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Jane Eyre

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Dedication

I would like to dedicate this modest work to the tender hearts, to the candles of my life, to my dear parents and my dear husband. A special dedication to all my lovely brothers and my sister; And a particular dedication to all my dear friends.
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Lists of Abbreviations

(JE)= Jane Eyre
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General Introduction
Literature is an artistic writing which is concerned with giving pleasure through attractive forms and expressions. It moves freely, in such ways, between real and represented worlds, truths and imaginations (Evans 13). It is regarded as a cultural institution in which the value as society assigns to its literature: these vary from the society to another and from one age to age, ranging from seriousness and ritual, to frivolity and verbal play (Childs and Fowler 129).

Since literature is seen as reflection of real-life, so it represents the social circumstances; in this context, the Victorian era was seen as the most period that has been related to the exploration of social problems, such as poverty, working class, religion and morals, nationalism, gender differences and the nature of family.

Victorian era is named after the coronation of the Queen Victoria in 1837, and lasted till her death in 1901. This age was associated with a great change in all domains: policy, religion, social classes, culture and literature. (Allitt 6).

During her reign, the country was swinging between power and danger, but the danger was stronger. The Victorian novelists tried to raise the awareness of social problems. Childs and Fowler claim the following:

This becomes of more central is aware of the rules importance when the society represented is aware of the roles which it exists; when they have attained the status of social conventions. Societies create patterns of behavior which success or failure can measured; and the writer must react to these conventions either by confronting to them or by attacking and exploring them. These conventions are most revered in periods of high social mobility (130).

Charlotte Bronte (1816-1855) is a Victorian novelist and the eldest of the three Bronte sisters, Emily and Anne, whose novels have become enduring classics of English literature; they questioned contemporary social, political, religious issues, intellectual subjects as well as the role of individual in modern society (Evans 234). In time when men-centered and men-controlled, women were discriminated
and called “The Angel in the House”; this latter is expressed as “the husband and the wife are one, but the husband is that one” (McDowall 136); the idea is that man and woman were unequal and the family was under the rule of the ‘Master’ or the man if the household became stronger, thus housewives were limited in their fathers’ or husbands’ houses where they cared only about their children (Gilbert and Gubar 601). They discouraged from going out to work (McDowall 137). Nevertheless, the Victorian writer Charlotte Bronte rebelled through her novel *Jane Eyre* in which she expressed her innermost belief (Ruggier 5).

In *Jane Eyre*, Charlotte Bronte reflects the beginning of modernism in the Victorian society in her unconventional portrayal of an independently thinking heroine who challenges traditional class structure and intellectual beliefs. Moreover, Charlotte adopted a gender-neutral pseudonym, Currer Bell, which gave her a greater liberty to express her views and ideas (Adetunji 1).

*Jane Eyre* was successfully published in 1847; it gave a much credit to its author among its critics and contemporary writers as well. The story traces Charlotte Bronte’s life that is living in the Victorian period and having miserable life experiences (Peck and Coyle 175). Through *Jane Eyre*, Charlotte wants to break the roles and to criticize Victorian women; she makes the character of her heroine as a tough independent woman who has a great self independence and autonomy (Tirtana 2). Jane is also characterised as an isolated and unloved orphan who is then entering the world of work which is not allowed for women in Victorian Era. Thus, the aim of the present research work is to explore the heroism of Jane Eyre and to put finger on what makes her unlike and different from other conventional and traditional Victorian women at that time.

The nineteenth century families were large and patriarchal. They encouraged hard work respectability, social differences and inequality in gender. It is known for centuries that women were positioned under men’s authorities. They were created only to give birth and breastfeed for the baby, to clean the house, to serve
their children’s needs and to obey their husbands’ commands. Charlotte Bronte’s *Jane Eyre* is seen as a story of defiance against the conventionality in Victorian Era though the heroine was neither beautiful nor rich. In the novel, Jane resists her social identity through her sense of personal dignity, equality, self-respect, autonomy and independency, and liberty. Therefore, the present study comes to answer the following questions:

1. To what extent does Charlotte Bronte succeed in portraying her heroine Jane as an independent and autonomous Victorian woman?
2. How does Charlotte transmit her message of the importance of woman in a Victorian society to the reader?
3. How does Charlotte Bronte reject the Victorian woman’s traditional role in *Jane Eyre*?

The choice of Charlotte Bronte’s *Jane Eyre* did not come at random, but because of certain reasons. First of all, it is related to our interest in this story, which is a picture of a rebellious woman in an abusive and men dominated community and era. Second, the story gives a modern view of free and independent woman. Third, the story is considered as the most popular Charlotte Bronte’s masterpiece.

Our study aims to investigate how Charlotte Bronte portrays her unlikely Victorian heroine Jane Eyre using James Phelan’s theoretical model of thematic character.

The present study examines the way Charlotte Bronte portrays her heroine Jane Eyre vividly and makes her unique and unlike. It is divided into three main chapters. The first chapter is about some contradictory theories about ‘character’ in literary texts; some of them have seen ‘character’ with no role or importance as Aristotle and Formalism and Structuralism (1914-1960); and some have seen ‘character’ with a great importance and significance like E.M. Foster (1927), Chatman (1978) and Phelan (1989). The second chapter presents a historical
background about the Victorian Era and an overview about the literary style of Charlotte Brontë in *Jane Eyre*. The third chapter is the analysis of the novel; it is based on the content James Phelan’s theory of thematic character in order to show how Jane Eyre seeks to become an independent and autonomous Victorian woman.
Chapter One:

Basic Theories of Fiction

Character
Introduction

The art of fiction is an intriguing topic, and has attracted much critical attention from different scholars. Henry James is a pioneer who theorised about fiction writing with his focus on the interrelationships between life, experience, impressions and the art of the novel (Luo 7). The story has two elements: ‘events’ and ‘character’ (Chatman 21). Events are the most concentrated element and have given the promoted primacy in the story; this sequence of events called the plot, whereas ‘character’ refers to subject or people who depict actions within these events (21).

There are two contradictory theories about ‘character’ in literary texts; some of them have seen ‘character’ with no role or importance as Aristotle and Formalism and Structuralism who argue that ‘character’ is secondary and functional to the “plot”; and some have seen them with great importance and significance like Forster, Chatman, and Phelan who assert that ‘character’ is independent element in narrative.

1.1 Definition of Fiction Character

People are interested in knowing about each other stories. The appeal of a good novel, movie, or biography is that it draws people into the story such that they identify with one or more of the characters (Bennema 1). Character performs a crucial role in the construction of a story world, because a story is a narration of happenings to characters. For this reason, character’s portrayal is of paramount importance in novelistic production. Therefore, a close analysis of character as one object in story is an essential part of narrative study. Since a character perceives and acts, he or she is not infrequently considered in conjunction with action (Luo 103). There are different perspectives on the relation between character and action lead to the different evaluation of them.

Structuralists claim that character is nothing but a mere functional element that exists exclusively in and through the text (Chatman 111). Tzvetan Todorov calls
these textual entities a mass of signs that is bound together by a proper name. Jonathan Culler explains that the stress on the interpersonal and conventional systems which traverse the individual and make him a space in which forces and events meet rather than an individuated essence, leads to a rejection of a prevalent conception of character in the novel. Character’s function within a plot is to carry out actions. In other words, the character is an agent within the narrative syntax.

Whereas, modern critics believe that ‘character’ resembles people in real life, as Fowler and Childs define the ‘character’ as the representation of a person that is likely to change, both as presence in literature and as an object of critical attention, much as it changes in society (23). They continue their view how the conception and analysis of fictional character vary in different phases of literature.

In the same way, Royle and Bennett agree that characters are the life of literature because they attract the readers’ curiosity and fascination, affection and dislike. Through the power of identification, the readers conceive the literary characters as they conceive themselves and become a part of them (60).

The British critic and academic David Lodge published his book *The Art of Fiction* (1991), he defines character as the most important single component of any novel; he also affirms that fictional character is difficult to define and to discuss in technical terms because they are different in types of character as well as in the ways to representing them. He agrees with Forster’s classification of character into flat and round and major and minor characters (67).

### 1.2 Theories of Character

Theories of character have restricted into two groups; the first group denies the importance of “character” in literary text; whereas the second group supports “character” as an important component in narrative.

#### 1.2.1 Aristotle’s Theory

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1[https://is.muni.cz/th/75102/ff_m/MA_THESIS.pdf](https://is.muni.cz/th/75102/ff_m/MA_THESIS.pdf)
Aristotle’s *poetics* laid the foundation stone of an approach that based on what literary characters are and how they are limited to act within the narrative syntax (Gillespie 175). In his view, the actions or the incidents of the story take precedence over the ‘characters’: ‘characters’ give readers qualities but their actions decide whether they are good or bad ones (Gillespie175). Back to ancient literature, tragedy is defined by Aristotle as an imitation of an action that is serious, complete and of a certain magnitude in embellished speech. Tragedy is different from any other genre because it is represented in the form of action not in the process of narrative. Action comprises all human process including deeds, thoughts and feelings by means of pity and fear. In tragedy, characters imitate the serious side of life, whereas characters imitate only shallow and superficial life in comedy. In Aristotle’s sense, action is not activity or what characters perform on the stage but something closer to process. In other words, action is the process that takes between the beginning and the end of the play. In other hand, he defines characters as “I mean that according to which we say the people in action are of certain a sort” (Chatman 27).

In this definition, Aristotle did not give importance to character as much as to action. Actions come first that are the object of imitations in which men is involved in, meanwhile characters are included for the sake of action, and they are secondary to plot according to his division tragedy. Tragedy has six parts: plot, characters, diction, reasoning, spectacle and song. Thus, the plot is the first...
principle and it is the original and the soul of the tragedy\textsuperscript{5}. Whereas, character holds the second place in his classification, on other words, without action tragedy cannot exist, but without character it may (Chatman 27).

According to Hardison, the action is the most important than the men performing the action. He asserts that Aristotle distinguishes between agent (pratton) and character (ethos); agents are people who perform actions, they are essential to drama but characters are something added later, even they are not essential to successful tragedy (Chatman 109). For Aristotle, agent must have at least one trait, namely that deriving from one action he performs, he may either be noble or base and all human are different in character because of some duality of goodness and evil (Chatman 109). Goodness and evil are primary inherited in agents by virtue of the action in which they are involved, whereas ‘character’; Aristotle means that in virtue of which the readers ascribe certain qualities of the agent\textsuperscript{6}. Aristotle argues that character in unchanging, he just reveals one moral choice through tragedy, it comes close to modern notion of disposition, so people inherit qualities that influence their thought and actions. Aristotle’s view of character corresponds to the modern type ‘flat’ or ‘type’ (Bennema 26).

