An Analysis Of Feminism In The American Drama *Game Of Thrones*

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Baohua Yang*, Caiyun Dong
School of Media and Technology, Liaocheng University, Liaocheng, China
*Corresponding author, e-mail: yangbh@163.com

Abstract

As popular culture, the interpretation and performance of gender image and discourse in films and television dramas have a subtle influence on the general public, which gradually builds up gender values and norms in the whole society. The TV drama "*Game of Thrones*" is set in the historical background of medieval Europe, but the content is separated from the social landscape of the medieval society under the feudal system at that time, giving women a higher status, which is obviously deeply influenced by modern culture. This paper looks at the female characters of *Game of Thrones* and examines the strong feminist aspects of the show.

Keywords

"Game of Thrones"; Feminism; Medievalism

Introduction

The television series *Game of Thrones* is a major fantasy television series filmed and produced by HBO, based on the original novel A Song of Ice and Fire by George R.R. Martin, the show is about the constant struggle of several powers in the continent of Westeros and their struggle against the White Walkers. Since its premiere in 2011, it has been loved by millions of fans around the world and its plot direction has always been on the minds of fans.The final season of *Game of Thrones* has aired in 2019 and the fates of the various characters have been settled. In this struggle full of violence and intrigue, there are several women who have left a deep impression on the audience, and this article will start with the female characters of *Game of Thrones* and analyze the strong feminist color of the show.

The Medieval Background of the American Drama *Game of Thrones* and the Conflict of Female Power

The primogeniture system, the knighthood system, the feudal system of dividing the nobility... all this implies that although *Game of Thrones* is an overhead history, its setting is actually based on medieval Europe, the Middle Ages or the early Middle Ages is commonly called the "Dark Ages" in Europe and America, which is traditionally considered to be a slow period in the history of European civilization:feudalism brings frequent wars and stagnation of technology and productivity, which is compatible with *Game of Thrones* warfare conflicts.In the Bible, from the beginning of mankind, the male is regarded as the first sex and the female as the second sex, and the status of women is lower than that of men. In the story of "Adam and Eve," Adam's sin was caused by Eve, and Eve was transformed from a piece of Adam's rib, so Christianity believes that women are subordinate to men and should bear the primary responsibility for original sin, so in medieval Europe, women's status has always been more limited, medieval Europe has always been a male-dominated society.

Created in a medieval setting, *Game of Thrones* amplifies women's sense of individuality and power,in the first season, this consciousness is not very obvious, several major nobles are all dominated by men, and women have no voice, including the female dragon mother Daenerys obeyed her brother Viserys, and was given as an object to Khal Drogo in exchange for power, and Sansa at this time It's also just a little girl who wants to marry a prince. However, as the story progresses, and the power changes, women rise to the top of the hierarchy, and by the end of the story, King's Landing, the North, Highgarden, Dorne, and the Targaryens are all dominated by women as the "eldest" of their families. All these are in conflict with the medieval setting. Obviously, this is the result of the creator's careful and intentional setting, combining his own awareness of women's power and consciousness with the medieval background, colliding new sparks in a special combination, giving the audience an unexpected psychological experience.

Specific character embodiments of female consciousness in *Game of Thrones*

The Ambitious Female Politician—Cersei Lannister

Cersei's feminine consciousness awakens early in the play, when she dares to enter the witch's chamber at the age of 13 to ask her fate, but her main goal is to marry the prince and become queen.However, after becoming queen, she gradually lost her psychological attachment to King Robert in the face of his indifference and disrespect, and after the tragic death of the king and

his children, she became king on the Iron Throne. Cersei has always been ambitious, but she has been suppressed as a woman, first by King Robert, then by her own father, Tywin Lannister, who became the King's Hand after Robert's death and gave her in marriage to the Prince of Highgarden at will,Cersei raged at her father as the Empress, but it was the only thing she could do to resist. And then even after being king, she was forced to take on Yoron Greyjoy to defend herself against foreign enemies.It could be argued that although Cersei has a strong sense of femininity and power and has single-handedly ascended to the Iron Throne, she has always been shrouded in the shadow of male power, but as one of the show's earliest incipients of femininity and has only fallen from the top of the heap in the last two episodes, Cersei Lannister deserves to be the soul of feminism in the show.

The Restless Highgarden Rose—Margaery Tyrell

The Queen of Thorns and Margaery are very different from the other female characters in the play, the Queen of Thorns and Margaery are the mother and daughter of Duke Mace Tyrell of Highgarden, the Tyrells are very large and wealthy, their territory of Highgarden is also the richest region in Westeros, so later on Duke Tywin also wants to marry them to gain great wealth, the word of Tyrells' house is "Growing Strong", the Queen of Thorns once spat her house word was too silly, she was not satisfied with the wealth she possessed and was determined to reach the pinnacle of power, and the current Duke of Tyrell, her son, was a weak man, while her grandson, the Knight of Flowers, loves men and is devoted to Prince Renly, the only member of the family who shared her ambition was her granddaughter, Margaery, and together they had once reached the pinnacle of power, controlling the king.If things had gone their normal course, they would have led the Tyrells to the Iron Throne, but they were up against the unconventional Cersei, who buried all the Tyrells' hopes in a fire. The two women of House Tyrell are the representatives of the "high intelligence" of the women in the play, the other female characters have all gone through trials and tribulations and grown up step by step, but these two women have been walking between power by various means since the beginning of the play. But the "high intelligence" is in quotes here, the Queen of Thorns and Margaery, being Tyrells, didn't understand the meaning of "Growing Strong".The reason the Tyrells have dominated Highgarden for centuries, no matter how much the Iron Throne has changed, they have always been rich and treated by the King because they don't get involved in power struggles, but these two women's ambition has killed the family. They are charming but impressive to the audience, and their courage and strategy have a very strong modern feminist flavor, which if put into the modern world would be the representative of independent and successful women.

