

A Bakhtinian Perspective on the Nineteenth Century Chronotope: Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* as a Chronotopic Counterpart for Gustave Flaubert's *Madame Bovary*

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Abstract—This paper revisits *Jane Eyre* and *Madame Bovary* in the light of Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of literary chronotope, highlighting the importance of time and space; it aims to suggest that despite living in different times and spaces, both protagonists eventually approximate similar catastrophic ends as manifest in Emma's literal and Jane's symbolic deaths. Jane seems to be a historical counterpart for the French Madame Bovary – as both women seem to share a highly romanticized view of the world, unconsciously craving prosperity, passion, and high society. On the other hand, however, both women are oddities in their respective historical contexts, struggling for an idealized life beyond the norms of the nineteenth-century society. This paper suggests that despite living in different times and spaces, both character dynamics tend to eventually approximate similar catastrophic endpoints.

Index Terms—*Jane Eyre*, *Madame Bovary*, Mikhail Bakhtin, Chronotope (Time-Space), narrative, characterization, setting

I. INTRODUCTION

A classic romance featuring the characteristic happy ending of the romance genre, *Jane Eyre* is often remembered for the way things turn out for its Madonna-figure protagonist. This paper aims to depict how Bakhtin's theory of the literary chronotope explains the importance of time and space in the narratives, characterizations, and settings in *Jane Eyre* and *Madame Bovary*, and how the similar functions of the two seemingly different chronotopes can lead these two figures to their grievous destinies. Hence Jane may inevitably encounter the challenges Emma could not resolve: time and space – and all the alternative chances they provide for the protagonists – may bring Jane the same disastrous fate and the unhappy post-marriage life which Emma Bovary suffered and could only resolve by terminating her life. If we are to let the novel *Jane Eyre* continue itself in the chronotope matrix, we may decide that as a determined but stubborn woman, Jane may eventually be deeply dissatisfied with the kind of living she once regarded as idyllic. Jane tends to turn a blind eye to the fact that her ambitions are not *really* fulfilled as she had originally anticipated. Unlike Madame Bovary, Jane makes every attempt to adjust herself to the codes of Victorian society, but a chronotopic vista to her life reveals that this cannot be a romance at all. In effect, neither woman can ever evade the dominant hegemony of time-space.

II. THE LITERARY CHRONOTOPE

Mikhail Bakhtin, a philosopher of language and a student of German phenomenology, adjusted various twentieth-century ideas to his own purpose, although he seldom applied these ideas in any depth to works of literature. Some of his major ideas such as dialogue, carnival, and his version of the time-space matrix (or the chronotope), have become classic tools in literary criticism. The term chronotope derives from a 1925 lecture given by the physiologist Aleksei Ukhtomskii attended also by Bakhtin, yet the specific usage of the concept was to a large extent based on Cassirer's analysis of space and time intuitions as represented in language and myth. Bakhtin argues that the term chronotope (space-time), which was introduced as part of Einstein's Theory of Relativity, is borrowed for literary criticism “almost as a metaphor” (Morris, 2003, p. 184) to express the inseparability of space and time. In *The Dialogic Imagination*, Bakhtin defines the literary Chronotope as follows:

In the literary artistic chronotope, spatial and temporal indicators are fused into one carefully thought-out, concrete whole. Time, as it were, thickens, takes on flesh, becomes artistically visible; likewise, space becomes charged and responsive to the movements of time, plot and history. This intersection of axes and fusion of indicators characterizes the artistic chronotope. (Bakhtin, 1981, p. 84)

This paper aims to suggest that time and space are key concepts (as well as major forces) in the development and formation of the identity of the two protagonists of *Jane Eyre* and *Madame Bovary*. On the other hand, neither character can help but surrender to the dominance of their corresponding chronotopes. While the notions of love, marriage, social connections, individuals' integrity, choice and loss may change a character, occurring within the boundaries of a certain time and space (Bakhtin's chronotope) also shapes a character's destiny. In this sense, a synthesis of the 'artistically visible' time and space may result in a fresh perspective to the destiny of Charlotte Brontë's best loved heroine.

