

The Female Migration Dilemma in Different Routes but the Same Destination ——An Analysis of Female Characterization in Eileen Chang's novel *Aloeswood Incense: The First Brazier*

Wenqin Ruan*

College of Liberal Arts, Jinan
University, Guangzhou, Guangdong,
510632, China

*Corresponding author: vicky_
ruanwenqin@ldy.edu.rs

Abstract:

Eileen Chang is one of the typical representations of Shanghai school literature in Chinese modern literary history. Her debut short story, *Aloeswood Incense: The First Brazier*, was written during her time studying in Hong Kong. The novel presents a glimpse of the flamboyant and extravagant Hong Kong society in the early twentieth century with refined strokes and delicate descriptions. Through textual analysis, this paper will explore two female figures, Ge Weilong and Mrs. Liang, of the novel in three aspects: different personalities and backgrounds, language and psychology, as well as life experiences. This paper will also explore the emergence of the Mainland-Hong Kong migration boom during this period in terms of the political and economic situation of Hong Kong as a colony, the collision of ideas between the old and the new societies, and the choices made by individuals in the face of the general trend of the times. It also reveals the reasons why immigrant women in general are faced with a difficult situation in terms of survival in the context of this trend. By analyzing this novel's women portraying techniques and the implied historical reasons behind them, it further reveals the significant role that literary works play in the understanding of social microcosms and group images of a specific period of time.

Keywords: Eileen Chang; *Aloeswood Incense: The First Brazier*; Modern Hong Kong; mainland China immigration

1. Introduction

Eileen Chang is one of the major representative writers of Shanghai school literature in modern Chinese literary history. Her works were unique among the many people who promoted progressive literature in the Republic of China, focusing on the men, women, and minor characters struggling to survive in the current of the times, which were works that took a half-step backward from the times. Therefore, Eileen Chang's novels display not only outstanding literary and narrative qualities, but also strongly historical and contemporary. *Aloeswood Incense: The First Brazier* is Eileen Chang's first novel, written while she was studying in Hong Kong. There were numerous studies and analyses of this work in academic history, both exploring the literary nature of its textual descriptions and analyzing the novel's characterization. Yang Yun and Li Yahui's studies interpreted the role of the numerous descriptions used in this novel in characterization from the perspectives of environmental descriptions and descriptive techniques as well as the most prominent literary techniques and side effects of Eileen Chang's novels [1,2]. Sun Lixiu and Xie Yafeng took human psychology and personality as the entry point to analyze the characteristics of the heroine Ge Weilong [3,4]. Scholars such as Han Yanwei and Chen Min chose to conduct comparative literary analysis and research between the female image in this work and similar ones in other works, relying on the general environment of the era to explore the connotation behind the image and women's behaviors in the special period [5,6]. However, previous studies have tended to focus more on the literary work itself, ignoring the specificity of the era in which this novel was written, and failing to place the novel characters in the context of the existential dilemma faced by immigrant women under the wave of immigrants in pre-war Hong Kong. Therefore, this paper will use the method that combines literary text and historical background factors to analyze the characters in *Aloeswood Incense: The First Brazier* further and explore the motivation of the characters' behaviors.

For the analysis of the characterization of literary works in special periods, if just relying on the text and detaching from social background, the understanding of characterization will often be biased and controversial. That's why on the basis of the original text of Eileen Chang's novel *Aloeswood Incense: The First Brazier*, this paper combines the relevant historical materials of Hong Kong's social conditions in the early twentieth century with the plight of mainland women immigrants to Hong Kong during this period, and analyzes the two typical female figures of the novel, Ge Weilong and Mrs. Liang, to explore the reasons why the two of them went to the same

miserable end with different personalities and different family environments. What's more, through the multi-faceted examination of internal and external factors, this paper will reveal that the literature of the special period can help readers better understand the social epitome and group image of special periods, which has both literary and historical values.

