Gothic Monsters: How do *Jane Eyre* and *Rebecca* construct Gothic monstrosity?

Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre* (1847) and Daphne Du Maurier's *Rebecca* (1938) are both considered gothic novels sharing similarities in plot from the tale of Bluebeard. The nature of the Gothic genre is often perceived as elusive and these novels are not gothic in a purist sense, however they still carry much of the Gothic DNA procured by writers such as Horace Walpole and Ann Radcliffe. The gothic genre can be seen as functioning as a 'literary response to the crisis of rational systems based on the principles of pure reason' according to Tetyana Chonka.[1] Monsters and monstrosity in the Gothic genre can be seen as what Jeffrey Cohen views as the materialisation of cultural anxieties.[2] The fictionalising of these cultural anxieties that lie beyond logic and reason allows for these topics to be observed more distantly under the pretence of fiction. Maximilian Novak's take on monsters presenting cultural fears and taboos is that what he calls gothic demons represent the uncontrolled forces of the mind.[3]

Jane Eyre and *Rebecca* do not construct monstrosity in a binary fashion but distribute it both among characters and in the mansions themselves within which these characters reside. The monsters within these texts are going to be categorised into four types of monstrosity. The first is moral and legal monstrosity which is the most obvious form usually carried out through crime and cruelty. This is primarily embodied by Maxim and Rochester but can be seen through many of these texts' constructs. Secondly, there is bodily monstrosity which is most obviously embodied through descriptions of Bertha and how she aligns with the abject body. However, the obsession and sexualisation of Rebecca's body becomes an active force within the plot even though she is physically absent. There is also narrative monstrosity where storytelling can give a subjective, biased take on events and where emotions lie before a clear portrayal of who is morally or legally corrupted. Finally, there is spatial monstrosity where the mansions of Manderley and Thornfield Hall can be actively monstrous in the plot despite being agentless places. These monstrosities are dispersed amongst the Bluebeard template in both narratives where a wealthy husband with secrets forbids knowledge to a new wife which eventually is revealed to be the previous wife. Importantly, all this takes place under the husband's roof which can enforce a sense of entrapment. Alfred Longeuil states that Gothic etymologically can be traced back to be synonymous with barbarism, specifically in connection with cruelty, ignorance and savageness.[4] Cruelty and savageness are more obvious aspects of monstrousness but ignorance is important not to be overlooked within this framework. There is ignorance due to secrecy but also avoidance in the first person narration of embracing truth. Furthermore, if the domestic spaces can be considered microcosmic of

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[1] Tetyana Chonka, Oleksandr Kordonets, Evelina Balla, Volodymyr Banias, and Nataliya Banias, "From Mary Shelley to Stephen King: the transformation of gothic fiction in English literature," *Amazonia Investiga* 13, no. 78 (2024): 210.
[2] Jeffrey Jerome Cohen, "Monster Culture (Seven Theses)," in *Monster Theory: Reading Culture*, ed. Jeffrey Jerome Cohen (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1996), 4.

[3] Maximillian E. Novak, "Gothic Fiction and the Grotesque," *NOVEL: A Forum on Fiction* 13, no. 1 (Autumn 1979): 58.
[4] Alfred E. Longueil, "The Word 'Gothic' in Eighteenth Century Criticism," *Modern Language Notes* 38, no. 8 (December 1923): 455.

a broader society then ignorance that certain social and domestic systems are flawed is definitely to be considered monstrous.

