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A comparison between the female characters in the novel *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Brontë and the movie adaptation from 2011

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Introduction

Charlotte Brontë's novel *Jane Eyre* (1847) is a novel about a woman's self-discovery through other women's influence. Its "Pilgrim's Progress"[1] structure reinforces the novel as a *Bildungsroman*. The key to this genre is maturation and transformation, representing a "journey of growth, both interior and socially" (Monk 45). If one agrees with Simone de Beauvoir's argument that "[o]ne is not born, but rather becomes a woman" (295), then identity should be considered a social construct, and consequently also relational and contextual (Magee 5). Jane is strongly influenced by the women in her life. Her moral and emotional progress is shown at different stages in her life, where she meets with important women who influence her in various ways.

When the reader is introduced to orphaned Jane at Gateshead, her aunt, Mrs Reed, advocates her exclusion which gives rise to Jane's pursuit of independence and freedom from oppression. At Lowood, Helen Burns and Miss Temple help Jane achieve some independence through religion and education. They also help her to control her rebellious nature, which enables her integration with society. At Thornfield, however, Jane is socially confined to the housekeeper, Mrs Fairfax. She has a moderate, class-conscious mind. As a consequence, Jane seeks an unhealthy emotional dependence on Mr Rochester. However, Bertha Rochester demonstrates the danger in having a relationship with him. Towards the end, the scholarly women Maria and Diana Rivers at Marsh End become Jane's family. Jane's reunion with Mr Rochester consequently appears healthier, because she is no longer solely emotionally dependent on him for love. In conclusion, these women contribute to Jane's reaching her "Celestial City". In different ways, they progressively enable her maturity - morally and emotionally - towards her self-discovery and independence.

Since these women are important to Jane's progress, it is of great value to see how they are portrayed in Cary Fukunaga's movie adaptation of *Jane Eyre* (2011). Fukunaga chose not to use a voiceover in his adaptation to convey Jane's inner thoughts. Therefore,

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[1] *Jane Eyre* (1847) is structured in a "five-fold progression" structure. This structure highlights the significance of the different stages in her life, similar to John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress* (1678) which leads to the Celestial City (xxvii).

actresses, camera angles, fashion etc. collectively convey Jane's point of view. As Geoffrey Macnab argues, the main challenge when adapting *Jane Eyre* is to capture Jane's vivid narrative (68). Brontë's symbolic narrative of light/dark and hot/cold, by which she depicts the characters' influence on Jane, will therefore be considered. The symbolic nature of names and scenery will also be considered - the latter is closely connected to Jane's interior. Further, how well these women adhere to the ideals of the time should reflect their function within the social environment and consequently also in Jane's life. Therefore, the novel's context will be considered. More specifically, the confining domestic sphere which Victorian women were restricted to is important to be aware of. All of these features are important in order to understand Jane's struggle and development.

The essential question this essay will address is whether the important female characters are fairly displayed in the movie adaptation, in order to enable Jane's self-discovery, independence and freedom. I will use Hutcheon's statement that the adaptation is "second without being secondary" (9), as my approach for this essay. My aim is to fairly motivate and understand differences and similarities in the depiction of the female characters in Brontë's novel and Fukunaga's movie. My hope is to find that these characters' influence on Jane ultimately enables her to reach her "Celestial City", i.e. the stage in her life where she feels free, loved and independent.

Movie Adaptation Theory

Since many readers imagine events of the novel when they read, they consequently build up certain expectations which might not be visualized when the novel becomes adapted onto the screen. Before launching into a comparison between the two different media - novel and movie - it should be argued that literature is not superior to adaptation as an art form. Or else, Linda Hutcheon argues, "[i]f an adaptation is perceived as "lowering" a story [...] response is likely to be negative" (3). The change of media will inevitably result in necessary deviations from the original text. For example, the protagonist's narration will have to be transposed through certain visual images/camera angles and speech, etc. The audience will therefore have to understand the protagonist's narrative from a visual third mode of engagement.

Moreover, even though the director is ultimately responsible for the adaptation

as a finished product, (Hutcheon 85), it should still be recognized as a complex process of creation. The adaptation is shaped by the many 'moviemakers' involved. For example, actresses must physically make visible their responses to the camera or orally ventilate their reactions (Hutcheon 25). Receivers' trends and values might also contribute to deviations from the original story's context (Hutcheon 28). These 'moviemakers' engage emotionally and imaginatively when the novel becomes adapted, and consequently the adaptation is a collective interpretation of the original work.

However, in order to be considered a successful adaptation, a relationship should ultimately be prevalent in this shift of media. Hutcheon argues that "[a]n adaptation's double nature does not mean [...] that proximity or fidelity to the adapted text should be the criterion of judgment or the focus of analysis" (6). Still, she concludes, the essence of the adapted work should be present - a sort of fidelity to the "spirit" of the original work (10). The director of *Jane Eyre*, Cary Fukunaga, has also argued the importance of a spiritual fidelity to the original work in an interview. He has claimed that

> [e]verything is adaptation and you're not going to make everyone happy. I'm trying to make the best version I can in a cinematic version of the story that I still feel is faithful to the themes, the characters, the emotions, and even the tone of Brontë's book. Every detail isn't necessary as long as the feeling is right. (Chai)

In conclusion, an adaptation is an interpretation of the original work. However, a successful adaptation captures the core story which is transposed through the different media, using certain equivalent sign systems from the elements of the adapted story: themes, characters, events, point of views, symbols, motivations, contexts, etc. (Hutcheon 10). Important to take into consideration, though, is the co-producer's approach to adapting. In connection with her adaptation of *Jane Eyre* (2011), Alison Owen has stated in an interview that she has avoided too much fidelity towards Brontë's text, in order to "shake things up a bit" (McGrath). Thus, the movie adaptors consciously aim to renew a classic novel. The movie audience should therefore anticipate - and hopefully appreciate - certain deviations from the novel *Jane Eyre*.

