

A Comparative Analysis of Views on Love between Zi Juan and the Nurse

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Abstract: *A Dream of Red Mansions* and *Romeo and Juliet* are famous love tragedies. Previous studies have mentioned more about the two servants, Zi Juan and the nurse's personalities, but less about their views on love and the relationship between their views on love and the times. This paper explores the similarities and differences of love views under different feudal systems. At last, it comes to the conclusion: in the open and free Western Renaissance, the nurse thinks that love should be equal and happy; In the harsh Qing Dynasty, Zi Juan believed that love should be equal and mutual.

Key words: *Personality, Views on love, Feudalism.*

I. Introduction

Cao Xueqin's *A Dream of Red Mansions* is one of the most famous works in China. It's the love tragedy of Lin Daiyu and Jia Baoyu. *Romeo and Juliet* is Shakespeare's most famous love tragedy in the Renaissance period. It depicts the love story of two young people in hostile families. As the daughters of a rich family, Lin Daiyu and Juliet always stay together with their loyal servant, Zi Juan and the nurse. These two people play a very important role in promoting the love development of the hero and heroine. However, due to the differences of age, and personality in different kinds of feudal society, Zi Juan and the nurse hold different views on love which is greatly influenced by society.

The existing research gives me great inspiration. In Liu Juan's (2016) and Cheng Nuo's (2019) papers, the authors focus on the difference between the nurse's attitude towards Juliet's love. In Zeng Jimin's article (2010), the author explores the violation of several conversational principles from the perspective of pragmatics. This inspires us to analyze the details of characters' personalities hidden in the discourse text itself. In the article of Hatice Karaman (2015), the author describes the catalytic role played by Juliet's mother in the process of Juliet's love tragedy. This inspires me to analyze the nurse from a perspective similar to that of a mother, revealing the relationship between the nurse and Juliet-not only like a master and servant, but also a mother and daughter.

In the articles of Li Shan (2008), Xu Mengxin (2017), Zhang Weiqing (2020) and Bian Yan (2015), the authors analyze the status of Zi Juan, a servant girl with low status, her character and the relationship with the Daiyu, but do not make much analysis on the character of Zi Juan when she is with other people. In an article of Li Hongyuan (2008), the author starts with the names of the characters, and then analyzes the personality of the characters from various symbolic symbols related to the character.

In addition, in Wang Cong's (2018) paper, based on the differences of times and cultural backgrounds between China and the west, the author analyzes the differences in the personalities of main characters in the two works, which enlightens me to analyze the influence of the two heroines on the servant's view of love. In the two articles of Qin Sujun, Li Suyun (2011) and Zhang Yu (2015), they summarize the different ways of pursuing love and the feudal family's obstruction of free love. This paper enlightens me to start from the background of the two texts, and combine with the differences of the time and cultural background of the two works to explore the constraints of the feudal system on human nature at that time. Based on the existing

research about the analysis of the characters, this paper attempts to analyze Zi Juan's and the nurse's love views, and the influence of feudal society on their views on love.

II. The Views on Love

2.1 Definition

From the meaning of the word, love refers to one person's appreciation and admiration for another. Therefore, from a small scale, love refers to the feelings of mutual acceptance and mutual appreciation between the opposite sex aiming at marriage. As a kind of concept, the view on love is a kind of cognition and thought influenced by a person's certain era background, social living conditions, personal thoughts and feelings. Therefore, a person's view on love is inevitably affected by external factors, such as social system, cultural tradition, and also by personal internal factors, such as physiological condition and other factors.

The view on love is people's basic view and attitude towards love, which mainly includes: what is love, the nature of love, the position of love in social and personal life, the standard of mate selection, etc. The view on love in different historical periods, due to different economic conditions, social systems, and ideological and cultural status of the impact and constraints, has different content with the development of society and continuous development and change.

Eric Fromm, a humanist philosopher, wrote in his book *The Love of Man Art* that care, responsibility, respect and understanding are indispensable to love. This kind of care is more pure and it comes from the bottom of heart. The care generally covers all aspects, especially involving the field of privacy. Responsibility refers to the love of both sides in this relationship should consciously fulfill their obligations, in order to better enjoy the rights they can use. Respect is more inclined to two people's personality equality, enjoying the same status in the right to life. Understanding refers to the subconscious willingness of two people to think from each other's perspective and identify with each other's behavior.

