

A Comparative Analysis of the Feminist Consciousness of the Heroines in Jane Eyre and Bleak House

Fei Gao^{1, a}

¹School of Foreign Studies, China University of Petroleum (East China), Qingdao, 266580, China

^agaofei1113@163.com

Abstract

This paper compares Jane Eyre and Esther Summerson's feminist consciousness in Jane Eyre and Bleak House. It consists of three chapters, introduction and conclusion. Firstly, the thesis introduces the Victorian period, its social values and the features of the novels of this period. Secondly, this paper reviews the domestic and foreign studies on Charlotte Brontë's and Charles Dickens' novels. Next, this paper briefly introduces Charlotte Brontë and her work Jane Eyre, Dickens and his Bleak House. This paper gives priority to comparative analysis of the feminist consciousness of the heroines in Jane Eyre and Bleak House. The first part is the comparative analysis of the similarities between Jane Eyre and Esther Summerson, and the second part is the comparative analysis of their different feminist consciousness, and analyzes the reasons for the differences. The conclusion restates the similarities between Jane Eyre and Esther Summerson as well as the differences between their feminist consciousness. Through the comparative analysis, it also helps readers to further understand these two works and their social significance.

Keywords

Jane Eyre; Esther Summerson; Feminist consciousness; Comparative analysis.

1. Introduction

Charlotte Brontë made a powerful propaganda for the rationality and necessity of women's education. Her novels can be regarded as the most classic of literature and gender consciousness. It can be said that Charlotte Brontë was a prominent writer in the women's literature in the 19th century, which focused on the pursuit of women's independence and the social value of equality with men. At the same time, she laid a solid foundation for the development of women's literature in the 20th century, which showed the problems faced by women after independence. Considered as Charlotte's most representative work and one of the most prevailing novels, Jane Eyre is also an autobiographical work, reflecting the experiences and the thoughts of herself.

Charles Dickens was the greatest representative of English critical realism. The publication of Bleak House marks the beginning of his third period. The title "Bleak House" is not only the name of the house, but also the society of that time. This work is aimed at the abuses of the English courts. It mainly narrates the lawsuit of Jarndyce and Jarndyce over the inheritance of a family fortune. However, this paper analyzes this work from a new perspective, focusing on the analysis of the feminist consciousness of the heroine, Esther Summerson.

This thesis allows readers to appreciate Jane Eyre and Esther Summerson from a new perspective. It intends to make a comparative analysis of the feminist consciousness of the heroines in Jane Eyre and Bleak House. Although there are quite a few similarities between Jane Eyre and Esther Summerson, their views on feminism were quite different. This paper mainly

analyzes the different aspects of their different feminist consciousness such as their views on the status of women and men as well as their views on love and marriage.

It also analyzes the main reasons leading to their different feminist consciousness, such as the social environment, the Victorian education of women, the author's experience and ideological cognition. Additionally, it can help the readers realize the significance of kindness, self-reliance, equality and love.

2. Brief Introduction to the Background

2.1. The Definition of the Victorian Age

Victorian era, before the George era and after the era of Edward, is considered as the peak of the industrial revolution and the British Empire. Its time limit is often defined as 1837-1901, the period of the reign of queen Alexandrina Victoria. This period of the British Empire reached the top of the world. Together with the Edwardian era, it is considered to be the golden age of the British Empire. The Victorian age was a time of soaring ambition, of great technological progress, of great magnificence as well as a time of great ugliness, of great squalor and of great misery.

2.2. The Social Values of the Victorian Age

The industrial revolution in the 18th century accelerated the development of British economy and society. At the same time, it also turned the social structure upside down and rapidly changed people's way of life. And the groups that have changed the most were the middle-class women. Living a rich life, men have the economic strength to assume the responsibility of the family, so women no longer need to engage in any productive labor. Women gradually shed the so-called social responsibilities from the forefront of economic society to the family, living a humble life in a patriarchal society. Passivity, obedience and dedication are the traditional moral values of the Victorian society in the 19th century.

As a result, being a governess has become an ideal career for a woman. However, governess during that period did not have the sense of existence, not to mention the sense of honor of the teaching profession like the one in today's society, and could not be treated as ideal by employers and the society. The situation of middle-class women has become so confusing. The lives of working women at the lower levels have become even more miserable.