Since the objects of imitation are men in action and these men must be either of a higher or a lower type, for moral characters mainly answer to these divisions, goodness and badness being the distinctive marks of moral differences, it follows that the writers must represent men either as better than in real life or as worse (Luo 83). In other word; Aristotle neglects the character and focuses on plot because of two reasons: first; at his time the dominant genre was tragedy that is based on representation of actions and life, second reason; the society was divided


into specific layers and that layers have typical characteristics, hence, these classes had limited numbers of traits as good and evil (Luo 83).

The absence of an articulate and development theory of character is partly due to the Aristotelian idea that character is fixed and secondary to plot on which twentieth century Russian formalism and French structuralism have capitalized. Another reason is the complexity of the concept character, characters resemble people but are not real and difficulty of analysing character something are can rarely read from the surface of the text (Bennema 2).

1.2.2 Formalism and Structuralism’s Theory

The followers of Aristotle’s idea about subordination of character to plot are Structuralists and Formalists who avoid to define the ‘character’ in terms of psychological essence, however they define it not as ‘being’ but as a ‘participant’ (Barthes and Duisit 22). They too argue that character is product of plot, and its status is functional and character can only be functions “that they are in short, participants or actants rather than Personage” (qtd. in Chatman 112). Formalists and Structuralists analyse only what characters do; not what they are. They neglect the psychological and moral essences in characters (Weststeijn 57).

Vladimir Propp a Russian Formalist and critic who worked on Russian folktales indentified recurrent structures and situations in such tales and publishing his findings in his book The Morphology Folktales (1928) (Aguirre 1). For Propp, the characters are mainly just the mechanism for distributing around the story, he notes the thirty-one functions seen to group naturally into spheres, hence, it makes more sense to the spheres of actions as roles rather than characters; as this reflects the subordination of characters to action (Barrey 149).

Propp’s function is understood as an act of a character which is defined from the point of view of its significance for the course of action, thus, functions of characters serve as stable and constant elements in a tale, independent of how and
by whom they are fulfilled. They constitute the fundamental components of a tale (Herman 19). As Aristotle, Propp argues that what is ‘character’ do in the tale is more important than who does it or how it is done (Simpson 71), then he claims that the number of functions are undertaken by seven basic types of character roles which are: the villain, the dispatcher, the helper, the princess or prize and her father, the donor, the hero or victim and the false hero (Barrey 150). These roles could sometimes substituted among different characters, in other words, one character can engage in acts as more than one role, for example: when hero kills the villain dragon, and the dragon’s sister takes on the villainous role of chasing the hero. Thus, one role may be employed by several characters as multiple villains but these entire roles are basic to any folktales (Barrey 150).

In the same way, the French Structuralist Claude Bremond who focuses on events-sequences rather than characters, he claims that character plays a part of what interest the audience who appreciate character’s traits for their own sake: some ‘characters’ have little or nothing to do with the ‘plot’, thus, the narrative characters are subordinate to plot (Chatman 113). Bremond highlights that function has meaning only in so far as it takes in the general line of action of an actants and each character can be the agent of action sequences that are properly his own (Barthes and Duisit 257).

1.2.3 Chatman’s Theory

Chatman (1980) argues for an open theory of character, one can contrast a literary character is the same way he construct a historical person as he construct the people he meets in real life (Weststeijn 57). Because lack of interest of character in narration, Chatman gives a life and importance to character after his saying: “it is remarkable how little has been said about the theory of character in
literary history and criticism” (108). Chatman declares that ‘plot’ and ‘character’ are separable and independently memorable (118). He argues that ‘characters’ are autonomous being and remain open reconstructs in sophisticated narratives just as some people in the real world, they stay ambiguous no matter how well the readers know them (119). Hence, ‘characters’ are open being which are first coded by the writer through discourse and then reconstructed by the readers through the very same discourse (138). This reconstruction is based on readers’ conception of people which means that it lies beyond the discourse; in other words, the readers read between the lines, form hypotheses on the basis of what they know and see, try to figure them out, and predict their actions (118). Chatman explains that to understand a character, it must be interpreted and reconstructed and there is always more than one way of characters’ interpretation.

Percy Lubbock agrees that it is a simple to create for oneself the idea of a human being, a figure as well as a character, this creation occurs every day when one can construct a people around him by piercing together his fragmentary evidence and molding his image in though. People and artists have the same way in characters’ reconstruction in their mind; partially, imperfectly, very much at haphazard, but still perpetually (Chatman 128). In this way, the readers form an image of character that is a “paradigm of traits”. Traits are used to compose character that has a range of them. In Chatman’s words, a trait is being a “relatively stable or abiding personal quality” (127). He coins the idea of traits in order to develop a structural format for character identity within the story world, but it can be extended beyond the story world (Chatman 118). Thus the readers do not need to remember characters because of the words they say or the words used.

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to describe them, but they remember them as constructs in their consciousnesses (Weststeijn 58).

Chatman distinguishes between events and traits: events have fixed and determined positions in the story which develops by cause and effect chain, moreover, the order in the story is fixed with a beginning, middle, and an end (Chatman 128). However, traits are not the subject to these limitations; they prevail throughout the narrative as well beyond (128). Whereas paradigm, on the other hand, is a metaphor of “vertical assemblage intersecting the syntagmatic chain of events that compromise plot” (Chatman 127). In other words, a character collects its attributive prepositions, keeps related to itself throughout the plot and there with constitutes as stable unit that helps to secure coherence to the narrative.

### 1.2.4 E.M Forster’s Theory

A British novelist and later an academic E.M Forster gives the main and essential elements of Storytelling. In his *Aspects of Novel* (1927), he makes a clear distinction between story and plot, emphasizes on the relationship between character and incidents, and how fantasy, prophecy and rhythm motivate the readers, and finally, he illustrates that creative writing goes beyond storytelling.

Forster claims that the plot is embodied in the adroitness of telling the story, depicting people, and constructing the plot. At the beginning, he makes differences between plot and story and his classification of character is the most notable contribution to the narrative (Royle and Bennett 54). First, speaking about plot and story, Forster remarks that the story is a narrative of events arranged in time sequence, however; the plot is also a narrative of events but the emphasis on causality. “The king died and then the queen died” is a story “the king died then the queen died of grief” is a plot (Forster 87). However, the time-sequence is preserved but the sense of causality. (93). Story includes two events related to time, he proposes, while the plot includes another connection which is causality, it provides the thread of narrative by showing how they are related to each other. The
causal connection between one event to another constitutes fundamental aspects of any narrative (Royle and Bennett 63). Forster emphasizes on the importance of time sequence which turns a random collections of episodes into a story “what does the story to narrate the life in time, it is impossible for the novelist to deny time inside the fabric in his novel” (Forster 27).

Besides what will happen next, Forster turns his attention away to characters or what he called them people purposely\(^\text{10}\). A novelist can only begin to explore the value of human experiences by developing the characters of the story, Forster emphasizes that characters are not real people rather they are like real people. He claims that the novelist makes up a number of words-masses and give them names and sex, assigns them plausible gesture, and cause word-masses are his characters (52).

For Forster the fictional character seems real more than people in actual life. He compares between the Queen Victoria in history and in novel, illustrating that:

If a fictional character is like an identifiable person such as Queen Victoria, the novel will become a memoir; which is in history is based on evidence though a novel is also based on evidence, this modified by the temperament of the novelist… the historian also is concerned with characterization; he too deals with actions and the characters of the men only so far as he can deduce then from their actions, but he can only know of its existence when it shows on the surface ,the hidden life remains hidden, however the function of the novelist to reveal the hidden life at its sources: tell us more about Queen Victoria than could be known, and thus to produce a character who is not the Queen Victoria of history (53).

In daily life, people communicate by external signs. They contain many secrets, but one can know them in the novel perfectly. Hence, this clarity and completeness allow characters to take an advantage of being real, and a great part of their inner life is revealed in the novel\(^\text{11}\). Forster considers that characters are


real as real people because they are convincing, but the barrier of art separates them (Forster 69). In a sense, Forster views the fictional characters as an essential element of narrative and they depict and resemble people around us, thus, novels suggest a more comprehensible and more manageable human race (71).

Forster continues in distinguishing between ‘flat’ and ‘round’ characters. The former, flat characters are never change in the story; he claims that they are endowed with a single idea or quality and their great advantage is that they are easily recognized (76). Flat characters are easily remembered afterwards because they are not changed by circumstances. He remarks that flat characters can be summed up in a sentence, and they are best when they are comic because they create this wonderful feeling of human depth (79-80). Flat characters are not capable of great vivacity or power but they need be typed since there is only a single trait, hence, their actions are predictable (Chatman 132).

On the other hand, round characters, unlike flat characters, always surprise the readers with their behaviors and unsuspected aspects of their nature and they are ready for extended life (Forster 83). Authors present enough details about them in order to render them full, lifelike, and memorable. Their roundness is characterised by both individuality and unpredictability because round characters usually play a major role in the story; they called protagonists who exhibit the ability to adopt to new circumstances (Roberts 57). Chatman claims that round characters are capable of changing and surprising the readers in a convincing way (Chatman 132).

1.2.5 James Phelan’s Theory

James Phelan (1989) suggests that character should be noticed and not be considered in isolation from the plot (Weststeijn 55). The literary character develops and changes as plot does develop, hence, Phelan ends by mixing up the study of character with the study of plot or what is called progression (Phelan 9).
Phelan has acknowledged the interconnection between character and narrative progression. In his work which moves away from structuralist narratology towards a rhetorical stance on narrative that posits as “feedback loops” between anthropology agency, textual phenomena, and reader response, Phelan pays close attention to how character emerges in particular narratives in order to help elucidate the ethical communications that those narratives suggest between implied author and implied reader (Phelan and Rabinowitz 99).

Phelan suggests great contributions to the rhetorical study of character in his delineation of character in three primacy dimensions: the mimetic, the synthetic and the thematic. The mimetic dimension presents character as a “real” human being; in other words, in what extent character can represent the image of a real and actual person. The mimetic dimension is used by realist writers and fiction. The synthetic dimension deals with contractedness in language and how character is a literary construct (Weststeijn 59). The last one is the thematic dimension which presents how a character can represent an idea, a class or any principle to give a meaning to the literary work. The thematic dimension is the common one in fiction generally (Herman 205).

Realists suggest that characters are ‘life-like’, that is they are like real people because of two requirements: the first requirement for such character is to have a plausible name and to say and do in so-called ‘real life’, the second requirement is a certain complexity, a character appears merely ‘one-dimensional’ or in Forster’s terms ‘flat’ character (Royle and Bennett 62). According to Royle and Bennett, to be life-like, fictional character should have a number of different traits or qualities which may be conflicting or contradictory: he or she should be to some extent unpredictable, her or his words and actions should appear to originate in multiple impulses (75).
1.3 Definition of Characterisation

Characterisation is the process by which the writer reveals the personality of a character. Also it is the art of creating characters for a narrative, including the process of conveying information about them. Characterisation is really the art that distinguishes modern fiction\(^{12}\).

