MINISTERY OF PUBLIC EDUCATION OF UZBEKISTAN

AJINIYAZ NUKUS STATE PEDAGOGICAL INSTITUTE

FACULTY OF PHILOLOGY

ENGLISH DEPARTMENT

COURSE WORK

On the theme: ***Religion in the novel Jane Eyre***

Charlotte Bronte

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Content

Introduction

The novel Jane Eyre is a first-person narrative of the title character. The novel is set somewhere in the north of England, during the reign of George III (1760–1820), and goes through five distinct stages: Jane's childhood at Gateshead Hall, where she is emotionally and physically abused by her aunt and cousins; her education at Lowood School, where she acquires friends and role models but also suffers privations and oppression; her time as governess at Thornfield Hall, where she falls in love with her Byronic employer, Edward Rochester; her time with the Rivers family, during which her earnest but cold clergyman cousin, St John Rivers, proposes to her; and the finale with her reunion with, and marriage to, her beloved Rochester. During these sections the novel provides perspectives on a number of important social issues and ideas, many of which are critical of the status quo (see the Themes section below). Literary critic Jerome Beaty opines that the close first person perspective leaves the reader "too uncritically accepting of her worldview", and often leads reading and conversation about the novel towards supporting Jane, regardless of how irregular her ideas or perspectives.

Early Victorian literature includes some of the greatest and most popular novels ever written. Most writers of that period wrote long works with numerous characters. In many instances, the authors included actual events of the day in their tales.

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The practical value of the investigation is the benefit of examining the social concerns during the English lessons for learning a vast variety of traits, styles and ideas of the social problems transmission.

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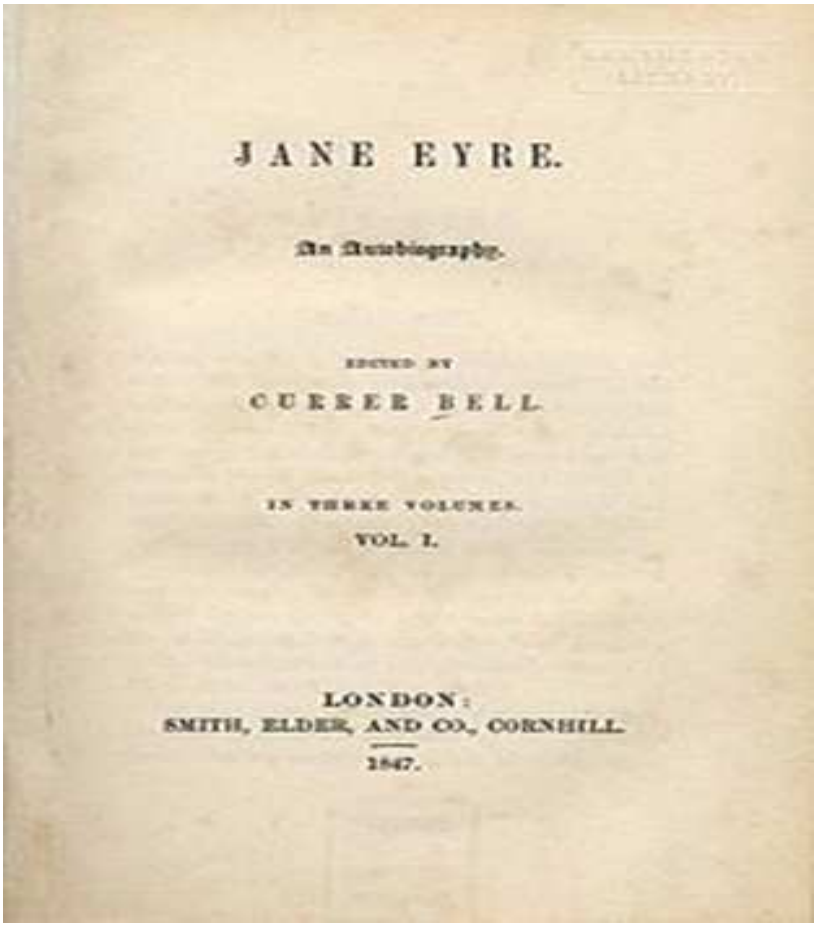
The aim of the work is the theoretical and practical substantiation of the concerns with the specific social problems in the novel Charlotte Bronte

The novels of Bronte sisters –Emily and Charlotte and Anne- have many romantic elements.The novels are especially for their psychologically and tormented heroes and heroines. Critics rank Emily's " Wuthering Heights" and Charlotte's " Jane Eyre" among the greatest works of Victorian fiction.

Chapter I Brief summery of the plot



JANE EYRE.

An Autobiography.

EDITED BY

CURRER BELL.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

LONDON:
SMITH, ELDER, AND CO., CORNHILL.

1847.