In Victorian British society, masculine authority was unchallenged and insurmountable. Men determined the heterosexual communication and the nature of education while women can only obey, not to mention pursuing the genuine kind of love. Few women are lucky enough to meet the right man, and they can only wait for them to come to their own. Lucky women may be able to wait until the happy ending. However, if a man hesitates to take the action, a woman has no choice but to be more silent than a man.

2.3. The Novels of the Victorian Age

As a product of the Victorian era, Victorian literature is characterized by magnificence and diversity. It is multi-sided and complex from all angles, including the romantic and realistic reflection of the great changes in people's life. This era also gave birth to a large number of indomitable literary giants.

During this period, novels were widely prevailing and flourished. Famous novelists include Dickens, Thackeray, the Brontë sisters and Lady Gaskell. On the one hand, these critical realism novelists re-advocated realism in the 18th century; on the other hand, they shouldered the responsibility of criticizing the society and defending the interests of the public. Although their creative features and styles are different, they share a common concern for the lives and destinies of the general public. They are deeply indignant over inhumane social institutions,

depraved social morality, the prevalence of money worship and widespread poverty and injustice. The true portrayal of people's life and the ruthless criticism of the social system in their works aroused the public's awareness of social problems and social development. At the end of the 19th century, there also appeared a brave female novelist George Eliot and a writer Thomas Hardy who not only exposed and criticized the social ugliness, but also launched a bold attack on the traditional Victorian morality.

3. Brief Introduction to Charlotte Brontë and Charles Dickens

3.1. Literature Review

3.1.1. Related Study Abroad

The study of *Jane Eyre* at first mainly focused on the comprehensive analysis of the ideas of the works, and quite a few scholars gave relatively pertinent comments on the women's issues and realistic factors reflected by Charlotte Brontë. What's more, some comparative studies of the works of women writers in Victorian age were made. Debra Teachman offers a large quantity of the materials about the background information, especially women's status in the Victorian age, education for Victorian girls, the governess in nineteenth-century England, inheritance and law of marriage and custom and so on (Teachman, 2008).

As to the analysis of the characterization of *Jane Eyre*, comprehensive materials could be found. To a certain extent, the need to be admired by people points to Charlotte Brontë's own frustration with herself falling short of the Victorian version of feminine ideal. The protagonist paints sublime images that reflect her innate qualities and personal inner life.

Bleak House is one of the most important work of Charles Dickens and the study of this work was fairly abundant. The studies mainly dealt with some of the most obvious features of this work such as the comparison between Dickens and other writers, the analysis of the main theme of *Bleak House*— the corrupt English law and the artistic techniques applied in this work. Researchers have analyzed the children's threat and their needy future in Brontë and Dickens. They turned away from the sentimental tradition to the Victorian children— without the warm glow of benevolence or the soft lens of pity (McArthur, 2015). These children take several forms: the miserable child in all-too-realistic poverty, the rebellious youth, or the undifferentiated mass of children ill-advisedly bred and then left to bring themselves up. In addition, there were also monographs on the family concept in Dickens' works (Guo, 2018).

3.1.2. Related Study at Home

Domestic study of Charlotte Brontë and her work started late and has developed step by step to its relative prosperity. Many scholars studied *Jane Eyre* in terms of the characterization of *Jane Eyre*. Researchers have analyzed the reasons for *Jane Eyre*'s sense of inferiority such as lacking confidence in her appearance, the social environment of her time and the dissatisfaction of the circumstances of her up-bringing. What's more, the author also shows why and how *Jane Eyre* went from inferiority to confidence and self-improvement (Zhao, 2016).

In addition, quite a few scholars studied the connection between Charlotte Brontë and *Jane Eyre* based on the similarities between the author's personal experience and the heroine's experience. Then the analysis of this work from the perspective of sociology came into view. The focus of the study was gradually shifted to the feminist consciousness of the heroine. Researchers also argued that *Jane Eyre* is one rebellious woman in the Victorian Age (Li & Li, 2016). Many scholars also studied the feminist values of Charlotte Brontë as well as that of the Victorian era (Xie, 2015).

The study of *Bleak House* at home was much later than that of *Jane Eyre*. At first the studies were mainly about the most obvious theme of this work— the darkness and corruption of the British legal system and judiciary. What's more, many analyzed Dickens' works in order to

reveal the consciousness of the author and his time. For example, Zhou Qihua argued that Biblical culture had a profound effect over Dickens in many ways such as themes, plots and characters, to name a few. He mainly centers on the children's images, angel images, order at home, freedom and equality, and illustrates the representations of the Christian affection in Dickens' works (Zhou, 2017).

