (*Jane Eyre* 119) and adapts the lessons to her age and mental abilities “I felt it would be injudicious to confine her too much at first; so, when I had talked to her a great deal, and got her to learn a little, and when the morning had advanced to noon, I allowed her to return to her nurse” (*Jane Eyre* 119). In Morton, Jane meets with a difficult task to teach illiterate girls, daughters of workers and farmers. In the beginning she is disillusioned a bit that her wide range of knowledge cannot be utilized with those pupils (*Jane Eyre* 412), however, due to her character and because of her great school management including her own example of good manners she manages the school with the great results. Jane is also perceived as a good teacher and nice and educated person by her surroundings as she has a good relationship with her pupils as well as with their parents (*Jane Eyre* 420).

William’s journey to become a teacher is much different from that of Jane’s. Unlike Jane, William is educated at Eton and expected by his relatives to be a clergyman. However, the post of a cleric is conditioned by a marriage with one of his cousins he doesn’t like at all (*The Professor* 6).

Therefore, he decides to sever his ties with his honoured relatives and starts to work for his older brother as a clerk. After some time, he realizes that the work in the office is not something he would like to do for the whole life and he travels to Belgium to start his new life. Receiving a recommendation from a rich friend of his, he looks for a job in Brussels. By coincidence and because of his knowledge of French language and Latin he is offered a job as a professor of English and Latin in a boys’ school. Notwithstanding his lack of experience, his only encounter with the teachers was that of a pupil at Eton, he proves his ability to maintain the discipline and to keep attention of his pupils even during his first lesson, since they are “all the while, sitting mute and listening with fixed attention” (*The Professor* 54). William’s behaviour and treatment of pupils is so natural as if he was educated to become a teacher. His approach and ability to teach brings him a new possibility to teach in a girls’ school, which he accepts. His work at school for girls is accompanied by situations he is not used to while teaching boys. Since he is a man – teacher, girls desire to keep his attention making eyes on

him, giggling and showing off their charm (*The Professor* 71). However, William seeks the intelligence, not beauty in his pupils. He compares the girls – pupils to the tapestry hangings.

To the tutor, female youth, female charms are like tapestry hangings, of which the wrong side is continually turned towards him; and even when he sees the smooth, neat external surface he so well knows what knots, long stitches, and jagged ends are behind that he has scarce a temptation to admire too fondly the seemly forms and bright colours exposed to general view. (*The Professor* 100)

As he continues to find mental qualities, “love of knowledge, natural capacity, docility, truthfulness, gratefulness, are the charms that attract his [the teacher’s] notice and win his regard. These he seeks, but seldom meets” (*The Professor* 101). Besides, he treats his pupils as an equal not taking into consideration their beauty or social status. He places their knowledge on the first place of his interest (71). His approach helps him to become a respected teacher and brings him recognition of the directors of the both schools and later of the general public and later he becomes an English professor at a College in Brussels (*The Professor* 178).

## 2 Pupils

The teaching process needs someone to be taught, it means a pupil. Until 1870 most children never went to school and suffer of lack of reading and writing skills. Children from rich families were prevailingly taught at home by governess until the age of 10. Boys from wealthy families then went to Public schools such as Eton. On the other hand girls continued to be educated at home (“Victorian School Facts”).

Teachers and governesses depicted in Brontë’s books meet various learners from different social classes. It would be possible to make differences among the pupils based on personal likes and dislikes. Yet, Brontë does not allow the main characters in both books to be influenced by prejudices of the social status of their pupils. And if some of them start to doubt the equality of education she does not let the prejudices win. It is excellently illustrated in the case of Jane Eyre and her work in the village-school in Morton where the class is full of untaught children who “seemed to me hopelessly dull; and at first sight, all dull alike” (*Jane Eyre* 420). She has to remind herself that in everyone, even in a poor child, a certain level of intelligence could be hidden (*Jane Eyre* 420). Nevertheless, after a short time she recognises her mistake and corrects her opinion having comprehended that the pupils are not so dull, but “sharp-witted girls” (*Jane Eyre* 420).

Correspondingly, in *Thornfield* she is not familiar with Adèle’s origin. The master, Mr. Rochester thinks that Jane may feel a compulsion to change her work place after she learns that her pupil is “the illegitimate offspring of a French opera-girl” (*Jane Eyre* 166). On the contrary, the fate of a parentless child affects Jane so much that she likes little Adèle more than before.

Identically, Frances Henri, a teacher and later a directress of a school in *The Professor*, does not make any differences among her pupils, some of them being much poorer than the others. “As to Julia and Georgiana G—, daughters of an English baronet, as to Mdlle Mathilde de —, heiress of a Belgian count, and sundry other children of patrician race, the directress was careful of them as of the others, anxious for their progress, as for that of the rest—but it never seemed to enter her head to distinguish them by a mark of preference” (*The Professor* 210).

The only male teacher in the novels, William Crimsworth, also treats his pupils as they deserve without being interested in their appearance or social position at all. He describes his



teacher's approach to the pupils, girls in that case, in Chapter XIV. "A professor does not meet his pupil to see her dressed in satin and muslin, with hair perfumed and curled, neck scarcely shaded by aerial lace, round white arms circled with bracelets, feet dressed for the gliding dance... he finds her in the schoolroom, plainly dressed, with books before her" (*The Professor* 100). Moreover, the social status of his pupils he does not make a difference between them. He deals with their behaviour and knowledge only. Even though the pupils are of higher social class he punishes them without any hesitation because of the cheating or bad behaviour (*The Professor* 84, 110).

## 2.1 Lowood Pupils

Lowood is a school for girls, orphans, "all the girls have lost either one or both parents" (*Jane Eyre* 56). In the time when Jane comes to Lowood as she describes, there are "the eighty girls" who are of "every age, from nine or ten to twenty" (*Jane Eyre* 49). Since the school is run and procured by the Evangelic Church management, their clothes and their outward appearance corresponds with the religious beliefs of the institution, simplicity and modesty. The girls wear simple uniforms – "brown dresses, made high and surrounded by a narrow tucker about the throat, with little pockets of holland (shaped something like a Highlander's purse) tied in front of their frocks, and destined to serve the purpose of a work-bag: all, too, wearing woollen stockings and country-made shoes, fastened with brass buckles" (*Jane Eyre* 52). As Jane comments, the clothes give "an air of oddity even to the prettiest" (52). Any caprice in girl's appearance is forbidden. Mr. Brocklehurst's plan "in bringing up these girls is, not to accustom them to habits of luxury and indulgence, but to render them hardy, patient, self-denying" (*Jane Eyre* 72).

Not merely ordinariness of the clothes is important he likewise observes the whole visual appearance including hair conditioning as well. The girls have to wear "plain locks combed from their faces, not a curl visible" (*Jane Eyre* 52). Once he ascertains an unkempt girl with naturally curly hair and orders immediately to invite the barber and cut her hair and also other girls' top-knots have to be clipped" (*Jane Eyre* 72-73).

Even though Mr. Brocklehurst tries to maintain the appearance and clothing of the girls in compliance with his beliefs, it is a matter of the fact that "whatever he might do with the outside of the cup and platter, the inside was further beyond his interference than he imagined" (*Jane Eyre* 73). He looks not only after purity and simpleness; he is responsible for

the budget of the Institution trying, of course, to keep it at the minimum: “the laundress tells me some of the girls have two clean tuckers in the week: it is too much; the rules limit them to one” (*Jane Eyre* 70).

