

ENGLISH: *JANE EYRE*

Through its portrayal of human experience, Brontë's *Jane Eyre* reinforces the significance of resilience.

Life's journey is characterised by phases of ups and downs which form the integral aspect of human experiences. Notions of independence and resilience are commonplace through Charlotte Brontë's novel *Jane Eyre* published in 1847. The importance of identity and holding firm to personal beliefs and values are crucial in the reinforcement of resilience and the portrayal of human experience. Through the distinct usage of literary prose and numerous inter-textual references, *Jane Eyre* seeks to explore the position of women in the Victorian context of society and to challenge conservative England in order to allow the significance of resilience to prevail as Jane seeks out her humanist desires, despite repeated setbacks.

The structure of *Jane Eyre* is of a subjective and chronological autobiographical archetype which allows Jane as both the protagonist and narrator to communicate directly the audience in first person. The reader is able to receive a direct interjection and response from Jane in regards to her thoughts which mature and develop as the plot thickens and unfolds. The famous quote from the start of the final chapter being "Reader, I married him" is short and sharp which emphasised that Jane has overcome her demons and has shown through resilience that she is able to establish herself in a manner that she chooses to be. Human experiences are also portrayed through the plot which is driven by dialogue and characterisation of Jane, Rochester and others in order to juxtapose experience and reason. Locations and places aid in the development of experiences in which the facets of personalities such as resilience, defiance and morality conflict until Jane and Rochester accustom themselves with "perfect concord" to settle down.

As *Jane Eyre* unravels the life of a young orphaned girl at the age of ten to her married life as a mother, the disproportionate amount page length allocated to each stage of her life signifies the importance of certain events over the other. In contrast to the single page that is devoted to her transition from a graduate of Lowood school to being a teacher and woman, multiple pages are dedicated towards her exchanges with the 'men' of her life. Jane's outbursts towards Rochester throughout the mid to latter portions of the novel highlight the development of human experiences and as a result of Jane resilience stating her independence such key idea is reinforced. In response to Rochester's brash questioning, Jane states that "I don't think, sir, you have a right to command me, merely because you are older than I, or because you have seen more of the world than I have; your claim to superiority depends on the use you have made of your time and experience" as a mean of striking out and standing up for her personal views and beliefs of independence and liberty.

Language and imagery go hand in hand to develop a sequence of events which remind the audience of the challenges that people face as they take the human journey. Although occasionally interpreted as signs of a lack of feminist independence, the occasions in which Jane speaks out and literally runs her own path with most cases being into disaster are resurrected by Charlotte Brontë to portray the resilience of Jane as a symbol for humanity. By spitefully arguing with Mrs Reed after she depicts Jane as a deceitful child to Mr Brocklehurst, she is subsequently even further disowned from Gateshead and left to her own accord at Lowood. However Jane becomes the better of her circumstances, eventually developing a close friendship with Miss Temple. Jane says that "I felt as I went on that Miss Temple fully believed me" and establishing herself academically and artistically. Bessie later remarks that she is achieved more in life compared to the Reed children. This is another sign of her resilience being characterised throughout the portrayal of human experiences.

The language of Charlotte Brontë novel *Jane Eyre* is rich with motifs of natural elements being the weather, trees or birds that enhance its Gothic imagery of confinement and entrapment. The novel opens with a scene of bad weather and temperament which sets the stage for the initial sequences of Jane's life. Jane is a 'nobody' at Gateshead and has nothing of her own. She reclines to the

window reading a book about English birds. As the symbolism of birds and the weather take their shape, it is clear that such actions have brought displeasure to John Reed whom lashes out at Jane by saying “you have no businesses to take our books, you are a dependant; you have no money; your father left you none; you ought to beg, and not live here with gentlemen’s children like us”. Despite the literal deterioration of the atmosphere surrounding Jane, she becomes the extended metaphor for the bird in fighting back against John Reed by striking him back. Such acts of independent and resilience are commonplace throughout the experiences of Jane Eyre as she seeks to secure her own identity and position in society.

Charlotte Bronte aka Currer Bell sought to challenge the conservative society of Victorian England in the mid 1800s through the use of her literary abilities. Jane Eyre is a text which has sometimes been referred to as a feminist manifesto but could also be interpreted and labelled as one of the resilience of life’s journeys. Language is used to juxtapose the realisms of the Gothic times with the times of Jane Eyre where she endures repeated setbacks but seeks to preserve through them. Human experiences are characterised by the events and circumstances that we as the responder encounter and through Jane Eyre’s portrayal of life as a woman of her time standing up for her independence and liberty, the significance of liberty is reinforced.



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