Term A ociated i h Clo e Reading

High School

Definitions contain examples from *Jane Eyre* and *Antigonê, and an explanation of how the use of the device links to meaning.*

Literary Elements

Archetype is a character, action, or situation that is a prototype, or pattern, of human life generally; a situation that occurs over and over again in literature, such as a quest, an initiation, or an attempt to overcome evil. Many myths contain archetypes. Two common types of archetypes involve ***setting*** and ***character***. A common archetypal setting is the desert, which is associated with spiritual sterility and barrenness because it is devoid of many amenities and personal comforts. ***Archetypal characters*** are those who embody a certain kind of universal human experience. For example, a *femme fatale*, *siren*, or *temptress* figure is a character who purposefully D ɔ ȳ d y a m i c character world. She travels through life, tested, tempted, and abandoned. In utter despair, she survives by remaining true to her convictions. Her ultimate reward is a strong (legal) marriage to Rochester, a marriage in which she is an equal partner.

Characters are people or animals who take part in the action of a literary work. Readers learn about characters from

- what they say *(*dialogue*)*,
- what they do (actions),
- what they think (interior monologue),
- what others say about them, and
- through the author's direct statement.

The ***protagonist*** is the central character of a drama, novel, short story, or narrative poem. The adversary of this character is then the antagonist. To be believable, a character must reflect universal human characteristics that are the same despite geographical differences and time periods. The emotions and concerns of real people of all times are expressed in concrete terms through the traits of literary characters. An author may choose to emphasize a single important trait, creating what is called a ***flat character***; or the author may present a complex, fully-rounded personality (a three-dimensional or ***round character***). A character that changes little over the course of a narrative is called a ***static character***. Things happen *to* these characters, but little happens *in* them. A character that changes in response to the actions through which he or she passes is called a ***dynamic character***.

Epiphany is a sudden unfolding in which a character proceeds from ignorance and innocence to knowledge and experience.

The ***protagonist*** of *Jane Eyre* is Jane herself because it is her story, and she is always central to the action. She is ***dynamic*** because she changes and adjusts to new circumstances throughout her journey.

Jane Eyre's chief ***antagonist*** is Rochester because he tries to make her into something that she is not, as does St. John later in the story.

A ***flat, static character*** in *Jane Eyre* is the spiteful Aunt Reed, who never changes in her attitude towards Jane, not even on her deathbed.

Motivation—Jane's motivation is self-preservation; she is trying to find a measure of happiness in a world of dreary prospects for an orphan girl with no money.

Epiphany—For example, Jane Eyre suddenly understands all the mysterious events and signs

when she hears Mr. Briggs announce that Mr. Rochester has a wife still living. Everything makes sense to her now.

Foil—a character, usually minor, designed to highlight qualities of a major character: e.g., Blanche Ingram enhances Jane's qualities of modesty and humility.

Stock—a flat character in a standard role with standard traits: e.g., Mrs. Reed is like a wicked stepmother, and her children act as wicked stepsisters and brother.

Details are the facts revealed by the author or speaker that support the attitude or tone in a piece of poetry or prose: e.g., in *Jane Eyre,* Rochester explains the arrangements he made for housing his "mad" wife in this way.

> "'I had some trouble in finding an attendant for her: as it was necessary to select one on whose fidelity dependence could be placed; for her ravings would inevitably betray my secret: besides, she had lucid intervals of days—sometimes weeks—which she filled up with abuse of me. At last I hired Grace Poole, from the Grimsby Retreat. She and the surgeon, Carter…, are the only two I have ever admitted to my confidence. Mrs. Fairfax may indeed have suspected something; but she could have gained no precise knowledge as to facts'" (272).

Rochester seems to have made the best arrangements he possibly could have made for Bertha, but he also wants to keep her hidden away. Since she has periods of sanity, she might reveal her identity if others interacted with her.

Diction is word choice intended to convey a certain effect: e.g., in *Jane Eyre, Charlotte* Brontë describes Bertha in harsh terms:

> "In the deep shade, at the further end of the room, a figure ran backwards and forwards. What it was, whether beast or human being, one could not, at first sight, tell: it grovelled, seemingly, on all fours; it snatched and growled like some strange wild animal: but it was covered with clothing; and a quantity of dark, grizzled hair, wild as a mane, hid its head and face" (257-258).

Words such as *grovelled, snatched, mane* make Bertha appear as something less than human.

