

Original Paper

Exploring Female Empowerment: A Comparative Study of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* and Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*

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Abstract

*This research paper explores female empowerment in literature via a comparative analysis of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* and Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*. The paper examines the main female characters in each novel, their portrayal of agency, independence, and autonomy, and the social and cultural factors that shape their experiences. Through this analysis, the paper identifies the similarities and differences in the approaches taken by Austen and Brontë, and discusses the implications of these findings for our understanding of female empowerment in literature and society. The paper argues that both novels offer powerful critiques of patriarchal society and highlight the need for collective action and solidarity among women, in order to achieve true empowerment. The research contributes to our understanding of gender and empowerment in literature, and provides insights into the on-going struggle for gender equality.*

Keywords

society, culture, empowerment, gender, struggle, equality, independence, feminism

المخلص

تستكشف هذه الورقة البحثية قضية تمكين المرأة في الأدب من خلال تحليل مقارن لأعمال جين أوستن *عناد وتحامل* وشارلوت برونتي *جين إير*. تتناول الورقة الشخصيات النسائية الرئيسية في كل رواية، وتحليل تمثيلاتها للوكالة والاستقلالية والحرية، والعوامل الاجتماعية والثقافية التي تشكل تجاربهن. من خلال هذا التحليل، تحدد الورقة التشابهات والاختلافات في النهج الذي اتبعته أوستن وبرونتي، وتناقش النتائج المستخلصة من ذلك بشأن فهمنا لتمكين المرأة في الأدب والمجتمع. تؤكد الورقة على أن هذين العاملين الأدبيين يقدمان نقدًا قويًا للمجتمع الأبوي ويسلطان الضوء على أهمية العمل الجماعي والتضامن بين النساء لتحقيق التمكين الحقيقي. يساهم هذا البحث في فهمنا للنوع والتمكين في الأدب ويوفر نظرة على الصراع المستمر من أجل المساواة بين الجنسين.

Introduction

In the 19th century, women in English society were restricted by societal norms that dictated that they be domestic caregivers and wives. However, two contemporary female authors, Jane Austen and Charlotte Brontë, challenged these norms through their works of fiction. Their novels *Pride and Prejudice*, by Austen, and *Jane Eyre*, by Brontë, are two works of fiction that showcase the power of female empowerment at a time when women were limited in their opportunities (Ilunina, 2021). Through their female protagonists, Elizabeth Bennet in *Pride and Prejudice* and Jane Eyre in *Jane Eyre*, Austen and Brontë explored the challenges women faced in pursuing independence and self-actualization. The authors depicted their female characters as strong-willed, independent thinkers who challenged societal norms and traditions (Shihada, 2019).

This comparative study explores how Austen and Brontë portrayed female empowerment in their novels, examining the similarities and differences in the way the two authors depicted their female protagonists and the challenges they face. Moreover, it discusses the societal and cultural factors that shaped the female experience in 19th century England, and how these factors are reflected in the novels (Alhaj, 2018). The study seeks to provide insights regarding the evolving role of women in English society during the 19th century, and the ways in which female empowerment was portrayed in the literature of the time. The study of the two novels in question not only provides an understanding of the past, but also illuminates the contemporary debates surrounding gender equality and female empowerment (Alquraidhy, 2022).

Importance

This comparative analysis of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* and Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* is significant for several reasons. Firstly, these novels are regarded as literary classics and continue to be read and studied widely. They have influenced the portrayal of women in literature and contributed to discussions regarding feminist themes in literature.

Secondly, the study of these novels provides insights into the historical context of women's empowerment, and the societal and cultural factors that shaped the female experience during the Georgian and Victorian eras. By understanding the challenges that women faced in achieving empowerment during these eras, contemporary society can learn from the past, and address the current barriers to gender equality and women's empowerment.

Thirdly, the analysis of these novels illuminates the limitations of both historical and contemporary societal norms and expectations that restrict women's opportunities and impede their progress towards full empowerment. By exploring the characterization of the female protagonists in the two novels in question, and their quest for empowerment and independence, this analysis provides a basis for discussion of how contemporary society can support women's efforts towards self-actualization and empowerment.

