

## YU XIUHUA'S SELF-IMAGE CREATION IN POETRY

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### ABSTRACT

As a poet at the bottom, Yu Xiuhua's physical disability, the misfortune of love and marriage, social discrimination, and the isolation of the soul make the loneliness that no one knows linger in her mind all the time, so she pours loneliness into her poems and writes about her real life, all of which complete her self-image shaping of the disabled peasant woman at the bottom.

**Key Words:** Yu Xiuhua, Self-Image, Poetry.

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Born in 1976 in a poor rural family in Hengdian Village, Zhongxiang City, Hubei Province, Yu Xiuhua married in 1995 without free love because of cerebral palsy caused by birth collapse, limited mobility and language ability. In January 2015, her poem "Crossing Half of China to Sleep with You" was widely reprinted on WeChat Moments. In addition, various media reports called her a "poet with cerebral palsy", which made Yu Xiuhua an instant hit and entered the public's vision. Yu Xiuhua and her poems also rose from a literary phenomenon to a public topic, causing widespread concern and controversy.

As a bottom poet, Yu Xiuhua's physical disability, the misfortune of love and marriage, social discrimination and the isolation of the soul make the unknown loneliness linger in her mind all the time, so she injected loneliness into her poems, wrote the real life of the bottom, and described how she was in love, in the crowd and in her hometown. And it is this emotion of blood and tears of the disabled peasant women at the bottom, this real, painful and helpless loneliness that touches readers.

This paper starts with Yu Xiuhua's identity factors, pays attention to Yu Xiuhua's personal emotional expression and poetry expression, and understands how Yu Xiu Hua writes her own experience into poetry to shape her self-image.

#### **Lose one's dignity in marriage**

Love is a lofty emotion of mutual attraction between men and women in love in a specific social relationship, focusing on the acceptance and recognition of the spiritual level of both sexes. "Marriage" is the social relationship between men and women, and it is a unique contractual relationship established in the economic base and superstructure of human beings.<sup>1</sup>The reality of disability makes Yu Xiuhua face many difficulties in the pursuit of love, and even stops at the door of love. Similarly, her physical disability made it difficult for her to walk in the marriage relationship and lost the dignity of a wife.

Yu Xiuhua is born disabled and born in the countryside, and she is also a woman—a vulnerable group who must depend on men to form a family in the countryside. The overlap of three identities makes Yu Xiuhua become a dominated person who can not control her own actions or even her destiny in the traditional binary opposition environment. Marriage brings only endless pain. In Chinese rural society, stable social relations need to be maintained by building a family between men and women. "The relationship between men and women must have an arrangement so that there will be no passionate feelings between them." "Men and women only act according to certain rules to manage the economic and reproductive undertakings of division of labor and cooperation, and they do not hope for psychological agreement with each other."<sup>ii</sup> This spiritual "difference between men and women" is perfectly reflected in Yu Xiuhua's marriage. She has written poems based on her husband more than once, complaining about this tough patchwork marriage. "He was drunk, and he said there was a woman in Beijing/who looked better than me. When they have no way to live, they go dancing/He likes dancing women/He likes to see their buttocks shaking/He said that they will call the bed and have a good voice. It's not like I don't say a word/and always cover my face." (*My dog, called Xiao Wu*)<sup>iii</sup>

It is worth noting that she attributed her failed marriage to her physical disability, crying in her poem that "love and betrayal have been entangled for a lifetime/I allowed myself to steal and escape." Then come back with tears on my face/I bury my disability, dig it out, and then worship it in the temple or in the middle of the road/be whipped and crushed." (Relationship)<sup>iv</sup> In the relationship, because of her disability, she always puts herself in a lower position, being whipped, abused, ignored and laughed at, because the fact is that "his life is also mediocre, so mediocre that he needs to make fun of his wife. What he didn't know at that time, I had already cancelled my wife's identity."<sup>v</sup> In this marriage, because of the loss of dignity, she secretly cancelled the social attribute of "wife" in her heart, and endured the miserable marriage life in exchange for dignity in desolation.

### **Lose response in the crowd**

Yan Lianke, a famous writer who has been suffering from illness for a long time and has a strong disease complex, once said: "An unhealthy person often has a feeling of despair about life, but he often erupts a passion in despair. A person's physical resistance is weakening, but his inner and spiritual resistance must be increasing. Healthy people may not need anything against life, but the hearts of unhealthy people may always be in confrontation with something in life."<sup>vi</sup> Disabled people and healthy people have different attitudes when they encounter despair in society. They have been fighting against unfair fate in their lives, so in despair, they will even rebound from the bottom and give an account of their fate.