The novel Jane Eyre is a first-person narrative of the title character. The novel is set somewhere in the north of England, during the reign of George III (1760–1820), and goes through five distinct stages: Jane's childhood at Gateshead Hall, where she is emotionally and physically abused by her aunt and cousins; her education at Lowood School, where she acquires friends and role models but also suffers privations and oppression; her time as governess at Thornfield Hall, where she falls in love with her Byronic employer, Edward Rochester; her time with the Rivers family, during which her earnest but cold clergyman cousin, St John Rivers, proposes to her; and the finale with her reunion with, and marriage to, her beloved Rochester. During these sections the novel provides perspectives on a number of important social issues and ideas, many of which are critical of the status quo (see the Themes section below). Literary critic Jerome Beaty opines that the close first person perspective leaves the reader "too uncritically accepting of her worldview",

and often leads reading and conversation about the novel towards supporting Jane, regardless of how irregular her ideas or perspectives

Jane Eyre is divided into 38 chapters, and most editions are at least 400 pages long. The original publication was in three volumes, comprising chapters 1 to 15, 16 to 26, and 27 to 38; this was a common publishing format during the 19th century

Context

The early sequences, in which Jane is sent to Lowood, a harsh boarding school, are derived from the author's own experiences. Helen Burns's death from tuberculosis (referred to as consumption) recalls the deaths of Charlotte Brontë's sisters Elizabeth and Maria, who died of the disease in childhood as a result of the conditions at their school, the Clergy Daughters School at Cowan Bridge, near Tunstall, Lancashire. Mr. Brocklehurst is based on Rev. William Carus Wilson (1791–1859), the Evangelical minister who ran the school. Additionally, John Reed's decline into alcoholism and dissolution recalls the life of Charlotte's brother Branwell, who became an opium and alcohol addict in the years preceding his death. Finally, like Jane, Charlotte became a governess. These facts were revealed to the public in The Life of Charlotte Brontë (1857) by Charlotte's friend and fellow novelist Elizabeth Gaskell.

The Gothic manor of Thornfield Hall was probably inspired by North Lees Hall, near Hathersage in the Peak District. This was visited by Charlotte Brontë and her friend Ellen Nussey in the summer of 1845 and is described by the latter in a letter dated 22 July 1845. It was the residence of the Eyre family, and its first owner, Agnes Ashurst, was reputedly confined as a lunatic in a padded second floor room.

It has been suggested that the Wycoller Hall in Lancashire, close to Haworth, provided the setting for Ferndean Manor to which Mr Rochester retreats after the fire at Thornfield: there are similarities between the owner of Ferndean, Mr Rochester's father, and Henry Cunliffe who inherited Wycoller in the 1770s and lived there until his death in 1818; one of Cunliffe's relatives was named Elizabeth Eyre .

The sequence in which Mr Rochester's wife sets fire to the bed curtains was prepared in an August 1830 homemade publication of Brontë's The Young Men's Magazine, Number 2.

1.1Jane's childhood

The novel begins with the titular character Jane Eyre living with her maternal uncle's family, the Reeds, as a result of her uncle's dying wish. The novel starts when Jane is ten years old and several years after her parents died of typhus. Mr. Reed, Jane's uncle, was the only one in the Reed family to be kind to Jane. Jane's aunt, Sarah Reed, does not like her, treats her as a burden and discourages her children from associating with Jane. Mrs. Reed and her three children are abusive to Jane, physically, emotionally, and, as the reader is quick to realize, spiritually. The nursemaid Bessie proves to be Jane's only ally in the household, even though Bessie sometimes harshly scolds Jane.

Excluded from the family activities, Jane is incredibly unhappy, with only a doll and books in which to find solace. One day, after her cousin John knocks her down and she attempts to defend herself, Jane is locked in the red room where her uncle died; there, she faints from panic after she thinks she has seen his ghost. She is subsequently attended to by the kindly apothecary, Mr. Lloyd, to whom Jane reveals how unhappy she is living at Gateshead Hall. He recommends to Mrs Reed that Jane should be sent to school, an idea Mrs Reed happily supports. Mrs Reed then enlists the aid of the harsh Mr Brocklehurst, director of Lowood Institution, a charity school for girls. Mrs Reed cautions Mr Brocklehurst that Jane has a "tendency for deceit", which he interprets as "liar". Before Jane leaves, however, she confronts Mrs. Reed and declares that she'll never call her "aunt" again, that she and her daughter, Georgiana, are the ones who are deceitful, and that she'll tell everyone at Lowood how cruelly Mrs. Reed treated her.

1.2.Lowood

At Lowood Institution, a school for poor or orphaned girls, Jane soon finds that life is harsh, but she attempts to fit in, and befriends an older girl, Helen Burns, who is able to accept her punishment philosophically. During a school inspection by Mr Brocklehurst, Jane accidentally breaks her slate, thereby drawing attention to herself. He then stands her on a stool, brands her a liar and shames her before the entire assembly. Jane is later comforted by her friend, Helen. Miss Temple, the caring superintendent, facilitates Jane's self-defence and writes to Mr. Lloyd, whose reply agrees with Jane's. Jane is then publicly cleared of Mr. Brocklehurst's accusations.

