

The Argument for Kong Yiji's Characterization

Jingyi Chen^{1, †}, and Zhipeng Qi^{2, a, *, †}

¹ Nanchang Business College, Jiangxi Agricultural University, No.79 Youth Avenue, Nanhu New Town, Jiujiang, Jiangxi, China

² College of Economics and Management, Tianjin University of Science and Technology, No.29. Thirteenth Street, Tianjin, China
a. QiZhipeng@mail.tust.edu.cn, l

*corresponding author

†These authors contributed equally

Abstract: This paper discusses the external image and internal spirit of Kong Yiji from Lu Xun's works "Kong Yiji". Moreover, why he chose to leave at the end of the day to explore how the author used special literary techniques to create and highlight the characters. Kong Yiji was a victim of the imperial examination system in the Qing Dynasty. He spent his life in the Four Books and the Five Classics and was reduced to begging and refusing to take off his long gown, which symbolized his status as a scholar. Speaking of classical Chinese words, he emphasized several times that he was a scholar, even teased by others, but also pretentious, self-admiration. Feudal culture and feudal education poisoned Kong Yiji and made him develop the bad habits of despising labor and being indolence. Through the exploration and study of words, sentences and paragraphs in the text, from different positions and perspectives, from external to internal, the character characteristics and behavior of the characters before and after the comparison, in-depth analysis of a diversified and complex character image. Kong Yiji was not only an aristocratic and intellectual scholar but also a cowardly and helpless scholar who was poisoned by feudal society. His body not only shined with the light of honest and good human nature but also had a lazy, self-deceiving national bad nature.

Keywords: Kong Yiji, Characterization, Lu Xun

1. Introduction

"Kong Yiji" was Lu Xun's favorite novel, as he claimed several times during his lifetime. From this, it can be inferred that Lu Xun was satisfied with the creation of the character image of Kong Yiji. It is difficult to know Kong Yiji's real name; Kong Yiji's identity and family history have not been introduced. The only information it can be obtained about Kong Yiji is rumors from others and snippets of his life in the hotel. This gives readers a space to imagine Kong Yiji and a strong interest in him. For example, If Kong Yiji is really a lazy person? If he was trying to survive, why didn't he steal the more valuable finances instead of just the books? What really makes a character real and interesting are the contradictory doubts that happen to him. These doubts let us faint find that Kong Yiji's body may have happened to some of the facts we do not see. These facts may be the truth that leads to the tragedy of Kong Yiji. As a result, many mysteries and doubts about Kong Yiji, which could never be revealed and explained, played a more profound role in criticizing society. The

complexity of the image of Kong Yiji and the significance of the creation of the image are extraordinary. Why did Lu Xun create the image of Kong Yiji? The analysis of the reasons for this not only calls for the good quality of "sincerity and love" but also criticizes the bad root of Chinese people's "cheating and concealing". At the same time, it appeals to the majority of artists to speak out and fight for more "Kong Yiji" in the world.

Although Lu Xun did not mean his love for Kong Yiji, Lu Xun did not leave the reason for his love for Kong Yiji. Scholars continue to study and analyze the image of Kong Yiji, causing a series of doubts and thinking. The dilemma of Kong Yiji's identity is a problem that cannot be ignored under the current historical conditions. The analysis of Kong Yiji's image is of great significance to the evolution and reflection of Chinese national character. Centered around the image creation of Kong Yiji, scholars from the perspective of the semiotic principles deconstruct the full text or make the discipline overlapping analysis from the perspective of sociology, psychology, and scholars from the perspective of social-historical development found Kong Yiji continuity of the image in the modern, because contemporary intellectuals to a certain extent, has some similarity with Kong Yiji. Looking through the research results of some contemporary review articles, scholars and educators, the author finds that some of the conclusions are questionable to a certain extent, or the analysis of Kong Yiji is limited to a single perspective. Thus, it inspired the author's interest in the analysis of how Lu Xun shaped the image of Kong Yiji. In order to make a comprehensive and detailed analysis of Kong Yiji's image as far as possible, the author consulted a large number of materials, from the external and internal characters, as well as the details of the plot and situation setting of the novel to carry out an analysis. In the writing of Kong Yiji, figurative description, expression description implying internalized decline and death, sharp deceleration of the decisive moment of tragic fate and sudden abandonment of narrative intervention are adopted to give the text the function of conveying Kong Yiji's hardship and bleak outcome[1].