2.2 Personality under the views on love

2.2.1 Zi Juan

Zi Juan thinks that two people's love should be equal and mutual. She thinks that in the love relationship, two people need to be in an equal position. Zi Juan believes that true love should break the feudal class restrictions and pursue the equality of two people in personality. This is absolutely not allowed in the harsh feudal family at that time. But it is also in such a strict environment that ideas which could go against the mainstream can become more violent and deviate from the normal. Her view of love is well reflected in her personality.

Zi Juan was a servant girl in a feudal family. In ancient China, such a woman was not only oppressed by patriarchy and the authority of the husband, but also by her master. It is easy for her to be patient. Zi Juan is sincere, intelligent, upright and straightforward. She is the typical embodiment of forbearance with fortitude. Although Lin Daiyu is deeply loved by Jia Mu, Zi Juan is not proud of her favor. On the contrary, she is very modest, and her reputation is not as good as Xi Ren. In the middle stage of the story, Zi Juan dares to help Daiyu to test Baoyu and find out whether Baoyu is as sincere as Daiyu. In the later stage, when Daiyu is dying, all the people in this big family do not care her and only Zi Juan still stays with Daiyu. After Daiyu's death, she was strict with Baoyu, so she was a loyal servant of Daiyu.

2.2.2 The nurse

The nurse thinks that two people's love should be equal, and love must be able to bring happiness. She thinks that in the process of love, both men and women need to love each other, that is, the equality of personality. But it's also needed to have the same status. Therefore, in her view on love, equality has another meaning, which is the double equality of internal and external. The love which hurts any aspect of Juliet is not

the ideal love that she thinks Juliet ought to have. This is well reflected in her character.

As a middle-aged woman, the nurse regards Juliet as her daughter. In her eyes, Juliet is always a little girl like a fairy. The nurse has a strong personality with middle-aged vulgarity, but at the same time she is kind. She is garrulous and noisy, but she always treats Juliet from the point of an elder, helping Juliet connect with her lover when she finds her true love, and persuading her dear Juliet to stop losing herself in the love and marry someone more suitable when Romeo is exiled. She devotes all of her love to her little girl, and dares to risk when Juliet fights against her parents. However, the nurse gives up the love for the so-called happiness.

III. Comparison of Views on Love

3.1 Similarity

The Similarity of love view between Zi Juan and the nurse is that they think that true love should be equal love.

What is equal love, or in what ways is equal love embodied? On the equality of love, people will think of *Jane Eyre*'s lines.

“Do you think that if I am poor, born in a humble family and not beautiful, I have no feelings? You are wrong. I have the same soul and feelings as you. In front of God, our spirit is equal. If God gives me a little wealth and a little beauty, I will make you inseparable. I'm like now, I can't do without you.”(Charlotte Bronte,2016,73).

In Jane's point of view, the equality of love should be only the equality of spirit, emotion and the payment of both sides. In romantic love, the love relationship between two people is not only the emotional connection between two people, but also the spiritual essence and material conditions of two people. But when it comes to love, we first think of the spiritual essence, because in love, the spiritual essence is the most critical and core factor, so the equal love should first be reflected in the two people's thoughts.

In the *A Dream of Red Mansions*, Zi Juan witnesses the development of relationship between Lin Daiyu and Jia Baoyu. Although Lin Daiyu is weak and doesn't sew as traditional women every year, she is willing to embroider sachets for Jia Baoyu. The ornaments staying with Jia Baoyu can be freely given to others, but the things Lin Daiyu gives will be carefully stored. Besides, it's not convenient for Lin Daiyu to go out. Every time Jia Baoyu goes out, he will take care of the things that are valuable and send them to Lin Daiyu. What Zi Juan sees every day is the sincerity and equality of these two people in treating each other. In Zi Juan's opinion, a person's pay is not in vain, but in exchange for almost the same return and care. Different from the traditional male dominated couple, what she sees is the equal interaction between two people. She also agrees with this kind of love, so she thinks that two people should be equal in love, especially in spirit and dignity.

