

Analysis of the Shaping of the Image of the Shrew from “The Taming of the Shrew” to “Strange Stories from Liao Zhai”

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Abstract: “The Taming of the Shrew” is an early work of Shakespeare, which vividly portrays the image of Catherine’s shrew. “Strange Stories from a Lonely Studio” is Pu Songling’s representative work. In this work, the author presents images of different types of shrews. Generally speaking, these two works reflect the social scene at the time through vivid images of shrews and convey profound truths. This article mainly focuses on the analysis of the image of the shrew in “The Taming of the Shrew” and the analysis of the image of the shrew in “Strange Stories from Liao Zhai”. The focus is on the analysis of the image of the shrew and the background behind the image of the shrew. The cultural value and social significance that it contains, I hope to inspire some related fields and give readers some perspectives.

Keywords: Taming the Shrew; Strange Stories from Liao Zhai; Image of a Shrew; Shaping Analysis

In the two works “The Taming of the Shrew” and “Strange Stories from Liao Zhai”, although both successfully portrayed the image of a shrew, the form of expression is different, and the creators hold different views. Through the images of shrews in “The Taming of the Shrew” and “Strange Stories from Liao Zhai”, readers can not only perceive the literary meaning of shrews, but also understand the politics, economy, and culture of the specific period that the creator wants to show. This is the reason for the success of “The Taming of the Shrew” and “Strange Stories from Liao Zhai”, and it is also an important role played by the “Shrew” in the history of literature. Entering modern society, under the collision of various ideas, readers have a more comprehensive understanding of “Shrew”. With a comprehensive perspective, readers can better walk into the image of the shrew created by “The Taming of the Shrew” and “Strange Stories from Liao Zhai”.

1. Analysis of the image of the shrew in “The Taming of the Shrew”

1.1 The emergence of “shrew”

In “The Taming of the Shrew”, Katherina is pungent and arrogant, and Bianca is silent and gentle, forming a sharp contrast between the two. So, what is the real reason that made Katharina a shrew? On the surface, Katherina’s various acts of shrews are due to: ① The father’s excessive preference; ② The contrast in courtship; ③ The blow to her self—esteem. But from a deeper analysis, in the autocratic patriarchal society at that time, there were many restrictions on women, which put a heavy shackle on women. It is precisely because of this strong and arrogant social atmosphere that Katharina’s mentality is out of balance. In fact, Katherina just released her nature naturally, but this release was incompatible with the social order at the time. The reason why Katherina became a recognized shrew mainly stems from the patriarchal society.

1.2 The emergence of “tame”

The patriarchal society depicted in “The Taming of the Shrew” regards shrews as a terrible “disaster”, which may affect or even destroy social development. So, for the shrew of Katherina, there will naturally be a tamed person. In the interaction with the tamed person, Katharina’s image of the shrew is more vivid and three

—dimensional, making readers feel very real. For example, in “The Taming of the Shrew”, in order to fight against the family at the time, Katherine contradicted her father “Look at it, I will take revenge one day.” In order to reject the constraints of dogmatism, Katherine beats the teacher and insults the seeker. “She will use a three—legged stool to break your nose. . .” In order to resist her husband’s control, Katherine and her husband tit—for—tat “I won’t go today, and I won’t go tomorrow, if it’s a lifetime. If you are not happy to go, I will not go for the rest of my life. . .” Because the words and deeds of shrews are completely different from those of other women, and they even challenge the authority of men such as fathers and husbands, they will naturally be ridiculed by the outside world. “Tameness” has become a reasonable and urgent matter. In “The Taming of the Shrew”, the “taming” is mainly reflected in: ① Bianka’s suitors must remove obstacles and bring Bianka out of the arduous life; ② Father Baptista gives generously. The dowry of her, repaying those who dare to ask for relatives; ③ Peter tortured Katharina again and again physically and mentally, making her become like others and a recognized “good wife” in a patriarchal society.

By portraying the emergence of “shrew” and the appearance of “tame”, people can see that a fierce and straightforward shrew has gradually transformed into a woman who suppresses herself and dare not resist. Such a female image is very gentle on the surface, but helpless and timid on the inside. It is a sad group of people in a patriarchal society.

