

Medical culture in the disease narrative of modern Chinese literature

An Weina^{1,a*}, Li Yinwei^{2,b}

¹School of health management, Xi'an Medical University, Xi'an, Shaanxi, China

² School of clinical medical, Xi'an Medical University, Xi'an, Shaanxi, China

^aanweina@xiyi.edu.cn, ^blywhi@sina.com

*Corresponding author

Keywords: Modern Chinese literature; Disease narration; Medical culture.

Abstract. There are lots of disease narrations in literary works, which constitute a content-rich medical picture. This paper focuses on the disease narrative works from the Revolution of 1911 to the birth of New China, and analyzes the medical culture and phenomenon presented by literary works from the three aspects of modernization of medicine, identification of women, and aesthetic connotation of common diseases.

1. Introduction

From the Revolution of 1911 to the birth of New China, Chinese society had been in a period of great turmoil and great change. In this background, many scholars and patriots use the writing method of "disease narrative" to metaphorize social issues and promote the modernization process of nation. The content of these articles includes the people of all classes from the dignitary and the nobles of middle class to the ordinary people in the urban and rural areas, thereby forming a beautiful literary landscape in the modern literature history of China. By analyzing the disease narrative works of literary masters such as Lu Xun, Xiao Hong, Yu Dafu, Ba Jin, Cao Yu, Ding Ling, etc., we can not only feel the social reality of China in the first half of the 20th century, but also clearly grasp the development of medicine and unique cultural representation at that time.

2. Modern transformation of medicine

During the May 4th Movement, Chinese and Western cultures collided sharply. In the disease narrative works, the modern intellectuals clearly showed different attitudes toward Chinese medicine and Western medicine.

2.1 Doubts over Chinese medicine

In Lu Xun's work "Father's Disease" recalls his experience of seeking medical treatment for his father's illness, which details the treatment methods of Shaoxing's two "famous doctors". The medicines used by the two people are more unique than others, even using the broken drum skin as a medicine for Lu Xun's father who is suffering from edema, which heals physical illness by the meaning "breaking bulging", and using "troubles by ghost" and destiny is destined as explanations for the fact that his father could not be cured. Eventually, Lu Xun's father died because the disease was delayed for more than two years without treatment. It was just because of the whole process of his father's treatment of illness in his youth, and later he learned the knowledge of Western medicine in Japan systematically, Lu Xun, as the coach of the "May 4th" New Culture Movement, carried out the evaluation of "obviously unbalanced, but has critical value of thought." [1] to Chinese medicine, and considered "Chinese medicine is just a deliberate or unintentional liar." Although Lu Xun realized his bias in his early thoughts in his later years, and reaffirmed the "rich treasures" and its great potential of Chinese medicine, but May fourth cultural celebrities like Lu Xun, Chen Duxiu, Zhou Zuoren, Guo Moruo, Ba Jin, etc., Lu Xun, regarded Chinese medicine as the symbol of

thousands years of Chinese traditional culture or folk culture and sharply criticized, thus achieving the purpose of pursuing a new scientific trend, which had a major impact on society at that time.

2.2 Domination by Western medicine

The literary works of this period also showed the process of Western medicine from the resistance of the Chinese medicine court to the occupation of the main body. In Ba Jin's work "Spring", Haichen was seriously ill and two Chinese doctors had no good methods for him. Even after eating Chinese medicine, the condition worsened. The father Juexin invited western medicine for Haichen, and finally Haichen was diagnosed as meningitis. However, because of the misdiagnosis of the previous Chinese medicine, the treatment was delayed, and Haichen finally died. In Lu Xun's "Brothers", Zhang Peijun invited the Chinese medicine doctor Bai Wenshan and Western medicine Pu Yisi to see his brother. As a result, the Chinese medicine doctor not only diagnosed by mistake, but also ridiculously thought that his brother was sick and related to family destiny. But the Western doctors give clear diagnosis and treatment with rigorous, scientific and hygienic treatment. Compared with the two, Western medicine won all the victories. In late Qing period, with the increase of missionary physicians coming to China, Western hospitals have been established in various ports in China, and Western medicine has become the representative of Western modern scientific thoughts and methods. [2] In the Chinese modern writers, Western medicine and Chinese medicine form a sharp contrast, showing the modern transformation of tradition and science to superstition. Due to the propaganda role of the new culture, it directly promotes the establishment of the dominant position of Western medicine.

3. Discovery and identification of women

The civilization history of China for thousands of years has a strong patriarchal atmosphere, and the spirit and body of women have been banned. Until the beginning of the 20th century, the wave of women's liberation that accompanied the May Fourth New Culture Movement made the female group "Enter into the history" [3]. Since then, women's literature has developed rapidly. The female disease narrative in modern literature shows the fate of women in that era.