## 2.2 Pupils in Morton

Similarly as in Lowood, a village school in Morton is determined to be a girls’ school. However, in contrast with Lowood, most pupils are daughters of workers and farmers from the surroundings of the parsonage. In the beginning, as the pupils are of the lowest social sphere, the parson Mr. Rivers warns Jane “your scholars will be only poor girls—cottagers’ children—at the best, farmers’ daughters” (*Jane Eyre* 408), Jane herself feels degraded, because her education is much higher and she is endowed with knowledge of subjects and accomplishments she thinks she cannot present them (*Jane Eyre* 412). Their very low level of education is evident from Jane’s description of her twenty pupils during the first day in Morton school, where only “three of the number can read: none write or cipher. Several knit, and a few sew a little. They speak with the broadest accent of the district. At present, they and I have a difficulty in understanding each other’s language” (*Jane Eyre* 411). The pupils are daughters of the working class and they are used to help at home and on the farms a lot. They have not had an opportunity to educate themselves since there was not any school for girls before in the parish. As St. John explains during his dialogue with Jane, he firstly established the boys’ school in Morton some time ago (*Jane Eyre* 407). Despite Jane’s initial doubts and feelings of despair she, after a short time, she realizes that amongst the girls there are “not a few examples of natural politeness, and innate self-respect, as well as of excellent capacity” (*Jane Eyre* 420).

Brontë depicts in the village school of Morton how non-educated pupils under the kind and strict management of an educated teacher, exposed to her own example of behaviour make a rapid progress not only within gained knowledge, but also in their manners (*Jane Eyre* 420). An increase of interest in education is seen in a growing number of scholars, since at the beginning of the school there were twenty pupils and near Christmas there have already been sixty girls attending the school (*Jane Eyre* 447). Moreover, Jane is not compelled to abandon her better education. After all, she does not teach only reading, writing and arithmetic; she finds among her pupils “several farmers’ daughters: young women grown, almost. These

could already read, write, and sew; and to them [Jane] taught the elements of grammar, geography, history, and the finer kinds of needlework” (*Jane Eyre* 420). Furthermore, Jane provides home schooling for those gifted farmers’ daughters as she with them passes “many a pleasant evening hour in their own homes” (*Jane Eyre* 420). Jane herself as a teacher remarks that it is “a great deal” commenting the progress of her best scholars who have become “decent, respectable, modest, and well-informed young women as could be found in the ranks of the British peasantry” (*Jane Eyre* 447).

### 2.3 A Pupil in Thornfield

Contrary to the previous two types of pupils, Adèle is a foster child of Mr. Rochester, a rich man, therefore she has a private educator – a governess. She is an only pupil in Thornfield. A little girl of French origin “perhaps seven or eight years old” (*Jane Eyre* 115). Thus, Jane has to communicate with her in French. The ability to speak French is also the reason why Jane is accepted as a governess to Thornfield.

Jane, after she meeting her new pupil, finds her “sufficiently docile, though disinclined to apply: she had not been used to regular occupation of any kind” (*Jane Eyre* 119). Besides, she is very lively as it is common with children of her age and spoilt a bit by her rich guardian, Mr. Rochester (*Jane Eyre* 124). Being a young child, she loves presents and surprises and is interested in her appearance, which Jane tries to challenge saying “You think too much of your ‘toilette’” (*Jane Eyre* 195). She is not able to be attentive for a very long time since she is not used to regular work and gets distracted easily as for example when she awaits Mr. Rochester’s arrival and cannot concentrate on learning, thinking only about a possible present he will bring her and keeps running up and down the stairs. It is the only time when Jane gets a little angry with her behaviour (*Jane Eyre* 136). Without proper instruction she might not be able to achieve any improvement in her knowledge or skills and stay ordinary and common as Jane describes her as having “no great talents, no marked traits of character, no peculiar development of feeling or taste which raised her one inch above the ordinary level” (*Jane Eyre* 124). Nevertheless, under Jane’s governance she makes reasonable progress. The difference is palpable since Mr. Rochester, after examining Adèle a bit, praises Jane’s work. He expresses his opinion of Adèle as a pupil and Jane’s work with her as follows: “you have taken great pains with her; she is not bright, she has no talents; yet in a short time she has made much improvement” (*Jane Eyre* 139).

### 3 Schools

In the beginning of the nineteenth century, in the period of the novels *Jane Eyre* and *The Professor*, primary education in England was in infancy. As Jason Long presents in his essay, there was a huge gap between English primary education and education [for example] in the United States and Germany. He says:

England was decades behind the United States in establishment of a national system of primary education, and even behind in achieving high rates of school attendance and literacy. The gap relative to Germany was greater. Prussia established compulsory education in 1763, more than a century before England. By 1860, percent of all German children between the ages of 6 and 14 attended school; in England, only half of 6-14 year olds were in school in 1851. Not until the Education Act of 1870 did England create system of universal elementary education. (1028-1029)

School attendance was not compulsory and children of the working-class had to help their parents with the financial securing of their families thus they were rather sent to work than to school. Stone adds: “Compulsion was not introduced until 1881 and non-payment until 1891” (96-97).

Since at the beginning of the century the educational process was focused more on upper classes to ensure the uniqueness of the elite, there was no need to educate lower classes. The upper-class families did not want to mix their male offspring with the poor or lower-class boys. As there were not schools for girls in those times, the girls from aristocratic families were educated at home by governesses. This trend was not a privilege of the beginning of the nineteenth century, it began much earlier in the history. “It was in the seventeenth century that the gentry drew away from the lower classes, segregating their children either at home with a private tutor, or in a handful of socially exclusive schools such as Eton, Westminster and Winchester [also called “Public schools”] ... to be trained up in society with their equal” (Stone 71-72). These schools were “financially out of reach to all but wealthy members of the ruling class” (“Elementary Education in the 19th Century”). Stone confirms the reason why children of the poor and from the lower-classes were lack elementary education. He describes those intentions as “an extreme example of the generalization that children of each social group are normally given an education which will fit them for a future in their inherited position in society, and that every level of education is therefore tied to a different social

class, each of which has a strong vested interest in preventing infiltration from below” (Stone 73).

However, the reasons for maintaining or establishing schools for lower-class or poor children started to emerge and in its base they varied a lot.

Firstly, the reason was connected with religion. The clergy found out that ordinary people were not able to read the Bible, so it was necessary to provide them lessons of reading. “Sunday schools taught reading as it was regarded as a crucial component of learning Scripture” (Lacquer 111). This education was usually provided by Sunday schools, because the working class children were able to devote their time to education only on Sundays. In addition to Sunday schools, there were so called National Schools within the parishes established and led under control of the Church of England. The Evangelical Church had not lagged behind and started to establish so-called British schools. “The schools were supported by the churches, both through direct charitable donations and through the local clergy often teaching in the schools for no fee” (Meyer et.al. 80). As Pamela Horn adds in her book “the denominational schools depended for their funds upon the fees of pupils, supplemented by donations from well-wishers” (2). Even though the schools were established for poor children, they were not free of charge. Another possibility for very poor young children was to attend the Dame schools: “Dame schools, often taught by older women in their homes, provided a cheaper alternative to those families unable to afford church school rates” (Mair 19).

Secondly, then there were a lot of criminals among poor people as they starved of hunger and lack of money, therefore, there was an opinion that the education would help to arise their earnings and prevent the society from the crime. “As the Edinburgh Review remarked tersely in 1839: “we must build more schools or more prisons”. There was also a financial gain to be derived from any improvement in working-class habits of thrift and sobriety, for this might incidentally serve to stimulate the economy and reduce the poor rate” (Stone 90).