Mrs Reed

Jane's struggle for independence and freedom from oppression stems from her relationship with Mrs Reed at Gateshead. She advocates Jane's exclusion, at the same time as she makes her feel confined. Jane is an orphan and she is therefore aware of her dependence on Mrs Reed. It is Jane's place to be humble and try to make herself agreeable, a servant reminds her, or else she will have to go to the poorhouse (16). The important symbolism of hot/cold and light/dark is established through Jane's relationship with Mrs Reed. Her exclusion of Jane causes the images of cold and dark. The desolate scenery at Gateshead also mirrors Jane's desolate and cold interior, as Mrs Reed's oppression extinguishes Jane's vitality. Life at Gateshead, run and organized by Mrs Reed, ultimately makes Jane "gr[o]w by degrees cold as a stone", Jane explains (19).

Jane's interaction with Mrs Reed also enlightens the reader on the fact that Jane is passionate beyond acceptance for a girl. Her fiery and rebellious nature not only renders her disagreeable to Mrs Reed, it also poses a threat to her acceptance into the Victorian society (Macpherson 7). Contrary to Jane's disposition, the ideal girl had characteristics such as self-denial and forbearance (Burstyn 32) since the "code of social respectability [...] entailed repression in language and actions" (Burstyn 34). Jane fails to adhere to the ideal by scorning bullying John Reed and claiming Mrs Reed to be "deceitful" (44). Ladylike behavior constrained and domesticated girls' movements at the time as well (Burstyn 36). Therefore, she further violates the physical boundaries when she wrestles John.

Symbolism of fire conveys Jane's struggle in combining passion and purity (Macpherson 8). Jane compares herself to "a ridge of lighted heath" when she stands up against Mrs Reed's oppression. She further considers herself "winner of the field" (45) after speaking her mind freely in Mrs Reed's presence. In this way, Jane connects fire with passion and freedom from oppression. Importantly, though, when she gives her "furious feelings uncontrolled play" (45), she also considers herself maddened. Fire is thus also connected with danger and unaccepted behavior. Embodying "such a picture of passion" (14) then, Jane becomes to Mrs Reed "the occasion of discomfort" (40), "with her incomprehensible disposition, and her sudden starts of temper" (267). Partly because of Jane's unconventionality and passionate nature, Mrs Reed turns everyone against her and advocates her exclusion.

Mrs Reed's power to exclude Jane from every enjoyment (34) can be explained

by the power mothers had over their children at the time. Women's main duty was to organize the household and bring up children (Burstyn 32) as "[b]oys and girls depended on their mothers to teach them the moral principles upon which to build their lives" (Burstyn 39). Jane explains Mrs Reed's permeating power as the "exact, clever manager" at Gateshead, whose "household and tenantry were thoroughly under her control" (43). Jane further explains Mrs Reed's exuding power by stating that

> I know that had I been a sanguine, brilliant, careless, exacting, handsome, romping child – though equally dependent and friendless – Mrs Reed would have endured my presence more complacently; her children would have entertained for me more of the cordiality of fellow-feeling; the servants would have been less prone to make me the scapegoat of the nursery. (19)

Besides Jane's passionate behavior, Mrs Reed's envy and hatred towards Jane's mother further explains her aversion towards Jane. On her death bed, Mrs Reed makes clear that "I had a dislike to her mother always; for she was my husband's only sister, and a great favorite with him: he opposed the family's disowning her when she made her low marriage" (267). The fact that Jane's mother married below her family's social scale and adventured the Reed's social stand, has made Mrs Reed prejudiced against Jane before knowing her: "I hated it the first time I set my eyes on it" (267) she concludes.

Some important reasons why Mrs Reed oppresses and excludes Jane are only to some degree present in Fukunaga's adaptation. The fact that Mrs Reed to a great extent bases her scorn of Jane on Jane's mother's marrying into a lower class is excluded. Excluding such vital background information makes Mrs Reed seem less a product of a class society. Consequently, Mrs Reed is a flatter character in the movie than in the novel. However, the fact that Mrs Reed despises Jane because of her passionate behavior is depicted. The movie establishes this in the scene where Jane fights with John Reed (00.06.10). Mrs Reed moreover defends her harsh treatment of Jane by alluding to her notion of proper behavior for a girl. She says that "children must be corrected for their faults [...] you are passionate" (00.09.37). The fact that Mrs Reed's domestic authority contributes to Jane's exclusion is also established, through clever camera work. Symbolically blurred in the background, she ignores John when he taunts Jane. She passes through the room and disappears again - seemingly disregarding his misbehavior (00.05.53).