2. Character Analysis of Ge Weilong and Mrs. Liang

There are two main female characters in *Aloeswood Incense: The First Brazier*—the heroine, Ge Weilong, and her contrast, Mrs. Liang. The entire novel centers on Ge Weilong, who went to Hong Kong during the turbulent times to escape from the war and pursue her studies, but was lost step by step in the intoxicating life of the colony. In contrast to "childish" Ge Weilong, her aunt, Mrs. Liang, seems to be the guide of the materialistic world. Through her continuous penetration from material to emotional, Ge Weilong eventually became a willing slave of money and power, and went into a state of degradation.

2.1 Ge Weilong

Ge Weilong's physical appearance is clearly depicted at the beginning of the story. Unlike colonial women who pursued the new fashion of healthy beauty because of Western culture influence, she retained a very typical oriental flavor when she first came to Hong Kong from Shanghai. The novel depicts her as a typical Shanghai woman with a bland but beautiful small face, a thin nose, and a small round mouth, just like a traditional Chinese dish called "steamed pork" [7]. Unlike the smart people around Mrs. Liang, Ge Weilong, who arrived in Hong Kong for the first time, still had student's childishness and the constraints of the traditional Orient, which made her out of place in Hong Kong's bustling foreign scene. In addition to the strong contrast in appearance, Ge Weilong also has showed her discomfort with the ostentatious extravagance inwardly, since the moment she stepped into Liang's mansion. Eileen Chang focuses on portraying Ge Weilong's sense of struggle between verbal ingratiation and inner pride and innocence, through language and numerous psychological coded aspects. When she is in need of help, on the one hand, she will disparage her father, who conflicts with Mrs. Liang as a nerd, so as to comfort her aunt and absolve herself at the same time, showing her insights and sense of smoothness; on the other hand, however, in the face of her aunt's extravagant life in the Liang Mansion, which is criticized for the identity as a widow, she will also flatter herself, claiming that she is innocent

who has been cleansed herself from all the mud and dirt. Both Ge Weilong and her aunt come from middle-class families in Shanghai. Traditionally, the more wealthy an Oriental family is, the more austere and introverted it will be, and the more they value reputation far more than wealth. Compared with her aunt, who was bold and determined enough to focus on her inner choices, Ge Weilong is more influenced by her family. Originally, she wanted to join her aunt because she was strapped for money. But when she saw her aunt's behavior and the comments of the people around her, she was afraid that she would be dragged into her own innocent reputation. It can be seen that even if Ge Weilong is in a difficult situation, even if she aspires to the material world, she still consciously retains the innocence in her heart, thus showing a sense of severance between the smooth handling of affairs and the heart of a child.

There is numerous complexity in the novel, while the plot is more condensed, and thus Ge Weilong's fall can actually be summarized simply as three life choices. The first choice was when she first stepped into the Liang Mansion, the extravagant aura of the late Qing Dynasty mixed with the colonial atmosphere emanating there made her feel uncomfortable, which might even be said haunted. But faced with a place so alien to her, she ultimately chose to stay. The second choice came when she was confronted with a closet of gorgeous clothes, which was undoubtedly a sugar-coated bomb from Mrs. Liang, an invitation to lure Ge Weilong into a materialistic society and take advantage of her. Ge Weilong was initially able to hold her ground in the face of temptation, thinking that perhaps it was not meant for her. But in the end, when she couldn't resist trying it on, she has already known that the price she had to pay to enjoy the material conditions provided by Mrs. Liang. The last choice was her marriage with Qiao Qiqiao, which was the last chance for her to escape the abyss of degradation and it was also the most probable one. However, in the end, because of the slippery slope of her inner self and the targeted emotional traps set by Mrs. Liang and Qiao Qiqiao, she fell into the hell of marriage, which was an abyss to get network resources for Mrs. Liang and money for Qiaoqi Qiao [7]. The three choices epitomize Ge Weilong's state of mind towards the final deplorable ending. Her initial perseverance is gradually disintegrated in the face of the pressure of survival, the temptation of materialistic desires and the emotional and psychological kidnapping, and she profoundly realizes that she is no longer able to withdraw herself from her existing life, and can only soberly allow herself to fall step by step in accordance with Mrs. Liang's plan to become a tool of her aunt's and Qiaoqi Qiao's profiteering.

