Mindreading matters

A study of Jane Eyre and Emma, in search of empathic response in the narrative, through theory of mind, for the purpose of scaffolding

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to use a cognitive approach to analyse two novels that are considered to be part of the British literary canon: *Jane Eyre* (1847) by Charlotte Brontë and *Emma* (1816) by Jane Austen. The study aims to utilise close reading and thematic analysis of human emotion. The themes are as follows: the fear of losing a loved one, morals and values in relation to love and marriage, and feelings of disgust, aversion, antipathy and shame. Quotations from each novel are analysed with the theoretical framework of “theory of mind” and placed within the emotional frame of the thematic analysis. The aim of this is to provide possible scaffolding for learners of English as a foreign language, in an attempt to make canonised literature more easily accessible. Scaffolding may be needed for Swedish EFL learners to overcome the language barrier presented in literature from the 19th century. Further benefits of emotional scaffolding conform to requests of the Swedish Agency of Education and the Curriculum’s demands that education be conducted in such a way as to promote empathy, compassion and understanding for fellow humans.

The analysis shows that strong emotional connection in the novels provide ample opportunity to analyse readers’ possible empathetic response, thus resulting in the opportunity for these responses to serve as scaffolding as well as an opportunity to improve empathetic ability.

Keywords

Canonised literature, classic literature, EFL, empathy, scaffolding, upper secondary school, theory of mind
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Introduction

John McRae, professor of English at the University of Nottingham, makes a distinction between literature with capital “L” and literature with lowercase “l”. With this analogy he is referring to the difference between canonised literature and popular fiction. The syllabuses for English at upper secondary level in Sweden, demand that both categories of literature are to be included at every level, to various degrees (Nat. Agency for Ed. “Syllabus” 55, 60). Current literature, such as modern fiction, poetry and songlyrics, utilises a style of language that learners can approach with relative ease, since it is the style of language that surrounds them in their everyday life. Canonised literature, in particular novels that are considered classics, are usually older works of literature and their style of language might be more difficult to comprehend for learners in the 21st century. However, classic novels have the benefit of a universal appeal with themes that expand beyond cultural differences, which makes the language barrier something worth conquering for educational purposes.

To successfully integrate a classic novel in the classroom, strategic scaffolding is required, to assist the learners of English as a foreign language. Scaffolding refers to supportive behaviour, designed to help learners develop in the Vygotskian-coined term Zone of Proximal Development, which refers to the next level of skill that a learner can reach in the learning progress (Phisghadam and Ghardiri 51). A tool for scaffolding is to approach literature from a cognitive perspective, where this approach helps us understand how the representation of emotions in literature works, as a result of the mind’s tendency to use imagination to ascribe meaning. Therefore, learners might be
able to use an emotional connection with the literature to understand and learn the language.

In a broader sense, the implementation of classic literature in the EFL classroom has more than one benefit, as it might improve language proficiency while also providing learners with cultural capital, which sociologist Pierre Bourdieu defines as knowledge that furthers a person’s means of communication and self-presentation in society, to further one’s social standing (Richardson 241-58). This cultural capital is improved for learners through reading novels that native speakers of English are very familiar with, as they are also part of public education in native English-speaking countries. Reading classic novels thus provides opportunity for learners to develop their English-speaking persona, by developing their cultural capital through learning about historic values and traditions in English-speaking countries, also in correlation with the aims of the syllabuses for English (Nat. Agency for Ed. “Syllabus” 54, 60). As mentioned before, this is highly relevant to the EFL classroom, especially when applied during the course of English 6, where the syllabus requires far more literature than the previous course does (Nat. Agency for Ed. “Syllabus” 60). Beyond an increase in literature in the EFL classroom, the syllabus for English 6 also demands said literature to be older literature, which has been taken into consideration for the purpose of this study. A cognitive approach to reading literature in the EFL classroom also finds support in the curriculum for upper secondary education, as it should promote understanding and compassion for others (Nat. Agency for Ed. “Curriculum” 5), where a cognitive approach to literature might be a tool for this section of Swedish education.

As Sweden has not taken part in warfare for over 200 years, it is not unreasonable to say that growing up in Sweden in the 21st century means growing into a
life without immediate danger. It might be unreasonable to say that such safe
surroundings are supporting a desensitization among the population. However, an
article that was published in the Official Journal of the International Society for
Research on Aggression in 2009 by Kostas A. Fanti, Eric Vanman, Christopher C.
Henrich and Marios N. Avraamides, suggests that repeated exposure to media violence
reduces the psychological impact of media violence in the short term, thus desensitizing
viewers to media violence. The study claims that viewers tend to feel less sympathetic
toward the victims of violence and actually more enjoy the violence portrayed in the
media. The result of this study, combined with the individualized selection of media
content from social media such as Facebook and binge watching of Netflix and HBO,
show the danger of viewers being exposed to a limited view of the surrounding world.
By adding the effects of an apparent secure upbringing in a Swedish suburb, students
may have difficulty empathizing with other people, simply because their knowledge of
global events are limited by the narrow bubble they live in. With the global climate
being what it is, that bubble is beginning to burst and a different reality is hitting closer
to home than before, which is one of the reasons to apply counter-methods to this
possible desensitization. Furthermore, the Swedish curriculum defines that students are
to be taught democratic values and understanding and compassion for fellow humans
(Nat. Agency for Ed. 5). One medium for this education, might be the reading of
literature in the classroom. In accordance with theory of mind scholar Lisa Zunshine,
the motivation is therefore that an emotional connection might provide the opportunity
of increased understanding and compassion, eventually resulting in greater empathy for
other human beings.

The aim of this study is to use a cognitive approach to analysing two novels that
are considered to be part of the British literary canon; Jane Eyre (1847) by Charlotte
Brontë and *Emma* (1816) by Jane Austen. As established classics, these novels have previously been analysed in numerous fields, among them feminism and post-colonial theory. Themes that have been used for such analyses include views on women, marriage and social status, and also views on non-Europeans, particularly female, as savages in the colonial era. Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar shed new light on the subject in *The Madwoman in the Attic*, when they relate the paradox of how female authors portrayed female characters from the 19th century as either angelic or monstrous, to fit the mold of patriarchy and the writing style of their contemporary male authors. In *Subjection at home and abroad: representations of the "other" in Jane Eyre and Villette*, Nina Marie Thodesen states that one way for the heroines, Jane and Lucy, to form their own identity in a patriarchal society, is to do it in the same manner as men do, by defining people and habits they feel superior to, for example people who are more oppressed than the females in a patriarchal society. Thodesen claims that the female protagonists do this by stating negative differences by using foreign or oriental references, which Thodesen labels the language of empire. The work of Jane Austen has often been read as a commentary on society’s views on gender and stereotypes of the early 19th century, in regards to social climbing and the different opportunities that were allotted to men and women during the Georgian era. In *Jane Austen, Feminism and Fiction* Margaret Kirkham places Austen in the climate of post-enlightenment feminism, and claims that Austen demands a sharp reader to detect the criticism against a patriarchal society’s contemporary prejudices. According to Kirkham, a feminist view on Emma’s devotion to her father can be interpreted as criticism against the sentimentalization of devoting daughters.

This study will however apply a more cognitive approach, specifically through the theory of mind, in an attempt to frame the human emotions portrayed in the novels.
as some select themes. The idea is that learners can identify with the centrality of the emotions and that it will provide scaffolding for readers. As previously mentioned, this might also further empathic ability as learners feel for the characters through close reading.

By using a cognitive approach while including canonised classic novels in the EFL classroom, these novels are made to be more accessible to young Swedish readers in today’s society. The richness of a classic novel not only provides opportunity to improve language proficiency, but may also enhance cultural capital and understanding of English-speaking countries and their socio-cultural setting. The universal emotions in the themes of the novels, such as the fear of losing a loved one, morals and values in relation to love and marriage, and feelings of disgust, aversion, antipathy and shame, can be used as scaffolding for learners that read canonised literature with both a language style and a setting that is old-fashioned, and thus remote from today’s readers. Furthermore, reading literature with this approach might provide an opportunity for learners to develop their empathic ability. *Jane Eyre* and *Emma* were chosen for this study because of their possibilities regarding interpretation and their richness in portraying multiple characters and their individual narrative development.

**Method**

This study is done in an attempt to view *Jane Eyre* and *Emma* in a new light for educational purposes. The desire is to create a new perspective on these novels, through theory of mind and the analysis-themes selected, which might allow for a deeper connection between learners and material, thus resulting in fruitful knowledge for the
EFL classroom. It is not an attempt to dictate how one should include these novels in EFL classrooms, merely a possibility for how one could include them.

For the purpose of this study, the theoretical framework begins with the broader term of cognitive criticism and develops into the narrower theory of mind. It is initially necessary to refer to the former, as it is the foundation for the latter.

