Journal of Human Sciences Oum El Bouaghi University
ISSN 1112-9255
Vol 07, Number 02, june 2020

OEB Univ. Publish. Co.

Inheriting the Victorians: The Revival of Jane Eyre in Jasper Fforde's The Eyre Affair

وراثة الفيكتوريين: احياء جاين آ ير في ذي آ ير افير لجاسبر فورد

Ilhem OTMANI*,Laboratory LECUCRA,University of Annaba, Algeria.
ilhemotmani7@gmail.com
Pr.Salah BOUREGBI,University of Annaba, Algeria.
Salihbourg@yahoo.fr

Date of receipt:(05/09/2019) , Date of revision: (24/01/2020), Date of acceptation :(25/04/2002)

Abstract :

This paper is concerned with novelistic refashioning of the nineteenth century as a significant trend in postmodern literature. Acknowledged as an innovative literary technique, rewriting has increasingly been used by many postmodern British novelists to engage critically with Victorian texts. This article focuses on the process of the postmodern rewriting of the Victorian text by addressing the novels of Charlotte Brontë's Jane Eyre (1847) and Jasper Fforde's The Eyre Affair (2001). Its main purpose is to investigate why the Victorian in particualr holds such an attraction for the postmodernist writers. Our aim is to reveal the numerous similarities between the two novels. What qualities have been absorbed and what have been excluded.

Keyword: Jane Eyre, Jasper Fforde, postmodernism, rewriting, The Eyre Affair, the Victorians.

.

ملخص :

تعنى هذه الورقة بالتجديد الروائي للقرن التاسع عشر باعتباره توجها مهما في أدب ما بعد الحداثة. معترف بها كأسلوب ادبي مبتكر، استخدمت اعادة الكتابة بشكل متزايد من قبل عدد من روائيي ما بعد الحداثة البريطانيين للتعامل بشكل نقدي مع النصوص الفيكتورية . ان هذه المقالة تركز على عملية اعادة كتابة النص الفيكتوري من خلال معالجة روايات شارلوت برونتي جاين آ ير(1847) وذي آ ير افير لجاسبر فورد (2001).الغرض الرئيسي منها هو التحقيق في سبب انجذاب كتاب ما بعد الحداثة للفيكتوريين بشكل خاص.هدفنا هو الكشف عن اوجه التشابه العديدة بين الروايتين.ماهي الخصائص التي تم استيعابها والتي تم استبعادها.

الكلمات المفتاحية: جاين آ ير، جاسبر فورد، ما بعد الحداثة، إعادة الكتابة، ذي آ ير أفير، الفيكتوريون.

* **Corresponding Author: Ilhem OTMANI, Email: ilhemotmani7@gmail.com**

Introduction :

The late twentieth and the twenty-first centuries have shown interest in texts knowingly set in the Victorian era. For a great part, Contemporary writers choose to revive the voices of their grand Victorian celebrities, and rewriting has become a major feature of British postmodern literature.

Apart from engaging with the Victorian literature in general, the attraction to Charlotte Brontë's Jane Eyre has significantly increased. Considered by now a classic, Jane Eyre proves important by its ongoing republication and filmic interpretation from many perspectives. It sustains a varied afterlife from stage screens, comic books, parodies, literary criticism, and a considerable number of novelistic adaptations and rewritings.

Indeed, many studies have been carried on Jane Eyre from the feminist, the psychological, the social and the postcolonial perspectives. Besides, much critical responses to this latter tend to be about Jean Rhys's Wide Sargasso Sea (1966). However, no study has touched upon the present topic so far. Quite surprisingly, Jane Eyre has never been compared to The Eyre Affair in a thoroughly documented study so far as we know at least.

As a matter of fact, the frequency with which the Victorian literature has been and continues to be reinvented suggests the degree of interest it has revived. This is what attracts the attention of Christian Gutleben and Andrea Kirchknopf to devote scholarly attention to this phenomenon. Considered as the first attempt to determine the importance of the postmodern rewrites, Gutleben's Nostalgic Postmodernism: The Victorian Tradition and the Contemporary British Novel (2001) discusses the relationship of postmodernism with the Victorian models. The significance of this book lies in the inclusion of most of the recent postmodern rewrites to see how and why they revert to the nineteenth century.

