

Prominence of Courage in Charlotte Bronte's Jane Eyre

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Abstract

Literature always owes an important position for women. Women characters in every novel are given some importance in order to enhance the reader's interest. Charlotte Bronte has also penned female character as her protagonist in the novel *Jane Eyre*. Charlotte Bronte has gained fame with her novel *Jane Eyre*. Charlotte Bronte's own experience is expressed through her novel *Jane Eyre*. In this novel protagonist name is served as a title name. Bronte's Jane Eyre is a character who suffers from her childhood to womanhood. This novel has divided into 38 chapters and it clearly explains Jane Eyre's survival in various places. Bronte's narration of Jane Eyre's character which is also a title name has described five stages of life. Jane Eyre's longing for love is clearly depicted by Bronte. The main objective of this paper is to analyze the Jane Eyre's courage and her defense over the conflicts in her every stage of life. Jane Eyre's struggle against her destiny plays a prominent role in this fiction. One can easily evaluate Jane Eyre's independent character through Bronte's narration. The conclusion of this paper also deals with the analysis of Jane's transformation into bold lady and also her achievement in true love.

Key Words: Bronte, Courage, Longing, Independent, Destiny, Life

INTRODUCTION:

Jane Eyre (1847) is a novel which was written in 19th century, generally known for feminism. In this novel Charlotte wants to explore her own experience through protagonist. Female protagonist of *Jane Eyre* is typically different from other female protagonist in the literature world. The novel begins with a Jane Eyre's loss of her family under the disease typhus and her new life with her maternal uncle's house in Gateshead Hall. *Jane Eyre* is narrated in first-person narrative through the protagonist. In this novel Bronte's description over the character Jane clearly explores her expedition in every stage of

life. It is apparently explained that Jane expects only true love in every stage from the people who she encounters. When she was ten years old her life is destined and commenced with her uncle's house under the guidance of her aunt Mrs. Reed. Her life in Mrs. Reed's house made her to feel the pain and sufferings which is overloaded to a girl in her age. Jane is treated as a slave and ordered to complete household works for her food. She started to hate her life and she totally hates her aunt for treating herself in a violent manner. Mrs. Reed's behavior towards her own children is quite soft

nature. And Jane also expects same kind of love from her aunt which is denied for her.

Once she was punished severely by her aunt regarding her self-defense from her cousin John Reed who treats her like his mom, Jane voluntarily explained her pathetic situation to the apothecary Mr. Lloyd. He is the one who insists Mrs. Reed to join Jane into the school. But Mrs. Reed's decision on sending Jane to school has cruel plan behind that is because she does not want Jane to stay in her house. And also she wants to destroy her life in Lowood. In order to spoil her peace in Lowood she sent a letter to the director of the school, Mr. Brocklehurst. In this letter she comments badly about Jane which made Mr. Brocklehurst to receive a bad impression on Jane in his first sight. Jane's intolerance of pain made her to deliver angry words towards her aunt when she is leaving her house. She decided not to return to her aunt's house in her lifetime and also she pronounced that she will never call Mrs. Reed as an 'aunt' again. Mrs. Reed's cruel behavior towards Jane leads her to this decision. In school, Jane has gained some love through her friend Helen Burns and also from her teacher Miss Temple. Miss Temple served as a well-wisher for Jane Eyre who helped her in problematic situation. Only because of Miss Temple's influence Jane went to Thronfield Hall as a governess for a girl Adele Warens. Jane's life in Thronfield Hall provides a drastic change in her life. Later her realization of love life with Mr. Rochester leads her to travel Moor house where she tends to know about her blood relations. One can easily find that Jane's boldness to face her conflicts plays a vital role in the novel. Jane

as an orphan girl proves her courage through her independent life.

