

Wan Yu Literature and Feminism

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Abstract: In China, the phenomenon known as "Wan Yu Literature" has recently taken social media by storm, igniting intense discussions among people. This trend is centered around Lin Wan Yu, a character from the popular Chinese TV series, "Love Apartment". Following a scene in which Lin writes a letter to her boyfriend, Zhan Bo, expressing her evolved understanding of life, many female netizens have been emulating this act as a way of exploring self-discovery and feminism. The discussion surrounding "Wan Yu Literature" reflects a deeper ideological transformation in society, as women assert their right to define what "running away" means for themselves, demonstrating a desire for greater gender equality and individual freedom.

Keywords: Feminism, Wan Yu Literature, Independence of Personality

1. Introduction

In 2023, the character Lin Wan Yu from the TV series "Love Apartment" is back in vogue. In the "Wan Yu Literature" that swept across social media platforms, women competed to imitate the plot of the drama in which Wan Yu wrote a letter to Zhan Bo, telling her a new understanding of life. Topics such as "I finally understand Wan Yu after so many years" and "I seem to understand the freedom that Wan Yu wants" have rushed to the top of the hot search and become the center of attention [1]. The audience's evaluation of "Wan Yu" has changed from ten years of disgust to love, which reflects the change in women's consciousness: from being forced to accept the traditional concept of marriage as the necessity and the end of life, to the courage to break the traditional concept of bondage, the pursuit of freedom, self-worth and the realization of ideals.

Few studies analyze the awakening of women's consciousness through online literature. Existing literature mainly analyzes the female image through film and television works, and few scholars take the audience as the main body to study the awakening of female consciousness embodied in it. To address this gap in the literature, this paper first analyzes the reasons why Lin Wan Yu was loathed 11 years ago through the protagonist of A Doll's House, Nala, and the image of Cinderella in films and TV dramas of the same period, and then discusses contemporary women's brand-new understanding of "running away", which provides an opportunity to promote the awakening of women's consciousness and gender equality [2]. It then discusses contemporary women's new understanding of "running away", inspiring the promotion of women's awakening and gender equality.

2. Wan Yu Literature

Lin Wan Yu from Love Apartment has returned to people's view, opening up a new "Wan Yu Literature". This also echoes the discussion of self-discovery and feminism in the current society, and her image presents the meaning of women's pursuit of subjectivity, conveying the decisiveness of personal self-determination.

"Dear Wan Yu, after all these years, I finally understand your departure, what was recognized as the failure of the third film is now like a thunderbolt, your plane landed in 2012, while my plane is now taking off." [3] This is a letter that recently circulated on the internet, which spans eleven years and is addressed to Lin Wan Yu, who was once questioned in Love Apartment.

Wan Yu, a character in the hit drama "Love Apartment" more than ten years ago, is the daughter of Lin's Bank, a Fortune 100 company, she was supposed to be studying music in New York City, but broke off and ran away because she was dissatisfied with her family's marriage contract, and came to the Love Apartment by mistake, where she started a friendship and met love by chance. Just when everything seems to be on track, she runs away again. Taking off her wedding dress and leaving behind her letters, Wan Yu packed her bags and left for Barcelona, leaving her boyfriend Zhan Bo's infatuation and the audience's disbelief behind.

Now, eleven years later, Wan Yu's departure has gained more and more recognition. People tenderly use "Dear Wan Yu" as the letterhead to express their relief and understanding of the character's ending; it seems that Lin Wan Yu has broken free from the image of a "capricious girl" and has become a free-spirited and free-spirited rebel.

3. Reasons for Questioning "Wan Yu" 11 Years Ago

3.1. Compare "Wanyu" with "Nala"

The two times that Wan Yu runs away in the play are the symbol of a free spirit. The first time she ran away because she didn't want to marry a man she had never met before, he left forever and started her first independent life, and this time she ran away means "boldness" in front of the public. The second runaway is also for a marriage contract. Wan Yu vetoes Zhan Bo's marriage proposal with 14 "objections" and decides to leave. She decides to leave, and although she does not want to give up the warmth of love and friendship, she craves for more freedom and adventure. Her decision is questioned by the audience and is seen as capricious and numb. Both of Wan Yu's runaways were in search of freedom but were met with mixed reviews [4].

When we talk about "running away", we naturally think of "Nala", who is the prototype of millions of stories of women who run away. In the novel by Norwegian author Henrik Ibsen, Nala is the daughter of a wealthy merchant, married to Helmut, a lawyer, and living a seemingly happy life. However, a crisis makes her realize that her romantic popularity is just an illusion, and when she realizes that she is just a "doll" at the mercy of her father and husband, she decides to run away from home.

The play ends with a bang, but the door opens for the Chinese woman. At the beginning of the May Fourth Movement, Henrik Ibsen's play "A Doll's House" was introduced to China and quickly became popular because it embodied a modern understanding of Chinese womanhood and gender identity and the characterization of "Nala" was adopted and transformed in the corridors of history. "Wan Yu" is one of the minor practices of the new century [5].

Contemporary gender historian Xu Huiqi points out in her book Nala in China that when Nala was first introduced to China, she was endowed to break free from slavery and pursue freedom, and was regarded as a role model for breaking free from her "father's" family and revolting against arranged marriages. However, the fact that she escaped from her "husband's" family was ignored. Xu Huiqi

explains, "The new cultural trend in the early years of the Republic of China gave a sublime and sacred meaning to human discovery and the natural expression of human individuality - love. Young people at that time regarded love as an object that challenged tradition, believing that only through 'love' could they become complete and free human beings" [6].