The ***denotative*** and ***connotative*** meanings of words must also be considered. Denotation refers to the dictionary definition of a word, whereas ***connotation*** refers to the feelings and attitudes associated with a word. Here is an example from *Jane Eyre:* "'And, Miss Eyre, so much was I flattered by this preference of the Gallic sylph for her British gnome, that I installed her in an hotel…'" (123).

In this sentence, Brontë emphasizes the contrast between Rochester and Celine Varens, the French opera singer, by having him call Celine a sylph—"(1) any of a class of imaginary beings supposed to inhabit the air. (2) a slender, graceful woman or girl." And he calls himself a gnome—"in folklore, a dwarf supposed to dwell in the earth and guard its treasures." (definitions from Webster's)

The ***connotations*** of these two words reinforce even more the differences between Celine and Rochester. "Sylph" suggests beauty, delicateness, happiness, lightness, etc., while "gnome" suggests ugliness, heaviness, despair, darkness, etc.—or day and night. Neither sylphs nor gnomes exist, Brontë perhaps suggesting through these words that neither does their relationship. Rochester discovers later that Celine was only using him.

Dialect is the speech of a particular region or group as it differs from those of a real or imaginary standard speech. For example, John and Mary, the servants at Ferndean, speak in a lower-class dialect, speech that distinguishes their position in society. After Jane and Rochester marry, Jane hears John say, "'She'll happen do better for him nor ony o' t' grand ladies.' And again, 'If she ben't one o' the' handsomest, she's noan faal and varry good-natured; and i' his een she's fair beautiful, onybody may see that'" (- ! arry good-

and in his eyes she's quite beautiful, anybody may see that.")

Euphemism is the use of a word or phrase that is less expressive or direct but considered less distasteful or offensive than another: e.g., when Helen Burns is dying of tuberculosis, the doctor says, "'she'll not be here long'" (69). Then Jane visits Helen and asks her, "'Are you going somewhere, Helen? Are you going home?'" And Helen replies, "'Yes; to my long home—my last home'" (70). These phrases (*not be here long* and *long/last home*) soften the blow of Helen's dying.

An idiom is an accepted phrase or expression having a meaning different from the literal: e.g., when Abbot and Bessie take Jane to lock her in the red room, she says, "The fact is, I was a trife beside myself; or rather *out* of myself, as the French would say" (9). Both phrases are idioms because it is physically impossible to be next to oneself or outside of oneself. She means she is thinking and behaving in a way she has not before.

Imagery consists of the words or phrases appealing to the senses—the descriptive diction—a writer uses to represent persons, objects, actions, feelings, and ideas: e.g., in *Jane Eyre,* Jane describes one of her paintings that caught Rochester's attention with its vivid images:

"One gleam of light lifted into relief a half-submerged mast, on which sat a cormorant, dark and large, with wings fecked with foam: its beak held a gold bracelet, set with gems, that I had touched with as brilliant tints as my palette could yield, and as glittering distinctness as my pencil could impart. Sinking below the bird and mast, a drowned corpse glanced through the green water; a fair arm was the only limb clearly visible, whence the bracelet had been washed or torn" (110).

Not only do the images set an eerie mood, they also foreshadow disastrous events in Jane's relationship with Rochester.

Mood is the emotional atmosphere in a literary work: e.g., in *Jane Eyre,* the atmosphere of Moor House beckons to a miserable, destitute Jane:

"I could see clearly a room with a sanded floor, clean scoured; a dresser of walnut, with pewter plates ranged in rows, reflecting the redness and radiance of a glowing peat-fire. I could see a clock, a white deal table, some chairs. The candle, whose ray had been my beacon, burnt on the table; and by its light an elderly woman, somewhat rough-looking, but scrupulously clean, like all about her, was knitting a stocking" (292).

Nothing could appeal to Jane more at this point than a clean, warm home. The occupants take her in, nurse her back to health, and help her achieve a measure of independence.

Plot is the sequence of events or actions in a short story, novel, play, or narrative poem. ***Freytag's Pyramid***

Rising action: Jane falls in love with her employer, Mr. Rochester, as she grows increasingly fearful of whatever haunts the attic.
Climax: After Jane accepts Rochester's marriage proposal and endures his outrageous courtship methods, her discomfort turns to horror and humiliation when she finally meets Bertha Mason Rochester, his wife, in the attic.
Falling Action: Jane escapes Rochester and his desire to make her his pampered mistress and, after much trouble, finds herself at Moor House, where her only living relatives take her in and help her recover.
Denouement: After Jane fends off St. John's advances, she returns to Mr. Rochester, now blinded and crippled, but a widower whom she happily and legally marries at Ferndean in the end.

