

# Three Main Types of Female Images in Castle

Yuanxiu GUO<sup>1</sup> Hongqin YU<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Library, Linyi University of Shandong Province, China; 644921643@qq.com

<sup>2</sup>Foreign Language School, Linyi University of Shandong Province, China  
yhq301@163.com

**Abstract** - Kafka is one of the most outstanding writers in the 20th century modern literary world. *Castle* was not only Kafka's life experience and the summary of his philosophy thought, but also the mature symbol of Kafka's works. In order to help readers understand the work better, the three main types of female images in *Castle* are analyzed in this thesis. Women "in" the castle, women "outside" the castle and women "exiled" by the castle. Literature research method is used in this thesis. Analyzing the female images in *Castle* can also help us understand the society of that time.

**Index Terms** - female images; *Castle*; Kafka; exile

## 1. Introduction

Franz Kafka (1883-1924) is hailed as the pioneer of western modern novels for his succeeding describing the loneliness and confused survival circumstances of modern human beings (Steve, 2008). He is one of the best writers of the 20th century, "He has become a legendary hero and saints. "From the viewpoint of other writers, Kafka can be compared with Goethe, Dante, and Shakespeare" (Ye, 1988, p.678). "These writers are aware of it or don't realize it, but all can't change the facts" (Liu, 1998, p.11). *Castle* is not only Kafka's life experience and the philosophy thought summary, but also the mature symbol of Kafka's works.

Kafka's works were worth studying because "The thing that was told by Kafka was our own thing. He revealed our own problem that our salvation was at risk without God"(Ernst, 1984, p.422). Many researchers studied Kafka and his *Castle* at home and abroad. Ritchie Robertson introduced Kafka's winding life in his work *Who is Kafka: a Very Short Introduction* (Ritchie, 2008). Zeng Yanbing studied Kafka from a female perspective (Zeng, 2005). Kafka shaped thirteen female images in *Castle*. In this thesis, these thirteen female images will be analyzed into three categories: women "in" the castle, women "outside" the castle, and women "exiled" by the castle. Women "in" the castle are carefully studied in this thesis. They have some common characteristics. They all have Kafka's father's shadow; they all have power to govern other persons; they are confident and arrogant. However, they are all accessories of their husbands.

## 2. The Influential Elements on Kafka's Writing

Kafka's awareness of women was shown through the female images of *Castle*. In other words, we could find the shadow of Kafka's mother in *Castle*. For example, Hans' mother and Amalia's mother had the shadow of Kafka's mother. And these mother's images were attached to males and were not independent. Therefore, those independent images of women had the characteristics of Kafka's father, such as the

boss of Gard Bridge Hotel Dena, the mayor's wife Mitzi, Grand hotel proprietress and Frida, etc

### A. The Influence of Kafka's Father

Kafka's life was unique and legendary. Kafka was born on July 3, 1883 in an ordinary Jewish family in Czech Republic in Prague. His father, Herman Kafka, supported the family. He was strict with his children. Kafka's mother was a sensitive woman. Kafka inherited the sensitive nature of his mother. So he had been suffering from this kind of invisible mental torture, and the image of his father became a "shadow" of his life. His father's request and quest made Kafka's life in trouble. In Kafka's mind, he could only survive in the world without his writing. But Kafka's father was strongly opposed Kafka's writing, because he thought that the writing is worthless and shameful. Kafka once wrote to his friends, "My whole body and mind contributed to the literature, until thirty years old I always insist on the direction, I have not the slightest deviation; if one day loses this direction, the end of my life" (Zhu & Zhang, 2002, 111). For Kafka, writing was the most objectionable thing, so writing was Kafka's main way to revolt father's opposition. Father was a "knot" in Kafka's life, and father was also the "knot" in his works, and we felt the presence of the father in this work all the time. Women in *Castle* also took the characteristics of the father.

In Kafka's world, the father is a tall, strong man; in many cases Kafka even portray him as a giant. He surrenders to his father, "For example, I often think of the time we naked in bedroom. I was thin and weak, and you were strong and tall. I have to shame in bedroom, and not just for you, but all over the world, because you are the gigantic image in my eyes" (Ye, 2000, 407). Therefore, in Kafka's idea, his father is the "ruler" in his family and his life, and his father's thought is the "standard" of all behaviors. Kafka lived in the shadow of his father, and his emotional life is full of contradictions and disputes with his father. We can almost see his father or paternal image hidden in every corner of Kafka. In particularly, female images represent the characteristics of his father in *Castle*, such as the Bridge Hotel owner who was the wife of shop-owner, village head of the wife, the Grand Hotel, Frida and so on. They represent his father in three aspects- appearance, words and deeds.

