The struggle within Jane

A comparison between the novel *Jane Eyre* and its inner monologues from a narrative point-of-view

Agneta Johansson
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1 Introduction

*Jane Eyre* is often considered to be a classic novel about a girl and her development through life from childhood to marriage and motherhood. The young orphan Jane, with limited possibilities, explores the world and manages to marry the rich noble man in the end. Jane herself is seen as a true heroine who questions society’s rules on several levels. However, this is not the case on all narrative levels of the novel. The narrator Jane gives the reader an impression of a strong-willed female following her own morals instead of obeying predominant values in society. Still, the inner monologues convey a different impression. In the monologues, new voices appear and become narrators. These voices, how they are presented and the outcome of the monologues, are not coherent with the overall impression the reader gets from Jane as narrator. The aim of this essay will be to examine this tension between the inner monologues and the novel as a whole.

This essay will claim that the inner monologues of *Jane Eyre* are not coherent with the narrative as a whole and therefore create a tension that questions the narrator’s reliability. As an introduction, a historical background to the women’s emancipation progress during the current century will be presented together with a brief account of Brontë’s authorship and the public reception of *Jane Eyre*. The novel will be analysed from a narrative point-of-view with Genette’s narrative model as starting point and the inner monologues will be close read and analysed with a special interest in the different voices of the monologues.
2 Background

In the following analysis, I will claim that the tension between the third-person narrative in the novel and the content of the inner monologues consists of a tension between different female ideals. In order to contextualise this, a brief background to the female situation in the nineteenth century. During this period of time, the feminist ideas about women’s emancipation started to grow stronger. In The Language of Truth, Harriet Björk gives a background to women’s situation during the nineteenth century and Brontë’s authorship. In order to fight back the emancipation and its development, numerous books and essays were written about the role of woman. One of these scripts which favoured traditional female values was Sermons to young women (1765). Women were, according to this script, supposed to be graceful, feminine and obedient. An educated female should hide her knowledge and instructions were given about this and why it was necessary: “But if you happen to have any learning, keep it a profound secret, especially from the men, who generally look with a jealous and malignant eye on a woman of great parts and a cultivated understanding” (Björk 35). Women were told to emphasize their accomplishments instead of their knowledge in order to please their future husbands. In Jane Eyre, the narrator Jane is clearly educated but without the required accomplishments.

Jane’s personal circumstances could be seen as an illustration of the female situation during the nineteenth century. Therefore, Charlotte Brontë’s importance as a woman writer and what may have influenced her writing become interesting. Brontë’s correspondence shows how she was not content with women’s situation in society. Still, she was not of the opinion that women should protest and try to change society themselves through reforms. Women should wait patiently for the change instead of rebelling. In her letters, Brontë states her opinion about women’s limited conditions and how less situated women should leave the
domestic sphere and turn to the labour market instead of waiting for marriage (Björk 25). Even though Brontë cannot be considered as a radical feminist, her correspondence proves her interest in the woman issue, her awareness of a society in change and a great interest in emancipation (Björk 33). Brontë’s correspondence is quoted by Björk: “Whenever I have seen, not merely in humble, but in affluent homes – families of daughters sitting waiting to be married, I have pitied them from my heart. It is doubtless well – very well – if Fate decrees them a happy marriage – but if otherwise – give their existence some object – their time some occupation (Björk 24). By this statement, Brontë showed an opinion about how marriage was preferable but if that was not possible, women should seek a profession. Jane’s situation and development throughout the novel show a resemblance with Brontë’s stated opinions. Jane is an orphan with limited possibilities in life. Since she lacks the accomplishments and possibilities to marriage, her option in life is to get an occupation, all according to Brontë’s quoted opinion. By following this, Jane succeeds in the end, financially secured and happily married.

When Jane Eyre was published, the novel caused a moral debate. In Defining Moments A Cultural Biography of Jane Eyre, Philip Grey gives a background to this “moral panic”, as he calls the critics’ reaction to the novel. According to Grey, one of the most famous reactions is Elizabeth Rigby’s essay in the Quarterly Review where she claimed Jane Eyre to be “anti-Christian”. Because of Rigby’s essay, the novel was informally censored for a long period of time (Grey 123). The reason for Rigby’s accusation of the novel as being anti-Christian was, according to Grey “an attempt to maintain social order” (125). Naturally, Jane’s behaviour must have startled the nineteenth century’s moral guardians. According to Grey, parents even forbade their daughters to read the book. Jane’s thoughts and her unfeminine way of expressing herself threatened the male dominated society, since the critics considered Jane to behave in a typical male manner instead of a female (122).
The issue of individualism was also discussed by critics. Brontë was said to proclaim individualism and to question gender norms. Grey interprets Jane’s revolt as follows: “Even though she inhabits a fictitious world, Jane does not become the first woman doctor or lawyer. But when she refers to the ‘silent revolt’ of oppressed women in her famous monologue from the corridor of the third storey at the beginning of Chapter 12, she gives voice to that revolt” (Grey 123). This interpretation of Jane corresponds with the opinions of Brontë herself, stated by Björk. Brontë was not a rebellion concerning female emancipation. Women were supposed to silently wait for a change and if they did not succeed in marriage, the second best thing was to get an occupation. Jane is a typical example of this. She is poor, without any family to protect her. In order to provide for herself, she becomes a teacher. Later on in the novel, she even becomes a governess in order to see the world outside. Still, she has her boundaries due to society’s predominant values during the nineteenth century. This becomes especially clear in two of the chosen inner monologues where she is reduced because of her social class and lack of accomplishments.
3 A narratological analysis of the novel