Rochester and Maxim are villainous throughout their respective novels. For example, Rochester locks up his former wife within the attic and withholds this information from Jane. He uses the architecture of the house to keep Jane removed from his secret former marriage. Similarly, Maxim kills his former wife Rebecca and withholds this information from the narrator by segregating her into the West Wing so that the preserved East Wing can remain Maxim's and Mrs Danver's secret. Melissa Bisonette explains that a monster surfaces when there is a 'refusal to participate in the classificatory order of things'.[5] This underlines the gothic idea of boundary anxiety that these characters represent. There is a tension between the relationship of labels aristocrat and criminal within which breeds monstrosity. It is more widely understood in contemporary criticism that Rochester and especially Maxim are not romance heroes. The texts being both first person perspective of the loving wives to the bluebeard characters can create the view that the mistreatment and murder of the former wives is merely a blip within a romance story between the second wives and their husbands. In Jane Eyre, Jane narrates 'I lingered in the long passage to which this led, separating the front and back rooms of the third story – narrow, low and dim, with only one little window at the far end, and looking, with its two rows of small black doors all shut, like a corridor in some Bluebeard's castle'. This quote is an early allusion to the idea that Rochester is not the romantic hero that the narrative suggests, but instead a captor and domestic abuser of Bertha. The elongation of the sentence using commas, as well as descriptions such as 'low and dim', 'one little window' and 'small black doors all shut', create a heightened sense of suspense and oppression when considering Bertha a victim. Kirsten Parkinson writes that 'Brontë later regretted this representation, writing that 'profound pity ought to be the only sentiment elicited by the view of Bertha's degradation' and notes positively upon adaptations of the narrative which offer a greater degree of sympathy regarding the objective morality of the situation.[6] Maxim's oppression of Rebecca is similar but ends in murder as opposed to captivity. Maxim and Rochester's monstrousness is interrelated with their desire to enforce power. Maxim enforces power by belittling and isolating the second Mrs De Winter and we can assume he behaved similarly with Rebecca. During his proposal he refers to the narrator as a 'little fool' and calls her 'almost as ignorant as Mrs Van Hopper, and just as unintelligent'. Later when she has moved into Manderley, he behaves distantly which the narrator assumes is more akin to his quotidian behaviour after what could be considered a honeymoon in the mediterranean. Auba Pons describes that Maxim's insistence in treating Mrs De Winter like a child, as well as her insecurity in youth

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[5] Melissa Bloom Bissonette, "Teaching the Monster: *Frankenstein* and Critical Thinking," *College Literature* 37, no. 3 (Summer 2010): 111

[6] Kirsten L. Parkinson, "Mrs. Rochester's Story: Franco Zeffirelli's Adaptation of *Jane Eyre*," *Literature/Film Quarterly* 43, no. 1 (2015): 18.

and class, prevent her from taking the natural path from immaturity to maturity.[7] Therefore, we can see that Maxim is deliberately maintaining a power imbalance between himself and Mrs De Winter. Consequently, Maxim's villainy is partly stemming from this insecure, immature desire to maintain a domestic power imbalance. This desire to maintain a power imbalance arguably is what caused the murder of Rebecca as she resisted typical social pressure to be an obedient upper class wife. Similarly, Rochester debates with Jane, as well as deliberately incite jealousy pretending he intended to marry another woman in order to maintain a sense of social hierarchy. Jessica Cox argues that under contemporary law, Rochester's behaviour towards Jane is considered domestic abuse, highlighting the jealousy fuelled spying as well as threats of violence.[8] In the third act of the narrative structure of both texts, the couples reciprocate on more mutual, balanced terms. After the interrupted wedding where Rochester's secret of Bertha's false imprisonment is revealed, he shows vulnerability and pleads to Jane for forgiveness, referring to himself as a scoundrel and expressed that it is not just romantic love he feels but soul and flesh interconnected with Jane's. Rochester and Jane eventually reunite and experience a more balanced relationship when it is revealed that Rochester was handicapped in the burning of Thornfield Hall. While Maxim and Mrs De Winter follow a similar template of plot whereby the ex-wife secret is revealed and a more balanced marriage is achieved there are small but significant displays of character separating the narrative. As Auba Pons expresses:

When he confesses what he did to Mrs de Winter, the confession acquires a melodramatic tone, as he starts positioning himself as the victim by stating that "Rebecca has won" (297). It is at this point that the tables turn. As Maxim becomes childish, Mrs de Winter becomes more like a mother figure- a protector and the dependence that exists between them is reinforced. For the first time in the novel, it becomes apparent that these two characters need each other; it is not just the wife clinging to the husband.[9]

As demonstrated above, Maxim's masculinity and seemingly perfect patriarchal role is undermined through the reveal of pretence. Therefore, there is a somewhat deliberate nature in how he has isolated and oppressed the narrator. Potentially due to the nature of the first person narration, Maxim is seemingly never held as guilty for his actions as the narrator, who due to the nature of her role is as close to a mouthpiece as we can get in the novel. She scarcely casts judgement upon Maxim's murder and there relationship seems to blossom not just in spite of it but due to it. Maxim uses influence and deceit to avoid any form of acceptance for the crime. Despite there seeming to be little punishment for it, Rochester calmly and openly admits his maltreatment and confinement of Bertha. Furthermore, during the burning of Thornfield Hall he sacrifices

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[7] Auba Llompart Pons, "Patriarchal Hauntings: Re-reading Villainy and Gender in Daphne du Maurier's *Rebecca* / *Fantasmas del patriarcado: una relectura de la villanía y el género en Rebecca*, *de Daphne du Maurier*," *Atlantis* 35, no. 1 (June 2013): 69–83.

