

## **Why Jane Eyre is Jane Eyre—An Analysis of the Influence of Foster Care Education on Jane Eyre with Satya’s Iceberg Theory**

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### **Abstract**

Jane Eyre is the heroine of Charlotte Brontë's autobiographical novel *Jane Eyre*, and her behavior of being independent, confident, courageous, loving, and forgiving makes her highly recognized by the public. Jane's likable behavior is closely related to her mental health. Virginia Satir, a famous psychologist conveyed that compared to the behavior of oneself, the more significant part of the inner world is inconspicuous. In other words, Jane's behavior is inextricably linked to her psychology. Even more, Virginia Satir also mentioned that a person's surroundings would also have a particular influence on his/her character and psychological behavior. To put it another way, Jane Eyre's behavior has something to do with the experience of her miserable childhood. Furthermore, foster care education, as the first way Jane learned about the world, had a significant impact on Jane's psychology. The study of the impact of foster care education on Jane will have some influence and inspiration on the development and planning of modern education. This paper will conduct an analysis of the influence of foster care education on Jane Eyre with Satya's iceberg theory.

**Keywords:** foster care education, Jane Eyre, Satya's iceberg theory

### **1. Introduction**

The development of children's character through home education has always been a subject worthy of study, for the impact of home education is complex and far-reaching. Research has revealed that the character of a loved one has a more profound and lasting impact on a child than the disparity between rich and poor (Davis-Kean, 2005). *Jane Eyre*, as a novel written from Jane Eyre's first perspective, describes Jane Eyre's upbringing and foster care education very clearly. In the end, Jane Eyre found her ideal lover Rochester and courageously pursued equality which was more than difficult in the male-dominated society of the 19th century, and grew up to be a role model for women who still has an educative and exemplary meaning today. Jane's experience and success prove that Jane Eyre's upbringing and foster care education is meaningful for studying the influence of family education on the formation of human character and behavior. Satya's iceberg theory includes seven levels of behavior, coping styles, feelings, opinions, expectations, desires, and ego. Besides, she states that a person is

# 5th World Conference on Social Sciences and Humanities

28 - 30 October 2022

Milan, Italy



inextricably linked to his/her family of origin, and this connection has the potential to influence him/ her throughout life (Marable, 1984). Since Jane Eyre was an orphan, the family education mentioned here referred to in this paper mainly refers to the education she received in foster care from Mrs. Reed (her aunt) from the ages of 1 to 10 and the education she received when she was sent to Lowood School at the age of 10. How this period of foster care education influences the character and behavior of Jane Eyre? Just like Virginia Satir and iceberg theory, which is a metaphor that refers to a person's "self" like an iceberg, mentioned what we can see is only a tiny part of the surface - behavior (Marable, 1984). And this paper will discuss and study this issue based on Satya's iceberg theory.

The purpose of this paper is to analyze the hidden psychological factors behind Jane Eyre's behavior and personality traits through the iceberg theory proposed by Satya, and then to analyze the influence of the foster care education Jane Eyre received on the formation of these psychological factors. It is hoped that by analyzing the impact of foster care education on the appearance of Jane Eyre's personality and behavior, insights can be found into the direction of contemporary educational development and teachers' teaching methods, to enrich the ways and means of foster caring for healthy human development.

In the research progress, the following difficulties may be encountered in the research process: 1. bias in the psychological analysis of Jane Eyre, resulting in inaccurate analysis results. 2. *Jane Eyre* is a novel with autobiographical nature, so the depiction may be subjective and personal, resulting in inaccurate analysis results.

In order to solve the above difficulties and achieve the research objectives, the thesis will be composed in this way. First and foremost, there will be a list of the concrete behavior of Jane. Next, there will be a link between the behavior and her personality and the psychology of this behavior. Finally, combined with Satya's iceberg theory, it proves the possible factors contributing to the development of Jane Eyre's personality.

## 2. The Influence of Foster Care Education on Jane Eyre

Jane Eyre met multiple people in the period of foster care education. What should be laid emphasis on is the impact of some specific people including Mrs. Reed, Miss Tambor, and Helen Burns. Considering the character of Jane Eyre is considerable, this paper will mainly focus on the 4 behaviors of Jane and the character they reflect: loving learning, resigning from Lowood, persistently pursuing equality, and forgiving the rudeness of Mrs. Reed.

