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The Function and Thematic Significance of French Quotations in Charlotte Brontë's Novel *Jane Eyre*

Master Thesis

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ABSTRACT

This MA thesis examines Charlotte Brontë's novel *Jane Eyre* (1847), concentrating on the quotations written in the French language. Since the book was written in an English-speaking environment, a significant number of different-length quotations are found in the novel. This work aims to analyse these quotations by finding their function and thematic significance. Relying on different literary and cultural insights, I will reveal why this foreign language was chosen, how it represents the characters and complements the context, which is strongly connected with the author's own experiences and passions, knowing that French was an important language to her. This analysis will also provide insights into how characters use the language to represent their development, culture, education, and cosmopolitan life.

1. INTRODUCTION

Le français a cette capacité unique de rendre les idées belles rien qu'avec la manière dont elles sont exprimées.

- Claude Lévi-Strauss

This quote reflects a sense of the uniqueness of the French language, which has the power to express the most wonderful aspects of life that English, or any other language in the world, cannot express, no matter how polished and rich it can be. It demonstrates to us that only readers of French can fully appreciate the beautiful, delicate subtleties of the world around us.

Over the centuries that have brought us literature, it is hard to find a novel without one or two French expressions or ideas from France. This is not just because of historical influence or the fortuitous mixing of languages (Michael L. Ross, 2023). Embedded in English-language literature, French does not just decorate it by intervening in dialogues or appearing through ideas from France, as we could guess when we find French quotations in any work - it brings a much deeper meaning. Its fluid, romantic flow can convey the culture and reveal emotions or inner thoughts, much more powerful and subtle than any other language in the world. Many French expressions are found in the works of Charlotte Brontë, whose judicious choice of language shapes our understanding of characters, allowing the reader to see what they are and reveal their purpose in the novel.

Born in 1816 into a small rural environment, Brontë found it hard to associate with the cosmopolitan world, which contrasts with her novels, where we find the recurrent appearance of the French language (Ross, 45). From an early age, creating stories with her siblings, Charlotte was able to invent tales about the mythical lands of Angria and Gondal (Ross, 45), demonstrating her creativity. As a young woman, Charlotte was introduced to the French language at school, then deepened her knowledge during her studies in Brussels and in her work as a teacher at the Pensionnat Héger, where she was further immersed in French and its culture. Her father, Patrik, exhibited a similar natural inclination for education - although he came from a poor family, he attended Cambridge University, passing on his love of education to his children (Benson, 2). Brontë's poems and novels testify to her desire to define herself as a poet, to create her poetic identity, and to become part of a literary tradition of which she was well aware. These early works reflect her aspiration to "be one of that bright band" of revered poets (Bock, 49).

Previous discussions have associated Brontë's works with the French language, particularly in her major novels, such as *The Professor* (1857), *Villette* (1853), and *Jane Eyre* (1847). These linguistic associations are most often linked to Brontë's past, which had a significant impact on her relationship with the language and influenced the appearance of French in her works. The protagonist in *Jane Eyre* and her experiences with the French reflect Brontë's learning process (Cohen, 173). The fusion of languages is also linked to the historical situation, particularly in the 19th century and the Victorian era, when the world itself was in flux and change, with France a significant source of influence on other cultures and nations (Flinch, 50).

In this thesis, I intend to explore the function and thematic significance of French quotations in Charlotte Brontë's novel *Jane Eyre*. While considering how scholars focus on its various themes, such as feminist readings, social critique, cultural studies, and many other disciplines, one aspect remains barely discussed, despite this being a very important consideration in analysing the French language in the novel. That aspect is the exploration of the significance that French quotations bring to the context and the novel's characters. This MA thesis aims to comprehensively analyse the use of foreign language within the English novel in the context of the period, or more precisely, in the context of cultural (social) influences in 19th-century Victorian England. Since *Jane Eyre* contains multiple French quotations, this work will explore their purpose and deeper meanings that were chosen by the author for reasons that are far from coincidental – they have the power to deepen the characterisation of the characters who use them and to contribute to the novel's overall thematic significance, highlighting the broader themes of the novel in terms of the cultural and educational differences between the characters, the national identity of the character and of the whole country he or she represents.

My reasoning behind choosing this topic is as follows: by analysing the novel from the unique perspective, I will contribute to existing and future works by filling the gap in this area, also sharing my knowledge gained from personal knowledge and studies in different fields, such as French and English languages, literary and cultural studies. In this way, this analysis of the use of language will contribute to the analysis of multilingualism and its implications in *Jane Eyre*, as well as in English literature in general.

This MA thesis is composed of three chapters, each of which analyses a different character, who is one way or another related to the French language, by using French quotes, reciting the French phrases of other characters, or referring to France in their speech. This exploration will examine the perspectives of three different characters: Jane Eyre, Mr. Rochester, and Adèle Varens. Firstly, Jane

learned French during her schooling years and later used and developed it in her life, which reveals the development of the protagonist, known as a bildungsroman. Second, Mr. Rochester, whose cosmopolitan life and education exposed him to the French language, which had a great impact on elevating his social standing. Lastly, Adèle, who is originally from France, brought the culture with her to England, infusing the flavour of true French identity into the novel. This work stands out from the existing analysis by adding a new dimension to examine the significance of French quotations through these different lenses in *Jane Eyre*. Surprisingly, after a thorough analysis of the novel, a significant number of French quotations and references to the French language were found, which is editorializing, given that Charlotte Brontë wrote the novel in an English context. However, these quotations will not be analysed separately. The most essential and analysis-focused quotations will be chosen to analyse to achieve the goal of this MA work.

The search for French quotations for this thesis was carried out in the following order: the novel was read, and all French quotations and references to France were collected. The next step was to select the quotations from the three main characters on whom this thesis focuses. After grouping the quotations according to their respective characters, the most thematically related quotations were assembled. The following instances represent examples of how thematically related quotations were grouped:

> ‘Revenez bientôt, ma bonne amie, ma chère Mdlle. Jeannette,’ (p. 169)
> ‘Bon jour, mesdames.’ (p. 263)
>
> ‘Monsieur, je vous remercie mille fois de votre bonté;’ then rising, she added, ‘C’est comme cela que maman faisait, n’est-ce pas, monsieur?’ (p. 213)

These quotations are spoken by the character Adèle and are presented in a similar context, where the character greets others and emphasizes her manners. In the same way, for each character—Jane, Rochester, and Adèle—the relevant quotations have been selected and categorised. The following part of the thesis is the analysis of these quotations, which is presented in the analysis section of this work. It is important to note that not all French quotations have been analysed in this thesis. For example, a quotation such as: ‘Tant pis!’ said her Ladyship, ‘I hope it may do her good!’ (p. 268) told by Blanche Ingram's mother, or other French quotes spoken by others than the main characters, were not analysed. The thesis ends with the conclusion and a summary in Lithuanian.

2. French quotations in English literature: A Theoretical Framework

The use of French quotations in Charlotte Brontë's novel *Jane Eyre* certainly carries much deeper meaning than we could guess, and not accidental - it undoubtedly has a hidden significance, as many scholars have already uncovered many ways the foreign language can be interpreted, uncovering a rich cultural and historical background behind it. This literary review draws on interpretations of the French language in the novel and literature in general, which can be used as a window for understanding French in Brontë's *Jane Eyre*. This review also highlights the cultural and linguistic interpretations important in shaping the novel's themes, the characters' interrelationships, and the author's experiences in a rich Victorian and 19th-century cultural milieu.

To understand and analyse in detail the manifestations of the French language in Brontë's works, it is worth looking at the historical and literary context that led to French usage in Brontë's works and English literature. Flinch's (2010) study of French literature examines in what ways the period of the 18th and 19th century revolutions impacted the civilisations, especially Britain. She notes that in that period, many authors started to use the French language and philosophy as a basis for developing and expressing French ideas (Flinch, 6). She argues that the themes of freedom and individuality, which represented a "new epoch" to them, served as the primary inspiration for English writers. Flinch also explains that English intellectuals had mixed feelings of admiration and jealousy for French science and new concepts that the English did not yet possess, which is reflected in English literature (Flinch, 6).