2. Analysis of the image of shrew in “Strange Stories from Liao Zhai”

2.1 The main types of shrews

In “Strange Stories from a Lonely Studio”, shrews can be divided into different types. Specifically: Yin family in Ma Jiefu, Jiangcheng sisters in Jiangcheng, Li Sheng’s wife in Hades, Li Sheng’s wife in Shao Linzi, Shen in Coral, and Shao Jiuniang in The King’s family, Wang Tian’s official woman in “Lv Wubing . . .” These shrews can be divided into three categories:

(1) A shrew who rebelled against her in—laws. The biggest feature of this type of shrew is “not filial”, completely ignoring the constraints of feudal etiquette. For example, in “Coral”, the author wrote: “If the mother is angry, she will express her anger.” Zang Gu actually treated her mother—in—law as a maid and asked her to clean the urinal instead of herself. Moreover, when her mother—in—law was ill, Gu Zang was indifferent and did not have the slightest filial piety. When her husband wanted to visit, she was also opposed by Zang Gu. In the feudal society at that time, this kind of unfilial behavior towards mother—in—law was very bad, equivalent to “unpardonable evil”.

(2) A shrew who abuses her concubine. In “Ma Jiefu”, Yin is very jealous that the concubine is pregnant. When the concubine is ill, he deliberately finds reasons to bully the concubine and beat him up badly, which eventually leads to the concubine’s abortion. This type of shrew’s “fierceness” is mainly manifested in family life. The target of giving power is the maid or her child. Through this type of shrew, people can feel the various defects of the feudal society’s marriage system and the oppression caused to women.

(3) A shrew who abused her husband. In feudal society, the rule followed was “wives follow their husbands” and “doing things as things do is like heaven”, and wives must obey their husbands unconditionally. This shows that the relationship between wife and husband is not equal. It is based on this disparity that a group of shrews abusing their husbands will appear. For example, in “Strange Stories from Liao Zhai”, there are some shrews who do not follow the social norms of “wives be in their husbands”, speak boldly, do things boldly, and are not blindly obedient to their husbands. A more typical female image is: Hou’s, Jiang Cheng, Li Sheng’s wife, Yin family, etc. Although these shrews are fierce, they also have a spirit of resistance.

2.2 Analysis of the similarities and differences of shrews

In “Strange Stories from Liao Zhai”, although the types of shrews are different, in essence, they all have some similarities. Specifically: ① Improper words and deeds. These shrews often speak viciously and behave maliciously, and always do things that go against the public order and good customs of the society, which makes most people feel disgusted; ② By nature they are suspicious. These shrews are more suspicious, accustomed to using “evil” thoughts to speculate about others at will, often suffering from gains and losses. Moreover, he has a

strong possessive desire for his husband, property, etc. , and does not allow others to interfere. In addition to these similarities, these shrews also have differences.

For example, in terms of character, some shrews are both arrogant and wise. They are both arrogant, brave and honest, vicious, lonely, and helpless, and are exploited by feudal ethics. Take “Jiangcheng” as an example. Jiangcheng’s “fierce” is mainly manifested in jealousy, which makes him very fierce. When Jiang Cheng and Gao Fan threw the red scarf to convey their affection, although Jiang Cheng acted fiercely, he had a certain strategy in his heart and his own opinions, which could reflect the cleverness of women, which made people feel both hateful and with a hint of understanding.

3. Conclusion

To sum up, from “The Taming of the Shrew” to “Strange Stories from Liao Zhai”, people mainly hold a critical attitude towards shrews and believe that the words, deeds and thoughts of shrews are not worthy of promotion. However, in modern society, people’s understanding of shrews has actually changed a lot. For example, in a series of film and television works such as “My Savage Girlfriend” and “My Savage Mother”, the creators mainly use words such as “cute”, “strong”, “brave” and “persistent” to describe more powerful of women, with a kind of understanding, respect, and even praise. Under the influence of these film and television works, readers can get some new inspirations, not only seeing the “evil” of the image of shrews in “The Taming of the Shrew” and “Strange Stories from Liao Zhai”, but also seeing their deep “helplessness” and “Helpless” and their true temperament. This change in cognitive concepts can indirectly promote the development of literature and help people interpret literary works from a more diversified perspective.

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