Mrs Reed is reinforced as an unlikable character through what Fukunaga has referred to as the "hideous" fashion of the 1830's (Bonus: 00.09.00). He has set the movie slightly later than the novel takes place. This decision enables a more updated look for Jane's grown-up character. Mrs Reed, however, remains ostentatious-looking in the timely fashionable puffy sleeves of the 1830's - the "balloons of arms" (Bonus: 00.09.29). Jane is therefore more identifiable to a 21th-century audience in a later, less hideous fashion, while Mrs Reed is emphasized as unappealing.

Despite clever fashion choices reinforcing Mrs Reed's characteristics, Sally Hawkins' appearance weakens Mrs Reed's important characteristics. In the novel, Mrs Reed's exterior reinforces her as controlling and as an exacting manager of the household, as no illness could break her, Jane claims. Jane further explains her "constitution as sound as a bell" and that she is "a woman of robust frame, square-shouldered and strong-limbed, not tall, and, though stout, not obese" with "a large face, the under-jaw much developed" (43). Hawkins' rather small and unthreatening constitution therefore makes Mrs Reed seem less forceful and oppressive.

Miss Temple and Helen Burns

Lowood is a harsh environment for Jane to endure, with obstacles and oppressions to overcome in her maturing progress. The name of the institution allegorically represents "Low wood" which incubates disease (xxvii) - from the prevalent religious hypocrisy. The school leadership starves the girls and has them live in privations preaching modesty. The headmaster, Mr Bruklehurst, cites the Bible: "[i]f ye suffer hunger or thirst for my sake, happy are ye" (75). Helen Burns, a close friend of Jane's at Lowood, embodies the workings of such a "doctrine of endurance". "[T]he forbearance she expressed for her chastiser" (67) makes her suffer unbearably and renders her passionless about life. Possibly, Charlotte Brontë created Helen's self-sacrificing character to contrast her with Jane's. Brontë was of the opinion that hope should not lie in resignation and thoughts of heaven (Beer 124). Thus, the symbolical name "Burns" arguably supports the reading of Helen dying of fever because she is too fervent about a religious faith which burns her too severely for survival. Jane contrarily represents someone with a passion for living. She has a more sensible approach to religion

and self-sacrifice since she values freedom and independence.

Brontë's symbolical narrative continues to enlighten the reader on the oppressive and reviving forces in Jane's life. Miss Temple serves as Jane's retreat from the dark oppressive forces and the religious hypocrisy prevalent at the institution. Miss Temple is consequently connected with light. For example, when Miss Temple enters the schoolroom, light "stream[s] in through a window near" (83). Miss Temple is Jane's "reason for tranquility" with her "serene atmosphere" (101). Pat Macpherson further suggests that Miss Temple is Jane's "shrine to refined propriety" (97). Jane learns from Miss Temple the importance of self-discipline, to be able to speak up for herself when she is unjustly accused (84). In Victorian England, women achieved influence over men by listening to them and agreeing with them (Burstyn 33). In order to influence people then, Jane must learn to apply this self-control, which Miss Temple displays.

Miss Temple shows the power of self-discipline when she succeeds in subverting Mr Brucklehurst more effectively than Jane. (Macpherson 96). By incorporating the ideal of womanhood outwardly, Jane notes that Miss Temple can on "[t]he inside [...] "[be] further beyond his interference than he imagined" (76). Miss Temple instructs Jane to "exaggerate nothing" and to use a less emotional and passionate narrative. Consequently, Jane learns to be "most moderate – most correct" (84) and argue convincingly. Thus, with Miss Temple's guidance, Jane learns to give "allegiance to duty and order" by outwardly appearing "a disciplined and subdued character" (100). This discretion enables her integration with society and also her ability to influence people.

Macpherson argues that "self-control" as the "key to self-improvement" is the most important lesson Jane learns at Lowood (99). If discreet, a woman could advance outside of her confining domestic sphere to live a fuller and freer life. Miss Temple, Macpherson suggests, helps Jane to advance outside of this sphere. Miss Temple symbolically feeds Jane's soul (Macpherson 95) and her intellect. This is revealed through the event where Miss Temple invites Jane and Helen to "a refreshing meal" with "a brilliant fire" and "satisfied [their] famished appetites" (86) when "[t]hey conversed of things [Jane] had never heard of". Jane is intellectually stimulated: "[w]hat stores of knowledge they possessed!" (87), she excitedly exclaims. Significantly, the intellectual stimulation which Jane receives from Miss Temple later enables her to become a governess which entails "independence through self-support" (Bell 264).

Jane sums up Miss Temple's importance by stating that "she had stood me in the stead of mother, governess, and latterly, companion". Miss Temple acts as a role model to

Jane, and she even acknowledges that she owes the best of her acquirements from Miss Temple (100). However, Mia Wasikowska, who plays Jane, has said in an interview: "[w]hat I loved about Jane is that she has this innate sense of self-respect, and there's really nowhere it should have come from [...] It's not like she had a loving upbringing. Everything she has achieved, it's because she made it for herself" (McGrath). Possibly, Wasikowska has been influenced by Fukunaga's reading of Miss Temple. He does not give credit to her importance in Jane's maturing progress either, since her character has been omitted in the movie adaptation. Fukunaga has admitted that Miss Temple is one of the few people who are "kind" to Jane, but that he has had "no time to feature her" (Bonus: 00.15.26). Reducing Miss Temple's influence on Jane to "kind" evidently leaves a lot to be desired. Particularly so, if one agrees with Macpherson argument that "Miss Temple [is] the making of Jane Eyre: her education, the food for her soul, the means of her livelihood, and the key to Rochester's attraction to her" (95).