More specifically, Andrea Kirchknopf's seminal book Rewriting the Victorians: Modes of Literary Engagement with the 19th Century (2013) surveys questions about the nature of the postmodern return to the Victorian tradition. The book focuses on novelistic refashioning of the past with a special attention to some rewritings of Charlotte Bronte's Jane Eyre. Peter Carey's Oscar and Lucinda, Jean Rhys's Wide Sargasso Sea, and Jasper Fforde's The Eyre Affair are among the novels discussed by Kirchknopf.

In fact, the importance of these previous studies is crucial to my research. However, the contribution of my study resides primarily in their limitations. On the one hand, Gutleben's analysis, due to its broad scope, makes an unconvincing, even inconsistent, assessment of the postmodern rewrites. On the other hand, Kirchknopf deals with postmodern rewriting of the Victorian text genuinely. Her book, Unlike Gutleben's, covers almost all argumentative aspects about the Victorian literature rewritten in the postmodern novel, but analyzed them only as parodies or pastiches of their Victorian originals.

In this article, our aim is to undertake a study about the revival of the Victorian novel in postmodern fiction through intertextual interplays. Intertextuality, in fact, is the most useful literary mode to address the postmodern interest in the past. What my study ultimately offers is an evaluation of some critical issues in The Eyre Affair such as the alternative ending, point of view, the death of the author, and the building of characters. More than this, we seek to answer the following question: What is the writer's impetus behind revisiting an already existing Victorian text? Is it to pay tribute to its grand Victorian ancestry or to rebel against it?

2. Postmodernism: Shadowing the Victorians :

In defining Postmodernism, the postmodern theorist Linda Hutcheon writes that the term is "a fundamentally contradictory enterprise" (1988, p. 23) and one of "the most over-and under-defined" (ibid, p. 3) terms. Admittedly, Hutcheon's view, about the difficulty and the ambiguity the term raises, rings true when one looks at the heterogeneous number of definitions that the term bears, and the different spheres of cultural studies, literary theory, media and aesthetic, where it appears.

In fact, the term has several points of origins and is in a perpetual process of definition. Its earliest emergence dates back to the first decade of the twentieth century, and has been discussed by critics, like Perry Anderson and Frederic Jameson. In architecture, it has been widely used to name a school or a movement. Postmodernism begins in 1950s and extends to the late 1960s by intellectuals such as Roland Barthes, Jean Baudrillard, Gilles Deleze, Jacques Derrida, Michel Foucault, Julia Kristeva, Jacque Lacan and Jean François Lyotard. It represents given cultural forms and denotes the various ways of dealing with the changes of the post-war society. Besides, it departs from the conventional studies to address the crisis of representation from which the Western philosophical tradition suffers.

It is a well-established fact that cultural phenomena that defy simple definitions are certain to increase the appetite of scholars. This is particularly true of the phenomenon: postmodernism. The theorist Ihab Hassan asserts that postmodernism is a term that resists definition. He stresses the complexity of describing postmodernism by saying: "what was postmodernism? What was postmodernism and what is still? I believe it is revenant, the turn of irrepressible, every time we are rid of it, its ghost rises back. Like a ghost, it eludes definition" (2001, p.1). In the same perspective, when answering the question what is postmodernism? The French philosopher Jean François Lyotard replies, "What, then, is the postmodern? What place does it or does it not occupy in the vertiginous work of the questions hurled at the rules of image and narration? It is undoubtedly a part of the modern" (1984, p.81). Postmodernism thus understood is a continuation of modernism; the postmodern era does not signal the beginning of a new era; it is rather the continuation of the modern era.

Within its very name, the prefix 'post' suggests that postmodernism is contracted with modernism, whether as its substitute or its chronological continuation. Nevertheless, "post" has much to do with a critical engagement with modernism; it is the incorporation of modernism instead of its suppression. Accordingly, the relationship is something more akin to a continuous engagement with modernism, that is, postmodernism needs modernism to survive.