Through the exploration of the generation and reasons of the obedient female images in the Victorian period and the analysis of the contemporary images of the females, Yü Hui drew a view that the obedience of Esther is the product of the old times and calls on women to know themselves from a new perspective in the new era (Yü, 2015).

He Xiaoxiao argued that the issue of female identity has always been a hot topic in the academic circle. The paper shows people's varying degree of identification with Esther such as the aristocracy, the middle-class, and the proletariat. It also analyses Esther's progress to self-identification. From this paper we can see the position of women in the patriarchal society in the 19th century (He, 2018).

3.2. Brief Introduction to Charlotte Brontë

3.2.1. Charlotte Brontë

Charlotte Brontë (1816-1855) was born into a family of country ministers in Thornton, Yorkshire, in the north of England. Her mother died young, and Charlotte, at the age of eight, was sent to the Clergy Daughters' School at Cowan Bridge, a charity for the clergy's orphaned children. There her sisters Maria and Elizabeth died of consumption. Charlotte and her sister Emily went home, and when she was fifteen years old, she went to Miss Woolley's school, where she taught a few years later. She later worked as a governess and eventually devoted herself to literary writing. Charlotte Brontë had two elder sisters, two younger sisters and a brother. Emily Brontë and Anne Brontë are also eminent writers, so they are often called "three Brontë sisters" in the history of English literature.

In 1847, Charlotte Brontë published her famous novel *Jane Eyre*, which gave rise to a stir in the literary world. From the autumn of 1848 to 1849 her younger brother and two younger sisters passed away. In the shadow of death and confusion, she insisted on finishing the book *Shirley*, which showed her sorrow for her sister Emily, and described the spontaneous workers' movement in early Britain. She also wrote *Villette* (1853) and *The Schoolmaster* (1857), both of which were based on her own life experiences. Charlotte Brontë is adept to describe natural scenery with lyrical style.

Charlotte's writing owns a lot of features. Firstly, she exposes the cruelty, hypocrisy, inequality and other evils of the upper class. On the other hand, she shows the misery and suffering of the poor and thus presents a vivid realistic picture of the English society. Secondly, she mainly writes from an individual perspective and puts her own feelings into her main characters. Therefore, she is a subjective writer, tending to write about the characters themselves and to recreate a world of their lives and experiences. Thirdly, there is an intense love for the beauty of nature. She has obvious contempt for the worldly ambition and success, for she believes only in hard work, self-discipline and high intelligence. Another phenomenon in her novels is that her heroines— all her novels have heroines instead of heroes— are never provided with the traditional virtues and are all about lonely and neglected young women longing for life and love.

3.2.2. Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*

Considered as Charlotte Brontë's most representative work and one of the most popular and important novels of the Victorian age, *Jane Eyre* tells the story of an orphan girl called Jane Eyre. With her obscurity and inferiority, Jane Eyre stands out as a representative of the middle-class working women struggling for their basic rights and equality as a human being and as one of the most remarkable fictional heroines of the time. The book is perceived as a representative

work of feminist writings that reflect the experience and protect the interests of the weaker sex. In terms of the position of woman in society, Jane Eyre maintains that women should have equal rights with men.

Another theme of the book is the criticism of the bourgeois system of education. The Lowood school is the embodiment of the bourgeois principles of education, the aim of which is to bring up obedient slaves for the rich. What's more, Charlotte has her description of the English country squire. She compares them to the uncultivated and narrow-minded Philistines. But Rochester is an exception.

3.3. Brief Introduction to Charles Dickens

3.3.1. Charles Dickens

Charles John Huffam Dickens (1812-1870) was an English writer and German author. His major works include David Copperfield, The Pickwick Papers, Oliver Twist, The Old Curio Shop, Hard Times, Our Mutual Friend and A Tale of Two Cities.

