

Introduction to written texts assignment

[Sociology](#)



In this essay I will also look at the contra-view to the question to understand that there can also be no conflict with Cane's quest in that era. Charlotte Bronze's female protagonist Jane, in her novel *Jane Ere* published in 1847, explores the life of a simple governess, who has gone through life difficulties to discover herself and to become acceptable by society. It is evident that Bronze created the character of Jane based on her own experiences growing up. Therefore, it is clear that Bronze was experiencing struggles with social equality as well as remaining socially acceptable herself.

I will use the themes of feminism and individuality to define social hierarchy and to explain my position. To defend and support these themes, I will use the set readings and Mary Kluges' book *Literary Theory: A Guide for the Perplexed* to explain the nineteenth century discourses and ideologies. To understand the nineteenth century, it was a period when human thinking and behavior had some reflection of the medieval ages where certain human behavior was set in stone.

For example, it was a strongly held belief in the nineteenth century that for a man and a woman to have certain roles and responsibilities within society and within a particular relationship or family. The roles and responsibilities were defined by what was inherited from the generations prior and to a significant degree, these beliefs had a connection with the laws of God disseminated through the church. As a result, such roles and responsibilities were strongly entrenched hence to challenge them would result in making the person an outcast. Gender as a whole is a crucial element to the construction of a society.

European women in the nineteenth century lived in the age of gender inequality and therefore women of both upper and middle-class had no occupational choices and stayed home caring for the children and the house, while men were out working and bringing home the money. This discourse is considered the norm and as Mary Kluges explains in *Literary Theory*, she refers to the postindustrial theories that signifies gender as attached to sexually dimorphic bodies, which signify the division of social practices and relations into binary oppositions of male/female and masculine/feminine (Kluges 2006, p. 1-92). The gender concept is clearly a conflict in anytime, posing a threat to social standing and the definition of women. Whilst the advocating of social equality within society is an intellectual way of advancing the rights of a suppressed group of people such as females, it is none the less difficult to digest the fact that Jane Ere cannot, at the same time require social acceptance. As a consequence, the two opposing ideologies were bound to create a significant conflict.

One example of extending social equality is the opinion of Mary Woolgathering, where she urged the liberals of her day, compatriots in the great task of overthrowing what they believe together was a decadent aristocratic privilege to extend the rights of men-citizenship-to women (Broody 1983, p. 1). The conflict relates to the century and the values, which infringe upon the social equality for females. For example, a female in the nineteenth century was taken to be subservient to the male of the species. A male in the nineteenth century was regarded as the leading head of the household or community.

Michel Faculty imposes that the power given to the men by the rulers at the time, is maintained by the way men act to conform to the notions of law and order (Robs 2009, p. 98). It was an acceptable norm or value within the community in the nineteenth century that a female was in some respects inferior to the male and therefore not competent to be seeking an equal social footing with a male. To further my point of the above paragraph, Jane Ere as a character is representing feminism. She argues for social betterment of governesses and equal rights for women.

Richard Chase admitted in 1948 that Jane Eyre's novel rose from mythologies Cane's confrontation with masculine sexuality (Gilbert & Guava 1979, p. 338). My understanding of this, is that Cane's confrontation with sexuality made it hard and intimidating for her to stand her ground while fighting for what she believes. The relationship between feminism and masculinity is a very intimate topic and one that Jane had to experience in order to understand herself and her identity. However, ideas and discourses change over time.

As the industrial revolution evolved, values that were strongly held by human beings in the nineteenth century began to change. Topic three of the study guide states that new liberalism in thinking, allowed ideas to flourish for the society and culture and thus giving way to an age of self-conscious individuality (Study guide 2013, p. 17). As a consequence, the phenomenon of equal rights began to grow. In this process, as the rights of individuals were being debated, the rights of a woman associated with feminism was also seeking social equality.

Kluges explains the postindustrial feminist theory investigates how, and with what consequences, 'women' is constructed as otherness, as non-being and dangerous to the consciousness (Kluges 2006, p. 6) allowing us to understand the position of Charlotte Bronze and her need for recognition, equality and rights. Bronze's need to let out her anger, frustrations and oppression resulted in the form of literature allowing her to event her issues on social equality and acceptance through the medium of writing and therefore creating the character of Jane as a feminist figure, shaping one's view and opinion about women.

John Stewart Mill a great thinker of the nineteenth century developed the idea of individuality, which related to the notion of happiness. He believed that the bribery of the individual and the happiness of a person should be the basis upon which civil liberties and judicial power should be based. He believed civil liberty for all members of society, in particular protecting and preserving the rights of women in society. He further advocated that the working class person should no longer be considered a slave or a worker serving a paternalistic aristocracy.

John Stewart Mill advocated that weaker members of society be protected in the social reforms and encapsulating the rights of women and children in both and legal and domestic terms (Study guide 2013, p. 1). The concept of social equality is not to distilled a man from befriending or retaining a relationship with women, but in fact creates a form of respect and equality, acceptance of the role and identity of a women within a relationship and within society as a whole. A women's individuality was greatly influenced by the Enlightenment.

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Timothy Tacked writes about the new age and how the Enlightenment was a period, in which writers were emerging from centuries of darkness and ignorance into a new age, enlightened by reason, science, and a respect for humanity (Tacked 2000, p. 1). Ultimately, the emergence of new ideas brought about individualism and made clear the importance of the individual and their rights. This is related to Cane's character as she portrays individualism through her actions and thoughts.

As a result she is able to defend herself and stand up to the higher authority. This is seen when she confronts Mrs. Reed. Her status as an orphan taught Jane many things and one is to think for herself. Though in doing so she is constantly on the wrong side of the society. Her individuality dissolves her social standing, making it hard for social acceptance. The contra-view to the topic is that there is no conflict between Jane Ere as a nineteenth century female wanting social equality but at the same time needing to remain socially acceptable.

With the change of times, Jane Ere advocates a right to preserve that equality of a woman within a society, but does not necessarily mean that she can't remain socially acceptable. The mere fact of seeking equal rights does not invalidate a women's social status, in fact it enhances the value of a women within the society and enriches the social fabric of social society. Unless social equality is requested and argued for the sights of equality for women would be difficult to achieve and therefore Jane Ere attempts to seek those rights for women in the nineteenth century as the industrial revolution takes place.

In her speech about equality, Jane Ere confronts Rochester, her Master and says: “ Do you think, because I am poor, obscure, plain and little, I am soulless and heartless? You think wrong! -I have as much soul as you, – and full as much heart!.... It is my spirit that addresses your spirit; just as if both had passed through the grave, and we stood at God’s feet equal-as we are! ” (Gilbert & Guava 1979, p. 53). Clearly, Bronze in her text states that women are very calm generally, but they feel just as the same as men.

Women need to exercise their intellectual processes and make efforts as much as men do. Therefore, she advocates that for someone to be so narrow minded, to say that women as fellow creatures ought to be confined only to themselves for making puddings and knitting stockings and embroidering bags does not fit within the social setting that she attempts to bring to light through her book (Broker & Widows 1996, p. 110). In fact in the novel Jane Ere admits that he is only a woman protesting or crying for equality but at the same time she is as good as a man (Broker & Widows 1996, p. 11). In conclusion, this assignment agrees to the notion of a conflict between Jane, as a feminist female writer advocating social equality on the one hand and wanting to remain socially acceptable. Jane Ere can be seen to be creating a conflict in an era where social equality for women is not an acceptable norm of society. The contra-view for social equality is that Jane is not trying to make any material changes, but is only fermenting equality for women but not extracting herself from the social fabric of society, hence Bronze’s novel cannot be considered creating a conflict at all.