

On Lu Yao's *Life* in Feminist Perspective --Confucian Traditions and Real-Life Concerns

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Abstract

Lu Yao's *Life* is a complex system of emotional weaving, with intricate character relationships, multiple and diverse changes in characters' feelings, multiple contradictions intertwined, power discourses constantly intervening, male absolutes highlighted everywhere, women's low status even pathetic, and implicit gender issues constantly thrown out to readers unintentionally and intentionally, but mixed with external whitewashing factors. The author tries to use feminist criticism to expose the ugly portrayal of men in *Life*, to reveal the implicit devaluation of women, and to restore the ecology of gender portrayal itself.

Keywords: feminism, *Life*, gender, ugliness

1. Female Repression Under the Door

In traditional society, men often had to choose a match that was below them or a general match for them, while women could match at will, without undue stringency, mostly for the sake of pure love. The family match has always been the traditional Chinese concept of marriage, showing inequality, and women are often required by the male's family match, being the passive and the male chooser, with the male bursting into a strong willed choice. Depressed and disillusioned after Gao Galin's teaching position is taken over, Qiaozhen appears to give him hope for his life. The two of them are not always in love, and although Qiaozhen is a relatively pretty woman, and her family is well-off compared to Gao's, this is not an absolute advantage that makes Gao like her. Qiao Zhen has a very complex psychology before she starts to make contact, she secretly looks at Gao Galin every time he is in high school, she is so happy to learn that Gao Galin did not get into university that she almost goes crazy, she is in deep pain when she learns that Gao Galin has become a teacher, she is violently revived when she learns that he has been replaced as a farmer, this series of emotional changes are detailed to every point, in fact the essence is because Gao Galin's identity is constantly changing, Qiao Zhen is worried that The other side is too good for him and she is not good enough for him. After Qiaozhen confesses her love for Gao Galin, the two of them kiss and finally Gao Galin says, "Later, you will have to brush your teeth". Gao Jialin's rejection of rural life, and after coming into contact with Qiaozhen, he does not actively go to him for some time, deliberately turning a blind eye, "He even felt that his haste to have such an affair with an uneducated rural girl was simply a sign of degradation and depression; it was tantamount to admitting that he would be willing to be a peasant for the rest of his life." (Lu, Y., 2012, p. 65) This was an early view before he entered the city, but of course later in life, after entering the city, he himself found in countless comparisons with Huang Yaping that he was more suited to the kind of intellectual that needed a companion with whom the language of the heart met. On one occasion when Qiaozhen saw him coming, when she gave as a correspondent Gao Jialin pulled up "your old sow gave birth to twelve piglets, one was crushed to death by the old sow, there is still left "The first one was crushed to death by a sow, and there is still one left. Gao Jialin annoyingly pulled up a newspaper from the table" (Lu, Y., 2012, p. 168), as a rural woman, identity has never changed, Gao Jialin's identity before and after the transformation is psychologically believed that Qiaozhen is not worthy of him, Gao Jialin is "noble". Gao Yude, the father of both men, also held the same view, and when he learned of their affair, he said to his son, "Don't make any more trouble for me, you should have died long ago! How can we be so proud of others? How can we be above them? He's a man of the Damar River!" (Lu, Y., 2012, p. 85) As a father, he also thought it was inappropriate. In traditional marriages, knowledge is not a bargaining chip, but family status is the first priority. As Qiaozhen's father, who threatens to break Gao Galin's legs, this is a time when Qiaozhen's marriage as a

daughter is completely under her father's control, and although her seemingly free struggle is successful, she ends up united with Ma Bolong, in line with her father's original vision. "The daughter, a special role in the family. She is only naturally maternal, purely daughterly, sometimes even free to be asexual. The family difficulties that arise because of the daughter's presence are riddled with contradictions and conflicts. In the old-fashioned family, where men were inferior to women, the daughter's status was inferior, either as a cash cow or a money loser." (Wang, C.-R., 2002, p. 230) Ma Bolong - the captain of the first team in the village of Madian, who participates in the school management committee - we will not speculate for a moment whether Ma Bolong was called by Liu Liben after the blow he received from Qiaoqiaozhen, but Liu Liben has been unhappy with Ma Bolong and is quick to speak to Qiaoqiaozhen about his desire to think about it. If it is said to be truly considerate of his daughter, completely for the sake of his daughter, will not be at this time suddenly pass this kind of information, on the one hand, afraid of aggravating the blow to his daughter, on the other hand, afraid of his daughter emotional will be their own life event casually a throw. Liu Liben had always hoped that his daughter would marry someone from a wealthy family, preferably a powerful one - his eldest daughter Qiaoying had married Gao Minglou's eldest son, a so-called "high-ranking associate" - but was trapped by his daughter's lack of knowledge and his daughter's strong desire to break away, so his compulsion was not fully extended. But the essence remains the same - control over one's own daughter. In Qiaozhen's case, the "father complex" can be seen in a hidden way, and she ultimately chooses to obey her father.

