

A Feminist Approach to the Hours

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Abstract

The author Michael Cunningham was born in Ohio in 1952, graduated from Stanford University, and now lives in New York. It was once praised by the Los Angeles Times as "one of the most outstanding writers of our time." He won the Pulitzer Prize and Faulkner Prize for the publication of his work *The Hours*. The adapted movie of the same name also won an Oscar. Therefore, many scholars try to explain and interpret *The Hours* from different angles. The most common of these are the analysis of works and films from the aspects of gender theory, inter-subjectivity theory, bisexual homosexuality theory and the inheritance and development of Mrs. Dalloway. This thesis takes Michael Cunningham's novel *The Hours* as the research object, and the struggle of the three female images in the novel is mainly through the female subjective consciousness and female survival in the feminist perspective. The Hours of Three Women's struggle, loss, liberation and sublimation. A positive meaning of *The Hours* is that we can use this to rediscover the period from the beginning of female liberation to the present, and the call to experience feminism has returned from radical to calm and sincere thinking. In *The Hours*, the protagonist showed the initial fierce resistance and self-liberationism, while maintaining a strong individual independence, while showing strong anxiety and confusion in self-identity, this change is after In the era of feminism, after the individual seeks independence, it is difficult to seek the refraction of the emotion of identification. Loneliness.

Keywords

Feminism; *The Hours*; English Chinese Translation; Western Literature.

1. Introduction

American contemporary writer Michael Cunningham, in his novel *The Hours*, describes Mrs. Woolf and Mrs. Brown, the author of the classic consciousness novel *Mrs. Dalloway* (early named *The Hours*) And Mrs. Dalloway, who has the same name as the heroine of the novel, they are pioneers of modern feminism, confused housewives, and rebellious free women. This chapter interprets the different eras they face, the different environments and problems they face, and the longing for freedom and happiness, and the pursuit of female liberation from a feminist perspective. By demonstrating their self-exploration, Cunningham reproduced the development history of modern feminism, thereby arousing people's thinking about female issues.

2. A Feminist Approach to the dilemma of Three Women

In the works, the three protagonists have a lot in common, and they have a partner who treats them well. They seem to live a life of clothes and food without worry, but at the same time they all suffer from psychological pressure and anxiety to some extent in order to maintain their lives Long-term harmony, while suppressing disguise yourself. Virginia had her own study and bedroom to concentrate on her novels; Laura had a husband who loved her and a clever, loving son, who took good care of her while she was pregnant. Clarissa has an editorial job she loves,

a daughter, and a gay partner of 10 years, Sally. Appeared on the surface they each have their own comfortable life, they can completely Ann according to fixed pattern of life until the end of life, but they are of the day to day life showed great dissatisfaction with anxiety, like Betty had said "despite 'professional housewife now, however, if the job does not require, or do not allow women to give full play to their talents, she does not have enough self-esteem, cause she was tied to his wife, mother and daughter, and many other roles have no hiding", they "can't achieve a high level of human needs, in their own potential, can't The 'feminine mystery' is false and deceptive, a tender trap." [1] Studies conducted by psychologists on mentally healthy people also show that human beings' pursuit of truth and concern for major issues are an important feature of human mental health. The three women in the work have fallen into the "gentle trap" to varying degrees, and have the psychological crisis of not being able to realize their own life value. From another point of view, this sense of crisis is also the awakening of their self-awareness.

Therefore, Virginia wanted to escape from the care of her husband and the doctor, and constructed her own life in her novel Mrs. Dalloway, walking on the edge of fiction and reality to maintain herself. Laura has to make a birthday cake for her husband to prove her love, not just to be his caretaker. Clarissa also want to prepare for his former lover Richard victory party, with confidence to show their own strong and ability. They all realized that they were independent people who could do what they liked, and not passively dependent on men, not just as dependents of their families and husbands and acting on them. This chapter will study the plight of the three protagonists from a feminist perspective.

2.1. Woolf-Despair

As a pioneering feminist writer, Woolf was in a time when women were oppressed. In the 1920s in Europe, women were in a passive position in social and political families, and most ordinary women were in a state of habit. But Woolf had advanced thinking, so she fell into a dilemma, a spiritual imprisonment, a calm, arranged by others, and a loss of free life.

For male writers, the village represents a tradition, a pure land, and the city represents the spiritual wasteland called by T. Eliot, is degenerate and filthy.

Men no matter where they are, they always beautify the countryside in their minds. For Woolf, she loves the life of the metropolitan London. She is passionate about dancing and riding. She thinks walking in London is more interesting than strolling in the countryside. Life is a kind of imprisonment. Although rural life helps her body recover, her only wish is to reinvest in the difficulties of urban life. (Song Wen, 2006).

