

# The Girl Worshipper of Androgyny -- Jia Baoyu from The Perspective of Feminist Psychoanalysis

Zhiming Xian \*

College of Liberal Arts, Hubei Normal University, Hubei, China

\* Corresponding Author Email: 20203668@stu.hebmu.edu.cn

**Abstract.** With the combination of the third wave of feminism and psychoanalytic theory, psychoanalytic literary criticism has opened the era of change from focusing on genes to focusing on the growth environment of characters. However, the study of *A Dream in Red Mansions* is still biased towards the traditional research method, but there are few studies using this method. In order to fill the gap in this research, this study will focus on the character of Jia Baoyu, and use the analytical method of psychoanalytic feminism and queer theory to analyze Jia Baoyu and his growth environment. Through the analysis of Jia Baoyu's father Jia Zheng, Jia Baoyu's mother Mrs. Wang and Jia Baoyu's place of growth Jia Fu, this study found that these environmental factors had an impact on Jia Baoyu's androgynous characteristics, and caused Jia Baoyu's girl worship psychology to a certain extent. The use of psychoanalytic feminism to study Jia Baoyu is a relatively new research method, and it is also rare to look into other fields of the study of *A Dream in Red Mansions*. It is hoped that this study can provide a research idea for subsequent researchers so that people can focus on other factors besides the characters in the text.

**Keywords:** Jia Baoyu; *A Dream in Red Mansions*; queer theory; psychoanalysis; feminism.

## 1. Introduction

This study focuses on the gap of psychoanalytic feminism in the research field of *A Dream in Red Mansions*. This study is of significance to inspire subsequent researchers to broaden their research field, especially the factors other than the characters in the text. It can not only deepen the research depth of Jia Baoyu's figure, but also deepen scholars' understanding of *A Dream in Red Mansions* and provide references for the study of other texts. This study focuses on Jia Baoyu, a hero in *A Dream in Red Mansions* written by Cao Xueqin, a writer of the Qing Dynasty. In a previous life, Jia Baoyu was a stone left over from the sky and was reborn in Rongguo Mansion after being enlightened by a monk and a Taoist priest. Jia Baoyu got his name from being born with a piece of jade in his mouth. Jia Baoyu is Jia Fu direct grandson, deeply Jia mother love. He likes to get along with girls, usually close to the family sisters and maids; Bosom friends with Lin Daiyu, and they develop a sincere emotion which was rare in society at that time. He was also close to a group of men, such as Qin Zhong, Jiang Yuhan, and King Bei Jing. He liked to write poems and loved to create, but he did not like to recite them and hated the eight-part script and the imperial examination, which was also criticized by his father. In the end, the girls around him died or scattered, leaving him alone crazy and stupid, and finally, he left the world under the leadership of a monk and a Taoist priest [1]. This study attempts to analyze Jia Baoyu's personality acquisition, especially the influence of the acquired environment on his personality, from the perspective of psychoanalytic feminism and the relevant theories of Freud and Jones. In the research, literature analysis and close reading of text are mainly used to search and read the relevant literature and analyze the text content. The main advantage of this research method is that it can combine theory and text to make innovations and draw conclusions on the basis of previous research. The ultimate goal of this study is to clarify the environmental factors that affect Jia Baoyu's personality. The main research objects involved in this study are Jia Zheng, Mrs. Wang and Jia Mansion.

## 2. Psychoanalytic Feminist Theory

There were three major waves of feminism. In the first wave, women demanded the right to work and vote. In the second wave of feminism, women demanded equal rights and faced gender differences. In the third wave of feminism, feminism and other theories combined co-existed and became diverse. During the wave when feminist and psychoanalytic theory were first combined, feminists also took a deeper look at Freudian psychoanalysis. However, the combination of relevant theories and the study of Jia Baoyu's image in *A Dream in Red Mansions* is not common, and the domestic research in the past ten years only stays at the level of psychoanalysis, and studies using relevant theories of psychoanalytic feminism are carried out. Feminist psychoanalysts reject Freud's biological determinism and advocate the conclusion that personality is more determined by sociocultural circumstances. Some psychoanalytic feminists also skipped the Oedipus complex (Oedipus Complex) and focused on the pre-Oedipus stage (0-18 months oral and 1-2 years anal). Feminist psychoanalysis states that gender is psychologically constructed, not biologically preconceived [2].

## 3. Literature Review

In the last ten years, there have been only a few research on Jia Baoyu's character in *A Dream in Red Mansions*. There are mainly four ones:

In April 2013, Deng Lei, a master's student at Donghua University's Law School of Literature, made a psychoanalysis of Jia Baoyu's character image in *A Dream in Red Mansions*. He analyzed Jia Baoyu's personality traits through the theory of three selves and restored Jia Baoyu's complete personality structure [3].

