

# Narrative Threads of Madness in Literature

## (WITH REFERENCE TO THE VICTORIAN & EDWARDIAN ERA)

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### ABSTRACT

This study recommends conducting a survey using three books as subtopics among a universe of around 100 persons (between the ages of 15 and 40).

A web-based questionnaire was created and distributed to the participants. This questionnaire will assess the subject's awareness of the characters, as well as their favour (if any), mental picture, and impression of them.

**Keywords:** *Characters, Edwardian, Literature, Mad, Victorian*

### 1. INTRODUCTION

It's crucial to recognise that people's perceptions of lunacy have evolved through time; mental illness and the stories that accompany it haven't always been popular.

These questions pique the curiosity of literature students:

'Why are there so many 'crazy' characters?' What are their functions in the book/poem? Are these personalities well-liked by the readers?'

This research seeks to evaluate the influence of a 'mad' character on the reader by documenting readers' responses to characters in three separate texts: Bertha Mason in *Jane Eyre* (Bronte), The Mad Hatter in *Alice's Adventures In Wonderland* (Lewis Carroll), and Gollum in *Lord Of The Rings* (Tolkien).

### 2. METHOD

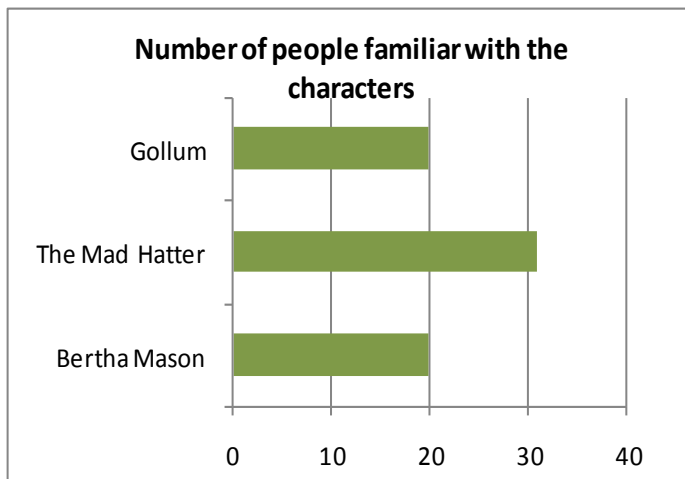
An online questionnaire was created and distributed to 50 people. The participants (who ranged in age from 15 to 40) were given ten days to complete the questionnaire, which consisted of simple, straightforward

questions. The topic of the paper was kept a secret, and the respondents' perceptions of the characters were checked at the end of the questionnaire with a question concerning the relationships between all of the characters.

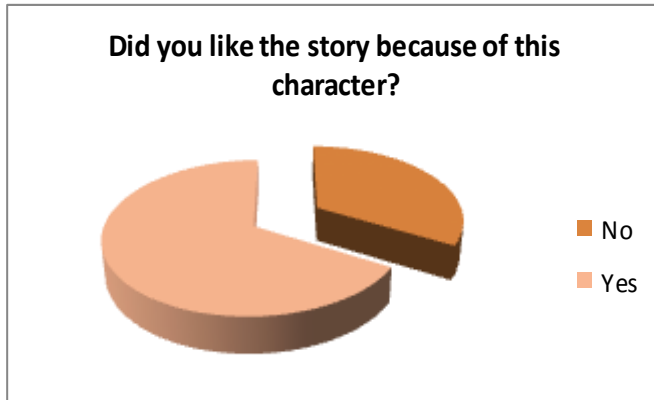
The article seeks to explore the influence of a mentally sick character in a work of fiction on the tale, as well as how the character affects the readers, using the examples provided.

### 3. RESULTS

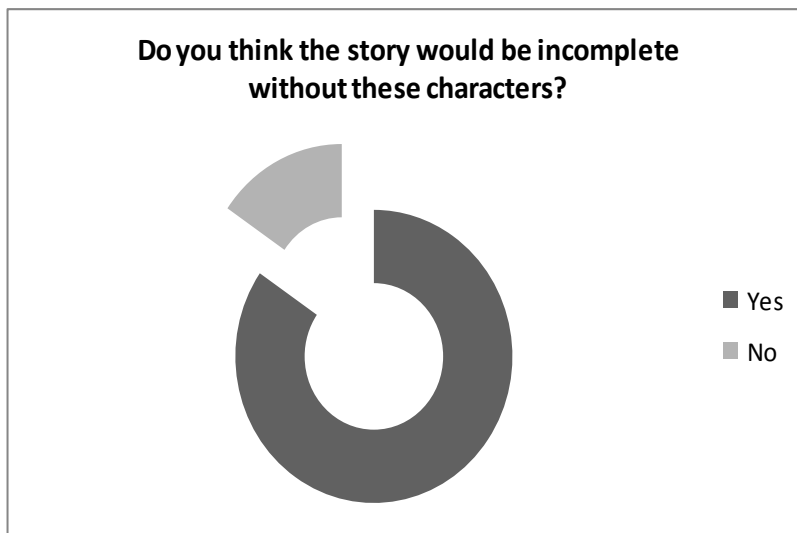
A universe of 50 people was interviewed regarding the topic. On evaluation of the responses, the following results emerged:



