An Analysis of the Awakening of Female Consciousness in Lady Sapphire's Diary: Taking Hofstede's Theory of Cultural Dimensions as a Perspective

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Abstract. Ancient Chinese feudal society was a society with a large power distance, and a highly centralized and centralized power system was practiced throughout the ages. Under the influence of feudal authoritarianism and the concept of “great unity”, ancient Chinese society had a large power distance, strong collectivism, and a prominent masculine temperament. Women have long been bound by feudal authoritarianism and adapted to the gender division of labor in the male-dominated society, and female consciousness has not yet awakened. However, during the May 4th period, the power distance showed a trend of narrowing, and the index of individualism gradually increased, the masculine and feminine temperament tended to moderate, and the bud of female consciousness began to awaken. From the perspective of Hofstede's theory of cultural dimensions, this paper will try to analyze the background of the emergence of “free love” works under the ideology of personality liberation in the May Fourth period, and take Ding Ling's diary novel Lady Sapphire's Diary as an example, adopt the research method of textual analysis, and analyze and explore the awakening of women's consciousness from two perspectives, namely, the distance of power and the difference between individualism and collectivism, in the theory of Hofstede's theory of cultural dimensions, focusing on specific textual contents. We use textual analysis to analyze and explore the awakening of women's consciousness from the perspectives of Hofstede's theory of cultural dimensions, power distance, individualism, and collectivism, and from the perspective of specific textual contents.

Keywords: Lady Sapphire's Diary, Hofstede's theory of cultural dimensions, female awakening, freedom.

1. Introduction

From the perspective of Hofstede's theory of cultural dimensions, this study focuses on the constraints on women's thinking in the authoritarian system of ancient Chinese feudal society and the novels of “free love” during the May Fourth period, which are very meaningful for exploring the awakening of women's consciousness during the May Fourth period, and analyzes the changes in social patterns and the initial awakening of women's consciousness during the May Fourth period from three perspectives, namely, power distance, individualism and collectivism, and specifically from two perspectives, namely, power distance, individualism and collectivism, This study analyzes the changes of social formations and the initial awakening of female consciousness in the May Fourth period from three angles of Hofstede's theory of cultural dimensions: power distance, individualism and collectivism, and masculinity and femininity, and specifically studies Ding Ling's diary novel Ms. Sapphire's Diary during the May Fourth period from the perspectives of power distance, individualism and collectivism. Textual analysis is employed to delve into the content of the essay and specifically analyze the embodiment of the awakening of female consciousness. The book was written against the backdrop of the “May 4th” trend of individual liberation and was a highly influential work of enlightenment at the time. The book tells the story of Safie, who ran away from home because she desperately wanted to pursue her ideal life. After meeting Lingis, she fell deeply in love with him after several struggles, and for the first time, she realized the pursuit of the combination of women's body and spirit. However, after seeing the true nature of Lingis, Safie, after numerous conflicts and struggles, finally comes to her senses and chooses to leave alone. Safi's contradictions and departure realize women's transcendence of self and the pursuit of self-worth,

which to a certain extent embodies the awakening of women's consciousness, and the ultimate research goal of this study is to explore and analyze the awakening of women's consciousness in the May Fourth period.

2. The Awakening of Women's Consciousness in the May Fourth Period from the Perspective of Huo's Cultural Dimension

Cultural Dimension Theory is a pioneering theory put forward by Dutch sociologist Gilbert Hofstede that analyzes cultural differences between countries in six dimensions: Power Distance, Uncertainty Avoidance, Individualism-Collectivism, Masculinity-Femininity, Long-term and Short-term, Indulgence versus Restraint [1]. The three dimensions of power distance, individualism, collectivism, and masculinity-femininity are closely related to the social environment of the May Fourth period, so we will analyze the background of the emergence of free-love novels in the context of the "May Fourth" personality liberation ideology from these three dimensions.

2.1. Power Distance

In his book The Power of Cultural and Organizational Psychological Software, Hofstede defines "power distance" as the extent to which disadvantaged members of a country's institutions and organizations expect and accept that power is distributed unequally. Here, institutions (institutions) are the basic units of society, such as families, schools, communities, etc., and organizations (organizations) are the places where people work [2]. People's acceptance of hierarchy is stronger in societies with greater power distance and weaker in societies with less power distance. Ancient Chinese feudal society was a society with a large power distance, where the monarch resided at the center of the power structure and the exercise of power depended on the monarch's will [3]. Under the dominant political concept of "great unification", the vertical power system of the state formed a highly centralized structural pattern [4]. Society as a whole was generally more receptive to hierarchy. In the May Fourth period, a group of advanced intellectuals began to pursue freedom, trying to awaken the desire for "freedom" and "democracy" in all walks of life. The Diary of Lady Sapphire shows Sapphire's longing for freedom and her eagerness to escape from the bondage of feudalism and authoritarianism, and she finally chooses to run away from home. To sum up, although the power distance in Chinese society at that time did not change greatly, people's acceptance of the hierarchical system showed a tendency to weaken, and they were full of longing for freedom and democracy, and to a certain extent, the power distance showed a tendency to narrow.

