

## THE PORTRAYAL OF THE PROTAGONIST IN “JANE EYRE” BY SHARLOTTE BRONTE

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**Abstract.** *The following article briefly analyzes the description of human fate in one of the most prominent romantic and real plays - the novel “Jane Eyre” by Charlotta Bronte. It also provides a full insight into English literature in Victorian period, distinct styles, from introspective realism to wild romanticism and social criticism. Their personal experiences, including isolated upbringings and work as governesses, deeply influenced their writing, leaving an indelible mark on literature.*

**Keywords:** *Victorian period, Jane Eyre, Charlotte Brontë, Feminism, Moral Integrity, realism, romanticism, fiction, novel, idea, human fate, destiny, author's skills, character, symbol, analysis antagonist, protagonist.*

### ИЗОБРАЖЕНИЕ ГЛАВНОГО ГЕРОЯ В «ДЖЕЙН ЭЙР» ШАРЛОТТЫ БРОНТЕ

**Аннотация.** *В следующей статье кратко анализируется описание человеческой судьбы в одной из самых выдающихся романтических и реальных пьес — романе «Джейн Эйр» Шарлотты Бронте. Она также дает полное представление об английской литературе викторианского периода, отдельных стилях, от интроспективного реализма до дикого романтизма и социальной критики. Их личный опыт, включая изолированное воспитание и работу гувернантками, глубоко повлиял на их творчество, оставив неизгладимый след в литературе.*

**Ключевые слова:** *викторианский период, Джейн Эйр, Шарлотта Бронте, феминизм, моральная целостность, реализм, романтизм, художественная литература, роман, идея, человеческая судьба, предназначение, навыки автора, персонаж, символ, анализ антагонист, главный герой.*

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### INTRODUCTION

Jane Eyre is a novel by the English writer Sharlotte Bronte. It was published under her pen name "Currer Bell" on 19 October 1847.

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The first American edition was published the following year by Harper and Brothers of New York. Jane Eyre is a bildungsroman that follows the experiences of its eponymous heroine, including her growth to adulthood and her love for Mr Rochester, the brooding master of Thornfield Hall.

The novel revolutionized prose fiction, being the first to focus on the moral and spiritual development of its protagonist through an intimate first-person narrative, where actions and events are colored by a psychological intensity. Charlotte Brontë has been called the "first historian of the private consciousness" and the literary ancestor of writers such as Marcel Proust and James Joyce.

The book contains elements of social criticism with a strong sense of Christian morality at its core, and it is considered by many to be ahead of its time because of Jane's individualistic character and how the novel approaches the topics of class, sexuality, religion and feminism. Jane Eyre, along with Jane Austen's Pride and Prejudice, is one of the most famous romance novels. It is considered one of the greatest novels in the English language, and in 2003 was ranked as the tenth best-loved book in Britain by the BBC in The Big Read poll.

### **Portrayal of Jane Eyre**

#### **Characterization as a Strong Female Figure**

Jane Eyre is presented as a strong female character through her independence and defiance against the gender roles prevalent during the Victorian era. She asserts herself as equal to men in her life, particularly in her relationship with Mr. Rochester. For instance, when she says to Rochester during their engagement scene: "I am not talking to you now through the medium of custom or conventionalities; it is my heart that speaks" (Chapter 23). This declaration underscores her refusal to accept social hierarchies that would place him above her due to his wealth and status [1].<sup>3</sup>

#### **Narrative Voice and Style**

The novel's style is characterized by long sentences with elaborate word choice and biblical allusions. This formal verbiage reflects Jane's educated background but also makes her appear thoughtful as she meticulously details every aspect of her experiences. When describing her marriage to Rochester after Bertha Mason's death, she uses biblical imagery: "ever more absolutely bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh," echoing Genesis' description of Eve's relation to Adam.

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<sup>3</sup> Study.com - \*The Characterization & Analysis\*

This adds depth by emphasizing moral duty.<sup>4</sup>

### **Personal Journey: Overcoming Adversity**

Jane's journey from an orphaned childhood at Gateshead Hall to becoming a governess at Thornfield Hall highlights resilience in the face of adversity. Her early life under Aunt Reed's cruelty shapes much of who she becomes—someone fiercely determined not just for survival but for self-respect.<sup>5</sup> At Lowood School for Girls under Miss Temple's care, Jane finds solace but also witnesses hardship firsthand when Helen Burns dies in her arms—a poignant moment inspired by Charlotte Brontë's own loss.<sup>6</sup>

The whole of the work is a critique of Victorian England's social hierarchy and inequality for woman. Jane struggles against social class and gender inequality, both of which she considers great injustices. Jane Eyre is very much the story of a quest to be loved. Jane searches, not just for romantic love, but also for a sense of being valued, of belonging. A theme is a key idea that runs through the text. In Jane Eyre the main themes are love and hate, social class and personal discovery.

