As we have seen, psychological analysis of realistically drawn characters reveals them to be "creations inside a creation" who are "often engaged in treason against the main scheme of the book" (Forster 1927, 64). In nineteenth-century fiction, such characters tend to subvert two schemes in particular: the education pattern that we find in such novels as *Emma* (Paris 1978b), *Great Expectations*, and *The Mill on the Floss* (Paris 1974), and the vindication pattern that we find in such novels as *Mansfield Park* (Paris 1978b), *Henry Esmond*, and *Jane Eyre*.

In the education pattern, which reflects the archetype of the fortunate fall, the protagonists' flaws lead them to make mistakes that bring suffering to themselves and others, and out of this suffering comes moral and emotional growth. In the vindication pattern, which reflects the Cinderella archetype, deserving protagonists are discriminated against or devalued by parental figures and the surrounding community, but they prove their worth and eventually receive widespread approval and an appropriate social position. These patterns have tragic and comic forms, and some novels contain both education and vindication patterns. In *Middlemarch*, for instance, Lydgate is educated while Dorothea is vindicated; in *The Mayor of Casterbridge*, Elizabeth-Jane is vindicated while Henchard is educated. Although *Jane Eyre* is predominantly a novel of vindication, it also presents Jane as undergoing a process of moral growth.

A Horneyan approach shows the supposedly educated characters to be less mature and the vindicated characters to be less admirable than plot and rhetoric suggest. In novels of vindication, the protagonists are often mimetically portrayed as having extremely harsh childhoods that force them to develop compulsive strategies of defense; but instead of being recognized as destructive, these strategies are celebrated by the rhetoric and, in comic versions of the pattern, validated by the plot. Jane Eyre's emotional problems are presented in vivid detail, but the world of
the novel is manipulated so as to obscure the compulsiveness of her behavior, to satisfy her conflicting psychological needs, and to sanction her self-glorying rhetoric. Like Pip's, her distortions and blind spots are in keeping with her character but sometimes make her account of herself unreliable. A Horneyan approach will help us to see Jane more clearly, to appreciate her motives for telling her story, and to do justice to the brilliance of Brontë's mimetic characterization.

As is typical in novels of vindication, Jane has a miserable childhood. Her mother is disinherited when she marries a poor clergyman, both parents perish of typhus soon after Jane's birth, and Jane is taken in by her uncle Reed, who dies while she is an infant, leaving her to the care of an aunt who resents her as an alien intruder. The destitute child is constantly reminded of her dependent position. Her cousin John tells her that she "ought to beg, and not to live here with gentlemen's children like us" (ch. 1); and Abbot, the lady's-maid, informs her that she is "less than a servant," for she does nothing for her keep (ch. 2). Bessie, the nurse, admonishes her to be good, for she would have to go to the poor house should her aunt turn her out. "My first recollections of existence," says Jane, "included hints of the same kind. This reproach of my dependence had become a vague sing-song in my ear; very painful and crushing." Like Pip, Jane is perceived as having no rights and as being insufficiently grateful for the inadequate care that is so grudgingly bestowed on her.

As a result of these conditions, Jane develops intense feelings of insecurity, vulnerability, and hopelessness. Entirely dependent, she lives with a constant dread of being abandoned by a hostile aunt who perpetually criticizes her, excludes her from family life, and gives her children license to torment her. John Reed bullies and punishes Jane "not two or three times in the week, nor once or twice in the day, but continually: every nerve I had feared him, and every morsel of flesh on my bones shrank when he came near" (ch. 1). Jane is "bewildered by the terror" he inspires because she has "no appeal whatever" against his "menaces" and "inflictions" (ch. 1). Her aunt turns a blind eye, and the servants will not intervene. Although she strives "to fulfill every duty," she is "always suffering, always browbeaten, always accused, for ever condemned" (ch. 2). It seems "useless to try to win any one's favour."

Of all the terrible childhoods in Victorian fiction, Jane's is one of the worst. As despised and rejected as Heathcliff, she is even more isolated,
since Heathcliff has Cathy, whereas Jane has no ally at all. Like Pip's sister, Jane's aunt feels burdened by having to care for an orphan, takes out her resentment on the child, and then excuses herself by blaming her victim, whom she sees as irredeemably bad. Tormented by the Reed children as well as their mother, Jane leads "a life of ceaseless reprimand and thankless fagging" (ch. 3). Like Pip, she is made to feel unsafe, unloved, and unworthy by a foster-parent who wishes her dead; but her case is worse than Pip's, for she must live "without one bit of love or kindness" (ch. 4) for the first ten years of her life, whereas Pip has Joe for emotional support.

Jane tries to defend herself by striving to please Mrs. Reed and by escaping into imaginary worlds, but the opening episode shows that neither of these strategies works. Mrs. Reed banishes her because she does not have a "franker, more natural" manner, and John Reed flushes her out of the window seat, where she has taken refuge with a book, in order to harass her (ch. 1). No matter what she does, Jane can neither win acceptance nor escape abuse.

It is part of the vindication pattern for the protagonist to be surrounded by detractors who are shown to be mistaken about her, but when we study the mimetic portrait of Jane we can see that Mrs. Reed's complaints are not without foundation. Jane is not "sociable and childlike" (ch. 1), frank and natural, nor could she be when her mistreatment at the hands of the Reeds has made her angry, insecure, and distrustful. Her aunt's description of her "as a compound of virulent passions, mean spirit, and dangerous duplicity" (ch. 2) is supposed to be seen as profoundly unfair, but it is, in fact, accurate. Although Mrs. Reed fails to understand her own contribution, Jane is "a compound of virulent passions," as the opening chapters show, for she is full of rage and resentment. She has a "mean spirit" in the sense that she is too fearful to express her outrage directly and accepts too much abuse. "What a miserable little poltroon had fear, engendered of unjust punishment, made of me in those days!" exclaims the narrator (ch. 4). The charge of duplicity is also understandable. Jane tries to be "useful and pleasant" (ch. 2) in order to avoid being sent away, but she is too full of hostility to play this role successfully, and her pretense is transparent. After Jane explodes, Bessie says that "she never did so before," but Abbot observs that "it was always in her": "She's an underhand little thing: I never saw a girl of her age with so much cover." Before her
explosion, Jane is a sullen, brooding, silently accusing child (John Reed calls her “Madam Mope”) whose demeanor makes the Reeds defensive.

