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**From Victorian Heroine to Vampire Slayer:
A Comparative Analysis of *Jane Eyre* and
*Jane Slayre***

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Abstract

Sherri Browning Erwin's *Jane Slayre* (2010) was created as a "monstrous mashup" of the classic original novel *Jane Eyre* (1847) following the trend called Frankenfiction. While Charlotte Brontë decided to criticize social injustices towards women during the Victorian Era through Eyre's life and character, Erwin pursues to join the literary movement of supernatural remixes with this adaptation. The comparison of Jane's character in the two novels, *Jane Eyre* and *Jane Slayre*, shows how Erwin carried out this mashup considering the literary elements that are found in *Jane Eyre*, such as genre, style, themes, characters and settings into the creation of *Jane Slayre*. The discussion clarifies the similarities and differences between these two novels and examines the authors' intentions in each work.

Key words: Charlotte Brontë, Sherri Browning Erwin, *Jane Eyre*, *Jane Slayre*, Frankenfiction, Adaptation.

Resumen

Jane Slayre es lo que se denomina un *mashup* monstruoso de la novela clásica original *Jane Eyre* que integra elementos pertenecientes al subgénero *Frankenfiction*. Mientras que Charlotte Brontë opta por criticar las injusticias sociales hacia las mujeres durante la época Victoriana a través de la vida y el personaje de Eyre, Sherri Browning Erwin pretende unirse al movimiento literario de las mezclas (remixes) de elementos sobrenaturales con su novela. La comparación de ambos personajes, Jane Eyre y Jane Slayre, explora cómo Erwin llevó a cabo este *mashup* teniendo en cuenta los elementos literarios que se encuentran en *Jane Eyre*, como el género, el estilo, los temas, los personajes y los escenarios en la creación de *Jane Slayre*. El análisis presenta las similitudes y diferencias entre estas dos novelas y analiza las intenciones de las autoras en cada obra.

Palabras clave: Charlotte Brontë, Sherri Browning Erwin, *Jane Eyre*, *Jane Slayre*, Frankenfiction, Adaptación.

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Introduction

The Victorian Era unfolded a range of literary and cultural exploration and changes, establishing an interesting and important moment for literature. This was an era adhered to moral and social values where middle-class women were expected to be confined at home, being submissive, virtuous, and primarily focused on household duties and feminine roles like motherhood. Charlotte Brontë and Elizabeth Gaskell are examples of authors who followed the revolutionary breakthroughs of English literature to challenge the standards of society.

These women published stories, sometimes under false names, that portrayed women and their expectations in society and how sacrificial their lives were. Additionally, these stories criticise certain aspects of the society in which they were written, such as the idea of marriage, which was pictured in these works very different as it was perceived by women, where the natural habits of women and their duties were described as social constraints and patriarchal oppression. *Jane Eyre* (1847) by Charlotte Brontë is one of the works that served to make implicit criticism to these ideals, constraints, and patriarchal oppression.

Later in Victorian literature, we can find the rise of Victorian Gothic with physical and psychological terror, the mysterious and the supernatural, in stories set in castles, convents, or old mansions, which served to criticize the standard order and morals of society. These elements can be found in *Jane Eyre* and will be more prominent in the monster mashup *Jane Slayre*. This work by Sherri Browning Erwin published in 2010 belongs to a reformulation of the nineteenth-century Gothic movements called Frankenfiction. It is a concept that arises from the combination of the words “Frankenstein” and “fiction” and refers to the remix of monstrosity (zombies, werewolves, vampires, etc.) and classic literature (De Bruin-Molé 2). This term is related to the enduring influence of Shelley’s novel on literature and culture, and how it has been reinterpreted and reinvented in contemporary works, playing with themes and characters of the original story to explore new ideas and ethical dilemmas in the modern era.

We can see this movement in *Jane Slayre*, as it combines elements of Charlotte Brontë’s classic *Jane Eyre* with Frankenfiction. Jane Slayre is a heroine-to-be, also known as vampire slayer, who is destined and guided to fight against vampires lurking in the dark

and face supernatural dangers while she deals with her feelings for the enigmatic Mr. Rochester.

This undergraduate dissertation seeks to compare both novels, *Jane Eyre* and *Jane Slayre*, and analyze how the story is portrayed in different ways. Also, it intends to analyze how both characters Jane Slayre and Jane Eyre are portrayed in each work. *Jane Slayre* is catalogued as Jane Eyre's adaptation, so the essence of the story and the characters are expected to be the same. However, the authors' intentions behind these works and their representations and attitudes towards female roles are different. Erwin adapted Brontë's novel to the era in which it was published, making the appropriate changes both in space and in the thoughts of the characters. She propelled *Jane Slayre's* novel by employing the literalness of the facts and the purpose of the characters. An example of this strategy is the character of Jane: in *Jane Eyre* she acts as a saviour for defending freedom, while in *Jane Slayre* she acts and is considered a true heroine for saving the lives of several characters. We shall discuss the different elements involved in this adaptation considering the way *Jane Slayre's* author addressed them to generate a new cultural product for a twenty-first-century audience.

