

Study of Female Character Images in Stendhal's Novels

-- Taking Mrs. De Reinal in "The Red and the Black" as an Example

Hanyu Wu

Concord University College Fujian Normal University, Fuzhou, China

Abstract: Human nature is even more complicated, drifting between the black and white world. The image of Julien created by "The Red and the Black" has left a deep imprint on readers' hearts. Stendhal expressed his profound understanding of ethical issues by depicting the relationship between Mrs. De Reinal and different characters. In order to create the image of Mrs. De Reinal, the author used a lot of pen and ink to show the ethical dilemma she faced and her ethical redemption, which has rich ethical connotation. In Stendhal's works, the violent shock caused by the violent storm and the violent collision of thoughts and feelings in the hero's heart, and the torment of cooking and baking in the soul are lingering. "The Red and the Black" is a classic work by Stendhal, a French critical realist. This book has created a very moving female image of Mrs. De Reinal. This paper tries to analyze the female characters in Stendhal's works by taking Mrs. De Reinal as an example.

Keywords: Stendhal; The Red and the Black; De Reinal; Female Characters.

1. Introduction

As a representative masterpiece of Stendhal, the pioneer of western critical realism literature, "The Red and the Black" vividly shows the contradictions and struggles of all parties in France in the first half of the 19th century. Stendhal, a French writer, devoted his life to two things: recording Italy and expressing love. His works directly describe the life in Italy and the character of Italian girls, and express a French writer's overall understanding of Italy through different models of novel creation. In "The Red and the Black", Stendhal created the artistic image of Mrs. De Reinal with great enthusiasm, which had a great influence on the fate of the protagonist Julien.

Stendhal, the author, completed "The Red and the Black" with superb literary creation skills, making "The Red and the Black" a masterpiece circulating all over the world. The novel portrays a hero-Julien, who comes from a civilian background and has great ambitions. Julien has gone all the way forward in the rough fate. His life is full of ups and downs, and it also brings us deep thinking. Stendhal shows Julien's pursuit and great ambition in his works with a lot of words. Although she came from an ordinary carpenter's family, Julien was ambitious when she was a child. He is full of confidence in himself, especially in his future. Generally speaking, the typical feature of "The Red and the Black" lies in the tragic fate of the characters, and this tragic writing is completed through the ups and downs of the story. Through the tragedy of the protagonist, we should also make clear the unique connotation of the author's writing, especially to reveal the whole from the individual and spy on that era from a corner of society.

Female subjective consciousness is the conscious consciousness of women's position, function and self-value as subjects in the objective world. It has two main characteristics: first, women are in the position of being the subject and seeing, and she is the initiative of her own life path; The second is to affirm the existence of women's subjective consciousness and desire. This paper attempts to take Mrs. De Reinal as an example to analyze the female characters in Stendhal's works.

2. The Hesitation of Ethical Choice

As an outstanding French critical realist writer and pioneer in the 19th century, Stendhal advocated romanticism and opposed classicism. Julien's character in "The Red and the Black" comes from Stendhal, and the background of his works is based on the social background at that time, which is full of political color. The analysis of "The Red and the Black" is shown in Figure 1:

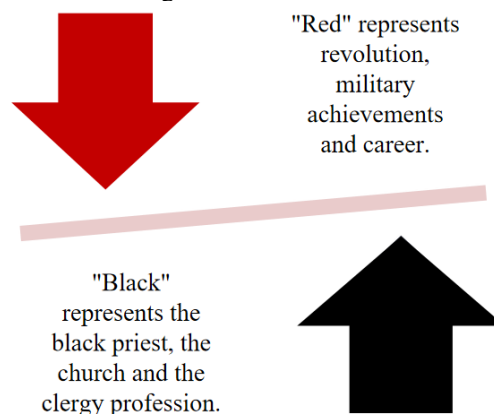


Figure 1. Analysis of "The Red and the Black"

The relationship between the characters "The Red and the Black" is shown in Figure 2 below:

