

Analysis of the female character image of "White Deer Plain" under patriarchal consciousness

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Abstract

"White Deer Plain" is one of the representative works of Chinese modernist literature, which narrates the social changes in the Weihe Plain for half a century, and creates many distinctive female images in rural China. This paper analyzes the image of female characters in White Deer Plain from the perspective of patriarchal social ideology, and explores the reconstruction of female characters in film and television works.

Keywords

Marxist perspective; "White Deer Plain"; Female character image.

1. Introduction

The TV series "White Deer Plain" is adapted from Chen Zhongzhong's novel of the same name, and one of the important reasons why it can be popular with the public is its nuanced portrayal of the characters in the story, however, "White Deer Plain" depicts 45 female images before and after, and under the narrator's pen, some of them have been diluted of gender, and only become hard-working and capable of passing on their ancestry in the feudal family. In the end, he still fell into the situation of being spurned and insulted by men, and his fate did not escape the tragic ending compared with the previous category of women. When standing in the perspective of today's women, looking back at the past through the pages of the book, I feel not only the double squeeze of women's life and spirit by "patriarchy" in the world, but also the tragedy of the times when the traditional society is undergoing fission, and women's consciousness has awakened but cannot break free from the shackles.

2. Portrayal of female characters under patriarchy

(1) The image of women who pursue freedom

"White Deer Plain" depicts a very peculiar woman in that era - Bai Ling, she is Bai Jiaxuan's only daughter, she has her own pursuits, dreams, and more independent and autonomous rebellious character, making her another representative of Tian Xiao'e. Bai Ling is a true portrayal of the new women and revolutionary women of the era in Chen Zhongzhong's pen, and is the most prominent shining point in the whole work, she connects the various story nodes of the entire tragic fate. Bai Ling repeatedly violated the boundaries of feudal patriarchy, resolutely resisted the oppression of the feudal system, from "not binding her feet" and "going to school in private schools" to "going out" and "participating in the revolution", she always adhered to her inner choice and forged ahead towards her ideals; Bai Ling bravely faced marriage, fought tenaciously against the shackles of the real world, and conveyed a woman's declaration of independence to the feudal society. Bai Ling did not shy away from his own political pursuits, dared to confront the unfair social order, distinguished between right and wrong, joined the Communist Party, and cooperated with the organization to complete many tasks. It's just that such a revolutionary woman still can't escape the roulette wheel of tragic fate in the end. In "White Deer Plain", all the women portrayed by Chen Zhongzhong who rebelled and challenged the rule and dignity of the patriarchal society ended extremely tragically. [2] The depiction of Bai Ling's female

character is also in line with the basic Marxist theory of "White Deer Plain" rooted in the people's nature.

(2) The image of a female character struggling for innovation

In Marxist theory of literature and art, "class nature" is a key concept, emphasizing the class attributes of literary and artistic works and the display of class struggle, and believing that literature and art are social ideologies that reflect specific socio-economic structures and class relations. [3] In the process of sinicization of Marxist literary and artistic theory, the interpretation of "class nature" began by combining Marxist theory with China's specific social and historical reality, especially in the literary and artistic practice that reflects China's revolution and social changes, emphasizing that literature and art should stand in the position of the proletariat and the working people, propagate the proletarian viewpoint, stimulate class consciousness, and promote social change.

In "White Deer Plain", Bai Ling's death stemmed from the inferior nature of the class system at that time, and her death was no accident. In Bai Ling's society where the political system is not yet perfect, the political ideals full of enthusiasm may not allow young people to get the political attitude they deserve, but on the contrary, the mercenary villains like Bai Xiaowen can be promoted and promoted to higher positions like a fish in water. The "black hole" of political struggle hangs the noble who go against its will, and rewards the inferior who cater to its will. [4] Modern civilization brought Bai Ling a strong spirit of resistance and a sense of social responsibility, so that she was no longer willing to be an ordinary peasant woman, but she suppressed her beautiful political ideals with a higher level of patriarchy and persecuted real revolutionaries. The patriarchal consciousness has never dissipated, it has permeated every corner of Bailuyuan, and it will continue to spread in the city and in the revolution.