In order to explore these issues, this undergraduate dissertation follows the principles of adaptation studies, which are initially focused on the interpretation of one media system into another including parodies, format change or updates (Corrigan; Elliot; Hutcheon, *A Theory*). In "Defining Adaptation," Corrigan argues that adaptations can be studied in three ways: as a process, as a product, and as reception (34). As a process, adaptation studies intend to explain how entities are reshaped in their relationship with other objects. The result of this readjustment is the product, which can outcome from omission or addition of some elements, or the change of setting. Finally, the adjustment and understanding from the reader to the new entity is catalogued as the reception. For the purpose of this research, it is intended to study the adaptation of *Jane Eyre* into *Jane Slayre* under these three perspectives: what elements the latter author considered to elaborate the mashup and what is the final result compared to the original story.

This analysis also considers the term appropriation. It refers to the removal of some parts of one story from their original context and adds them into another context which consequently changes its meaning (Corrigan 38). *Jane Slayre* may be also considered an appropriation as elements from *Jane Eyre* can be found differently in the mashup, reshaping and distorting their original meaning. However, in this case it is more precise

to catalogue *Jane Slayre* as an adaptation given the strong transparency of the adaptation process of the novel due to its explicit intertextual reference with *Jane Eyre* (Sallamaari 14).

To conclude this introduction, it is necessary to indicate that the discussion is organized in three chapters. The first one presents the Victorian female literature which englobes the classic novel by Charlotte Brontë *Jane Eyre* in the context of Victorian Gothic, and Brontë's intentions and ideas behind the story and characters, with special reference to the situation of women at the time. The second chapter explores a movement derived from the Gothic Literature called Frankenfiction and explains how the novel *Jane Slayre* by Sherri Browning Erwin is the result of a mashup of the original novel and Frankenfiction. The third chapter is devoted to the comparison of the two novels, *Jane Eyre* and *Jane Slayre*, with the intention of analyzing and discussing the adaptation process considering the different elements that gave shape to Brontë's work and how they were approached in Erwin's novel. In particular, the analysis centres on the style, themes and characters of both novels.

1. Victorian Female Narratives: *Jane Eyre*

The Victorian era, which occurred between 1837 and 1901, was considered a period of prosperity and progress during the reign of Queen Victoria. However, apart from the prosperous economic, political, and technological achievements, society was also marked by oppression, contradictions and limitations, especially for women. Hence, nineteenth-century literature reflects men's and women's distinctive gender roles, how marriage and motherhood were a woman's greatest attainable achievement, and how the domestic atmosphere impeded her independence and her personal and vital development.

Fitting into the Victorian ideal, the "Angel in the House" was the female middle-class life goal, considered as:

a moral, yielding, domestic paragon... ...in which women should be confined to the home to better protect them from the immoral influences of the world, in order that they, the naturally more moral sex, should exert their good influence on their husbands and children, and through them, society at large. (Rose 1)

Such were the restrictions and limitations on women's freedom that one sentence can be used to sum up their purpose in the world of their time: to be pure and innocent, tender and sexually undemanding, submissive and obedient (Andersson 2). Marrying and serving her husband, taking care of the house and future children was expected of the female role in society as they were considered inferior to men, both legally and intellectually, and they were expected to stay submissive and obedient.

They were also financially dependent on them, whether it was their father before they married and, once married, their husband. Access to education for middle-class girls boiled down to "to sing, dance, and play the piano, to draw, read, write, some arithmetic and French and to do embroidery" (Lundén and Srigley 147) so their options to enter the job market were even more reduced: "governess, school teacher, or companion to a wealthy lady" (Weerasinghe 3).

Freely expressing thoughts and opinions was also not always within their sphere of possibility, just as they were not expected to have ambitions for independence or self-identity. Women were constantly incapable of exercising any act or thought that lay within the outer male territory, and not so much within the female domestic sphere.

In spite of this, during the nineteenth century, the figure of the woman writer became increasingly strong and relevant, finding a safe place in writing where she could express her desires for equality and independence. However, not everything was so simple because women writers also had to face prejudice or criticism. That is why many women writers used pseudonyms, such as Charlotte Brontë, who published some of her works as Currer Bell.

Charlotte and her sisters Emily and Anne believed that pseudonyms were needed to guarantee a more prejudice-free approach from readers and critics, prejudice born from the expectations they had about the type of literature produced by women. As Charlotte Brontë states in “A Biographical Notice of Ellis and Acton Bell”, they wanted to succeed in the literary world regardless of being women or not, and also intended their works to be perceived as any other book, so they chose pseudonyms that maintained their initials but avoiding adopting masculine names either (Price 1).