The eighty pupils at Lowood are subjected to cold rooms, poor meals, and thin clothing. Many students fall ill when a typhus epidemic strikes. Jane's friend Helen dies of consumption in her arms. When Mr. Brocklehurst's maltreatment of the students is discovered, several benefactors erect a new building and install a sympathetic management committee to moderate the harsh rule of Mr Brocklehurst. Conditions at the school then improve dramatically.

1.3.Thornfield Hall

After six years as a student and two as a teacher, Jane decides to leave Lowood, like her friend and confidante Miss Temple who recently got married. She advertises her services as a governess and receives one reply. It is from Alice Fairfax, the housekeeper at Thornfield Hall. She takes the position, teaching Adele Varens, a young French girl. While Jane is walking one night to a nearby town, a horseman passes her. The horse slips on ice and throws the rider. Despite his surliness, she helps him to get back onto his horse. Later, back at Thornfield, she learns that this man is Edward Rochester, master of the house. Adele is his ward, left in his care when her mother abandoned her. At Jane's first meeting with him within Thornfield, he teases her, accusing her of bewitching his horse to make him fall, as well as talking strangely in other ways, but Jane is able to give as good as she gets. Mr. Rochester and Jane soon come to enjoy each other's company and spend many evenings together.

Odd things start to happen at the house, such as a strange laugh, a mysterious fire in Mr. Rochester's room, in which Jane saves Rochester by rousing him and throwing water on him and the fire, and an attack on Rochester's house guest, Mr. Mason. Jane receives word that her aunt is calling for her, after suffering a stroke because her unruly son John had died in sad circumstances. She returns to Gateshead and remains there for a month attending to her dying aunt and helping her cousins after the funeral. Mrs. Reed, as she lies dying, confesses to Jane that she had wronged her, and gives Jane a letter from Jane's paternal uncle,

Mr. John Eyre, in which he asks for her to live with him and be his heir. Mrs. Reed admits to telling her uncle that Jane had died of fever at Lowood. Soon after, Jane's aunt dies, and she returns to Thornfield.

After returning to Thornfield, Jane broods over Mr. Rochester's rumoured impending marriage to the beautiful and talented, but snobbish and heartless, Blanche Ingram. However, one midsummer evening, Rochester baits Jane by saying how much he will miss her after getting married, but that she would soon forget him. Then follows one of the most stirring speeches in the whole book, when the normally self-controlled Jane opens her heart to him. Rochester is then sure that Jane is sincerely in love with him, and he proposes marriage. Jane is at first sceptical of his sincerity, but eventually believes him and gladly agrees to marry him. She then writes to her Uncle John, telling him of her happy news. As she prepares for her wedding, Jane's forebodings arise when a strange, savage-looking woman sneaks into her room one night and rips her wedding veil in two. As with the previous mysterious events, Mr. Rochester attributes the incident to that strange woman, Grace Poole, one of his servants. During the wedding ceremony, Mr. Mason and a lawyer declare that Mr. Rochester cannot marry because he is still married to Mr. Mason's sister, Bertha. Mr. Rochester admits this is true, but explains that his father tricked him into the marriage for her money. Once they were united, he discovered that she was rapidly descending into madness and so he eventually locked her away in Thornfield, hiring Grace Poole as a nurse to look after her. When Grace gets drunk, his wife escapes, and causes the

strange happenings at Thornfield. It turns out that Jane's uncle, Mr. John Eyre, is a friend of Mr. Mason, and was visited by him soon after Mr Eyre received Jane's letter about her impending marriage. After the marriage ceremony is broken off, Mr. Rochester asks Jane to go with him to the south of France, and live with him as husband and wife, even though they cannot be married. Refusing to go against her principles, and despite her love for him, Jane leaves Thornfield in the middle of the night.

Jane travels as far from Thornfield as she can using the little money she had previously saved. She accidentally leaves her bundle of possessions on the coach and has to sleep on the moor, and unsuccessfully attempts to trade her handkerchief and gloves for food. Exhausted and hungry, she eventually makes her way to the home of Diana and Mary Rivers, but is turned away by the housekeeper. She collapses on the doorstep, preparing for her death. St. John Rivers, Diana and Mary's brother and a clergyman, saves her. After she regains her health, St. John finds her a teaching position at a nearby village school. Jane becomes good friends with the sisters, but St. John remains aloof.

The sisters leave for governess jobs and St. John becomes somewhat closer to Jane. St. John learns Jane's true identity, and astounds her by telling her that her uncle, John Eyre, has died and left her his entire fortune of 20,000 pounds . When Jane questions him further, St. John reveals that John Eyre is also his and his sisters'

uncle. They had once hoped for a share of the inheritance, but were left virtually nothing. Jane, overjoyed by finding that she has living and friendly family members, insists on sharing the money equally with her cousins, and Diana and Mary come back to Moor House to live.