While the concept of modernism can be perceived as "largely Anglo-American one" (Hutcheon, 1988, p. 4), postmodernism is an umbrella term that cannot be used to refer to a particular style or generation. It is a global and international phenomenon that crosses international frontiers and intellectual boundaries. In reality, modernist writers are mainly interested in the formal aspects and the innovative techniques of a literary work, whereas postmodernist art "favors bricolage or pastiche to original production, the mixture of styles and genres, and the juxtaposition of 'low' with high culture. Where modernism is sincere or earnest, postmodernism is playful and ironic" (Nicole, 2009, p. 2).

Historically, the idea of originality used to be a landmark in any literary work; however, it takes another trajectory with the arrival of the postmodern era. It must be noted that unlike modernism, postmodernism does not eliminate the past, but it revisits it. For Umberto Eco (1983), postmodernism is the ironical revision of the past: "[t]he postmodern reply to the modern consists of recognizing that the past, since it cannot be destroyed, because its destruction leads to silence, must be retrieved: but with irony, not innocently" (as cited in Bondanella, 1997, p. 101).

In the same light, Jameson claims that we cannot talk about an authentic culture within postmodernism, as it is a culture of pastiche and "a world in which stylistic innovation is no longer possible, all that is left is to imitate dead styles, to speak through the masks and with the voices of the styles in the imaginary museum" (1998, p. 7). Postmodern culture, in his view, does not only quote other cultural productions and historical moments; rather it "cannibalizes" (1991, p. 96) them to the degree that they lose their historical and critical meaning.

When dealing with rewriting the Victorian, one can encounter a number of key questions about what makes the Victorians such an exciting source for postmodern writers. Is it, as James A. Schiff (1998) puts, a postmodern "urge to retell [and] everyone seems to be [yielding to] it"? (as cited in Jellenik, 2007, p. 2). Is it "a hard thing to make up stories to live by"? Can we "only retell and live by the stories we have read or heard"? (Heilbrun, 1988, p. 37). Definitely, the questions are many and the answers vary a great deal.

Actually, intertextuality was among the many terms often assigned to rewriting. In contemporary literary vocabulary, the language of intertextuality has surfaced in many approaches to literary interpretation. The term emerge in

the twentieth century to denote the dependence of authors on a previously existing tradition. From Mikhail Bakhtin's theory of dialogism to Julia Kristeva's representation of the text as a quotation mosaic, and Roland Barth's perception of the literary work as a citations tissue, intertextuality promises a plurality of meanings. This plurality works against the authoritative, conventional approach to the text. According to Barthes (1981), a truly authentic work can no longer be written because there is always a relationship with previously written texts. Hence, "any text is intertext; other texts are present in it, at varying levels" (as cited in Moore & Thatcher, 2008, p. 121).

Intertextuality, both as a term as well as a theory, keeps holding an influence on those who followed the theoretical heritage of Bakhtin and Kristeva namely Roland Barth. This latter borrowed the term to announce his notion of the "death of the author" in which he goes far to eliminate the author when analyzing a text. This means that what matters for us is the text not the author, and the reader must find a meaning to the text.

Indeed, rewriting makes use of the idea of intertextuality (though they can be used interchangeably in certain contexts) and draws attention to previously written texts but proves its original approach in reshaping them. Adrienne Rich defines the concept of rewriting as "the act of looking back, of seeing with fresh eyes, of entering an old text from a new critical direction" (2006, p. 491). In fact, the attraction to the nineteenth century literature has led to the revival of many Victorian novels. Actually, we clearly notice the popularity of rewriting in fiction by J.M. Coetzee's Foe (1986) a rewriting of Defoe's Robinson Crusoe (1719); Leonardo Sciascia's Candido (1978), a postmodern retelling of Voltaire's Candide (1759); Jean Rhys's Wide Sargasso Sea (1966) a revision of Brontë's Jane Eyre (1847) among many others living in different continents writing in different languages.

From what precedes, we see that despite the huge number of scholars, writers and theorists, who seek to find an exact definition to the term postmodernism, this latter proves to be unfixed nor its essence and contradictory nature could be explained by a single perspective. Besides, we understand that "postmodernism does not produce" (Docherty, 1990, p. 15) but reproduces that is why the idea of uniqueness and absolute truths is undermined in postmodern literature.