2.2. Individualism and Collectivism

Individualism refers to societies in which people are loosely connected: people take care of themselves and their nuclear families. In contrast, collectivism refers to societies in which people are integrated from birth into strong, tightly knit in-groups that provide lifelong protection in exchange for absolute loyalty to the group [2]. In this case, the higher the index of individualism, the more pronounced the individual tendencies of the members of the society. Conversely, the collectivist tendency of the members of the society is more pronounced.

In ancient China, under the influence of centralized power and the concept of "great unity", the index of individualism was low, and men held absolute dominance and the right to speak. Regarding the marriage system, China has long had the custom that marriages must be concluded by "the order of parents" and "the words of matchmakers". Especially the male direct line of honorary relatives, have the absolute right to marry, and cannot be disobeyed by the children [5]. Women can only passively obey the father's decision, to obey the social requirements of the female "three from four virtues", women to male dependents and subordinates of the identity of the existence of male-dominated society, to a great extent, binding and controlling women's thinking, so that women are subject to this highly centralized system of power, and long-term in a dominated position, in the social status of women. They are subject to this highly centralized system of power and remain in a

permanent position of domination, with a very low status in society. In the May Fourth period, a large number of young intellectuals began to pay attention to "human beings" themselves, gradually shifted from scrutinizing "society" to scrutinizing "self", focused on their feelings, and tried to focus on their own feelings and attempted to break through the bondage of the feudal traditional system. In The Diary of Ms. Sapphire, Sapphire takes the initiative of her life into her own hands, pays attention to her own feelings, and pursues the realization of her self-worth. It can be seen that the index of individualism in the society at that time began to show an increasing trend, people began to pay attention to "themselves", and shifted their attention to themselves.

2.3. Masculinity – Femininity

Hoh defines it as when there is a clear difference in emotional gender roles: men are perceived to be decisive, tough, and concerned with material achievement; women are perceived to be modest, gentle, and concerned with quality of life, and such a society is referred to as a society of masculine temperament. When emotional gender roles overlap with each other, i.e., both males and females are perceived to be modest, gentle, and concerned with quality of life, such a society is referred to as a society of feminine temperament [2]. The higher the masculinity index, then the more prominent the masculinity and characteristics of the society as a whole and the more pronounced the masculinity. On the contrary, the more obvious the feminine temperament is.

Ancient Chinese society was a society where masculinity was more prominent, and femininity was minimal. There were very obvious differences in the perception and impression of gender roles in society, and the gender temperament was more seriously polarized. At all levels of society, men are the power holders and decision-makers. Women's dependence on men was formed, which in turn influenced people's actions and habits in life [6,7]. The society at that time believed that women should serve men in all aspects. There was a serious lack of women's awareness of their gender and self, and women's consciousness remained unawakened for a long time. In the May Fourth period, a kind of novel that used "free love" to show their self-worth began to emerge and occupied a major position in the May Fourth novels. One of the works, The Diary of Ms. Sapphire, gradually breaks the traditional stereotypes of gender order, and the traditional boundaries of the social division of labor between men and women are gradually blurred, which shows that the masculinity of the society at that time was gradually weakening, and the masculinity and femininity gradually tend to be harmonized.

3. Textual Analysis from the Perspective of Huo's Cultural Dimensions

Fok's theory of cultural dimensions provides a framework for understanding interpersonal interactions and social structures in different cultural contexts. The dimensions of "power distance" and "individualism-collectivism" are suitable for exploring the relationship between the individual and society and between the upper and lower classes. Through this perspective, this paper will deeply analyze how the characters in the novel awaken and fight for their self-consciousness under the pressure of different cultures, to reveal the social and cultural conflicts and the awakening of women's consciousness reflected in the work.

