

A Tentative Study on the Samsara Fatalism in the Novels of Eileen Chang

Chuan Huang^{1, a}

¹ Guangdong University of Technology, Guangzhou, Guangdong, 510000, China

^aCorresponding Author's Email: hc389137991@163.com

Abstract: Eileen Chang's novels penetrate abstract concepts with personal concrete insight, and form feelings completely different from historical time and progressive imagination through stagnant Samsara experience, confirming the unique meaning of concrete life and showing the richness and complexity of human nature. On the basis of the previous studies on the novels of Eileen Chang from the perspective of love and marriage, this paper focuses on the Samsara fatalism phenomenon in the novels by means of close reading of the texts. Taking Samsara experience as a research perspective is an important way to enter Eileen Chang's novels and even modern literature, which lays a profound foundation for us to examine the constance of stable life and the universal of The Times.

Keywords: Eileen Chang, Samsara, Abnormal Love.

1. Introduction

At present, domestic and overseas academic studies on the novels of Eileen Chang mostly focus on further exploration or re-interpretation of the key topics involved in previous studies, such as the close reading of the text from the perspective of love and marriage. From the gender studies, the differences between male and female images in the works and the significance of literary history are reviewed, and then Eileen Chang's views on women and love are drawn back. From the perspective of psychoanalysis, the psychoanalysis of the characters in the work is explained. Starting from the historical background, combined with Eileen Chang's life experience and materials, the aesthetic style and ideology are investigated and explored. Since the beginning of the new century, there have been some unique research results on Eileen Chang's novels, which focus on the study of her "modernity" theme, the study of her image and costume implication, and the study of her "late style"[1-4].

In the work, on the basis of the previous studies on Eileen Chang's novels from the perspective of love and marriage, this paper focuses on the samsara fatalism phenomenon in the novels[5]. There are many researches on abnormal love in his novels, but most of them ignore its fundamental correlation with the phenomenon of samsara destiny[4]. The popular studies on Zhang studies generally believe that abnormal love reflects Eileen Chang's view of love and society, but ignore the hidden meaning of love is self-consciousness, that is, whether to take love or money as the base of female survival[4]. Therefore, it is necessary to reunderstand the association between the samsara fatalism phenomenon and abnormal love in the novels.

2. The Meaning of Samsara: The Experience of Life in Stagnation

"Samsara" is also called rotation, which means circulation. It is a Buddhist term used to describe the continuous life and death in the six paths of heaven and man, like the wheels running. Chinese people have a strong view of Samsara. Things are in and out, and things rise and fall, just as the full

moon wanes. Zhang Ruoxu's "Life has been endless from generation to generation, and the river and moon look similar from year to year" reflects Chinese people's anxiety about reincarnation, while Wang Wei's "When the sun is gone, prepare to watch the stars shine upon" and Su Shi's "We slept close to each other in the boat, unaware that it was dawning in the east" also reflect that Chinese people can always find a way to survive to resolve the contradiction between reincarnation and progress.

"Samsara" refers to the circulation and overlap of the same or similar fate in different stages of an individual's life or between an individual and others. The "Samsara fatalism" in this paper refers to the characters' own or omniscient perspective (the narrator)'s understanding of the stagnation, stagnation, even repetition and return of society and life in Eileen Chang's novels. It can be divided into the following two categories: one is the repetition of the same or similar experience and situation of an individual; the other is the overlap of the same or similar fate between individuals. The phenomena of "repetition" and "overlap" are respectively embodied in "time"—a continuous system composed of the past, present and future. However, the manifestation of the phenomenon of reincarnation is indeed different from that of time consciousness. For example, time consciousness is linear, "the dead are like this, not giving up day and night", and the value logic of "progress" represented by it and historical imagination is a kind of concept. Reincarnation creates a gap between the concept of time and the imagination of progress, which makes people truly feel the stagnation of life, the panic and the despair entangled in reincarnation. Therefore, compared with time, it has a spatial nature and is a kind of survival experience of people. The gap between progressive imagination and reincarnation is the fundamental reason why Eileen Chang's characters sink into the prosperity of the city, struggle with love and money, and then produce abnormal love. It is also an important expression of the writer's complex life experience into literary creation.

In her Own Essay[6], Eileen Chang said, "I find that those who engage in literature always pay attention to the flying side of life, but ignore the stable side of life. In fact, the latter is the foundation of the former." "The secure side of life has a

sense of permanence, and though it is often incomplete and must be broken every so often, it is still eternal." Eileen Chang confirmed the repeatability of stable life through her novels. "Samsara" is considered as the background color of eternal life. By seeing, hearing, feeling and thinking through time, each woman in her novels reveals the constant common of the whole world, namely the "stable side of life", thus dispelling the modern historical logic with the consciousness of progress as the core and reflecting the unique significance of People's Daily life independent of historical logic.

