

EXPLORING THE BACKGROUND BEHIND BRONTE'S BRUNETTE

CLASSIQUE

VOLUME ONE - NUMBER 10

classic literature for today's context

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Gilbert Keith
CHESTERTON
'ROLLICKING JOURNALIST'

OPINION:
DRUNKARDS
DOESTOEVSKY'S UNWRITTEN
ANSWER TO BINGE DRINKING

PLAIN

Jane?



//EDITORIAL

We read to know we are not alone.

-C.S. LEWIS

Let me be the first admit, by the time Friday night rolls around it is a lot easier to opt for a night in front of the television rather than reading a book.

In most cases higher cognitive processes are required for reading classical literature than watching television. While television offers audio and visual interaction, perhaps sometimes written words can speak more directly to the heart.

Identifying part of our selves, our lives, our beliefs in a fictional character, a biography or a piece of non-fiction can help to remove intellectual and emotional isolation. When our thoughts intersect with the authors' words, we realise that we are not alone. We can find solace in the notion that our thoughts, problems or situations are similar to another who lived before us. What we learn from their experience can help shape our actions and reactions, helping us make a more informed decision.

Considering and evaluating the writing of another, allows us to define more clearly our own beliefs, values and opinions, as well as broadening our perspective. Without hearing the voices of others, we are left in a sedentary state of introspection, staring into a mirror where the image does not change nor educate.

This magazine aims to highlight the relevance of classic literature themes to 21st century Australian culture, as well as introducing these novels to a new generation of readers.

I hope you find this month's edition entertaining, thought provoking and with this magazine, yourself in good company.

Yours in Literature,

Michelle Juers (Editor in Chief)



Editor in Chief
Layout, images and text:
Michelle Juers

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//LETTERS TO THE EDS.

Congratulations
Angus for your
literary efforts and
thoughts you win
this month's prize
of a \$20 Dymocks
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EDITOR'S CHOICE

As a computer
programmer by day, I
anticipate the time when I
can read, so using the other
side of my brain.

When you get your
head around the language found in period
literature, you discover that the struggles and
themes of these books mirror those in today's
society. They are testament to the opinion that
the core human condition does not change over
time. I admit it may be affected by environmental
variables but in the end, it is still working with
the same hardware (to put it technically).

These books offer a treasure trove of insight,
if only we can blow off the dust without
choking, and dig in!

-Angus Holbitz, Newton, SA

NOVICE NOTE

I am a novice classical reader. I generally find them difficult to read. However, after seeing the latest *Pride and Prejudice* movie with Keira Knightly I was determined to give it a go. Your magazine has been a real god-send to a struggling lit-aurette like myself. Being able to relate the high english wording to my life and generation brings the books alive. I'm now onto *Emma* and loving *Persuasion*. **-Jenni Georg, Loxton, SA**

Look out for next months edition, our feature article is on Emma. (Eds)

READING REWARDS

First of all, thank you for your magazine. It is refreshing to find a thoughtful alternative to the trash and tripe found in tabloid offerings. In my opinion, classical literature is not given enough of a chance by most people. Dedicating time to read a 500 page Dickens or Doestoevsky I admit is a challenge in our time poor world. The rewards you reap, however, from reading such books and the insight you gain into other cultures and eras, not to mention the growth in vocabulary makes it well worth the investment. **- Tom Tuffet, Brisbane, QLD**

We love to hear from you. Send your letters to Classique Magazine 17 St Lawrence Ave Croydon SA 5008

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//NEXT ISSUE

Emma

FEATURE ARTICLE:

Austen's Matchmaker

Exploring Emma's Enigmas

OPINION:

Tolstoy vs Doestoevsky

Which Russian reigns supreme?

AUTHOR SPOTLIGHT:

George Macdonald

'Man of letters, man of faith'

PLUS:

Book reviews, cool quotes
and much more...

//QUOTE THIS

"Books are the quietest
and most constant of friends;
they are the most accessible
and wisest of counsellors,
and the most patient of teachers."

- Charles W. Eliot

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BRONTE'S BEAUTY

Michelle Juers invites you to learn more about Charlotte Bronte's 1847 novel Jane Eyre.

What is it about the tale of heroic governess Jane Eyre that continues to inspire filmmakers and playwrights to bring her to life again and again? Is Jane's strength sourced from her creators linguistic finesse or does Jane's fiercely indendent mind take on a life of its own?

