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## **The Different Mr. Rochesters of Jane Eyre**

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## Summary

The famous novel by Charlotte Brontë, *Jane Eyre*, will be the subject of this thesis. I will seek to research the character of Mr. Rochester and his use and display in four film adaptations. All the adaptations will be compared to the source as well as to each other to determine how the character of Mr. Rochester is circumstantial each time. The adaptation theories from theorists such as Robert Stam will be used as guidelines. The film adaptations that will be used in this thesis are *Jane Eyre* (1943) and *Jane Eyre* (1996), both theatrical versions, *Jane Eyre* (1997), a TV version, and lastly *Jane Eyre* from 2006, a BBC mini-series. According to the Internet Movie Database, almost thirty adaptations of *Jane Eyre* have been made. I chose to research these four adaptations for many reasons; I thought it interesting to have two American adaptations (*Jane Eyre* 1943; 1996) and two adaptations that are English (*Jane Eyre* 1997; 2006). I thought by choosing adaptations that had only a year between their premieres would be interesting (*Jane Eyre* 1996; 1997). The 2006 mini-series adaptation was chosen for its length and the 1943 adaptation was also chosen because I thought it was worthy of comparison to the other three adaptations, due to its age.

At first we will look at the major themes in the novel regarding Mr. Rochester and how they are displayed in the film adaptations of *Jane Eyre*. That is done so we can know Mr. Rochester's background a little better before doing a close reading of Mr. Rochester in each film version to see how his character develops through each adaptation. Mr. Rochester will then be characterized in each film by love, violence and the motifs of a Byronic hero. Detailed differences in scenes between the adaptations and the novel will also be examined. Voice-over will be researched to see if and how it is displayed in the film adaptations and a closer look at focalization will be investigated. In the conclusion, Mr. Rochester from the novel and the film adaptations will be compared and discussed in regards to Charlotte Brontë's own words about Mr. Rochester.

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## Introduction

The 19<sup>th</sup> century was a flourishing time for literature, both novels and poetry. Well known authors and poets from the era like William Blake, Lord Byron, John Keats, Jane Austen and Charles Dickens are still famous for their works today and are a part of the literary canon. Another famous author from the 19<sup>th</sup> century is Charlotte Brontë. Her work, *Jane Eyre*, is also an important part of the literary canon; during its time of publication, the Victorian age, it was thought controversial as it is about a woman that went after her own mind and morals. *Jane Eyre*'s part in the literary canon has also made the novel an academic text where it is being taught today as one of the early feminist novels. *Jane Eyre* tells a story of a young girl that was cast away from the only family she had after her parent's death, and made to stay at a school for orphans. While Jane stays at Lowood school she gains religion and calm and also strong opinions about her being equal to everyone, even a wealthy gentleman like Mr. Rochester. Jane goes off to work as a governess and there she blossoms into a young woman with love and care for her master. It is a story about Jane's independency, Mr. Rochester's redemption and above all: love.

The different film adaptations and how they are similar or different to the literary source make it important to look at the adaptation theory. Adaptation theory does not follow a defined set of rules, but has many theories and gestures. Adaptation theory is only as old as movies, and is still growing. Theorists like Brian McFarlane and Robert Stam have come forward with many ways to analyse an adaptation.

The objective of this paper is to research Charlotte Brontë's major themes in *Jane Eyre* together with a close reading of the second main character of the novel, Mr. Rochester, as well as close readings of four film adaptations. The adaptations will be compared to each other with the focus on Mr. Rochester and his personality and actions. The oldest version of the four adaptations stars Orson Welles and Joan Fontaine, both famous actors in the 1940's. *Jane Eyre* (1943) was directed by Robert Stevenson and the screen play was written by Stevenson, John Houseman and Huxley. There are also rumours that Orson Welles took part in writing the screen-play and was given complete freedom to interpret Mr. Rochester after his own mind (Howard, 1991).

*Jane Eyre* (1996) starring William Hurt, Charlotte Gainsbourg and a young Anna Paquin as young Jane was directed by the Italian director Franco Zeffirelli who is known for

directing famous adaptations like *Romeo and Juliet* (1968) and *Hamlet* (1990) along with many more. The script was written by Zeffirelli and Hugh Whitemore but the translation and adaptation was by Josep Llubra. The 1997 television version of *Jane Eyre* display Ciarán Hinds and Samantha Morton in the roles of Mr. Rochester and Jane. This version was directed by Robert Young and the screenplay was written by Richard Hawley, Kay Mellor and Peter Wright. The last adaptation used for the research in this thesis is *Jane Eyre* (2006), TV mini-series made for BBC, directed by Susanna White, the only female director of the adaptations and the screen-play of Brontë's novel is by Sandy Welch. This version stars Toby Stephens as Mr. Rochester and Ruth Wilson as Jane (Internet Movie Database).

## **Hypothesis**

Mr. Rochester is not the main character in *Jane Eyre* but plays a large and important role for both the protagonist and the story itself. The reader does not follow Mr. Rochester's point of view nor do the viewers of the films, but Jane gives the reader her perspective of Mr. Rochester in the novel and in the films the viewers follow Jane through the story, but are present as a third-person (as seen through the camera). Mr. Rochester is an interesting character. He is dark and mysterious and the viewer or the reader never gets to know him personally because Mr. Rochester is only made known through Jane. I thought it would be interesting to research the character of Mr. Rochester for there are many different versions of him. I plan to find out how these versions differ and how they are narrated differently in each adaptation. The adaptations will be compared to the source novel and each other to see how the character of Mr. Rochester develops throughout each film adaptation.

Charlotte Brontë wrote a letter to her friend, W. S. Williams, about how she intended Mr. Rochester's character to be, but both the novel and the film adaptations show a completely different man. Therefore my question for the thesis that I will do my best to answer is if Mr. Rochester is the same in the films as Brontë intended him to be, considering the letter that she sent to her friend. Did Brontë go against her own words deliberately or did Mr. Rochester come out differently in the novel, and therefore the adaptations as well, than she had originally intended?

### **1. Theory**

Cinematic adaptations are as old as cinema itself. Ever since the first movies came out, adaptations have been around (Leitch, 2007, p.22). Often, adaptation is not treated as a positive thing, as if cinema has somehow done a disservice to literature. Infidelity and betrayal play a large part in adaptation criticism (Stam and Raengo, 2005, p.3). When an adaptation is said to be unfaithful to the source, viewers feel it has failed to capture what they see as a fundamental narrative thematic, and aesthetic features of its literary source. The notions of fidelity gains its persuasive force from our sense that some adaptations do fail to realize what we most appreciated in the source novels; some adaptations are indeed better than others; and some adaptations miss at least some of the salient features of their sources. As seen in the different adaptations of *Jane Eyre*; the 1943 version only has Jane's voice-over

tell the viewers that she spent a few days outside with no food or shelter; Jane in the 1996 version takes a wagon to St. John and only one sister and spends no days out on the moor; The 1997 version did not have an uncle that leaves Jane of all his belongings in his will while the 2006 versions tries to follow the original source thoroughly. Maybe viewers should not think so much about the fidelity of an adaptation, because it is not really possible for an adaptation to be strictly true, for an adaptation is automatically different and original due to the change of medium (Stam, 2005, p.3).

The search for a generalized model for adaptation can quickly disintegrate into a list of do's and don'ts. It is ruled that novels are verbal and use words while films are visual and rely on images; a novel can express internal knowledge of a character, while an adaptation has to imply feelings or motivations from a character's actions. Films can only use the present tense although voice-overs are often used to tell the viewers about something in the past; Joan Fontaine reads from a book to explain things that are not shown, and the 1997 version relies on Jane's voice-over both for her thoughts and what had happened in the past, like when Jane tells about her time at Lowood school to shorten the filmed time on that chapter (Geraghty, 2008, p.1).

