

How does jane's
character differ from
the other women in
the novel essay
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Jane's temperament is strong and unique and she shares very few qualities with any of the other women in the novel. This is because, as a central character, Jane has to stand out and be individual. The other women in the novel are used to accentuate the qualities Jane has and enable comparison as well as helping to develop Jane's character. The beginning of the novel is set at Gateshead, where Jane spends the early years of her childhood. The cruelty Jane suffers at Gateshead, because of Aunt Reed and her cousin John, is what she struggles to overcome throughout the novel.

Aunt Reed is a fairly simple character who only features occasionally in the novel, but whose cruelty is constantly referred to as having scared Jane. Aunt Reed is portrayed as being cruel, manipulative and "hard-hearted." She takes advantage of her power over Jane and treats her with "miserable cruelty". Jane has a more caring nature than Mrs Reed, from whom she seeks only love. Jane is not malicious like her aunt and the only qualities they share are their strong-willed principles and feminist attitude towards many circumstances.

Aunt Reed's significance in the novel is to create reader sympathy, the cruelty inflicted on Jane makes the reader understand and tolerate her flaws. Eliza and Georgiana, Jane's cousins at Gateshead, have nothing in common with her. They are arrogant, "idle", "selfish," and rude. They have little care or concern for any one else and often bully and torment Jane. They have a higher social class than Jane, which they think, entitles them to do what they please. There is nothing kind or loving about them.

They are also the exact opposite of Jane's other cousins Diana and Mary and the comparison is supposed to be made that at Gateshead Jane was miserable but at Marsh End she could be happier. The comparison is essential to show the development of Jane's character, and when Jane returns to Gateshead, before Mrs Reed's death, it is to show that she is mature and content despite the anguish she suffered. Bessie only has a very small part in the novel, but it is relatively significant.

She provides Jane with a substitute mother, who although does not always show it, cares for Jane, is very kind to her and consequently Jane " preferred her to any one else at Gateshead. " Jane and Bessie differ mainly in social position. Bessie is lower in rank than Jane but despite this often takes authority over her. Other than this their characters are quite similar, both are assertive and headstrong but Bessie has the wisdom of age. Helen Burns is a very significant supporting character in the novel, who Jane meets during her time at Lowood.

She differs from Jane in almost everyway, therefore highlighting Jane's qualities. Helen is passive, self-sacrificing and self-controlled. " It is not violence that best overcomes hate. " She devalues herself and is a saintly, Christ-like figure who " lives in calm, looking to the end. " Jane however, is assertive and passionate; she seeks happiness and reward in this world and only relies on God for guidance and support. The differences between Jane and Helen's characters help the reader to further understand Jane's nature and principles.

Using Helen as a comparison makes it possible to draw attention to Jane's strengths and weaknesses. For example, Jane's passion is often the reason she gets into trouble and it is the cause for much anger and hatred. Helen is quiet and passive, she never complains and has a "doctrine of endurance," but therefore she often lets people take advantage of her. In this way the two differ significantly and Helen helps Jane to control her passion. The subject of religion also shows lots of differences between the two characters.

Helen is extremely religious and abides by all of God's teachings, making "his word, her rule. She believes that if she is good and saintly in this world, she will be rewarded in heaven. Jane however wishes to find happiness on earth. Jane and Helen's principles of being good are similar but Jane seeks more. Helen's significance in the novel is to provide a friend for Jane and a possible role model. Helen helps Jane to develop her good qualities and control her bad. The death of Helen draws a lot of sympathy from the reader, as it means yet another lost loved one for Jane. Miss Temple and Jane both share the same good, kind nature.

Miss Temple is "full of goodness, it pains her to be severe to any one." She cares greatly for all the children she looks after at Lowood and stands up to any injustice. She is religious and practises God's teachings, although she too, like Jane, seeks happiness in this lifetime, not in heaven. She also shares the same social class as Jane as both women have to work for a living. This equality makes Miss Temple a very good role model for Jane, because Miss Temple's kind, patient and unselfish temperament are rewarded, as Miss Temple finds happiness and love.

Mrs Fairfax is the first person Jane really comes in to contact with at Thornfield, therefore it is significant that Mrs Fairfax proves to be warm and welcoming to Jane. This is important as Jane's initial welcome and her happiness at Thornfield is all relevant to her meeting and falling in love with Mr Rochester. Mrs Fairfax and Jane don't really share that many qualities. Their social class is similar and "the equality between her" and Jane "was real," but Jane is intelligent and much more of a dreamer.

Mrs Fairfax is simple, "affable and kind," she is content with what she has, Jane seeks more. Mrs Fairfax also plays the condescending mother role, as Jane and Mr Rochester's feelings develop. She can be very judgemental but the fact that her views have such a significant impact on Jane, shows just how much her opinion matters and Jane does care, not just about Mrs Fairfax but also her self image. Adele provides a good comparison to Jane's childhood and shows the difference social class can have. Adele has a higher social class than Jane even though she is a child.

