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MARIE PLESKOTOVÁ

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**THE PRESENTATION OF MR ROCHESTER AND HIS WIFE IN JANE EYRE BY
CHARLOTTE BRONTË AND IN WIDE SARGASSO SEA BY JEAN RHYS**

Bakalářská práce

Vedoucí práce: PhDr. Milena Vodičková, Ph.D.

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Prohlašuji, že jsem svou bakalářskou práci vypracovala samostatně a použila jen uvedených pramenů a literatury.

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ABSTRACT

The novels *Jane Eyre* and *Wide Sargasso Sea* were written and published with the interval of more than one hundred years. However, they are connected by the characters of Mr Rochester and his wife Antoinette, called also Bertha. The personalities of Mr Rochester and his wife are analysed in this thesis and the question whether he is more a positive or negative character is examined. Mr Rochester's wife is described with focus on different roles she plays in the novels. The aim is to provide the analysis of the characters with focus on the differences and similarities within both the novels.

INTRODUCTION

As the title of this bachelor thesis reveals, in its four chapters it will deal with the characters from two novels *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Brontë and *Wide Sargasso Sea* by Jean Rhys. Although these novels were written and published with the interval of more than one hundred years and the authoresses came from completely different cultural backgrounds, their works are inevitably and strongly connected by the figures of the two main protagonists Edward Fairfax Rochester and Antoinette Cosway, who is in the novel *Jane Eyre* named Bertha Mason/ Rochester. The main aim of this thesis is therefore to describe these two characters in two completely different narratives.

Before the actual characterisation of the protagonists, the basic information about the novels will be provided. It is necessary to know the content before a deeper observation of the characters and for this reason, first of all the plots of both the novels will be summarised, with focus on the most important events connected with Mr Rochester and his wife and also other characters who contributed to the development of the stories. At the end of the chapter, there is a brief comparison of the two stories, emphasising the distinctions between both the novels.

Secondly, the actual description of the character of Mr Rochester in the novel *Jane Eyre* will follow. He will be looked at from the point of view that considers his moral qualities. To be able to know more about Mr Rochester, the description of his ward Adèle, Mrs Fairfax and mainly Jane Eyre will be looked at.

Last but not least, another chapter will analyse the personality of Mr Rochester in the novel *Wide Sargasso Sea*. Here the importance of the exotic and colonial environment will be stressed and the true nature of the relationship of Mr Rochester and Antoinette will be examined.

Finally, the character of Antoinette and Bertha will be described with focus on the novel *Wide Sargasso Sea*, where Antoinette is the main protagonist, depicted with emotional and cultural understanding of the half Creole writer Jean Rhys. In the novel *Jane Eyre*, as the

portrait of Bertha is quite monotonous, without the opportunity of recognising her nature better, the different roles that she plays in the novel will be examined.

In the conclusion, Mr Rochester's main characteristic features from both the novels will be summarized and the question whether the two protagonists should be considered as one person, one Mr Rochester and whether this man is more a villain or a virtuous man will be answered.

1 PRESENTATION OF THE NOVELS JANE EYRE AND WIDE SARGASSO SEA

This chapter will provide some basic information about the novels Jane Eyre and Wide Sargasso Sea. It will give a short overview of the plot and themes and comparison of both novels.

1.1 NOVEL JANE EYRE

The first part of this chapter will deal with the novel Jane Eyre by Charlotte Brontë. The circumstance connected with publishing the novel, short summary of the plot, themes and motifs will be described.

1.1.2 GENERAL INFORMATION

Since its first publication on the 16 October 1847, the story of a plain girl Jane Eyre and mysterious Mr Rochester has become one of the most famous and the most popular novels all over the world. Although nobody expected an unknown author with a pseudonym Currer Bell to achieve such an amazing success, the publishers and Charlotte Brontë's friends admired her passionate heroes and thrilling plot (Gaskell, 1909, p. 329 – 340). Gaskell even mentions one of the employee of the Smith, Elder and co. publishing company, who was so absorbed in the novel, that he could not help but "to sit up half the night to finish it" (Gaskell, 1909, p. 332) and when Mr Smith himself read the book, he found out that "the praises had not exceeded the truth" (Gaskell, 1909, p. 332). The readers themselves also realized and appreciated that Jane Eyre was something completely new and unlike from anything else they could have read before.

Nowadays, the novel can be understood and explained in many different ways. And in various literary history publications, various points of view are presented. For example, although Carter and McRae notice that the reader can look at the narrative as if it was either

another a rags-to-riches story with fairy tale like happy ending, or a story of love and passion, which is strongly influenced by morality and personal discipline they also stress Jane Eyre as a classical bildungsroman (Carter et McRae, 2001, p. 268). And Stříbrný notes the strength of authoress' desire for the equality between man and woman (Stříbrný, 1987, p. 482). Regardless these different approaches, all authors seem to agree on the opinion that the story is a very "unique Victorian book because in its purity becomes passionate and outspoken" (Sampson, 1970, p. 788) and it is undoubtedly "a notable contribution to the flourishing of female writing in mid-century" (Carter et McRae, 2001, p. 267).

1.1.2 SUMMARY OF THE CONTENT

Jane Eyre is an exceptional heroine. Charlotte Brontë made her plain, small and unattractive in contrast with the contemporary tradition. It may be surprising that her sisters disagreed with Charlotte at this point, but she tried to persuade them about the rightness of her decision and she opposed: "I will show you a heroine as plain and as small as myself, who shall be as interesting as any of yours" (Gaskell, 1909, p. 317). And certainly, Jane is very interesting and still attracts many readers.

As a little girl with a serious look, which seems to be insulting to her aunt, but as the readers know, hides a rich internal life, she already has to struggle with her destiny to find her happiness and peace of mind. Her nature proves a great personal self-discipline and deeply rooted moral principles as well as the ability of strong feelings and attachment towards her beloved people, in her adulthood especially towards 'Her Master' Mr Rochester.

She allows herself only one emotional outburst in defence against her spoiled cousin and pays very hard for it. However hard the following years in Lowood School may be, she is not in the danger of losing her good qualities, as she is influenced not only by one of the teachers, kind Miss Temple, but also by her friend Helen Burns, who is an example of "Christian virtues" (Sanders, 1996, p. 420). Moreover, other personal merits and abilities are developed and help her to become a governess at Thornfield, where she meets

Mr Rochester, his little French ward Adèle and Mrs Fairfax, woman who has a good heart and stands behind her master without hesitation.

Despite the pleasant approach of all inhabitants at Thornfield, the atmosphere of old residence is dark and mysterious. This foreshadowing anticipates some of the following events, disclosure of real Mrs Rochester and Jane's escape from Thornfield. This action is followed by a family reunion. Jane meets her distant cousins and recovers while staying with them. The most significant help is provided by St. John Rivers, an austere minister, completely devoted to his Christian belief and strict moral principles. Still she cannot stop loving Mr Rochester, refuses St. John's rational and cold proposal and returns to her true love. Although Mr Rochester meanwhile has lost his sight and an arm, these losses can be considered as his moral rescue and he is not loved less by Jane Eyre, quite contrary. She returns as a salvation for an aging and broken man and by her love she cures not only his physical pain but his mind as well.

1.1.3 THEMES AND MOTIFS

“The theme of work is its underlying philosophy, the larger idea or concept” (Vodičková, 2006, p. 30). The novel *Jane Eyre* is quite extensive and literary critics still can point out many various interpretations. Those that belong among the most common examples, are sexual and marital independence, gender differences, equality of men and women and social classes (Sanders, 1996, p. 420). As these themes are generally known among the readers and considering the topic of this thesis, the aim of this paper will be to focus on the characteristics of a colonial theme in *Jane Eyre*.

