Although some critics have mentioned the resemblance of aspects of Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre* to fairy tales, particularly to *Cinderella,* none has done an extensive, in-depth study of the fairy tale elements in *Jane Eyre.* As I will demonstrate, *Jane Eyre* bears a relationship to fairy tales on various levels: allusions, parallels, characterization, and overall plot structure. Some major critics regard *Jane Eyre,* subtitled "An Autobiography," as a novel of personal growth and education, a Bildungsroman, consisting of five parts which correspond to the five places at which Jane sojourns (Gateshead, Lowood, Thornfield, Moor House/Morton, and Ferndean). However, underlying this overt story is a substructure of overlapping cyclical journeys: the heroine, like the protagonists in fairy tales, returns triumphant to her oppressive origins. This plot structure of cyclical journeys seems to be the most important way in which *Jane Eyre* resembles fairy tales and, ironically, it is the feature which has been most neglected. Apparently because *Jane Eyre* is a wish-fulfillment fantasy about the most significant emotional relationships in the author's circumscribed life of concentrated feeling, this success story functions similarly to both dream and fairy tale. That fairy tales are stories of wish fulfillment which function analogously to dreams has been argued plausibly by various theoreticians.

In creating *Jane Eyre,* Bronte was working within the heritage of Romanticism, which celebrated ballads, folklore and fairy tales. More specifically, in adding fairy tale coloring to a serious novel of passion, she may have been inspired by the example of Tieck's drama *Bluebeard,* which sought "to combine the charm of a nursery fable, and all the dreams and associations of childhood, with scenes of interest which might find an echo in the bosom of mankind ... the main interest was to rest on human passions..." *Jane Eyre,* in which the heroine as a child is fascinated by and later recalls fairy tales told her by the servant Bessie, and in which the hero and heroine constantly see each other in terms of fairy imagery, contains explicit allusions to *Gulliver's Travels,* "Little Red Riding Hood," the Arabian *Thousand and One Nights,* *Midsummer Night's Dream,* and "Bluebeard." Significant fairy tale elements present in *Jane Eyre* include: wicked stepmother and fairy godmother figures, as well as male donor figures; the universal "Cinderella" success story, in which the heroine, overcoming the social competition of mean stepsister figures, marries the
aristocratic hero; the motif of transformation from toadlike ugliness to beauty through love, as in "Beauty and the Beast"; the pattern of journeys in which the heroine returns to her starting points, with her relations to the inhabitants altered in her favor. Apparently Brontë regarded the journey as an important element in the appeal of the fairy tale, for in Shirley Rose Yorke says of travel that even "if you only went on and on, like some enchanted lady in a fairy tale, you might be happier than now" due to "perpetually altering" surroundings (ch. XXIII).

The bulk of the fairy imagery in the novel is applied to the relationship between Jane and Rochester, which is characterized by Romantic wonder, imagination, spontaneity and sympathy. During their initial encounter along the roadside, Rochester finds himself thinking of the fairy rings and Jane recalls the Gytrash monster of Bessie's stories. These spontaneous mental associations were probably intended by Brontë as the immediate, intuitive perception by each character of the mysteriously powerful "presence" of the other. Rochester says of his presentiment that Jane would do him good, a presentiment fulfilled by her act of saving his life: she did not "strike delight to my inmost heart so for nothing. People talk of natural sympathies; I have heard of good genii:-there are grains of truth in the wildest fable" (p. 154). Responding to Rochester's encouragement to cast off her "Lowood constraint" and act naturally with him, Jane's spontaneous personality, "half fairy, half imp," emerges. Mischievous and mercurial, Jane constantly teases Rochester and merits from him such epithets as "provoking puppet," "malicious elf," "sprite," "changeling" and such responses as a pinch on the arm and a tweak of the ear instead of a kiss on the cheek. When Rochester most responds to the "witchery" and "enchantment" of Jane's presence, he uses as terms of endearment the most diminutive of fairy imagery: "Is this my pale little elf? Is this my mustard seed?" and "Yes, bonnie wee thing, I'll wear you in my bosom. . ." Jane in turn sees Rochester as a brownie. Brownies secretly perform good services, and she finds Rochester a sympathetic helper. In addition, brownies have small, grotesque, satyrlike bodies, and Rochester is at once ugly and sexy.