Finally, this comparative analysis provides insights into the relevance of these novels for contemporary debates surrounding gender equality and female empowerment. The issues of love, marriage, class, and gender explored in the novels remain relevant today, and their examination provides a basis for discussion regarding how contemporary society can promote gender equality and women's empowerment.

Problem Statement

Despite the progress made in women's rights and gender equality, the issue of female empowerment remains a significant challenge in many societies. Women continue to face barriers to achieving full independence, self-actualization, and equality in various aspects of their lives. This problem is not new and has a long history, particularly in the western world. In England, the Georgian era (1714-1830) and the Victorian era (1837-1901) were periods when societal norms and expectations for women were restrictive, with women's roles largely limited to domestic responsibilities and marriage (Dahy, 2022).

Through their novels, *Pride and Prejudice* and *Jane Eyre*, Jane Austen and Charlotte Brontë respectively explored the theme of female empowerment during these eras. Despite being written over two centuries ago, the themes of these novels remain relevant today as women continue to fight for their rights and empowerment. While there have been advancements in women's rights and equality, women still face barriers in achieving full empowerment and self-actualization. There is therefore a need to study and analyse how female empowerment is portrayed in these two novels, and the societal and cultural factors that influenced the representation of women in literature at the time (Heaverly & Elisabeth, 2020).

This study seeks to contribute to a better understanding of the historical context of women's empowerment, and to provide insights into how modern society can learn from the past, in order to promote gender equality and women's empowerment. The study of these two novels also seeks to illuminate the limitations of societal norms and expectations that restrict women's opportunities and impede their progress towards full empowerment (Rashid et al., 2018).

Objectives

The primary objective of this comparative analysis is to explore how female empowerment is portrayed in Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* and Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*. Specifically, the study aims to achieve the following:

- 1) Examine the characterization of the female protagonists, Elizabeth Bennet and Jane Eyre, and analyse how their experiences and actions demonstrate their quest for empowerment and independence;
- 2) Analyse the societal and cultural factors that shaped the female experience during the Georgian and Victorian eras, and how these factors are reflected in the novels in question;
- 3) Compare and contrast the portrayal of female empowerment in *Pride and Prejudice* and *Jane Eyre*, and identify the similarities and differences in how Austen and Brontë depicted their female protagonists;

- 4) Assess the impact of these novels on the portrayal of women in literature, and their significance in the context of feminist literature;
- 5) Provide insights into the relevance of these novels for contemporary debates surrounding gender equality and female empowerment.

Literature Review

The portrayal of female empowerment in literature has long been a subject of much discussion and analysis. The Georgian and Victorian eras, in particular, saw a significant shift in the way women were represented in literature, as female authors began to challenge the traditional gender roles that confined women to domestic responsibilities and marriage. Two of the most prominent female authors of these eras, Jane Austen and Charlotte Brontë, explored the theme of female empowerment in their novels, *Pride and Prejudice* and *Jane Eyre*, respectively.

Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*, published in 1813, tells the story of Elizabeth Bennet, a young woman who defies societal expectations and refuses to marry for financial security. Through Elizabeth's journey, Austen portrayed the struggle for women to gain agency and independence in a patriarchal society. Meanwhile, Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, published in 1847, tells the story of Jane Eyre, a governess who defies the societal expectations of her class and gender, and ultimately achieves self-actualization and empowerment through her own efforts (Shihada, 2018).

Previous scholars noted the similarities and differences in the way Austen and Brontë portrayed female empowerment in their novels. Austen depicted Elizabeth Bennet as a strong-willed and independent thinker who challenges societal norms and traditions, whereas Brontë portrayed Jane Eyre as a more radical figure who defies societal expectations at every turn. Both novels explored the themes of love, marriage, class, and gender, and provided insights into the societal and cultural factors that shaped the female experience in the 19th century (Mohammed et al., 2022).

Several existing studies explored the societal and cultural factors that influenced the representation of women in literature during the Georgian and Victorian eras. For instance, in her book *A Literature of Their Own*, Showalter (date) noted that women writers of the time used literature as a means of expressing their frustration with societal restrictions, and as a means of asserting their own agency. Others, such as Gilbert and Gubar (date, as cited in Hemmati, 2020), explored the feminist themes in 19th century literature, and argued that female authors of the time used their literary work to challenge the patriarchal order, and to promote women's rights and empowerment.