In the following analysis, Gérard Genette’s narratological model will be used as a structuring device for the main analysis. Issues such as voice and distance, discussed by Porter H Abbot and Mieke Bal will also be used in order to evolve the analysis further. Gérard Genette’s narrative model consists of six particular areas: the basic narrative mode, focalisation, narrator, time issues, story packaging and, finally, representation of speech and thoughts (Barry 222–231). In Jane Eyre, the narrative mode, the focalisation and the narrator are of special interest.

According to Genette’s model, the mode of narration in a novel is either mimetic (scenic presentation, often with direct speech) or diegetic (summarising and telling). Both of these modes must be used in order to create a novel (Barry 223), and this is the case in Jane Eyre where the story involves a long period of time. An example of the diegetic mode appears in the very first sentence of the novel: “There was no possibility of taking a walk that day. We had been wandering, indeed, in the leafless shrubbery an hour in the morning” (9). When John Reed is looking for Jane, wanting to torment her, the mimetic mode enforces the situation and describes Jane’s dislike for John’s evil manners: “‘What do you want?’ I asked with awkward diffidence. ‘Say, “what do you want, Master Reed” ’was the answer.” (12). The direct rendering of the dialogue arguably involves the reader more closely in the situation. By using the voice tag: “was the answer” instead of John’s name, he becomes a distant and oppressive part of the dialogue. With this dialogue as a representative example, the main narrative mode used in the novel must be considered as mimetic since the focus of the plot is the mimetic situations with dialogues, thoughts and direct actions.

The division between mimetic and diegetic mode made by Genette is questioned by Mieke Bal. Bal discusses the matter of distance: “in contrast to dramatic representation, no
narrative can ‘show’ or ‘imitate’ the story it tells. All it can do is tell it in a manner which is
detailed, precise, ‘alive’ and in that way give more or less the *illusion of mimesis* (Bal 227).
The structure of *Jane Eyre* and the vivid presentation of the strong Jane enforces the illusion
of mimesis mentioned by Bal. Jane’s outbursts and the crucial events of the story as for
example the proposal and the breakup, are narrated in a mimetic manner. Bal also mentions
the importance of a present narrator: “The narrator is present as source, guarantor, and
organizer of the narrative, as analyst and commentator” (Bal 229). Jane, as narrator, fulfils all
these criteria. She “writes” her own autobiography and tells the reader all about her
experiences, thoughts and inner growth. Bal’s distinction about the illusion of mimesis
becomes unnecessary in this case. Illusion or not, the impression of the vivid presentation of
Jane as an honest and present narrator is accomplished.

With Jane as a present narrator the reader gets a clear impression of Jane as a strong-headed
girl with great pathos already in the very first chapter of the novel. The incident in the
library and its aftermaths show an energetic strong-willed girl with principles. While a
diegetic mode of narration provides an impression of distance to the narrated events, the
mimetic mode together with the first-person narration in the discussion between Jane and her
young master John Reed emphasise how Jane does not hide her opinions about being treated
as a servant. She fights back and continues to protest against the cruel punishment when she is
put in the frightening red room. Her conversations with the surrounding adults in the first
chapter illuminate how she is consistent in her behaviour. She speaks her honest mind
whoever she talks to, having no hesitations whether it is a servant (Bessie), an apothecary (Mr
Lloyd), a frightening headmaster (Mr Brocklehurst) or her benefactress (Mrs Reed). When
she confronts Mrs Reed with her feelings she is painfully blunt and accusing: “I am not
deceitful: If I were, I should say I loved you; but I declare I do not love you: I dislike you the
worst of anybody in the world except John Reed” (44). This dialogue is a typical example of
how Jane refuses to behave in a typical female manner and instead demands to speak her personal mind. According to Grey, as mentioned above, this male behaviour of Jane was considered threatening at the publication of the novel.

Discussing the depiction of the Reed family, Kathleen Tillotson claims that Jane's life with the Reed family is portrayed in a defusing manner: "But yet the tone is kept low, with no overt bid for pity; her captors are not monsters, their point of view is a valid one" (Tillotsson 29). The Reeds did what they were supposed to and fulfilled their duty according to society. Obviously, Jane's situation as an orphan without protection makes her dependant on her benefactress Mrs Reed. Therefore, Jane's behaviour towards Mrs Reed seems deviant. A ten-year-old orphan, who dares to question her benefactress, must be self-confident and argumentative. As mentioned by Grey above, this must have startled parents at the time, convincing them to forbid their young daughters to read the novel.