Mrs. Reed cannot comprehend “how for nine years [Jane] could be patient and quiescent under any treatment, and in the tenth break out all fire and violence” (ch. 21). Although compliance did not work, Jane had clung to it out of a fear of total rejection. When she is subjected to more abuse than she can bear, her pent-up fury erupts, and she finally rebels. The precipitating event is John Reed’s attack. Having been told to stay away from the family, Jane retreats to the window seat in the breakfast room with Bewick’s History of British Birds, draws the curtain, and sits “shrined in double retirement,” entering imaginatively into the scenes of desolation pictured in the book (ch. 1). She is not permitted to defend herself by moving away, however, any more than is Pip, for John Reed finds her and hits her with the book, causing her to fall and cut her head. At this point, Jane loses control of herself and bitterly accuses John of being wicked and cruel. Enraged, he assaults her and, for the first time in her life, she fights back: “I received him in frantic sort. I don’t very well know what I did with my hands, but he called me ‘Rat! rat’ and bellowed out aloud.” My guess is that Jane struck him in the genitals.

Having allowed her aggression to emerge, Jane expects the worst, and, feeling that she has nothing more to lose, resolves, in her “desperation, to go all lengths” (ch. 2). She resists, “a new thing” for her, as she is dragged off for punishment. In “the mood of the revolted slave,” she broods on the injustice of her lot: the Reed children are selfish, spoiled, sadistic, but they are approved, while she, who “dare[s] commit no fault,” is “termed naughty and tiresome, sullen and sneaking, from morning to noon, and from noon to night.” She resolves to escape this “insupportable oppression” by running away or starving herself to death. Imagining that Mr. Reed’s spirit, “harassed by the wrongs of his sister’s child,” might “revisit the earth to punish the perjured and avenge the oppressed” (ch. 2), she thinks she sees a ghost and becomes terrified. Her screams bring her aunt, who ignores her pleas for another form of punishment, and Jane has a fit when she is shut up in the Red Room once more.

Despite the trauma of this experience, Jane finds that the consequences of her rebellion are predominantly positive. Her hysterical behavior brings about the intervention of the apothecary, Mr. Lloyd, and
arouses Bessie's sympathy for the first time. She is to be sent away from Gateshead, to be sure, but to school rather than to the threatened poorhouse. When John Reed attacks, she fights back, and he thinks it better to desist than to confront her "deep ire and desperate revolt," the effects of which he has already felt (ch. 4). The worm has turned; Jane is mean-spirited no more.

Instead of being a passive victim, Jane puts her aunt on the defensive, asking "What would uncle Reed say to you, if he were alive?" (ch. 4). When Mrs. Reed reacts with a look of fear, Jane presses the attack, saying that her dead relatives in heaven see how she treats her. "Shaking from head to foot, thrilled with ungovernable excitement," Jane attacks again after Mrs. Reed tells Brocklehurst that she is a liar. She calls her aunt "bad," "hard-hearted," and "deceitful" and says that when she is grown she will tell people that "the very thought of you makes me sick, and that you treated me with miserable cruelty." The "frightened" Mrs. Reed seeks to placate Jane, whose soul begins "to exult" with a "sense of freedom, of triumph." Whereas compliance has failed, aggressiveness works, a lesson that is reinforced when Bessie praises Jane's new-found boldness and warns that the people she meets at school will dislike her if she fears them.

Jane's experiences at Gateshead establish the agenda for her vindication. She needs to prove she is not mean spirited and duplicitous; hence her boldness, bluntness, and repeated declarations that she is not afraid. She needs to prove she is not bad, worthless, inferior to people like the Reeds; hence her need to be good at all costs, her boasting about the recognition she receives, and her great satisfaction in social and economic advancement. Jane is extremely sensitive about her plainness (Abbot says that "one really cannot care for such a little toad"—ch. 3); hence her critical or condescending attitude toward beauties like Blanche Ingram and Rosamond Oliver and her sense of triumph at being preferred to them by Rochester and St. John.

The world of the novel is so arranged that after Jane leaves Gateshead her feelings of personal, social, and economic inferiority, of friendlessness, isolation, and undesirability, and of weakness, vulnerability, and cowardliness are all reversed. Her value is attested by her intellectual and artistic accomplishments; the friendship of admirable people like Helen Burns, Miss Temple, and the Rivers sisters; the fondness of her pupils; the venerating love of Rochester; and St. John's appreciation of her sterling qualities. She proves herself fearless, truthful, and good in
every situation; and her poverty, low status, lack of family, and frustration in love are all removed by manipulations of the plot.

Jane’s vindication begins at Lowood, where she reverts to her self-effacing ways. She wants to be “good” so as to make “many friends, to earn respect, and win affection” (ch. 8), and she is well-received until Brocklehurst stigmatizes her as a liar and instructs the girls to shun her. Feeling “crushed and trodden on” once more, Jane “ardently” wishes “to die.” When Helen Burns urges her to take comfort in the approval of her own conscience, Jane says that thinking well of herself is not enough if others do not love her: “I would rather die than live—I cannot bear to be solitary and hated.” Helen complains that Jane thinks “too much of the love of human beings,” but Jane has felt solitary and hated all her life and is desperate for warmth and approval. She tells Helen, “I would willingly submit to have the bone of my arm broken, or to let a bull toss me, or to stand behind a kicking horse, and let it dash its hoof at my chest” in order to “gain some real affection from you, or Miss Temple, or any other whom I truly love.” Fortunately, Miss Temple treats Jane fairly, and when she realizes that she will be evaluated on her merit, her energies are liberated, and she proves that Mrs. Reed had misjudged her.

The aggression that had emerged at Gateshead has not disappeared but takes the form of indignation on behalf of Helen Burns, with whom Jane identifies as another abandoned, abused, but truly superior child. When Miss Scatcherd strikes Helen, Jane proclaims that if the teacher struck her, she would take the rod from her hand and “break it under her nose” (ch. 6). But Helen disapproves of Jane’s violent impulses. In addition to being self-effacing, like Jane, Helen is also very detached. She gets into trouble because she “cannot bear to be subjected to systematic arrangements” and is off in a dream world much of the time. Since Helen is so resigned, she does not feel the degradation, the sense of injustice, and the desires for revenge that Jane experiences on her behalf.