2. The Description of Kong Yiji's External Image

2.1. Appropriate Clothing

The consumers of Xianheng Hotel were mainly divided into two categories, one was the undignified people who could only stand and drink because of poverty, and the other was the well-dressed people who calmly walked into the hotel with sufficient funds; the table was full of wine and meals, and the well-dressed people who sat on the chair and drank wine without hurrying, and Kong Yiji, who was different from the two collectives of the Xianheng Hotel, is very special, Lu Xun defined him as "a poor consumer who worn decent clothes but stands and drinks". Some scholars pointed out that Lu Xun once changed "drinking while eating" into "drinking while sitting", which emphasized the difference in social class and consumption between the "short clothes gang", who drank while standing and the "long clothes gang" who drank while sitting next door[2]. This alternative and the ironic move was caused by the mismatch between Kong Yiji's own economic strength and spiritual positioning, Kong Yiji could not become a "decent consumer" in the true sense of the Xianheng Hotel because of poverty, but Kong Yiji was indignant in his heart, whether it was a tangible hotel counter or an invisible shackles of feudal society, which added to Kong Yiji's deep sense of powerlessness. Kong Yiji deeply followed the imperial competitive examination system of feudal society from the bottom of his heart, hoping to improve his poor life by becoming an official through the imperial competitive examination. Kong Yiji stole books from other people, and when he was discovered, he still did not recognize his behavior as stealing books because Kong Yiji felt that stealing books damaged his dignity as a reader, so he did everything he could, and such absurd behavior vividly showed the self-deception, pedantic and stubbornness in Kong Yiji's personality characteristics. Kong Yiji could not give up the identity symbol of the intellectuals represented by decent clothing, and it

was difficult for him to take off not only this particular dress but also his own dignity and superiority as a reader.

2.2. A Fresh Scar on the Face

Kong Yiji had a poor living ability, no appropriate work to support life, and occasionally stole some things.

Kong Yiji just walked into the hotel; all the non-abstainers laughed at him, even the consumers who sat far away; they also laughed at him even if they could not see Kong Yiji; those who did rough work stood drinking and laughed at Kong Yiji. Everyone in the hotel laughed at Kong Yiji for having a new scar on his face. Kong Yiji did not dare to come to the hotel when the wound was bleeding and had not healed; he waited until his facial injury was restored and the wound callus. Kong Yiji, as described by Lu Xun, was a man with strong self-esteem. He was afraid to expose his indecent side to others, and he was especially afraid that his external performance was contrary to the performance of scholars. Lu Xun's description of scars not only described the tragic experiences and characteristics of the characters but also deeply reflected the social root of the tragedy of the characters through the relationships between the characters and scars, which could be said to kill two birds with one stone[3].

2.3. Hand

Kong Yiji lost his dignity in public, so he began to escape with those who stood outside the counter mocked him, Kong Yiji began located on the side of the counter "I" to communicate, but Kong Yiji and "I" communicated the Analects of Confucius and other literary classics, because "I" have not abundant knowledge so "I" could not understand, Kong Yiji will teach "I" "fennel beans", "hui" word " was how to write.

When "I" casually answered him, Kong Yiji was very happy. Kong Yiji hit the counter with two fingers with long nails, and then he wrote on the counter and dipped them in wine.

This part of the text that Lu xun wrote is very delicate; every detail is exquisite and in-depth. Kong Yiji with long nails could be seen that this was a pair of hands who did not often do manual labor; it was difficult to grow long nails; Kong Yiji with long nails dipped in the bowl of wine represented that Kong Yiji was an informal person. Kong Yiji did not pay attention to details in life, and the quality of his life was not high[4]. Using his long nails and knocking on the table, Kong Yiji thought that his knowledge had played a great role and began to show off to the people around him[5].

