

To explore the construction of housewife image from the perspective of Chinese feminism through critical discourse analysis

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Abstract:

In view of the status quo of feminism and women research in China, we will focus on the group of “housewives”, who are easy to be ignored and are often regarded as typical examples of women attached to their husbands and families. But I think there is some misunderstanding. In the traditional female point of view, housewives are not financially independent, around the family all day, or even spiritually rich, not “independent women”. But isn’t there an element of self-selection involved? In my topic, through critical discourse analysis to understand the construction of housewives from the perspective of Chinese feminism, so as to explore the “self-value” in the housewife group.

Keywords: Critical discourse analysis; Chinese feminism; Housewife; Independent female

1. Introduction

According to the article “Foreign Scholars on the Study of Chinese Women and Gender” in China Social Science Network, the western study of Chinese women was produced in the climax of the feminist movement in the early 1970s, and in recent years, Chinese scholars overseas have increasingly become a new force in this field. In the period of reform and opening up, due to the increasing channels of understanding China, the studies of Chinese women in the 1970s and the author of the relationship between the Chinese revolution and Chinese

women’s liberation, and tend to talk about Chinese women as a whole; the writings in the 1990s turn to the diversity of Chinese society, the meaning of social gender discourse, the relationship with the country, modernization and nationalism. The academic research of domestic feminism is not satisfied with the description of the phenomenon, but deeply explores its meaning, that is, the meaning behind the phenomenon or the action contest of social forces and various interests. Each study explores the meaning of a particular phenomenon, trying to break down with some habitual concepts and assumptions. Compared with domestic, the most prominent feature of

foreign Chinese women's research is: gender is the core analysis category.

According to the review of "Chinese Family Research: Forum on Current Situation, Problems and Prospect", I know that there are not enough journals and platforms to publish professional papers on family and marriage in China, so the academic development space is insufficient and the research team is weak. Family research seems to have fallen into a certain bottleneck stage of development, has been free in the edge of sociology, in a tepid state, unable to make satisfactory answers to the challenges and problems of modernity encountered by the family. Housewomen are in an awkward position, and professional research is rare. According to the article "Research on Female Image in Domestic Family Ethics Drama (2012-2021)", it is learned that the rise of female economy has become a feature of The Times. In order to attract female audiences, family ethics dramas tend to focus on describing and writing female images. The more focused on the portrayal of female images, the more and more show the plight and growth of women, with a strong femininity. There must be some of them.

Through literature retrieval, foreign scholars on the issue of housewife discuss more detailed, but focus on groups and domestic scholars, eventually, there is some differences, foreign scholars pay more attention to the white housewife group, economic strength is located in the upper class, domestic scholars also discuss the upper women; family problems, but in general, both for the lower class housewife survival and choice problem is generally neglected, in the media, film and television is certain involved, but the related literature is less. There is still a lot of room for the discussion of housewives.

2. Research problem

According to the domestic feminist view and the image construction of housewives, we investigate and study the social phenomena and related books, combined with their own understanding, to explore the incompleteness of the housewife image under feminism, and explore the female independent value of the housewife group. To explore the image construction of housewife by critical discourse analysis method, explore the "self-worth" in the housewife group.

3. Research method

Critical discourse analysis method, supplemented by case analysis. Analysis of specific text literature, combined with personal understanding, and social reality. In-depth analysis of domestic feminist viewpoints, summarize the

image of housewives, and show the image of housewives from a more complete perspective of criticism.

4. Analysis of household women's image from the perspective of women

4.1 The living status of domestic women and the image construction of social media for this group.

The image of housewife in modern society is a very common to describe women's pronoun, that for housewife, in fact, from the perspective of the survival situation there are still a lot of things worth discussing. A woman who focuses on her family, without a side job, has negligible income or has no income, which leads to incompatible with modern society, which is not "independent" economically. At the same time, the survival situation is not optimistic, on the one hand, their own sense of self may be insufficient, on the other hand, the public opinion pressure is greater. Some policies, such as child-care subsidies, treat housewives as vulnerable groups and passive recipients. Although they provide welfare and support, they ignore the contribution of housewives' unpaid work to the society and deny the participation in the society.