Writing is a private thing of dialogue with oneself, but any writer can not be separated from social factors to carry out absolute personal writing, Yu Xiuhua's poetry is a rebound to the force imposed on her by the outside world, and the life experience expressed in the poetry is also a common social dilemma of a disabled peasant woman living in the crowd at the bottom—loneliness, normal loneliness. "She saw people coming and going on the road/No one saw her/She heard them talking loudly or quietly/No one knew she heard/She counted. A man came out of the crowd and waved to her/No one knew she counted." (*A Woman on the Roof*)<sup>vii</sup> Lonely, she faces the crowd with a gesture of seeking response and reply. No one pays attention to her. She asks questions and

there is no response. In the crowd of people coming and going, she is always in the lower circle, and her existence is not even ignored, but examined. "Forty years/It has been driven back to the shallow water by bigger waves again and again/Playing with fish and shrimp/It is also good at catching the wind, the words in the wind, the snake in the cup." (*The Leaky Bottom Boat*)<sup>viii</sup> Although the villagers and she live in the same field of Hengdian Village, her disability makes her more low-level than the villagers at the bottom. Rumors and finger-pointing pass by like the wind, all of which make her more self-abased and endure loneliness and discrimination. I don't even know how to describe my relationship with my hometown in words. "My cemetery has been chosen/but the epitaph can't be written/this unclear life, how can I determine my relationship with Hengdian Village." (*Relationship*)<sup>ix</sup> She can only communicate with the rivers, clouds and plants in Hengdian Village, find poetry in the countryside, find care in poetry, be a barnyard grass in fear in spring, live in mud and write poems on clouds.

### **Lose your freedom in your hometown**

For thousands of years, "hometown" Hometown has always been a hot topic for writer, and the melancholy of homesickness of strangers is called "nostalgia". But for "Hometown" The creation of the theme, YuXiuHua and others are very different, She said she is a only hometown no hometown of people, Hometown is to leave the birth place and then look back home after a name, But YuXiuHua because of physical disease has been forever nailed in the Hengdian village, Physiological restrictions let her lost the right to have a hometown. I want to escape from my hometown and betray this village named Hengdian/But fate has left me behind again and again, guarding a broken house, old parents and a son who is slowly growing up. " (*You just need to live* )<sup>x</sup>, at the same time, she lost the right to climb up and cross the class. Originally born in the countryside, she was at the bottom. Now, because of her disability, even the bottom will abandon her. She can only stand on this land in a daze, watching the changes of the village alone and helplessly. Under the background of lonely life, she bears a different "nostalgia" from others- "My nostalgia is a sorrow that can not be melted, not a sorrow that can be alleviated by coming back from afar, not a poetic and picturesque sorrow, but a bloody sorrow." (*My Homesickness Is Different From You*)<sup>xi</sup>This is a kind of helplessness and loneliness caused by immobility based on physical disability.

After becoming famous, Yu Xiuhua finally had the conditions to leave her hometown. While the city life of debauchery was dazzling, it also made people hesitate. "After ten o'clock, the wind was stronger. I went out of the hotel and walked in one direction/I didn't know where they were/I stopped at the crossroads/neon lights, cars, pedestrian overpasses.These things without dialect/can't make me happy ." (*One Night in Beijing*)<sup>xii</sup>Physical disability and strange things merge together to aggravate her loneliness, so in the new environment, her poems appear the concept of" foreign land "and" hometown ", " At that time we were all in a foreign land: can we synthesize a hometown ." (*An Osmanthus Tree in the Drizzle*)<sup>xiii</sup>It can be seen that when she is unable to resolve her loneliness, she will turn her melancholy to the ties with others, take the initiative to find cross-connections with others, use love to cure the hardships in her heart, and increase her weight in the world, so as not to be like a rootless duckweed. This trace of homesickness in a foreign land is like a root-seeking journey of thinking. The homesickness of ordinary people is horizontal, which is the emotional fetters of a person and a group of people on

the earth, while she has vertical homesickness, which belongs only to one person and another person in the soul.

Lonely experience is considered to be "a psychological reaction to the deepening of self-consciousness of human beings when individual life is temporarily disconnected from the widely connected external world and devoted to the consideration of individual life and the meaning of life, and the sense of individuality and particularity that can not coincide with others."<sup>xiv</sup> Yu Xiuhua, a disabled wife who was scolded in her marriage, a peasant woman who spoke alone in the crowd, and a lonely and rootless duckweed in her hometown, was excluded by others because she was at the bottom. She could only pour all her lonely experiences into her poems.

## 2.CONCLUSION

Yu Xiuhua, a disabled rural woman, in the case of physical hardship, lack of freedom in marriage, and enduring social contempt and ridicule, uses poetry as a crutch to fight against the injustice on her body, writes the truth into her creation, and completes the shaping of her self-image.

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