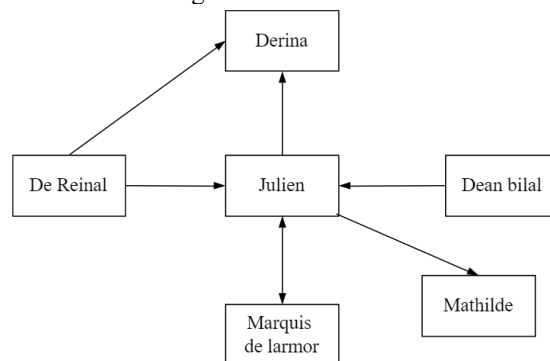


Figure 2. "The Red and the Black" character relationship

As can be seen from the relationship between the characters, this book mainly focuses on Julien's two loves. First, when he was a tutor at the home of Mayor Willied Rena, he gradually fell in love with Mrs. De Reinal, the mayor's wife, and cheated on the mayor. The second paragraph is the love between Julien and Mathilde, the duke's daughter, when she was the secretary of the Duke of De larmor.

People are the sum of social relations, and the fictional characters in the works are also embedded in the interpersonal network woven by various social and ethical relations. In the first half of the novel, the person who interacts most frequently with Mrs. De Reinal is her husband, Mr. Mayor. In Mr. Mayor's handling of interpersonal relationships, his suspicion of poverty and love for wealth and his attention to the so-called noble and humble order are almost everywhere. He thinks that anyone who takes his salary from his own hands is his own slave. Slowly, her personality became numb and heartless, but even so, she didn't want to get rid of it. She chose to continue to endure it. Like Mrs. De Reinal, she chose to shift her attention to her children and give all her love to them. For her, children can make her get emotional balance and spiritual comfort [1].

Although Mrs. De Reinal is a devout believer in God and has great maternal love in the world, she is completely ignorant of love. She married her husband at the age of sixteen, and she never realized what love is from her husband. "She has never felt or seen the most subtle love-like thing in the world in her life [2-3]. Julien's appearance aroused the enthusiasm and gentleness in her heart, and also made her sincerely sigh that there are such excellent men in this world. In her view, Julien is completely devoid of all the hypocrisy, fraud, ignorance and meanness of her class and society. In her eyes, she is the embodiment of purity, innocence, wisdom and nobility. Julien's love for her is like an anesthetic, which makes the struggling Mrs. De Reinal forget the pain of betraying Germany from time to time and fall into the nondescript hell: "She believes that there is no room for saving herself, so she just closes her eyes and doesn't look at the hell, and caresses Julien crazily." When love has become a thing of the past, she chose to suppress her passion and be a walking dead woman. This is a sad woman. These "born to love, live for love" women, because of "passionate love", bloom beautifully, find happiness and meaning in life, but they are also doomed to an unfortunate ending.

The female images in Stendhal's works are all passionate, romantic, beautiful and kind. Although they have different personalities and backgrounds, they have won the love of readers. The awakening of Mrs. De Reinal's female subject consciousness is embodied in many aspects. She began to think constantly and realized that there was no love and attachment between herself and her husband. Now she has dedicated something that has never appeared to Julien, and there is no loss for her husband, but it is very important for herself [4]. Mrs. De Reinal thought that Julien's mind was hurt because of her own fault. In order to make up for it, "she went all the way to Villiers' bookstore, although the bookstore was notorious as a Liberal Party. There she bought ten Louis books for her children, and these books, she knew, were all that Julien liked to read. Julien's appearance not only awakened Mrs. De Reinal's love, but also inspired the Sphinx factor in her instinct. It is precisely because of the existence of the animal factor that when her human factor began to do its duty and mission to control the animal factor, Mrs. De Reinal's ethical consciousness gradually became clear.

3. Potential Emotional Crisis under a Happy Life

Stendhal pursued love all his life and created many images of Italian girls who went through fire and water for love. Those elegant, charming, passionate and unrestrained Italian women have strong vitality under Stendhal's meticulous work. They lived and loved wonderfully and vividly. Perhaps it is because the writer's attitude is clear, or because the character Julien is so radiant that people simply ignore his first lover who doesn't seem to have complicated personality characteristics. The literary critics unanimously gave her such a comment: she is a beautiful, pure, dignified and kind young woman, full of compassion and self-sacrifice spirit.