In September 2014, Sui Xiaohui, a scholar from the College of Literature of Shaanxi Normal University, made a new interpretation of the song "Lifelong Mistake" in the fifth chapter of "*A Dream in Red Mansions*", taking it as the basis for Jia Baoyu's psychoanalysis, and explored the deep psychological motivation of his obsession with "the agreement of wood and stone" [4].

In January 2020, Bai Tingting, a scholar from the School of Literature of Northwest University for Nationalities, used Freud's psychoanalysis theory to deeply and carefully explore the emotional relationship between Jia Baoyu and Qin Zhong in the novel at the subconscious level, explained the relationship between Baoyu and attack people with the Oedipus complex and related theories, and analyzed the motives of the characters behind the plot of "naughty children in school" with the repression theory [5].

July 2020. Lu Zhan, a scholar at Jiangsu Normal University, published an article. He first used Freud's theory to analyze Jia Baoyu's "anti-father complex" and "Oedipal complex". Then using the dream theory to analyze the travel fantasy refers to 12 hairpins, embroider Yuanyang dream Zhaojiang Yunxuan, Zhen Jia Baoyu first meet, Qingwen farewell to Baoyu in a dream four complexes; Finally, the paper analyzes how Jia Baoyu's Libido sublimates with the theory of three selves [6].

It can be seen that there are still some deficiencies in this type of research on Jia Baoyu's character image in *A Dream in Red Mansions*.

First of all, when researchers use psychoanalytic literary theory to analyze the text of *A Dream in Red Mansions*, they are susceptible to the advanced interference of current social ideology. People tend to presuppose the analysis results before the analysis, and this result is often not guaranteed to be correct. Only in the analysis of the text to a certain extent to discard the authority of the prior impression, can get a more objective and correct conclusion. The conclusions obtained by the researchers are often in line with people's understanding of the characters in the book, and it cannot be ruled out that the prior impression affects the experimental results of the scholars.

Secondly, when the characters are examined, their inner activities are seldom studied in the context of Qing Dynasty society. For certain behavior criteria, critics will be swayed by the values of today's

society, which will be biased in psychoanalysis. Only by focusing on the social values and ideology of Qing nobles can truly grasp the spiritual core of the novel text.

In addition, the psychoanalytic theory used in the study was relatively old. More focus on Freud's research theory, but ignore other theories, for example, feminist psychoanalysis can also be used to focus on the influence of the acquired environment on personality; Or Jung's psychological literature psychoanalysis, which focuses on the influence of the collective unconscious on personality. The use of more cutting-edge scientific methods can help get more accurate results.

There are a few related research directions. Through the above analysis, it is found that there is still a huge gap behind the study of Jia Baoyu's character image in the psychoanalysis of *A Dream in Red Mansions*, and Jia Baoyu's personality in the book is only a small part of the current research. Some studies also provide new research ideas, such as comparative studies with other works and interdisciplinary studies with other disciplines. These aspects still need a large number of red chamber dream study researchers to analyze.

Therefore, according to the above shortcomings, this study uses more advanced feminist psychoanalysis. According to the theory of psychoanalytic feminism, it is necessary to analyze the cultural environment in which Jia Baoyu grew up when studying her. In this paper, the research direction will focus on the following aspects: Jia Zheng, Mrs. Wang, and Jia Mansion. These three aspects are closely related to the formation of Jia Baoyu's character.

#### 4. Analysis of Environmental Factors

According to the female psychoanalyst Horney, Freud discovered the Oedipus complex and its effect on human relationships, but Freud was wrong about the biological reasons for children's attachment to their parents. She believes that the parent-child relationship is a product of the environment. Jia Zheng is Jia Baoyu's father, and Mrs. Wang is Jia Baoyu's mother, these two figures will have a significant impact on Jia Baoyu's interpersonal relationship, and Jia Mansion is Jia Baoyu's growth environment when considering Jia Baoyu's personality development, it should also be taken into account.

##### 4.1. Jia Zheng

Jia Zheng, like the homonym of his name "Zheng" (meaning correct in Chinese), is the image of a feudal orthodox scholar who attaches importance to reading examinations. He is also very strict in the education of his son Jia Baoyu. According to the theory of psychoanalytic feminism, this paper finds several factors that influence Jia Baoyu's personality in the book.