Disappointed by her father, Helen has given up looking for love and justice from human beings and has made her bargain with God, the “mighty universal Parent,” who sees “our tortures,” recognizes “our innocence,” and “waits only the separation of spirit from flesh to crown us with a full reward” (ch. 8). Her vindication will come in the afterlife. She urges Jane to disregard ill-usage, to try to forget Mrs. Reed’s “sever-
ity, together with the passionate emotions it excited” (ch. 6). Why “should we ever sink overwhelmed with distress, when life is so soon over, and death is so certain an entrance to happiness—to glory?” (ch. 8). Jane is not ready to adopt this perspective; she wants happiness and glory on earth.

Nor is Jane ready for Helen’s rejection of the major lesson she had learned at Gateshead, that we should be good to those who are good to us but “strike back again very hard” at those who are cruel and unjust so as to teach them “never to do it again” (ch. 6). Helen says that “heathens and savage tribes hold that doctrine; but Christians and civilized nations disown it.” She advocates, instead, the imitation of Christ: “Love your enemies; bless them that curse you; do good to them that hate you and despitefully use you.” Jane protests that it is impossible for her to love Mrs. Reed and to bless John and bitterly pours out “the tale of [her] sufferings and resentments.”

Although she cannot accept Helen’s philosophy, Jane is uneasy about her rage and vindictiveness. The explosions of anger with which the novel begins give her an exhilarating sense of freedom and triumph, but they also fill her with self-hate and anxiety. She is sustained for a while in the Red Room by the energy of rebellion, but then her courage sinks, and in her “habitual mood of humiliation, self-doubt, [and] forlorn depression” she begins to wonder if she is wicked, as everyone says she is (ch. 4). She has just been thinking of starving herself to death, and surely this is a crime. After she tells Mrs. Reed that her mother, father, and uncle know “how you wish me dead,” Bessie says that she is “the most wicked and abandoned child ever reared under a roof,” and Jane half-believes her, for she has “only bad feelings surging in [her] breast.” When she attacks her aunt after Brocklehurst’s visit, the taste of vengeance is like “aromatic wine,” but the “after-flavour” gives her the “sensation” of having been “poisoned.” Feeling her “indignation” to be “fiendish” (ch. 4), she leaves Gateshead with “a sense of outlawry and almost of reprobation” (ch. 21).

In the vindication pattern of the novel, Jane eventually proves that she is superior to the people who devalued her and receives her just deserts. In the education pattern, she is rewarded because she triumphs over her own passionate nature, resists powerful temptations, and succeeds in living up to a lofty moral ideal. Whereas the agenda for her vindication is set at Gateshead, that for her education is established by Helen Burns. Jane cannot immediately follow Helen’s injunction to love
her enemies, but when she fully and freely forgives Mrs. Reed, who is unrelenting even on her deathbed, she proves to herself that she has spiritually matured (ch. 21). As narrator she displays a Christ-like attitude toward her tormentors: "Yes, Mrs. Reed, to you I owe some fearful pangs of mental suffering. But I ought to forgive you, for you knew not what you did" (ch. 3). Helen shows Jane how she ought to deal with her resentment, and Jane incorporates Helen’s dictates into her idealized conception of herself.

The author collaborates with Jane not only in bringing about her vindication but also in making it possible for her to live up to her idealized image of herself. If Jane continued to experience her anger, she would fail to exemplify the teachings of Christ and would feel herself to be an uncivilized heathen. But what is she to do with her aggression? Part of it is channeled into the feistiness that Bessie encourages and that charms Rochester, but most of it is acted out for her by others, enabling her to satisfy her vindictive and rebellious impulses without losing her nobility. Jane’s enemies are all brought down by the author, Mrs. Reed and John quite horribly, making it easier for her to forgive them; and an alter ego is provided in Rochester, whose fierceness, mysterious sufferings, and volcanic passions reflect the side of Jane she cannot express and that the rhetoric conceals.

Jane must find a way to manage not only her anger but also her craving for life. As long as Miss Temple is there to satisfy her desire for warmth and approval, Jane lives contentedly at Lowood “in allegiance to duty and order”; but as soon as Miss Temple leaves, Jane develops a powerful longing for “Liberty, Excitement, Enjoyment” (ch. 10). Having spent all her vacations at Lowood, she has known only “school-rules, school-duties, school-habits and notions, and voices, and faces.” Tiring of her narrow existence in the space of a few hours, Jane remembers that “the real world [is] wide, and that a varied field of hopes and fears, of sensations and excitements, [await] those who [have] courage to go forth into its expanse, to seek real knowledge of life amidst its perils.”

Jane never has this courage. Since her cravings are out of harmony with both her lot as a woman and her need to be good, she quickly relinquishes them. Her prayer for liberty seems scattered on the wind, and she frames “a humbler supplication: for change, stimulus” (ch. 10). When that petition, too, seems swept off into space, she asks to be granted “at least a new servitude!” This is what she pursues when she advertises for a situation as a governess. Although she longs for “life
and movement,” she is pleased by the old-fashioned character of Mrs. Fairfax’s response. She had been haunted by a fear that she would get into a “scrape” by acting for herself and wishes “above all things” for the result of her “endeavours to be respectable, proper, en règle.”

Once she is settled at Thornfield, Jane’s restlessness returns. Adèle and Mrs. Fairfax are “good,” but she believes “in the existence of other and more vivid kinds of goodness” that she wishes to behold (ch. 12). She insists that she is longing for more vivid kinds of goodness because she must moralize her desire for experience, which she fears is improper. To justify her discontent she invokes the millions of women who, suffering “too rigid a constraint, too absolute a stagnation” are “in silent revolt against their lot” (ch. 12). This passage is justly celebrated for its feminist sentiments, but we must remember that Jane could never engage in a real revolt against the constraints of her lot because of her need to protect her respectability. She dares not do anything that might prove Mrs. Reed to have been right in calling her wicked. At this point Rochester arrives at Thornfield and Jane’s restlessness disappears.

Jane and Rochester have such an intense romantic relationship because they fulfill many of each other’s emotional cravings. The relationship is glorified by the rhetoric and is a major part of the vindication pattern, but from a Horneyan perspective the mimesis shows that each party brings into it emotional problems and contradictory needs. The contradictions are magically resolved by manipulations of the plot, but, even so, the relationship Jane celebrates at the end is not as ideal as she claims it to be.