3. The Eyre Affair as a Rewriting of Jane Eyre:

Many contemporary reworkings of Jane Eyre critically deal with the ending of the novel in various ways. They examine the protagonist's abandonment of her defiant character in favor of the apparently conservative choice of getting married. Fforde rewrites and extrapolates events that previously happen in Jane Eyre to tell an alternative ending of later novel. Hence, before coming to a detailed comparison of the novels, it is worthwhile to have a brief taste of both of them.

Jane Eyre is about true love that faces many problems but manages successfully to overcome them to fulfill destiny. It is the story of title character from her childhood and her growth, a young orphan girl, who was taken away from the only family left to her to stay at a school of orphans. The novel is narrated in the first person by Jane, and the setting is in north of England. It starts from her childhood at Gateshead Hall where Jane is raised by her rich and cruel aunt, Mrs. Reed.

Later on, while staying at Lowood School (where she becomes a teacher later), she suffers a lot from its devious headmaster, but she acquires friends, religion and also strong opinions about her being equal to everyone. After that, she goes off to work as a governess at a manor called Thornfield, where she blossoms into a young woman, who takes care of her impassioned master named Rochester. The Latter has a Byronic character in this novel with whom Jane finds herself falling secretly in love. Finally, beyond Jane's expectation, Rochester proposes to her and she accepts that disbelievingly. In the wedding day, a man named Mr. Mason claims that Rochester has already a wife and he introduces himself as the brother of that wife whose name is Bertha. After hearing this fact, Rochester takes the wedding party back to Thornfield, where they see Bertha growling, like an animal there.

Although Jane loves Rochester, she chooses to leave there, miserable and penniless. Eventually, Bertha, who was locked in the attic of Thornfield Hall, escapes and burns Thornfield to the ground, and tragically commits suicide by jumping from the roof. Rochester saves the servants life but lost his eye sight and one of his hands. When Jane hears about this event, she goes to Rochester and at last, romantically at Ferndean, they rebuild their relationship and marry. Finally, Rochester recovers his sight and can see their first child (Miles, 1988, p. 7).

The Eyre Affair (2001) is extremely indebted to mostly British literary figures and texts namely to Jane Eyre. When reading the novel, we easily notice the presence of Shakespeare's plays, Dickens's novels as well as Wordsworth's poetry. It is commonly agreed that intertextuality can be achieved through many ways; however, Brian McHale says that there is no "more effective than the device of 'borrowing' a character from another text-'transworld identity'" (1987, p. 57). This is actually, what Fforde does in his novel, borrowing Jane from Bronte's original.

What is noticeable in the novel is that literature is much taken care of, and literary figures are much appreciated. Actually, The Eyre Affair is the first novel of the Thursday Next series, named after the heroine of the novels following her adventures as a literary detective. The novel centers on the character of the Crimean war veteran Thursday next whose mission is to "investigate forgeries, thefts, misrepresentations, and interpretations of those literary texts deemed valuable by society" (Hateley, 2005, p. 1029). A master

literary thief named Acheron Hades, who has the capacity to change shapes and stays invisible on film, is a central character in the novel too.

Later on, Acheron Hades kidnaps and murders characters from Charles Dickens's Martin Chuzzlewit and then abducts Jane Eyre from the pages of the book to the socialist republic of Wales to hold her ransom. After many confrontations, Thursday manages to free Jane and pursues Hades in the fictional world of Brontë's novel. In this latter, she collaborates with Rochester and finally succeeds in dispatching the criminal with a silver bullet and encourages Jane to return to Rochester, instead of accompanying St. John Rivers to India. As a reward, Rochester unites Thursday with her lover Landen.

The actions of the novel are set in the late twenty century England, in an altered post-Orwellian 1985 England and imperial Russia are in a prolonged Crimean War. In this novel, the world to which we are introduced is both contemporary and different from our own. Much of the history that we know is explained differently since time travel entails the possibility of intervention in the past and thus changing history. Accordingly, to understand this novel, the reader should forget the rules of time and reality.