And thirdly, the owners of the factories and manufactures “hopes that the elementary school could be used to break the labouring classes into those habits of work discipline now necessary for factory production ... for making workers both more “tractable and obedient” and more punctual in their attendance” (Stone 92).

In the year 1833 new legislation was introduced, which helped to bring more children to schools. It was the restriction of the employment of children in factories (“Elementary

Education in the 19th Century”). But there still remained the most serious reason of the small amount of educated people from lower social ranks, i.e. fees, because all types of schools were usually paid by the pupil’s family or relatives, sometimes partly supported by the financial help of charities, parishes, landlords or donators from higher social layers. To bring elementary education closer to the poor, around 1840 the Ragged schools for the poor and orphan children were founded. They provided free education, meals and clothing. At last, in 1870 Education Act was enacted that “made provision for the elementary education of all children aged 5-13, and established school boards to oversee and complete the network of schools and to bring them all under some form of supervision” (Gillard; ch.5). However, the compulsory and free school attendance was stated a few years later.

There was a great change in the educational system in the beginning of the nineteenth century when the system of monitoring was adopted by the National and British schools. The system allowed to engage experienced and educated older pupils in the educational process so that they might help to teach their younger classmates. The system of monitors was firstly conceived by Andrew Bell. “This involved older pupils instructing younger scholars and was devised to rectify the lack of teachers” (“The Fitzwilliam Museum”). The Bell’s monitorial system was embraced by the National schools established and ran by the Church of England. A few years later Joseph Lancaster used the similar system in his school for non-conformist pupils. “Non-conformist schools following this system eventually joined together as ‘The British and Foreign School Society’ in 1814” (“The Fitzwilliam Museum”). System employed “older pupils as monitors, transmitting their knowledge and skills to their younger contemporaries” (“The Fitzwilliam Museum”). As it was partially mentioned above, the monitorial system of education did not only help older pupils to learn through teaching the others but as Newman performs in his study, “attractiveness of the monitorial system was its ability to economize on teachers at a time when neither the facilities nor the funding were available for training” (163).

In the beginning of the nineteenth century, there was no possibility to build new, special school buildings with beautiful, commodious rooms and wide windows to provide educational process for poor children there. The schools were usually older “imposing buildings with high up windows to prevent children from seeing out” (“Victorian School Facts”). As it has been already mentioned sometimes teaching was conducted in teachers’ houses as for example Dame schools. Private tutors and governesses attended houses of the

upper-class families or usually lived in their employer's house. Schools established with the support of the Church were usually older buildings in parishes within the reach of churches. Underutilized houses were provided by the landlords or factory owners within their property. The state of the school buildings equalled to the financial abilities of its donators.

A big turnabout occurred in 1833 when the first grant of £20,000 was made by government to aid "private subscription for the erection of school houses." This grant was given to the two main religious providers of schooling at the time – the National Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor and the British and Foreign School Society. Grants to build schools gradually increased over the century and an Education Department was established in 1856 to control this funding (Meyer et.al. 81).

### **3.1 Schools in the Novels**

In the novels, the reader is acquainted not only with the appearance of the building, description of the rooms and schoolrooms but also with the establishment and everyday life in the institutions. There are two schools in *Jane Eyre*, Lowood Institution and a village-school in Morton parish, which are introduced in the following text, besides there is also Thornfield mentioned since it represents the place of private educating. The other novel *The Professor* provides brief information about the prestigious English school Eton and the rest of the story takes place in the Belgium's Institutions. The description and establishment of the Belgium Schools is excluded from the thesis as it is focused on education in England only, however, the main character is an Englishman who reflects his experience gained during his study at Eton into his teaching methods, that his personality and methods, which cannot be omitted.

#### **3.1.1 Lowood Institution**

In *Jane Eyre* the Lowood Institution plays a dominant role in the life of the main character, because Jane is initially educated there. Later she herself becomes a teacher of Lowood's pupils. The author of the book puts an emphasis on the description of Lowood Institution so the reader can learn about that place a lot. She describes the place where the school is situated as the "forest-dell" (*Jane Eyre* 87). The house is

a large building, half of which seemed grey and old, the other half quite new. The new part ... was lit by mullioned and latticed windows, which gave it a church-like aspect; a stone tablet over the door bore this inscription:—"Lowood Institution.—This portion was rebuilt A.D. ---, by Naomi Brocklehurst, of Brocklehurst Hall, in this county."

"Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."—St. Matt. v. 16 (*Jane Eyre* 55).

There is also a wide garden enclosed to the school "surrounded with walls so high as to exclude every glimpse of prospect; a covered verandah ran down one side, and broad walks bordered a middle space divided into scores of little beds: these beds were assigned as gardens for the pupils to cultivate" (*Jane Eyre* 54).

Having available Jane's description, the reader discovers that Lowood Institution is quite a large building due to Jane comments on her impression of the building after her arrival as "a house or houses – for the building spread far - with many windows" (*Jane Eyre* 48), or when she walks through, "I passed from compartment to compartment, from passage to passage, of a large and irregular building" (*Jane Eyre* 49).

Afterwards she is ushered to a parlour she depicts as not such beautiful as at Gateshead "but comfortable enough [with] paper walls, carpet [and] shining mahogany furniture" (*Jane Eyre* 48). The room serves as a drawing room. The schoolroom is described as "a wide, long room, with great deal tables, two at each end, on each of which burnt a pair of candles" the pupils "seated all round on benches" (*Jane Eyre* 49). The rooms in the building are usually long rooms as it is obvious from their characteristics. The pupils and teachers eat in a refectory that is "a great, low-ceiled, gloomy room ... [with] long tables" (*Jane Eyre* 51). Also the bedroom is a very long room with "the long rows of beds, each of which was quickly filled with two occupants" (*Jane Eyre* 50). Besides there are basins placed in the bedroom and each of them serves to six pupils. The schoolroom and the dormitory are situated in the new traction of a building (*Jane Eyre* 55).

Lowood is an Institution where only girls are educated. At the beginning, Jane as a new child does not understand the meaning of the inscription "Lowood Institution" written on a stone tablet over the entrance of the building, as for her it is simply a school. Therefore, her new friend Helen clarifies its meaning saying that it is "partly a charity school ... for educating orphans" (*Jane Eyre* 56). As to the fees, she also explains that a yearly payment is required in the amount of fifteen pounds usually paid by relatives or friends. But "fifteen



pounds is not enough for board and teaching, and the deficiency is supplied by subscription” (*Jane Eyre* 56). Furthermore she learns that they are financially supported by the “different benevolent-minded ladies and gentlemen in this neighbourhood and in London” (*Jane Eyre* 57). Not only Helen’s explanation and inscription over the door, but also the fact that the school is governed by a clergymen Mr. Brocklehurst, who is the “treasurer and manager of the establishment” (*Jane Eyre* 57), shows reader a school being evidently one of the church schools partly patronized by the magnanimous wealthy ladies and noblemen. Helen also clears that Mr. Brocklehurst takes care of their food and clothes (*Jane Eyre* 57). Whether the school is provided by the Catholic or Evangelic Church, the reader is acquainted in Chapter VII by Mr. Brocklehurst’s words “here in an evangelical, charitable establishment” (*Jane Eyre* 72). In addition, there is another reference to the importance of the donators in the book. After typhus fever affects the Lowood Institution and a lot of pupils die, the public realizes that the living conditions in the building have a negative impact on the health of its residents. Therefore, “several wealthy and benevolent individuals in the county subscribed largely for the erection of a more convenient building in a better situation” (*Jane Eyre* 94-95).