### B. The Influence of Kafka's Mother

Kafka's mother, Juliet, was born in a wealthy family and received higher education. She married Kafka's father and became a virtuous wife. She played a traditional role of wife and mother. She gave birth to six children, but two sons died unfortunately, and Kafka became the focus of his mother.

Although Kafka became the focus of his mother, he could not be given enough love by his mother. Firstly, Kafka mother was often ill, so she did not have time to care about Kafka. Secondly, the status of Kafka's mother was very embarrassing because of the father's might and the "virtuous" of mother. To be honest, Kafka's mother was an accessory appendage, then this kind of maternal love is a modification; Thirdly, Kafka's three sisters shared mother's love with Kafka, so Kafka did not get enough love of his mother. Kafka sometimes lived in the absence of maternal state, which would influence the maternal images of Castle. We could find out the shadow of Kafka's mother from the images of Hans' mother and Amalia's mother in *Castle*. They were attached to their husbands and were sick, and they had little concern for their children.

### C. *The Influence of Kafka's Living Background*

Anyone's ideas and values were related to his experience. Kafka was not an exception. "Kafka was tragic witness because of his pain" (Flores, 1946, 184). His life, family, marital status and experience contributed to his character. He lived in a declining empire, and the national political atmosphere was particular serious and depressing. Kafka's family made Kafka become a supervisor himself. Kafka's family was also extremely depressing. Maybe it didn't matter for ordinary people, but it was fatal for Kafka because of Kafka's sensitivity. In addition, Kafka father's cold, majesty and tall image did not slip of Kafka's mind. Kafka never found relevant points of his life, and he had to explore in order that his life would be in a balanced state. We could say that this was a way of life and the paradox of thought, and it existed and bit the owner's soul. Kafka need to get rid of such a situation of suffering, and no one could understand him so that he had to talk to himself.

## 3. Women "In" the Castle

Women who lived in the castle had the power, and Kafka's father is a symbol of power in Kafka's family. So the women who lived in the castle would show the same characteristics of Kafka's father..

### A. *The Image of Gal Dena*

The Bridge Hotel proprietress, Gal Dena, had the characteristic of Kafka's father in shape. Kafka's father was a "giant" who was tall, strong and wide shoulders. She also had a strong tall figure, waist round, and her husband had become a child in front of her. The strong wife of shop-owner is Kafka father's image which is a manifestation of externalization. In the fiction, not only a shopkeeper, almost all other persons in the store were afraid of the strong wife of the shop-owner, and it was a kind of invisible authority

### B. *The Image of Mitzi*

Mitzi was the village head's wife who was the real leader of the village. The village head could not play any role. He could not charge the village a day if his wife did not stay with him. Basically he did not have the ability to handle official business. He was even lying in bed during the meeting with K, so everything was processed by Mitzi in the village. Village head was only a nominal ruler. In fact, all things are decided

by his wife in the village, which was very ridiculous in *Castle*. Mitzi ideologically constituted Kafka father's image.

### C. *The Image of the Grand Hotel Proprietress*

Grand Hotel proprietress had a characteristic of Kafka father's words and deeds. "Don't say that" 'the wife of hotel-owner quickly interrupted K, "I don't want to listen to you talk about my clothes. My clothes don't need you tube. I forbid you to say such nonsense" (Ye, 2000, 350). In this sentence the words "forbidden" had obvious characteristics of Kafka father's words and deeds. Kafka's father was strict with his children when they were having a meal. Nobody would be able to comment on the quality of food.

### D. *The Image of Frida*

Frida was an authoritative woman and she was beautiful, glamorous, confident and attractive. She was superior in front of the servants. However, she was actually a hotel waitress, which indicated that she was a servant. At the same time, she was not just an ordinary servant; she was a lover of Cram who was the governor of the castle, so she looked down upon other servants. For those servants, Frida's eyes emitted the light of right. She was the mistress of Clum, and this light came from the castle. This light was the symbol of power, and the power contributed to Frida's charm, confidence and arrogance. Although Frida had these rights, she was not happy. As a waitress, Frida just was a humble woman, a servant of the governor of the castle (Jin, 2009, 178). To Frida, power was put in an extremely high position that was higher than freedom and love. Her miseries were that she was under the control of power and no her ego because of long-time living in power.

