
RESEARCH ARTICLE

Blaze and Breeze: Towards a Better Vision of Feminism Together

Yang Bai

Tibet University, Tibet, China

Corresponding Author: Yang Bai, **E-mail:** baiyangresearch@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

What conclusions can we draw by comparing women's literature produced in two different cultural and social contexts? This paper compares the development of feminine consciousness in the heroines of *Jane Eyre* and *A God without Gender*, two pioneering women's literature from the East and West, and applies various theories of feminism to analyze them in an attempt to find the common feminine problems and their causes faced by women in different cultural contexts around the world, and ultimately draw conclusions to better solve these feminine problems. In particular, I argue that the two heroines face similar female problems caused by the patriarchal chain of social institutions, laws, and ideologies. The two heroines never give in and fight bravely. The fundamental reason for their different endings is the need to break the barriers of the patriarchal chain. Therefore a society that guarantees equal rights for women at all levels is the foundation for women's real growth.

KEYWORDS

Feminism, Female literature, Minority literature, World literature.

ARTICLE INFORMATION

ACCEPTED: 23 August 2022

PUBLISHED: 25 August 2022

DOI: 10.32996/jhsss.2022.4.3.18

1. Introduction

The two novels, *Jane Eyre* and *God Without Gender*, are both feudal, patriarchal societies, although they are in two different cultural and social settings. In this work, I selected a pioneering female literature work of the Tibetan minority in China, *A God Without Gender*, and compared it with the famous western female literature work *Jane Eyre* for a comparative study, trying to fill the gap between Chinese minority works and world literature from a feminist perspective of female works. From the perspective of comparative literature, most studies are comparative studies between literary works of the dominant culture, but comparative studies between minority literature and other literature are less frequent. In particular, comparative studies between contemporary Tibetan literature and other literature are very scarce, and the exchange between national literature and world literature from a feminist perspective is even more scarce. However, minority literature is a part of world literature, and minority women's literature is also a part of world women's literature, so the exchange between the literature of various ethnic groups is very important.

2. Literature review

While there are some studies comparing Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre* with other works from a feminist perspective, most of the comparisons are with foreign literary works, such as *Wide Sargasso Sea* (Hope 51-73), *The Mill on The Floss* (Belle 53-56), *Cinderella* (Clarke 695-710), and only a very few are done with Chinese literary works such as *Dream of the Red Chamber* (Lijuan 85-86) and *A Man's War* (Zhenmei & Xiaoling 108-111), with fewer done with Chinese ethnic minority works. Specifically, there is a lack of studies comparing *Jane Eyre* with Chinese minority female literature. Therefore, the purpose of this paper is to compare *Jane Eyre* and *A God Without Gender*, one of the few famous Chinese Tibetan female literary works. Both *A God Without Gender* and *Jane Eyre* are the growth histories of female protagonists written by female writers. This paper will compare these two works from a feminist perspective and try to discover the development and limitations of the female consciousness of the two heroines in different historical and cultural environments and their causes. Previous critics have studied each of these two works from a feminist perspective. *Jane Eyre* some critics have fully affirmed Jane Eyre's feminine consciousness, such as Gilbert and Guitar, in *The Mad*

Woman in the Attic, who argue that Jane Eyre's anger against patriarchal society is represented by the character Bertha and that eventually, Rochester is attacked by Bertha (Jane Eyre's anger) and finally "sheds his mask" (patriarchy) and becomes a true equal to Jane Eyre. This is a classic feminist analysis of Jane Eyre (336-371). In *The Sultan and The Slave*, Joyce also affirms Jane Eyre's feminine consciousness and its positive role, treating Bertha and Jane Eyre as two separate individuals. Specifically, Joyce considers Rochester and her cousin, who represent the patriarchy, as the Sultans, and Jane Eyre and Bertha as the Slaves. At the same time, Jane Eyre's rebellion against her cousin and her unwillingness to become his slave, in turn, makes her cousin a true Christian rather than a patriarchal slave owner (592-617).