### 2.1 Factors that Made her Love Learning Things

Jane kept learning all the time, and she always tried to read more and got good grades in her study at Lowood. Even working in Thornfield, she kept reading the book in the study of Rochester. Moreover, these are evidence of her persistence in the study. Moreover, it can be related to the influence of Miss Maria Tambor, the superintendent of Lowood, and Helen

# 5th World Conference on Social Sciences and Humanities

28 - 30 October 2022

Milan, Italy



Burns, her classmate and friend. Both of them are very motivated and love to read. Especially Miss Tambor, who was not only a teacher to Jane but a very knowledgeable friend, encouraged Jane to read and gave Jane Eyre a positive influence on her love of learning. In the applied study of Satya's iceberg theory, when people have a confident expectation or admiration for people, their behavior will tend to be in line with this part of people (Marable, 1984). At the same time, some studies show that in the field of neurology, learning certain behaviors from others are identified in the brain as the safest behavior and human instinct (Ramsey et al., 2021). If people live with someone who loves to read and is knowledgeable, then he/she will be more inclined to love learning and reading. In other words, the positive impact of Miss Tambor and Helen was one of the reasons that made Jane love studying.

## 2.2 Factors that Made her Resign Resolutely from Lowood

In Chapter 10, Jane left Lowood school for a better life (Brontë, 2016). And this is evidence of her bravery, dissatisfaction with the status quo, and confidence in solving the dilemma she faced after resigning. This is not to say that Jane's departure has nothing to do with the corrupt management system of Lowood, Helen's death, and Miss Tambor's resignation, but that Jane's courage to resign from Lowood has her character brave and confidence related.

### 2.2.1 Factors that Made her Brave

Bravery played a significant role in resigning. If he/she is brave, it will cost him/ her less time and energy to make one decision. Mrs. Reed helped Jane's brave character a lot, even though Mrs. Reed's ways were not out of love and were not right. Grose (2013) suggests that if parents train their children to be independent and face difficulties on their own, their children will own a better capability of releasing anxiety and develop abilities with coping dilemmas. When Jane was with her aunt, she was forced to face difficulties alone, and if she did something wrong, she would be imprisoned in the red house (where her uncle passed away), which is probably the worst thing that could happen to a devout Christian like Jane. When Jane was able to cope with these difficulties and fears, Jane's mental capacity became very good. So, when Jane left Lowood, she could deal with anxiety and stress with confidence. Because she knew that there could not be anything worse than the punishment Mrs. Reed gave her. This can also be seen as a "letting the child be independent" approach to parenting, perhaps a bit too aggressive, but it helped to allow Jane to be optimistic about most of the bad things that might happen after she left Lowood. According to Satya's iceberg theory, when a person is independent and does not want the help of others, he/she is more inclined to solve problems independently (Marable, 1984). This can also be applied to Jane. She could not reach anyone for help at that time, so she endured the pain and withdrew. Some scholars may question that Mrs. Reed's style of education tends to be more oppressive, and blindly using it to teach children to be brave and self-reliant can be counterproductive and lead to low self-esteem (Frye, 2019). To be honest, it is possible. In the early days of Jane's tutorship at Thornfield, Jane exhibited sensitive inferiority. She was always worried that others would think poorly of

# 5th World Conference on Social Sciences and Humanities

28 - 30 October 2022

Milan, Italy



her. Nevertheless, this needs to be seen in the context of the times and Jane's background. Jane Eyre lived in the 19th century when male power was highly inflated, and the status of men and women was unequal. Jane Eyre's social status and economic conditions were not optimistic. If Jane were not prudent and sensitive, it would have been difficult for her to survive at that time. Besides, evidence shows that it is also possible that children who grow up in a rigorous foster care education become more capable in recognizing and responding to trauma ().