Thrall and Hibbard (1936) define characterisation as “the depicting, in writing of clear images of a person, his actions and manners of thoughts and life. A man’s nature, environment, habits emotions desires and instincts: all these go to make people what they are, and the skillful writer makes his important people clear to him through a portrayal of these elements” (qtd. in Chatman 108).

The readers form a mental construct of characters from the information that are given, but also add some ideas from their own experience and imagination. Unlike ‘real’ people, they do not exist independently of their narrative context and little or no benefit to be gained from speculating on the psychological make-up of a character for which the readers are not given any indication in the text (Lethbridge and Mildorf 10).

In the story, the fictional character is represented by different personality traits from physical as age, complexion, color of hair and eyes, and emotional qualities like humor, morality or comedy.

Fludernik claims that prototypically human and therefore can perform acts of physical movement, speech acts, and thoughts, and their acting necessarily revolves around their consciousness, their mental centre of self-awareness, intellection, perception and emotionality (Luo 26). To analyse any fictional character, readers should know the techniques of characterisation: how does the text inform the readers about fiction characters?

http://www.roanestate.edu/owl/elementslit.html.
1.4 Techniques of Characterisation

The author uses different ways to introduce and to describe his characters by textual data, these data help reader to know how characters develop, how characterisation is distributed through text, in what extent information source are reliable, what readers learn about a character’s inner life, and finally in which arrangements of contrasts and correspondences are the character depicted. In literature, there are different techniques of characterisation but generally there are two main techniques: direct characterisation and indirect characterisation.

1.4.1 Direct Characterisation

The most instrument used in constituting the character traits is direct characterisation. In direct characterisation, the narrator tells what character is look like, his physical appearance, his thinking and feeling but the more authoritative the narrator is, the more reliable is the piece of information (Rimmon-Kenan 62).

Direct characterisation is also very close to generalisation about a particular character, when a narrator claims that X is pensive and depressive, he brands the character with these traits more forcefully, than if he did it by means of indirect characterisation. Direct definition of character existed in the age of the novel; however, starting with modernism, narrative strategies demanded new character-indicators that would meet the specific requirements of the new aesthetics (Roberts 59).

A character is also sometimes characterised explicitly through a telling name, using adjectives or describing them by the narrator (called authorial characterization) or by another character in the narrative (also called figural characterization) or even by the characters themselves (self-characterization) (Lethbridge and Mildorf 10-11).

13 https://is.muni.cz/th/75102/ff_m/MA_THESIS.pdf
Chatman (1927) remarks about direct characterisation that calls attention to a narrator's voice, but to encapsulate a character or setting in a word or brief phrase implies still greater powers with greater audibility. By hints throughout the text, it becomes explicitly what they are like in a word, a word that the narrator presumes to apply (226)

Direct characterisation is called also ‘telling’, this term is used by Wayne. C. Booth in his *The Rhetoric of Fiction* (1961). He claims that through this information, the readers must accept without question if writers are to grasp the story that is to follow (3). He added that this kind of characterisation has never completely disappeared from fiction.

1.4.2 Indirect Characterisation

Unlike the traditional strategy of telling the traits directly by the narrator, indirect characterisation relies on suggestiveness and indeterminacy of indicators that are hidden in the fabric of the discourse; it lays more responsibility on the reader and his ability to infer and interpret these implied indications. There are numerous devices falling under the category of indirect characterisation, but all of them share the same quality they all show rather than tell. In addition, they are known in various depths of the discourse or story and they may run through the whole story or appear just once, moreover, they work together to create a complex blend of characteristic feature.

Booth (1961) calls indirect characterisation showing; he claims that showing is more artistic than telling or direct characterisation; because many authors and critics have been convinced that dramatic modes of narration are naturally superior to any mode that allows for direct appearances by the author or his reliable spokes man. The complex issues involved in this shift that have been reduced to a convenient distinction between ‘showing’, which is artistic, and

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14 [https://is.muni.cz/th/75102/ff_m/MA_THESIS.pdf](https://is.muni.cz/th/75102/ff_m/MA_THESIS.pdf)
Basic Theories of Fiction Character

Chapter One

‘telling,’ which is inartistic. Booth remarks that the novelists sometimes will tell
the truth and sometimes they will lie, and the readers must determine what is going
on (Booth 8).

According to Rimmon Kenan (1994), there are basic indirect indicators of
indirect characterisation. He claims that to enhance the reader’s perception of a
trait once it has been revealed through the character’s action, speech or external
appearance (Rimmon Kenan 69), thus the basic list of indirect characterisation
comprises: actions, speech, external appearance, and environment.

1.4.2.1 Actions

Actions are the most and frequent fields of implicit meanings, no matter
whether they are just one-time actions or habitual ones. Habitual activities usually
form the basis of flat characters or a static background of the round ones, while one
time-action tend to evoke the dynamic aspect of the character, often playing a part
in the turning point in the narrative (Rimmon-Kenan 63).

Actions by characters reveal their nature, what they do is the readers’ best
clue to understanding what they are, actions may also signal qualities of character
such as naiveté, weakness, deceit and subterfuge, and they may also demonstrate a
character’s new awareness or the development of particular character strength
(Roberts 55).

1.4.2.2 Speech

Speech is an element inextricable from the events, actions or interactions.
It integrates characters within their story worlds, helps the readers to assess and
interpret the characters. As Rimmon-Kenan asserts that action and speech convey
character-traits through a cause and effect relation which the reader deciphers in
reverse (67).

What character says dramatic statements and thoughts; it reveals what they
are like. Although speeches of the most characters are functional and essential to
keep the action moving along, they provide material from which the readers may
draw conclusions. Characters often use speech to hide their motives and thoughts through the readers should see through such ploy (Lethbridge and Mildorf 34).

The authors devote their skills to arranging events and speeches so that readers can draw their conclusions. By studying what characters say about each other, the readers can enhance their understanding of the character being discussed. Everything they learn from the dialogue and speeches often indicate something other than what the speakers intend, perhaps because of prejudice, stupidity, or foolishness (Roberts 56).

1.4.2.3 External Appearance

The author’s description may tell the readers about characters’ appearance which reveals much about a character’s social and economic status, and they tell them about characters traits. External appearance not only describes the character’s surface, but also demarcates it against other entities around, moreover, it helps to identify it. When it comes to appearance, conventions play a crucial role; for instance: one can hardly imagine a wise advisor to be young, muscle-bound and richly dressed. However, complying with any extra-textual conventions tends to classify the character rather as a flat one (Luo 226).

David Lodge (1991) affirms that physical description or external appearance description is the common and simple way to introduce a character in older fiction. He states that clothes are always a useful index of character’s class and life-style especially in the case of exhibitionists (68). For example, when a character wears a black silk, it signals desire to impress, theatricality, and sexual provocativeness (68).

In realist texts, what is indicated is an opposition; character has two sides, there is an inside and an outside to a person, but that one side may be understood to have an influence on the other (Royle and Bennett 78). Thus, external appearance allows readers to deepen insight into character (Roberts 57). Characters are
constituted by interplay of the inner and the outer, but that it is not a question of one being truth and the other being mere surface.¹⁵

1.4.2.4 Environment

Environment is a subcategory of a much wider concept of literary space, and encompasses not only the space in which a character dwells and acts, but also the objects that surround the characters’ environment.¹⁶ Regarding the relationship between characters and their environment, Chatman draws attention to some characters that may become just a constituent part of the environment, especially when they are insignificant for the plot, and their role is just to form a part of the story’s illustrative devices (139-140).

Robert Liddell distinguished four specific ways of relating environment with characters and plot. The environment can be ‘utilitarian’, meaning that it is forming a background for the story without much penetration into the plot or character definition. The second category is called ‘symbolic’ that stands for an environment that is closely bound to the plot, reflecting what is happening. E.g. turbulent events are often followed by thunderstorms; fog and rain illustrate melancholic meditation. The third type ‘irrelevant’ represents an environment completely insignificant to the story setting or development. The last one is ‘ironic’ in which environment poses a clash of two natures that of the character’s mood or personality (Chatman 140).

Environment stands for a rapid shifting back and forth from the outside physical world to the world of the imagination (Chatman 143). Frequently it is even difficult to distinguish, whether readers are inside the character’s skull or wandering around outside his mind. In his general theory of narrative, Chatman argues that character and environment are so-called ‘existent’ the material that constituents parts of the story.

Characters exist and move in a space which exists abstractly at

¹⁵ https://is.muni.cz/th/75102/ff_m/MA_THESIS.pdf
¹⁶ https://is.muni.cz/th/75102/ff_m/MA_THESIS.pdf
the deep narrative level….so we can distinguish the character from the setting in a story. The setting "sets the character off" in the usual figurative sense of the expression; it is the place and collection of objects against which his or her actions and passion appropriately emerge (140)

A normal principle function of setting is to contribute the mood of the narrative; in this essence, Lodge (1991) claims that novelists are in good position of being able to invent whatever weather that appropriate the mood they want to evoke, so the weather affects the characters’ mood and feeling in the narrative course. For example, when the author uses evening, few people are in the avenue and the houses call attention to them, this will produce and reflect the characters’ loneliness and melancholy as well (85).

Readers can arrive at clear understandings of what characters in stories are like by correctly interpreting the characterisation tools used by an author. It is important to have a good understanding of a character because of the personality of the character contributes greatly to the conflict in a story. Sometimes the character’s personality will cause his problems in the first place. Other times a character’s traits can be what impede him from dealing effectively with his problems. An understanding of these traits can help readers understand why the story unfolds the way it does and why the problem is so difficult for the character to overcome17.

Conclusion

Chapter one showed that Aristotle, the Formalists and Structuralists have subordinated the character to plot, but on the other hand, Chatman, Forster, and Phealan have elevated the character as an independent component in the narrative.

Besides, the chapter discussed an overview of characterisation techniques in which the character is introduced explicitly and implicitly. It is important to have a good understanding of a character because of the personality of a character contributes greatly to the conflict in a story.
Chapter Two:

Charlotte Bronte’s *Jane Eyre*:

A Critical Review
Introduction

This chapter is devoted to identify an overview of the Victorian era and its great change in all domains: policy, religion, social systems, culture, literature, and gender role. It is necessary to give a hint about Charlotte Bronte’s style and life in order to find out how she reflects her own experience in life through *Jane Eyre*. Charlotte Brontë introduces her characters carefully; all of them have a role and interrelation with each other and with the protagonist as well. Within different settings, Jane experiences different moods that shape Jane’s identity.

2.1 Historical and Social Context

The Victorian era was associated with a great social change. Queen Victoria succeeded her uncle William IV as a monarch of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland (Peck and Coyle 169). Her name was given to the period of her reign while she was still living (Allitt 6). She came to the throne as young woman in 1837 and reigned until her death in 1901 (McDowall 144). with the advice and guidance of Prime Minister Lord Melbourne, Victoria could control her government even though, she no longer wielded actual political power that slipped quickly away from the monarchy and Aristocracy (Allitt 46).