A cognitive approach to literature, is based on the idea that literature can provide affective stimulation for the reader. Peter Stockwell, Professor of Literary Linguistics at the University of Nottingham, summarises cognitive criticism as “a way of thinking about literature” (Nikolajeva, 4). Maria Nikolajeva, professor of Education at the University of Cambridge, describes cognitive criticism as a theory that deals with both reader and implied authors’ strategies in text construction. Cognitive criticism works as a broader theoretical framework that connects various directions of literary scholarship to human cognition, including but not limited to perception, attention, empathy, memory, reasoning, decision-making, language and learning (4). Nikolajeva attests that cognitive criticism has provided hard facts in terms of how reading fiction can improve our understanding of the actual world. Nikolajeva claims that the brain reacts to fictional worlds such as descriptions, events and characters as if they were real. This reaction simulates cognitive and affective responses to the actual world, and therefore our understanding of it (8). The central argument of Nikolajeva’s study is that cognitive and affective skills such as theory of mind and empathy can be enhanced and accelerated by reading fiction. The present study focuses on upper secondary education, with the idea that students at this level are capable of connection through empathy while reading. As the title of Nikolajeva’s book suggests, it focuses on children rather than adolescents. However, Nikolajeva states that empathy, the ability to understand other people’s feelings independently of one’s own, develops fully during adolescence which
depends on the radical restructuring of the adolescent brain (17). Therefore, it is reasonable to suggest that the direction of this study, of upper secondary education, is justified in its focus, as young adults at this age are prime candidates for further empathic education.

By relying on the claims of Nikolajeva, that reading literature helps the reader to develop a better understanding of the real world, that claim also raises the question whether the fictional world is an accurate portrayal of the real world. Keith Oatley, Professor of Applied Psychology at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education and at the Department of Psychology at the University of Toronto, together with then doctoral student Mitra Gholamai in (in the Department of Human Development and Applied Psychology, also at the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto), refer to the debate of the nature of fiction, between authors Henry James and Robert Louis Stevenson, where the former argued that a novel is “a direct impression of life” which followed along the lines of Aristotle and his proposal that fictional narrative is based on mimesis, a term generally translated to “representation” or “imitation” or “copying” (263). On the other hand, Stevenson remained unconvinced and stated that literary art was an abstraction (263-64).

For the purpose of this study, a middle ground of the statements of James and Stevenson is desirable, giving both sides of the debate equal worth. Fiction is after all fictive creation, but it is a creation of the human mind and must, in some way, reflect its reasoning and perceptions, according to the prominent scholar of theory of mind Lisa Zunshine.

Lisa Zunshine, professor of English at the University of Kentucky, Lexington, states that “‘Mind reading’ is a term used by cognitive psychologists to describe our ability to explain people’s behaviour in terms of their thoughts, feelings, beliefs, and
desires.” Furthermore, Zunshine states that this ability is also called “theory of mind”, which she uses interchangeably throughout the chapter. Zunshine specifies that “theory of mind” as an ability, is used to interpret the behaviour of real-life people in terms of their underlying states of mind, which can be extended to literary characters (195). Supported by Zunshine’s claim, it should be possible to read works of fiction and interpret characters’ behaviour with theory of mind and subsequently use that experience to interpret real-life people’s behaviour. Zunshine attests that although this mechanism was developed to deal with real people and that readers are aware on some level that fictive characters are not real people, it is still stimulated by literature (198). For the EFL classroom, this connects fiction and reality and might allow for a broader understanding of human behaviour, hopefully enabling compassion in the process, thus fulfilling an important part of teaching.

The Oxford Dictionary quite simply defines empathy as “the ability to understand and share the feelings of another”, while Suzanne Keen, professor of English at the University of Washington and Lee, describes empathy as a vicarious and spontaneous sharing of affect, something that can be provoked by witnessing another’s emotional state (4). With these definitions in mind, it is necessary to question whether this ability is actually enhanced by practicing theory of mind during close reading of a novel. However, as theory of mind is an ability that allows for interpretation of actions to explain beliefs and emotions, it stands to reason that if one can interpret others in this capacity, one is not far away from relating to the beliefs and emotions behind the actions.

As previously mentioned, it might be possible to enhance one’s cognitive skills by reading literature, as fiction is a human creation, thus its universes must in some way reflect the actual circumstances that the creator exists within, in terms of the human
emotion and interactions found in said fiction. By reading, it might therefore be possible to experience emotion and interaction, without actually experiencing them (or the harm within this experience), thus rendering reading as a safe but hopefully effective form of empathic education (Zunshine, 195). Patrick Colm Hogan, Professor of English at the University of Connecticut, discusses the literary understanding of emotion (278). Hogan asks the relevant question of “why is it that we engage in simulation of emotionally aversive situations?” (279). The author provides the answer that the whole point of simulation is that it allows us to avoid potentially harmful outcomes. Hogan explains this by sharing an imagined scenario of hunting in a dangerous place, where being eaten by lions is a certainty. By reading about this, the reader avoids actually being eaten, but this still obtains the empathic experience within the mind (279).

The National Agency for Education in Sweden states that teaching at upper secondary level is to be conducted in such a way as to promote democratic citizenship and compassion for other people, regardless of cultural and ethnical dissimilarities (5). These are some of the many components that the curriculum demands be present in any classroom, outside the content of the subject being taught but within the classroom context. One of many questions that teachers ask themselves, is how to successfully rise to this occasion. As a teacher of English one might find an answer to this question within the field of literature. Students might learn values like compassion for their fellow humans by reading literature about fictional characters, and similarly the emotional response to the literature might make it easier for learners to read and relate to classic literature.

This study utilises a method of close reading and thematic analysis. The purpose of close reading is to find sections in the material that correspond to the themes of human emotion portrayed in the content. The aim is to find instances in the text that
engage theory of mind by means of emotional appeals. The themes are limited to the loss of a loved one, morals and values in relation to love and marriage and lastly feelings of disgust, aversion and shame. These were chosen after close reading of the novels, and limited because they represent different aspects of human emotion, in simplified terms: fear, love and aversion.

Zunshine exemplifies an interpretation of behaviour with a citation from Virginia Woolf’s *Mrs Dalloway*, where “Peter Walsh was *trembling* because he was *excited* to see Clarissa again.”, and Zunshine discusses the assumption the reader makes by connecting the italicized words in the sentence (193). It is claimed that readers expect such a connection, because of a collective past history as readers, where we generally assume that a character’s body language or actions are indicative of his or her thoughts and feelings. In regards to the example above, Zunshine explains that if the trembling was caused by illness, the author would have explicitly told the reader this. Thus it is a common strategy for authors to convey emotion in literature, through behaviour, according to Zunshine, since they write from the assumption that readers share a collective past history of reading (193-95).

This study utilises a similar strategy for analysis of the material, with certain adaptations. Examples from the material contain both conversation and situations where a specific human emotion is portrayed through either dialogue or interior monologue. However, the example from *Mrs Dalloway*, where Peter Walsh is indeed trembling because of emotion, rather than illness, is a rather direct example the application of theory of mind in literature. For the purpose of this study, an example from *Jane Eyre* follows:

I mean, that human affections and sympathies have a most powerful hold on you. (Brontë 409)
Applying theory of mind to this quote requires knowledge of the surrounding context in this section of the novel, as it does not carry much weight on its own. The protagonist Jane receives this statement about herself from another character, St. John, after a discussion about her newfound friends actually being her cousins. He has observed her behaviour during this conversation, interpreted it and lastly revealed the fruit of his analysis where he makes a statement about Jane’s emotional state. This is an example of how the approach of theory of mind is applied during this study, by analysing the dialogue and determining the emotion based on that dialogue.

As mentioned above, the novels *Jane Eyre* and *Emma* are analysed through the lense of theory of mind, in an effort to search for emotional appeals that might work as scaffolding for readers. What follows are more detailed descriptions of the themes that the novels are analysed through.

Jane Eyre and Emma, as characters, are both without either one or both parents, which creates a theme of loneliness and a search for comfort in other characters as well as places in the narratives. In some sense, the characters are continually searching for a new home and a place of comfort during the course of the novels. This allows for a theme of emotions that is possible to relate to for modern readers as well. Especially in *Jane Eyre*, the novel portrays a set of universal emotions such as unjust treatment and victimization of children. This theme has been titled “Fear of losing a loved one”, but also encompasses the emotion that comes from already having lost a loved one, and the consequences of that loss.

During the period of time when these novels were written and published, the institution of marriage was more than a union of two people, which assisted in establishing the second theme as “Morals and values in relation to love and marriage.”
It was certainly a way to gain social capital, but was most prominently coloured by the urgency of financial security, as marital alliance would determine one’s economic circumstances for life, either for better or worse. Knowledge about the historical context surrounding *Jane Eyre* and *Emma*, is in some sense a requisite for the reader to relate to this theme. For further discussion of this aspect, I refer to the final part of the main analysis, where the pedagogical implementation is documented.

One aspect of the emotional spectrum contains more negative feelings, such as disgust, aversion and antipathy, against others and oneself. While the initial themes focuses on thoughtful emotions, this theme concerns emotions of a more spontaneous character. Explosive feelings of disgust, taking the shape of outrage and anger, are sometimes followed by feelings of shame. This curve of emotion allows the analysis to follow both the rise and fall of emotion. This theme has been titled “Feelings of disgust, aversion, antipathy and shame”.