In addition, there are also some critics who believe that the feminine consciousness in Jane Eyre has limitations. For example, in *From Governess to Girl Bride*, Esther argues that Jane Eyre, as an "androgynous" working-class woman, achieves a power reversal with the older man, Rochester. However, in the finale, Jane Eyre joins the middle class with its stable gender division and submits to the domestic sphere, while Rochester regains his sight and power, restoring patriarchal authority (853+). In general, the study of Jane Eyre shows that Jane Eyre has a feminist spirit but also has its limitations. However, the analysis of the causes of the limitations is less frequent and not deep enough. Regarding the *A God Without Gender*, some critics have studied the dilemmas faced by the women in work and their development of feminine consciousness, such as Wang Lin, who studied the existential dilemmas of the women in the text and analyzed the self-marginalization during the struggle in that dark environment and the flourishing of feminine consciousness after the women's living space was improved (76-78). Zhanfang studied the heroine's existential dilemma and the three vulnerable identities of the heroine an unpopular person, a woman, and a child. She then analyzed the emergence and manifestation of feminine consciousness in her upbringing (131-135). Others have further studied the causes of the heroine's existential dilemma, such as Qionгда, who analyzed the causes of the female existential dilemma with the limitations of the serf women and noble women's own feminine consciousness and its causes, arguing that the female existential dilemma comes not only from the oppression of the patriarchal or patriarchal system but also from the deficiencies of women's perception of their own gender orientation (collective female unconscious) (112-113). In addition, some authors point out the shortcomings of the heroine's feminine consciousness development, such as Wang Quan, who believes that the position of women's consciousness awakening and socialization are under the influence of the "other" and are relatively passive. She also believes that the reason for this is the author's historical awareness so that she understands that the liberation of Tibetan women is a gradual process and does not deliberately exalt the heroine. She believes that the author must face up to history (96-101). The above critics have studied *Jane Eyre* and *A God Without Gender* separately from the feminist perspective. While *Jane Eyre* is a very famous feminist literary work, *A God Without Gender* has been little studied internationally. This paper will analyze in depth the feminine consciousness of the heroines of the two works, explore their limitations and causes and compare them based on feminism theories. Until now, Feminist theories have been developed in a variety of ways, but the common denominator is the overthrow of the dichotomy and the pursuit of fairness and justice, and the object of their research has changed from the gender level to the ecological level. Besides, they pay more attention to the differences among women, including the different situations faced by women of different nationalities and classes. Each feminist theory criticizes patriarchy from different perspectives, overturns the unfair gender system, and analyzes the causes of gender inequity. For example, Millett Kate, a representative of the liberal wing of radical feminism, analyzes the oppression of women by patriarchy and its gender system in her masterpiece, *Sexual Politics*. Similarly, Mary Daly of the radical feminist cultural school analyzes the role of the other for women in the patriarchal gender system in her masterpiece, *Pure Lust: Elemental Feminist Philosophy*, and suggests that in order to reject the role of the other, it is necessary to distinguish the so-called positive nature of femininity from the pathological excesses and to be the self with its own needs, desires and interests, eventually putting an end to the game of men as masters and women as slaves. Simone De Beauvoir, the representative of existential feminism, adopts the ontological and ethical language of existentialism to make a theoretical account of the various features of women's oppression in her masterpiece, *the Second Sex*. Psychoanalytic feminist representatives such as Adler Alfred, Karen Horney, and Clara Thompson also criticized the Oedipus complex proposed by traditional psychoanalysis and proposed socially acquired determinism and cultural determinism of gender. Whereas Marxist feminism analyzed women's domestic and social labor, socialist feminism combined criticism of capitalism and patriarchy on its basis. This paper will apply the above feminist theories to analyze the situations of the heroines in *Jane Eyre* and *A God Without Gender*. It will mainly compare the development of feminine consciousness of the two heroines in different socio-cultural and institutional environments, the oppression by the patriarchal environment, the ending of both of them, and the limitations of the degree of development of feminine consciousness of both of them and their reasons. The paper is divided into two parts. The first part focuses on the development of the female consciousness of the heroines in *Jane Eyre* and *A God Without Gender* and the oppression of the patriarchal environment during the development. The second part focuses on comparing the degree of development of the feminine consciousness of the two heroines and their limitations and causes.

3. A dialogue between East and West across time and space - an introduction to two works

Jane Eyre is a famous English novel written by Charlotte Brontë. Charlotte's own life trajectory is very similar to that of Jane Eyre's heroine. Like her heroine Jane Eyre, she lost her closest relatives at an early age and was sent to boarding school. The harsh conditions and strict rules of the school led to the death of the people closest to them at school. Later, Charlotte, like the heroine,

becomes a teacher at the school she attends and then works as a governess for a wealthy family. During this period, she was also proposed to by two men. But she refused both because she thought they did not really love her but just wanted to have a wife according to tradition. This is exactly the same as the plot in *Jane Eyre*. Later Charlotte, like *Jane Eyre*, also fell in love with a married man. However, Charlotte's love for the married man ends in vain, and she eventually marries a priest. In *Jane Eyre*, *Jane Eyre* and Rochester have a perfect ending.

The most prominent theme in Charlotte's novels is the strong desire of women for independence and autonomy. This theme is expressed in all of her novels. And the use of women's aspiration as the theme of her novels was unprecedented in the history of English literature before, and she was the first person to express this theme. Her novels can therefore be regarded as the most classic works in the study of literature and gender consciousness. She herself was a crucial writer in 19th-century women's literature with the theme of pursuing female independence and equality between men and women. Later writers have been influenced by her to varying degrees when dealing with the theme of women. In particular, women writers who are concerned with the fate of women themselves respect her as a pioneer and regard her works as a model for "modern women's fiction."

Jane Eyre is one such novel that portrays a woman who is not content with the status quo, who is not willing to be humiliated, who dares to fight, who reflects the honestly confessed cries and reproaches of an ordinary heart and the desire of a woman to grow into a real human being.

In the West, there is Charlotte Brontë, and in China's minority regions, there is also a pioneering female writer of this kind, the Tibetan author *Yangdon*. Her masterpiece, *A God Without Gender*, is deeply concerned with many issues such as human liberation and women's liberation from the perspective of the main character, a woman named Yangji Drolma. The work depicts the heavy class oppression and gender oppression in old Tibet.