2.2 Mrs. Liang

Mrs. Liang, on the other hand, is completely different from Ge Weilong. In contrast to Ge Weilong's newcomer, Mrs. Liang has thoroughly integrated into Hong Kong society and has become the "Empress Dowager Cixi" in her own residence, relying on her late husband's inheritance with her social ability. Eileen intends to imply Mrs. Liang's livelihood as a "pimp" through the amount of physical and verbal descriptions. In the novel, Mrs. Liang's appearance is described as pale with grey, it is also said "beauty has aged, but her eyes have not", revealing she is a beauty in its twilight. Her fashionable clothes and manners further reflect her sophisticated image of having lived in colonial society for many years. In addition to her outward portrayal, Mrs. Liang's verbal descriptions are also very vivid. Whether the flamboyant shrewdness she shows when she scolds Qiao Qiqiao, or her tender attitude when confronting Ge Weilong, she is always able to accurately grasp other's pain points, and give full play to her strengths of being exquisite in all aspects and insightful into people's minds [7]. Although Mrs. Liang and Ge Weilong share similar origins, they are opposed in character. Compared with Ge Weilong, Mrs. Liang has a sharper and more flamboyant personality and is more determined to make her own choices. Unlike Ge Weilong, whose every step seemed to be a passive choice made with hesitation, Mrs. Liang always clearly understood her own needs and was willing to make sacrifices to achieve them. That's why she insisted on following the path she recognizes, even if it means breaking ties with her family and abandoning the innocence of a middle-class family to marry a married rich merchant. Mrs. Liang is a person who puts profit beyond everything else. The colonial environment of Hong Kong is like a fish out of water for her, and after many years of operation, she has been able to gain a firm foothold and has gradually changed from a disadvantaged person who relies on herself to carry out socializing to a person who relies on co-ordination of socializing in exchange for resources and a position of power. Years of social life and experience in dealing with people had also made her more perceptive, and she had already figured out the weaknesses of her unknown niece when she first met Ge Weilong. Mrs. Liang's weak sense of kinship and her belief in the importance of profit is the foundation of her life. As the saying goes, "There is no such thing as a free lunch", when Ge Weilong was grateful for her aunt's generosity, Mrs. Liang had already seen her as a new pawn for her own power and money deals.

Mrs. Liang's brilliance lies in the fact that Ge Weilong voluntarily goes to a depraved end, and even soberly realized what it meant to go down that road from the

very beginning. From the initial preparation of gorgeous clothes and jewelry, to introducing Ge Weilong to her old lover Situ Xie, and then taking advantage of Weilong's eagerness for marriage and controlling her completely with flamboyant Qiaoqi Qiao, Mrs. Liang led Ge Weilong to step into the material ocean field step by step, and also pushed her into the abyss. In the end, Ge Weilong became the person who sold her sex and social skills in exchange for money and power for others. It is saddening to note that both Mrs. Liang, who actively became a socialite to make a living, and Ge Weilong, who was passively heading towards degradation, even though their initial purposes and ideas were different, they eventually came to the same end. Combined with the background of modern Hong Kong as a colonial society, Ge Weilong and Mrs. Liang, who come from middle-class families in the mainland, are faced with the impact of different cultural ideas from China and the West and the pressure of survival in the colony due to the shortage of resources and the rise in prices. Rather than becoming money slaves willingly, it is the survival dilemma that the women, who are the under-privileged of the society under the flood of the times, have to face under the difficult immigrant environment.