III. NARRATIVE

Narrative is defined as a series of occurrences or events told in a specific order. In a narrative, not only the sequence of events matters, but also – ideally – events are of a cause-and-effect nature. According to Bennett & Royle, narrative is "a series of events [told] in a specific order – with a beginning, a middle and an end" (Bennette and Royle, 1999, p.55). In addition to this linearity, the relation between the teller and the listener/reader is of considerable importance. In effect, the notion of the sequence of events is as important as our understanding of the concept of the narrative as "someone [...] telling someone else that something has happened" (Barbara Herrnstein Smith, qtd. in Bennette and Royle, 1999, p.55).

David Herman believes that "narrative is a basic human strategy for coming to terms with time, process, and change" (Herman, 2007, p. 28). Teresa Bridgeman argues that narratives "unfold in time, and the past, present, and future of a given event or action affect our interpretation of that action" (Bridgeman, 2007, p. 52). She also maintains that,

The point in the story at which a narrative begins and ends can have a considerable effect on the reader [...] Beginnings are where we first encounter the narrative world and establish its key characteristics. And endings are where we move towards our final interpretation of the narrative. (Bridgeman, 2007, p. 57)

Beginning is where the reader/listener encounters the narrative territory for the first time to establish its main characteristics, whereas ending is where the reader/listener is able to move towards the ultimate interpretation of the narrative. In spite of their essentiality to our understanding of narratives, temporal and spatial relationships are more than background elements in a narrative; they are indispensable to its structure, affecting our critical appreciation of a narrative and strongly influence the way in which we construct mental images of what we read. To fill the gaps of what happens in the story world, the evaluative and emotional coloring of the facts must be taken into account. As Abbott suggests,

This is because the narration is inflected everywhere by our sense of who is narrating. We offset for perceived biases – self-interest, love, hatred, envy, fondness, immaturity, personal agenda – that may affect the reliability of the narration, not so often regarding the facts, which we usually (though not invariably) accept, but frequently regarding the emotional and evaluative coloring of those facts (Abbott, 2007: p. 45).

To Bakhtin, the significance of all the chronotopes lies in their meanings for the narratives. In fact, chronotopes are the unifying centers for the essential narrative events of a novel. The chronotope is the point in which the knots of narrative are tied. Bringing together elements of time and space, the chronotope emerges as an axis for concretizing representation – a force which gives body to the entire novel.

Realist narratives characteristically follow a clear-cut storyline, which keeps out too many complications and while containing all the necessary information, tries to avoid narrative deception or suspense. Similarly, plots of nineteenth-century novels seem to be rather static and mostly lacking unexpected or spectacular turns. These narratives also involve various distortions of the linear time-sequence including: anachronisms, prolepses, the slowing down and speeding up of events.

In the first chapter of the realistic novel *Madame Bovary*, there is a first person narrator, who is almost entirely overshadowed throughout the rest of the book by a third person omniscient narrator. The narrator of *Madame Bovary* is a provincial chronicler of provincial life; he does not let the reader fully sympathize with Emma, who has been detached from the narrator himself and the reader. On the other hand, *Madame Bovary* opens with a scene of schoolroom ridicule, not in Emma's life, but in that of her husband, Charles. It ends, not with her death, nor even with that of Charles, but with the award to the local pharmacist, Homais. Such a beginning and ending to the novel could initially encourage the reader to start sideline Emma as the eponymous main protagonist. Comparatively, the retrospective first-person narration in *Jane Eyre*, whose narrator is a mistreated orphan, stimulates the readers' sympathy from the very beginning. Like Emma, Jane is excluded as her story opens with the child being mistreated at Gateshead, although she is adversely at the center of attention. Moreover, the novel's vague ending is more than a compromise as it is idealistic, fanciful, and left to the reader's imagination.