Although there is no one theory or rule about adaptations, there are many versions of a novel being adapted into a film: *transposition* is when a novel is delivered directly on screen with a minimum of obvious interference from the screenwriter or director; *commentary* (or restructure) where the novel is altered in some respect, whether it is done on purpose or inadvertently like the other three versions of *Jane Eyre*. The 1943, 1996 and 1997 all have something altered or missing from the original source, like Jane's time out on the moor, Jane's gaining of family members that she did not know of or a rich uncle that wishes to leave all his belongings to Jane. The third category is *analogy*; where the novel is used to make another work of art, quite departed from the original (Leitch, 2007, p.93-94).

Theorists compete to set forth theories about how adaptation works and how to define an adaptation. Although there is no one particular model to follow, there are many theories to look at and to take note of when adapting, or when an adaptation is being reviled in an academic or non-academic text. Brian McFarlane is a big name in the adaptation theory studies and has provided many ideas and useful theories. One of his theories is that when interpreting a film on the grounds of adaptation studies resisting distinction between verbal and visual texts in theory while re-inscribing it in practice; it depends on several different kinds of signifying codes. They are language codes, visual codes, non-linguistic codes and

cultural codes. McFarlane labels all these codes as if the essence of cinema were seeing without hearing, selecting, or interpreting (Leitch, 2007, p.180).

Robert Stam, another well-known scholar in adaptation theories and literary and film studies, said that too often, adaptation discourse subtly re-inscribes the axiomatic superiority of literature to film. He argues that too much of the discourse has focused on the subjective question of the quality of adaptations, instead of focusing on more interesting issues of the theoretical status of adaptation and the analytical interest of adaptation. Then Stam points out that first, it derives from the priori valorisation of historical anteriority and seniority, where the assumption lays that older arts are better arts. Reception theory indirectly authorizes more respect for adaptation as a form. The text is an event, whose indeterminacies are completed and actualized in the reading. Instead of being portrayals of a pre-existing reality, both novel and film are communicative utterances, socially situated and historically shaped (Stam and Raengo, 2005, p.4-11).

Stam says that the art of creating an adaptation consists in choosing which generic conventions are transposable into the new medium, and which need to be discarded, transcoded, or replaced (Stam, 2005, p.6). Robert Stam says that a source text forms a dense informational network, a series of verbal cues which the adapting film text can then selectively take up, amplify, ignore, subvert, or transform. He also puts emphasis on how a source text can never be taken out of the equation when looking at an adaptation, but that it is also necessary to look at the adaptation without the source text, to see how an adaptation can be understood without the crucial emphasis on literary origin (Geraghty, 2008, p.196).

Adaptations will always be criticised by viewers, especially those who have read and know the literary source well. These people are probably the hardest ones to please with an adaptation, unless the filmmaker gives the source good delivery. When deciding on an adaptation, the easiest way is to adapt a known literary source. There will already be a group of audience that have read the book that would most likely want to see the film version of a book they liked. When making an adaptation that has already been done before, maybe once or even thirty times like *Jane Eyre*, it can only help the newest adaptation, for the same audience group of the former adaptations and fans of the source are likely to want to see the newest adaptation of a work they like (Murray, 2012, p.157).

## **2. Major Themes in *Jane Eyre* concerning Mr. Rochester**

A theme is something that underlines a novel throughout the whole story. Theme is not what the novel is about, it is what makes the story how it is. Some are necessary for a fruitful storyline as it gives a novel its fillings and decorations. Themes can be both small and large. The larger ones are more noticeable in a story, while the smaller ones are maybe only mentioned every other time. The larger themes are easy to find and follow, but smaller themes can be harder to find and figure out (MHS composition guide, n.d.).

*Jane Eyre*, the novel, is filled with different themes, also in characterizing Mr. Rochester. There are large and small ones and the film adaptations try to use some of the major themes, although not as well emphasised as in the novel. As a Gothic novel, *Jane Eyre* carries the themes of a Gothic Age, which was rich in literature during the Victorian Age. Family plays a large role in Mr. Rochester's past as it had great influence on how his life went.

Mr. Rochester is not known to be very religious, but he and Jane do speak of religion together. Other themes like class, gender and beauty are also strong themes in characterising Mr. Rochester. The themes that are stated below are in regard to Mr. Rochester from the literary source. The adaptations will also be noted in regards to the themes to compare and contrast the difference in the versions to each other and the novel itself.

### **2.1 Family**

Mr. Rochester's father and brother are the ones that have influenced Mr. Rochester's life the most when he is introduced to the story. Mr. Rochester is a bad tempered man after he saw his life fade away with no hope of true love and legally stuck with a wife suffering from a mental illness, which Mr. Rochester has locked up in a tower. His father and brother both knew of the wife's illness, but Mr. Rochester's father was a greedy man and wanted Mr. Rochester to marry for money, for his older brother, Rowland, would inherit all their father's belongings. Mrs. Fairfax, the housekeeper at Thornfield Hall, acknowledges Mr. Rochester's ill feelings against his family when she tells Jane that "If he has peculiarities of temper, allowance should be made...because he has painful thoughts, no doubt, to harass him, and make his spirits unequal." "What about?" asks Jane. "Family troubles, for one thing" says Mrs. Fairfax "I believe there were some misunderstandings...some steps were taken that were not quite fair,

and made a great deal of mischief. Old Mr. Rochester and Mr. Rowland combined to bring Mr. Edward into what he considered a painful position, for the sake of making his fortune: what the precise nature of that position was I never clearly knew, but his spirit could not brook what he had to suffer in it” (Brontë, 2012, p.150-151). In the 1943 and 1996 versions Mrs. Fairfax mentions Mr. Rochester’s family troubles to Jane, but in the 2006 version, Mrs. Fairfax only tells Jane that “He has had disappointments in life” (Jane Eyre, 2006). The 1997 version does not show this conversation between Jane and Mrs. Fairfax.

## **2.2 Religion**

Mr. Rochester seems to have lost his faith in God. Rochester says to Jane in the 2006 version “I had a clear conscious, unpolluted by sin” (Jane Eyre, 2006) and in the novel Mr. Rochester and Jane speak of repentance and reformation. Now he is only “[h]ard and tough as an India-rubber ball” (Brontë, 2012, p. 156), which is mentioned in the novel as well as the 1943 and 1996 versions. The way Mr. Rochester’s life took a horrible direction has made him cold and bitter, incapable of warmth and beliefs. Mr. Rochester does probably acknowledge God, for example he asks God for forgiveness when he asks Jane to be his wife.

In the 1997 version, Mr. Rochester is narrated as a bitter, cold hearted man who, when Jane suggests for him to look to God, says “Tell me when has God done anything for me? I wait for Him, I wait forever” (Jane Eyre, 1997). In the 2006 version Mr. Rochester asks Jane if she believes in redemption and she tells him that if he has sinned, he can be redeemed. Mr. Rochester does acknowledge God in the 2006 version for he admits that he would risk the wrath of God to have Jane. In the novel, Jane uses her religion to help the devastated Mr. Rochester when she is leaving him. Jane tells Mr. Rochester to trust in God, himself and Heaven, so he could hope to meet Jane again, although it would not be until after their death.

## **2.3 Class**

Mr. Rochester is a gentleman as Mrs. Fairfax says; “[Mr. Rochester] has a gentleman’s taste and habits and he expects to have things managed in conformity to them” (Brontë, 2012, p. 123). When his father and brother died, Mr. Rochester inherited Thornfield Hall, a large estate with much land attached. Mr. Rochester is of great fortune, twenty thousand pounds per year, and can live as he pleases, which he does by keeping mistresses all around the world, one at a time, who he spends money on hotel rooms, silk and jewellery for. Jane sees Mr. Rochester’s

place in society and his class as an obstacle for him to ever notice her in a romantic way. The class distinction between Jane and Mr. Rochester is shown in all the adaptations, as Jane comes from Lowood institution and Mr. Rochester from this great fortune. The class distinction is also displayed in each adaptation like in the novel, when the party arrives at Thornfield Hall and they all look down on Jane. Although Mr. Rochester is of a higher class than Jane, he is the first to treat her as an equal.