Numerous academics have examined how Brontë's exposure to various languages, especially French, influenced her writings. Ross (2023) in his work about multilingualism in English-language fiction investigates Brontë's strong bond with French, pointing out that even though she was raised in a rural area of Yorkshire, she spent valuable time in Brussels, where she studied and later taught at the Pensionnat Héger. These years helped her to become fluent in French. The scholar also added, her relationship with her former mentor in Brussels, Constantin Héger, helped Brontë develop a deep emotional connection to the language, as evidenced by her letters (Ross, 46). In one of the letters (of November 1845) to Heger, written in French and sometimes switching to English, Brontë confessed:

> I have never heard ... French spoken but once since I left Brussels – and then it sounded like music to my ears – every word was most precious to me because it reminded me of you – I love French for your sake with all my heart and soul. (*Letters* I 435, as cited in Ross, 46)

According to Ross, Brontë's use of French in her books is both for literary purposes and intimate, carrying deep emotional meaning. He gives an example of Brontë's argument about her other novel, *Shirley*. Here, Brontë explained that her English language switches to French expressions have a higher literary value: "I use this French word because English is limiting", which suggests that Brontë finds that French gives her a freedom of expression that English did not always offer (Ross, 47):

> In her first adult (but posthumously published) novel The Professor (1857), the protagonist, William Crimsworth, newly escaped from a wretched existence in his native England and employed in a Belgian school, is observed by his Francophone superior to have "l'air rayonnant" (a radiant air) (68). It is significant that this judgment is delivered in French, for change of idiom contributes as much to the young man's buoyancy as change of scene; indeed, the two are fused. A similar logic applies to the female protagonists of Brontë's later, more ambitious novels. (Ross, 47).

Eells (2013) in her detailed analysis of French in *Jane Eyre* also adds, that Brontë often chooses French words instead of their English counterparts just because they sound better, providing an example from *Shirley*, where Brontë describes a winter scene using the word "reflets" and encourages readers to look for its English alternative by saying that: "Reflections won't do" (Shirley, p. 527, as cited in Ells, 2). Ells suggests by this explanation that the playful use of language shows that French has not only a decorative function but also adds depth and enriches the poetic quality of her writing.

Brontë's use of French in her novels is also explained by William A. Cohen in his essay "Why Is There So Much French in 'Villette'?". He expands on Ross' (2023) work by arguing that Brontë's use of French is not only related to her time spent in Belgium but also because it relates to themes of class, identity, and emotions, which the author tried to convey (Cohen, 171). Although Brontë in *Jane Eyre* included less French than *Villette*, the language, according to Cohen, continued to be a powerful tool for emphasising these themes. He gives arguments by providing the example of Jane's first encounter with her new French student, Adèle Varens, instantly recognising her fluency in the foreign language:

> "Fortunately I had had the advantage of being taught French by a French lady, and as I had always made a point of conversing with Madame Pierrot as often as I could... I had acquired a certain degree of readiness and correctness in the language." (*Brontë, Jane Eyre*, quoted in Cohen, 174).

In his work, Cohen explains several reasons for the choice to use French in the novel. Firstly, it strengthens Jane's standing in Rochester's household by highlighting her education and demonstrating her suitability for the position of governess. The second reason would be to establish a distinct

hierarchy between Adèle and Jane (Cohen, 175). According to Cohen, this explains the bond with the French in *Jane Eyre* and in Brontë's own life, where they both picked up the language from a native speaker (Brontë from her schoolmaster, Jane from Adèle) and used it to demonstrate their cultural awareness.

The French in *Jane Eyre* also speak about Victorian fears of foreign influence, which was often welcomed negatively by Englishmen. In her chapter from *Translation Studies: Retrospective and Prospective Views*, Andreea Bălan (2020) describes how Jane and other French female characters in Victorian novels are often portrayed as culturally and socially distinct from English characters, and authors used that to highlight cultural and social differences between people:

> "As the female individuals of the nineteenth century occupied a position of duality within the Victorian culture, being either pure or ruined, familiar or foreign, Charlotte Brontë engenders some French women in her Jane Eyre such as AdèleVarens - the illegitimate child of the French opera dancer Céline Varens, and her maid Sophie. Jane Eyre describes her French teacher as "harsh and grotesque"". (Bălan, p. 19).

According to Bălan, Victorian literature frequently compared French and English women. While depicting French women as careless and lacking morals, English women were described as virtuous and self-controlled (Bălan, p. 20). Bălan argues this pattern by giving the example of Adèle and her mother Céline Varens, whose life as an opera dancer "marks her want of sobriety; her multiple lovers mark her want of chastity; her illegitimate child marks her lack of conjugal bond, and her abandonment of Adèle so she could flee with her lover to Italy, violates maternal virtue" (Judith E. Pike 170, as cited by Bălan, 23). Céline, as Bălan explains, is also criticised by the English character Rochester. He shames Céline for lack of self-control, revealing her numerous extramarital affairs, and careless decision to leave her daughter Adèle behind, which again perpetuates the idea that French women are careless and morally weak (Bălan, p. 24).

According to Bălan, these characteristics are also reflected in Adèle's personality, saying that "coquetry runs in her blood" (Brontë, 212, quoted in Bălan, 24):

> "The danger of vice and sinfulness is remarked not only here, but also in Adèle's personality, especially in her longing for presents as well as her pride and focus on clothes ("her pink silk frock"). Being pictured as a "miniature of Celine Varens" for "coquetry runs in her blood, blends with her brain" (Brontë, 171), Adèle "demands a 'cadeau'" whenever she meets Rochester." (Bălan, 24).

However, Bălan argues that Adèle's character is not entirely negative, which is shown through Jane. She treats Adèle with more kindness and guidance than Rochester, who rejects the girl, because he considers her as shallow and foolish as her mother (Bălan, 23). As a responsible and moral

Englishwoman, Jane uses strict discipline and appropriate education to "save" the French child from becoming like her mother, who was viewed as having poor morals (Bălan, p. 23). This contrast between the English and French characters (Jane as a symbol of discipline and moral integrity, whereas Adèle's French heritage is linked to extravagance and vanity) reflects the cultural divide between the two nationalities Brontë draws in the novel (Craina 2015, p. 45).

In the article *The French Aire in Jane Eyre*, Emily Eells (2018) offers a detailed analysis of French in *Jane Eyre* that touches on various viewpoints, including gender, education, and social expectations. One of the chapters of this work proposes the idea that the novel associates the French with romance and rebellion, particularly in Rochester's affair with Céline Varens (Eells, p. 2):

> "As the love affair took place in Paris where the mode of transportation was *la voiture* and the entrance to Céline's apartment *une porte cochère*, his narrative is necessarily punctuated with French words and terms of endearment like 'mon ange'." (Eells, 2)

Rochester uses French phrases like *grande passion* and *mon ange* when describing his past affair with Céline (Jane Eyre, p. 120). Eells (2018, p. 2) points out that Jane avoids such expressive language because she tries to control and restrain her emotions and words. Even when her relationship with Rochester develops and they become quite close to one another, they mainly speak in English. By this example, Eells (2018, p. 2) argues that Brontë uses French when she aims to separate duty from desire, or "negotiate the tensions of reason and passion" (Eells, p. 2).