The British Empire experienced the greatest growth in its area in the second half of the nineteenth century and the references to this issue appeared in literature only later. However, we can find brief references to colonialism in *Jane Eyre* and as these references quite correspondent with the approach towards colonies in the nineteenth century, as Savi Munjal from the University of Delhi notes Charlotte Brontë did not avoid “stereotypes about colonial territories and peoples” (Munjal, 2007). Colonies are viewed only as something very distant

and exotic, yet nothing very unusual and the names of remote places are mentioned without the necessity of further explanation, probably because they were not unknown to educated people. For instance, when Mr. Mason explains how he knows Mr. Rochester and Jane Eyre listens to him: “The words Jamaica, Kingston, Spanish Town, indicated the West Indies as his residence” (Brontë, 2002, p. 181). And she is immediately able to decide in which part of world they belong. Colonies also represent places, from where the fortune of most people comes. Jane’s heritage from Madagascar or Mr Rochester’ property which was gained through the marriage with young Creole girl Bertha are good examples of this approach.

“He [Mr Rochester’s father] sought me a partner betimes. Mr Mason, he found, had a son and daughter, and he learned from him that he could and would give the latter a fortune of thirty thousand pounds: that sufficed. When I left college, I was sent out to Jamaica, to espouse a bride already courted for me (Brontë, 2002, p. 286).

In addition to these two examples, colonies are observed as a wild area that needs missionary work and God’s good will. This is quite clear from the attitudes of St. John Rivers.

1.2 NOVEL WIDE SARGASSO SEA

This part of the chapter, likewise the previous one, will include short description of the novel, its plot and themes. In addition, a brief comparison of the two novels appears at the end of the chapter.

1.2.1 GENERAL INFORMATION

A hundred and nineteen years after the publication of Jane Eyre, Jean Rhys used and extended the story of Bertha, “the mad woman in the attic” (Carter et McRae, 2002, p. 484) and published her most successful novel Wide Sargasso Sea. In the three parts of her book,

using the voices of Bertha and Mr Rochester, Rhys tried to unravel the mystery behind Bertha and gave the explanation of her life which is missing in Jane Eyre. After a long time spent by writing, in 1966 she finally published her completed story. And as Francis Wyndham in the introduction to the novel mentions, *Wide Sargasso Sea* is “in no sense a pastiche of Charlotte Brontë and exists in its own right, quite independent of Jane Eyre” (Rhys, 1968, p. 10). Although *Wide Sargasso Sea* is not as generally known as *Jane Eyre*, it found its readers and it is a remarkable novel.

1.2.2 SUMMARY OF THE CONTENT

The story of Antoinette, in the novel *Jane Eyre* called Bertha, is set at the beginning of the nineteenth century in Jamaica, exactly after the year 1833, when the Emancipation Act was passed and the black slaves were freed. The times are unhappy and hard for a lonely mother, a widow after a former slave owner, and her children, daughter Antoinette and a handicapped son Pierre. The only help she can hope for is from an old servant Godfrey and a witch-like nanny Christophine. A little girl is accompanied by the sense of unhappiness and despair from childhood and has no relief in belief in God or strong friendship as *Jane Eyre*. She is affected by her origin, as a half Creole, she does not belong either to white people or to black ones. Even after her mother’s marriage to rich Mr Mason, she is not happier, as her life is influenced by burning down of their estate Coulibri by an enraged mob of former slaves, the death of her brother and the following insanity of her mother.

The only peaceful times in her life are the years she spends in the convent school, which are soon changed into marriage with young Mr Rochester. However, the marriage is doomed to failure. The cold English nature of Mr Rochester and the passionate wild mind of Antoinette cannot understand each other. Half hidden mocking of servants, gossips and slanderous letter about Antoinette’s possible madness from Daniel Cosway, the by-blow of Antoinette’s father, together with Mr Rochester’s discontent cause irreparable damage to their relationship. Mr Rochester in his disappointment, anger and feeling of betrayal seduces young servant girl while Antoinette is resting in the neighbouring room, so she can

hear everything. From now, it is only a matter of time, when Antoinette loses the rest of her clear thinking and goes mad. Then there is no obstacle for Mr Rochester to leave these deeply hated places and return to calm and well-known England, although he has to take a little part of this wildness, his wife, with him.

1.2.3 THEMES AND MOTIFS

According to Lauren Smith, Jean Rhys was in her writing influenced by her Carribean origin and therefore interested in “themes of identity, fragmented consciousness and self-alienation” (Smith, 2004). It can be said that the most visible theme of the novel is probably the theme of unhappy relationship and misunderstanding between two people. It is possibly the main theme, as the motif of unhappy marriage appears in many works by Jane Rhys (Carter et McRae, 2002, p. 484). Still it could be considered as a novel exploring the dark side of a human nature, revealed in the menacing letter from Daniel Cosway, malicious servants and even the approach of Mr Rochester towards his wife.

Very strong motif present in the book is slavery, not only slavery of black people, disannulled in the Emancipation Act, but also the slavery of human nature and mind. Together with another motif, the fire, it is penetrating the whole novel. And the fire is at last the only possibility of the emancipating from the personal slavery. The same fire that punishes Mr Rochester for his badness.

Women’s independence is also very important theme in the novel and creates very interesting parallel to Jane Eyre. While Jane Eyre never loses her independence and resolution, as Rogers notes: “Charlotte Brontë’s novel is in fact the narrative of a far from conventional heroine who never recedes into passivity or mere observation” (Rogers, 1996, p. 351), Jean Rhys’ heroine Antoinette is never given chance to become an independent person. Her family determined her life and she is unable to change her destiny.

1.2.4 COMPARISON TO JANE EYRE

Like Charlotte Brontë, Jean Rhys set her novel in the places she knew best, exotic Dominica and Jamaica in the Caribbean, and let her heroine talk about her life, but here the similarities end.

Charlotte Brontë chose for her novel a first-person narrator and thus the reader must completely rely on Jane's interpretation and opinions. And she seems to be a very reliable narrator who does not omit any event. However, the doubts may appear, as although she depicts Mr. Rochester very accurately, she is in love with him, and love can influence her view. Mr. Rochester's point of view is completely missing, and the readers can only guess his intentions, feelings and thoughts or must rely on his words and actions. He had to wait more than one hundred years to be allowed to speak for himself. Although Mr Rochester is never specifically mentioned under his name in *Wide Sargasso Sea*, it is undoubtedly him, who was given a voice and a chance to reveal the true about his marriage with Bertha. Jean Rhys let him tell the second part of her novel, whereas the first and third parts belong to Antoinette. Both of them are too much influenced by their feelings and the hostile atmosphere of the places they live in, to be reliable narrators, and this creates a very interesting contrast to the novel *Jane Eyre*.

The tone of the whole book has the same features that can be used to describe Antoinette. It is mysterious, dark and desperate, Jane's clear judgement and sensibility are missing and this makes a reader feel afraid of an unknown and unfriendly world. This unfriendly atmosphere is raised by the usage of French patois and Creole dialect, strange mixture of languages, which do not belong to any particular country.

Although some parts of the book may be very romantic and passionate, the anticipation of inevitable disaster causes the reader cannot rest. And what is worse, the reader cannot decide, which of the actions described in the book is the actual climax, the actual disaster. It can be madness of Antoinette's mother, the marriage itself or Mr Rochester final changing of unstable Antoinette's mind into the mind of a mad person. But if *Wide Sargasso Sea* was considered as a prequel to *Jane Eyre*, the key moment should be the act of moving

Antoinette to England and hiding her in the attic of the Thornfield Hall. It is the action that causes all the mysterious events in Jane Eyre and the following Bertha's act of setting the house on fire could be considered as a climax of both novels.

2. ANALYSIS THE PERSONALITY OF MR ROCHESTER IN THE NOVEL JANE EYRE

In the following text, I would like to introduce the literary interpretation of Mr Rochester, the main male character from the novel *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Brontë.