3.1 Sick woman image and feminist consciousness awakening

In the work "One Writer" of Lu Yin, Qinfen occasionally encountered a former lover, but because of ethical concepts, she could not love, and her sadness attack her heart, make her spit out a blood, and fell ill after returning home; In Xiao Hong's "Hulan River Biography", Xiaotuan yuan's daughter-in-law because of the life vitality of unconscious outpouring into the eyes of the hulan river residents of the patient, and the treatment of her family was to beaten her. Her mother-in-law's desire to make her a good person by beaten. In the final, Xiaotuan yuan's daughter-in-law was tragic death by the abuse of mother-in-law. By portraying a series of sick women, female writers show the miserable situation in which women have been suppressed by traditional ethical concepts for thousands of years, rediscovering and examining women's bodies and emotions.

3.2 Female doctor image and professional value identification

The image of women's health care often appears in the narrative of modern literary diseases. Women's nature is suitable for medical doctors, and female doctors have been in history for a long time, but later declined due to the exclusion of male medical groups. During the "May 4th" period, the ideological community challenged patriarchal rights and husbands' rights, and came up with that women should go out of their homes. Among women in that time, "although the number of female teachers and doctors is small, it is called a very valuable life." [4] The literary works of this period also show people's recognition of the value of women doctors. Ba Jin's "Fourth Ward" depicts a hellish third-class ward where the underlying people who suffer from the disease are suffering and die, killed and died like ants. Only Dr. Yang Muhua regards the patient as "a person, a friend." She has a fiery heart, a noble professional ethics, a humanitarian spirit, and is the only bright line in the ward."

Cao Yu's "Transmutation" tells a whole process of an old hospital transmute to a new one in the province during the Anti-Japanese War. In this work, Ding Dafu is the most touching figure. She dares to challenge the evil forces, and has worked hard to help the wounded, and has a lofty ideal to serve the country. She concentrated on the bright future of the war. Ding Ling's work "In the Hospital" tells the story of Lu Ping, a knowledgeable woman who worked as an obstetric nurse in a rural hospital. She was upright and responsible. She always questioned all irrational phenomena sharply and gradually grew up after grinding. The female medical image in literary works shows the political society's demand for women's liberation and resistance to feudalism after the May 4th Movement. The construction of this disease discourse mode has opened another way for women to enter the medical field.

4. Disease type and aesthetic implication

Since the "Book of Songs", Chinese literature has often given medicine a symbolic color, and gradually formed the creation method of disease metaphor, so that the disease has a poetic character. There are three types of diseases commonly found in modern literature, each with complex aesthetic implications and cultural values.

4.1 Tuberculosis

In the early 20th century, tuberculosis was an incurable disease with a very high mortality rate. It is like a country in the midst of the May 4th Movement. It is possible to destroy at any time. Therefore, tuberculosis has become the carrier of national imagination. [5] For example, Ba Wen's "Cold Night" protagonist Wang Wenxuan suffers from tuberculosis and eventually dies, metaphorizing the mentality of the intellectuals and the darkness of the old Chinese political environment; and because the tuberculosis patients are often pale, fragile, and pitiful, therefore, With the symbol of love, marriage and romance, such as Yu Dafu's "Day and Night", the protagonist has a special feeling for the homosexual Wu Housheng who is weak and has lung disease. Ding Ling's "Diary of Ms. Shafei", the sick Shafei despise traditional love ethics, and seek for individual liberation, pursuit for the spiritual and fleshy unity of love, but eventually fell into disappointment and pain.

4.2 Mental illness

The people who survive in the cracks are depressed, decadent, and stunned, and mental illness has become an anachronism. The madman in Lu Xun's "Madman's Diary" is not only a persecution of delusional patients, but also an intellectual image of the mind and thought, reaching the critical theme of "intention to outside medicine"; in Zhang Ailing's work "Golden Lock" Cao Qiqiao is a abnormal psychology and mad revenge due to personal lust failure to satisfy, which is a great complaint against the patriarchal culture.

4.3 Plague

The social unrest caused by the successive years of war is similar to the life chaos caused by the plague, so the writer also gives the plague a special aesthetic meaning. In Xiao Hong's "Life and Death Field", the author skillfully borrowed the plague metaphor from foreign enemies, infidels, and the chaos caused by the revolution; Shen Congwen's "The Mud" describes the epidemic in the slums, the countless tragic circumstances of the deceased, and the suffering of the people at the bottom. In addition to the effective form of literary and dramatic arrangements, these different types of diseases also show the level of understanding and aesthetic imagination of people at that time.

5. Conclusion

The modern Chinese literary works are filled with a large number of disease narratives. Behind these disease images, they have rich cultural implications and aesthetic orientations, and are endowed with social healing functions. By reading these works, we can also understand the development of Chinese medicine at that time and the social and cultural psychology associated with medicine.

Acknowledgement

This research was financially supported by the fund project of Xi'an Medical University in 2016. (Grant NO. 2016pt39).

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