2.4. Waist

Kong Yiji happily gave the children a fennel bean. After the children ate it, they all looked up at the dish in his hand and refused to leave. Kong Yiji was very alarmed and afraid that the children would take away his fennel bean. He instinctively stretched five fingers to cover the dish and bent down to protect the plate with his whole body; Kong Yiji thought that his tall figure should not be afraid of these children, so he immediately straightened up, very proud.

Kong Yiji got along in harmony with the children and was full of a playful atmosphere. This is the only bright part of the story. In this fragment, the character who is under Lu Xun's pen is lovely, even naive, and there is still hope in his heart.

2.5. Leg

Lu Xun wrote that Kong Yiji was beaten twice, once in the family surnamed He and the other in the family surnamed Ding. Kong Yiji went to the family surnamed He to steal books, which showed that the family surnamed He was a literary family. A successful candidate in the imperial examinations at

the provincial level, surnamed Ding, was also an intellectual under the imperial examination system and also relied on rich knowledge to become official. If Kong Yiji did not respect the scholars, with Kong Yiji tall figure, he was very difficult to be hanged up and beaten and even less likely to have a leg broken. It was concluded that Kong Yiji was an intellectual who was deeply poisoned by the imperial examination system. He worshipped knowledge and scholars almost crazy. Kong Yiji even thought it was a kind of happiness to be beaten by scholars.

3. Description of Kong Yiji's Daily Behavior

Although Kong Yiji lived a poor life, he did not erase his honest and kind of good character. When consuming at Xianheng Hotel, Kong Yiji never defaulted on the store's wine and food money. The waiter at Xianheng Hotel thought that Kong Yiji's conduct was better than others and never defaulted. Kong Yiji regarded keeping his promise as a gentleman's behavior[6]. Although Kong Yiji lived a poor life, as a scholar, he never compromised with the moral degeneration of the world that got worse day by day at that time and still continued to stick to his decency and dignity. In sharp contrast, the seemingly decent shopkeeper cheated the customer stealthily, losing integrity in order to gain interest and secretly ordering the waiter to mix in the wine to deceive customers. Kong Yiji's dedication to his own intellectual standpoint may be seen in his consistent wearing of long gowns or in his upholding of an honorable and reliable appearance. Kong Yiji has numerous worthy problems worth criticism, such as laziness, but there is no doubt that Kong Yiji's character is still shining commendable human light.

When Kong Yiji was facing an official career and life was difficult, he could still maintain the kindness of the people around him. When the neighbor's child coveted his dish that went with wine, Kong Yiji gave them fennel beans respectively. Kong Yiji gently bent down and patiently explained to the child. In the Xianheng Hotel, a successful candidate in the imperial examinations at the provincial level surname Ding made people scared and always bullied people, but people in short gowns hid their pressure by ridiculing Kong Yiji, which was such satire. The weak guys, also as onlookers, bully Kong Yiji. Everyone was trying their best to pass on their own pressure and put pressure on the weaker than themselves. In this deformed society, only Kong Yiji, who looked pedantic and stubborn, retained the last warmth. Kong Yiji did not put life pressure on weaker children; on the contrary, he did his best to respect the children and remain the greatest kind to innocent children.

Kong Yiji's daily behavior revealed the coexistence of cowardice and kindness. When people made fun of Kong Yiji, even a scholar could not get his demeanor depressed. Xianheng Hotel occupied the center of the novel's narrative as a "scene," which was more to describe these public places as a field of public opinion than to pursue the effect of narrative alienation. In these works, the author conferred the experience and fate of the main characters to public opinion. Only by splicing the fragments of public opinion can the readers see a relatively complete character image. This is a special technique of Lu Xun to create characters, which can be called the public opinion composition method[7]. The reality put Kong Yiji high and threw him down the imperial examination ladder, and broke his dream of a career magnanimous, creating his callous character and gradual personality change, sick scholar soul. In the face of the cold audience psychology, piercing ridicule and laughter, he could only use outdated, written classical Chinese words to label himself as a reader to comfort the inner trauma. Kong Yiji became a satirical role in the satirical drama, making himself regarded as a popular conversation and jokes, but his restless soul was temporarily released. Even though everyone bullied him so much, he still acted like an unknown and transparent man. In front of such a cold, ruthless society, Kong Yiji showed a look of resignation in this scene, with his situation, status, and other sad nature inseparable. It was yielded to the sad plight of the cowardly performance. A cowardly character was implied in his kindness. However, the behavior of dividing fennel beans mentioned above also showed Kong Yiji's kindness mixed with cowardice. He was in such a rare and harmonious

atmosphere, surrounded by children's childlike innocence. Without the colored eyes of people in society, he enjoyed a moment of peace and comfort.