Search for home and family

Without any living family that she is aware of (until well into the story), throughout the course of the novel Jane searches for a place that she can call home. Significantly, houses play a prominent part in the story. (In keeping with a long English tradition, all the houses in the book have names). The novel's opening finds Jane living at Gateshead Hall, but this is hardly a home. Mrs. Reed and her children refuse to acknowledge her as a relation, treating her instead as an unwanted intruder and an inferior.

Shunted off to Lowood Institution, a boarding school for orphans and destitute children, Jane finds a home of sorts, although her place here is ambiguous and temporary. The school's manager, Mr. Brocklehurst, treats it more as a business and a place of correction than as school in loco parentis (in place of the parent). His emphasis on discipline and on spartan conditions at the expense of the girls' health make it the antithesis of the ideal home.

Jane subsequently believes she has found a home at Thornfield Hall. Anticipating the worst when she arrives, she is relieved when she is made to feel welcome by Mrs. Fairfax. She feels genuine affection for Adèle (who in a way is also an orphan) and is happy to serve as her governess. As her love for Mr. Rochester grows, she believes that she has found her ideal husband in spite of his eccentric manner and that they will make a home together at Thornfield. The revelation – as they are on the verge of marriage – that he is already legally married – brings her dream of home crashing down. Fleeing Thornfield, she literally becomes homeless and is reduced to begging for food and shelter. The opportunity of having a home presents itself when she enters Moor House, where the Rivers sisters and their brother, the Reverend St. John Rivers, are mourning the death of their father. She soon speaks of Diana and Mary Rivers as her own sisters,

and is overjoyed when she learns that they are indeed her cousins. She tells St. John Rivers that learning that she has living relations is far more important than inheriting twenty thousand pounds. (She mourns the uncle she never knew. Earlier she was disheartened on learning that Mrs. Reed told her uncle that Jane had died and sent him away.) However, St. John Rivers' offer of marriage cannot sever her emotional attachment to Rochester. In an almost visionary episode, she hears Mr. Rochester's voice calling her to return to him. The last chapter begins with the famous simple declarative sentence, "Reader, I married him," and after a long series of travails Jane's search for home and family ends in a union with her ideal mate.

1.4.God and religion

Throughout the novel, Jane endeavours to attain an equilibrium between moral duty and earthly happiness. She despises the hypocrisy of Mr. Brocklehurst, and sees the deficiencies in St. John Rivers' indulgent yet detached devotion to his Christian duty. As a child, Jane admires Helen Burns' life's philosophy of 'turning the other cheek', which in turn helps her in adult life to forgive Aunt Reed and the Reed cousins for their cruelty. Although she does not seem to subscribe to any of the standard forms of popular Christianity, she honours traditional morality – particularly seen when she refuses to marry Mr. Rochester until he is widowed. The last sentence of the novel is a prayer of St. John Rivers on his own behalf: "Religion serves to moderate Jane's behavior, but she never represses her true self."

In her preface to the second edition of Jane Eyre, Brontë makes her beliefs clear; "conventionality is not morality" and "self-righteousness is not religion," declaring that narrow human doctrines, which serve only to elate and magnify a few, should not be substituted for the world-redeeming creed of Christ. Throughout the novel, Brontë presents contrasts between characters who believe in and practice what she considers a true Christianity, and those who pervert religion to further their own ends. Here are further examples:

Mr. Brocklehurst, who oversees Lowood Institution, is a hypocritical Christian. He professes aid and charity but does the opposite by using religion as a

justification for punishment. For instance, he cites the Biblical passage "man shall not live by bread alone", to rebuke Miss Temple for having fed the girls an extra meal to compensate for their inedible breakfast of burnt porridge. He tells Miss Temple that she "may indeed feed their vile bodies, but you little think how you starve their immortal souls!".

Helen Burns is a complete contrast to Brocklehurst; she follows the Christian creed of 'turning the other cheek' and by loving those who hate her. On her deathbed, Helen tells Jane "I'm going home to God, who loves me." Jane herself cannot quite profess Helen's absolute, selfless faith. Jane does not seem to follow a particular doctrine, but she is sincerely religious in a non-doctrinaire, general way; it is Jane, presumably, who places the stone with the word "Resurgam" (Latin for 'I will rise again') on Helen's grave, some fifteen years after her friend's death. Jane is seen frequently praying and calling on God to assist her, especially with her struggles concerning Mr. Rochester; praying for his wellness and safety.

After Hannah, the Rivers' housekeeper, tried to turn the begging Jane away at the door, Jane later tells her that "if you are a Christian, you ought not consider poverty a crime."

The young evangelical clergyman St. John Rivers is a more conventionally religious figure. However, Brontë portrays his religious aspect ambiguously. Jane calls him "a very good man," yet she finds him cold and forbidding. In his determination to do good deeds (in the form of missionary work in India), St. John courts martyrdom. Moreover, he is unable to see Jane as a whole person, but views her only as a helpmate in his impending missionary work.