DISCUSSION:

Jane Eyre is a novel which portrayed a life of a Jane Eyre, a protagonist in a feministic approach. Bronte's rebellious thought is reflected through the character Jane. As a single woman Jane Eyre boldly raised her strength to survive in this male chauvinistic world. Most of the nineteenth century novel basically discussed about restricted life of a woman. It is only because that is the period for every women writer to share their sufferings and conflicts through writings. But some of the writers also portrayed their female characters in a pathetic manner in order to wake the courage of the readers to explore their self confidence in facing troubles. Like Charlotte Bronte's novel Jane's character not only expressed her sorrow full part of her life and also she tries to defense against the troubles regarding getting back her true love Mr. Rochester. Jane Eyre's passionate love towards Mr. Rochester begins with the misunderstanding and ends with true love. 'True love never fails' is a common quotes recited by everyone in this world. But it is totally applicable in the case of Jane and Rochester. Like every true love Jane's love has also faced several conflicts which made her to leave Rochester for some days. As Shakespeare quoted in his novel *A Midsummer Night's Dream* "A course of true love never did runs smooth". Jane also overcomes many problems in her love life. Jane's lonely life made her to search for a love in every place wherever she moves, but love from Rochester is something different

which she cannot leave in any situation in her life.

Many of the character in the novel continuously stabs and marginalized Jane. It has reason that is other characters in the novel do not want her to raise her influence on society. They tried to avoid her from the out world by fixing her as an outcast. From the beginning of the novel Jane continuously discriminated by the characters. For instance her poverty is commented by her cousin John Reed to Jane. He comments:

You have no business to take our books: you are a dependent, 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, and eat the same meals we do, and wear clothes at our mama's expense. Now I'll teach you to rummage my bookshelves: for they are mine; the entire house belongs to me, or will do in a few years. Go and stand by the door, out of the way of the mirror and the windows. (Jane Eyre 13)

John Reed's way of conversation towards explains his greedy nature. It gives a clear discriminating talk of a John Reed and his cruel behavior to Jane. Jane tolerated these words in order to save her life. Jane is compared with the servant and her food is served only she behaves as a slave. Once she tries to defense herself from John Reed she is thrown into the dark room which is believed that the place for ghost where her dead uncle's soul remains. Jane cried out of fear and she faints until Mr. Lloyd tends her. Jane is tortured for being an orphan without holding any fortune. She explains her pain through words in the description about John Reed as she pointed out, "He bullied and

punished me: not two or three times in the week, nor once or twice in the day, but continually: every nerve I had feared him, and every morsel of flesh on my bones shrank when he came near".(12) Jane calmly tolerates all the hardships and burst out of oppression, she tries flew away from her aunt's house.

Jane's life in Lowood School made her to feel the outside world from her confined life. Her acquaintance with Helen Burst owes comfort zone to pursue her education. She was totally upset when her beloved friend Helen has lost her life in typhus by consuming improper meals from school. Charlotte Bronte's sister Maria is reflected through the character Helen. Like Helen's death in maltreated school, Maria also received her death through one of the maltreated schools, and died under tuberculosis disease. Again Jane started to live in loneliness. In fact Lowood also serves as an unfortunate area for Jane. Again she is condemned by the male character Mr. Brocklehurst, a director of Lowood School. He does not want Jane to continue her education in his school. According to Mr. Brocklehurst Jane is a 'liar'. He provides a remark for Jane by mocking her pathetic orphan life. He says Jane: "Is a little castaway; not a member of the true flock, but evidently an interloper and an alien". (71) Jane does not want to expose her anger towards him perhaps she presents courage to tackle this situation. As the years passed Jane grows as a talented and a conscious girl in order to face forthcoming problems in her future. Once in her discourse with her friend Helen she deliberately confessed her longings for love and regards from others.

She includes that she wants to taste the feel of affection and to gain respect rather continuous hatred from others. It is a common desire for every orphan and they want to join with society. Miss Temple, a teacher who inspired Jane and comforts her in every pathetic situation. As a matured girl Jane left Lowood School.