When Mrs. De Reinal realized that she had fallen in love with Julien, she had an unknown madness for Julien that she had never had before with her husband. Mrs. De Reinal in "The Red and the Black" was educated by religious asceticism since childhood, and was thrown into the decadent and dead life of the nobility after marriage, but her inner passion was not stifled. The acquaintance with Julien aroused her desire to pursue "passionate love" and a beautiful marriage and found happiness in difficult love [5-6]. When Julien's love and career were about to reach a double climax, all the efforts of Mrs. De Reinal to expose the messenger came to naught. He was desperate, so he took a gun to the church and attacked Mrs. De Reinal without consequences. He shed tears when he learned that Mrs. De Reinal was not dead. She originally thought that all men in the world were as vulgar, despicable and only valued money as Mr. De Reinal. When she saw Julien, she was attracted by his fine face at first sight, and her heart was instantly filled with infinite happiness. Stendhal demanded that women's liberation not only be carried out under the banner of freedom in general, but also in the name of personal happiness. However, this writer, who lives in a male-centered society, unconsciously reveals in his works the demands of the male-dominated society on women. For each of them, the ideal woman most accurately reflects the other who shows himself to him. Once the veil woven by beauty, poetry and love is stripped, the nature of women's being degraded is exposed.

In her hesitation, Mrs. De Reinal was finally restricted by human factors. With nostalgia for her current life, she finally gave up her plan to elope with Julien and made a choice that met the social and ethical requirements in the two relationships. We can see more touching factors in Mrs. De Reinal's love for Julien. She is a 30-year-old young woman with simple appearance, dignified beauty and girlish charm [7]. This provincial aristocratic woman with a happy nature, no life experience and no affectation married rude, vulgar and boring De Reinal at the age of 16. She can abandon everything for the person she loves. In the dark, she gives in to love without resistance and hides under innocence. As long as she sees Julien again, she will give her heart to him. In order to escape from the prison where she is held by the upper class and reach a happy heaven, she has made an arduous struggle for him. She hopes to get spiritual comfort and feel the beauty of love. She never knew that she could be so happy. In this way, Julien satisfied all her desires for love, and the two of them sparked the love, opened the heart of love and nourished her heart.

4. Tragedy of Female Images

Stendhal thinks about women from a male perspective. He

warmly praised Italian women and pointed out: "Compared with men, women's courage has a more lasting follow-up explosive force." Italian girls portrayed by Stendhal are well-educated, proud and innocent, beautiful and intelligent, brave and determined. However, in a male-dominated society, Stendhal's works inevitably reveal the helplessness of being a woman in a male-dominated society [8-9]. Once the fantasy veil woven by aestheticism, poetry and love in the works is stripped off, the nature of women's being belittled is exposed or ending their lives in tragedy. From this analysis, the Italian girl portrayed by Stendhal is more like living in the Renaissance. Passion is the key word of Italian girls' personality in Stendhal's works. "Passionate love" makes their bodies and will burn to the limit of beauty. Broke through secular taboos and despised social norms. Stendhal's imaginative romanticism and liberalism grew up in the Renaissance, but people always return to the cruel reality.

Mrs. De Reinal made all kinds of bold and even shocking struggles to defend her love with Julien. In the anonymous letter incident, she taught Julien how to cover up the facts, and Mrs. De Reinal made all kinds of bold and even shocking struggles to defend her love with Julien. In the anonymous letter incident, she taught Julien how to cover up the facts. After their affair was exposed, it was also Mrs. De Reinal who tried to cover for Julien. Throughout the female images in Stendhal's works, passion is the pillar of their character, and the pursuit of "passionate love" makes them have the tragic beauty like a moth to a fire; Breaking through secular taboos and ignoring social norms have made them transcendence and rebels of the times, doomed to a tragic fate that is hard to get rid of. Julien died quietly in the sweet memories with Mrs. De Reinal, and returned to the "mother's arms" with her first love and her true love, which made her feel kind, burned her enthusiasm and released her passion.

