

The Influence of Environment on Women's Growth in Jane Eyre and Little Women

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Keywords: *Jane Eyre*; *Little Women*; Growth Environment; Female

Abstract: From the perspective of the influence of the growth environment on women's development, this thesis makes a comparative study of two internationally famous outstanding works in the 19th century - *Jane Eyre* by British female writer Charlotte Bronte and *Little Women* by American female writer Louisa May Alcott. By analyzing the different family and social environment in the two works, this thesis points out that the different growth environment has a positive or negative impact on the growth and development of the two heroines, Jo and Jane, such as character shaping, career and marriage choice. At the same time, it summarizes the western women's outlook on love and career in the 19th century with these two highly representative works, so as to further draw the enlightenment of the excellent character of the two women to contemporary women.

1. Introduction

Jane Eyre and *Little Women* are both novels about a character's growth process with women as the protagonists. *Jane Eyre* is the representative work of Charlotte Bronte, an English female writer in the 19th century. The protagonist Jane Eyre has attracted many readers because of her unique dual character. Similarly, *Little Women* by Louisa May Alcott, an American writer in the 19th century, seems to have an eternal charm through time and space. This work tells the story of the growth of the four sisters of March's family under the background of the American Civil War, and shapes a group of women with both traditional virtues and new era ideas.

Throughout the research history of these two works at home and abroad, people's comments on these two works are surging. Foreign writers mainly reflect the light of these two works from multiple perspectives such as history and politics, while domestic writers mostly evaluate this work from the perspective of literature. Therefore, the domestic literary circles still need to further explore the theme of the novel from multiple aspects and angles. Besides, most of the theses on the impact of the growth environment on women's development in these two works focus on the family or social environment, but do not connect them. For example, Huang Yan (2011) published "The model of family education -an analysis of Mrs^[4]. March's educational methods in *Little Women*", so the starting point of this thesis is relatively novel. This thesis also combines the social hot spot of the family education promotion law of the People's Republic of China, which fits the focus of public attention and has certain effectiveness. This thesis will systematically analyze the influence of the heroine's career and marriage choice in the two novels from the two aspects of family education and social situation. This can provide readers with a new perspective to read and analyze

these two works, so that they can get a new understanding of the books and the female images in the books.

2. Literature Review

Jane Eyre and *Little Women* are both works that caused great sensation in the British and American literary world in the 19th century. This chapter will analyze the two works from three aspects: content introduction, research status at home and abroad and theoretical introduction.

2.1 Introduction to *Jane Eyre* and *Little Women*

Jane Eyre is a well-known work with autobiographical color. For more than 100 years, the image of Jane Eyre has been immortal, and this novel has been welcomed by people all over the world. It tells the story of an English woman who became an orphan from childhood. She constantly pursued freedom and dignity in various hardships, adhered to herself, and finally achieved happiness. The novel vividly shows the hero and heroine's tortuous love experience, praises getting rid of all old customs and prejudices, and successfully creates an image of a woman who dares to resist and strive for freedom and equal status.

Little Women mainly tells the story of the growth of the four sisters of the March family. The archetype of Jo is Alcott herself, and the archetypes of Meg, Beth and Amy are Alcott's three sisters. The story takes place in a New England town during the American Civil War in the mid-19th century. Mr. March, the male host, took part in the war as a military priest and went to the front. Mrs. March and her four daughters lived a poor but fun life at home. Meg, the eldest daughter, who is good at performing and cleaning up the housework. She is gentle but somewhat vain; Jo is a tomboy. She is irritable but creative and she loves writing. Her third daughter, Beth, is a quiet and shy girl who loves music, has a kind heart and is willing to help others. Her youngest daughter Amy is the pet of the family. She is elegant and beautiful, but a little selfish. She is fond of art and has talent in art. Under the guidance of her mother, the four sisters take the Christians in *The Pilgrim's Progress*, strive to overcome their shortcomings, complete the growth from children to mature women, and find their own destination. The characters in *Little Women* only include parents and four daughters in a family, neighbors, and their relatives or friends. It describes the lives of the four girls and the trivial things around them. No matter from the perspective of material selection, plot or characters, it is a "small book", but it has become an unforgettable novel, which has been translated into many languages and spread widely. It has been made into films, TV dramas and cartoons many times, and has become a classic in the United States.

