

Jane eyre and victorian period



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In the Victorian period, most women were aiming to get married to a man of the same or better social status, be loving and serving wives and be a mother to her husband's children. Marriage was not necessarily based on love. It was usually based on financial and social benefits.

Women did not have many rights and privileges and always needed a man to determine their social position. For example, Blanche Ingram thought that she was going to marry Mr. Rochester for his wealth and social position; his wealth could give her the ability to live a life of luxury. Mr.

Rochester's interest in Blanche was originally based as a trick to make Jane feel envious, but because of Blanche's beauty and the idea that her social power could benefit him, Jane believed it. These marriages did not last long periods because some men became bored of their women and in turn, women realised that their husbands were not as wealthy as they were before. These relationships were also usually quite dull and lifeless. Jane and Rochester's relationship however, was different. They loved and cared for each other, although there was a massive contrast in class.

These marriages were most likely to last lifetimes because of the love and excitement gluing the relationship together. Georgiana and Lord Edwin Vere loved each other and wished to get married, "... But his relations were against the match;" says Bronte. His family was against it and refused.

Bronte shows us that parents were looking for beneficial marriages for their children. In this case, the marriage attempt was based on love but it was rejected due to the contrast in class. However, Georgiana and the Lord were determined to marry and eloped secretly together, yet their plan was foiled

as Eliza informed Mrs Reed. Again Bronte here shows that it was difficult to marry for love as families were against it if there were no benefits. Also she is trying to show us the importance of what the family decides and how you could not easily get away with disobeying them.

Blanche Ingram and Mr Rochester's potential marriage was based on Blanche's interest in Mr Rochester's money and his phoney interest in Blanche's beauty and social position. As a sign that wealth was the only obsession on Blanche's mind, she revoked her interest in Rochester when she discovered that he was not as wealthy as before. Here Bronte is trying to show that money played a big role in marriage because people were greedy and thought that money would make them happy. Money brought you power then and this was greatly important.

"-to take Miss Ingram to my bosom, in short (she's an extensive armful: but that is not the point-one can't have too much of such an excellent thing as my Blanche):" This proves that Mr. Rochester was interested in only her attractive body and her social power. This is another example of a beneficial relationship because neither of them loved each other, Blanche wanted Mr. Rochester's money and he wanted her beautiful body. Jane Eyre and Mr Rochester's relationship was rather peculiar.

Jane did not want Rochester's money and Jane was not even slightly appealing and obviously he surely did not want Jane for her wealth or social position. Love was the sole reason for their relationship. Jane and Rochester's contrasts in class had its consequences though. Mr Rochester's idea of loving and caring for his wife is to shower her with money and jewels;

this what he sees as the honourable way to deal with his loving wife.

However Jane has other ideas; from her perspective, this is the exact opposite of what she wants. It is almost as if Rochester is trying to change Jane to be of a higher class like him.

Bronte shows this when Rochester calls Jane “ Janet” as a symbol that he is trying to change her. Bronte again shows great symbolism when Rochester proposes to Jane. At the start of the chapter, Bronte sets the scene with: “ A splendid Midsummer shone over England: skies so pure, suns so radiant as were then seen in long succession. ” Then as the chapter brings to a close, and Rochester and Jane have confessed their love, a storm breaks out. Here, Bronte shows us what the future has in store for Rochester and Jane, indicating that their decision to wed was unwise.

In the same chapter, Bronte uses further symbolism. After the emergence of the storm, a bolt of lightning splits the tree at which Jane and Rochester were sitting earlier that evening. That tree symbolises Jane and Rochester’s relationship. They have a strong base of love, but as you get further up the tree, they are going in two different directions and dissimilarity in class is pulling them apart. Before the tree had been split Rochester said “..

. here is the chestnut tree: here is the bench at its old roots. Come, we will sit there in peace to-night, though we should never more be destined to sit there together. “ This symbolism shows again how marriages for love were not easily found.

When Jane found about Bertha, the mad woman in the attic and Mr. Rochester’s wife, she said to herself: “ Who in the world cares for you? Or
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who will be injured by what you do? “. Jane knew that she had to marry Rochester and ignore his dishonesty. No one else of this high quality and standards would love Jane as much as Mr.

Rochester did. When Jane returns to Thornfield, after leaving to find work elsewhere, she find that Rochester is blind, has lost a hand and Bertha has jumped off the roof following a fire she herself had caused. Their spark of love is ignited once again and they get married now that Bertha is out of the picture. As proof of Jane’s true love for Rochester, she marries him when he is missing an eye and a hand, ignoring his state. As long as he loves her she is happy. Bronte gives us great examples of different types of marriages; in this one she shows us that as well as there are beneficial marriages, there are marriages of true love, just two people who don’t want anything more in life than to love each other.

Bertha Mason and Mr. Rochester were married for financial benefits. Rochester’s father persuaded him to marry Bertha for her money. Not aware of the genetic problems in her family, Mr.

Rochester agreed to marry her, as she was also truly ravishing. When Rochester discovered that she had a mad mother and her brother was a “mute idiot” he soon began to realise her usual outbreaks of violence and temper. This rage only worsened and already lurking over the horizon was absolute madness. St John Rivers’ interest in Jane Eyre was fuelled by how she will help bring him success as a missionary and accompany him to India. Jane refused to marry him, as they were not in love and that is the only reason she is willing to marry anyone.

Bronte displays that after you find true love, like Jane found Rochester, it is difficult to see yourself with anyone else. In the Victorian era, marriage was extremely important for beneficial reasons. People married for social benefits and for wealth. Men looked for women who had what they didn't have, for example a wealthy man looked for a woman with a high social position. Marriage for love was very scarce because it was not easy to make money if you didn't have much at the start, so people looked to marry someone wealthy who would make life easier for them. Once you had money, you had power and your social status would also begin to rise.

Instead of waiting to emerge as a socially powerful person, people married people who were already socially powerful in order to gain their power. In poorer families, more marriages are for love because of you cannot live wealthy lives you might as well live a happy one. I think what Bronte was trying to say about marriage that was very different depending on what every person wants. She shows this to us by giving different examples of love and marriages like Jane and Rochester and Blanche and Rochester.