

“Jane Eyre’s Morality”: A Kohlbergian Reading

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Abstract:

Classified as a bildungsroman novel, Brontë’s *Jane Eyre* (1847) is a work of fiction which deals with the moral development of the main character as an essential ingredient of the genre. Jane’s journey towards maturity and independence is a long rocky way that shapes her identity and finally harmonizes her with society. Through many stations in her journey, Jane has to make tough moral choices and decisions to obtain healthy moral reasoning. Thus, this paper is meant to trace the protagonist’s moral development in the light of Lawrence Kohlberg’s moral theory. Jane’s journey starts when she is ten years old, and ends at the age of thirty. At the end of the novel, Jane is married and has a child aged ten. Her twenty-year-journey locates her in the three consecutive stages of moral development. Her twenty-year-journey locates her in the three consecutive stages of moral development. Depicting the influence of the main and minor characters in the novel, this paper seeks to illustrate how Jane develops a sense of moral reasoning and acts accordingly.

Keywords: bildungsroman, conventional morality, kohlberg’s moral development, postconventional morality, preconventional morality

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