Conflict is a term that describes the tension between opposing forces in a work of literature and is an essential element of ***plot***. Some of the more common conflicts involve the following forces: a person in opposition to another person, a person opposing fate, an internal battle involving contradictory forces within a character, a person fighting against the forces of nature, or a person in opposition to some aspect of his or her society. Examples of each conflict from *Jane Eyre:*

a person in opposition to another person: Jane vs. John, Jane vs. Mrs. Reed, Jane vs. Mr. Brocklehurst, Jane vs. St. John
a person opposing fate: Jane vs. her position in life as an orphan, a charity school girl, a lowly governess, a village schoolmarm
an internal battle involving contradictory forces within a character: Jane vs. her strong feelings for Rochester, when he is still a married man

Jane vs. the elements and dire hunger when she wanders penniless on the moors after escaping Rochester
a person in opposition to some aspect of his or her society: Jane vs. the rest of society when she, a mere governess, first accepts Rochester's marriage proposal

Flashback is a scene that interrupts the action of a work to show a previous event: e.g., at different points in *Jane Eyre*, Rochester tells the stories of his affair with Celine Varens, the French opera singer, and of his entrapment into a marriage with Bertha Mason, the West Indian madwoman.

Foreshadowing is the use of hints or clues in a narrative to suggest future action. Brontë uses foreshadowing in the passage that follows:

> "As I looked up at them, the moon appeared momentarily in that part of the sky which filled their fissure; her disk was blood-red and half overcast; she seemed to throw on me one bewildered, dreary glance, and buried herself again instantly in the deep drift of cloud. The wind fell, for a second, round Thornfield; but far away over wood and water, poured a wild, melancholy wail: it was sad to listen to, and I ran off again" (243).

The eerie color of the moon and the wild cry occur shortly before Jane's illegal wedding. Both warn of the forthcoming disastrous ceremony and the revelation of Rochester's mad wife locked in Thornfield's attic.

Suspense

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the person or thing through whose eyes the reader experiences the action. Jane Eyre tells her story from the distance of ten years' time, a perspective that influences her story yet provides the understanding she has gained over the years.

Shift in point of view—The point of view shifts to Rochester's in Chapter 26 when he explains to Jane the history of his marriage to Bertha.

Rhetorical Shift or *turn* refers to a change or movement in a piece resulting from an epiphany, realization, or insight gained by the speaker, a character, or the reader. In *Jane Eyre*, when Jane falls in love with Rochester, her language reflects her new-found happiness:

> "I felt at times as if he were my relation, rather than my master: yet he was imperious sometimes still; but I did not mind that; I saw it was his way. So happy, so gratified did I become with this new interest added to life, that I ceased to pine after kindred. My thin crescent-destiny seemed to enlarge; the blanks of existence were filled up; my bodily health improved; I gathered flesh and strength" (129).

Of course, this happiness she feels now only makes more painful her disappointment later when she discovers Rochester already has a wife.

Setting is the time and place in which events in a short story, novel, play, or narrative poem take place. *Jane Eyre* takes place in the early nineteenth century and has five major settings: Gateshead, Lowood, Thornfield, Moor House (Marsh End), and Ferndean Manor.

Style is the writer's characteristic manner of employing language.

Theme is the central message of a literary work. It is not the same as a subject, which can be expressed in a word or two: courage, survival, war, pride, etc. The theme is the idea the author wishes to convey about that subject. It is expressed as a sentence or general statement about life or human nature. A literary work may have more than one theme, and most themes are not directly stated but are implied. The reader must think about all the elements of the work and use them to make inferences, or reasonable guesses, as to which themes seem to be implied. An example of a theme on the subject of pride might be that pride often precedes a fall. Themes in *Jane Eyre* might be stated as "Be true to your beliefs" and "Act from a balance of passion and reason."

Tone is the writer's or speaker's attitude toward a subject, character, or audience, and it is conveyed primarily through the author's choice of diction, imagery, figurative language, details, and syntax. Tone may be serious, humorous, sarcastic, indignant, etc. Jane's description of the morning after Rochester proposes to her reflects her intense happiness:

> "I was not surprised, when I ran down into the hall, to see that a brilliant June morning had succeeded to the tempest of the night; and to feel, through the open glass door, the breathing of a fresh and fragrant breeze. Nature must be gladsome when I was so happy. A beggar-woman and her little boy—pale, ragged objects both—were coming up the walk, and I ran down and gave them all the money I happened to have in my purse—some three or four shillings: good or bad, they must partake of my jubilee. The rooks cawed, and blither birds sang; but nothing was so merry or so musical as my own rejoicing heart" (226).