Temporal patterns in the nineteenth-century novels move towards a defined and anticipated ending, but the three main areas of "order", "duration," and "frequency" generate the gaps between story time and discourse time that leads the reader toward "suspense", "curiosity", and "surprise" in order to define narrativity. Along with various dimensions of narrative worlds, we can "conceive of plot as a metaphorical network of paths, which either converge or diverge, of goals which are either reached or blocked. "We can conceive of plot as a metaphorical network of paths, which either converge or diverge, of goals which are either reached or blocked. More literally, our image of a work can involve the paths of the protagonists around their world, bringing together time and space to shape a plot" (Herman, 2007, p. 55). In this sense, Flaubert's *Madame Bovary* presents a fairly straightforward chronological sequence of events in a disastrous

marriage. The point is that Emma's story does follow a path, but it is hardly the path of a pilgrim to salvation, as it concludes with Emma's suicide. Moreover, Emma feels trapped because the farthest she can escape from Yonville is to the county town of Rouen while she dreams of Paris, Switzerland, and Italy. Furthermore, Flaubert makes two major exceptions to this linear construction: first, he frames Emma's story with accounts of Charles's childhood and of his decline, and second, he interrupts his story often but briefly to report his characters' fragmentary memories, daydreams, and schemes.

Flaubert divided his text into three parts containing nine, fifteen, and ten chapters, respectively. This lack of symmetry among these numbers shows that even the beginning and ending of the protagonist's life is turned over by the second part being introduced to the reader. That is the part focusing on Emma's post-marriage life. In other words, given the outcome, suicide, Flaubert's three parts implicitly correlate adultery with a fall, but through a narrative structure that highly depends on the interplay between progress and delay. At each step within the plot, Emma succeeds, fails, or returns to some starting point, enlightened by experience; each time, however, she succeeds only in doing something self-destructive.

Similarly, while *Jane Eyre* has a linear plot on the surface, Brontë's radical use of a first-person, retrospective narrator in the novel undermines the idea of linearity of the narrative, opposing her progressive spiritual journey from location to location. Accordingly, the motif of feminine enclosure – the irresolvable feminine problem of exclusion – is established by a series of disturbing returns. Moreover, since the story is narrated through the adult Jane, the heroine's lack of fair-mindedness overshadows almost all the values through the book which tempts the reader to stop trusting her decisions.

Jane's story consists of 38 chapters including five locations as separated episodes, rather than being connected with evident progress or change. The plot of *Jane Eyre* is also replete with returns that symbolically reveal the drama of "enclosure and escape" which is an accurate description of Jane's jerky progress. "Her movement through the novel," as Annette Federico interprets, "can best be seen as a seesaw rather than a linear progression towards maturity through her shifts in time and space and the original scene in the red room and its strange repetitions throughout Jane's story" (Federico, 2009, p.109). The ending of Jane's story is more than a compromise, for it is "utopian, unworldly, and shaded in ambiguity" (ibid.).

IV. CHARACTERIZATION

In *Speech Genres and Other Late Essays* Bakhtin classifies the novel genre based on "how the image of the main hero is constructed" (Bakhtin, 1986, p.10). The chronotope as a formally constitutive category determines that the man's image is constantly and inherently chronotopic. As Bakhtin formulates, "all subcategories of the biographical construction typically have a number of extremely important features, including the most primitive type, which is constructed as an enumeration of successes and failures in life" (Bakhtin, 1986, p.17). In the same book, defining five types for the novel of emergence, Bakhtin argues that,

The fifth and last type of novel of emergence is the most significant one. In it man's individual emergence is inseparably linked to historical emergence. Man's emergence is accomplished in real historical time, with all of its necessity, its fullness, its future, and its profoundly chronotopic nature. [...] Understandably, in such a novel of emergence, problems of relative and man's potential, problems of freedom and necessity, and the problem of creative initiative rise to their full height. The image of the emerging man begins to surmount its private nature (within certain limits, of course) and enters into a completely new, spatial sphere of historical existence. Such is the last, realistic type of novel of emergence (Bakhtin, 1986, pp. 22 & 24).

Both Jane and Emma are novices in a changing society whose cultural basics are still predominant. Both characters challenge the restrictive boundaries, but little achievement is obtained. The characters change, but it is not a progressive one. Their resignation may occur in either a deep sense of frustration or an ultimate surrendering to a monotonous domestic life. On the other hand, in maintaining close interaction with the fictional world, the protagonists gradually undergo a genuine evolution, but their changes are not simply the revelation of qualities given from the start; the key plot events, including the choices characters make, irreversibly leave their marks on their gradual evolution; little by little, every single event changes, reshapes, and remakes them. Nevertheless, protagonists preserve a certain capacity to surprise, which ensures change and thus evolution of the fictional world at hand.