[8] Jessica Cox, "'I'll try violence': Patterns of Domestic Abuse in Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* (1847)," *Women's Writing* 29, no. 3 (2022): 328.

[9] Llompart Pons, "Patriarchal Hauntings," 74.

his own safety in order to ensure the safety of the servants therefore risking fully sacrificing himself in service of workers in a social position below himself. The ability to admit and confront his treatment of Bertha and sacrifice his sight and hand in service of his servants is an indication towards a positive character arc away from monstrosity which is not indicated in *Rebecca.* This attempt at restoration of order explains why Jane and Rochester's future together feels more hopeful as a morally adjusted and rebalanced dynamic as opposed to the exile and reduced way of life that Maxim and Mrs De Winter live after the burning of Manderley. Finally, though there is no obvious cross-textual comparisons, *Jane Eyre* also includes patriarchs Mr Brocklehurst and St John. Mr Brocklehurst is more obviously monstrous due to the mistreatment of schoolchildren enforced by him at Lowood, however he is also the head of the institution that became a refuge for Jane from her childhood at Gateshead Hall. St John externally may seem somewhat heroic due to his commitment to a life as a missionary of religion, however his dedication to this cause makes him an extremely cold, heartlessly practical person who mistreats family and friends in order to serve his mission.

From the perspective of the narrators, Rebecca and Bertha are the obvious monsters because they oppose them. *Jane Eyre*'s Bertha is more traditionally monstrous due to the overtly fear-inducing descriptions of her within the text. In chapter twenty-five, when Bertha breaks out of her third story confinement, Jane says that what she saw of Bertha reminded her of a vampire. She is also described as ugly with red eyes; a purple complexion and swollen, dark lips. Furthermore, she is described animalistically in chapter twenty six where Bertha is described as being on all fours and growling like an animal. These descriptions match what Jela Krečič and Slavoj Žižek describe as 'ugly' in a critical sense of the word, inciting 'Disgust (that) arises when the border that separates the inside of our body from its outside is violated'.[10] Ugliness that incites disgust is caused by blood and faeces for example due to their revealing nature about 'bare life itself'.[11] The monstrous sense of disgust evoked by Bertha can be seen on a surface level from her external descriptions using colours such as red and purple as well as adjectives like swollen which are normal when considering human interiority but disgusting for exteriority. Slavoj Žižek references Immanuel Kant describing passions as ugly and disgusting because they reveal base human desires at a certain level which is a non-physical example of human interiority which causes disgust when viewed externally.[12] This can be seen in the sense of disgust incited by the animalistic and vampiric air of Bertha, as vampires and animals are known for their lustful and predatory behaviour. This kind of sexual and aggressive behaviour is restricted from the eye of middle/upper class society (and physically hidden away in the case of Bertha) as it causes disgust. This inclination towards aggression is seen through the attack on Mr Mason as well as both counts of arson. However, postcolonial readings of *Jane Eyre* by critics such as Gayatri Spivak, as well as Jean Rhys' *Wide Sargasso Sea*, suggest that Bertha Mason is not a monster but a

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[10] Jela Krečič and Slavoj Žižek, "Ugly, Creepy, Disgusting, and Other Modes of Abjection," *Critical Inquiry* 43, no. 1 (Autumn 2016): 65.

[11] Krečič and Žižek, "Ugly, Creepy, Disgusting," 66.

[12] Slavoj Žižek, *Absolute Recoil: Towards a New Foundation of Dialectical Materialism* (London: Verso, 2014), 65–66.

victim ‘produced by the axiomatics of imperialism’.[13] Through this lens, Bertha’s aggression and rebellion can be seen as justifiable as it is not necessarily the innate nature of her character that causes these actions but the monstrosity of patriarchal systems of domesticity and imperialism represented by Rochester. A more sympathetic view of Bertha is seen through the postcolonial lens, but it is important to note that it is not the novel that frames her this way but later criticism attempting to reclaim a villainous character from such harsh judgement in light of the immorality of Western colonialism.