After struggling with different publications, Charlotte Brontë eventually managed to publish *Jane Eyre*, her most influential novel, in 1847. *Jane Eyre* is a proto-feminist novel and a pioneer in openly dealing with issues of women’s rights, gender roles, education, and women’s emancipation.

In addition, the Gothic genre emerged in England in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries and was characterized for dealing with themes such as physical and psychological terror, the mysterious and the supernatural. These types of stories sometimes were set in distant regions or Catholic Mediterranean countries, but they also took place in close and common environments, but within a Gothic atmosphere, such as old mansions, castles, or even schools, where a plot could be carried out to lead to exploring Gothic and realistic themes, such as madness, crime, the macabre and the supernatural portrayed in common and real places and situations. Elements of Gothic fiction are present in the novels by the Brontë Sisters. They created works that explore the fears and taboos of their contemporary society, often breaking with the established canons of the time. These types of stories feature tormented characters, either employing the literalness and realism of human characters accompanied by their traumas, difficulties, and mysteries or with ghosts whose symbolic function represents the darkest aspects of humanity. The effect this genre had on the reader was that it created a sense of unease and suspense.

Jane Eyre is characterized by some aspects of a Gothic novel as it portrays terror and mystery. *Jane Eyre* was written using basic Gothic elements such as the terror shown in Lowood and the mystery in Thornfield's third floor. However, autobiographical, romantic touches, several feminist and social critiques, and realistic elements can also be found in it (Gutiérrez Artero).

The realism in *Jane Eyre* is found in the characters and the places where the action takes place. All of them are inspired or based on real life and the social context in which Charlotte Brontë grew up. The novel could be defined as a vivid portrait of women during the Victorian era. Despite this, one cannot fall into the trap that *Jane Eyre* is an autobiographical novel, but rather a fictional semi-autobiographical one, since the character of Jane is completely invented, despite clearly seeing in her imaginative and creative elements, thoughts, ideas, reflections, and claims characteristic of Charlotte Brontë herself.

The story is told by Jane Eyre in the first person and follows a chronological order, so it is also included within the literary subgenre Bildungsroman: a story that follows its protagonist from childhood to maturity, focusing on their psychological and moral development (Carrillo Elkin 48) and dealing with issues such as social class and religion within the context in which it was found, the Victorian era, a period of rigid social, economic, moral norms, and gender roles.

2. Gothic Retellings: Frankenfiction and Mashups

Gothic fiction is still relevant nowadays, but new subgenres with it have emerged. One of them is Frankenfiction, a term that arises from the combination of the words “Frankenstein” and “fiction” and refers to the remix of monstrosity (zombies, werewolves, vampires, etc.) and classic literature (De Bruin-Molé 3). It can be conceptualized as a “historical monster mashup” or “Gothic remix” among other categorizations (De Bruin-Molé 3). To understand this subgenre, we must clarify what a mashup or a remix is in terms of literature. De Bruin-Molé describes Frankenfiction, in the first place, as a reanimation, the combination of real-life elements and monsters, and then suggests using the term “mashup” as it became the most common among its fans and critics.

Even though stating a definition of these terms becomes slightly complicated, “mashup” or “remix” refer to the mixture of disparate elements which are collected and assembled without altering the original format, creating new or different meaning. Gothic remixes or monster mashups mix fantastic elements such as vampires, werewolves, ghosts, and more with historical and literary novels and works, sometimes guided by the purpose of criticizing societal issues, reflecting the idea that monstrosity is part of human beings and the awareness of otherness (De Bruin-Molé 12).

However, the consideration of this subgenre as a “mashup” or “remix” is subjective, as argued by Sonvilla-Weiss:

Collage, montage, sampling, or remix practices all use one or many materials, media either from other sources, art pieces (visual arts, film, music, video, literature, etc.) or one’s own artworks through alteration, re-combination, manipulation, copying, etc. to create a whole new piece. In doing so, the sources of origin may still be identifiable yet not perceived as the original version.

Mashups, as I understand them, put together different information, media, or objects without changing their original source of information, i.e., the original format remains the same and can be retraced as the original form and content, although recombined in different new designs and contexts. For example, in the ship or car industry, standardized modules are assembled following a particular design

platform, or, using the example of Google map [sic], different services are over-layered so as to provide the user with parallel accessible services. (Sonvilla-Weiss 9)

Frankenfiction has become popular in the digital age, where it is easier to access a large number of works and cultural references to combine and reinterpret them. Frankenfiction has been driven by movements such as postmodernism, which question the boundaries between originality and imitation in artistic creation. In fact, some writers like William Gibson and Henry Jenkins state that “post-millennial culture is at its most basic level, a remix culture; a culture that subsists on and often encourages derivative works, which combine or edit existing materials into fresh products” (quoted in De Bruin-Molé 7).