Later on, in chapter 23, Jane is convinced that Miss Ingram will be Mr Rochester's future bride and does not believe Rochester when he confesses his love for her. Through the mimetic narration, the conversation gives an intense and impulsive impression of the young governess, full of emotions and pride: "Do you think I can stay to become nothing to you? Do you think I am an automaton? – a machine without feelings? and can bear to have my morsel of bread snatched from my lips, and my drop of living water dashed from my cup? Do you think, because I am poor, obscure, plain, and little, I am soulless and heartless?" (292). The numerous mimetic situations in the novel, and this dialogue especially, where Jane speaks her mind very open-mindedly and emotionally contribute to the impression of Jane as someone who has confidence in herself. While she is aware of her impossible situation, her lack of accomplishments and beauty, she still has all the arguments and the maturity of a self-confident female who knows her rights and possibilities.
Jane’s open-minded speech has importance in the novel as a whole and the representation of speech is an important concept according to Genette’s narrative model. Genette divides speech into three different levels: Mimetic speech (“I have to go”, I said to her), Transposed speech (I told her I had to go) and narrativised speech (I informed her that it was necessary for me to leave) (Barry 230). In *Jane Eyre* all three levels are used, but mimetic speech dominates in crucial and emotional situations. In chapter 24, Jane has accepted Mr Rochester’s proposal but is resistant regarding accepting gifts. Rochester wants to transform her into a beauty of the world by giving her jewels and expensive clothes. Jane refuses to accept his gifts and his fortune. The only thing she wants is an explanation of his faked interest in Miss Ingram. He answers:

“Well, I feigned courtship of Miss Ingram, because I wished to render you as madly in love with me as I was with you; and I knew jealousy would be the best ally I could call in for the furtherance of that end.”

“Excellent! Now you are small – not one whit bigger than the end of my little finger. It was a burning shame and a scandalous disgrace to act in that way. Did you think nothing of Miss Ingram’s feelings, sir?

“Her feelings are concentrated in one – pride; and that needs humbling. Were you jealous, Jane?”(303).

This passage is a typical example of how mimetic speech enforces the emotional tension between Jane and Mr Rochester. Interestingly enough, Rochester here explains how he dislikes Miss Ingram for being proud and at the same time praises Jane for having the exact same personal quality. Jane’s behaviour all through the story is extremely proud and she proves it once again in this passage.

In this dialogue, Jane’s behaviour shows no trace of the female ideals mentioned above. In the script, mentioned above, women were supposed to hide their knowledge for men in
order to please them. Jane certainly shows her opinions and knowledge when she accuses Mr Rochester of being small-minded. Miss Ingram represents the traditional accomplished female in the novel and Mr Rochester considers her to have no other feelings than pride. Jane, on the other hand, is the plain but educated female who has captured his heart. This could be seen as an emancipatory statement by Brontë, where education and self-respect conquers accomplishments.

Jane’s mental development is depicted by the narrative focalisation of the novel, which is another concept in Genette’s narrative model. Focalisation means perspective, which is to say the point-of-view from which the story is told. The focalisation in a literary text can be external which means that the reader will only receive information about what the characters actually say or do as if the reader was actually present in the situation. The opposite of external focalisation is internal and through this focalisation the reader also gets information about the feelings and thoughts of the characters. Both kinds of focalisation usually intervene in novels, but one of the focalisations usually dominates (Barry 224–225).

In Jane Eyre, the story is told by Jane herself, using first-person narration. Jane is the focaliser and the novel has the character of a mental journey towards adulthood. Although the reader follows Jane for a long period of time through many different events and locations with external focalisation, the main focalisation must be said to be internal through Jane’s thoughts and mental growth.

Focalisation as a useful device in narration is discussed in The Cambridge Introduction to Narrative. Depending on whether the focaliser is a character in the narrative or an observer of it, readers can be differently influenced by how events are narrated and by whom they are actually told (Abbot 66–67). By using the first-person narration from Jane’s point of view, we are coloured by her perspective and influenced in our interpretation of the story. Abbot also handles the matter of distance. If the narrator has a part in the events and the story, this
impacts us as readers (Abbot 67). Since Jane Eyre is subtitled as an autobiography, the distance could be considered as almost absent in this novel. As readers we are supposed to read the story as the true story about Jane's life.

One of the most famous and discussed passages that may have contributed to Brontë's reputation as a threat towards traditional values, as mentioned above, is found in chapter 12 when Jane sits in her room at Thornfield, pondering over her restlessness:

It is in vain to say human beings ought to be satisfied with tranquillity: they must have action; and they will make it if they cannot find it. Millions are condemned to a stiller doom than mine, and millions are in silent revolt against their lot. Nobody knows how many rebellions besides political rebellions ferment in the masses of life which people earth. Women are supposed to be very calm generally: but women feel just as men feel; they need exercise for their faculties, and a field for their efforts as much as their brothers do; they suffer from too rigid a restraint, too absolute a stagnation, precisely as men would suffer; and it is narrow-minded in their more privileged fellow-creatures to say that they ought to confine themselves to making pudding and knitting stocking, to playing on the piano and embroidering bags. It is thoughtless to condemn them, or laugh at them, if they seek to do more or learn more than custom has pronounced necessary for their sex (129–130).