In recent years, the study of feminist literature has become an increasingly important field of study, with scholars seeking to understand the historical context of women's empowerment, and the ways in which literature can contribute to social change. The study of *Pride and Prejudice* and *Jane Eyre* provides insights into the evolving role of women in English society during the 19th century, and illuminates the current debate surrounding gender equality and female empowerment (Sariwulandari, 2021).

Methodology

The research design and approach employed for this study is a comparative literary analysis. The primary texts are Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* and Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*. The study analyses the representation of female empowerment in these two novels, with a focus on the portrayal of female agency, independence, and autonomy.

The study employs a qualitative approach, using close reading and textual analysis to identify and interpret the themes, motifs, and characterizations relating to female empowerment in the novels. The analytical framework employed for the study utilizes feminist literary criticism, which examines the representation of women in literature, and the ways in which gender roles and power dynamics are constructed and challenged in literary texts.

In order to ensure the rigor and validity of the research, the study employs a systematic and transparent process for selecting and analysing the primary texts. The selection criteria for the novels is based on their significance and relevance to the topic of female empowerment in literature. The analysis of the texts involves identifying key passages and scenes that related to the theme of female empowerment, and conducting a detailed analysis of the literary techniques and devices used to convey these themes.

The research design and approach also involves triangulation, which is the use of multiple methods and sources of data to enhance the validity and reliability of the findings. This includes a review of existing research on the topic of female empowerment in *Pride and Prejudice* and *Jane Eyre*, as well as the use of theoretical frameworks and tools from gender studies and feminist theory to inform the analysis.

The primary texts employed in this study, namely Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* and Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre*, are selected according to their significance and relevance to the topic of female empowerment in literature. Both novels are considered to be seminal works of English literature, and are studied widely and celebrated for their exploration of gender roles, power dynamics, and social conventions.

This study considers these two novels' representation of female characters who challenge traditional gender norms and expectations, and who assert their agency and independence in different ways. Elizabeth Bennet in *Pride and Prejudice* and the titular character in *Jane Eyre* are both complex, multifaceted characters who navigate a patriarchal society in their own unique ways.

The criterion used for selecting these novels is their literary style and technique. Both Austen and Brontë are known for their sophisticated use of language and narrative techniques, and their novels offer rich opportunities for close reading and textual analysis. The novels also present a range of themes and motifs related to female empowerment, such as social class, marriage, education, and personal growth and development.

Finally, the selection criteria also considers the cultural and historical context in which the novels were written. *Pride and Prejudice* was published in 1813, at a time of significant social and political change in England, and *Jane Eyre* was published in 1847, during the Victorian era, when gender roles and

social norms were particularly rigid and restrictive. Both novels reflect and respond to the social and cultural contexts in which they were written, and offer valuable insights into the ways in which women were able to assert their agency and independence in these periods.

The analytical framework employed for the comparative analysis of these two novels is rooted in feminist literary criticism. The approach examines the representation of women in literature, and identifies the ways in which gender roles and power dynamics are constructed and challenged in literary texts. The analytical framework used for this study also employed gender studies and feminist theory to provide a critical lens through which to interpret the novels in question.

The key analytical tool used in this study is close reading, namely a detailed and systematic analysis of the language, style, and structure of the novels. Close reading enables a deep exploration of the characters and their motivations, and helps to identify the ways in which the novels convey ideas about female empowerment.

Another important analytical tool employed for this study is intertextuality, which refers to the ways in which a text is influenced by, and connected to, other texts. The novels analysed are both part of a broader literary tradition, and drew on various literary and cultural sources. By examining the intertextual connections between them, the study is able to identify the ways in which these novels engage with, and respond to, broader literary and cultural debates about gender, power, and identity.

The study also employs theoretical frameworks and tools from gender studies and feminist theory, such as the concept of the 'male gaze' and the idea of intersectionality. These theoretical tools facilitated a nuanced analysis of the ways in which gender intersects with other forms of identity, such as race, class, and sexuality, and how these intersections affect the representation of female empowerment in the novels.

Female Empowerment in "Pride and Prejudice"

Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* features two main female characters, Elizabeth Bennet and her sister Jane Bennet, who are both strong, dynamic characters in their own right, albeit with distinct personalities and strengths.