These words very clearly show the oppression of women by the times and society at that time. Her husband's behavior of caring for Woolf is a kind of imprisonment and repression for her. It is precisely because of these difficulties, Wool The awakening of the husband 's female consciousness, he began to think about the meaning of women, began to resist the discrimination and oppression of women, and began to fight against patriarchy.

2.2. Laura-Shackles

Laura was a housewife in the 1950s who was in the prosperity of the US economy. She apparently lived a happy life of a wealthy husband who was envied by others, but in fact, her dilemma lies in the trivial life of life. For her, this made her unable to find the meaning of her life and unable to achieve spiritual independence and prosperity.

At home, she strives to maintain her family, take care of her husband and son, and in a trivial and boring life, the spiritual world has no place to rest and is on the verge of collapse. Just like when she was reading Mrs. Dalloway, "I imagined that there might be a little bit of sparkle, but that is a little bit. Although it is very clear in my heart, most of the independent people in the

world have the similarity in hesitation. Hope, but it is like those little fists, curled up in the body and never exposed."

Even when making a cake for her husband's birthday, she needs to be nervous and collapsed because of failure. At that time, all women in the society were able to handle family affairs, and a cake was a piece of cake. It is not dissatisfaction with the cake you made, but a sense of impatience in life. Laura couldn't get rid of the family's bondage, the pain of being independent was extremely depressed, and finally she began to resist.

2.3. Clarissa-Lacerate

Clarissa is a new woman in New York at the beginning of the 21st century. The feminist movement is deeply rooted in women's hearts. Women do not have to depend on men to survive. Although she has her own same-sex partner's ability to be financially independent, such a seemingly complete life, she still has Dilemma: There is still no way to get rid of her bondage with Richard. Richard calls Clarissa as Mrs. Dalloway. Clarissa is imprisoned in this name, and there is no way to have her own life.

Clarissa is a modern career women, she is better than the former two have more space and freedom, but she is also lonely, she's pressure is the society as a whole to her, she can't get rid of the traditional concept of society, Clarissa in Virginia and Laura did not have highly life, but she stood swaying; She broke through more patriarchal barriers, but she was already covered with wounds that healed and left unfit marks. In the patriarchal society, women are the property of men. Women must obey the authority of men, obey the supervision of men, and abide by the values of men. After the three protagonists in the work realize their plight, woman's self-awareness begins to awaken, and they begin to fight against the patriarchal society. This chapter is divided into three parts, and analyzes the struggle of the three protagonists in turn from the perspective of women.

Clarissa's life was squeezed by the banquet. "She thought she was doing a good job, but it was not." To encourage Richard to survive and hold a banquet, it seems that she is forcing Richard, but in fact She was forcing herself to restrain herself but Richard eventually chose to die. She was stunned in the house, but at the moment of Richard's death, Clarissa's predicament was about to be broken. She was about to start a rebellion and release Get rid of your own freedom

3. A Feminist Approach to the Revolt of Three Women in the Hours

In patriarchal culture, women exist as the subordinate of men and belong to the "second sex". Their activities are limited to small families, and the outside affairs are taken charge of by men. In different ways, the three women express their desire to escape from the family -- the so-called "comfortable concentration camp". This kind of escape is not only to leave the family to find the space of their own talents, but also to leave the barriers of the patriarchy which has been long and deeply rooted in the history to control them.

3.1. Virginia-Resisting to Restrictions

Woolf is infested with mental illness. She writes to resist the passage of life. The novels she writes can be called her autobiography to a certain extent. She resists the vulgarity of daily life and the trouble of mental illness. Constantly surging emotions, exploring the meaning of life, writing is all her weapon, used to resist social prejudice and shackles.

Although Virginia can release the painful soul deep in her spirit in the novel, she still cannot eliminate the oppression in her heart, and cannot escape the supervision of her husband and servants. She does not want to return to the daily life in the traditional female situation. She has to obey Lenard's order as a wife, to make contact with her maid Nelly as a housewife and so on. All these social roles like confinement to her. She flees to the train station, but she has no courage to escape her duties and roles. When she returns home with Lenard, she keeps thinking

"On the other side is the train. On the other side is London, and all London implies about freedom, about kisses, about the possibilities of are and the sly dark glitter of madness." (Micheal Cunningham, 1999: 172) This dilemma between freedom in London and confinement in Richmond drives her misery and crazy. The voice from her inner side ask her to go to London and breeze the free air but her feet has not step out one step for which she has to fulfill her roles and responsibilities for her husband and her family. Therefore, she often expresses her mood through the suicide of the protagonist in the novel. "Between the suburbs and death, I choose death." (Cunningham, 1999) In this way, she struggled and fought against the patriarchy, eager to find an exit to the soul.