Indeed, this alternative world is the central tool for Fforde's novel. The plot of The Eyre Affair depends on the concept of time travelling and intertextual traveling. The writer skillfully works with the idea of time travel borrowed from the treasury of science fiction genre convention. From the very first beginning, we are introduced to an unacquainted world where Thursday Next has been familiar with time travelling since an early age. She introduced her father as an expert time traveler: "My father had a face that could stop a clock […] it was a phrase the ChronoGuard used to describe someone who had the power to reduce time to an ultra-slow trickle. Dad had been a colonel in the ChronoGuard" (Fforde, 2001, p. 1). The cast also includes her genial uncle MyCroft, who invents a device to transporting people into any literary text in addition to Spike Stoker, an eccentric vampire hunter, and Jack Schitt of the unscrupulous Goliah Corporation. This movement between the book world and real life is a clear form of intertextuality. What blur the lines between these two worlds is the fact that characters can have a literary journey between the real world and the book world, namely to Jane Eyre. Similarly, characters out of Jane Eyre can enter the twentieth century world and act together

In his intertextual novel, Fforde does not offer a definite interpretation of Jane Eyre. In a very original way, he has created The Eyre Affair as a parody of Jane Eyre. Hutcheon (1993) calls parody, whose main function is to borrow from other texts, "a perfect postmodern form" (as cited in Stephan, 2019, p. 38). Mark Berninger and Katrin Thomas state that **"**Instead of using "repetition with Critical difference" as a device of extramural criticism, parody in Jane Eyre serves for intramural analysis of the way fiction works"(2007, p. 185). In fact, the familiarity with the target text and the

ability to recognize the allusions to it form the perfect audience of parody. In this connection, Fforde (2005), in one of his interviews, explains that the reasons behind choosing Jane Eyre is the fact that readers would be familiar with it: "What is important for me with Jane Eyre is that even if you have not read the book or seen the movie, you still know her. She is already there in people's minds" (as cited in Bekiryazici, 2017, p. 113).

In fact, the simple parodies of Bronte's text seem to be the primarily narrative of Fforde's novel, which rewrites and refers to Jane Eyre in obvious plots. It is structured as a literary artifact that can be read and physically entered in his 1985 different world. Another simple parody lies in the use of symbolic names for the main characters; St. John Rivers is, for instance, changed into Acheron Hades. Equally, we can meet characters named Braxton Hicks, Jack Schitt, and Landen Park-Laine (Hateley, 2005, p. 1026). From its mysterious title, which suggests crime and espionage, we already notice the presence of Brontë's heroine. However, in spite of Jane Eyre's appearance in the novel's title, she is the least prominent literary character if compared to Fforde's popular cast list of borrowed literary heroes and heroines. We notice Jane in brief in The Eyre Affair, as the writer attributes only few lines to her. By doing so, Fforde seizes Jane from his novel making her intrusion in the first person narrator impossible. Throughout the novel, Jane and Thursday have brief occasions of communication and collaboration. Jane remains a silent presence, influencing and informing Thursday's character. Clearly, the nineteenth century romance is turned into an action-packed thriller full of shoot outs, fast cars and investigations, and Brontë's heroine is reinvented as an adventure heroine.

Critics maintain that Fforde pays homage to the original story as well as to characters. Instead of attacking Jane Eyre, The Eyre Affair is an elaborate tribute to it. In this regard, Juliette Wells writes that Fforde "pays tribute to the boldness and originality of Bronte's fictional creation" (2007, p. 199). In fact, Thursday shows notable similarities with Jane and Landen resembles Rochester in many aspects. The intertextual relationship between both novels is mirrored in the portrayal of their heroines. Fforde supplies Thursday with many of the qualities of Bronte's heroine, from physical to temperamental. Actually, both heroines are not physically beautiful nor do they show a feminine display. In character too, Thursday Next apparently bears resemblance to Jane as an autonomous and opinionated woman, who goes after her own mind. She is described by her professional partner, Bowden Cable, as "everything a woman should be. Strong and resourceful, loyal and intelligent" (Fforde, 2001, p. 171). The life of Thursday Next, a modern action woman, shows undeniable parallels to Jane's fate, mainly in her anxious relationship to her war-disabled lover, and in her dilemma between liberation and domesticity. By endowing Thursday with several qualities of Jane's, and by having his own protagonist interact so intensively with Rochester, Fforde

makes the possibility of romance between these two characters, rather than- or as well as- the romance between Thursday and Landen (Mettinger & Rubik, 2007, p. 205).