The two works focus on the value pursuit and the constraints of social and moral norms of British and American women in the 19th century, and break the labeling setting of women in previous literary works. Finally they present different female groups.

2.2 Introduction to Environment

Lots of good educators pointed out that the environment plays a very important role in a person's growth. A good environment is the basis for children to form correct ideas and an excellent personality.

Environmental education includes three aspects: family environment, school environment and social environment. The author doesn't mention Jo's school environment too much in *Little Women*, so this thesis will focus on the analysis of family environment and social environment.

2.2.1 Family Environment

The family environment has the most profound impact on people. The brand of family life on people's physical and mental development is hard to erase all his or her life, and plays an important role in the process of people's growth and development.

If we want to make the family environment have a positive effect on children, Ma Zaiguang (2017) believes that parents should do:

(1) Parents should love, respect and trust their children, and try not to be rigid, scold or beat at will. They ought to get along with their children with an equal, democratic and friendly attitude, conversely less "autocratic" practices, and establish a new type of democratic family relationship.

(2) Parents should consciously cultivate civilized and healthy life interests in the family, such as loving science, music and literature, paying attention to cultural cultivation, etc. Parents should help children to improve their ability to distinguish right from wrong. In these aspects, parents should set an example everywhere and set an example for their children^[5].

2.2.2 Social Environment

The social environment is the external condition that individual psychological development must rely on. In addition to family, the development of individual psychological behavior is also closely related to the social environment.

Firstly, the influence of social environment on personal ideology and morality. The formation and development of personal ideology and morality must be affected by the social living environment. This influence will become more and more obvious with the growth of people's age and the expansion of the scope of interpersonal communication.

Secondly, characteristics of the impact of social environment on individuals. This is mainly reflected in the following two aspects:

(1) In the social environment, the educational objects affected by individuals are extensive. From individuals to groups, from children to the elderly, people from all walks of life will have a moral impact on students. At the same time, individuals are also affected by a wide range of channels, including various media, interpersonal relationships, role models, fashion and atmosphere. It surrounds people with colorful forms and ways in all directions, so that they can be educated and influenced;

(2) Complexity and variability. The social environment is rich in content and diverse in forms, which will inevitably bring the complexity of the role of education. At the same time, society is in the process of change and development, and people's thoughts are bound to change with the changes of the times, especially when the social situation has undergone complex and profound changes, which will affect individual value orientation; When the contradictions and struggles in the field of international and domestic consciousness become more complex, especially the intensification of international hostile forces, it will bring ideological and cultural infiltration to the next generation; Individualism, money worship, hedonism and other negative and decadent ideas will also have a negative impact on the next generation.

2.3 Research at Home and Abroad

Charlotte Bronte's autobiographical novel *Jane Eyre* is one of the most popular and important novels in the Victorian period. It has been warmly evaluated by foreign literary critics and has become a hot spot in western literary criticism. Many critics have interpreted the works from different angles.

For example, in terms of feminism and psychoanalysis, Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, the

famous American feminist critics, in *The Mad Woman in the Attic*, explained the mutual reflection relationship between Bertha and Jane Eyre from the perspective of feminism and psychology, and believed that Bertha's irrational behavior was the vent of Jane Eyre's repressed psychology in the male-centered society^[3].

Looking at the research history of *Jane Eyre* and *Little Women* at home and abroad, the trend of comment on these two works is surging. Many critics in various countries have commented on this work from the main aspects of feminism, colonialism, Marxism and narrative mode. However, in comparison, foreign writers mainly reflect the light of this work from the perspectives of literature, politics and history.