Brontë's first major use of allusion to fairy tales in Jane Eyre helps create the child's eye view of the world. Jane's initial apprehension of Brocklehurst's person is expressed through literary allusions to the Brobdingnagian and to the Big Bad Wolf which devours Little Red Riding Hood. Jane, aged ten, is an unusually small child for her age; heretofore she has delighted in the pictures of Gulliver's Travels, which include the "diminutive people" of the correspondingly tiny universe of Lilliput, and in Georgiana's doll house furniture (the tiny chairs and mirrors, the fairy plates and cups). And later she will sketch wee fairy folk: "a naiad's-head, crowned with lotus-flowers, rising out of them" and "an elf sitting in a hedge-sparrow's nest, under a wreath of hawthorn bloom." (p.235) It is not surprising that little Jane, with her natural predilection for things small, conceives of tall Mr. Brocklehurst as an ugly Brobdingnagian. The contrast in their relative sizes is accentuated by the fact that Jane's initial impression of Brocklehurst is from the position of a low curtsy. Looking up,
she sees what at first appears to be a "black pillar...the grim face at the top was like a carved mask, placed above the shaft by way of capital." As to Gulliver looking at the Brobdingnagians, so to Jane looking at Brocklehurst, all appears enlarged and coarsened: "his features were large, and they and all the lines of his frame were equally harsh and prim." When Brocklehurst sits down and places Jane "square and straight before him," her view becomes a close-up (usually Gulliver stands on a table for this): "What a face he had, now that it was almost on a level with mine!" But instead of a Swiftian grotesque vision of facial warts, nostril hairs, etc., Jane experiences Little Red Riding Hood's general perception of the abnormally large features of her supposed grandmother just before the wolf attempts to devour her: "what a great nose! and what a mouth! and what large prominent teeth!" (p.34). When Brocklehurst recognized Jane at Lowood, he publicly slanders her character and has her placed on a stool as a sign of ignominy. Upon being raised onto the stool, her sole perception is another Gulliver-like close-up of Mr. Brocklehurst: "I was in no condition to note particulars; I was only aware that they hoisted me up to the height of Mr. Brocklehurst's nose, that he was within a yard of me..." (p. 68). In summation, through allusion to fairy tale Bronte creates a child's subjective perception of a world largely unknown and perilous, controlled by huge grownups.

Later an allusion to the Bluebeard story draws the reader's attention to parallels between Jane Eyre and that fairy tale. In returning from the roof of Thornfield, Jane finds that the layout of Thornfield, a Gothic Mansion, reminds her of Bluebeard's castle: "I lingered in the long passage to which this led, separating the front from the back rooms of the third story; narrow, low, and dim, with only one little window at the far end, and looking, with its two rows of small black doors all shut, like a corridor in some Bluebeard's castle" (p. 110, italics added). Rochester, like all Bronte's heroes, is a benevolent despot who can be compared to Bluebeard. In fact, in Villette Paul Emmanuel, another cigar-smoking "brownie," who has locked the heroine in the attic garret so that she will memorize her lines, facetiously says: "You will set me down as a species of tyrant and Bluebeard, starving women in a garret, whereas, after all, I am no such thing" (p. 131).

There are further suggestions of the Bluebeard story. Rochester's mad wife secretly locked in the attic (at the top of a garret staircase leading from the long third floor gallery) corresponds to Bluebeard's dead wives hidden in a closet (at the end of a long gallery on the ground floor). In both instances, the purpose in keeping former wives hidden is to remarry. In "Bluebeard" a rich gentleman, who owns splendid town and country houses, lives nearby a lady of rank who has two beautiful daughters. He invites the lady and her daughters and their guests to one of his country seats, where they spend the week in parties and games. One of the two daughters has such a good time that she decides to marry the rich but ugly Bluebeard. So far we have Rochester's successful courting of Blanche, who favors him for his lands rather than his looks. However, whereas Bluebeard proposes to the beautiful neighboring girl who soon disobeys him and
discovers what is hidden, Rochester proposes to Jane and shows her what is hidden in the attic when his attempt at bigamy is foiled. Jane becomes the one who narrowly escapes from the clutches of the tyrant.

Bronte's knowledge of the architecture of Bluebeard's manor seems to indicate that she read the original "Bluebeard" story by the Frenchman Perrault, perhaps obliquely alluded to in little Jane's reference to "a certain little French storybook which Madame Pierrot had that day shown me" (p. 77). (Notice the similarity in name between "Perrault" and "Pierrot.") In her use of fairy tale elements and allusions in the novel Jane Eyre, Charlotte Bronte may have been inspired by Tieck's use of the fairy tale "Bluebeard" as the source for a serious modern drama. Blackwood's Magazine, to which her father subscribed and which she read, published an article on Tieck's Bluebeard (Feb., 1833). According to this article, Tieck sought, as would Charlotte Bronte later in Jane Eyre, "to combine the charm of a nursery fable, and all the dreams and associations of childhood, with scenes of interest which might find an echo in the bosom of manhood..." (p. 208).

In Tieck's view, the marvellous of the Nursery Tale was to be reduced as nearly as possible to the standard of common life;...occasionally to manifest itself in fitful glimpses, sufficient to remind the reader or spectator that an invisible agency, like a thread of silver tissue, pervaded and ran through the whole web of human existence. The main interest was to rest on human passions,...The difficulty, therefore, was in such a case to find a subject which would possess the airy charm of a Nursery Tale, and yet where the human interest should not be entirely merged in the allegorical or the marvellous;—some neutral ground on which infancy and manhood might shake hands; and where the influence of the good and evil passions which sway the heart within, should blend and harmonize naturally with the agency of spells or spirits from without. Such a subject seemed to be presented by Bluebeard (p. 209).