In "The Red and the Black", Stendhal shows us two ways for women to pursue their own lives: cheating and falling in love. Deep down, on the one hand, it is the demand of human nature and the desire for love, on the other hand, it is the imprisonment of religious concepts. This contradiction is most concentrated in her son Stanley's fever and cold. She thinks this is God's punishment for his unfair love, and guilt haunts her. And a woman's natural maternal love intensifies her condemnation of herself. I am the murderer who killed my son. When Mrs. De Reinal competed with Julien who performed love driven by utility, as a woman bent on getting love, the ending could only be defeated. When Julien was about to harvest love and reap the political benefits brought by love, an exposure messenger came to nothing, and Julien took extreme action: shooting Mrs. De Reinal. Naive and simple noble lady, though arrogant, is only a victim of Julien's utilitarianism in this interaction. All this makes the love in "The Red and the Black" show fuzziness and ambiguity, and finally leads to a tragic ending.

Although these tragic women portrayed by Stendhal were destroyed in the struggle against the existing ethical norms, religious canons and social order, their actions broke the tranquility of reality, awakened the true feelings, became tragic and beautiful images, and left endless aesthetic space for people. Mrs. De Reinal's female subject consciousness is only in the primary natural stage and has great limitations [10]. Although she shows that women are unwilling to be attached to the pursuit of free love with Julien, she should also have her own subjective consciousness of emotional pursuit in life. It can be said that her life is worthy of sympathy and regret.

Part of the reason for this unfortunate tragedy is the suffocating torture of social ethics at that time, and the other part is her love that has never been answered. She regards love as the most important thing in life, which is the idea that women should have in the new era. From a moral point of view, she built her love at the expense of others, and she did not hesitate to destroy others' happiness in order to achieve the purpose of getting love for herself. Therefore, her tragic ending is inevitable.

There is a close relationship between the change of individual destiny and the society of the times. Social unrest, people will be displaced and miserable, "The Red and the Black" is such a dark and decadent era. "The Red and the Black" describes a complex and turbulent era. The collapse of Napoleon's regime and the domination in the hands of nobles and monks led to many social contradictions, among which the contradiction between the workers and peasants, the petty bourgeoisie and the feudal aristocratic ruling class was particularly prominent. In addition to objective factors, the influence of subjective factors cannot be ignored, and what kind of personality will make what kind of behavior. Julien is actually a person with multiple personalities intertwined, with self-esteem, inferiority, truth and hypocrisy, rebellious spirit and compromise with reality. Contradictory personality makes his life choices also show the characteristics of diversity and complexity. Driven by this contradiction and strong utilitarian heart, Julien gradually lost himself, even lost his soul. His unscrupulous means to achieve his goal once made him win for a short time, but it also became an important factor in his tragic life.

It is not difficult for us to see that the characters' personalities are set off by plot development, which also enlightens us that in creation, we should adopt multi-angle methods to shape the characters' personality images in an all-round way through the rendering of the environment, the narration of language dialogue and even the capture of expressions. In particular, we should pay attention to the complexity and profundity of characters' personality characteristics, grasp the changes of characters in the environment, and analyze their inner psychology through the surface.

5. Conclusion

Female subjective consciousness is the conscious consciousness of women's position, function and self-value as subjects in the objective world. It has two main characteristics: first, women are in the position of being the subject and seeing, and she is the initiative of her own life path; The second is to affirm the existence of women's subjective consciousness and desire. The fate of Mrs. De Reinal and Julien is regrettable, but they are only representatives of this kind of women, and there are many people with the same or similar fate. She abandoned everything and went to visit Julien in prison with a devastating attitude, and planned to die with Julien; Although the writer portrayed two unprecedented female images, he thought about a problem that he had never thought about before: the gradual awakening of female consciousness. This is undoubtedly a great progress, but judging from the writer's environment and times, it unconsciously reveals the demanding when examining women from a male perspective in a patriarchal society. But it is precisely this kind of emotion that enables the hero to see the ugly reality clearly, and then realize his self-awareness and loyalty to emotion, and walk into his own essential world in the return of emotion.

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