

Analysis of the Power Alienation in Bi Feiyu's Novel Yumi

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Abstract: Contemporary writer Bi Feiyu's works are very cutting-edge thinking and reflection of potential social problems, and the novel *Yumi* is a good confirmation. The characters in Bi Feiyu's novel *Yumi* can almost not escape from "power", and the recognition of power, the pursuit of power, the price paid for the pursuit of power and the influence brought by power will push people into the abyss of alienation. Therefore, the thinking on power and reflecting on alienation are also particularly important in contemporary society. An analysis of the power alienation in Bi Feiyu's novel *Yumi* can inspire the people who live in contemporary society. In view of this, this paper studies all kinds of characters through intensive reading of the novel *Yumi*, and analyzes how "power" uses an invisible force to "non-normalize" human survival concept and survival behavior, that is, alienation. Based on the characteristics and the expression of alienation to get the result of alienation caused by power and its influence on contemporary society. At the same time, it also lets the people living in contemporary society see the consequences of people after the alienation of power and get inspiration from it.

Keywords: Bi Feiyu, *Yumi*, alienation, power

1. Introduction

Alienation refers to an alien power that, in turn, controls the person who created it [1]. This alien power is manifested in the text. Bi Feiyu's novels do not lack discussion on "alienation," among which *Yumi* is a typical example. This paper mainly studies *Yumi* in the "Three Sisters," and *Yuxiu* also has a certain involvement. Alienation is embodied in *Yumi* as the distortion of power to people [2]. In *Yumi*, the madness of maize for power and the pursuit of power in the Wang Family Village reflect the alienation of power from people and the distortion of people's hearts. Alienation is not uncommon, but the interpretation of "alienation" has advanced with the era; this is the development of human richness. Bi Feiyu himself once said in an interview: "The novel is accompanied by the redefinition of historical people again and again. In these different definitions, human beings are becoming rich [3]." Therefore, the author believes that it is necessary to interpret the sense of the era.

There are many studies on Bi Feiyu; among them, the distance of the alienation of power is so long that it lacks the advanced nature of the times, and most women do not engage in group sex. The other is to write about the harm of power to people or the tragic fate caused by power. There are also aspects concerning power and sex. Compared with existing literature, this paper has a strong, comprehensive nature, and within the scope of the research, both women and men have special treatment of character relationships. In order to further address the alienation of power, this paper

explores the alienated concept of survival through the identification and pursuit of power. Through the description of "sex," it deeply explores the expression of alienation to reflect the value of this paper.

2. The character characteristics of alienation

The most fundamental characteristic of the traditional consciousness of power is that power is considered the lifeblood and the general equivalent exchange, and it can control and exchange for all [4]. The alienated individuals in *Yumi* are usually drawn by power, forming a sense of power at the bottom of their hearts. Bi Feiyu's basic literary concept of power is based on the "world and human feelings" type, placing political power or even extreme power in the daily lives of ordinary people. The consciousness of power has infiltrated people's life mode and thinking mode for a long time. Therefore, the influence of power on people comes from the long-term sense of power developed in people's hearts [5]. *Yumi* is a typical example of the sense of power fermenting in her mind for a long time and eventually being alienated by power. She was supposed to be naive, but she showed off with her brother in front of the women her father had slept with; she should have been carefree, but she tried to control all her sisters; she was supposed to be in romantic love, but she only wanted "power." She grew up both in life and thought, guided by "power," becoming a soulless dummy with only a body. Her desire to express power, her thirst for power, and her desire to control power became more intense with her growth.

2.1. The identification and unremitting pursuit of power

The premise of pursuit is identity, and the basic tone of *Yumi* is a sense of identity with power. The holder has the natural right of control, but the powerless can only rely on the holder without a bottom line. This kind of manipulation and bottomless attachment has become the fuse for the alienation of characters. In Wang Family Village, Wang Lianfang was the branch secretary. The "new policy" he casually mentioned, not even certain about himself, is the course of the entire village. No one in the village raised objections, and no one investigated the truth. The power holder states the truth, and then the entire village follows suit, and the internal reason is people's blind identification with the owner of power. This identity turns people into a lifeless body drawn by power. Without thought and without soul, they have been alienated by power.

In Wang Lianfang's family, a typical "patriarchal center" family, the father holds absolute authority, and a defining feature is the imperative to bear a son. Wang Lianfang is the ruler of the family; no one dares to oppose his will. He frequently engages in infidelity, yet no one dares to question him, considering it as a matter of course. Desperately desiring a son, he subjects his wife to torment, who dares not resist and even blames herself for not having a son. This oppression doesn't just stem from paternal control over the family's dynamics but also from the overarching power that supports paternal authority—specifically, Wang Lianfang's control over the entire village as the village party secretary. In this context, the patriarchal family is fundamentally one oppressed by power, and all family members naturally exhibit a sense of obedience to this superior patriarchal power, i.e., a sense of identity. Consequently, individuals living within this model can only experience alienation through power.