In China, Charlotte Bronte's unique female narrative style has attracted the attention of some critics. In "*Jane Eyre's* interpretation of structural art", Zhang Mingfang (1998) believes that the refinement of novel structure, rich imagination and novel style have become important factors to attract readers^[7]. Similarly, domestic critics have also discussed the work *Little Women*. For example, Wu Bing (2013) analyzes the female theme consciousness and narrative style of the two classics *Gone with the Wind* and *Little Women*^[6].

In contrast, domestic writers comment on these two works more from the perspective of literature, and the research perspective is not as rich as that of foreign writers. Therefore, the domestic literary circle still needs to further explore the theme of the novel from multiple aspects and angles and deeply analyze the characters.

3. The Influence of Family Environment on Jane and Jo

Jane and Jo grew up in very different environments. Jane was often abused and scolded at her aunt's house and never felt the slightest love. This has a fundamental impact on Jane's contradictory character of self-esteem and inferiority, resistance and compromise. However, Jo's mother taught her daughters to be kind to others with her love and practical actions in front of her daughter. Compared with Jane's contradictory character, Jo has a more firm, independent and sober attitude. Especially in the view of love, the two girls have the same thing: independence and decisiveness; The difference is that Jane is more eager for a feeling of spiritual equality because of her humble birth; Jo has a harmonious family and looks forward to her career progress. The status of love is not so important.

3.1 Absence of Fatherly Love

Jane Eyre's biological father and her uncle who adopted her died when she was very young. Poor Jane Eyre hardly felt much father's love. Not only Jane Eyre, but also her brothers and sisters had no father's care because her father died early. But in this case, as a qualified mother, she can't keep silent about the role of father, because the mother should let the children know that even if the father leaves them, they should grow strong and live with the eternal love of their father. But Mrs. Reed didn't do so. In the whole book, she never talked about her husband to the children, which led to John being spoiled by his mother and causing trouble again and again, and Jane Eyre's lack of correct judgment of chauvinism. Although Jane pursues gender equality, her significant change at the end of the story shows that she conforms to women's family constraints under the influence of patriarchal culture.

In *Little Women*, Mr. March's participation in the civil war led to the long-term "loss" of his father's identity. But different from Mrs. Reed, Mrs. March always makes the children feel the love from him, and makes the children feel that even if their father is not with them, he is always with them in his heart, and he always loves this family.

3.2 Guidance of Motherly Love

In *Little Women*, although Mr. March was absent for a long time because of his participation in the civil war, he always taught his daughters to take the right path in life through letters. However, only correspondence plays a very small role in the growth of children. At this time, the guiding role of the mother is very important. Similarly, because Jane Eyre's uncle died early, Mrs. Reed's guidance to the children will play a key role in their growth.

3.2.1 Mrs. Reed's Way of Education

The Reed family members include Mr. Reed, Mrs. Reed, two daughters and a son. Poor Jane Eyre was adopted at Uncle Reed's house since her parents died prematurely. Since her uncle Reed died early, Mrs. Reed was the head of the family and shouldered the important task of educating children. From the beginning, Mrs. Reed's way of educating Jane Eyre was different from that of her own children. She treated Jane Eyre as a servant and implemented a "punitive" way of education for her: when Jane Eyre had a conflict with her children, Mrs. Reed granted Jane that Jane didn't have to sit with them, and said that she was sorry to have to let Jane stay alone. Another time John hit Jane Eyre with a book. Then she fell down. Jane Eyre said, "You are like a murderer -you are like a slave -driver -you are like the Roman emperors!" ^[2] (Bronte, 2003, p. 5) Hearing this, he "grasped my hair and my shoulder" (Bronte, 2003, p. 5) ^[2]. He beat Jane Eyre to "felt a drop or two of blood from my head trickle down my neck." ^[2] (Bronte, 2003, p. 5) At this time, Jane Eyre was no longer afraid, but fought with him like crazy. When Mrs. Reed learned about the situation, she said, "take her away to the red-room, and lock her in there." ^[2] (Bronte, 2003, p. 5) No one else dared to enter the room at night because she was afraid of Mr. Reed's ghost, and Mrs. Reed locked her in the red room alone without even lighting a candle. From here, we can see Jane Eyre's tragic situation, loneliness and neglect, which also created her later rebellious spirit. When her aunt denounced her as a lying and annoying girl in front of Mr. Brocklehurst, Jane Eyre felt that her personality was being ruthlessly trampled, and her humiliation and anger turned into a sonorous and powerful resistance: "you are bad, hardhearted. you are deceitful!"^[2] (Bronte, 2003, p. 29)