The novels chosen for analysis have been selected firstly for their status as canonised literature, and secondly for them being written by women authors. In correlation with both syllabus and curriculum for English at upper secondary level (Nat. Agency of Ed. “Syllabus” and “Curriculum”), this type of canonised literature provides the EFL classroom with a beneficial level of language, in terms of linguistics, as well as cultivating cultural capital for the learners through the richness of the material (Richardson 241-58). As it is favourable to provide learners with examples of highly regarded literature, it is also favourable that said literature has been written by woman authors, to establish a non-normative setting for the classroom. Furthermore, the nature of *Jane Eyre* and *Emma* are fairly different, where the former provides a darker, gothic setting and the latter provides lighter setting for the narrative. This has also been a
factor for the selection of material, as the varied nature of the narratives might respond to varied learners in the EFL classroom.

Both novels are mainly focused on the personal development of the main characters, Jane and Emma. However, the extensive character-list of both novels provide the reader with ample opportunity to analyse both direct dialogue between characters and interior monologue. Main themes of both narratives correspond to each other, for example love, marriage, autonomy, social class, the role of women in society, thus producing a link between them, which benefits a combined analysis. The narration in Emma is from a third person view, relating the story from Emma’s point of view, in keeping with Austen’s characteristic free indirect discourse, but also on occasion from Mr. Knightley’s. Jane Eyre is narrated by the protagonist herself, while events occur and also in retrospect. The narrations provide insight into the main characters, while also allowing the reader to view the protagonist Emma from another’s perspective, thus providing ample opportunity to apply the theoretical framework.

*Jane Eyre* spans 521 pages, while *Emma* is a novel of 350 pages (in the current editions used). In correspondence to the length of the novels, various amounts of material have been found in correlation with the thematic analysis. In this study, *Jane Eyre* is most prominent during the analysis, as the novel provided many examples corresponding to the themes. For the same reason, the first part of the thematic analysis consists of three examples from both novels, as the novels displayed this theme throughout the narration in an implicit manner, with few direct examples for analysis. This lack of balance between samples from the novels, and also between themes, is not considered a weakness of the study as it is merely a suggestion for how one could approach the novels from a cognitive perspective, and therefore does not aim to be correct in any universal sense.
Thematic analysis of the portrayal of human emotions

Being orphaned or semi-orphaned, can create a struggle in identity formation when growing up, thus displaying a consequence of actualising the fear of losing a loved one. During the narrative, it becomes apparent that Brontë’s protagonist Jane reacts to her state as an orphan by becoming very independent and strong in her own person. Austen’s protagonist Emma also suffers the fate of losing a parent, and thus absorbs the role of ruling female in the household, not so gently steering her father in the direction she desires. There is however also an element of identity formation for Emma, as she struggles to become a woman without the guidance of a mother. Both novels could be considered to belong to the genre of bildungsroman, since the reader follows the protagonists’ moral and psychological growth through their endeavors.

The character of Mrs. Weston (formerly Miss Taylor), previously governess to Emma and her sister Isabella, is a presence in the novel that fills a gap left by the deceased mother in the household. This becomes apparent quite early in the novel as Mr. Woodhouse keeps expressing his sorrow for Miss Taylor leaving the household to marry Mr. Weston. The following quote includes a conversation between the returning daughter Isabella and Mr. Woodhouse.

‘Ah my dear,’ said he, ‘Poor Miss Taylor! It is a grievous business.’

‘Oh, yes, sir,’ cried she, with ready sympathy, ‘how you must miss her! And dear Emma too. What dreadful loss to you both! I have been so grieved for you. I could not imagine how you could possibly do without her. It is a sad change, indeed; but I hope she is pretty well, sir.’ (Austen 67)
Without further focus on Austen’s distinctive irony, the reader is being told by the narrator, through the context surrounding this exchange, that Mr. Woodhouse and his daughter are in earnest about their statements. Even though marriage could mean salvation for a woman (from poverty for example), the conversation might elicit an empathic response to the abandonment of Mr. Woodhouse and Emma, rather than the pleasure of Miss Taylor’s successful marriage. By leaning on Keen’s statement that characters’ negative affective states, such as those provoked by undergoing persecution, suffering, grief and experiencing painful obstacles, make a reader’s empathizing more likely, the sorrow at losing Miss Taylor will be the empathizing winner, even though it can also be interpreted to be morally wrong (71). This is an assessment that Paisley Livingston and Alfred Mele, Professors of Philosophy at Lingnan University, Hong Kong and Florida State University respectively, make in regard to warranted emotion, as in the appropriate response to the evoked stimuli (159). Livingston and Mele claim that people attribute moral value to many emotions, and relate how it can be considered to be morally proper to feel sympathetic in certain circumstances and outraged in others (159). These views on the conversation exemplifies how complex analysis of emotional response can be, since different points of view can amount to different emotional response.

Being a small child in the home of relatives who despise her, Jane Eyre finds some comfort in a doll. The actions of this young child, clutching her doll while trying to fall asleep, are quite universal and most likely still happen in modern society. As Jane believes the doll to be happy, making herself happy, she imbues the doll with human-like qualities and creates a mother-like role for herself, substituting the doll for the child she herself is.
. . . I undressed hastily, tugging at knots and strings as best I might, and sought shelter from the cold and darkness in my crib. To this crib I always took my doll; human beings must love something, and, in the dearth of worthier objects of affection, I contrived to find a pleasure in loving and cherishing a faded graven image, shabby as a miniature scarecrow. It puzzles me now to remember with what absurd sincerity I doted on this little toy, half fancying it alive and capable of sensation. I could not sleep unless it was folded in my night-gown; and when it lay there safe and warm, I was comparatively happy, believing it to be happy likewise. (Brontë 35)

Keen claims that character identification lies at the heart of readers’ empathy. However, she also states that novels and stories featuring animals, miniaturized figures such as Tolkien’s hobbits, and toys come to life, provoke empathic reactions of readers who report ready identification with nonhuman figures (68). With this in mind, it is possible that this passage from Jane Eyre, might induce empathy for both Jane and the doll. With Keen’s statement it is also possible that the reader can empathize with Jane’s feeling of wanting to escape the cold and darkness of the nursery by holding onto something she loves.

Throughout Jane Eyre, the protagonist searches for both places and people to call home and family and when she finally succeeds, (outside the romantic relationship, refreshingly against the stereotype that finding true love solves everything) it is with apparent joy, observed by her newfound cousin. As a reader, one is not privy to the actual seriousness or excitement that Jane feels, however, from the conversation and the
view of St John, the emotion in this exchange is quite evident.

‘You were serious when I told you you had got a fortune; and now, for a matter of no moment, you are excited.’

‘What can you mean? It may be of no moment to you; you have sisters and don’t care for a cousin; but I had nobody; and now three relations - or two, if you don’t choose to be counted - are born into my world full-grown. I say again, I am glad!’ (Brontë 445)

As Keen states that character’s negative affective states, such as those provoked by undergoing persecution, suffering, grief and experiencing painful obstacles, make a reader’s empathizing more likely (71), it is possible that this example does not fit the bill for emotional scaffolding. However, when the reader has already empathized with Jane’s loneliness and search for family and shelter throughout the narrative, essentially her search for a real-life substitute of her childhood doll, this section should elicit joy in the reader.

Almost every one of Jane Austen’s novels deals with the reality of marriage in British society during late the 1700s and early 1800s, and the novel Emma is no different. As it was for women in real life, so it is for the women in novels from that time period as well; marriage is the option for women to not only prosper, but survive. However, in sharp contrast to Austen’s other heroines, Emma is the daughter of a wealthy gentleman and does not require marriage to keep her standard of life. The following quote shows the somewhat unusual situation that Austen has placed Emma in, as she does not require marriage to save her. Emma has the opportunity to afford love to
be the only reason to enter into such an alliance.

I have none of the usual inducements of women to marry. Were I to fall in love, indeed, it would be a different thing; but I never have been in love; it is not my way, or my nature; and I do not think I ever shall. And, without love, I am sure I should be a fool to change such a situation as mine. (Austen 60)

In this instance, the reader might engage into a particular aspect of theory of mind, what Zunshine refers to as the reader’s ability to navigate multiple levels of intentionality present in a narrative (204). The reader might understand that Emma believes this as she is saying it, basing this on the context around this statement, where the reader is aware of Emma’s determined personality and personal conviction. To follow Zunshine’s idea: “We know that Austen knows, that we know, that Emma thinks, that this statement is the truth” (Fiction 31). The reader might empathize with Emma’s foolishness in thinking that she will not ever fall in love, simply because as young adults it is sometimes the case that one feels that way. Behind the last line of the quote lies a strong conviction that might resonate within modern readers, since the usual incitement to marry comes from love in today’s society.

The narration relates how the protagonist regards the acquaintances surrounding her newfound friend Miss Harriet Smith and her prospective alliances. The emotion behind this statement reveal a great deal about the character, since it relates Emma’s high-handedness in judging others and deeming them “unworthy”. This also extends to the second and third quote below, when Mr. Elton declares his love for Emma and not
Miss Smith, much to Emma’s disdain, and she has to put Mr. Elton into his right place, which is, of course, below Emma.