From the beginning of the novel, Brontë describes Jane as a strong-willed, passionate and outspoken young girl. Jane regularly speaks out against the cruel treatment of her cousin, John and her aunt, Mrs Reed. Her protagonist Jane is placed in between economic classes and drifts among the lower, middle and upper classes of Victorian England. The condition of women in Victorian England was one of inequality and oppression.

### **Major Themes**

1. Independence and Self-Respect – Jane is a strong-willed character who values her self-respect above all, refusing to be dependent on others, whether in love or financial matters.

2. Love and Equality – The novel explores the idea of love based on mutual respect and equality, rather than social status or wealth. Jane and Rochester's relationship embodies this struggle.

3. Gothic Elements – The novel includes classic Gothic tropes, such as Thornfield's eerie atmosphere, Bertha Mason as the "madwoman in the attic," and themes of mystery and fate.

4. Social Criticism – Jane Eyre critiques the rigid social hierarchy of Victorian England, particularly in regard to women's roles and the treatment of orphans and the lower class.

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<sup>4</sup> Spark Notes - \*Style\*

<sup>5</sup> Infli.net - \*Charlotte Brontë: Jane Eyre\*

<sup>6</sup> Laurellit.com - The Blurred Line Between Charlotte Brontë & Jane Eyre

5. Religion and Morality – The novel presents different religious perspectives through characters like Helen Burns, Mr. Brocklehurst, and St. John Rivers, contrasting strict piety with personal morality.

### **Jane Eyre as an Independent and Strong-Willed Heroine**

From the outset, Jane Eyre is depicted as a determined and resilient young woman. As an orphan raised by her cruel aunt, Mrs. Reed, and later at the harsh Lowood School, Jane faces hardship and injustice but refuses to submit passively. Unlike many 19th-century heroines who conform to societal expectations, Jane asserts her independence and self-respect. Her famous declaration “I am no bird; and no net ensnares me: I am a free human being with an independent will” captures her belief in personal freedom and dignity.

### **Jane’s Morality and Inner Strength**

Throughout the novel, Jane demonstrates an unwavering commitment to her moral principles. Her relationship with Mr. Rochester, the brooding master of Thornfield Hall, tests her values. Even when deeply in love, Jane refuses to become his mistress upon discovering his marriage to Bertha Mason. Rather than compromising her integrity, she chooses to leave Thornfield, enduring loneliness and hardship. This act reinforces her belief that self-respect is more valuable than passion.

### **Jane’s Search for Love and Equality**

One of the most compelling aspects of Jane’s portrayal is her desire for love based on mutual respect rather than social status or wealth. Unlike traditional romantic heroines who are passive in their relationships, Jane insists on equality in her bond with Rochester. She does not want to be dominated or treated as inferior, making her a revolutionary figure in Victorian literature. Her eventual reunion with Rochester, after he has been humbled by fate, solidifies their relationship as one of true companionship rather than dependence.

### **Jane Eyre as a Feminist Icon**

While Jane Eyre was written long before modern feminist movements, the novel has often been regarded as an early feminist work. Jane’s insistence on her own worth, her rejection of societal constraints, and her pursuit of fulfillment on her own terms all challenge the restrictive roles assigned to women in the 19th century. Brontë’s portrayal of Jane as a woman who demands respect and autonomy continues to inspire readers today.

### **Conclusion**

Jane Eyre remains a timeless novel because of its powerful portrayal of a woman's journey to independence and love. Its blend of romance, social commentary, and Gothic elements makes it a compelling and enduring classic. Brontë's heroine, Jane, continues to inspire readers with her strength, intelligence, and unwavering moral integrity. Charlotte Brontë skillfully portrays Jane Eyre as an emblematic figure embodying strength amidst adversity while navigating societal constraints during Victorian England. Through narrative techniques like direct address (wherein readers are drawn into intimate conversations), Brontë empowers women by highlighting their capacity for self-determination despite oppressive circumstances.

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