Eventually, the respective spouses could be seen. Huang Yaping does not say she is with Zhang Kenan, but with her father's persuasion, Kenan's liking and the family match, the result must also be together, going to the big city of Nanjing together. Qiaozhen ends up with Ma Bolong, who is also from the countryside, and although it is not a happy ending, it is a reality. Both find themselves in the "right family". There are socio-historical reasons for this, as men have long been accustomed to dominating women in their lives and work, and if the other woman is superior to them, there is a subconscious sense of hostility and confrontation. This is not because men are not confident, but precisely because they are so confident that they have always imagined their own abilities to the extreme, never noticing and considering, and never believing in the essential ability of women, who are marginal spares, to be called out when help is needed, to enable them to achieve their purpose and then to brand themselves as such, which is what men covertly seek. In modern society, there is also this image of the man who, as the wife in a family, goes to work to support the whole family, and who then has to bear the uneasiness from his own heart on the one hand, and who will spend the whole day in fear and anxiety, possibly not only appreciating his wife but scolding her, considering this an insult to men, and his own male subject position is challenged and shaken, and on the other hand, he has to bear This is often the result of the double pressure that can break up a male family marriage, which is a result of the influence of the male cultural centre and the female periphery.

2. "Angels" and "Demon Women"

In the United States Gilbert and Guba's feminist masterpiece *Madwoman in the Attic* examines two unrealistic images of women in pre-19th century Western male literature - the angel and the demon woman - and exposes the distortion and repression of women in patriarchal male society hidden behind these images. Mostly false, they simply reflect the male writers' gender bias and desire to place women in a subordinate position. Qiu, Y.-H., 2006, p. 224). There is one female character in the novel that can be broadly compared to the 'demon woman' - Zhang Kenan's mother, who appears twice in total.

2.1 *Without Knowing Gogarin, She Was Cursing in the Face of Dung Picking From Country People, Six Times in All, off and on*

"Not late, not early, but at this time, stinks to high heaven!"

"Manure carrier! You're stinking people to death! You can go elsewhere to carry the dung, don't bully people here!"

"What's wrong with your ears? I've told you once and you don't listen, and you're still here to take it on, annoying as hell!"

"You hillbilly, what a pain!"

"Where are you from? You don't even look at the time to take a shit, you're just doing it at this time! What are you doing here? You want to eat someone else?"

"Go far! Covered in shit! Stinky!"

This is the power of the ugly portrayal of a city woman's cynicism, a "thug" mentality. We can't help but value them, and according to empiricism, the bad, the bad and the ugly are mercilessly slapped on Kernan's mother,

causing the real logic of the matter to be ignored. This was around the time of the evening before the white dew, when fertiliser was needed and the subcontracting company was taking a break under the tree, and first of all Gokhalein went in to take out the faeces without giving a greeting to anyone and went in without saying a word. Or take the initiative to go up and say hello to make a note, no manners. And then there is Gagarin's unhealthy hatred, the unspoken hatred of the country people for the city people, which forces him to go up and argue, and isn't it the right thing to consider as an untimely "intruder" to try to avoid conflict? The end result is again a conditional silence, because it is the mother of an old school friend who is worried about her embarrassment. An incomplete resentment, an impolite behaviour, a rebellion from one's own pitiful heart, all of which we ignore.

2.2 Another Ugly Face Was Shown When Gao Galin's "Backdoor" Was Denounced

In order to take revenge on Gao Galin for the revenge of her daughter-in-law, she had to report it, regardless of the so-called benevolence. There is also the fact that her son, Zhang Kenan, still says that this is the behaviour of a villain and unethical, unintentionally using this kinship self-contradiction to intensify the solidified perception of Zhang Kenan's mother, thus making it easy to conclude - that Gao Galin's tragedy was caused by her, that she was the stifler of a perfect marriage and the breaker of a beautiful relationship, that Gao Galin was so miserable and She is so tragic and unfortunate, she is so heartless and indifferent, that it seems that Zhang Kernan's mother is the one who puts an end to it. But when the fog is lifted and the facts are restored to him, it is a different story. The first thing is that, for her, her son was on the verge of getting married, and the appearance of Gao Galin led to everything coming to naught, and she may have been laughed at by her colleagues, and then, if one is to truly pursue morality, how is it not moral to actively report and expose wrongdoing in an era when things were just getting underway? Is there really no need for the moral righteousness of the state under the moral righteousness of emotion? This internal logic is concealed by Lu Yao's narrative, confusing the reader. The invisible writing that defies all distortion is the result of male hegemony.