3. Multiple Factors of Immigrant Women's Predicament

The female characters in the story *Aloeswood Incense: The First Brazier* have saddening endings, but the characters themselves are also full of controversy. Eileen Chang is very good at telling the struggles and choices of the little people in the flood of history in such a special period of modern times through the penmanship of compassion in satire. Behind the tragic endings of Ge Weilong and Mrs. Liang is the living dilemma that mainland women who immigrated to Hong Kong in recent times had to face. If modern history is a product of the collision of mixed cultures and ideas, then colonial Hong Kong must be a small microcosm of the whole modern society, with multiple economic, social and ideological factors constituting the driving force behind the tragic experiences of common people.

3.1 Attractive Hong Kong Society

The story took place in pre-World War II colonial Hong Kong, which had been under British rule for nearly a century since the cession of Hong Kong by the Treaty of Nanjing, and had a deeper penetration of foreign cultures compared to traditional Chinese society, and continued to attract immigrants from all walks of life by virtue of its unique geographical advantages and tolerant social char-

acteristics. At this time, mainland China was in a period of chaos between the warlords of the Beiyang Dynasty, and the struggle between the forces of each side made the wars constant and the people's lives insecure. Under such circumstances, the more stable and peaceful social environment in Hong Kong is a great attraction to the people of the Mainland. What's more, at that time the world environment was also in a situation where the trauma of World War I had not yet been overcome, but international conflicts were becoming increasingly severe, and coupled with the effects of the Great Depression. These made the lives of many countries' people can not be guaranteed, and most people were in a state of panic that a world war might break out at any time. So that was a time when Hong Kong stood out as an ideal "utopia" for immigrants because of a relatively tolerant and peaceful environment for the whole world. As the frontier of the opening up of the Far East continent, Hong Kong has attracted countless Mainland Chinese and foreign immigrants in search of better chances of survival. Colonial Hong Kong under British rule was the window for the mainland to observe western society. In recent times, many patriots aspired to seek salvation through the advanced technology and system of the West, and Hong Kong, as a place where both cultural forces were present, the arrival of immigrants also brought about a new round of cultural and ideological integration. Moreover, because of Hong Kong's open and tolerant public opinion environment, many aspirants would also choose it as a place to publicize their personal thoughts and ideas. It can be said that during this period Hong Kong was extremely attractive to foreign immigrants, both in terms of social and intellectual environment.

Apart from a peaceful, open and tolerant social environment, Hong Kong also possesses outstanding educational resources. Since the British occupation of Hong Kong in 1842, there has been a large influx of missionaries. They not only brought new religious beliefs but also promoted the development of Western studies at the same time. The British government maintained its rule in the Hong Kong area through a soft policy of vigorously building schools and developing education, while the local government in Hong Kong also opened a number of excellent Western-style academies. Among them, the Morrison School run by the Morrison Education Society was the earliest new-style school in Hong Kong, which was moved from Macao in November 1842, and since then new-style schools such as the Yinghua College have also been relocated to Hong Kong. Moreover, girls' schools such as the Anglo-Chinese Girls' School, the Baptist Girls' School, the Congregational Girls' School and the Diocesan Girls' School were also opened in Hong Kong, creating oppor-

tunities for capable women to study natural sciences and new school knowledge. As the development of foreign parochial schools, government schools set up by the Hong Kong Government are also developing gradually. The Central School which was established in 1862 was the largest government-run school at that time and was the predecessor of today's Queen's College. It was not only opening for local students in Hong Kong, but also for students from Mainland China. Although neither the church-run schools nor the government-run schools were run for the education itself, one side for missionary needs and the other for cultivating cronies and consolidating colonial rule, the new style of education had absolute advantages over the traditional education in old China in terms of teaching content, methods and learning environment. It's definitely that the new school education plays an important role in broadening students' horizons and increasing their scientific and technological knowledge [8]. That's the main reason why Ge Weilong, the heroine of *Aloeswood Incense: The First Brazier*, does not return to Shanghai with her parents but to continue her studies in Hong Kong despite the unaffordable cost of living. It can thus be seen that the vigorous development of education in Hong Kong by the British colonial government was also one of the major reasons for attracting Mainland Chinese to emigrate to Hong Kong.