Born on February 7, 1812, on the outskirts of Portsmouth, Dickens was born into a family of naval clerks. He was forced to work as a child laborer. After the age of 15, he worked as an apprentice, clerk and court clerk in a law firm. He began working as a newspaper reporter covering the house of Commons at the age of 20. In 1837, he completed the first full-length novel The Pickwick Papers, which was the first realistic novel creation. Subsequently he published the Oliver Twist (1838), The Old Curiosity Shop (1841), Dombey and Son (1848), David Copperfield (1850), Hard Times (1854), A Tale of Two Cities (1859), Great Expectations (1861). In June 9, 1870 he died in Gates Heights.

3.3.2. Charles Dickens' Bleak House

Bleak house is considered as one of the greatest achievements of the writer Charles Dickens, and his description of Victorian London is second to none.

The book tells the story of Lady Dedlock who had a terrible secret of her own, and of a ruthless lawyer named Tulkinghorn, who tries to solve the mystery and seek for his own gain by threatening the Baron couple. Generous John Jarndyce is caught up in a struggle with his past and his two young wards, Richard Carstone and Ada Clare. Like Lady Dedlock, they were all involved in a case of Jarndyce and Jarndyce, in which every party intended to obtain a huge fortune provided that the verdict was final.

At the heart of Bleak House, the first law novel, was about the Old English "Chancery", a symbol of the haphazard, evil and incompetent justice system. Dickens had been a trainee in a law firm in his early years, and he had his own experience of the false injustice of the legal system and the blackmail and deception of lawyers in the name of justice.

Dickens begins his novel with a detailed description of London's fog, the symbol of justice. In the novel, "the justice of the court" in the UK to accept a lawsuit pile heritage, judges and lawyers around the case, use sophistry, delay, such as a variety of ways, to share the interests of the case. After decades it ended automatically after running out of heritage.

The novel is also full of humanitarian spirit. Characters like the illegitimate daughter Esther, John Jarndyce, the man owning Bleak House, and Ada Clare, another beautiful and kind-hearted ward are all of the pure, inorganic heart, who think kindly of relationships as an asset that can be exploited. This is the source of humanity's light, through the vast black fog, which has become the starting point of humanity redemption.

By using the technique of reasoning as the process of presenting the truth, Dickens greatly increased the flavor of suspense in his works. This kind of reasoning, which treats the world as a mysterious text and carefully reads it, also adds a lot of sadness and joy to the atmosphere of reading itself.

It has the minute description about the Victorian decadent declining aristocracy, people who depend on noble inquiline class, and the slums of London. Dickens has seen new rationality of capital industrial civilization as well as the innocence in the book, hence become the starting point of avoiding destruction.

Bleak House has all the best elements of the novel, the value of the vision, the plot of the novel, as well as the details of the literary talent, so that this more than 600, 000 words of the masterpiece without a heavy feeling.

4. The Comparative Analysis of Heroines in Jane Eyre and Bleak House

4.1. The Similarities Between Jane Eyre and Esther Summerson

They were alike in birth. Both of them are orphan girls. Jane Eyre's parents were both dead. Her aunt's disgust, her cousin's contempt, abuse and beatings, as well as snobbish servant... She was brought up in disgrace. And Esther Summerson was also an orphan until she was placed under the guardianship of Mr. John Jarndyce. What's more, they have one common identity—the governess.

Both of them has ordinary appearance. Jane Eyre doesn't have beautiful face or graceful figure. She is poor, obscure, short and unbeautiful. She is not confident about her appearance, believing that herself is not worthy of the handsome, rich and important protagonist Rochester. Esther thought beauty never belonged to her.

When it comes to their character, Jane and Esther are both warm-hearted and self-abased. Self-abasement has always been an important factor in Jane Eyre's search for love. Later, in front of St. John, Jane Eyre's self-abasement for her appearance was even more exposed: when St. John proposed to Jane Eyre, Jane Eyre's first reaction was to examine the appearance of St. John's beauty, she also bluntly told St. John's sister Diana that St. John was a beautiful man, but she believed that she was so plain and "We should never suit" (Tang, 2011, p. 581). This kind of inferiority mentality shows Jane Eyre's low self-esteem, which is inseparable from the social environment. In the British society in the 19th century, it was a common social phenomenon to judge people by their appearance. People used to regard the beauty and elegance of a woman as an important asset, especially the one that could be displayed in social occasions and attract others' attention. For her, living in the social environment, it is impossible not to be affected by this social trend. We can say that in Jane Eyre's character, self-esteem occupies an important position. But her self-esteem comes from inferiority. It is inferiority that prompts Jane Eyre to improve herself and challenge the unfair society (Qin, 2015).