Jane Eyre also bears some resemblance to the familiar fairy tale "Beauty and the Beast," in which the beast is transformed into a handsome prince. As the Beast likes Beauty's honest answer that she finds him ugly, so Rochester prefers Jane's frankness to Celine's flattery. Beauty temporarily leaves the Beast in order to visit her father who is ill; although she promises to return in a week, she later allows her two sisters to persuade her to stay away longer. Similarly, Jane takes one week's leave of absence from her master Rochester in order to see her Aunt Reed, who is critically ill, but she will be persuaded by her two female cousins to prolong the visit. She leaves Rochester a second time when she learns he has a wife and she is unwilling to become his mistress. As Beauty returns to the Beast after her dream that he is dying and reproaching her for staying away, so Jane returns to Rochester following his urgent telepathic summons. Upon her final return to Rochester, Jane finds that he is a good Beast after all and that she need not have fled in fear:

He would never have forced me to be his mistress. Violent as he had seemed in his
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despair, he, in truth, loved me far too well and too tenderly to constitute himself my tyrant: he would have given me half his fortune, without demanding so much as a kiss in return, rather than I should have flung myself friendless on the wide world. (p. 443)

Obviously, Jane is a Cinderella. Her Aunt Reed and her cousins Georgiana and Eliza function as the wicked stepmother and stepsisters. As Cinderella in rags rakes the cinders while her stepsisters dress up and go to the ball, so Jane dusts regularly ("Bessie now frequently employed me as a sort of under nursery-maid, to tidy the room, dust the chairs, etc.") and is excluded from the winter holiday parties at which Georgiana and Eliza, dressed in finery, are the center of attention. Jane listens from the stairhead to the music and merriment below. This pattern at Gateshead is repeated at Thornfield. There Jane, alongside little Adele (perhaps a figure for Jane's childhood self), sits at the top of the stairs and listens to the party at which the Ingram sisters are the belles of the ball. Yet in the end Jane will marry Rochester, the Prince Charming.

More significant than specific parallels to the Cinderella story is the overall story line, a "Cinderella" success story. How did a heroine "poor, obscure, plain, and little" manage to oust a rival who possessed wealth, connections, beauty, and imposing stature? Or, even if we accept Rochester's disavowal that the courtship of Blanche was authentic, which disavowal does not quite ring true, how did the heroine manage to overcome her own handicaps and win the desired male?

Charlotte Bronte, who suffered because she felt she was not beautiful, had told her sisters that instead of the conventional beautiful heroine she would create "a heroine as plain and small as myself" in Jane Eyre. Of suffering little Jane the servant Abbot says, "one cannot really care for such a little toad as that," and Bessie agrees that "a beauty like Miss Georgiana would be more moving in the same condition." (p. 28) Yet Jane manages to move Rochester and reader alike. Of course, the subjective first person narration is an important factor in the reader response. Jane's subjective inner world transcends her physical reality and her body is seldom seen. When Jane as a child looks in the mirror, all is still and dim except for the "glittering eyes of fear," which have the effect of "a real spirit" (p. 16). This reflection, unlike most mirror images, seems an attempt to represent visually pure spirit.

In Jane Eyre soul-body dualism is employed largely for the purpose of presenting Jane's identity as a spirit which can incarnate in various forms and Blanche's identity as mere body, surface beauty ("soulless and heartless"). Passages in which Rochester associates Jane with "changelings," fairy spirits exchanged for children in infancy, are as follows:

...you have rather the look of another world. I marvelled where you had got that sort of face. When you came on me in Hay Lane last night, I thought unaccountably of fairy tales.... (p. 125)
She comes from the other world—from the abode of people who are dead; and tells me so when she meets me here in the gloaming! If I dared I'd touch you to see if you are substance or shadow, you elf! (p. 247)

You—strange—you almost unearthy thing! (p. 257)

You mocking changeling—fairy born and human bred! (p. 441)

As the desired male Rochester accepts Jane's personal "myth" that she is a great soul housed in a tiny body and that her beautiful rival is a body devoid of soul, her reality becomes transformed. Of course, he will choose spirit over flesh, and Jane's very body, which she perceives to be "puny and insignificant," becomes to him a kind of "beauty just after the desire of my heart—delicate and aerial." (p. 261)

Plain Jane's success against a seemingly superior female rival may appear to be merely a personal fantasy incapable of being shared by large numbers of readers. However, I suggest that this myth, in its broadest outlines, is a female equivalent of the male myth of the puny fellow who overcomes the giant. Consider the fairy tale "Jack and the Beanstalk," the Biblical account of David and Goliath, Charlie Chaplin films and Woody Allen films. Just as big men can enjoy the latter, so beautiful women can enjoy the former. The essence of each of these "myths" is that the intelligent protagonist triumphs over almost insuperable obstacles. F. Scott Fitzgerald once said, "there are only two stories, 'Jack the Giant Killer' and 'Cinderella.'" Jane is a Cinderella.

