

The Enlightenment of Beauvoir's "Femininity" Theory on the Problem of "Feminine Boy"

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Abstract

Nowadays, in the battlefield of Chinese public opinion, the battle of "Feminine Boy" has become the focus. Through Beauvoir's theory of "femininity", this paper analyzes the historical roots of masculinity and the gender binary antagonism represented by the "Feminine Boy". At the same time, it also analyzes the social shortcomings from the phenomenon of the commercialization of the "Feminine Boy" stars. Finally, the paper tries to propose feasible measures to promote diversified gender temperament and free and equal social atmosphere.

Keywords

Feminine Boy; Feminist Philosophy; Masculinity; Femininity.

1. Introduction

In early September 2018, when the school semester of Chinese primary and middle school students began in autumn, the large-scale variety show "The First Class of the New School" was officially broadcast, which triggered heated discussion among the audience. The purpose of the program is to encourage students' learning enthusiasm and confidence through artistic performances and game interaction. However, the audience expressed their resistance to the actors and guests invited by the program, saying that the male guests were "painted with powder", "no male, no female" and "lack of masculinity", and even called them "Feminine Boy". This incident has triggered the criticism and severe resistance to the issue of "Feminine Boy", led by the mainstream media [1].

"Feminine Boy" refers to the appearance and behavior of a feminine man, his appearance, gentle, with the beauty of feminine. In recent years, with the improvement of the entertainment audience's visual aesthetic requirements, in order to cater to the preferences of the audience, the entertainment industry has formed some "Feminine Boy first" ethos. "Feminine Boy" has gradually developed into very insulting words, and the labeled behavior has already entered the modern ordinary men's daily life and work, causing many boys face pressure and anxiety, even do not understand what is the true meaning of masculinity [2]. Therefore, this paper tries to use the theory of "femininity" to criticize the irrationality of the phenomenon of "Feminine Boy", and to put forward methodological suggestions on this phenomenon.

2. Literature Review

Simone de Beauvoir was a well-known feminist in the 20th century. Her classic "The Second Sex" put forward the thought of "femininity" and "women is the other", which brought reference value to the development of feminist thought. Her ideas were originated from Sartre's existential philosophy, such as the theories "existence precedes essence" and "others are hell" have had a profound influence on Beauvoir [3].

2.1. The History Origin of "Femininity"

Beauvoir pointed out that the creation of "femininity" has a long history. During the agrarian period, women enjoyed high dignity and reputation because of children in the expansion of the labor force and ethnic continuity. However, women were only the carriers of authority, and they were not profitable for themselves. After the emergence of private ownership, women became men's personal property and personal belongings. Polygamy and virgin plots were the products of the time, and many eastern societies even kept the custom of marrying widowed. In the Middle Ages of Europe, the secondary sexual status of women was also strengthened due to the influx of Christian civilization. For example, St. Paul advised women not to make public appearances, and Aquinas Thomas compared women to incomplete people. In the 15th and 19th centuries, the legal status of women failed to improve, and the social attitude towards women had been in contradiction and conflict. For example, Montesquieu felt that women should not be trapped in the family. However, Rousseau noted that a woman was "created to commit and submit to men and to tolerate his unfairness". The French Revolution did not completely change the fate of women, and the Napoleonic legal system of the 19th century aggravated the severe constraints on women. The industrial Revolution and the feminist movement in the 20th century had created a brand-new historical period for women, but their status as the "other" had not been completely improved [4].

2.2. The Function of Woman's Life for Forming the "Femininity"

At the same time, Beauvoir also examined a woman's life, intended to explain the role of a woman's life experience in forming her "femininity". In childhood, educations for girls are to adapt her to accept a woman's established destiny and realize that the whole world is ruled by men. Thus, she felt the supremacy of paternity, and all men have male prestige. During adolescence, the girls' body begin to develop and show narcissism, men dazzle her, but also make her fear and anxiety, she let herself gain beauty to attract men. During sexual initiation, the adolescent sexual experience has suddenly been significantly different from before, which is a physiological experience that comes with physical development. Women's sexual roles are mostly passive. For married women, an equal marriage may not necessarily produce love. By contrast, how to seize the husband is also an art, housewives often with a day of waiting and boredom to meet the quarrel. Therefore, it is not easy to achieve gender equality through the love between the two sexes, and the marriage system is abnormal and unreasonable from the very beginning. When a woman becomes a mother, she completes her physical destiny. Many women aspire to have sons, and cultivate them as "heroes," or outstanding people, to share in their success. The older daughter usually gets the father's preference, while the mother tries to add the woman's inherent destiny to the daughter. Therefore, motherhood fails to satisfy a woman and cannot fill the emptiness and helplessness of a dull life. As a woman grows old, she relies on her son, or devotes herself into the housework, and becomes cold [4].