A God Without Gender is the first full-length novel completed by a woman in the history of Tibetan literature. It was adapted into a twenty-episode television series, "Lhasa Past," which had a far-reaching impact. *Yangdon* herself is also an important writer in the history of contemporary Tibetan literature. The novel focuses on the fate and experiences of the heroine, Yangji Drolma, a girl from a noble Tibetan family. Through the experience of Yangji Drolma from a child to an adult, the fate of various characters in the changing times of Tibetan history is shown. Yangji Drolma repeatedly moves from one family to another and is a foster child. This experience is similar to that of *Jane Eyre*. Like *Jane Eyre*, Yogi Drolma has always been suppressed because she contradicts the demands of patriarchal society on women, but she never becomes the expected "lady of the house" but is full of freedom, courage, and rebellious spirit. However, when Tibet began to enter a new stage of history, Yangji Drolma, like a fish in water, embarked on a quest for self. This novel recreates the social customs and life of Tibetan people of all classes, including nobles, officials, serfs, and nuns, during a period of great historical change. Of course, besides depicting the lives of the old Tibetan people, the author also depicts the fate of the new Tibetan women.

In an interview about the book, author *Yangdon* said that it seems that Tibet is mysterious and inexplicable to people from the outside world, and people seem to think that everything in Tibet is different from the outside world. She even mentioned that people know nothing about Tibet to the extent that it is as if she is from another planet as if she does not belong to this planet. Therefore, *Yangdon* said that one of her missions in writing is to restore the most objective and realistic hometown. In addition, *Yangdon* says that as a woman, she is naturally more concerned about the lives and fates of other women. She believes that in Tibetan history, women have made great contributions to society, but in Tibetan history, the image of women has been relatively weak and ignored, and she believes that Tibetan literature that ignores women is incomplete, which is also one of the directions she strives for. In the interview, Rangzen also mentions a lot of unfairness of women in old Tibet in terms of education and social status but also mentions the relatively empowering side of women, such as women from good families can go to private schools and parents expect to have girls, but all the reasons seem to be for women to take better care of their families, and she talks about people giving priority to educating boys because they will step into society in the future, while women. The only occasion in which she appears in the public sphere is as a companion to her husband. This shows that women are also educated not for their own development but to be able to function better in the private sphere (SoChung, 2017).

The historical process of Tibet in the first half of the 20th century became the most profound reason for the change in the fate of Yangji Drolma and many others and a solid vision for the poetic generation of the novel.

4. Tough grass blown by wind and rain - the development of female consciousness and environmental oppression in two heroines

Jane Eyre and *A God Without Gender* both depict the history of women growing up in a patriarchal environment. Their instinctive sense of self as human beings and the resistance and struggle of this sense of self when it is oppressed by patriarchy. As psychoanalysts say: men and women have the same need for the opportunity to actively and creatively shape their destiny. According to Adler Alfred, all people are born helpless, and we struggle with that sense of powerlessness throughout our lives. Everyone struggles to achieve a sense of "superiority." He believed that women's struggle to overcome their helplessness was

thwarted by a patriarchal society. Both men and women have a "creative self" and a desire to empower themselves through thought and action (123).

Jane Eyre shows a strong sense of self to Mrs. Reed's family as a child, to the orphanage as an adolescent, and to Rochester and her cousin as an adult, people who try to oppress her. However, there are many obstacles in the process of developing herself, and these obstacles are caused by the patriarchal environment. As Millett Kate analyzes in *Sexual Politics*, patriarchal oppression is a chain that includes the low status of women in the political sphere, private oppression of women, and ideological hostility to women, all of which place women in an inferior position of otherness (116). First, ideologically, patriarchy establishes the male as the supreme subject and the woman becomes objectable and other, creating a dualism. Men are noble, and women are inferior, and religion and regulations view women with great malice of this dualism (Simone De Beauvoir 276-280).

In both works, Jane Eyre and Yangji Drolma have been subjected to great malice because of their female identities. Jane Eyre is an oppressed woman, no matter what her circumstances are. As a child, she confronts Mrs. Reed's family and is mistreated because she is not submissive enough, a woman of "less than pleasing character"; as an adult, Rochester and her cousin, who propose to her, are also the ones who try to oppress her as the Other. Yangji Drolma, As a noble lady, she is not valued by her family because of her female identity and is scorned as "unlucky" because of the coincidence of her birth and the death of a male member of the family. In addition, the family and private ownership reinforce the "other" status of women. Because the owner of the property itself is more important than the life, if the woman is the heir, she will transfer all the maternal property to her husband's property. Therefore, she was excluded from the inheritance. She becomes the "other," and the will to continue the family and keep the property intact reduces the woman to an object of oppression (Simone De Beauvoir 308-313). The old owner of the manor died, and a new owner came. Yangji Drolma asked her lactating mother why this person would come. Her answer gave Yangji Drolma a deeper understanding of the greater differences between men and women beyond gender: the estate can only be sealed to men, and women are not have inheritance rights.

