

How does charlotte bronte depict jane eyre's childhood through the first four cha...

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Jane Eyre was written by Charlotte Bronte in 1847. It was first published as an autobiography under the pseudonym Currer Bell and immediately became a big success. Charlotte Bronte originally had to write her novel under a pseudonym because women were not allowed to publish books at that time as women had a lower status than men did. This is mirrored throughout the book, for example, John Reed had complete control over Jane and other girls and women of Gateshead hall. This leads on to how women were treated in the Victorian times; women did not have any rights over men and were not in any way independent.

Jane Eyre is a bildungsroman. This means that the book Jane Eyre concentrates on the spiritual, moral, psychological, social development and growth of Jane Eyre from girl to adulthood. On this long and arduous journey, the main character must feel some loss or discontent at a young age that forces her to embark on this journey. In Victorian times, adults believed that children should be seen but not heard. A prime example of this is when Jane worked as a governess of Adele at Mr Rochester's house. Whenever Mr Rochester has guests at his mansion; his guests made remarks and comments about Adele's actions.

The storyline of Jane Eyre is a reflection of Charlotte Bronte's life as it was an autobiography. For instance, as in Jane Eyre, Charlotte Bronte's parents died and she was sent to her aunt to be taken care of. When she was at her aunt's house she was treated badly. Jane Eyre is full of erotic tension, passion and irony; three characteristics that distinguish Jane Eyre from any

other Victorian time book. Furthermore, Jane Eyre was written in the view point of a child, this was unseen in any books at that time.

In addition, Jane Eyre puts across the idea to the reader that men and women should have equal rights; and that women can be as independent as men can be. This is also another part of Jane Eyre that distinguishes it from all other Victorian time books. These reasons are the cause of why Jane Eyre was later named a revolutionary text. When Jane Eyre was published, it was first frowned upon because it displayed all these characteristics, however given time the novel became a big success and opened the eyes of many Victorian men and women. Bronte shows in the first four chapters how Jane is cut off from others at a young age.

Jane Eyre is isolated from the Reed family, " Eliza, John and Georgiana were now clustered around their mama," From this quote the reader can see that Jane has been cut off from the Reed family. " Clustered", emphasises that the relationship between Jane's cousin's and their " mama" is very close. This further emphasises that the Reed family have discarded Jane from socialising with them. The house-maids, Abbot and Bessie also segregate Jane, " if she were a nice, pretty child, one might compassionate her forlornness; but one really cannot care for such a little toad as that. The reader recognises from Abbot's severe comments about Jane's appearance that the servants think that they are of a higher social status than Jane.

This would shock the reader of Charlotte Bronte's time because servants always had a lower social status than the people they worked for. Jane is

secluded because she is poor and 'dependant', " You have no business to take our books; you are dependant, mama says; you have no money; your father left you none; you ought to beg, and not to live here with gentlemen's children like us. This quote explains to the reader that when Jane's father died he left no money for Jane; this is why Jane is financially dependant on the Reed family.

However, Jane is independent in many other ways; she entertains herself and does not rely on the Reed family for support. " Us" shows the further elimination of Jane's presence in Gateshead Hall. When John says " gentlemen's children like us", a lot of irony is created because Jane's cousins certainly don't behave like " gentlemen's children". Jane reads books to entertain herself and they also symbolise to Jane a way of escaping from Gateshead hall, " Bewick's History of British Birds.

By choosing a bird book, Bronte shows that Jane fantasises about escaping from Gateshead hall because birds can fly to any location and Jane cannot. In addition, Jane's character is contradicted to birds because she is captured and isolated and birds are free to do what they want. Jane's isolation has resulted in Jane creating replacements for the love and companionship she needs, " With Bewick on my knee, I was happy: happy at least in my way. " From this quote the reader recognises that Jane has created imaginary friends in the books that she reads.

By repeating the word " happy", Jane shows that she feels overjoyed with her so called companion. In addition, by personifying the book by referring to

it by “ Bewick”, Jane emphasises that she has no friends or anyone to love her. In the depressing early stages of Jane Eyre’s life, Bronte informs the reader of how the red room haunts Jane. The red room’s quietness provokes an eery atmosphere, “ very seldom slept in. ” Jane’s description of the red room illustrates to the reader that the red room is very rarely used and very quiet.