Those soft blue eyes, and all those natural graces, should not be wasted on the inferior society of Highbury and its connections. The acquaintance she had already formed were unworthy of her. The friends from whom she had just parted, though very good sort of people, must be doing her harm. (Austen 14)

Encouragement! I give you encouragement! Sir, you have been entirely mistaken in supposing it. I have seen you only as the admirer of my friend. In no other light could you have been more to me than a common acquaintance.

(Austen 95)

He wanted to marry well, and having the arrogance to raise his eyes to her, pretended to be in love; but she was perfectly easy as to his not suffering any disappointment that needed be cared for. There had been no real affection in his language or manners. (Austen 97)

In the final thoughts of the character Emma, is becomes evident that she applies the theoretical framework herself (Zunshine 195), basing her reasoning in the second quote on Mr. Elton’s behaviour and the lack of “real affection in his language or manners” (97) during his confession of love for Emma. It is however difficult to determine who would gain the reader’s emotional response, if it is empathic feelings of outrage and injustice at Mr. Elton’s arrogance or if the reader might think that Emma’s theory of
mind has been deceived and that Mr. Elton actually does feel for Emma. With such an assumption, the reader might empathize with the firm rejection instead and feel its sting.

Mr. Knightley at one point, reprimands Emma for an insult she gives to Miss Bates and relates this to the latter’s social standing as a reason for reprimanding Emma. The following statement conveys the harsh reality for women during this era, where marriage was salvation from poverty and in some sense keeping of one’s freedom. To escape poverty as a single woman, employment might be necessary, such as a governess for example, which most likely meant a reduced sense of freedom as one’s time and intellect was essentially bought.

Were she a woman of fortune, I would leave every harmless absurdity to take its chance; I would not quarrel with you for any liberties of manner. Were she your equal in situation - but, Emma, consider how far this is from being the case. She is poor; she has sunk from the comforts she was born to; and if she lives to old age must probably sink more. (Austen 270)

Peter Mallett, Associate Professor at Kobe Shoin Women's University, states that a claim that Austen makes in her novel is that a rich single woman will never be the target of ridicule that a similarly single but poor woman will be (39). In keeping with Eugene Goodheart, Professor of Humanities at the University of Brandeis, and his statement that Austen intended Emma to be a heroine whom no one would much like, apart from Austen herself (589), the narration does not require the reader to empathize with the protagonist, as is often the case. Keen relates to her own findings, where readers felt the need to apologise for empathizing with another character, other than the one suggested through the narrative technique (76). This element of reader’s empathy continues to
correspond with *Emma*, suggesting that it is a desired effect to empathize with Miss Bates, and not Emma.

The character of Miss Bates in *Emma*, might be compared to the character of Jane Eyre, in terms of their situations as women who are more in need of marriage than Emma. However, Jane and Emma share similar traits of resisting marriage, although for different reasons. This interior monologue that Jane has during the aftermath of the destroyed nuptials with Mr. Rochester is filled with the strong conviction that many attribute to the protagonist. She speaks yet again about the conflict between passion and conscience, because she wants to be Mr. Rochester’s mistress, but cannot consign to do it in good conscience.

I care for myself. The more solitary, the more friendless, the more unsustained I am, the more I will respect myself. I will keep the law given by God; sanctioned by man. I will hold to the principles received by me when I was sane, and not mad - as I am now. Laws and principles are not for the times when there is no temptation: they are for such moments as this, when body and soul rise in mutiny against their rigour; stringent are they; inviolate they shall be. (Brontë 365)

During an initial analysis of this quote, it might seem like a case where reason rather than emotion is used, thus questioning its value within the framework of this study. However, the reason for its inclusion is the emotion behind this interior monologue. It is an excellent example of the internal struggle of the protagonist, as she is torn in half by
her split personality, the passionate one and the logical one. The following quote also illustrates the struggle between Jane’s decision in the novel, the interior monologue displaying the way she compares her two suitors, Mr. Rochester and St John.

I was almost as hard beset by him now as I had been once before, in a different way, by another. I was a fool both times. To have yielded then would have been an error of principle; to have yielded now would have been an error of judgement. (Brontë 482)

As a character, Jane Eyre is highly sympathetic in her position as underdog, and Keen relates a teacher’s reflections about Jane Eyre as an example of a fictional character’s power to resist professional technical analysis, because of the strong character identification that readers felt for her (77). In reference to the theoretical framework, the first narration illustrates a hypothetical image of “body and soul, rising in mutiny” (Brontë 365), thus even a description of behaviour can be interpreted for its emotional connection, if the actual behaviour is not present. Zunshine articulates the question of “how much prompting do we need to bring to attribute a mind of her own to a fictional character?” (202). She states that very little is required, since the slightest indication that we are dealing with a self-propelled entity leads us to assume that this entity possesses thoughts and feeling, for the reader’s interpretation and, frequently, misinterpretation (202). Thus it might be the case that it is the reader’s privilege to decide if emotion or reason is pulling the strings in that example, and also deciding which to empathize with.
Jane Eyre is a character with strong conviction of right and wrong. The following quote is taken from a section in the novel where Jane is having her fortune told by a fortune-teller, who is really Mr. Rochester in disguise. This passage is even more applicable in terms of the theoretical framework, as it is Mr. Rochester (albeit in disguise) applying it to Jane. Brontë is telling the reader what Mr. Rochester thinks that Jane thinks, what he determines that she feels for love and possibly himself. Yet again the concept of multiple embedded minds becomes apparent, “Brontë wants us to know, that Mr. Rochester knows, what Jane’s feelings are” however, without immediately letting Jane in on this gender-game (Zunshine “Fiction” 31).

I see no enemy to a fortunate issue but in the brow; and that brow professes to say - ‘I can live alone, if self-respect and circumstances require me so to do. I need not sell my soul to buy bliss. I have an inward treasure born with me, which can keep me alive if all extraneous delights should be withheld, or offered only at a price I cannot afford to give.’ The forehead declares, ‘Reason sits firm and holds the reins, and she will not let the feelings burst away and hurry her to wild chasms, The passions may rage furiously, like true heathens, as they are; and the desires may imagine all sorts of vain things: but judgement shall still have the last word in every argument, and the casting vote in every decision. Strong wind, earthquake-shock, and fire may pass by: but I shall follow the guiding of that still small voice which interprets the dictates of conscience. (Brontë 233)
Caroline Levine, Professor of English at the University of Cornell, suggests a correlation between author Brontë’s pseudonym, Currer Bell, and this section of Jane Eyre, where the hero assumes the trappings of femininity in order to beguile Jane to betraying her innermost feelings (278). The application of theory of mind in this example is extremely direct, since the character Mr. Rochester is using both visual reactions and previous knowledge about Jane to deliver his statements about her, to her. This combination allows Mr. Rochester to attribute Jane’s brow and forehead with a fair amount of emotion. Readers might empathize with the feeling of being scrutinized by someone else, and relating to the uncomfort of having one’s emotional state written on one’s face.

Jane Eyre berates herself for believing in a happy ending with Mr. Rochester. The following quote displays the internal struggle that Jane faces, in the aftermath of her failed nuptials. Things have changed and Jane regards herself as blind to her beloved’s faults. This calls into question how much desire the reader has to be moved by fiction (Burke 89), and if this can be extended to a character as well. If the desire is high, will the reader empathize with Jane and more importantly, does Jane empathize with Mr. Rochester (even though he has lied to her) because her mind deeply desires her to do so?
'Oh never more could I turn to him; for faith was blighted - confidence destroyed! Mr Rochester was not to me what he had been; for he was not what I had thought him. I would not ascribe vice to him; I would not say he had betrayed me; but the attribute of stainless truth was gone from his idea, and from his presence I must go: that I perceived well. When - how - whither, I could not yet discern; but he himself, I doubted not, would hurry me from Thornfield. Real affection, it seemed, he could not have for me; it had been only fitful passion: that was balked; he would want me no more. I should fear even to cross his path now: my view must be hateful to him. Oh, how blind had been my eyes! How weak my conduct!' (Brontë 341)

On her own, Jane continues on a metaphoric dialogue, a continuing aspect of Victorian novels, according to Erik Gray, Associate Professor of English and Comparative Literature at the University of Columbia NY, that symbolises compatibility between future partners (269). This type of dialogic sharing, is further discussed during the later sections of the thematic analysis.

The battle between Conscience and Passion, ever raging inside Jane Eyre, is also the battle between stereotypes of male and female. The clear-headed Conscience is calculating and harsh, typically male, and thus taking a decisive grip on the female Passion, telling her what is to be done. A contemporary study found that faced with moral conflict, women were more likely to accommodate others’ wants to maintain personal relationships (Raymore 625). This might offer an explanation for the struggle within the protagonist, as she desires to stay and leave, simultaneously.

