An examination of the complexity and function of the gothic features in Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre*

En undersökning av komplexiteten och funktionen av de gotiska inslagen i Charlotte Brontës *Jane Eyre*

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Summary

An important and in fact essential feature throughout Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre* is the gothic elements. At first sight *Jane Eyre* may not look like a gothic novel. However, it includes a lot of gothic features that appear throughout the novel such as ghost, dark secrets and supernatural experiences. The aim of this essay is to show that the gothic elements in the novel have the function of developing the storyline as well as the characters. Importantly, the gothic features affect the relationship between the two main characters both positively and negatively. The results of this essay show that the gothic elements in the novel have a greater function than to frighten the reader. They do not only help develop the main character but they also show the reader Jane’s inner passions and desires. The gothic features are also central in developing Mr Rochester’s character in the eyes of the reader, as they help illustrate his complicated background as well as his growing closeness to Jane. The gothic features are thus central to characterization, and ultimately crucial in building the relationship between the two main characters.
Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre* is a novel about personal growth both morally and psychologically, as well as about finding your identity. The protagonist, Jane Eyre is an orphan girl who grows up at Gateshead Hall, the home of her cruel aunt and cousins. She is repressed and treated with little respect. At a young age her aunt sends her away to Lowood charity school. After six years as a student and two years as a teacher she leaves Lowood to become a governess at Thornfield Hall where she meets its owner, the secretive Mr Rochester. At Thornfield Hall she experiences both love and personal growth. When reading the novel, one cannot fail to notice the obvious mysterious atmosphere that according to me, is partly there as an attempt to frighten the reader. The novel contains ghosts and dark secrets as well as supernatural experiences. In the essay I will distinguish between gothic incidents, which take place in the story and gothic features or elements which is an aspect of the narration. The gothic elements constitute one of the most commented upon aspects on the novel and like many other critics I will in this essay discuss the function of the gothic elements found in the novel. Robert B. Heilman, one of the critics examining the gothic features in *Jane Eyre*, states that Brontë steps away from the old Gothic. Her purpose of using the gothic features is therefore not to frighten the reader but rather to explore the inner feelings of the characters (99). Like Heilman, I will also show that there is a complexity to these gothic features; they are not just there to frighten us but also help develop the storyline as well as the characters. For example, as we shall see, gothic elements show the reader the real desires and passions of the main character and also the development of the relationship between Jane and Mr Rochester.

Before examining these features a definition of the gothic genre is necessary. Jerrold E. Hogle accounts for typical features of the genre. Distinctive for a gothic novel is that the action takes place in a large mansion or old house. This place is full of hidden secrets that haunt the characters psychologically or physically, as well as secret rooms and dark interiors. The gothic genre often includes the possibility of the supernatural. The boundaries between the supernatural and reality are in some cases crossed when unexplainable incidents occur in the story, which can either be naturally explained or be truly supernatural. The atmosphere is mysterious and includes elements like wind howling, rain blowing, crazed laughter or lights in abandoned rooms (2). All of these elements appear in the novel *Jane Eyre*. Both Gateshead Hall and Thornfield Hall have a gothic atmosphere and unexplainable incidents occur in both houses. However, in my opinion the novel should not be seen as a gothic novel but a novel that contains many gothic features.

I will start by looking into how gothic elements are important for character development. I argue that Brontë uses these gothic features to show how Jane’s character grows when she is exposed to the gothic elements. The red room is the first gothic element that we encounter in the novel. In the red room she sees herself as a spirit-like creature in the mirror. She, herself, explains this supernatural creature as a tiny phantom, half fairy, half imp (*JE* 10). The vision Jane has of herself through the mirror is connected to her feeling of being different that she is constantly struggling with. Jane has no
connection to her aunt Reed or her cousins even though they are her family. According to Eugenia C. DeLamotte the picture in the mirror represents the Jane that Mrs Reed has created through her tyranny (195). She then understands that this is how others see her, like a monster, a weird child. She has been exposed to comments like “she is not worthy of notice.” and “that nasty Jane Eyre” (JE 26) and has begun to believe these. But when she sees this picture of herself she realizes that this is not who she really is. She knows that she has to prove to everyone that they have been treating her wrong. In the red room Jane also sees a ghostly light from outside which she believes is the ghost of her uncle. A few minutes before she sees this light she thinks about how he would have treated her kindly if he was alive considering his wish on his death bed when he asked his wife to take care of Jane as if she was her own child. This makes her wipe her tears, afraid that he will show up as a ghost and comfort her (JE 13). Once again she reflects on the fact that her “family” is treating her unjustly, something that strengthens her self esteem even more. DeLamotte similarly claims that in the red room she realizes that she is being treated unjustly and that she has to defend herself in order to not become this creature (196). According to Heilman it is via the gothic features in this scene that Brontë shows how Jane’s self esteem and feeling of value grow (97).