It becomes incomprehensible in the movie how Jane manages to develop anything but emotional and physical wounds, coming from harsh Lowood School without her refuge temple - Miss Temple. Snap-shots of physical abuse suggest Jane's education as only forced and abusive, and not the source of the intellectual stimulation which Miss Temple makes it. These snap-shots are shown after St John has asked Jane whether her education at Lowood was a thorough education (00.13.24). Therefore, Jane's educational background is left unsupported. The scenes where she works as a governess, speaks French and teaches geography consequently seem unrealistic. Moreover, Mr Rochester's love for Jane, without her mind being his treasure like he expresses in the novel (347), seems physical instead. Their relationship seems less substantial when the focus is on their "natural sympathies" (00.49.27) for each other and not as much on her mentality.

There are some possible reasons, except for lack of time, which might have contributed to Miss Temple's exclusion. One reason could be that her absence allows more focus on the harshness at Lowood. To establish a traumatic childhood, in a short amount of time, the primary focus of the Lowood scenes seems to be to portray Mr Brocklehurst as an insensitive authority of the school. For this reason, the scene where Mr Brocklehurst puts Jane on "the pedestal of infamy" (0.14.38) is maintained and focused upon. Another possible reason why Fukunaga does not seem to appreciate Miss Temple enough to maintain her character could be that he does not appreciate Brontë's symbolical narrative. The light/dark symbolism should shed light on Miss Temple's importance. Fukunaga has used a "very minimal use of artificial light" (Gantz) in *Jane Eyre*, however. He has been "couched in

realism [...] in the overall visual design of the film" (Bonus: 00.11.07) as he himself says. Thus, while staying true to the era, his adaptation is rather dark and lacks some important highlighting of the female characters' essentiality to Jane's maturing progress.

Helen Burns is also essential to Jane's maturing progress and is thus also connected to the theme of light. Jane fights her mental battles in "darkness" and "dense ignorance" (19), but Helen "consider[s] things by a light invisible to my eyes" (67), Jane says. When befriending Helen, Jane observes how she accepts the unfair treatment at Lowood without complaint. Jane, on the contrary, with her passionate rebellious nature, reasons that one should "strike back [...] very hard" if one is "struck at without a reason" (68). Helen, who is an ardent Christian, preaches "[l]ove your enemies; bless them that curse you; do good to them that hate you and despitefully use you" (69). She claims that with her religious faith, she avoids committing hasty actions with evil consequences (66). She also suggests to Jane that she should try to control her passionate emotions to become happier (69).

Jane's passionate outbursts towards Mrs Reed actually result in her tasting the poisonous after-flavor of vengeance (45). Jane proves to have embraced some part of Helen's Christian philosophy then, when she decides to try to reunite with Mrs Reed on her death bed, even though Mrs Reed still regards Jane "icily" and "bad to the last" (266). Jane wishes to "forget and forgive all injuries – to be reconciled and clasp hands in amity" (265), and tells Mrs Reed to ask for God's forgives and be at peace (276). Thus, Jane shows her independence from Mrs Reed's oppression after Helen's Christian inculcation, since she is no longer affected by Mrs Reed's hatred. Helen consequently enlightens Jane on the emotional independence to be gained from religion.

Helen's character is important in the process of portraying the self-sacrificing, harsh environment at Lowood. Therefore, she retains her explanation of being struck at for her own good, for her improvement, and that one must not nurse animosity because of it (00.15.59). She is thus faithfully depicted as a self-sacrificing character for Jane to be contrasted with. She says that she is "going home [...] to God" (00.17.57) which could prove that she does not appreciate life. Jane, however, remains passionate about living, as Helen says (00.18.09). Jane is consequently established as passionate and not self-sacrificing from her interaction with Helen Burns in the movie.

Furthermore, Helen is portrayed as the inculcator of the independence to be gained from religion. Jane describes how Mrs Reed "thought I could do without one bit of her kindness" (00.16.10). Helen then suggests to Jane that she should reduce her dependence on such oppressive forces as Mrs Reed. If she puts faith and love in "the invisible world" instead,

"the kingdom of spirits commissioned to guard [her]", she is already loved. After Helen has articulated this lesson to Jane, the scene where Jane tries to reunite with Mrs Reed proves Helen's influence on Jane. Despite the fact that Mrs Reed claims that Jane was "born to be her torment" as well as admits to having lied about Jane's alleged death, Jane still gives Mrs Reed her "full and free forgiveness" (01.12.>). Moreover, when Jane leaves Mr Rochester, she exclaims "God help me!" (Bonus: 01.29.55). This line should imply that Jane seeks comfort and strength in religion to free herself from Mr Rochester's confining and oppressing relationship. Helen's character in the movie thus contributes to Jane's emotional independence from oppression. She also helps to establish Jane as a freedom-seeking character.