The Victorian era witnessed a huge economic and social change and rapid advance in many domains: medical, scientific and technological knowledge in the nineteenth century (McDowall 131). Class distinctions become more clear especially the rise of the middle class which consisted of merchants and business people, thus the Victorians were ‘status laden’ society (Taele 15). The middle class tried to prove itself by insisting on a firm sense of morality based upon the family unity and by rejection of people who tried rise above their position; in other words, the rich man must have a mansion and the poor man has his cottage¹.

The social change in English society witnessed the wave of great immigration of population from countryside to towns (Peck and Coyle 169). At that time, the landowning farmers’ own income had suffered because of cheaper imported corn and new methods of farming reduced the number of workers on the land (McDowall 132). Hence, Rapid social change was facilitated by the Industrial Revolution (Allitt 1). There are many reasons that come to revolutionise Britain’s industry: money, labour, a greater demand for goods, new power, and better transport (McDowall 120). Workers decided to join together on order to ask for a fair wages and good conditions to work appropriately, but unfortunately, this demand was refused by the government that punished all the unemployment and the poor who raised the riots (123).

Another side of differences that indicates the differences in social classes is in education. According to Mitchell, the sons of aristocrats and the middle class were sent to public schools. The eldest was expected to take over his father’s position while the younger sons were supposed to take professions such as military officer, administrator or clergyman (Nao 10). The daughters were educated at home in various skills like singing, painting, playing an instrument and preparation for marriage. On the other hand, the sons of working classes had a little schooling; children had to start working at very early age at factories or workhouses (Brown 53). McDowall affirms that

The use of child labour in the workhouse and in the new factories increased towards the end of the century this was hardly surprising. A rapidly growing population made world of children. Children of the poor had always worked as soon they walk. They were particularly useful to factory owners because they were easy to discipline, unlike adults and they were cheap (120).
By the first half of the nineteenth century, the parliament acknowledged the need to help the poor disable by offering them children’s homes, orphanage and boarding schools for children who have no parents as well as for children whose parents unable to support themselves. In others words, boys were taught a trade such as carpentry or shoemaking. Girls were prepared for domestic service, they almost sent to boarding school in preparation to become a governess. Life as an orphan was not easy, many orphans were not properly taken care of as regards health, and schooling and ever important psychological aspects of feeling loved and belonging among people (Persson 4).

The nineteenth century families were large and patriarchal, they encouraged hard work respectability social differences and inequality in gender (Tirtana12). It is known for centuries that woman is positioned under man’s authorities; they tied up by rules, norms and values of the society (Korkmaz 32). The Victorian woman is the least engaged of any member of the house hold, she must be passive and devote herself to the good of others, if she tried to think about herself and would tend to draw away her thoughts from others, she ought to be avoided and considered as an evil (Gilbert and Gubar 601). Similarly to this view of considering Victorian woman as the ‘Angel of the House’, John Ruskin affirmed that woman’s power is not for rule, and not for thinking and creation, but for orderings of domesticity (602).

A wife was legally a man’s property but for unmarried women could provide them a little opportunity. The poor women could only work as household servants, farm labourers, or factory workers to service; the only genteel professions open to the middle-class women were governess, schoolteacher or companion to wealthy lady with its awkward status between servant and lady (Xiaojie 67). Governesses were employed by aristocratic families to educate their daughters, it has becoming essential in upper class (Brown 36). In this era, people especially the upper class wanted to employ governesses for probably two reasons; first reason is the absence
of schools for girls. Parents thought that it would better to educate their girls at their home and second reason is employing a governess is the cheapest way for the middle class parents to educate their daughters (Nao 5).

Another change that characterised the Victorian period is in literature. Between 1870 and 1880, England witnessed new values both in fiction production and audience reading, there was an increase in the number of people who could read both men and women (Evans 262). The Victorian novel was the most common and popular genre at that time thanks to the expansion of newspaper and the periodicals press. It debated about the political, religious and social issues that played an important role in the experience of the reading people.

Novel became means through which readers defined their social identity and formed their attitudes to such issues as nationalism, gender differences and nature of family, this led to take in consideration of how the novel emerged as a “realist” form, closely linked to history, biography, as well responded to the religious and scientific controversies of the time (Allitt 3). Moreover, the novel at that period showed a great variety, so some novelists tried a number of different forms as if they were attempting to adjust themselves to all the change of public tastes. Some of these varieties of novels: the Novel of Crime, Novel of Social Protest, Novel of Governess, Buildungroman, Realistic Novel and Utopian Novel (Evans 251). The rise in “Governess literature” of the nineteenth century may be owed partly to this concern: the status and opportunities of working women, especially the position of the governess within middle class and upper class households where had ambiguity that would appeal to the novelists; in other words, her position was ambiguous and mixture of moral importance and economic servitude as that any Victorian women (Brown 77).

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The novelists represented society as they saw it but being aware of the problems created by industrialization, exploitation of women and children, and terrible living conditions. They used their novels in order to put in evidence these issues and to stimulate people to find solutions to them. In particular, Victorian novels associated with realism in which the middle class novelists’ works considered to be a universal standard of morality and conduct (Peck and Coyle 191). Realistic novels concentrate on those experiences and circumstance: as family and social relations that are familiar to the readers in society (Brown113). Legouis writes that the middle of the nineteenth century novelists turned from focusing on analyzing personal emotions to presenting more social problems (Persson 2). The moral and social concerns of many people made life better for orphans and poor people (Persson 3).

Charles Dickens, Thomas Hardy, George Eliot, Charlotte Bronte, Emily Bronte and Makepeace Thackeray, these are the big names and writers who contributed to the elevation of fiction field. Their works give to readers a vivid picture of Victorian life, showing them not only what the world looked like but also people’s hopes, dreams, and fears and their ideas about the past and the future (Allitt 79).

Charles Dickens is the greatest novelist that England has yet produced. He saw things from different way and exaggerated way because he hated the social system into which he had been born (Evans 244). He was to attack the corruption, hypocrisy, and the misunderstanding of children of his time (244). Dickens published his fictions in serials that have created an extensive demand for each new number (Adams 22). Charlotte and her sister Emily Bronte grew up in vicarage in a pretty isolated area and became the authors of classics *Jane Eyre* and *Wuthering Heights* (Evans 245).

All Victorian novelists shared a common themes and subjects in their writing such as: the early death because of diseases and also the suffering in childhood, especially their protagonists who are treated badly either by their relatives or by
their society; moreover, women who had few rights and they struggle to get their independency (Kovacs and Neelan 7).

2.2 Biography of Charlotte Brontë

Charlotte Bronte was born in Yorkshire, England on April 21, 1816. She is one of six children of clergyman, Patrick Bronte and his wife Maria (Ruggier 4). Charlotte suffered from early death of her mother Maria. Soon after, the family moves to Howarth, England (4). In 1824, Charlotte and her sisters go to the Clergy Daughters’ school at Cowan Bridge where bad and harsh conditions that had caused Charlotte’s eldest sisters, Maria and Elizabeth death and fortunately, Charlotte and Emily brought home3. The three sisters and their brother Branwell were commended to the care of their aunt Elizabeth Branwell. Charlotte, Anne, Emily and Branwell were educated at home in isolation and they created their own literary world in Reverend Bronte’s Parsonage (Korkmaz 4). By their creativity and talent, the sisters and their brother could create an imaginary world which they called Angeria and began to write in details. In 1831, Charlotte went to school at Roe Head where she became a teacher and went to serve in many places as a governess before completing her school in Brussels (Tirtana 4). She was hired to tutor the children of wealthy Sedgwick family but she did not like this job and left it soon after. She returned to work as a governess but she again failed (5).

Upon her return to Howarth, the three sisters decide to open their own school after the necessary preparations which had been completed but unfortunately the project failed. During their days at Howarth, Charlotte discovered Emily’s poems and decided to publish a selection of poems of the three sisters (Taele 26). In 1846,
their poems published under the pseudonyms of Currer, Eliss and Acton Bell. Charlotte completed the *Professor* which was rejected for publication six times. The novel was passing slowly and heavily from publisher to another, whereas Emily’s *Wuthering Heigh*, Ann’s *Agnes Grey*, and Charlotte’s *Jane Eyre* had been accepted and published under the Bell pseudonyms in 1847.

The sisters wanted to be limited by the world of domestic fiction where had associated with female writers of the time. In 1847, Charlotte has lost her brother Branwell who died from alcoholic and drugs, as well as she lost her sisters Ann and Emily. The real identity of the sisters still was ambiguous in front of the publishers and the reader as well. In 1848, Charlotte went London in order to reveal the truth “we are there sisters” (Stoneman 217). She continued writing and produced *Shirley* (1849) and *Villette* (1851). In 1853, Charlotte married Arthur Bell Nicholas who was her father’s curate in Howarth. In 1854, Charlotte expected a child but she caught a pneumonia that seized her. Next year, she died while she was pregnant and still young (Korkmaz 5).

2.3 Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre*: A Literary Analysis

The novel opens with ten-year-old Jane living in the home of her aunt Mrs. Reed, where she is abused by her aunt and by her cousins (Ruggier 7). After defending herself against John Reed’s bullying, she is sent to Lowood School, a boarding school for orphaned girls. At Lowood, she falls into the hands of the hypocritical clergyman Brocklehurst who starves his charges and singles Jane out to be neglected by the other girls. She is befriended by Helen Burns, a fellow student who dies in a typhoid epidemic that sweeps through the school (JE 77). She also finds help and kindness from Miss Temple who refuses the brutality (Shirai 112). Eventually, Jane becomes a teacher in the school. When she reaches

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the age of eighteen, she advertises her services and is hired as a governess at Thornfield Hall\(^5\).

At Thornfield, she supervises the education of Adele, the ward of the master of the house, Edward Rochester. At the beginning, Rochester is a hard and bitter man but he is impressed by Jane’s intelligence and independent spirit. One night, Bertha escapes from her attic room and sets fire to Rochester’s bed but Jane saves his life. Despite the widespread belief that he will marry selfish Blanche Ingram, he proposes to Jane who joyfully accepts and plans are made for the wedding. As Jane and Rochester stand at the altar, Bertha’s brother, Richard Mason rushes into the church and reveals the existence of his wife (JE 285). The principals visit Bertha in her attic and see a madwoman (287). Rochester suggests to Jane that they go away and live as husband and wife where no one knows them, but Jane refuses and leaves Thornfield (Ruggier 9).

