

## Charlotte Bronte is one of the Most Famous Victorian Women Writers

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**Abstract:** This abstract examines the enduring legacy of Charlotte Brontë, one of the most prominent Victorian women writers. It explores how her novels, notably “Jane Eyre,” defied societal norms by portraying female characters with strong wills, intellectual curiosity, and a desire for independence. The abstract delves into the themes of love, social injustice, and the complexities of female identity that permeate Brontë’s work, highlighting her unique ability to capture the emotional and psychological depth of her characters. It also acknowledges the challenges Brontë faced as a female writer during a time of limited opportunities, emphasizing her pioneering role in paving the way for future generations of women writers. This exploration of Brontë’s life and work underscores her enduring influence on literature and her continued relevance as a voice of passion and rebellion. This article defines and analyzes the most important notions in Charlotte Brontë’s novels and the specific techniques their transmission to the readers, as well as to contrast the aspects of her works with the problems of individuality.

**Key points:** Victorian age, Jane Eyre, Shirley, Emily, Professor, realism, psychological themes, individualism.

### Upbringing and family background

There had been so many ages in other countries’ literary development. One of the notable ones is Victorian age and Romanticism in British literature. This era is known for its social injustices and the writers of that time tried to picture them in their works. The greatest novelists of the age include Charles Dickens, William Makepeace Thackeray, Charlotte Bronte, Elizabeth Gaskell and George Eliot.

Writers like Charlotte Bronte and George Eliot addressed women’s rights and challenged gender norms. Studying these works sheds light on the developing role of female during that period. Overall, the main aim of this study is to place female writers’ work within the context of Victorian era, as their writings actively encodes the language and concerns of the mid-nineteenth-century social, psychological and economic thoughts.

Charlotte Bronte was regarded the prominent woman writer at this time. She was born on April 21, 1816 in Market Street, Thornton, west of Bradford in the Yorkshire. She was an English poet and novelist, as well as the eldest of three Bronte sisters who survived into adulthood and she is person whose writings became classics of English literature. Her mother Maria, the daughter of a wealthy tea trader and grocer, died of cancer at the age of 38 on September 15.

In terms of education, in August 1824, Patrick sent his daughters to the Clergy Daughters' school at Cowan Bridge in Lancashire. Charlotte kept that the school's poor conditions affected her health and physical development. Maria suffered a severe case of consumption while studying at Cowan Bridge. Patrick Brontë learned of Maria's illness and he immediately removed her from school. Elizabeth, on the other hand, was led to Haworth two weeks after Charlotte and Emily were returned home by their father when the school transferred to a good and healthier location.

Boarding school life was really challenging for Charlotte. Many students were forced to leave the school due to epidemics which was spread viral in an unhygienic manner and caused to many deaths.

After several years, in July of 1835, Brontë had an opportunity to become a teacher at Roe Head school. In May of 1839, Brontë shortly became a governess. But she hated the position, particularly the sense of humiliating as a family servant. Meanwhile, her sisters planned to open a school, which their aunt agreed to support financially. After all, her experiences in Brussels are very important for her literary development. She got a strict literary training, became aware of the sources of her own character, as well as gathered crucial materials for all her novels. In her biography of Charlotte, Elizabeth Gaskell points out the tragic event of brother Branwell's death had a greatly negative impact on Charlotte and her sisters, however, Reid argues that Charlotte was "too brave, healthy, and reasonable in all things to be utterly weighted down by the fact that her brother had fallen a victim to loathsome vice" [22,74] which he supports by a passage taken from Charlotte's novel *The Professor*, in which he states Charlotte provides her thoughts on her brother Branwell's fall.

After Charlotte's death, in 1857, Elizabeth Gaskell, her biographer, published "The life of Charlotte Brontë", establishing the reputation of Charlotte Brontë as having suffered from a tragic life. In 1860, Thackeray published the unfinished "Emma". Her husband helped revise "The Professor" for publication with the encouragement of Gaskell. Two stories, "The Secret" and "Lily Hart" left unpublished until 1978.

### **Significance of literary development and critical analysis of novels**

Charlotte Brontë wrote her first popular poem in her 13<sup>th</sup> age in 1829, and was about to write more than 200 poems during her lifetime. About in 1833, her stories shifted from tales of the supernatural to more realistic stories.

In December 1836 she even wrote a letter to the Poet Robert Southey asking him for her career as a poet. Southey replied that "Literature cannot be the business of a woman's life, and it ought not to be. Charlotte first respected this advice, but later, went on writing, ignoring it. In 1845 autumn Charlotte encountered some poems by her sister Emily, and that discovery led to the publication of a joint volume of Poems by Currer, Ellis and Acton Bell (1846), or Charlotte, Emily, and Anne; the pseudonyms were supposed to preserve privacy and avoid the special treatment that they guessed reviewers conceded on women. The novel "Professor" was Brontë's very first novel written about her experiences in Brussels. It was completed in June 1846 and though Charlotte tried hard to have the book published, it was rejected nine times and in fact never came out in Charlotte's lifetime [13,73].