Mrs Fairfax

Mrs Fairfax's influence on Jane mainly concerns inculcation of social restrictions. She articulates Jane's awkward social position at Thornfield, where she neither belongs to the servants' nor to her employer's class. Since Jane is confined to Mrs Fairfax socially, Jane becomes restless and longs for "more of intercourse with [her] kind of acquaintance with variety of character" (129). Mrs Fairfax is "placid-tempered" and of "average intelligence" (128) and considers herself "quite in the light of an ordinary housekeeper" (119). Thus, Jane becomes emotionally dependent on Mr Rochester because of lack of social stimulation. His ease of manner frees Jane from the "painful restraint" (171) of class restrictions at Thornfield, which Mrs Fairfax advocates. This emotional dependence, however, makes him become her whole world (316).

Since Mrs Fairfax is such a class-conscious person, she seems to motivate her relationships from a class perspective as well. She is most concerned with upholding Mr Rochester's reputation and acquaintance. Mrs Fairfax seems less inclined to form a respectful relationship with Jane, since she belongs to a lower class than Mr Rochester. Mrs Fairfax claims that Mr Rochester is "always civil" (119) and moreover that she has "no cause to do otherwise than like him" (124). When Jane says that he is changeful and abrupt in his mood, Mrs Fairfax answers in his defense. She says that it only appears so to a stranger and that further peculiarities of temper should be allowed because of his nature and family troubles (149). It becomes apparent that Mrs Fairfax values Mr Rochester higher than Jane, after Mrs

Fairfax has been told about Jane's and Mr Rochester's upcoming marriage. She responds to this information by exclaiming that "it passes me!". She further claims that "[e]quality of position and fortune is often advisable in such cases" (305). This response infers that Mrs Fairfax does not think that Jane is worthy of such a man.

Fukunaga has stated that his aim has been to portray Mrs Fairfax as an important class inculcator (Bonus: 00.24.27). Mrs Fairfax retains the crucial line in the movie where she explains to Jane about social restriction based on equality and the idea of class. She tells Jane that "one cannot talk to them [the servants] on terms of equality" (00.24.25). However, Mrs Fairfax seems less keen on basing relationships on social stand in the movie adaptation. Mrs Fairfax does neither defend nor clarify Mr Rochester's abrupt behavior to Jane, the way she does in the novel. Only in a scene in the movie, when Mr Rochester's outside shootings disturb their peaceful supper, does Mrs Fairfax sigh at her master's behavior and claim him "a good master […] except when he's in an ill humor" (00.38.45). Further, by positioning her next to Jane in the first of "those fireside chats that are the centerpiece of Jane Eyre" (Gantz), Fukunaga symbolically shows that Mrs Fairfax sides with Jane instead of Mr Rochester (00.36.03). Close-ups are also occasionally made on Mrs Fairfax's fearful glances, which seem to suggest that she is afraid that Mr Rochester will form a bad opinion on Jane. Thus, Fukunaga arguably fails to portray Mrs Fairfax as a very class-conscious person, by inferring a closer relationship between her and Jane.

In the novel, Jane claims that Mrs Fairfax has "no notion of […] observing" (124). Mrs Fairfax's observational skill in the movie adaptation, however, makes her see Jane's discontent at her confinement. Therefore, she is able to make Jane verbally confide in her. Undoubtedly, Jane's mental rebellion at her confinement needs to be articulated. Fukunaga has resisted using a voiceover, which would have voiced Jane's thoughts to the audience. Moreover, the fact that Fukunaga also has cast a Jane with "an emotionally subtle approach to acting", as he has said himself (Rea 2), makes this articulation imperative. Nevertheless, when Jane confides in Mrs Fairfax, they are framed together, through a barred window (00.30.49). Fukunaga has referred to this setting as "cage-like". Even though he has claimed that he is trying to portray "the varying perspectives on what women should achieve in life" (Bonus: 00.30.30), he arguably fails to do so. Instead, the scene makes them seem caged and confined together, which once again suggests a close relationship between them.

Mrs Fairfax has a humoristic trait in the movie adaptation which she does not seem to have in the novel. This characteristic further reduces her as a class-conscious person and enables the close relationship between her and Jane. Mrs Fairfax's character seems to

serve as Jane's witty refuge from Mr Rochester's mysterious and brooding character in the movie. In an interview, Fukunaga has said that "it's all about tension and creating that sense of horror underneath" (Buchanan).Without Mrs Fairfax's humor then, the emotional impact of the movie would suggestively not be as strong. She displays humor when she announces Mr Mason's arrival in a rather clever and amusing way. Since he comes from a warm place, Spanish-town, she subtly hints at the urgency of tending to this intrusive visitor, by claiming that he refuses to take of his jacket because of the cold (00.57.45). In another scene, she sets the humoristic mood after Adele "shows her accomplishments". Mrs Fairfax breaks the silence after Adele's strained performance, by sarcastically stating: "How very French" (00.28.15).

Mrs Fairfax's boost of personality and humor could originate from Judi Dench's role interpretation and acting. Possibly, Fukunaga has allowed her too much liberty when portraying Mrs Fairfax's character. Fukunaga has actually said that directing Dench is "daunting" since she has "made more films than I'll ever make in my life time" (Buchanan). He has even said that she "can do no wrong" (Bonus: 00.23.34). Also, receivers' notion of her from previous roles as an actress with the trademark of "playing dignified, strong willed women in positions of authority" (IMDB), could contribute to her character appearing more dominant than in the novel. The significance of Mrs Fairfax serving as a moderate person and a dull moralizer who Jane is socially confined to is therefore somewhat lost in the movie adaptation. Not only does the movie give a rather unfaithful depiction of Mrs Fairfax's character then, but Jane's unhealthy emotional dependence on Mr Rochester is unmotivated when she and Mrs Fairfax have a close relationship.