Finally, the role of women is defined by social categories that oppress them. Women were treated as "angels of the family," unable to go out to work, with no ground to develop a sense of self and live their lives for others. Both Jane Eyre and Yangji Drolma did not have enough social support to become "real people" and accomplish self-actualization in their social environment. In such a situation, women as the "other" need to be submissive, among other character traits. The patriarchy, in turn, prescribes a feminine temperament that alienates women from themselves (Jagger 104). They are unable to make self-development as they would like to or as a person would want to. Jane Eyre is constantly suppressed and disliked for her courageous expression of herself on most occasions and her fierce resistance to injustice. Yangji Drolma's short haircut, bravery in rescuing abused serfs, and love for the outdoors were judged as "unmarriageable" for their unfeminine behavior. Her mother, who understood this, was unwilling to pay the dowry and sent her away to become a nun.

Psychoanalytic feminism states that gender inequality is rooted in a series of early childhood experiences that cause not only men to see them as masculine but women to see themselves as feminine. (Tong 193) Horney points out that society limits women's social development. Women's feelings of inferiority stem from their understanding of their subordinate position in society (54-70). During Yangji Drolma's upbringing, she suffered constant blows because of her femininity. At the Manor, Yangji Drolma was taught by the mantra master that women could not touch the Dharma bag because they were women. Men could touch it because it was a man. Besides that, the patriarchal culture requires them to be feminine in the first place: passive, masochistic, and narcissistic. Those women who are "masculine" are labeled as "sick." They are seen as women who suffer from a "masculinity complex," a so-called delusion of "escape from femininity"(Horney 54-70). Both Jane Eyre and Yangji Drolma are "escapees from femininity" in the social environment of the time. In a patriarchal society, women are expected to be obedient and submissive, and Jane Eyre and Yangji Drolma, who do not conform to femininity, are suppressed. Therefore, they are hindered in the process of developing themselves.

Patriarchy uses this series of political, social, and ideological chains to keep women in a subordinate position and to suppress women who do not meet the requirements. Juliet Mitchell, in *Psychoanalysis and feminism*, points out that the root of women's oppression is deep in the spirit (167). Alison M. Jagger, in *Feminist Politics and Human Nature*, also points out the forced alienation and objectification of women's bodies and spirits in a patriarchal environment (104).

Facing the patriarchal society, both female writers show their deconstructionist ideas. Their heroines, Jane Eyre and Yangji Drolma are full of self-awareness and equality, deconstructing the essentialism of patriarchy, dualism, and the unfair gender structure imposed by society. As Cixous suggests, women should rebel against the phenomenon of "existing according to men's will, being the other of men, without ever being known as such. She encourages women to break away from the world men have constructed for women and to write about themselves outside this world, putting into words what they are not considered by men (245). Charlotte and Yang zhen are such writers who write about heroines full of resistance.

Jane Eyre, in the face of all kinds of oppression and injustice, has always been resilient; she jumped out of the "other as a man" fence. Jane Eyre said: "Women are supposed to be very calm generally, but women feel just as men feel; they need exercise for their faculties, and a field for their efforts, as much as their brothers do; they suffer too rigid a restraint, to absolute a stagnation, precisely as men would suffer; and it is narrow-minded in their more privileged fellow-creatures to say that they ought to confine themselves to making puddings and knitting stockings, it is thoughtless to condemn them, or laugh at them if they seek to do more or learn more than custom has pronounced necessary for their sex." Jane Eyre, as a woman, in that patriarchal era, did not take marriage arguably recently as the answer to all human needs. She longed for the outside world and for her own development as a whole person, showing a strong sense of equality and self-consciousness. As Betty Friedan mentions in *The Feminine Mystery*, women's domestic life substitutes for more meaningful goals (69-70). Women as wives and mothers do not have the time and experience to develop their full selves in "creative work" outside the home, limiting the development of women as full human beings (330). Friedan rejects the denial of women's personhood and defines them only in terms of their relationship with men and in the sense of being wives, mothers, and homemakers. In the text, Jane Eyre fiercely resists such treatment, rejecting the marriage proposals of Rochester and her cousin, because she wants to establish a marriage relationship with true equality of personality, not as an appendage and an instrument, and she exclaims to Rochester: "Do you think I am an automaton?—a machine without feelings? and can bear to have my morsel of bread snatched from my lips and my drop of living water dashed from my cup? 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! And if God had gifted me with some beauty and much wealth, I should have made it as hard for you to leave me as it is now for me to leave you. I am not talking to you now through the medium of custom, conventionalities, nor even of mortal flesh;—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!"