4.2. The Different Feminist Consciousness Between Jane Eyre and Esther Summerson.

4.2.1. Their Views on the Status of Women and Men

Jane Eyre holds the remarkable status in the English literature as the one who dares to fight against the patriarchal society. Unlike her contemporaries, she believes that men and women are born to be equal and women should never be tamed by the male-centered world or feminist ego. It's her feminist consciousness that leads her to enjoy both the financial self-reliance and social equality.

She protects her own dignity and determines to achieve self-actualization instead of being an accessory of men. While fighting against the unfair society she tried to defend her dignity, not to be violated and trampled on. As a woman, it takes a lot of courage to go against the grain and challenge the unfair society. Her resistance was formed gradually, from her experience during her childhood, in Lowood School, in Thornfield Manor and at St. John's (Li, 2017). In a manner of speaking, it is her hard life that created her stubborn character and the courage to challenge the tremendous pressure and to pursue equality and happiness.

In contrast to Jane's view that men and women are equal, Esther seems to have weak feminist consciousness. Perhaps Esther gains the qualities of obedience and gratitude after her godmother's death. She continues to be grateful to John Jarndyce for his influence and help, even if Jarndyce doesn't know it. Jarndyce is old enough to be Esther's father, but when he asks her to marry him, Esther obeys him, and they both think Esther would make a good hostess (Yü, 2015). "I have no doubt of your being contented and happy with me, being so dutiful and so devoted; but I saw with whom you would be happier" (Dickens, 2011). When Mr. Jarndyce called off their engagement, Esther sobbed and wept afresh because of gratefulness.

4.2.2. Their Views on Love and Marriage

Jane Eyre pursues a genuine kind of love. On the one hand, she was not ashamed of herself due to her humble origin, meager salary and plain appearance. Instead, she courageously pursues Mr. Rochester, the owner of the Thornfield Hall, regardless of their great differences (Liu, 2018, p. 114). On the other hand, when her dignity was hurt, she chose to maintain her self-esteem and left Rochester (Xü, 2017, p. 39). Most importantly, when she became a rich lady while Mr. Rochester was blind and poor, she still chose him as her husband, instead of accepting St. John. In contrast to Jane Eyre, Esther Summerson lacks of courage to pursue the true love. She decides to return the favor and marry her caregiver. She accepted his proposal out of sheer gratitude rather than love. Her decision nearly led to an unhappy marriage and missed the one she loved.

4.3. The Reasons for their Different Feminist Consciousness

4.3.1. Social Environment

The industrial revolution and the rising of the new middle-class lead to their differences. In the Victorian era, the modernization process was at the peak stage. The development of economy influenced the social and family structure. As the rising of new middle-class, unlike the ladies of the past, half of the females do nothing in family. They take responsibility for society and family in their own special way, but unlike ordinary women working in the factories, they are at different division of labor.

First, urban life changed the large and stable family into the nuclear "small family" of parents and children. Second, with urbanization and industrialization, it came opportunities for trade and ways of life, both outside the home and away from the home. The separation of place of residence from place of work made the family more private and the division between the public and private spheres more obvious. It also provided a premise for the gender division advocated by the middle-class.

While the working women at the bottom of the society were forced out of their homes by life, the middle-class women in the early Victorian era completely retired to their homes. They were separated from the economic activities in the public sphere and their activities were limited to the family sphere. Economically successful middle-class men assigned to the maintenance of family harmony and happiness for women. They attached great importance to the female's "virtue" and "function" which is to be a good wife and good mother. A woman's job is to please her husband, to gracefully put up with his passion and irritability, and to understand and accept his taste (Yü, 2015).

4.3.2. Victorian Education of Women

Victorian morality valued female chastity above all else. They strongly urge women, especially young women, to keep their chastity and do everything they can to resist inner needs and external temptations. When a woman successfully resists all kinds of temptations, she will win others' respect. On the other hand, if she fails to maintain her virginity before marriage or during the renewal of her marriage, she will be doomed. When a woman loses her virginity, she loses everything respectably.