Again, this supreme happiness of hers will soon come crashing down when Jane learns of the existence of Bertha Mason Rochester.

Tone shift, multiple tones

Figures of Speech

Figures of speech are words or phrases that describe one thing in terms of something else. They always involve some sort of imaginative comparison between seemingly unlike things. Not meant to be taken literally, fgurative language is used to produce images in a reader's mind and to express ideas in fresh, vivid, and imaginative ways. The most common examples of fgurative language, or fgures of speech, used in both prose and poetry are ***simile, metaphor***, and ***personiýcation***.

Apostrophe is a form of personifcation in which the absent or dead are spoken to as if present, and the inanimate as if animate. These are all addressed directly: e.g., the night after Jane learns about Rochester, she lies in her room thinking what to do:

> "She broke forth as never moon yet burst from cloud: a hand frst penetrated the sable folds and waved them away; then, not a moon, but a white human form shone in the azure, inclining a glorious brow earthward. It gazed and gazed and gazed on me. It spoke to my spirit: immeasurably distant was the tone, yet so near, it whispered in my heart 'My daughter, fee temptation!' 'Mother, I will'" (281).

Motherless Jane fnds the comfort and support she needs ¨ ee A m T φ Ɔ Ɔ nd s es ö s A ℵ ƺ ℵ sM p m x l M p T M ɹ X S S Q G

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Rochester's mad wife locked in the attic unfolds.

Antithesis is a contrast or opposition. St. John with his *icy* disposition is the antithesis of the -natured Rochester:

> "'The picture you have just drawn is suggestive of a rather too overwhelming contrast. Your words have delineated very prettily a graceful Apollo: he is present to your imagination,—tall, fair, blue-eyed, and with a Grecian pro f le. Your eyes dwell

picks at Helen for the slightest infraction. Jane thinks Miss Temple is the best teacher because she is so kind, dignified, and intelligent.

Comparison is a traditional rhetorical strategy based on the assumption that a subject may be shown more clearly by pointing out ways it is similar to something else. The two subjects may each be explained separately, and then their similarities are pointed out. For example, Rochester explains to Jane about his living with mistresses, how it is "'the next worst thing to buying a slave: both are often by nature, and always by position, inferior: and to live familiarly with inferiors is degrading'" (274). And Jane sees that she would be no different from Celine, Giacinta, or Clara:

> "I felt the truth of these words; and I drew from them the certain inference, that if I were so far to forget myself and all the teaching that had ever been instilled into me as—under any pretext—with any justification—through any temptation—to become the successor of these poor girls, he would one day regard me with the same feeling which now in his mind desecrated their memory" (274).

Contrast is a traditional rhetorical strategy based on the assumption that a subject may be shown more clearly by pointing out ways in which it is unlike another subject. When Jane first hears of Blanche Ingram's beauty, she tries to maintain her grip on reality (she has no business falling in love with her employer) through painting two portraits showing the contrast between her and Blanche—"Portrait of a Governess, disconnected poor, and plain" and "Blanche, an accomplished lady of rank" (141).

Characterization is the act of creating or developing

party. Her criticism of their behavior enhances Jane's character, for she is above reproach.

Symbolism is the use of any object, person, place, or action that not only has a meaning in itself but also stands for something larger than itself, such as a quality, attitude, belief, or value. There are two basic types, *universal* (a symbol that is common to all mankind) and *contextual* (a symbol used in a particular way by an individual author). For example, in *Jane Eyre*, the chestnut tree stands as a symbol of what happens to Jane and Rochester. They will be separated for a time but rejoined after Rochester suffers burns and mutilation trying to rescue Bertha from a burning Thornfeld:

> "…I faced the wreck of the chestnut-tree; it stood up, black and riven: the trunk, split down the centre, gasped ghastly. The cloven halves were not broken from each other, for the frm base and strong roots kept them unsundered below; though community of vitality was destroyed—the sap could fow no more; their great boughs on each side were dead, and next winter's tempests would be sure to fell one or both to earth: as yet, however they might be said to form one tree—a ruin, but an entire ruin" (243).

Understatement is the opposite of hyperbole. It is a kind of irony that deliberately represents something as being much less than it really is: e.g., Jane Eyre tries to make sense of Grace Poole and her eccentric behavior. Puzzled by everyone's tolerance of Grace, she will not allow herself to grow too alarmed: "When thus alone I not unfrequently heard Grace Poole's laugh…." (96). Her understated thoughq uld { ʻ h! c ɔ ɔ Ġne " enas!d, e
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