

Q. Analyse the main themes of Charlotte Bronte's 'Jane Eyre.'

Ans: Charlotte Bronte's 'Jane Eyre' has several important themes. One of the most important themes may be the injustice of a rigid class structure. Because Jane is an orphan, her life choices are far more limited than those of many of her relatives and peers, even though she is mostly more intelligent, capable and hard-working than they are. Throughout the course of her life, Jane first struggles to find self-worth, and then to maintain that worth, her integrity. Jane wants to consider herself a forthright, hardworking, honest person who is, above all, true to her self and her beliefs. Romance, abuse, rage, despair, and isolation, in turn, challenge her sense of self. Yet, each time she faces a challenge, she forges a path always towards her beliefs, her independence, and what she believes to be her good and decent qualities.

This becomes especially clear when she and Rochester fall in love. They clearly share an authentic intimacy that should have been celebrated from its inception, but Jane is reluctant to express her feelings or let others know about their bond because of the difference in their social status.

However, another important theme is the voice of women. Jane is willing to express her needs and opinions in a society that values women who are submissive and accommodating. This leads to frequent punishment in her early life, and seems much less attractive than her childhood friend Helen's more gentle style. In the end, though, Jane develops a strong sense of herself and continues to rise. Her sense of independence allows her to reject school master Mr. Brocklehurst's hypocritical self-righteousness and later, a loveless marriage to St. John Rivers. It also makes her much more attractive to Mr. Rochester, the real love of her life.

Other themes include spiritual authenticity vs. self-centered piety, and of course, the transcendental power of love. Any of these themes might be considered the "main" theme of the novel Jane Eyre, depending on personal interpretation, values and worldview.