In addition, both texts are narrated through the first person perspective, giving their readers the opportunity to share the subjectivity of the main characters in their paths towards shaping their personalities. Like Bronte's Jane, who is well aware about the process of narrating her story, Thursday recites without ever declaring her authorial identity. Moreover, the mirror scene is revealed in the first chapters of both novels, where the concepts of self- realization and the quest for autonomy are stressed. Like Jane, who is punished and locked up in the red room where she noticed "a fascinated eye towards the dimly gleaming mirror" (Bronte, 1992, p. 111), Thursday distances from herself to see her own image. Her appearance is captured in a glance in the mirror using the personal pronoun "she". She says, "I opened the drawer of my desk and pulled out a small mirror. A woman with somewhat ordinary features stared back at me …She had no cheekbones […] I noticed, had just started to show some rather obvious lines" (Fforde, 2001, p. 19).

In the same way, it was only after having stayed in Thornfield Hall and watched Jane and Rochester's relationship, that she recognizes her emotions for her ex-lover Landen Park-Laine. Thus, the flexible barrier between reality and fiction becomes more captivating in the novel to the point that they become "softer than we think; a bit like a frozen lake. Hundreds of people can walk across it, but then one evening a thin spot develops and someone falls through; the hole frozen over by the following morning"(ibid, p. 206).

Fforde's plot spins far away from that of Bronte's novel, and characters re-envisioned from other fictional works take up much more space on his pages than do those from Jane Eyre. Nevertheless, Jane is never far away, since many of her signal characteristics and experience reappear in Thursday. Much like Jane, who rejects to travel abroad with a man, the manifestation of St. John Rivers (a character from Jane Eyre), is obvious when Thursday receives a proposal from her colleague Bowen Cable.

Aside from noticeable plot parallels, Fforde combines intertextuality and metafiction to parody Jane Eyre. For example, it was in her first visit as a child to Haworth House, where Bronte used to live once, that Thursday enters Jane Eyre (Hateley, 2005, p. 1027). Once inside the novel, she looks at Jane and gets some similarities with her: "I stared at her intently with a mixture of feeling. I had realised not long ago that I myself was no beauty […] I felt myself stand more upright and clench my jaw in subconscious mimicry of her pose" (Fforde, 2001, p. 66).

Thursday shares a signal characteristic with Jane too in terms of family history. Both of them are motivated by loss: Jane loses her parents and her uncle Reed at an early age. She is always seeking for a loving and caring

family as well as for a social status that she needs. In turn, Thursday, who is not orphaned, is affected by loss to regain a damaged reputation, that of her dead brother Anton, who died in apparent infamy during a battle experience. Her uncle Mycroft, who introduces her to the book world, is similar to Jane's uncle John Eyre, who provides her with perfect social position.

Admittedly, the continuous struggle of the poor plain governess to assert her autonomy against the patriarchal society is commonly seen as a model for the development of a feminist consciousness. In this novel, patriarchal authority is represented in the characters of John Reed, Rochester, and St. John Rivers. In The Eyre Affair, despite the possibility opened of both Jane and Thursday achieving an implicitly feminist level of autonomy, the novel shows a conservative rather than revolutionary understanding of feminine subjectivity in relation to cultural capital. In addition, while the novel presents a discourse of female knowledge and authority, it suspiciously includes any desires potentially readable as feminist. It frequently highlights feminine subordination to masculine knowledge via romance plots whereby conservative gender roles are validated under the guise of comedy. The female protagonist of The Eyre Affair appears to live what popular culture does to Charlotte Brontë and Jane Eyre in conflating her with her best known character: gesturing towards feminist discourse while eventually propagating and supporting conservative romantic endings in the service of patriarchal society.

One of the many deviations in The Eyre Affair from Jane Eyre concerns the ending of this latter. In his transformation of the happy endings, Fforde engage with a conventional view of Victorian endings. His novel pinpoints the ending in a way that playfully brings into question the inevitability of the fixed happy ending in general. Besides, it indicates how much we, as readers, are guided by genre conventions and agree with their conventional standards in order to have a satisfactory read. (Mettinger & Rubik, 2007, p. 185)**.** In this regard, one of the protagonist's of David Lodge's Nice Work (1988), which depends on a shared understanding of the conventions of such endings, comments that "all the Victorian novelists could offer as a solution to the problems of industrial capitalism were: a legacy, a marriage, emigration or death" (as cited in Gutleben, 2001, p. 69). Indeed, the final romantic union between the blind Rochester and Jane in Brontë's novel does not please Fforde, and pushes him to attribute another ending to Jane Eyre. According to Fforde's fictional version, Brontë's novel ends with Jane accompanying St John Rivers to India. Thursday's departure with St. John Rivers to India as his helper means that she does not find love but only a job, the thing that effectively discounts the romantic narrative of Brontë's novel and, in turn, privileges the feminist aspect. By revising the ending of Jane Eyre, Fforde's version seems to be the original one and that of Brontë is already an alternative one as Berninger and Thomas writes, "the alternative version of

