

A Summary of the Image of Bloom in Ulysses

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Abstract: Bloom is the main character in Ulysses. It has been more than 20 years since Ulysses was introduced into China. The research on Bloom in China's academic circle includes text-based research, living style research, comparative literature research, Mythology Prototype Research, new nationalism research, Wanderer research and so on. This paper attempts to review and sort out the research results of Bloom's image for reference and enlighten the future research direction. "Ulysses" is a long-length stream of consciousness novel created by Irish writer James Joyce and published in 1922, known as "The pinnacle of stream of consciousness novel", "The greatest novel of the century". However, due to the suspicions set by Joyce in his book, and the artistic technique of the stream of consciousness, it is difficult to understand, and the comparison with "Odyssey" in "Homer Epic" has also deepened its complexity and profoundness, so it has also been ridiculously referred to as the "Book of Heaven". The main characters in Bloom's book have triggered people's all kinds of interpretations, so that Ireland's annual June 16th is called "Bloom Day" to commemorate this great artistic creation. The study of Bloom's image is an important part of the study of "Ulysses", and it is of unique significance for us to understand Ulysses, a Greek figure in modern extensions and thinking about the future of the nation. This article will review and refine the current research on Bloom's image in China, and try to provide inspiration for the future research on the character's image.

1. Text-based research

Because there is no complete translation of Ulysses, the study of this book is rare, and the acceptance of literary criticism theory in China will take some time. Therefore, the earliest scholars did not start to analyze Bloom's character image from the comparison with Greek Ulysses, but from the text. The views on Bloom's image during this period can be roughly divided into two categories. One is that he is mediocre, ineffective, weak and incompetent mediocre. Bloom's occupation is advertising salesman, which is a very ordinary job. His daily life can also be described as boring and mediocre, and even wretched. He wakes up in the morning to prepare breakfast for his wife and brings it to the bedroom, and he even don't dare to tell the letter from his wife's lover. But he also has a good side in human nature. He is kind and sincere, caring for the family of the deceased, helping drunk and troubled Stephen out of embarrassment, understanding his wife's hardship, defending the Jews at a critical moment, etc. Of course, the research at this time also paid attention to the comparative relationship between Bloom and Ulysses, but simply regarded Bloom as a contrast, completely another kind of character.

The second view is that Bloom is an ordinary person with a true and complete personality. First of all, he was a pitiful and sad man. His father committed suicide due to a failed career, his son died unfortunately, his daughter was not around, and his wife was not loyal to him. And although he rushes about outside every day, there is little achievement in his career, and the consciousness of anxiety and trouble often pops out of his mind. On the other hand, he is also a kind and kind middle-aged person. He helps blind people cross the street, donates money, and helps Stephen who was beaten by British soldiers, debates with racist "citizens" and so on, which also reflect his beautiful qualities. Of course, there is a vulgar and frivolous aspect in his character. Watching the

buttocks and masturbation of the maid in the neighbor's house, and thinking that "The Fun of Cheating" is a good book, exposed it completely to the readers.

These two views have their own internal consistency—both affirm the versatility of Bloom's character. However, the former focuses on expressing the collapse of Western civilization, so it focuses on describing Bloom's vulgarism; the latter focuses on expressing the truth of art, so ordinary people are the focus of analysis. This text-based interpretation laid the tone for later character research.