## **2.4 Gender**

Gender behaviour is influenced by the process of socialization. Gender roles depend on society, culture and even geographic location and politics. The main thing in gender roles is the society they live in, which determines a pattern of behaviour that a person has to be in line with, depending on their sex (Questia, n.d.). By being the male, Mr. Rochester is naturally dominant in both the novel and the adaptations, although Jane tries to determine her own ways in life. As a male character, Mr. Rochester has a safe place in the society and does not need anything else than himself to get by while Jane does not receive full independence until she inherits her uncle's money. Jane is then the one who decides how her and Mr. Rochester's life's turn out, by choosing to return to him.

## **2.5 Beauty**

Beauty is a strong underlying theme in the story and in the film adaptations. Both Jane and Mr. Rochester are known for carrying no physical beauty. Although the adaptations probably show Jane and Mr. Rochester more handsome than the novel meant for them to be, the films emphasise their lack of beauty. Jane is pale and small and in the novel she describes Mr. Rochester as “[...] with broad and jetty eyebrows, his square forehead...his decisive nose, more remarkable for character than beauty...his grim mouth, chin, and jaw...broad-chested and thin-flanked, though neither tall nor graceful.” (Brontë, 2012, p.141) Mr. Rochester knows about his lack of beauty and instead uses his money to make him more desirable to women: “Look carefully, if I were to tell you that I am worth twenty thousand pounds, surly the light from the fire would soften my features” (Jane Eyre, 2006). He also knows that Miss Varens, Miss Ingram and other ladies only wanted Mr. Rochester for his money. Jane tries to convince Mr. Rochester that it is inner beauty that makes the man but he disclaims that for he knows there is nothing beautiful inside of him. The narrator implies that Mr. Rochester does not take

his lack of beauty with as much modesty as Jane, for example he almost loathes Adèle for being the daughter of an opera singer that broke his heart when he figured out that she was only with him for his money.

## **2.6 Gothic**

*Jane Eyre* is a dark, dangerous and mysterious novel, which are all elements of a Gothic novel. Jane and Mr. Rochester are passionate and full of emotions that are common for the main characters in a Gothic styled novel. The story takes place in a large and gloomy mansion out in the country and is filled with secret and lies and even madness. One motif of a Gothic novel is a Byronic hero, which will be introduced later in this thesis (Course site, 2008). Each film version shows all of the Gothic themes; Thornfield Hall is a big and gloomy mansion, Mr. Rochester is a dark and troubled Byronic hero, and something horrifying is going on in the tower of the house.

The film versions suggest that family troubles are the reason for Mr. Rochester's cold heart just as displayed in the book when Mrs. Fairfax is the first to speak of it. Religion comes forth in all of the adaptations, although some emphasise it more than others; the versions from 1943 and 2006 show Mr. Rochester ask God for forgiveness as he asks for Jane's hand in marriage and the 1997 version shows Mr. Rochester's bitterness towards God, while the 1996 version only shows religion when Jane is a child at Lowood; when she and Helen say 'God bless you' to each other. Class is made obvious both in the novel and the films, as Jane feels her place in lower class hinders her being marriage material for Mr. Rochester. The difference of class is also shown in each adaptation when Mr. Rochester's party is at Thornfield Hall and they talk down to Jane. Gender is never mentioned in the adaptations, but the viewer knows that women were lower than the man during that time and age. Beauty, and lack of it, is hampered on in all the adaptations. The Gothic themes are underlying in all the film versions as in the novel; Thornfield Hall is a mysterious place, Mr. Rochester is an angry Byronic hero and madness, love and secrets are all present in the films.

### 3. Voice-over and focalization

A voice-over can often be heard when watching a movie. The storyteller (*voice-over*) informs the viewer about some things that need to be known to follow the storyline of a movie. Then in the movie itself, the viewer follows either one of the character, all of them, or the camera throughout the film. That is called a focalizer, the one the viewer follows throughout the film and the one who gives us the most information about what is going on and also the one who introduces the viewer to other characters. The focalizer is often the one that the viewer has the most sympathy for (Wichlacz, 2007).

#### 3.1 Voice-over

Spoken narrative or voice-over has often been deemed by film theorists as a lazy resort of writers unable to convey ideas audio-visually says David Parkinson, the author of *100 ideas that changed Film*. But still the voice-over has proved invaluable across the generic range and been favoured by some of the world's best directors. Although some might say a voice-over is unnecessary and only done because of laziness I think voice-over can be important in some cases. When doing an adaptation of a complicated or a long novel, there are some things that the viewer needs to be informed of to understand the storyline. Some films do not have the time, or it does not fit in the script to show certain things that can easily be described by a voice-over without making the film look lazy or cheap. In adapting literature, voice-over is often used, as seen in *Jane Eyre* (1943) and *Jane Eyre* (1997). Maybe the goal is for the viewer to get the feeling that the adaptation is from a novel and the filmmaker wants to keep the narrator or as in the cases of *Jane Eyre* (1943, 1997) the voice-over is used to jump over scenes and give insight in to Jane's thoughts. Regardless of time or setting, screen stories can be related from the viewpoint of a first person, third person or even an omniscient narrator. Voice-overs can replace the tone of literary sources and sometimes smooth awkward transitions in sprawling dramas or patch up pictures that have been heavily revised during editing (Parkinson, 2012, p.125).

Narrative mediums like literature, theatre and film for example, rely on a narrator to convey the narrative's story. This narrator can take many forms and in films it can be both the camera and a narration of a voice-over. Using a voice-over is an easy form of narrative to describe what needs to be in a film, partly because it is usually distinctly separate from the film frame. A typical voice-over is heard at the beginning and at the end of a film; to introduce the characters and the path of the story and then to give fulfilment to the end of a

film or if there are some explanations needed for the viewer. Explanations and what happens after what the film shows the viewer is often put out as a text at the end, instead of a voice-over. Film adaptations from novels often use narration, a voice-over to explain what is needed, especially if the novel is long and complex and there needs to be some information for the viewer that the filmmakers will not put in film. Voice-over does not only inform and explain to the viewer about the path of the story, but can also reveal to the viewer the inner thoughts of major and minor characters which otherwise would not be known to the viewer (Wichlacz, 2007).

In the novel *Jane Eyre*, Jane tells the reader the story of her life, from when she was a child until she has a family with Mr. Rochester. Jane is telling the reader the story of her life, ten years after her marriage to Mr. Rochester. We follow Jane throughout the whole story, with her thoughts about it and how she coped with the information and characters she came across along the way. The reader knows exactly what Jane is thinking at all times because she is doing the same as voice-over does; narrating. In the movies voice-over is used in some of the versions, some use it more some less or not at all, like in the 2006 version. The 2006 version has the superiority of being longer and can therefore show more than the other versions; the 1943 version has Jane read from the novel *Jane Eyre* (an altered version of the novel) to elaborate how she came to know over time that Mr. Rochester was so moody and angry for a reason and for example when she gives a description of the times in which she was born. In the 1997 version Jane's voice-over is used to jump ahead of time, cut scenes from the original novel and to go faster through scenes, like for example Jane's time at Lowood with Helen. The voice-over in *Jane Eyre* (1997) is also used to reveal Jane's implied feelings for Mr. Rochester. The 1996 version has Jane's voice-over only at the end when Jane explains what happened after she returned to Mr. Rochester. Voice-over in regards to focalizations will be studied further below in this thesis.

As said above, narration or voice-over is most often told in the first- or third-person. When there is a voice-over from a voice that is not a character in the film, the voice-over is done in third-person. When a first-person narration comes from the main character, like in the *Jane Eyre* film adaptations (although there is not a voice-over in the 2006 version and hardly any in the 1996 version, we know from the point of view that Jane is the one we are following through the film but the viewer and the story is told in the third-person) it helps to solidify them as the protagonist and aides the audience in sympathizing with the character (Wichlacz, 2007).