In her work, Eells (2018, 5) also notes that the French help characters in *Jane Eyre* to conceal their real emotions. For example, Rochester uses French to hide his real intentions towards Jane, using a foreign language to create a distance. He jokes that Adèle thinks of her as "prête à croquer sa petite maman Anglaise" (*Jane Eyre*, p. 210), which means "ready to eat up her little English mother". Eels argues that the play with language that Rochester uses is a way for him to hide his intentions of proposing to Jane and foreshadow their future marriage. This enables him to influence the course of his relationships while avoiding outright emotional expression (Eells, 5). By using French, he in a way connects Jane's future to his own prior experiences of excess and pleasure (Eells, 7). Eells argues that "French allows him to lift his inhibitions and to say more than he would normally allow himself to say" (Eells, 6), for example, in his act of posing as a gipsy fortune teller. This part in the novel, as Eells notes, also shows how Rochester manipulates the language in such situations to conceal his true identity and goals. According to scholar, Rochester comes across as mysterious and contrasting because of his use of French (Eells, 7). Eells concludes that, while French is frequently associated with passion in *Jane Eyre*, it can also signify self-control or an ability to control one's emotions.

Eells adds that Rochester uses the phrase *se donner une contenance* (to compose oneself) to stay calm: "I want to smoke, Jane, or a pinch of snuff to comfort me under all this, '*pour me donner une contenance,*' as Adèle would say" (Jane Eyre, p. 231 as cited in Eells, 5). According to Eells (2018, 5), Rochester, as in the provided example, uses French to establish emotional distance (which aligns with Victorian ideals of self-restraint), just as he uses smoking to regain his sense of calm. Additionally, Eells (2018, 5) notes that Rochester uses French to discipline Adèle when she opens her present, implying that even she must sometimes suppress her emotions instead of being over-expressive: "let your operation be conducted in silence: tiens-toi tranquille, enfant; comprends-tu?" (Jane Eyre, 110, as cited by Eells, 5).

Following her work, Eells (2018, 8) explains that Adèle's way of speaking reflects her mixed identity between French and English cultures, "entre-deux or franglais" (Eells, 7), which shows that she is not fully part of either (French or English) world. According to Eells (2018, 8), Adèle does not use French as carefully as Jane does, which makes her speech sound more natural but, at the same time, incorrect. She sometimes translates directly from French to English, which leads to mistakes. Ells provides an example, when Adèle says, "Now, Mademoiselle, I will repeat you some poetry" (Jane Eyre, p. 87) or "Madame Frédéric and her husband: she took care of me, but she is nothing related to me" (Jane Eyre, p. 87-88), where she follows French grammar instead of English (Eells, 7). Eells argues that these mistakes of her mixed speech show Adèle's uncertain place in society "as a girl born in Paris but brought up in England" (Eells, 7).

Eells also argues that Brontë associates the French language with theatricality and exaggeration instead of authenticity: "The foreign acts as a mask—or smoke screen—to the real thrust of the discussion" (the term used figuratively to suggest that the truth is hidden) (Eells, 6). This idea appears often in the novel, for example, in Adèle's imitation of her mother's behaviour, treating French as a way to perform, as her mother used to do - she dances and recites lines for Rochester, asking him to agree with her resemblance to her mother: "C'est comme cela que maman faisait, n'est-ce pas, monsieur?"' (Jane Eyre, 119). Eells suggests that in the novel, French words are used to physical descriptions as well, for example, in the description of Louisa Eshton's features, which are described as 'of that order that the French term "minois chiffonné"' (Jane Eyre, 146) or her father 'something of the appearance of a "père noble de théâtre"'(Jane Eyre, 148) (Eells, 6). This strengthens the notion that the French language is employed as a mask for social roles. It also reflects Victorian concerns about the French language's artificiality and theatricality (Eells, 6).

Additionally, Eells argues that *Jane Eyre* favours English values over French ones (Eells, 10). She explains that English values of discipline, self-control, and integrity ultimately triumph in the novel, even though the French permit self-expression and discovery. Eells (2018, 9) suggests that this case is most evident in Adèle's transformation. For example, Adèle is initially depicted as a pompous and fashion-obsessed girl who is excessively preoccupied with her appearance due to her French upbringing (Eells, 10). Scholar notes that when discussing her character, Brontë frequently uses French, for instance, when she demands to be given a rose at Thornfield's house party to "compléter [s]a toilette" (Jane Eyre, p. 145). Adèle's response, according to Eells (2018, 4), was also exaggerated, as she " sighed a sigh of ineffable satisfaction, as if her cup of happiness were now full" (Jane Eyre, p. 145), which demonstrates Adèle's emphasis on beauty. However, later, as Eels notes, Adèle undergoes a transformation: "Adèle has been nurtured in an English environment and trained to constrain her Frenchness to behave according to Victorian propriety" (Eells, 9). Her Frenchness is "corrected" at the English school where she was palced: "As she grew up, a sound English education corrected in a great measure her French defects; and when she left school, I found in her a pleasing and obliging companion: docile, good-tempered and well-principled" (Jane Eyre, 383). Eells uses this example to argue that the terms "corrected" and "defects" imply that Adèle's Frenchness had to be controlled to conform to English norms (Eells, 9). Eells further contrasts French and English values, stating that Jane does not view French as a sign of beauty or status like Adèle does. Rather, she employs it as a means of achieving her independence (Eells, 4). This distinction emphasises even more the novel's theme of English virtues surpassing French ones and ultimately triumphing.

According to Eells, Rochester's story also exhibits a similar pattern (Eells, 10). His relationships with French women end in betrayal and big regret, but he eventually finds happiness with Jane in England. Additionally, as Eells observes, Jane later rejects unrealistic love when she declines to live with Rochester in France (Eells, 9). She declines Rochester's invitation to move to France with him, and asks herself:

> "Which is better?—To have surrendered to temptation; listened to passion; made no painful effort—no struggle;—but to have sunk down in the silken snare; fallen asleep on the flowers covering it; wakened in a southern clime, amongst the luxuries of a pleasure villa: to have been now living in France, Mr. Rochester's mistress;... or to be a village-schoolmistress, free and honest, in a breezy mountain nook in the healthy heart of England? (Jane Eyre, 306, as cited by Eells, 9)

According to Eells, this part in the novel demonstrates Jane's conviction that French pleasure and passion are inferior to English morality and reason (Eells, 9). This, as argued in the paper, is employed to highlight the victory of reason over passion and to challenge idealised notions in the Victorian era.

Various scholars and critics agree that Jane Eyre's journey is about self-discovery, personal development, and independence. In her work about *Jane Eyre* and the role of women in Victorian society (2015), Craina adds that by allowing Jane to tell her story, Brontë makes a powerful statement about the value of women's self-expression and intellectual freedom (Craina, 46). She suggests that Jane assert her voice through her words. Craina here explains that Jane's character is created by Brontë to demonstrate that a woman's fulfilment can come from personal development and achieved independence rather than from marriage and traditional roles set by the surrounding society.

She argues that it is demonstrated through Jane's journey, which is about gaining confidence, learning, and becoming independent. It shows how a woman can find her true purpose in life, even when society expects her to follow traditional roles (Craina, 40). Education is very important to Jane, but not in the usual way, because while Jane values learning, Brontë does not show that learning is the main goal of her life. Craina says that some critics are even disappointed that Jane is not continuing as a governess in the end, but Jane's personal growth is taking her to a higher level of education - she is teaching others (Craina, 43).

Craina adds that even though Jane is a governess, her position is not what links Jane and Rochester. In Victorian times, governesses were considered working-class servants, and wealthy men rarely married them (Craina, 42). Some critics believe that Jane's position as a governess made her marriage possible, but the novel suggests that it is her intelligence, strong character, and independence that truly attracted Rochester (Craina, 42). Craina suggests that the novel is an illustration of a Bildungsroman, a genre of narrative that centres on the growth and learning of a protagonist. According to the book's subtitle, "An Autobiography," Jane's personal development is the central focus of the novel (Craina, 40).