As mentioned above, the typhus fever costs numerous lives in Lowood Institution. The main reason of spreading so quickly and in such a big extent are bad living conditions in the building and also the nature of the place where it is situated “That forest-dell ... was the cradle of fog and fog-bred pestilence” (*Jane Eyre* 87). Brontë describes all the imperfections during Jane’s stay; for example insufficient clothing, since the pupils have no warm clothes and they suffer a lot during the winter months not only outside where they have to spend their “hour every day in the open air” walking only in shoes, freezing without the gloves (*Jane Eyre* 67), but also inside the building “a keen north-east wind, whistling through the crevices of our bedroom windows ... had made us shiver in our beds, and turned the contents of the ewers to ice” (*Jane Eyre* 59). Frozen water is a real problem during the winter, since sometimes children cannot maintain hygiene “but this morning we were obliged to dispense with the ceremony of washing: the water in the pitchers was frozen” (*Jane Eyre* 59).

However, the biggest problem which influences the health of young girls is hunger. “The scanty supply of food was distressing: with the keen appetites of growing children, we had scarcely sufficient to keep alive” (*Jane Eyre* 67). Jane mentions small portions of food soon after her arrival to Lowood. “Soon after five p.m. we had another meal, consisting of a small mug of coffee, and half a slice of brown bread. I devoured my bread and drank my

coffee with relish; but I should have been glad of as much more – I was still hungry.” (*Jane Eyre* 59). In Chapter VII, Brontë also depicts consequences of such starvation – abuse of younger pupils by the older ones (*Jane Eyre* 68). Neither young Jane is spared this kind of older pupils’ behaviour. After they deprive her of a big part of her meal she has “swallowed the remainder with an accompaniment of secret tears, forced from me by the exigency of hunger” (*Jane Eyre* 68). Unfortunately, any kind of starvation is seen in the eyes of their manager Mr. Brocklehurst, a clergyman, as the “torments of martyrs; to the exhortations of our blessed Lord Himself” (*Jane Eyre* 71). Nevertheless, the situation gets better after the attack of typhus, when “new regulations were made; improvements in diet and clothing introduced [and] the funds of the school were introduced to the management of a committee” (*Jane Eyre* 95).

### 3.1.2 Lowood Monitors

Brontë deals with the characters of monitors in Lowood. There are monitors mentioned several times, therefore, it is obvious they are inseparable part of the Lowood’s educational process. As it is mentioned in the historical overview, their function was according to Bell and Lancaster to teach younger pupils. In *Jane Eyre* the educational function of the monitors is not described. They seem to be more like assistants who take care of the teaching aids and supervise younger girls. The pupils are taught in groups, which can evoke the Lancasterian system, as Jane describes the class as follows: “I saw them all drawn up in four semicircles, before four chairs, placed at the four tables; all held books in their hands, and a great book, like a Bible, lay on each table, before the vacant seat” (*Jane Eyre* 50). Thus, it can be expected that someone else will come to sit on the empty seats. Immediately, the reader is conversant with the fact that “three ladies entered the room, each walked to a table and took her seat; Miss Miller assumed the fourth vacant chair” (*Jane Eyre* 50). As it can be assumed from the word ‘ladies’ the persons who entered the classroom were not evidently pupils, but teachers.

The position of monitors is also seen in the instructions given by the teachers such as: “Monitors, collect the lesson-books and put them away!” (*Jane Eyre* 49) “Four tall girls arose from different tables, and going round, gathered the books and removed them. Miss Miller again gives the word of command - ‘Monitors, fetch the supper-trays!’” (*Jane Eyre* 49) The information that those girls are taller give the reader a clue that the girls were taller, and

maybe older than the others, moreover, they sit in different places and they are four because of four groups of children who are divided to the classes according to their abilities. It is evident from the next quote that each class has its monitor: “Monitor of the first class, fetch the globes!” (*Jane Eyre* 53) Nevertheless, the monitors do not sit on the same kind of seat as the pupils, they sit on higher ones. “‘Fetch that stool,’ said Mr. Brocklehurst, pointing to a very high one from which a monitor had just risen” (*Jane Eyre* 74).

Their controlling position is also apparent from the scene where Helen is admonished because of her untidiness. “A monitor, a great rough girl, presently came up, exclaiming in a strong Cumberland accent - ‘Helen Burns, if you don’t go and put your drawer in order, and fold up your work this minute, I’ll tell Miss Scatcherd to come and look at it!’” (*Jane Eyre* 67)

All those extracts confirm that the girls – monitors in Lowood perform monitoring in the basic sense of the word. The reason might be the sufficient number of teachers for eighty pupils there and as a result, there is no need to deputize them.

### 3.1.3 A Village School in Morton

Brontë situates the last teaching place of Jane Eyre into a small village called Morton. Morton belongs to the parish where Mr. John Rivers acts as a parson. First he established a boys’ school and at the time he meets Jane, he means to establish a girls’ school for daughters of workers and farmers there with the financial support of Mr. Oliver, the owner of a needle-factory and an iron-foundry. Jane is offered to teach girls in their new school and Mr. Rivers apprises her of a cottage near the school building for the teacher’s accommodation (*Jane Eyre* 407). The fact is that she accepts his offer not merely because she needs to be financially independent but also because she obtains a living place for her along with the working place. “I wanted a safe asylum,” she claims (*Jane Eyre* 407), the school and the cottage are “distant half a mile from the village” (413) and are surrounded by the fields. It is not a boarding school since the pupils are not accommodated there.

Neither the school building nor its equipment is pictured in *Jane Eyre*, however, there is a quite transparent description of the teacher’s habitation. It is “a little room with whitewashed walls and a sanded floor, containing four painted chairs and a table, a clock, a cupboard, with two or three plates and dishes, and a set of tea-things in shelf. Above, a chamber of the same dimensions as the kitchen, with a deal bedstead and chest of drawers; small, yet too large to be filled with my scanty wardrobe” (*Jane Eyre* 411).

Because the school costs and the teacher's salary must be paid by someone, the Morton school is not free. However, as it has already been mentioned above, Mr. Oliver, a rich factory owner, financially helps run the school. He pays the fees for really poor children. "Mr. Oliver pays for two [new pupils from the Foundry Close]" (*Jane Eyre* 435). Furthermore, his daughter Miss Oliver helps a lot with the financial aid to the poor. She, for example, "pays for the education and clothing of an orphan from the workhouse" (*Jane Eyre* 407) and what is more, thanks to her, the cottage for the teacher is furnished.

### **3.1.4 A Schoolroom in Thornfield**

In general, governesses attended the pupils in their parent's sumptuous houses or were accommodated there. In the novel *Jane Eyre* Jane as a governess educates her pupil Adèle in the mansion of Thornfield. A room in Mr. Rochester's manor, where they all live, serves Jane and her little pupil as a schoolroom. At first, it is a library chosen by Mr. Rochester as a place for Adèle's to be taught there. It seems to be the most suitable room for acquiring new knowledge since there are a lot of books there, however "most of the books were locked up behind glass doors" (*Jane Eyre* 118). Fortunately, there is still one bookcase which is left for teaching aims. Jane is astonished by the great number of books including "Everything that could be needed in the way of elementary works, several volumes of light literature, poetry, biography, travels [and] a few romances" (*Jane Eyre* 118). Owing to Mr. Rochester's wealth, the books are not the only equipment in the room serving for teaching, there is also "a cabinet piano, quite new and of superior tone; also an easel for painting and a pair of globes" (*Jane Eyre* 118). Nevertheless, the place changes as needed, as it is necessary to accommodate to the master's requirements. If Mr. Rochester is in the house the library is utilized "as a reception-room for callers" (*Jane Eyre* 135). Consequently, Jane and Adèle have to move to another room and arrange it as a new schoolroom suitable for them (*Jane Eyre* 135).