3.2 Severe Existential Crisis

Hong Kong's superior social environment and educational resources have attracted a large number of Mainland middle-class families to emigrate, however, this is accompanied by a high cost of living. After settling in Hong Kong, the British colonial government, in view of Hong Kong's lack of resources and scarcity of land, planned to give full play to its advantage of being situated on the coast of the harbour, and focused on the development of Hong Kong's harbour trade, to build it into a unique free port in the Far East. And with the continuous development of port trade, Hong Kong's urbanization is also growing. This is accompanied by rapid population growth, and the growth rate of the urban population is considerably higher than that of the countryside, showing a clear tendency towards urbanization and centralization. At this time the population density in the vicinity of Victoria City was much higher than even the East End of London, which was the most densely populated area 40 years later [9]. The importation of large numbers of people further strained the already scarce land resources in Hong Kong, so the Government forcibly demobilized some of the population to the surrounding rural areas. Moreover, under the general environment of the free port, Chinese businessmen were often oppressed

and discriminated against by foreigners, and their living conditions were very difficult. Although this situation improved when the Chinese population increased in size, the oppression was always present. Population growth has intensified the conflict of uneven resources, which inevitably brings about a rise in prices and makes the situation of Chinese immigrants, who are already struggling to survive, more and more difficult, so they have to give up their emigration and return back to their homeland. It can be seen that in Hong Kong, which is already a small place with a large population and a scarcity of resources, due to the influx of a large number of foreign businessmen and immigrants after the opening up of the free port, the prices of goods have been on the rise while the job opportunities have become increasingly tight, thus leading to an extremely difficult environment for the survival of the Chinese immigrants. As a result, even middle-class families of Mainland China, such as Ge Weilong's family, can only be in the situation of not being able to make ends meet and in the face of rising prices and micro-blogging sources of income.

The shortage of resources and rising prices brought about by the booming economy have forced Hong Kong Chinese immigrants to choose between leaving and stopping their losses in time, or finding another way to boost their income in an effort to stay. The latter is undoubtedly a permanent and difficult journey for first-time immigrants from the continent. The mode of wealth accumulation that is generally familiar to middle-class families on the Mainland does not apply to Hong Kong, and thus it is tantamount to starting from scratch to gain a foothold there. It must be even more difficult for women, who are already in a disadvantaged position, to integrate into the extravagant society of Hong Kong within a short period. At that time, there were only three ways for female immigrants in colonial Hong Kong to make a living. The first is leaving Hong Kong to return to the Mainland and find a suitable man to get married which means living a traditional female life of raising children. Returning to the corrupt and backward feudal environment after enjoying a free life and being exposed to advanced thinking and culture is undoubtedly a great pain for women who can afford to come to Hong Kong. Second, relying on their own knowledge and ability to find a job in Hong Kong to support themselves. Not to mention the fact that even in Hong Kong, which was relatively open, there were still very few occupations for women to choose from. Although someone was fortunate enough to find a career in a church school or a hospital, the pay was also hardly enough to survive in the situation of rising living costs. The third and last way out is to become a subordinate of powerful men, relying on beauty to integrate into the extravagant

and lustful upper class, and to move up the social ladder through socializing or marriage [10]. This was the way Mrs. Liang and Ge Weilong chose. Although it may seem like a self-defeating end nowadays, for immigrant women in Hong Kong at that time, it may have been the only way to be able to stay.