Mr. Rochester is a less than perfect Christian. He is, indeed, a sinner: he attempts to enter into a bigamous marriage with Jane and, when that fails, tries to persuade her to become his mistress. He also confesses that he has had three previous mistresses. However, at the end of the book Mr.Rochester repents his sinfulness, thanks God for returning Jane, and asks Him for the strength to lead a purer life. It is implied that Rochester's maiming and blindness were God's

judgment for his sins, and that the partial recovery of his sight was due to his repentance. "God had tempered judgment with mercy."

Social class

Jane's ambiguous social position—a penniless yet decently educated orphan from a good family–leads her to criticise some discrimination based on class, though she makes class discriminations herself. Although she is educated, well-mannered, and relatively sophisticated, she is still a governess, a paid employee (middle class), and therefore relatively powerless. She respectfully defers to Rochester and his guests from the upper class, but she asks Leah, the housemaid (lower class), to get her a candle rather than get it herself, and has a servant girl when she is school mistress at the small village school in Morton. While Jane is always conscious of her social position (Rochester is master and she is employee) in everyday matters, at heart she sees herself as his equal, as evidenced in her passionate speech prior to Rochester's first proposal. "... it is my spirit that addresses your spirit; just as if both had passed through the grave, and we stood at God’s feet, equal,—as we are!"

Chapter II Gender relations

A particularly important theme in the novel is the depiction of a patriarchal society. Jane attempts to assert her own identity within male-dominated society. Three of the main male characters, Mr. Brocklehurst, Mr. Rochester and St. John Rivers, try to keep Jane in a subordinate position and prevent her from expressing her own thoughts and feelings. Jane escapes Mr. Brocklehurst and rejects St. John, and she only marries Mr. Rochester once she is sure that their marriage is one between equals. Through Jane, Brontë opposes Victorian stereotypes about women, articulating her own feminist philosophy:

Women are supposed to be very calm generally: but women feel just as men feel; they need exercise for their faculties, and a field for their efforts as much as their brothers do; they suffer from too rigid a restraint, too absolute a stagnation, precisely as men would suffer; and it is narrow-minded in their more privileged fellow-creatures to say that they ought to confine themselves to making puddings and knitting stockings, to playing on the piano and embroidering bags. It is thoughtless to condemn them, or laugh at them, if they seek to do more or learn more than custom has pronounced necessary for their sex. (Chapter XII)

It is also interesting to note that while most readings of Jane Eyre dwell on the fact that Bertha is insane, it is not because she is insane that Rochester hates her. The two specific claims that he makes against her, before she became insane,

are that she was 'intemperate and unchaste' and that he therefore felt degraded. Some feminist readings of the novel have taken this to mean that the strictures imposed on women contemporary to the book were such that stepping outside of them could have been construed as insane.

Other interpretations have seen this as evidence that Bertha was syphilitic, and that the romanticism of the book neglects the truth that Edward Rochester would have been as well. The book may use the syphilitic condition as a metaphor for the sexual predation and narcissistic projection of Edward Rochester; Edward says Bertha is "unchaste" in an attempt to relieve himself of the psychic pain of his having the disease himself and his own likely role in Bertha acquiring that condition as well as the fact he likely has the disease and risks infecting Jane. His psychological projection combined with his position of power distorts reality such that it gives Bertha no choice but to be "insane" (which may be combined with actual physical brain deterioration from the syphilis) if any challenge to his veracity would cause her greater problems, such as abandonment, starvation, etc.

Atonement and forgiveness

Much of the religious concern in Jane Eyre has to do with atonement and forgiveness. Mr. Rochester is tormented by his awareness of his past sins and misdeeds. He frequently confesses that he has led a life of vice, and many of his actions in the course of the novel are less than commendable. Readers may accuse him of behaving sadistically in deceiving Jane about the nature of his relationship (or rather, non-relationship) with Blanche Ingram to provoke Jane's jealousy. His

confinement of Bertha may bespeak mixed motives. He is certainly aware that in the eyes of both religious and civil authorities, his marriage to Jane before Bertha's death would be bigamous. Yet, at the same time, Mr. Rochester makes genuine efforts to atone for his behaviour. For example, although he does not believe that he is Adele's natural father, he adopts her as his ward and sees that she is well cared for. This adoption may well be an act of atonement for the sins he has committed. He expresses his self-disgust at having tried to console himself by having three different mistresses during his travels in Europe and begs Jane to forgive him for these past transgressions. However, Mr. Rochester can only atone completely – and be forgiven completely – after Jane has refused to be his mistress and left him. The destruction of Thornfield by fire finally removes the stain of his past sins; the loss of his left hand and of his eyesight is the price he must pay to atone completely for his sins. Only after this purgation can he be redeemed by Jane's love.

