

Bai Lusu's Feminist in Eileen Zhang's Love in a Fallen City

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Abstract:

Zhang Ailing is an excellent female literature writer in China. In the 1940s, she turned her attention to “women’s frustration”. She is also one of the important writers of “isolated island” literature after the fall of Shanghai. Her writing style is full of realism and unique. This paper mainly studies the new thinking female behavior of Bai Luisu in *Love in a Fallen City*, and reveals the initial ideological awakening of women in the old era. It found out that some women gradually become self-aware and start to think for themselves. The feminist thought embodied in Zhang Ailing’s works is the awakening of new women that she realized after seeing all kinds of women’s things in the old era, highlighting the helplessness of women in the old China. Zhang Ailing’s sympathy and enlightenment to old Chinese women and the gradual awakening of modern women are worth thinking about in the new era.

Keywords: Bai Luisu; feminism; female criticism; female revelation

1. Introduction

Eileen Chang has a distinguished background, and her works are also worth reading. The appearance of Eileen Chang’s first work, *Agarwood Dust-The First Incense Burner*, made her famous. *Love in the Fallen City* is Zhang Ailing’s famous work, Eileen Chang studied at the University of Hong Kong, where she was exposed to modern historical and cultural ideas, and was also influenced by many Western novels. Mother aunt is a new type of woman, and they continue to lead Zhang Ailing to feminism, which also created Zhang Ailing to fight for this life [1].

In the early 20th century, China became a semi-colonial and semi-feudal country. With the invasion of Western countries, China culture began to change and the ideology began to change. China began to

advocate science and democracy, and began to gradually overthrow feudalism. The remnants of feudalism also indicate that the old Chinese women are still in trouble. At that time, due to the invasion of Western countries and feudalism, bureaucracy and landlord bourgeoisie, China was in chaos and women’s status was low. The first feminist movement of women’s resistance was from 1850 to 1945, involving the United States and many European countries; The second was from the 1960s to the 1970s, which began in the United States and finally spread to other parts of the world, setting off women’s awakening marches around the world, and the May Fourth Movement made Chinese women’s thought further.

Feminism refers to the awakening of the status, role and self-value of women as subjects in the objec-

tive world, which is the sober side of women in the real patriarchal society. Women can rationally analyze the impact of their own actions on their future, to make the right choice and judgment for themselves. In general, women should pay more attention to their own interests and achieve a better self, rather than sacrifice themselves because we are the weak party and sacrifice ourselves for the interests of the strong party. *Love of the Fallen City* is a representative work of female enlightenment. This paper takes Bai Luisu in *Love of the Fallen City* by Zhang Ailing as an example to analyze feminism and its initial progressive female thought. Every book by Zhang Ailing vividly analyzes the broken and fragmented feelings of women in the old era.

2. Bai Luisu's Feminist in Love in a Fallen City

In the old Chinese society, a woman in a feudal family listened to her parents all her life, accepted an arranged marriage and married a man whom she did not like and had not seen several times. After marriage, she taught her husband and children, surrounded the family all her life, always lived for others, lived for the interests of others, and never had a moment for herself, even if she was not herself, and did not understand her life.

Bai Luisu, a woman born in a feudal family, did not read for a few years. The shoulder can not pick; the hand can not lift; anything can not do a woman, chooses divorce after her husband's domestic violence, the old era of divorce is the shame of woman, and most women choose to compromise for their children. For the face of the family and choose to swallow, and few men marry a divorced woman. So much pressure Bai Luisu or choose to divorce, shows that Bai Luisu has a preliminary idea of new women, for their own sake, in constant progress [2].

When the third master wanted Bai Luisu to adopt her ex-husband's nephew, he said to Bai Luisu that "life is his death is the ghost of her ex-husband". Bai Luisu did not silence but bravely fought back, straight to the point that the other party wanted to say. These relatives, each of whom used a large amount of money given to her by her ex-husband after her divorce, falsely said that to provide her with food and shelter was actually to buy a daughter in disguise, using her money until after being drained, the Bai Luisu had no use value, and she was casually abandoned [2].

