

Module 7: Balancing the Individual and Society

Topic 3 Content: *Jane Eyre* Across Genres

Introduction



Jane Eyre Across Genres

Coming of Age Gothic Feminist Autobiography




When Charlotte Brontë published her novel *Jane Eyre* in 1847, she blended earlier literary traditions with groundbreaking social commentary. The resulting complex story continues to intrigue modern readers as a novel that extends across numerous genres. Click each of the tabs to explore how *Jane Eyre* exemplifies various novel genres, including coming of age, gothic, feminist, and autobiography.

When Charlotte Brontë published her novel *Jane Eyre* in 1847, she blended earlier literary traditions with groundbreaking social commentary. The resulting complex story continues to intrigue modern readers as a novel that extends across numerous genres. Click each of the tabs to explore how *Jane Eyre* exemplifies various novel genres, including coming of age, gothic, feminist, and autobiography.

Module 7: Balancing the Individual and Society

Topic 3 Content: *Jane Eyre* Across Genres

Coming of Age



Jane Eyre Across Genres

Coming of Age


Gothic

Feminist

Autobiography

A **coming-of-age story** portrays the experiences of a person as he or she transitions into adulthood. It is also known as a **bildungsroman**.

Jane Eyre is a classic example of a coming-of-age novel because it follows the protagonist from her early childhood into her adulthood when she finally achieves a secure marriage and satisfying family life. Her trials and tribulations are formative in her life journey as she seeks happiness and a sense of self.



A young Jane accuses her Aunt Reed of mistreatment

A **coming-of-age story** portrays the experiences of a person as he or she transitions into adulthood. It is also known as a **bildungsroman**.


Jane Eyre is a classic example of a coming-of-age novel because it follows the protagonist from her early childhood into her adulthood when she finally achieves a secure marriage and satisfying family life. Her trials and tribulations are formative in her life journey as she seeks happiness and a sense of self.

Image Caption: A young Jane accuses her Aunt Reed of mistreatment

Module 7: Balancing the Individual and Society

Topic 3 Content: *Jane Eyre* Across Genres


Gothic



Jane Eyre Across Genres

Coming of Age Gothic Feminist Autobiography

Jane Eyre was written during the Victorian era, but it captures many Gothic characteristics inherited from its literary ancestor, Romanticism. For example, many settings are dark and ominous, such as the red-room where Jane fears her uncle's ghost. Nature becomes a threatening force when lightning strikes the chestnut tree. The strange, mirthless laughter coming from the attic is a supernatural element that is eventually explained. However, other supernatural events remain mysterious, such as when Jane hears Rochester's voice calling to her from an impossible distance.



Jane watches a ghost, later revealed to be Bertha, tearing her wedding veil


Jane Eyre was written during the Victorian era, but it captures many Gothic characteristics inherited from its literary ancestor, Romanticism. For example, many settings are dark and ominous, such as the red-room where Jane fears her uncle's ghost. Nature becomes a threatening force when lightning strikes the chestnut tree. The strange, mirthless laughter coming from the attic is a supernatural element that is eventually explained. However, other supernatural events remain mysterious, such as when Jane hears Rochester's voice calling to her from an impossible distance.

Image Caption: Jane watches a ghost, later revealed to be Bertha, tearing her wedding veil

Module 7: Balancing the Individual and Society

Topic 3 Content: *Jane Eyre* Across Genres

Feminist




Jane Eyre Across Genres

Coming of Age Gothic **Feminist** Autobiography

Feminist literature is writing that advocates for women's rights and equality.

Jane Eyre exemplifies feminist literature because it comments on the predicaments of women who are denied financial independence and equal opportunities for education and for employment. The protagonist, Jane, does not attain true happiness until she becomes a financial, intellectual, and social equal to her husband.



Jane reunites with Rochester and is ready to marry him now that they are equals

Feminist literature is writing that advocates for women's rights and equality.

Jane Eyre exemplifies feminist literature because it comments on the predicaments of women who are denied financial independence and equal opportunities for education and for employment. The protagonist, Jane, does not attain true happiness until she becomes a financial, intellectual, and social equal to her husband.

Image Caption: Jane reunites with Rochester and is ready to marry him now that they are equals

Module 7: Balancing the Individual and Society

Topic 3 Content: *Jane Eyre* Across Genres

Autobiography



Jane Eyre Across Genres

Coming of Age Gothic Feminist **Autobiography**

Although *Jane Eyre* is a work of fiction, many of its elements are reminiscent of Charlotte Brontë's real life. For instance, the poor living conditions of Lowood school where the character Helen dies were inspired by the girls' school attended by a young Brontë and her two older sisters, both of whom died of tuberculosis. In addition, Brontë herself worked as a governess, and some scholars allege that she once fell in love with an employer.

Further blurring the line between autobiography and fiction, the full title of Brontë's novel was originally *Jane Eyre: An Autobiography*.



The original published title in 1849 was *Jane Eyre: An Autobiography*

Although *Jane Eyre* is a work of fiction, many of its elements are reminiscent of Charlotte Brontë's real life. For instance, the poor living conditions of Lowood school where the character Helen dies were inspired by the girls' school attended by a young Brontë and her two older sisters, both of whom died of tuberculosis. In addition, Brontë herself worked as a governess, and some scholars allege that she once fell in love with an employer.

Further blurring the line between autobiography and fiction, the full title of Brontë's novel was originally *Jane Eyre: An Autobiography*.

Image Caption: The original published title in 1849 was Jane Eyre: An Autobiography