

The Construction of Female Images in Charlotte Bronte's Novels

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Abstract: In the 19th century, British female writer Charlotte Bronte portrayed many female characters who were in adversity, unwilling to sink, struggling and tenacious in pursuit. This article takes "Jane Eyre" as an example to analyze the female images in "Jane Eyre". The female protagonists represented by Jane Eyre will always be remembered for their personality and spiritual charm, and exude permanent artistic charm, inspiring generations of women to pursue independence, self-esteem, and self-improvement. Charlotte's novels awakened the vast number of female compatriots in the Victorian era, causing them to begin to examine their own predicament. From the perspective of female images, it is not difficult to find that her work "Jane Eyre" infuses an ideal of "female beauty". By overlapping the ethical perspectives of justice and care, everyone is treated equally and fairly, and no one is harmed or neglected. Charlotte Bronte's feminist ethics not only criticize the neglect of female voices in traditional ethics, but also provide a new perspective for the construction of ethics itself.

Keywords: Charlotte Brontë; Female Image.

1. Introduction

Feminist ethics is the achievement of feminism in the field of ethics. "It is actually a feminist perspective to criticize and construct an ethical theory aimed at women's liberation. It criticizes the ethical theory and moral practice that belittles and discriminates against women, and it constructs an ethical theory of equality between men and women. Charlotte Brontë, an English woman writer in the 19th century, created many female images who were in adversity, unwilling to sink, struggling and doggedly pursuing [1]. Charlotte Brontë is the first female writer who writes female stories from a female perspective and regards women as independent individuals. Charlotte has been thinking about women all her life. In her works, Charlotte conveyed her advanced thoughts on the living conditions, social status and fate of women under the patriarchal system. The appearance of heroines in *Jane Eyre*, *Shelley*, *The Teacher* and *Villette* shook the British literary world at that time and won warm praise. Through the introduction of the concept of power, Jane absorbed herself into the field of moral thinking, expanded the scope of obligations and responsibilities, and eliminated the tension between self-development and caring for others, thus entering a stage of moderate care for herself and others based on the principle of no harm [2]. This paper takes *Jane Eyre* as an example to analyze the female images in *Jane Eyre*. *Jane Eyre* is one of the representative novels of George W. Charlotte Brontë. It focuses on eulogizing female consciousness, aiming at awakening female consciousness, and it is also a true portrayal of the author's poetic life. With its novel theme, sincere feelings and the unique artistic charm of the heroine, it has conquered many readers and become a work of far-reaching significance in the history of English literature and even world literature [3]. The self-consciousness that women germinate after learning the day after tomorrow is that women position themselves as a natural person with independent personality on the premise of their gender identity. From the perspective of female image, it is not difficult to find that an ideal of "female beauty" is injected into her work *Jane Eyre* [4]. Through the overlapping of the two ethical perspectives

of justice and care, everyone will be cared for when being treated equally and fairly, and no one will be hurt or ignored. Charlotte Brontë's feminist ethics not only criticizes the neglect of women's voices in traditional ethics, but also provides a new perspective for the construction of ethics itself.

2. Introduction to the Creative Background and Content of *Jane Eyre*



Figure 1. Portrait of Charlotte Brontë

In 19th century Britain, with the progress of the Industrial Revolution, the trends of democracy and science continued to influence all aspects of social development, and new ideas gradually impacted the ideological constraints of the old era, especially women's desire for equal and free status [5]. Charlotte Brontë was one of the most famous writers of the time. As shown in Figure 1, Charlotte Brontë, a British novelist, was born in a poor pastor's family and studied in a boarding school before becoming a teacher and in-home tutoring. In 1847, Charlotte Brontë published her famous novel "*Jane Eyre*", which caused a sensation in the literary world. As women, they have long been oppressed by male

hegemony in their lives and do not have actual discourse power. Therefore, their works are created from a female perspective, viewing and describing the world and desired life in their eyes with unique female thoughts [6].

Charlotte Brontë's work *Jane Eyre* has achieved great success, not only because of the "rebellion" of the writer and works, but also because his works break the shackles of the times on women's thoughts from the perspective of women, and at the same time show the literary characteristics in harmony with the background of the times [7]. The author uses rendering atmosphere, nightmares, hallucinations and premonitions to create an atmosphere of hell and build an allegorical environment. In Gateshead, *Jane Eyre* felt the "gloomy memorial atmosphere" from her life, and saw the "ghost" that appeared and disappeared from time to time, while the "red house" that suppressed terror and made people feel creepy almost became the embodiment of hell. In Lowood, "death has become a frequent visitor here", "gloom and terror are shrouded in the wall" and it exudes "the stench of death". For *Jane Eyre*, it is undoubtedly that she has just jumped out of the fire pit, but she has been thrown into a more terrible hell [8]. As shown in Figure 2, the work tells the story of an English woman who has become an orphan since childhood, constantly pursuing freedom and dignity in various hardships, persisting in herself, and finally achieving happiness. Expressed the desire to improve the status of women and dare to fight for freedom and equal status.



