



The Madwoman and the Blindman: Jane Eyre, Discourse, Disability

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This breakthrough volume of critical essays on *Jane Eyre* from a disability perspective provides fresh insight into Charlotte Brontë's classic novel from a vantage point that is of growing academic and cultural importance. Contributors include many of the preeminent disability scholars publishing today, including a foreword by Lennard J. Davis.

Though an indisputable classic and a landmark text for critical voices from feminism to Marxism to postcolonialism, until now, *Jane Eyre* has never yet been fully explored from a disability perspective. Customarily, impairment in the novel has been read unproblematically as loss, an undesired deviance from a condition of regularity vital to stable closure of the marriage plot. In fact, the most visible aspects of disability in the novel have traditionally been understood in rather rudimentary symbolic terms—the blindness of Rochester and the “madness” of Bertha apparently standing in for other aspects of identity. *The Madwoman and the Blindman: Jane Eyre, Discourse, Disability*, resists this traditional reading of disability in the novel. Informed by a variety of perspectives—cultural studies, linguistics, and gender and film studies—the essays in this collection suggest surprising new interpretations, parsing the trope of the Blindman, investigating the embodiment of mental illness, and proposing an autistic identity for Jane Eyre. As the first volume of criticism dedicated to analyzing and theorizing the role of disability in a single literary text, *The Madwoman and the Blindman* is a model for how disability studies can open new conversation and critical thought within the literary canon.

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