Furthermore, Eells' work also adds how the use of the French language in the novel contributes to this theme. Eells notes that Jane studies French seriously at Lowood, practices daily, and works hard on her pronunciation (Eells, 4). Jane's French lessons at Lowood required strict discipline, as Jane herself recalled them as "a portion of French by heart daily" (Jane Eyre, 86) (Eells, 6). Eells notes that Jane's ability to speak French helped to establish her as an educated and self-reliant woman in addition to securing her job as Adèle's governess at Thornfield and achieving financial independence (Eells, 6). This helps Jane to stand out from working-class women and be seen as well-educated. Eells adds an example of Bessie - when discussing Jane's future schooling, she mentions that Jane "will have to translate French books" (Jane Eyre, p. 63), which emphasises the benefits the French brings for young women, who seek big opportunities in the society of those times. Eells points out that in *Jane Eyre*, "Equality is achieved through education and learning, French is an integral part of Jane's education" (Eells, 3). Eells also points out that the French not only practically helped Jane get a job at Thornfield but also shaped her identity as an educated and independent woman: "respectable,

proper, *en règle*" (Jane Eyre, 75) (Eells, 6). Eells adds an example when Bessie hears Jane speaking French, she says, "You are quite a lady" (Jane Eyre, p. 78), reinforcing the idea that French is linked to sophistication. Craina suggests that a proper education is part of Jane's aim and journey, which shows how a woman can discover her true purpose in life, as shown by the development of the protagonist in the novel (Craina 2015, 40).

Eells' analysis also explains the symbolic meaning of the French language in the novel. According to scholar, the name of *Jane Eyre* has a secret meaning in French, which emphasises the bilingualism in Brontë's novel. The initials, "J.E.," show her strong sense of self and her function as the first-person narrator, because these initials are similar to the French pronoun "je" (Eells, 3).

At the same time, Eels suggests that her last name, "Eyre" represents Jane's search for acceptance, because the surname links with the French word "aire" which means "area" or "space,". This word, according to scholar, could symbolise Jane's search for a place where she belongs: Jane relocates from Gateshead to Lowood, then from Thornfield to Ferndean (Eells, 3).

Furthermore, this theme is further emphasised when Adèle struggles to pronounce "Eyre" correctly, mispronouncing it "Aire". Ells provides the example when the girl exclaims, "Bah! I cannot say it" (Jane Eyre, p. 86). According to scholar, this particular moment is significant since the French word "aire" can also allude to an "eyrie," meaning eagle's nest (Eells, 3). This resemblance represents Jane's search for safety, like an eagle locating its nest (Eells, 3).

According to Eells, this wordplay emphasises the Victorian tension between individual freedom and social expectations, as Jane tries to create a life where she may be emotionally stable and autonomous while resisting being dominated by others (Eells, 3). Through this analysis of symbolic meanings, Eells shows that French in the novel is both a real and a symbolic way for Jane to express her independence.

3. FRENCH QUOTATIONS IN *JANE EYRE*

The following analysis, which consists of three parts, each examining the quotations in French of different characters in the novel, will examine how the inclusion of French quotations in the novel's narrative enriches the thematic complexity of the novel, in which French emerges not only as a linguistic feature but also as an integral part of the characters' portrayal. French quotations allow the reader to see what they are and reveal their purpose in the novel. The various ways in which Jane, Rochester, and Adèle use French in this novel will be analysed to clarify the impact they have on the novel's broader themes (cultural, educational differences, and the representation of the national identity). This part will show how the quotations relate to language as a site of cultural, social, and personal expression in Victorian and 19th-century England.

1. Jane's Use of French

A Tool for Bildungsroman and a Mark of Education

This section analyses the French quotations in the novel, focusing on those spoken or retold (initially used by another character in the novel) by the protagonist Jane Eyre. As we already know, the novel tells the story of Jane's life from childhood to early adulthood, depicting her upbringing, education, personal and emotional development. By analysing this growth and transformation, we can see that the quotations in French act as a literary device to emphasise the development of the character, or, in more specific term, the use of French contributes to the novel's generic identity, as a Bildungsroman, a literary genre that emphasises the psychological and emotional growth of the main character. The inclusion of French quotations in Jane's speech, sometimes to express her thoughts and sometimes to renarrate Rochester, is a very subtle but significant way of the author to show Jane's progress not only in her knowledge of the language but also in her personal development in the new social background she is living (Thornfield). As a little girl, Jane was introduced to French at Lowood School, and later practiced and learned it while working at Thornfield as a governess. The instances of French language use that will be presented in the analysis will show how it works to emphasise the character's intellectual growth through her education in a broader cultural sphere. In addition, the French quotations used by Jane allow her to grow in social class. In the same way, French for the girl works as a tool that gives the character a sense of sophistication and belonging to a class within the social context of nineteenth-century England.

As we learn in the novel, Jane is desperate to get an education (or, at first, desperate to run away from her unloving aunt) and, once she has one, to achieve the personal independence she has been seeking all her life. Her quest for independence goes back to her childhood as an orphan at Gateshead Hall, where she was punished not only by her cruel aunt, Mrs Ryd, but also by her brother and ignorant sisters. Later, at Lowood School, Jane suffered from a harsh environment and from unpleasant authority figures such as Mr Brocklehurst, who humiliated her in front of the whole school. Not to mention several other teachers who ignored the girl and treated her very harshly, far too harshly for a girl who had not experienced any affection as a child. The wish to be independent and create her own life in fulfillment is also notable in Jane's later years represented in the novel. Margaret Lenta (1981) argues, the independence gained through education later frees the young girl from the village school where she has been teaching and gives her the mobility which allows her to return to Rochester in the end of the novel (p. 34).

Continuing the analysis, we could notice that Jane's knowledge of French is a great help in achieving her goals, thus revealing her psychological and moral development from childhood to maturity. Jane's wish for independence is a perfect example of how the French helped to create the Bildungsroman. The constant progress of the protagonist is noticeable right from the start of the novel, when the simple girl, with no strong background, develops not only psychologically, but also raises her social status. As Chris R. Vanden Bossche (2005) suggests, Jane's story mirrors the rise of the middle class, as she starts with nothing (no family name or wealth) but through hard work and self-determination, Jane builds a life for herself. She is even able to eventually marry a man of higher social standing, raising her status. In this way, she becomes a "self-made woman who shapes her destiny through individual achievements" (p.56). This is emphasized in the novel by Jane herself, where she sees her potential that comes from learning French:

> Fortunately I had had the advantage of being taught French by a French lady; and as I had always made a point of conversing with Madame Pierrot as often as I could, and had besides, during the last seven years, learnt a portion of French by heart daily—applying myself to take pains with my accent, and imitating as closely as possible the pronunciation of my teacher, I had acquired a certain degree of readiness and correctness in the language, and was not likely to be much at a loss with Mademoiselle Adela. (p. 154)

It reflects the character's desire to improve and pursue a higher level of personal fulfilment. As we follow Jane from her childhood to her becoming a young woman, we are constantly confronted with her French. As in the quote above, she broadens her horizons by improving her French with Madame

Pierrot, and then she has to deepen her knowledge with her little pupil, Adèle, who brings even more of the true French tradition to Jane's knowledge, since Adèle is herself French. In this way, Jane not only receives an education that sets her apart and elevates her to a higher social level than many of her peers, but also develops her skills in work and behaviour, thus enriching her knowledge of French. Emma E. Gruner (2016) notes that teaching gives Jane a genuine sense of personal achievement, especially through the growth she sees in her students. The scholar suggests that at Thornfield, Jane takes care for Adèle's learning, saying she felt deeply responsible for her progress, and later, while teaching the village girls in Morton, she proudly notes how quickly some of them improved and how rewarding it felt to witness that, especially as a teacher, who is responsible of such achievement. Gruner suggests that these moments show that, regardless of where she is, Jane finds purpose and joy in helping others learn (p. 5). This shows how the French in the novel function as a tool for development and a way to represent personal and social growth.