In *A God Without Gender*, Yangji Drolma also shows a similar rebellion and deconstruction. First of all, the title of the novel itself reflects the author's idea of deconstruction, and she also mentioned in the follow-up interview that genderlessness is a rebellion against "gender." Patriarchy treats men as the center of the universe, while women are essentially "other" and subordinate to men, creating a dichotomy that Yangji Drolma challenges. As anthropologists Claude Levi-Strauss suggests, every society is regulated by various roles, signs, and rituals, which Jacques Lacan termed "Symbolic order" (64-66). Gender identity and gender inequity are formed from a child's childhood experiences, and a child must go through psychosexual development to adapt to this society (Duchen 78). Yangji Drolma is a rebel of this order. She fully develops her nature, even if this nature does not conform to the essentialist and gender order imposed on women, Yangji Drolma insists on being herself, and with her actions, she carries out a silent rebellion, defending her development as a full human being, Yangji Drolma's free nature makes her disgusted with the hypocritical rules of the estate and enjoys the free and idyllic life in the countryside. Contrary to the code of conduct as a lady's lady, she plays innocently in the fields and gets dirty and is judged by the noble elders as not at all like a lady. When the minority sent rumors among the people that the Red Han Chinese (the Red Army in Lhasa) were man-eating, poop-eating monsters, she bravely went into the Red Army barracks to find out for herself what the legendary and terrible Red Han Chinese were really like, and thus she also saw the true "equality" in the Red Army barracks. Afterward, she enrolled in a class to learn Chinese without her mother's knowledge and prepared to go to the mainland. Filled with the spirit of autonomy and freedom, she bravely explores and actively fights for her life in this environment full of barriers. Of course, such a rebellion suffers from the backlash of those who have unconsciously accepted and internalized the patriarchal order; thus, She is "not like a girl" and "not fit for marriage" and is eventually sent to become a nun before she met the red Army.

5. Breaking through the cage - the degree of development of the feminine consciousness of the two heroines and its limitations and causes

The two heroines have the same spirit of defiance and self-awareness, but the endings are very different. Jane Eyre eventually returns to Rochester. After finding out that her wife is dead and Rochester is disabled and has no wealth, Jane Eyre finally becomes his equal. Many studies of Jane Eyre's feminist perspective have criticized this ending (Wang Ying 83-85, Zhu Jia Ke 95-96), arguing that Jane Eyre eventually becomes a "domestic angel" who returns to her family. In fact, the heroines of both novels face a similar patriarchal upbringing and share the same vision of developing into "complete human beings." By comparing the two works, we can find that the social system is actually the soil that determines whether the seeds of female self-awareness can take root and bear fruit. The environment in which Jane Eyre is set is still feudal and patriarchal, and there is no ground for the true growth of women, from laws to social institutions. As a result, Jane Eyre's vivid feminine consciousness, her vision of going out and exploring without being confined to her private space, and her struggle and resistance to self-development eventually return to the fence. However, compared with other women who are also on the fence but do not know it, the spirit of Jane Eyre is still the pursuit of equality and unyielding. In her relationship with Rochester, Jane Eyre always insisted on self-respect and self-love and sought equality of character, saying to Rochester: "I do not think, sir, that you have the right to command me simply because you are older than I am or because you have seen more of the world than I have; your claim to advantage depends on your use of time and experience". Despite returning to domestic life, what is different is that Jane Eyre fights for the right to be equal to her husband, in spirit, to have his respect, and to have the purest love. If we look at this point, Jane Eyre remains a deserved feminist pioneer.

Her ending has much to do with the era in which the writer Brontë lived, in which women did not yet enjoy fair and independent autonomy in the feudal, patriarchal Victorian period. Thus, even the beloved character Jane Eyre, whom Brontë created as the embodiment of her own experience and spirit, could not find a place for her. It seems to end only in the private sphere of the family. But Brontë is not willing to give in, and through Bertha's fire, she deprives Rochester of his wealth, his health, his imprisoned Bertha herself, but also of the patriarchal qualities that Rochester represents with her, including financial, status, spiritual and ideological superiority and injustice. By giving Jane Eyre the economic status she lacks, the two are forcibly made "equals" in this way. The two are now financially equal, and because of his disability, Rochester is forced to rely on Jane Eyre for his spirituality and life. Bertha's death also represents their one-to-one relationship, their equality in marriage, and the fact that as Rochester sheds the trappings of patriarchy, he is left with only the purest of relationships between him and Jane Eyre, between human beings, genuine and equal. The relationship between them instantly changed from unequal to equal today. In fact, the ending that Brontë gives to Jane Eyre in that era, although still in the private sphere, is still very different from the traditional "family angel." Brontë's arrangement shows her beautiful vision. That is, women were also equal to men in terms of economy, status, ideology, and mutual needs. Both parties work together and need each other from spirituality to life. This is not at all the beautiful and fair gender relationship that Brontë portrays. Only in her time, it was impossible to give these to women, Jane Eyre, with laws, institutions, etc., so she passed Jane Eyre's inheritance, Bertha's setting the fire, etc. Here, I also agree with the commentators such as Gilbert and Gubar, who mention Bertha as the embodiment of Jane Eyre's anger to remove Rochester's patriarchal "mask" (336-371). I think Bertha represents the feminine consciousness, and the fire Bertha sets represents the anger of the feminine consciousness to deprive Rochester of everything that made him and Jane Eyre unequal. And Bertha's death seems to represent the quelling of the anger. After all, injustice has been destroyed, and the anger disappears, leaving only the tender and loving Jane Eyre herself.