First of all, the lack of male companionship, in the thirty-seventh chapter, Jia Zheng left Jia mansion, began his career, the book mentions the Yuan princess (Jia Zheng's daughter) home to visit relatives, Jia Zheng for work more heart, in order to repay the emperor, the emperor see Jia Zheng good character, good style, and was born in a scholarly family, so promoted Jia Zheng. Jia Zheng left to take office on August 20. It was not until chapter 70 that Jia Zheng returned home. That day, the sisters had breakfast in the room and received a letter from Jia Zheng. Jia Baoyu for Jia mother read Jia Zheng letters, above in addition to said etiquette, also said that June will come back. Everyone was very happy to hear it. 1 For adolescent Jia Baoyu, the absence of the gender role of the father will affect his personality, and the absence of paternal love will result in the feminization of boys, boys lack of masculinity, withdrawn, timid, stingy, like to get along with girls, dress, language, body have different degrees of imitation of women [7]. And this conclusion is indeed reflected in the text. Since Grand View Garden provides Jia Baoyu with a relatively independent environment with only girls and the secular world, it is difficult to judge whether Jia Baoyu is withdrawn, timid and stingy in the process of communicating with men, and this point that she likes to get along with girls is indeed reflected in the text.

In the article, can find a lot of plots about Jia Baoyu's harmonious relationship with women. His dress cannot be reflected because of the feudal law, but his language does have the characteristics of

women, for example, in chapter 19 of the book, when XiRen criticizes Baoyu for being "dissimilar, capricious, and most unwilling to be upright," he once said: "... Just look at me with you, and keep watch over me, until one day I turn into flying ash - flying ash is not good, ash is still visible and can be seen. When I turn into a light smoke and the wind blows away, you will not be able to restrain me, and I will not be able to see you. Let me go then, and I don't care where you go."; In Chapter 57, when ZiJuan tested whether he was true to Daiyu with his emotional words, he said again: "I only wish that I would die immediately and burst out of my heart and you saw it, and then all my belts and bones would turn into ashes, - ashes still have traces, it would be better to turn into a puff of smoke, - the smoke can still condense, and people can still see that all the directions that need to be blown by a strong wind will disperse in a moment. That's good!" He said, "I will only tell you one thing: Live, we live together; If we are not alive, we will become ashes and smoke together, how about that?" It can be seen that Jia Baoyu's words have a strong ability to express feelings and emotions, and the tone is upward. These are the qualities of female discourse [8].

In addition, the lack of a father will cause children to be sensitive and suspicious, they often feel inferior, and the consequences will form a self-centered character, which will affect future development. Children can only grudgingly accept grievances so that when they form their own judgment, they often rely on whether they can get them or not. If they don't get them, they will feel strongly disappointed and guilty to their parents. In the long run, such a radical success mentality makes their inner world imperfect, and they will always aspire to be the best person in their parents' eyes. Unable to accept the setbacks encountered in real life [9]. This is also reflected in Jia Baoyu, in the face of the learning task assigned by his father, Jia Baoyu could not complete, and then turned negative. Jia Zheng placed high expectations on Jia Baoyu's education, and he, like other parents in traditional society, was unable to get enough time with his son to complete his education. Therefore, the final result is that Baoyu will fall into the dilemma of high expectations and lack of education, which is easy to cause a certain inferiority complex.

#### **4.2. Mrs. Wang**

Mrs. Wang is the mother of Jia Baoyu, who also comes from a feudal noble family and is a model of feudal ethics. Since it was respected by the feudal society, she must have accepted the patriarchal discourse and added the code of conduct. Both she and Jia Zheng started from the standpoint of maintaining the feudal orthodox thought, ruthlessly and sentimentally destroying the rebels of the feudal system. The father-son opposition and mother-son opposition between this couple and Baoyu were maintained by a loving love word [10]. Madame Wang was a woman who grew up in a feudal noble family. The education of the big family for Mrs. Wang since childhood is that her behavior and thought should conform to the requirements of feudal ethics and morals, and the traditional ethical thoughts will undoubtedly mark her deeply; At the same time, Jia Zheng's work caused the husband and wife to spend less time together, which jointly caused Mrs. Wang's expectation of Jia Baoyu to increase, the son as a spiritual pillar, the son has a higher expectation, which Jia Baoyu also has a greater psychological pressure. Some children cannot bear the huge psychological pressure to the opposite of their parents, resist with their parents, easy to produce extreme behavior [11]. The psychoanalytic school also believes that the mistaken identity of children's gender roles caused by childhood families is also a factor leading to homosexuality. For example, Bibo's research shows that weak fathers and overbearing mothers are two important factors in male homosexual tendencies [12]. Obviously, Jia Baoyu's dual gender can also be traced from here. In order to alleviate the psychological blow suffered by the child, unconditionally meet the child's excessive material requirements, so that the child has bad emotions such as arrogance and willfulness. This will cause the child to be self-centered, disorderly behavior [7].

