

Jane eyre by charlotte bronte

Literature



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Novel one was written by a black American writer, Marguerite (Maya) Angelou. The novel is written as an autobiography and was written in the 1960's recounting events that happened in the period of the 1930's - 1940's. The novel was not published until 1984 as racial segregation and inequality for black people was still present in society in the 1960's.

Novel two was written by Charlotte Bronte when she was thirty-one. The novel was first published in 1847 under the male pseudonym of Currer Bell. Bronte wrote a letter to the Poet Laureate of the time who advised her to behave like a woman and give up her writing career. Bronte was condemned by the society of the time for making the character of Jane wilful. Unlike novel one, which is a factual autobiography, novel two is written as an autobiography but is actually fictional.

Both novels are Bildungsroman. These types of text describe the progress of characters from childhood to maturity. The novelists both use first person narration and this enables the authors to control the story, as it is the narrators thoughts and feelings which are the focus of attention, even when a different character is speaking. The novels are both written by adults but through the eyes of a child. The writers are trying to recapture the feelings they felt at the time of each incident, which is written about, but the adult writer imposes their views on events. 'I can now conjecture readily that this streak of light was, in all likelihood, a gleam from a lantern,' from novel two and 'I preferred, much preferred, my version,' from novel one.

In the novels, the main characters, Maya and Jane are both young children who are about ten years old. Maya Angelou and Jane Eyre both have

unconventional family lives but whilst Maya lives with her loving grandmother and brother, Jane lives with her hard-hearted aunt and cousins. In novel two Jane Eyre, who is the main character, is middle class by birth. Jane is orphaned and poor. Maya Angelou is the main character in novel one and is recovering from being sexually assaulted by her mother's boyfriend, Mr Freeman. Although Jane and Maya's home lives contrast, the situations they are put in have some similarities. The narrators are both symbolic of childhood of the era that they were brought up in. both of the child characters experience prejudice, Jane because she is a poor orphaned female child and Maya because she is a black female child.

The characters react to their situations in very different ways. The young Jane Eyre rebels against her aunt because she resents being treated as an inferior to her cousins and the servants of the household. Jane shows this as she repeats the idea of not belonging to the same family as her aunt, how could she really like an interloper not of her race and unconnected with her.' The young Maya keeps her feelings and some thoughts hidden from other characters but writes about them, 'the humiliation.' Both of the narrators hope for equality and both have a strong sense of justice and injustice.

Maya Angelou's sexual assault is the heart of her novel and this assault inevitable changes her views of people and events. Novel two was written to show the social status of women in the early nineteenth century and to show that Charlotte Bronte believes in equal rights for women. Bronte centres her whole novel on the rebellious character of Jane. Bronte uses Jane to show that women are strong-willed and can think for themselves. Bronte creates Jane to show that she believes that women should be treated equally.

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Angelou also believes in equality and shows this in a fantasy part of her novel, where her black grandmother has power over a white man.

There is a theme of social classes in both novels. In novel two the theme deals with the difficulties faced by orphaned children and lower class Victorian women. In novel one this theme deals with Mays being a black female child. Being a black child made Maya Angelou invisible to white adults. This is shown in the novel when the white dentist ignores her, 'He had never once looked at me.' In novel two Jane also has the feeling of being invisible to adults and this is shown in a paragraph where she is describing her own appearance, ' I thought it like one of the tiny phantoms.' The character Jane has to deal with the feeling of being unequal to even her aunts servants, ' You are less than a servant.'

In novel two there is a theme, which is constant throughout the novel, and this is moral courage. Jane has to grow up in a house where no one cares for her and therefore has to strive to earn their respect. This was typical of an orphaned child in the nineteenth century because they were seen by society as being at the very bottom of the social ladder. This was also true for Maya Angelou. Angelou grew up in a society, which was controlled by white people. She had to work hard to gain recognition in this society of white supremacy. Angelou shows courage when she is in the white part of Stamps and a wagonload of white children go past and make racial comments.

Segregation is another theme, which is common to both novels. Jane Eyre experiences segregation when she is locked in the 'red room' on her own. Jane is placed in this situation because she retaliated to an attack. Maya

Angelou experienced segregation of a very different kind to Jane Eyre.

Angelou experienced racial segregation. This is shown when Angelou says ' Momma and I followed that lane to the backstairs of Dentist Lincoln's office.'

The styles of writing in the novels are very different because of the times that they were written in. Maya Angelou's novel is written in a very high standard of English and only uses colloquial language in the dialogue of her grandmother. Angelou uses the dialogue of the characters to show social status and also reveals balance of power. This is seen in the conversation between Maya's grandmother and the white dentist. The white dentist calls Maya's grandmother Annie. This is an informal title and it would not be used to show respect. Maya's grandmother, however, calls the dentist, Dentist Lincoln. This is a formal title that shows respect. The way in which these characters address each other shows social and cultural issues. This conversation shows the social status of black people and white people throughout the novel. The social status that is shown is that black people were seen as second-class citizens by the white people of the time.

Charlotte Bronte uses her novel to demonstrate an excellent command of vocabulary skills and to show that she is very well educated. Bronte uses dialogue to reveal attitude of the characters, ' And you ought not to think yourself on an equality with the Misses Reed and Master Reed.' This shows that other characters think that Jane Eyre is unequal to the other children in the house because she is poor and orphaned.

In novel two Bronte uses old-fashioned language. A modern day reader can see that this text is old because of various aspects of the text. The choice of

words that Bronte makes use of are very archaic and are rarely used in modern texts. She uses words like 'influx,' 'thus' and 'alas.' Also the word order or syntax that Bronte used would not make sense in modern language, 'turned to divest a stout leg of the necessary ligature.'

Angelou's writing is more modern when compared to Bronte. Angelou as narrator sometimes speaks as though the reader has the same amount of knowledge as her. Angelou also restrains her language at times. An example of this in the novel is in the rape incident when she describes the physical pain of her ordeal as 'And then there was the pain.' This seems out of place, as language in the novel is usually very descriptive and detailed.

Religious similes are used in both novels. An example of religious similes in novel two can be found in a passage about the red room. Jane describes certain things in the room to have religious connotations, 'tabernacle' and 'shroud.' In novel one religious language is used throughout, 'angel', 'penance' and 'prayers.'

Childhood is represented in both texts through the narrators. Childhood shows cultural issues because in both novels the children are discriminated against. Maya Angelou was a black child and the culture of the white people caused them to racially discriminate her. Jane was discriminated against because she was a poor orphaned child living with upper class people.

Social issues are revealed through the situations that the children are placed in. Segregation between white people and black people shows that white people were seen as superior and that black people were seen as 'rubbish.'

Social issues in novel two are shown in the discrimination of Jane because she was lower class.

Historical issues are revealed through the cultural and social issues. The cultural and social issues were common of the time that each novel was written in. Some of the historical issues in the novels have been passed down form century-to-century and decade-to-decade. Prejudice, racism and inequality are all still present in our society today. Charlotte Bronte might have thought that in the future theses words would not be in use but unfortunately there are still people who subject others to these three things.