2.1 MR ROCHESTER: VILLAIN OR A VIRTUOUS MAN?

Over a century and a half during which people have been and still are reading and admiring the work of Charlotte Brontë, Mr Rochester has become one of the best known male characters in the literary world. Originally, it can be said that he was and still is mostly considered to be a more or less positive figure. However, in the second half of the twentieth century, the voices that point out his negative features started to appear. For instance, Angela Carter in her literary essays *Expletives deleted* states that “Rochester is a libertine but, worse than that, a cad, as well” (Carter, 1993, p. 170). The most significant example of exposing his possible nature to the world is present in Jean Rhys’ novel *Wide Sargasso Sea*. Although she depicts young Edward Rochester’s mistakes and bad deeds, the readers are forced to reappraise his actions in *Jane Eyre* as well. Suddenly, some facts, not visible for the first time, start to draw their attention. And as the readers cannot see the real nature of Mr Rochester and must rely only on *Jane Eyre*’s description and his speeches, some questions can be asked and also can be attempted to be answered such as: Who exactly is this mysterious man? Is he more a villain or a virtuous man? What is the real nature of his relationship towards *Jane Eyre*?

2.1.1 MR ROCHESTER IN THE EYES OF MRS FAIRFAX, ADELE AND JANE

The first mention of Mr Rochester in the novel is put into the mouth of Mrs Fairfax, the housekeeper of his residence *Thornfield Hall*. Mrs Fairfax, although later on it is obvious

she feels a friendly affection for her master, only shortly presents him as the owner of Thornfield Hall and clears out his relation towards her and his little ward Adèle without any further information about his character. Adèle is a little more talkative on the subject of her beloved guardian and it is easily recognisable she likes him very much and misses his presence. Could a child be fond of an unpleasant evil man? Probably not, and the fact that he is the only person speaking French except Adèle's nanny would be of a little importance if he talked to her in a mean and rough way. Besides, Mrs Fairfax soon describes his character, and although it is not really a satisfactory depiction, readers as well as Jane can imagine Mr Rochester as an occupied, decent man with some peculiar features, still liked by his tenants and other people. However insufficiently may this characterization appear, it provides one important comment about Mrs Fairfax's master:

I don't know – it is not easy to describe – nothing striking, but you feel it when he speaks to you, you cannot be always sure whether he is in jest or earnest, whether he is pleased or the contrary, you don't thoroughly understand him, in short – at least, I don't (Brontë, 2002, p. 99).

As a foreshadowing of the mysterious events, Brontë let Mrs Fairfax and Jane Eyre talk about ghosts who may possibly haunt the apartments of Thornfield. During their conversation, it is revealed what was the nature of the Rochester family in past: "They have been rather violent than a quiet race in their time" (Brontë, 2002, p. 100). Of course, these Rochesters are dead for a long time, but why would their descendant be any different? The readers should therefore expect some strange secret behind Mr Rochester's good reputation.

2.1.2 MR ROCHESTER'S GENERAL ATTITUDE TOWARDS WOMEN

Undoubtedly, Mr Rochester is “rude, difficult and far from handsome” (Gregory, 2004). Still he is a man who is admired and loved by many women, which may be caused by the air of mystery which makes him a real Byronic hero (Gregory, 2004). He is well brought up and educated, and as a wealthy man with a good position in society, he definitely has met a lot of women, he has rich experiences with dealing with them and knows the appropriate manners when encountering them. He reveals the story of his attachment towards Céline Varens, Adèle’s mother. The narrative about his hurt feelings and generous treatment of Adèle, although he is not obliged to her by any commitment, as she is probably not his legitimate daughter, evokes sympathy. However his former mistakes and misbehaviour could cause pain, he has paid a high price and his image is considerably improved. Nevertheless, it cannot be forgotten, that the whole story is told by him and Ms Varens has no chance to correct whatever may be said to her disadvantage, no chance to find lies or false statements in the description of her personality and acting.

From the acquaintance with Blanche Ingram it is clear Mr Rochester knows all the rules of gallantry and pleasant favours which are expected from a gentleman of his position. Although he does not leave some of his verbal irony, by his companions it is still considered as a witty and lively exaggeration, which entertains them. It may be questioned if he is careful about not crossing the invisible lines of a decent conversation or if he is trying what Blanche and her mother can overlook on her way to fulfilling her desire for a rich bridegroom.

To sum up, it can be said that Mr Rochester seems to be a man who once trusted women but was severely hurt and his irony, sarcasm and sometimes lack of good manners function as tools protecting him from being hurt again. Here, the similarity with his younger alter ego from the novel *Wide Sargasso Sea* can be perceived. Young Mr Rochester is also hurt and feels deceived but he uses the bitter escape from hated islands and not the irony and improper manners to overcome his pain. On the other hand it is his bitterness that affects his behaviour and nature. Moreover, Antoinette’s husband does not have anybody who could be

trusted and who is not likely to deceive him, Jane Eyre. And this makes all the difference between these two Mr Rochesters.

However, not even Jane is for her trustworthiness rewarded by all the appropriate manners, as Mr Rochester says: “Excuse my tone of command, I am used to say: ‘Do this,’ and it is done: I cannot alter my customary habits for one new inmate” (Brontë, 2002, p. 117). This is not very much pleasant and gentlemanlike and he knows it but, he is not willing to change his behaviour. Is it not a terrible approach to a woman even if she is his inferior? Of course, it is, but on the other hand, something more important than the formal way of treating is given to Jane. Although she is talked to in almost rough manner, she is talked to as an equal person, not as a woman who is inferior in social rank. After abandoning the appropriate manners, the real Mr Rochester’s self remains for Jane and that is more than the manners.

2.2 THE ACQUAINTANCE WITH JANE EYRE

Mr Rochester’s first encounter with Jane could be easily mistaken for a part of an old myth or a fairy tale. A man falling from his horse being bewitched by a strange woman could be a mythical king or a knight from ancient times. Nevertheless, thus far there is no chance of verifying the rumours Jane has heard about Mr Rochester, for she does not know with whom she meets. She is kept without the opportunity of talking with him and creating her own view for a few days later and the readers can only guess what the opinion of Mr Rochester about his little almost fairy tale like governess is. Until the revealing of the existence of Ms Rochester, Jane and the readers cannot know the real depth of Mr Rochester’s immediate feelings towards beloved “quite little figure sitting by itself” (Brontë, 2002, p. 292).

It is also very interesting that even if it is their very first meeting and Jane does not know who the strange man is, she helps him and thus anticipates the following actions, as: “from this moment on she is figured as helping him back on his moral horse, guiding him to the correct path from which he has wandered in so many ways (Covert, 2004). Before this

influence of Jane on Mr Rochester will be dealt with, the beginning of their relationship should be inquired.

As it was pointed out before, when speaking with Mr Rochester, it is hard to guess whether he is talking seriously or whether he is teasing his companions. The first words, he says to Ms Eyre, are quite teasing and when connected with his irritated voice they could be considered as a little inappropriate: “Did you expect a present, Ms Eyre? Are you fond of presents?” (Brontë, 2002, p. 114). There are various ways how to explain what he can hide behind these words and what his purpose of asking is. Is he only saying the first thing that occurs to him after Adèle’s request for a “cadeau” for Miss Eyre? Presumably, he is not. It looks more like an attempt to discover who this strange, plain girl is. If she is another from the line of women whom he has met in his life, women like Adèle’s mother, only desiring expensive gifts, pleasant favours and gallantry, women from whom he could not expect any serious attachment. He must be surprised by Jane’s earnest answer and his curiosity if it was not awakened by the strange encounter on the moors is definitely awakened now.

It is also possible that Mr Rochester’s questions are asked only on the basis of desire to know better a person who is supposed to bring up and educate his ward, but as he lived easily for several months without knowing who was educating Adèle, an interest only for this reason would be very surprising.