## 4. Women "Outside" the Castle

### A. *The Image of Hans' Mother*

In *Castle*, Hans' mother's existing state also illustrates the "Lack of Mother". Hans mother's first appearance was in a morbid form when K saw her. "She was sitting in a corner in a high chair and wearing clothes made of a kind of a silk" (Li, 2010, 178). "The woman looked like a clay sculpture which leaned back of the chair, and she didn't lower her head to look when children were playing at her side, but turned a blind eye to look up at the sky. She was weak and noisy in the novel" (Ye, 1988, 15). In contrast, Hans showed great concern for his mother. Hans showed a lot of attention when K recommended a doctor to Hans' mother. When K said that he could help Hans' mother to look for a doctor, Hans' mother felt very embarrassed. She was worried about her health; however, she was afraid of her husband's attitude. The main problem was that she was afraid that her husband did not agree with it, because she absolutely followed him.

### B. *The Image of Armalia's Mother*

Another mother image is Armalia's mother which was also based on the image of Kafka's mother. The mother is more morbid than Hans' mother, who was silent in the whole story. Hans' mother showed a little concern to the children, while Armalia's mother did not have any care about her children, and she was only an irrelevant symbolic image. Hans is very concerned for the mother's health; while, Armalia was

quite calm when she came to her mother's health. Armalia's brother, Pakistan, plead for the families, and his mother ha tear and waited when the family met unlucky. Armalia's mother did not give much maternal love for her children. She did not take on the role of the mother, but just an additional sign of the father. Her husband was the most important goal in her life. She was not the conventional mother image, and she just was an accessory symbol of her husband's power field. Just as Simone said, "Female was a tool that was used by male to conquer nature" (Simone, 1949, 183).

### C. *The Image of Pebe*

Pebe did not have any position. She was beautiful and fond of dressing when she was young, but her fate was miserable, because she was not the lover of the lord of the castle, and she did not get her position and honor. To some extent, Frida's position seemed to become a symbol to gain ratification, and the position seemed to be ruled by male. When Frida left the Grand House, Pebe took the place of Frida. When Frida came back to the Grand House again, Pebe had to leave in order that Frid could have position. But by doing this, Pebe became discriminated by people. Pebe was eager to gain honor from the job when Frida left, but her efforts were in vain.

## 4. Women "Exiled" by the Castle

### A. *The Image of Armalia*

Armalia was the only hero image in the entire novel because she had the spirit of resistance. In this paternal authority, Armalia rejected the lord's call and his "sex" domination. In the patriarchal society, Armalia was treated as rebels of patriarchy, and her resistance would bring blame and deportation to her whole family. She was a pioneer and tragic hero because of her resistance. She realized that her deny would bring her parents, brother and sister endless disaster and pain, and even destroy her family, but she still made the resistance.

Armalia realized the mighty of the patriarchy which was strong and was able to destroy everything. Armalia could do nothing except silently enduring the suffering of her life, but she still bravely refused the traditional moral culture. She was a pioneer and hero.

### B. *The Image of Olga*

Olga was a victim because of Armalia's resistance. Armalia rejected Saul's shameless call, and her family were also dragged into suffering. The whole family tried their best to change their positions, but all their efforts were meaningless. Armalia is an objector, and Armalia's sister, Olga, was a sin who atoned for Armalia's crime. Olga also tried her best to change their position, but she could not get rid of this bad luck. Olga went to sleep with the servants in the stable of the Grand Hotel, because she wanted to find out the messenger who delivered letters to Armalia, and she also hoped to find out a way to change their position. She slept with those servants in the stable at least twice in a week for two years, but her effort was in vain. She seemed to regard this kind of appeal and atonement as the part of her life. This kind

of life was a model for Kafka as a Jew. Jews are homeless for a long time so their lives were kinds of atonement.

## 5. Conclusion

"Castle is full of ambiguity and had a miraculous space, and the female images are full of mystery" (Zeng, 2005, 278). There is not a fixed definition about "inside" or "outside" of the castle. "We walked up and down the castle around, and we did not find the entrance." (Durant, 1927, 338) In the novel, no one is able to enter the castle, so in this sense, there is not "castle woman" because no woman really lives in the castle. We just regard them as women living "in" of the castle in an abstract sense. Those women who live outside the castle are miserable because they do not have their own positions and ideas. They only obey their husbands. There are also women who are exiled by the castle. Armarlia is an objector and hero because she dares to revolt the authority of male. We should learn from Armarlia and dare to doubt the authority. Olga is the role of a atonement, and she atones for Armalia's so-called "crime". "Kafka sketches out the living conditions of women for us, who live in the castle which is the symbol of patriarchal social system. We realize that a lot of women have become the victims of autocracy in Kafka's eyes, and they have gone into trouble but unable to get out" (Wang & Chen, 2009, 276). The characters in the castle are a reflection of Kafka's experience. Female images in the castle are Kafka's perception of the society and his comprehension of life.

Kafka created those impressive female images in the vast space, and they revealed the evil of the class society. At the same time, the female images in *Castle* also reflected their certain realities. Analyzing the female images can help us understand the works of Franz Kafka better.

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