



The Contrast of the Female Consciousness Between the East and the West in the Opera Scripts of the 17th Century

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Abstract. Nowadays, more and more women have joined social life, and the consciousness of women has been paid more and more attention. More and more scholars have devoted themselves to the study of female consciousness. Based on the opera or drama scripts of *'Romeo and Juliet'* and many versions of *'White Snake'*, the author analyzes the characters representing the female characters of the East and the West. The study found that both works praise the awakening consciousness of women, but in *'Romeo and Juliet'*, Juliet still compromises, and *'White Snake'* reflects the submission to the secular. The two works are still greatly influenced by the patriarchal society. However, both writers are important figures in promoting the emancipation of women's thoughts in the history of literature.

Keywords: opera's script language · Juliet · the White Lady · female consciousness

1 Introduction

Nowadays, more and more women join social work, and female consciousness is paid more and more attention. Many scholars are committed to the development of female consciousness. Through the comparison of female consciousness between the East and the West, we can better understand the process of female consciousness and the gradual improvement of women's social status in the world, making women's social status more equal, having legal rights, and women can also understand self-worth and make more contributions to society. In this paper, the author chooses two opera scripts, namely *'Romeo and Juliet'* and *'White Snake'*. *Romeo and Juliet'* is Shakespeare's script. Based on the script, the author will analyze the image of Juliet according to the script language. The author will analyze the evolution of the text of *White Lady* and the evolution of female images in these texts, and we can understand the change in female consciousness and the improvement of female status in Chinese history.

One tough issue for historians to meditate on the possibilities of reading evidence out of the context of a certain era would be that the so-called consciousness is invisible. To argue that certain motivation or behavior is reflected as a mirror of the consciousness of one gender or two is taking the risk of applying a pre-established gender-bias view

or violating some Lacanian concepts. The modest way is far from easy while gender studies are always confident to provide the proof of gender consciousness labeled profile of people, no matter whether they are created in a novel or they lived. The comparative way to do this study was adopted due to this very concern.

2 The Embodiment of Female Consciousness in the Two Works

2.1 Juliet's Female Consciousness

Romeo and Juliet were created in the Renaissance. After the opening of the new route, the European economy developed rapidly. People held the flag of freedom and advocated humanism. Shakespeare's creation of the script also encouraged people to break away from the shackles of feudalism and pursue the happiness of the world. The story tells that the two families of Romeo and Juliet have a feud, but they loved each other, and are eventually dead because of a misunderstanding [1].

After Juliet knew that the man she loved was Romeo, a member of the Montague family, she did not give up the pursuit of love due to a family feud. She said, 'Only your name is my enemy, even if you do not name Montague, you are still the same. What is the relationship between the surname and the surname Montague?', 'I am willing to put my heart, compensate you for this empty name outside [1]. Facing the oppression of their family, Juliet did not give in. If she listens to her family's arrangements, she will be reduced to family rule, and compromised to patriarchy, she will no longer be a complete person and no longer have an independent personality. People have the right to pursue freedom and pursue what they desire within the scope of legality .

"It is too hasty, too rash, too surprising" [1]. When she heard Romeo expresses his love, Juliet said. She was not very surprised by her lover's sudden confession. Juliet is a calm woman. She has independent thinking and is a complete person.

When Romeo was forced to kill Juliet's brother, one with a lover on one side and a dead brother on the other, Juliet still chose 'enemy' Romeo as her husband, which not only needed to bear the pressure from the rest of the family but also to bear her own inner condemnation. The pressure on her is no longer a feud, and it is the choice of lovers and relatives, the choice of love freedom, and family glory. Juliet finally chose Romeo, which means that she should bear the name of betraying the family and the ridicule of others. But if she can't take this step and doesn't make this decision, she will be back in the original cage, cannot get rid of the cycle of the feud, cannot have the right to choose their own life, and can only accept fate. In the process of pursuing love step by step, she undoubtedly realized that what she was striving for was not only love with Romeo but also the right to pursue the freedom of life.