How is Mr Rochester influenced and moved by Jane’s speech and actions, is for a long time kept in his mind as a secret. But it can be assumed he likes her sincerity and he feels the strange connection between their dispositions. She becomes his confidant, but only in matters he willingly communicates, for instance the story of his love to Céline Varens, or in the circumstances Jane is personally present, such as saving his life from being burnt to death or helping with looking after injured Mr Mason. Still she is not told the real cause of these accidents and is deliberately left to come up with her own reasons. In consequence, the nature of their friendship is based on the mutual affection but not on the honesty, and without any doubts, the honesty is crucial in these kinds of relations.

On the other hand, only Jane Eyre makes Mr Rochester talk and act towards her really equally. Although only little of his secrets are confided to her, it is maybe the biggest part

Mr Rochester has ever trusted anybody with. The possibility of improving his life is unconditionally connected with the sense, sincerity and compassion young and unspoiled Jane expresses. And even if he realizes how inappropriate it is to talk with her about his former experiences with love, he is not able to give up relief, which this connection supposedly brings him.

Strange that I should choose you for the confidant of all this, young lady: passing strange that you should listen to me quietly, as if it were the most usual thing in the world for a man like me to tell stories of his opera-mistresses to a quaint, inexperienced girl like you (Eyre, 2002, p. 135).

2.3 JANE'S INFLUENCE ON MR ROCHESTER

Mr Rochester cannot be praised for the equality in treating Jane without reminding that it is she who demands this equality. Of course, she means equality in social contact and not in conversation connected with her work.

I don't think, sir, you have a right to command me, merely because you are older than I, or because you have seen more the world than I have – your claim to superiority depends on the use you have made of your time and experience (Brontë, 2002, p. 127).

Her desire for fair and equal treating is perceptible in all her actions from the beginning to the end of the novel. And it makes her exceptional in many ways and attracts Mr Rochester. Considering that he is a man of broad experiences with dealing with rich women from higher society, it is necessary to realise how much surprised he must be by this insight into poor Jane's dispositions. And as a curious man he demands to know more about this plain creature and disposes himself to Jane's pleasant presence and her moral influences. The readers can ask if he ever has met a person like Jane. The most likely answer is no, and according to Mr Rochester's confession before Jane's escape it is the correct answer.

After a youth and manhood passed half in unutterable misery and half in dreary solitude, I have for the first time found what I can truly love – I have found you (Brontë, 2002, p. 294 – 295).

In some occasions it may seem Mr Rochester deliberately torments Jane. For instance, he insists on having her present during the party with his companions, although he knows she does not like to participate. Is it only his malevolence or does he have any hidden reason? He has realised long before Jane is falling in love with him. As a much older man of the world, he definitely knows the implicit features of love and passion on woman's face to mistake it for some other feelings than a very strong affection. So why is he flirting with Blanche Ingram? Does he want to learn Jane to jealousy? Does he want to ensure himself about her feelings? Is he only playing with her strong emotions? Does he feel the same passion for her and tries to stop this by comparing her with charming Blanche? If the reader wanted to see Mr Rochester in the best light, the answer would be no for all the options, and the explanation would be that he needs to see his clever and sensible friend in the company of snobs and shallow people to strengthen his attachment to her. But there is no explanation offered by Mr Rochester in the novel, so each reader must choose the reason according to his reading experiences and feelings evoked by the book.

Although finally, Mr Rochester expresses his tender feelings to Jane and proposes to her to become his wife, she is sure enough able to realise what uncertain position she is in, and is not so incautious to put all her trust into the hands of Mr Rochester. As Angela Carter points out in her previously mentioned feminist attack, Mr Rochester is a cad, and Jane realises it very well and shows interesting female solidarity in refusing him after revealing the truth about his wife (Carter, 1993, p. 170). Is this action not a good example for Mr Rochester? Is it not another step to transform him from “India-rubber back to flesh?” (Brontë, 2002, p. 125). The readers believe it is and we have to attribute it to Jane and not to Mr Rochester. Jane tries to turn Mr Rochester back to the God and to help him find the consolation in the belief: “Do as I do: Trust in God and yourself. Believe in heaven. Hope to meet again there” (Brontë, 2002, p. 296). Is it not a proof of Jane's strength? And on the

contrary, Mr Rochester refuses to reconcile himself to Jane's decision to leave: "Then you condemn me to live wretched and to die accursed?" (Brontë, 2002, p. 296).

However Jane does not leave Mr Rochester only to save his soul, but to save herself as well. She realises from his story of his former mistresses, that if she was his mistress, he himself would eventually reject her: "He would one day regard me with the same feeling which now in his mind desecrated their memory" (Brontë, 2002, p. 292).

And by leaving, she protects them both from losing their dignity and Christian virtues. At the end of the novel, when Jane is returning to him, Mr Rochester is quite a different person. His health is broken, but his soul is healed. He was destined to suffer for his actions, but he was also enabled to experience his catharsis to deserve Jane's love publicly accepted and come to his happy ending.

I did wrong: I would have sullied my innocent flower – breathed guilt on its purity: the Omnipotent snatched it from me. I, in my stiff-necked rebellion, almost cursed the dispensation: instead of bending to the decree, I defied it. Divine justice pursued its course, disasters came thick on me (Brontë, 2002, p. 416 – 417).

Last but not least, I would like to point out that Mr Rochester, however nice and capable of being loved may appear, is not a really positive character in the novel. Although he could be praised for his attitude towards Bertha (considering the circumstances, the readers can regard her being hidden in the attic with a watcher as quite fortunate destiny in comparison with the conditions of contemporary lunatic asylums). Nevertheless, even here some question about the care she is provided may be asked, and as Mia Iwama claims the awareness and understanding of Bertha's illness was increasing in those days, so Mr Rochester could have attempted to let his wife's case examined and treated instead of "locking her up like a prisoner in a cheerless, windowless room, wearing dirty and ragged clothing and subject to the abuse of Grace Poole, who binds her to a chair to subdue her" (Iwama, 2003). The reason for why he did not try to help his wife can be only asked but never

answered. Probably, the option of treating her was the easiest one and suited the best to his selfish character.

Mr Rochester's selfishness is apparent in many of his actions. For only a selfish man could expose his beloved person of ridicule and shame which undoubtedly has to follow a false marriage. Only a selfish man could ask a decent woman to become his mistress and we can only calculate what would have happened to Jane if she had accepted this offer. In short, I believe Mr Rochester, perceived by readers as a positive character and a good person, is thoroughly the result of Jane Eyre's love and influence. Without her he would be a completely different man. And she also shows the readers why they should admire him and love him as she does.

3. ANALYSIS OF THE PERSONALITY OF MR ROCHESTER IN THE NOVEL WIDE SARGASSO SEA

In this chapter, the second part of the novel *Wide Sargasso Sea* will be discussed with the main interest aimed at the narrator of this part, Mr Rochester.

3.1 MR ROCHESTER, THE COLONIST OF ANTOINETTE'S MIND

As it was stated before, the novel *Wide Sargasso Sea* is divided into three parts, the second one describes the short and unhappy marriage of Antoinette and Mr Rochester and Mr Rochester himself is the narrator of this part. In this novel, he is presented very differently from the novel *Jane Eyre*. Van Brute (2004) notes that he appears in the novel as a new type of a colonist. He comes to a foreign land with neither knowledge nor respect to local culture and traditions. He does not distinguish much between the Creoles and black people. And what is more, he acts as if he was a real settler and Antoinette was an area which has to be cultivated.