2.3 For Qiaozhen, apart from her lack of knowledge, her behaviour can be described as that of an "angel". Everything she did was so reasonable and seamless. She was full of imagination about her future life, holding hands and saying to Gao Galin, who was still a farmer at the time, "You'll have a break once in seven days, so you can spend, like, Sundays at school", and she had to do her best to take care of him, to use the kind of state model in the city to practise intermittence, a kind of "male dominant, female dominant She had to do her best to take care of him, to practise intermittence in the same way as in the city, a kind of "male dominated, female dominated" model of small family formation. When Gao Galin is depressed, Qiaozhen provides him with the greatest comfort, worrying about Gao Galin's absence but constantly reassuring herself and thinking of him in every way. She thought, "She'll work hard at home and raise the baby well", and took the initiative to tell him, "Why don't you just find a way to go to work? I know what you're thinking!" When he asked her if she wasn't afraid that she wouldn't want you? She said, "No, as long as you are happy with your life". (Lu, Y., 2012, pp. 108-109) She was so selfless, so completely unconcerned with herself, so absolutely confident in the future that she was willing to sacrifice her partner's time, willing to risk being abandoned, to support Gao Galin in going out to work, a monstrous love that cannot be explained by reason. After Gao Galin entered the city, Qiaozhen came to see him, prepared a quilt of new cotton for him, dog bedding, as a farmer surprisingly still worried that he did not have enough to eat, wear bad shoes, a roll of money out of the close to give him, save their own food and drink willing to dedicate all to Gao Galin, their own money to save but also sacrifice the luxury of staying a little longer, catching the car of three stars, still worried about the hoe in the field was taken. When Gao Jialin said to Qiaozhen that she would be leaving her, she was in such a state of amazement, "Go ahead, I will never drag you down You go your way, find someone better outside", which has come to a break, she did not whine, did not make a fuss, calm and quiet, peaceful as if nothing had happened, can be relieved of the general. When Gao Galin wants to return to his hometown, Qiaozhen again shows such tolerance, a burst of wifely and maternal nature, stopping her elder sister Qiaoying from deliberately making things difficult, and persuading Gao Minglou to arrange a teaching post. Qiaozhen plays almost all the roles, except that she is not really herself. She is deprived of all creativity and vitality. From the author's point of view, the author designs a female character who has no knowledge but is everywhere full of perfection, trying to conceal the creative agency of women, whose natural dedication is taken for granted by the one shortcoming of having no knowledge.

"Men are not meant to exercise authoritarian dictatorship in the arena of social life; this is due to a combination of many factors such as history and reality, society and individuals, men and women From the point of view of men themselves, 'men by name', aspiring to build a successful career and ruling the country with a family as the ideal, became the main factor, the inner motivation for them to occupy the centre stage of society. 'Career-oriented men' is a fancy name for talking about themselves. The greatest satisfaction for men is to fully demonstrate their wisdom, ability and poise in society. Of course, women's willingness to play a supporting role

and their unintentional or inability to fight against men also consolidates the male social subject position in another way." (Wang, C.-R., 2002, pp. 277-278) In the most perfect scenario, Qiaozhen, when she marries, must also be a "virtuous wife and mother" in the Chinese tradition of "three obediences and four virtues", and later, probably because of her lack of knowledge and lack of love from the male Gao Galin, she is another woman who is left out. In reality, she marries Ma Bolong, but cannot let go of Gao Galin, so she will either get a divorce and approach Gao Galin, or spend her life in pain and suffering, becoming depressed and lonely.