(3) The image of female characters who abide by the old rules

In Marxist theory of literature and art, the concept of "ideology" is based on the philosophical ideas of Marx and Engels, and believes that literature and art should reflect the social trend and ideology of a specific historical stage, and that literary and artistic works should go beyond the function of pure entertainment and become a tool to reflect social contradictions and promote social progress. [5] Hegel said, "Every man is the child of his time." "The changes of the times will inevitably have an impact on the fate of the individual. The spring breeze of new ideas set off a wave on the calm Bailu Plain, and between "establishing the new" and "keeping the old", the Bai and Lu families made different choices. Bai Jiakuan adheres to the old code of conduct and traditional way of doing things; Lu Zilin welcomes new things, he actively accepts new ideas and changes, and believes that the spring of the Lu family is coming. Lu Zhaopeng studied in the city with the support of his father and received the influence of new ideas at an early age. As a newcomer of the times, he has seen the disadvantages brought about by "conservatism", and he has also begun to examine traditional culture and customs from a new perspective. [6] When he married Mr. Leng's daughter under the arrangement of his parents, he resolutely refused to accept the marriage, and even though his parents persuaded him to put the interests of the family first, he resolutely chose to pursue the freedom of marriage. And his awakening indirectly stimulated his wife, Lu Leng. In the face of her husband's cold reception and indifference, she indirectly felt the impact of new ideas and concepts on the traditional form of marriage. Lu Lengshi showed a struggling ambivalence after seeing Tian Xiao'e: "She used to feel disgusted when she saw it, but now she is jealous that bitch is coming, she and Heiwa are probably trembling like a sheep in that broken kiln every night." This kind of recognition and awareness of her own desires is precisely part of the awakening of personal consciousness, for Tian Xiao'e, she is no longer blindly disdainful and repulsive, but gives birth to a kind of envy and jealousy. [7] This act of spiritual rebellion allows us to see the transformation of individual concepts and changes in thinking under the purification of new ideas.

3. The relevance of patriarchal consciousness and female role image

TV dramas are closely linked to society, economy, and politics, and are a unique way of cultural and artistic expression. From the perspective of Marxism, TV dramas are not only the presentation of cultural products, but also the mapping of ideology. Its production and content are influenced by the conditions and cultural environment of the times, showing the class and ideological tendencies of a particular period. [8] At the same time, as an art form, TV dramas have a unique social function and influence in the process of audience acceptance and understanding, and the female characters of TV dramas are also given their "what they should be" by ideology.