### 3.2 Eton

Eton is a well-known public school in England and its history extends into the fifteenth century. Even though historically “Eton was established primarily for the education of poor scholars, it was the resort, from the beginning, of young men in the higher walks of life” (“Eton College”). In all historical periods, it was a sign of a higher social status to have a son studying at Eton. However, Jones in her thesis argues that until 1860 “Britain’s privileged youth received an education that was broad in moral emphases but narrow in curricular scope” (Jones 10). Jones’ statement deals with the fact that at Eton boys and young men were educated in Classical studies, which means they were taught only Greek and Latin. Also Sir Maxwell Lyte confirms the fact, speaking about the curriculum: “Neither science nor religion were taught, and Mathematics fared little better than Divinity, eight years ago [1830], the study of Euclid, of algebra, and even of arithmetic being practically optional” (qtd. in Landow). But there was a great emphasis on moral status and on constructing the pupils’ self-independence at Eton. For example, the responsibility for all the duties was given utterly on boys’ hands as “there is no school-bell” (Burke 229) to warn boys they have to be somewhere, and it was not the “part of business of the masters to see that the rules are being observed; or that duties are being performed” (Burke 229). The discipline and independence built in boys taught them to rely on themselves and as Hughes says “to make them good English boys, good future citizens” (qtd. in Jones 15). Moreover, at Eton “in case of detection of rules being broken, or on failure of duties being performed, punishment will be meted accordingly” (Burke 229). Besides, consideration was given to building their physical fitness. As Burke mentions in his article *Life at an English Public School*, the school also focused on boys’ enjoyments in sports as in cricket, foot-ball, swimming and boating (229). The year 1868 radically changes Eton’s establishment, rules, and the curriculum. The choice of the fields of study broadened and included “French, German, Italian, higher mathematics, history, physical geography, chemistry, political economy logic, and comparative philology” (Landow).

In *The Professor* the prestigious school for young English boys is mentioned twice. Firstly in the connection with the main character William himself and secondly when he plans to send his son to study there. Although William is not rich, his wealthy relatives take care of him and send him to study at Eton. There is not mentioned anything about the college and its buildings or accommodation in the book, yet there is some information about Eton given.

First, it is William's education mentioned during his entrance interview with his brother Edward when asking him for a job, so the reader has awareness of the subjects taught at Eton. As next, it is Edward's question "Do you know anything besides that useless trash of college learning—Greek, Latin, and so forth?" (*The Professor* 15) showing his contempt for Eton's classical education. However, William's answer "I have studied mathematics ... I can read and write French and German" (15) demonstrates that according to the book he gained also knowledge in Mathematics and foreign languages as well. As the book presents, William's knowledge of Latin, French and German is excellent since it always opens him new working possibilities. The knowledge of German helps him to acquire a job of a clerk in his brother's factory. He copies and translates commercial letters from and to German (*The Professor* 36). French and Latin help him gain a working place as a professor of English and Latin in Brussels. In addition, the book provides information that William was taught "French under a Frenchman" (*The Professor* 71). There are also water sports he was involved in at Eton mentioned: "I had not been brought up at Eton and boated and bathed and swam there ten long years for nothing; it was a natural and easy act for me to leap to the rescue" (*The Professor* 164). Another information regarding Eton is that William studied at Eton for ten years (*The Professor* 7). As a graduate from Eton, William counts with the fact that his son Victor will go to Eton either. Thinking as a father about Victor's temper, he realizes that some parts of his temperament should be "if not whipped out of him, at least soundly disciplined" (*The Professor* 222). Therefore, the reason for his decision is not merely to let his son have a better education, but also to become disciplined and self-controlled.

## 4 Educational Process

In the beginning of the nineteenth century education, especially that of poor children was not so extensive.

Schools across the country followed a similar curriculum for girls, such as teaching reading (mostly from the Bible), needlework and singing; it was a limited curriculum and differed from that of the boys. Some schools also provided instruction in writing, spelling and arithmetic, although this depended on the founder's attitude. Not everyone believed that writing and arithmetic were necessary or suitable for the poor, particularly the female poor. ("The Fitzwilliam Museum")

Schools sponsored by the church and charity usually provided curriculum which "consisted principally of moral and religious instruction following closely upon the Church Catechism, reading and usually writing, sometimes 'casting accompts', and, occasionally singing" ("The Education of the Working Classes to 1870"). Also Stone confirms that in parish schools there were taught only two or three Rs (112). He presents the opinion of the representatives of the then church that "literacy, the Bible, and preaching ... could create a moral ... and an obedient society" (Stone 90). Nearly all the historical sources deal with the information that mainly three Rs' (reading, writing and arithmetic) were usually taught. However, in the essay *The Education of the Working Classes to 1870* the authors analyse schools in England in detail and there is information placed that "the curriculum [of the National and British schools – those provided by the Catholic or Evangelic Church] covered the three R's and a little more. Despite the objection that children were being educated above their station, schools often taught history, geography, and grammar as well" ("British History Online"). As a result, it is apparent that subjects taught at schools in the early nineteenth century varied a lot depending on the school, its providers and governance.

### 4.1 Subjects Taught

As applies to the subjects, they are presented in other parts of the thesis, namely in the chapters about teachers and pupils. Here, there is a brief overview of them.

*Jane Eyre* provides information about everyday routines in Lowood including classes and subjects taught there. The Lowood Institution, although determined for orphan girls'

pupils, offers a wide range of subjects. The pupils are sorted into the classes according to their abilities and knowledge. Jane presents the questions she is asked after her arrival. “She [the teacher] inquired ... how old I was, what was my name, whether I could read, write, and sew a little” (*Jane Eyre* 48). Jane as a newcomer is placed into the “inferior class” where the youngest children are assembled and she is “placed at the bottom of it” (*Jane Eyre* 50). After that she is “enrolled a member of the fourth class” (*Jane Eyre* 59).

The class is clustered around their teacher and the subject is chosen to be suitable for the pupils’ level of knowledge.

The superintendent of Lowood having taken her seat before a pair of globes placed on one of the tables, summoned the first class round her, and commenced giving a lesson in geography; the lower classes were called by the teachers: repetitions in history, grammar, &c., went on for an hour; writing and arithmetic succeeded, and music lessons were given by Miss Temple to some of the elder girls. (*Jane Eyre* 53-54)

From the text of the book it is evident how pupils proceed to the higher class. They have to acquire the knowledge of the particular class and after their knowledge is excellent they are qualified to a higher class. As it is in Jane’s case: “I had made visible progress: that very morning I had reached the head of my class ... she [Miss Temple] had promised to teach me drawing, and to let me learn French, if I continued to make similar improvement two months longer” (*Jane Eyre* 77). Thanks to Jane’s diligence, in a few weeks she is “promoted to a higher class; in less than two months” and she is “allowed to commence French and drawing” (*Jane Eyre* 85). The reader is also acquainted that in contrast with our school system, the first class is the highest one. “In time I rose to be the first girl of the first class; then I was invested with the office of teacher” (*Jane Eyre* 95) and the inferior class is the fourth one. Moreover, the pupils who are new or of poor knowledge have to be “at the bottom of it” (*Jane Eyre* 50).