Jane Eyre turns out to be the original and our original is depicted as an alternative version" (2007, p. 186).

While critics have interpreted Jane Eyre as a gothic romance, a bildungsroman, a feminist novel, a social novel, or an autobiography of Brontë herself, The Eyre Affair displays a postmodern feature that is the blending of genres. It shows similarity to comedy and film scripts that reveal themselves in Fforde's style and plot. It is believed to be a genre busting, as it combines elements of the Gothic, realism, romance and fairy tale, as well as detective and science fiction. In fact, in spite of Forde's use of humor and comedy in his novel, his narrative pattern is quite similar to that of Brontë and the rewrite and the source text interweave to the degree that they can rewrite each other. Fforde's comic detective fiction is decidedly postmodern: packed with invented literatures, histories and elements of popular culture, containing references to the English classics, and subversively using science fiction and fantasy fiction themes.

At last, the postmodern concept of "the death of the author", which holds that the reference to authorial meaning or background is irrelevant in interpreting the text, gets prominence in Fforde's world. For Barthes (1977), "to give a text an author is to impose a limit on a text, to furnish it with a final signified, to close the writing" (as cited in Dasenbrock, 2010, p. 107). Due to the movement of characters in and out of texts, the novel's authorship becomes problematic. Here, although the author Charlotte Bronte is metaphorically dead, this does not stop the events of the story and its important parts like the ending, to be altered**.** According to scholar Erica Hateley, "Thursday, already symbolically associated with Jane Eyre, is effectively associated with Charlotte Bronte in that she 'authors' some of the novels most famous (or infamous) episodes in a style that the Bronte Federation member describes as 'pure Charlotte Bronte'"(2005, pp. 1032-1033).

In Fforde's parallel world, Jane Eyre is a book that was certainly written by Charlotte Bronte; nevertheless, "no one likes the ending" (the one written by Fforde) as Thursday has admitted that the book might have been more pleasing "if Jane had returned to Thornfield Hall and married Rochester" (Fforde, 2001, p. 38). In The Eyre Affair, Bronte loses her control over the text as an author and her novel takes a different turn than she originally intended. For instance, when Jane is kidnapped, the narrative breaks unexpectedly, because it is Jane who is narrating the events of the book. Therefore, when she is abducted from the novel, there is neither a narrator nor actions to be told to the reader. It can only progress when Thursday jumps into the novel and stops Jane to be kidnapped. This means that Thursday surpasses the authorship of Bronte improving the story in a finer way (Bekiryazici, 2017, p. 111)**.**

Outstandingly, the permeability between fiction and reality in Fforde's novel can be perceived as a manifestation of the reader's participation in the creation of meaning. In this world, there is a close link between texts and readers who can, and do, mark a change within their chosen literary sphere. The Eyre Affair invites the reader to observe how imagination works during the reading process to the point that we can say that the narrative is neither Fforde's nor Thursday's, it is the reader's turn to rewrite it and create meaning.

Conclusion :