### 3.2 Focalizer

When it comes to who is the focalizer in both the *Jane Eyre* novel and the four film adaptations, Jane is the one the viewers follow in all of the versions although it is maybe shown differently in each film version. In the novel, Jane is telling the reader the story. Therefore the reader gets all the information about each character and how the storyline grows directly from Jane's aspects and experiences. In the novel the reader is given the internal knowledge of Jane and how she reads other characters. In the films the viewers are following Jane's point of view (POV) throughout the story, from her time at Gateshead until she reunites with Mr. Rochester in the end. It can be wondered if the story and the films would turn out differently if someone else had been the focalizer, like Mr. Rochester, for example. He plays the largest role in Jane's life and following Mr. Rochester's POV would probably give us a completely different aspect of the story. Maybe the reader and/or the viewer would feel more sympathy with Mr. Rochester and completely understand his decision to break the law by marrying Jane if the reader or viewer would have been following Mr. Rochester's feelings and thoughts throughout the novel/films.

The reader and/or viewer could also have even less sympathy for Mr. Rochester if they followed the storyline from his POV, they might think that he is not honouring his obligations and so on. Then there is also the possibility that the story or the film adaptations would be told from the POV of Mrs. Fairfax or even Adèle, which would probably not have been so accurate, for Adèle is just a child, while Jane is telling the story, ten years after she met Mr. Rochester. There are many ways that Brontë could have interpreted the story, but as it is about Jane Eyre herself and what she goes through, it is probably best that her POV is the one that is followed. Otherwise no one could know if the popularity of the novel would have succeeded into many different adaptations and ongoing publishing of the novel since it first came out.

In the 1943 version, the film starts with Jane reading from the book *Jane Eyre*, which has been altered for this version. Her voice-over implies to the viewer that Jane is telling us a story and that we will follow her through the film. There are both face shots and shots with both the speaker and the one who is being spoken to; when Mr. Rochester and Jane are speaking to each other, they are both kept in the shot, but when a character is showing emotions with facial expressions the camera often puts emphasis on that character to show the viewer how he/she is feeling, without using words. When Jane is a child, Mr. Brocklehurst is sometimes filmed from below, to show that he is superior to Jane. There are some over the

shoulder shots, but more often both characters that are speaking are both filmed directly. The viewer does not see through Jane's eyes, and Jane is most often the superior character when with others in a scene. Mr. Rochester does have a lot of lines and plays a large role and sometimes he is the one that the camera focuses on.

In both the 1996 and 1997 versions, the viewer sees the distress Jane is having in the red room from her own eyes. The POV is all Jane's but in some scenes Jane is not present. In both these adaptations, the viewer is the 3<sup>rd</sup> unrecognized party and sometimes the camera films over the shoulder, especially in the latter version. In the 1996 version, Mr. Rochester is sometimes put in the foreground whilst he speaks, but the viewer is usually following Jane. The viewer hears the story of Bertha from Mr. Rochester's POV and when Thornfield Hall is on fire, Mr. Rochester has the followed POV. In the 1997 version, just as the 1943 version, Jane's voice-over is heard a lot and therefore the viewer knows that Jane is the focalizer, although there are some scenes that Jane is not a part of. The camera is mostly within a comfortable distance of a character and often there is only one character in a shot but to emphasise Jane's and Mr. Rochester's feelings the camera does a close up of them separately; for example when Mr. Rochester screams 'No!' in the church (Jane Eyre, 1997).

In the 2006 version, the characters who are a threat to Jane (Mrs. Reed, Mr. Brocklehurst and such) are filmed from down below, to show their superiority to Jane and Jane is filmed from above as a child to show that she is inferior to them. The camera follows Jane, but not directly from her vision. The POV is in a way that makes us follow her every footstep. The characters are often alone in a shot, especially when Jane and Mr. Rochester are speaking to each other but there are never close shots of them except of Jane when she sees that Mr. Rochester's bed is on fire. The viewer again sees through Jane's eyes when she follows Mr. Rochester's light up to the tower and when she is watching Mr. Rochester walking in the garden. Sometimes Mr. Rochester seems to have the POV, like when he is telling Adèle about the Caribbean Islands.

#### 4. Mr. Rochester

Mr. Rochester is the main character in *Jane Eyre* after Jane herself and is of great importance to the story and Jane. Both Jane and Mr. Rochester's characters grow throughout the novel by gaining new perspectives and going through hardship that relies on their heart to get them to the finish line. Mr. Rochester is a dark and questionable character that goes through life carrying awful secrets that barely anyone knows of. Mr. Rochester's grief over missing out on life has taken its toll on his character and his appearances and he takes his anger and hate for life out on others. Mr. Rochester has a huge impact on Jane, as he is the first one to acknowledge her as a human being and respect her views as an intellectual woman.

Mr. Rochester is an interesting and mysterious character who is amusing to follow through the novel and the film versions. It is interesting to get to know Mr. Rochester, his secrets and what he keeps up in the tower that is making all these noises. Mr. Rochester is a typical Byronic hero, bearing characteristics that were popular in Gothic novels during the Victorian Age. A deeper understanding of a Byronic hero and why Mr. Rochester is one will be made clear. Love and violence, two major themes in Mr. Rochester's character, will be researched with close reading of the film adaptations. As said before, the year after Charlotte Brontë wrote *Jane Eyre* and got it published, she sent a letter to her friend W. S. Williams where she wrote how she meant Mr. Rochester to be like:

Mr. Rochester has a thoughtful nature and a very feeling heart; he is neither selfish nor self-indulgent; he is ill-educated, misguided; errs, when he does err, through rashness and inexperience: he lives for a time as too many other men live, but being radically better than most men, he does not like that degraded life, and is never happy in it. He is taught the severe lessons of experience and has sense to learn wisdom from them. Years improve him; the effervescence of youth foamed away, what is really good in him still remains. His nature is like wine of a good vintage, time cannot sour, but only mellows him. Such at least was the character I meant to portray.

(Brontë, 1848)

#### 4.1 Mr. Rochester and Byronic hero motifs

The term “Byronic hero” as a type of character was first introduced in Lord Byron’s poem *Childe Harold’s Pilgrimage* published early in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Brontë was possibly influenced by Lord Byron’s works because her second main character, Mr. Rochester, does carry many Byronic hero motifs in his characteristics and is one of the most famous Byronic heroes from the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Judging from the letter Brontë wrote her description of Mr. Rochester’s character is almost the complete opposite from how he comes across to Jane and the reader. Charlotte Brontë’s description of Mr. Rochester is different in many ways to the Mr. Rochester that is known; Mr. Rochester might not be selfish but he is well educated as he went to college until he went to Spanish-town, Jamaica to marry Bertha Mason at the age of twenty-one.

Mrs. Fairfax says that he is clever and well educated as he has travelled the whole world. Rashness and inexperience is far from being part of Mr. Rochester’s characteristics as he is an intelligent man of the world. Mr. Rochester is not happy with his way of life as many others, and is therefore always seeking something on his travels. Brontë’s description of Mr. Rochester does fit in some ways, as she says that although he gets older, the good in him still remains, as Mr. Rochester has a loving heart, when he gets the chance to show it. Mr. Rochester does mellow with time, but that is mainly because he is finally free from a terrible marriage and has finally received happiness for the rest of his life in the arms of Jane and later, their children.

Harold Bloom, an American literary critic said in his book *Novelists and Novels* that the Brontë sisters did grow up with Lord Byron’s poetry and work. When the girls were just children, Lord Byron died but his work kept on living and was thought really important to English literature and poetry. It was also thought that Lord Byron had brought something new to the scene. Bloom then succeeds by saying that Charlotte Brontë was in fact trying to seek vengeance upon Lord Byron, as Mr. Rochester leaves his Byronic hero motifs in the end and needs to depend on Jane for everything, and has thereby been tamed into domestic virtue and pious sentiment. By this, Bloom means that Brontë could not allow Lord Byron to succeed in literature forever. The letter Brontë wrote to W. S. Williams also further supports that Brontë was trying to show that the literary power of *Jane Eyre* results from its authentic sadism in representing the very masculine Mr. Rochester as a victim of Charlotte Brontë’s will-to-power over the beautiful Lord Byron (Bloom, 2005).