2.3. The Function of Literary Works for Forming the "Femininity"

In addition, the literary works of male writers also depict femininity. Montroand was a "macho", in whom women were "twilight nights, messy and restricted existence" and men were "carnivores" and "noble princes". Pride of the male genitalia and thought of male supremacy, Lawrence was "passionately convinced of male dignity" and tried to "replace the worship of the great Mother god with the sun worship". Kdelo saw women as "the Lord's maid", saying she would be faithful to her husband, family, home country, and church, but he also saw women as the "source of evil" and "pushes men to fall". Brecon saw women as poetry and ideals, as the savior of all mankind, but he never treated women as subjects for detailed talk or study, leaving them "under the form of the 'other' again". As a "feminist", Stendhh praised the woman's natural state of affairs: simple, generous, sincere, sharp, and passionate. At the same time, he stressed that "stupid social customs have reduced women to a semi-slave state," and hated and deeply

lamented the fate of women, but he believed that "women are just mortals", not a great man crucial to human beings. To sum up, Beauvoir concluded that "in any case, the woman is the privileged other" and "is one of the man's means" [5].

Therefore, based on the existentialist view, women have no innate essence, women are formed in the "situation", and the physiological structure cannot determine its essence, the so-called "masculinity" or "femininity" with stereotypes is the inevitable consequence of the male central culture, and is the internal essence of gender binary opposition.

3. Accept Multiple Sexual Characteristics and Refuse the "Feminine Boy" Shame

3.1. The Historical Origin of Masculinity

Just like the formation process of "femininity", the formation of male masculinity also has a certain artificial composition, and people's view of whether a boy is the "Feminine Boy", the key is whether there is masculinity. In ancient Chinese culture, the mainstream of masculinity was "soft for beauty", for example, Confucianism emphasized convincing people by virtue, the gentleman should achieve the unity of moral integration; Taoism advocated the quiet, elegant, and "useless" life realm. Everything related to "force" did not conform to the mainstream aesthetic. Therefore, in ancient times, literary and artistic works focused on the depiction of ideal male images dominated by weak scholars. Until the end of the 19th century, modern Chinese intellectuals "looked to the world" in order to achieve the grand goal of saving the nation, trying to learn the modern power methods like Europe, America and Japan. However, they also absorbed the ideology and culture of racism and nationalism tendencies. Under the impact of eugenics in Europe and America, based on the concern about the backwardness of the Chinese nation, Cai'e and Liang Qichao tried to reconstruct the male body and masculinity of China with the military sports training. In early 1920, the masculinity with physical masculinity as the mainstream was officially recognized by the aesthetic mainstream. Thus, it could be seen that the question of "Feminine Boy" is the continuation of the "national degeneration theory". This logic was the "great pressure and traumatic feeling" of the Chinese people under the historical background of modern China's efforts to cope with the fierce modernization competition in the world. Later, modern China had been under the high pressure of lagging behind other countries, and this bad psychological state had gradually become a collective emotional structure and a highly physical imagination of international relations, with "backward will be beaten" as the core. For body nationalists, male masculine bodies could even be directly equated with the national prosperity and national rejuvenation. However, for people who grew up in the post-industrial age, the personality of intelligence and emotion is obviously more influenced by the changes in their professional content and life style. Today, China's large and medium-sized cities are gradually entering the post-industrial and consumer society, and China has completed the comprehensive poverty alleviation and all-round well-off society, and has held an unprecedented position in the international status. Under such a social background and under the influence of feminist thought, women's individual independence consciousness and economic ability in the new era are both enhanced, so they pay more attention to men's cooperation ability and emotional support ability in daily life. For men themselves, the intellectual and emotional personal temperament also contributes to their professional life and social life, thus, it has become their active choice. At the same time, it also has elements of consumerism: in order to make the audience constantly produce new consumption desire, consumerism needs to promote refinement and details of lifestyle, which is the most popular for the body consumption, so, "small meat", "small milk dog", actually is the expansion of business ethics and value, which also presents a highly materialized social characteristics. It is undeniable that this phenomenon also brings positive effect and innovative value to the

progress of social ideas: in this sense, the acceptance and recognition of male feminine temperament actually reflects the doubt and abandonment of traditional patriarchal consciousness; the modern male love for delicate body symbols can also be regarded as the alienation of modern national narrative and the acceptance of contemporary globalization [1]. It is concluded that masculinity based on physical strength is not the inherent aesthetic preference of the Chinese people, but is caused by development needs in a certain historical period. According to Beauvoir's existentialist view, people should not make an inherent characterization of masculinity, let alone use "Feminine Boy" to shame men, especially in the post-industrial era, where the growing demand for multigender temperament exists.