*Jane Eyre* not only alludes to and contains parallels to fairy tales but also resembles fairy tales in characterization. As in many fairy tales intended for girls, in the first half of *Jane Eyre* the maternal spirit is split into two extremes: the good, beautiful, loving mother (Miss Temple) and the wicked, hateful mother (Mrs. Reed). At Gateshead Jane is in the position of a dependent in the home of her cousins, because Aunt Reed has violated her pledge to her husband on his deathbed to bring up Jane as one of her own children. Mrs. Reed is in effect the wicked stepmother who deprived the heroine of her birthright. Miss Temple, the head teacher at Lowood who investigates the charges against Jane and clears her of them, is the antithesis of Mrs. Reed. Young, lovely, loving, she interacts with Jane and Helen in the manner of an ideal mother with her daughters. One night

She kissed me, and still keeping me at her side (where I was well contented to stand, for I derived a child's pleasure from the contemplation of her face, her dress, her one or two ornaments, her white forehead, her clustered and shining curls, and beaming eyes), she proceeded to address Helen Burns. (p.74)

When the girls must leave, Miss Temple embraces them, saying, as she draws them to her heart, "God bless you, my children!" (p. 76) In addition, there is the striking scene of the two girls lying together in a crib in Miss Temple's room the night Helen Burns dies.
What about the paternal spirit? In *Jane Eyre* the donor figures are male: Mr. Lloyd, the apothecary (physical healer), who sets in motion ideas of Jane's removal from the oppressive atmosphere of Gateshead; St. John Rivers, the clergyman (spiritual healer), who brings Jane into his home; John Eyre, the uncle who bequeaths to Jane a fortune. Mr. Brocklehurst, who is introduced at Gateshead where he is obviously in league with Mrs. Reed, is a cruel male authority figure, the male equivalent of Mrs. Reed. In contrast, Jane's dead uncle, Mr. Reed, who formerly acted as a father to her, and middle-aged Rochester figure to some extent as a benevolent parent. Explicitly, Rochester tells Jane, "I am old enough to be your father" (p. 317), and Mrs. Fairfax says, "There are twenty years of difference in your ages. He might almost be your father." In the penultimate chapter of the novel, the maimed and blinded Rochester wonders whether "I should now entertain none but fatherly feelings for you" (p. 439), and the next day Jane sits on his knee. Interestingly, Rochester's blindness and subsequent partial recovery of vision correspond to Mr. Patrick Bronte's near-blindness and partial recovery due to a cataract operation; and Jane's reading to the blinded Rochester corresponds to Charlotte's reading to her father. However, Rochester figures primarily as a lover rather than a surrogate parent.

As the maternal spirit was split into two extremes in the characterization in *Jane Eyre*, so was the spirit of the siblings. In creating the Reed and Rivers cousins, which are exact antitheses, C. Bronte repeated the configuration of her own remaining siblings, a brother (Branwell) and two sisters (Emily and Anne). The two sets of cousins, which share characteristics of C. Bronte's brother and sisters, seem to constitute disparate imaginative reflections of a single complex reality. The nightmare vision of the Reed cousins may have been prompted by Charlotte Bronte's recent disappointment in her brother Branwell, an aspiring artist who had become debauched and dissolute. John Reed's end seems a prophecy of Branwell's. Georgiana Reed, in her robust forcefulness, slightly resembles Emily Bronte. Eliza Reed, who epitomizes the dangers of religious austerity, roughly corresponds to "gentle" Anne Bronte, who was prone to religious melancholy. However, the cheerful vision of the Rivers cousins contains more details of Emily and Anne and seems to reflect them more accurately than does the vision of the Reed cousins. Diana and Mary Rivers, like Emily and Anne Bronte, share responses to literature, love animals, are attached to the heath, and regret having to leave home to work as governesses among strangers. Emily was so homesick at school that she never again left her moorland home; repeatedly Anne stoically went forth as a governess. Diana with her dog corresponds to Emily with "Keeper," and Mary with her cat corresponds to Anne with "Flossy" and other cats. Diana's forceful personality, to which Jane sometimes yields, resembles Emily's strong personality, to which Charlotte occasionally deferred. Mary's quiet, less imposing nature is like that of "gentle" Anne. Jane Eyre's previous ordeal at Thornfield and suffering alone in nature have prepared
her to prize her friendship with the Rivers sisters, just as the author herself appreciated being reunited with her sisters after the ordeal of her second sojourn at the Pensionnat Heger in Brussels.