The first sentence at the beginning of "White Deer Plain" is "Bai Jiaxuan is proud of marrying seven women in his life." The women in the first six rooms all died suddenly shortly after their marriage, and their mother-in-law, Bai Zhao, summed up the fate of these women's lives in just one indifferent sentence - nothing more than paper pasted on the windows. She has been working hard for the succession of the Bai family all her life, since the death of her husband Bingde Laohan, she has firmly held the power of the family and refused all factors that hinder Bai Jiaxuan's continuation of future generations. [9] In her heart, it is worth it when the family property is spent, and if a woman dies, she will change it, and if she dies, she will marry another 5, and she must not cut off the incense of the Bai family. Her unmistakable paternalistic style once surprised her son Bai Jiaxuan, because when the old man Bingde was alive, Bai Zhao never participated in the discussion and choice of family topics, she was like a hookah that the old man Bingde carried at any time, she completely belonged to the old man of Bingde, and after the old man passed away, he would eventually be subordinated to his son. Only when the family has lost its backbone and the son has not yet taken charge of himself can he shake the ashes in the cracks and reproduce a little faint light. However, the place where the light is directed still does not cross the boundaries of traditional women's ethics and morality. [10] Bai Zhao's patriarchal consciousness is still confined to the jurisdiction of women, and although his son still does not have the ability to manage the family, Bai Zhao has never interfered, touched, or even understood those "things that men do". This is a typical woman who has been immersed in traditional male consciousness for a long time, she accepts the domestication given to her by male society, begins to look at other women from a male perspective, and requires other women to become "women" with a strict gaze. But this way of measuring and manufacturing women is exactly the "de-feminization" brought to women by the shackles of feudal society. [11] Bai Zhao consciously served patriarchal ethics, as if he had become an accomplice of a patriarchal society and a supporter of feudal etiquette. When her grandson Bai Xiaowen and his new wife were in love and spiritually decadent, she said the most vulgar and bad words, which made her granddaughter-in-law full of shame and indignation. She was as tough as before in this matter, but she just fired at her granddaughter-in-law with such a paternalistic majesty. Her traditional feminine thinking has been deeply rooted in the bone marrow, as a woman but can not understand women, as a woman but with a man's moral yardstick to look at women, persecution of women, Bai Zhao's independent female consciousness has faded, the only thing left on the body is the small embroidered shoes attached to men, etiquette bandages, patriarchal ideas are not only reflected in feudal men, traditional Chinese women have also been domesticated into patriarchal supporters, and this is the reflection of its ideology. [12]

4. Innovative exploration of female character image

In Marxist literary theory, artistic innovation is usually regarded as an innovation in art form, style, theme, and expression. Tian Xiao'e's image may represent a woman who is under the pressure of gender and ethics in feudal society, and her sexual experience may be her rebellion in this environment, but also her insistence on humanity. Tian Xiao'e is usually portrayed as a

seductress in sexual depictions, which is in stark contrast to other sexual depictions in legal marriages, and this role positioning leads to her sexuality being given an immoral color by the narrator, seeing her as a representative of sensuality rather than an individual who rebels in a specific environment, and also leads to her sexuality being opposed to the ethical order, and ultimately becoming the object of moral judgment. The narrator strongly opposes sexuality and morality, redefining Tian Xiao'e's sexuality as an immoral "slut" behavior, triggering complex thinking about ethical order and sexuality, and Tian Xiao'e's sexuality is no longer seen as a symbol of sexual liberation, but as a manifestation of excessive carnal desire and moral depravity, and becomes the object of moral judgment. [13] Ultimately, Tian Xiao'e's sexual depiction in the novel presents a complex image, in which she is both a rebel trying to break through the shackles of the ethical order, and is rewritten by the narrator as a "model" that cannot die well, reflecting the process of reproduction of the ethical order. [14] In this way, Chen Zhongzhong attempts to delve into the relationship between sexuality and ethics and the complex evaluation of sexuality in society, attempts to explore the issue of women's liberation through Tian Xiao'e's story, and challenges traditional Confucian notions, presenting a female figure that cannot be ignored by portraying Tian Xiao'e, whose actions and fate force the reader to re-examine the limitations of Confucian ethics. This narrative allows Tian Xiao'e's story to go beyond simple gender role stereotypes and reflect the complex situation of women in society and in the family.

5. Conclusion

In short, Marxist literary and artistic theory provides a solid theoretical foundation and rich creative inspiration for the development of Chinese film and television dramas, making it an important medium for social change and cultural development. In "White Deer Plain", the submission of Bai Zhao and Bai Wu, the madness of Lu Leng, the struggle of Tian Xiao'e, and the death of Bai Ling all reflect the suppression of human nature by the traditional Chinese feudal patriarchal system under the patriarchal consciousness. The tragedy of women's survival in "White Deer Plain" is also the survival tragedy of traditional women for a long time, looking at these typical female characters from the perspective of Marx's literary theory, each character is permeated with the class position behind it, and each one reflects the ideology of the era in which it is located.

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