Therefore, running away from "father" and chasing "husband" became an expression of emancipation. Similar to this logic, Wan Yu's two outings are understood very differently, perhaps because of the different objects of her outings. The first time Wan Yu runs away is "out of her father's house", she escapes from the traditional family community, which is regarded as a freedom-seeking rebellion, just like Nala's free-spirited runaway; while the second time she runs away has the metaphorical meaning of "out of her husband's house", which is even more superimposed on the abandonment of warm friendship, which not only shattered the utopian-like friendship imagination in the Love Apartment but also left behind the warmth of that period, which is the most important thing to remember [7].

3.2. Compare "Cinderella" with "Wan Yu"

Love Apartment premiered in 2009 when Korean idol dramas such as *Together We Come to Watch Meteor Shower* were in full swing, and the influence of idol dramas such as *Mischievous Kiss* and *Prince Turns into a Frog* had not diminished at all. In these dramas, there are constant stories of innocent princes falling in love with Cinderella, and women are constantly portrayed as objects of redemption who need to be trusted and protected.

Among these female characters reminiscent of Cinderella, Wan Yu does not seem to fit the image of a "runaway girl" - instead of waiting for the prince to arrive, she chooses to explore the unknown world on her own [8]. In her world, love is precious and freedom is more expensive, but at that time, most viewers did not understand this and people preferred "Cinderella"-style female characters.

During the same period, some TV dramas also tried to deal with women's situations in a more realistic context: *Big Daughter When Married* tells the story of a virgin teacher who is unable to find love due to family pressures, while *Dulala's Promotion* focuses on the growth of Dulala, an office worker who ultimately realizes her professional ambitions and reaps the fruits of love. Among the many stories with happy endings, Wan Yu left a controversial open-ended ending. Media gender research expert Wang Lei points out that in the early 21st century, independent, free-spirited women were often ridiculed and despised for usurping male authority, and Wan Yu was no exception [9].

Unsurprisingly, at the time, the myth that "family equals community of love" had not yet been busted, but as Chizuko Ueno warns, the symbolic importance and encouragement of love at the altar stemmed from the ideological apparatus that had long exploited women's reproductive labor. This is implicit in many "Cinderella" and "leftover" stories, as the media construct or reinforce old gender concepts while reflecting societal values: in many "Cinderella" and "leftover" stories, the media seizes the opportunity to negate emancipation by subtle means, creating the myth of the sacred supremacy of love [10].

Under the subtle influence of the media, women indulge in the sweet fantasies created by popular culture, construct idealized romantic courtship relationships, find alternative satisfaction in the stereotypical male "Prince Charming," or relieve anxiety through family ethical dramas or workplace promotion dramas. However, Wan Yu's escape story exists in a kind of vacuum because she is neither permanently committed to a heterosexual relationship nor determined about her place in the workplace. While some women remain committed to their marriages and jobs, Wan Yu's dual escape in search of freedom and adventure is undoubtedly brave and enviable, but also frustrating and confusing.

4. Understanding Wan Yu

After an 11-year hiatus, Lin Wan Yu is once again at the center of society's attention, this time returning to the limelight in the form of a new "Wan Yu Literature". This time, she returns to the limelight in a new form of "Wan Yu Literature", a move that is closely in line with the current trend of society's in-depth exploration of the issues of self-discovery and feminism. The image of Wan Yu not only conveys the essence of women's quest for subjectivity but also expresses the determination of individual self-determination. Her escape is not only a quest for "freedom", but also a revolt against dependent relationships and the male-dominated gender order. However, at the same time, the similarity between "Wan Yu's Escape" and the earlier "Nala's Escape" lies in the fact that it is intertwined with the social reality, reflecting a brand-new social outlook.

From another point of view, Zeng controlled the direction and image of the new female discourse with the elite male-dominated narration of "Nala," and made Chinese women believe that only by studying and identifying with Nala could they gain the status of "human beings" on a par with men. The Chinese women were made to believe that only by studying and identifying with Nala could they gain the status of "human" on a par with men.

Such a narrative of escapism, dominated and defined by elite males, appears to liberate women from the constraints of femininity, but in fact, places them on the path of male predetermination. In the current re-creation of "Wan Yu's Escape", this situation has been reversed. Most of the people who write back to Wan Yu are women, and most of the people who produce related content are women, who have taken the initiative to come to the forefront, set new trends, and create new interpretations of Wan Yu to regain the right to define "running away" [11].

Women's discussion and understanding of "Wan Yu" nowadays has long gone beyond the role of Wan Yu itself, but covers the symbols she represents and the meaning she embodies. Their fight for the right to define "leaving" is a fight for the right to freely choose their lives, no longer to give up halfway for love or marriage, but to strive to find their truest inner needs and values. Behind "Wan Yu Literature" is the self-growth process of this generation of women, from the stage of "having the love of a good man takes over everything" to the passage of "finding oneself first".

In short, "Wan Yu Literature" has once again aroused society's deep concern for self-discovery and feminism. Women's right to define "running away" shows their sublimation of ideology at a deeper level, and it also provides inspirational thinking for the realization of gender equality and freedom of individuality.

5. Conclusion

Advances in technology and the popularity of social media have enabled us to understand the changes in women's awakening in different ways. This paper focuses on analyzing the reasons behind the changes in netizens' evaluation of the TV drama character "Lin Wan Yu". In recent years, more and more TV dramas have begun to explore women's living conditions and issues, such as educational equity and implicit occupational sexism, etc. The purpose of this paper is to express women's role in today's society. The purpose of this paper is to express the challenges faced by women in today's society and the call for women's rights. Therefore, studying the change of audience's evaluation of "Lin Wan Yu", helps us to better understand the influence of feminist values in today's society.

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