Victorian girls' schooling also pushed women into the role of "housekeepers". In the performance of ideal women, Dickens often boasted of their intelligence and ability, especially to assist men. Women, when men are confused or obsessed, are always there to comfort and guide them. He does not think that women's intelligence is inferior to men's. In his works, the ideal women and men are complementary in intelligence and career, and they have moved towards equality to a certain extent. According to the relationship between men and women can judge the degree of civilization, it can be said that this is the writer's reflection and thinking of the progress of The Times. On the other hand, Dickens satirizes those women who are not calm, lose their reasons and go to extremes because of being hurt. He admits that women are the representatives of emotion and lack of rationality, which is exactly the product of the author's combination of his own view of women and traditional literary stereotypes.

4.3.3. The Author's Experience and Ideological Cognition

Dickens dropped out of school at the age of twelve, and had a rich life, from child labor to stenographer, from copywriter to professional writer. Dickens is a writer who is sensitive to the reality. In life, Dickens himself, as a son, a brother, a lover, a husband and a father, influenced his emotional world and formed his attitude and belief towards women. His creative thoughts come from his insight into and thinking about the real life. The requirements on women in his historical period will also be consciously integrated into his views on women.

From the traditional consciousness, Dickens agreed with the idea that men focused on rationality and women focused on sensibility. The social background of free competition of capitalism also requires women to have a kind and gentle character, providing comfort and support when men suffer setbacks in career and relationship. Women are also necessary to maintain the harmony of every family. Dickens' women in traditional views should be the "angels" of the family, treating her husband and children gently and kindly. Throughout Dickens' novels, we can perceive that there is a hidden thread running through his family: both husband and wife strictly abide by monogamy: the male is generally in absolute dominance in the family: both husband and wife must be kind, or they will be severely punished. He advocates the concept of women as a kind of family women.

Therefore, ideal women should be modest and gentle rather than being arrogant and indifferent. They are not only able to keep their homes in order, but also able to support their husbands and children. They can dedicate their love wholeheartedly to their families and their loved ones. They use their love and actions to influence the world around them, and they are able to repay good for bad, rather than choose extreme means to revenge or self-pity.

Charlotte's father did not want to cultivate his children into so-called "ladies" to increase their competitiveness in the marriage market. He paid more attention to the cultivation of children's hard-working and thrifty qualities.

Charlotte not only inherited his father's intelligence, foresight and strong thirst for knowledge, but also inherited his father's firm will and great ambition. Charlotte was sent to the very cheap and poor conditions of the school, but instead of bowing to life, she struggled against the harsh environment, and thus obtained the diligence, learning and the precious treasure in spirit.

As to the narrative point of view, Jane Eyre is narrated in the first person for the reason that Charlotte intends to let women speak for women. Bleak House is narrated in dual narrative, the third person perspective and Esther's perspective.

5. Conclusion

In this paper, Jane Eyre and Esther Summerson are compared to analyze their similarities. On the one hand, they were alike in birth. Jane Eyre's parents were both dead and she was brought up by her aunt. Esther Summerson was also an orphan until she was placed under the

guardianship of Mr. John Jarndyce. On the other hand, both of them have ordinary appearance. They were both plain and obscure. When it comes to their characters, Jane Eyre and Esther Summerson are both warm-hearted. Whenever they meet people in need, they help them. What's more, they were both self-abased. This kind of inferiority mentality shows Jane Eyre's low self-esteem, which is inseparable from the social environment.

The different feminist consciousness between Jane Eyre and Esther Summerson is also analyzed. Jane Eyre believes that men and women are born to be equal and women should never be tamed by the male-centered world or feminist ego. Nevertheless, in contrast to Jane Eyre's strong sense of feminist consciousness, Esther Summerson's feminist consciousness seems to be quite weak. She accepted old Mr. Jarndyce's proposal, although she didn't love him. When Mr. Jarndyce called off their engagement, Esther sobbed and wept afresh because of gratefulness.

This paper also illustrates the reasons for their different feminist consciousness such as social environment, the education of the Victorian women and the author's ideological cognition. The industrial revolution and the rising of the middle-class lead to their differences. Victorian girls' schooling pushed women into the role of "housekeepers". As a man of this period, Charles Dickens believed that women should be the "angels" of the family, treating their husbands and children gently and kindly. However, as a woman writer, Charlotte Brontë advocated that women are as equal as men. Through the comparative analysis of the two heroines' female consciousness, this paper also helps readers to further understand these two works and their social significance. Self-respect, self-reliance and self-actualization contribute to Jane's feminist consciousness. It is instructive to women and is worthy of a further exploration.

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