In *God Without Gender*, the author, Yangchen, lives in a new society with a Constitution that guarantees equality for all. Unlike Brontë, who lived in a society where laws and institutions guaranteed women and all people fair human rights, and who herself attended college at Beijing University's Chinese Department, Tibetan women in her parents' generation still lived within the various fences of gender and class like Yangji Drolma. But like history, author Yangchen does not use the fire of anger to deprive the patriarchy of the conditions given to men to grant women this fairness, but by writing history into the novel, she brings to life the changes brought about by the democratic reforms in Tibet for Tibetan women through the character of Yangji Drolma. Unlike Jane Eyre, in *God Without Gender*, the granting of equality is no longer produced through the inexorable violent outbursts of fires and casualties but a silent spring breeze of social system reform. And this corresponds to the history of old and new Tibet and reflects the changing fortunes of Tibetan women. Before the democratic reform in 1959, Tibet was still in a feudal serfdom society where the law at that time clearly divided people into various classes and people had unequal status in law, and women, even as a high-ranking noble class, were in a relatively unequal position compared to men. But after the democratic reform, under the leadership of the Constitution and the central government, the Tibetan people were freed from the shackles of the old social system, and everyone enjoyed equal legal status. Tibetan women, regardless of class and origin, enjoyed the same rights as men in political, economic, cultural, social, and family life and gained a new life. (29-32) Having gained the same social rights as men, Yangji Drolma succeeded in stepping out of the wall, gaining relative equality and freedom, and realizing her desire to develop as a full human being. Always asserting herself, she bravely explores all possibilities and seizes all paths to freedom and equality without fear of human words, working silently. In "*God Without Gender*," the seed of self-awareness in Yangji Drolma, the heroine, blossoms rapidly when she encounters this new fertile soil. She is enterprising and courageous, so it is not surprising that she has such an ending after the social change. But what is worth thinking about is the contrary serf girl Yixi Ram, who can be said to live numbly in a hundred tortures, with no trace of female consciousness at all. But surprisingly, Yangji Drolma saw her transformed in the military camp. (Add, how did she become a new person?) It shows that in such a "soil," even women without a strong sense of femininity can be shaped by the environment and develop towards "becoming a complete person."

The reason for the different endings of the two is the unfairness of the different types of social systems and laws that exist in two different social and cultural environments, leading to their different fates. Jane Eyre still lives in a patriarchal society where women do not have equal rights, so no matter how Jane Eyre resists and struggles, she ends up in a cage, oppressed in the private sphere, and suspended in her family and marriage, in a world where women have little choice. Yangji Drolma, on the other hand, has gained relative legal and social equality to step out of the private sphere and into the public sphere to develop herself. Thus, it is crucial for women to gain equality in the social system and in the law. But there are still many parts of the world today where women still have a long way to go to achieve equality. Moreover, there are many places where women already have equal rights, but gender inequality still exists at the ideological level. In *Psychoanalysis and Feminism*, Mitchell-Juliet points out that the roots of women's oppression lie deep in the spirit (167), and Jagger, in *Feminist Politics and Human Nature*, points out that women's bodies and spirits are alienated in a patriarchal environment and that there is still a great deal of collective unconscious bias against women, so that spiritual liberation is still a long process (109). Indeed, as Friedan argues, the emancipation of women is also the emancipation of men. It is as important for men to develop their private, individual selves as it is for women to develop their public, social selves, and both men and women need to be free to develop in every way in order to become real human beings (Second Stage, 112-148). Just as Yangji Drolma saw true "equality between men and women" in the military camp, when Yangji Drolma was

still on the estate, there was no shortage of courageous and capable women and no shortage of men who did not have ambitious ideals but were kind-hearted, caring, and loving, as exemplified by Yangji Drolma's mother and stepfather. However, both are caught in the barriers of gender because of their respective genders. The mother is very capable, but because she is a woman, she is not able to exert herself in the public sphere or enjoy various family inheritance rights as a master, so she has to work behind a man by remarrying, but in fact, the mother is able to do all the work of her stepfather and often works for him. And although the stepfather is not very enterprising, he is kind and family-oriented, but because he is a man, he is considered to be unmotivated and indecisive. If the barriers of patriarchy could be removed, it would mean that men could also be liberated because each person could develop healthily into a full human being according to his or her own will, instead of becoming a puppet of the social gender system.

The two novels expose the oppression of the two heroines by the patriarchal society in many aspects, including politics, economy, and ideology. In the face of oppression, the two heroines resist in their own way and protect their precious sense of self. In the end, due to the different social environments they live in, Jane Eyre has to return to her family in an environment lacking the soil for female development, while Yangji Drolma is fortunate enough to be able to find herself. In the final analysis, only when women's rights and interests are protected in all aspects will there be the most basic ground for "self-development." However, there is still a long way to go in terms of spiritual emancipation. In many countries around the world, women's basic rights are not guaranteed. In other countries where there is legal "equality for all," there are still ideological oppressions and challenges to women. Even in countries that have achieved relative political and spiritual gender equality, women still face new issues such as "work-family balance." As pluralist feminism points out, the oppression of women around the world has both commonalities and uniqueness. For example, Jane Eyre and Yangji Drolma face the same patriarchal oppression, but Yangji Drolma has an additional layer of ideological oppression than Jane Eyre: "women are unlucky." Because it snowed heavily when Yangji Drolma was born, and her father died shortly afterward, everyone considered Yangji Drolma to be an "unlucky person" according to the feudal superstition of the time. In addition, the slave women in *A God Without Gender* face class oppression. Around the world, there are women who face racial discrimination in addition to class and gender discrimination. In addition, due to cultural differences, even though women are explicitly protected by law, they are still in a difficult position when faced with issues such as "sexual harassment." Therefore, we also need to have a pluralistic perspective when analyzing women's issues at the same time. Comparing feminist works by female authors from two different countries is also a way to add a pluralistic perspective to feminist literary criticism.