Jane’s attraction to Rochester has many components. Insecure about her own charm and appearance, she is set at ease from the first by his rough manner and lack of good looks. She would have shunned anyone displaying “beauty, elegance, gallantry” from a feeling that he could not “have sympathy with anything” in her (ch. 12). Given Jane’s tastes, Rochester is not unappealing. She likes his “decisive nose,” his choleric nostrils, his “grim mouth, chin, and jaw” (ch. 13). When Mason later appears on the scene, he repels Jane “exceedingly” (ch. 18). He is handsome and amiable-looking, but there is “no firmness in that aquiline nose, and small, cherry mouth,” “no thought on the low, even forehead; no command in that blank, brown eye.” He is a “sleek gander” to Rochester’s “fierce falcon.” Rochester is a domineering man whose
“dark, irate, and piercing” eyes frighten others but not her (ch. 13). The fact that she is not intimidated proves that she is no longer the miserable little poltroon for whom she has such contempt. Being able to stand up to such a powerful man gives her a feeling of strength.

Whereas Jane has been bored by the decent but unremarkable people at Thornfield, Rochester is a lofty, mysterious being who fascinates her. She “reverence[s]” his “vigorou,” “original,” “expanded mind” (ch. 23), and he in turn expresses great admiration for her. He tells her that she is “cast in a different mould to the majority” (ch. 14), regards her as a fit person in whom to confide, and assures her that her “unique” mind is not “liable to take infection” from him. To him, she is a princess in the guise of a governess. His tributes feed her pride and counterbalance the devaluation she had experienced at Gateshead. They are all the more gratifying because he is a “proud, sardonic” man who is “harsh to inferiority of every description” and treats others with “severity” (ch. 15). Rochester and Jane form a community of two superior beings who appreciate each other and look down on everyone else. Instead of being excluded from the privileged circle, as she had been at Gateshead, Jane is at the center of things.

Rochester describes Jane as being like a caged bird, a “vivid, restless, resolute captive” that “would soar cloud-high” if it were free (ch. 15). But Jane never soars. Instead, she satisfies her desire for knowledge of real life amidst its perils by living vicariously through Rochester, much as Hedda Gabler lives through Ejler Lövborg. Rochester has had the kind of exciting life for which Jane longs but of which she is afraid, and he regales her with “glimpses” of the “scenes and ways” of the world—not “its corrupt scenes and wicked ways,” she hastens to assure us, “but such as derived their interest from the great scale on which they were acted, the strange novelty by which they were characterised.” Concerned for her respectability, Jane is eager to let us know that she was “never startled or troubled by one noxious allusion.” She is so “gratified” by following Rochester “in thought through the new regions he disclosed” that her restlessness subsides, the “blanks of existence” are filled, and she gains “flesh and strength.”

Jane’s assurance that Rochester does not describe corrupt scenes and wicked ways is all the more striking because he has already confessed that he has led a degenerate life and has told her the story of his affair with Cécile Varenns, a French opera dancer and the mother of Adèle. Rochester’s lurid history is part of his appeal because it allows Jane
glimpses of corrupt scenes and wicked ways in which she really is interested, but it also makes her anxious. More puritanical than Hedda, Jane can enjoy Rochester's transgressions only if she can convince herself that he is now reformed: "I believed that his moodiness, his harshness, and his former faults of morality (I say former for he now seemed corrected of them) had their source in some cruel cross of fate" (ch. 15).

Jane has reason to know, however, that Rochester has not yet conformed to the established morality. He has presented himself to her as a victim of fate—his sinfulness being due "rather to circumstances" than to his "natural bent"; but he has acknowledged that he "turned desperate" when fate wronged him and that he is desperate still: "since happiness is irrevocably denied me, I have a right to get pleasure out of life: and I will get it, cost what it may" (ch. 14). Jane does not know what Rochester has in mind, but his plan is to marry her despite the fact that he already has a wife. He convinces himself that his pursuit of pleasure need not lead to further degeneration if the pleasure is "as sweet and fresh as the wild honey the bee gathers on the moor." Jane's innocence will somehow purify their union. When he decrees that his aims and motives are right, Jane protests that they cannot be "if they require a new statute to legalise them." They do demand a new statute, he replies, because "unheard-of combinations of circumstances demand unheard-of rules." Jane opposes Rochester's situational ethic with an absolute one: "The human and fallible should not arrogate a power with which the divine and perfect alone can be safely entrusted." This conversation occurs shortly before Jane declares that Rochester seems to be free of his former faults.

Rochester's rebelliousness is part of his appeal to Jane. She, too, has felt unjustly treated by family and fate, and she, too, has broken out in angry insurrection against irrational authority. Before Rochester's appearance, she was feeling silently rebellious against her woman's lot and was longing to escape her confinement. As a rich upper-class male, Rochester is able to act out his resentments, and Jane can experience her own forbidden impulses through him.

Jane is excited not only by Rochester's rebellion against the norms of respectability to which she herself is enslaved but also by his aggressive behavior. His fierce, volcanic passions mirror feelings of her own that had emerged at Gateshead but that she has repressed. She delights in the fact that he is "a bold, vindictive, haughty gentleman" (ch. 16). Her vindictiveness and haughtiness must be concealed (although they are
evident in her narration), but she can relish such qualities in Rochester. She is critical of him at first, but his “sarcasm” and “harshness” come to seem like “keen condiments in a choice dish.” She is attracted to his strange and “sinister” depths and wishes to “look into the abyss” and “explore its secrets” (ch. 18). This is much safer than exploring her own inner depths, which are also strange and sinister, as some of her paintings reveal. It is no wonder Jane feels that she and Rochester are soul mates. Although they are divided by rank and wealth, she has “something in [her] brain and heart, in [her] blood and nerves, that assimilates mentally to him” (ch. 17).

Sensing Jane’s affinity to the turbulent side of his nature, Rochester also feels that they are soul mates, and this is part of what draws him to her. He is most powerfully attracted, however, by Jane’s rigorous morality, which gives him the hope that she can redeem him. She represents the person he might have been had he not gone astray. He tells her that he has been on the wrong course since the age of twenty-one but that he “might have been as good as you—wiser—almost as stainless. I envy you your peace of mind, your clear conscience, your unpolluted memory” (ch. 14). Jane sees Rochester as he wishes to see himself, as “naturally a man of better tendencies, higher principles, and purer tastes than such as circumstances had developed, education instilled, or destiny encouraged.” She thinks there are “excellent materials in him,” though “somewhat spoiled and tangled at present” (ch. 15), and he sees in her purity and rectitude the promise of regeneration. She wants to reform him, and he longs to be reformed.