A. *Madame Bovary*

The first sign of Emma's presence is shaded by the details indicating the wealth of a Normandy farmer but the reader may also get the impression that this is the setting for a fairy tale. Emma's unusual elegance establishes this country girl as the ultimate narcissist who cannot help but compulsively believe in the fantastic worlds as portrayed in novels; nevertheless, the problem is that the world in which Emma lives and the one she dreams about in her imagination hardly match. Emma has an unrealistic and radically romantic conception of life, love, and marriage. The radical difference between the worlds she sees through her rose-colored glasses and the actual one she lives in makes her increasingly more of a cynical person, though not necessarily wiser in the course of time.

Emma's 'space' consists of her readings and the consequent dreams that they bring about. When Emma experiences the real luxury at La Vaubyessard on their invitation to the annual ball of the Marquis, she is convinced that a world like

the one she read about in novels really exists. As a result, she is disturbed by the consistency of the married life. But as it later turns out, she could never have been happy, regardless of whom she was married to, or where she lived. Obsessed and failed by society, she compensates herself for the sacrifice with her first purchases. This is followed by an attempt to enjoy the life as she becomes an enthusiastic mistress first to Rodolphe and then to L'ón. But extramarital affairs are never eternal since passion will ultimately fade with time. Love and marriage will not guarantee the possession of a lasting 'difference' that Emma was after all her life, but they are only a continuous return of the same. In other words, Emma remains a pure, absolute figure of desire whose persistent aspirations afflict her to such an extent that she is kept in a permanent state of dissatisfaction. At this point, the writer seems to mock his main female character. In order to illustrate the invisible path to failure, Flaubert conveys something of the feminine approach to everyday life, by creating an enormous gap between the traditional living with its everyday life, average people and routinized behaviors on the one hand, and the heroine's remarkable personality and mindset on the other.

Emma's perceptions are also distorted. Thus the analysis of the variation of the perception of time and space by Emma is possible according to her mental state concerned with two kinds of duration in the novel. First is the duration of Emma's secluded boredom when time slows down and space shrinks repeatedly through the novel. Second is the duration of the perfect moment of bliss, when emptiness is replaced by fulfillment and instead of disappearing, Emma seems to expand around herself in a kind of moment of eternity.

In this respect, when Madame Bovary comes back from a visit to her former lover Rodolphe, in a last desperate attempt to find the money which could save her from ruin and shame, Emma's perceptions of space and time are completely altered as she is on the verge of collapse and madness. This demonstrates the explosion of mental inner space and time into an outer space which has become strangely unfamiliar to her. Emma is never capable of regaining a sound perception of space and time; therefore, she commits suicide. Hence the traditional fairy-tale ending of 'they married and lived happily ever after' is by no means applicable to her story. Emma Bovary cannot escape her circumstances, and there is no exit other than death, hence a chronotopic restraint.

B. *Jane Eyre*

Not only a love story, *Jane Eyre* is also a plea for the recognition of the individual's worth. But in practice, Brontë's story is a repetitive fantasy rather than a progressive movement towards a predetermined goal. In Chapter 1, we first meet Jane enclosed in a window seat. This enclosure does prepare the reader as it gives an idea of the image of the later Jane. From this beginning, Jane is uncertain whether she should protect herself, and the heroine's fundamental problem as an anomalous orphan within a society in which she has no place is illustrated implicitly. Jane's childhood in Gateshead and later in Lowood asylum is replete with her natural element of rebellion, revenge, and rage. Even after she achieves a stable status in the asylum as a teacher, on Mrs. Temple's departure, Jane's mind puts off all it had borrowed of her, and she begins to feel the stirring of old emotions, and wishes for a complete change, or a long-desired liberty.