Jane does not know where she will go and she loses her suitcase while traveling and nearly starves to death. She travels as far as she can to be far away from Rochester till she arrives at the doorstep of St. John Rivers and his sisters (JE 329). They take care of her till she regains her health then she earns her a living by teaching in a local school. She receives an unexpected inheritance from her uncle John Eyre, and in the process, she discovers that she is related to the Rivers family on her father’s side. Jane shares the money with her cousins. Suddenly, St. John proposes to Jane, asking her to accompany him on his coming missionary mission (JE 335). She is on the verge of accepting when she hears the voice of Rochester calling to her, after which she leaves to seek him. Upon returning to Thornfield, she finds the Thornfield mansion in ruins as a result of a fire set by Bertha (JE 418). Rochester, while seeking to save his insane wife, is injured and blinded by the fire, and she plunges to her death from the burning roof (JE 420). Jane finds

Rochester and they are finally married. He regains his sight, and they have a child as the story ends.

2.4 Characters

Charlotte Bronte portrays her characters vividly; they play a great role in helping to shape the identity and the personality of the heroine Jane either female characters or male characters. They are divided into major and minor characters.

2.4.1 Major Characters

Jane Eyre: The narrator and protagonist. Jane is an orphan girl who lives until the age of ten with her cruel uncle widow Mrs. Reed in Gateshead. Jane was abused physically and emotionally by the inhabitants of the house especially her cousins. Charlotte described her heroine as plain, poor, little and rebellious, she is not a beautiful as she wishes to be. One day she asserts to her sister Emily that “I will show you a heroine as plain and small as myself” (Gateskell11), thus, she contrasts with other female characters in the novel like Georgiana and Blanch Ingram. Jane spends eight years at Lowood, a girl boarding school where she is neglected and called liar by Mr.Brocklehurst (JE 65). On the other hand, she meets her best friend Helen Burns and Miss Temple.

From Lowood to Thornfield, Jane is employed as a governess to Mr. Rochester’s ward Adele. At first time Jane falls in love with Mr. Rochester who admires her because of her cleverness and her intellect (Ruggier 6). In the novel, Jane meets several of individuals who threaten her autonomy but she succeeds at asserting herself and maintains her principles of justice, human dignity, and morality.

Edward Fairfax Rochester: Jane’s employer and the master of Thornfield. He is a wealthy and passionate man who loves Jane honestly. Although she is

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different from him in the sense of social class, he confesses his love to her publicly. Mr. Rochester regrets what he is done in the past; he married the insane Bertha Masson and made many girls his mistresses (JE141). Mr. Rochester is important to Jane because he provides her the unconventional love and sense of family that she never experienced before. Jane finally agrees to marry him after she gains her independence. The fire sets to the Thornfield that causes him blindness, thus Mr. Rochester become dependent on Jane and became equal as Jane seek for. Finally, they marry and become happy in their union.

**St. John Rivers:** The clergyman and Jane’s cousin. In the novel, he is described as cold, reserved, and ambitious. His ultimate goal is to serve God and Christianity in the rest of his life. St. John refuses to give in his love for Rosamond Oliver out of a warped sense of God’s duty but he ignores God’s love (JE 99). When he proposes Jane to marry and accompany him to missionary in India, she refuses him totally because she believes that marriage is based on love and passion, she may loses her rights to a life and autonomy in a unacceptable way to her (Ruggier 7). While Mr. Rochester is described in terms of fire and flames, St. John is associated with cold and ice: “his eyes were a cold, bright, blue gem” (JE 403).

### 2.4.2 Minor Characters

**Helen Burns:** Jane’s friend at Lowood School who bears the cruelty from her teacher all the time. She is very sure with thought of going to heaven; she was a Christian doctrine believer of tolerance and forgiveness. As an orphan like Jane, Helen believes that her true family is waiting for her in the kingdom of heaven (80). In Lowood, she accepts the cruel punishments especially from Mrs. Scartcherd,
however, she remains strong in her beliefs that God will reward the good and punish the evil (Harrington). On other hand, Jane is unable to have such blind faith. Later, Helen died early because of typhus fever (JE 78).

**Mrs. Sarah Reed:** The wife of Mr. Reed and Jane’s aunt. She is considered as Jane’s benefactress “they called Mrs. Reed my benefactress; if so a benefactress is a disagreeable thing” (JE 31) but Jane did not like her at all. She is described as a woman with “robust frame, square shouldered strong limbed” (34). She resents Jane’s presence in her home at Gateshead due to her jealousy of the love her husband had for Jane. When Jane was ten years old, Mrs. Reed decided to send her away to the Lowood School, and later; she tries to prevent Jane from receiving an inheritance when she hides the letters that are sent by John Eyre. Before Mrs. Reed dies, she asks the forgiveness from Jane (Ruggier 7).

**Mr. Brocklehurst:** The manager of the Lowood School. He hypocritically preaches Christian beliefs while poor living conditions for the girls. While he lives a luxurious and well fed existence, his students are starving, freezing, and even dying because of bad conditions especially in winter\(^{10}\). Later, it is discovered that Mr. Brocklehurst has been stealing school funds to fill his own pockets (JE 82). He is eventually replaced as head of the school (82).

**Bertha Mason:** Mr. Rochester’s secret and insane wife. She is a beautiful Creole woman from West Indies family (287). Bertha is married to Mr. Rochester in an effort of his father in order to consolidate the wealth of the two families. After their marriage, Rochester discovers that his wife is insane and mad woman who behaves violently and abnormally (300). Then he decided to imprison her in the attic at Thornfield under Grace Poole’s protection. Each night, she laughs and screams as a beast and occasionally wanders in the house. At the end, Bertha sets a fire to Thornfield House and jumps from window and dies (Ruggier 6).

Bessie Lee: The servant in Gateshead house. She is described as “slim young woman, with hasty temper” (JE 29). She is the only one in Gateshead who shows kindness to Jane, telling her stories and singing her songs. She visits Jane at Lowood several times after her departure Gateshead and impresses with Jane’s gentlewoman. Finally, she marries the Gateshead coachman, Robert Leaven, and has three children, one of them named her Jane (Ruggier 6).

Eliza Reed: Mrs. Reed’s daughter and Jane’s cousin. She is described by Jane as headstrong and selfish (JE 14). She hates her sister Georgiana and breaks up her engagement to Lord Edwin Vere. When she becomes as devote Christian, after her mother’s death, Eliza separates from her sister and enters a convert in France. Eventually, Eliza becomes mothers superior and leaves her money to the church (237).

Georgiana Reed: Mrs. Reed’s second daughter, Jane’s cousin, and Eliza’s sister. She is a prettier than Eliza with pink cheeks and golden curls with her spoiled and selfish character (Ruggier 6). When Jane returns Gateshead during Mrs. Reed’s illness, Georgiana and Jane become friends at the first time. She accuses her sister Eliza of broken up to marry Lord Edwin Eve but later on, she marries a wealthy man.

John Reed: Mrs. Reed’s son, Jane’s cousin and Eliza and Georgiana’s brother. He is the spoiled darling of his mother and naughty boy in Gateshead. John is disturbing and misbehaving his cousin Jane all the time, and causes her to be punished and imprisoned in the Red room when she tries to resist and defend herself. John becomes an alcoholic and gambler when he grows up, then he commits to suicide in order to escape from his massive gambling debts (JE 219).

Mrs. Fairfax: The old widow and the housekeeper at Thornfield Hill and Mr. Rochester’s relative (JE 117). She welcomes Jane upon her arrival to Thornfield. She is very kind to her but when she discovers Mrs. Rochester and Jane’s attempting to marry, she warns Jane because of their differences either in
age or in social class. Mrs. Fairfax retires after Jane’s departure from Thornfield (JE 419).

**Miss Temple:** The teacher in Lowood School. She is described as “tall, fair and shapely” (47) and being full of goodness. She is the only person kind to Jane and Helen and helps them in the school. When Jane is embarrassed in front of the students by Mr. Brocklehurst who names her liar, Miss Temple proves that she is not. She also provides a warm bed to Helen during her illness and death. Miss Temple is inspiring Jane to become kind and strong woman when she will grow up (Harrington). She leaves the school and marries. Consequently; Jane feels loneliness and decides to leave Lowood School and seek better life.

**Blanch Ingram:** The beautiful lady who hopes to marry Rochester in order to secure her position in society (JE 175). Jane is sure that Mr. Rochester prefers Blanche’s beautiful appearance to her own plainness. She believes that man should marry woman for love not for social and political position (184). Mr. Rochester is aware that Blanche is only interested in him for his money. He pretends to marry her in order to make Jane jealous. Miss Ingram is insulting Jane and all governesses that she meets in her life (Ruggier 7).

**Celine Varens:** Adele’s mother and Mr. Rochester’s French mistress. She is a dancer and opera singer who pretends love to Mr. Rochester just for his wealth. Secretly she betrays him with another man (7). When he discovers that she runs away to Italy with a musician and leaves her daughter to his care. Mr. Rochester regards Adele as a ward although she is not his own real daughter (JE 99).

**Diana Rivers:** Jane’s attractive cousin and St. John’s sister. Jane and Diana meet at first time in the Moor house. She “had a voice toned, to my ear, like a cooing of a dove, she possessed eyes whose gaze I delighted to encounter. Her whole face seemed to full of charm” (JE 337). Moreover, Diana is intelligent and has a free will (Harrington). She supports Jane to take a right decision about her

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marriage St. John. Diana helps Jane to maintain her independence and autonomy for the rest of her life as woman. At the end of the novel, Diana marries a navy officer (Ruggier 7).

Mary Rivers: Jane’s cousin, St. John and Diana’s sister. Mary is portrayals as a strong, independent, intelligent and pretty woman but her expressions are more “reserved and her manners are gentle” (JE 337). Mary is forced to work as a governess after her family’s loss of wealth. Mary is kind, compassionate and provides Jane with friendship and dialogue, particularly when Jane begins to live with them at Moor House (Harrington). And the end of the story, she marries a clergyman (JE 443).

Mr. Lloyd: The apothecary who treats Jane after her illness in the Red Room at the Gateshead house; he suggests that it would better to Jane to go school at Lowood (Ruggier 7). When Mr. Brocklehurst charges that Jane is a liar, Mr. Lloyd sends a letter to Miss Temple clarifying that she is not (JE 47).

Mr. Briggs: The solicitor from London who publicly reveals Rochester's marriage to Bertha Mason. Briggs is also instrumental in giving Jane her proper inheritance after her uncle dies (Ruggier 6).

Hannah Rivers: The elderly servant at Moor House who initially refuses to allow Jane to enter the house because she believes that Jane is a beggar (JE 501). Later on, the two eventually become good friends.

Rosamond Oliver: The daughter of Mr. Oliver. The beautiful Rosamond is the benefactress of Jane's school and she is in love with St. John. Although he secretly returns her love, St. John cannot allow himself to marry her because of their differing circumstances and his intention to go missionary. Rosamond ultimately marries the wealthy Mr. Granby (388).

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**Mr. Oliver:** Rosamond's father and the wealthiest man in Morton; he attempts to use his wealth for the benefit of the town, particularly in terms of helping St. John Rivers with his school\(^{14}\).

