

Jane Eyre(Ramji lal 2005)

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I. INTRODUCTION

This book is intended to meet the examination requirements of advanced students of English literature at Indian universities and elsewhere. The first to third chapter deals with the Charlotte Brontë's life, works and introduction to this novel

Charlotte Brontë was born in 1816, the third daughter of the Rev. Patrick Brontë and his wife Maria. Her brother Patrick Branwell was born in 1817, and her sisters Emily and Anne in 1818 and 1820. In 1820, too, the Brontë family moved to Haworth, Mrs. Brontë dying the following year.

In 1824 the four eldest Brontë daughters were enrolled as pupils at the Clergy Daughter's School at Cowan Bridge. The following year Maria and Elizabeth, the two eldest daughters, became ill, left the school and died: Charlotte and Emily, understandably, were brought home.

In 1826 Mr. Brontë brought home a box of wooden soldiers for Branwell to play with. Charlotte, Emily, Branwell, and Ann, playing with the soldiers, conceived of and began to write in great detail about an imaginary world which they called Angria.

In 1831 Charlotte became a pupil at the school at Roe Head, but she left school the following year to teach her sisters at home. She returned to Roe Head School in 1835 as a governess: for a time her sister Emily attended the same school as a pupil, but became homesick and returned to Haworth. Ann took her place from 1836 to 1837.

In 1838, Charlotte left Roe Head School. In 1839 she accepted a position as governess in the Sidgwick family, but left after three months and returned to Haworth. In 1841 she became governess in the White family, but left, once again, after nine months.

Upon her return to Haworth the three sisters, led by Charlotte, decided to open their own school after the necessary preparations had been completed. In 1842 Charlotte and Emily went to Brussels to complete their studies. After a trip home to Haworth, Charlotte returned alone to Brussels, where she remained until 1844.

Upon her return home the sisters embarked upon their project for founding a school, which proved to be an abject failure: their advertisements did not elicit a single response from the public. The following year Charlotte discovered Emily's poems, and decided to publish a selection of the poems of all three sisters: 1846 brought the publication of their Poems, written under the pseudonyms of Currer, Ellis and Acton Bell. Charlotte also completed *The Professor*, which was rejected for publication. The following year, however, Charlotte's *Jane Eyre*, Emily's *Wuthering Heights*, and Ann's *Agnes Grey* were all published, still under the Bell pseudonyms.

In 1848 Charlotte and Ann visited their publishers in London, and revealed the true identities of the "Bells." In the same year Branwell Brontë, by now an alcoholic and a drug addict, died, and Emily died shortly thereafter. Ann died the following year.

In 1849 Charlotte, visiting London, began to move in literary circles, making the acquaintance, for example, of Thackeray. In 1850 Charlotte edited her sister's various works, and met Mrs. Gaskell. In 1851 she visited the Great Exhibition in London, and attended a series of lectures given by Thackeray.

The Rev. A. B. Nicholls, curate of Haworth since 1845, proposed marriage to Charlotte in 1852. The Rev. Mr. Brontë objected violently, and Charlotte, who, though she may have pitied him, was in any case not in love with him, refused him. Nicholls left Haworth in the following year, the same in which Charlotte's *Villette* was published. By 1854, however, Mr. Brontë's opposition to the proposed marriage had weakened, and Charlotte and Nicholls became engaged. Nicholls returned as curate at Haworth, and they were married, though it seems clear that Charlotte, though she admired him, still did not love him.

In 1854 Charlotte, expecting a child, caught pneumonia. It was an illness which could have been cured, but she seems to have seized upon it (consciously or unconsciously) as an opportunity of ending her life, and after a lengthy and painful illness, she died, probably of dehydration.

1857 saw the posthumous publication of *The Professor*, which had been written in 1845-46, and in that same year Mrs. Gaskell's *Life of Charlotte Brontë* was published.