Later in Chapter 12, when she finally gets the job in Thornfield, Jane feels relieved but at the same time discontent. It is in the second half of the chapter that Jane's first meeting with her enigmatic master is marked with changing her "monotonous life" (Brontë 2003, p. 117). Her plea for liberty is answered with the appearance of a dark, Byronic hero. Despite the novel's games of equality, Jane's lack of volition in her relationship with her master makes her being caught within her own patterns of desire as well as the patriarchal structures. Once more, as the novel progresses, Jane loves Rochester the man, but has doubts about Rochester the husband. She seems to fear the loss of herself and her possessiveness. Therefore, Jane's actions denote a strange stop-start movement that veers between paternal authority and romantic love. She fears the vulnerability, possession, degradation, male intrusion and control that her engagement to Rochester may bring along. She is consciously unable to comprehend the full meaning of the achieved freedom. Living in Ferndean, a remote forest far from the crowd, is what Jane, the personification of an unregenerate and undisciplined spirit in a hierarchal society, achieves.

The idea of change in the character is debatable by the connection between patriarchal enclosure and love and Jane's restlessness along with the desire for freedom. The desires, identifications, and fears attached to the male figures make Jane perpetuate her enclosure. Moreover, lack of casual acquaintanceships and ordinary daily contacts in the *Jane Eyre* world clarify the heroine's psychic isolation, conveying her unresolvable problem of exclusion. The all-or-nothing feeling towards most of the subsidiary characters also shows that her feelings are mostly mixed but seldom moderate. And while dealing with her hunger, rebellion, and anger, Jane's resignation is highlighted by accepting the norms of society.

After inheriting a substantial amount of money, she is free to go wherever she wishes, but Jane also knows that it is improbable to find a better husband than Mr. Rochester. The fear of loneliness and a hunger for having a real family encourages Jane to first share her wealth with her newly found relatives, and then marry a man who is desperately needed. There was no adventure in marrying Rochester at this point; in fact, this was more of a beneficial contract. Jane enjoys the support of a male figure as well as saving her strong sense of dominance in exchange for her care of Rochester in the shade of love. Jane's desire for a "power of vision" to "overpass" bounding "limits" (Brontë 2003, p. 110) results in a viewless retirement, in a Bluebeard castle, deep in a "gloomy wood" with "no opening anywhere" – all hinting at Jane's symbolic death.

V. SETTING

As Michael Holquist observes, "In the analyses of ancient texts, Bakhtin uses chronotope as a unit of narrative analysis, a time/space figure that is typical of certain types of historically instanced plots. At this level, the chronotope would seem to be a recurring "structure," differing very little from the kind of technical feature of literary texts which the Russian Formalists called a 'device'" (Holquist, 2002, p. 108). In *Dialogism: Bakhtin and his World*, Holquist also conceptualizes that chronotopes, "as formally constitutive category of literature ... are not mere devices. ... In literary texts they are not cut off from the cultural environments in which they arise" (ibid.). In fact, chronotopes provide a means to explore the complex, indirect, and always mediated relation "between art and life, between literature and lived experience" (Holquist, 2002, p. 113).

A. *Madame Bovary*

Madame Bovary's action begins in 1830, the time of the "July Monarchy" in northwestern France in the real city of Rouen and the fictional towns of Yonville and Tostes. The setting of the novel is particularly remarkable as a social commentary, because it not only accentuates Flaubert's realist style, but also relates to the novel's protagonist. *Madame Bovary* is planted firmly in these French provinces and the (anti)heroine spends much of her time stuck in the sleepy little towns she hates. This is the fact which makes her feel even more trapped and unhappy in her marriage.

The novel is deliberately limited to a particular age and social range. It is divided into three parts to follow the biographical line of the main character, Emma Rouault, a young woman living in the country, in Normandy, in the 1840s. Flaubert successfully radicalizes the problematic social self by taking a woman as the focus-figure of his story to illustrate what women's condition was like, and show how they were oppressed by the masculine power during times such as July Monarchy and the next régime. He also focuses on the specific issues of religion, education, technological changes and marriage to highlight what was then called *Bovarysme*— which in turn best describes the protagonist's closed context.