Several works of classic nineteenth-century British fiction have been reinterpreted within the Frankenfiction subgenre. One of the earliest and most popular examples is the adaptation of *Pride and Prejudice* (1813), the classic novel by Jane Austen, which was spiced up with ultra-violent zombies in *Pride and Prejudice and Zombies* (2009), by Jane Austen and Seth Grahame-Smith. It is a version of Austen’s work in which a plague of zombies sows terror and devours human beings. In this adaptation, we find that the protagonist, in this case Elizabeth Bennet, becomes the chosen one, the heroine who must save humanity from those hungry zombies.

In *Pride and Prejudice*, the characters behave according to the expectations of their time, nineteenth-century England, in which women must come to terms with their destiny of marrying a wealthy man. Throughout the novel, a literary, formal, and courteous language is used. Meanwhile, in Graham-Smith’s version, although it is also set in nineteenth-century England, this time the city is stalked by zombies, so damsels and knights, both equalized at the same social level, are trained in martial arts and the use of weapons to fight those zombies. In this case, the language used feeds on satire and irony (Benesi 2).

Frankenstein’s creature, originating from Mary Shelley’s novel remains as an iconic figure in horror fiction. This creature has influenced cyborgs, androids, and other artificial life forms prevalent in contemporary science fiction. Additionally, some adaptations of classic texts through the novel-as-mashup approach appear more satirical than others, often with the purpose of modernizing or “fixing” aspects of the original plots (De Bruin-Molé 2).

Joy is present among the adaptations, represented mostly as parody. As Hutcheon states, “while such an act of parody is one of incorporation, its function is one of separation, of contrast” (Hutcheon, “Parody” 203). This means that the use of satire and irony provides a reinterpretation of the text in an imperfect way, without losing the appropriate sense of the original text. De Bruin-Molé also concludes that “irony is thus a key component of both adaptation and parody, and something that potentially separates these terms from remix” (De Bruin-Molé 115).

Apart from joy, satire and irony, violence is the mashup’s main component. It is mostly used to add drama to scenes that were already dramatic or violent in the original text, but mixing up the drama with cartoon-ish brush strokes. This is exactly what occurs in *Jane Slayre*, whose author claims, for instance, that it will “transform Charlotte Brontë’s unforgettable masterpiece into an eerie paranormal adventure that will delight and terrify” (Erwin 1).

2.1. *Jane Slayre*

Jane Slayre (2010) is a novel written by Sherri Browning Erwin based on Charlotte Brontë’s *Jane Eyre* but rewritten with elements from Frankenfiction. The novel, set in the nineteenth-century England, tells the story of Jane Slayre, an orphaned vampire who grew up with her aunt Mrs. Reed and her cousins, also vampires. With the passage of time and a ghostly apparition of her (supposedly) deceased uncle Mr. Reed, Jane accepts and assumes that her destiny is to become a vampire slayer, and to find the rest of her family members (The Slayers). To achieve this, Jane leaves Gateshead Hall for Lowood, where she grows up and is trained. There Jane experiences some scenes in which Jane fights zombies and vampires hiding in the dark. Later, Jane goes to Thornfield Hall Manor to work as a governess for a young girl. There Jane meets Mr. Rochester. They both fall in love with each other but there is a hidden, dark secret about Rochester’s past that Jane did not know. Rochester keeps his first wife, Bertha Mason, locked in a room because she is a werewolf, apparently dangerous. The story continues with Jane deciding to leave Thornfield Hall and “abandoning” her beloved. However, Jane Slayre is a strong woman with too clear ideas, so much so that she finally decides to return to Rochester, although when she arrived, she did not find what she expected. Bertha had bitten Rochester transforming him into a werewolf and he had fled to a house in solitude, far from society. In chapter forty, Jane had to decide how to try to save her beloved. In order to achieve this, she used some vials against lycanthropy. Then, she buried him by performing a ritual

where the result would be death or his salvation. Finally, Rochester recovered his sight and was freed from lycanthropy. Thus, Jane and Rochester had a long-lasting and prosperous marriage, as they had two children who will continue the Slayre lineage. Vampires, zombies, and werewolves transform Charlotte Brontë's protagonist Jane Eyre into Jane Slayre, a haunting paranormal superheroine.

Jane Slayre is a mashup work that also includes comedic elements, where the author had to adapt the style to that of Brontë's novel, as expected in mashups. However, in her novel Erwin finds ways to elaborate on her new story, establishing her own form of expression, introducing twists that distinguish her story from the classic novel (Erwin 1).

Jane Slayre is full of comedic and humorous situations due to the inclusion of fantastic characters such as vampires, zombies, and werewolves. The juxtaposition of real characters initially portrayed in Brontë's original work with fantastic creatures generates a certain idea of humour for the reader. Furthermore, the interactions among these characters are integrated into the original plot. For example, Slayre suffers the same privations as in the classic story, such as an aunt who despises her, but Erwin portrays this relationship as "vampire and hunter" to enhance the illustration of the hostility between the two characters. Additionally, the author sometimes employs a less formal register in a satirical way in contrast to the seriousness of the original novel.