A Byronic hero can be found to be an arrogant, cynical, moody and even an emotionally conflicted person. He bears distaste for social norms and is disrespectful of rank and privilege. The Byronic hero is intelligent but yet self-critical and self-destructive. The Byronic hero is charming in that way that he is seductive and sexually attractive, despite of looks, and being world-weary and mysterious gives him that “there is something about him” feeling. The Byronic hero uses his sexual attractiveness and his standard to be socially and sexually dominant. Although being sophisticated and often well educated, the Byronic hero is struggling with integrity and is treated as an outcast, but mainly because he himself chose to live the life of an outcast. The reason for the Byronic hero feeling and wanting to be an outcast is mainly because he has a troubled past and/or is suffering from an unnamed crime and has therefore put himself in exile by leaving his regular place (TV Tropes, n.d.).

Mr. Rochester carries many of these distinctions of a Byronic hero. Mr. Rochester is rather arrogant, cold and moody on Jane’s first encounter with him. Soon after arriving at Thornfield, Jane finds out through Mrs. Fairfax that Mr. Rochester has a reason for why he acts so distant and cold. Something that his father and brother did to Mr. Rochester that Mrs. Fairfax does not know exactly what is, has made him to become a conflicted person. The Byronic hero motifs are mostly similar in both the novel and in the adaptations, but each film emphasises certain motifs more than the others. In the 1943 and 1997 versions, Mr. Rochester is displayed as extremely angry and in a heavier mood than the ones in the 1996 and 2006 versions.

Jane Eyre, played by Joan Fontaine in the 1943 version, says that from her first meeting at Thornfield with Mr. Rochester she felt instinctively that his malignant mood had its source in some cruel twist of fate, which she later learns. She tells the viewers in voice-over that Mr. Rochester was “indeed a great man who beneath the harsh mask lay a tortured soul and a good heart” (Jane Eyre, 1943). But to add to his troubles, Mr. Rochester is always temperamental and abrupt towards Jane and others although he tells Jane that he himself used to be kind and live a good life, but that life had made him hard and turned him from being the greenest plant around into being a fake plastic one.

Mr. Rochester is very moody and emotionally conflicted, just as a Byronic hero. He is very abrupt, and his anger can fire up anytime. Mr. Rochester knows when to be sophisticated but there is always something mysterious about him. When Mr. Rochester asks for Jane’s hand in marriage he seems to be afraid to a certain amount, as he asks her in haste and demands an answer instantly for he knows he is doing something wrong. After the fire and

after Jane's return to Thornfield Hall, it becomes clear that Mr. Rochester is self-destructive and self-critical as he is deciding whether he wants her to stay and finally get the love of his life, or let her go for she is young and he is not handsome and a wreck after the fire at Thornfield. But Mr. Rochester kisses Jane and is released of his Byronic hero motifs.

Just as in the 1943 version featuring Orson Welles, the 1997 version with Ciarán Hinds as Mr. Rochester, his character is coloured by extreme wrath and insane abruptness. Mr. Rochester tells Jane early in this adaptation that she herself will one day feel how bad love can be. Although Mr. Rochester is very bad tempered, the difference in this adaptation is Jane, for she also shows more temper and asks him more inappropriate questions than she ought to, which makes Mr. Rochester even angrier. Although this version of Mr. Rochester can get extremely mad, he is the one who shows Adèle the most infatuation by not just giving her presents but holds her in his lap and caresses her. Mr. Rochester shows his regret for how his life has turned out, is self-critical and emotional but can be sophisticated and have fun when he wants, as he seems to be in great humour when the party comes to Thornfield Hall (Jane Eyre, 1997).

The 1996 version featuring an American playing Mr. Rochester (William Hurt) and the four hour long BBC version featuring Toby Stephens as Mr. Rochester are in some level similar to each other, just as Orson Welles and Ciarán Hinds are to a certain amount. What is quite different in the 1996 and 2006 versions is that the Byronic hero has changed in some way to be more similar to Jane Austen's Mr. Darcy from *Pride and Prejudice*, which BBC made an adaptation of the year before *Jane Eyre* with Hurt and Charlotte Gainsbourg as Jane, and it received critical acclaim.

In the 1996 version, Mr. Rochester is abrupt and goes from having a smile on his face to a frown within only a few words. When Jane draws Mr. Rochester for Adèle, he is in great humour and asks if Jane thinks that he is handsome, but when he sees the photo he is disappointed as he is reminded of his unflattering face and expressions. Mr. Rochester tells Jane that he used to be different and asks her if he has any hope of being 'transferred back to flesh and blood' (Jane Eyre, 1996). In the end, when Jane comes back to Mr. Rochester, he does not want to cast her off or deny her being there, but is soft in reply and does not understand why she should want to be with him as he is no better than a ruined dream. As this version shows William Hurt as a little softer Mr. Rochester although he is not a happy man, the Byronic hero motifs are not as strong as in the 1943 and 1997 versions. Mr. Rochester is clearly living a damaged life, but shows it with less emotion.

Toby Stephens as Mr. Rochester is a bit softer than the 1943 and 1997 versions of Mr. Rochester. He has great humour, although it can be shifted away immediately. In this version it is emphasised that Mr. Rochester is well travelled and really intelligent with much wisdom in biology. Mr. Rochester talks about disappointment about the world, as it is not as interesting as he thought, but that reflects his disappointment with himself and how his life has turned out, that even by staying at the other end of the planet, he still cannot run away from his problems. Mr. Rochester is saddened when Jane talks about how it is the inner man that makes one beautiful, for he knows there is nothing inside of him that is good, for he has lost his innocence and kind heart. Mr. Rochester does not hide the fact that he has problems and is suffering but does not allow himself to let anyone know about his troubles and instead went travelling to find true love. When Jane has accepted Mr. Rochester's proposal, he is both extremely happy and scared and prays to God to let no one take her away from him (Jane Eyre, 2006).

Although this version of Mr. Rochester is more in line with the 1996 version and therefore a bit similar to Austen's Mr. Darcy, coming from the same production company, Mr. Rochester is abrupt and emotional which Mr. Darcy is not and this Mr. Rochester shows many Byronic hero motifs, as anger (though not extreme), emotions and disappointment with life are made clear by himself and he knows it well that women have wanted him only for his money, and not his looks.

In all the versions, both the novel and the film adaptations, Mr. Rochester does not, just as a Byronic hero would, mind the guilt and breaking the law as he commits bigamy in asking for Jane's hand in marriage, still being married to Bertha. Divorcing his wife for mental illness was not allowed, so Mr. Rochester keeps Bertha in the tower with a care-taker, Grace Poole, as he himself travelled the world acting like a bachelor. The marriage his father and brother arranged for Mr. Rochester cheated him of having a normal and happy life, and he thought he was allowed to receive happiness by marrying Jane since he had done his duty. As Mr. Rochester said in the 1997 version to Jane he could not understand why they could not be together since they loved each other. Being passionate about a particular matter or person is a Byronic hero motif which Mr. Rochester shows clearly about his marriage to Jane in all the versions. In some literature, the Byronic hero is paired with a more innocent, angelic figure, just as Jane has to choose between the saintly St. John Rivers or the Byronic Mr. Rochester to spend her life with (Course site, 2008).

## 4.2 Mr. Rochester and love

*Jane Eyre* is known for its Gothic motifs that characterized literature in the Victorian Ages; a mysterious mansion, 'ghost' in the attic, fires and a Byronic hero (Course site, 2008). It shows signs of early feminism (the liberties of women to follow their own wishes), as is reflected in Jane's character and Jane's strong will about her own life and choices, which was completely different from the norm and thought to be astonishing at such times, as women had almost no rights during the Victorian Age. In spite of all these exciting themes that fill Brontë's book and makes it very interesting, it cannot be forgotten that *Jane Eyre* is intended as a love story; A love story between a cynical, self-loathing man of great fortune and a poor and obscure young girl with an early feministic view of the world.

Mr. Rochester's love and care for both Jane and Adèle differs between versions, both in the novel and the films. In all of them Mr. Rochester showers Adèle with presents, which she adores but she gets little affection from her ward and Mr. Rochester sometimes gets easily angry at her. In the 1997 TV version, Mr. Rochester is kind and warm to Adèle, takes her in on his lap and is a fatherly figure to her when he is at Thornfield. Then in the 2006 version, Mr. Rochester knows he has done the right thing by taking Adèle with him to England as her mother left her, and is true to his obligations although he takes his hatred of Adèle's mother, Céline Varens, out on Adèle.