At Lowood school, Jane Eyre was punished. She said: "If people were always kind and obedient to those who are cruel and unjust, the wicked people would have it all their own way: they would never feel afraid, and so they would never alter, but would grow worse and worse. When we are struck at without a reason, we should strike back again very hard; I am sure we should so hard as to teach the person who struck us never to do it again." ^[2] (Bronte, 2003, p. 50) These words are the further deepening of Jane Eyre's rebellious character. When Jane Eyre came to Mr. Rochester's Thorn Field Manor as a tutor, she won Rochester's love with her charm, and they fell in love. This is obviously a challenge to the hierarchical bourgeois family concept, and Jane Eyre's resistance character is becoming more and more mature.

3.2.2 Mrs. March's Way of Education

Although the four sisters have different personalities, they are all self-reliance under the guidance of their mother: Meg despises the affectation of upper-class society and is willing to be poor in order to pursue true love; Jo becomes a writer and runs a school through her own struggle; Beth calmly faces death without dragging her family down and leaves a smile to the world; Amy sympathizes with the poor people and finally takes charity as her own responsibility. Although they were born into poverty, they were never disappointed with the reality of suffering. Instead, they became braver and braver, and pursued their life ideals persistently and firmly. It can be said that Mrs. March is a very successful mother and female image in the author's works. She not only dares

to bear the burden of life, but also gives consistent love and teaching to her children, so that her four daughters can make continuous progress and mature in the experience of life. She guides her daughters to understand the reality, experience the hardships of life in practice, and try not to hurt them in reality. She always infects them with the warmth of her family, making them believe that no matter what difficulties and twists they suffer in the outside world, they can dispel all misfortunes and regain the happiness of life when they return home! Mrs. March is well versed in education. Her daughter's education is measured and artistic. Mrs. March's family education can be discussed and analyzed from the following three aspects:

Firstly, a good family atmosphere is important. March's family was in decline and became materially poor. Mr. March was away from his children and loyal to his country. In such a difficult environment, Mrs. March shouldered the burden of the family alone, organized her family life in order, created a good family environment and formed a united and family atmosphere. Mrs. March, who had been busy all day, came home one day (the children were performing) "Glad to find you so merry, my girls" Well, dearies, how have you got on today? There was so much to do, getting the boxes ready to go tomorrow, that I didn't come to dinner. Has anyone called, Beth? How is your cold, Meg? Jo, you look tired to death. Come and kiss me, baby." ^[1] (Alcott, 2012, p. 8) The friendly inquiry immediately filled the family with deep warmth and infected everyone, so the daughters quickly and happily set up tables, chairs, cups and plates and enjoyed a happy dinner with their mother. After dinner, Mrs March read a letter from Mr. March to her daughter. Seeing that her daughters were worried about their father, Mrs. March broke the silence with a happy voice: "Do you remember how you used to play Pilgrim's Progress when you were little things? ... Now, my little pilgrims, suppose you begin again, not in play, but in earnest, and see how far you can get before Father comes home," ^[1] (Alcott, 2012, p. 11) It is certain that Mrs. March also strongly misses her husband in her heart and is sad for her husband's hard military life. But she did not reveal it at all. Instead, she skillfully guided her daughters to turn their feelings for their father into courage to overcome difficulties and face life with the stories in the journey of heaven.