Bertha Rochester

Jane is considered original and un-timid (432) by St John Rivers. Macpherson further claims that she is a woman with the power of welding emotional, intellectual, and spiritual strength into speech (70). However, despite these notions of Jane as a woman with the ability to speak up, she struggles to freely articulate opinions outside women's restricted sphere. The key to influence at the time was, as earlier argued, to display self-control and lady-like behavior, which Miss Temple has taught her. Arguably, the urge to remain rational in society's

definition restrains her passionate side then. Consequently, Jane strolls about at Thornfield in silent rebellion at her confinement. Miss Temple's influence on Jane can thus still be regarded as present at Thornfield.

However, as Charlotte Brontë herself often "wish[ed] to say something about the 'condition of women' question" but claimed that "it is one respecting which so much 'cant' has been talked, that one feels a sort of repugnance to approach it" (qtd. in Beer 29), she created the character Bertha instead. Her character shows the Victorian conception of a passionate woman. Bertha embodies the horrible, neglected and passionate part which Jane "cannot find a place for; hunger rebellion and rage" (Macpherson 20). Bertha is therefore depicted as a gothic creature of the novel, more specifically as a purple faced, bloated featured animalistic creature with bloodshot eyes (327).

The danger of giving into such fiery and passionate behavior is shown through Mr Rochester's perception of Bertha. He seems to consider her "mad" (347) because she has "neither modesty, nor benevolence, nor candor, nor refinement in her mind or manners" (352). He claims that her excesses prematurely developed into insanity (353). By letting her passionate nature go unchecked, Bertha seems to have become separated from society. Bertha's supposed 'madness' seems to stem from her unfeminine and inappropriate behavior. She therefore retains no lines in the novel and seems inarticulate. Consequently, Macpherson suggests, "[t]he story of Jane at Thornfield [...] is not only haunted by Bertha, but made meaningful by her, unspeaking and unspeakable as she is" (13).

A relationship with Rochester could endanger Jane's freedom as well. She would presumably have to be confined to an attic and silenced by separation from society, alternatively confined to the proper gender role of the time. Women's role in a relationship was as "the moral spiritual genius of man's life" (Burstyn 32). However, as Macpherson justly argues, Jane will not serve as Rochester's angel to "wipe out his sins with her purity" (49). She realizes that she cannot be in a relationship with Mr Rochester, because he restricts her freedom. Symbolism of fire, previously argued to be connected with unaccepted behavior and restricted freedom, warns against Bertha's fate and a relationship with Mr Rochester. When Bertha tries to set Rochester's bed on fire, she becomes connected with fire. Rochester's "flaming glance" (365) symbolically renders him dangerous as well.

In the movie, Bertha is mostly hidden from Jane's "morally unsullied point of view" (Monk 45). Bertha only partakes in one short scene, and she is therefore mainly an imagined horrible creature lurking in the shadows at Thornfield. Jane's point-of-view is cleverly reinforced by this withdrawal, since neither Jane nor the audience is familiarized with

Bertha, but merely senses her spooky presence. The gothic mood thus stems from Jane's eeriness of not quite knowing what is hidden away in the attic. This gothic tension is moreover an important feature in Fukunaga's buildup of suspension in *Jane Eyre*. He aims to portray "[t]hat sort of spookiness that plagues the entire story" (Buchanan). However, with such a build-up of suspension for Bertha's scene, meeting with small and seductive Valentina Cervi, who plays Bertha, becomes a great disappointment. She has long, dark, disheveled hair, a symmetrical face with a smooth complexion and smoldering eyes. This appearance seems unsuitable after the scene where Jane takes care of Mr Mason (01.02.36) who has deep flesh-wounds, which supposedly have been inflicted by Bertha (01.23.56). More importantly, her appearance is the opposite of Brontë's description of her.

Nevertheless, despite physical deviations from the novel, the movie adaptation still manages to inculcate the forbidden in being a passionate woman through Bertha's character. Bertha symbolically retains no lines in the movie, thus, locked-up and inarticulate, Bertha's character shows what a passionate relationship with Rochester might result in – i.e. confinement and silencing. Fukunaga has further depicted how Jane would be confined to the proper gender role of the time in this relationship. He has argued Mr Rochester's need to fit Jane into the sphere which women were restricted to at the time, by saying in an interview that "[i]t's through Jane that he becomes healed" (Reid). Mr Rochester in the movie consequently refers to Jane's "unpolluted mind" and connects her with something "sweet and fresh [...] an inspiration [...] w[earing] the robes of an angel of light" (00.43.49). Further, Mr Rochester refers to Jane as "fresh" and "healthy without soil or taint" and he believes she will regenerate him (01.04.56). In accordance with the novel, the movie shows Jane's abhorrence to their continued relationship to stem from her meeting with Bertha. Jane struggles to get out of her corset (01.14.28) after the scene where she meets Bertha. Wasikowska has explained the corset's symbolism in an interview:

> It restricts your voice and your breath, and it's really symbolic of the repression of the day...That's very much what that time represented for women - physical repression that becomes mental...With Jane Eyre the corset helped me understand the repression and pain of the character. (Rea 1)

Thus, the removal of her corset could symbolize that Jane frees herself from her gender role in their relationship. Bertha has, in a sense, shown Jane that as Mr Rochester's wife, her voice would ultimately be as silenced as hers. Thus, a relationship with Mr Rochester ultimately restricts Jane's freedom. She frees herself from the corset - symbolically from the gender role

- to retain her freedom.