Through these thoughts, Brontë illuminates how the strong mind and the principles of the adult Jane have not been humbled by her experiences of life and her cruel childhood. This passage seems displaced considering the chosen internal focalisation of the narration. The structure of the text resembles a written political speech instead of actual thoughts and the structure appears to be too obvious to fit in with the internal focalisation. The autobiographical structure of the novel, with an adult female retelling her history, colours the
narrative and, in this case, creates a discrepancy between Jane’s life experience as a married woman and her actual thoughts at Thornfield at the time of the event.

The married Jane who tells her story brings forth the issue of narrator, another concept in Genette’s narrative model. In novels, authors use a narrator to tell the story and to illuminate possible messages. The author can use either a covert narrator (who is not identified as a character with name or history) or an overt narrator (named character with personal history). An overt narrator can be non-intrusive, merely observing and telling the story from an outside perspective and is then called “heterodiegetic”. The overt narrator can also be present in the story and is then called “homodiegetic” (Barry 225–226). As mentioned above, Jane is the obvious narrator of the novel. The first-person narration, the internal focalisation and the detailed description of her personal circumstances emphasise this. Brontë used Jane as an overt narrator of her own story. An obvious sign of this is the subheading of the novel: An Autobiography, encouraging the reader to rely on the narrator and consider all events and definitely all internal actions to be reliable. In order to emphasise the credibility even further, the narrator Jane speaks directly to the reader of the novel:

Hitherto I have recorded in detail the events of my insignificant existence: to the first ten years of my life I have given almost as many chapters. But this is not to be a regular autobiography: I am only bound to invoke memory where I know her responses will possess some degree of interest; therefore I now pass a space of eight years almost in silence: a few lines only are necessary to keep up the links of connection (99).

Here, the reader becomes even more personally acquainted with the narrating Jane. The structure of the story is explained and the impression of a reliable narrator recalling her memories is emphasised.
This recalling of memories also initiates the issue of time, another important concept in Genette's narrative model. Since Jane Eyre is implied to be written by Jane herself as a married woman looking back and telling her own story from childhood to motherhood, the novel could be seen as one long analepsis (flashback). When Jane finishes her story, happily married, the reader can look back through the analepsis and reflect on Jane's development and experience over time. All through the story, Jane has given proof of a strong female, emotional, strong-headed with lots of principles. The small girl who spoke her mind without any fear, the young woman who left the security of teaching in order to experience the world outside and the adult female who refused to marry of duty without affection and love. These actions emphasise the impression of a strong female questioning society values. The plain, educated Jane survives on her own and the ending of the novel shows how she has become independent and able to marry without economical priorities.

The matters of voice, focalisation and distance are discussed by Abbot. These matters are considered to be the most important devices of the narrator. Grammatical person is naturally of importance when it comes to voice in narration. According to Abbot, it is important to determine who the narrator is because we then as readers can understand how the narrator may put forward his or her own personal circumstances by what is actually told in the narrative. By this, we can decide whether we can trust the information we are given or not (Abbot 63). In Jane Eyre, the first-person narration emphasises the reliability of the story. The structure of one long analepsis enforces this, since the reader gets the impression of a mature female telling her history from childhood to marriage. The feeling of trust in the narrator becomes even stronger by the emotional outbursts of the young Jane speaking her free mind. At the same time, according to Abbot, an intense voice can shift the interest from the actual story toward the narrator herself instead (66). In Jane Eyre, the narrator and the story could be considered to be the same.
In conclusion, Brontë used mainly mimetic presentation in order to convey Jane’s personality and mental growth throughout the narrative. Mimetic speech is used especially in situations where Jane acts in a non-female manner and speaks her mind. The story is told by using first-person narration and the focalisation is preferably internal since Jane’s emotional development is in focus. By the subheading *An Autobiography*, the narrator becomes reliable and in order to increase the reliability further, the narrator (Jane) speaks directly to the reader. The narrative as a whole brings forth the impression of Jane as a strong female who does not fear questioning prevailing female ideals in an oppressive society.
4 Analysis of the inner monologues

Since *Jane Eyre* is considered to be one of the predominant women emancipation novels, feminist narratology is relevant. This method puts the narration into its historical and cultural context. In the article “Double Gender, Double Genre in Jane Eyre and Vilette”, Robyn R Warhol discusses women writers from a narrative point-of-view. Warhol argues “that narratological analysis is a means of making visible woman authors’ activism in exposing and complicating oppressive binary categories within culture” (858). The tension between actions and behaviour could, according to this, be a deliberate attempt to show the conflicts between genders and class in the nineteenth century. Feminist theory claims this self-difference to be a way of giving double voices to females as narrators and voices (868), and this could be the case in *Jane Eyre*. In order to argue the claim, three inner monologues of the novel have been chosen where new voices appear and criticize Jane and her behaviour. These voices will be analysed in order to argue the claimed tension that occurs through the discrepancy between the monologues and Jane’s character in the novel as a whole.

The tension, consisting of the difference between Jane’s behaviour and her actions is a matter discussed by Schacht in the article *Jane Eyre and the history of self-respect*. Jane’s self-respect and its development are central in the novel. According to Schacht: “...Jane’s concern for self-respect must be included among the causes for one of the novel’s most puzzling divisions, that between its rebellious and conformist elements” (424). These divisions, as Schacht calls them, can be illuminated by a comparison between the monologues and the general impression of Jane in the novel.