2. Character-based Research

Hu Yuan pointed out Joyce's "non-heroic" tendency in characterization in the article "Puzzling and Exploring the Way of Human Survival-A Preliminary Study of Joyce <Ulysses> Character Image", which expresses her thoughts about the way of human existence. Hu Yuan believes that Bloom reflects the confusion, helplessness and lowliness of the ordinary people living in the prosperous city. Bloom, an advertising contractor, is in reality oppressed by both vision and family. He can only restrain and endure the social environment that discriminates against the Jews and the run of the Catholic Church, and maintains his self-esteem with fantasy. He has the justice, kindness and enthusiasm of ordinary people. He also hopes to end the struggle, lust and ambition. He sympathized with and supported the Irish National Independence Movement. He saw political greed, jealousy, inequality and religious hypocrisy, but he was unable to change. In the novel, Bloom fantasizes about being king, and implementing new programs is actually a fantasy. Bloom only fulfilled his ideals in fantasy, and did not pay no action for it. Of course, this is restricted to a certain extent by the actual environment—Ireland's suffocating, stagnant social reality does not provide Bloom with the possibility of action. On the other hand, Bloom's inaction is inseparable from his own gloomy mentality and inferiority mentality. He has no motivation and courage to fight, and can only use the timid and humble reason to maintain the life without expectation and adventure. Bloom's life is left with repetition and monotony without conflicts and transitions, and with mediocre, invariant inertia. He has no way to defeat his subjective world, nor has the ability and courage to change the objective world. He can only do a humble roam in a tragic life. Therefore, Bloom is not even an "anti-hero", but an authentic non-heroic marginal.

Some scholars have studied Bloom from the perspective of comparative literature. Comparative literature refers to the process of the interaction between two or more national literatures. As a discipline, it emerged in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Taking care of the image of Bloom from the perspective of comparative literature, Hu Yuan believes in "The Hamlet of the Twentieth Century-Comparison of Character Images of <Ulysses> and <Hamlet>", Bloom's spiritual roaming and Hamlet's thinking and exploration have internal consistency, although they are impregnated with different era characteristics and have their own tragic personalities. The image of Bloom is the extension of image of "Hamlet" in the twentieth century. He was so weak and incompetent, and seemed completely missed from the handsome prince Hamlet; but Bloom's spiritual essence is a typical "hamlet", and his roaming in Dublin is actually a spiritual roaming. Bloom spent a day wandering in Dublin, thinking about the meaning of life and the destiny of mankind. Like Hamlet, the conflict between ideal and reality caused Bloom's melancholy. He longed for a society in which everyone is equal and happy, but the society in reality is in ruins. In addition, Bloom often thinks about the meaning and value of life, just like Hamlet's "survival or destruction?" , "But that's all. I used to live. Goodbye." Despite the illusions, Bloom, who is a marginal person of reality, has not given up the ideal of life "regardless of religion, belief and class", nor has he let go of his wife ' s emotions; despite his indecision, inaction, and cowardice in front of reality, Bloom did not give up the pursuit of love. But Bloom and Hamlet are also different, one is cowardly and incompetent, self-violent and self-abandoned, the other is heroic and decisive and completes revenge; the task of the times they face is different from the real situation, and Bloom ' s own characteristics of marginal people—only being able to roam in the spiritual world, self-deception, self-consolation,

inferiority, etc. are all different from Hamlet. Bloom, a marginal people in modern society, has both a kind and pure side, and a vulgar side in his heart. The repression of reality and his own humbleness suffocated his spiritual pursuit and ideal light, making his struggle and confusion in life inevitably branded with tragedy. So he is a great man in spirit, a mediocre in reality.