In contrast, Rebecca’s monstrous role in the narrative is after her death which lingers and haunts Manderley and the new De Winters in multiple ways. Rebecca is not visually ugly or monstrous like Bertha. She is in fact described as beautiful and tall. However, she is villainous in the sense that she is antagonistic to the narrator. As Robert Drake suggests in his journal article, Rebecca is both a haunting presence as well as the dark angel to the narrator’s light angel.[14] Rebecca haunts the narrator and Maxim through Mrs Danvers as she preserves the East Wing as it was left when Rebecca was alive; she tricks Mrs De Winter into dressing in the same costume as Rebecca at her first and only Manderley party as well as eventually assumedly burning down Manderley through Mrs Danvers. Furthermore, Rebecca haunts from beyond the grave as her boat, prophetically entitled ‘je reviens’, is discovered and the truth regarding her murder almost comes out. Despite the novel not being supernatural, the present nature of Rebecca within the narrative echoes supernatural ghosts from gothic texts. Rebecca is given a name while Mrs De Winter is not and she posthumously has a greater influence upon the narrative over her counterpart highlighting her influence beyond the grave. From the perspective of the narrator, order is to some degree restored when she finds out that Maxim killed Rebecca because she is less jealous of the former wife who seemed far more attractive and respected than the narrator herself. However, feminist critics have noted that Rebecca’s sexual rebellion against Maxim is in fact a patriarchal protest which makes her nominally heroic in a feminist sense. Alison light offers the insight that ‘Rebecca refused to obey the law whereby women exchange their bodies for social place’ highlighting that Rebecca is not a villain but actively protesting against patriarchal systems which lessens her villainous nature.[15] Auba Pons revisits this notion and highlights that Maxim is definitely villainous due to his crime of murder against his wife, but this does not automatically make Rebecca the hero and she argues that:

Thus, just as Maxim admits that "I accepted everything- because of Manderley" (du Maurier 1002: 308), all the other characters in Rebecca are just as concerned about the perpetuation of the patriarchal estate and they

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[13] Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, “Three Women’s Texts and a Critique of Imperialism,” *Critical Inquiry* 12, no. 1 (Autumn 1985): 247

[14] Robert Y. Drake Jr., “Manderley Revisited,” *The Mississippi Quarterly* 12, no. 2 (Spring 1959): 86–87.

[15] Alison Light, “‘Returning to Manderley’: Romance Fiction, Female Sexuality and Class,” *Feminist Review*, no. 16 (Summer 1984): 15.

cling to it for protection: Mrs de Winter needs patriarchy to define who she is, and Rebecca needs it to protect and conceal her unaccepted sexual behaviour under the image of a perfect wife.[16]

Therefore, it can be seen that Rebecca is not actively feminist however she is exploiting the power that being the wife of Maxim and Manderley provides in order to explore her polysexual inclinations. It is important to note however that she would desire to uphold the patriarchal system and not protest against it. As noted previously, Rebecca is not monstrously ugly like Bertha however she is what Jela Krečič and Slavoj Žižek would refer to as creepy in a critical analysis of modes of abjection.[17] They highlight that 'What makes a neighbor creepy is not his weird acts but the impenetrability of the desire that sustains these acts'[18]. This mirrors the character of Rebecca because it is not apparent whether she is feminist, upholding patriarchal systems, sexually liberated or spiteful against Maxim. One critic implements queer theory in their retrospective insights into *Rebecca*, suggesting a romantic or sexual relationship between the characters of Mrs Danvers and Rebecca which further complicates the objective understanding of motivations which fuel her behaviours.[19] Maxim towards the end of the novel discovers that Rebecca had terminal uterine cancer and that Rebecca was manipulating Maxim to kill her prematurely as a final act of rebellion but again her motivations are unclear. However, all these avenues and insights of analysis are filtered through a first person narrative documented by Jane and the second Mrs De Winter.

The effect of the first person narration is inherently a subjective perspective upon the objective fictional events that Charlotte Bronte and Daphne Du Maurier construct. Greta Olson outlines the general theory on first person narration that 'it is the particular quality of 'personalized narrators' to demonstrate to us the 'biased nature of our experience of reality'.[20] Jane and the nameless narrator shape our entire perception of the narrative, in as basic a sense to when the narrative starts and ends for example, which allows them to make narrative choices and therefore self-serving biases. In *Jane Eyre*, we have some evidence that Jane is not entirely noble and not entirely unaware of her position of superiority being the bearer of knowledge regarding the story. Joan Peters highlights that 'to some extent we have to take Jane's narrative word for this because in the discourse we actually see acted out between them Jane does still edit her speech, this time for Rochester's protection.'[21] In this sense, it becomes important to consider who gets to frame villainy and monstrosity within the story. It would seem logical that Jane would portray her love interest and future husband as less monstrous in his interest but also in her own interest due to her close relationship with him. In a similar vein, the monstrous and highly descriptive portrayals of Bertha serve Jane well because they justify Rochester's behaviour to some degree as well as villainise the individual that

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16 Llompart Pons, "Patriarchal Hauntings," 80.

