

Li Bihua's Characterization from Female Perspective

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Abstract: As the “first person of romance”, Li Bihua has created many love tragedies, and many contrasting female and male images have been born under her pen, but in the relevant research papers, there are more female images and fewer male images. This paper mainly starts from feminist literary criticism, focuses on analyzing the two novels “The Green Snake” and “Farewell My Concubine”, summarizes the characteristics and contrasts of the male and female images in the books, and explores the female consciousness behind the writing of the two sexes.

Keywords: Feminism; Li Bihua; Male Image; Female Image; Contrasts

Introduction

Feminist literary criticism first arose in the mid-to-late 20th century, and in the early 1980s, it intermingled with Chinese literary criticism theory, which had a certain impact on China's literary creation. Feminist literary criticism aims to resist male oppression and fight for women's freedom and liberation. There are few writers in China who write about women, and the women they write about are mostly traditional women, but Li Bihua takes a unique female perspective and embodies the awakening of her female consciousness by portraying the contrasts of her characters.

1. Female Characterization

1.1 The image of a woman obsessed with love

The traditional female characters in Li Bihua's writing often have a kind of obsession with love that goes beyond life. Whether they are treacherous demons or misplaced women, they are all characterized by their willingness to give everything for love.

As one of the female protagonists of Green Snake, White Snake is willing to gamble a thousand years of Taoism for the sake of an encounter; for the sake of love, she is willing to tolerate Xu Xian selfishness and cowardice in the face of his bones. White Snake is so brave that she fights against all the outside forces that destroy her love, but she is so brave that she is unwilling to recognize Xu Xian's true nature. Even when she learns that her husband is cheating on her, White Snake does not want to give up. Seemingly obsessed with her identity as a wife, White Snake sees herself as a part of Xu Xian and holds on to this relationship^[7].

Cheng Dieyi in Farewell My Concubine possesses both natural firstness and psychological secondness^[5]. When he first arrives at the Pear Garden, Xiaodouzi refuses to sing “I was originally a weak female, not a male son”, and as the tobacco stick slides in his mouth, Xiaodouzi's natural firstness disappears^[3], perhaps because his most trusted brother says he is a weak female, Little Douzi accepts this fact, and in that traditional society, Cheng Dieyi's sense of femininity is created in a raw way. In a long time, Cheng Dieyi's dependence on her senior brother gradually turns into love, “she” loves Duan Xiaolou, loves “her” overlord, this love is not allowed by the society at that time, even Duan Xiaolou is not willing to recognize this love, but Cheng Dieyi still dream of staying with Duan Xiaolou. However, Cheng Dieyi still dreamed of staying with Duan Xiaolou until Ju Xian appeared. The appearance of this woman will show the ugliness of Duan Xiaolou to the fullest, despite this, Cheng Dieyi still love Duan Xiaolou, this love is almost twisted, but also the embodiment of its deep love, because of this deep love and love, Cheng Dieyi more than once to Duan Xiaolou to emphasize to be from the end of the day, and strongly opposed to its love with the Ju Xian, but also because of this deep love and love, Cheng Dieyi for the first time to use the way of insults for the way of Duan Xiaolou in exchange for the sword that he likes. The Sword. Perhaps Cheng Dieyi is living in the theater, but the choice of cutting her own throat is also a reflection of her obsession with love.

1.2 A Sober Female Figure

In addition to the characteristic of being crazy about love^[1], not yielding to fate and being bold and sober is another characteristic, and

the two constitute the complete female image in her writing.

Unlike White Snake's obsession, Green Snake always carries a sobriety in dealing with her feelings. Xiaoqing takes the initiative to seduce Xu Xian because she is not willing to be lonely, and she still does not give up the pursuit of love even after she and her sister have turned against each other. However, after learning about Xu Xian's ugliness under the mask of his elegance, Xiaoqing does not deceive herself and her sister, White Snake, but she resolutely gives up this hypocrite and seduces Fa Hai instead, and then she sees through the man's true face, Xiaoqing does not choose to fall, but she soberly chooses to fight against him. Despite the enmity with her sister, when her sister is suppressed under the Lei Feng Tower to save Xu Xian, Xiao Qing does not turn a blind eye to her hatred, but rises up to fight, stabs her sword at the selfish and cowardly Xu Xian and saves her sister^[7].

The same kind of sobriety can be seen in Juxian, as another heroine in Farewell My Concubine, Juxian has the sobriety and resistance that Cheng Dieyi does not have. Although it is said that "a bitch is heartless and a playwright is unrighteous", Juxian overthrows this prejudice. She does not succumb to fate and does not degenerate because of her status, but actively fights against her status and life. After meeting Duan Xiaolou, she is brave to give for love, but when she recognizes that the essence of this "king" is selfishness and cowardice, Juxian does not deceive herself and others because of love, but decisively hangs herself from a beam^[6].

Although these trivial resistance and struggle are not satisfactory, they are the manifestation of her sobriety and symbolize the awakening of women's consciousness.