Jane Eyre was written while watching over her father's operation on his eyes. It was published in May 1846, and was very successful, even though there was also criticism that her writing was coarse, doubts about the gender of the author, as well as questions about the morality of the novel, to which Charlotte responded with a preface to the second edition of the novel, in which she refutes the attacks on her views of morality and religion.

The fourth, fifth and sixth chapter deals with the story of the novel.

Jane Eyre was published under the pen name Currer Bell. The fact that Charlotte and her sisters all used pseudonyms when they published their work may in itself be an interesting starting point for the discussion of gender, as their pen names were meant to disguise their gender but retain their initials (C.B. for Currer Bell and Charlotte Brontë).

After the publication of Jane Eyre, Charlotte Brontë kept writing. First, she worked on Shirley (published in 1849). However, before publication she suffered the loss of both her brother and her two other sisters. Her third novel, Vilette, was published in 1853.

It is the story of Jane Eyre, and her growth to adulthood. Jane is an orphan who grows up with her aunt and cousins, is subsequently sent away to Lowood school where she experiences the harsh regime that religion can provide (according to Charlotte Brontë, this is not true Christianity), but also finds her first and only friend, Helen Burns. When Jane Eyre finishes her education, she becomes a governess at Thornfield Hall, where she falls in love with her employer, Mr. Rochester...

Ten-year-old orphan Jane Eyre lives unhappily with her wealthy relatives, the Reed family, at Gateshead. Resentful of the late Mr. Reed's preference for her, Jane's aunt and cousins take every opportunity to neglect and abuse her as a reminder of her inferior station. Jane's only salvation from her daily humiliations is Bessie, the kindly servant who tells her stories and sings her songs. One day, Jane confronts her bullying cousin, John, and Mrs. Reed punishes her by imprisoning her in the "red-room," the room in which her uncle died. Convinced that she sees her uncle's ghost, Jane faints. When she awakes, Jane is being cared for by the apothecary, Mr. Lloyd, who suggests that she be sent off to school. Mrs. Reed is happy to be rid of her troublesome charge and immediately sends Jane to the Lowood School, an institution fifty miles from Gateshead.

Jane soon discovers that life at the Lowood School is bleak, particularly because of the influence of the hypocritical headmaster, Mr. Brocklehurst, whose cruelty and evangelical self-righteousness results in poor conditions, inedible meals, and frequent punishments for the students. During an inspection of the school, Mr. Brocklehurst humiliates Jane by forcing her to stand on a stool in the middle of the class and accusing her of being a liar. The beautiful superintendent, Miss Temple, believes in Jane's innocence and writes to Mr. Lloyd for clarification of Jane's nature. Although Jane continues to suffer privations in the austere environment, Miss Temple's benevolence encourages her to devote herself to her studies.

While at Lowood, Jane also befriends Helen Burns, who upholds a doctrine of Christian forgiveness and tolerance. Helen is constantly mistreated by Miss Scatcherd, one of the more unpleasant teachers at the school, but maintains her passivity and "turns the other cheek." Although Jane is unable to accept Helen's doctrine completely – her passionate nature cannot allow her to endure mistreatment silently – Jane attempts to mirror Helen's patience and calmness in her own character. During the spring, an outbreak of typhus fever ravages the school, and Helen dies of consumption in Jane's arms. The deaths by typhus alert the benefactors to the school's terrible conditions, and it is revealed that Mr. Brocklehurst has been embezzling school funds in order to provide for his own luxurious lifestyle. After Mr. Brocklehurst's removal, Jane's time at Lowood is spent more happily and she excels as a student for six years and as a teacher for two.

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Despite her security at Lowood, Jane is dissatisfied and yearns for new adventures. She accepts a position as governess at Thornfield Manor and is responsible for teaching a vivacious French girl named Adèle. In addition to Adèle, Jane spends much of her time at Thornfield with Mrs. Fairfax, the elderly housekeeper who runs the estate during the master's absence. Jane also begins to notice some mysterious happenings around Thornfield, including the master's constant absence from home and the demonic laugh that Jane hears emanating from the third-story attic.