When analysing the monologues, the issue of narrative discourse is relevant. According to Bal, there are three different types of represented/reported discourse used in literature: direct discourse, simple indirect discourse and free indirect discourse (Bal 188). The inner
monologues must be considered as belonging to the free indirect discourse (FID), since they have the typical features of this discourse without reporting verbs and shift of tenses (199). FID resembles stream-of-consciousness but not entirely. Bal refers to Ullman who suggests that FID is used as “the vehicle for reveries, dreams, hallucinations, and other such mental states, moving in the direction of stream-of-consciousness but not identical with it” (209). In *Jane Eyre*, FID is without a doubt used as a tool in the monologues in order to mediate Jane’s inner thoughts and agonies. These tools, the different voices of the monologues, will be analysed in order to argue the claim.

According to the claim, these different voices represent opinions that are not coherent with the general thoughts and actions of Jane herself in the novel as a whole. Discussing the issue of shifting focalization, Abbot introduces the term *free indirect style*, a style where: “The author simply allows a character’s voice momentarily to take over the narrative voice” (Abbot 70). When this shift appears, Abbot considers it to be problematic and challenging for: “interpreters who are trying hard to locate a unified sensibility on which to base their interpretation” (Abbot 70). Three of the inner monologues will be analysed in order to illuminate the tension between the novel as a whole and the inner monologues will be argued.

In the first chapter, after the incident in the library with John, Jane is punished and imprisoned in the frightening red room. Jane is devastated by her situation and asks herself why she is always suffering, always being accused and condemned:

“Unjust! — unjust!” said my reason, forced by the agonising stimulus into precocious though transitory power; and Resolve, equally wrought up, instigated some strange expedient to achieve escape from insupportable oppression — as running away, or, if that could not be effected, never eating or drinking more, and letting myself die (19).
The monologue consists of an exclamation followed by an exclamation mark. The exclamation is repeated followed by a voice tag (in this case *said my reason*). Jane's reason is the voice and these two words are all that is said. After this request, a long and detailed description of the reason for the outburst is given.

The repetition of the word *unjust* enhances the effect of an emotional outburst. Reason, preceded by the pronoun *my*, shows how the little girl struggles between feelings and reason. This becomes contradictory, since such an emotional outburst (*unjust!*) cannot be signified as reasonable. The long detailed clarification of how the emotional utterance has been enforced also contradicts the credibility of the narrator. Could it be possible for such a young uneducated girl to recognise all these reasons for an unjust treatment? The adult Jane recollects her memories and describes them from a mature perspective. The autobiographical structure creates a tension between the direct mimetic speech of the young girl and the long, more adult explanation of the situation and therefore questions the interpretation of the monologue. The outcome of this situation also questions the narrator's credibility. The little girl considers starving and "letting herself go". She reacts strongly about the unfairness in the situation and wants to punish her superiors. Still, she remains obedient and the only revenge she gets is when she tells Mrs Reed how much she hates her.

Jane is an example of an unreliable narrator and this particular issue is discussed by Rimmon-Keenan in *Narrative fiction*. If the narrator depicts the story in such a manner that makes the reader question the meaning of the story and its content, the narrator becomes unreliable (101). The formulation with exclamation marks implies to the reader that strong emotions are involved and therefore contradicts the voice of reason. Together with advanced vocabulary, explaining the cause of the outburst, the suspicion of an unreliable narrator is awakened.
If the narrator’s reliability is questioned, the identification of the monologue’s voice becomes questionable. The novel is narrated by a married woman looking back and recalling her memories. Therefore, it is possible to say that the narrated feelings of the young girl could actually be the reflections and opinions given by the adult, educated, woman and not the natural ones of a young girl. The contradiction consisting of the girl’s reason “screaming out” feelings becomes open to the reader’s interpretation as well. Considering this, it is reasonable to interpret the voice, my reason, as actually being Jane’s inner feelings and not her reason talking.

According to Warhol, first-person narrators can be either a “dissonant” self-narrator who looks back using gained experience when relating history or a “consonant” self-narrator who is objective and engaging in the achieved experience at the time of the event(862). This monologue cannot be said to be either dissonant or consonant. Instead a tension is created and the reliability could be questioned. The young girl is devastated and consonant while the explanation for the outburst and the planning for a revenge is dissonant and given by the mature Jane.

According to Abbot, FID may function as a tool in order to enforce irony and empathy. In that case, at least two sources of narration intervene with utterance and response. These sources can be difficult to separate and interpret clearly (211). In the first monologue, strong empathy for the little child is awakened through the structure and the vocabulary. The exclamation marks enforce strong emotions and used words as “insupportable oppression” and “letting myself die” emphasise sympathy for the orphan Jane.

The second inner monologue takes place after the incident in Mr Rochester’s room. Bertha has set fire to Mr Rochester's bed and Jane helps him. After the incident Mr Rochester leaves home and Jane is informed that he is returning with Miss Ingram, most possibly his wife to be. Jane is agonized by her situation:
“You, ‘I said’, a favourite with Mr Rochester? You gifted with the power of pleasing him? You of importance to him in any way? Go! your folly sickens me. And you have derived pleasure from occasional tokens of preference—equivocal tokens shown by a gentleman of family and a man of the world to a dependent and a novice (186).