The introduction of fantastic creatures also heightens the dramatic tension in various situations. As an example of this, in the classic novel there is a woman imprisoned in Mr. Rochester's attic presented as his first wife, who later develops mental illness and is believed to be dangerous. In *Jane Slayre*, the same woman, Bertha, is presented as a dangerous werewolf and is locked due to her violent nature. This fact increases the tension in Slayre's relationship and encounter with this woman as she poses a real threat to her physical integrity, but being a werewolf, the contradictions of feelings and morality are less intense than in Jane Eyre's. In other words, in *Jane Slayre* Rochester's behaviour is less problematic and more justifiable because her wife is a real monster and should be kept under control.

Erwin remains faithful to many aspects of Jane Eyre's story as she has taken advantage of the elements first employed by Brontë. The author shows enhancement in characters and their relationships, and exaggerates drama in different situations due to fictional and monstrous additions. The author intensifies the feelings portrayed in the original story

and plays with the monstrous additions and the original text to give different turns to Jane's story and yet somehow keep the essence of the classic original novel by Brontë.

3. Comparative Analysis: *Jane Eyre* and *Jane Slayre*

In this third chapter we will carry out the comparative analysis between the two works, *Jane Eyre* and its mashup *Jane Slayre*. These two novels will be contrasted and studied in connection with their narrative structure and style, analyzing how both authors decided to write their works. Also, this chapter explores the themes that were initially addressed in the classic novel and the contrast in the fictional mashup. Finally, this chapter offers an analysis of the development of the main characters and their relationship, and the outcomes in each novel.

3.1. Narrative Structure and Style

Both novels, *Jane Eyre* and *Jane Slayre*, are considered to maintain the same style, as if there had been no changes in authorship and narrative. In this, Erwin mentions having made an effort to study Brontë's writing voice and tone among her various works to preserve that remarkable aspect of *Jane Eyre*. Erwin studied how she could vary words and phrases from the classic to preserve its essence but also to convey her vision of this new Jane (Erwin 3). However, as indicated above, Erwin sometimes uses a less formal register in certain passages.

Both novels are narrated in the first person by Jane herself and chronologically. Their narrative is set as a retrospection of the protagonist, and they belong to the subgenre known as a Bildungsroman. Consequently, these novels could contain traits of subjectivity where Jane's feelings, thoughts, and experiences shape the way she sees the world. By portraying this, it allows the reader to see through the protagonist's eyes, understand, and interpret the world as she does.

Jane Slayre, as I have mentioned before, is a mashup between the classic novel *Jane Eyre* and fantasy and horror elements, with additional original twists from Erwin and no biographical elements from the author, as she mentions that creating *Jane Slayre* was an idea to join the literary movement of historical monster mashups with a strong character she admired, Jane Eyre (Erwin 1).

Jane Eyre and *Jane Slayre* describe the personal development of Jane, the heroine of the story. The journey is narrated physically, intellectually, and personally, as Jane makes a physical journey from one place to another in unison with the life stages of any person,

in addition to carrying with her during development all the learning achieved through the years, from her childhood to maturity.

Furthermore, it is remarkable how, like Charlotte Brontë, Erwin managed to involve the reader by addressing him or her directly on several occasions in *Jane Slayre*:

Dear reader, I stopped myself before I said I should stab it through her heart. I should break it under her nose. (Erwin 58)

The absence of life in her eyes, dear reader, how it cut me to the bone!
(Erwin 90)

In connection with this, one of the most remarkable contrasts is in the last chapter. In Brontë's version, the chapter thirty-eight starts with the famous utterance: "Reader, I married him." We find the parallel version in Erwin's version in chapter forty, which states: "READER, I BURIED HIM." This contrast strongly states and differentiates how each story was developed considering the elements that were included in Erwin's version.

As I mentioned before, Erwin opted to keep Brontë's voice, and style, so using the word "reader" as a direct address in the classic novel maintains Brontë's intention. This author has used this device in different works such as *Villete* (1853) and *The Professor* (1857). In this particular case, there could be several ideas or reasons why Brontë opted for this style, and the first thought could be to actively involve the reader through the development of the story, to make them feel part of Jane's most private thoughts, achieving a special connection between the two.

However, we could also think that Charlotte Brontë had more specific intentions. *Jane Eyre* is known for being an orphan and struggling all the time to find a place where she could belong to and be loved, so Brontë could have used direct address to emphasize the loneliness that Eyre is going through (Monin 7) and how hard she seeks to be heard with empathy, and to show deeper how she sees the world and how she would like to be seen.