Undoubtedly, he does not love his young wife and their marriage is from the beginning doomed to failure. But why is that so? Formally arranged marriages were quite common in the nineteenth century, so the marriage itself and lack of tender feelings between the partners should not be considered as the reason for all the following troubles. The real cause of all the problems should be sought elsewhere. In the first place, Mr Rochester's nature should be blamed. His first words towards the reader on the subject of his wedding with Antoinette are: "So it was all over, the advance and retreat, the doubts and hesitation. Everything finished, for better or worse" (Rhys, 1968, p. 55). Even if we know, he does not love her, still, these words are very unusual for a man who has just got married. They reveal his cold English manners which cannot come to understanding with Antoinette's passionate and fragile mind.

3.2 THE IMPORTANCE OF THE ENVIRONMENT

Other possible explanation of the tragic end of Mr Rochester's and Antoinette's story may be found in the influence of overall circumstances: the roles of the servants and the wild environment of the Windward Islands. Now these two aspects should be looked at and considered on by one.

3.2.1 THE INFLUENCE OF THE LANDSCAPE ON MR ROCHESTER

The role of the landscape is crucial throughout the novel. Lauren Smith claims that Brontë as well as Rhys is: "interested in using the natural landscape as a metaphor for their protagonists' psychological and spiritual states" (Smith, 2004). Where Jane Eyre accurately shares the beauty of the nature and the strength coming from it with the reader, Antoinette shows almost unhealthy passionate attachment to the landscape: "I love it here more than anywhere in the world. As if it was a person. More than a person" (Rhys, 1968, p. 74). However, the more Antoinette loves the nature, the less composure and peace she can get from it. For Jane Eyre, nature is a work of God: "It is a moral and spiritual touchstone (...) for Antoinette, it is ultimately a mirror of her own fragmented consciousness" (Smith, 2004). Therefore, it should be clear which of these two points of views on the landscapes are closer to Mr Rochester and how they will influence his actions.

Immediately after the marriage, Mr Rochester and Antoinette go to spend their honeymoon on the Windward Islands, where Antoinette has inherited a small estate. In the same way as she returns to a place and to people she knows very well and likes very much, he comes to an unknown area, where everything seems to be strange and unwelcoming. It is easy to imagine feelings of a typical English gentleman, soon after he has lost the last connection with Jamaica, which could remind him of the world he was familiar with and associate him with his typical way of life. The wild and uncontrollable nature full of bright colours and sun creates a complete contrast with the description of misty, dreamy and neat landscape of Jane Eyre's England.

It is only characteristic that the last spot on Rochester's way to the wild that could present itself as a civilised locality, the village where they stop before climbing into the mountains estate, is called Massacre. Undoubtedly, the name fully completes the mood of the place and Mr Rochester's feelings and he asks: "And who was massacred here? Slaves?" and as if Antoinette felt his distress, she answers very quickly, trying to be comforting: "Oh, no. Not Slaves. Something must have happened a long time ago. Nobody remembers it" (Rhys, 1968, p. 55). But the fact that no memories of the place have been preserved is maybe more disturbing than the real story of massacre would be, because it is always more difficult to face the trouble we do not know exactly. And Mr Rochester has to face the marriage to a woman, he does not know and who, as everybody around insinuates, is probably hiding a secret.

Nevertheless, even after leaving the Massacre there is no relief in the surrounding nature and Mr Rochester thinks: "I understood why the porter had called it a wild place" (Rhys, 1968, p. 58). Local environment really is wild and what is more it is somehow irksome.

Everything is too much, I felt as I rode wearily after her. Too much blue, too much purple, too much green. The flowers too red, the mountains too high, the hills too near. ... A bird whistled, a long sad note. ... The bird whistled again. A mountain bird. Shriill and sweet. A very lonely sound (Rhys, 1968, p. 59).

On the other hand, going deeper into the wild nature, Mr Rochester discovers the beauty of the place. Same as he starts to be attracted by Antoinette strange fragile appearance, he feels affection towards the wild heavenly-looking nature surrounding of their house. Especially, he likes the place around the river and a small pool.

I went very early to the bathing pool and stayed there for hours, unwilling to leave the river, the trees shading it, the flowers that opened at night. ... It was a beautiful place – wild, untouched, above all untouched, with an alien, disturbing, secret loveliness (Rhys, 1968, p. 73).

However, any affection of this kind does not have a long duration. When the relationship is broken, Mr Rochester turns his hopes towards his home and the familiar landscape of England. His infatuation with Carribean is over. His love for Antoinette as well.

3.2.2 THE ROLE OF THE SERVANTS

From the beginning of the second part of the novel, the reader is aware of the strange behaviour of the servants. They serve, but in each of their movement there is the air of ridicule. It is the question if they just do not esteem Antoinette, because she is only a Creole and a “white cockroach,” or if the reason is that they know the unhappy fate of her mother. In general, it can be said, the behaviour of the servants helps the readers anticipate the inevitable ending of the novel and simultaneously influences Mr Rochester, because it creates the atmosphere of something strange, unpleasant and dangerous around him.

The servants act with a mandatory servility but in each of their actions, the reader and as well Mr Rochester can feel the air of superiority is surrounding them. It is clear they know a secret which fills them with an unnatural confidence. And they make him feel unpleasant.

Amélie, who had been sitting with her back to us, turned round. Her expression was so full of delighted malice, so intelligent, above all so intimate that I felt ashamed and looked away. (Rhys, 1968, p. 57)

Amélie is especially an important character in the book. Although only a poor servant, she is quite beautiful and charming. After a night during which Mr Rochester drinks a love potion prepared by another servant, Christophine, she comforts him and is seduced by him. Their affair very negatively affects the mental condition of Antoinette and hastens her nerve collapse.

But probably the most important servant in the novel is Christophine, who has been already mentioned. Despite the fact that she belongs to the lower class in the area of West Indies, she represents one of the strongest characters in the story and is the cause of many

important moments through the book. Former Antoinette's nanny has become her closest friend and adviser. Mr Rochester and Antoinette differ in the opinion on her and on other servants: "She trusted them and I did not" (Rhys, 1968, p. 75). To Mr Rochester, more than to a calm and amiable refuge Christophine resembles a very dangerous and tough burrow. Why is that so? Undoubtedly it is because she is connected with the art of obeah, a type of the sorcery of the black people from West Indies. Moreover, the potion which he drunk and which made him sick was of her work. Although he finally finds means how to rid of her influence, it happens at the same moment when as Van Brute notes Christophine's power is most visible: "In the way her words and dictates become embedded within Rochester's mind, so that her language becomes a series of repetitive idioms in his conscious" (Van Brute, 2004).

"Poison you? But look me trouble, the man crazy! She come to me and ask me for something to make you love her again and I tell her no I don't meddle in that for béké. I tell her it's foolishness."

(Foolishness, foolishness)

"And even if it's no foolishness, it's too strong for béké."

(Too strong for béké. Too strong)

"But she cry and she beg me."

(She cry and she beg me)

"So I give her something for love."

(For love) (Rhys, 1968, p. 126 – 127).

Finally, Mr Rochester wins his battle with Christophine, chases her out of his and Antoinette's life, but her importance is indisputable.

3.3 MR ROCHESTER AND HIS RELATIONSHIP WITH ANTOINETTE

The relationship of Mr Rochester and Antoinette clearly begins as a purchase contract. The question is who is buying whom. Mr Rochester needs money and Antoinette's relatives want to marry her as soon as possible. He is aware of this fact from the beginning and he fulfills all the conditions and even convinces Antoinette to marry him, when she, afraid of possible consequences, hesitates. The reader would expect Mr Rochester to be quite happy after the marriage, but he is not. Except the influences of the environment he is disturbed by another thing. He does not understand his wife. He does not even feel any sympathy for her. He does not like her and he believes she has bought him: "And the woman is a stranger. Her pleading expression annoys me. I have not bought her, she has bought me, or so she thinks. (...)The girl is thought to be beautiful, she is beautiful. And yet..." (Rhys, 1968, p. 59).