Similarly, there seems to be a "split" representation of one dark, foreign woman, probably Mme. Heger (the wife of Constantin Heger, the man for whom Bronte experienced repressed passion), as two distinct fictional characters—a female Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde in terms of the author's fantasy. Beautiful Blanche, who functions as female rival, appears in civilized social settings. Bloated Bertha, who functions as wife, occasionally emerges from hiding during the night and indulges her bestial instincts. In Jane Eyre Bertha is literally of foreign origin, and Blanche is exotic, foreign in appearance. Significantly, the younger Bertha to whom Rochester proposed is said to have physically resembled the present Blanche, to whom he is considering proposing. (Rochester specifically that the younger Bertha was "a fine woman, in the style of Blanche Ingram; tall, dark, majestic" [p.307]. Bertha is a Creole from Spanish Town, and Blanche is "dark as a Spaniard" [p.175].) The question which the author explored in fiction and answered negatively was: Would he choose her again if he had it to do over? Rochester's false remark to Jane that Bertha was the creature of "an overstimulated brain" seems an accurate description of the authorial imagination which created mad, vampirelike Bertha. Charlotte Bronte seems to have taken a feverish delight in conjuring up lurid behind-the-scenes activities of the wife. What is most unusual about Bronte's creation of Bertha—expressive of authorial animus—is the application of imagined horrors, not to illicit sex, but to the legitimate carnal relationship within marriage.

The two emotional impulses of the novel are the need for a warm, supportive family, including siblings, and the later need for a mate. The initial settings for the two halves of the novel are a family home (Gateshead) and the home (Thornfield) of a potential mate, Mr. Rochester. Apparently because Bronte's most passionate feelings were for Constantin Heger, a married man, the love interest in Jane Eyre centers on Rochester as a married man. There is an almost insuperable obstacle, the existence of a wife, to be overcome before the heroine can achieve happiness. Because these emotional needs are thwarted in each setting, the heroine embarks on a journey, to return later triumphant, in the fashion of a true fairy tale heroine. Accordingly, the underlying plot structure consists of two slightly overlapping journeys, the one commencing and ending with Gateshead, Jane's childhood home, the other commencing and ending with Thornfield, Jane's new home with Rochester.

Whereas in the first half of the novel Jane is tyrannized by Mrs. Reed, in the second she is oppressed by Rochester, who attempts a bigamous marriage with her and then tries to persuade her to become his mistress. Each oppression is witnessed by the protective spirit of Jane's parent figure of the sex opposite that of the oppressor. Little Jane thinks that the spirit of her dead uncle, who in life functioned as her guardian, is "harassed" by the wrongs the aunt has done her and may "quit its abode" to appear before her.
The streak of light which glides up the wall and quivers on the ceiling she assumes to be "a herald of some coming vision from another world," and she faints soon after. Similarly, Jane feels that Rochester's transgressions are witnessed by the spirit of her dead mother. In a scene which parallels and explicitly recalls the experience at Gateshead ("The light that long ago had struck me into syncope, recalled in this vision, seemed glidingly to mount the wall, and trembingly to pause in the centre of the obscured ceiling"), Jane sees the spirit of her dead mother which advises her to flee from temptation.11

Let us examine each triumphant return in detail. When Jane briefly visits Gateshead, through the aid of Providence she in effect settles old accounts. She comes at the request of Mr. Reed, whose health has been undermined by financial ruin and by her beloved son John's debauchery and suicide. It is true that as a child little Jane worsted Mrs. Reed verbally, but that triumph was the mere token victory of a powerless child and, moreover, was followed by the bad aftertaste of guilt. As an adult armed with mature powers and Christian grace, Jane returns to the familiar settings and feeling of her childhood: "The same hostile roof now again rose before me:...I looked into a certain corner near, half-expecting to see the slim outline of a once-dreaded switch; which used to lurk there, waiting to leap out imp-like and lace my quivering palm or shrinking neck." Jane, who as a child angrily told Mrs. Reed she would never visit her, has returned, seemingly with the Christian forgiveness of a Helen Burns. However, she reiterates her lack of vindictiveness to the point that it seems the lady doth protest too much:

The gaping wound of my wrongs, too, was now quite healed; and the flame of resentment extinguished. (p. 230)

It is a happy thing that time quells the longings of vengeance, and hushes the promptings of rage and aversion; I had left this woman in bitterness and hate, and I came back to her now with no other emotion than a sort of ruth for her great sufferings, and a strong yearning to forget and forgive all injuries—to be reconciled and clasp hands in amity. (p. 232)

My disposition is not so bad as you think: I am passionate, but not vindictive. Many a time, as a little child, I should have been glad to love you if you would have let me; and I long earnestly to be reconciled to you now: kiss me, aunt. (p. 242)