3.3 Traditional thinking as “Female Marriage Clerk”

Eileen Chang’s attitude towards her female characters was often one of sadness and anger. In her novel, she introduced the concept of the “female marriage clerk” as a profession in which a woman earns a living by pleasing others with her beautiful body. It has been passed down for a long time and it’s so common that all women who choose to get married in order to survive can be called female marriage clerks [11]. This concept shows Eileen Chang’s understanding of the nature of marriage, and it also reflects the gender oppression in society that makes it difficult for women to survive. In traditional Chinese society, a woman’s role as wife and mother is a mandatory rule, and has become the consensus of most Chinese women over a long period of time. The value they seek to realize in their lives is to choose a suitable man to marry, and rely on marriage to achieve a leap in class or to avoid a decline in life quality. Bai Liusu, the heroine of *Love in a Fallen City*, should have been released to be out of her misery when she got divorced due to domestic violence, but when she returned to her home, she was criticized and gossiped about by her brother and sister-in-law. However, even with such experience, she still believes that marriage is her only way out. After meeting Fan Liuyuan she was never willing to just a romantic relationship, and her repeated temptations were to seek a new marriage as her own security. Even when Hong Kong fell, she thought that the fall of a city in exchange for the results of her love was also a good ending [12]. In the situation of suffering from the torture of marriage and still take marriage as her life-saving straw, Bai Liusu’s idea is obviously incomprehensible at present. But in the long years of feudal rites and regulations, many women have already regarded marriage as their lifelong career, and can not get rid of its bondage from their body to mind.

In addition to the traditional social discipline of women, the formation of the female marriage clerk thinking is also due to the fact that under a patriarchal society, it is difficult for women to realize their self-worth as subjects, instead, they are more often objectified and put up for sale as objects. In a traditional Chinese feudal family, a daughter’s sense of emotional belonging as a blood-related member of the family is much lower than that of an un-

related daughter-in-law. This has deprived many women of the support of their families at the root of the problem, so there is no suitable soil for them to realize their self-worth without any worries as men do. Moreover, even if families above the middle class have the spare capacity to raise their daughters, it is more as a kind of object investment, and the ultimate objective remains to enhance their daughters’ competitiveness in the marriage market, rather than for the development of the daughters themselves. In addition to weak kinship ties, most of society’s occupations favor men, leaving women with fewer choices which are also relatively low-paying. Such a social environment will force many women who want to go out to make a career to go back home again, and they have no choice but to follow the arrangement of their parents and families to enter into a hopeless marriage. There is no love in this marriage; there is only the social status of being a certain wife, and they can only follow the social requirements for married women. They are dedicated to their duties as wives and suffer from the pain and suffering of loss of self-personality [13]. The identity as a female marriage clerk that makes women do not realize their self-worth will make them fall into the struggle of self-doubt, and the inferiority complex that arises from oppression during the struggle will make women psychologically subordinate to a society in which men are superior to women and ultimately be willing to fall into the role of a subordinate [14]. The traditional mindset and the social situation have made it a voluntary necessity for women to take the path as female marriage clerks. Both Ge Weilong and Mrs. Liang are invariably women under the influence of the thinking. Mrs. Liang is willing to break with her family to marry a married wealthy businessman in order to make a class leap, while Ge Weilong eventually goes down the abyss of degradation also out of the obsession with her marriage with Qiaoqi Qiao as well as the double bondage of the traditional concept of women’s fame.

4. Conclusion

Taking the story back in the background of Hong Kong’s colonial society, it is one-sided to arbitrarily conclude that Ge Weilong is weak-willed and self-sacrificing, or to regard Mrs. Liang as a villainous figure who is absolutely “evil”. They all epitomize the Chinese female immigrants in modern Hong Kong, where social oppression has left them with few options for survival. In such turbulent times, while their choices were certainly flawed, it is unfair to judge their choices out of their historical circumstances. The choices that seem so disastrous now may have been the best they could come up with at that time. From the typical female figures in literary works such as

Ge Weilong and Mrs. Liang, we can get a glimpse of the lives and choices of individuals under the flood of history, and thus have a more intuitive understanding of the colonial Hong Kong society.