**John Eyre:** Jane's uncle, as well as the uncle of the Rivers siblings; John makes his fortune in wine in Madeira. He intended to adopt Jane but he is told that she is dead by Mrs. Reed. Although he dies before they ever meet, John leaves his fortune of twenty thousand pounds to Jane (JE 388).

**Miss Scatcherd:** The history and grammar teacher at Lowood. She is generally unkind to her students particularly cruel and abusive to Helen (Ruggier 7).

**Miss Miller:** One of the teachers at Lowood. Miss Miller greets Jane on her first arrival to the school (JE 42).

**Grace Poole:** Imposing woman with a taste for alcohol, she is the caregiver for Rochester’s mad wife. Jane considers her as the one who causes problems and strange laugh in the mid of nights, but she is taking care of Bertha secretly (Ruggier 6).

**Richard Mason:** Rochester’s former friend and Bertha’s brother. He is responsible for arranging Rochester’s disastrous marriage. When he visits Mr. Rochester in Thornfield, he is attacked by his insane sister Bertha. He stops the marriage just before Rochester and Jane are to be wed (JE 194).

**Robert Leaven:** The coachman at Gateshead and Bessie's husband. After John Reed's death, Robert comes to Thornfield to bring Jane back to Gateshead with him (217).

2.5 The Setting

Charlotte Brontë uses the setting in an interesting and expressive way in order to show a constant Jane’s need for change (Adetunji 2). The protagonist, Jane inhabits five different locations in the novel: Gateshead Hall, Lowood School, Thornfield Hill, Moor House and Frendean House (Martensson 3).

The first place Jane inhabits is Gateshead Hall which is the starting point of her journey. She has been there for most of her ten years as an orphan and oppressed girl (Harrington). Charlotte uses an important image which will reoccur throughout the novel: Ice and cold that represent solitude and sadness and Jane wants to get away from her lonely life at Gateshead Hall to find a warm place where she can be loved (Martensson 6). While Jane sits all alone in the next room, isolated from the company of the family, Mrs. Reed and her children are gathered around the warm fire (JE 6). Mary Burgan writes that “Jane’s position in the window seat is a deeply engrained emblem of her utter homelessness” (qtd. in Martensson 6). In Gateshead, Jane provides important and meaningful information about her situation and her feelings of solitude and unhappiness as a child. Moreover, she experiences a sense of imprisonment when she is locked in the red room as punishment for her resistance “I got up to see. Alas! Yes: no jail was ever more secure” (JE 13). So, Gateshead is a jail where Jane is abused and neglected among her relatives.

Jane is sent to the charity school at Lowood. Similar her time in Gateshead, Lowood is a place which does not offer much warmth or light. Jane’s time is associated with cold and darkness. When she describes one of the rooms at the school, she explains how many girls are gathered there but they are only provided with two candles as a source of light. After just a short time; rooms are followed
by total darkness\textsuperscript{15}. However, Jane finds people who love her and treat her with respect: Miss Temple and Helen Burns are the first persons who make her feel comfortable and important in life. At Lowood, Jane learns that knowledge is power. When she learns, she becomes a teacher with ambitious soul (Korkmaz 31). Then Jane decides to leave Lowood School and seek for a new servitude (JE 84). She becomes a governess for Adele who is Mr. Rochester’s ward in Thornfield Hill (99). Thornfield Hill is an open place where Jane feels free and at the first time; she falls in love with Mr. Rochester\textsuperscript{16}. Jane is impressed by the furniture of the rooms and the kindness of the inhabitants but there is some mystery in the house such as the laughing and screaming at the nights that create a horror atmosphere (Martensson 13). When Jane discovers that Mr. Rochester has a secret wife, she runs away to another place.

In the Moor House in the middle of the nature, Jane finds her real relatives, the Rivers who treat her as member of family. In the Moor House, the companionship of Mary and Diana is suitable to her intellect and moral improvement; she finds her independency as woman and as governess (Harrington). Moreover, she inherits the twenty thousand pounds from her uncle John Eyre (JE 388). The final location is Ferndean where Jane settles down with Mr. Rochester, and they marry and live happily ever after\textsuperscript{17}.

\section*{2.6 The Themes of Jane Eyre}

Charlotte Brontë produces her novel in order to transmit certain messages that concerned problems of society; she wants from people to be aware of their

\textsuperscript{15} Setting in Jane Eyre. Omdix. Web. 27 April 2015.
http://www.omdix.com/pdf/docs/study_study_1071117479.pdf

http://www.victorianweb.org/authors/bronte/cbronte/je1.html

\textsuperscript{17} Setting in Jane Eyre. Omdix. Web. 27 April 2015.
http://www.omdix.com/pdf/docs/study_study_1071117479.pdf
problems and find solutions. Victorian society was patriarchal; thus, people were discriminated and abused especially poor women and children. Themes in Charlotte Bronte’s Jane Eyre are related to woman’s struggling to survive and find her position in society and in family as independent creature.

2.6.1 Family and Love

In Gateshead house, the orphan little girl Jane is oppressed and dependent. She does not receive any kindness or family love from her aunt Mrs. Reed, except from the servant Bessie who treats her kindly. Jane finds love from other persons throughout the rest of the novel such as Miss Temple and Mrs. Fairfax who give her the love and guidance that she needs as little and orphan girl. Moreover, Jane finds her real biological family when she meets the Rivers. Still, she does not feel as though she has found her true family until she falls in love with Mr. Rochester at Thornfield. At the beginning, Jane does not accept Mr. Rochester’s first marriage proposal because she realizes that their marriage is based on inequality in social class and she will lost her autonomy but she accepts his second marriage proposal “I am strangely glad to get back again to you: and whenever you are is my home, my only home” (JE 240). Within her marriage to Mr. Rochester, Jane feels bringing her sense of family and love.

2.6.2 Social Position

In the novel, Brontë expresses the injustice of a rigid class structure. Jane is an orphan and poor girl within a wealthy people particularly with her relative the Reeds at Gateshead house. Her choice in life is limited and oppressed even though she is more intelligent. This becomes especially clear when she and Rochester fall in love. The beautiful Miss Ingram, with higher social position, is expected to marry Mrs. Rochester because both of them belong to the same social rank “I saw

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he was going to marry her, for family, perhaps political reasons, because her rank and connections suited him” (JE 182). However, Jane asserts that her mind is poor (282). Finally, Jane proves neither the differences in social classes nor poverty will be obstacles to marry her lover Mrs. Rochester “reader. I married him” (440). Finally, Brontë proves how personal virtues are best indicators of character than class.

2.6.3 Gender Role

Jane wants to express her needs and opinions in a society that values women who are submissive and under man control, this leads to several punishments in her early life when she resists. Her sense of independence allows her to reject school master Mr. Brocklehurst’s hypocrisy and loveless marriage to St. John Rivers (Tiainen 30). It also makes her much more attractive to Mr. Rochester who is the real love of her life. In the end, though, Jane develops a sense of strong woman (Harrington).

Brontë uses marriage in the novel to portray the struggle for power between man and woman. This exemplified with insane Bertha who symbolizes how married woman can be repressed and abused by man dominant society. Jane seeks her identity and strives for equality in her relationship “it is my spirit that addresses your spirit; just as if both had passed through the grave, and we stood at God’s feet, equal; as we are!” (JE 248).

Jane is aware of problems that associated with unequal marriage. Thus, even though she loves Mr. Rochester, she refuses to marry him until she gets her own inheritance.

2.6.4 Religion

Throughout the novel, Jane struggles with the issue of religion. Mr. Brocklehurst’s Evangelicalism is full of hypocrisy: he spouts off on the benefits of

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http://www.omdix.com/pdf/docs/study_study_1071117479.pdf
privation while he enjoys in a life of luxury and emotionally abuses the students at Lowood. Also at Lowood, Helen Burns believes in Christianity of absolute forgiveness and tolerance because she suffers from her punishments and eventually dies\(^{22}\). On the other hand, St. John practices a Christianity of ambition and love exclusion, but Jane rejects his marriage proposal because he threatens her independence\(^ {23}\).

Jane learns to adapt Helen’s forgiveness without becoming complete passive and returns to Mr. Rochester when she feels that she is ready to accept him again. The novel is religious assertion of a woman’s right to self-identity and equality. Moreover, the novel depicts a Christian feminism advocates the values of love, sexuality, and a marriage of partnership (Lamonka 246).

**Conclusion**

The great change in all domains that characterized the Victorian period has an influence and gave an inspiration to many writers as Charlotte Brontë. That is why Charlotte Brontë portrays the reality of her time and the suffering of woman specifically through her masterpiece *Jane Eyre*. The analysis of characters, setting and themes give a close reading to the novel and will help us to investigate the different thematic character that Jane experiences in different places through her maturation in the story in the next chapter.

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Chapter Three:
Investigating the Thematic Major Character in Charlotte Bronte’s Jane Eyre
Chapter Three
Investigating the Thematic Major Character in Charlotte Brontë’s Jane Eyre

Introduction

We have earlier presented some information about theories of character and characterization in the first chapter, and a historical and literary background of the novel, *Jane Eyre*, in the second chapter. In the third chapter, we will focus on how Charlotte Brontë’s heroine Jane becomes unlike and unconventional heroine in the conservative Victorian society. This analysis relies on James Phelan’s theoretical model of ‘thematic character’. *Jane Eyre* is a Victorian novel that tackles a woman’s quest and struggle for self-respect, autonomy and independence, liberty and equality. These thematic characters play an important part in the maturation process and the development of the heroine Jane in different locations gradually.

3.1 Jane’s Sense of Autonomy and Independence

James Phelan’s theory discusses the character’s embodiment of such idea, concept or any principle in order to give a meaning to literary text, as he calls it ‘thematic character’, thus in the novel; Jane’s independence and the sense of autonomy begin in Gateshead House. When she lost her parents, Jane was child and adopted by her uncle, unfortunately, few years he died (JE 13). Jane states her independence from the beginning; she does not give up when her autonomy is threatened. Instead, Jane fights back to reclaim her independence. However, at that time Victorian women were forced to rely on their male husbands or fathers or relatives in order to keep survive because all women were subordinate to men and their destiny was marriage (Korkmaz 32). If not, single women found works as governess, or servant, or a companion to a wealthy widow (Nao 5). If they could get neither job nor marriage, they obliged to be dependent on the mercy relatives to feed, and clothe, and shelter them (24).

Jane lives in Gateshead for ten years; her life there is miserable and harsh especially after her uncle death. The readers get sense of solitude, sadness and pity:
she spends her full time sitting in the window-seat, describing the rough weather outside, this reflects Jane’s bad and sad inner situation in this home: “dread fault one was the coming home in the raw twilight, with nipped fingers and toes, and heart saddened by the chidings of Bessie” (JE3). Jane shows how awful to be alone and half-naked as tramp in the dark day, although she is living in big house but she never feels that it is a warm house with a lack of familial love. In this sense, Mary Burgan states that Jane’s position in the window-seat is deeply engrained emblem of her homelessness (Martensson 4).