Juliet is passionate, positive, and resolute about love. After his first meeting with Romeo, he decided: 'If only he had done married, then the grave is my wedding bed.' Facing Barris's proposal, old Kepler's attitude is very determined that his daughter will obey his will, the majesty of patriarchy is revealed, though his daughter will protect him for the reputation of the family is also for the consolidation of their social status. However, Juliet's rebellious strength enabled her to fight against her father and the patriarchal society. She does not think that she can spend the rest of her life with an unloved person under her father's pressure, nor that her father, family, and years of

family resentment can block her right to pursue happiness in life. Romeo's love made her argument have a more solid foothold [2].

The male in the dominant position will own to it is imposed on women, so women can only be silent and have aphasia. In a male-centered marginal position. If women want to be accepted by society acceptance and recognition, it must be through patriarchal femininity (weak, meek, conscious norms that suppress, distort, and reshape the heavens (dependence and passivity, etc.) Sexuality, consciously integrated into the patriarchal ideology' [3]. This is the traditional thought of deprivation of women's freedom. Due to female meaning with the awakening of consciousness, Juliet gradually changed her right to pursue love, freedom, and happiness from patriarchal oppression, from the feudal family out of control for love, for the pursuit of freedom, the pursuit of secular happiness autonomy .

2.2 The White Lady's Female Consciousness

The story of Leifeng Pagoda evolved from many versions. The story told that a white snake magically changed a woman who was called the White Lady. She loved a scholar, Xu Xian because the love between man and monster violated the secular rules at that time, the White Lady was imprisoned in Leifeng Pagoda by a monk Fahai. In Chinese traditional culture, the snake is usually the embodiment of evil Li Huang works for the first time to show the image of a white snake, it is a very evil bad woman image [3]. During the Ming Dynasty, someone sorted out folk stories and wrote *The White Lady Was Imprisoned in Leifeng Pagoda Forever*. The image of the white snake is constantly changing with the development of the times, showing multiple characteristics, which also reflects the changes in women's social status and the thoughts of the times to a certain extent.

Tang and Song Dynasties: In the traditional Chinese culture, the snake is usually the embodiment of evil promiscuous 'Li Huang' works for the first time to show the image of the white snake, it is a very evil bad woman image [3]. 'Li Huang' tells the story from the perspective of Li Huang. The white snake turns into a beautiful woman and tempts Li Huang to marry her. After marriage, Li Huang is poisoned and cannot speak. Although he is still alive, he can only watch his body disappear with only one skull left. The author wants to use this story to warn people not to be greedy for beauty. In the Song Dynasty, Mrs. Bai Yi was a veritable snake and scorpion beauty. She tried every means to eat the heart of the scholar to enhance her magic power. Finally, she was also escaped by the scholar.

During the Tang and Song Dynasties, the white lady mainly presented the image of a bad woman, first of all, because the snake itself was endowed with mysterious and vicious colors in Chinese traditional culture. For example, the Chinese idiom 'snake scorpion heart' is to describe people's hearts. Secondly, because it was in a patriarchal society at that time, women's social status was low, and their right to speak gradually decreased. Therefore, the white woman was always associated with the image of the evil woman. Later, *Leifeng Pagoda* was published in Qing Dynasty (1738). The plot of the whole play, the author is based on the script *The White Lady Was Imprisoned in Leifeng Pagoda Forever*. This version of the White Snake Story on the Kunqu stage is a contribution [4]. The white lady also gradually showed a good side. During the Ming

and Qing Dynasties, the place where the story of 'White Snake Biography' occurred was fixed in the southern area of China, which is a rich and beautiful area in China. Capitalism first began to sprout here. New ideas began to germinate, which had a certain impact on traditional feudal ethics. The rise and development of the people's class and citizen culture influenced the creation of literature.

It led to the appearance of the image of the white lady in Leifeng Pagoda [4]. This is related to the rise of the citizen class. People try to break the shackles of feudalism, which also has a certain conflict with feudal ethics. In this work, treat me a little trick, temporary shelter from the wind and rain, then only said to borrow boat shelter from the rain, Then I can see my lover [5]. In ancient China, women's status was low, and they usually only had the opportunity to be selected by men. The white lady broke this rule and pursued pure love bravely.