Taking the phenomenon of reincarnation as the research point of view is an important way for us to enter the novels of Eileen Chang. The progressive consciousness and historical imagination are popular concepts of The Times, but the phenomenon of Samsara fate is constantly hidden due to its authenticity and constance. The contradiction and separation between the two is the reason for the abnormal love of her characters. Therefore, we will have a new understanding of the abnormal love and marriage relationship in the novels of Eileen Chang. It provides a new perspective for us to deconstruct and explain the humanity, destiny and the background of The Times behind it.

The writing style of reincarnation and destiny in Eileen Chang's novels shows the resistance of "life experience" to social concepts. Eileen Chang, focused portrayal of the characters on the "connect" rather than "speculation", to show the contradiction between thinking and reality, history and logic with specific perception of contradiction, the contradiction of life time and the historical time, progress and through contradiction, the contradiction between social value and personal experiences, social concept of the contradiction between complation and life experiences of three-dimensional. These contradictions constitute the internal tension and conflict of Eileen Chang's literature and even modern literature, and provide us with a profound understanding of the role of "life experience" in modern literature.

3. The Root of Reincarnation: The Pursuit of Life to Seek A Foothold

Where does Samsara come from? Its root lies in the fact that each of Chang's women has a life quest to find a place to stand. It can be divided into material and spirit, the shrewd side always overwhelms the lustful side in the end, and the by-product of material victory is often the breakdown of love and affection, the lack of female desire, Leading women to become deformed walking dead.

Why is every woman looking for a foothold? This is the heart of Eileen Chang, she revealed such a background: the status of women was missing in the old society. In the patriarchal society, it was extremely difficult for women to find their own independent way of making a living, let alone liberate themselves. The first step is to occupy the material, namely money, economic promotion and security, which is the foundation for women to establish a life. However, despite the original intention, the price paid is huge. Just as Eileen Chang said in Talking about Women, "Pleasing people with beautiful bodies is the oldest occupation in the world, and it is also a very common occupation for women. Women who get married to make a living can all be included in this category." Lacking status and means to make a living, women can only rely on men, which is also what Mrs. Xu warned Bai Liusu in Love in a Fallen City: "Looking for a job is all fake,

while looking for a man is true." However, to find someone who can provide material security, its original intention is not love, but money as the core of the marriage relationship. Therefore, the liberation of the material level, the price is the spiritual level such as love, family loss. In the end, instead of becoming the women they thought they were, they turned out to be shrewd snobs and psychopaths.

If women of the previous generation do, they must sacrifice the interests of women of the next generation. A daughter's desire to fund her education, for example, constitutes a threat to her mother's property. Another example: The daughter wanted to gain free love, but the man's economic status was not so good, which also posed a threat to the mother's property. The mother's intervention led to the collapse of the love. The mother eventually sold her daughter to a rich and powerful family in order to secure her economic status. That is the new "material victory" and "spiritual loss". This leads to the birth of a new cycle: the daughter will become her mother one day.

So the cycle goes on and on, which becomes the tragic ending of the book of The Golden Cangue: "The moon of thirty years ago has long gone down, and the people of thirty years ago are dead, but the story of thirty years ago is not finished — not finished." Samsara, with its constancy, is an important experience of stable life, which makes the individual soul more complex and rich.

Taking The Golden Cangue as an example to analyze the fatalistic phenomenon of reincarnation and explore its causes and great influence, it is quite typical[7]. Cao Qiqiao had at least three choices that were sufficient to help her break out of the Samsara of "Golden lock", but all of them she chose stagnation and return. The first time was that she got a share of the property and has independent financial ability, but she chose to be conservative and chaste and waited for Ji Ze. The second time, Ji Ze came, in the face of exposing Ji Ze's lies and muddled between, she almost did not hesitate to make a decision for "wealth" abandon "sex". The third time was the daughter's marriage. The daughter was going to marry into a family that was really good to her. It was not difficult to make the choice to let her daughter live a better life, but Cao Qiqiao chose to stop her from getting married out of jealousy. In the end, her daughter was caught in the Samsara she was in[8].

4. Conclusion

In conclusion, taking the phenomenon of reincarnation as the research perspective, we can understand why Cao Qiqiao is unable to free herself from the "golden lock" and thus gain a free life. Therefore, we have a deeper understanding and feeling of the "evil" of human nature. Through the intergenerational transmission of the Samsara phenomenon, we can form a more comprehensive understanding of the relationship between individuals and families. Through the Samsara phenomenon to the origin of abnormal love, understand the background of abnormal love and its alienation. In the face of the progressive concept of The Times, individuals can always realize the trend of return and solidification, which helps us to re-examine the relationship between individuals and The Times.

Expressed in Eileen Chang's literary works through the cycle of flavor, we were able to scan to imagine modern life and progress, return to a specific individual survival, life experience, so as to understand the less digestion perverted the contradiction between space and time flow main, and backwash individual soul of complex and diverse, led us through the modern literature theory in the study of discourse.

Thus, we can face up to the rich and complex spiritual world and literary environment of individuals. Through the exploration of reincarnation experience, we can understand the living situation of modern literature, modern writers and modern people, thus reflecting on the research of modern and contemporary literature, and re-examining the relationship and path between tradition and modernity, progress and stagnation in the individual and The Times.

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