After much waiting, Jane finally meets her employer, Edward Rochester, a brooding, detached man who seems to have a dark past. Although Mr. Rochester is not handsome in the traditional sense, Jane feels an immediate attraction to him based on their intellectual communion. One night, Jane saves Mr. Rochester from a fire in his bedroom, which he blames on Grace Poole, a seamstress with a propensity for gin. Because Grace continues to work at Thornfield, Jane decides that Mr. Rochester has withheld some important information about the incident.

As the months go by, Jane finds herself falling more and more in love with Mr. Rochester, even after he tells her of his lustful liaison with Adèle's mother. However, Jane becomes convinced that Mr. Rochester would never return her affection when he brings the beautiful Blanche Ingram to visit at Thornfield. Though Rochester flirts with the idea of marrying Miss Ingram, he is aware of her financial ambitions for marriage. During Miss Ingram's visit, an old acquaintance of Rochester's, Richard Mason, also visits Thornfield and is

severely injured from an attack - apparently by Grace - in the middle of the night in the attic. Jane, baffled by the circumstances, tends to him, and Rochester confesses to her that he made an error in the past that he hopes to overturn by marrying Miss Ingram. He says that he has another governess position for Jane lined up elsewhere.

Jane returns to Gateshead for a few weeks to see the dying Mrs. Reed. Mrs. Reed still resents Jane and refuses to apologize for mistreating her as a child; she also admits that she lied to Jane's uncle, John Eyre, and told him that she had died during the typhus outbreak at Lowood. When Jane returns to Thornfield, Rochester tells her that he knows Miss Ingram's true motivations for marriage, and he asks Jane to marry him. Jane accepts, but a month later, Mason and a solicitor, Mr. Briggs, interrupt the wedding ceremony by revealing that Rochester already has a wife: Mason's sister, Bertha, who is kept in the attic in Thornfield under the care of Grace Poole. Rochester confesses his past misdeeds to Jane. In his youth he needed to marry the wealthy Bertha for money, but was unaware of her family's history of madness. Despite his best efforts to help her, Bertha eventually descended into a state of complete madness that only her imprisonment could control. Jane still loves Mr. Rochester, but she cannot allow herself to become his mistress: she leaves Thornfield.

Penniless and devastated by Mr. Rochester's revelations, Jane is reduced to begging for food and sleeping outdoors. Fortunately, the Rivers siblings, St. John (pronounced "Sinjin"), Diana, and Mary, take her into their home at Moor House and help her to regain her strength. Jane becomes close friends with the family, and quickly develops a great affection for the ladies. Although the stoically religious St. John is difficult to approach, he finds Jane a position working as a teacher at a school in Morton. One day, Jane learns that she has inherited a vast fortune of 20,000 pounds from her uncle, John Eyre. Even more surprising, Jane discovers that the Rivers siblings are actually her cousins. Jane immediately decides to share her newfound wealth with her relatives.

St. John is going to go on missionary work in India and repeatedly asks Jane to accompany him as his wife. She refuses, since it would mean compromising her capacity for passion in a loveless marriage. Instead, she is drawn to thoughts of Mr. Rochester and, one day, after experiencing a mystical connection with him, seeks him out at Thornfield. She discovers that the estate has been burned down by Bertha, who died in the fire, and that Mr. Rochester, who lost his eyesight and one of his hands in the fire, lives at the nearby estate of Ferndean. He is overjoyed when she locates him, and relates his side of the mystical connection that Jane had. He and Jane soon marry. At the end of the novel, Jane informs the readers that she and Mr. Rochester have been married for ten years, and Mr. Rochester regained sight in one of his eyes in time to see the birth of his first son. The author has worked with zeal and enthusiasm after taking all sources.

Ramji Lal Jane Eyre." IOSR Journal Of Humanities And Social Science (IOSR-JHSS), vol. 22, no. 11, 2017, pp. 89-91.