Orson Welles as Mr. Rochester gives the viewer a hint by the look in his eyes that he seems to have some interest for Jane, as he watches after Jane in many scenes and also during their first encounter when Mr. Rochester is asking Jane about her and Thornfield Hall. Mr. Rochester is eager towards Jane as he asks her about his appearance, shows her respect and hopes that Jane will be happy at Thornfield. On the night of the fire, when Jane rescued Mr. Rochester he asks her if she thought his life deserved saving and told her that he knew she would do him good. Although Mr. Rochester is hot tempered, he finds comfort in Jane and becomes warmer towards her as he knows he can trust her. When Jane left after seeing Bertha, Mr. Rochester does not go after her but asks her if she still loves him, Jane says she does, but she asks God to bless him and leaves. When Jane arrives at Thornfield, Mr. Rochester does not want pity and Jane begs him not to send her away and they kissed (Jane Eyre, 1943).

William Hurt's Mr. Rochester is the softest version of them all, but shows little emotions. He shows interest in Jane, asks her about her drawings and if she was happy when she made them. Mr. Rochester speaks calmly towards Jane whether he is scolding her because

Adèle is awake late in the evening or when he speaks about the string that connects their heart, but always without emotions in his eyes and no facial expressions, different from Welles. On the night of the fire in Mr. Rochester's bed, he tells Jane that he knew she would do him good, but does not go as far as come on to her, as he does in the 1997 and 2006 versions. Mr. Rochester is deeply in love with Jane and kisses her all over when he asks for her hand in marriage, but still it seems too difficult for him to break the barriers and show any real emotions, similar to Austen's Mr. Darcy. When Jane is running away from Thornfield Hall, Hurt's Mr. Rochester shows passion and fear and denial as he jumps on the horse to follow Jane and screams after her to not go. Later, when Jane returns to him, Mr. Rochester does not try to talk her out of staying although he speaks down to himself in his self-destructing way. But their love is strong and Jane's declaration of love to him however he looks like gives them both the happy ending they wanted (Jane Eyre, 1996).

As stated above, the 1997 version of Mr. Rochester, played by Ciarán Hinds is very kind to Adèle and shows her affection. Although he can be extremely angry, he can also be in real good humour in between. He does not show Jane any warmth in the beginning although he tries to show her interest and asks her questions about her life. Jane, played by Samantha Morton, is different from the other Janes and can also be bad tempered up to certain amount, so both she and Mr. Rochester are in a way at it against each other, although it is not too obvious, but Jane shows with facial expressions and answers that she does not approve of the way Mr. Rochester treats her in the beginning. This changes fast, as Mr. Rochester starts to show Jane more interest and finds a friend in her, especially when Jane saved him from his burning bed, he called her his guardian angel and holds her hand for some time and comes strongly on to her and she flees to her bedroom, scared but interested and a little happy (Jane Eyre, 1997).

Jane's voice-over is heard where she says that Mr. Rochester has too many faults, thinks himself as superior, that he is proud and deeply sarcastic but Jane then gives the hint that she is clearly starting to fall for Mr. Rochester. Mr. Rochester hints the same as he asks Jane if she is not happy to see him again when he arrives back to Thornfield Hall with his party guests. Mr. Rochester later asks Jane if she would be willing to throw away convention to receive happiness; here his is clearly fishing after if she likes him enough to be with him, in spite of his past and living wife. When Jane needs to leave for her sick aunt, Mr. Rochester becomes rather childish as he is unhappy with the fact that Jane is leaving him. He is also

childish when Jane returns to Thornfield, disappointed that she stayed away so long and did not write.

Hind's Mr. Rochester is not afraid of showing emotions and opinions and when he declares his love for Jane, he is extremely passionate, but yet scared, pleasant and polite as he kisses her all over and begs for her hand in marriage and to make him the happiest man on earth. Mr. Rochester stays in this thrilling and exciting mood, happy to have finally found the love he has searched for many years. Mr. Rochester does doubt himself and asks Jane to say that she loves him, for he is always self-destructive and believes no good can happen to him. Mr. Rochester later declared that he did not mind he was committing a crime in marrying Jane, because all he wanted was to make Jane happy. When Jane returns to Mr. Rochester, he gets irritated that Jane wanted to be his nurse and eyes and does not want pity and gets angry at Jane, and asks her to leave. Jane needs to fight for his love and get him to understand that it is because of love but not pity that she wants to stay with him. At the end he gives in and cries for the wish to see Jane's face again and they went on to live a happy life together (Jane Eyre, 1997).

In the 2006 version, Mr. Rochester is not pleased when he falls from his horse and blames Jane's wickedness for it, but also gives a confident smile as he tells her to hurry back home to Thornfield. Mr. Rochester later tries to seduce Jane a little by asking if she thinks he is handsome when she knows of all his fortune, for he knew he was not handsome, but that his money made him eligible. Mr. Rochester is often grumpy and in a heavy mood so Jane is sometimes a little afraid if he will scold her for something. When Jane saved Mr. Rochester from his bed of fire, he is surprised that Jane is just going to leave him and go back to her bed, and asks her to at least shake his hand for thank you. He holds her hand as he tells Jane that he knew she would do him good. Jane replies that she wants to go to her room for she is cold and Mr. Rochester then wraps her with his cloak and holds her near up against his body, looks her in the eyes like he is testing her, but Jane is frozen and he says that if she must leave him, she must. This makes Jane fall even more for Mr. Rochester and makes her believe that she could be beautiful, that she could be someone that Mr. Rochester would want. Mr. Rochester does seem to care for Jane, for when the Ingrams talk badly to her for being a governess, he abruptly changes the conversation so they would stop talking badly to Jane (Jane Eyre, 2006).

Although Mr. Rochester and Jane had their moment after the fire, he is still stiff and cold towards Jane and asks her if she thinks that he was in love with Blanche Ingram, for Mr. Rochester wanted to use Blanche to make Jane jealous. Mr. Rochester knows that he can trust

Jane, which is a sign of care, but when Jane asks for a leave to go and see her aunt, Mr. Rochester is not pleased and shows his fear of being at Thornfield without Jane. Mr. Rochester leaves her in a fuss when he asks Jane to stay but she tells him she needs to go. When Jane returns from her aunt, Mr. Rochester calls her an ungrateful thing for staying away so long, but is in fact glad that she is finally back. Jane gives Mr. Rochester a clear message that she likes him in some way, for she says to him that where he is, there was her home. When they declare their love for each other, Mr. Rochester is calm at first and does not show many emotions while he listens to Jane speak, but when he runs to her, grabs her and asks for her hand in marriage he is very passionate and gets over-excited when Jane says yes to his proposal (Jane Eyre, 2006).

In the 2006 version, different from the other adaptations, Mr. Rochester and Jane spend the night together after the wedding was stopped. They are talking and caressing each other and Mr. Rochester asks her to move away with him where no one would know anything and they could live together as brother and sister, for he only wanted to be with her, in whatever way possible for he knew that both of them could not be without human companionship. Mr. Rochester lets all his barriers down and is almost crying as he begs Jane to stay as he knows that they are one and therefore have to be together. When Jane returns to Mr. Rochester, he does not want Jane to stay to be a friend or companion, for he wants a wife. Here Jane makes Mr. Rochester jealous of St. John, just as Mr. Rochester had tried to make Jane jealous of Blanche Ingram, they agree that they both want a marriage and live happily ever after (Jane Eyre, 2006).

#### **4.3 Mr. Rochester and violence**

As a part of being a Gothic novel with its Byronic hero motifs, Mr. Rochester is a troubled man who shows it in anger, sometimes it is extreme and sometimes it is cold and emotionless. Mr. Rochester has a hardened heart, because he was cheated of a normal and happy life, as his father and brother made him marry a woman from a family with a history of madness, and hiding the truth from Mr. Rochester. Living a life unfulfilled, searching for true beauty and love, knowing he has a lunatic for a wife locked up in a tower in his mansion, has made Mr. Rochester a cold, self-destructive man who does not believe anyone can love him without his money. Mr. Rochester's abruptness of temper, from being in a good humour to extreme anger is understandable for he has lived a life that he did not wish upon himself and has had to suffer for. This anger and changeable manners shine through in each film version as it did in

the novel itself. In some versions his anger is extreme and emphasised (Jane Eyre, 1943; 1997) while in the 1996 and 2006 versions it is played down a bit and Mr. Rochester is made more emotionless, which is similar to Austen's Mr. Darcy from *Pride and Prejudice*.