There are multiple references to subjects which are taught in Lowood. As it has already been mentioned above in the quotes describing the system of the classes, the Lowood Institution offers girls not only to study reading – “one class still stood round Miss Scatcherd’s chair reading ... it was English history” (*Jane Eyre* 60), writing and arithmetic, but also history, geography, French – taught by a French teacher, music and drawing. Moreover, the school led by the clergyman cannot omit the lessons of Catechism and reading the Bible as it can be identified in the quotes: “The Sunday evening was spent in repeating, by heart, the Church Catechism, and the fifth, sixth, and seventh chapters of St. Matthew; and in



listening to a long sermon” (*Jane Eyre* 69) or, “a protracted reading of chapters in the Bible” (*Jane Eyre* 50).

Ready to prepare young girls for their future positions the school takes care to teach them handwork like, for example sewing. “Miss Smith put into my hands a border of muslin two yards long, together with needle, thimble, &c., and sent me to sit in a quiet corner of the schoolroom, with directions to hem the same. At that hour most of the others were sewing likewise” (*Jane Eyre* 59-60).

As regards the subjects taught in Morton’s school for girls, there is a nice overview of the lessons in the story. Mr. Rivers, a parson and establisher of the school, being aware of the level of Jane’s education and rich knowledge, warns Jane “Knitting, sewing, reading, writing, cyphering, will be all you will have to teach” (*Jane Eyre* 408). Despite his expectation of a very basic teaching, as it is explained in the part about the Morton’s pupils, at last she teaches much more. Owing to young farmers’ daughters who have already been educated a bit she can provide them the basic knowledge of “grammar, geography, history and the finer kinds of needlework” (*Jane Eyre* 420). On top of that, the lessons of catechism are given daily by Mr. John Rivers, the parson (*Jane Eyre* 421).

What was taught at Eton according to the novel *The Professor*, the reader learns only from Williams’ knowledge, reminiscences and his brother’s remarks. Firstly, Edward, his brother mentions the classical education that William should know from his studies, Greek and Latin, during their dialogue in his office. William is also able to translate the business letters from and to German language, therefore it is obvious he knows the language very well. Moreover, he concedes that he is educated in mathematics as well (*The Professor* 15). Furthermore, later in the book the reader is acquainted with the fact that William can speak and write French and besides he admits he was taught French by the Frenchman (*The Professor* 71). His knowledge of Latin is confirmed when he acquires a job as a teacher of English and Latin in Brussels. From above mentioned it is apparent that William is well-educated young man with the great knowledge of languages and mathematics. Since there is not any other school than Eton mentioned in the novel, it can be deduced that William gained these skills and knowledge during his stay at that English prestigious public school. There are also some sports mentioned when William recalls his time spent at Eton “I had not been brought up at Eton and boated and bathed and swam there ten long years for nothing” (*The Professor* 164).

## 4.2 Methodology, Curriculum, Discipline

There is not much told about the methodology in *Jane Eyre*, but there are some hints enabling the reader to imagine the learning process. In Lowood, Brontë presents pupils who learn mainly by memorizing the curriculum. Jane explains how difficult it is for her as a newcomer to follow the lesson since she is not used to “learn by heart” and how perplexing the frequent changing of the tasks is for her (*Jane Eyre* 59). As it is evident from the following quote, memorizing is not the technique of the beginning pupils, also the older students are taught to remember things quickly. In the lesson of English history, the process of acquiring the curriculum is described as well as the knowledge the pupils are examined in is presented. “A chapter having been read through twice, the books were closed and the girls examined. The lesson had comprised part of the reign of Charles I, and there were sundry questions about tonnage and poundage and shipmoney...” (*Jane Eyre* 60).

The question is how useful the knowledge about tonnage, poundage and shipmoney was for a woman those times. Reading aloud is also part of drill practice and examination in the Lowood’s lessons. The example may be the History lesson where Miss Scatcherd examines the reading focused on the right pronunciation and intonation issues, whereas she pays attention on “error of pronunciation, or some inattention to stops” (*Jane Eyre* 60).

The girls in Lowood are motivated by their success as their achievements forward them on the scale within the class from the very bottom to the top and afterwards they are allowed to proceed to a higher class. How quickly they achieve such progress depends on them. Jane reflects on the process of improving her abilities to learn. “I toiled hard, and my success was proportionate to my efforts; my memory, not naturally tenacious, improved with practice; exercise sharpened my wits; in a few weeks I was promoted to a higher class; in less than two months I was allowed to commence French and drawing” (*Jane Eyre* 85). Jane also describes her achievements after her first lessons since she learns “the first two tenses of the verb ETRE, and sketched my first cottage (whose walls, by-the-bye, outrivalled in slope those of the leaning tower of Pisa), on the same day” (85). Moreover, Madame Pierrot, the teacher of French language, motivates Jane by showing her a short story in French and as Jane depicts, in the evening, lying in bed, she examines “in thought, the possibility of my ever

being able to translate currently a certain little French story which Madame Pierrot had that day shown me” (*Jane Eyre* 85). The most positive issue as to the French language methodology in the book is that the subject is taught by a native speaker.

There is also a kind of negative motivation that urges the pupils to become better and better in Lowood. If they fail or make mistakes, they are returned to the bottom of the class (*Jane Eyre* 60). Not merely is a successful proceeding to a higher class but also the teachers’ approach incentive for the young pupils who live in Lowood having no parents. What impact must have had a warm Miss Miller’s praising and Miss Temple’s approving smile (*Jane Eyre* 77) on Jane, who afterwards achieves a higher class in such a short period of time (85). The other side of the coin in the story is Miss Scatcherd, since throughout the educational process in Lowood Jane meets several situations when Helen, her best friend in Lowood, is treated badly and punished by Miss Scatcherd. Even when Helen should be praised because of her great knowledge in the History lesson, the teacher starts to blame her for her dirty nails, although Helen could not clean them in the morning since water in a basin was frozen (*Jane Eyre* 60). The situation ends with a physical punishment of Helen with “the bunch of twigs” (*Jane Eyre* 61). There are great many examples of that kind of Miss Scatcherd’s behaviour towards Helen in the book. Nevertheless, Helen does not think it is the teacher’s fault as she confides to Jane:

Then learn from me, not to judge by appearances: I am, as Miss Scatcherd said, slatternly; I seldom put, and never keep, things, in order; I am careless; I forget rules; I read when I should learn my lessons; I have no method; and sometimes I say, like you, I cannot BEAR to be subjected to systematic arrangements. This is all very provoking to Miss Scatcherd, who is naturally neat, punctual, and particular. (*Jane Eyre* 63)

She also comments on her inability to focus in Miss Scatcherd’s lessons as her voice pitch is very low and Helen often starts to dream about something more interesting (*Jane Eyre* 64). Nowadays, with her symptoms, Helen would be appointed at a pedagogical-psychological advisory centre to receive special recommendations for her teachers and her further education, but Miss Scatcherd did not have such possibilities. She is angry with Helen’s behaviour as she thinks she is a slovenly and disobedient girl.

By contrast, Mrs Maria Temple’s attitude to Helen is absolutely different. She represents a kind, patient and very supportive approach of teaching. “It pains her to be severe to anyone, even the worst in the school: she sees my errors, and tells me of them gently; and,

if I do anything worthy of praise, she gives me my meed liberally” confirms Helen (*Jane Eyre* 63-64). Furthermore, she emphasizes Miss Temple’s ability to teach in an interesting way, she says that “Miss Temple has generally something to say which is newer than my own reflections; her language is singularly agreeable to me, and the information she communicates is often just what I wished to gain” (*Jane Eyre* 65). Not only is Miss Temple a great teacher and person, in addition, she gives a lead to her pupils not showing superiority over them. She walks along the rows of pupils during their Sundays journeys to the church even though it is freezing, while encouraging them “by precept and example, to keep up our spirits, and march forward, as she said, ‘like stalwart soldiers.’ The other teachers, poor things, were generally themselves too much dejected to attempt the task of cheering others” (*Jane Eyre* 68).