After living with Bertha for four years, Rochester is filled with despair, but he determines to seek renewal by returning to Europe. He spends ten years searching for “a good and intelligent woman” whom he can love, but he finds no one in all of his travels he would wish to marry if he were free (ch. 27). Made reckless by disappointment, he tries “dissipation—never debauchery: that I hated, and hate.” The distinction may seem elusive, but in Rochester’s mind “debauchery” is associated with Bertha, whom he loathes: “Any enjoyment that bordered on riot seemed to approach me to her and her vices, and I eschewed it.” If he felt that he had become promiscuous like Bertha, he would be overwhelmed with self-hate, so he contents himself with one mistress at a time. Beginning “to regard the notion of an intellectual, faithful, loving woman as a mere dream,” he returns to Thornfield and finds what he has been looking for in Jane. He thinks her “good, gifted, lovely”; she is
his “better self,” his “good angel” (ch. 23). In Horneyan terms, Rochester perceives Bertha and Jane as embodiments of his despised and idealized selves. He dreads becoming like Bertha and aspires to emulate Jane.

Rochester’s search for renewal through the love of a good woman is doomed by its contradictions. Frustrated by his plight, he has convinced himself that his bond to Bertha is “a mere conventional impediment,” that it is “absolutely rational” that he should be “free to love and be loved,” and that he can and should marry again (ch. 20). His “original intention” is not “to deceive” but to explain his situation to a woman who is “willing and able to understand the case” (ch. 27). Any woman who accepted his bigamous proposal would lose her value for him, however, since she would no longer be on a higher moral plane. He conceals the truth from Jane not only because he fears her refusal but also because, having found in her the qualities he has been seeking, “without soil and without taint” (ch. 20), he needs to preserve her innocence. Even if he had succeeded in his deception, he would not have been regenerated, since he would have increased his sinfulness by wronging Jane. Despite his dismissal of “custom” and “mere human law” (ch. 27), Rochester has not freed himself of the values of his culture. It is because he is burdened by guilt that Jane’s purity and rectitude are so important to him. He cannot possibly cleanse his conscience by compromising her.

Rochester has conflicting needs of Jane. He wants her to be a liberated woman who is capable of understanding his case, of overleaping the obstacles of custom, convention, and mere human law in the name of a rational morality. He senses the caged spirit that wishes to escape its constraints, and he celebrates her as a “savage, beautiful creature,” a “wild, free thing,” “resolute” and “indomitable” (ch. 27). At the same time, he needs her to be his good angel without soil or taint. Once his marriage to Bertha is revealed, he tries to persuade Jane to remain with him, but, as she well understands, if she succeeds his former mistresses, he will one day regard her “with the same feeling which now in his mind desecrate[s] their memory.”

Rochester has misread Jane, of course, as have the critics who see her as a feminist heroine. She longs for greater freedom and a wider range of activity, but she is afraid to pursue her desires. Jane’s will and energy, resoluteness and indomitability are all on the side of propriety. Far from being a free spirit who rebels against the constrictions of her feminine
lot, she is a compulsively conventional woman who must live her life according to rule.

At first Jane and Rochester seem to complement each other perfectly, since the repressed side of each is dominant in the other. Rochester is a rebel against society and religion who is troubled by conscience, while Jane is a super-conscientious woman with repressed rebellious impulses. He looks to her for reformation, while she satisfies through him the bold, vindictive, haughty side of her nature. But the match is not really perfect since they have contradictory needs of each other that reflect their own inner conflicts. Rochester wants a wild, free thing who is absolutely virtuous, while Jane desires a worldly adventurer who will not threaten her innocence. He is looking for a pure mistress, and she wants him to be a reformed sinner so that she can gratify her forbidden impulses through his past escapades. When Jane learns that Rochester still means to defy the established morality, a conflict arises between them that cannot be resolved.

Jane feels like a criminal for driving the man she adores to despair, but she cannot possibly remain with Rochester, for this would prove that she is bad and undo her efforts at self-vindication. Helen Burns had chastised her for thinking too much of the love of human beings and urged her to live for the approval of her conscience. Jane now proves her moral growth by giving up the man who has fulfilled her romantic dreams in order to do her duty, even though she has no one who cares about her or whom she would offend by living with him. “I care for myself,” she proclaims (ch. 27). “The more solitary, the more friendless, the more unsustained I am, the more I will respect myself. I will keep the law given by God; sanctioned by man.” She had told Helen that thinking well of herself was not enough if others did not love her, but now she embraces Helen’s scenario. Jane is to Rochester as Helen had been to her. She urges the impulsive, vehement man to “trust in God” and “believe in heaven.” When he complains that she is condemning him “to live wretched, and to die accursed,” she advises him “to live sinless” and “die tranquil.”

By leaving Rochester, Jane proves that she is not the bad person the Reeds said she was and actualizes the idealized image she has modeled on Helen Burns. Like Helen, she feels invulnerable in her self-regard as long as she remains true to her principles. Now she is ready to risk her life not to win love but to preserve her virtue. When she finds herself
solitary, rebuffed, and in danger of starving, she does not regret her
decision or murmur against her fate. Helen had said that “if we were
dying in pain and shame, angels see our tortures, recognise our inno-
cence” (ch. 8). Jane feels surrounded by the divine presence. Since she
has lived sinless, she hopes for a tranquil death and is confident “that
neither earth should perish, nor one of the souls it treasured” (ch. 28).
She utters a prayer of thanksgiving and puts herself in the hands of
Providence.

For the first three-quarters of the novel, Jane lives in a relatively realistic
world, but after she leaves Thornfield the novel takes on a fairy tale
quality as the action seems increasingly contrived. Jane is mimetically
drawn to the end, but the world in which she lives seems manipulated
for the purpose of rewarding her virtue, glorifying her character, and
satisfying her conflicting psychological needs.

With Jane’s departure from Thornfield, the education pattern is com-
plete. Her forgiveness of Mrs. Reed, resistance to the temptations of
love, and readiness to die for the sake of conscience all show that she
has learned the lessons of Helen Burns. From a psychological point of
view, Jane is obeying tyrannical shoulds so as to feed her pride and avoid
incurring self-hate. Her bargain, like Helen’s, is no longer with human
beings but with God, on whom she relies to honor her claims. Since one
of her shoulds is that her claims must not be for earthly rewards, she
cannot be disappointed by anything that happens to her.