Under the mother's infection and influence, the four daughters can do their best to share the burden of the family and organize rich and colorful family activities. Meg is a tutor to support the family; Jo is patient to accompany her eccentric aunt; Beth takes care of the housework; Amy goes to school. In her spare time, Meg does needlework; Jo writes; Beth plays the piano and Amy draws pictures. They also study together, write and play plays by themselves.

Secondly, children always need a bosom friend. In March's family, Mrs. March is not only the loving and respectable mother of her daughters, but also the "confidant" of her children She said to her children, "My dear, don't let the sun go down upon your anger. Forgive each other, help each other, help each other, and begin again tomorrow." ^[1] (Alcott, 2012, p. 69) When Meg, who was about to become an adult, was annoyed by the rumors she heard at the ball, Mrs. March said, "I am more sorry than I can express for the mischief this visit may have done you, Meg...Mother is always ready to be your confidant, father to be your friend, and both of us hope and trust that our daughters, whether married or single, will be the pride and comfort of our lives" (Alcott, 2012, p. 86-89) Mrs. March's role as the confidant of children has never stopped ^[1]. Even when all four daughters have married and settled down, she is still their loyal listener and solves their problems anytime and anywhere.

Thirdly, a good role model in a family will help children actively receive education in practice. Mrs. March can be said to be a model for parents to learn. Once, when Mrs. March learned that her four daughters wanted free time without any work and complete freedom and relaxation, Mrs. March did not criticize them, but let them try for a week. When they began to get tired of doing nothing and secretly rejoiced that the experiment was coming to an end, Mrs. March, with a sense of humor, decided to end the experiment in an appropriate way in order to deepen the impression of

the lesson. She gave her servants and herself a holiday. It can be imagined how embarrassed the four children are in a home where no one works and no one cooks. They have to do it by themselves. They always make things worse in families that lose normal life order. They are very depressed! At this time, the mother appeared in front of them, and they talked about their life this week. Finally, they realized that only if everyone did their duty could we live a comfortable life; only by helping each other and undertaking daily work, life will be more pleasant, leisure will be interesting, tolerance and patience will make the family comfortable and happy.

The above three aspects only reflect a part of Mrs. March's educational art. From Mrs. March, there are many family education methods that we can learn from and learn from, such as teaching by example. Mrs. March is not an expert in education, but a real practitioner of the art of education. Although we have been more than 100 years away from the era background in the novel, Mrs. March's educational art in the novel can span time and space, which is worth studying by educators and parents.

4. The Influence of Social Environment on Jane and Jo

Social environment is the external condition that individual psychological development must rely on. In addition to family, the development of individual psychological behavior is also closely related to the social environment. This chapter will explore the impact of social environment on Jane and Jo from two aspects: school environment and work environment.

4.1 School Environment

As a freelance writer, Jo lives mainly in the family. Because of Mrs. March's reasonable way of education, Jo's life is still moving in the right direction. Since Jane was sent to school by Mrs. Reed, her living environment has changed and she has to adapt to the new life again. When Jane Eyre went to Lowood charity school, she dared not expect good results. She knew that people like her would not be welcome anywhere. Sure enough, before Jane Eyre was sent to Lowood charity school, Mr. Brocklehurst, the principal of Lowood charity school, had a short conversation with Jane Eyre's aunt. During the conversation, my aunt told Mr. Brocklehurst that she was a bad child, dishonest and needed strict management. Mr. Brocklehurst seized her opportunity to break the slate, asked her to stand in the middle of the classroom in public, and told other children to be careful of Jane Eyre, a bad liar. Obviously, this punishment for Jane Eyre was not only physical but also spiritual. Her body and mind were greatly hurt. Just when she was suffering both physically and mentally, Helen passed by her. She felt Helen like a hero passing by a slave, which made Jane Eyre with a strong self-esteem unbearable and deepened her inferiority.