Yu Honeying's article "Interpretation of" *The Book of Heaven <Ulysses>* believes that Bloom is a person with good wishes and modern consciousness, and shows the spirit of people who develop themselves and pursue happiness. Bloom forgives the derailed wife, funerals for dead friends and helps the blind to cross the road and so on reflect his virtue of tolerance and introspection. This virtue shows the genetic code of the Irish nation, and it also shows the author's affirmation of people, especially ordinary people, and his approval of the marginal people's pursuit of a happy and beautiful life. On the other hand, Bloom still suffers from personal pain and social suffering. Under such circumstances, Bloom still ushered in the possibility of rebuilding the family with his own virtue, thereby seeking mutual tolerance and development of humanity. Bloom's shortcomings reflect the complex emotions of the author's love and hatred of his own nationality, and also make Bloom, a character with multiple facets, more abundant and three-dimensional. Bloom is a loser and a marginal person in the daily lives of all living beings, and a bright color in the reality of being damaged and insulted. The author portrayed the image of ordinary people with flesh, reason and irrationality in a frank style, and also expanded the vast world for Ulysses in describing the real "people" in life. In addition, Bloom thought in the cemetery: "If buried vertically, then it can save the place." "The botanical garden is nearby. Blood seeps into the soil and breeds new life." "People can live alone all their lives. Really, it is possible. They can even dig graves for themselves, but after death, we must rely on others to cover the soil. Everyone is the same. "After the death, there is another world called Yin Si Hell. I don't like the other division, she said in her letter. I don't like it either. There are so many things to see, to listen, to feel. There is a warm life around... a warm blanket: a warm, bloody life. "The above revealed that he cares about the living environment and interpersonal relationships, and seeks personal value and meaning in life. Joyce completed the description of Bloom's trivial life. The creation of Bloom's image shows the important connotation of paying attention to human development and affirming human spirit.

3. Research on the vision of mythological prototype

Just as the "New Anglo-American Criticism" was questioned and criticized by the literary and critical circles for its one-sidedness and narrowness, mythical prototype criticism came into being. This school originated from the rise of the Cambridge School of Classical Studies in Britain at the beginning of this century, and became the pinnacle in the book "Anatomy of Criticism" by Canadian literary critic Northrop Frye. Frye believes that myth is "a world of total metaphor", and literature is "shifted myth". Mythical prototype criticism came to the stage of history, and then combined with the study of Bloom's image, produced a new explanation.

First, scholars believe that Bloom is the hero of anti-Catholicism and British colonialism, and is also a neurotic personality with inferiority and falsehood. Bloom's prototype is the ancient Greek hero Odysseus, which is academically recognized. Since Bloom is a character, he inevitably has the characteristics of Odysseus, which is reflected in two points, one is a hero, and the other is a two-sidedness. Bloom, as a Jewish Irishman, deeply hated the repression and control of the spirit and body of the Catholic Church, and also worked hard to fight British colonialism, "In a day that is not too far away. The autonomous sun rises from the northwest "The ancient hero Odysseus we have seen is always worried and stable. He is as proud as a god and polite as a humble gentleman, and he conquers the world. This is the inherent duality of human beings: both weak and unreliable, low self-esteem, cowardly, and self-confident, arrogant and shameless. Ulysses in modern society formed under the control of atheism inferiority complex and false personality of neurosis. The scholar's discussion on this point is not very detailed.

The second is to regard Bloom as a modern person looking for a lost self, showing the connotation of self-alienation and humanity return. Yu Qing believed that Odysseus was the first

hero in Western literature to alienate and return to his true nature. Odysseus In his ten years of adventure at sea, Sri Lanka resisted the dangers and temptations of the outside world, and purified his instincts. He eventually had to return to his hometown. After returning home, he wiped out the strangers and eventually lived a peaceful and happy life. In the 20th century, Bloom experienced a journey of thought and consciousness in a day of wandering in Dublin, and gradually recovered his feelings and self-confidence as a man, husband and father. Of course, the premise of this interpretation is to consider Odysseus as a multi-layered and complex hero. From this perspective, this interpretation is very progressive.

4. The new growth point of Bloom image research

On the basis of affirming the character attributes of Bloom's anti-heroes, Guo Jun further extended in the article "Anti-heroes: Deconstructed Power and the Future of the Nation-- Interpreting the Image of the Protagonist Bloom" that Joyce's shaping of such anti-heroes is indeed indicative of new nationalism. Compared with its prototype, Bloom is completely an anti-hero, and this is the character that Joyce wants to shape and portray. This alternative image created the effect of defamiliarization. Joyce did not use praise or sensational tone when describing this mixed character. Instead, he calmly analyzed, sharply criticized, and mercilessly ridiculed, thus opening up space for spiritual liberation. Joyce created a grotesque perspective for us to interpret Bloom through Bloom's stream of consciousness and self-talk, thus showing the deconstructive power of this character. Some of his words seem to be scattered and disorderly, but a little scrutiny and combination will have a subversive effect.