This monologue has the character of a long speech and accusation from an observer. The observing and accusing voice in this monologue is the narrator Jane herself, shown by the tag I said in the beginning of the monologue. The pronoun You is emphasised both by its italics and its repetition in the first three questions. The voice is intensely judgemental towards Jane and her affection for Mr Rochester. It sickens the voice that she has the self-confidence to imagine that she could be of any romantic interest to the noble gentleman. The monologue continues:

How dared you? Poor stupid dupe! — Could not even self-interest make you wiser? You repeated to yourself this morning the brief scene of last night? — cover your face and be ashamed! He said something in praise of your eyes, did he? Blind puppy! Open their bleared lids and look on your own accursed senselessness! It does good to no woman to be flattered by her superior, who cannot possibly intend to marry her; and it is madness in all women to let a secret love kindle within them, which, if unreturned and unknown, must devour the life that feeds it; and, if discovered and responded to, must lead, ignis-fatuus-like, into miry wilds whence there is no extrication (186–187).

By depreciatory words of abuse like Poor stupid dupe! and Blind puppy!, Jane is told to be foolish to even consider such attraction as possible. The voice asks Jane if not even her self-interest makes her wise enough to realise the impossible in the situation and that she should be ashamed of herself. Abbot claims that FID is useful as vehicle in order to enforce irony and
this is the case in the second monologue. By using depreciatory words and claiming Jane to be stupid, the voice ironically puts her into place. The voice continues to instruct Jane about what she has to do:

“Listen, then, Jane Eyre, to you sentence: to-morrow, place the glass before you and draw in chalk your own picture, faithfully, without softening one defect; omit no harsh line, smooth away no displeasing irregularity; write under it, “Portrait of a Governess, disconnected, poor and plain.”

“Afterwards, take a piece of smooth ivory – you have one prepared in your drawing box: take your palette, mix your freshest, finest, clearest tints; choose your most delicate camelhair pencils; delineate carefully the loveliest face you can imagine; paint it in your softest shades and sweetest hues, according to the description given by Mrs Fairfax of Blanche Ingram: remember the raven ringlets, the oriental eye; - What! you revert to Mr Rochester as a model! Order! No snivel! – no sentiment! – no regret! I will endure only sense and resolution. Recall the august yet harmonious lineament, the Grecian neck and bust; let the round and dazzling arm be visible, and the delicate hand; omit neither diamond ring nor gold bracelet; portray faithfully the attire, aerial lace and glistening satin, graceful scarf and golden rose: call it, “Blanche, an accomplished lady of rank.”

“Whenever, in future, you should chance to fancy Mr Rochester thinks well of you, take out these two pictures and compare them: say, “Mr Rochester might probably win that noble lady’s love, if he chose to strive for it; is it likely he would waste a serious thought on this indigent and insignificant plebeian? (187).

In this monologue, the function of the narrator is challenged. The voice speaking to Jane has knowledge about what Jane has in her drawing box and what she has been told about Blanche
Ingram by Mrs Fairfax. Therefore, the obvious narrator Jane is suddenly divided into two separate narrators where one Jane accuses the other. The question about the reliable narrator becomes relevant in this passage. Jane is judged for her former actions and thoughts and the accuser, the voice, seems to be the voice of society and its values. This shows through the lecture Jane is given about how useless and hopeless it is for a woman of no fortune to be infatuated by a superior. She is told to scrutinise herself and realise how hopelessly worthless, plain and insignificant she is compared to Blanche, who is an accomplished woman blessed with both looks and fortune.

The difference between Blanche and Jane describes the conditions for Victorian women. During the beginning of the novel, Jane is a dependant woman shaped by her environment and the second monologue shows her insignificance in society compared to the accomplished Blanche. In *The flesh made word: female figures and women's bodies*, Mitchi describes the importance of this difference: “The two portraits and the two socioanatomical constructions they represent dominate the rest of the novel, serving as reference points in Jane’s physical and emotional journey” (50). Jane’s impossibility to even consider Mr. Rochester’s attraction portrays the effects of society values and how only through inheritance and independence such a marriage could have been possible.

What is then the outcome of this monologue? Jane obeys the lecture from society and draws the portrait. She realises her hopeless position and presumes that Blanche Ingram naturally is Mr. Rochester’s choice for future marriage. Compared with her actual actions and behaviour towards superiority, this behaviour is not consistent. Another outcome could for instance have been an outburst caused by an unfair destiny. The little girl did not hesitate to speak her mind when she felt unfairly judged so the adult Jane, educated and mature, should not hesitate to at least complain about her situation.
The final monologue in support of my argument is when Jane has to decide whether she should leave Mr Rochester or not. He wants her to become his mistress and claims that transgressing a mere human law is not a problem, since she has no relatives that could be offended by her actions:

This was true: and while he spoke my very conscience and reason turned traitors against me, and charged me with crime in resisting him. They spoke almost as loud as Feeling: and that clamoured wildly. ‘Oh, comply!’ it said. ‘Think of his misery; think of his danger: look at his state when left alone; remember his headlong nature: consider the recklessness following on despair – soothe him; save him; love him; tell him you love him and will be his. Who in the world cares for you? or who will be injured by what you do?’ (365).