4. As an Intellectual Infatuation with Kong Yiji

The article mentioned Kong Yiji's theft three times; the first time was to steal the He family's books, the second time was to steal the books and stationery, and the third time was to steal the family of a successful candidate in the imperial examinations at the provincial level in the Ming and Qing dynasties surnamed Ding. These descriptions could directly see that books and knowledge occupy an important position in Kong Yiji's heart, and Kong Yiji was full of awe for knowledge. In addition to the direct description, there are some side descriptions that can also reflect Kong Yiji's high recognition of knowledge[8]. For example, Kong Yiji kept encouraging the clerk to learn knowledge in the future. In the face of the boy who showed impatience, Kong Yiji showed a sincere attitude. When the boy casually answered the question, Kong Yiji was very happy, knocked on the counter with his nails, and kept nodding. At that time, it was very valuable for Kong Yiji to value knowledge so much and to spread knowledge so much actively.

At that time, Kong Yiji, as a knowledge infatuation, was actually very lonely. He was in the lower class of feudal society, and his decadent and stubborn thoughts could not be understood and appreciated by all. The feudal class of the upper class would not appreciate him, and the poor working people of the lower class also despised him. His infatuation with knowledge was gradually submerged by the dust of times, locked deep in his heart, unable to express his feelings. Disappointed in his loneliness, unwilling to work hard, and unwilling to associate himself with people dressed in short shirts, he was forced to become a special presence in society[9]. He was immersed in the dream of being an intellectual, unwilling to come out, feeling the loneliness, pathos and pain of the other world. From Kong Yiji vaguely revealed that those intellectuals living in the turbulent times of helpless and cowardly inferiority and no one to understand the loneliness. It can be said that Kong Yiji's infatuation with knowledge, from another point of view, became another reason to push him into the abyss. Kong Yiji, to some extent, reflected that Lu Xun resisted the corruption of the character of the whole nation with his independent personality. His sense of loneliness comes from his deep love for the nation and the incomprehension of the kind of love.

5. Why did Kong Yiji Choose to Leave in the Evening

Why did Kong Yiji leave at "sunset" of the day rather than the usual "evening" when people drink at their peak? The author thinks this is Lu Xun in order to reflect Kong Yiji's painful struggle and choice. "Evening", when the customers of Xianheng Hotel finished their work, Kong Yiji was afraid to meet them in the hotel and on the road, so Kong Yiji chose the time when they went out to work and could not come back because their working hours were not finished. This explains why Kong Yiji chose "sunset". During this period of time, there are only likely to be well-dressed consumers in the Xianheng hotel, because their time is relatively free. Kong Yiji is not particularly afraid of these people, because these well-dressed consumers will not pay much attention to him; Kong Yiji is more concerned about those who are not well-dressed consumers, afraid they will laugh at him and ridicule him. At the end of the story, Kong's pride is shown.

Kong Yiji was a victim of the imperial examination system in the Qing Dynasty. He wasted time in preparing for the imperial examination. Kong Yiji always emphasized that he was a scholar. Although he was ridiculed and laughed at by others, he was still pretentious. After stealing the family whose successful candidate in the imperial examinations at the provincial level, he first wrote down on paper "I obey the punishment", and was broken in the middle of the night, and finally left the world in a desolate way, ending his miserable life. When his leg was broken, Kong Yiji had a black

and thin face. He wore a ragged jacket and wrapped his legs under a straw mat. Kong's resistance was limited. For the violence of others, Kong Yiji was unable to resist, could only bear, so as to leave scars and disabilities, and finally lost his life. Most unfortunate of all, Kong Yiji was tortured by a successful candidate surnamed Ding in the imperial examinations at the provincial level, who had money and power and enjoyed the power to do whatever he wanted to do to others: he set up a private court of punishment, and even if he first wrote on paper that he would voluntarily obey the punishment, his legs were broken. Under the threat of those in power, Kong Yiji was just a fish on the chopping block of those in power. All Kong Yiji could do was to be humiliated. The final choice to leave at "sunset" is a special resistance.