Little Adèle says in the 1943 version that when Mr. Rochester comes home to Thornfield Hall, he sits in his chair by the fire with a frown on his face, where he is twice as bad than Jane could imagine. When Jane first met Mr. Rochester he was extremely angry, as he had just fallen from his horse but he soon gets calm and asks Jane about her whereabouts. But when he arrives at Thornfield, Mrs. Fairfax says that the master had arrived in such a violent humour and was asking for Jane. When she came to his study he only clicked his fingers to order Jane to pour hot water on his foot and fusses over that she does not say a word. He orders Jane to play for him on the piano, but later screams at her to stop and bids her good night. Jane is puzzled and terrified of what has happened and why her master was so proud, sardonic and harsh. Jane does scold Mr. Rochester for treating Adèle so badly, by showing her no warmth or love, although as Jane discovers the story of Adèle's mother, she does not approve of Mr. Rochester's behaviour towards Adèle.

When Bertha's brother, Mason, comes to Thornfield Hall, Mr. Rochester shows no remorse and gets extremely angry at him for showing up. Mr. Rochester shows his true angered side to Blanche Ingram as he confronts her for only being after his fortune. Mr. Rochester does not get angry with Jane for leaving, but rather sad and disappointed. After the fire and losing his sight, Mr. Rochester's temper does not get better and he is angry at Jane for showing up again at Thornfield Hall, for he wants no pity and orders her to leave, but Jane persuades him to believe that she has come back because of love and nothing else (Jane Eyre, 1943).

When William Hurt as Mr. Rochester falls from his horse he tells Jane calmly to stand on the right side of the road, but does not scream at her. At their first meeting at Thornfield Hall, Mr. Rochester is polite to her as he asks her questions but abruptly changes his mood and bids her good night. On their next account, Mr. Rochester asks Jane about her drawings but again he abruptly changes his path of mood and scolds Jane for Adèle's still being awake. As in most of the versions, Mr. Rochester does not show Adèle warmth or care but gives her presents, just as he did to her mother. Mr. Rochester gets angry with Jane for interfering in how he chooses to treat Adèle and says that he at least honours his obligations. Mr. Rochester goes about in the same emotionless, cold temper, sometimes angry but he and

Jane get to know each other more and Jane now knows how his character works (Jane Eyre, 1996).

On the day of their wedding, Mr. Rochester gets extremely mad at Mr. Briggs and demands a proof that he has a wife. When Mason shows up, Mr. Rochester knows there is nothing he can do, he is so disappointed and angry he asks everyone to come and meet his wife. Mr. Rochester screams at Mason that his family and Mr. Rochester's family deceived Mr. Rochester into a marriage to a mad woman. Mr. Rochester screamed that he did what he was told to do and has been living the last fifteen years in torment. Afterwards Mr. Rochester becomes more passionate about Jane and follows her when she went from Thornfield, until he sees that Thornfield Hall is on fire. Mr. Rochester is not angry with Jane when she comes back to him. Mr. Rochester does not understand why she should want a wreck like him, but does not scream or get angry at her, but speaks to her calmly and embraces Jane (Jane Eyre, 1996).

Mr. Rochester gets mad and screams at Jane when he falls off the horse in the lake in the 1997 version. He demands her to hand him his whip, and Jane does not like his tone with her. Mr. Rochester later says that it is in his nature to order people around and thinks it is a given fact, especially when he pays them. When Jane saves Mr. Rochester from his burning bed he lost his temper and yelled at Jane for trying to drown him in his sleep but also gets mad at her that she is going to go back to her room after he put out the fire and orders her to sit down. Here Mr. Rochester shows Jane that he is interested in her. When Mason arrives at Thornfield Hall, Mr. Rochester is disappointed to see him but does not get mad at him but he gets irritated that Jane is always asking about Grace Poole. On the day of their marriage, Mr. Rochester gets extremely mad at Mason for calling Bertha his wife and brings them all to the tower and explains his story. The priest condemns him for committing to bigamy and Mr. Rochester answers him madly that he would do anything to be with Jane.

When Jane is leaving him and Thornfield Hall, his temper rises through the roof as he drags her out to the tree where they stood under as they declared their love for each other. In his bewildered mood Mr. Rochester screams at Jane to confess that she does not love him and said it only to get his fortune, that she was only a child who does not know what love is. His madness and love for Jane blocks him for thinking clearly and says that he does not understand why they cannot be together if they love each other, and screams at her that she belongs to him. When Jane returns to Mr. Rochester he gets really angry with her for wanting to be his nurse and companion, for he does not want pity. He asks Jane if she found another

man and asks her why she did not stay with St. John, for he himself is just a ruin like Thornfield Hall. As a Byronic hero, Mr. Rochester is self-critical and hateful until he finally gives in and believes that Jane wants him for him (Jane Eyre, 1997).

Toby Stephens as Mr. Rochester screams at his dog and tells Jane that she is a witch and to get away from him, for she has done enough when they meet out on the path. When Mr. Rochester asks to see Jane at Thornfield, he is in a bad mood and shows Adèle no affection, gives her a gift and tells her to be silent. In this bad temper, Mr. Rochester asks Jane about family and friends and where she came from and when she answers that she has no relations, he tells Jane that she is lucky, for she will then never get disappointed. When they meet, Mr. Rochester is grumpy and shows it through a negative mood. He screams at her to stop playing the piano and orders her to put Adèle to sleep and complains about his leg. Mr. Rochester does not speak well of Adèle and claims her to be the spitting image of her spoiled mother. Therefore he treats her ill, for he has hate towards her mother, Miss Varens, for using him just for his money and gifts. When Blanche Ingram is trying to fish out a proposal from Mr. Rochester, he gets cold and confronts her that he knows what she is really after. When Adèle asks Mr. Rochester to tell her about the Caribbean's he tells her of the beautiful wonders of the place, but abruptly changes his mood and screams at Adèle for singing a song that reminded him of Bertha and threatens to send her to boarding school immediately (Jane Eyre, 2006).

On the day of Mr. Rochester and Jane's wedding, Mr. Rochester throws himself at Mason before he invites them all to meet his wife, Bertha. When Jane returns to Mr. Rochester she sees that he is even bitter and angrier at life where he sits blind, arranging candles in his room. Mr. Rochester says that he is a revolting sight, but does not order her to leave. Mr. Rochester does get jealous and curious about St. John and out of jealousy he gets angry with Jane that she came back instead of staying with this beautiful St. John as she describes him (Jane Eyre, 2006).

## **5. Difference in adaptations towards the novel**

The film versions all show the same story and characters, although there are some alterations both in scenes that are left out and different interpretation of characters. Jane in the 1943, 1996 and 2006 versions is displayed more quite and subtle than Jane in the 1997 version who is more forward. Mr. Rochester is shown as the angry man Brontë wrote him as in the 1943 and 1997 version, whereas in the 1996 and 2006 versions Mr. Rochester has softened. The story is about Jane Eyre and her growth of character from an unwanted and angry child towards a steady independent woman but not all of the adaptations emphasise Jane's coming about. For example in the 1943 version, Mr. Rochester is almost like the main character and in my opinion he owns the attention of the viewer and even outshines the quiet Miss Eyre.

Conversations from the novel are shortened and merged in the adaptations. Some of the conversations intersect with the literary source where the original text is preserved and the characters say something directly like in the novel (Leitch, 2007, p.93-94). The 2006 version tries to give the most fidelity (transposition) to the literary source, although there are some scenes and conversations that are altered, as it must be remembered; an adaptation will always be a little different due to change of medium. The other three versions are commentary; that is altered versions. Important scenes for the development of Jane's character are left out of most of the adaptations. In the 1943 version Jane does not meet St. John and his sisters and Jane's voice-over is heard that says she spent nights out on the moor, but it is not shown. A new character, Dr. Rivers, is introduced and plays a good willed man, always kind to Jane. Jane does not inherit an unknown uncle's possessions.