However, soon Mr Rochester starts to feel the affection for this woman and it seems he may like her. He says: "she was sitting on the sofa and I wondered why I had never realised how beautiful she was" (Rhys, 1968, p. 67). And soon after, his affection becomes more and more passionate. But passion is very little for building a stable relationship. Mr Rochester is a cold English gentleman with a destructive character (Střibrný, 1983, p. 710) who disdains the culture of West Indies and appreciates only England. His mind can never understand and love Antoinette's complicated and vulnerable soul and he is aware of that: "I was thirsty for her, but that is not love. I felt very little tenderness for her, she was a stranger to me, a stranger who did not think or feel as I did" (Rhys, 1968, p. 78). Although they do not have the same feelings for each other as Antoinette loves him deeply, it seems they could live almost happily until a letter comes and destroys Mr Rochester's peace of mind.

When Mr Rochester discovers the sad story of Antoinette's mother and a possibility of the same destiny for Antoinette, he does not consider himself only as a man bought by his wife but also betrayed by her and his closest relations. He is hurt and it negatively influences his approach towards Antoinette and he becomes quite rude and unfair. In his pain he is ruining Antoinette's happiness. He no more wants to see her as a beautiful and pleasant girl,

he can imagine her only as a mad woman who does not deserve his love, and he acts as if she was a different person. In the novel it is expressed in the way he starts to call her a different name. – the name of her mad mother.

Don't laugh like that, Bertha.

My name is not Bertha, why do you call me Bertha?

Because it's a name I am particularly fond of. I think of you as Bertha (Rhys, 1968, p. 111).

It may be said, he transforms her into a mad person. He believes, she tried to poison him with a love potion from Christophine and from this moment, he loses the remains of his affection. The last and worst of his deeds against Antoinette is seducing of Amélie. It is something Antoinette cannot handle and still Mr Rochester does not feel much of remorse. From now, Antoinette is not a partner, it is his burden. On the other hand, he can feel jealousy, and does not let her leave him. He prevents the possibility another man could possess her. He decides to leave the estate on the Windward Islands, a place which reminds him not of the nice moments but everything sad. England is now the aim of his wishes. He desires to see that calm and cold place, full of known and reasonable people where he would not lose his composure: "English trees. I wondered if I ever should see England" (Rhys, 1968, p. 135).

On leaving Grandbois, the reader can see how unhappy Mr Rochester is and how unable of any attempt to change the situation he is. It is probably the most sorrowful part of the novel, as at that moment it is clear, the damage cannot be repaired. Antoinette and Mr Rochester can never come to an understanding. Here Mr Rochester for the last time shows signs of his lost affection: "Antoinetta – I can be gentle too. Hide your face. Hide yourself but in my arms. You'll soon see how gentle. My lunatic. My mad girl" (Rhys, 1968, p. 136). But it is only a sigh. Mr Rochester leaves the island with his mind full of hatred and disgust at everything he experienced here.

4. THE ANALYSIS OF THE PERSONALITY OF MR ROCHESTER'S WIFE

In the following chapter, the characters of Antoinette and Bertha will be described with the support of different descriptions present in the novels *Wide Sargasso Sea* and *Jane Eyre*. Antoinette will be looked at with focus on cultural aspect, as it plays a very important role in the *Wide Sargasso Sea*.

4.1 MADWOMAN IN THE ATTIC

It may seem that the readers of *Jane Eyre* have no particular reason to think more deeply about Mr Rochester's mad wife. But this would be a sad mistake. Mad women, hidden in the attic, whose identity is strictly guarded, can be explained as a symbol of many different aspects. As Shveta Vyas notes, according to some critics Bertha is a complete opposite of Jane, the other critics claim, the women are mirrors to each other (Vyas, 2010). Nevertheless, it is clear, they do differ enormously in the way they cope with obstacles in their lives, in their actions and approach towards Mr Rochester. The difference in their relationship towards Mr Rochester led to a statement, each female character in Victorian literature is portrayed either as "the angel or as the monster" and in 1975 two feminist literary critics Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar published a book dealing with this topic whose title *The Madwoman in the Attic: The Woman Writer and the Nineteenth Century Literary Imagination* is inspired by Bertha (Vyas, 2010).

Not only the feminist movement can find its topic in the novel, but, with the respect to cultural and racial misunderstanding, Bertha can also represent, for instance, repression of a person who does not fulfil Victorian standards, as Keunjung Cho states: "Bertha's imprisonment in Thornfield's attic arguably represented the oppression of a racial inferior, a half-Jamaican Creole" (Cho, 2003).

4.2 CHARACTERISATION OF BERTHA IN THE NOVEL JANE EYRE

From the very first hints about the existence of Mr Rochester's mad wife Bertha living hidden in the attic, the reader, although he does not know there is a wife, gets an impression of a beast-like mysterious creature, who is able only to cause problems and torment her husband. She creates an insurmountable obstacle to the union of Mr Rochester and Jane Eyre (Vyas, 2010). Bertha is a silent figure in the novel and has no opportunity to speak for herself and make the readers aware of what is happening in her disordered mind. The only sound which is typical for her is her demonical laugh: "It was a curious laugh, distinct, formal, mirthless. I stopped: the sound ceased, only for an instant, it began again, louder: for at first, though distinct, it was very low" (Brontë, 2002, p. 101). From the description provided by Jane Eyre, it is clear the laughter is something very peculiar and very typical for Bertha. However, some information apart from this one can be discovered from the description of the other protagonists of the novel, and it can help the reader understand the roles Bertha plays in the novel.

Apart from being an obstacle of Jane and Mr Rochester's marriage, Bertha is the reason for Mr Rochester's moral downfall. Even before the existence of Bertha is revealed, Mr Rochester admits he has been walking on a wrong path during his life.

I started, or rather (for like other defaulters, I like to lay half the blame on ill fortune and adverse circumstances) was thrust on to a wrong tack at the age of twenty, and have never recovered the right course since (Bronte, 2002, p. 128).

The reader knows from a previous narrative, that at the age of twenty, Mr Rochester's father and brother deceived him somehow and later it can be recognised the deceitful act of theirs was forcing him to marriage to Creole Bertha, who is considered to be the most immoral element in the novel, at least in the description of her husband: "Bertha Mason, the true daughter of an infamous mother, dragged me through all the hideous and degrading agonies which must attend a man bound to a wife at once intemperate and unchaste" (Brontë,

2002, p. 287). Young and inexperienced, he recognised too late that Bertha's sensuality, exciting before their marriage, is immoral (Waller, 2004). Apparently, Bertha's role in Mr Rochester's life is to be his burden and reason for his moral downfall following this unhappy marriage.

Shveta Vyas suggests another important role, Bertha may play, is being a mirror to Jane Eyre. As they both come from inferior conditions and can be considered outsiders in Thornfield and "their lives are governed by their societal circumstances, and they both move forward in their respective stories only through the actions of the men in their lives" (Vyas, 2010). This point of view can be supported by already mentioned Jane's solidarity and compassion with the mad wife: " 'Sir,' I interrupted him, 'you are inexorable for that unfortunate lady: you speak of her with hate – with vindictive antipathy. It is cruel – she cannot help being mad' "(Brontë, 2002, p. 283).

In the eyes of nowadays critics, Bertha can also symbolize the suppression of the colonies. She represents an exotic, strange element in the book, Savi Munjal calls it the otherness. "The racial otherness are evident in the descriptions of Bertha, who is described as 'discoloured', 'purple', 'swelled', 'blackened'" (Munjal, 2007). Vyas in her article also notes, Bertha suffers because of her origin and therefore she is looked at with prejudices by white English people (Vyas, 2010). Simply, because she is different, she is the cause of evil.