But, then, a voice within me averred that I could do it, and foretold that I should
do it. I wrestled with my own resolution: I wanted to be weak that I might avoid
the awful passage of further suffering I saw laid out for me; and Conscience,
turned tyrant, held Passion by the throat, told her tauntingly, she had yet but
dipper her dainty foot in the slough, and swore that with that arm of iron he
would thrust her down to unsounded depths of agony.

‘Let me be torn away, then’ I cried. ‘Let another help me!’

‘No; you shall tear yourself away, none shall help you: you shall yourself pluck
out your right eye; yourself cut off your right hand: your heart shall be the
victim, and you the priest to transfix it.’ (Brontë 343)

For the reader, an emotional response to this passage might come from the
coloracter identification that Keen claims (68), or the negative emotions displayed in the
interior monologue (Keen 71). However, as this passage relates the struggle of
maintaining virtue, modern readers might find the concept fairly old-fashioned and
difficult to grasp. This could result in a complete lack of reader’s empathy to Jane’s
situation. This is however refuted by Keen’s study, where she refers to readers’
explanations about empathizing with characters they had nothing in common with.
Keen explains that the opportunity to share feelings underwrites character identification
that transcends difference (70). Thus, readers do not have to be orphans with the
struggle to maintain virtue to be able to empathize with Jane.

On the subject of Mr. Rochester’s mistresses, Mr. Rochester realises that Jane’s
opinion of him throughout the conversation is lessening. Although Jane adheres to the
morality of the Victorian era, by subtly judging Mr. Rochester, she is also unwilling to
do so in a direct manner. She contains her opinion in a fairly diplomatic utterance “I
don’t like you so well as I have done sometimes” (Brontë 359), supporting the case that
she is entertaining the idea of bending to another’s will to maintain the personal relationship, in spite of the moral conflict (Raymore 625).

. . . but, Jane, I see by your face you are not forming a very favourable opinion of me just now. You think me an unfeeling, loose-principled rake: don’t you?

‘I don’t like you so well as I have done sometimes, indeed, sir. Did it not seem to you in the least wrong to live in that way, first with one mistress and then another? You talk of it as a mere matter of course.’ (Brontë 359)

Yet again, a character is evidently applying the theoretical framework on another character, as Mr. Rochester openly applies “mind-reading” (Zunshine 195) during the conversation with Jane. Readers’ emotional response might focus on the protagonist in this instance, which should produce feelings of empathy towards the situation of wanting to throw one’s convictions to the wind and do the “wrong” thing, instead of the morally right (Emotion 159).

Having been offered the role of Mr. Rochester’s mistress, and denied it, Jane contemplates what she should do. The emotional response to this interior monologue, might focus on Jane’s claim that “no one will ever love me so again” (Brontë 414), emanating from hopelessness, as a negative emotion could be the empathizing trigger for the reader (Keen 71).

Which is better? - To have surrendered to temptation; listened to passion; made no painful effort - no struggle; - but to have sunk down in the silken snare; fallen asleep on the flowers covering it; wakened in a southern clime, amongst the luxuries of a pleasure villa: to have been now living in France, Mr. Rochester’s mistress; delirious with his love half my time - for he would - oh, yes, he would
have loved me well for a while. He *did* love me - no one will ever love me so again. I shall never more know the sweet homage given to beauty, youth, and grace - for never to anyone else shall I seem to possess these charms. He was fond and proud of me - it is what no man besides will ever be. But where am I wandering, and what am I saying, and above all, feeling? Whether is it better, I ask, to be a slave in a fool’s paradise at Marseilles - fevered with delusive bliss one hour - suffocating with the bitterest tears of remorse and shame the next - or to be a village school mistress, free and honest, in a breezy mountain nook in the healthy heart of England? (Brontë 414)

The contrastive image of right and wrong, illustrated with words such as fever, delusive bliss and bitter tears to stand against freedom and honesty in the healthy heart of England, and most importantly, the question of whether “to be a slave in a fool’s paradise”, indicates that the reader needs to interpret the symbolic imagery for the emotional struggle that it really is. In this instance, the application of theory of mind, is directed to the hypothetical behaviour, rather than realistic behaviour of the character. Zunshine states that the reader is asked to make the narrative emotionally cohesive, by supplying explanations for character behaviour (203). Even though the passage from *Jane Eyre* details both uncertainty and certainty for the protagonist’s fate, it is up to the reader to assume the mental stance of Jane, until the narrative decides that is.

St John asks Jane Eyre to accompany him to India, as a missionary and his wife, not for reasons of love but for logical reasons that they suit, according to St John. These
passages are very similar in emotional stance as the previous one, yet again illustrating Jane’s internal monologue when trying to make a decision. Keen states that the internal perspective is a commonplace of narrative theory that promotes character identification and readers’ empathy (96). These examples of monologue are included because of their clear path from defiance and resoluteness in attempting to do the wrong thing for the right reasons, to the same emotions in attempting to do the right thing, for the equally right reasons. Readers’ empathy might be invoked by following the logical train of thought of the protagonist in the following quotes.

If I do go with him - if I do make the sacrifice he urges, I will make it absolutely: I will throw all on the altar - heart, vitals, the entire victim. He will never love me; but he shall approve of me; I will show him energies he has not yet seen, resources he has never suspected. yes, I can work as hard as he can, and with as little grudging. (Brontë 466)

Can I receive from him the bridal ring, endure all the forms of love (which I doubt not he would scrupulously observe) and know that the spirit was quite absent? Can I bear the consciousness that every endearment he bestows is a sacrifice made on principle? No: such a martyrdom would be monstrous. I will never undergo it. As his sister, I might accompany him - not as his wife: I will tell him so. (Brontë 467)
Jane continues to pursue the Victorian metaphoric dialogue, except as an interior monologue, which might further readers’ empathy for a union with Mr. Rochester, instead of St John, as the former is more inclined to pursue this dialogic sharing of metaphor (Gray 274). However, as Jane’s interior monologue yet again displays a dilemma which is highly connected to the historical context, it might be difficult to elicit reader response, despite Keen’s claim that character identification, and thus empathic response, can be found without much in common between reader and character (70). Nevertheless, this section remains a strong candidate for invoking readers’ empathy, as it contains modern values of marriage and love. Grey claims that metaphoric dialogue between fictional characters is in correspondence with actual Victorian interactions, which sprung from debates concerning women’s rights, that changed the view from arranged marriages, decided by parents, to alliances that were willingly entered into by both man and woman, and should therefore not constitute the inferiority of the woman, as she was equally willing to enter into the marriage (276-77). Although Jane is not married, she is invoking her right to refuse the marriage proposal, a sentiment that might be relatable to modern readers, even though arranged marriage still exists in parts of the world today. For the reader’s response, this issue might raise awareness of women’s rights and an improved ability to empathize with the fact that not everyone is allowed to refuse a proposal.

In the end, Jane and Mr. Rochester are equals, as he has been crippled and blinded, reducing his physical state, and she has gained her fortune, thus elevating her economical state. In the following quotation, it is apparent that, for Jane, the combination of conscience and passion is what is needed for their relationship to flourish. The emotion of love is there, but the fact that she can be useful to her future husband also plays a role in the decision regarding their future together.
I love you better now, when I can really be useful to you, than I did in your state of proud independence, when you disdained every part but that of the giver and protector. (Brontë 513)

Sandra Gilbert, Professor of English at the University of California Davis, and Susan Gubar, Professor of English and Women’s studies at the University of Indiana, support the view that it is the financial independence that allows Jane to “follow her on will” and marry Rochester on terms of equality (367). For reader’s empathy, this desire of equality between two partners before uniting in an alliance, is highly relatable to today's society, where equal rights for everyone remains a subject that must be discussed. Jane engages in her own version of applying theory of mind in the statement above. Mr. Rochester has not explicitly “disdained every part but that of the giver and protector” (Brontë 513), nonetheless, his actions during the events of the narrative have provided Jane with enough material to be able to explain his behaviour with these feelings.

Something that is vital to the trials in Jane Eyre is how the protagonist struggles to resist the persuasion of her suitors as both Mr. Rochester and St John ardently try to persuade Jane to become theirs. Both unions at the time are faulty since the one to Mr. Rochester would be passionate but immoral and lacking in honour, while the one with St John would be moral and honourable but lacking in passion. Jane Eyre uses her morality to stand against Mr. Rochester, and tries her best to battle against the reason within her to marry St John, as he is more suitable in the sense of morals and values. In
some regard, this struggle belongs to Emma as well, both in terms of her ardent shutdown of the declaration of love that Mr Elton claims to have for her and also in her own statements about not falling in love, and therefore having no incitement to marry. The emotional response that this theme might invoke within readers, does focus on values and morals of marriage and love from a different century, thus it might prove complex for modern readers to relate. However, in accordance with Keen’s claim about empathy for characters without practical and obvious connection to the reader, an empathic response could still be invoked (70). Consequently, the theme could be applied to a modern discussion about stereotypical roles in relationships, to promote empathy for others and further a non-normative educational environment.