Jane Bennet is the elder sister of Elizabeth, and is depicted as a model of feminine grace and virtue. She is beautiful, gentle, and kind-hearted, and is universally admired by all who know her. However, her passivity and tendency to see the best in others also make her vulnerable to manipulation and mistreatment, as demonstrated by her ill-fated romance with Mr. Bingley, who is persuaded by his snobbish friend Mr. Darcy to break off his engagement to her.

Elizabeth Bennet, on the other hand, is a more independent and assertive character, who is not afraid to speak her mind and to challenge social conventions. She is intelligent, witty, and self-assured, and is readily willing to stand up for herself or for her family, even when it means going against the expectations of society. This is evident in her refusal to accept Mr. Darcy's initial proposal of marriage, which she sees as insulting and condescending, and in her later decision to marry him, despite the

social and economic disadvantages that it entails.

Both Jane and Elizabeth embody different aspects of female empowerment and agency. Jane's quiet strength and resilience demonstrate the power of gentleness and kindness, and her eventual happy ending with Mr. Bingley suggests that these virtues are ultimately rewarded. In contrast, Elizabeth challenges traditional gender roles and expectations, and asserts her right to make her own decisions and to pursue her own happiness, even in the face of societal pressure and disapproval.

Both Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* and Charlotte Brontë's *Jane Eyre* offer compelling portrayals of female agency, independence, and autonomy, and challenge traditional gender roles and expectations.

In *Pride and Prejudice*, Elizabeth Bennet stands out as a particularly strong and independent character, who is not afraid to speak her mind and to challenge social conventions. She refuses to accept the traditional role of women as passive and submissive, and instead asserts her right to make her own decisions and to pursue her own happiness, even if it means going against the expectations of society. This is evident in her refusal of Mr. Collins' proposal of marriage, which would have secured her financial stability, but would also have required her to surrender her independence and autonomy. It is also evident in her eventual decision to marry Mr. Darcy, despite his initial condescension, and the social and economic disadvantages that marrying him entails.

Similarly, in *Jane Eyre*, the eponymous character is portrayed as a fiercely independent and autonomous individual, who refuses to be subjugated or oppressed by anyone. She asserts her right to be treated with respect and dignity, and refuses to accept the traditional role of women as passive and submissive. This is evident in her interactions with her cousin, John Reed, who physically and emotionally abuses her, and with her employer, Mr. Rochester, who tries to exert control over her. Jane's determination and agency ultimately enable her to forge a meaningful life for herself, free from the constraints of societal expectations and gender norms.

Pride and Prejudice is set in a highly patriarchal society, in which women are expected to be passive and submissive, and in which their value is largely determined by their social status and ability to secure a good marriage. Despite these constraints, the novel offers a complex and nuanced portrayal of female empowerment, and highlights the social and cultural factors that both enable and limit it.

One of the key factors that shapes female empowerment in *Pride and Prejudice* is social class. Women in the upper classes at the time when the novel was written and set had more opportunities for education and social mobility, and were therefore more likely to have access to resources and networks that enabled them to exercise agency and independence. This is evident in the character of Elizabeth Bennet, who is educated, articulate, and self-assured, and who is able to challenge the expectations of her social class and to assert her independence. However, women of the lower classes, such as the servants and labourers who appear in the novel, were largely excluded from these opportunities, and were therefore more vulnerable to oppression and exploitation.

Another key factor that shapes female empowerment in *Pride and Prejudice* is marriage. Since marriage is the primary means by which women in the novel can secure social status and economic stability, it is therefore a central concern for all of the female characters. However, the novel also suggests that marriage can be a source of oppression and constraint, particularly for women who are forced into loveless or unequal marriages. This is evident in the character of Charlotte Lucas, who accepts Mr. Collins' proposal of marriage, despite her lack of affection for him, as a means of securing her economic stability and social status.

Female Empowerment in *Jane Eyre*

Jane Eyre, the eponymous character of Charlotte Brontë's novel, is a complex and multifaceted character who embodies many of the values and ideals of the feminist movement. Throughout the novel, Jane is portrayed as a strong-willed and independent individual who is determined to assert her own identity and values, and to resist the social and cultural constraints that seek to limit her potential.