As already mentioned, the French language in the novel shows Jane's personal growth. We see Jane's journey through life as she searches for a place where she can feel calm and safe, unharmed and understood, the feelings Jane has lacked since she became an orphan. Later in the novel, when Jane runs away from her Rochester home in Thornfield, she feels depressed and exhausted, as she again faces her unfaithful destiny following from behind. However, after a failed marriage and a long, tiring journey, Jane starts to see the hopes that await her. She finds these hopes when she is taken in by Saint John Rivers and his sisters, Diana and Mary. Despite being hopeless, Jane is offered shelter where she is treated with respect. The girl begins to feel new emotions, as if she has been born again, because she finds herself in a loving and caring family, especially as Jane has not been treated so generously by strangers (or even her family members, such as her aunt and siblings) before. Here, she starts to feel a sense of home and security, like a real family rather than an unloved orphan or a housemaid. When Jane first thinks that she has found what she was looking for at Moor House, she uses a French phrase to describe this feeling:

> My purpose, in short, is to have all things in an absolutely perfect state of readiness for Diana and Mary before next Thursday; and my ambition is to give them a beau-ideal of a welcome when they come. (p. 595)

This quote, including a French passage, does not just comment on the house. This French phrase, *beau-ideal*, which translates "beautiful ideal" in English, shows how Jane is beginning to believe that she has finally found the place she has always wanted, where she can do her best to create this house "beautiful and ideal", the one she longs for her loved ones to have, and which Jane herself never had.

This quotation functions to symbolise Muhamed Amrin (2008) in his work analysing the psychological aspects of Jane Eyre's personality, states that the story of Jane is a coming-of-age story, because it shows the development of an unconventional woman in a Victorian society, which was known for its strict rules and expectations, especially for women, where the character remains a strong, admirable woman with common sense and a desire to stand up for her beliefs (p. 13). This helps to explain Jane's desire to create her *beau-ideal,* as a way to express her strong desires and wishes she has managed to create and maintain until she has finally found a way to express. In this way, this French passage reflects another important aspect of bildungsroman - the formation of personal ideals and emotions of the protagonist. In this way, the use of French in the novel marks an important step in Jane's growth.

In addition to that, the French language helps to align the novel with the conventions of Bildungsroman. The French quotations also serve as a representation of the education in *Jane Eyre*. The novel tries to exhibit the personal growth of Jane in terms of her knowledge of the world around her and the possibilities in it through her knowledge of the French language. In the novel, Jane expands her horizons by getting her first education at Lowood, where Miss Temple encourages young girls to learn, emphasising the importance of it to the young, growing personalities. Together with Madame Pierrot, Jane's French teacher, Jane learns about the importance of learning foreign languages, such as French, which opens new perspectives to the wider world. We first encounter France as a place where the new possibilities and knowledge came from, when Jane's new friend, Helen Burns, describes the new teacher whom Jane observes in her first days in Lowood:

> '<…> and the one who wears a shawl, and has a pocket-handkerchief tied to her side with a yellow ribband, is Madame Pierrot: she comes from Lisle, in France, and teaches French.' (p. 75)

The above-mentioned passage helps Jane to become acquainted with the new French instructor, Madame Pierrot. Her presence in Jane's upbringing highlights the cultural and educational influence of the French on girls' early development. Learning French at Lowood with Mrs. Pierrot not only contributes to Jane's intellectual growth, but it also becomes a practical skill for the girl, who can learn French from a native. This gained knowledge and practice of French makes Jane an educated woman, and later becomes invaluable in her role as Adèle's governess at Thornfield Hall. Here, in upper-class space, Jane's ability to speak and teach French gives her a unique opportunity that she would not have had without such an education.

Since the novel reflects Victorian England when it was written, we can see how the cultural and historical context contributed to the use of language in it. As Vicinus explains in his analysis of the position of women in Victorian England (1972), French was particularly popular in 19th-century British schools for middle and upper-class women (p. 18). The knowledge of a foreign language, especially French, opened up a wider world to women in the society of those times. At all times, the French language itself was seen in society as a representation of sophistication and elegance, which attracted new learners to get acquainted with this prestigious foreign language. Similarly, in this novel, Jane studied at school with her French teacher, Madame Pierrot, and later Jane herself taught the language privately to the young Adèle. For women of the time, learning French was considered a great achievement, allowing them not only to gain an education but also to establish contacts beyond the English-speaking world, as it provided new possibilities of work. In this novel, Jane's knowledge of a foreign language, therefore, not only distinguished her education but also enabled her to achieve more than many similar women of her age from lower social classes. Jane's knowledge of French worked for her as a tool of social mobility because it allowed her to obtain a teaching position at Thornfield Hall. This illustrates that Jane's use of French is a symbol of the education that a girl was able to acquire in a Victorian culture that already exceeded the strict restrictions of society. It also shows how linguistic knowledge, especially French, can be used as intellectual development.

Although Jane's quotations are not very frequent in the novel, they are enough for the author to represent Jane's education and show her understanding of the world. This passage, where Jane quotes some ideas told to her by Rochester, combines several French expressions:

> He then said that she was the daughter of a French opera-dancer, Celine Varens, towards whom he had once cherished what he called a 'grande passion.' This passion Celine had professed to return with even superior ardour. He thought himself her idol, ugly as he was: he believed, as he said, that she preferred his 'taille d'athlete' to the elegance of the Apollo Belvidere. (p. 214)

Two expressions, "grande passion" and "taille d'athlète", show more than just the knowledge of language and gained education, but also Jane's ability to switch between two languages, which she does very easily. Even though the expressions were initially spoken by Rochester (Jane just retells them later in the narrative), her ability to remember and adapt them in certain situations proves the linguistic and intellectual abilities she has gained through her life. At the same time, it also represents the new social life that Jane is stepping into at Thornfield Hall. Since Jane adopted these words from Mr. Rochester's story, it shows that Jane is now learning and getting to know a cosmopolitan, highly

cultured, and socially uplifted world represented to her by Rochester, a life which is new and unknown for a simple girl like Jane. In addition to that, her ability to switch between the two languages and even cite Rochester's words without confusion reflects that Jane can adapt to the new social environment she is now living in, without any confusion or difficulty.

When Jane retells the words of Mr. Rochester to describe his past experiences with Celine Varens, his language introduces Jane to elite European culture, which, if Jane had not had a French education, she would not have understood. Even more, Jane would not have been allowed to learn that as a working-class woman in the society of the Victorian era, her social class was not exposed (and did not have a chance) to such experiences. However, with the help of education, Jane is able not only to convey Rochester's experiences told to her, but also to express them using foreign language skills, which shows that Jane is intellectually and worldly educated enough to translate the French expressions in her mind without making any mistakes or losing the sense between two languages. This shows Jane that she can place and adapt herself in this new surrounding environment. As Shuttleworth (1996) argues, "The novel replicates linguistically Jane's attempts to transgress social boundaries whilst remaining within an accepted social framework; to maintain energy at the highest level of excitation without bursting through into pathology" (p. 152). By this idea, the scholar suggests that the French used by Jane even has the power to put Jane in a more equal position to Rochester himself.

The use of French quotations in *Jane Eyre* serves several functions, enriching the novel's thematic complexity. Jane's French quotations help to identify the novel as a Bildungsroman because they help to highlight her colourful journey from Lowood School to Thornfield Hall, reflecting on her personal development and growth, which is a crucial element of the novel's literary significance. We can find this development through French quotations found through the narrative, reflecting Victorian and 19th-century ideas and views about education and social class, especially of lower-class women.