Mrs. Reed's account of her past revenge (her refusal to give John Eyre Jane's address, employing as pretext the lie that she was dead, a fiction which may reflect some wish fulfillment) and her present inability to relent toward Jane constitute dramatic foils to Jane's repeated statements of forgiveness. Such melodramatic, black-and-white contrast is often found in fairy tales and dreams. Since base emotions do not fit the idealized picture of oneself, hatred and resentment are repressed and often projected onto the other (hated) person. That night Mrs. Reed dies while Jane is in the house.
Jane, devoid of guilt, is simply a witness as Providence destroys the hateful parent figure of the same sex. Jane is able to close this chapter of her life and of the novel with the comment, "Neither of us (Eliza or myself) had dropt a tear." (p. 242)

A good illustration from fairy tales is in the *Wizard of Oz*. Dorothy's house, blown about by a cyclone, lands on the Wicked Witch of the East and kills her. Upon being congratulated for having destroyed the Wicked Witch of the East, Dorothy, "an innocent, harmless little girl" who "had never killed anything in her life," responds, "you are very kind; but there must be some mistake. I have not killed anything." Her congratulator replies, "Your house did, anyway," "and that is the same thing. See!" This passage contains within itself its psychological significance. The congratulator's words indicate that the heroine's violence is veiled from herself. Analogously, in dreams, as Freud has amply demonstrated, one's violence tends to be disguised by symbolism in order to pass the ego censor unrecognized.

Similarly, when Jane returns to Thornfield it is in ruins, as all in that house which formerly thwarted her marital desires has been destroyed. The catastrophe at Thornfield, which included the maiming, blinding and scarring of Rochester, some neighbors feel "was a just judgment on him for keeping his first marriage secret, and wanting to take another wife while he had one living." (p. 431) On the level of overt meaning in the novel, obviously Providence has visited upon Rochester just retribution for his crimes. However, on the level of wish-fulfillment fantasy, Rochester has been punished, not for wishing to remarry with Jane, but rather for having a wife. The wife has been destroyed and Rochester has been chastised at Thornfield in order that he might be embraced and married at Ferndean.

The encounter between Jane and Rochester at Ferndean indicates that Jane has gained the ascendancy in their relationship. Whereas formerly Jane was in the paid service of the wealthy Rochester, now she is independently wealthy, as the result of her inheritance. "I told you I am independent, sir, as well as rich: I am my own mistress," says she whom in the past Rochester sought to make his mistress. And whereas previously Jane was more emotionally dependent on Rochester than vice versa, now he is more dependent on her. Rochester used to tease Jane by talking about beautiful Blanche as his future bride. He thereby provoked Jane to declare her love first and afterward kidded her that she proposed to him. Now Jane teases Rochester by talking about St. John and indicating that he wanted to marry her. Rochester declares his love and proposes. In his blindness he has to be literally supported by Jane, who, in her usual fashion, experiences not crude triumph but rather sentiments more ideal: "the powerlessness of the strong man touched my heart to the quick...the water stood in my eyes to hear this avowal of his dependence...." (p. 442)

Jane and Rochester sound each other's attitude toward marriage, through deft verbal sparring which ultimately takes the form of *fairy tale riddle*. When Rochester says that he is thinking of taking a wife and asks Jane her opinion, she says it depends on his choice. He then tells her to make
the choice and he will "abide by your decision." The underlying fantasy here seems somewhat analogous to the Wife of Bath’s Tale, wherein the knight’s choice is between an ugly, faithful wife and a beautiful, young, disobedient wife. The knight tells the loathly lady (fairy in the form of a hag), “I put me in your wise governance; chooseth yourself... For as you like it, it suffiseth me” (11. 231, 232, 235). Jane’s response to Rochester’s deference is the riddle, “Choose then, sir—her who loves you best,” which Rochester understands. Then, in the semblance of another riddle and answer, he declares his love and proposes marriage: “I will at least choose—her I love best. Jane, will you marry me?” (p.448)

The name of the final setting, “Ferndean,” subtly recalls the first fairy setting mentioned in the novel. Little Jane looking in the mirror, which remarkably functioned as a “visionary hollow,” found that her reflection gave “the effect of a real spirit: I thought it like one of the tiny phantoms, half fairy, half imp, Bessie’s evening stories represented as coming out of lone, ferny dells in moors” (p. 16, italics added). And it is only in fairy land with fairy identities that union between the heroine and the married man can take place. During the excursion to town to buy a trousseau, Rochester tells little Adele a story about a fairy, which is an allegory of when he decided to propose to Jane and commit bigamy. As he was sitting on a stile in the field writing, “a little thing with a veil of gossamer on its head” approached him. This scene would correspond to Jane’s return from Gateshead to Thornfield, when she walked the distance from Millcote to Thornfield through hay fields and encountered Rochester sitting on a stile writing. “It was a fairy, and come from Elf-land, it said; and its errand was to make me happy: I must go with it out of the common world to a lonely place—such as the moon” through the “talisman” of a wedding ring. It said “we shall leave earth and make our heaven yonder.” (p. 269) In case any reader has missed the allegory and its terms of translation, Rochester answers Adele’s final objection with “Mademoiselle is a fairy.” (p. 270) The allegorical story implies that Rochester fears such happiness is not to be had in this world and therefore posits a “heaven yonder” in which it will take place. Although the innocent heroine Jane does not yet know that a wife exists, her natural instinct is also that the proposed marriage between herself and Rochester is too good to come true. “It can never be, sir; it does not sound likely. Human beings never enjoy complete happiness in this world. I was not born for a different destiny to the rest of my species; to imagine such a lot befalling me is a fairy tale—a daydream” (p. 261), says Jane, who fears “my hopes were too bright to be realized.” (p.179) Rochester insists that he will “realize” this dream, but his attempt at bigamy is foiled. It remains for the author to realize this dream, through removal of the impediment to marriage and placement of Jane and Rochester in the otherworldly seclusion of Ferndean.