3.2. Laura-Facing Herself

Laura, Mrs. Brown. As a housewife, her way of fighting against confinement to seek for freedom is reading, taking care of Richard and playing a good wife. While reading Mrs. Dalloway, the restlessness hidden deep in Laura's heart was once again disturbed. The seemingly peaceful and harmonious family was just day-to-day housework, caring for her husband and children, waiting for the birth of life in her belly. Her anxiety and pain stem from the emptiness of life. The protagonist's confession in Mrs. Dalloway: "One day her life will be completely over. It will not matter whether she continues without her." (Cunningham, 1999).

This is also a question to her. Laura did not have her own career and pursuit. She began to look squarely at herself. After reading the novel, and after meeting Mrs. Dalloway, she may have received some kind of suggestion, and finally feel sad for her suppression. Looking for a breakthrough, she realized a terrible beauty-death. She decided to escape, abandon her husband and children, drive alone to the small hotel, and happily die in a space of her own. At that moment she decided that as a wife and mother she would not choose to die. She still loved life and continued to look for her lost self...

Laura was pregnant and her husband seemed to have everything planned for her. He even bought her flowers for his birthday. She did not have to celebrate her husband, who had already cooked breakfast in the morning. She is a housewife, but she can't do anything well, not even making cakes successfully. It seems that no matter what she does, she needs to rely on men, and should rely on men. Her role is wife and mother. For her, being a man's wife is everything to her, and her existence is nothing more. Because Laura lived just after World War II. The devastating effects of World War II dramatically changed the entire structure of American social relations and the American economy, with men being drafted into the military and women becoming the labor force. In the midst of extreme deprivation, women acquire skills that were previously unavailable and assume positions of authority and responsibility. But after World War II, when men went back to their jobs or new jobs, and women were fired or demoted, the husband said to the son, "You're going to be somebody and do important things." Men do the big things, and women's place is to stay at home, wife, mother, lover, and Laura is no exception. Although she had no husband or servants to "watch over" her, the tediousness of domestic life also made her sick of emptiness, so she wanted to kill herself in a hotel and make it all disappear. After a failed suicide attempt, she returned home, but after giving birth to her child, she left and found a job as a librarian in Canada to start her own independent life. Because she could not get the value of her life in the family, her time, her life not only exist for this, she also had to break through the oppression of the patriarchy.

3.3. Clarissa-Relief-from Imprisonment

Clarissa takes care of the life of Richard, a friend with AIDS, and she is busy preparing for the dinner like Mrs. Dalloway in Woolf's work, Richard is tired of this kind of scrupulousness. Live for yourself.

However, Clarissa's value and meaning of her own life all depend on Richard,

Clarissa came to his house to pick him up for the dinner, and found Richard sitting on the window sill with a smile and recalling their past time. He quoted Woolf to Leonard: "I believe no one can beat us Two are happier." Then he slid slightly out of the window and fell. Richard used a more dignified way to end his pain and let Clarissa feel relieved. She feels what has happened in the single day is too much for her to bear and feels release from the death of her ex-lover. Then she says "It's time." (Michael Cunningham, 1999:224) "Everything is ready." (Michael Cunningham, 1999:226).

Clarissa is a modern career woman, she is better than the former two have more space and freedom, but she is also lonely, she's pressure is the society as a whole to her, she can't get rid of the traditional concept of society, she buy a flower to the flower shop for yourself, don't buy the shopkeeper recommend lily, because it is a traditional symbol of purity, loyalty. The last flowers she carried were small pieces of bright and colorful flowers, which she had brought to her own room and for her former lover Richard. This is a woman of her own mind, not only in charge of her own destiny, but also in charge of the lives of men. But behind her independence lurks the anguish of "Mrs. Dalloway throwing parties to hide her silence," as Richard puts it. The inner pain could not be disguised to get rid of it, and the idea of society imposed on her was always there no matter how hard she tried. Clarissa stood at a height that Virginia and Laura did not, but she staggered; She broke through more patriarchal barriers, but she was already covered with wounds that healed and left unfit marks.

4. A Feminist Approach to The End of Three Women

In the works, the three protagonists bravely fought against the patriarchal society in the predicament. Woolf deviated from the rural tradition and yearned for the prosperous city. The frustration of Mrs. Brown in the family showed that women wanted to walk out of the claustrophobic private sphere and in the public sphere. In order to increase the visibility and influence of women, Clarissa took on the responsibility of herself and others, and experienced life in the women's own language and way. This chapter will analyze the final outcome of the struggle between the three protagonists and the patriarchal society from the perspective of feminism.