3.1. Power Distance

In Lady Sapphire's Diary, Sapphire's days are monotonous and tedious as she recovers at home from a lung disease. She constantly warms milk and reads the newspaper to pass the time, often resentful of the noisy and depressing home environment. Although her father and sister care for her, Sapphire sees their concern as blind and cannot understand the real reason for their love. Could it be "love for my pride, love for my temper, love for my lung disease?" [8]. Whether it is her family or Viktor, who visits often, Saffie believes that they do not know her or understand her, but just give love blindly. Even with plenty of company around her, Saffie still feels lonely and bored, as well as fed up with the unpleasant environment at home. After meeting Lingis, Sapphire falls in love with

him uncontrollably and finally chooses to run away from home. Sa Fei's family is different from the traditional patriarchal feudal family. Her father, including the family members, gives Sa Fei tolerance and love, but this kind of blind love still makes Sa Fei feel bored and empty. Sapphire's final choice to leave home is a very bold, courageous, and groundbreaking move, on the one hand, leaving her own family and family environment, on the other hand, it is also an escape from the feudal extended family system at that time. When facing the system of feudal tradition and the patriarchal system of the extended family, Safi does not choose to submit and compromise, nor does she accept the notion of patriarchal supremacy in a family. Instead, she takes the choice into her own hands, escapes from her boring living environment, chooses to make herself comfortable, takes control of her own life, and begins to pursue the "freedom" that she desires. Freedom".

After Sapphire moved into lodgings close to Lingis, Sapphire began to accept and enjoy Lingis's shallow affections and intimate demeanor, "and to admit that he hinted at my propriety in being a woman and that these caused me to look down upon him, and to darken him, and to laugh at him." [8]. Shafei does not accept or even very much resent the so-called woman's duty in Lingji Shi's mouth, in the male-centered feudal society, the power is concentrated in the hands of men, women have to do nothing more than to teach their husbands and raise their children, manage the trivialities of the extended family, and to be gentle and virtuous, and the hierarchical order of the gender in which the male is superior to the female is universally accepted by the feudal society at that time. But Shafei was very disgusted when she heard "women's duty", Shafei looked down on this foreign returnee, only wanting to ridicule, cursing him, disdain for this feudal social division of labor between men and women and feudal gender hierarchical order, also disdain for feudal ideology for women's all kinds of constraints, but also do not recognize that in the male-dominated society, the male inferiority of women's hierarchy. The hierarchical system is disdain for this Ling Ji Shi who has a resume of studying in foreign countries but has a feudal mindset, as well as a disdain for the feudal system and ideological concepts. When Sapphire saw the true face of Lingis and realized that "in the noble beauty that I adored, there was a despicable soul", Sapphire felt that he was a pitifully shallow and despicable person, and after some contradictions and struggles, she chose to leave quietly. This reflects Shafei's dissatisfaction with the gender hierarchical order of feudal society and her disapproval of the ideology of male superiority and female inferiority and also shows the initial awakening of female consciousness.

From Saffy's escape from the noisy and uncomfortable family environment and the unappreciated family relationship, choosing to run away from home in pursuit of her own life, freedom, and love, to her revulsion and disdain when she hears Lingis say "a woman's duty" when she falls in love with him and becomes intimate, to her scorn and contempt for the feudal ideology and the gender hierarchy between men and women in the feudal society of that time, to her contempt for Lingis who is wearing the glamorous shell of staying in the foreign country but has a feudal ideology. After she falls in love with Ling Ji Shi, she is disgusted and disdainful when she hears Ling Ji Shi say to herself "a woman's duty", and ridicules Ling Ji Shi, who is wearing the glamorous shell of staying in the ocean but possesses a feudal mindset, and scorns the gender hierarchies between men and women and the feudal mindset of feudal society at that time, and then she chooses to leave after discovering Ling Ji Shi's true nature, though she is reluctant to let go of her husband, and still chooses to leave after contradictions and struggles. On the one hand, it is a departure from Lingis, who is handsome but possesses feudal ideology, and on the other hand, it is also an escape from the gender hierarchical order and feudal ideology of feudal society. To a certain extent, it can be seen that the power distance in the whole society has not changed qualitatively, but it shows a tendency of narrowing, and people begin to attempt to get rid of the bondage of the feudal system and feudal ideology, and desire and pursue freedom. It is worth mentioning that women also began to aspire to get rid of the constraints of the big feudal family, longing for the pursuit of freedom, began to oppose and scorn the traditional feudal ideology, questioned the division of labor between men and women under the feudal system, and the female consciousness showed the bud of awakening.