## 2.2.2 Factors that Made Jane Confident

Self-confidence also played an important role in resigning from her only career in Lowood. Self-confidence enables Jane to face all the difficulties she faces after her resignation. For example, when she was rejected for a job, she could have quickly adjusted her mind and applied again. Miss Tambor helped a lot with that. As one of the superintendents in Lowood, Miss Tambor never rested on her laurels. She read a lot and had her own opinion. She defied power when famines came, giving the children cheese and bread over the objections of her superior, which shows her ideals and beliefs. With noble ideals and a broad horizon, Miss Tambor always motivated Jane to broaden her horizon and chase her dream, and this brought Jane to the expectations of herself, hoping that she could also live a good life. According to Satya's iceberg theory, having developed confidence and an expectation of a better life for himself/herself, he/she will show it in actions. For example, he/she was courageously pursuing his/her ideal career and daring to risk quitting his/her job. McFarlin et al. (1984) also conducts that a person with high self-esteem will be more likely to overcome the terrible result of failure. To put it another way, the confidence given to Jane by Ms. Tambor is significant for supporting Jane in resigning from Lowood.

## 2.3 Factors that Made her Pursue Equal Love

When Rochester shows his love for Jane and offers to marry her, Jane refuses him. In Chapter 23, Jane also asked Rochester if he ever thought of that because she was poor, obscure, plain, and small, so she was soulless and heartless (Brontë, 2016). Then Jane firmly expressed that this was the wrong idea. She thought she had as much soul as Rochester did and full as much heart. If God had given her some beauty and wealth, Jane should have let her leave Rochester with as much difficulty as she now left him. She did not now speak to him through the medium of custom, of tradition, nor through mortal flesh: but her spirit spoke to his; as if both had passed through the grave, and they stood at the feet of God as equals - for they were equal (Brontë, 2016). Furthermore, when Jane discovered that Rochester had a wife, she interrupted the ongoing wedding and left him. These are all manifestations of Jane's quest for equal love (Brontë, 2016). This determined pursuit of equality should be related to her childhood foster care education and experiences.

### 2.3.1 Helen Burns' Positive Influence on Jane's Pursuit of Equality

There is a saying in Chinese, out of silence, out of silence. From not in silence, perish in silence (Lu, 1973). Helen is a lesson of Jane telling her to pursue equality. Helen was one of her

# 5th World Conference on Social Sciences and Humanities

28 - 30 October 2022

Milan, Italy



best friends in Lowood, who was considerate, easy-going, and warm-hearted. She always tried to endure every unfair treatment and forgive her bullies. When Miss Smith punished her for some trifles, Helen did not resist or answer back. On the contrary, she still curtsied to Miss Smith respectfully when she saw her (Brontë, 2016). However, Helen did not get feedback until she passed away early in Lowood for the teacher's irresponsibility. It also showed Jane that kind but weak people could not be treated well by society then. In Satya's iceberg theory, it comes out that when one person is disappointed with the positive feedback from one thing, he/she will be resistant to be kind or even turn to do something terrible (Marable, 1984). In other words, if a child feels that he/she is not being rewarded for his/her efforts, his/her sense of self will awaken, and he/she will tend to become rebellious (Abdullaevna, 2021; Green-Bartteet, 2016). So, Jane is more likely to pursue equality, for she saw Helen had not been treated well although she was kind.

## 2.3.2 Miss Tambor's Positive Influence on Jane's Pursuit of Equality

Miss Temple is kind and generous and gives Jane much help. Helen once said that Miss Temple is very kind. She is painfully mean to anyone, even to the worst students in the school. This gives Jane some inspiration. Jane likes Miss Temple, so she has expectations of Miss Temple's personality, just like the iceberg theory mentioned in 2.2.2 above. Jane will aspire to equality and work towards it.