3.2. The Harm of "Feminine Boy"

What is more, "Feminine Boy" is the embodiment of gender inequality and gender binary stereotypes. It contains a dwarfing and derogatory meaning, promoting the patriarchal ideas. Compared with the "female man", it reflects the independent and strong female image, and this phenomenon exposes the traditional male aesthetic hegemony. In addition, "Feminine Boy" has become an insulting word. In fact, it is the contempt for "Feminine", hostility to gender, indicating that men unfortunately have the common flaws of women [6]. Therefore, from the perspective of gender equality, the word "Feminine Boy" not only humiliates men, but also confirms the public stereotype of women's shortcomings, such as men with "Femininity". According to Beauvoir's theory, this reflects people's view that women's intelligence and ability are inferior to men, and confirms the status of others and vassal, which is not conducive to gender equality.

However, the explosion of "Feminine Boy" stars also reflects some social shortcomings, which are worth pondering. Due to the development of fan economy and feminist concept, entertainment companies will be "Feminine Boy" star commercialization, create strength but meet the needs of women love beans, their famous just behind the purpose of the capital operation, not artistic creative strength, so, the public disappoint in it, and they present the "Feminine Boy" image. Its commercial operation is profit-oriented, only for their own fame and model acting strength, eager for overnight hot across the country. To re-examine the internal relationship between idol worship and social values, it is easy to see that idol worship is the manifestation of social values. Nowadays, minors are determined to be stars and Internet celebrities. In the final analysis, this phenomenon proves the upsurge of social earned gain, money worship, and the tendency of unfair social distribution [7]. For example, in Idol Trainee, viewers need to buy members and designated consumer goods to help her debut. In 2018, after the show hit the show, iQiyi's member sales reached 2.1 billion yuan and Nongfu Spring's online sales surged 500-fold. After L'Oreal of Paris officially announced Wang Yuan as the spokesperson of its brand image, the post was forwarded more than 10 million times, and the lipstick red number related to Wang Yuan was immediately sold out in one minute after it was launched [8]. Thus, the audience's enthusiasm for this male image and the huge commercial value brought behind it reflect the social atmosphere of putting money first. Therefore, while maintaining the image of the "Feminine Boy", people also identify the purpose of its emergence, and vigorously criticize this unhealthy trend.

4. Conclusion

According to Beauvoir's theory of "femininity", like women, the stereotype of male masculinity is also formed through a long historical process, among which there are inevitably unreasonable factors. Therefore, in a pluralistic, inclusive and free society, people should accept the pluralistic characteristics. First of all, schools should strengthen the affirmative power education of minors and break the traditional concept of male power supremacy. Equal Right means that men and women have equal social rights. However, in China's current education

system, the concept of gender equality in society started, and its development is not mature and sound. What is more, schools today still emphasize the gender stereotype of "how boys should behave, and how girls should behave". It can be seen that in gender education, only by subverting the conservative gender stereotypes and creating equal gender concepts for minors under the concept of gender-independent education can students have a harmonious situation where students respect each other and jointly promote social progress together. Second, the government departments should rationally regulate the insulting words such as "Feminine Boy". Internet users under the action of anonymous mentality, accept harmful information in the name of "freedom of public opinion", vigorously promote to increase the influence, and these negative remarks is difficult to "successful counterattack" and plagued by stereotypes. In such a background, "Feminine Boy" such insulting words emerge. Therefore, the online real-name system can encourage government departments to supervise netizens and other such inappropriate words. Finally, people apply care to understand the positive meaning of gender diversity: provide a smooth way for the formation of individual gender diversity temperament, can save individual growth resources, mobilize the enthusiasm of individual cultivation and develop gender diversity temperament, enrich the diversified talent resources, meet the desire of individual gender temperament, reduce the pain of individual self-struggle and hostile society, can fully improve the happiness index of individual and society, and achieve the social ideal of gender diversity. Therefore, people with each gender temperament should work together, coordinate and cooperate, give each gender temperament basic respect, and understand the characteristic differences of multiple gender temperament. Only in this way can gender antagonism and improper discrimination against "Feminine Boy" be eliminated, and only when the two sexes can they complement each other, respect each other, and establish a great modern socialist country with equality between men and women.

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