The important symbolism of Mr Rochester representing dangerous fire after Jane has met Bertha, is also present in the last fire side scene. The fireplace no longer seems to serve as a warm and cozy backdrop. Instead, Jane and Mr Rochester are both positioned almost too close for comfort. The sound from the fire seems amplified and the fire is smoky – scorching and blackening. Mr Rochester is filmed against the fire (1.26.22) and in this way his love comes to symbolize danger to Jane's freedom. However short the meeting with Bertha is in the movie then, Bertha's character still inculcates the danger of a relationship with Mr Rochester.

Mary and Diana

Bertha demonstrates to Jane the danger of a continued relationship with Mr Rochester. Therefore, Jane endeavors to become solitary, friendless and more unsustained, so that she can respect herself instead of becoming labeled insane (365). However, an important relationship with the River sisters, Mary and Diana, shows that she does not have to sacrifice freedom for love. Instead, their relationship contributes to Jane's emotional independence.

Mary and Diana are vital in providing Jane with revitalizing warmth at Marsh End, since she has to constrict her vitality when she is with St John Rivers. The apt image St John's gives of his sisters, where they have a pleasure in keeping Jane "as they would have a pleasure in keeping and cherishing a half-frozen bird some wintry wind might have driven through their casement" (400), emphasizes their important roles in providing Jane with the warmth and care that she needs. Jane also explains the reviving pleasure she feels in their intercourse (402) and explains their discourse as "witty, pithy, original". St John, however, escapes from their vivacity (455). He is further "a cold hard man" (432) and consequently he represents an oppressive force which extinguishes Jane's vivacity, as she falls under his freezing spell (459).

As earlier argued, Jane has an 'intellectual hunger'. Therefore, Diana seems to be of extra importance to Jane, since she inspires and stimulates her intellect (403). Jane explains that Diana is the superior one in the relationship, the leader in their trio (403). This superiority is reinforced through Diana's appearance: "[p]hysically, she far excelled me: she was handsome; she was vigorous. In her animal spirits there was an affluence of life and

certainty of flow, such as excited my wonder, while it baffled my comprehension" (403), Jane says. Moreover, Diana serves as Jane's moral guidance. She observes Jane's tendency to submit to John's wishes. Jane admits that she "knew no medium in my dealings [...] with hard characters, antagonistic to my own, between absolute submission and determined revolt" (462). Having observed this, Diana warns Jane against doing "whatever he exacts" as he would urge [Jane] to impossibilities (478). Jane explains that Diana "spoke with a certain authority" and she admits to "yielding to an authority like hers" (395). Providing Jane with such important guidance to "act on her own best and not St John's" (447), Jane manages to free herself from his oppression.

Most importantly, though, Mary and Diana include Jane in their sisterly communion. Their strong emotional bond, their close, sisterly relationship, makes Jane less emotionally dependent on Mr Rochester in their reunion towards the end of the novel. Fukunaga never alludes to the fact that Mary and Diana actually are relatives of Jane's. He has stated in an interview that he thinks the connection is not really necessary as long as Jane considers them family (Chai). However, the sisterly communion which Jane should feel in the River sisters' presence is not depicted clearly enough in the movie adaptation. Neither dialogue nor body language reveals a close relationship between Jane and the sisters. In the novel, Jane says that she is "fain to sit on a stool at Diana's feet, to rest my head on her knee, and listen alternately to her and Mary" (403). The only physical closeness they have in the movie, though, is polite hugs when they enter or leave rooms.

St John's cold and stern presence seems to be the restraining reason. Fukunaga has explained that "because we have so little time with the Rivers family, every moment I could, I just tried to bring them together" (Bonus 00.13.18). The fact that the sisters always appear together with St John in the few scenes - in fact the few minutes - they partake in the movie, makes the contrasting relationships Jane has with St John and the sisters insufficiently portrayed. In the novel, St John escapes the sisters' vivacity and withdraws from their reviving discourse. Contrarily, in the movie, when Mary says that "Jane is the most exciting thing that has happened since St John's sermon on the Fall of Babylon", St John silences her with a reproachful look (00.12.33).

Further deviating from the novel, Diana is not portrayed as superior to Jane, neither physically nor mentally. Jane seems taller than Diana and both sisters look as plain as Jane. The fact that Diana's face should be as full of charm as Mary's, further seems to suggest some appeal in appearance which is not conveyed. The sisters do not have intellectual discussions with Jane to show Diana's mental superiority either. Diana is merely positioned

close to books at best and no conversation with Diana establishes her as Jane's moral guidance. After St John claims that he wants Jane to be his missionary wife, Jane can be seen in the subsequent scene to ponder to herself in the dark, before declining his offer (1.40.20).