In *Romeo and Juliet*, the nurse has the same attitudes. After Romeo and Juliet met on the balcony, Juliet asked the nurse to send a message to Romeo to create a chance for them. After seeing Romeo, the nurse did not directly express what Juliet wanted :

“If ye should lead her into a fool's paradise,as they say,it were a gross kind of behavior ...”(Sh-akespeare,2013,118)

She mentioned the God. In the Western Christian concept, one can't lie to God. This spiritual sustenance constrained them, making these testing words related to God necessarily express one's true feelings. So after the nurse heard Romeo's words, she determined that the two people were equal in love. In the nurse's heart, it's necessary to find out whether Romeo treats the girl as sincerely as Juliet says. These words of the nurse are very important, and they are an important embodiment of the nurse's view on love.

3.2 Differences

3.2.1 Mutual love of Zi Juan

In the view on love of Zi Juan, love must be mutual, and both sides must have the true feelings of their relationship. This is most incisively and vividly reflected in the plot that she sends out the feelings of Baoyu in Chapter 57. This chapter is the most brilliant chapter of Zi Juan. In this part, Zi Juan shows her frank and sincere character with her bold and straightforward words, which is also the most straightforward embodiment of two people's mutual contribution in her love view. Zi Juan tries to find out Baoyu's true feelings on the pretext that Lin Daiyu will return home. It's more like a ritual. Before the ceremony, Zi Juan had seen Daiyu's affection through her usual observation, but only had not her own recognition about Baoyu's affection. But after the ceremony, Zi Juan knew that they both treated each other with the same sincerity. This test is also more like a key, which opens the door for Zi Juan to officially recognize this love and help Lin Daiyu pursue love directly.

From the above analysis, we can see that in the eyes of Zi Juan, the most important thing about the equality of love is the emotional equality. This kind of equality should not be limited by secular material conditions, and it is a pure and mutual feeling. In the trial of Baoyu, Zi Juan is like a judge, measuring the love between two people with a scale.

3.2.2 Happy love of the nurse

In addition to equality, the nurse believes that happiness is also a major element of love. When the news of Romeo's exile came, the nurse did not immediately persuade Juliet to give up his lover. Because at that time, the hostess was very sad for her brother's death and her husband's exile. At this time, their love has not brought fatal harm to Juliet. At that time, Romeo was still the best person to comfort Juliet. In order to make her little girl happy, she is willing to continue to support this love, because happiness is also an important factor for her to support this love. When it came to later and the father threatened to tell her that her little girl would be driven out of the house, the nurse realized that if she went on like this, her little girl would lose everything now, leaving only the illusory love. As a middle-aged woman of the lower class, she has experienced the hardships of life at the bottom, and she thinks such a life is not happy. Therefore, in order to avoid her little girl struggling for life, she chose to give up supporting Romeo.

From the above analysis, it is not difficult to see that in the eyes of the nurse, love is more secular. So the happiness of love must be supported by material conditions. If love can only bring people spiritual pleasure, but make people suffer in physical and material aspects, such love can not bring real happiness, and should be abandoned. This is also very understandable, because the nursing mother grew up and experienced in this era. And because she lives at the bottom of society, she thought that love must be limited by all aspects of material conditions. Love in the nurse's eyes is more like a vase. With beautiful flower, the vase will be set off with extra value and beauty. But we should never break the vase just because the flower is taken away.

IV. Correlation Between Views On Love And Feudalism

4.1 Feudalism

Feudalism is a kind of social ideology, that is, human consciousness determines society. The social form on which this ideology depends is feudal society. For the interpretation of the definition of "feudal society", due to the different understanding of the Marxist theory of social formation, there have been divergences in academic field on how to treat the differences between Chinese feudal society and Western European feudal society.

Feudalism means that all the land in the world does not belong to the public, but is owned by the feudal lord and can be inherited by the members of the nobility, or is formed by natural division like the Greek city-state. The centralization of power in feudal society was a system formed by war or alliance of tribal city states and operated by central contract, local tribute, tax collection and donation. In feudal society, power was in

the hands of a few people, and the minority could rule the majority.

The authors of the two stories both lived in feudal society and their ideology was influenced by feudal systems, but systems in different states. The two texts were produced in different periods of the development of feudal society in the East and the West. One was in the late Qing Dynasty, the end of Chinese feudal society, and the other was in the new cultural movement, Renaissance, against the old feudalism advocated by the emerging western bourgeoisie. Even in different periods, the influence of feudalism on the author still has something in common, which is vividly reflected in their characters-Zi Juan and the nurse.