The portrayal of *Yumi* in the work is proud and authoritative, because she knows that the power of the father's village branch secretary has enough deterrence to make her superior to others in Wang Family Village, allowing her to stand on the commanding heights of power over all people and things. Under the protection of power, *Yumi* believes that she is not an ordinary person but a noble one. People without power can only look up to themselves, and their marriage partners should not be ordinary either. "Power" seems to have become an invisible tool but is generally accepted by the

public. It is like an invisible knife that separates people from each other and pushes them into the abyss of "alienation". The love of Yumi is generated by the "sense of identity" rooted in the heart, rather than the pure love of girls. Her love originates from her heart, which is alienated by power. She hopes that her love is high-profile and praised by the public, so she chose Peng Guoliang, who can "go from heaven to earth," to satisfy her alienated heart. Because she observed the influence of Peng Guoliang's ability to navigate "heaven and earth," she believed that the ability of "heaven" was even higher than her father's power. The sense of identity with power rooted in her heart unconsciously led her to develop an inferiority complex in front of Peng Guoliang. After Wang Lianfang lost power, Yumi instantly realized that a family supported by power would collapse once it lost power. The family would lose its dignity, could no longer enjoy the benefits of power, and might even be vulnerable to attacks by others. Therefore, she had to recklessly regain power. In order to pursue power, she harmed her body and sold herself. With her own body, she exchanged for a little power from Director Guo. Yumi's recognition and pursuit of power led her to believe that no existence can survive without power and that power is supreme, capable of trading everything for its sake. This is a tragic figure.

2.2. Alienated concept of survival

The paradigm of "concept-survival" is the basis of German classical philosophy's ontology, and the idea that thinking determines existence was the philosophical theme of that era [6]. There is also a certain rationale behind the notion that thinking determines existence in modern times. *Yumi* merely reflects the decisive role of the thinking mode in the way of survival. The sense of identity regarding the power in Wang Family Village has led to their conceptual alienation, resulting in a life filled with alienation. The state of living in alienation implies that people cannot survive based on their own strength and must rely on external strength, thus losing their self-subjectivity and becoming separated from their own essence [7]. In order to gain protection from the power of Wang Lianfang, the female accountant voluntarily offered her body repeatedly after being raped by Wang Lianfang. Faced with power, the female accountant can only use her body to please the master of power, believing that this is the only way to survive. After enjoying the benefits of power, Wang Lianfang engaged in liaisons with other women throughout Wang Family Village. Because Wang Lianfang held power, some individuals remained silent, knowing that his wife was mistreated. However, once Wang Lianfang lost power, they began to retaliate against the gang rape of Wang Lianfang's two naive daughters. This reflects the survival concept of the people in Wang Family Village, where actions are based on the notion of the right to power and moral ethics have been discarded, leaving only human nature alienated by power.

The same is true for Yumi. When her father, Wang Lianfang, held power, she deeply realized the benefits of power and was praised by people everywhere in Wang Family Village. She had superior conditions for marriage. Therefore, after Wang Lianfang lost power, she felt that she could not survive without power support. So, she used her young body to please the power owners, continued to pursue power, and married herself to a widowed and elderly man with no emotional foundation. After marriage, Yumi has no right to speak if something involves Guo Jiaxing; she has to serve him in sexual relationships. However, Yumi did not resist such living conditions but enjoyed them very much. This living concept, alienated by power, has aggravated the inequality between people.

3. The expression form of alienation

From Bi Feiyu's novel research, it can be found that power is closely related to the human body. Through the purposes of conquest, discipline, and manipulation of the body, the goal of ruling is achieved [8]. In the novel *Yumi*, the female body is typically linked to power, mainly reflected through

the exchange of "sex." In the novel, Yumi's father uses power to take away other people's bodies, and Yumi also exchanges her body for power. Power and the body seem to form a closed loop. A body dominated by power is a form of alienation. Additionally, this form of alienation is reflected in the relationships between characters; a form of alienation through power leads to abnormal character relationships.

3.1. The description of "sex"

Bi Feiyu's works typically employ the depiction of "sex" to convey certain messages, with *Yumi* being a prime example. The expansion and distortion of human nature are portrayed vividly through the repression and indulgence of sex. In *Yumi*, one can observe individuals in an alienated environment committing sexual plunder against the vulnerable to satisfy their suppressed love. This plot often illustrates that men dominate positions with inherent power while women are unable to resist and become victims of sexual plunder [9]. After his wife's pregnancy, Wang Lianfang's repressed love found no outlet, leading him to spread his affection to women unable to resist, engaging in sexual robbery like a perpetrator. Liu Fengxiang was a beautiful, charming, and talented girl before marriage. However, she was raped, became pregnant, and was forced into a casual marriage, becoming a typical victim of "sexual plunder." It is evident that, despite being born in Li Family Village, she too faced the presence of a "Wang Lianfang." Under the coercion of male inherent force, she could not resist and became a victim. This is because the living environment under the leadership of power can also become alienated. Yuxiu experienced a similar fate, losing her innocence after her father lost power, with the once beautiful girl becoming the target of numerous gang rapes. After Yuxiu loses her innocence, her final ending is tragic.