Later, she started to begin her life as a governess for a French girl Adele Varens in Thronfield. After her painful experience in childhood Jane raised her self-defiance. Once in her way she encounters a horseman and she had some misunderstandings with him. Later when her return to Thronfield she realized that the man in horse with whom she had clash is the master of Thronfield house where Jane works as a governess. Rochester is the only man who started to respect her and he falls in love with her. Jane also feels some comfort when she spends her time with Rochester. At this point Bronte has fulfilled the Jane's longings as well as reader's expectation. When everything is fine there arise conflicts in order to show the presence of unhappiness in the life of an outcast. Jane's continuous unrevealed suspense in the house of Rochester made her to feel strange. Rochester's sudden disappearance for several days and his again appearance with a snobbish woman Blanche Ingram shows Rochester unclear character. Rochester's proposal for marriage to Jane made her to believe him completely for his sincere love. Jane's expectation towards her husband is only true affection and peaceful life rather than fortune and jewels. It is proven when her confess on her expectation. She says that: Oh, sir! –never mind jewels! I don't

like to hear them spoken of. Jewels for Jane Eyre sounds unnatural and strange: I would rather not have them. (276) Later her letter towards her paternal uncle Mr. John Eyre has revealed the real face of Rochester in the marriage. The background of Mr. Rochester is apparently presented by the lawyer Mr. Mason a brother of his first wife, Bertha who is insane and locked in a separate room for several years. Jane's letter towards her uncle is the only reason for untying this suspenseful knot, because Mr. John Eyre and Mr. Mason are friends. Jane cannot tolerate Rochester's untruthfulness. Even her true love for Rochester remains stable she does not want to marry him. She totally frustrated and she plans to move away from him. Even in Thronfield although she received love she is betrayed and this place also proves her unfortunate life. When Rochester offers Jane to elope to France and to live in relationship without marriage Jane refused to come with him. As life owes continuous troubles Jane used to tackle everything with her courage. She protests with conflict by throwing courage as her sword.

Once she left Thronfield. She planned to travel and her destiny leads to live in Moor House where she becomes a friend with Mr. John Rivers and with her sisters. Later through John Rivers she came to know that her uncle Mr. John Eyre has left over 20000 pounds for her before his death. And also she is glad to know that Mr. John Rivers and his two sisters belong to her own relation. Jane is fulfilled that she has come to know about her own bloods. Even though she cannot gain for what she expects and strives throughout her life her orphan life is ended

when John River and her sisters joined their hands with Jane. Soon after John River's proposal for marriage leads to think about her love on Mr. Rochester. Although she knew that Rochester cannot marry her when his first wife is alive she refused the proposal of John River in order to save her virgin of love. And she moves back to Thronfield to see her love. After her visit to Thronfield she realized that Rochester has lost his eyes while rescuing his first wife from her death. Unfortunately he failed to rescue Bertha and he lost his eyes. True love never worries about the beauty apart from love. Jane has proven she happily married Rochester even his vision is lost. In every part of her life Jane's self-defense led her to remain stable in order to gain love from others.

CONCLUSION:

Jane Eyre by Charlotte Bronte has portrayed the life of a people in Victorian period through her characters. Jane's continuous traumatic circumstances led her to lead an independent life. People's life will not remain same in every situation. There are many other incidents in the novel where Jane expressed her courage. But in the novel Jane does not possessed her feminism regarding equality from men characters rather she expects respect and care. Jane is totally different from a Victorian woman because she boldly expressed her own

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opinion without depending on others. Jane has also inspired by other Victorian woman in a novel. Miss Temple is a teacher on whom Jane has separate respect because she is the only female character who supports Jane in all the traumatic situation occurred in Lowood. There are many circumstances that lead Jane into trauma and offered plight in her life. Jane's childhood days with her uncle's family, her education in Lowood School under the authority of rude Brocklehurst, her love life with Mr. Rochester in Thronfield hall are the part of her life which owes continuous sufferings which cannot be tolerated by a normal woman ,as an orphan Jane tackled her situation with her courage. Mr. John Reed and Mr. Brocklehurst are the two male characters who showered their dominating power to Jane. Jane boldly faced continuous problems offered from this patriarchal society. She torn the screen of inferiority and led her situation to fly away from these cruel characters and finally her long for true love is achieved by her through Rochester. Charlotte Bronte has described Jane as a character who can accept her own destiny and also she wonderfully penned her as an independent bold lady who can battle against severe wars throughout her life. *Jane Eyre* is a novel which is depicted in a feministic tone but leaves various useful messages for every woman in the world to stand courageously in the battle of life.

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