4.2 Similarities in differernt feudalisms

In feudal society, two important factors are feudal masters and feudal slaves. So that the similarities must be obedience and servility. The feudal master belongs to the leading class, while the feudal servant belongs to the leaded class. The master has absolute leadership and ownership over the servant. Feudal servants should obey the master's orders absolutely and should not have the right to resist. These are the servility and obedience of the feudal system engraved on the slaves.

In *Romeo and Juliet*, the nurse is the daughter's personal servant. She has a very good relationship with Juliet, which can be called Juliet's spiritual mother in this family. Although the nurse can participate in the master's dialogue a little freely, in essence, she must obey the orders. When Juliet refused her father's marriage arrangement and the father insulted his daughter, the nurse didn't say offensive words to the father, but just gently dissuaded the father.

"You are to blame, my lord ,to rate her so." "I speak no treason" (Shakespeare,2013,198).

In this feudal family, Juliet's father is the highest feudal lord, the one who can't be refuted. When Juliet's mother learned the fact and she was going to give up talking for Juliet, the nurse realized that they had no room for resistance. So she chose to obey. She immediately changed her attitude and obeyed the will and decision of the feudal lord. She turned to analyze Romeo's badness and Hath's goodness, persuading Juliet to give up Romeo. As a servant, the nurse can't resist completely like her master Juliet. In her heart it will not benefit to fight against the feudal lord, because he will mercilessly deprive you of everything you have. The obedience and servility have been engraved in her heart, which forced her to give up the meaningless resistance.

In the *A Dream of Red Mansions*, compared with Yuan Yang and other people, Zi Juan occupies a relatively not significant position. On the one hand, it is because her master is Lin Daiyu, a relative who came to live. In this family, Daiyu has nothing to rely on except the love of her grandmother. But more importantly, Zi Juan is a typical loyal servant in the feudal society of China. She made the best of all the rules that should be abided by in the feudal family. One of the most important characteristics is her intelligence. This wisdom is most obvious in her plot of testing Baoyu, but it is also shown in the daily life. The author usually describes her when Daiyu tells her to work. This just shows that the most important thing Zi Juan usually does is to do her duty as a servant well, so she is a dutiful and qualified servant. So what is her recognition? Naturally, it is the performance of keeping her daily tasks heartly in such a family, if you want to be an excellent servant girl, obedience is necessary.

Their obedience and servility are also a big part of their love view. Their attitude towards love is very bold and avant-garde compared with those around them. However, due to their status as feudal slaves, they still can't get rid of the restriction of material conditions for love. Influenced by the heroine, they witnessed a bold love and contributed their own strength in this love. But they were suppressed by the feudal forces, and succumbed to the arrangement of the feudal lord

4.3 Different feudalisms and the influences on views on love

4.3.1 Secret feudalism and implication.

Cao Xueqin, the author of *A Dream of Red Mansions*, lived in the Qing Dynasty of China. During the Qing Dynasty, China's feudalism had developed for thousands of years and entered a stiff stage. During the Qing Dynasty, the imperial government strengthened the centralized control in all aspects, and reached the peak in people's ideological and cultural aspects. The imperial examination system of Qing Dynasty was the wide use of eight part essay, a strictly defined article, strictly limiting people's thoughts.

In the Qing Dynasty, people can not develop their own unique personality, but can only comply with the rule of the feudal lord. Therefore, in the Qing Dynasty, the feudal arranged marriage was the main form of marriage. At that time, the free love between men and women was considered to be unruly, and not in line with the feudal etiquette, which was deviant. As long as the family power of both men and women is basically in the same position, they can reach a marriage relationship without meeting or understanding each other. Naturally, in the feudal society of Qing Dynasty, people were unfamiliar with the concept of love and the concept of views on love.

What Jia family reflected is a miniature of the feudal society at that time. The grandmother, like a feudal emperor, enjoys supreme rights and status in this family. Jia Zheng, Mrs. Wang and others were like ministers loyal to the emperor, while Jia Zhen and others were like treacherous ministers in the court, who brought the dynasty to destruction with their shameless behavior. Zi Juan, whether in this society or in this feudal family, belongs to the lowest level of people. They have survived among different people since childhood. What they can do most is to observe other people's words and deeds, so as to guess other people's thoughts. In this process, what they need to do most is to restrain themselves, including their love.