Thematically, feelings of disgust, aversion, antipathy and shame, are combined in this study because of their nature of being regarded as negative human emotions, however with potentially positive effects, for example through aversion followed by shame and thus a desire to repent for behaviour that caused negative effects. During the novels, either between characters or for a character, these emotions develop together and follow each other, thus allowing for a combined analysis of several emotional responses.

As mentioned earlier, Emma is an anomaly as a protagonist created by Austen, since she is of good fortune and under no duress to marry, like other heroines in Austen’s novels. However, where other protagonists face such problems, Emma’s main problem is that her good fortune threatens to disrupt her life, as the following quote displays.
The real evils, indeed, of Emma’s situation were the power of having rather too much her own way, a disposition to think a little too well of herself: these were the disadvantages which threatened alloy to her many enjoyments. (Austen 1)

Goodheart states that Austen warned her readers that Emma would be a heroine that not many would like, except for Austen herself. Goodheart goes on to say that it is easier to define why the reader may dislike Emma than why her creator likes her. He attributes this to Emma’s willful and manipulative nature, and that she is an arranger or rather a misarranger of other people's lives. She fails to see things clearly and truly, and her self-knowledge is uncertain. Goodheart states that the end of the novel brings an acknowledgment from Emma that she has learned from experience, however, that not every reader is persuaded of this (589).

One of the first signs of shame on Emma’s part during the course of the novel, is during a conversation with Mr. Knightley, regarding Harriet Smith’s refusal of Mr. Martin’s proposal. The following quote relates an early discomfort for Emma, who considers Mr. Knightley her equal, when he resolutely does not agree with her on this matter. The smallness of this character is evident in the quotation, since her discomfort is directly related to her regard for Mr. Knightley rather than a true sense of regret at her conduct. If readers’ empathy is invoked for Emma in this quote, it does so regardless of the narration, since it does not fit the bill for figural narration and thus distances the reader from Emma’s stream of consciousness in her mind (Keen 96).
Emma made no answer, and tried to look cheerfully unconcerned, but was really feeling uncomfortable, and wanting him very much to be gone. She did not repent what she had done; she still thought herself a better judge of such a point of female right and refinement than he could be; but yet she had a sort of habitual respect for his judgement in general, which made her dislike having it so loudly against her; and to have him sitting just opposite to her in angry state was very disagreeable. (Austen 46)

Zunshine attests that shame is a public emotion, one that plays to an audience (228). This passage from Emma, interestingly combines a reversed application of theory of mind from the protagonist’s point of view. Even though the public emotion of shame is in her mental stance, she is trying to prevent Mr. Knightley from drawing such a conclusion by analysing her behaviour. The reason she does this can be traced to both Mr. Knightley’s reprimand and his behaviour, evident in the narrative, as “having him sitting just opposite to her in angry state was very disagreeable” (Austen 46).

In the following statement, made by Emma to Mr. Knightley, a certain bitterness is revealed towards society’s view of women. Through the narration, if the first-person point of view, the reader might instantly empathize with Emma, as the message of the quote might be very relatable to modern readers, despite gender. As Keen defined that readers often empathize with the victimization of children, similarly this might invoke empathy for society’s demands on outer appearance for both women and men (69-70).
I am very much mistaken if your sex in general would not think such beauty, and such temper, the highest claim a woman could possess. (Austen 44)

The protagonist Emma contemplates her own actions during the novel, and during this inner conversation feelings of shame and regret are apparent to the reader. This quote is problematic to place within the analysis, as it also belongs with the second theme of morals and values of love and relationships. Emma has reached a new level of empathy towards the people she usually manipulates.

The first error, and the worst, lay at her door. It was foolish, it was wrong, to take so active a part in bringing any two people together. It was adventuring too far, assuming too much, making light of what ought to be serious - a trick of what ought to be simple. She was quite concerned and ashamed, and resolved to do such things no more. (Austen 98)

Although this might suggest an empathic progress, Goodheart argues that, as a character, Emma is not nice and will indeed never be nice (598). For this argument to become relevant to the above quote, it is vital to reflect whether the power of empathy makes someone a better person, or simply a person with the capacity to choose to be better. Keen relates that studies show that reading enhances the ability to make inferences about other’s thoughts and feelings and that reading featuring positive depictions of members of “outgroups” leads to a reduction of social distance. However,
making accurate inferences and a reduction of social distance does not guarantee the production of human beings with good intentions toward others (105-6). Readers’ response to Emma’s resolution to “do such things no more” (Austen 98) may be to regard it with suspicion, wondering if character development has really occurred.

The narrative of *Emma* tells the reader that the protagonist does not appear to feel disgust or true aversion towards others simply because of their place in society. It is however evident through the narration that Emma does feel a need to actively make others feel less than herself, because of social standing, as the following quote concerning an invitation to a dinner-party at the Coles’ demonstrates. John Hagan, Professor of Sociology and Law at the University of Northwestern, is critical to the views of Emma that suggest immense character development of the protagonist, with Emma correcting her faults and achieving moral and emotional maturity (545-46). This passage aptly showcase the lack of character development that Emma has reached, because she actually regrets not being able to insult the Coles more, supporting Hagan’s claims. However, this might actually elicit readers’ response since Emma is displaying distinct human infallibility, which might invoke readers’ empathy by character identification, through feelings of human ineptitude (Keen 68).

The regular and best families Emma could hardly suppose they would presume to invite - neither Donwell, nor Hartfield, nor Randalls. Nothing should tempt *her* to go, if they did; and she regretted that her father’s known habits would be giving her refusal less meaning than she could wish. (Austen 147)
Readers might be able to relate to Emma’s desire to have others understand her actions, without physically explaining them, in some sense wishing that others applied theory of mind to her own behaviour. As Zunshine states that the theoretical framework is applied to attribute feelings and beliefs to actions, there is no such restriction that would prevent this reversal of analysis (193). Emma’s interior monologue proves that the situation can be reversed, in comparison to the example below, a desire to project one’s mental stance rather than hide it.

This concealment of mental stance, and also Emma’s mean streak, is evident during an outing during the novel where she grasps the opportunity to slight Miss Bates in the middle of the excursion. Frank Churchill demands, on behalf of Emma, that everyone in the group should relate one thing clever, or two things moderately clever, or three very dull things. The following quote makes it evident that the exchange between Miss Bates and Emma is not in good feeling. Once again, Emma, in some sense adept at social discourse, at first manages to hide her beliefs behind a controlled behaviour, through this preventing Miss Bates to use her theory of mind to interpret the situation for what it really is.

‘Oh very well,’ exclaimed Miss Bates; ‘then I need not be uneasy. “Three things very dull indeed.” ‘That will just do for me, you know. I shall be sure to say three dull things as soon as ever I open my mouth, shan’t I? (looking round with the most good-humoured dependence on everybody’s assent). ‘Do you not all think I shall?’ Emma could not resist. ‘Ah! m’am, but there may be a difficulty. Pardon me, but you will be limited as to number - only three at once.’ Miss
Bates, deceived by the mock ceremony of her manner, did not immediately catch her meaning; but when it burst on her, it could not anger; though a slight blush showed that it could pain her. ‘Ah! well - to be sure. Yes, I see what she means’ (turning to Mr Knightley) ‘and I will try to hold my tongue. I must make myself very disagreeable, or she would not have said such a thing to an old friend.’

(Austen 266)

Katie Halsey, Professor of English at the University of Stirling, defines that “within the modest heroine tradition, the blush is assumed to be a guarantee of authentic emotion, a safeguard against feminine deceit. Blushing speaks the language of the heart, a language that the lips may be denied from uttering.” (229). With this statement in mind, the blush that descends on Miss Bates, explained by the narrator as something that could “pain her” (Austen 266), might actually be the real evidence of her emotion, as her words remain glib and refrain from delivering a response to Emma. Furthermore, the blushing countenance of Miss Bates could also be related to the two forms of shame that Ullaaliina Lehtinen, Doctor of Theoretical Philosophy at the University of Gothenburg, describe as the aristocrat’s shame and the underdog’s shame. Lehtinen reasons that unfair treatment of women, suitable in this case, produces a feeling of lower self-respect or inferiority which leads to the subject having feelings of being an outcast and not belonging to the general frame (190-91).

It is fairly suitable that it is Mrs. Weston, formerly Miss Taylor, that reprimands Emma in the following passage (in her role of substitute mother). It is not in relation to the quote above, but happens in its own context, where Emma has mimicked Miss Bates’ manner of speaking.
For shame Emma! Do not mimic her. You divert me against my conscience.

(Austen 161)

The protagonist is called to feel shame at her behaviour and the reader is left to decide if such feelings actually occur. Goodheart claims that this passage is a testament to Austen’s desire to create diversion in the novel, attesting the author to be guilty of diverting the readers against their conscience every time she allows Miss Bates to open her mouth (592). Goodheart’s claim suggest that readers might not empathize with Miss Bates, however, as she is the person being victimized in this passage, it is likely that Keen’s claim holds true and that Miss Bates is the one that will invoke readers’ empathy (70).

