

Jane is really not a typical Victorian heroine. Mr. Rochester is older and a much more experienced man, but she refuses to accept him as her superior. She also refuses to be claimed, by any man. A lot of factors make Jane unusual in the world of the novel. Jane is searching for love, but refuses to be “owned”. She craves to be an independent woman, and this seems to be a problem because of how society worked in the Victorian Era. The male dominated.

Gender roles

At times, Jane represents what a woman should be in the Victorian Era, but other times, Jane defies expectations and breaks the gender roles. She challenges the gender expectations several times throughout the novel, which I have already said something about. Each male figure in the novel seems to be, at various levels, controlling and oppressive. They somehow try to use their male power over Jane as a woman. This is an example of how women were expected to know their place in society. Jane must “escape” from a dominant male figure that tries to force her to ignore her feelings or abandon her morals. Jane fights back against John Reed, escapes Mr. Brocklehurst’s religious governance and starvation, refuses to be Rochester’s mistress, even though he threatens her with violence, denies St. John Rivers a loveless marriage, and she finally marries Rochester as his equal. But at the end of the novel, gender roles are somewhat reversed by the end of the novel. Rochester now depends on Jane to be his eyes and hands, and he depends on her.

Jane’s behaviour against these male figures represents that Jane is the opposite of what was common at the time. A common woman in the Victorian Era was required to provide their husbands and raise the children. Women’s rights were limited and Victorian wives became property to their husbands. We get an insight into a typical upper class woman through the character of Miss Ingram. Her purpose in life is to bear a child. She has no job and the only thing she does is reading, playing the piano or participate in social outings. Charlotte Bronte has succeeded in showing the reader different social classes of the Victorian Era. It was hard for women to get an education. Jane worked hard and became a governess. We see now that she has a career and can earn a living. This was incredibly hard at this time; especially for a girl like Jane. Bronte expresses that “women feel just as men do” through Jane. Jane Eyre is a novel that