One of the key features of Jane's character is her fierce independence and autonomy. From a young age, she is determined to be her own person, and refuses to be defined or limited by the expectations of others. This is evident in her interactions with her aunt and cousins at Gateshead, where she refuses to accept their abuse and oppression, and in her decision to leave Lowood School and seek a new life for herself as a governess. Throughout the novel, Jane consistently asserts her right to be treated with respect and dignity, and refuses to be subjugated or oppressed by anyone, no matter their social status or gender.

Another key aspect of Jane's character is her sense of moral and ethical responsibility. She is deeply committed to justice and fairness, and is willing to speak out against injustice and oppression, even when it risks her own safety and security. This is evident in her decision to leave Thornfield Hall after discovering Mr. Rochester's dark secret, and in her refusal to marry St. John Rivers, despite his pressure and manipulation.

Jane Eyre is widely regarded as a groundbreaking work of feminist literature, and one of the key themes of the novel is the portrayal of female agency, independence, and autonomy. Throughout the novel, Brontë explored the ways in which social and cultural constraints limit the potential of women, and highlighted the ways in which women can assert their own identity and values in the face of these constraints.

The key way in which Brontë portrays female agency and independence is through the character of Jane Eyre herself. From a young age, Jane is determined to be her own person, and to assert her own values and beliefs, even when they conflict with the expectations of others. This is evident in her interactions with her aunt and cousins at Gateshead, where she refuses to be subjugated or oppressed, and in her decision to leave Lowood School and seek a new life for herself as a governess. Throughout the novel, Jane consistently asserts her right to be treated with respect and dignity, and refuses to be defined or limited by the expectations of others.

The way in which Brontë portrays female agency and autonomy is through the relationships between the women in the novel. While many of the male characters seek to control and dominate the women around them, the women themselves often form close bonds of friendship and support. This is evident in the relationship between Jane and Helen Burns at Lowood School, and in the deep affection and respect that Jane develops for her friend and mentor, Miss Temple. These relationships offer a powerful alternative to the patriarchal structures of society, and suggest that women can find strength and support in each other, even in the face of adversity.

Jane Eyre is set in the Victorian era, a time when women's roles and opportunities were severely limited by social and cultural factors. Despite these constraints, the novel portrays Jane as a powerful and independent woman who is able to assert her own identity and values in the face of societal expectations.

One of the key social factors that shape female empowerment in the novel is the rigid gender roles and expectations of Victorian society. During this era, women were expected to be obedient and submissive, and their primary role was considered to be that of a wife and mother. However, Jane challenges these expectations by refusing to accept the limited role that society has assigned to her. Instead, she seeks her own path in life, and refuses to be defined or limited by the expectations of others.

A second key cultural factor that shapes female empowerment in the novel is the class structure of Victorian society. Jane is born into a lower class family, and faces discrimination and oppression, because of her social status, throughout the novel. However, she refuses to be defined by her social class, and seeks opportunities to advance herself and to assert her own independence. This is evident in her decision to become a governess, which was seen as a socially acceptable role for women of her class, and which allows her to assert her own identity and values.

Religion is also a significant cultural factor that shapes female empowerment in the novel. Victorian society is deeply religious, and religious beliefs play a significant role in shaping gender roles and expectations. However, Jane's relationship with religion is complex, and she often questions the rigid morality and judgmental attitudes of those around her. This allows her to develop a more nuanced and independent understanding of religion, and to use it as a tool for personal growth and empowerment.

Comparative Analysis

Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice* and Charlotte Brontë's "Jane Eyre" are both iconic works of literature that explore the role of women in society and challenge traditional gender roles. While both novels offer powerful portrayals of female empowerment, they differ in their approach to the subject.

Through the character of Elizabeth Bennet in *Pride and Prejudice*, Austen presented a more subtle exploration of female empowerment than Brontë did in "Jane Eyre". While Elizabeth is an independent and intelligent woman, her agency is often constrained by the societal expectations of her time. She is expected to marry for financial security and social status, and her own desires and ambitions are often

subjugated to the needs of her family, and the expectations of society. However, Elizabeth is able to assert her own agency and independence within these constraints. She refuses to marry for convenience or social standing, and instead seeks a partner who values her for her own qualities and character. She also challenges the patriarchal attitudes of the men around her, and demands to be treated with respect and dignity, even when she is in a position of social inferiority.