After the display of cruelty delivered to Miss Bates, the narration makes it evident that Emma is yet again struck by shame at her own conduct. It is again in relation to Mr. Knightley reprimanding her and judging her about what she has done, which further demonstrates the lack of character development of the protagonist once more, since it is only in relation to Mr. Knightley that she sees the errors of her ways, not because of any real improvement of character. However, in continuing with the theme of shame, readers might empathize with Emma through the vivid imagery in the passages below.

Never had she felt so agitated, mortified, grieved, at any circumstance in her life. She was forcibly struck. The truth of his representation there was no denying. She felt it at heart. How could she have been so brutal, so cruel to Miss Bates!
How could she have exposed herself to such ill opinion in any one she valued!

(Austen 270)

Time did not compose her. As she reflected more, she seemed but to feel it more. She had never been so depressed.

. . . and Emma felt the tears running down her cheeks almost all the way home, without being at any trouble to check them, extraordinary as they were. (Austen 271)

Without the surrounding context of the novel, the phrasing of these examples might convince the reader to empathize with the protagonist and conclude that the words and actions are true indications of her mental stance. Although, to follow the claims of Hagan, such an interpretation of Emma’s character development might not be true. Therefore, these passages exemplifies the subjectivity of applying the theoretical framework on such a complex thing as mental processes. To relate back to Zunshine’s example of “the trembling of Peter Walsh”, it is in fact not possible to determine that his tremblings are due to mental stance rather than illness, as Woolf does not explicitly tell the reader this (193). Even if such an explanation never arrives in Mrs Dalloway, in the same sense as the examples from Emma, the only person who can be completely sure of the reason behind the tremblings and Emma’s shame, are the authors, thus ensuring that any application of theory of mind aimed at the passages, remain faulty of subjectivity and most likely cannot be proven to be the correct assessment of either character’s mental stance.
The close connection between harsh behaviour and the shame that follows, is evident in both *Emma* and *Jane Eyre*. In the following example, the initiating aversion is displayed, shown in a confrontation between Jane and her cousin John Reed.

‘You have no business to take our books; you are a dependant, mamma says; you have no money; your father left you none; you ought to beg, and not live here with gentlemen’s children like us, and eat the same meals we do, and wear clothes at our mamma’s expense. Now, I’ll teach you to rummage my bookshelves: for they are mine; all the house belongs to me, or will do in a few years. Go and stand by the door, out of the way of the mirror and the windows.’ I did so, not at first aware what was his intention; but when I saw him lift and poise the book and stand in act to hurl it, I instinctively started aside with a cry of alarm: not soon enough, however; the volume was flung, it hit me, and I fell, striking my head against the door and cutting it. The cut bled, the pain was sharp: my terror had passed its climax; other feelings succeeded.

‘Wicked and cruel boy!’ I said. ‘You are like a murderer - you are like a slave-driver - you are like the Roman emperors!’ (Brontë 13)
children are emotions that modern readers can easily relate to, supporting Keen’s hypotheses that character identification opens the opportunity for empathy, even when character and reader differ from each other in all sorts of practical and obvious ways (70). Keen goes on to say that this might be used didactically to develop reader’s moral sense, through representation of characters with strong differences (71). However, Keen also states that “readers of different dispositions may experience character identification and empathy in various orders, and their experiences of both phenomena may change depending on the novel, the author, or their age and condition while reading.” (71) Micheal Burke, Professor of Rhetoric at the University College Roosevelt, supports this by relating a subject’s response to the question of whether mood affects the actual reading event itself (92). One subject answered that reading a serious book with a happy and energetic mood, caused the subject to cease reading as it was difficult to identify with the characters in the current mood. This further showcases the complexity of literature, especially as a component in the compact environment of education. It is however difficult to steer reader’s experiences or attempt to control the mood, as these are subjectively dependant.

Jane Eyre responds to John Reed’s subsequent attack by defending herself with her bare hands. In reaction to this, she is banished to the red-room, locked in as punishment for her passionate actions. Before this, the servants Bessie and Miss Abbot express their wonder at the little girl’s behaviour.

‘For shame, for shame!’ cried the lady’s-maid. ‘What shocking conduct, Miss Eyre, to strike a young gentleman, your benefactress’s son! Your master.’

(Brontë 15)
Jane Eyre is expected to feel shame at her actions, caused by the aversion between the cousins. For a reader, identifying with or feeling for the “wrong” character, as Keen states, can induce feelings of discomfort, shame or self-censorship (76). By only analysing the quote above, taken out of its context, it is interesting how it suggests that the reader should empathize with John Reed instead of the protagonist. Naturally, in a patriarchal society, girls should defer to boys, and Jane is behaving in the opposite of the norm. As mentioned above, Keen’s research shows that childhood reading leaves an imprint with the reader and can resonate within during adulthood as well (69). This passage from Jane Eyre, mirrors a sample from Emma, with the similar expression of “for shame” being used (Austen 161). However, the context of these examples are different, as the reader is set up to empathize with Jane in this example, while the previous sample suggested that empathy might be directed at Miss Bates. Again, the narratives show the complexity of human emotion that can be interpreted from the passages, with different paths to take for the readers’ empathy.

Through the novel, it is apparent that Jane Eyre feels both fear and disgust toward to the woman in Thornfield Hall who creates such turmoil during sections of the novel. While initially believing that this woman is a servant, Grace Poole, Jane Eyre feels great distrust for this person in Mr. Rochester’s household. In regards to the attack on Richard Mason during the houseparty where Jane is required to attend to his injuries, while waiting for Mr. Rochester to return with a surgeon, her own thoughts worry her.

What crime was this, that lived incarnate in this sequestered mansion, and could
neither be expelled nor subdued by the owner? - what mystery, that broke out, now in fire and now in blood, at the deadest hours of night? What creature was is, that, masked in an ordinary woman’s face and shape, uttered the voice, now of a mocking demon, and anon of a carrion-seeking bird of prey? (Brontë 244)

Martha Nussbaum, Professor of Law and ethics at the University of Chicago, claims that some people are more marked for shame and disgust than others. Nussbaum states that societies ubiquitously select certain groups and individuals for shaming, marking them off as “abnormal” and demanding that they blush at what and who they are. This category includes people with visible diseases and so-called deformities, the mentally and physically handicapped (174). Jane’s reaction to psychiatric disability confirms the claims of Nussbaum, and poses the question of whom to empathize with in this section: the “abnormal” and misunderstood Bertha Mason, or the protagonist? If feeling empathy towards “the wrong” character, can unsettle a reader to such a degree that they do not wish to confess to such an emotion, “the subgenre of contemporary fiction that takes misunderstood or demonized characters and recenters a revisionist fiction upon the marginalized other” (Keen 76), can prove to be a solution, at least as a support for readers, to prevent them from feeling any limitation of empathy, merely possibilities.

After the above-quoted interlude of the attack on Mr. Mason, he is ferried away in the early hours of the morning. Mr. Rochester and Jane turn to the orchard at Mr. Rochester’s decree. It is not a stretch to imagine that the metaphor of Thornfield Hall as a dungeon, in comparison to the purity and freshness of the garden, is in fact a comparison between Bertha Mason and Jane Eyre. Readers might be able to empathize
with the longing in this passage, as Mr. Rochester demonstrates a desire to escape from the confinement of his life and marriage.

‘Come where there is some freshness, for a few moments,’ he [Mr. Rochester] said; ‘that house is a mere dungeon: don’t you feel it so?’

‘It seems to me a splendid mansion, sir.’

‘The glamour of inexperience is over your eyes’ he answered; ‘and you see it through a charmed medium: you cannot discern that the gilding is slime and the silk draperies cobwebs; that the marble is sordid slate, and the polished woods mere refuse chips and scaly bark. Now here’ (he pointed to the leafy enclosure we had entered) ‘all is real, sweet, and pure.’ (Brontë 249)

There is definite aversion in Mr. Rochester's feelings toward his home, a place where his darkest secrets are kept and haunts him, by his own accord. The theoretical framework is applied by Mr. Rochester, in an assumptious manner, where he ascribes Jane with a mental stance she cannot help having, since she is unaware of the true nature of Thornfield Hall. Jane follows Mr. Rochester into his metaphor, without elaborating further, attributing their willingness to identify with each other and at the same time preserve their innate differences that are essential to both the harmony of metaphor and marriage, by Victorian standards, (Gray 285).
The narrative provides Jane with the opportunity to face her aunt Mrs. Reed’s aversion against her in adult form, as she travels to her, as the old woman is lying on her deathbed. Upon meeting her niece, Mrs. Reed speaks about Jane Eyre to Jane herself, calling to mind Zunshine’s feature of multiply embedded minds, as “the author knows, that the reader knows, that Jane knows, that Mrs. Reed does not know that Jane Eyre is in fact Jane Eyre” (Fiction, 31) Mrs. Reed, even on her deathbed, carries a vengeance against Jane Eyre. During this dialogue, Jane is presented with the rare opportunity of free discourse with Mrs. Reed, as the latter is unaware of the recipient being the same as the subject of the conversation.