2. Mr. Rochester’s Use of French

A marker of Cosmopolitan Identity

As we continue our analysis, we learn that Charlotte Brontë uses French quotations to highlight the differences between the characters in terms of their life experience and social class. As we read the novel, we see that Mr Rochester does not use the full French quotations in his narrative. Instead, by mixing English and French. By doing it, he allows the other characters in the novel and the reader to find the true meaning of his ideas. His infrequent but subtle inclusion of French words reveals to us his confidence and rich experience, which is deeply intertwined with his past in France. Mr Rochester whose use of French in conversations, especially with Jane when he discusses his past life, demonstrates his frequent travels beyond his native country, his knowledge of European culture, and his complex experience with France. This part of the analysis examines how Rochester's use of French serves the narrative by highlighting the power of language to demonstrate the characters' class, to reveal the views of the world around him, and to represent cosmopolitanism. By analysing relevant quotations, this section will show how Rochester's language contributes to the novel’s thematic significance to highlight the affluent, cosmopolitan outlook of the character. In the broader context of the time, they also reveal the deep conflicts between French and English values.

One of the most obvious reasons why Mr Rochester often uses French when communicating with the other characters in the novel is because of his frequent travels around Europe and, most importantly, France. These journeys opened up a wide world for the character in many dimensions and shaped the character and his behaviour in the novel. Mr Rochester, through his experiences in foreign lands, has not only come to know the world, but he has also developed a relationship with the people and cultures, which goes far beyond the borders of his native England. The French quotes he uses in the novel serve the same function – they present the character's cosmopolitan and worldly identity.

> For ten long years I roved about, living first in one capital, then another: sometimes in St. Petersburg; oftener in Paris; occasionally in Rome, Naples, and Florence. (p. 474)

In this passage, Rochester's tone conveys his cosmopolitan identity. The major European capitals and cultural centres of the 19th century he lists in the above-mentioned quotation, reveal that the character travelled extensively and got acquainted with these places, suggesting that he was immersed in the elite, high-cultured European sphere that was characteristic of the upper-class people. What highlights his status even more is that not many people of those times were able to leave their home countries.

Paris was the cultural and artistic capital of the time, providing Europe with new ideas and trends in fashion, literature, and politics. His acquaintance with distant lands indicates a worldview and lifestyle that is international, sophisticated, and culturally broad, especially when he describes entertainment and romantic relationships he has experienced in places far from England. Rochester's phrase shows that this character is not limited by his native country, but his upper-class and affluent background privileges allow him to travel around the world as a high-class cosmopolitan figure. This reveals Rochester's high social status in 19th-century England, which is completely different from Jane's. The list of cities mentioned by Rochester shows his familiarity with them, and the tone of the quote shows that he considers such knowledge of the world and cultural experience normal and appropriate for a person of his level, which once again highlights his elite identity. This trait that is part of the elite identity of is further discussed by Lena Woodrow (2022), who highlights that Rochester's free and natural communication with Jane, as a Governess and a woman, breaks the conventional norms associated with the Victorian middle and upper classes in societies, where the separate spheres ideology was a class phenomenon. (p. 27) She suggests that as a man and her Master, Rochester shows his indifferent attitude towards the conventions expected of him, as a true elite part of the society, breaking the established norms and not being afraid to stand up for strong opinions. Green (2009) adds that in Victorian society, women fought for status alongside women from lower social classes. Her analysis of Victorian governesses from the historical perspective suggests that in Victorian society, and that governesses were abused, as in Jane Eyre, where the girl appeared in "the drawing room at Thornfield" and had to listen "to Rochester's aristocratic visitors abusing all who [were] governesses." (p. 51). Glad (2013) gives us the example of the scene where the guests arrive at Thornfield and treat Jane with clear condescension. However, she explains that despite being of a higher class, Mr. Rochester stands out as the first person who truly sees and treats Jane as an equal (p. 11).

In addition to representing Mr Rochester's combination of cultural superiority and cosmopolitanism, his use of French also functions as a tool to represent both Rochester's and the general Victorian English posture towards the French language and culture. This posture has the power to represent not only Rochester's but the whole country's posture towards France as a deceptive, theatrical, and overly excessive place. This is first represented through Rochester's language when he addresses Adèle Varens. Despite the extensive travel throughout his life, Rochester's relationship did not end when he returned to England – his ward, Adèle, came with him from France as an undesirable part of his affair with Céline Varens. Mr. Rochester says:

> Yes, there is your 'boite' at last: take it into a corner, you genuine daughter of Paris, and amuse yourself with disembowelling it,' said the deep and rather sarcastic voice of Mr. Rochester, proceeding from the depths of an immense easy-chair at the fireside. 'And mind,' he continued, 'don't bother me with any details of the anatomical process, or any notice of the condition of the entrails: let your operation be conducted in silence: tiens-toi tranquille, enfant; comprends-tu? (p. 197)

In 19th-century England, French was considered a sign of high society, as it was not only associated with a good education but also with travel and refined taste, which could only be acquired by people of wealth and higher social classes, who had enough money to travel. This cosmopolitan attitude of Rochester aligns with the 19th-century understanding of the elite. It corresponds to what a respectable upper-class person should be like. Frequent travel and exposure to European culture were considered indicators of sophistication and good taste at the time. (Eagleton, 1975, p. 95).

The fact that Rochester can change languages is also a symbol of its cosmopolitanism. Unlike Jane, for whom French is part of her education, Rochester learns the language from his own experiences and travels. This is shown when he uses French words such as *boîte*, *tiens-toi tranquille*, *enfant* and *comprends-tu* in his conversation with Adèle. As we can see in the quote above, he switches from English to French, and he does it naturally, without explaining what he means, and without trying to translate it into a French phrase. Rochester speaks with confidence, which shows his superiority over others, demonstrating not only his linguistic knowledge, but at the same time, it acts as a way to show that he is in a higher social position than others. His tone also tells us that he belongs to the upper class of society.

By this quotation, addressed to Adèle, Rochester also implies Jane, who is nearby when Rochester speaks to his ward. Rochester knows that Jane comes from a simple background, and although she knows and speaks French, she does not have as much worldly experience as he does. During their first meeting, this quotation functions as a test to Jane, as if to find out if the girl will understand a foreign language and at the same time, will Jane be able to understand it in an English context, in the new environment she was placed into. By using this quotation, including French words, Rochester is showing his authority in a subtle and unrecognisable way. When Rochester says "tiens-toi tranquille, enfant; comprends-tu?", it not only shows that he is trying to give orders to Adèle, but at the same time, he radiates self-confidence and high status in his own house. By his tone and use of French interjections, he also establishes total control over Jane and her pupil, even more highlighting his already obvious superior standing between them. Rochester's use of French is a tool that deepens the

social class differences between Rochester and Jane. In this scene, she, as governess, becomes even more apparent as a lower social status, who must remain an observer in the conversation between Rochester and Adèle.

Using French also helps Rochester express his strong opinions related to his higher social status. At the same time, the character's use of French can reveal the attitudes of Victorian England in general, using Rochester as an embodiment of the general attitudes of the time.

The novel stigmatises and criticises Adele's French origins and cultural heritage, thus highlighting the clash between two cultures. We can see this particularly in the character of Mr Rochester. Although Rochester himself speaks good French and has a lot in common with the country, his attitude towards French culture is often contradictory and negative. This is particularly evident when he talks about Adèle 's childhood:

> "She was quite destitute, I e'en took the poor thing out of the slime and mud of Paris, and transplanted it here, to grow up clean in the wholesome soil of an English country garden." (p. 222)

This reflects a widespread English prejudice against French culture as impure and morally questionable – this is how Rochester's experiences represent to us. By emphasising and undermining Adele's cultural past and origins, Rochester represents moral judgement of the country as well. In the above-mentioned quotation, we see that Rochester tries to save Adèle from the 'slime and mud of Paris'. By this phrase, he also tries to distance himself from his past, closely linked to Céline Varens, which evokes for him shameful and embarrassing memories of French culture. He sees his past as alien to his present self.