The dominant challenge of male power is represented by embodies the female consciousness. The awakening and the improvement of women's status, which made the image of 'the white lady more and more' humanized can reflect the kind of human nature, also meant resisting feudalism and an unfair patriarchal society. Fahai imprisoned Xu Xian in Jinshan Temple and refused the White Lady's request to release Xu Xian, resulting in the White Lady water-filled Jinshan Mountain and rising against feudal ethics. She has a strong resistance consciousness, she dared to pursue their love and break the inherent traditional female image. The writer through a series of creative adaptations, First of all, the White Lady fully 'humanized', showing its original kind of human nature. She yearned for welfare, she pursued the pure love id and sacrificed herself for love. The White Lady in Dragon Boat Festival was drunk and showed the original shape, a very large snake, scared to death Xu Xian. To save her beloved husband, she did not hesitate to defy all difficulties and danger, going to a mysterious mountain to rob a magic flower to save Xu Xian's life. Fahai wanted to kill the White Lady, he let Xu Xian hide in the Jinshan Temple, she gave up everything just so she could spend the rest of her life with Xu Xian. Her pursuit of love and yearning for welfare, although it is too dangerous, she dared to sacrifice. Until the defeat of the battle of Jinshan Temple, she was imprisoned under the Leifeng Pagoda, she was still not forgotten in Xu Xian, which shows the single-minded image.

Nevertheless, the White Lady still contains the 'evil' side: many of Xu Xian's money and clothing are stolen; to dispel Xu Xian's suspicion, the white lady cheated Xu Xian many times. But the good side of the white lady in the Ming and Qing Dynasties has been shown.

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Since the 20th century, people have adapted the image of the White Lady again. The white lady gradually faded part of the evil in human nature and became a just and kind woman. Tian Han has adapted the story of "White Snake" many times, and "White Snake" (1955) has the greatest influence. The 'White Snake' created by Tian Han removed the story [3].

The feudal color of 'White Snake' adds the character of 'resistance'. The struggle between Bai Suzhen and Fahai is the confrontation between the demon and Buddha. Although 'White Snake' is a demon, it does good, while Fahai is a human, but it is evil. The two are in stark contrast, satirizing the complexity of human nature in real society. The white lady created in 'Green Snake' (1993) is beautiful and kind. When she sees a pregnant woman giving birth to a child in a rainstorm, she becomes the original giant snake image to block the rain for pregnant women. She prescribes medicine for the people, people are very grateful to her; to save Xu Xian, she used the Qiantang River to flood the temples, because the river rushed to the people's homes. She stopped the practice and saw that she pitied all living beings [6].

The transformation of the image of the white lady in today's society is first of all because literary and artistic works should promote positive energy. The kindness and courage of the white lady are worth promoting; secondly, after the founding of new China, feudalism was overthrown, women's voices rose, and they also played a very important role in society.

3 Deficiencies in the Two Works

'Romeo and Juliet' Juliet love Romeo very much, 'I will entrust my whole destiny to you, treat you as my master, follow you to the end of the world'. Juliet is very brave in the struggle against patriarchy, but in front of love, she is very obedient. She gave her destiny to her lover, completely surrendered to Romeo, and seemed to forget her value. It is as if the meaning of her existence is to give life to her lover, and she can give up her life for Romeo. In the relationship between the sexes, women consciously place themselves in the identity of the obedient, and willingly, this dependent, gentle, and passive femininity appears again. Humanistic writers call for freedom and human rights for women. They still do not put women on an equal footing with men. Equality does not penetrate marriage. Women regard the success of marriage as the greatest success of life.

The Legend of the White Snake' is a Buddhist disciple. To conquer the demon, he used all means, even despicable means, to hinder the free love between Xu Xian and the White Lady [6]. Although the white lady did not do bad things in the later text, the white lady was even a very kind woman, but Fahai still had to hinder the love between this man and the demon, because he firmly believed in his own beliefs and believed that there could not be pure love between different species [7, 8]. Fahai is a symbol of feudal morality. Influenced by the millennium monarchy and feudalism, writers cannot get rid of the shackles and create a beautiful ending of free love [9, 10].

4 Conclusion

The exploration and thinking of women's issues in the two works have progressive value in the patriarchal feudalism at that time and still are today. Both works show the pursuit of gender equality. Women also have the right to pursue their happiness. They are no longer accessories of family honor, not bound by feudal secularism. They look at women through the female perspective, encouraged women to pursue love bravely and free them

from the male perspective. The awakening of female consciousness not only transcended the previous works, but also had an extraordinary influence at that time, and also had a profound impact on the subsequent writers.

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