‘I have had more trouble with that child than anyone would believe. Such a burden to be left on my hands - and so much annoyance as she caused me, daily and hourly, with her incomprehensible disposition, and her sudden starts of temper, and her continual, unnatural watchings of one’s movements! I declare she talked to me once like something mad, or like fiend - no child ever spoke or looked as she did; I was glad to get her away from the house. What did they do with her at Lowood? The fever broke out there, and many of the pupils died. She, however, did not die: but I said she did - I wish she had died!’

‘A strange wish, Mrs Reed; why do you hate her so?’ (Brontë 267)

Mrs. Reed’s statement that the child Jane Eyre behaved like a fiend, like someone mad, and the subsequent disgust that follows, mirrors the feelings toward Bertha Mason that Jane has, whom she also considers to be a mad demon. This supports the fact that even
as Jane is a highly sympathetic character (Keen 77), she is also capable of the same fallibility as the antagonistic character Mrs. Reed, providing a complex situation for the reader to determine for whom one feels empathy for. These aspects also serve to place Jane in a similar category to Emma, and similarly might confuse readers’ response, since the object of empathy is not immediately clear.

That Jane feels strongly about Bertha Mason is plainly stated in the following example. She confides to Mr. Rochester, that when waking from a dream, she witnessed a woman in her room, who inspected Jane’s wedding veil. This is the first description painted of Mrs. Rochester, the woman in the attic, at least between Jane and Mr. Rochester.

[upon seeing the woman] . . . and how were they?”

‘Fearful and ghastly to me - oh, sir, I never saw a face like it! It was a discoloured face - it was a savage face. I wish I could forget the roll of the red eyes and the fearful blackened inflation of the lineaments!’

‘Ghosts are usually pale, Jane.’

‘This, sir, was purple: the lips were swelled and dark; the brow furrowed: the black eyebrows widely raised over the bloodshot eyes. Shall I tell you of what it reminded me?’

‘You may.’

‘Of the foul German spectre - the vampire.’ (Brontë 327)

The willingness to compare Bertha Mason to gothic horror-creatures such as ghosts and
vampires, suggests that Jane cannot interpret Bertha’s behaviour in any other way than to attribute her with beliefs and desires that correspond with madness. The marginalizing of the “other”, a women with different ethnical heritage than Jane, influences the protagonist in her description of Bertha and also the subsequent feelings that follow the description. Although initial empathy might be for Jane, a morally correct empathy would be for the oppressed woman in the attic (Livingston and Mele 159).

It seems fitting to return to the qualities of the character Jane Eyre, yet again struggling during an internal monologue with the consequences of her actions. This passage displays a clear view of self-loathing inside Jane Eyre, although it does not persuade her to betray her convictions. As a reader, it is apparent by this monologue that Jane feels she is ruled by either her emotions or her principles, suggesting a helplessness attributing to an otherwise strong fictional character. This paradox might invoke empathy for the dual nature of humanity, struggling to let heart and head work together, rather than one taking the lead at every interval.

What was I? In the midst of my pain of heart and frantic effort of principle, I abhorred myself. I had no solace from self-approbation: none even from self-respect. I had injured - wounded - left my master. I was hateful in my own eyes. Still I could not turn, nor retrace one step. (Brontë 369-70)

There are definite differences between the setting of the novels Jane Eyre and Emma, where one displays gothic dramatisation and the other a comfortable life in a small
village and its bustling society. In *Emma*, the character of Miss Bates is a creature regarded by the protagonist as somewhat ridiculous. Emma may not regard Miss Bates with aversion, but when interacting with her she creates circumstances in the novel where especially Mr. Knightley regards Emma with some disappointment at her behaviour. The examples of negative emotions in *Jane Eyre*, such as aversion and disgust, is prominently figured from the perspective of the protagonist, and also from others toward the protagonist. Both novels provide readers with ample possibility for an emotional response, and might not always result in empathy for the obvious candidates such as Jane and Emma. Rather the complex situation of empathizing with another character is provided, like Miss Bates and Bertha Mason, thus resulting in a fairly well-rounded empathic experience for a reader.

The pedagogic implementation of classic literature in the EFL classroom demands justification and further explanation, in terms of the strategies required and limitations that need to be dealt with. The syllabus for English 6 states that the course should include a definite increase in literature for the students to read, especially demanding older works of literature, in comparison to the syllabus for English 5 (Nat. Agency for Ed. “Syllabus”). This demand can definitely meet with resistance from the students, if they are not fond of reading in their spare time, it might be even more difficult for them to do it in a forced manner during school hours. Where a connection to familiar material, such as a video-game (Jolley 81), might engage a resistant reader, similarly *Jane Eyre* and *Emma* could be introduced into the EFL classroom by using a cognitive approach to the literature, thus providing emotional response as scaffolding (Phisgadam and Ghardiri 51) for learners when reading literature with old-fashioned language and traditions. This could be done in a way to connect the content and human emotion of the novels to modern society in a way that enables the students to take in the
literature and improve not only their linguistic prowess, but also their abilities to connect with human emotion and through that increase their social skills and interpersonal relationships (Zunshine 193 and Keen 70).

As previously mentioned, one part of the pedagogical relevance of this project, lies in the eclectic choices that learners can make while following a thematic reading project based on the themes and approaches presented in the present study. As the novels are quite different from each other, while still dealing with similar themes, there are vast opportunities for learners to choose the novel that catches their interest the most. This is beneficial to a real pedagogic setting as well, since it might be unlikely that the timeframe for English 6 allows for two expansive novels to be read and dealt with in a successful way. By using the study’s thematic analysis, learners can choose to do a close reading of either *Jane Eyre* or *Emma* and still be able to take part in classroom discussions about both novels, because of the shared thematic approach. It is quite possible to conduct seminars with discussions of said themes without having read both novels, as long as the themes have been discussed beforehand and at least one participant in each seminar can relate events in the novels that portray the human emotion of the theme.

A potential hurdle for such an undertaking in the classroom is the language barrier that students might face. In terms of leaping over that hurdle, it can be argued that shorter versions of classical novels could be used for this. It is however important to acknowledge that content can be lost in these abbreviated versions, to the point that the portrayal of human emotions is lost due to such strain on the actual text, when vital parts are erased or limited. Furthermore these novels are considered classics for a reason, and reducing them to an abbreviated version might be considered a violation of their status as works of art. A solution to this, I would argue, is rather to extensively
prepare students for the reading, by discussing the historical context of the novels, allowing for better understanding of the themes. By thematizing the novels and truly understanding the aspects of the themes before reading, students will more easily be able to cope with the language barrier. Beyond this, if further assistance is required, it might be beneficial to use digital support such as tablets for reading and films to support learners in their understanding of the material (Dierking 407).

In modern society, where the subject of equality remains ever important, it is possible that the novels in this study could be used to further that subject. Female authors, writing about female characters, can be difficult to take in for both male and female students in the EFL classroom. This is precisely the reason that the novels should be used. Through this study, it has been evident that these novels, written by female authors, can be incredibly complex and multilayered, thus resenting the idea that such works would be less worthy than those of male authors, in correlation with the patriarchal society they were written in.
Conclusion

The aim of this study has been to use a cognitive approach to analyse two novels that are considered to be part of the British literary canon; *Jane Eyre* (1847) by Charlotte Brontë and *Emma* (1816) by Jane Austen. By using a cognitive approach while including canonised classic novels in the EFL classroom, these novels have been made to be more accessible to young Swedish readers in today’s society. The richness of these classic novels do not only provide opportunity to improve language proficiency, but also enhance cultural capital and understanding of English-speaking countries and their socio-cultural setting. The universal emotions in the themes of the novels, such as fear of losing a loved one, morals and values in relation to love and marriage, and feelings of disgust, aversion, antipathy and shame, can be used as scaffolding for learners that read canonised literature with both a language style and setting that is old-fashioned, and thus remote from today’s readers. Additionally, the result of using this approach to reading literature might provide an opportunity for learners to develop their empathic ability. *Jane Eyre* and *Emma* were chosen for this study because of their possibilities regarding interpretation and their richness in portraying multiple characters and their individual narrative development.

Future research might include further analysis of the chosen novels, however, to gain as much insight, it would be beneficial to extend the study to include other classic novels. To promote a non-normative setting for education, novels of male authors could therefore be included. However, it is sometimes easy to forget the real situation in the classroom, during a theoretical context. And as the purpose of the analysis was to provide empathic themes that could work as scaffolding for learners, thus any further research should include the actual implementation of such a strategy in the EFL
classroom alongside interviews of learner’s opinion of the scaffolding as successful or not.

The study has revealed immense material for analysis, and an emotional depth of the narratives has emerged, with the application of a cognitive theoretical framework, as a refreshing change to the traditional literary analysis. Modern readers might not be able to directly relate to the necessity of maintaining virtue or a patriarchal society’s claim that girls should defer to boys. They will however be able to empathize with feelings of being subjugated to unfairness and victimization, emotional dilemma of right and wrong and the search for comfort in other human beings.

By promoting learners’ empathy, teachers might observe learners walk out of the classroom with more compassion and understanding than when they came in.
Works cited

Primary sources


Secondary sources