As a very common element in *Jane Slayre* and *Jane Eyre*, we can find some elements of zoomorphism. This is a literary device that consists of giving animal characteristics to humans or other characters. This technique is used to give the reader an idea of how an animal resembles a person's action or reaction in particular situations (Staight 1). We can find this as in:

‘He died, poor thing.’ Miss Georgiana blamed her sister for insisting on having a taste of his blood and draining him too dry before he had a chance to turn the tables. Now she and her sister lead a cat-and-mouse life together; they are always quarrelling. (Erwin 105)

‘I could walk the matted floor as softly as a cat.’ (Erwin 202)

Likewise, in chapter two in Brontë’s version, Jane is described as a cat due to her behaviour: “Hold her arms, Miss Abbot: she’s like a mad cat” (Brontë 7).

A combination of description and dialogue shapes Jane Slayre’s story. In its lines, we can find the author aiming to depict the characters and their peculiarities, the environments, and every detail in an indirect way. So, we will not find a character being tagged as a “vampire” but we will find their struggle to face the mirror as they cannot visualize their reflection because they do not have one. Thus, Erwin tends to present the information to the reader in an indirect way.

Part of these descriptive fragments is depicted as monologue. We can find both Janes constantly debating with themselves about their expectations for the future and its outcomes, and through very detailed utterances Erwin describes the environments in a way the reader can visualize them in their mind. Slayre portrays more obscure and complex imagery, and we can find more time invested in their descriptions.

We can see imagery due to the description of each place. These novels are written in a chronological way, and their structure is based on the different places where the story is set. Each place, Gateshead Hall, Lowood School, Thornfield, Moor House and so on, implies a process in Jane’s growth. It even shows it by their names, as Gateshead contains the word “head” inside which could refer to the beginning of her process and change. That is the reason why it had to be very descriptive so the reader could understand what Jane looks like when she arrives at a place, how she is changed, and the outcomes. Each place becomes an important stage in Jane’s life and the construction of herself.

The composition of both novels, *Jane Eyre* and *Jane Slayre* is complex and consists of several literary techniques previously mentioned, such as first-person narration, alternating between dialogue and description. The novel is also characterized by the construction of complex and realistic characters who evolve and change throughout the story. The structure of the novel is classic, with an introduction, development, and

denouement, but it also includes several twists and surprises in the plot that keep the reader interested until the end.

3.2. Themes

In this section we will analyze the themes behind the story according to each author's intentions. *Jane Eyre* was written around the topics of gender roles, social class, and social rules of that time, adopting a proto-feminist attitude for its claims for gender equality. In her novel, Brontë stated how Jane vindicated her independence and her place in society regardless of her sex; she argued for equal rights and opportunities for development and independence. The character Jane Eyre shows the passion women can have to pursue their expectations and dreams, and break with the roles imposed by society.

The original Brontë novel also shows the dilemma of Jane Eyre between wanting to be loved but also to be independent. She was not loved as she was an orphan and always found herself in difficult places that could not offer love to her. Even though she possessed no beauty, no wealth, and no independence (Weerasinghe 2), Jane dedicated to develop her inner self to become strong and find for herself a place in society; Eyre's strong character balanced her deficiencies. Her modesty and integrity won over Mr. Rochester's heart and Jane finds herself sentimentally involved with him. Given her strong convictions, we might think Jane would choose her independence over the feelings she had for Mr. Rochester, especially considering the conflictive situation with Bertha and the moral dilemmas it entailed. However, the story surprises us with her eventually staying with him and marrying him. We could say in this regard that Jane feels that Rochester is like her home, because he hosted her in and showed her what love is. That is why it has been mentioned that the marriage between both characters, and in both novels, is part of Jane's redemption as a heroine: In *Jane Eyre* she saves Rochester from absolute loneliness and in *Jane Slayre* she saves his life.

Another important theme is education. Brontë portrays how education for women was established and makes clear how inefficient it was and how it required changes. Lowood Boarding School barely prepared her to be a governess, and all her stay was in poor conditions. The author expresses through chapter 12 how women and men can feel the same frustration when they cannot participate actively in society and how women also need opportunities to intellectual and vital development. Regarding this, Brontë famously claimed:

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 puddings and knitting stockings, to playing 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. (Brontë 72)

It is important to stress that this specification about the improvements in women education is not stated in *Jane Slayre*, which is a very significant omission. Sherri Browning decided to omit this quote in the process of adapting the novel. *Jane Slayre* is set in a different social context than *Jane Eyre*. Also Jane Eyre's own character is totally introspective, creating long paragraphs of descriptions that can slow down the action in *Jane Slayre*.

Brontë made sure to criticize gender stereotypes and prejudices, including those about women's beauty. This was a high-rank expectation that the author intentionally decided to disqualify by making Jane "plain," a trait uncommon in the heroines of contemporary novels. She portrayed how women could develop other aspects and be beautiful as well. *Jane Slayre* keeps the same ideas, as Slayre had no physical grace, and her beauty appeared in the development of her personality and skills.