Her aunt Mrs. Sarah Reed and her children regard Jane as inferior to them and neglect her. They gather around the fireside in the drawing-room, whereas; she is alone and is seen as friendless and status-less orphan (Harrington).

I was a discord in Gateshead Hall: I was like nobody there; I had nothing in a harmony with Mrs. Reed or her children, or her chosen vassalage. If they did not love me, in fact, as little did I love them. They were not a bound to regard with affection thing that couldn’t sympathise with one amongst them; heterogeneous thing, opposed to them in temperament in capacity in propensities; useless thing, incapable of serving their interest, or adding to their pleasure; noxious, cherishing the germs of indignation at their treatmnt, contempt of their judgment (JE 14).

Aunt Reed always treats Jane as inferior to a maid especially when one day, little Jane quarrels with her cousin John who beats her. Mrs. Reed orders her servants to lock Jane in the red-room as a punishment, but Jane resists against the persecution and discrimination (Nao 4). Jane defends herself that she is not deceitful, and she does hate Aunt Reed more than anybody in the world, and she is not liar as she claims but her Georgiana who tells lies (JE 36). According to this extract, Jane could dare to face her aunt strongly and angrily. She defends herself although she is a child of ten years old, and this indicates Jane’s autonomy and her desire to be independent and to draw her way in the world alone and free (peck and Coyle 175).
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Jane is locked in the red room as a punishment (JE 15) without companionship or nourishment. She is ill and afraid because she remembers her uncle Reed in the church vault and fears that his spirit might arise before her at any moment. She observes sudden light gleaming in walls hears the sound of rushing wings and screams out of terror. Moreover, she imagines ghosts and beasts (JE 16). The apothecary of the family Mr. Llyod visits Jane in order to see her condition; she declares that the incident gave her nerves and shock (Ruggier 8). After talking to Jane about her life in Gateshead, Mr.Llyod suggests to Mrs. Reed that Jane must go school (JE 23), and then Jane is sent to Lowood boarding school where she learns a lot to become strong and independent. She becomes aware of fact that she will never submit and should rebel against the difficulties in the vast world (Gao 5). Jane has now to accept the reality to face the false truth of her aunt’s hypocritical manner and has to enter the new life, new beginning and new people (Elviandri 25).

Mrs. Reed tells Mr. Brocklehurst about Jane’s violent behaviors, most of these telling are untrue and exaggerated but Jane gathers her engines and launched them in Mrs. Reed’s face (JE 35). Even she threatens her that she will tell everybody in the school about her cruelty and this is the truth (JE 36) at the end “I was left there alone winner of the field” (JE 36) states Jane. It is the first time she has won a battle with her aunt and it gives her a courage and hope. Her autonomy begins at this moment and her sense of independence will arise as a strong woman in the rest of the story.

Lowood School is a bleak and institution-like where girls dressed in the same plain clothes and the same haircut. The food is of poor quality and there is no much of it, but it is an overall improvement on Gateshead house (JE 45). The time of Jane in Lowood is associated with dark, cold weather and place because it is

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founded to harden the girls and to teach them lessons about the struggle in life (Martensson 7). In Gateshead, Jane was denied and isolated, but at the first time is welcomed and befriended by Miss Temple and Helen Burns in Lowood School. Miss Temple teaches Jane how to reverence her personal worth, meanwhile; Helen inspires her how important is to have a pure soul (Harrington). Lowood is where Jane gets protection and formal education that help her to be independent woman (Elviandri 26).

Ten years left in Lowood School, Jane desires for a new servitude (JE 84), and seek for another job in another place, in another house, amongst new faces, under new circumstances (85). She advertises in the Shire Herald, and this is very brave for a Victorian woman to advertise in newspaper since women were not supposed to provide themselves\(^2\). Here, Jane shows her full independence as woman instead of relying on man. Then she receives the answer to work as governess in Thornfield Hall (JE 87). During her first days in Thornfield Hall, Jane meets her employer Mrs. Rochester with a “stern features and heavy brow” slipped with his horse on “the sheet of ice with glazed the causeway” (JE 111). She offers to help him and she insists to help him, this demonstrates her independence that interest Rochester in Jane though both meet as strangers (Hofstede 7). Moreover; Jane affirms that she is not afraid of being out late when it is moonlight.

The third floor of the house where Mr. Rochester keeps his wife Bertha imprisoned, is the part of the mansion which gives Thornfield Hall a gothic and mysterious atmosphere (8). The third floor is described as “a home of the past: shrine of memory” (JE104), where Mr. Rochester tries to suppress his memory of the past (Martensson 9). Thornfield is a place where Jane resists the temptation to


http://www.victorianweb.org/authors/bronte/cbronte/je1.html.
let the thorny cares of this world, in the form of Mr. Rochester and to protect her faith (Harrington).

Her autonomy reveals attraction to Mr. Rochester, while her social consciousness dictates the relationship to be impossible. Jane is not alone in this situation; Mrs. Fairfax expresses her concern when she states that gentlemen in this station are not accustomed to marry their governesses (JE 261). The Victorian social classes, upper, middle, and working class, are all turns to these stations, and aims to stay in their positions. Although Jane claims autonomy, she still struggles to stay within her social confinement (Jones 35-36). However, Mr. Rochester indeed falls in love with Jane and he wants to posses her as his own. He plans to pour the heirloom jewels into her lap as well as to attire his Jane in satin and lace, and force the world to acknowledge that Jane’s beauty (JE 255). Mr. Rochester desires to change her, but Jane persists and this would make her abnormal to her nature.

Rochester and Jane’s relation grows up; he calls her all the time an angel and his comforter (JE 247). He promises her to take her around Europe though her answer is sharp and very unconventionally “I am not angel, and I will not be one till I die: I will be myself” (JE 247). Following Phelan’s theory, this statement indicates a strong sense of Jane’s autonomy and independency though she is a woman and governess in Thornfield, she refuse to be the domestic angel that Mr. Rochester accustoms to deal with others women in his life (Xiaojie 7). Mr. Rochester has a secret wife who marries her for a status, sex, and for money: this shows his inferiority more than superiority as a master, he confesses that he has no respect for himself (JE 300). This reminds the readers of Jane’s assertion of her own superiority, when she claims that she scorn such union based on loveless as Mr. Rochester and Blanche Ingram’s one, so she is better than him because of her sense of autonomy and independence (Gilbert 793).
During preparation for her wedding, Jane decides to write to her uncle John Eyre who wishes to adopt her and make her heiress. Although she loves Mr. Rochester, she rebels against the change and dependence on him. She wants to escape by claiming the inheritance that would establish her autonomy through economic means: thus Jane could control her own life rather than rely on her master (Jones 37). Her independence is valued through taking care of herself without having depended on men (Larsson 19). She has the courage to stand up and speak out even in the times when she inferior to other persons (Larsson 19).

When Jane discovers that Mr. Rochester has a wife, Bertha Masson, he asks her to run away together and becomes his mistress, and she refuses totally this idea.

Jane falls in deep thinking what she have to do and the only solution she has found is to leave Thornfield quickly, decidedly, and entirely (JE 292). She imagines that someone would help her but she resumes that only herself should tear away and no one else (JE 292). Her autonomy pushes her to leave Thornfield and Mr. Rochester’s forbidden marriage and love with respecting her morals and principles. She proves her independence, when she leaves Thornfield alone with no money and no clothes.

For the sake of her conscience and independency, Jane leaves Mr. Rochester and Thornfield Hall (JE 314). On her way through the moors; she loses her only possessions and obliged to live as beggar for a while, lost and heartbroken, and in the edge of starvation and poverty. However, Jane has maintained her endurance “life, however, was yet in my possession, with all its requirement, and pains, and responsibilities. The burden must be carries; they want provided for; the suffering endured; the responsibility fulfilled: I set out” (JE 318). With no money, Jane is forced to beg and search for job to rely on herself and even she sells some of her clothes to survive (JE 334). She has a will to live and be independent in front of difficulties. After spending a night in the woods, Jane follows a road that leads to
the house of Mary, Diana and St. John Rivers (JE 327). She introduces herself as ‘Elliot’. St. John tells Jane that he will try to find her a job soon.

In the Moor House, Jane admires the old fashioned parlour and fine and well furnished rooms, though the family has no much money but she likes the house and his inhabitants. The beautiful sisters Diana and Mary provide Jane with friendship, community and knowledge (Harrington). They gather each evening and learn German language, drawing, and read books; they share the same ideas and entertainment (JE 344).

Jane gathers and gains growth for her educational identity through Helen, Miss Temple, Diana, and Mary: she is eager to learn more to become autonomous and hard-working member of society (Tiainen 42). She becomes a teacher of charity school in Morton which gives her a professional self-independence and self-confidence (Tiainen 42) despite her detachment from fixed social ties (Adetunji 4). Rigney states that Charlotte Brontë’s ideal heroine could survive and secure “through a strong feminist consciousness and the affirmation of such independent values as chastity and independence” (Korkmaz 32).

After receiving the fortune from her uncle John Eyre, Jane is fully independent (Jones 38), Then she decides to return to Mr. Rochester of her own accord (Jones 39). She finds Thornfield in ruins and Mr. Rochester has lost his eye and hand while attempting to rescue Bertha in the fire (JE 419) he is now dependent on his servants to help him find his way round the house and Jane becomes his right hand and his sight (JE 442), she no longer calls him Master; instead, she calls him ‘My Edward’ to show that the he belongs to her (JE 455).

3.2 Jane’s Sense of Equality

“women in Jane Eyre‘s world acting as agents for men, maybe the keepers of other woman but both keepers and prisoners are bound by the same chain” (Gilbert

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789) claims the critic and feminist writer Sandra Gilbert who considers Jane Eyre as an ideal and strong woman in abusive and man-dominated Victorian society. Jane’s first meeting with Mr. Rochester is like a fairy-tale meeting: Jane describes the horse as “a great lion-like” called “Gytrash” gliding through the shadow and followed by “tall steed, and on its back a rider”, these pictures give to the readers an image of a fairy prince whose first action is to fall down with his horse (JE 112). Jane offers a help to him, he leans on her shoulder and admits that necessity compels him to make her useful (JE 113). Thus, Jane and Mr. Rochester begin their relationship as master and servant, prince and Cinderella; in another way, they begin as spiritual equals (Gilbert 790). Relying on Phelan’s argument about thematic character, Jane works in Thornfield as Adele’s governess; but she realises her famous saying about the equality between men and women:

> Women are supposed to be very calm generally; but a woman feels as a man feel; they need exercise for their faculties, and a field for their efforts, as much as their brothers do; they suffer from a rigid restraint, too absolute stagnation, precisely as a man would suffer; it is a narrow-minded in their more privileged fellow-creatures to say that they ought to confine themselves making pudding knitting to playing on the piano and embroidering bags. It is thoughtless to condemn them, laugh at them, if they seek to do more or learn more than custom has pronounced necessary for their sex (JE 108).