Jane, being a teacher in Lowood for two years is influenced by her favourite teacher a lot. As she comments to herself: “I had imbibed from her something of her nature and much of her habits” (*Jane Eyre* 96). Jane’s attitude to her pupils is similar to that of Miss Temple’s. Neither as a governess nor as a teacher does she use punishments. She demands obedience and discipline with her pupils providing a good example by herself. Jane counts with the mental ability according the age of her pupils as in the case of Adèle, who is not able to concentrate on learning the whole day (*Jane Eyre* 119).

There are not any methods of teaching described during Jane’s stay at Morton, however, her abilities to educate the schoolroom full of pupils with different knowledge is almost unbelievable. She has to deal with twenty pupils in the beginning and sixty after a few months as an only teacher there. It is evident she has to differentiate her lessons. On the one hand, some of her pupils are not able to read or write and they have a problem to understand each other (*Jane Eyre* 411). On the other hand, she teaches farmers’ daughters who are a bit educated as they already know three Rs’ and she can teach them the basics of “grammar, geography, history and the fines kinds of needlework” (*Jane Eyre* 420). Besides, she provides private lessons in the evenings to the best pupils from Morton’s school. Albeit there are not any methods of teaching described, the fact is that she manages her teaching well as she herself is aware of her pupils’ progress and also praised for her success by Mr. Oliver, a financial donator of the school (*Jane Eyre* 424).

Although not educated in teaching, William stands for a great and skilled teacher in the novel. Teaching in the boys’ and also in the girls’ school he meets several difficulties but he manages his classes with ease.

Since William teaches English the book *The Professor* provides a great many examples of developing skills and methods used during the teaching the language. Reading aloud William uses primarily during the first lesson, to examine the boys' level of the language skills, their ability to read fluently with focus on pronunciation. They read the story about the Vicar of Wakefield since it contains "prime samples of conversational English" (*The Professor* 53), therefore, it should be easy to read it for the beginners. The book provides an example of reading lesson in the girls' school as well, the pupils read chapters from the book *History of Scotland* there and the teacher is focused on improving their accent (*The Professor* 105). Writing is another skill being cultivated during William's lessons. The pupils write dictations and compositions. The procedure of writing a composition is described in Chapter XIII where learning by memorizing is mentioned too. "I dictated certain general questions, of which the pupils were to compose the answers from memory, access to books being forbidden" (*The Professor* 96). During the dictations the teacher always pauses a few seconds to provide weaker pupils more time and in the end he allows his pupils a brief space to check the dictate before it is submitted (*The Professor* 103). Besides, William tries to develop his pupils' creative writing by giving them the task to create "an emigrant's letter to his friends at home" (*The Professor* 124). While correcting the writings he comments on examples of errors that occur in the text: "There were errors of orthography, there were foreign idioms, there were some faults of construction, there were verbs irregular transformed into verbs regular; it was mostly made up, as the above example shows, of short and somewhat rude sentences, and the style stood in great need of polish and sustained dignity" (*The Professor* 112), which performs a great focus on accuracy. Sometimes, he discusses the errors immediately with the pupil explaining the rules of grammar. "I went through it carefully, noting every error, and demonstrating why they were errors, and how the words or phrases ought to have been written" (*The Professor* 114).

Regarding the language acquisition he recommends to his pupils to use the language whenever they can saying: "you ought to be so solicitous for your own improvement, that it should not be needful for a master to remind you twice of the expediency of your speaking English whenever practicable" (*The Professor* 117). Besides, he let the pupils speak English at any occasion "it will be a good exercise for you to explain to me in English how such a result was produced by such means" (*The Professor* 118). Moreover, he does not forget to correct his pupils during their speech as it can be seen from his prompt reaction when he

meets the use of wrong expression during the pupil's speech: "My parents were not all the two Genevese" he immediately corrects the mistake: "Say *both*, instead of 'all the two'" (*The Professor* 116). However, he deals with correcting and blaming his pupils carefully. He expresses the opinion that there is "no use in blaming severely" (*The Professor* 112). Furthermore, he is able to support and encourage the weaker students who work hard. In spite of discovering some faults in a piece of writing of a weaker pupil he inscribes "Well done" at the bottom of the page (*The Professor* 103). While teaching, William adjusts his lesson and curriculum to the pupils' level of knowledge. He does not differentiate the tasks but he deals with bringing his lesson "down to the lowest level of his dumbest pupil's capacity" (*The Professor* 56).

Except for the teaching methods and the teacher's approach towards pupils the discipline in the classes is also very important. Teaching in a boys' school the teacher must be strict and consistent to manage the lessons full of young boys. The use of the method of "the carrots and the sticks" helps him to keep the pupils obedient. "When I had shown myself the mildest, the most tolerant of masters – a word of impertinence, a movement of disobedience, changed me at once into a despot. I offered then but one alternative – submission and acknowledgement of error, or ignominious expulsion" (*The Professor* 56-57).

Being a professor in a girls' school William meets another kind of problem with his pupils, the fact that he is a man causes a variety of feelings and compulsions to showing off among young girls. However, regarding their obedience and behaviour he conducts his lesson well using the same consistency and strictness as in the boys' school. Nevertheless, he has to be very careful in his acting with girls since some of them are devoted Catholic and therefore any kind of action or friendly behaviour could be wrongly perceived (*The Professor* 101-102). Thanks to his ability to teach and manage the pupils well with a certain kind of diplomacy, he becomes a respected teacher not merely among his pupils, but also among the general public. Good reputation helps him to acquire a job as an English professor to all the classes at the College in Brussels (*The Professor* 178).

### 4.2.1 Punishment

As the historical sources apprise, punishments played and sometimes still play an important role in maintaining discipline in classrooms and schools. “Punishment is a forcible means of compelling obedience to the authority of the school as represented by the authority of the master who gives it. Incidentally it may act as a warning to others, but its essential purpose is remedial, the reformation of the offender by inculcating respect for law and order, and by tending to prevent a repetition of the misdemeanour” (Smith 75). It seems that in the Victorian period not only non-physical punishments at schools but also physical punishments were more than usual. “It wasn’t uncommon for children to be beat by canes made from birch wood. Boys were typically caned on their backsides whereas girls would take the punishment on their legs or hands” (“The Victorian School Facts”). The motives for such solutions varied from case to case. The most frequent reasons for chastisement were disobedience, unpunctuality, untidiness, misbehaviour or cheating in the lessons.

Despite the fact that the two stories play in different types of schools and countries, the question of punishment is omitted neither in *Jane Eyre* nor in *The Professor*. However, the examination of the cases shows that the punishments practised at the Lowood Institution as described in the first book are much harder and more humiliating. Untidiness is often the reason for punishment and wearing some demeaning sign or mark on visible parts of the body is a usual tool in Lowood. Brontë provides two examples. Firstly, by means of the incident when a girl who “blotted an exercise in copying it out” has to wear “the untidy badge” on her arm and is condemned “to a dinner of bread and water” (*Jane Eyre* 77). In the other case, a girl called Helen has her things in a drawer untidily-folded and on next day the teacher “wrote in conspicuous characters on a piece of pasteboard the word “Slattern,” and bound it like a phylactery round Helen’s large, mild, intelligent, and benign-looking forehead. She wore it till evening, patient, unresentful, regarding it as a deserved punishment” (*Jane Eyre* 84).