In many social media, housewives are a group that is neglected and forgotten. What do you think? In fact, it is not divorced from the economic status and women themselves. Without an independent income, it is regarded as a "tool man" attached to the patriarchal families. From the myth of Nu Wa mending the sky, the distant times also had a female glory, but soon became a patriarchal society, even in today's modern society. Women are subconsciously regarded as "vulnerable groups", which has shown the implicit meaning of "secondary sex".

4.2 Contemporary public opinion status and social atmosphere for housewives.

The discussion of housewives has always been hot, which cannot be separated from the discussion of feminism. From the late 19th century to the beginning of the 20th century was the first wave of feminism, mainly demanding equality of rights; the second wave occurred in the 1960s to the 1980s, mainly emphasizing the uniqueness and superiority of women different from men, and the third wave from the 1980s, which began to rise to the proposition of "liberation of people", and the field of movement gradually expanded. The feminist movement criticizes the traditional gender roles, advocates gender equality, and wants to rebuild the image of housewives. These discourse has challenged the traditional authority, but also raised new

possibilities, and called for the independence and liberation of housewives themselves.

In many film and television works have also shaped a typical image of a housewife. Bree in *Desperate Housewives* is a classic example of family loving, good at cooking and glossy. Such an image is stereotyped as a “good wife and a good mother”, which also represents the public’s general expectation for housewives. However, such construction ignores the individual needs and diversity of housewives. They only belong to the family and only contribute to the family, and their external development has nothing to do with them, which obviously have a narrow and shallow understanding.

There are also some films and television works that reflect the new pursuit of modern women, the conflict between career and family, and the typical example of a housewife’s desire to integrate into the society. For example, Claire in *Modern Family*, who was originally a full-time housewife, but she ended up in charge of the family business. Such a woman shows the multiple choices of modern housewives and the desire to balance her career and family.

4.3 Housewives face the self-choice of family and career.

In many cultures, housewives are seen as the primary caregiver of the family, assuming the role of domestic work in a patriarchal society. In Asia and the Middle East, women are expected to assume household chores and childcare responsibilities. However, with the improvement of women’s education level and the enhancement of gender equality awareness, more and more women focus on the pursuit of career.

Many women choose between family and career based on the family life cycle, such as the child’s growth stage. However, there are other hidden problems. Although we can flexibly deal with the employment problem, the income and re-adaptation problems caused by career interruption still have a great impact. If you have a good family foundation and a certain knowledge reserve, women in the new era tend to choose to realize their self-worth in their career before getting married and having children.

5. Expected outlook.

In China, with the rapid development of social economy and the gradual enhancement of the awareness of gender equality, there will be a more comprehensive definition of the group of “housewives”. Breaking the general view of the cognition of this group will be reexamined, and the positive side of women’s independence and liberation will be explored in the group of “housewives”.

People need to pay more attention to the survival of contemporary women and women’s own choice. Instead of thinking about the phenomenon of women’s return to family from the background of the family or traditional patriarchal system, instead of thinking about the dominant position of self in return to the family from the perspective of women themselves. Recognition of unpaid labor and economic policy support will redefine the value of a housewife’s personal labor.

At the same time, housewives may also have psychological problems in long-term labor and estrangement from the outside world. Future research can also go deep into the psychological space to explore the obstacles of this group and put forward effective intervention measures. The status of women in the family is not from the family needs women to understand, but from the perspective of women choosing the family. The family is chosen, and a woman with independent self-awareness chooses the family by herself.

The future study of housewives from the perspective of Chinese feminism will pay more attention to diversified and interdisciplinary research, and through critical discourse analysis and practical analysis to promote the understanding of housewives, and promote gender equality and female empowerment. At the same time, the research should combine the Chinese cultural and social background, put forward solutions with local characteristics, and contribute Chinese wisdom to the research of global feminism.

6. Conclusion

Through the critical discourse analysis, there are many factors behind the image construction of housewives. Traditional discourse, through media, policy and education channels, defines housewives as “good wives and good mothers”, ignoring their individual upward space. However, feminist discourse and other rebellious discourse are challenging this traditional image construction, proposing more equal and diverse images of housewives. Through studying this topic, we can understand the living status of housewives and their deeper role thinking.

Under the development of the new era, both society and women in progress, the pursuit of personal value is more and more become a consensus, women in women still place, the future for its discussion will be more and more diversified, whether choose family, or eventually to society, they are as an independent individual to choose, rather than the so-called family attachment.

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