Michelle Juers explores the author background, plot and appeal of the novel in an attempt determine why Bronte's Beauty is no Plain Jane.

Author Background
Jane Eyre's author Charlotte Bronte was born on 21 April 1816 in Yorkshire, England. Her mother died when she was five years old. She was brought up by her father, a clergymen and her Aunt. Charlotte and three of her sister were sent to live at Cowan Bridge, a school for clergy men's daughters. She returned home when two of her sisters died of tuberculosis but returned later to teach in 1835.

She spent the years after teaching as a governess, with aspirations of starting her own school. Collaborations with her sisters in this initiative failed, but harboured creativity and assisted in the artistic growth of Emily, Anne and Charlotte into novelists.

The sisters received little recognition for the publication of their collection of poetry. In 1847, Charlotte under the male pseudonym of Currer Bell wrote *The Professor* (which was only published posthumously) and later on that year *Jane Eyre*. Charlotte revealed her identity after the success of *Jane Eyre* and went onto publish *Shirley* (1849) and *Villette* (1853).

Charlotte suffered immense grief and emotional isolation following the death of her siblings Emily and Branwell in 1848, and Anne in 1849. She unwillingly married Reverend Arthur Nicholls in 1854 and died of pneumonia while pregnant, the following year.

Plot Summary
Orphaned as a child, Jane is sent to live with her abusive aunty and cousins. Educated at Lowood Academy, she experiences more hardship as she is forced to survive on minimal food and grieves the death of her best friend from typhus. Jane goes on teach at Lowood for two years before accepting a position at Thornfield Hall where she is governess for Adele, the illegitimate child of Mr Rochester. The novel follows the relationship between Jane and her intemperate yet passionate Master. Forced to flee Thornfield after an unforeseen, almost bigamous event, Jane in desperation, finds herself at Moor House where she is befriended by St John Rivers and is reunited with family she thought she never had. She goes on to teach at a charity school and is sought for marriage by Rivers. A voice, however, calls her back to Thornfield where she is confronted with a world that is so different from the one she departed several years ago.

REGARDING JANE EYRE

Edited by Susan Geason
Random House Australia 1997
533 Pages



THE BOTTOM LINE:

Insights well worth looking into.

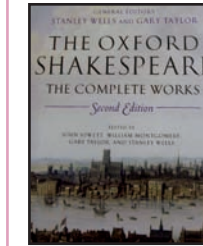
Regarding Jane Eyre

This anthology brings together the responses of some of Australia's best female authors to Jane Eyre. Also included are chapters from Charlotte Bronte's biographers and the author of the Jane Eyre prequel *Wide Sargasso Sea*. The collection gives readers the opportunity to explore the pschye, environmental conditions and past of Jane Eyre, as well as discovering more about the book's author.

Jane's character is explored in depth in several essays in the book, allowing the reader to gain a greater understanding of her motivations, aspirations and faults. The inclusion of accounts from Bronte's biographers gives valuable information about the life and times of the book's author, revealing the societal and personal context in which Bronte wrote.

This collection offers interesting insights, enhancing the Jane Eyre experience. Analysis from different perspectives, offers you a more comprehensive understanding and view of this classic novel.

//REVIEWS



THE OXFORD SHAKESPEARE THE COMPLETE WORKS

Edited by Stanley Wells & Gary Taylor
Oxford University Press (2nd Ed)
Second Edition 1344 pages

THE BOTTOM LINE:

Straight to the pool room.

Shakespeare: The Complete Works

The complete collection of Shakespeare is found in one book. As well as gathering all his works, this edition offers a general introduction to Shakespeare and his writing, brief introductions to each of his individual works, a User's Guide to help navigate the collection, an essay on Shakespeare's language and a list of recommended Further Reading.

The size and weight of the book may be inconvenient for those who wish to read and travel with the book, but this is hard to avoid considering the large body of his work. The quality of binding and paper increases the overall reading experience.

It is hard to look past this collection, as it is clear that his works have been carefully been edited and compiled in an attempt to remain as close as possible to the original manuscripts. The volumes explanatory content ensures that the reader is aided in their understanding and makes the Shakespearian experience more relevant and enjoyable.