The idea of women as being equal to men and women’s needs being the same as men’s are undoubtedly unacceptable to Victorian society, no wonder she says after that anybody would blame her of saying that. Through Jane, Charlotte rejects traditional views of class distinction and also denigrates society’s attempt to restrict woman’s activities (Tirtana 37). Charlotte wants to say that women need active pursuits and to have career, education, and some activities to increase their creativity as men do (Tirtana 37). Although she describes herself as poor, obscure, plain and little, indigent and insignificant Plebeian, she seems to be aware that these only external qualities derived from social conventions, otherwise she tells
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Mr. Rochester that she is full of heart and soul, and her spirit or mental qualities stand equal to those of any upper gentry (Tiainen 34).

Jane seeks her identity and strives for equality in her relationship with Mr. Rochester: “I am not talking to you now through the medium of custom, conventionalities, nor even of mortal flesh;—it is my spirit that addresses your spirit; just as if both had passed through the grave, and we stood at God’s feet, equal,—as we are!” (JE 248). Even in religious belief, Jane believes that men and women are equal in front of God because they both will be addressed as spirits not as physical corpses and regardless of their customs and conventionalities in their society.

Mr. Rochester asks Jane to live with him and to be his mistress, but Jane rejects to enter into a union that would not be based on equality. Moreover, to be Mr. Rochester’s mistress, it would be a kind of slavery or dependency for Jane (Tiainen 36). Even before the secret of Bertha is revealed, Jane is uncertain and hesitant about her wedding and marriage to him because she is conscious of the class differences between them and her economic inferiority to his own (Tiainen 36). She is aware of the problems that associated with unequal marriage; thus, even she loves Mr. Rochester, she refuses to marry him until she gets her inheritance from her uncle John Eyre.

Jane can’t reach equality in her relationship with St. John Rivers; she rejects him when he proposes her to join him in India as his missionary partner: she will not sacrifice herself to serve a man the sole incentive of moral duty (Adetunji 3). She desires not only emotional equality; she wants complete equality between men and women (Larsson 16). Jane ultimately inherits a large amount of money from her wealthy uncle who elevates her to a status and enables her to forgo the society around her and enter into a marriage of equality with Mr. Rochester. Their

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http://www.omdix.com/pdf/docs/study_study_1071117479.pdf  
5 http://vmek.oszk.hu/05600/05680/05680.pdf
marriage now is based on equality and autonomy. The equality that exists between Jane and Mr. Rochester begins already at Thornfield but deepens at Ferndean. At Thornfield, Mr. Rochester tells to Jane that “my bride is here, because my equal is here, and my likeness” (JE 244). At Thornfield they are equal mentally and spiritually; however, at Ferndean, they are also socially equal (Tiainen 47).

3.3 Jane’s Sense of Self-Respect

Jane Eyre is an orphan and ill treated little girl who learns how to live from her childhood’s environment in order to shape her growing strong and experienced personality (Schacht 425). She has a special image out of ordinary: she makes a life by herself, and dares to show her own voice under the pressure of life, she always maintains her self-respect by hard work, intelligence and tough individualism (Beaty 165). She never gives in on her way, though she has little figure but with a huge soul.

Mr. Rochester proposes to Jane to marry him and become his second half; he decides to dress her with an expensive jewels and dresses “I’ll myself put the diamond chain round your neck, and the circlet on your forehead, which it will become: for nature, at least, has stamped her patent of nobility on this brow, Jane, and I will clasp the bracelets on these fine wrists, and load these fairy-like fingers with rings” (JE 255). However, Jane rejects his offer and changes the subject because she is aware of her position as governess not as a rich young lady that dressed with jewels and satin. “Don’t address me as if I were a beauty; I am your plain, Quakerish governess” (JE 255) replies Jane to Mr. Rochester. In this sense, Jane feels a sort of self-respect and she will not exceed her limits of social norms, though she is asked by the rich man Mr. Rochester to marry her.

Jane hesitates to leave her lover Mr. Rochester for a while claiming that he loves her and he will never forget her. His first marriage is just a fault in his past and he cannot bear a mad woman for his rest of life (JE 300). Consequently, he
asks her to be his mistress and go abroad and live together away from their acquaintances (JE 306). After a long inner struggle, Jane resumes that she cares for herself and the more solitary, the more friendless, the more unsustained she is, the more she will respect herself (JE 310-311). Basically, Jane holds in God’s laws and principles that protect her body and her soul as well against any danger. For this reason, her self-respect is strong (Tiainen 42). Although physically she feels powerless; however, mentally she still possesses her soul and with it certainty of ultimate safety (JE 311).

3.4 Jane’s Sense of Liberty

“There is no possibility of taking a walk that day” (JE 6). We realize in this sentence of the first chapter that Jane Eyre wanders in her mind and desires to seek liberty in her real life. Jane’s isolation from family Reed’s ties gives her freedom to shape her own destiny: her relationship with them is hostile and because of her childhood dependence on the Reeds for food and shelter, consequently, Jane disowns them and resolves to start a life relying on her abilities (Adetunji 4). In the early passages, we see the little Jane dreaming to travel faraway lands, she dreams of,

Of the bleak shores of Lapland, Siberia, Spitsbergen, nova Zembla, Iceland, Greenland, with the vast sweep of the Arctic Zone, and those forlorn regions of dreary space that reservoir of frost and snow where firm fields of ice, the accumulation of centuries of winters, glazed alpine heights above heights, a surround the pole, and concentrate the multiplied rigours of extreme cold (JE 7).

Her imagination is inspired after reading her favorite book *Gulliver’s Travel*. Moreover, Jane wishes a liberty that takes her away from the Reeds and finds a fine house in the little fields and trees of Lilliput (20). Q. D. Leavis states that *Gulliver’s Travel* shows her that there are other kinds of places in the world, and really Jane wants to escape, change her situation, and see other places far from her cruel relatives (Shirai 110).
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Her sense of liberty increases after Miss Temple’s departure from Lowood institution, she looks at the window in the long white road then she says “I desired liberty, for liberty I gasped for liberty, I uttered a prayer for change, stimulus” (JE 84). Jane utters the word liberty three times; that affirms her need for liberty, and to change in her life better than now. Moreover, Jane believes in actions and movement everywhere to show her ability as strong, independent, and free woman. When she states that she has restless in her nature that may cause her pain, her relief is to walk along forward and backward. Then she continues to assume that a good attitude of human being is change and a journey through liberty (Shirai 111).

In Thornfield Hall, Mr. Rochester succeeds to make Jane jealous, after pretends that he will marry the beautiful Blanche Ingram. Jane decides to leave him and she is free and can go anywhere she wants “I am no bird; and no net ensnares me; I am a free human being with independent will, which I now exert to leave you” (JE 249). Jane asserts her liberty with no specific place and address, she is an independent woman and he cannot imprison her as little bird in the net (Lamonka 84).

Conclusion

To conclude, this chapter has tried to answer the questions already raised. Charlotte Brontë’s Jane Eyre depicts woman’s position in the Victorian society, struggling to achieve autonomy and independence, self-respect, equality and liberty in a society known by its oppression and imbalance between social classes and sex. Jane experiences these thematic characters in several places where she could establish her fine and strong personality in different circumstances.

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General Conclusion
The Victorian age is marked by an important transformation at all levels that have affected in English society. The latter saw many circumstances as a result of a phenomenon called the Industrial Revolution, and eventually, it is one of the principal changes in many aspects of social life. Moreover, Victorian society was conservative and patriarchal and abusive and dealt with women as inferior to men.

In *Jane Eyre*, Charlotte Brontë reflects the beginning of modernism in the Victorian society through her unconventional and unlike portrayal of an independently thinking heroine who resists the Victorian women’s traditional role. Therefore, Charlotte Brontë adopted a gender-neutral pseudonym which gave her a freedom to express her views.

The primary aim of the work was to investigate several thematic characters that Jane Eyre pursues for in her life from her childhood in Gateshead and Lowood School to her adulthood in Thornfield Hall, Marsh Land, and Ferndean House. This strong and brave woman could speak out her feelings and emotions freely regardless of her age, gender, social status and circumstances in harsh and cruel society. Thus, Jane is regarded as unlikely and unconventionally Victorian heroine in the Victorian society. Our analysis relied on James Phelan’s theoretical model of literary character, he distinguishes three models: the mimetic, synthetic, and thematic. The mimetic character is when character is portrayed as real and possible person; that is to say he is human being-like in real life. The synthetic character refers to how character is artificial; it stresses that character is a literary construct. Finally, the thematic character refers to how a character can be used to embody a certain idea, themes, a group or class within the semantic structure of the literary work. The latter is our concern; that is to say that Jane could depict and represent some sort of thematic characters which make her independent and unlike woman, she struggles and quests for independence and autonomy, equality, self-respect,
and liberty within the novel. And indeed, Jane succeeds to achieve her goals and dreams.

Lawrence and E. M. Hanson praise the character of Jane as real and distinctive little girl with her sharp and rapid change of mood (Ruth 2). Some critics praise the British novelist Charlotte Brontë’s ability to create mood, strong emotions and feelings and vivid characters especially the protagonist Jane Eyre. They think that Charlotte Brontë insists on the equality between men and women, and in the fact that love combines between emotional and spiritual equality, not equality in a legal, political or social sense but the recognition that the same heart and the same spirit animate both men and women (Ruth 2-3).

Jane Eyre seeks her independence and autonomy, equality, self-respect and liberty through different locations where she gets her full experience and identity. One can conclude that, Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre* is as subtle protest against the traditional Victorian women who were portrayed as poor, dependent, abused and miserable.
Works Cited List


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Abstract

The present study is an attempt to deal with the unlikely Victorian Heroine in Charlotte Bronte’s *Jane Eyre*. It comes to show modern view of free and independent woman in the British society. The study’s goal is also to shed light on the importance and the independency of characters as the main element of literary work. James Phelan is one of the theorists who contribute to theoretical model of character; he divides the ‘character’ into three components: mimetic, synthetic and thematic. The latter helps to identify those characters embody themes and ideas which reflect the role of ‘characters’ in literary texts. This dissertation is divided into three chapters: the first chapter introduces some contradictory theories about ‘character’ in literary texts; some of them have seen characters with no role; and some others have seen them with great significance. The second chapter presents an overview about literary style of Charlotte Bronte in *Jane Eyre*. The third chapter is the analysis of the novel; it based on the Phelan’s theory of thematic character in order to show how Jane Eyre seeks to become an independent and autonomous Victorian woman.

Key words: character, woman, Victorian, thematic character, heroine.