2.1.Love and passion

A central theme in Jane Eyre is that of the clash between conscience and passion—which one is to adhere to, and how to find a middle ground between the two. Jane, extremely passionate yet also dedicated to a close personal relationship with God, struggles between either extreme for much of the novel. An instance of her leaning towards conscience over passion can be seen after it has been revealed that Mr. Rochester already has a wife, when Jane is begged to run away with Mr. Rochester and become his mistress. Up until that moment, Jane had been riding on a wave of emotion, forgetting all thoughts of reason and logic, replacing God with Mr. Rochester in her eyes, and allowing herself to be swept away in the moment. However, once the harsh reality of the situation sets in, Jane does everything in her power to refuse Mr. Rochester, despite almost every part of her rejecting the idea and urging her to just give into Mr. Rochester's appeal. In the moment, Jane experiences an epiphany in regards to conscience, realising that “laws and principles are not for times when there is no temptation: they are for such moments as this.” Jane finally comes to understand that all passion, as she had been living

her life up until then, and all conscience, as she had leaned towards during her time at Lowood, is neither good nor preferable. In this case, Jane had allowed herself to lean too far in the direction of passion, and she is in danger of giving up all logic and reason in favour of temptation.

However, Jane finally asserts that in times of true moral trial, such as the one she is in with Mr. Rochester at the moment, to forgo one's principles, to violate the “law given by God,” would be too easy—and not something she is willing to do. Jane's struggles to find a middle ground between her passionate and conscience-driven sides frequently go back and forth throughout the novel, but in this case she has drawn the line as to where passion is taking too great a role in her life, and where she will not allow herself to forgo her moral and religious principles.

Reception

According to a review of Jane Eyre in The Quarterly Review, it was found to be "pre-eminently an anti-Christian composition". Although Brontë clearly intended for the book to be a protest against Victorian lifestyle, which caused a great unrest with the Quarterly Review, they found Jane Eyre to be more radical than its original intent: "We do not hesitate to say that the tone of mind and thought which has overthrown authority and violated every code human and divine abroad, and fostered Chartism and rebellion at home, is the same which has also written Jane Eyre". Although Jane Eyre is now commonly accepted into the canon of secondary school English literature, its immediate reception was in stark contrast to its modern-day reception. In 2003 the novel was ranked number 10 on the BBC's survey The Big Read.

2.2. Proposals

Thinking she will make a suitable missionary's wife, St. John asks Jane to marry him and to go with him to India, not out of love, but out of duty. Jane initially accepts going to India, but rejects the marriage proposal, suggesting they travel as brother and sister. As soon as Jane's resolve against marriage to St. John begins to weaken, she mysteriously hears Mr. Rochester's voice calling her name.

Jane then returns to Thornfield to find only blackened ruins. She learns that Mr. Rochester's wife set the house on fire and committed suicide by jumping from the roof. In his rescue attempts, Mr. Rochester lost a hand and his eyesight. Jane reunites with him, but he fears that she will be repulsed by his condition. "Am I hideous, Jane?", he asks.

“Very, sir: you always were, you know” she replies. When Jane assures him of her love and tells him that she will never leave him, Mr. Rochester again proposes and they are married. He eventually recovers enough sight to see their first-born son.

Literary motifs and allusions

Jane Eyre uses many motifs from Gothic fiction, such as the Gothic manor (Thornfield Hall), the Byronic hero (Mr. Rochester) and The Madwoman in the Attic (Bertha), whom Jane perceives as resembling "the foul German spectre—the Vampyre" (Chapter XXV) and who attacks her own brother in a distinctly vampiric way: "She sucked the blood: she said she'd drain my heart" (Chapter XX). The mystery of Thornfield Hall with its dark secrets creates a typically Gothic atmosphere of suspense. When resolved, we then get the theme of madness, also common in Gothic fiction, as is the motif of two characters, John Reed and Bertha Mason, who commit suicide. Apparently supernatural happenings are frequently mentioned, such as Jane's prophetic dreams, her sense of the ghost of her uncle, the lightning striking the chestnut tree on the night she agrees to marry Mr. Rochester, and Jane and Mr. Rochester being able to hear each other's call over miles of separation when St John forces Jane into a decision to marry him.

Jane Eyre also combines Gothicism with romanticism to create a distinctive Victorian novel. Jane and Rochester are attracted to each other, but there are impediments to their love. The conflicting personalities of the two lead characters and the norms of society are an obstacle to their love, as often occurs in romance novels, but so also is Rochester's secret marriage to Bertha, the main Gothic element of the story.

Literary allusions from the Bible, fairy tales, The Pilgrim's Progress, Paradise Lost, and the novels and poetry of Sir Walter Scott are also much in evidence. John Reed is compared to Caligula. Jane is compared to Guy Fawkes. Both Biblical figures like Samson and figures from Greek myths such as Apollo are referred to at various times.