Jane’s exposure to the gothic elements in the red room leads to her confrontation with Mrs Reed:

*Speak* I must: I had been trodden on severely, and *must* turn: but how? What strength had I to dart retaliation at my antagonist? I gathered my energies and launched them in this blunt sentence – “I am not deceitful: if I were, I should say I loved you; but I declare I do not love you: I dislike you the worst of anybody in the world except John Reed: and this book about the Liar you may give to your girl, Georgiana, for it is she who tells lies, and not I.” (JE 36-37).

As we can see from the example Jane speaks to her aunt like an adult rather than like a ten year old child. She speaks to Mrs Reed almost as if they were equals something that was not at all common in the 19th century. This shows her beginning transformation from a child to an adult that she goes through in the red room. Angela Andersson too claims that in the red room Jane transforms from a child to a more mature person (7).

When Jane comes back to Gateshead Hall, her childhood home, after some time with Mr Rochester at Thornfield Hall her cousins meet a completely transformed woman, a confident and experienced one. Elisabeth K. Haller argues that Jane’s true identity emerges fully after the struggle with Mr Rochester’s personality. He is the first man she has interacted with and she feels that she can speak freely when she is with him because they share a special bond like equals (208). I argue that it is her special, almost supernatural, connection to Mr Rochester that gives further strength to her character, thus continuing a development that started in the red room. She feels almost invincible and whatever her
cousins or aunt say it will not bother her anymore (JE 273). Jane has this feeling of security because she knows that she has a real home to come back to and people there who love her. She also has Mr Rochester, a man who in fact sees her like his equal (JE 304) and to whom she feels comfortable to speak in a free manner. As we can see, Jane’s experiences in the red room and her special relationship with Mr Rochester give her strength and courage to keep fighting for her rights and against the abuse from Mrs Reed and her cousins on both occasions at Gateshead Hall.

The gothic features are also included in the novel to show Jane’s inner passions and desires. Heilman argues that Brontë’s women are independent and full of power and passion (97). I have already touched upon this subject in the former paragraph. In my view, the development of the character and her letting out her inner passions are closely related. The red room is an image of the inner passion Jane feels but cannot let out because she is repressed by her aunt. However, in the red room she cannot hold it back and gets so upset and scared that she faints (JE 14). She cries for help and shows great emotions because she wants to be let out of the red room. Jane is an emotional person with a lot of passion buried inside of her. She is not a cold person without feelings and this is why it is hard for her to stay calm in situations like these. Ever since childhood, Jane has been trying to hold back her emotions but sometimes the circumstances become too much for her and her passions shine through, for example when she defends herself against John Reed, the maid says: “Did ever anybody see such a picture of passion!” (JE 6). Laurel P. Lorber states that Jane hides the passionate sides of her personality from the outside world and only lets them shine through a couple of times when she cannot control herself (1). Mysterious features in the novel such as the gothic elements in the red room thus represent Jane’s inner feelings wanting to come out. After her experiences in the red room we can see a clear development in Jane, she has grown to become more confident and speaks up for herself. For example when she asks her aunt Reed what Mr Reed would have said if he knew how she treated her, Jane explains it herself as if “something spoke out of me over which I had no control” (JE 26). This is her inner passion wanting to get out and that is something she cannot control. After being in the red room these feelings become stronger and Jane gets more convinced that she is not the one having a problem or acting wrong. She tells her aunt that her children are not good enough companions for her: “They are not fit to associate with me” (JE 26).