As for religion, nineteenth-century France was a dualistic ideological world with reactionary Roman Catholicism on the one hand, and the more enlightened free thinkers outside the Church on the other. Moreover, in the domain of education "British authors frequently portrayed French girls and young women in ways that highlighted the general laxness of French girls' education" (Rogers, 2005, p. 2), which resulted in the emergence of the women who were "prone to ostentation and subterfuge" (ibid.).

An insight to the education of girls can help us understand the fashioning of French women's identity in the nineteenth century. In other words, to be *unebourgeoise* the "would emphasize motherhood and domesticity", and the "*la bourgeoise* was located in the home as a wife and a mother" (Rogers, 2005, p. 3). Clearly, education was increasingly a way for nineteenth-century "girls to stake out new individual identities at odds with the dictates of domesticity" (Rogers, 2005, p. 13).

As a technological change, the developments in the publishing industry served the increase in untutored female reading and its subsequent problems. The problem was defined not only in terms of what the new readers read, but also in terms of how they read. They would read too much, too indiscriminately, too subversively, too unwisely and hence unable to distinguish reason from falsehood, or truth from fantasy.

After all, Emma Bovary was an archetype reader who crystallized the problems of *bovarysme*. As a social problem, it was a form of escapism, but this escapism was a sign that women refused to be constrained by their allotted roles as mothers, housekeepers and dutiful daughters. In the convent school in Rouen, education was poorly prepared "for the expected duties of a provincial middle-class woman, and it certainly contributed to leading Emma astray" (Rogers, 2005, p. 1). In the convent school she learnt about the magic of religion, but its doctrine was left untold, and this was what the French educating system lacked as compared to the English version. Having been "initially seduced by the mystical languor of Catholic liturgy", Madame Bovary "quickly received more openly erotic stimulation through the laundress" (ibid.). Her readings of romantic content and her unwatched relation to literature seems to chronotopically separate her from her real environment.

Marriage is another issue that makes it possible to delve more into the real time and space of *Madame Bovary*. Indeed, in the Victorian age, marriage was not fairytale-like or romanticized as it is portrayed in the novels of the time. In the Napoleonic order, women's place was made explicitly a subordinate one. The right to divorce with a great many restrictions was introduced by a new divorce law of 1803, and its specific grounds were reduced to just three: degrading criminal sentences, adultery and physical abuse. Considering such rigid conception on nineteenth-century France womanhood, Emma Bovary was depicted quite the opposite by Flaubert. Not only she anticipated marriage as an elevated romance, but also she imagined herself being in love with the married Charles, as soon as she had the chance to meet him. She approached the issue of marriage as a loophole, and the tactless Charles was her prince charming, who turned to be her main source of misery.

B. *Jane Eyre*

Jane Eyre's story is set in the northern England in the early nineteenth century; this is a period in which the most popular literary form is the novel, and *Jane Eyre* illustrates many of its defining characteristics. *Jane Eyre* is also indebted to earlier Gothic novels, while Victorian themes and motifs also feature in her autobiography as she matures.

The novel is mostly known as a coming-of-age story, in which the protagonist has various conflicts with the norms and conventions of her society. Like many other Victorian novels, *Jane Eyre* demonstrates a social panorama in which the characters represent various economic and social classes, as well as gender differences. The appearance of the word 'class' was linked to fundamental changes in the economy and to their effects on social relations that led to divisions in society, or what is called social conflict. Brontë addresses the consequences of class boundaries in individuals' relations in the vast social landscape of her novel. Nevertheless, Jane's social mobility is bounding since there has been a gap between Jane and her real world as she always hid herself behind the curtains to save her inevitable privacy. As a result, this austere, stubborn girl can never melt into the higher society. Only when she is financially independent (and Rochester dependent), she fashions herself as a woman who has all her dreams fulfilled.

Charlotte Brontë artistically appeals to various genres (Romance, Gothic, Mystery, and Realist) and their elements, in the line between autobiography and fiction, and attests several settings through factual as well as fictional chronotopes, to challenge the major theme of personal progress and to express what was hidden in the lives of nineteenth-century English Victorian women. However, perhaps the most striking feature of the history of response to Brontë's novel is a persistent concern with biographical background – the Brontë story. Admittedly, the novel is an autobiography, not in its facts and circumstances, but in the actual suffering and experience that significantly affects our interpretations of the novel.