2.3.Feminism

The role and standing of women in the Victorian era is considered by Brontë in Jane Eyre, specifically in regard to Jane's independence and ability to make decisions for herself. As a young woman, small and of relatively low social standing, Jane encounters men during her journey, of good, bad, and morally debatable character. However, many of them, no matter their ultimate intentions, attempt to establish some form of power and control over Jane. One example can be seen in Mr. Rochester, a man who ardently loves Jane, but who frequently commands and orders Jane about. As a self-assured and established man, and her employer, Mr. Rochester naturally assumes the position of the master in their relationship. He sometimes demands rather than questioning Jane, tries to manipulate and assess her feelings towards him, and enjoys propping up Jane through excessive gifts and luxuries that only he would have been able to provide. Jane, however, believes in the importance of women's independence, and strives to maintain a position in life devoid of any debts to others. Her initial lack of money and social status unnerves her, as she realises that without the means to be an independent woman, she is bound to either struggle through life trying to make a living or marry and become dependent on a man. Even after Jane agrees to marry

Mr. Rochester, and is swept up in the passion of the moment, the feminist elements of her personality still show through. She is uncomfortable with the showering of lavish gifts, as she resents that they will make her further reliant on and in debt to Mr. Rochester, and thus tries to resist them. Furthermore, Jane asserts that until she is married to Mr. Rochester, she will continue to be Adèle's governess and earn her keep. This plan, which was entirely radical and unheard of for the time, further illustrates Jane's drive to remain a somewhat independent woman. It was for this reason she suddenly remembered and wrote to her uncle who until now thought her dead. "... if I had but a prospect of one day bringing Mr. Rochester an accession of fortune, I could better endure to be kept by him now." This feminist undercurrent also presents itself in Jane's interaction with her long-lost cousin, St. John Rivers. St. John repressed Jane's feeling and controlled her excessively. She often felt that he "took away liberty of mind" During her stay with her cousin, St. John proposes to Jane, by claiming her "as a soldier would a new weapon". Jane realises that she cannot marry a man who constantly forces her into submission and treats her like an object, and she refuses to marry him. Once again, her need for independence shines through.

The only time Jane truly feels ready to marry a man is when she is equal to him. In the end of Jane Eyre, Jane inherits a fortune from her uncle. This allows her to be economically independent from Mr. Rochester. Also, Mr. Rochester becomes lame and blind after the fire that ripped through his home. He now depends on Jane, rather than Jane depending on him. This change in the power dynamic of their relationship unites the two of them once again.

While the significant men present in Jane's life throughout the novel all try to, in some form or another, establish themselves as dominant over Jane, she in most cases remains resistant at least to a certain degree, refusing to submit fully or lose all of her independence. The only time Jane feels comfortable attaching herself to a man is when she knows that she is his financial, intellectual, and emotional equal. This final adherence to her strong convictions on the independence of women point out Brontë's similar views on the patriarchal Victorian society of the time.

Adaptations and influence

The novel has been adapted into a number of popular forms, including film, television and theatre. However, perhaps more importantly, the novel has been the centre of a number of rewritings and reinterpretations. Most notably reinterpretations and rewritings by notable authors have become important within British and American literature, including novels such as Jean Rhys's Wide Sargasso Sea.

Characters

- Jane Eyre: The protagonist of the novel and the title character. Orphaned as a baby, she struggles through her nearly loveless childhood and becomes governess at Thornfield Hall. Jane is passionate and strongly principled, and values freedom and independence. She also has a strong conscience and is a determined Christian.
- Mr. Reed: Jane's maternal uncle, who adopts Jane when her parents die. According to Mrs. Reed, he pitied Jane and often cared for her more than for his own children. Before his own death, he makes his wife promise to care for Jane.
- Mrs. Sarah Reed: Jane's aunt by marriage, who adopts Jane on her husband's wishes, but abuses and neglects her. She eventually casts her off and sends her to Lowood School.
- John Reed: Jane's cousin, who as a child bullies Jane constantly, sometimes in his mother's presence. He ruins himself as an adult by drinking and gambling and is thought to have committed suicide.