Figure 2. Meditation of Girl *Jane Eyre* Reading at the Window

A dignified and equal seeking *Jane Eyre*, this seemingly weak but incredibly resilient woman has also become a model in the hearts of countless women due to this work. The novel vividly portrays the ups and downs of the love experiences of the male and female protagonists, and praises the liberation from all old customs and prejudices [9]. Deep love rooted in mutual understanding and respect has a strong artistic power that shakes the soul. They fell in love with each other during the continuous relationship, but at the wedding, she learned that Rochester had married and their marriage was not allowed by law. Later, *Jane Eyre* left Rochester in pain and became a teacher again. During this time, she experienced the inheritance division and proposal with her cousin, the priest St. John. But when she learned that he did not propose out of love for her, but thought that she was suitable to be a preacher's wife, so she refused this proposal. Its most

successful aspect lies in shaping the image of a woman who dares to resist and strive for freedom and equal status.

Jane Eyre's pursuit of life in "*Jane Eyre*" has two basic melodies: full of passion, imagination, resistance, and a persistent spirit; The desire for freedom and happiness in the world and the pursuit of a higher spiritual realm. The theme of this novel is to successfully portray a female character who is uncomfortable with the status quo, unwilling to be humiliated, and willing to fight through the bumpy life experiences of an orphan girl. It reflects the call and condemnation of an ordinary soul to speak frankly, and the desire for a lowercase person to become a capital person. From the growth stage of *Jane Eyre*'s life, we can see that the strength that supports her to stand firm and unwavering in difficulties is her strong sense of femininity.

3. Analysis of Female Images in *Jane Eyre*

3.1. Physical Beauty

Charlotte Brontë boldly broke through traditional artistic models and opened up new forms of artistic expression. She gave more concise and simple descriptions of the female characters in her works, portraying the female protagonist who won the favor of readers solely through her spiritual and personal charm, without relying solely on physical beauty or physical beauty [10]. In shaping the image of women, Charlotte the Dagger has her unique and extraordinary qualities, and in some aspects, she even surpasses them. It should be said that Dickens' works are extremely successful in vividly portraying male images and children's personality traits, while the description of female images is relatively inferior. In her representative work "*Jane Eyre*", Charlotte Brontë describes the appearance of *Jane Eyre*'s cousin, Joanna, as follows: "Her beauty, her rosy face, and golden curls seem to make everyone who looks at her happy..." But beneath this beautiful appearance, she is a child who is both fierce and savage, spoiled by others.

3.2. Spiritual Beauty

Jane Eyre is a kind, helpful, responsible, just and compassionate person. In Lowood Orphanage, *Jane Eyre* and Helen are in the same boat, and often extend a hand of love and help to Helen to help this timid, abused and discriminated sister. When Helen got lung disease, *Jane Eyre* gave her meticulous care and care, and finally let her lie in her arms and die, and go to heaven to find a love that she didn't get in the world. The female images in Charlotte's works are not unlimited. They all seem to be following a path of personal struggle. They only consider how they can gain an equal position in society, but do not think about the whole cause of women's liberation [11]. Therefore, whether in the family or in society, men should occupy the dominant position, and women should obey men. Most Victorian women demanded themselves by the standard of "perfect women" and willingly played the role of "family angel". They were completely unaware of the humble social status and repressed situation of women in a patriarchal society hidden behind the reputation of "family angel". *Jane Eyre* showed her kindness by offering help without knowing that the man in front of her was her employer. In the manor, after learning about the poor life experience of little Adele, *Jane Eyre* sympathized with and pitied Adele very much, caring for her extremely, and giving her motherly love.

3.3. Personality Beauty

Jane Eyre left such a deep impression on readers due to her beautiful personality. Her beauty stems from her kind heart, sincere attitude, and elegant demeanor; She has rich knowledge and has her own profound and unique insights into problems; She has a strong will for independence, equality, and a strong personality, constantly striving for self-improvement, self-esteem, and self-love. Although she still carries the author's Christian ideology, the social significance objectively contained in this image has surpassed the various female images portrayed by Charlotte, and even women like Lucy have not reached her level. Charlotte, through the confrontation between "family angels" and new women, told her fellow women that in order to break free from their dependence on men, change their passive and oppressed fate, gain social recognition and respect, and achieve equal social status with men, women must rely on their own efforts and strive for economic independence. When Rochester planned to dress her up as a "beauty" in everyone's eyes, she would rather keep her true colors. Although she longs for beauty, she values the natural essence that women should possess more; Although she pursues beauty, she does not rely on luxurious heirloom treasures to dress up, but on her personal charm to make herself stand out and full of youthful vitality.

4. Conclusion

To sum up, we can feel that Charlotte Bronte, who is full of passion and imagination, gives her heroine a noble beauty of humanity and personality, and shows her unique aesthetic view of women. In this paper, the heroines represented by Jane Eyre will always be remembered by people for their personality charm and spiritual charm, and exude permanent artistic charm, inspiring generations of women to embark on the road of pursuing independence, self-esteem and self-improvement. Charlotte's novels awakened the vast number of female compatriots in the Victorian era and made them begin to examine their own predicament. For readers living in the new era, Charlotte's advanced female consciousness is still worth learning. Charlotte devoted all her heart and soul to shaping her beloved female image. She often described their ideals, friendship and love in a kind and touching style and in a direct conversation between the protagonist and the reader. Especially at the critical moment of plot development,

let the protagonists dissect their inner world and show their living souls to readers, thus arousing readers' real feelings for them. He expressed his desire to liberate women, save nature, pursue and realize the real equality between men and women, advocated human beings to pay attention to environmental issues, and explored ways for people to live in harmony with nature, which reflected the further development of his ecological feminism.

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