3. Frantic Female Advances

Crucial to the story of Gao Galin's love life are two women - Qiaozhen and Huang Yaping. As you can see, their pursuit is so frantic that Gao Galin does not have to spend a single ounce of effort or use much sweet talk. He is happy, as if he was born with a 'woman's touch' and 'peach blossom luck'. These two types of women represent the traditional, rural style and the modern, intellectual, urban style. For Qiaozhen, in order to alleviate Gao Galin's shyness, she helps him sell buns and takes the basket away from him, in fact, she has been following him all along. Countless times she peeked across the street at the Lin family's yard, pretending to go to a nearby field to fetch pigweed while Gao Galin was bathing. She had already prepared a cigarette for Gao Galin and begged him in a whisper to kiss her. Because of Gao Galin's remark about brushing more teeth, she broke her tooth bed, willingly quarrelled with her father and changed her clothes as many times as she could, fearing that he would not like her costume. When she sees that he is reluctant to see her, she waits, kisses Gao Galin on his tanned skin, secretly pays attention to his labour conditions, prepares a bottle of red salve and a packet of cotton pads, steals eggs and cakes from the box and gives them to Gao Galin, uttering an inner monologue that says "I see you more than my father and mother". Qiaozhen is a woman caught in a love dilemma. She has thought of countless things for him and has long prepared countless things for him. From the frantic chase to the constant active approach during the hot period of love, to the later stages, she scolds Gao Galin, while she never hates him and asks her father not to scold him, even thinking of death. In her eyes, Gagarin was so magnificent that she could not blame him for whatever he had done wrong. She did not complain in the slightest, did not show any resentment and was loving him without principle. Was this foolishness or fidelity?

And Huang Yaping, she has the knowledge of independent, capricious, vain girl, she likes him, so she also forgot to broadcast, mental confusion, in Gao Gang is another female initiative confession, hope Gao Galin can always accompany her. Later she also kept giving Gao Galin thought work, elaborating on the reasons why she should be chosen, being so proactive and eager. Even after being aggrieved, she still pleaded for Gao Galin's forgiveness and was willing to give up her identity before breaking up, only to die when Gao Galin spoke his mind. As intellectual women, according to common sense, they should be different from Qiaozhen-style pursuits and relationships, or at least be sensible, but in the face of Gao Galin, like a spell that cannot be undone, no one can escape the whirlwind of falling madly in love with him, Gao Galin exudes a fascinating light wherever he is, convincing women, making them constantly enchanted and attracted. They are also willing to give and to sacrifice everything. The author adds leverage to his suitors in order to create this male figure, from rural to urban, from lack of knowledge to all-powerful, the women's families are getting better and better, the other side is getting better and better, but the scales still cannot be tipped in favour of the women, they are still passive. Their eyes revolve around Gogarin, knowing what he needs and what he doesn't need. Gao Galin is their value realiser, their judge. Lu Yao's writing about men subconsciously favours men, portraying women as inferior, even to the point of "distortion".

4. Male Power Involvement

The use of male power in the novel is a key factor in its completion, because it is under the false warmth of power that all kinds of human feelings, all kinds of fractures, conflicts and contradictions can intermingle and create dislocations with each other. Only when this power is revealed is it possible to discover the gender differences in the text. Power in fiction can be divided into: patriarchal power, official power, and emotional power.

On the one hand, patriarchal power is not explained in relation to matriarchal power; in the case of Gao Galin's parents, even his mother's name is not explained, and he appears only to start cooking for Gao Galin, worrying about him, and only "slapdash" the image of the family as a good wife and mother. Even when faced with the marriage and future of his son and Qiaozhen, only his father, Gao Yude, steps in to take charge of everything. Similarly, Gao Minglou is the head of the family, with his mother, a three-star woman, only cooking behind the scenes and taking care of the family's food and living. Zhang Kenan's father is rarely seen, but he is written as a macho man who is busy with his career and doesn't care to run the household. In Huang Yaping's parents, when she told them that she was going to marry Gao Galin and abandon Zhang Kenan, her mother cried on the bed,

not saying anything and not being able to say anything, throwing her hands up in disbelief. Her father, on the other hand, was furious, "You're typical of bourgeois thinking! You young people are a pain in the arse! The fallen generation! The father wrung his hands and went out. (Lu, Y., 2012, pp. 189-190) It is clear to see that the men are rigid and the women have to act as the last consolers, wiping their daughter's tears. When she learns that Gao Galin is to be sent to the countryside, Huang Yaping's first thought is to go to her father, because only he can take the decision, the mother is weak and is unable to choose and offer advice. Patriarchal power, on the other hand, is a restriction on one's own children, whether it is Gao Galin's father, Qiaozhen's father, or Huang Yaping's father, all of whom are the same.

Official power. In the novel, there are two main points, one because of Gao Minglou's position of power, which causes Gao Galin to lose his teaching position as soon as he opens the double and is replaced by someone who has just graduated from high school - three stars. This is also the point of origin of the novel. The power blackness that ultimately leads to tragedy throughout. The later effects of male power are enormous. The second place is because Gao Galin's uncle becomes the local leader, some power blackness comes out again, and finally another tragedy is born because of the exposure of power. This official power does not only have an impact on Gogarin's future, but it also unconsciously crushes women.