In *Jane Eyre*, on the other hand, Brontë offers a more direct and overt exploration of female empowerment, through the character of Jane Eyre herself. Jane is a strong and independent woman who refuses to be defined or limited by the societal expectations of her time. She seeks her own path in life, and refuses to accept the limited roles that society has assigned to women. Jane's agency and independence are evident throughout the novel, from her decision to leave Lowood School and seek a new life for herself, to her refusal to marry Rochester until he values her as an equal partner. She also forms close bonds of friendship and support with other women, demonstrating the power of female solidarity, and the importance of women supporting each other in the face of societal constraints.

There are both similarities and differences in the approaches taken by Austen and Brontë in their portrayal of female empowerment in their respective novels, *Pride and Prejudice* and *Jane Eyre*. The similarity between the two is that both authors created female characters who challenge traditional gender roles and expectations. Elizabeth Bennet and Jane Eyre are both independent and intelligent women who refuse to be limited by the societal expectations of their time. They seek their own paths in life, and assert their own agency and independence in the face of patriarchal constraints.

Another similarity between the two novels is that both Austen and Brontë emphasizes the importance of female friendship and solidarity in supporting and empowering women. Elizabeth Bennet forms close bonds of friendship with other women, such as her sister, Jane, and her friend, Charlotte Lucas. Similarly, Jane Eyre forms a strong bond of friendship with Helen Burns, and later with her cousin, St. John Rivers.

However, there are also differences in the approaches taken by Austen and Brontë in their portrayal of female empowerment. One key difference is that Austen's approach is more subtle and nuanced, while Brontë's was more overt and direct. Elizabeth Bennet's agency is often constrained by societal expectations, and she must navigate a complex web of social norms and expectations to assert her own independence. In contrast, Jane Eyre's agency is more direct and overt, as she actively seeks opportunities to challenge the limitations imposed on her by society.

Another difference between the two is that Austen's portrayal of female empowerment is more focused on individual agency and autonomy, while that of Brontë is more focused on collective action and solidarity among women. While Elizabeth Bennet is able to assert her own agency and independence within the constraints of her societal expectations, Jane Eyre actively seeks opportunities to challenge and change those expectations, often in collaboration with other women.

The comparative study of *Pride and Prejudice* and *Jane Eyre* offers important insights into the

portrayal of female empowerment in literature, and its implications for society. The analysis reveals that while these novels were written in different time periods, and by different authors, they share important similarities in their representations of strong, independent female characters who challenge traditional gender roles and expectations. These characters assert their own agency and independence, and form bonds of friendship and solidarity with other women that provide them with the support they need to overcome the limitations imposed on them by the patriarchal society in which they live.

By exploring these themes in their novels, Austen and Brontë offers important critiques of the social and cultural factors that shape female empowerment. They demonstrate that women are capable of achieving great things when they are given the opportunity to do so, and that collective action and solidarity among women is essential for achieving true empowerment. They also highlight the limitations and obstacles that women face in patriarchal societies, and the need for social and cultural change to overcome these obstacles.

The implications of this comparative analysis extend beyond literature to broader societal issues related to gender and empowerment. By portraying female characters who assert their own agency and independence, Austen and Brontë challenge the traditional gender norms and expectations that continue to limit women's opportunities in many societies. They also highlight the importance of collective action and solidarity among women for achieving true empowerment, and the need for social and cultural change to support and encourage women's empowerment.

Conclusion

The comparative study of *Pride and Prejudice* and *Jane Eyre* provides a valuable contribution to our understanding of female empowerment in literature and society. Both novels offer representations of strong, independent female characters who challenge traditional gender roles and expectations, and assert their own agency and independence. Through their exploration of these themes, Austen and Brontë offers important critiques of the social and cultural factors that shape female empowerment, and highlight the need for collective action and solidarity among women. While these novels are written in different time periods, and by different authors, the similarities in their representations of female empowerment offer important insights into the continuity of gender norms, and the on-going struggle for gender equality. The comparison also highlight the differences in the approaches taken by Austen and Brontë in their portrayal of female characters, and the social and cultural factors that shape their experiences.

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