Another example of gothic elements that show Jane’s attraction to mysteries is when she arrives at Thornfield Hall. She meets an atmosphere that is a mixture of Gothicism and everyday realism. During a tour of the house Mrs Fairfax, the housekeeper, shows her old rooms and dark staircases. Jane finds this fascinating and hopes for an interesting and exciting stay at Thornfield Hall but when she is shown to her own chamber it is furnished in an ordinary style, the room feels very welcoming and safe (JE 114), something that according to DeLamotte makes Jane a bit disappointed (199). During the same tour Jane encounters a hidden life inside the house when she hears a mysterious
laugh in the attic (JE 125), one she cannot imagine a human being giving away because it is so preternatural. DeLamotte claims that once again Jane is disappointed when the gothic becomes ordinary and shows itself to be the servant, Grace Poole (201). I agree that Jane becomes a bit disappointed considering that she seeks out the attic at a later occasion. In the third storey she lets out her imagination and she speaks of the “life, fire, feeling, that I desired and had not in my actual existence” (JE 128). This indicates that she is looking for a thrill and that she feels bored in the house and wants excitement (JE 128). DeLamotte also argues that instead of feeling scared in the mysterious haunted house Jane feels bored and is in fact afraid of the ordinary life (205). Another example that proves DeLamottes argument and shows the connection between gothic features and Jane’s passion is when Jane does not want to enter the house after her meeting with the mysterious man during her walk:

I did not like re-entering Thornfield. To pass its threshold was to return to stagnation; to cross the silent hall, to ascend the darksome staircase, to seek my own lonely little room, and then to meet tranquil Mrs Fairfax, and spend the long winter evening with her, and her only, was to quell wholly the faint excitement wakened by my walk – (JE 136-137).

She clearly wants excitement in her life and something more than the domestic life that includes spending time with Mrs Fairfax, a woman who is as far from gothic as you could come. Pat Macpherson also argues that Jane feels discontented as a governess and with the domestic life (12). However, she feels safe and comfortable with the people at Thornfield Hall and for the first time in her life she feels that she has a real home (JE 294), and that is where Mr Rochester is.

Caroline Stone argues that Mr Rochester awakens Jane’s sexual passion because he is the first man with whom she experiences attraction, jealousy and desire (3). When Mr Rochester brings with him visitors to Thornfield Hall, among them the beautiful Miss Ingram, Jane experiences strong feelings, feelings she has never had before. When she learns that Miss Ingram is intended to be Mr Rochester’s wife she refers to herself as a better match for Mr Rochester and points to their mental equality (JE 208), something that I will come back to later on in the essay. She also indicates that she has to conceal her feelings because she does not think that he feels the same for her (JE 208). According to Eric Solomon, Jane is passionate but she has enough control to water down her fiery feelings (216). When she realizes that she has to leave Thornfield Hall and her beloved Mr Rochester if he marries she cannot hold back any longer:

Do you think, because I am poor, obscure, plain, and little, I am soulless and heartless? You think wrong! – I have as much soul as you – and full as much heart! And if God had gifted me with some beauty and much wealth, I should have made it as hard for you to leave me, as it is now for me to leave you. (JE 303).
Jane lets out all her emotions before her master, a man that in theory is superior to her in every way. However, this is not an obstacle for her because she feels connected to him in mind and she relates to him as her equal “…equal – as we are!” (JE 303). Debra Teachman refers to Thornfield Hall as a place where Jane can give in to her strong emotions (6). Jane displays her true passions when she learns that Mr Rochester already has a wife. She is tempted to be with him anyway but she does not give in to her passions because of her own dignity “I care for myself” (JE 382). When she is about to leave Mr Rochester she has to resist her strong desire to go to his chamber and say: “Mr Rochester, I will love you and live with you through life till death” (JE 385). However, she uses her inner strength as noted above, and leaves. The gothic features at Thornfield Hall thus function to show us the inner desires and passions that Jane has kept hidden during her childhood at Gateshead Hall and Lowood School.

Besides developing Jane’s character, the gothic elements in the novel also show the reader Mr Rochester’s true character and let us know that they affect him in both a negative and positive way. To him as a character in the story, the incidents are not mysterious or exciting but a threat to his intentions towards Jane. As we shall see he becomes closed and bitter but he also gets more certain that it is Jane that he loves. According to Fred Botting, Mr Rochester is a typical Byronic hero, a common figure in gothic fiction, a social outcast with a dark secret from the past (98). Terry Eagleton suggests that Mr Rochester is travelling so much to try to forget his past life (21). This indicates that his past life is in some way reflected in the house and that he travels to forget. He refers to Thornfield Hall as a prison because his dark past haunts his mind when he is there (JE 257).