5. The Vision of God

In addition to the empiricism of the father, there is another male character in the novel who sees everything and watches the whole picture, all in his own mind as it develops in a predetermined way - old Uncle Deshun. As an outsider who does not delve into the interior of the novel's characters, he has a dispassionate vision. For the outsider, typical of Kong Yiji, "the first character in Kong Yiji, being outside, has a perception that is naturally distanced from the events of the plot, or, as I suggested in *The Theory of Mutation*, a certain 'mutated' perception, misaligned with the events themselves. All the characters are characters in the senses of other characters, that is, ordinary, but also unique, strange, in the words of Russian formalism, alienated, because of the specificity of their senses. It is the melding of multiple perceptions into a single furnace that creates what Heidegger calls 'astonishment'". (Sun, S.-Z., 2016, p. 37) Old Uncle Deshun was so kind that when he saw Gao Galin's hand bleeding from his desperate digging, he would immediately come and stop the bleeding with yellow earth and give him comfort. On learning that Gao Galin would be in town with his new love, he came to town with Gao Galin's father to persuade him personally. He also has a feminine and keen sense of observation; Gao Yude knew at first about his son and Qiaozhen, while Deshun had known about it for a long time and persuaded Gao to be more open. He has a feminine sense of humour, recounting his own emotional history as he drags Gao Galin and Qiaozhen to the city for a manure pull, recounting his own previous tales with sadness, hoping that the two of them will cherish their opportunities and live well. He also has a feminine tolerance, at the end of which he scolds, but is more tolerant, a kind of encouragement. But what cannot be ignored is that as a male, he has all the character of a female, which is a glorification of masculinity and a distrust of the female character.

6. Confucian Tradition and Real Life Perspectives

In this conversation, Lu Yao talks about his thoughts on the 'urban-rural crossroads' and the middle-grade novel he intends to write with great effort. In this conversation, Lu Yao talked about his thoughts on the 'urban-rural intersection' and the middle-grade novel he was going to put a lot of effort into writing. (Houfu, 2015, p. 145) The object of *Life* is a crossroads between the city and the countryside, and the protagonist constantly shifts and pursues between the two, never escaping this fate. Geographically, it is a rural village in Shaanxi, the beneficiary of Shaanxi's Middle Kingdom culture, so enclosed that "some sources indicate that in rural areas of inaccessible northwest China, the spatial extent of peasant interactions is drawn in a circle with the radius of a half-day trip on foot." (Houfu, 2015, p. 14) With limited transportation and fewer external connections, the "small country, small people" mentality was evident, and people were still conservative in their thoughts, actions and language. When Lu Yao was born, his father pinned a small red cloth with a bow and arrow on the lintel of the Moonchild kiln, telling the world that his family had given birth to a boy, a sign of the preference for sons over daughters. In Confucianism, too, there is the sexism that we now criticise.

On Lu Yao personally, the completion of this novel is the folding in of the shadow of the first half of his own life, where the emotions of the self enter the characters and plot of the novel *Life* in a woven way. "When I think about it, the best days I have spent here in my life so far were the twenty days or so it took to write the first draft of *Life*. Before that, I was twenty-eight years old I had been preparing for this for nearly two years, tormented by mental and artistic considerations; and the spirit really reached oblivion when I finally got through the barriers into the actual performance. I remember working eighteen hours a day for nearly a month, unable to distinguish between day and night, my body was on fire, my five senses were in disarray, and I could not pass

urine or stool freely" (Lu, Y., 2000, p. 6) This is Lu Yao's own account, he is not just writing about Gao Galin and Deshun, he is also writing about himself.

In terms of affection, his experience has deep roots in female love. Due to economic and traditional ethics, he was passed on to his eldest uncle, and although his eldest uncle and mother treated him well and as if he were their own, how can this compare to natural maternal love, the direct source of motherhood being blocked and having an invisible effect on one's growth.

In terms of love, he was similarly struck by women, and his own ever-attractive lover - Lin Hong - a Beijing city youth - abandoned him mercilessly, without giving him any reason to do so, and after learning the news he even thought of jumping into a river and committing suicide. Women gave him one more destruction of his life, and love was something he almost despaired of, not unrelated to the despair of love that is described to women several times in *Life*. Later on, meeting his life partner, Lynda, is more of a work partner than a life partner, with long geographical separations and none of that ideal-like sweetness, just correspondence.

The role of women had an inescapable influence on Lu Yao's development. Before Lu Yao wrote *Life*, he actually received a lot of help from men in his life; the village headman helped him to go to school, the headmaster made an exception and agreed, and the gender source of the love he received was unbalanced.

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