17 Krečič and Žižek, "Ugly, Creepy, Disgusting," 66.
18 Ibid., 66.
19 Janet Harbord, "Between Identification and Desire: Rereading 'Rebecca'," *Feminist Review* 53, no. 1 (Summer 1996): 95–107.
20 Greta Olson, "Reconsidering Unreliability: Fallible and Untrustworthy Narrators," *Narrative* 11, no. 1 (January 2003): 101
21 Joan D. Peters, "Finding a Voice: Towards a Woman's Discourse of Dialogue in the Narration of *Jane Eyre*," *Studies in the Novel* 23, no. 2 (Summer 1991): 230.

stands in the way of Jane's romance story. Jane addresses the reader in her novel, implying that the text is an autobiography or memoir with an implied audience. With the understanding that there is a reader or readers in mind, there is a greater incentive supplied as to why Jane might filter by who and why monstrosity is constructed across her fictional life. Confronting moral deviations to oneself is difficult to some degree and then doing so to a freethinking audience poses even greater difficulty with which Jane and Rochester's reputation are put at risk. In *Rebecca*, there is more evidence to suggest that the narrator frames the story in a way that protects her and Maxim from moral judgement. The most clear evidence is that the second Mrs De Winter becomes silently complicit to the crime of Maxim's murder which allows him to get away with the crime. Therefore, there is a clear incentive for the narrator to portray herself and Maxim as morally clean and pro-social people. Moreover, there is a high degree of incentive to convey characters who antagonise the romance story of herself and Maxim as monstrous in a self-justifying manner. Harriet Linkin seconds this notion and offers these descriptions of antagonistic characters to convey the point: 'Mrs. Van Hopper, with her with "small pig's eyes" (10), Jack Favell, whose mouth is "too soft, too pink" (161), or Mrs. Danvers, with her "skull's face, parchment- white, set on a skeleton's frame" (67).'[22] With this focal perspective on the narrator as constructing a self-preserving narrative, the majority of the narrator's time at Manderley can be observed as her struggle with attempting to antagonise the final obstacle that stands between her and perfect, romantic harmony with Maxim which is Rebecca. Maxim revealing that he killed Rebecca and that she was a manipulative, malicious and unfaithful wife completes this for the narrator and then the fictional tension is transferred over to something more akin to a crime drama. Heta Pyrhönen argues that the second Mrs De Winter is a masochist:

'The frame narrative shows the now mature second wife … [but] she reveals to us that she indulges in 'things that hurt' out of Maxim's sight… The juxtaposition … allows us to identify the motivation pulsing beneath the narrator's account. It suggests that the second wife's narration of the couple's story is comparable to the first wife's promiscuity: her narrative serves as her whip'.[23]

The idea that the narrator publicly acts as a dutiful wife but indulged in 'things that hurt' outside of Maxim's sight shows her ability to deceive and proves her unreliability. Furthermore, it is implied that the narration in itself is an instrument, not exclusively for framing herself and Maxim as troubled protagonists and people that oppose their romance as monsters, to derive masochistic pleasure in the retelling of her story. This masochistic nature of her character would explain her nameless and agentless role in the narrative as something she indulges and continues despite the fear that comes alongside having no control. In addition to her moral shortcomings, the narrator distinguishes herself as more monstrous than Jane Eyre in the lack of resistance she offers against the patriarchal systems she is placed in. Jane chooses poverty over a

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[22] Harriet Kramer Linkin, "The Deceptively Strategic Narrator of *Rebecca*," *Journal of Narrative Theory* 46, no. 2 (Summer 2016): 224.
[23] Heta Pyrhönen, "Bluebeard's Accomplice: *Rebecca* as a Masochistic Fantasy," *Mosaic: An Interdisciplinary Critical Journal* 38, no. 3 (September 2005): 159.

relationship with Rochester as his mistress; she refuses St John's attempts to indoctrinate her in a religious patriarchal system through marriage and only returns to Rochester when she has complete independence. Jane in this sense can be seen as resisting patriarchy. The second Mrs De Winter fully embraces life married to a wealthy, powerful aristocrat despite his Bluebeard history and deliberately ignores when he uses his influence to get away with his crime and in this sense she is submitting to the patriarchal systems because they are favourable to her.