Lu Xun praised the engraving of German artist Kathy Kelewhich as a motherly love, for those who were insulted and hurt people feel sad and angry, protest and struggle. Lu Xun said: "In fact, in many parts of the world, there are still 'insulted and damaged' people, they are our united front friends." He called on artists to mourn for these people, to shout and fight for them. The story ends at "sunset" of the day, leading generations of artists to mourn, cry out and fight for the insulted.

6. Social Background

Lu Xun cared about the people all his life. As early as 1902, he asked, "What is the most lacking thing for the Chinese nation?" At that time, Lu Xun's answer to this question was sincerity and love[10]. In other words, "there is a serious problem of cunning, hypocrisy, shamelessness and suspicion. The slogans are good, the slogans and declarations are beautiful, the books are grandiose, but according to the actual situation, this is not the case at all." From the above quotes, it can be seen that Lu Xun began to pay attention to honesty and love when he was young. This is related to his personal experience. Lu Xun was born into a rich family in Shaoxing, Zhejiang Province. He was originally a young master who did not worry about food and clothing. However, after his 13-year-old grandfather was jailed, the eldest son of the family had to bear more pressure. This transition from rich to poor had a profound impact on the young Lu Xun and also triggered Lu Xun's doubts about society in the future. Since then, Lu Xun began to live in exile. The difference in material life had not the most far-reaching impact on Lu Xun, but more important was the blow in the spiritual field. His father's serious illness directly made Lu Xun feel the warmth of the world in spirit. According to Lu Xun's memories of going to the pharmacy to get medicine, he was stigmatized and fooled in the pharmacy, which made him feel social indifference and cunning, and he began to yearn for sincerity and friendship particularly. Many years later, he said in "Scream·Preface": "Who has fallen into trouble from a well-off family? I thought that in this way, we can probably see the true face of the world." Lu Xun saw the world's lack of sincerity and love, which could issue a sad sigh. Lu Xun paid attention to sincerity all his life and believed that hypocritical concealment and deception were major drawbacks of national character. In the article "On Open Eyes", he said: "The Chinese people dare not face up to all aspects and create wonderful routines with deception and deception, but think they are on the right path. On this path, it proves that the Chinese people were cowardly, lazy and cunning."

In Kong Yiji, there is not only Lu Xun's appreciation of honesty and love but also his criticism of deceiving and cheating. Kong Yiji's story takes place in a society full of falsehood and distrust between people. To Xianheng hotel, those indecent consumers often have to look at the yellow rice wine from the jar scooped out, and then see whether there is water in the wine pot, and pro see the wine pot was put in hot water and then rest assured. On the one hand, it shows that consumers who are not well-dressed live a more difficult life. Their money is hard-won, and they cannot bear to lose weight. On the other hand, it also shows the bad social atmosphere at that time from the side; adding water to wine has been the norm in the industry, and people who spend real money to buy wine, also need to watch over the side to drink good wine, which shows the prevalence of false wind in the society. However, the Chinese people live in such a false society, living in this concealment and

deception of society, the mental state is distorted and alienated, and the trust and love between people are constantly eroded and eliminated[11].