"Bai Luisu suddenly smiled - a dark, not also kind smile, the music abruptly stopped". Here is clear Bai Luisu will bid farewell to the past themselves, to start their own new life, coming to this step, can also be said to be the rise of

her female thought enlightenment. Bai Luisu decided to use her own future to bet, she herself is constantly changing, and finally can live for themselves. If the old Chinese women can take this step will not be a thousand years of complacency [2].

Fan Liuyuan 32 years old is an overseas Chinese. Parents died with a lot of industries. He has never regarded women as his feet under the mud, young age was stimulated, gradually become debauchery, eating and drinking whoring gambling, master of everything. It can be said that Fan Liuyuan just put women as a pastime of boredom casually sent tools, coupled with the influence of his native family. Fan Liuyuan's father is derailed with Fan Liuyuan mother together, after the derailment has been put their mother and son in foreign countries have not let them return. Until met Bai Luisu, when dancing, Fan Liuyuan said to Bai Luisu "Love her for a lifetime" and later slowly familiar with all kinds of love words to her, Bai Luisu never believed, she understood that this was a man in order to make women fall in love with their own words to women, but the mouth said that there would be no actual action. She began to understand that the man's commitment is useless, she only believes in herself. All in order to get away from the cannibalistic family [2].

In front of Fan Liuyuan, Bai Luisu dared to say to him "You men surface a set, behind a set". She is a woman who dares to say and do. In old China, few women would say such words to men so frankly, but also because by saying this sentence Fan Liuyuan realized the different Bai Luisu, feels that she is different from other women, there is an inexplicable emotion in the heart [2].

Bai Luisu in the understanding of Fan Liuyuan, follows the Fan Liuyuan as a man who generally plays around to understand the world, and try to also have their own interests and affairs. In old China, women usually do not go out, at home a whole day, all day to worry about housework, a lifetime only around the husband and family, nothing to do when sitting aimlessly looking at the sky, they are taught that the outside is terrible everywhere is a man-eating monster, a little inattentive will be cheated, have not been outside how to know the outside world. They are always frog in the bottom of a well, guarding their own small place all day, her cognition is the world in the few people she has come into contact with, even a world made up by her husband, when women go out to learn knowledge is really rare, but also very courageous.

Many of the women in Zhang Ailing's works have ideas belonging to the new era, and most of the heroines in Zhang Ailing's books have their own unique characters, In sharp contrast to women in the old era, most of her works present the warning and reality of women in the real world.

3. Female Criticism on Love in a Fallen City

Each of Zhang Ailing's works clearly sees women in the old era, and most of her works reflect the sorrow of women in the old era that she saw, which is conveyed through her works, not a small part but thousands of women. Zhang Ailing wants to rely on her own pen, enlighten the women who were bound in the old era, and want them to wake up quickly.

In the *Love of the Fallen City*, the Bai Luisu faintly said to the third and fourth masters: "Divorced, and want to be his widow, let people laugh off their teeth." Although some of the ideas of Bai Luisu fringe have a new era, but in that feudal era, many fixed ideas have not changed, that a woman is not perfect after marriage. The purpose of marriage is to make one's life better and better, not worse. It is worth mentioning that she is the only woman in the White House who has old-fashioned ideas but can accept new ideas, breaking through the tradition [2].

As a victim of feudal times, Bai Luisu's mother is a typical representative of traditional feudal women. As the mother of Bai Luisu, she has no plans for her daughter and is unable to help her. She has lost her independence and autonomy deeply influenced by The Times. The Daughter will only "stay in the face" when asking for help, "numb" with a smile on her face, which is not only a character, but also a helplessness that has been oppressed for a long time. The feudal era has made her emotional solidification, unable to let her daughter live a better life, and lost the ability to resist. The tragedy of Bai Luisu's mother is not her personal tragedy, but the epitome of women at that time. Bai Luisu's mother passed on "obedience" and "forgiveness of others" to her daughter, although she herself was powerless to struggle under the oppression of The Times. Women were not only restricted by society, but also by their own family structure and ethical concepts. It can be seen that the dregs of the feudal era penetrate into every woman, so that their daughters, like them, are trapped in the mire, and they can never escape, and generations of women are constantly in the cage, reaching out but no one can save them, and they are powerless.