Implication is not the only point of love view of Zi Juan, but the most prominent point in her personality. It is also a very important point in the personality of people in Chinese feudal society. Before Zi Juan tries Baoyu, she just looks at the love between Lin Daiyu and Jia Baoyu and records it silently. One reason is that they met at a relatively young age at that time and this kind of intimate feeling was just the friendship between children; but the more important reason is that the sisterhood between Zi Juan and Daiyu was at the warming stage at that time. In other words, Daiyu was not worth breaking her own implication for the sake of her master.

4.3.2 Relaxed feudalism and directness

Shakespeare, the author of *Romeo and Juliet*, is the most outstanding playwright in the English Renaissance. Before the Renaissance, the West experienced a long and dark middle ages, which was called the Dark Ages. At that time, the whole European continent was not ruled by a powerful force. In this long time, people's thoughts were completely under the control of Catholicism. In the middle ages, European feudalism experienced the important stages of formation, development and decline. Feudal society instilled in people the idea of giving up struggle and obeying the arrangement of power holders, and required people to give up pursuing their own happiness in order to achieve a unified order.

European Renaissance is an ideological and cultural movement of western capitalism against feudalism. The core content of European Renaissance is humanism. Humanism advocates taking human as the core and pursuing the liberation of personality. The liberation of human personality is the opposite of the feudal society's demand for people to restrain their feelings and desires. Humanism advocates that people's happiness is the most basic thing and should be pursued in their life. Shakespeare lived at the end of the Renaissance, when the society was full of Renaissance freedom. People's mind has been unprecedentedly liberated. Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* is produced under the influence of this social background and ideological trend and the work is filled with anti feudal consciousness.

Throughout the whole process of the development of this love story, this nurse shows an unprecedentedly

open concept of love. The nurse learned from Juliet's initiative that her little girl had a sweetheart. So why did Juliet take the initiative to tell the nurse about the secret? It's because Juliet knows that the nurse won't hind her pursuit of love. As expected, after knowing what Juliet thought, the nurse first expressed her surprise, but soon she accepted it. She didn't keep silent about it, and didn't reprimand Juliet severely as the feudal society required. On the contrary, she agreed with it very much and was willing to help deliver the message and get married secretly. She thinks that love should be mutual appreciation and admiration, so she boldly accepts Juliet's orders and test Romeo's feelings. After confirming their wishes, she interacted with them each other to get married in the church. This plot is very important, because in the feudal traditional concept, it is very bold for men and women to have a secret free love relationship, not to mention a secret marriage in a place where western Catholics devotes their beliefs. When Juliet was heartbroken because she learned of Romeo's exile, the first thing that the nurse thought of was to let Romeo comfort her, and even had the behavior of staying overnight. In the feudal orthodox concept, it belonged to adultery, which was absolutely not allowed. On the other hand, it is a proof of her open view on love that she agreed their marriage in private.

So, all the behaviors of promoting the love development of the nurse were against the feudal system at that time. But a servant in Shakespeare's work dares to violate the feudal system, especially in that time, because of the influence of Renaissance, it proves that people had the consciousness of breaking through the feudal system and appreciated it very much. On the other hand, even the nurse, a slave living at the bottom of the society, has such an open view of love. It also proves the great conflict between the ideology and culture of the emerging bourgeoisie under the feudal system at that time, and explains the historical law that the feudal system is going to perish after all.

V. Conclusion

A Dream of Red Mansions and *Romeo and Juliet* are very famous love tragedies. The authors also integrate the background factors of their creation period into the shaping of the their characters. Thus it can be seen that social factors have an important influence on people's personality and love view.

Based on different feudalism, Zi Juan and nurse have different characters and views on love.

Cao Xueqin, the author of *A Dream of Red Mansions*, lives in the harsh and decadent period of Chinese feudal society. Therefore, in his works, although Zi Juan is an introverted and steady servant girl, she pursues equal love. She pursues the love with equal personality, but does not advocate publicly her feelings, which is the embodiment of Chinese modesty and character.

Shakespeare, the author of *Romeo and Juliet*, lives at the end of the Renaissance when the new bourgeoisie opposed feudalism. Therefore, in his works, the nurse is an open and outgoing servant. She pursues equal and happy love, and shows it in a very straightforward way. She pursues the love of equal status and dares to talk about love, which is the embodiment of westerners' enthusiasm and extroversion.

In a word, in the open and free Western Renaissance, the nurse thought that love should be equal and happy; in the harsh Qing Dynasty, Zi Juan believed that love should be equal and mutual.

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