The author’s subtle spelling out that the happy ending is a fairy tale or daydream would seem to indicate that, although Jane and Rochester’s dreams come true, she does not allow herself to believe that she can find such happiness in real life. Like her heroine, she has shrewd common sense
which says of her "day visions... up and on to an ideal heaven," "My fine visions are all very well, but I must not forget they are absolutely unreal. I have a rosy sky, and a green flowery Eden in my brain; but without, I am perfectly aware, lies at my feet a rough tract to travel, and around me gather black tempests to encounter." (p. 315) Like her heroine who paces the third floor corridor of Thornfield and allows her "mind's eye" to dwell on "bright visions" and "inward ear" to listen to "a tale my imagination created, and narrated continuously; quickened with all of incident, life, fire, feeling, that I desired and had not in my actual existence," Bronte makes the action and happiness she cannot find (p. 112), through the practice of literature as daydream, but ultimately never confuses dream and reality.

Upon completing the penultimate "Ferndean" chapter, Bronte commences the final chapter with "Readers, I married him," as if shutting a book of fairy tales and relating how the hero and heroine lived happily ever after. The ending is unabashedly a domestic idyll for a heroine who has spoken of "culinary rites," "domestic endearments and household joys," and who has responded negatively to St. John's urging that she give up ties of the flesh and exercise her talents. When Jane wished to give part of her inheritance to the Rivers, telling St. John, "you cannot at all imagine the craving I have for fraternal and sisterly love. I never had a home, I never had brothers and sisters; I must and will have them now:...", he responded, "But, Jane, your aspirations after family ties and domestic happiness may be realized otherwise than by the means you contemplate: you may marry." (p. 390) The conclusion of Jane Eyre realizes "homes" in both these senses, which were the respective goals of the two journeys. Doubly blessed, Jane retains her sisterly ties with her cousins Diana and Mary, who are happily married, and is blissfully wed to Rochester, to whom she bears a son.

I suggest that the enduring appeal of Jane Eyre (an immediate best seller in its own day and a popular novel ever since) resides in the fact that intense personal daydreams conform to fairy tale patterns in story telling which are universally satisfying. The sheer intensity of Jane Eyre is that of an egocentric dream world in which everything is made to conform to the individual will. As in dreams, there is an idealized self, the first person narrator, with whom the reader is happy to identify. Other characters, because they exist solely as subjectively perceived by the narrator in terms of her needs and self-serving biases, tend to be presented neither objectively nor in the round. Any character who thwarts the heroine in any way, even the hero Rochester, is dealt with by a rather cruel hand which is regarded as external and providential. Love and hate and fear and desire are given full play in Jane Eyre, which not only was recreational for the author but also has been first-rate entertainment for generations of readers.

NOTES

'1The Cinderella pattern has been discussed perceptively by Sarel Eimerl, "Story by Cinderella," The Reporter, February 22, 1968, pp. 48-52. Charles Burkhart also discusses Jane Eyre as a Cinderella figure, in Charlotte Bronte: A Psychosexual Study of Her Novels (London,
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Michael C. Kotzin, in his book on Dickens’ use of the fairy tale, cursorily notes the Cinderella, Bluebeard and Beauty-and-the-Beast motifs. (Michael C. Kotzin, Dickens and the Fairy Tale [Bowling Green, 1972], p. 67). In footnote 67 he draws attention to Alfred and Mary E. David’s article, “A Literary Approach to the Brothers Grim,” Journal of the Folklore Institute, I (1964), pp. 180-196 as having first pointed out that “Jane Eyre is both a Cinderella figure and the girl whose love releases a beast-bridegroom from his spell.”