Finally, it should be noted, Bertha, although she is not allowed to speak in the novel, or express herself in a not lunatic way, presents a very interesting character, whose roles are much more important than they may seem. It should not be forgotten, she, in the same way as Jane Eyre, influenced and formed Mr Rochester, and however different they roles were, she has her share on forming Mr Rochester's character.

4.3 CHARACTERISATION OF ANTOINETTE IN THE NOVEL *WIDE SARGASSO SEA*

In the novel *Wide Sargasso Sea* Jean Rhys, sharing with Mr Rochester's mad wife the Creole identity, portrayed her much more sympathetically with more understanding but less romantic features than Charlotte Brontë (Stříbrný, p. 710, 1987). As a result, the reader can closely observe Antoinette's development from a little unstable, timid child towards a young woman, whose peace of mind is destroyed by a relationship with a cold nature of an English gentleman who could never understand her needs and fears. Considering this approach Lauren Smith claims "Antoinette's descent into madness is the result of this nexus of crises, rather than a condition of her sociocultural identity or geographic location" (Smith, 2004).

4.3.1 ANTOINETTE'S LIFE IN CARRIBEAN

From the very first sentence of the novel, the reader immediately understands Antoinette is a lonely girl, whose family does not belong to the society surrounding her: "They say when trouble comes close ranks, and so the white people did. But we were not in their ranks" (Rhys, 1966, p. 15). The isolation of little Antoinette is not primarily caused by her nature and dispositions. The most important reason is the lack of trustworthy and reliable people around her. The inhabitants of her house, her lonely desperate mother taking care exclusively of Antoinette's handicapped brother, Pierre, old servant Godfrey, who thinks only of damnation and the devil, former slave Sass and, last but not least, Christophine, mysterious Martinique woman who knows the secret of West Indies witchcraft obeah. Not a very convenient company for a little girl, indeed.

The only one who remains practical and keeps the household in existence is Christophine, still she is doing it in her unusual way. She also realises the needs of a little girl and finds a friend for Antoinette. However, little black girl Tia does not prove herself as a real friend and Antoinette remains alone again, without a friend or loving mother. Antoinette does not have a place in the world around her. Her mother expels her from her care, as she is fully occupied by Pierre and sorrow over past events. "But she [mother] pushed me away, not

roughly but calmly, coldly, without a word, as if she had decided once and for all that I was useless for her” (Rhys, 1966, p. 17).

Servants work for the family, but do not respect the family and are not friendly. Christophine, although she tries to compensate Antoinette’s needs, does not have the means for it and the society on the island despise the Cosways, either as not being proper white people or not rich. And Antoinette experiences this very often: “One day a little girl followed me singing: ‘Go away white cockroach, go away, go away’” (Rhys, 1966, p. 20). From this short extract it is clear, that: “thought it is a childish taunt in the novel, the truth of it is that nobody does want Antoinette” (Lendrum, 2003).

It should not be surprising that as a result of this lack of love and understanding, Antoinette grows up as a neurotic child scared by every unpleasant thought or unusual situation, girl, who is happiest when alone, by herself:

I am safe. There is the corner of the bedroom door and the friendly furniture. There is the tree of life in the garden and the wall green with moss. The barrier of the cliffs and the high mountains. And the barrier of the sea. I am safe. I am safe from strangers (Rhys, 1966, p. 23).

It does not really matter that Antoinette’s mother marries rich and honourable man, Mr Mason and raises the family in the upper class, because as Lauren Smith states: “the postcolonial landscapes of crumbling imperial ideologies, collapsing social orders, and unsettling moral ambiguity has done the all possible damage” (Smith, 2004) and influenced Antoinette’s soul. Antoinette does not have a chance to restore the power of her mind, if she ever had any. Burning of the house of Mason would be disastrous for a strong person, but it definitely destroys Antoinette’s mother, who after the death of little Pierre becomes insane with grief. Now Antoinette definitely loses her mother and has only her aunt Cora to support her and substitute the motherly element. This reasonable woman does her best and before leaving for Europe, finds for Antoinette a suitable refuge in the convent school.

The years spent in the convent belong to Antoinette's happiest ones. She even finds some friends there and regains some peace. However, the peace of her mind is not real. Zoe Ripple writes that "throughout *Wide Sargasso Sea*, Antoinette's identity remains in flux" (Ripple, 2004) and the convent atmosphere does not have the power to change it. It reveals in the moment when Antoinette has to leave the convent, as she is to be married, and all the troubles, which were hidden behind the illusion of peace, return. The feeling of insecurity, the fear of life negatively influence Antoinette's mind. From her hesitation before the wedding, the reader can see, her apprehension of her inability to connect her life with this unknown man.

"You don't wish to marry me?"

"No." She [Antoinette] spoke in a very low voice.

"But why?"

"I am afraid of what may happen" (Rhys, 1966, p. 66).

Antoinette is afraid rightfully. Slowly, Mr Rochester and the readers as well are enabled to know Antoinette better, and to recognise her weak, almost fragile character. This weakness and the lack of understanding provided by Mr Rochester may be the cause of the fact that: "Antoinette's honeymoon home in Granbois soon becomes as suffocating to her as the world is dizzying" (Zevin, 2004).

"I am not used to happiness," she [Antoinette] said. "It makes me afraid."

"Never be afraid. Or if you are tell no one."

"I understand. But trying does not help me."

"What would?" She did not answer that, then one night whispered, "If I could die. Now, when I am happy. Would you do that? You wouldn't have to kill me. Say die and I will die (Rhys, 1966, p. 77).

The reader can recognise from many hints Antoinette is deeply in love with Mr Rochester, however he only can feel only desire and not the real emotion. And soon he has enough of his wife “Antoinette's otherness begins to plague Rochester” (Lendrum, 2003). Especially after he receives a malicious letter and is persuaded about Antoinette’s possible madness, Mr Rochester starts to act as if she really was a lunatic, and this approach makes Antoinette behave in a positively lunatic way. She had found a person whom she could trust and now she is losing him. This feeling urges her to try every possible way to force Mr Rochester to love her.

“Christophine, he does not love me, I think he hates me. He always sleeps in his dressing-room now and the servants know. If I get angry he is scornful and silent, sometimes he does not speak to me for hours and I cannot endure it any more, I cannot. What shall I do? He was not like that at first” (Rhys, 1966, p. 90).

Christophine helps Antoinette although she does not want to and believes Antoinette would be happier without Mr Rochester. And the results of this help are fatal. Mr Rochester supposes he has been poisoned and loses the very last emotional connection to Antoinette. He starts to believe more and more in the inevitable resemblance of Antoinette’s and her mother’s fate. He changes his behaviour, and to support this belief, he starts to call her by her mother’s second name: “Bertha is not my name. You are trying to make me into someone else, calling me by another name. I know, that’s obeh too” (Rhys, 1966, p. 121). Antoinette realises the danger of Mr Rochester’s behaviour but has no more strength and means to save herself.

4.3.2 ANTOINETTE ON THE THORNFIELD ESTATE

Finally, Mr Rochester “makes Antoinette's life a kind of panopticon: her removal to his sketched house in England resembles nothing so much as a colonial penal trip in reverse“ (Zevin, 2004). Now, Antoinette is imprisoned in a foreign country, in a strange

house with an old and peculiar woman who is hired to take care of her. Moreover, Antoinette's mind is no more able to think clearly. She can hear voices but does not understand their meaning: "I listen but I cannot understand what they say. So there is still the sound of whispering that I have heard all my life" (Rhys, 1966, p. 148). The transformation of Antoinette to ghost-like Bertha from *Jane Eyre* is complete.

Names matter, like when he wouldn't call me Antoinette, and I saw Antoinette drifting out of the window with her scents, her pretty clothes and her looking glass (Rhys, 1966, p. 147).