#### **4.3. Jia Mansion**

Jia Mansion is a noble house with social status, including Rongguo Mansion and Ningguo Mansion. In the Rongguo building and Grandma Jia love as a direct grandson Jia Baoyu and children of similar

age. Grand View Garden is the garden where children live. However, due to structural reasons, Jia Baoyu's father worked outside the home all the time, and Jia Baoyu lived in an environment that was rare at that time to live with most women for a long time. Due to Jia Zheng's perennial work and the relatively closed growth environment, Jia Baoyu cannot get enough care from his parents the family, so he longs for the care of others, and the care of the opposite sex can better meet their needs than the care of the same sex, so he often has a good feeling for the opposite sex around him in adolescence [7]. In addition, as mentioned above, Jia Baoyu is endowed with high expectations due to the lack of father's love, which will produce a kind of inferiority complex and escape psychology. However, other girls living in the Grand View Garden, who are similar in age to him, do not need to face the difficulties he encountered, nor need to consider becoming an official, but are physically more complete than him, so Jia Baoyu's heart has changed to worship psychology.

Jia Baoyu lives in such an isolated environment from the outside world, and rarely sees the same sex in his childhood, and his good friends are girls. If a boy's best friend is a girl when he is young, he will like a male lover when he grows up, and the wrong gender identity in childhood is one of the causes of homosexuality [12]. Therefore, the environment of Jia Mansion will also lead to the confusion of his gender identity, which is a factor causing his dual gender. In addition, the identity of Jia Baoyu's direct grandson also affected his personality, the patriarchal system gave the eldest son absolute power and the difficult mission of revitalizing the family while avoiding the disputes caused by the struggle for power, but the "passing on the old age does not pass on the talent" has buried hidden dangers for the future of the family, if the eldest son is good, he can bear the responsibility of the whole family; If the eldest son has virtue and no talent, he will be overwhelmed by the burden of responsibility, and the more weak and incompetent. As the son of Jia Zheng, Jia Baoyu bears this responsibility, but his identity is not the eldest son of his peers in Jia Mansion, so the conflict between this responsibility and identity is easy to lead to his identity recognition errors, which will also lead to his double gender [11].

## 5. Conclusion

The result of this study is that the special education mode of Jia Zheng and Mrs. Wang and the special environment of Jia Fu affect Jia Baoyu's personality and make him become a girl worshipper with dual gender; This study provides a lot of valuable reference significance for future research in this direction, which mainly affects the researchers of "A Dream in Red Mansions" and the literary theory researchers of the psychoanalytic school. Future research should focus more on the direction of external environment for in-depth exploration.

## References

- [1] Cao Xueqin, Anonymous. A Dream in Red Mansions. Shanghai Education Publishing House. Shanghai. 2020.
- [2] Wear Snow Red. Freud and Psychoanalytic feminism. Journal of Women's Studies, 2005, (05): 62-67.
- [3] Deng Lei. Jia Baoyu's Psychoanalytic Criticism of Personality. Journal of Kaili College, 2013, 31(02): 103-105.
- [4] Sui Xiaohui. A pair of sad friends and bitter lovers returning to their spiritual hometown -- A description of the song "Lifelong Mistake" by A Dream in Red Mansions. Journal of Yulin University, 2014, 24(05): 87-89.
- [5] Bai Tingting. Psychoanalytic interpretation of "Naughty Children making trouble in School" in the ninth chapter of A Dream in Red Mansions. Beauty and Aage, 2020, (01): 81-83.
- [6] Lu Zhan. Analysis on the image of Jia Baoyu from the perspective of Psychoanalysis. Young Writers, 2020, (20): 63-64.
- [7] Zhang Yuge. Research on adolescent psychological problems of single parent children. Chinese out-of-school Education, 2014, (S1): 4+7.

- [8] Cen Zeli. Jia Baoyu's daughter View and its language Characteristics in A Dream in Red Mansions. Journal of Vocational University, 2016, (06): 58-62.
- [9] Peng Yu. Research on "official" education for primary school students. Guizhou Normal University, 2016.
- [10] Zheng Jingyan. "Both good and Evil" Mrs. Wang. Journal of Kaili College, 2019, 37(05): 75-80.
- [11] Zhao Dandan. The "Eldest son Complex" under the influence of patriarchal law -- Centered on the character analysis in A Dream in Red Mansions. Heilongjiang Institute of Education, 2022.
- [12] Li Yinhe. Gay subculture. China Press Today. Beijing, 1998.