

An Analysis of Jane Eyre's Outlook of Love

Dan Yang

Hubei Polytechnic Institute Hubei Xiaogan 432000

Abstract: Jane Eyre is an orphan girl, obscure, small and plain. But she dares to rebel, to strive for equality, freedom and love. Jane struggles for spiritual liberty. What she pursuits is equal, sincere and independent love.

Keywords: Equal; Sincere; Independent

Jane Eyre is Charlotte Brontë's masterpiece. "It is also unambiguous one of the most celebrated novels in British literature."^[3] It is Jane's rebelliousness, her dislike for servility, and her insistence on equality that make the book unique. The whole book is about Jane's struggle for spiritual liberty. Her strong rebel personality can be seen clearly from her outlook of love.

1 Love is equal

Jane Eyre has witnessed the crime of capitalism from Gateshead Hall to the Lowood School. The tyrannies of the cousin, the maltreatment of her aunt, the hypocrisy and malignity of Brocklehurst took great harm to Jane Eyre. She determines to challenge the unequal society and resolves to depend on her strength to resume her life.

Mr. Rochester, the owner of Thornfield Manor, is an ordinary looking, middle-aged man with "ugly" features and rough demeanor. He is a victim of family's interests. He has been tricked by his father and elder brother into marrying Bertha who comes from a family of lunatics. He wants to take comfort in pure love. However, what he has got is the cheat of the polite society. So he scorns the outlook of marriage with ascendancy and money. In Thornfield Manor, one is an insignificant governess discriminated by others, while the other is the dignified and rich owner of manor admired by others. There is great disparity of social status and life situation between them. But they are both cynical and genuine. So they fall in love with each other.

The love begins and develops through putting each other on an equal footing. Rochester has seen her unusual intension through her not beautiful appearance. Jane Eyre knows he disdains the common customs, and is sincere just like Jane's monologue in the novel "the ease of his manner freed me from painful restraint: the friendly frankness, as correct as cordial, with which he treated me, drew me to him. I felt at times as if he were my relation rather than my master."^[1] So, she breaks through the wide gap of family status.

Love is equal. This is the primary standard that Jane Eyre chooses the spouse. "She thinks, she and Rochester are totally equal on spirit."^[5] We know Jane Eyre's strong rebel personality through the talk between Jane Eyre and Rochester "Do you think I can stay to become nothing to you? Do you think I am an automaton? --- a machine without feelings? and can bear to have my morsel of bread snatched from my lips, and my drop of living water dashed from my cup? Do you think, because I am poor, obscure, plain, and little, I am soulless and heartless? You think wrong! --- I have as much soul as you, ---and full as much heart! And if God had gifted me with some beauty and much wealth, I should have made it as hard for you to leave me, as it is now for me to leave you. I am not talking to you now through the medium of custom, conventionalities, nor even of mortal flesh; --- it is my spirit that address your spirit; just as if both had passed through the grave, and we stood at God's feet, equal, --- as we are!"^[1] She proposed to Rochester, not because of taking a fancy for his status and property, but because of longing for that he can meet each other sincerely and treat others as equals. She defeated Miss Ingram by her own inner beauty, who is resplendent with jewellery, and attractive. When she knows the insane woman is Rochester's wife, she left resolutely. She doesn't condescend to be Rochester's mistress. From these, Charlotte Brontë shows that Jane Eyre stands with the freedom of an independent will.

2 Love is sincere

In the literary works, love is an eternal theme. Real love is sincere. How do Jane Eyre and Rochester love each other sincerely?

When Jane Eyre comes to Thornfield Manor, she has reached the age of love. She knows she was poor, humble, short and small. She even knows her position in Thornfield Manor. But she wishes eagerly to get the real love. Sincereness opens the gate of love between Jane Eyre and Rochester. They are together from morning to night, sit knee to knee and talk. Their thoughts have been exchanged and the emotion has reached and communicated gradually. The truest love that ever heart. Felt at its kindled core. Did through each vein, in quickened start. The tide of being pour.^[1] This song is sung out their common heartfelt wishes: The sincere love injects vigor into their life.

