

The Horror of an Unleashed Woman:
Self-Governance and the Supernatural in Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*

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ABSTRACT

Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* is ostensibly the "autobiography" of a governess, tracing her progression from poor orphan to heiress and mother. After establishing Brontë's position within the historical context of the mid-Victorian era, I evaluate her heroine's social, economic, and religious status and engage in close readings of the narrative using the theoretical frameworks of G.W.F. Hegel, Max Weber, and William James. Chapter two traces various conjugations of master/slave relationships in Brontë's novel. Chapter three examines both the Protestant work ethic of the novel and the narrative's use of supernatural imagery.