Bai Luisu mother's sense of helplessness and her inability to help her daughter made women in feudal society lose themselves in the unique structure of family and society. The structure of feudal society made women lose the right to choose. Faced with their choices, they had to listen to them. They could only survive in this system and could not change their fate through their own efforts. Even women with awakening consciousness, in the face of such a social and family system, it is difficult to find an effective way to redeem themselves. The image of Bai Luisu's

mother symbolizes the extreme of this dilemma, and she has not only lost control of her own destiny, but also lost influence on the fate of the next generation of women, which is undoubtedly a tragedy for women.

"A woman, no matter how much better, can not get the love of the opposite sex, it will not get the respect of the same sex, women this point is cheap," Zhang Ailing in the article directly satirized whether now or before, some women do everything for men, what is male-dominated, without any dignity. There are also many "female contests" that we use modern language to say, which is worth our reflection, "women's jealousy, only to other women who take away men", women's jealousy, is the competition around men with other women as opponents, as a weak party we have to fight for ourselves, women should be united [3].

Zhang Ailing has written a lot of excellent female works, she sees the social status quo, but also understands the real thoughts of men, but people can not understand why her own love is such a tragic end, is the tragic experience of her childhood, when women can really wake up.

4. Female Revelation

The initial formation of the female thought of Bai Luisu in *Love of the Fallen City* saw the unique side of Bai Luisu, out of the original family she no longer bound herself, and became lively and cheerful. This gives more reflection as a modern woman, the author analyzes the social reality, Chinese culture takes its essence to its dregs, only take its essence, more than 5,000 years of history, except for the maternal period, women are dominated, women are the main leadership, special respect for women, women can have their own development space, and women have been oppressed for thousands of years. In order to consolidate the patriarchal leadership, the oppression and brainwashing of men on women and the harm to women, there have been many creepy traditions such as foot binding. Since childhood, the feet have been wrapped into three inches of golden lotus, and the smaller the feet are, the more beautiful they are, just to meet the deformed aesthetic of men and better control women. Foot binding women can not walk a long way, the pain of foot binding, foot binding lasted for a long time. Until later Sun Yat-sen banned foot binding, this bad habit can disappear, but for those women who had entangled feet, she has no place to tell her pain, posterity is only an infinite sigh.

For thousands of years, under the domination of men, women can not read and write, only men can go to school to learn. Women because they are indoctrinated men and women are not clear, to prove their innocence and must stay at home, learning knowledge to enhance their ability

to survive outside, ancient women are only allowed to learn piano, chess, calligraphy and painting, all actions can only be in the besir. Some women don't even know what their home yard looks like all their life, stay in small rooms all day, ancient people think that women only learn "knowledge" that can please men. Women are always inculcated men outside and women inside, men outside are responsible for making money to support the family, women are responsible for the family, giving birth to female children, doing endless housework every day, and facing many mother-in-law and daughter-in-law relationships. Men go home after work, do not have to do anything, some macho men to his wife, here is not right there is not right, said that the wife at home is "enjoying", and there are even a lot of men who beat his wife. Please do not forget that women stay at home so that their husbands can go out to work without worry, and women can also go out to work and earn their own money.

However, the current social situation in China is worth thinking about. Women enjoy less educational resources than men, and are at a disadvantage in the competition for academic qualifications. Family responsibilities and reproductive functions also lead to disadvantages in the workplace, which prevents women from better development. As Chizuko Ueno said, "The development of men and women is not a fair competition." When a woman goes to work, the employer always asks the woman whether she has a boyfriend, when she will get married, and when she will have children. At this time, the male advantage shows, and many women lose the qualification for this job [4].

There is an old saying "A woman without talent is a virtue". Many people understand its meaning wrong, this is not the fewer women read the better, it really means: that if a woman has no talent, but can distinguish between right and wrong is also a virtue. Later, it became a word that restrained and enslaved women, and even today, this wrong interpretation is still used.