The reason for his travels may also be connected with his desire to once again experience the excitement and freedom he felt before his haunted past. He might want to bring back the time when he did not have any worries weighing on his heart. It is hard to have to hide one’s secrets and still try to live in the present and move on with your life. This is something Mr Rochester at least tries when Jane arrives to Thornfield Hall. To everyone’s surprise he stays for longer periods than usual in the house. He makes an effort to try to get to know her and spends a lot of time with her (JE 376). However, at the same time as Jane starts to experience the gothic incidents in the house he gets reminded of his past and becomes more distant from Jane in order to keep his secret. DeLamotte claims that he has trouble socialising with Jane because he both wants to confide in her and still he does not want to tell her the truth afraid that she will not stay. He attempts to have it both ways, that is, he wants to be close to her but he does not wish to tell her the whole truth (209). At the same time the gothic elements at Thornfield Hall make the reader aware that Mr Rochester loves Jane and that he becomes even more confident that he is doing the right thing when he wants to marry her. He compares Jane’s true nature to the lover of his past (JE 353), to whom she differs in many ways. She is not exotic and beautiful on the outside, but instead she has a lot of inner beauty. She is also intellectual and able to have interesting discussions with Mr Rochester. The fact that Jane is more intellectual than his former women might make Mr Rochester
insecure because Jane is more likely to find out his secret. As a result of this he becomes more closed towards Jane because he is trying to protect himself. DeLamotte and Macpherson argue that Mr Rochester’s secret is the biggest impediment to the development of the relationship between Mr Rochester and Jane because it makes him a man of mystery (212, 10). In other words the gothic features in the novel illustrate the obstacles to the union of the two main characters. For example, they show the reader Mr Rochester’s complicated background and explain his closed and bitter character but they also help us see that he really cares for Jane.

Furthermore, the gothic features in the novel show the reader the development of the relationship between the two main characters, Jane and Mr Rochester. In the following I will argue that the gothic features bring them closer to each other for example during the mysterious fire in Mr Rochester’s bedroom. But they also draw them further apart for example when Jane figures out that Mr Rochester does not tell her the truth and keeps secrets from her regarding the gothic incidents. As I mentioned in the previous paragraph Mr Rochester himself is a big impediment to the development of their relationship because of his secret past.

The first gothic feature that I will touch upon is the fire in Mr Rochester’s chamber which is one of the early mysterious elements at Thornfield Hall. Jane cannot sleep one night because she feels worried and the mystery of the house is affecting her, she hears the same laugh she heard when she first arrived at Thornfield Hall (JE 176). It leads her out to the hall and then to Mr Rochester’s chamber which is filled with smoke because his bed is set on fire. Jane rescues Mr Rochester from a horrible fate and then wants to summon Mrs Fairfax and the servants, but Mr Rochester does not let her do this (JE 178). Instead he wants her to stay in his room while he goes away to check on something on the third storey. The fact that Jane sits by herself in the dark and waits after this awful experience is gothic in itself, and she hears footsteps and hopes that it is Mr Rochester and not “something worse” (JE178). When Jane is about to leave for her own chamber Mr Rochester asks her if she is leaving him already and holds on to her hand (JE 180). He also reveals the connection he felt with her the first time they met: “I knew... you would do me good in some way...” (JE 180). There is an obvious attraction between the two characters considering how emotional Mr Rochester is and also the fact that Jane cannot sleep after their encounter because she felt something special (JE 180). This is a clear indicator that this element brings them closer to each other.

As already mentioned, DeLamotte argues that the gothic incidents at Thornfield Hall make Mr Rochester a man of mystery and this is an obstacle to him and Jane getting closer to each other and to be completely honest with each other (212). I agree that Mr Rochester’s background is an obstacle for the characters to develop their relationship but I also think that it is the mystery around Mr Rochester that attracts Jane. It is not his appearance that tempts her, since Jane’s impression the first time she meets
him is that he is not handsome or heroic-looking \((JE\ 133)\). Maybe it is his mysterious character that attracts her.

Mr Rochester blames Grace Poole, one of the servants, for the fire \((JE\ 179)\) but Jane is not so certain that Grace Poole is responsible for the incident because she shows no guilt and Mr Rochester does not fire her. Instead Jane believes that Grace has some sort of power over him and that she wants them harm \((JE\ 185)\). The day after the fire Jane is looking forward to seeing Mr Rochester but she learns that he has gone away. In a way he gives her mixed signals and this makes her doubt his feelings for her \((JE\ 192)\). With the gothic features around the fire in Mr Rochester’s bedroom Brontë shows the attraction that is awakened between Jane and Mr Rochester and it becomes clear to the reader that they both feel something for one another.