Regarding the structure of the novel, it is, in fact, in much simpler structure and narrative style than her other works and it has the themes, such as search for independence and equality found in other novels – "Jane Eyre" and "Villette". The most impressive distinction from Brontë's other three novels is that she uses male.

On the other hand, "Jane Eyre", Brontë's the most famous novel, was accepted, published under the name of Currer Bell. It tells the story of a plain governess, Jane, who, after difficulties in her early life, falls in love with her employer, Mr. Rochester. They marry, but only after Rochester's insane first wife, of whom Jane initially has no knowledge, dies in a dramatic house fire. In the character Jane, Charlotte Brontë created a slight woman, modest, spiritually strong and intelligent. Like the writer, Jane's loneliness shaped her personality, providing her with the necessary survival skills. By Jane, Brontë shows dissatisfaction towards a society whereas keeping an objectivity toward humanity as a whole [19,18]. In the novel, Charlotte draws heavily on the Romantic traditions of

individualism she grew up on by choosing a narrator in the form of a plain looking, orphaned governess she had so much in common with [24,144].

So, it is the first novel in which Charlotte used first- woman-narrative letting herself to discover the depths of the female psyche in a much more realistic and relatable manner. However, *Jane Eyre* is often considered as a feminist novel because of its focus on gender issues. Throughout the novel, Jane confronts various kinds of repression which was familiar to many Victorian women who could thus relate closely to the main protagonist [20,54].

Charlotte Brontë's the last but not the least novel, written just before the death of the author, is "*Villette*" It is regarded by many critics to be Charlotte's most mature work. Some people hold the opinion that *Villette* is the greatest in quality, regarding its maturity context than *Jane Eyre*.

*Villette* is the last and darkest novel of Charlotte and its mainly about the events in Brussels and the analyses of its protagonist Lucy Snowe- a solitary British school teacher. Its scenario is very similar with that of the novel "*Professor*". Because, after being rejected many times, Brontë decided to put the experiences in Brussels of the novel "*Professor*" into the new and completed work "*Villette*". Among all the novels, *Villette* is the most autobiographical work as the writer strongly focuses on her Brussel experience. Although Brontë interpreted her experiences in the novel "*The Professor*", *Villette* was her last novel she was fully able to develop her memories as she made her first-person narrator into a woman.

"*Villette*" describes the self-realization of the individual middle-class English woman in changing an abroad. Regarding the structure and formation of the work, Charlotte gets back to the themes of isolation, religion, repression, as well as, searching for independence and finding one's own identity in difficult situations in a world full of injustices.

### **Contribution of her works to societal reforms and women rights**

Charlotte Brontë portrays societal issues and their impacts on women development in her novels. Also, she shapes herself in them, meaning that except *The Professor*, characters of other three famous novels are women, Brontë, thus, tries to illustrate her own struggles, limits and repressions caused by societal problems into those heroes.

"*The Professor*" may not have gained immediate acclaim, it has gained appreciation over time for its exploration of themes such as individualism, the pursuit of personal fulfillment, and the constraints imposed by social norms.

"*The Professor*" also stands as a unique contribution to Victorian literature, offering readers a nuanced exploration of identity, relationships, and societal dynamics. Its historical and social significance is enriched by its narrative style, thematic depth, and the autobiographical elements drawn from Brontë's own experiences.

"*Jane Eyre*", however, Brontë's most famous and controversial novel among other works. The novel is considered a feminist work for its portrayal of female protagonist who strives for personal and moral autonomy in a society that constrained women. The novel's critique of the rigid class structure and the injustices faced by woman in the 19<sup>th</sup> century sparked discussions about social reform and woman rights.

The "*Villette*", on the other hand, is known for its exploration of psychological themes and its portrayal of a strong, independent female character. "*Villette*" shows Brontë's evolution from conforming to stereotypes of romantic women luck to meet his special fate because there is no romantic ending and the author does not push his protagonist into the marriage market.

In conclusion, Victorian age greatly impacted Charlotte Brontë's works, providing a backdrop that shaped the themes, characters and social commentary in her novels. Victorian society had strict gender roles, with expectations for women to conform to domestic ideals. Brontë's heroines, especially *Jane Eyre*, challenged these norms by asserting independence and seeking equality. Her

novels, all in all, with their characters and exploration of social issues, have become timeless classics that continue to inspire discussions about gender and the pursuit of individual agency.

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