3.2. Individualism – Collectivism

In Ms. Sapphire's Diary, Ting Ling is full of "venting their subjective world of emotions and flaunting people's individuality", "It's not that I'm afraid of death, it's that I always feel that I haven't enjoyed everything in my life, and I want to, I want to make me happy", this is Sapphire's thoughts in the period of her illness. This is what Sapphire thought when she was seriously ill. Sapphire pursued happiness, took the absolute initiative in her own life, lived the life she wanted to live, and enjoyed her life to the fullest, instead of living under the constraints of the feudal system and ideological concepts all her life, and finished her life hastily [8,9]."His long body, his white face, his thin little lips, his soft hair are enough to sparkle one's eyes" this is the first impression Lingis left on Saffy, after the first meeting Saffy was infatuated with him, after Saffy moved and devoted her heart to Lingis, "I want to possess him. I want him to give his heart unconditionally." Unlike women who are bound and numbed by feudal ideas, Safi actively admires Lingis' looks and wants Lingis to take the initiative to pursue her, wanting to play him in the palm of her hand [8].

Safi is completely in the aesthetic subject, in the feudal society, women do not have the right to free love, have been bound by feudal ideological concepts, women do not dare to face their inner desire and yearning for love, do not dare to take the initiative to appreciate a man's appearance, the right to choose a partner in the hands of the family, women can only be passive obedience and acceptance. After marriage, they can only obey all the decisions of men. Women's thoughts and consciousness have been in a state of numbness. Men, on the other hand, have always been in the position of aesthetic subject, can marry their favorite women as wives, and after marriage, they can also take a woman with a pretty face as a concubine. Shafei dared to face up to their aspirations for love and the truest thoughts of the heart, her thoughts and actions reverse the male aesthetic subject since ancient times, women have been in the position of aesthetic status, women for the first time in the literary arena away from the dominance of male discourse, to show that as a "human being" should have the "willfulness" is also a pioneer in the awakening of female consciousness [10]. "Capricious" is also the vanguard of the awakening of female consciousness [10].

In her diary, Saffy also brings out the physical and psychological needs of women for love. "Why not swoop down and kiss his lips, the top of his brow, his ..... wherever?" [8]. In ancient China, women were used to obeying men, numb in their thoughts, afraid to face the normal psychological and physiological needs for love within themselves, and even considered such normal psychological and physiological needs to be shameful. Feudal ideology firmly imprisoned women's minds like shackles. Sapphire, on the other hand, expresses her disdain for these feudal ideologies and has a very rich inner world. She dares to face up to and fulfill her psychological and physical needs for love and boldly expresses her true inner thoughts and needs. She even thinks that "if it is not harmful to a person, why is it not permissible to kiss him a hundred times?" [8]. In ancient times, women would have been labeled as "ungentlemanly" and scorned by the world. In addition to this, in the diary, Sapphire also boldly expresses her doubts about asceticism, Sapphire ridicules Yuk Fong and his wife for not living together for fear of having children, Sapphire believes that the expression of love should not be suppressed, that these are normal needs in a love relationship, and that they should be faced and dared to be expressed.

Whether it is not wanting to scribble an end to her life when she is seriously ill and desperately longing for the pursuit of freedom and happiness, or facing up to the psychological and physiological need for love that arises within herself after falling in love with Lingis, it can be seen that Saffy shifts her gaze to herself, pays more attention to her feelings, and dares to face up to and express her true inner thoughts. While pursuing the freedom of love, it also reflects the need for personal value. Women began to break through the traditional feudal system as well as the feudal gender hierarchy and began to pay attention to themselves, female consciousness and self-consciousness showed a trend of awakening, the index of individualism began to increase, people began to pay more attention to their feelings, the pursuit of their happiness, to meet their own needs, and the society is no longer singularly presented collectivist state.

4. Conclusion

The findings of this study are that women's consciousness in the May 4th period showed an awakening trend. The May 4th period was a period of special significance against the feudal traditional concepts and order. However, it did not in essence completely reverse the traditional society of thousands of years with large power distance, high collectivism index, and prominent masculinity. However, to a certain extent, the power distance gradually narrowed, the index of individualism gradually increased, the trend of masculinity and femininity gradually tended to ease, a large number of novels with the theme of "free love" began to emerge, and women's consciousness gradually awakened, and began to pay attention to themselves and to pursue the realization of their self-worth. This study is a reference to the awakening of women's consciousness in the May Fourth period through a detailed analysis of the diary novel Lady Sapphire's Diary. In the future, it can continue to study the embodiment of the awakening of women's consciousness in other literary works of the May Fourth period more deeply from the perspective of Hofstede's cultural dimension theory.

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