When the master of the house is away, a mysterious gypsy woman comes to read the fortune of Mr Rochester’s female guests, and she knows things about them that only a member of the party could know. This situation involves many gothic aspects, the woman is mysterious and nobody knows where she comes from or how she can know these things about the guests. Maybe she is in fact psychic. Also, having your fortune told is a magical act that requires faith in the supernatural. The fact that she wants all the women to enter alone into the room is also something that makes this feature look gothic. This is based upon the uncertainty of what is going to happen and what her intentions are with the encounter. When Jane is with the mysterious woman it is not until he reveals himself that Jane realizes that it is Mr Rochester who has dressed up \((JE\ 240)\). Abby Bardi claims that Mr Rochester dresses up as a gypsy woman in order to get to Jane’s inner thoughts and to get her to reveal her feelings for him \((47)\). She understands that he wants to trick her to say inappropriate things and shesuspects that he knows how she feels about him \((JE\ 241)\). According to Bardi, Mr Rochester crosses the boundaries of both class and gender by dressing up, his intentions being to enter thoughts and subjects that would have been denied him in his male form: he wants to gain access to the secrets of female discourse \((47)\). When Mr Rochester is dressed up, Jane and he become more like equals and therefore closer. They are both women and of lower class than the master of the house, and Jane is even in a superior position here. Maybe this is Mr Rochester’s way of showing Jane that he sees her as his equal. I think that the gothic feature of the gypsy woman and her fortunetelling help the development of their relationship. The situation reveals that they have hidden feelings for each other and that they both are going through a lot of trouble hiding it.

The next gothic element at Thornfield Hall that affects the relationship between Jane and Mr Rochester is when Mr Mason gets attacked in the middle of the night. Jane and all the other guests are awakened by a horrible cry \((JE\ 245)\) which Mr Rochester claims to be one of the servants having a bad dream. Jane however, knows that there is something going on so she gets dressed and waits. After a while Mr Rochester knocks on her door asking her for help because he trusts her not to tell anyone. The
fact that he asks her indicates that he has some kind of sense of the feelings Jane has towards him and because of this he knows she will help him. This improves Jane’s self esteem because he puts his faith in her and it also gives her a hint that Mr Rochester feels something similar for her that she feels for him. He does not under any circumstances let Jane and Mr Mason speak to each other while he is away fetching the doctor *(JE 250)*. While Jane tends to the injured Mr Mason she learns that the person who hurt him, Grace Poole, is in the room next door when she hears her laugh *(JE 249)*. Jane helps Mr Rochester to tend to Mr Mason even though she has no idea of what has happened to him. This shows her devotion to her master and that she would do anything for him. I believe that after this incident she is even more curious about what Mr Rochester is hiding regarding Grace Poole and their connection. The fact that only the two of them share the secret about this night creates a bond between them. However, Mr Rochester still keeps Jane at a distance when he lies about the circumstances around Mr Mason’s injuries and the person responsible for them *(JE 258)*.

Before the wedding between Jane and Mr Rochester a series of unexplainable things happen, and all can be seen as an illustration of how the gothic features affect their relationship. Macpherson argues that it is the mysterious person who is responsible for all the incidents at Thornfield Hall that stands in the way of Jane and Mr Rochester’s romantic union *(10)*. Macpherson suggests that the closer the two main characters get to each other the more strange things happen, because the person or creature behind these incidents is not happy with the development of their relationship *(23)*. The first gothic feature we can see after the proposal is when lightning strikes the chestnut tree, the same tree they had been sitting under during the evening of the proposal. It is a sign of the love between Jane and Mr Rochester and that it soon will be torn apart. “You did right to hold fast to each other” *(JE 332)*, Jane says when she passes the tree the day after the lightning struck it, and by this she expresses her love for Mr Rochester. My interpretation is that this feature is included to show the reader that their love is stronger than lightning and that they are supposed to be together no matter what.