There has always been a situation in China where there are more men and fewer women, which is the destruction left by feudal dross. In old China, men preferred sons to daughters, and the reason can be seen that for thousands of years. Due to the rule of patriarchy, men forced women to give birth to boys desperately for the sake of the continuation of the patriarchal system, and some girls were aborted or drowned before birth, In order to continue the family tradition, some modern rural families give birth to 10 daughters without boys, and they will continue to give birth until they have a boy. These girls' names are also named Pandi, Laidi and Jindi. The boy is the focus of the whole family as soon as he is born, and the parents instill all their love and hope in him. The festival only to buy

him new clothes, all the housework at home without him to do. Because of the brainwashing of their parents, their older sisters did not study early, they got married and had children as young adults or minors, and their parents did not teach them this knowledge, but just wanted to take their bride price to their baby son to marry a wife, these older sisters are victims of the male power system. Wring her for all she's worth and throwing her away, isn't that just like Bai Luisu? It's still a problem in remote areas, and it's only going to get worse if women don't realize it. The author believes that women can work as well as men. Women can be scientists, politicians, firefighters, police officers, ski instructors, and pilots; women can do any job they want, can work in many male fields, women can do what men can do well. Wu Zetian's life is full of contradictions, but also quite rebellious life, is the traditional sense of the daughter, wife, and mother, but she is also the emperor, the ruler, the embodiment of the highest power. The bondage of history, eventually returned to the identity allowed by The Times, and finally set up a stele without words for themselves: Women in power will be questioned by most people as soon as they take office, and many people are opposed to it. Women are not allowed to intervene in a patriarchal society, and women are only expected to be tool without any threat in a patriarchal society. Women are hundreds of times more difficult to become leaders than men, As Chizuko Ueno puts it, "Women's self-actualization is considered a kind of rebellion against their rightful role [4]."

The first law issued after the founding of New China was the *Marriage Law*, which at that time became the legal guarantee and hope of Chinese women. The most important one: If the woman insists on divorce, she can get divorced. The *Marriage Law* was implemented in 1950, and since then, there have been no arranged marriages, child brides, polygamy, bigamy and concubinage in old China, and it has advocated free love between men and women, independent marriage, monogamy, and equal rights between men and women, which is of great significance in the history of new China [5]. The state proposed birth control for women, followed by the introduction of the one-child policy. It is hoped that women can be new women of self-esteem, self-confidence, self-reliance and self-improvement in New China, which protects the interests of all Chinese women, releases women from suffering and struggles, and also benefits modern women.

5. Conclusion

Love in *Love of the Fallen City* is full of games and calculations with each other, one wants to rely on his economy in society, and one wants to understand herself, but no one

knows who. The ending is Zhang Ailing's many novels, the best one, the war will always end, but no one knows what will happen to the two people after the war.

Bai Luisu is smart, and brave, and the choice is for themselves. She deeply knows that Fan Liuyuan does not love her, just to let her fall, and become his lover, after having casually abandoned her. Therefore, she is very sober and never put themselves in a dangerous position, after the outbreak of the Pacific War, and the fall of Hong Kong, Fan Liuyuan Bai Luisu come together, the oath under the fire let each other's hearts are installed under each other, but these are not true love, just in order to rely on their own side under the attack. There are all kinds of strange legends everywhere in the world, but not every story has a happy ending, and the desolation and ruthlessness in real society will only make people more and more sober.

The author believes that recent years are a period of rapid development of feminism in China. However, the current situation of women's survival still faces many challenges, there are no guarantees in many aspects, many things are unreasonable, and many rights and interests have not been introduced. Feminism does not mean to stand against men, but women can know themselves, recognize what they want, have their own independent ideas, women should not be limited to the family, and separated from society, and eventually abandoned by The Times. Men and

women have different physiological structures and cannot empathize, but we still hope that our male compatriots can think more about each other and think about what they do. Although China is equal to men and women, there are still many fundamental problems that have not been solved, which requires long-term and joint efforts from all aspects. The Times are progressing. The Times needs to progress, women should take a big step.

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