On this basis, global feminism argues that the oppression of women around the world, though different, interacts with each other. Further, global feminism argues that factors, whether racial, class, economic, religious, or ethnic, combine to create specific forms of oppression against women. The personal and the political, moreover, are one and the same. That is, individual life in the home and bedroom affects gender relations in society. Thus, women's issues are not divided as an individual but as a mailed whole. By exploring the oppression of women around the world in the private and public spheres, politically, economically, religiously, and ideologically, comparative literature from a feminist perspective nicely complements the global and pluralistic women's issues that can be explored under the new feminist theory, thus going on to discover the commonalities and characteristics of the oppressions faced by women in different countries and cultures and the organic unity between them as a whole. The two novels, *Jane Eyre* and *God Without Gender*, are both feudal, patriarchal societies, although they are in two different cultural and social settings. Through the inter-temporal dialogue between the two novels, it can be found that no matter which era or culture, there are great commonalities in the pursued failures of the situation faced by women. Most previous studies have focused on the comparison between mainstream Chinese and Western literary works, but this paper selects the literary works of the Tibetan minority in China in an attempt to add a flower from the East to the flower bed of world women's literature studies, so that the study of world women's literature can blossom more, including comparative literature from a feminist perspective, especially about Chinese minority literature. The "honest questions" that multicultural and global feminists must ask, as Elizabeth Spellman emphasizes, include the following: "How much do I know about women who are different from me in terms of race, culture, class, and ethnicity? What can I learn about them?" (178) She encourages feminists to gain more knowledge about others and to understand them. By comparing *Jane Eyre* and *A God Without Gender*, this paper finds that, as Rubin Morgan emphasizes in *Sisterhood Is Global*, women around the world, despite their differences and the different social circumstances and oppressions they face, are all searching for the same thing, which is the self: "self-actualization, "the right to be who they are," "self-identity," "clear self-expression," etc. (36). Therefore, it is hoped that there will be more studies of comparative literature under a feminist perspective to discover more about feminist issues in the world.

6. Conclusion

The purpose of this study is to analyze the development and causes of the feminine consciousness of the heroines of two pioneering women's novels from the East and West by comparing them from a feminist perspective, trying to find the commonalities and differences between women and the problems they face in different cultural contexts and their causes. The comparison reveals that although in different times, countries, and cultures, both heroines have significant feminine consciousness and are oppressed by the patriarchal environment in their development of feminine consciousness. However, the two heroines

resist bravely, and the way they resist and their final end is different. The reason is that Jane Eyre lives in a society where women do not have equal rights with men in terms of politics, law, and ideology, while Yangji Drolma lives in a society that has undergone a radical change, where she has gained legal equality, and her right to education and political rights are guaranteed in the same way as men. Thus, Jane Eyre can only achieve equality with Rochester by burning everything that represents the patriarchy through a furious fire and by acquiring an inheritance, i.e., an economic value, but she is still in the private sphere. Yongji Drolma, on the other hand, with her courage and a budding sense of self-growing and developing in the breeze of social system change, embarks on a journey of self-realization. Therefore, to guarantee women's real self-growth, it is necessary to guarantee women's political, economic, and legal equality in the first place. Moreover, at the ideological level, the collective unconsciousness of gender bias left over from the past should be continuously eliminated, and a truly equal society should be established. Most comparative studies in the past have focused on the literature of the mainstream cultures of the East and West, but world feminism emphasizes the feminine experience and the values of women from all over the world, including minority women, who are also an important part of the world's women. Therefore, in order to fill this gap, this study attempts to conduct a comparative study of Western literature and Chinese minority works from a feminist perspective, filling the gap between the study of Eastern minorities and the study of comparative literature in the study of the world women's literature. However, the results of this study do not seem to reveal any very novel ideas, which should be the shortcoming of this study. Therefore, researchers need to continue to conduct comparative studies on minority women's literature and other women's literature to find more creative and groundbreaking arguments and perspectives to contribute to the study of world women's literature.

Statements and Declarations:

Funding: This research is funded by Tibet University, grant number 00060694/027.

Conflict of interest: The author declares no conflict of interest.

Acknowledgment: This research was supported by Tibet University. I thank my colleague Changba Yangchin from Tibet University, who provided insight before the research started. I am also immensely grateful to my father, Dorji Tsering, and my mother, Tsepe, for their comments on my earlier versions of the manuscript, although any errors are my own and should not tarnish the reputation of these esteemed persons.

Publisher's Note: All claims expressed in this article are solely those of the authors and do not necessarily represent those of their affiliated organizations, or those of the publisher, the editors and the reviewers.

