

The Significance of Names in the Novel

In their book, *The Madwoman in the Attic* (second edition published 2000, Yale University Press) Sandra M Gilbert and Susan Gubar write:

'As we noted earlier, the allusion to pilgriming is deliberate ... Jane Eyre makes a life-journey which is a kind of mythical progress from one significantly named place to another. Her story begins, quite naturally, at *Gateshead*, a starting point where she encounters the uncomfortable givens of her career: a family which is not her real family, a selfish older 'brother' who tyrannizes over the household like a substitute patriarch, a foolish and wicked 'stepmother,' and two unpleasant, selfish 'stepsisters.' The smallest, weakest, and plainest child in the house, she embarks on her pilgrim's progress as a sullen Cinderella, an angry Ugly Duckling, immorally rebellious against the hierarchy that oppresses her' p.342

Bearing this analysis in mind, decide on the possible significance of the following place and character names in the novel:

Gateshead

Lowood

Thornfield

Marsh End

Ferndean

Jane Eyre

Mrs Reed

Helen Burns

Miss Temple

Blanche Ingram

Mary

Diana

St John Rivers