As a young woman, Jane struggles to maintain her identity and independence under the strict expectations of her contemporary culture. Every setting and situation confronted by Jane is a different phase that prepares her for the next experience. However, the problem is that, similar to Emma Bovary who experiences various successes, failures, or returns to some starting point at each step within her story, the settings and situations in Jane's story do not seem to be progressive in real sense. The linear organization of Jane's maturation process is attributable to the viewpoint of the narrator who recounts her story as wife and mother. Here the only difference is that unlike Emma, Jane's actions are not regarded as self-destructive.

In order to delve more into the setting of the novel chronotopically, it is necessary to mention that while the feminist movement was going on, women were still rubbed of their social roles. It was at this age of transition that Charlotte Brontë touched on four areas of social concern in *Jane Eyre*: education, women's employment, marriage, and religion; each and every of these areas had a crucial effect on every stage of Jane's life-travel.

In the first half of nineteenth century in England the education of middle-class girls was regarded as their so-called 'accomplishments,' the aim of which was "to render them hardy, patient, and self-denying" (Brontë 2003, p. 63). On the other hand, work opportunities for middle-class women were limited to sewing, washing, being a governess or, less commonly, teaching in a school. In this respect, Jane may be considered as an atypical governess in the household at Thornfield, since she benefited more liberties than what was traditionally common; however, despite all these liberties, much of her confusion about her identity at Thornfield was rooted in her contradictory role as a governess.

During the period, those who did not achieve married status became, 'redundant' (Ingham, 2006, p. 53); however, when women did achieve what seemed to be their main purpose, i.e. marriage, they became no first-class persons but nonpersons. In Brontë's lifetime, women were second-class people, hardly regarded as citizens within the crippling circumstances. Marriage is what *Jane Eyre* suggests as a happy, typically Victorian solution to Jane's problems, but such a conclusion does not address the intricacies that Jane would encounter in defining her identity as a woman within nineteenth-century constraints. This was a very modern fear, practically unheard of in Charlotte Brontë's times. Moreover, "for many of the population, as for Brontë, religion and its implications for the afterlife were living issues which colored individual attitudes, decisions, and behavior" (Ingham, 2006, p. 60). In *Jane Eyre*, Brontë explores areas of human conduct partly in terms of her own religious views. Earlier in the novel, Jane had declared that "St. John Rivers had not yet found that peace of God" (Brontë 2003, p. 357). When St. John insisted on their marriage and departure to India, she sincerely confesses to the reader that:

I had silently feared St. John till now, because I had not understood him. He had held me in awe, because he had held me in doubt. How much of him was saint, how much mortal, I could not heretofore tell: but revelations were being made in this conference: the analysis of his nature was proceeding before my eyes. (Brontë 2003, p. 412)

Finally, she concludes her story with St. John's last letter in which he "anticipated his sure reward, his incorruptible crown" (Brontë 2003, p. 459). By parroting St. John's last words, Jane implicitly confesses her own as well.

VI. CONCLUSION

Although *Jane Eyre* eventually adapts to the ideal, established Victorian universe when she marries Mr. Rochester, this seems to be more of a fancy marriage in which the protagonist is doomed to undermine and sacrifice her true potentials, freedom and creative initiative. Madame Bovary, on the other hand, is unable to adapt to the ideals appropriate to her chronotopic matrix. Understandably, the latter finds it impossible to acknowledge or surrender to the existing laws of her social context. Both Jane and Emma are character dynamics who are essentially at odds with the norms of the society, yet despite their different choices neither can elude the powerful grasp of time and space. Their various lifetime struggles are the futile attempts of a novice in a changing society. Under the chronotopic hegemony, cultural basics are often predominant. Both protagonists challenge the restraining boundaries, but little achievement is

obtained. The characters change, but their lives are hardly progressive. The ultimate resignation may occur in either attempting suicide or choosing a solitude way of living.

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