## 2.4 Factors that Made her Forgive Mrs. Reed

When Mrs. Reed was about to pass away, Jane went back to her and said that she had forgiven Mrs. Reed for her bullying when Jane was young. This shows the fact that Jane was considerable and good at forgiving others. This can be attributed to Helen. Helen was a kind girl. When she saw Jane being punished in starvation, she lent a helping hand to Jane and passed Jane a piece of food (Brontë, 2016). Besides, she always comforted Jane when Jane was in a low mood. She used to comfort Jane when she hated Mrs. Reed. She told her that Mrs. Reed was not good to Jane, and Mrs. Reed disliked Jane's character as much as Miss Scatcherd disliked hers. Then she made a comparison between herself and Jane, arguing that it was no use remembering the severity of Mrs. Reed. She then asks Jane if she would be happy if she held a grudge against Mrs. Reed. Finally, she concludes that life is too short to waste time holding a grudge against someone (Brontë, 2016). This phrase is an excellent example of psychological suggestion, which can take away much of a child's resentment. First, Helen lamented what had happened to Jane and then gave her reasons for thinking that is not good before finally offering her advice. Research shows that if the advice-giver can put their feet into others' shoes, their advice would be accepted easier (Stanier, 2020). In Satya's iceberg theory, it is interpreted as follows: when a person cares about others' mental health and feelings, his/her opinion, expectation, or advice will be better accepted by the other who has been shown cares to (Marable, 1984). In conclusion, Jane could forgive Mrs. Reed because Helen told her to do that in a convincing but kind tone, which is proven by many scholars of its effectiveness.

# 5th World Conference on Social Sciences and Humanities

28 - 30 October 2022

Milan, Italy



## 2.5 Why Did not Foster Care Education Lead Jane to Delinquency?

Fortunately, after foster care education, Jane became a beloved and family-friendly person. However, it has also been noted that children in foster care are more capable of delinquency and early pregnancy (Juárez et al., 2022; Katz et al., 2020). However, it has also been shown that if children receive more attention and “heart-to-heart” communication, delinquency rates may be reduced and may even encourage the child to become a better person (Ahrens et al., 2021). And the evidence also show that children will be more considerate and forgiving if they know that they are loved (Lawshe, 2017). From the perspective of Satya's iceberg theory, when a person is willing to understand another person's self-perception and feelings, he/she will be more likely to have a profound impact on the other person whom he/she wants to persuade (Marable, 1984). The influenced person will move in a positive direction when this influence is positive. In Jane's case, even though her foster care education received an adverse effect from Mrs. Reed and Miss Smith, Miss Tambor, and Helen, both knowledgeable and caring, would have a more profound and positive impact on her. All in all, taking into account the complexity of her childhood foster care education and the differences in each person's influence, Jane tended to be a good person is reasonable.

## 3. Conclusion

In conclusion, studying the personality development of Jane Eyre, a renowned character from autobiographical fiction, offers a clear and concise education experience that significantly shapes her character. Analyzing her development is comparatively straightforward compared to characters in entirely fictional works, making it a valuable subject for research. Jane's growth is influenced by numerous individuals, but three prominent figures stand out: Miss Tambor, Helen, and Mrs. Reed. They play crucial roles in cultivating Jane into a compassionate, independent, and courageous individual capable of genuine love. Understanding Jane's educational experience can also inform modern education strategies, contributing to the holistic and healthy development of students, a pressing concern for educators today.

Furthermore, analysing Jane's educational journey through Satya's iceberg theory serves as a cautionary reminder to educators about the significance of leading by example and caring for their students. Fostering a considerate and responsible generation is facilitated by genuine care and thoughtful guidance. Scholars can explore the impact of Jane's education on her personality development and apply the effective methods in their teaching practices, nurturing ambitious and educated future generations for the betterment of society. To maximize the effectiveness of these educational techniques, emphasis should be placed on the importance of mental health when training children to be independent. Teachers and parents should be attentive and provide support when children face difficulties, promoting a healthy and balanced

# 5th World Conference on Social Sciences and Humanities

28 - 30 October 2022

Milan, Italy



approach to growth. Additionally, sincere and honest communication between teachers, parents, and children is essential, fostering an environment where trust and openness thrive.

In summary, Jane Eyre's educational experience provides valuable insights into personality development and educational strategies. Analysing her journey through the lens of Satya's iceberg theory underscores the importance of caring for and guiding students responsibly. By applying these lessons, educators can contribute to raising a generation of compassionate, independent, and capable individuals, ensuring a brighter future for society.

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# 5th World Conference on Social Sciences and Humanities

28 - 30 October 2022

Milan, Italy



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