This is not a permanent solution for Jane, however, as it is for Helen
Burns, since Jane is not of an otherworldly disposition and is full of
appetites. Once the crisis created by the revelation of Rochester’s mar-
riage passes, her desires for earthly fulfillment return. She does not
experience these desires as conscious claims, however, for that would
violate her taboos. She is rewarded for her virtue by the author, the God
of this fictional universe, who makes her every wish come true. Jane
finds the family she has always longed for in the Rivers and becomes
financially independent when she inherits a fortune from her uncle Eyre.
The obstacles to the kind of union she desires with Rochester are cleared
away by the death of Bertha and his maiming and reformation.

The last quarter of the novel continues Jane’s vindication. She wins
the love and respect of the Rivers sisters, who are among the handful of
people in her world whose esteem is worth having, and she becomes a
favorite with her pupils and their parents when she teaches at the village school. She receives an impressive tribute from St. John Rivers, who asks her to be his wife and accompany him to India as a missionary. When Jane protests her unfitness for the task, St. John recounts all the virtues she has displayed in the ten months he has been studying her character. In the village school, she demonstrated that she "could perform well, punctually, uprightly, labour uncongenial to [her] habits and inclinations" (ch. 34). The "resolute readiness" with which she divided her inheritance into four shares, showed her freedom from avarice and respect for abstract justice, as well as a soul that revels "in the flame and excitement of sacrifice." In studying Hindustani at his request, she displayed "tractability," "untiring assiduity," and an "unshaken temper." She is "docile, diligent, disinterested, faithful, constant, and courageous; very gentle, and very heroic" (ch. 34). The despised child of Gateshead could wish for no higher praise. St. John is in love with the wealthy, beautiful, socially accomplished Rosamond Oliver, but it is Jane who has the moral and intellectual qualities he desires. She has triumphed once again over the kind of woman to whom she has felt inferior.

What Jane misses in St. John is "the sweet homage given to beauty, youth, and grace" that she had received from Rochester. "He was fond and proud of me—it is what no man besides will ever be" (ch. 31). Only Rochester can satisfy her need to be loved as a woman, but she seems to have lost him forever. On the verge of acceding to St. John's wishes, Jane is saved by a mysterious summons, as she hears Rochester calling. When she revisits the environs of Thornfield, the innkeeper tells her that Rochester "set store on her past everything" and sought her, after she ran away, "as if she had been the most precious thing he had in the world" (ch. 37). The fact that life seems empty to Rochester without her is another tribute to Jane. When they are reunited at Ferndean, his reception does not disappoint, and after their marriage, Jane overhears a conversation between the servants in which they recognize her fitness to be Rochester's wife despite the fact that she is neither beautiful nor a fine lady, two things about which she has always been insecure. This is the final note in the swelling chorus of praise that accompanies her vindication.

The last quarter of the novel tailors the world to Jane's needs. Although she still has the insecurities, compulsions, and conflicts induced by her childhood, she does not have to outgrow them to avoid their
destructive effects. By solving her problems for her, the author encourages us to see Jane as a strong, mature person who achieves an ideal happiness. Jane’s psychological problems must be obscured, of course, if we are to accept the self-congratulatory rhetoric that contributes to our sense of her vindication and growth.

While St. John’s proposal is a tribute, it is also extremely threatening; for although Jane knows that marriage to him would destroy her, she has difficulty resisting his dominating personality. St. John is a “cold, hard, ambitious man” (ch. 32) who becomes restless after entering the clergy because “the heart of a politician, of a soldier, of a votary of glory, a lover of renown” beats under his curate’s surplice (ch. 31). His solution is to seek glory in the service of God as a missionary. He will not be “subject to the defective laws and erring control” of his “feeble fellow-worms” but will be the servant of an “All-perfect,” “infallible master” (ch. 34), who will reward him with an “incorruptible crown” (ch. 38). He represses his need for love and channels his energy into his calling, in which he wishes Jane to participate. He wants Jane to be his wife so that she can help him in his missionary work, but she does not share his calling and knows that he does not love her. She feels that he would not protect her or care if she died. Jane refuses to marry St. John, but she offers to accompany him as his assistant, despite her conviction that the climate of India will kill her and that going there is “almost equivalent to committing suicide” (ch. 35). She can fight for a certain kind of emotional integrity (if they did not marry, her thoughts and feelings would still be her own), but not for the freedom to do what she wants or, indeed, for her very life. Why is this so?

Although Jane is ashamed of her childhood pusillanimity and frequently boasts of her fearlessness and ability to stand up for herself, she remains a predominantly compliant person who is looking for approval and conforms to traditional values. Her resoluteness and indomitability tend to be exercised in the name of religion and propriety. She can resist what she regards as immoral but is submissive toward people she admires as her superiors. As we have seen, she models herself on Helen Burns and follows her teachings. She tells us that Rochester exerted “an influence that quite mastered me—that took my feelings from my own power and fettered them in his” (ch. 17). She reverences his mind and likes to serve and obey him “in all that [is] right” (ch. 20). She can assert her independence only when he asks her to do wrong. Jane feels that
Diana Rivers “far excel[s]” her in beauty and “animal spirits” (ch. 30) and explains that “it was my nature to feel pleasure in yielding to authority supported like hers; and to bend, where my conscience and self-respect permitted, to an active will” (ch. 29).

St. John also triggers Jane’s compliance. Although she criticizes him for being stern, exacting, and ambitious, she sees him as a great and glorious figure: “his is the ambition of the high master-spirit, which aims to fill a place in the first rank of those . . . who are called, and chosen, and faithful” (ch. 38). St. John gains an influence that takes away Jane’s “liberty of mind.” This is partly because his perfectionistic standards exacerbate her feelings of inadequacy. Whereas everything she did suited Rochester, she is afraid of not pleasing St. John and is driven to satisfy him. As Diana observes, whatever St. John exacts, Jane forces herself to perform. She finds, however, that “his praise and notice” are more oppressive “than his indifference,” since “only serious moods and occupations” are acceptable to him, and she is forced to repress her “vivacity”: “I fell under a freezing spell. When he said ‘go,’ I went! ‘come,’ I came; ‘do this,’ I did it. But I did not love my servitude: I wished, many a time, he had continued to neglect me” (ch. 34). She wants more and more to please him but feels that to do so “I must disown half my nature, stifle half my faculties, wrest my tastes from their original bent, force myself to the adoption of pursuits for which I had no natural vocation.” Trying to explain her own behavior, Jane points out that never in her life has she “known any medium in my dealings with positive, hard characters, antagonistic to my own, between absolute submission and determined revolt” (ch. 34). She observes the one up to the “very moment of bursting, sometimes with volcanic vehemence, into the other.” We have seen Jane driven to rebel against the Reeds and Rochester, but since “present circumstances” do not warrant a “mutiny,” she submits to St. John Rivers.