The central theme of *Jane Eyre* is Jane's quest to find her place in the world and establish her identity as an independent woman in a society that imposes restrictions on women. Additionally, Jane's humble origins further constrain her social position, making her struggle even more challenging:

And you ought not to think yourself on an equality with the Misses Reed and Master Reed, because Missis kindly allows you to be brought up with them. They Will have a great deal of money, and you Will have none: it is your place to be humble, and to try to make yourself agreeable to them. (Brontë 15)

Therefore, *Jane Eyre*'s main idea is the struggle against all unjust oppression of an individual over that which oppresses him or her. In this way, Jane tells us how she gradually overcomes all the obstacles that appear throughout her childhood until her

maturity, and finally finds her path and her identity, achieving the independence she constantly seeks (Weerasinghe 5). In *Slayre's* case, her uncle Mr. Reed appears to her to state Jane's place in society, and highlights the beauty and relevance in Jane's job. She is destined to become a vampire's huntress even though that is not uttered clearly, but her uncle describes how Slayre made a stake all by herself without previous preparation; her purpose is in her blood.

It cannot be forgotten that the novel *Jane Eyre* contains Gothic fiction elements, a place where supernatural forces, mysteries, inexplicable facts, and conflicts dwell that explore the inner desires that force one to do things one does not want. Some of the Gothic themes and elements present in the novel *Jane Eyre* are: the inclusion of terror and amazement, the supernatural and unknown, unsolved mysteries and darkness, and madness. We can see these themes reflected in Mr. Rochester's mansion and all the mystery regarding the woman in the attic.

In *Jane Slayre*, the subplot of the woman in the attic contains more mystery and danger. The rivalry is carried out between a werewolf and a woman who is developing feelings for the woman's former lover. The battle between these two women intensifies and adds a turn in the development of the story and the relevance of Jane's relationship with Mr. Rochester. He is turned into a werewolf by his first wife and Jane fights to find a way to save her lover. This issue is explored further in the section devoted to the analysis of the main characters. In *Jane Slayre*, Bertha Mason is shown as a werewolf, which poses a real danger to society, while in *Jane Eyre* she is presented as a mentally disturbed woman, violent and dominated by the passion she feels for her husband Rochester. However, Rochester's behaviour of locking her up in *Jane Eyre* cannot be justified in the same way as in *Jane Slayre*. Once again, Erwin adds specificity to the supernatural mysteries that occur in *Jane Eyre*.

3.3. Characters

As it has been mentioned before, the two novels presented in this discussion follow the same story and the same chronological order, even *Jane Slayre's* cover says "The literary classic... with a blood-sucking twist." In both versions, the different scenes happen in places and at times in common, and we find the same characters and the relationships among them are similar. Picturing these similarities, we could expect that the main

characters will develop in the same way throughout the story, but there are notable differences between them.

Starting with the heroines of both novels, Eyre and Slayre are initially described as orphan girls who must endure hard times. Both suffer mistreatment from their aunt and their cousins, which makes growing up at Gateshead Hall a challenging experience. However, in the first pages of Slayre's story, there is a difference with the appearance of a ghost that perhaps shapes more of her growth. In *Jane Eyre*, the ghost, Uncle Reed, appears to add drama and as a supernatural element in the story, while in Slayre's version, that ghost carries news about her parents and her true purpose in life, and that becomes the first impetus of the beginning of Slayre's battle against supernatural monsters, just as her last name "Slayre" could imply "slayer," that is, a generational responsibility. Her character becomes a real heroine as she starts to prepare herself to fulfill her role.

In the stories, both Janes moved to a different place called Lowood where they received education, and a relevant characteristic of both characters during their time at this institution is their perseverance and determination to improve themselves; Eyre, with Helen Burns as a companion, learns to endure, have faith, and deal with her resentment. The difference with Slayre is that she also focuses on developing and improving her physical skills to combat the creatures in the pursuit of defending innocent people just like she was, using her resentment as motivation to reach her goal.

The following stage in Eyre and Slayre's lives is adulthood, and it is shaped by their childhood misery and the growth they achieved during their adolescence. This growth occurs at Thornfield Hall, home of Mr. Rochester. In this moment of the story, we can observe how both stories occur differently. Eyre faces challenges to protect her integrity and her morals and seeks a decent life for herself so she deals with her love for Mr. Rochester.

On the other hand, with the addition of supernatural elements and monsters, Slayre has to deal with more than internal dilemmas; she must face her generational purpose while she is also fighting for a normal and good life. Slayre and her hunting job, and the apparition and interaction with different supernatural creatures give more prominence and relevance to some characters than in Jane Eyre's story, such as Bertha Mason. It also modifies Mr Rochester's relationship with Slayre. The supernatural shades of each character and

situation increase drama and adventure in this story and help to portray Jane Slayre as an example of a brave superheroine.