DVD REVIEW: PERSUASION (2007)

Sally Hawkins and Rupert Penry-Jones star in the latest on screen adaptation of Jane Austen's 1816 novel *Persuasion*. The story is of love lost and the long journey towards possible reconciliation between Anne Elliot and Captain Frederick Wentworth. Produced by Canada's ITV, the production takes a slightly different approach, occasionally straying from the novel. The result is an enjoyable production that may, according to some, lack in production values and on-screen chemistry. A condensed plot and faster paced editing gives the production a more contemporary feel and reduces the running time to just over 90 minutes. This modernized adaptation is worth looking into, offering an enjoyable introduction to the characters and plot, that may well invite you to read or re-read the book.

Persuasion

//WEB-LITERATE

This month we check out some great resources of classic literature online and software that allows you to read your favourite book on your PC, Mac, iPhone or PDA.

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The recently elected Rudd Labor is currently attempting to increase taxes on alcohol in a plan to perturb potential plastered punters, but perhaps it is more effective to persuade such people to ponder their pints before pouring the said liquor down their throats. Encouraging people to first think, then drink may not change the situation but will in the least encourage dialogue and thought on the issue, which will at least delay their drinking.

I will be the first to admit that the viability and practicality of such a proposition is an admirable aspiration at best. Recent research has shown that drunkenness is very much a learned behaviour, a paradigm shift is most likely required to change the current situation. Considering the current state of the global stockmarket people may feel the need to dampen their financial uncertainty with a quiet lager, it may be more advisable to save their hard earned pennies and in the words of Pink to 'don't buy me a drink, just give me the money'.

If this prolific author would have completed both works, would this have any impact on binge drinking, drunkenness and its cultural, medical and social implications today? I'll leave that for you to decide.

Michelle Juers - is a web designer who attempts to dabble in literature, theology and social commentary.

WHAT OTHERS HAVE SAID ABOUT ALCOHOL

"No animal invented anything so bad as drunkenness – or so good as drink"
- GK Chesterton, *All Things Considered*

"Tis not the drinking that is to be blamed, but the excess."
- John Selden, *Table Talk*, 1689

"Drunkenness is nothing but voluntary madness."
- Lucius Annaeus Seneca, c. 4 BC - AD 65

"O God, that men should put an enemy in their mouths to steal away their brains! that we should, with joy, pleasance, revel, and applause, transform ourselves into beasts!"
- William Shakespeare, *Othello*

"First you take a drink, then the drink takes a drink, then the drink takes you."
- F. Scott Fitzgerald, *American Author*

"This is one of the disadvantages of wine: it makes a man mistake words for thought."
- Samuel Johnson



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Adaptations

Over the past 100 years the story of *Jane Eyre* has been adapted for movies ten times and television (in the form of telemovies and mini-series) ten times. The latest of these adaptations, produced by the BBC in 2006 sees Ruth Wilson playing the title role and Toby Stephens portraying the passionate and Byronic Mr Rochester.

Solid performances and a tight script, accompanied by tight cinematography result in an enjoyable four part mini-series. Juno's Ellen Page is set to be the next actor to take on the role of Jane in a full length feature film due to be released in late 2009 or early 2010.

Jane Eyre has also been transformed into numerous musicals and operas over time. The adaptation with music and lyrics by Paul Gordon and book by John Caird, featuring 25 musical numbers was first shown in 1995 in Wichita, Kansas. It was performed 209 times from December 10 2000 to June 10 2001 at Brooks Atkinson Theatre, New York and received several nominations at the 2001 Tony Awards, including best musical.

There has also been several stage plan adaptations and written and performed worldwide. Polly Teale's stage production of *Jane Eyre* was first performed in 1997 and has toured to 8 countries including Australia.



Teale has also written and directed a stage play in 2005 entitled '*Bronte*' that explores the personal lives of the Bronte sisters.

"Jane Eyre has not lost its appeal over time."

Appeal of the Novel

Bronte skilfully combines the genres of gothic horror, romance and Bildungsroman (a novel that tells the story of a child's maturation and focuses on the emotions and experiences that accompany and incite his or her growth to adulthood.)