All that can be said is that postmodernism welcomes the mixing of ideas and genres. Likewise, the rewriting of the Victorians proves that the shadow of the Victorian tradition is haunting the postmodern literature with a considerable number of adaptations born from Victorian texts. Postmodern writers did not only recreate the past, but have instead revealed a postmodern self-consciousness in drawing the relationship between the present and the past. In this light, Peter Widdowson puts that "Canonic texts from the past […] have arguably been central to the construction of 'our' consciousness" (2006, p. 491). Actually, postmodern rewriting challenges the concepts of originality, uniqueness, and the authorial identity. It implies that "there is no originality in literature and any literary work can be a repetition, continuation, or mixture of previous texts" (Herischian, 2012, p. 73). Accordingly, the intention behind rewriting an already existing text can either underline the parodic perspective of writing or paying tribute to canonical texts. Truly, the wide gap between the Victorian period and Fforde's alternative 1985 Britain would seem to set obstacles to recreate a fictional past in the fictional present, and to trace the similarities between both novels. However, through having a brief study of both novels in terms of plot along with the main characters, we could observe that there are many common points, and it is possible to explore the past to address the present. By reinventing Jane as Thursday, Fforde pays homage to the originality of Bronte's fictional character. Further, by confirming as well as revising the Victorian original at the same time, his novel is perceived by most critics as an amusing tribute to Jane Eyre, which supports the canon (Berninger & Thomas, 2007, p. 184; Wells, 2007, pp. 205-206). The attributable ending to Brontë functions as a kind of homage raising the profile of the historical author and offering even more space for speculation concerning authorial meaning, originality, and creativity.

Bibliography :

- Bekiryazici, M. (2017). The Eyre Affair as a postmodern parody of Jane Eyre. 3.

- Berninger, M. and Thomas, K. (2007). "A parallelquel of a Classic Text and Reification of the Fictional- the Playful parody of Jane Eyre in Jasper Fforde's The Eyre Affair." In M. Rubik and E. Mettingen-schartmann (Eds.), A breath

of fresh eyre: Intertextual and intermedial reworkings of Jane Eyre (pp. 181-196). Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi.
- Bondanella, P. (1997). Umberto Eco and the open text: Semiotics, fiction, popular culture. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Bronte, C. (1992). Jane Eyre. London: Wordsworth Classics.
- Dasenbrock, R. W. (2001). Truth and consequences: Intentions, conventions and the new thematics. Pennsylvania: The Pennsylvania University Press.
- Docherty, T. (1990). After theory: Postmodernism/ postmarxism. London and New York: Routledge.
- Fforde, J. (2001). The Eyre Affair. New York: Penguin.
- Hassan, I. (2001) "From Postmodernism to Postmodernity: The Local/ Global Context." Philosophy and Literature. 25(1). April.
- Hateley, E. (2005). "The end of the Eyre affair: Jane Eyre, parody, and popular culture". The Journal of Popular Culture, 38, November. Doi 10/ 1111/ j1540- 5931. 2005.00174. X.
- Heilbrun, G. C. (1988). Writing in women's life. New York: Ballantine.
- Herischian, N. (2012). "Jean Rhys's wide sargasso sea as hypertext of Charlotte Bronte's Jane Eyre: a postmodern perspective". International Journal of Applied Linguistics & English Literature, 1.72-82. 10. 7575/ ijãlel. V. 1n. 6.59-.
- Hutcheon, L. (1988). A Poetics of postmodernism: History, theory, fiction. London. Routledge.
- Jameson, F. (1991). Postmodernism ,or, the cultural logic of late capitalism. Verso
- - - -. (1998). The cultural turn: Selected writings on the postmodern. 1983-1998.London/New York: Verso
- Jellenik, C. (2007). Rewriting rewriting. New York. Peter Lang Publishing.
- Lyotard, J.F. (1984). The postmodern condition: A Report on knowledge. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- McHale, B. (1987). Postmodernist fiction. London & New York: Routledge.
- Miles, R. (1988). Jane Eyre by Charlotte Bronte. London: Macmillan.
- Nicole, B. (2009). The Cambridge introduction to postmodern fiction. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Rich, A. (1972). "When we Dead Awaken: Writing as Revision." College English 34(1).
- Stephan, M. (2019). Defining literary postmodernism for the twenty –first century. Switzerland: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Thatcher, T. & Moore, S.D. (Eds). (2008). Anatomies of narrative criticism: The past, the present and the futures of the fourth gospel as literature. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature.
- Wells, J. (2007). "An Eyre less- affair? Jasper Fforde's seeming Elision of Jane". In M. Rubik and E. M. schartmann (Eds.), A breath of fresh eyre:

Intertextual and intermedial reworkings of Jane Eyre (pp. 197- 209). Amsterdam and New York: Rodopi.
- Widdowson, P. (2006). "'Writing back': Contemporary re-visionary fiction" Textual Practice. 20(3).