The sincereness can be seen everywhere in their love. At the dusk of one midsummer, Jane Eyre and Rochester stroll under the

tree. Rochester thinks the opportunity of proposing has been ripe. He says, “You— you strange, you almost unearthly thing!— I love you as my own flesh. You— poor and obscure, and small and plain as you are— I entreat to accept me as husband.” Jane Eyre ejaculates, “What, me! ... me who have not a friend in the world but you— if you are my friend: not a shilling but what you have given me?” Rochester exclaimed, “Oh, Jane, you torture me! With that searching and yet faithful and generous look, you torture me!” “How can I do that? If you are true, and you offer real, my only feelings to you must be gratitude and devotion— they cannot torture.” Here are two sincere hearts.

When Rochester praises Jane Eyre a beauty, and lets her put on the silks and satins, she replies, “and then you won’t know me, sir; and I shall not be your Jane Eyre any longer, but an ape in a harlequin’s jacket— a jay in borrowed plumes. I would as soon as you, Mr. Rochester, tricked out in stage-trappings, as myself clad in a court-lady’s robe; and I don’t call you handsome, sir, though I love you most dearly: far too dearly to flatter you. Don’t fatter me.” Between lines, we see clearly that the beauty Jane Eyre pursues is not appearance but the inner beauty. The love she pursues is sincere.

In the church, the wedding of Jane Eyre and Rochester is going on. Mason suddenly appears and declares their wedding invalid. Because Rochester’s wife of the first marriage is still alive. Rochester tells the truth to Jane Eyre, and repents her piously. She totally understands his unspeakable bitterness. But she still leaves without hesitation. She tells him precisely, “If I lived with you as you desire, I should then be your mistress: to say otherwise is sophistical— is false.” She thinks, the sincere love is aboveboard, not furtive.

However, the call of the sincere love makes her return. Thornfield Manor has already been in ruins. Rochester has been already empty-handed, lost the sight of both eyes. The sincere love makes them get married.

3 Love is independent

It is the criterion that she conducts herself to become a freeman with the independent will. She strives vigorously to advocate the independent love. Destiny has given her a series of unfair arrangement. But she doesn’t submit. In order to realize the value of her life, she leaves the Lowood School and comes to Thornfield Manor. The love of Jane Eyre and Rochester comes from their own wishes. Their love is independent. The existence of the insane woman is the obstacle to their marriage. Jane Eyre decides on the spot to leave her lover. She comes to St. John’s home. There, she runs a rural school with her cousins. She is realizing the value of her life. In order to go to India to finish his religion mission, St. John wants Jane Eyre to marry him. But Jane Eyre despises such mission marriage with no emotion at all.^[2] She says, “I scorn your idea of love. I scorn the counterfeit sentiment you offer: yes, St. John, and I scorn you when you offer it.” In Jane’s view, love is independent. It can’t be forced. Finally, she refuses the proposing of John, get back to her own choice. It is independent that Jane Eyre loves Rochester. She dares to love. She makes every effort to defeat false, evil and ugliness with truth, good and beauty. She dares to safeguard love. She is unwilling to become the mistress. She dares to resist, to strive for the love. She hears the call of the love and comes back to her sweetheart. She dares to present the love.

Conclusion

The love Jane Eyre pursues is very difficult and valuable under the historical condition at that time. In the middle period of the 19th century, the marriage system in Britain was rigidly stratified, struck up a stigma with the commercial agreement everywhere. However, Jane Eyre faces the eyes of the common customs and gets rid of the restriction and lure of money, status, power. She pursues the equal, sincere and independent love which she yearns for boldly and persistently. In her era, she is such a new woman who surmounts the times.^[4] From her outlook of love, we can see her indomitable rebel personality clearly.

References:

- [1].Bronte, Charlotte. 2002. Jane Eyre [M]. Beijing: Modern China Press.
- [2].Du Ruiqing. 2000. Selected readings of Western Literary Masterpieces[M].Xi’an: Northwestern Polytechnical University Press.
- [3].Liu Nianci, Wang Huaxue, Zeng Fangting.2001. Monographic Study on the works of foreign writers [M]. Jinan: Shandong people’s Publishing House.
- [4].George Sanguosen,Translated by Liu Wanglin.1987.A brief history of Cambridge English Literature[M]. Shanghai:Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press
- [5].Xiao Shuhui. 2003. British Fiction[M]. Anhui: Anhui Education Press.