2. Male Characterization

2.1 Male Characters with Positive and Handsome Characters

Although the female characters in Li Bihua's works are mostly presented in a sly and extraordinary manner, the male characters are in line with the popular martial arts male protagonist image at that time. In the interview, Li Bihua also admitted that her male portrayal was to a certain extent influenced by martial arts films. Therefore, her male characters are either straight and upright, with the righteousness of a rivers and lakes or handsome and gentle, with the posture of a gentleman.

Fa Hai is upright and kind, handsome and dashing, strong in kung fu and full of righteousness, as a human being, Fa Hai always upholds the principle of the different paths of man and demon, in his eyes, monsters and demons are bad, so in order to safeguard justice, he does not hesitate to fight against the White Queen; Duan Xiaolou has been acting as an overlord for his whole life, and his body also carries the air of an overlord^[5]. Xu Xian's eyebrows are clear, simple, pious, living a free image of a flamboyant gentleman; and in "Rouge Buckle", Li Bihua only used eight words "eyebrows handsome, meticulous and gentle" will be the twelve young handsome appearance and elegant temperament to show out, eyebrows like a picture, a smile is enough to pull at the heartstrings.

Whether it is a righteousness of the "king", or the elegant gentleman, Li Bihua never denied the positive image of men, the description of their appearance is also a lot of effort.

2.2 Cowardly and Selfish Male Image

Not only is there a contrast in the image of women, but there is also a great difference in the image of men. On the surface, each one is a gentleman and a king, but when they really face their feelings, they become cowards! Some people say that Twelve Young Men don't love Ru Hua at all, but in fact, love is real, and so is cowardice and selfishness. In order to pursue Ru Hua, Twelve Young Men threw away a lot of money, but when his family fell, the only money that could support his self-confidence was not available, and then his inferiority complex and cowardice showed, so when Ru Hua wanted to be martyred, Twelve Young Men fled, and chose to live in the world^[2].

Xu Xian, after marrying White Snake, couldn't resist his greed and met with Xiao Qing, and after cheating, he showed the thinness of a man's heart to the fullest, and in order to elope with Xiao Qing, he even squandered the money earned from White Snake's medical practice. When the White Snake was in a desperate attempt to save Xu Xian's life, he even plotted how to use the White Snake to achieve his own ascension! When Fa Hai wanted to subdue White Snake, Xu Xian, as a husband, did not fight to the death to stop him, but slipped away to save his life^[2]! On the surface he is a well-mannered scholar, but in reality Xu Xian is selfish and cowardly, full of greed for eroticism, yet unable

to shoulder the responsibilities of a family. Such a despicable man could not afford such a sincere love, and this encounter with White Snake only exposed the flaws in his human nature. There is no denying that his love for White Snake has touched people's hearts, but in the final analysis, he loves himself the most.

3. Female Consciousness in Gender Writing

The May Fourth Movement brought about the liberation of ideas, especially the awakening of women's consciousness, from the ancient subordinate idea of "marrying a chicken and following the chicken, marrying a dog and following the dog" to the new era of independence, women are no longer the product of a male-dominated society, but are completely independent individuals.^[5] In the novels, women are no longer the product of a male-dominated society, but are completely independent individuals. In *Farewell My Concubine*, Cheng Dieyi, a playwright, tries hard to break the gender boundaries for the sake of love, and Juxian, a bitch, gives up all her belongings for the sake of love. Both of them are deeply in love with the same man, but the difference is that Juxian chooses to kill herself after seeing the selfishness of Duan Xiaolou, while Cheng Dieyi's love for Duan Xiaolou devours herself^[3]. Juxian is very conscious of this love, and is very decisive in giving up even though she is in love. Similarly, White Snake categorizes herself into the feudal tradition from the moment she falls in love with Xu Xian; she is Xu Xian's wife and Xu Shilin's mother; she is the only one who is not herself. White Snake divides herself into a part of Xu Xian, and it seems that every day afterward she lives for Xu Xian, and everything she does is also for Xu Xian, even if the man has betrayed himself, and when Xu Xian is threatened with death, White Snake still risks her life to save him. Because for her, her husband is everything above her own life. Xiaoqing, on the other hand, always puts her own self in the first place, seducing Xu Xian and Fa Hai because of her own desire for love, so when she sees through the nature of the male, Xiaoqing decisively chooses to give up, because for her, the first in line is always herself! On the other hand, Xu Xian and Duan Xiaolou, the male characters, become the recipients of love, and serve as the accompaniment to show that it is the women's right to speak.

Conclusion

The contrast between these female and male characters reflects the sadness of women's fate. The feudal legacy of male chauvinism has always influenced women's status and choices, and in the deep-rooted ideological confinement, women's resistance is insignificant. Li Bihua guides the readers to think about the fate of women in the male-dominated society through the contrasting design of characters in her works, and at the same time, she also shows her female consciousness appropriately through the portrayal of each rebellious character.

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