7. Conclusion

Based on the in-depth exploration and careful study of the words, sentences and paragraphs in the short story Kong Yiji written by Lu Xun, and based on a diversified standpoint and perspective, this paper discusses Kong Yiji from five parts: the description of Kong Yiji's external image, description of Kong Yiji's daily behavior, as an intellectual infatuation of Kong Yiji, why did Kong Yiji choose to leave in the evening and the social background. Through the analysis of the external image of Kong Yiji in this article and the detailed description of Kong Yiji's clothing, the lofty and superior character of a scholar who was not successful in the feudal society was outlined; this absurd behavior reflects the pedantry and self-deception of Kong Yiji; the fact that Kong Yiji came to Xianheng Hotel only after the wound on his face was scarred is similar to the fact that Kong Yiji chose to leave in the second half of the day. Both of them can enable readers to have a deeper understanding of Kong Yiji's rich inner world and make the image of an unsuccessful scholar with strong self-esteem jump onto the page; knock the counter with two long fingernails, and write on the counter with long fingernails dipped in wine. This details Kong Yiji's informal, infrequent labor, pride, poverty and other information to the reader; Lu Xun made readers see Kong Yiji's loveliness, naivety and respect for children through the changes of the two subtle movements of bending down and straightening up when Kong Yiji gave fennel beans to children; Lu Xun's statement about Kong Yiji's broken leg reminds readers of the image of a feudal intellectual who was poisoned by the imperial examination system. As Lu Xun said: "As indicated by history, whenever there is reform, it is always the task of enlightened, wise men at the beginning. However, these wise men must have research, thinking, decision and perseverance. They also use power, but they are not deceivers. They are good at guidance, but they are not flatterers. They do not look down on themselves, think they are the playwrights of everyone and do not look down on others as their followers. They are just a person in public, and I think they can do things for the public Industry. " Kong Yiji also has a flash of human nature. For example, keeping promises even when life is poor and keeping intellectual dignity by practice, treating those who are weaker than oneself with kindness rather than pouring pressure on them, respect and infatuation for knowledge, and being eager to spread the knowledge they have learned. From these details, we can see how Lu Xun portrayed Kong Yiji, a diversified and complex character. When Lu Xun wrote Kong Yiji, he put aside the utilitarian reality. The purpose is to contrast the general society with Kong Yiji's helplessness and sadness in his impersonal narration. The cool thin, and cruel; people's disregard and rejection of culture reflect Kong Yiji's watch and responsibility for knowledge and culture.

References

- [1] ZhangQuanzhi, (2022). "Say/Be Said": A Study of Public Opinion in Lu Xun's Novels. *Jilin University Journal Social Sciences Edition*,62(04),203-204
- [2] ChenJun,WuZhouWen, (2018). On the aesthetic Appeal of Lu Xun's novel *Language from the perspective of "Deep Revision" -- Taking "Blessing" and "Kong Yiji" as examples*.*Literary and Artistic Contention*, (02), 53-54
- [3] Zheng Mengyi, (2019). *The wound in a person, pain in the hearts of the world -- Interpretation of "scar" in Kong Yiji*. *Masterpieces Review*, (32), 89-90
- [4] Meng Lingjun, (2017). *Individual Elegy -- A Re-exploration of Kong Yiji's tragic image*. *Journal of Hefei University (Comprehensive ED)*, (01)
- [5] ChenYong,HanZaibin, (2020). *The identity Protection and disillusionment of the abjection Scholar -- Another interpretation of Kong Yiji*. *Bulletin of Chinese Language Teaching*, (11)
- [6] Gu Xingyun (2018), "Insulted and damaged" readers -- a new understanding of Kong Yiji. *Studies on Luxun in Shanghai*, (03)

- [7] Liu Keke, Yu Xiaozhi, (2022). *Functional analysis of the text form of Kong Yiji*. *Luxun Research Monthly*. (04), 27-28
- [8] Zhang Shujun, (2014). *Kong Yiji in the Anxiety of identity*, *Afterschool Education In China*, (03)
- [9] Shi Jianguo, (2006). *Behind "Cool and Thin" -- Rereading Kong Yiji*. *Review of Social Sciences*, (03)
- [10] Xu Xiaoyu, Xi Yimin, (2022). *The Call of Sincerity and Love: Another Interpretation of Kong Yiji*. *Sinogram Culture*, (12), 126-127
- [11] Tian Jianmin, Li Liang, (2019). *The Unique Cultural Watchman: Re-interpretation of the image of Kong Yiji*. *Journal of Nantong University (Social Sciences Edition)*, 35(06), 46-47