In addition, Jane’s depiction of the colours used in the red room creates a dark and heavy ambience, “ deep red damask. ” The reader notices from Jane’s portrayal of the red room’s colours that the red room holds dark and gothic qualities. The word “ deep” highlights how rich and gothic the colours are in the red room. These qualities further emphasise the eery atmosphere created by the silence. Furthermore, the furniture in the red room engulfs Jane, “ A bed supported on massive pillars of mahogany. ” Yet again the reader recognises in this quote the sinister atmosphere being created.

The phrase “ massive pillars” creates a feeling that everything inside the red room is bigger than Jane. After reviewing these few points of the red room, the reader can see a very eery and gothic atmosphere being created that creates fear in Jane. After the experience in the red room, Jane changes in character and begins to fight against Mrs Reed and the people of Gateshead hall, “ My Uncle Reed is in heaven, and can see all you do and think; and so can papa and mama they know how you shut me up all day long, and how you wish me dead.

The reader can notice Jane's change in character because before the incident in the red room, Jane would not have even considered confronting Mrs Reed like that. In addition, within earlier scenes religion has been used to scare Jane, however, Jane has now turned it around and used religious comments to threaten Mrs Reed. This would shock the reader of Charlotte Bronte's time because children were meant to be seen but not heard; Jane on the other hand, is seen threatening Mrs Reed and disputes this rule. In the opening chapters, the reader instantly acknowledges that Jane has no faith within the adults at Gateshead hall.

Jane reacts positively to Mr Lloyd, " I felt an inexpressible relief, a soothing conviction of protection and security, when I knew that there was a stranger in the room, and individual not belonging to Gateshead. " The reader can recognise from this quote that Jane feels safe around an outsider. It is ironic that she feels secure around " a stranger" as the reader would expect the opposite. Additionally, the reader knows that Jane trusts Mr Lloyd because she releases her emotions onto him, "" I was knocked down" was the blunt explanation.

By releasing her emotions, Jane is showing the reader that she trusts Mr Lloyd. Yet again irony is created and emphasised. Jane was unable to be comforted by Bessie, as prior to this chapter Bessie was very cruel, " Do you feel as if you should sleep, Miss? " From this quote the reader can see Bessie trying to comfort Jane; in addition, by using " Miss", Bessie is showing her social status is lower than Jane's. However, as the reader moves on, Jane

states that Bessie's appreciation is an "unwanted kindness", this shows that it is too little, too late for Bessie to try and comfort Jane.

This is because Bessie used to bully Jane in front of Jane's cousins. Jane's surroundings have enforced her to become extremely independent and passionate. Mrs Reed hates Jane and does not want her in Gateshead hall, "It must have been irksome to find herself bound by a hard-wrung pledge to stand in the stead of a parent to a strange child she could not love, and to see an uncongenial alien permanently intruded on her own family group." In the early parts of the story the reader is told that Uncle Reed left Mrs Reed with a promise to treat Jane as her own child.

But, Mrs Reed has not kept her promise and treated Jane like an "uncongenial alien". Use of the personal pronoun "own" emphasises that Jane is not welcome in Mrs Reed's "own family group". Jane's cousins reject Jane, "Eliza and Georgiana, evidently acting according to orders, spoke to me as little as possible: John thrust his tongue in his cheek whenever he saw me and once attempted chastisement." This quote shows the reader that Mrs Reed has told her children to keep away from Jane. This shows the Reed family has restrained Jane from their normal lives.

Jane's passion is shown when she argues with Mrs Reed, "I am not deceitful: if I were, I should say I loved you; but I declare I do not love you: I dislike you the worst of anybody in the world except John Reed; and this book about the liar, you may give to your girl, Georgiana, for it is she who tells lies, and not I." Jane's passion is shown considerably in this quote because she does not

burst out in anger; she controls her language and undermines Mrs Reed cleverly.

Reading on, the reader finds out that Jane has won the argument with the quote, " I was left there alone-winner of the field. This shows she has controlled her passionate anger and has won the argument with Mrs Reed using language and not violence. Conclusively, Charlotte Bronte has successfully portrayed Jane Eyre's childhood to be very miserable; by using first person, Charlotte Bronte tells the story in the eyes of Jane and further emphasises how dismal Jane's childhood was. In addition, by using first person, Charlotte Bronte emphasises the struggle that Jane goes through. This struggle builds Jane's character up so that she is hardened for whatever the rest of her life throws at her.