4.1. Virginia-Death

Before Virginia went for a walk, a complaint from her husband annoyed her, but soon the heroine of the novel again seized her energies. "She's dying..." Virginia said to herself, as the orderly procession of students passed behind her hinted at the passage of time, as did the flowers and plants that stirred in the breeze. Pedestrians coming down the stairs in front of her were descending from the fork on the right hand side, while she sat alone on the bench corresponding to the fork on the left, and a low column in the middle seemed to be destined to isolate her from the crowd.

Just as when Leonard ran after Virginia, he didn't know why he chose one direction of the station over the other, despite a moment's hesitation -- it was all doom and doom. The play at the station that follows undoubtedly highlights the central idea:

"It's not my duty to feed anyone else! "I have the right to choose where I live!" "It's human nature! "I'm dying in this damn place!" "The heart is sunk into the mire of endless darkness!" ... In the face of Virginia's outburst, Leonard's love and tolerance for her are touching. When the train to London comes into the station, she finally gives in -- her personality is not tolerated by the society and relatives, and can only bloom for her beloved husband. However, love can not bear her to let him bear all the pain, so she again converges and depresses herself.

At the end of the scene, Virginia dryly says, "You can't steal peace from running from life!" It is sonorous and resounding. This is both to say herself, but also to give up the suicide of Laura to

face life again, and more like a warning to the rival Louis of the appearance of the angry Clarissa - eventually, Clarissa gradually calm down, move on from the past - time has long passed, it is futile to think about.

After Woolf secretly returned to London, she found that London meant freedom, no suppression and no monitoring. But for her husband Leonard, London may collapse Woolf's spirit again, meaning death. But London is Woolf's choice. She said she chose to die between Richmond and death. She believes that training in the suburbs is just an escape from real life.

At dinner, the husband asked Woolf why someone must die in her novel. Woolf said that it was a kind of contrast, which made the living people cherish life more.

In her view, suicide is not cowardly and dare not face life. Dear Leonard, please face life directly, please face life forever, love his essence, and then let go of it. Years later, this soul, who had an insight into the world and was suspicious of life, wrote the suicide note full of passion and love before foretelling that the spirit was about to collapse. "She almost subconsciously walked in the water, stumbled, and was dragged by the stone into the water." (Cunningham, 1999).

4.2. Laura-Relief

Laura realized that life had more significance than death. Before going to sleep at night, she made a decision, a decision more difficult than death: to leave. After the birth of the second child, she will travel far away to pursue her own life. "Besides my husband, children, and family, I want more things." (Betty Friedan 1989) Women of that era had the power of employment and election, but because of the voluntary withdrawal of the patriarchal education In order to contact and compete with society, return to the family and become one family angel after another.

Laura knew that leaving her home and traveling far away would bring her infamy, and the family who loved her would be hurt as a result. However, she had no choice. Laura eventually traveled to Canada to work in a library. The woman who loved reading, which was once called "my bookworm" by her husband, finally found her home. In the male-dominated society, women have to please men by behaving follows the patriarchal standards and values. The only way to rid of control of men is to get independent in fiance. Laura unwilling and fails to be a good housewife. Affected by the spirits and feminist consciousness of Mrs. Dalloway created by Virginia, Laura desperately wants to change her life as an incompetent wife and mother. She'd rather be criticized by others for abandoning her children and husband than putting up with a role as a subject and the other in the male-dominated family. She follows her heart to do what she likes and lives independent life all alone. All in all, her struggle and compromise with her role of the other renders her suffers a painful life for she never jumps out of the control of the patriarchy.

4.3. Clarissa-Awakening

At the end of the novel, the three leading lady has been calm in the face to face with life, those who stray and pain already does not exist, although different - Laura chose to stay away from personal choice, Virginia chose death, Clarissa is chose to accept, but in the end they all must realize the meaning of life by the dialectical philosophy, to re-examine their own choice, Clarissa by listening to Laura's heart monologue, and Laura is a departure from the family for many years after the return to the kind of warm feeling when struck by (in fact these two characters to different choice of life in some perspective is just what each other after the cause of the pain and regret), They see commonalities in each other's choices. Virginia, on the other hand, is living through his own transcendence, which may be regarded as a mental illness by others, but is actually a different life (his sister once says to her in the film: he has two lives, one is in reality, and the other is in his novels). As Laura says, "What's the point of regret?" "That's what I can afford." At the time, it was the only option. No matter which kind of life you choose, pain will

always exist, but happiness will always be a moment. (Clarissa also said: I thought at that time, this is the beginning of happiness. I did not expect, this is happiness, happiness is in the moment), they can do is to face up to everything, do not escape from life. Everything is just like Virginia said at the end of the film, after understanding the truth and then abandon. I don't think the abandonment here is the denial of all values, but the abandonment of the chains around and within oneself. It is also a release (albeit an undesirable one) for others, even through death. At this time, no matter which choice has been calm.