4.2 Work Environment

Different social expectations shape different gender norms, resulting in different gender division of labor. Generally speaking, in the 1890s, the society was still a gender division model in which men dominated the outside and women dominated the inside. There are few career paths for women. They either become tutors like Jane, engaging in low-level occupations, or completely depending on their husbands to become a housewife. Jo chose to become a freelance writer, which was very challenging for women in the patriarchal society at that time.

4.2.1 Jane's Work as a Tutor

In Thornfield, Jane Eyre was humbled by the low position of a tutor, who was almost like a Victorian servant. When she met Rochester, the owner of the manor, her heart beat faster and felt

that she liked him. When Jane Eyre knew that Rochester liked Miss Ingram and planned to marry her, she felt that she didn't deserve Mr. Rochester at all. Miss Ingram was better than her in appearance, social status and wealth. All this made her feel painfully inferior. More importantly, she was dressed as a joke by her guests at the party. The sense of inferiority brought by poverty and ugliness made her more desperate. Therefore, she always chooses to stay in a humble corner. This habit is a typical manifestation of her inferiority complex. It was inferiority that made her refuse Rochester's gift again and again, and it was inferiority that made her doubt Rochester's love. She thought the most chilling thing is that she inevitably fell in love, but she was separated by a bigger gap-wealth, status and customs. Secondly, the title of "Sir" lasted from Jane as the tutor of the Rochester family until Rochester lost everything due to the fire. From the coincidence degree of time period, this title still exists after Jane is not a tutor, which shows that the meaning of this title is not only a simple employment relationship, but also a dependency relationship between women and men. Thirdly, from the perspective of the emotional entanglement between Jane and Rochester, Jane has always been a passive marriage recipient. Even when Jane knew Rochester had a wife, her reaction was he won't want her anymore; He will hate her. Indeed, Jane was voluntarily and consciously involved in this vortex. Jane finally returned to Rochester because she heard Rochester's cry in the dark, rather than calling Rochester herself.

4.2.2 Jo's Freelance Work

Jo has a strong temperament and a strong sense of independence. She believes that work is an important factor in realizing women's independence. Jo shows the rebelliousness that traditional women don't have: she want to be completely independent. She was dissatisfied with the requirements of traditional society for women and longed to have the same rights as men. Therefore, she boldly challenges the authority of men in the writing industry in the patriarchal society and believes that women can also create excellent works no less than men. Finally, through her unrelenting efforts, she realized her ambition and became a well-known writer. The job also brought her love. Jo met her future husband, a German university professor, Bhaer. They all love literature and yearn for purity, which means that from the day they first met, they will be in an equal position to appreciate each other. Jo admires Bhaer's knowledge and quality. Bhaer appreciates Jo's talent and courage. Their souls fit together and finally come together to support each other and become better themselves.

5. Enlightenment of Jane Eyre and Little Women

This thesis focuses on revealing the influence of family and social environment on personal character shaping, marriage and love in the growth environment. At all times and in all over the world, especially family education, has occupied the social hot spot, and the heat has not subsided. In these two works, the educational methods of the two families are very different. This thesis intends to analyze the causes of Jane and Jo's personality, career choice and the differences of marriage view in a male dominated society, explain the importance of family education and social environment to women's growth and development, and further draw the Enlightenment of the excellent character of these two women to contemporary women, that is, whether career choice should meet the needs of society or follow their hearts; In the face of marriage, we should give priority to equality and retain dignity, or wait patiently and pursue romance and purity. Jane and Jo gave different answers. In contemporary China, for Chinese families, since the introduction of the "double reduction" policy, how to educate their children and how to make their words and deeds have a positive impact on their children's growth and development is undoubtedly of great importance. This thesis emphasizes the importance of family environment from two literary works,

that is, parents should teach their children to be hardworking, frugal, willing to contribute, and establish a good communication mode with their children.