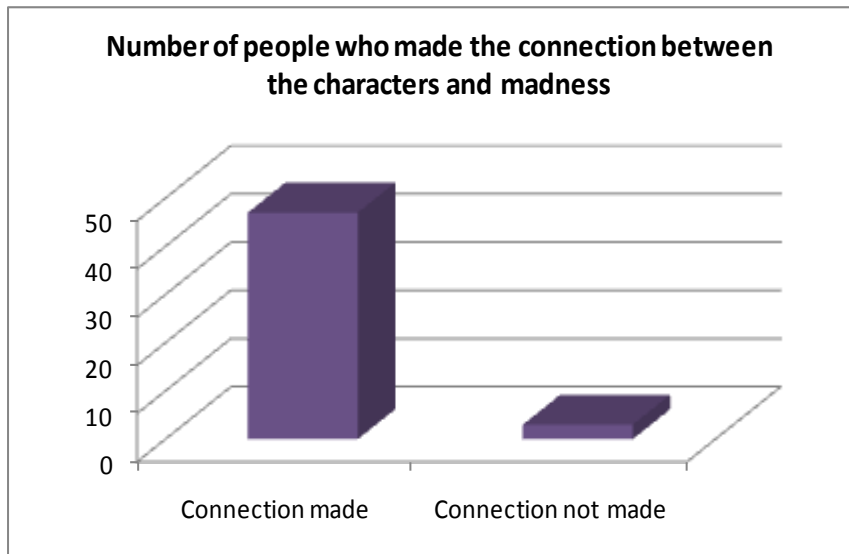
1. 48.8% of the people interviewed were familiar with Gollum, from Lord Of The Rings
2. 75.6% of the people interviewed were familiar with The Mad Hatter, from Alice In Wonderland and
3. 48.8% of the people interviewed were familiar with Bertha Mason, from Jane Eyre



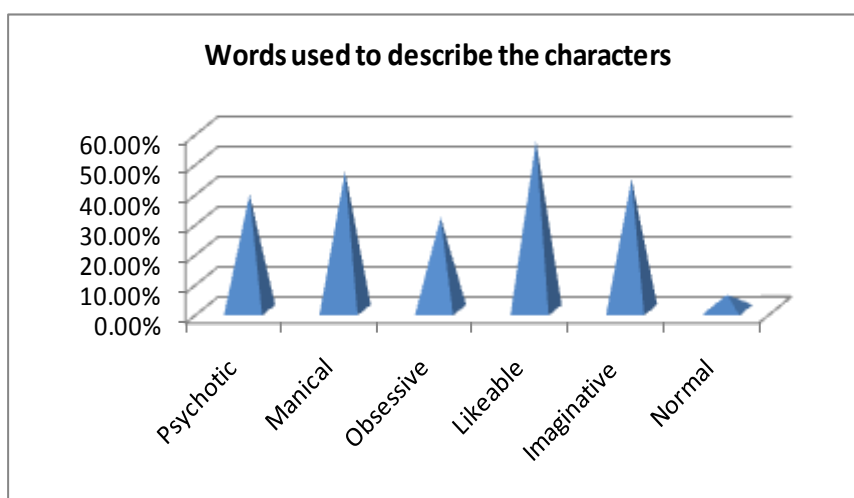
1. 66.6% of the people interviewed liked the story because of the character
2. 33.4% of the people interviewed did not like the story because of the character



1. 85.6% of the people interviewed think that the story would be incomplete without these characters.
2. 15.4% of the people interviewed do not think that the story would be incomplete without these characters



1. 47 people made the connection between the characters given and madness
2. 3 people did not make the connection between the characters given and madness.



1. 38.5% of the people used the word 'Psychotic'
2. 46.2% of the people used the word 'Manical'
3. 30.8% of the people used the word 'Obsessive'
4. 56.4% of the people used the word 'Likeable'
5. 43.6% of the people used the word 'Imaginative'
6. 5.1% of the people used the word 'Normal'.

#### **4. INFERENCES**

1. The Mad Hatter was known by the majority of those interviewed, with Bertha Mason and Gollum being known by equal minority.
2. The bulk of people enjoyed the novel solely because of the insane protagonist.
3. Only a small percentage of those polled believe the plot would be complete without the characters.
4. The majority of those polled saw the link between the 'crazy' characters.
5. Nearly half of the participants polled believed these characters were likeable.

#### **5. CONCLUSION**

The major objective of a novel (or so our forefathers believed) is to entertain the readers, and it is reasonable to assume that this is why the 'crazy' characters were developed.

As a consequence of analysing and interpreting the survey findings, the author has obtained significant insight into the thoughts of the readers.

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