

Analyse the methods charlotte bronte uses to essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

In this essay I shall analyse the methods which Charlotte Bronte uses to make the reader empathise with Jane Eyre in the first chapter. I will reflect on how the novel portrays Victorian ideology.

Charlotte Bronte's literary context in this chapter makes the reader empathize with Jane. Firstly the use of pathetic fallacy, relating to landscape and weather, emphasises the bleak, sad, lonely life that Jane leads "humbled by the consciousness of my physical inferiority". Perhaps "The cold winter wind had brought with it clouds so sombre" reflects the empty unloving environment that Jane is growing up in. Furthermore "in the leafless shrubbery" reflects the bareness of her existence. When Jane is reading in the library the author chooses a book Bewick's History of British Birds which is a book full of references to isolation and coldness "those forlorn regions of dreary space- that reservoir of frost and snow".

Again this seems to reflect Jane's unhappy situation. In a way Jane identifies with the bleakness contained in the book "of these death-white realms I formed an idea of my own". This suggests that Jane has an understanding of her own life through the wild landscapes illustrated in this book. She uses her imagination whilst reading this book to escape from the misery she is experiencing.

This is one of the few times that Jane finds happiness "I feared nothing but interruption" the book allowed her to escape into a world of her own. The author uses particularly effective vocabulary in creating the world that Jane lives in "a heart saddened by the chidings of Bessie" shows that Jane's spirit is worn down by constantly being told off by Bessie and the verb "humbled"

and the noun “ inferiority” leaves the reader in no doubt about the sadness of her life. The fact that Bessie tells her off also shows that even the servants of the household consider her to be inferior. They know that Mrs. Reed is supporting Jane and that she has no money of her own.

They therefore do not look at her as being the same social class as Mrs. Reed’s children and do not treat her with the same respect “ the servants did not like to offend their young master by taking my part against him” again shows that Jane is not treated as the same social level as John. John the eldest son of Mrs. Reed treats her like a servant girl “ I want you to come here” he orders.

He tells Jane to call him “ Master Reed” despite the fact that he is only fourteen and Jane is ten. He also uses bestial metonyms when referring to Jane “ tell mama she is run out into the rain, bad animal”. He also hits Jane and tells her it is “ for the look you had in your eyes two minutes since, you rat”. This shows that John considers her to be a female of much lower social status than himself. John is shown to represent Victorian ideology in his behaviour towards Jane.

This is shown in his angry response when he discovers Jane has taken a book to read “ they are mine; all the house belongs to me or will do in a few years”. In Victorian times the man of the household had total control over women’s lives. Since John does not have a father he is in charge of the household. This is reflected in his mother’s response when Jane is unjustly accused of attacking John.

She says “ take her away to the red-room and lock her in there. Mrs. Reed cannot accept any wrong-doing by her son and just assumes that Jane is guilty. She treats John indulgently, taking him out of school for a month or two “ on account of his delicate health”. Yet Jane’s description of him “ he gorged himself habitually at the table” and further that he had “ flabby cheeks” indicates that this is not the case. Despite the fact that Jane tells us that John “ bullied and punished” her continually, she says “ Mrs.

Reed was blind and deaf on the subject” this shows again that Mrs. Reed would not accept any criticism of her clearly unpleasant son. He tells her that she should not “ live here with gentleman’s children like us” and instead she “ ought to beg”. All these points show clearly the values of Victorian society.

A young woman with no means of support would find life very difficult.

Middle class women were not suppose to have a career but were expected to make good marriages and then look after the home.

Jane is in a difficult position because she has no family and no money and therefore is not valued in Victorian society. We can see that Jane is intelligent and a keen reader but this has no importance to the Reeds. All that matters is money and status. In comparing John to Jane we can see that he is unpleasant and violent and not interested in the books apart from the fact that they are his. Yet he is valued because of his social status as master of the house. It does not seem to matter that John is an unpleasant, cruel bully with “ not much affection for his mothers and sisters”.

He is still valued by society. His mothers and sisters do not seem to be aware of how unkind and brutal he is to Jane. This may indicate the power that

wealthy middleclass men had in their homes. A family would be fortunate if the man in the household was kind but in the case of a man like John life could be made to be very miserable as in Jane's case. On the other hand women were seen to be emotional rather than intelligent which is ironic in Jane's case. This is one reason why women were not allowed to vote.

The man of the household took responsibility for deciding which political party would suit him best. Women in Victorian times were often described as being hysterical and we do see that Jane becomes hysterical. "you are like a murderer- you are like a slave- driver- you are like the roman emperors" but surely Jane has been driven to this emotional state by John's brutality and constant beatings. Jane Eyre as a novel progresses from the 17th, 18th, 19th century.

In the 17th century novels was mostly about illicit love. This is not the case with Jane but she does eventually fall in love with someone who is married. But she doesn't know this and only after his wife's death does Jane marry him. 18th century novels were mostly about characters who were morally good and were very aware of their surroundings and had kind hearts. In the 19th century novelists very often used nature and landscapes to show the depth of characters feelings. So these landscapes can be said to be psychological landscapes which tell us about the life of the characters as well as where they live.

This is very much the case with Jane Eyre.