The character of Bertha Mason is central in both texts and deserves to be analyzed in this section. In *Jane Eyre's* story, Bertha is an addition of suspense and horror with her confinement in the attic of Thornfield Hall by Mr. Rochester, her husband (Sevenov 1). Bertha's confinement has been considered a way to symbolize women's oppression and racism during the Victorian era (Gilbert and Gubar). Some critics even suggest that Bertha's actions towards Jane Eyre were the expression of her inner conflicts about marriage and independence. Eyre's and, more generally, women's in general's struggle regarding independence and freedom was expressed even in Bertha's suicide, showing how deeply women wished for their liberation.

In *Jane Slayre*, Bertha is a werewolf married to Mr. Rochester. Bertha's desire for revenge is supported by her strength as a werewolf, and after burning Mr. Rochester's house, she bites him; as consequence, he turns blind and becomes a werewolf. This situation makes Jane Slayre and Mr. Rochester's relationship more complex as now she must deal with him being a monster while she hunts them, and this serves to play with the reader's expectations of their relationship.

In the end, Jane Slayre perhaps faces two destinies: being a monster's huntress following her call and purpose in life, or sticking to the profile of a Victorian housewife considering Mr. Rochester's conventional view about the women's role in society. However, we find Jane exchanging letters that informed her about vampire communities, and showed the intention of keeping her destiny and the independence it gave her alive. That purpose is extended to her children, and she does not hide it. Jane's future life is uncertain, but she stays ready and open for whatever the outcome is.

When it comes to Slayre, there seems to be a remarkable and strong development of character. Even though Eyre is already considered a heroine, Slayre, as her surname implies, is expected to become a brave and active heroine defeating different kinds of beasts, a *badass* (Conte), so perhaps her growth must be faster even though she keeps struggling with her personal life. This is an aspect that differentiates Slayre enormously from Eyre.

This would increase drama and highlight different aspects that are not found in the original story. For example, the fact that Slayre's aunt and her family are vampires

intensifies the horror and despise she could feel towards them, and this fear could propel in a deeper way the discovery of Jane's inner skills. Or the fact that *special* students at the boarding school are not allowed to eat meat as they become murderous would make Slayre develop into a different character in a very particular context compared to Eyre's. Therefore, despite the similarities between the two novels, each character develops in a different context that determines their personality and concerns.

Conclusions

This undergraduate dissertation offers a comparative analysis of novels of *Jane Eyre* and *Jane Slayre*. Both novels include conventions from Gothic fiction, but the introduction of horror elements in *Jane Slayre* sets it apart from *Jane Eyre*, offering a unique perspective on the characters' actions and decisions throughout the narrative. This is seen in the transformation of certain antagonistic characters in vampires and werewolves or in the different role played by the ghost of Jane's uncle, who in Slayre's adaptation conveys information regarding her parents and her true purpose in life, thus setting the story into action.

Regarding the literary features, both novels keep the same style, following the conventions of the Bildungsroman as it shows the educational, moral, and psychological growth of the main character, who is also the narrator and tells the story from her perspective. The structure of the novel is also the same and each location has been kept representing a phase in Jane's growth and development.

Erwin has expressed that by keeping the style of the original story, she aspired to keep the essence of the strong and appreciated character Jane Eyre. Both authors' narrative techniques allow the reader to visualize the world through Jane's eyes and connect and empathize with the character. In this way, the reader can understand the feelings and perceptions of the character in each situation, and know how she builds her morals and personality. Through description and detail, the author has presented Jane Slayre as the result of the remarkable and strong essence of Jane Eyre combined with the features of a heroine who is destined to hunt supernatural creatures.

Jane Slayre runs a different path when it comes to its end, and does not portray the necessity to criticize the society and its expectations, as we do say in Charlotte Brontë's work. The two novels approach themes like women's independence and education in different ways. Moreover, the novel's supernatural elements enhance drama and action, depicting Jane Slayre as a courageous superheroine who confronts two fates: that of a monster's huntress, pursuing her true calling, or adhering to the traditional Victorian conception of women's societal roles as a housewife. However, she demonstrates a commitment to preserving her autonomy and destiny.

Slayre's character development is exceptional and to a certain extent more prominent than Eyre's, as she requires distinct attributes to be cultivated within the same situations as

Eyre's. This may amplify tension and emphasize elements absent in the original narrative, such the vampire family and Jane's family legacy. The rest of the characters have also had certain changes that fit the context of Jane Slayre. Among them we find Helen Burns, Abbot, Rochester and even Bertha Mason. The adaptation added characteristics to the characters according to the context in which the action takes place. Bertha is a dangerous werewolf, Helen dies transformed into a zombie and it is her best friend (Jane) who cuts off her head, the end proposed for Rochester, although similar in some ways, is more dramatic and places Jane at a crossroads where she must make difficult decisions.

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