Much as she dislikes her servitude, Jane cannot stand up for herself because she has no self to stand up for. She grew up in an environment that gave her no opportunity to remain in touch with her spontaneous feelings. Instead, she developed neurotic needs and defenses that continue to govern her. Her life is focused on managing her rage, gaining security, and assuaging her feelings of being wicked, unworthy, and unlovable. She is pursuing not self-realization but reassurance; her behavior is governed by external sources of validation, whether they be other people, God, or a set of absolute values. She can rebel against
Rochester when he threatens her need for rectitude, but she has difficulty resisting a righteous man like St. John, especially when the occupation he offers promises “sublime results” (ch. 34).

St. John appeals to Jane’s craving for glory and a significant life. Like Helen Burns, he admonishes her not to “cling so tenaciously to ties of the flesh,” and he warns that if she refuses to marry him, she will limit herself “for ever to a track of selfish ease and barren obscurity” (ch. 34). What Jane most craves, however, is human warmth, the domestic pleasures of life, to be valued and loved as a person—the things she missed as a child. St. John prizes her abilities “as a soldier would a good weapon,” but he has no affection for her. She can summon the force to resist his demand for marriage because it arouses some of her deepest insecurities. Unlike Rochester, St. John is a handsome man who exacerbates her feeling of unattractiveness, and he is in love with the beautiful Rosamond. If they married, she would have to “endure all the forms of love . . . and know that the spirit was quite absent.” Marriage to St. John would be a “monstrous” “martyrdom” in which she would continually be made to feel unappealing and unloved, a poor substitute for Rosamond Oliver. Moreover, she fears that as his wife she would have to disown much of her nature. Whereas merging with Rochester would allow her to fulfill her repressed desires, merging with St. John would force her to stifle her feelings.

Because she objects to his conception of marriage and scorns his idea of love, Jane has moral grounds on which to decline St. John’s proposal, but she has no such grounds on which to refuse to accompany him as his assistant. Her aversion to the life she would lead and fear of a premature death are not enough to overcome her submissiveness and need for his approval. When St. John withdraws after her refusal to marry him, Jane cannot bear the estrangement and complains that his coldness is killing her. Trying to regain his friendship, she renews her offer to accompany him, although she continues to be afraid that he will destroy her. She tells Diana that he is a “good and great man” who pitilessly forgets “the feelings and claims of little people” (ch. 35). The “insignificant” had best “keep out of his way; lest, in his progress, he should trample them down.” Nonetheless, Jane is all but swept away when St. John makes a final effort to persuade her to marry him. Overcome by veneration, she is tempted “to rush down the torrent of his will into the gulf of his existence, and there lose my own”: “Religion called—Angels beckoned—God commanded—life rolled together like
a scroll—death’s gates opening, showed eternity beyond: it seemed, that for safety and bliss there, all here might be sacrificed in a second” (ch. 35). Jane is propelled along this path not only by the influence of St. John but also by that of Helen Burns.

When Dorothea Brooke is about to say “yes to her own doom” because of her compulsive compliance, George Eliot rescues her by killing off Edward Casaubon. Charlotte Brontë saves Jane from a similar fate by an even more intrusive device, the mysterious summons from Rochester. The author’s psychological realism having led her heroine to the verge of a self-destructive act, she extricates Jane and preserves the comic structure of the novel by the introduction of a supernatural element. The voice Jane hears is not a psychologically explicable delusion; Rochester actually calls her from Ferndean and she miraculously hears him. His summons gives Jane the strength to break with St. John, who goes off to a glorious but early death, thus confirming Jane’s fears for herself should she accompany him.

While Jane remains a mimetic character to the end, the author’s manipulations of the action obscure her psychological problems. She does not have to outgrow her compulsive compliance in order to escape the danger posed by St. John but is rescued by the mysterious summons from Rochester. She goes back to Thornfield, but as she approaches the house she realizes that if Rochester is there with his lunatic wife, she “can have nothing to do with him” (ch. 36). She will still be caught between her needs for love and rectitude and will have to leave once again. Happily, Bertha is dead and Rochester is free. Even better, Rochester is helpless, “blind and a cripple.” “I love you better now,” she tells him, “when I can really be useful to you, than I did in your state of proud independence” (ch. 37). Rochester’s dependence gives Jane something significant to do with her life. She will not be limited to the selfish ease and barren obscurity that St. John had said would be her lot if she refused to marry him but will be busy looking after Rochester.

Although Jane enjoys the power Rochester’s helplessness gives her, she needs to preserve her sense of him as a formidable person in whom she can lose herself and through whom she can vicariously fulfill her expansive desires. He is a “sightless Samson” who is “dangerous to approach” in his “blind ferocity,” a “royal eagle, chained to a perch,” who must “entreat a sparrow to become its purveyor” (ch. 37). Jane is content with the role of sparrow—she had described herself as one of the insignificant little people who should keep out of St. John’s way—as
long as she can continue to see Rochester as a majestic being whom she possesses through her submission. She need not be afraid that he will trample her down. Jane needs at once to be great and small, and her merger with Rochester satisfies both requirements.

Jane says that Rochester suits her “to the finest fibre of [her] nature” (ch. 37), and, indeed, he suits her better now than before. We have seen that when Miss Temple leaves Lowood, Jane longs to go forth into the world to seek real knowledge of life amidst its perils but is afraid of doing anything that might expose her to reproach. When she meets Rochester, she finds that she can experience an exciting life vicariously through him while keeping the real thing at a safe distance. She wants him to have had an adventurous existence, to be a nearly extinct volcano whose occasional modest eruptions frighten others but not herself. She does not know that he poses a threat to her virtue. After Rochester proposes, Jane is apprehensive about being his wife. She feels inferior because of her lack of “fortune, beauty, [and] connections” (ch. 25). She likes to hear about his travels, but she does not look forward to accompanying him as a fine lady, and she strenuously resists his efforts to adorn her. Her conquest of Rochester at once compensates for and exacerbates her sense of inadequacy. She could not have been happy had they married at this point, even if Rochester had been free.

