On the Differences of Feminism in Chinese and Japanese Female Literature Works

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Keywords: Female Literature, Differences, Traditional Family Values.

Abstract. The initiation and development of Chinese feminine literary values is a process which is full of changes and has many stage characteristics. Chinese female literature entered the history of literature accompanied by the discovery of people and the awakening of female consciousness since The New Culture Movement. At the same time, the introduction of western feminism theory and the works of female writers also broadened the writer's perspective. Together, they gave birth to the first Chinese women writers and therefore, Chinese feminine literary creation became more and more mature after decades of ups and downs. This paper studies the characteristics of contemporary female literature which contains not only radical derivatives, but also moderates at the same time. By deeply analyzing the similarities and differences of the Japanese female literature and Chinese female literature, we can find that they truly reflects the women’s positive aspirations to improve their own situation through their works and tried to get the opportunities and rights of expressing themselves freely from the oppression of the male chauvinism dominance. Therefore, we come to the conclusion that both Japanese and Chinese women writers entered the culture field of vision with a clear gender identity. While striking the male culture writing, they constitute the subversion and impact of male chauvinism. And they critically challenge the feudal traditional culture, explore and reflect the feudal culture with thousands of years from multiple aspects, angles and different levels. Through the developments of Japanese female literature and Chinese female literature, we can also see the developments of the society and culture.

Different Attitudes towards Male Chauvinism

Chinese and Japanese female literary works all derive from real lives, but some works by Chinese women writers reflect more about lives, which strongly oppose the improvement of malelism. However, the works by Japanese women writers are full of imaginations. The Japanese female writer who aspires to the virtual world without males once wrote the novel of Thumb P narrating a girl whose big toe became a penis. The change is due to the remaining ideologies of feudalistic age and to some perplexed issues caused by people’s traditional perceptions towards sex. This change shows that she doesn’t follow the traditional perceptions towards sex but follows her own way of the value of sex without the mere restriction of the traditional perceptions. The gender distinctions should be removed when having sex. The toe of the main female character in this work turned into penis, which is the challenge of femalelism. And the novel was about the existence and contrast.

So basically, both being lacking of the sense of responsibility and narrow minded are expressions of the patriarchal tradition. Once benefits for men are challenged, they would be unwilling to take the responsibility for women, they would not want women to enjoy the same freedom as them in a man-powered atmosphere. This is a social will that people are hard to surpass individually. Writers in recent times made a clear sense of that the edge of criticism on the patriarchal tradition mainly point to the almost omnipresent social oppression from patriarchy. The long-length novel of You Better Return which began to be published 1989 (of Tokutomi Roka) is an early work about the resistance against patriarchal oppression. It is interesting that the hero called Kawashima Takeo has a hot and steamy relationship with his wife Yoshiko. Additionally, he was edified by the western culture, so he always puts himself in his wife's shoes to think and protects his wife's rights. However, it is Takeo's widowed mother who presses Yoshiko and makes her dead. Of course we
can’t deny that this result may come from the mother-in-law's jealousy for the wife, and the factor of psychopathic personality in the mother formed by her husband's oppression in her early times. But the main reason is the mother represents the sense of men-powered in a patriarchal society. She wants to continue the family line and inherit the title of Kawashima, so she cannot stand a daughter-in-law who has tuberculosis. Her logic is sacrificing the smaller one and remaining the bigger one. Although Yoshiko is pathetic, she has to sacrifice her. The family of Kawashima is a big one, so she would rather have an infamy than the family line be broken. The son resists his mother for the reason of breaking the common sense, but his mother refutes him "it is the social rules of divorce—go against the family tradition, have no kids, have terrible disease."

Different Traditional Family Concept

Japanese feminine literary works reflected the increasingly weak traditional family values of women. By contrast, Chinese female writers paid more attention to marriage and family life. Japanese feminine literary subverts the previous fixed family pattern. The family described in their works can be a collection of life that consists of people without any blood relationships. Family likes this also has a particular sense of warm and security belonging to traditional family. For example, it is fully displayed in Yu Miri’s works, like Kazoku Movie and 5555. The writer thought and investigated the extensive social significant problems like the family disintegration and separation from family members. Moreover, she was not constrained by previous ideas and didn’t sing the elegy for the disintegration and separation blindly. They seemed to be contemplating using a new family pattern to replace the traditional family when the traditional family maintained by blood relationship, marriage relationship and the koseki went towards disintegrated inevitably. On the contrary, Chinese feminine literary works tend to bitterly condemn the current family situation and strongly struggled against the reality. They are strongly critical of malelism from the point of independent family role and increase the awareness of personal identity and status.

Different Pursuit of Material Civilization and Spiritual Civilization

In some perspectives, Japanese feminine literary works reflect the inanity of people’s emotional world and described the weak family affection. But Chinese feminine literary works attach great importance to describing the spiritual annoyance caused by pursuing material life and the emotional crisis after the satisfaction of material demand. Due to the different degrees of social development between Japan and China, we should be more alert to people’s understanding of themselves in spiritual world on the base of rich material foundation, From this point, China should learn from Japanese examples to make material civilization and spiritual civilization develop together. During the rapid development of material civilization construction, we should also pay attention to spiritual civilization construction and keep watch our spiritual family to achieve human-oriented, harmonious, comprehensive development.

Conclusion

Both Japanese women writers and Chinese women writers enter the culture view with the clear sexual identity. While striking the male culture writing, they constitute the subversion and impact of male chauvinism. And they critically challenge the feudal traditional culture, explore and reflect the feudal culture with thousands of years from multiple aspects, angles and different levels. Through the development of Japanese and Chinese female literature, we can see the social progress and development of culture.

All in all, the dialectical view of female literature considers the dialectical concept of equality between man and woman and the view of multi-subject as theoretical basis. It seeks common ground in diversity, communicates in pattern of opening, and realizes both self-existence and other’s existence. It demands that feminists should step outside of female. Because of being in it, they usually put the other side into their opponent, a defacto accomplice who lacks self-cognition as
well even they are opposite. Only in this way can female literature have the richness and diversity which it should have. In the multicultural age, the dialectical view of female literature will certainly have great influence on female literature and its criticism.

References