5.1 Western Women in the 19th Century

As two important works describing the growth of women in British and American literary circles in the 19th century, *Jane Eyre* and *Little Women* can reflect the main female characteristics of that era to a certain extent.

5.1.1 Viewpoint on Career

Whether it is *Jane Eyre* or *Little Women*, the outlet and career choice of women in the author's works are very limited. Tutor is one of the few occupations that British beauties could engage in the 19th century, with low income and low status. In contrast, Jo's freelance career was very challenging in the patriarchal society at that time. Even Bronte, the author of *Jane Eyre*, used a masculine pseudonym when publishing the work, which seemed to be deliberately concealing the identity of women.

5.1.2 Viewpoint of Love

On the issue of marriage, the two authors affirmed the important role of money in concluding marriage, and expressed support for marriage based on love. However, the 19th century was still a patriarchal society. Many women depended on their husbands and became housewives. Although at the beginning, Jane Eyre climbed the top terrace of the manor, overlooking the fields and mountains, hoping to live a free life, unwilling to weave cloth, weave socks, play the piano and embroider bags. This sincere remark seems to let readers see Jane Eyre who is unwilling to be a "angel in the family", but at the last moment, Jane Eyre is very happy to be an angel at home, and her husband and family have become everything to her. The Victorian patriarchal society required women to become "angels in the family". However, there is another kind of women represented by Jo, who are unwilling to live on their husbands all their life. They work hard in their career, strive to win their place in the society, and put their career first. Love is not so important in comparison.

5.2 Significance to Contemporary Women

For contemporary women, Jo's excellent quality is worth learning. Jo is a cheerful and optimistic girl. She can face the setbacks and hardships of life in time, and can always carry enthusiasm and hope without stagnating the pace of moving forward. Jo has always maintained a firm and persistent attitude towards love and dreams. In terms of marriage, Jo did not take marriage as her final ownership. She abandoned this deep-rooted thought in traditional female thinking, in her subconscious mind, becoming a real wife would make her lose independence and freedom. After reading this book, many readers will feel very regret that Jo didn't marry Laurie in the end. However, the relationship established between Jo and Laurie in their youth is very beautiful while Laurie is not suitable to spend life with her. Laurie is in the patriarchal class. The ideological difference and personality conflict is bound to become a major obstacle to their future marriage life. The cheerful and optimistic Jo can find many other meanings and values in life. Under the influence of her father and the support of her like-minded husband, Jo realized her dream of pursuing freedom and personality liberation. Jo loves writing very much. Although she understands that this is a very challenging road, she still has no hesitation and finally achieved good achievements. Her spirit of pursuing independent self and freedom leads women to speak in a patriarchal society, which has a far-reaching impact.

6. Conclusion

The influence of family and social environment on women's development is fully reflected in *Jane Eyre* and *Little Women*. The different career and marriage choices of the heroines in the two novels are not only related to family education, but also inseparable from the social and cultural reality faced at that time. Although these two works focus on women's growth, marriage and love, and explore the impact of family education, ethics and social environment on characters' career and marriage choice, the former is generally defined as a love novel, while the latter is more defined as a family novel. From this point of view, although the focus of the two works is different, there are some commonalities. *Jane Eyre* and *Little Women* focus on the career and marriage choices of British and American women in the 19th century, and express the author's exploration of women's own value and situation through the window of family and society. Through analysis, we further realize that whether it is the 19th century or the 21st century, family and society will have an indelible impact on everyone's life. From this perspective, we can better feel the charm of these two classics. It is worth mentioning that through the characters' career and marriage choices, the authors aim to make a balance between ideal expectations and ethics, gender identity and reading market, and negotiate in women's self-worth and traditional pressure. Therefore, the marriage choice of the characters in the novel is not only idealistic, but also the compromise of the authors.

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