- Eliza Reed: Jane's cousin. Jealous of her more attractive sister, and a slave to rigid routine, she self-righteously devotes herself to religion. She leaves for a nunnery near Lisle after her mother's death, determined to estrange herself from her sister.
- Georgiana Reed: Jane's cousin. Although beautiful and indulged, she is insolent and spiteful. Her sister Eliza foils her marriage to the wealthy Lord Edwin Vere, when they were about to elope. She eventually marries a "wealthy worn-out man of fashion".
- Bessie Lee: The nursemaid at Gateshead. She often treats Jane kindly, telling her stories and singing her songs, but she has a quick temper. Later she marries Robert Leaven.
- Robert Leaven: The coachman at Gateshead, who brings Jane the news of John Reed's death, which brought on Mrs. Reed's stroke, and Mrs Reed's wish to see her before she died.
- Mr. Lloyd: A compassionate apothecary who recommends that Jane be sent to school. Later, he writes a letter to Miss Temple confirming Jane's account of her childhood and thereby clearing Jane of Mrs. Reed's charge of lying.
- Mr. Brocklehurst: The clergyman, director and treasurer of Lowood School, whose maltreatment of the students is eventually exposed. A religious traditionalist, he advocates for his charges the most harsh, plain, and disciplined possible lifestyle, but not, hypocritically, for himself and his own family. His second daughter Augusta exclaimed, "Oh, dear papa, how quiet and plain all the girls at Lowood look... they looked at my dress and mama's, as if they had never seen a silk gown before."
- Miss Maria Temple: The kind superintendent of Lowood School, who treats the students with respect and compassion. She helps clear Jane of Mr. Brocklehurst's false accusation of deceit, and cares for Helen in her last days. Eventually she marries Reverend Naysmith.

- Miss Scatcherd: A sour and strict teacher at Lowood, she constantly punishes Helen Burns for her untidiness, but fails to see Helen's substantial good points.
- Helen Burns: Jane's best friend at Lowood School. She refuses to hate those who abuse her, trusting in God and praying for peace one day in heaven. She teaches Jane to trust Christianity, and dies of consumption in Jane's arms. Elizabeth Gaskell, in her biography of the Brontë sisters, wrote that Helen Burns was 'an exact transcript' of Maria Brontë, who died of consumption at age 11.[8]
- Edward Fairfax Rochester: The master of Thornfield Hall. A Byronic hero, he is tricked into making an unfortunate first marriage to Bertha Mason many years before he meets Jane, with whom he falls madly in love.
- Bertha Antoinetta Mason: The violently insane first wife of Edward Rochester; moved to Thornfield and locked in the attic and eventually commits suicide after setting fire to Thornfield Hall.
- Adèle Varens: An excitable French child to whom Jane is governess at Thornfield. She has been Mr. Rochester's ward since her mother, Mr. Rochester's mistress, abandoned her and "ran away to Italy with a musician or singer" (ch. 15).
- Mrs. Alice Fairfax: An elderly but kindly widow and the housekeeper of Thornfield Hall.
- Leah: The housemaid at Thornfield Hall.
- John: An old and normally the only man servant at Thornfield.
- Mary: Normally referred to as 'John's wife' and sometimes 'the cook'.
- Blanche Ingram: A socialite whom Mr. Rochester temporarily courts to make Jane jealous. She is described as having great beauty and talent, but displays callous behaviour and avaricious intent.
- Richard Mason: An Englishman from the West Indies, whose sister is Mr. Rochester's first wife. He took part in tricking Mr. Rochester into marrying Bertha. He still, however, cares for his sister's well-being.
- Grace Poole: Bertha Mason's caretaker. Mr. Rochester pays her a very high salary to keep Bertha hidden and quiet, and she is often used as an explanation for

odd happenings. She has a weakness for drink that occasionally allows Bertha to escape.

- St. John Eyre Rivers: A clergyman who befriends Jane and turns out to be her cousin. He is thoroughly practical and suppresses all his human passions and emotions in favour of good works. He is determined to go to India as a missionary, despite being in love with Rosamond Oliver.
- Diana and Mary Rivers: St. John's sisters and (as it turns out) Jane's cousins. They are poor, intelligent, and kind-hearted, and want St. John to stay in England.
- Rosamond Oliver: A beautiful, kindly but not deep thinking, wealthy young woman, the patron of the village school where Jane teaches. She falls in love with St. John, only to be rejected because she would not make a good missionary's wife.
- Mr. Oliver: Rosamond Oliver's wealthy father, who owns a foundry and needle factory in the district. He is a kind and charitable man and is fond of St. John.
- Alice Wood: Jane's maid when she is mistress of the girls' village school in Morton.
- John Eyre: Jane's paternal uncle, who leaves her his vast fortune and wished to adopt her when she was 15. Mrs. Reed prevents the adoption out of spite towards Jane.

Conclusion

Early Victorian literature includes some of the greatest and most popular novels ever written. Most writers of that period wrote long works with numerous characters. In many instances, the authors included actual events of the day in their tales.

Having said about Charlotte Bronte's works we dare to say that it is the most important milestone in the creative activity of her. But even amongst his immortal works of this kind the novel "Jane Eyre" stands in the special novel. The first reason of this lies in the period of writing of it. The novel is referred to the third, last period of creative activity, it is seemingly summarizes the whole life of the And this mixing appears on the background of the exact description of humans life and characters which are closely similar to the historic chronicles. In our work we tried to demonstrate this spirit of chronicles of the author himself.

My work aimed to show the novelity of the novel though it was written three-four centuries ago, we tried to prove that even being the narration does not lose the real character. We made our conclusion that fairy tales cannot but link with the real life and the problems of life, love, happiness, sadness, revenge exist in both at the Heavens and the Earth.

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