This monologue has the features of a conversation with both questions and answers. Two different voices, conscience and reason, are used in the beginning. The voices begin to argue with Jane’s feelings. Jane becomes the observer, outside the actual conversation and conflict between conscience, reason and feelings. The feelings focus on Mr Rochester and how Jane ought to take care of the poor Mr Rochester who needs her love and affection. Since she has no family who could be offended by her promiscuity, nobody would be affected more than herself.

Empathetic narrative, another term for internal focalization, is described by Van Peer as typical for the Romantic period. By using this mode, the authors were offered “a way out of the moral and epistemological limitations of ego-centered consciousness” (van Peer 85). By using this empathetic mode, the reader could achieve knowledge about other’s experience and feelings and become more understanding. Typical for this narrative mode is a double perspective where the use of pronouns as “he” and “she” labels the narratee as other (85). In this monologue, the pronoun “it” is used in order to create a double perspective. Despite of
the reason and conscience being marked as others, Jane becomes the silent narratee. She becomes passive and the other who is obliged to obey the outcome of the discussion. The final monologue continues:

Still indomitable was the reply: ‘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 (365).

In this passage, Jane’s conscience and reason have opposite opinions. Jane cares about herself even if no one else does. Her Christianity demands her to obey church and its morals. Even if she loves Mr Rochester, love and passion are factors that must be suppressed although she will suffer from a broken heart. Jane’s Christianity is central both in the monologue and in the novel as a whole. When Mr Rochester proposes in his garden, he claims it to be with the approval of God. Jane refuses to marry St. John, since she does not love him. Still, he offers a marriage in the name of Christianity purely based on religious charity. Jane’s Christian decision concerning the refusal of an adulterous life with Mr Rochester contradicts the accusation made by Rigby when she accused the novel to be anti-Christ. Jane obeys Christian rules even if she does not cave in to a loveless marriage with St. John. Therefore, Grey’s conclusion about Rigby’s accusation being an attempt to maintain order in a changing society seems appropriate.

Jane’s religious agony about leaving or staying is also discussed by Cynthia A Linder: "The decision that Jane has to make is between an adulterous life of love, or a life based on fundamental Christian principles" (Linder 33). The outcome of this monologue is of course
her leaving Thornfield and all possibilities of love in order to obey the sanctioned values and morals. She leaves her true love and almost dies of starvation until she is saved by her future cousins. According to Linder, her decision to follow her religious beliefs instead of her emotional desires shows how she has matured morally (33). This interpretation emphasises how the monologue is not coherent with the otherwise confident Jane who questions society's rules and morals.

According to Lamonaca's discussion in *Jane's Crown of Thorns: Feminism and Christianity in Jane Eyre*, Jane's refusal is caused by her self-respect: "By discerning for herself what she perceives to be God's will, Jane effectively resists Rochester's and St. John's attempts to possess her spirit as well as her body" (Lamonaca 246). Yet, a difference, and therefore a tension, exists between the monologue and Jane's behaviour. While she is active, emotional, and open-minded in her behaviour, she becomes the passive observer in the monologue. The final inner monologue ends with Jane declaring her own insanity caused by her love for Mr Rochester:

> If at my individual convenience I might break them, what would be their worth? They have a worth – so I have always believed; and if I cannot believe it now, it is because I am insane – quite insane, with my veins running fire, and my heart beating faster than I can count its throbs. Preconceived opinions, foregone determinations, are all I have at this hour to stand by: there I plant my foot (365).

Jane's passive role in the monologue becomes relevant when discussing the novel as narrative discourse. According to Peters, *Jane Eyre* "goes through three progressive stages, roughly corresponding to progressive stages in the protagonist's struggle to achieve her own voice" (219). The first stage takes place at Gateshead and Lowood, where Jane acts out as a rebellion against rules and society values. The second stage is at Thornfield, where Jane becomes more
mature, honest and emotional as woman. She experiences romantic feelings but still keeps herself in control. The third and final stage occurs towards the end. Jane has now developed into a mature woman with experience and self-confidence enough to question the prevailing values in society (219). Peters states that Jane’s maturity as a narrator enables “dialogical confrontations with other voices” (220). This is not the case, according to this monologue. Jane has no voice in the dialogue, instead her conscience and reason dominate and set the rules while Jane is passive.

The tension and struggle between rebellious thoughts and traditional values, mentioned earlier by Schacht, is emphasised when Jane refuses Rochester’s adulterous offer in the final monologue: “It comes into sharpest focus when Jane, who has seemed in constant revolt against the oppressive code of Victorian “respectability,” refuses Rochester’s offer of love without marriage, capitulating to moral convention” (425). Once again, the traditional values of the nineteenth century conquer and the free-spirited Jane caves in. The credibility of this monologue could be questioned. In chapter 24, where she has the emotional conversation with Rochester about the marriage, she gives a picture of a self-confident and emotional woman who is well aware of herself and her desires. By being an observer in this monologue instead of being an active participant, Jane as narrator becomes unreliable and questionable.