Literary creations in the special period cannot be separated from the general social background, and the images in the literary works are also the feedback of the times. Eileen Chang, who is a typical representation of the modern Shanghai school literature, because of the influence of her family background as the fallen aristocrats and the relatively independent and open-minded women in her family, focused her efforts on depicting the little people who struggled to survive under the current of the times in the midst of the various currents of thoughts. These characters might be half a step behind the times, might be stagnant in the times, or might be struggling with present-day thinking and inherited ideas. But all of them were real feedback from people struggling to survive in turbulent times. Therefore, analyzing literary works in the context of the times can help us grasp the images of controversial characters more accurately and draw more objective and comprehensive conclusions. At the same time, excellent literature also contributes to the study of micro-history, which can help us better understand and recognize the social landscape and group image of special periods from a more comprehensive perspective.

References

- [1] Yang Yun. A Brief Analysis of Female Characterization in Eileen Chang's *Aloeswood Incense: The First Brazier*-Centered on Environmental Description[J]. *Journal of Guangzhou University (Social Science Edition)*, 2017(7).
- [2] Li Yahui. Descriptive Techniques and Female Characters in Eileen Chang's "*Aloeswood Incense: The First Brazier*"[J]. *Comedy World: In*, 2022(4):0091-0092.
- [3] Sun Lixiu. The Web of Humanity: The Fate of Gwei Long in "*Aloeswood Incense: The First Brazier*"[J]. *Science and Technology Guide to Riches*, 2008(5X):1.
- [4] Xie Yafeng. An Analysis of the Image of Ge Weilong in "*Aloeswood Incense: The First Brazier*"[J]. *Science and Technology Information (Academic Research)*, 2007, 24:125-125.
- [5] Han Yanwei. Interpreting Women's Image in the Colonial Environment from Henry James' Portrait of a Lady and Eileen Chang's *Aloeswood Incense: The First Brazier* [D]. 2005.
- [6] Chen Min. Women and Ancient China: A Comparison of "*Aloeswood Incense: The First Brazier*" and "*I Love Bill*"[J]. *Anhui Literature (Lower Half)*, 2009, 000(001):11-12.
- [7] Eileen Chang. *The Complete Works of Eileen Chang: Aloeswood Incense: The First Brazier* [M]. Dalian Publishing House, 1996.
- [8] Lu Na. Hong Kong and the Cultural Exchanges between China and the West in Modern Times[J]. *Journal of Shandong University (Philosophy and Social Science Edition)*, 1997(2):81-84.
- [9] Chen, Guanyu. Three Questions on the Study of Modern Hong Kong Freeport (1912-1936) [D]. Qingdao University, 2022.
- [10] Chen Jiaohua. Exploring the career paths of female students in the Republic of China - A study based on Meng Ke and *Aloeswood Incense: The First Brazier* [J]. *Journal of China Women's College*, 2018(4):8.
- [11] Eileen Chang. Talking about Women[M]// Eileen Chang Anthology: Volume Four. Hefei: Anhui Literature and Art Publishing House, 1991.
- [12] Eileen Chang. Love in a Fallen City [M] // *The Collected Works of Eileen Chang: Volume Two*. Hefei: Anhui Literature and Art Publishing House, 1991.
- [13] Bai Chunxiang. The Survival of "Female Marriage Clerks" and the Nature of Their Lives: A Perspective on the Image of Wives in Eileen Chang's Novels[J]. *Journal of Jinzhong College*, 2021, 38(02):93-96.
- [14] Yang Jing, Wang Ziyi. Loss of Self under the Influence of Feudal Traditional Consciousness--An Analysis of Women's Psychology in Eileen Chang's "*Aloeswood Incense: The First Brazier*"[J]. *Masterpiece Appreciation*, 2024(24).