These systems of patriarchy are microcosmically defined by Manderley and Thornfield Hall. Thereby, these estate houses can be considered monstrous as they represent the systems through which the Bluebeard men are empowered and the first and second wives of them are oppressed. Kathy Mezei and Chiara Briganti highlight that 'The disturbed spaces of … Manderley evoke … a nostalgia for fading nationhood, class privilege, and imperial power'.[24] Not only are the systems that Manderley evokes social but gendered. This is highlighted by the house's division into the East and West wing where Maxim's previous marriage is on one side of the house and his current marriage another. Maxim's patriarch privilege allows literal space for him to maintain the lie of a marital tragedy on one side of the house and a blossoming second attempt at marriage on the other. Similarly, Thornfield Hall occupies enough spatial resources to hide a previous marriage and sustain a new one. John Sung Han observes that 'Before *Jane Eyre*'s madwoman roamed the attic … the subsequent connection between that space and female agency in Victorian fiction became established'.[25] Rochester and subsequently Thornfield Hall are able to falsely imprison Bertha through the house's architecture symbolic of a gendered power structure. Through a postcolonial lens, Thornfield Hall can also represent the history of the monstrous patriarchal system of the British Empire which once had the power and influence to silence and contain its overseas activities. In both texts, the house's fate is to be burned down most likely by the previous wives – definitely in the case of *Jane Eyre* and by proxy of Mrs Danvers in a continuation of Rebecca's post death haunting . On the one hand, this could be seen as restorative of order, thereby reducing monstrosity, as the patriarchal systems of domesticity, class and colonialism are burned down. On the other hand, it may purely highlight an act of rebellion which is enough to diminish the lives of two Bluebeard patriarchs but not enough to burn down an entire society's worth of patriarchy. Due to Rochester's heroic behaviour within the burning, as well as the admission of his crime, Rochester and Jane's post-Thornfield Hall marriage feels like withdrawal from a monstrous system. However Maxim's inability to admit wrongdoing and the narrator's unwillingness to hold him accountable reads more like forced exclusion from the social systems.

Overall, monstrosity in *Jane Eyre* and *Rebecca* is distributed between the Bluebeard males, their previous wives, their second wives and the estate houses. This is not distributed equally, however, but through a trickle-down effect from patriarchal structures by proxy of the estate houses and the Bluebeards,

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[24] Kathy Mezei and Chiara Briganti, "Reading the House: A Literary Perspective," *Signs* 27, no. 3 (Spring 2002): 841.
[25] John Sung Han, "A Lumber-Room of Her Own: Attics in *Pamela* and *Jane Eyre*," *Style* 48, no. 4 (Winter 2014): 529.

framed through the first-person narrative lens of the second wives. These structures are domesticity, social class and colonialism primarily. Maxim and Rochester are monstrous due to their oppression of both wives, however they are not so much actively monstrous but passively neutral in an inequitable system that requires resistance. Therefore, the estate houses could be considered the most monstrous, but the burning of the houses restores order to some extent whereas the Bluebeard males live on in relatively good ways compared to their previous wives. The previous wives could be reduced to monstrosity through antagonising the narrators and their husbands. They could also be perceived as heroic through their rebellion against oppressive patriarchs and the institutions they advantage from. However, this seems an oversimplification as Charlotte Bronte does not portray Bertha in this postcolonial manner and Rebecca's motivations are far more complex than simply rebellion. Jane is not explicitly monstrous but she does construct the narrative and dictate who is seen favourably and who is not. Whereas, the second Mrs De Winter not only constructs the narrative in a biased, unreliable way but actively withholds information about Maxim's crime because it benefits her to do so. One key distinction between the two texts is that both wives in *Jane Eyre* can be seen as trying to resist patriarchy and its structures whereas both Mrs De Winters actively support patriarchy when it suits them. Rebecca rebels against Maxim, definitely, but thrives in her position of influence as the wife of Manderley and relishes in the power and influence. Alternately, Jane resists these structures by refusing to be a mistress or a missionary's wife and only returning to Rochester an equal ground as in independent individual.

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