The night before the wedding, a mysterious woman comes into Jane’s chamber with a light, the same light she has seen in connection to the former gothic incidents at Thornfield Hall. The woman is without doubt against the marriage between Jane and Mr Rochester because she tears Jane’s wedding veil apart. DeLamotte suggests that this represents Rochester violating Jane by marrying her. The woman also represents the passionate side of Jane, the side that is eager to be with Mr Rochester; she is dressed in Jane’s wedding veil and a wedding dress and looks herself in the mirror *(212)*. This element is similar to the one in the red room in which Jane saw a picture of herself that she did not like. This time the mysterious being illustrates that she is doing the wrong thing by marrying Mr Rochester. DeLamotte argues that Mr Rochester can offer Jane adventure and travelling, a salvation from the plain life and a life in solitude but he is also a villain in the sense that he tries to lure her into marrying him under false premises *(211)*.
If we look back at the incident in the red room and the picture Jane saw of herself in the mirror, we remember how this was a reflection of how others saw her and a warning that she had to put a stop to the abuses in order to not become the creature she saw in the mirror. This time the picture she sees in the mirror symbolizes the woman she will become if she marries Mr Rochester. In other words Jane will not like the person she becomes if she goes through with the marriage. Jane is also puzzled about Mrs Fairfax’s disapproval of their marriage and this also makes her uneasy. The gothic elements before the wedding are all negative and should make Jane doubtful about the wedding but her strong emotions towards Mr Rochester and their spiritual connection make Jane even more confident in her choice regarding the marriage. As we can see, all these gothic features have to do with the relationship between the two main characters, and they serve the purpose of bringing them closer to each other but also further apart.

The last gothic feature in the novel that I will bring up is the special connection between Jane and Mr Rochester. They have some sort of supernatural bond between them, almost like a spiritual connection that in the end brings them together. One example of this is when Mr Rochester stands in the garden and Jane comes up behind him and he then addresses her even though he has not seen her. “I had made no noise: he had not eyes behind him- could his shadow feel?” (JE 298). This means that they can feel each other’s presence because of their special bond. Teachman argues that the feelings Jane and Mr Rochester have for each other are on a supernatural level (22). They are often referred to as twin souls or kindred spirits. The expression “kindred spirits” refers to two people sharing a dramatic experience and having to depend on each other in order to get through the situation or if one of them saves the other (urbandictionary.com).

I believe that out of the gothic elements previously mentioned there are two in which Jane and Mr Rochester could have established the bond as “kindred spirits”. The first one is the fire in Mr Rochester’s chamber from which Jane saves him. The other one is when Mr Mason gets attacked and Mr Rochester asks Jane for help, and they have to pull together in order to get through the situation. Mr Rochester has a special connection to Jane and as Eagleton argues his relationship with Jane is marked by spiritual equality (29). The other supernatural feature the author uses to show their special connection is when they both hear each other call out to one another even though they are miles apart. Just after St John Rivers proposes to Jane Mr Rochester calls out to her (JE 507) and she can hear him. This feature is according to Lorber genuinely supernatural in comparison to other mysterious elements in the novel that have had a natural explanation (26). This gothic feature makes Jane decline the proposal and instead she leaves the family to go search for Mr Rochester. According to DeLamotte the mysterious summons is Jane’s rescue from a life in entrapment with a man she does not love. She also claims that this is an example of their telepathic communication (221). As we can see, this last gothic element is crucial in the
development of the relationship between the two main characters and it also has the function of bringing them together at the end.

In conclusion, *Jane Eyre* is a novel with many gothic features and by examining them, it becomes clear that they have a greater function than just frightening the reader. They are closely related to the development of the story and the characters. As I have shown in this essay, the red room and the spiritual connection between Jane and Mr Rochester are gothic elements that develop the main character in the eyes of the reader. They illustrate her awareness of being treated in the wrong way and that she learns to stand up for herself. She develops into a more mature person and the gothic features make her strong. The gothic features in the novel also have the function of showing the reader Jane’s inner passions and desires which she hides due to her aunt pushing her away. In the red room Jane experiences strong emotions because of the gothic elements and we can see that she is a very passionate person when she stands up to her aunt Reed. At Thornfield Hall we learn that she wants excitement when she shows interest and seeks out the third storey where she hears the supernatural laugh. She also shows great interest in the mysterious man she meets during her walk outside Thornfield Hall and does not want to re-enter her domestic life as a governess. Also her sexual passions are awakened at Thornfield Hall by its owner Mr Rochester, a mysterious man that captures Jane’s interest and desire and whom she also experiences a special connection with. Due to this connection she feels that she can let out her emotions and speak freely even though Mr Rochester is in a much higher position than her. The gothic elements at Thornfield Hall also have the function of showing the reader Mr Rochester’s real character, they help illustrate his troubled background and his growing affection for Jane. As I have already mentioned the gothic elements in the novel are essential for the development of the relationship between Jane and Mr Rochester. They do so in both a negative and positive way. Even though the gothic features clearly show the reader that Mr Rochester is hiding something they also create situations and circumstances in which the two characters connect with each other. I argue that the supernatural connection between Jane and Mr Rochester is a gothic element that pervades the whole novel and it is also this gothic element that brings them together at the end.
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