Robert Martin, who feels that in Jane Eyre “the movement of the action is towards the maturity and self-knowledge of its two central characters,” asserts that the novel is divided into these five distinct locales, “each of which has its particular significance in Jane’s history and each of which is like an act in a five-act drama.” (Accents of Persuasion [New York: Norton, 1966], pp. 58, 60). Similarly, Q. D. Leavis considers the theme to be “how a woman comes to maturity in the world of the writer’s youth,” “how the embittered little charity-child finds the way to come to terms with life and society,” and regards Jane’s development as schematically “divided into four sharply distinct phases with their suggestive names: childhood at Gateshead; girlhood, which is schooling in both senses, at Lowood; adolescence at Thornfield; maturity at Marsh End, winding up with fulfillment in marriage at Ferndean.” (Introduction to the Penguin edition of Jane Eyre, pp. 11, 12, 13). Adrienne Rich also discusses this novel in terms of maturation and explicitly uses the fashionable term “Bildungsroman.” (“Jane Eyre: The Temptations of a Motherless Woman,” Ms., Vol. II, number 4 [Oct., 1973], pp. 68-107.

However, Anette Schreiber in “The Myth in Charlotte Bronte” (Literature and Psychology, XVIII [1968], No. 1, pp. 48-67) has briefly noted the second journey and its impetus. She has said that the “seminal myth is a woman’s search for a lover and a mate” (p. 49) and that the fantasy involves the “conquest of an inaccessible man” (p. 65). The major thrust of her article, however, is that the underlying myth is a desire for death as release.

Robert B. Martin, who has devoted a good deal of space to discussing the novel in terms of a five-part structure, has added as a one-sentence aside: “There are, in addition, two scenes in which Jane returns to an earlier home to discover changes in both herself and those she has known in the past: from Thornfield she returns to the deathbed of Mrs. Reed at Gateshead, and from Moor House she returns to Thornfield to find only its blind windows and gaping walls.” (Robert B. Martin, Charlotte Bronte’s Novels: The Accents of Persuasion [New York: Norton, 1966], p. 61).

Carl Jung simply asserts that fairy tales exhibit a “dream mechanism” and in many of his works refers the reader to F. Ricklin’s Wish Fulfillment and Symbolism in Fairy Tales (1908). (However, as Ricklin’s book is not listed in the Union Catalogue, one might question its importance.) Erich Fromm attempts to argue a relationship between fairy tales and dreams in The Forgotten Language: An Introduction to the Understanding of Dreams, Fairy Tales, and Myths (1951). Andre Jolles in Einfache Formen; Legend, Sage, Mythe, Ratsel, Spruch, Kasus, Memorabile, Marchen, Witz (1930), in his chapter pertaining to Marchen, theorizes about the wish fulfillment nature of fairy tales.


Curiously, Robert B. Martin, in Charlotte Bronte’s Novels: the Accents of Persuasion, negatively interprets Rochester’s addressing Jane as a fairy as signifying the “faultiness of his intentions” and the illusions under which Jane labors. (p.79) Martin speaks of the “potent means by which man deceives himself: superstition, a belief in fairy tales…all of them throw a veil of illusion over the clear sight that man should cultivate.” (p. 77) It seems to me that only the bigamous proposal of marriage on Midsummer Eve fits this interpretation and that Martin’s explanation fails to account for: “the grains of truth in the wildest fable” (JE, p.154); the persistence of the fairy tale motif in the final section of the novel, when Rochester has been purged of his bigamous intentions; and the wish-fulfillment nature of the plot as a whole.

Robert B. Martin previously noted Brocklehurst’s resemblance to a Brobdingnagian, as
Jane is brought close up to him. (Robert B. Martin, *Charlotte Bronte's Novels: The Accents of Persuasion* [New York, 1966], pp.66-67.) However, he failed to note the allusion to "Little Red Riding Hood."

*The motif of relative size is again employed by Charlotte Bronte for a tiny child in *Villette*. Little Polly says that if she came in the way of a mammoth it would trample her down, "as I might tread on a grasshopper in a hayfield without knowing it." Little over a decade later, Lewis Carroll’s imagination will engage in extended play with the motif of relativity of size from a girl’s point of view, in *Alice in Wonderland* (1865) and *Through the Looking Glass* (1871).

Annette Schreiber more briefly discusses mother and father figures in *Jane Eyre* in the article “The Myth in Charlotte Bronte.” Our interpretations differ in that she does not notice any positive mother images. She says that the mother figures range in destructive intention and intensity. (p.63)

11The latter scene, which I have perceived and explained in terms of Jane’s individual psyche, Adrienne Rich has interpreted in mythic terms. She says that the moon imagery is a “symbol of the matriarchal spirit and the ‘Great Mother of the night sky’.” She sees the dream as “archetypal” and the dreamer (Jane) as “in touch with the matriarchal aspect of her psyche which now warns and protects her against that which threatens her integrity.” Adrienne Rich, “*Jane Eyre: The Temptations of a Motherless Woman,*” *Ms.* vol. II, No. 4 (Oct., 1973), p.106.

Paula Sullivan received a Ph.D. in English from Harvard, where she was a Graduate Prize Fellow. She has taught at Earlham College and is currently a technical writer.