In the dinner after Richard committed suicide, his mother Laura, who had run away from home many years ago, was present. Laura explained to Clarissa that she was well aware of the consequences of her departure, but it was all due to her nature and she could not go against it. She chose to face her own nature and chose to bear the condemnation of conscience. This also comforted Clarissa. No one called her Mrs. Dalloway, she could finally regain her self and embrace life.

Clarissa returned to the bedroom, it was time to end the day, and she felt inexplicably relaxed in her heart.

At this moment, Clarissa really wanted to be Louis, to be a strange personality, unfaithful, unscrupulous, wandering the streets all day long. (Michael Cunningham, 2003).

She could finally face life with a smile, and found that it was not only when she was with Richard that she was full of energy. Get rid of the responsibility imposed on yourself, and like Laura, find a place to fly freely.

5. Conclusion

Huge achievements have been made in writing and film all the time. Since its publication in 1999, it has been studied by many experts and scholars for its literary value. This article focuses on the analysis of the three keywords of feminist culture to interpret the female images in the works. The patriarchal society's suppression of women and the suppression of female living conditions have led to the awakening and resistance of female self-consciousness.

Woolf, an independent and outstanding feminist writer in the countryside was suffocated by silence and suffocation, and the desire for urban life and freedom, the resistance to patriarchy, made her choose between rural life and death. He did not hesitate to choose death; Laura housewife, Little Bookworm, in order to pursue her own independent and free life, regardless of external abuse and harm to her family, finally chose to give birth to a second child Going to Canada alone to live a lonely but free life; Clarissa is an independent woman in the 21st century, but she is bound by her ex-boyfriend and is busy preparing dinner and caring for Richard. After Richard jumped downstairs and died, she finally Freed yourself and gained freedom.

The three female resistance to patriarchy at all times. Although they have no way to change their situation and their living conditions, their efforts have stimulated people's reflection on the development of modern feminism and caused people's ultimate goal of feminism. Virginia drowns herself to death and gets free forever. But in fact, death itself is a tragedy and It means the termination of fighting. Laura abandons her family and get rid of the trivial thing, but she lives solitary all her life and despised and hated be every one. Her way to pursuing the freedom costs too much which makes her as a lost image. Clarissa achieves her awakening and ideologically independence by her ex-boyfriend's death, but she has dropped into another predicament for her role of the other has never changed. All in all, a pioneer of modern feminism, a lost housewife and a rebellious free female. Although they live in different ages and places and face different situation and difficulties, they could never really achieve their true happiness and freedom for their halfway feminist consciousness and the ingrained patriarchy system.

Through the detailed interpretation of their lost images, we can conclude that even they strive to fight for their happiness, independence and freedom, but they will never succeed for their feminist consciousness is not destructive and thorough under that patriarchy society. Although they haven't change their situations and their role of being the other completely and successfully, the courage and efforts they have made to fight against the patriarchy, fight for their liberation could never be forgotten, which inspire the followers to keep struggling. We can learn the lesson of the failure, look ahead and continue to accomplish our goal of female's liberation. By analysis of feminism novels, usually the author is defined as a distinct femininity and the images of attempts to start from their own desires, they also usually for a specific female readers, with a variety of classic psychological analysis to illustrate the operation of the text, this is a kind of adventure, with limitations it indirectly hindered the breadth and depth to search on the theme of the novel. Feminists in the works, if only through the expression of women in social life is frustrated to express his disappointment for men, with bold masterpieces and taboo, or deliberate defiance of pornography and the boundaries of art, as their women's declaration of independence, then sank into the pure writing for fight, to prove and demonstrate cycle.

In this hard and alienated world, women can refuse to dance and silence loneliness. But should not cease to pursue care and love; Even if there is no need to appeal to worldly approval, not false to the man's love and benevolence, but should not stop a tender look; Once upon a time, men and women, across the bank eye wave circulation, or people behind the hands inadvertently light, they have been enchanted. Even if the woman himself, it is difficult to give up the pure graceful amorous feelings, the woman is doomed to be beautiful, love is doomed to be everlasting, the woman's world needs calm introspection at the same time, but also the real attention of the male world.

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