Punishment is not always deserved as it is seen in Chapter Six of *Jane Eyre* where Helen Burns is accused of having dirty nails. In fact, she could not wash them because the water in the washroom was frozen. Therefore it is the reason why the main character, Jane, is surprised by the kind of an excessive punishment that follows, nevertheless, Helen must have been used to that kind of penalization since she knows where the tool for the punishment is and what will follow:

Burns immediately left the class, and going into the small inner room where the books were kept, returned in half a minute, carrying in her hand a bundle of twigs tied together at one end. This ominous tool she presented to Miss Scatcherd with a respectful curtesy; then she quietly, and without being told, unloosed her pinafore, and the teacher instantly and sharply inflicted on her neck a dozen strokes with the bunch of twigs. (*Jane Eyre* 61)

Another example of an inequitable punishment is Jane Eyre's false accusation of being a liar without any evidence. She as a pupil has no chance to oppose and Mr. Brockehurst let her stand half an hour on a high stool in the middle of the schoolroom and no one is allowed to speak to her for the rest of the day (*Jane Eyre* 76).

On the other hand, punishment in *The Professor* is more moderate and there is no reference to physical punishments. William Crimsworth, the professor, uses the punishment of the 'ignominious expulsion' from his class when he meets the boys' disobedience during his lessons in the boys' school (*The Professor* 57). Whereas while teaching girls he encounters a bit different situations and kinds of unruliness. However, there are only two cases described in the novel. Firstly, in the situation when a group of three pupils "a band of very vulgar, inferior-looking Flamandes" (*The Professor* 84) behave inappropriately in the lesson of English. The leader of the group disrupts the lesson with horrible sounds and gestures - "she made noises with her mouth like a horse, she ejected her saliva, uttered brutal expressions" (84) and the rest of the group support her noticeably. Nevertheless, the professor finishes it vigorously. He orders "her and two of her tools to rise from their seats, and, having kept them standing five minutes, turning them bodily out of the schoolroom: the accomplices into a large place adjoining ... the principal into a cabinet, of which I closed the door and pocketed the key" (*The Professor* 84). The fact that the directress sitting and observing the class is surprised by this act can be a proof that punishments are not so frequent in that type of school. Secondly, the professor chastens a girl who is cheating in the lesson of English literature. She has apparently copied the text from the book. After the professor finds it out, he "wrote on the margin of her production "Stupid and deceitful," and then tore it down the middle" (*The Professor* 110).



## 5 Conclusion

The diploma thesis dealt with the topic of education in two selected novels *Jane Eyre* and *The Professor* by Charlotte Brontë. The main aim was the examination of the historical period of the early nineteenth century and the two Brontë's novels focusing on the educational process, the places and conditions of education, the participants of the process, i.e. educators and pupils, the curriculum and discipline. The thesis provided information from the historical sources and a great many examples related to schooling and learning from the novels. Though the stories are fictional, the description of the issues related to education is in accordance with the historical reality of that time, probably due to the fact that the writer herself had a rich experience in learning and teaching as she was a pupil, a governess and a teacher.

The thesis examined the figure of an educator in the beginning of the nineteenth century. It focused mainly on the education, social status and financial evaluation of a governess and a teacher. The look into the history showed that the position of a governess or a teacher was not esteemed at that period of time. In the beginning of the nineteenth century there was no special institution which would educate teachers or governesses. Thus, neither of them had formal education and they could copy a pattern of their own educators only. That was the case of Jane Eyre who became a teacher in Lowood only due to her endeavour and diligence. As visible in her teaching career, she followed the example of Miss Maria Temple, who was described as a kind and educated teacher in *Jane Eyre*. Similarly, William Crimsworth educated at Eton might get his experience only from his own teachers at the public school since he did not received any formal education for teachers.

The study of the history implied that it was necessary to be recommended by someone honoured and important to get a job as a governess or a teacher in the early nineteenth century. Likewise the educators in the novels, be it a teacher or a governess, had to have a reference from the previous working place or a respectable person who was a member of a higher social class.

Since the position of an educator was not so worthy those times, as both the novels and the historical sources confirm, the financial evaluation of a governess or a teacher was poor. The thesis presented a short overview how low their wages were compared to other working positions. Owing to the fact that the position of a contemporary woman was that of a housewife, the salaries of women and men varied a lot and favoured men over women. The

research of the historical teachers' evaluation and the comparison of wages in the book *The Professor* supported the fact.

The thesis provided the depiction of pupils based on the novels. It dealt with orphans in Lowood, an individual pupil Adèle who is a foster child of a rich wealthy man, and pupils from working class families and farmer families in Morton. Generally, children in the schools for the poor and orphans had to submit to the authority of a teacher, whereas children, mainly girls, of the rich who were educated at home by a governess could, and very often, did show the educator that her social status is below theirs.

The picture of the pupils is connected to the individual schools and the system of education. According to the historical sources, schooling and learning in the beginning of the nineteenth century was full of changes and new schools for poor and working class were founded, however, compulsory education still was not established. The schools were usually run by parishes or wealthy donators, institutions or people who were able to furnish the finances and premises. Therefore, the educational process was often provided in old, damped buildings near a church. Charlotte Brontë depicts in her novels four types of places where education is delivered: the prestigious public school of Eton that existed and still exists and where, historically, boys from the higher social classes were educated, a charity boarding school for girls provided by the Evangelic Church in Lowood, a village-school in Morton established by the parish and donated by a rich factory owner and a mansion of Thornfield that stood for a private education by a governess. Except for Eton all schools are fictional. But the establishments provided by the Church or parishes as well as the private education of children from the upper classes appeared in the history.

The picture of the schools is so vivid throughout the novels that numerous readers were sure that Cowan's Bridge, the school attended by Brontë as a child, must have been a model for the Lowood's school and its poor conditions. The author herself denied it claiming that her books were not autobiographical and were solely fictional.

A novelty in the system of educational was reflected in the novels as well. It was the monitoring system introduced by Andrew Bell and Joseph Lancaster at that time. They introduced the system of teaching pupils by more skilled ones. It had two positives. Firstly, the pupils strengthened their knowledge by teaching others, and secondly, it solved the problem of a lack of educators (caused by the low social status and financial evaluation of teachers and governesses). However, Brontë's picture of the monitors appeared only in *Jane*

*Eyre* and it differed a lot from the historical sources. The monitors were there assigned to the position of helpers with teaching aids and controllers of the pupils' tidiness rather than actively participating in teaching others.

As far as methodology and curriculum is concerned, it varied a lot and the school system was not homogeneous and depended mainly on the school, school master or owner, and the teachers. As there was no formal education of the teachers and no compulsory educational standards, the teaching practice was based on the educators' experience with his or her own education and school. The personal character was also important. The subjects offered and taught at schools were decided by the individuals as well. Generally, the books and historical reality agreed that the three R's were essential for both girls and boys. As to the girls, other subjects were connected to their possible future fulfilment, i.e. accomplishments like drawing or singing were welcomed and sewing and knitting were taught. For the boys, given the example of Eton, moral education and sports played a major role. Knowledge of foreign languages seemed to be important only to the rich and to those who planned or were destined to provide for themselves, that is to future teachers and governesses.

Punishment was part of the usual practice at schools at those times. The novels did not avoid the topic and the readers may witness whipping with a twig over the hands or a neck or standing on a visible place with a humiliating sign. The punishment was depicted only in Lowood, other schools seem to be more cultivated or being respectful towards their pupils.

Having examined the educational process of the period and the two targeted literary works by Charlotte Brontë it is to conclude that although both *The Professor* and *Jane Eyre* are works of fiction which subscribe to the logic of the narrative above the historical fact, the thesis has proven that in many ways the novels provide an authentic portrait of the nineteenth-century schooling and learning in England.

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