When Jane marries Rochester at the end, she is no longer poor, she has connections, and, since he is maimed and blind, her looks no longer matter. As he says, “fine clothes and jewels” are “not worth a fillip” now (ch. 37). Jane will not have to encounter the perils of traveling with him as a fine lady. Rochester is as dependent on her as she is on him and just as content to lead a reclusive existence. He no longer poses a threat to her piety and rectitude, since he has been humbled by his misfortunes, which he has accepted as the chastisements of divine justice: “I began to experience remorse, repentance; the wish for reconciliation to my Maker” (ch. 37). His rebellion is now all in the past. He has learned the lessons Jane was trying to teach him, just as she has learned the lessons of Helen Burns. He is rewarded for his new piety when his call for Jane mysteriously reaches her and when he recovers some of his vision.

*Jane Eyre* has a fairy-tale ending in which Cinderella gets the prince and lives happily ever after. After ten years of marriage, Jane holds herself “supremely blest” (ch. 38), and her happiness is understandable. She has
received the love, the validation of her worth, and the social position she deserves in a way that does not activate her conflicts or arouse her insecurities.

That conflicts and insecurities are still there we may infer from Jane's narration. Like Pip, she tells her story in part to celebrate herself, to show how well she turned out and how her virtue has been rewarded. She would not be motivated to do this unless she still felt a need for self-vindication. If Jane were at peace with herself, would she be so self-congratulatory, so persistently boastful, self-justifying, and condescending toward others? She is at pains to repeat all the tributes she has received and to call attention to her talents, virtues, and triumphs. She has a continuing need to repudiate the things said about her at Gateshead and to prove her superiority. The Jane who narrates the novel is not as inwardly serene as she supposes herself to be.

Jane presents her life with Rochester as ideal, and it is certainly the most satisfying she can achieve, given her needs and conflicts. But it does not seem to fulfill her earlier longing for a fuller existence. When Miss Temple leaves Lowood to marry, Jane craves the “varied field of hopes and fears, of sensations and excitements” that awaits those who have “the courage to go forth” into the world. She desires liberty, excitement, and enjoyment but settles for a new servitude in which everything is “respectable, proper, en règle” (ch. 10). Restless at Thornfield before the arrival of Rochester, she says that human beings cannot be satisfied with “tranquillity,” that they “must have action,” and she evokes the image of millions of women “in silent revolt against their lot” (ch. 12). They “need exercise for their faculties” and suffer as men would from “too rigid a constraint, too absolute a stagnation.” It is narrow-minded of men “to say that they ought to confine themselves to making puddings and knitting stockings, to playing on the piano and embroidering bags.”

Jane exercises her faculties to some extent as a teacher at Morton school, but she is eager to leave that unprestigious position when she receives an inheritance. St. John asks if the “consciousness of having done some real good” has not given her pleasure and proposes that she devote her life to the task of regenerating her race, but Jane replies that she wants to “enjoy [her] own faculties as well as to cultivate those of other people” (ch. 34). Jane seems to be saying that she wants to actualize herself, but when St. John asks what employment she proposes as a substitute for the one she is relinquishing, she replies that she wants “to clean down Moor House from chamber to cellar,” “to rub it up . . .
till it glitters again,” and “to arrange every chair, table, bed, carpet with mathematical precision.” She wants to have things “in an absolutely perfect state of readiness” for Diana and Mary when they return. St. John trusts that “when the first flush of vivacity is over,” Jane “will look a little higher than domestic endearments and household joys.” “The best things the world has!” Jane exclaims. Is there a difference between cleaning down and rubbing up Moor House and the pudding making and stocking knitting to which women should not be confined? What has happened to Jane’s revolt against the feminine lot?

There is a disparity, as we have seen, between the rebellious, adventurous, expansive side of Jane and her timid conventionality. While leading a “tranquil, settled,” dutiful life as teacher at Morton school, she rushes “into strange dreams at night: dreams many-coloured, agitated, full of the ideal, the stirring, the stormy—dreams where, amidst unusual scenes, charged with adventure, with agitating risk and romantic chance, I still again and again met Mr. Rochester, always at some exciting crisis” (ch. 32). What a contrast between such dreams, full of sensation and excitement, and the life she celebrates as so idyllic at the end. She is living at Ferndean, a damp, “desolate spot” (ch. 36), so “insalubrious” that it cannot be rented (ch. 37). As an act of conscience, Rochester kept Bertha at Thornfield rather than housing her there. She and Rochester “are ever together,” with Jane reading to him, conducting him where he wants to go, and “doing for him what he wished to be done” (ch. 38).

Except for the presence of Rochester, Jane is leading the tranquil, confined life full of domestic duties against which she envisions millions of women being in silent revolt. But Rochester makes all the difference, of course. Jane craves freedom from time to time, but it is freedom from constraint rather than freedom to fulfill herself. When she achieves a measure of independence through her inheritance, she does not know what to do with it, other than to clean down Moor house. She has no answer to St. John’s question about “what aim, what purpose” she has in life (ch. 34). Like the average woman of her culture, Jane lives for and through a man. Without Rochester, she would become like the old maids of whom Brontë writes with such compassion in Shirley.

What separates Jane from the average is the intensity of her relationship with Rochester, the completeness with which she merges with her mate. She holds herself “supremely blest” because “I am my husband’s life as fully as he is mine. No woman was ever nearer to her mate than I am: ever more absolutely bone of his bone, and flesh of his flesh” (ch.
38). Whereas love is for most men a thing apart, it is Rochester’s whole existence. Because of his disability, Jane is the exclusive object of his attention. For ten years, he and Jane have been talking “all day long,” never wearying of each other’s company. Jane glories in this existence, but it seems stagnant and confined to me.

The relationship that Jane so romanticizes is, in Horneyan terms, a morbid dependency in which she has no life of her own but lives through Rochester. The relationship is so intense because he needs Jane as much as she needs him; the morbid dependency is mutual. Together, they lead an extremely embedded existence in the damp, womblike world of Ferndean. Jane no longer desires stimulation or the exercise of her faculties—or perhaps she does, since she becomes a writer. But she is writing from a safe retreat, like Jacob Horner and Pip.