In the 1996 version Jane does not go wandering out on the moor, but ends up at St. John and Mary's, but they are not her cousins. The 1997 adaptation uses Jane's voice-over to go faster over the story. Here Jane does sleep out on the moor, but St. John and now Diana are not her cousins and Jane does not inherit an uncle's possessions. The 2006 mini-series do not leave out any scenes like the versions before and is the only version that has the gipsy scene, although it is altered in this version so Mr. Rochester stands behind some curtains while an hired gipsy tells the party what Mr. Rochester wants them to hear, instead of him dressing up as a gipsy, as done in the novel. When filmmakers leave out major and minor events, an ellipsis takes place (Stam and Raengo, 2005, p.33).

The night when Jane found Mr. Rochester laying in his bed on fire the adaptations varies on who put it out. In the novel Jane puts it out before Mr. Rochester finally wakes up.

In the 1943 adaptation, Jane gets Mr. Rochester to wake up at once and they put out the fire together. Jane starts putting out the fire as Mr. Rochester does not awake until Jane throws water at him then he helps her in the 1996 version. The 1997 adaptation shows Jane wake Mr. Rochester up and he puts out the fire alone while Jane watches. In the 2006 mini-series, Jane wakes Mr. Rochester up with a splash of water and they put out the fire together. These alterations from the novel do make some differences in Mr. Rochester's character. In the novel Jane is the hero when Mr. Rochester's bed catches on fire as he sleeps through it all, but in the adaptations there have been added more masculinity to Mr. Rochester's character than in the novel, for he helps Jane put out the fire in all of them and in the 1997 version he is the only hero, for he puts the fire out by himself after Jane wakes him up. In the 1996 version it is implied that Mr. Rochester had gone to bed drunk, as he holds a wineglass in his hand in his bed and had been drinking the evening before which does not happen in the novel.

In the novel, at the church on Mr. Rochester and Jane's wedding day, Mr. Rochester denies listening to Mr. Briggs and demands proof that he has a wife. The 1943 version shows a surprisingly non angry Mr. Rochester inviting the priest, Jane, Mr. Briggs and Mason to meet his mentally ill wife. In the 1996 version Mr. Rochester is narrated as angry and disappointed as he angrily invites them all to come and meet Grace Poole's patient. Mr. Rochester is extremely mad at Mason in the 1997 adaptation for calling Bertha his wife as he demands everyone to come and see her. In the 2006 version, Mr. Rochester throws himself at Mason screaming but calms down and says: "Enough - that is enough" and bids them to come to the house to meet Bertha (Jane Eyre, 2006). It does differ how Mr. Rochester's character takes this news at the church, as the 1996 and 1997 version make him angrier than in the novel and the 1943 version shows Mr. Rochester give up easily which I feel is not in correlation to how his character has been through the film. The 2006 version is the most similar to the novel in this scene as it shows Mr. Rochester stubborn at first but then commits to the truth.

Mr. Rochester had only met Bertha a few times before the wedding, and only in the company of others. The 2006 version displays Mr. Rochester thinking back to his time in Jamaica, where Bertha seduced him at first and before he knew, they were married. In the 1943 adaptation, Mr. Rochester tells Jane that he does not even know Bertha and that she was chosen for him when he was nineteen years old. Mr. Rochester does not speak of how he and Bertha met in the 1996 version. Mr. Rochester was never allowed to talk to or meet Bertha alone before the marriage in the 1997 adaptation. After the fire at Thornfield Hall, when Jane

returns, Mr. Rochester had moved to his other house, Ferndean Manor with only his servant and the servant's wife along with him. In the adaptations this varies; the 1943, 1996 and 1997 versions show Mrs. Fairfax still with Mr. Rochester at Thornfield Hall except in the 1997 version, they are staying at his other house. The 2006 version shows Jane coming at Mr. Rochester's other house, Ferndean Hall, where he lives with his servant, George.

The Mr. Rochester character becomes more domineering in the 1943 version, as I feel that he outshines Jane. In the 2006 adaptation, Mr. Rochester gains more recognition as the viewer gets to know him better due to longer screening-time and therefore in my opinion I do feel sympathy for him just as I do feel for Jane, although Jane is the main focalizer. The 1997 version does change the character of Mr. Rochester in some way, as he comes off as a little more childish than in the novel or the other adaptations. Mr. Rochester comes across as being fond of having a drink in the 1996 versions than in the other adaptations as he is often shown drinking and has a glass in his hand when Jane is trying to wake him up when he is lying in his bed on fire.

Although the adaptations, especially the 1943, 1996 and 1997 versions do leave out important scenes, they are mostly scenes about Jane, not Mr. Rochester. Almost all his scenes are in the adaptations, maybe altered or shortened, but they are there, except the gipsy scene, which is only in the 2006 version. By leaving out the gipsy scene, the other three adaptations do fail to show a side of Mr. Rochester's character; that he has his own type of humour and goes to great lengths to entertain himself. The four adaptations of Mr. Rochester are all altered in some ways from the source novel as the research above shows, but in the end Mr. Rochester does seem to come out as the same character; he has been freed from his duties of having a mentally ill wife locked up in a tower and when Mr. Rochester is sure that Jane wants him just for him, he is released of his Byronic hero motifs and finally gains the real love and happiness he has been searching for all this time.

These are the main differences in the adaptations from the source novel. With deeper close-reading of the films, even more things that differ from the novel can be found, but those stated above are the most important to speak of for now. Just as Robert Stam mentioned above, when adapting a source novel filmmakers need to decide which scenes are transposable into this new medium and figure out which need to be discarded or even replaced.

## Conclusion

*Jane Eyre* is an important work of art for the literary history. It carries signs of early feminism and shows a relationship doomed by the society which made the novel controversial on its publication, but it has not ceased to be published yet. *Jane Eyre* is a famous text to use for adaptations and the four adaptations are only a fraction of adaptations made.

An adaptation is always a reading of a source text. Although adaptations alter and even make a whole new art of an original text, sights will always be turned back to the source text. The adaptations of *Jane Eyre* give much fidelity to the novel, but the 1943, 1996 and 1997 versions are commentary adaptations as they are altered in some ways and use ellipsis in the script as they leave out major scenes like Jane's time out on the moor, Jane gaining cousins and Jane inheriting her unknown uncle's possessions. The 2006 TV mini-series version of *Jane Eyre* is a transposition adaptation as it tries to give most fidelity to the source text. There will always be some difference between a literary source and its adaptations, although the script is high in fidelity because cinema and television rely on realism while literature requires the reader's imagination and no one reads the same text in the same way (Geraghty, 2008, p.2).

As is with Mr. Rochester; he is the same character in each adaptation but characteristics and how he is narrated differs between adaptations as researched above. One reader reads Mr. Rochester differently from another reader, and viewers interpret his actions in different ways than other viewers. How we, the readers and viewers interpret Mr. Rochester is how we receive the information from Jane. Especially in the book where Jane is the only narrator and gives us all the information about Mr. Rochester's past, present and how he acts during everyday circumstances. Mr. Rochester is maybe the one with the power as the dominant gender, but he is in fact powerless without Jane's narration, both in the novel and in the adaptations as Jane is given the voice-over in some of the adaptations and is the main focalizer in all the films.

Whether Charlotte Brontë did not intend Mr. Rochester to become a Byronic hero, or if there was a hidden message in her letter that she wrote about Mr. Rochester to show her excellence beyond Lord Byron as Harold Bloom suggested can never be proved. From the research made in this thesis, it is definitely certain that Mr. Rochester as he is narrated in the novel and how he is displayed in the adaptations show him as a Byronic hero. Mr. Rochester's

character and characteristics are filled with the motifs of a Byronic hero as he is an angry, troubled man, living in denial searching for true love.

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