Jane Eyre has not lost its appeal over time. At its first publishing novelist William Thackeray was so caught up reading the story that he almost missed a deadline and was found by a servant in tears. Lucasta Miller states the appeal lies within the interior aspects of the novel, as well as 'its suspense-laden, melodramatic plot – featuring child cruelty and attempted bigamy and ...celebrated madwoman' (Miller 2006).

WHERE CAN I READ THE BOOK?

Read the book online at: <http://www.gutenberg.org/etext/1260> or purchase it from your online book retailer or bookstore

English philosopher and literary critique George Henry Lewes (in Miller 2006) puts it down to the book's 'strange power of subjective representation'.

Plain Jane?

Judging by the sustained appeal and success of the novel over the past 150 years it is clear that Bronte's Brunette is definitely by no means a plain jane. Jane is a strong character, possessing timeless traits of loyalty, resilience and integrity, offering a role model and heroine to admire.

The tight narrative and strong structural and figurative elements of the story ensure that the plot is executed skilfully. As a result the attentions of the audience are sustained and entertained. The exploration of dark themes and articulation of Jane's Character means that Bronte's novel has enough depth to be analysed on various levels.

Even though she is described as plain in Charlotte Bronte's novel, Jane Eyre is indeed a beauty. This beauty will continue to live on in the hearts of those on whom the book has made an impact.

DRUNKARDS

"They speak of my drinking,
but never think of my thirst."
- Scottish Proverb

*Dostoevsky's unwritten book
that is still relevant today.*

thinker not a drinker?

Do I not feel it? And the more I drink, the more I feel it. It is for this I drink, that in drinking I may seek compassion and feeling. It is not joy I seek, but sorrow only... I drink for I wish to doubly suffer!" (Dostoevsky p. 16)

In July 1865 Russian author Fyodor Dostoevsky had plans in mind to write two books. The first work; an attempt to address the current problem of drunkenness in society was to be entitled 'The Drunkards'. The second a "psychological account of a crime" when in full fruition became the highly acclaimed 'Crime and Punishment'. The Drunkards transcript was rejected by publishers, left incomplete and unfortunately never published.

It is safe to say the latter has been dealt with more than adequately in today's media and in modern literature, judging by the number of crime shows that lace our billboard sized plasma televisions in primetime. But what of the first subject matter, the novel that was never completed? The largely unwritten novel was to address a current issue in 19th century Russia, 140 years later perhaps it is a book missing from 21st century Australia's bookshelves.

The problem of drunkenness and alcohol abuse is by no means a new issue, in fact it has been a constant in western civilisation for a large part of recorded history. The first record of drunkenness is found in Genesis 9 in which Noah is inebriated after planting a vineyard and is seen naked by his son.

In a world in which technology continues to advance at a phenomenal rate of progress, it is humbling to think that some people still *enjoy* themselves in the same way people did centuries did beforehand; drinking excessive amounts of alcohol, some to the point where they can no longer stand. Considering all the bells and whistles affluent western society you'd think some may be able to find a different (or better) way to spend their time and money.

"consumed by over-consumption"

French novelist, actor and poet Jean Cocteau once said "Man seeks to escape himself in myth, and does so by any means at his disposal. Drugs, alcohol, or lies. Unable to withdraw into himself, he disguises himself. Lies and inaccuracy give him a few moments of comfort."

For some drunkenness is a voluntary action, done for pleasure and sensation. Others are consumed by over-consumption, unable to stay afloat drowning their own sorrows, while the sorrows themselves float, rising to the surface once again when sober.

Dostoevsky having dwelt upon the issue initially felt the propensity to write a novel in an attempt to address the problem that existed but never followed through. Nowadays media bring binge drinking to the forefront - rightly or wrongly so. From highlighting celebrity misdemeanours to reporting on schoolies celebration alcohol and its abuse in tabloid television, alcohol is never far from the public eye.

At the same time similar behaviour is almost glorified by commercial radio hosts who speak fondly of their partying experiences and promote alcohol as an integral part of Australian culture to visiting celebrities (Hamish and Andy talking to Jordan Sparks, Saturday 20 September). Images of sports people celebrating (or commiserating) and the morning after, eyes shielded by dark sunglasses are frequent.

It is needless to say that alcohol is an inherent part of popular Australian culture. Sporting events, birthdays, public holidays and the end of the working week are all reasons for people to celebrate with a quiet drink or two. Responsible and reduced alcohol consumption should be encouraged, even celebrated.



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