It is also unfortunate that women actively use their bodies to control powerful men and employ "sex" to wield power. When Yumi and Peng Guoliang fell in love, she gave him everything, but in the critical moment to defend the last line of defense, that is, her body. She aimed to bind the prestigious Peng Guoliang through her body. However, when Peng Guoliang learned about her sisters being gang-raped and questioned her purity, she lost the privilege of binding a man with her body. Consequently, she began to torment her body and took her chastity away with her hands. Finally, she initiated a sexual exchange to regain power, using the sexual exchange to satisfy her desires. Yumi's pursuit of power has rendered it unsightly, devoid of a sense of morality, lacking purity, and devoid of subjectivity, can only become crazy and alienated under the leadership of power.

3.2. Special treatment of character relationships

The main background of the story *Yumi* is the countryside, which should be a simple place, but it is not. The politeness in Wang Family Village is only superficial, and help is driven by interests; they only recognize power. The problem of alienation has become a common phenomenon, constituting the fate of the vast majority of people [10]. Bi Feiyu employs abnormal character relationships to highlight the theme of alienation, mainly within the neighborhood and the family. Due to the division of power, the relationship between neighbors cannot be equal. Typically, families without power look up to and cling to those with power, resulting in inequality between neighbors. Strangely, this inequality is the general default in Wang Family Village; no one seems to detect it. If there is any activity in the village, the party secretary must participate in the front row. Even playing activities among children must prioritize children from powerful families, and even children under the protection of power can control ordinary children without power. This trend of power permeates the village from top to bottom. Among them, the most painful aspect is that adults take revenge on the lost power of children, inflicting a lifetime of harm on them.

Power distorts relationships in the families represented by Wang Lianfang. The relationship between Wang Lianfang and his wife Shi Guifang seems to be merely a connection for the family line, lacking any emotional bond as husband and wife. For Wang Lianfang, his wife is just a tool for giving birth. Once a son is born, he can cease having relations with his wife and seek companionship elsewhere. It is peculiar that Shi Guifang is willing to be the role of a reproductive tool to fulfill her duty, having already lost her sense of self and life's purpose under the dual oppression of marital and authoritarian power. It is also disheartening to observe the relationship between father and daughter. There is almost no emotional communication between Yumi and her father, Wang Lianfang, manifesting only an ethical father-daughter relationship devoid of genuine emotions. Because Yumi despises her father's use of power to sell the family, yet at the same time, she agrees with the rationality of her father's power, which makes her a contradictory person. Consequently, she can only escape her contradictory heart by avoiding communication.

Wang Lianfang's favorite among his seven daughters is Yuxiu because she is beautiful and often acts like a spoiled child in front of him, satisfying his vanity and dirty heart. If it were not for this, he would not be indifferent when Yuxiu is bullied. Similarly, Yuxiu does not behave this way just because Wang Lianfang is her father but because she knows that he holds absolute authority both at home and outside. As long as she can earn her father's love, she doesn't have to worry about being bullied either at home or outside. The most regrettable thing is the lack of normal feelings among the siblings. Yumi tries to control her sisters when her parents are not at home, seeking the pleasure of power. She is satisfied that her sisters can be managed, directed, and manipulated by her. For this reason, she has been in conflict with Yuxiu. Even though Yuxiu later kneels in front of her to apologize for her mistakes, Yumi cannot be satisfied because she doesn't believe that Yuxiu, who has resisted for so long, can truly be under her control. More excessively, she is jealous that Yuxiu can give birth to a son while she gave birth to a daughter. Therefore, she cruelly sends Yuxiu's children away, causing the separation of mother and son. This family, bound together by power, lacks normal character relationships, leaving only scars and pushing people into the abyss of alienation.

4. Conclusion

In Bi Feiyu's portrayal, the alienation of power from people is like a sword, concealed in the invisible but capable of directly penetrating people's hearts, causing them to recognize only power and even harm each other. Under power and totalitarianism, people will unconsciously develop a sense of identity with power, obey its commands, calmly accept the harm brought by power, and gradually lose themselves, eventually becoming individuals alienated by power. Through the various alienated characters in *Yumi*, this paper finds that the power of authority unconsciously compels people to act on its behalf. Social ideas and the social environment are contaminated and alienated. As a new-generation writer, Bi Feiyu is forward-thinking in exposing social reality. The realistic value of *Yumi* is still worth reflecting on, reading, and understanding in the evolving contemporary China. This paper comprehensively discusses the alienation of power in *Yumi* through the characteristics of alienation and the unique treatment of "sex" and character relationships. However, this paper is not closely enough related to contemporary society and social phenomena; the exploration is not sufficiently profound. Future research can more carefully connect comprehensive research with the times.

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