At the same time, French quotations seem to have a dual function. They reflect Adèle's cultural heritage and the identity of the country as a whole, but from a negative perspective, they can also reflect a French cultural heritage in general, which is stigmatised and viewed negatively by Victorian English society. In the mindset of the time, Victorian England saw itself as having a sort of power by that could save people who were seen as immoral countries like France. David Morse (1993) in his work analysing high Victorian culture argues that England was a sort of a construction or a model, which could be held up as an example to the rest of the world, representing the possibility of progress, the solution for a conflicts and confusions, "where social life is governed by law and where debate is always calm and rational." (p. 48) This idea is also based on Rochester's view of immorality of France. In recounting his past and describing Adèle in unpleasant detail, he is trying to emphasise the view

of the time that England, compared to France, was a place where people could grow and develop both morally and socially. We can see this in the place where Jane retells Rochester's words:

> "He then said that she was the daughter of a French opera-dancer, Celine Varens, towards whom he had once cherished what he called a 'grande passion.'" (Brontë, 1847, p. 214)

Rochester's view of Adèle is closely linked to his opinion of her mother, Céline Varens. From the start, he is unwilling to acknowledge Adèle as his daughter, which suggests a deeper disdain not only for Céline, but also for what she represents - the French way of life, which, in Rochester's eyes, represents a moral decline. In his eyes, the French, especially Céline, the stage performer, are the embodiment of unfaithfulness, inconsistency and pretence, all of which are associated with the downsides of continental Europe. According to Federica Lucrezia Visentin (2013), Céline Varens is highlighted in the novel not only because Rochester thinks she influenced Adèle's behaviour, but also because the novel presents her, and even more than Adèle, as a clear example of a negative stereotype of a Frenchwoman. (p. 66)

The reader, who sees Adèle through Rochester's eyes, is also drawn into a place of cultural stigmatisation, even though she is a child. Adèle inherited from her mother not only a tendency towards French superficiality and theatricality, but also the way others see her - as a representative of the entire French national identity. For example, he emphasises the French origins of Adèle and Celine to link them to what he considers to be the flawed and wrong qualities of the country. Similarly, Rochester uses the phrase *grande passion* not only as a reminder of how he felt in the past but also as a warning of the country's moral decay, to which he regrets having surrendered to.

Mr. Rochester's quotations of French in *Jane Eyre* reveal his upper-class status, his cosmopolitan lifestyle, and his cultural sophistication due to his frequent travels in Europe. His short but significant inclusion of French in English speeches functions as a social marker of superiority, which places Rochester in a very close position with the European elite and distances him from other characters of lower social standing, such as Jane. Alongside this, in a broader historical context, they reveal a deep tension between French and English cultural values.

3. Adèle's Use of French

French functions as part of the cultural identity

This part of the work analyses the function of French, used by Adèle Varens in Charlotte Brontë's novel. The purely native French language, used by the girl, will be analysed through quotes found in the story, representing the girl's nationality and the identity of the country itself. It means that the language used by the native has the power to reflect the peculiarities and features of the whole country, confirming the prevailing attitudes about French culture in the 19th-century Victorian era. Adèle's mannerisms, love for fashion, and sometimes superficial attitude towards beauty and appearance embody stereotypes that English people had about French people and their culture.

The first time we encounter Adèle is when she reacts to meeting Jane, joyfully and as innocently as a child, exclaiming with French naivety:

> 'C'est le ma gouverante!' said she, pointing to me, and addressing her nurse; who answered—
> 'Mais oui, certainement.'
> 'Are they foreigners?' I inquired, amazed at hearing the French language.
> 'The nurse is a foreigner, and Adela was born on the Continent; and, I believe, never left it till within six months ago. When she first came here she could speak no English; now she can make shift to talk it a little: I don't understand her, she mixes it so with French; but you will make out her meaning very well, I dare say.' (p. 154)

As soon as she hears Adèle speaking French, Jane is surprised and asks the question, "Are they foreigners?". The above-provided quotation creates a contrast between the two English and French countries that the two characters represent. From a remark by Mrs. Fairfax, we learn that Adèle "never left it till within six months ago ", which refers to the suddenness of Adèle's cultural change (when she was taken from Paris by Rochester), which even more underlines her cultural distinctiveness from her current English environment. By this quotation, Brontë draws attention to Adèle and her attempts to adapt to this new British cultural environment.

The passage 'C'est le ma gouverante!' is used by Adèle when Jane arrives at Gertcherd Hall and is introduced to the girl. By using this French quotation, Brontë allows readers to get to know the young character, revealing her lively and spontaneous nature from her first appearance in the novel. As a short quote, this line has great power. Adèle seems to have been chosen as a figure who embodies and reflects the idea of France as it was imagined by the people of the time. This expressive welcome

when the girl first met Jane shows how deeply she is connected and rooted to her French background, because her impulsive, sincere reactions represent true French personality. Adèle's excitement over a simple action (meeting Jane) symbolises the performative and affectionate attitude of the girl. On a larger scale, this quotation functions as a presentation of how people in Victorian England imagined Frenchness, as a culture which lacks sophistication and self-control over simple situations.

We can also capture Adèle's genuine personality and feelings expressed in spontaneous and abrupt emotions in French, especially when she addresses her looks and tries to imitate refined, high-class manners:

> 'Il faut que je l'essaie!' (p. 140)
> 'Et alors, quel dommage!' (p. 255)

These lines reveal her open and expressive personality, which is very different from the more disciplined English environment to which she has yet to fully adapt, but in which she is currently living.
This is even more contrasted when we compare a girl's childhood with Jane's. Angela Andersson (2011) argues that Jane, like "everywoman in a patriarchal society must meet and overcome: oppression (at Gateshead), starvation (at Lowood), madness (at Thornfield), and coldness (at Marsh End)" (Gilbert et al, 339). Andersson suggests that Victorian women such as Jane were trapped in a society that did not accept angry, rebellious women. (p. 6) In contrast to Jane, the environment Adèle was raised allowed her expressive French personality to flourish, as her mannerisms and speech were not suppressed, the opposite of English raising (when we compare to Jane's childhood). The language of Adèle also has the power to symbolise a subtle resistance to the emotional restraint inherent in disciplined English society. By expressing her emotions naturally and openly in French, the girl shows how language helps preserve her instincts in the context of a foreign culture.

France is known as a symbol of style, fashion and beauty, and Brontë has not missed an opportunity to convey this through his characters' quotations. Adèle's frequent mentions and references to beauty and fashion clearly demonstrate this. Her constant attention to clothes, appearance, and looks is not just showing childish behaviour of being happy over small things – it also perfectly reflects a cultural stereotype:

> 'N'est-ce pas, monsieur, qu'il y a un cadeau pour Mademoiselle Eyre dans votre petit coffre?' (p. 181)

> ‘Et cela doit signifier qu’il y aura le dedans un cadeau pour moi, et peut-être pour vous aussi, mademoiselle.’ (p. 181)

> ‘Est-ce que ma robe va bien?’ cried she, bounding forwards; ‘et mes souliers? et mes bas? Tenez, je crois que je vais danser!’ (p. 213)

> ‘Elles changent de toilettes,’ said Adele; who, listening attentively, had followed every movement; and she sighed.
> ‘Chez maman,’ said she, ‘quand il y avait du monde, je le suivais partout, au salon et e leurs chambres; souvent je re- gardais les femmes de chambre coiffer et habiller les dames, et c’etait si amusant: comme cela on apprend.’
> ‘Don’t you feel hungry, Adele?’
> ‘Mais oui, mademoiselle: voile cinq ou six heures que nous n’avons pas mange.’ (p. 253)