The shift in focalisation within a narrative, discussed by Abbot above, becomes problematic in the final monologue. By using these three senses as voices and narrators, while Jane is passive and listening, the interpretation becomes difficult. This creates a tension and lack of conformity when it comes to interpreting the monologue. The otherwise so strong and open-minded Jane is suddenly vanished and instead she becomes a weak female without self-confidence.

In the final monologue, the conflict between emotions and morals is illuminated and both sides of the conflict demand empathy. Even if all of the chosen monologues use FID
as a vehicle in order to enforce empathy and irony, Jane’s inner monologues could not be seen as FID generally. The reason for this is that they are not coherent with any of the required mental states like dreams or hallucinations, mentioned above by Bal. The main impression of the monologues is that they are clear, argumentative and practical. This structure resembles the mimetic speech mode mentioned earlier as the dominating mode in the novel as a whole. The little girl Jane feels unfairly treated, the young woman Jane is put back into her place by society and the loving Jane is corrected by morals of society. Still, FID, fills its purpose as vehicle for a message to the interpreter of the inner monologues.

To conclude, in the first monologue the narrator’s credibility is questioned since the exclamation uttered by the young Jane contradicts the mature thought of the adult Jane. The consonant self-narrator Jane retelling the past creates a tension which questions the narrator’s reliability. In the second monologue, the narrator Jane is divided into two separate voices where one Jane accuses the other. The accusive voice represents society’s values about female ideals while the accused is the plain, educated Jane herself. The tension in this monologue is created by the outcome of the monologue. Jane obeys and accepts her dependant position in society instead of questioning it. The final monologue consists of a dialogue between Jane’s conscience, her reason and her feelings as voices. Jane herself is passive while the voices become narrators instead. Once again, a tension is created since Jane becomes a silent observer who obeys the voices instead of taking active part in the events.
5 Conclusion

During the nineteenth century, the question about women emancipation was awakened. Brontë’s novel *Jane Eyre* caused anxiety in the Victorian society, since it was alleged to question women’s limited possibilities. The women issue during that period of time is relevant, since mixed images of Jane as woman is presented in the novel. The claim is argued by a comparison between the novel as a whole and three chosen inner monologues of the novel.

After analysing the model according to Genette’s model, the main mode of the novel must be considered as mimetic. The plot is focused on Jane’s speech, actions and thoughts. Jane is the present narrator and the reader follows her “auto-biography” and gets a clear picture of a strong-headed, free-spirited young woman who questions society’s rules. Jane’s impression as a strong female is enforced by the narrative focalisation in the novel. The internal focalisation through her thoughts together with the first-person narration from Jane’s perspective creates a reliable narrator. As I hope to have shown, the main impression of Jane becomes the image of a strong female who refuses to obey traditional social rules.

However, the inner monologues create a different image of Jane. In order to argue the claim, three inner monologues have been analysed. New voices appear in the monologues and question the narrator Jane’s reliability. Instead of being the strong questioning female, Jane turns into an unsecure obedient woman who submits to society’s values. In the three chosen inner monologues, the claimed tension is proved in different ways. The credibility in the first monologue is questioned by the discrepancy between the emotional outburst from the young girl Jane compared to the long, detailed explanation given by the adult Jane recalling her memories. By this, the narrator becomes unreliable since it becomes impossible for the reader
to conclude what Jane’s true opinion about the situation actually is. While the screaming girl is emotional, her thoughts about revenge are without a doubt calm and reasonable.

In the second monologue, Jane is accused by herself as an observer of the situation. The strong and free-spirited Jane is oppressed and is instructed to judge herself for being unaccomplished. All through the narrative, Jane has been questioning the predominant values. Her conversation with Rochester when he confesses his love for her and his disapproval of Blanch Ingram’s accomplished behaviour is a typical example of Jane’s otherwise proud and free-spirited personality. In this monologue she suddenly caves in and accepts her insignificance compared to an accomplished female like Blanche. This contradiction in behaviour clearly shows the claimed tension.

In the final monologue, Jane’s change in personality becomes even more distinct when she is turned into a passive observer. Three new voices appear and debate whether Jane shall leave Thornfield or not. The voices are active while Jane becomes passive and obeys. Jane’s struggle between challenging traditional values or follow her Christian beliefs ends with Jane obeying the predominant values once again and she leaves Mr. Rochester. Still, she does not follow her Christian values when she is offered a marriage without love in order to do Christian work as a missionary’s wife. Jane’s passive role in the final monologue is therefore not consistent with the main impression of her in the novel.

Furthermore, the outcome of the chosen inner monologues enforces the claim of a created tension. The orphan Jane obeys her benefactress, the poor governess Jane draws the portrait and realises her insignificance and the adult Jane, who is madly in love, still decides to leave her love in order to be a good Christian. As I have argued throughout this paper, the tension consists of a contradiction between the actions of Jane in the novel as a whole and her behaviour in the inner monologues. The outcome of the monologues illuminates the tension even further.
To conclude, the novel gives a clear image of Jane as being a strong questioning female while the inner monologues give another, more traditional, image of her. This tension questions the reliability of Jane as narrator and the claim must be considered as argued.
6 Bibliography