The fact that Mary and Diana's relationship should contribute to Jane's emotional independence seems unrealistic with such an insufficient and unfaithful depiction of the River sisters and their relationship with Jane. Jane's reunion with Mr Rochester should consequently not result in a 'healthier' relationship where she is less emotionally dependent on him for love. The sisters seem insignificant in Jane's maturation progress, quite contrary to the novel.

Conclusion

In the movie adaptation of *Jane Eyre* (2011), the main focus does not seem to be on the *Bildungsroman* genre, but instead on mood and tension. This is manifested in the non-linear retelling of the storyline. The movie begins 'in medias res' at Jane's most emotional stage at Thornfield. Jane's journey is from thereon retold through flashbacks and there is less focus on Jane's progress and development from the different stages in her life. Consequently, the important women in Jane's 'pilgrim progress' are not allowed as much focus in the process of contributing to Jane's self-discovery and independence.

Clever camera work and fashion choices strengthen Mrs Reed from Gateshead as Jane's main antagonist, who instigates Jane's struggle for freedom and independence from oppression. However, Sally Hawkings' appearance diminishes Mrs Reed's authority. The movie version of Mrs Reed furthermore remains a somewhat flat character without some of the important social motives for advocating Jane's exclusion.

In the Lowood scenes, Helen Burns serves as an important character in the process of setting the mood of the self-sacrificing and religious hypocritical environment. As a consequence, her character is thoroughly portrayed as Jane's religious inculcator as well. From Helen's influence, Jane obtains a religious faith which contributes to some emotional independence. This is shown in the scenes where she forgives Mrs Reed and when she calls to God for strength to leave Mr Rochester. Miss Temple is cut from the movie though, despite the fact that she is Jane's most important source of influence at Lowood. Not only is she

important for Jane's self-control, but she also contributes to Jane's independence through education and self-support. Consequently, Jane's educational background, her working as a governess, as well as an important reason for Mr Rochester's attraction to her, remains unsubstantiated in the movie. Without Miss Temple, Jane comes across as an undeveloped and unrealistic character. At the same time, the overall mood and the feel of hardship which shapes Jane's childhood at Lowood can be argued to be reinforced without her 'refuge temple'.

At Thornfield, Jane is influenced by Mrs Fairfax and Bertha Mason. Mrs Fairfax is displayed as a humorous character with a close relationship to Jane. In the novel, she quite contrarily serves as a moderate, class-conscious person who makes Jane build up an unhealthy emotional dependence on Mr Rochester. This change of character is important, though, in order to make Mrs Fairfax contrast with Mr Rochester's brooding mysterious character. Fukunaga consequently favors mood and tension before faithfulness to character. Bertha Mason's character is also crucial for setting the mood. However, even though the short scene with small and unthreatening Bertha may seem anti-climactic and unrealistic, Bertha in the movie still conveys the forbidden female passion in a woman which must be confined and silenced. Jane throws off her corset after meeting her, and this action could demonstrate her freeing herself from such gender confinement.

Mary and Diana Rivers from Marsh End are not Jane's relatives in the movie adaptation. They are not sufficiently depicted for the audience to appreciate their close relationship with Jane either. They never visibly stimulate Jane's intellect, nor show convincing sisterly love. They should consequently not contribute to Jane's emotional independence from Mr Rochester in their reunion. St John Rivers, who dominates the movie scenes the Rivers sisters partake in, seems to be the reason for the restrained relationships at Marsh End – his character permeates the cold mood.

Considering Fukunaga's focus on mood and tension when adapting, most deviations from the female characters in the novel can be regarded as motivated. Furthermore, it must be taken into account that when a novel of approximately 500 pages is adapted into a two-hour movie, the adaptation will inevitably be compressed. Fukunaga himself has explained the difficulty in "fleshing out" even the main characters in such a short amount of time (Bonus: 01.33.30). Nevertheless, Fukunaga arguably fails to capture the most central part of Jane's journey. Considering the fact that *Jane Eyre* is a *Bildungsroman*, influenced and structured after John Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress,* Jane Eyre's 'pilgrim progress' should ultimately also result in her reaching her "Celestial City". This is the final stage where she

feels free and independent. In the novel, she reaches this final step at Ferndean, in a marriage to Mr Rochester where she says that she feels "as free as in solitude, as gay as in company" (519). However, Fukunaga has chosen a "quiet ending" of his adaptation. He has claimed that it is more interesting to portray the closeness and intimacy of their relationship instead of adapting the novel's ending, which he has claimed is just full of words (Bonus: 01.48.00). Since he does not allow Jane to articulate her marital bliss then, where she claims that she feels free, he also raises the question whether Jane ultimately reaches her "Celestial City" in the movie. Consequently, the question also remains whether the women have been part of shaping Jane's into an independent and free woman in the end.

Possibly, the uncertainty of Jane's independence and freedom reinforces the gothic mood. Fukunaga's focus on mood and tension when deviating from the novel's description of the women can *in part* be regarded as adaptation faithful to the spirit of the novel. As earlier stated, the moviemakers of *Jane Eyre* aimed at a renewal of a classic novel, and thus some changes were expected and motivated. However, the ending of the movie renders Jane's reaching her goal uncertain. Consequently, Fukunaga's adaptation of *Jane Eyre* (2011) is more of a tension-filled gothic story, than it is a *Bildungsroman* of female identity and self-discovery through other women's influence.

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