The above-mentioned quotations, even though collected from different scenes and contexts of the novel, all capture Adèle's domestic scenes, where the girl interacts with different characters such as Jane, Rochester and others. Her constant excitement about the way her dress looks, her perfect appearance, and her desire to dance and act show the girl’s French concern for self-presentation. This performative identity is in line with the British view (not only of the 19th century, but of all times) of French culture as theatrical and focused on external representation. Similarly, the same Frenchness is reflected in Adèle's desire to finish her outfit with a flower:

> ‘Est-ce que je ne puis pas prendrie une seule de ces fleurs magnifiques, mademoiselle? Seulement pour completer ma toilette.’ (p. 259)

Here we see that looks and elegance are very important to the small girl, because even a simple flower is considered a beautiful decoration to be enjoyed and appreciated. To a Victorian English society, such sentiments might have seemed charming, especially when they are expressed by a little child, but also superficial, reinforcing the idea that the French were over-obsessed with aesthetic perfection rather than something deeper, or relating to inner beauty. In the next moment, Adèle imitates adult manners with exaggerated politeness:

> ‘Revenez bientot, ma bonne amie, ma chere Mdlle. Jeannette,’ (p. 169)

‘Bon jour, mesdames.’ (p. 263)

‘Monsieur, je vous remercie mille fois de votre bonte;’ then rising, she added, ‘C’est comme cela que maman faisait, n’est-ce pas, monsieur?’ (p. 213)

In the quotations above, Adèle, with a vivacity natural to her identity, performs upper-class social honours and greetings, as if she belonged to one of the evening's members, other high-class female guests present at Rochester’s ball. Again, this way of behaving reflects a French upbringing, which naturally reinforces the exaggerated manners and high degree of formality that the English consider artificial and too exaggerated. In referring to the manners ‘C’est comme cela que maman faisait, n’est-ce pas, monsieur?’, the girl mentions that she learnt them from her mother, a French opera dancer. In this quotation, Adèle uses her knowledge of upper-class manners, learned from her mother, to show her early social consciousness, which contrasts sharply with the humble and somewhat impudent Jane's behaviour in the novel's first chapters. As we can find in Shuttleworth’s (1996) analysis of Charlotte Brontë's works in the context of Victorian Psychology: “Jane's own language for herself in childhood repeatedly stresses her lack of a sense of coherence. She is a 'heterogeneous thing', an 'uncongenial alien' distinguished from her cousins by her innate endowment of 'propensities' (p. 13-14). This further highlights the uniqueness of Adele's identity, which is surrounded by the deeper tensions of dominant Victorian theories of self-control.

At the same time, Adèle's language and references to her mother show her emotional attachment to the cultural environment of her previous life in Paris, a life she was forced to leave behind when Rochester took the girl to England. The use of French shows Adèle's strong emotional sensitivity, while at the same time, the use of French in the narrative can restore the girl's connection to her cultural heritage and allow her to recover the identity that she is forced to give up because of her sudden life in an English environment.

This part showed that Adèle’s use of French in *Jane Eyre* is more than just communication in a foreign language. Her French quotations are a way in which Brontë subtly explores the broader themes of the cultural differences, identity explorations, as well as the ambiguous attitudes towards French culture in 19th-century Victorian England. Adèle’s short but meaningful French expressions, such as the enthusiastic "C'est le ma gouvernante!" or "Revenez bientôt, ma bonne amie, ma chère Mdlle Jeannette", have a great significance for the reader to acknowledge not only the character's identity but also French culture as a whole.

4. CONCLUSIONS

This thesis aimed to explore the French quotations used in Charlotte Brontë's novel *Jane Eyre* by the main characters of the novel: Jane Eyre, Mr Rochester, and Adèle Varens. The thesis analysed how the French language functions in the context of the novel by investigating how each character's relationship to the language contributed to his or her characterisation and overall thematic significance. The analysis of the French quotations showed how the language highlights the broader themes of the novel, relating to the cultural and educational differences of the characters, their national identity, and the identity of the country as a whole that they represent. An important consideration in this analysis has been the broader historical and cultural context of 19th-century Victorian England, when the novel was written. People of the time, particularly the British, viewed the French country and language with both admiration and distrust, because it differed from their home country and its culture. For British people, France was a country of sophistication, while at the same time, it was associated with superficiality, excessive behaviour, and a place that lacked morality and sophistication.

Jane's use of French is a sign of education and self-improvement. Her knowledge of French, acquired first through school years and later through work, emphasises Jane's desire to improve and become independent, which represents the characteristics of the Bildungsroman, revealing the psychological, intellectual, and moral development of the protagonist. Jane's knowledge of French sets her apart from the other women in her class and qualifies her for the role of governess. Her quotations act as a bridge, allowing Jane to move between social classes and to learn about aristocratic life at Thornfield as well as wider European cultural traditions.

Mr Rochester uses French functions as a tool to represent the combination of cultural superiority and cosmopolitanism. His French quotations are full of descriptions of his earlier life in France and are meant to reflect not only Rochester's but also the general Victorian English posture towards French culture.

Adèle's frequent use of French functions as a tool to emphasise her role as a foreigner in an English culture and a representative of French culture in general. Adèle's language, which is characterised by excessive politeness and performative acting, is in line with Victorian stereotypes of French culture as careless and overly preoccupied with external appearances instead of inner beauty. Her linguistic habits, such as theatricality and superficiality, also reflect her cultural background and her true French identity, which was influenced by her mother.

SUMMARY IN LITHUANIAN

Šio magistro baigiamojo darbo objektas yra prancūziškos citatos, kurias Šarlotė Brontė romane *Džeinė Eir* vartoja trys pagrindiniai šio romano veikėjai: Džeinė Eir, ponas Ročesteris ir Adelė Varens. Darbo tikslas – išanalizuoti prancūzų kalbos funkciją, siekiant atskleisti, kaip kiekvieno veikėjo santykis su šia kalba prisideda tiek prie jų charakterio atskleidimo, tiek prie bendrosios kūrinio tematinės reikšmės. Šiame darbe siekta atskleisti, kaip prancūzų kalbos citatos išryškina kultūrinius ir edukacinius veikėjų skirtumus bei jų, kaip individualių asmenybių ir skirtingų tautinių tapatybių, savivoką.

Analizuojant prancūzų kalbą romane buvo atsižvelgta į XIX a. Viktorijos laikų Anglijos istorinį ir kultūrinį kontekstą, kuriame buvo parašytas romanas. To laikotarpio britų požiūris į Prancūziją ir šios šalies kalbą buvo dvejopas: nors prancūziška kultūra buvo laikoma prestižine, tačiau tuo pat metu Prancūzija asocijavosi su paviršutiniškumu, perdėtu susirūpinimu išoriniais dalykais, moralės bei savitvardos trūkumu.

Šis darbas suskirstytas į tris skyrius, kiekvienas jų analizuoja skirtingus veikėjus, vartojančius prancūzų kalbą per citatas ar išreikšdami idėjas. Pirmiausia analizuojama Džeinė Eir, kuri prancūzų kalbos mokėsi dar mokykloje ir vėliau ją aktyviai vartojo, o tai atspindi ne tik jos išsilavinimą, bet ir asmeninį augimą. Toliau nagrinėjamas ponas Ročesteris – kosmopolitiškas, išsilavinęs žmogus, kurio santykis su prancūzų kalba atskleidžia jo socialinę padėtį bei pasaulėžiūrą. Galiausiai aptariama Adelė Varens – mergaitė, nuo mažens augusi prancūziškoje aplinkoje ir šią kultūrą atsinešusi kartu su savimi į Angliją, taip suteikdama romanui autentišką prancūzišką dvasią.

Įtraukdama prancūzų kalbą į savo romaną, Šarlotė Brontė ne tik papildė kūrinį kalbine įvairove, bet ir praturtino veikėjų charakterizavimą bei sustiprino teminį kūrinio sudėtingumą, atskleisdama įvairiapusiškas veikėjų tapatybes.

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