The reason why Bloom has this deconstruction power is because he survives in the "crack". Guo Jun analyzed from the aspects of religion, emotion and gender. As a unique presence in Ireland, Bloom brought confusion and shock to his compatriots. While he could not break through the current status, it also brought a potential threat to the current status. He has a cowardly side, but it also symbolizes the future, hope and redemption, and represents the state of "whole person" that is not completely divided, such as gratitude and reason, body and spirit. It is precisely because of the mixed identity given by Joyce that he can seek a space in the real environment and walk outside all localities with fixed borders, explore the possibility of completing the construction of a new world in outer space . Where is the new world? Perhaps it is the "bloom version of utopia" written in the book, which is "the promised land of God." In this utopian concept, there is a mixture of yearning for utopian socialism and hopes for specific context reform in Ireland. But Bloom's journey is to destroy and deconstruct the stereotype all the way at the conceptual and ideological level. Only by destroying the old world can we better construct the new world. Therefore, in the eyes of scholars, Bloom ultimately represents both Joyce's new nationalism and new universalism.

Some scholars have studied Bloom's image from the perspective of a rogue. The wanderer is a popular discourse of literary research and ideological criticism. It originated from the protagonist in the novel "Abnormality" (1884) by Simmans. So far, in ancient and modern, Chinese and foreign literary tradition, the image of the wanderer is consistent, but the wanderer in the modern sense is proposed by Benjamin. When studying Portler's poems, Benjamin believes that Portler acts as a wanderer in the city of Paris, and Paris is Paris in the eyes of wanderers. Tian Dan introduced the concept of rogues to his research on Bloom, and believed that Bloom is the image of a rogue in Dublin. Unlike Baudelaire's calmness, Bloom's wandering is full of helplessness. His Jewish identity made him bear the pressure of survival and the mockery of others. The busy life of the salesman, the trauma of the middle-aged bereavement, and the humbleness of his wife Hongxing out of the wall all make him helplessly wandering on the edge of Dublin society. Joyce, through his rapidly changing and endless stream of consciousness, brought readers a repressed, paralyzed, disintegrated, and extremely nationalist Dublin. Bloom's wandering in the dead streets set off the paralyzed, ignorant mental state and life fantasy.

Starting from the concept of "other", Shen Fuying proposed that the "other" in "Ulysses" is the other who shares the logic of "other" with the mainstream, which typically reflects people's

recognition of the problem of the other in that era: The identities of the other and the mainstream self can be interchanged. The other will not only vilify the mainstream ethnic group who regards it as the other, but also vilify and persecute the weaker ethnic groups with their identity as the mainstream forces. Such ugly and persecuted practices and logic are absurd, and all stem from people's exclusive identification with national ideas. The author believes that there is still room for digging into Bloom research from this angle.

5. Conclusion

The study of Bloom's image has always been the main focus of the study of "Ulysses". Scholars have used various perspectives such as text analysis, survival methods, comparative literature, mythological archetypes, new nationalism, "wanderers" to look after Bloom. This character, in the collision with other disciplines and the background of the times, presents a pattern of characters matching it. The mediocre theory, the heroic theory, and the complex theory all have their reasonable limits. When talking about this novel with his friend Frank Badgen, Joyce once said: Odysseus is both a son and father, a husband and a lover, and he has both strengths and shortcomings; he is a comprehensive person and can be found from various aspects of life, Bloom is just such a person. In fact, Joyce has reminded readers that they should take a comprehensive look at the complex figure of Bloom. Today is a pluralistic era of cultural criticism. We can interpret Bloom's character at different levels, especially looking at the artistic creation of the last century with modern eyes, which is not only conducive to promoting the research of Bloom's character, and has unique significance for the development of modern times.

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