References

- [1] Adler, A (1974). *Understanding Human Nature*. New York: Vintage Books.
- [2] Belle J.L (1985), Mutiny against the Mirror: *Jane Eyre* and *The Mill on the Floss* *Pacific Coast Philology* 20.1/2 (November 1985):53-56.
- [3] Chen, Q et al. (2019), *Xizang lishi tushuo [Tibetan History Illustrated]*. China: Huawen chubanshe.
- [4] Cixous H (1981). *New French Feminisms*. New York: Schocken Books.
- [5] Clarke M (2000), Bronte's *Jane Eyre* and the Grimms' *Cinderella* *SEL studies in English Literature* 1500-1900, 40.4 (Autumn 2000):695-710.
- [6] Duchon C (1986), *Feminism in France: From May '68 to Mitterrand*. London: Routledge & Kegan Paul.
- [7] Esther G (2005), *Jane Eyre, from governess to girl bride*. *Studies in English Literature, 1500-1900*. 45.4 (Autumn, 2005): 853
- [8] Écrits J.L (1977): *A Selection, trans. Alan Sheridan*. New York: W. W. Norton, 1977.
- [9] Friedan, B (1974). *The Feminine Mystique*. New York: Dell.
- [10] Hope T (2012), Revisiting the Imperial Archive: "Jane Eyre," "Wide Sargasso Sea," and the Decomposition of Englishness Author(s)" *College Literature* 39. 1 (Winter 2012): 51-73.
- [11] Kong, Z (2018). bianyuan xushi shijiaoxia zhuiqiu pingdeng ziyou renxing de zange--duYangdon de changpianxiaoshuo <wuxingbiedeshen> 'A Hymn in Pursuit of Equality, Freedom, and Humanity from the Perspective of Marginal Narratives - Reading Yangdon's Long Novel 'God Without Gender', *Alaiyanjiu [Alai Research]*, 131-135. Number1. Chengdu, China.
- [12] Qiongdang (2020). lun Yangdon <wuxingbiedeshen> zhong de nvxingshuxie [On the Writing of Women in Yangdon's 'God Without Gender'], *'wenxue jiaoyu' [Literature Education]*, 112-113. 11. Wuhan, China.
- [13] Sochong (2017) *zuo zhe Yangdon: Zangdi nvxing yu wode wenxue [Writer Yangdon: Tibetan Women and My Literature]*. Qulan. N.P. 9 Nov. 2017. Web. 12. Jul.
- [14] Thompson, C (1964). *Interpersonal Psychoanalysis: The Selected papers of Clara Thompson*. New York: Basic Books.
- [15] Wang, Q (2018). wuxingbiedeshen de nvxing yishi shuxie jiqi qishi [The writing of female consciousness in 'God Without Gender' and its revelation], *Alaiyanjiu [Alai Research]*, 96-101. Number1. Chengdu, China: 2018.
- [16] Wang, L (2019). nvxing wenhua shenfen de goujian--Yangdon de changpianxiaoshuo <wuxingbiedeshen> '[The Construction of Women's Cultural Identity - Yangdon's Long Novel 'God Without Gender', *Puyang zhiyejishu xueyuan xuebao [Journal of Puyang Vocational and Technical College]*, 76-78. 32.6. Puyang, China.
- [17] Wang, Y (2007). Lun 19shihiji yingguo nvxing zuojia de nvxing yishi--yi xialuodi bolangte de <jianai> weili [On the Feminine Consciousness of 19th Century British Women Writers--Charlotte Brontë's Jane Eyre as an Example], *'xibeishidaxuebao (shehuikexueban)' [Journal of Northwest Normal University (Social Sciences)]*, 83-85. 44. 3. Lanzhou, China.
- [18] Yangzhen (2018). *Wuxingbie de shen [A God Without Gender]*. China: Zhejiang wenyi chubanshe.
- [19] *Zhongguo renmin gongheguo xianfa, [Constitution Of The People's Republic of China]*. China: Renmin chubanshe, (1954).

- [20] Zhang, Z & Han, X (2006), 'chuan yue shi kong de nvxing zhuyi--<jianai> he <yigere dezhanzheng> de bijiao' [Feminism Through Time and Space - A Comparison of 'Jane Eyre' and 'A Man's War'], *'Ming zuo xinshang'* [Masterpieces Review], 108-111. 22. Taiyuan, China.
- [21] Zhao, L (2015). Qiantan jianai yu lindaiyu maodun de nvxingjiefang yishi [A Brief Discussion of Jane Eyre and Lin Daiyu's Conflicting Sense of Female Liberation], *'yuwen jianshe'* [Language Planning], 85-86. 12. Beijing, China: 2015.
- [22] Zhu, J (2009). yingyu wenxue zuopin <jianai> zhongde nvxingyishi de tixian [The Embodiment of Feminine Consciousness in the English Literature "Jane Eyre"], *'Shidai wenxue (xiabanyue)'* [Times Literature (second half of the month)], 95-96. 12. Jinan, China.
- [23] Zonana J (1993). The Sultan and the Slave: Feminist Orientalism and the Structure of Jane Eyre. *Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 18.3 (Spring, 1993): 592-617.