

Investigate!

Jane Eyre: Imagery, Metaphor and Symbolism

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Imagery, Metaphor and Symbolism

❖ Nature

- In chapter 12 (Volume 1, chapter 12), re-read the three paragraphs beginning 'The ground was hard, the air was still, my road was lonely' and ending 'the tinkle of the nearest streams, the sigh of the most remote'. Answer the following questions:
 - What is the context of the passage?
 - What kind of visual impression does the passage create?
 - To what extent does sound play a part in the passage, and with what effect?
 - What is the overall atmosphere of the scene described?
 - How is the scene relevant to the events that occupy the rest of the chapter?
- You should now try to find other passages concerning the natural world and try to answer the same questions about them
 - A good way of doing this is to look at the openings of chapters, which often include natural description.

❖ Fire and light

- In chapter 25 (Volume 2, chapter 10) Jane tells Rochester about her dream of being visited by a strange woman
 - Re-read this passage and make notes on the ways in which images of fire and light are used to create a sense of Jane's experience

- Look for other examples of the use of fire in the descriptions of other characters':
 - Appearance
 - Inner feelings.

❖ Paintings and drawings

Art and personal taste

- Re-read the descriptions of Bewick's engravings in chapter 1 (volume 1, chapter 1)
 - What do they have in common?
 - How might they be relevant to Jane's situation at Gateshead?
 - What do we learn about Jane's personality from her fascination with these pictures?

Significance through art

- Re-read the passage in chapter 13 (Volume 1, chapter 13) beginning 'these pictures were in water colours' and ending 'the shape which shape had none'. This is Jane's description of her paintings
 - What do the subjects of these paintings have in common?
 - From Jane's descriptions, what impression do you have of their appearance?
- Now go on to read the passage immediately following, in which Rochester questions Jane about the pictures and makes comments on them
 - Why do you think Rochester is so interested in Jane's paintings?
 - What does he think they tell him about her?