Still Antoinette tries to understand where and why she is. She is looking for a real reason but clear thoughts are always escaping from her. Alan Gordon claims: "Antoinette has become delusional woman whose only moments of clarity are inspired by flashes of rage" (Gordon, 2004). She can recollect the important moments of her life and important people. The reader can again see how Antoinette was influenced by her mother's apathy.

Looking at the tapestry one day, I recognised my mother dressed in an evening gown but with bare feet. She looked away from me, over my head as she used to do (Rhys, 1966, p. 147).

Now Antoinette is unable to recognise what is dream, reality and memory. Alan Gordon notes: "Antoinette has lost the ability to distinguish between memory and dream, and thus she removes all barriers between waking and sleeping in *Wide Sargasso Sea*" (Gordon, 2004). The reader can no longer specifically identify the dream and the reality. Antoinette's narrative is confused and complicated, however one motif is weaving through her tale. She believes she has a task to do and she desperately tries to remember what this is.

But I looked at the dress on the floor and it was as if the fire had spread across the room. It was beautiful and it reminded me of something I must do. I will remember I thought. I will remember quite soon (Rhys, 1966, p. 153).

According to Zoe Ripple, in her endeavour to remember and finish the task “Antoinette becomes resolute and determined in a way that she has not been for the course of the novel: although her determination will lead to tragedy, it also leads to her liberation” (Ripple, 2004). In Antoinette’s very last dream, while walking through the halls and rooms of the house, she mixes Thornfield with Coulibri: “Suddenly, I was in aunt Cora’s room” (Rhys, 1966, p. 153) and fantasy with reality: “I walked as though I were flying” (Rhys, 1966, p. 153). As the dream continues, the reader cannot help feeling pity for Antoinette, as her dream becomes quite nostalgic in calling Christophine for help and longing for her exotic home.

I saw the grandfather clock and Aunt Cora’s patchwork, all colours, I saw the orchids and the stephanotis and the jasmine and the tree of life in flames. I saw the chandelier and the red carpet downstairs and the bamboos and the tree ferns, the gold ferns and the silver, and soft green velvet of the moss on the garden wall (Rhys, 1966, p. 155).

The dream continues and leads the reader through important events of Antoinette’s life. The fire which burnt Coulibri, the parrot who had burnt to death at Coulibri, Tia, a friend who deceived Antoinette, all is present. All of sudden, Antoinette wakes up, and it is clear Thornfield is not destroyed. Nevertheless, the readers know, it will happen, it must happen. But not now, so it can be said that: “Antoinette thus remains innocent in Jean Rhys’s novel” (Gordon, 2004) and gets her violent revenge only in *Jane Eyre* (Gordon, 2004).

CONCLUSION

The aim of this bachelor thesis was to describe the characters of Mr Rochester and his wife in two novels *Jane Eyre* by Charlotte Brontë and *Wide Sargasso Sea* by Jean Rhys. Both authoresses used different approaches to depict these characters and therefore they were examined with respect to the cultural aspect and the time of origin. Whereas Bertha in *Jane Eyre* is a silent figure and Jean Rhys had a wide range of possibilities how to actually create a completely new character, Mr Rochester, although without the possibility of first person narration is a fully depicted protagonist in *Jane Eyre*, so there was not as much potential in changing him as with Bertha.

However, from the previous pages, it can be understood that Jean Rhys used only the motif, draft of the story of Bertha and Mr Rochester and created new characters and did not respected much of Mr Rochester's characteristics from *Jane Eyre*. The similarities between these two protagonists, discovered in this thesis were the bitterness with which they both react to betrayals and their desire to possess. Still Brontë's Mr Rochester hides his bitterness behind the irony and sarcasm whereas Rhys' Rochester let his hurt feelings affect him in the behaviour towards Antoinette. The desire to possess people they love or loved in past is clear from Antoinette's moving from Carribean to England and being hidden in the attic and also from asking Jane to stay with Mr Rochester as a mistress who would be fully supported by him.

The main difference between Mr Rochesters therefore could be seen in the women influencing their lives, as Brontë allowed Jane to keep her free will and independence and teach Mr Rochester moral principles, while Antoinette could not be freed and had to finish her tragic role in the both novels.

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RESUMÉ

Cílem této bakalářské práce bylo popsat postavy pana Rochesterera a jeho ženy v románech *Jana Eyrová* od Charlotte Brontë a *Širé Sargasové moře* od Jean Rhys. Obě autorky si zvolily rozdílné způsoby zachycení těchto postav, a proto bylo při psaní této práce přihlédnuto ke kulturním aspektům a době vzniku obou románů.

V první kapitole byly oba romány krátce představeny a srovnány, aby si čtenář snáze uvědomil rozdíly mezi nimi. Druhá kapitola obsahuje charakteristiku hlavního protagonisty románu *Jana Eyrová*, pana Rochesterera. Protože pohledy literárních kritiků na postavu pana Rochesterera se velmi liší, tato kapitola byla jejich odlišnými názory inspirována, a jejím cílem bylo zjistit, zda je možné pana Rochesterera považovat za spíše pozitivní nebo negativní postavu.

V následující kapitole byla opět rozebírána postava pana Rochesterera, tentokrát v románu *Širé Sargasové moře*. Zde je považován spíše za negativní postavu, muže, který výrazně přispěje ke zničení svého vztahu s Antoinette a následné destrukci jejího duševního klidu. V závěru kapitoly jsou popsány a shrnuty důvody těchto událostí a vlivy negativně působící na pana Rochesterera.

Poslední kapitola této práce je věnována postavě ženy pana Rochesterera, v *Širém Sargasovém moři* nazvané Antoinette Cosway, v *Janě Eyrové* Bertha Mason. Tato kapitola obsahuje popis různých rolí Berthy v *Janě Eyrové* a aspekty ovlivňující Antoinettin sestup do šílenství.

Tato práce neměla poskytnout vyčerpávající srovnání obou románů. Cílem bylo spíše pomoci čtenáři uvědomit si některé zajímavé okamžiky a skutečnosti obsažené v obou příbězích a popisech postav a zamyslet se nad relativností názorů, které získáváme četbou literárních prací.

ANOTACE

Jméno a příjmení:	Marie Pleskotová
Katedra:	Anglického jazyka
Vedoucí práce:	PhDr. Milena Vodičková, Ph.D.
Rok obhajoby:	2010

Název práce:	Ztvárnění postav pana Rochesterera a jeho ženy v románu Charlotty Brontë Jana Eyrová a v románu Jean Rhys Šíře Sargasové moře
Název v angličtině:	Presentation of Mr Rochester and his Wife in Jane Eyre by Charlotte Brontë and in Wide Sargasso Sea by Jean Rhys
Anotace práce:	Bakalářská práce se zabývá analýzou postavy pana Rochesterera a jeho ženy. Pozornost je tedy zaměřena nejprve na charakteristiku pana Rochesterera v románu Charlotty Brontë Jana Eyrová a poté na popis jeho postavy v románu Jean Rhys Šíře Sargasové moře. Ženě pana Rochesterera Antoinette, nazývané také Bertha, je věnována poslední kapitola této práce, kde je zde rozebírána její role v obou románech.
Klíčová slova:	Osobnost pana Rochesterera, záporná či kladná postava, vliv prostředí, koloniální téma, kulturní hledisko
Anotace v angličtině:	This thesis provides the analysis of the characters of Mr Rochester and his wife. Firstly, it focuses on the characterisation of Mr Rochester in Jane Eyre by Charlotte Brontë and afterwards on the description of his personality in the novel Wide Sargasso Sea by Jean Rhys. Mr Rochester's wife Antoinette called also Bertha is examined in the last chapter of this work.
Klíčová slova v angličtině:	The personality of Mr Rochester, negative or positive character, the influence of the environment, colonial themes, cultural aspect
Rozsah práce:	44 stran
Jazyk práce:	Anglický jazyk