However, despite the fact that Adele is "spoilt and indulged" and Jane was not, the two are quite similar, both are parentless and have to settle for substitute mothers. Jane had Bessie. Adele has Mrs Fairfax. This shows another similarity, as both of their substitute mothers were lower in social class than themselves. As children they also both lacked love and proper parental guidance. Jane notices these similarities and therefore cares a great deal for Adele, which develops throughout the novel into a more motherly admiration.

Grace Poole has a very minimalist part to play in the novel and doesn't feature very often which makes comparison hard. However Bertha, who Grace Poole guards and who Jane for a long time believes her to be, does represent a strange connection to Jane. Bertha is the metaphorical equal to Jane. She has almost all the qualities Jane has but she amplifies and accentuates them. She has Jane's passion and expresses it freely and ruthlessly. She has Jane's desire for love and tries incredibly hard to gain attention and prevent Jane and Mr Rochester from being together.

She has Jane's jealousy, which again she uses to try and stop Jane and Mr Rochester from being together. She too longs for independence as she frequently escapes. Finally, she has intelligence and assertiveness. Despite the fact she is psychotic, she is capable of escaping and when she does she wreaks havoc, trying to get what she wants and all the time never being seen. Jane is not crazy and therefore would never do any of the things Bertha does, but the instincts are there, apart from one thing. Jane has morals, which means unlike Bertha she wouldn't try to kill Mr Rochester, rip up veils or set fire to Thornfield.

Blanche Ingram's differences from Jane are very obvious. She differs from Jane, mostly in her social class and beauty. However she is also very arrogant and rude and is "an accomplished lady of rank. In this way Jane has a more pleasant character, and the use of Miss Ingram helps the reader to appreciate Jane's good qualities. They also differ in moral values, Jane believes strongly in happiness and love whereas Miss Ingram favours materialistic properties. Miss Ingram is extremely vain and appearance and possessions mean everything to her.

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Jane does share this vanity and is very self-conscious about her appearance; she also believes that social class and money are important because what comes with these things is independence. Jane through out the novel struggles for independence and is rewarded with it at the end, however Jane has lived without having any possessions for so long that they are not so important to her as love. This becomes apparent in Jane's feelings towards Mr Rochester. Miss Ingram simply wants to be with Mr Rochester for his money and is not at all concerned with love. Jane however, truly loves Mr Rochester with or without his fortune.

At Marsh End Jane is provided with the last few things she needs to be happy, independence, equality and companionship. This comes mainly from the union between herself and her cousins St John, Diana and Mary. Diana and Mary are important characters who the reader warms to because of the kindness and assistance they provided Jane when she was destitute. They are both good-natured and although simple people, warm and " full of charm". Their social class is similar to Jane's as is their age and intelligence. Therefore the equality makes them good friends and Jane feels comfortable and happy in their company.

The differences are small but at Jane's first arrival at Marsh End, money obviously makes the ladies situation different. That however changes as Jane inherits her fortune, and as incidence arise and progress during Jane's time at Marsh End the women all soon become very similar. In social position, circumstance and character. All the women characters are relevant to the sequence of the novel. The nature of these women often express Jane's

feelings and they all aid in the development of her character, as well as representing Jane's constant struggle for happiness.

The women characters at Gateshead reflect Jane's unhappiness and it is the cruelty of the women she encounters there, which she spends the remainder of the novel trying to overcome. The women Jane comes into contact with at Lowood are both gentle and kind. They help Jane to become the person she wants to be, highlighting her good qualities and helping to correct her faults. Jane is happy during her time at Lowood and cares immensely about both Helen and Miss Temple, this makes their separation even more upsetting.

It creates sympathy for Jane because her happiness at Lowood was only very short lived and so she is forced to search for love elsewhere. At Thornfield Jane meets Mrs Fairfax and Adele, two women who she admires greatly. Again Jane's happiness and equality she feels with these women is all due to her situation. It is important that Jane likes these women because it reflects on the way her relationship will progress with Rochester. She is happy and content at Thornfield, with Mrs Fairfax, Adele and Mr Rochester, although this is again to be jeopardised with the arrival of Blanche and the discovery of Bertha.

These women highlight the problems Mr Rochester and Jane face in social class, wealth and relations. Marsh End is the conclusion to the story and the women Jane meets there are both kind, caring and equal to Jane. These women prove that Jane's struggle throughout the novel was not in vain as she is rewarded with friends, family and independence. Jane's experiences at Marsh End prove that she has overcome the hardship she began her life with

at Gateshead and she is finally able to marry Rochester, knowing that she has all the things she needs to be happy and contented, independence, money, family friends and equality.