The Liberator—Daenerys Targaryen

Daenerys was born just after the Targaryen dynasty was overthrown, and her mother died giving birth to her while fleeing the country. She grew up with her brother Viserys, who witnessed the rise and fall of the family and was determined to take back the Iron Throne, Daenerys was sold by her brother to Drogo in exchange for power, at this point Daenerys was very weak and only knew how to cling to her brother and then to her husband, after her husband's death she hatched three dragons in the fire, at that moment she became strong and found her destiny, in the show, she frees slaves, fights the White Walkers, and works her way up to the Iron Throne, though in the end she's burdened by hatred and power, but overall, Daenerys is a messianic character in the show. Daenerys is the most feminine character in this play, especially when she learns that Snow is the true son of her older brother Rhaegar, the rightful heir to the throne, and she asks Snow to conceal this fact to help her ascend to the Iron Throne. Daenerys has a number of titles in the series: Daenerys of the Stormfall, Queen of the Andals, the Lornadoes and the First Men, Ruler of the Seven Kingdoms and Protector of the Realm, Khaleesi of the Great Grass Sea, Immortal, Shatterer of Shackles, Messiah, Queen of Meereen, Terminator of the White Walkers, Mother of Dragons.... In addition to the blessing of the orthodox bloodline, the strong feminism of *Game of Thrones* is inseparable from the overall strong feminism of the show.

Interpretations of the Female Culture in *Game of Thrones*

Powerlessness and Struggle of Women in Feudal Society

While "*Game of Thrones*" expresses femininity in its entirety and gives the show's female characters a status and power unbecoming of that era, it still shows the helplessness and struggle of feudal women under the constraints of the times: even though Cersei is the Empress Dowager, she still has no choice in the face of her father's forced marriage decision; Catherine willingly marries her fiancé's brother directly after his death, in accordance with custom. The "beautiful" Brienne is as strong as a man, as capable of fighting and as loyal as a man, but she cannot be the knight she dreams of being because she is a woman; the ladies of noble families are taught from birth to be ladies, and then marry another noble and live their lives like their mothers. Therefore, although *Game of Thrones* tries its best to show the equality between men and women, the expression of female consciousness is only a struggle under the control of the mainstream ideology, and some of its deficiencies are inevitable in history.

The Reversal of the Expression of Female Consciousness

In recent decades, the "women's movement", or "feminist movement", has been growing in the

West, with women's rights being the counterpart of "men's rights", as reflected in the French Declaration of Human and Civil Rights and the In the United States Declaration of Independence, "human rights" meant only the rights of men and did not include women. The feminist movement emerged in this context, pushing women's power from the margins into the mainstream and making women's rights an important part of human rights as a whole. Feminism is the pursuit of equality between men and women, the improvement of women's status and the protection of women's rights under the reality that the whole world is almost a patriarchal society. In recent decades, women's consciousness around the world has risen dramatically, and women's pursuit of equal rights and status has become more and more intense and has achieved remarkable results. Against this backdrop, a series of feminist literary works have emerged, and a large number of films, TV shows and literary works have begun to show women's charisma and celebrate their ideas. The *Game of Thrones* is also such a work, when we see the background is full of betrayal, blood, conspiracy and power struggle and still happened in the Middle Ages, it is natural to think that this is a "man's play", the female characters are mostly subservient and foils to the men. At the heart of power there will always be only men involved, but in *Game of Thrones*, women can be dukes and chiefs with as much power and ability as men, which is one of the reasons why *Game of Thrones* is able to gain a high degree of recognition among the majority of female fans.

Constructing Self-identity of Female Identity

The television industry is bound to use more techniques for the sake of viewership because only when the viewers pay more attention to the programs and the duration of attention can the media gain commercial benefits. Thus in both the film and television mediums are using commercial operations to pursue the corresponding financial benefits. *Game of Thrones* has portrayed a group of women who are different from traditional feudal women and have the characteristics of women of the new era, catering to the preferences of a large number of contemporary female viewers with higher consciousness, and has gained a considerable number of female fans who have become loyal viewers of *Game of Thrones*. A sense of identity, Michael O'Shaughnessy said, "Television has to be connected to people's real lives, both real and imagined; if we don't see our own lives, our aspirations, and our dreams on television, then television has no meaning for us." In the drama, the clever and beautiful Margaery, the wise Queen of Thorns, the high-ranking Cersei, the gorgeously transformed Sansa, the knightly "Beauty", the ruthless murderess Arya, the resolute Dragon Mother..... although their fate stories are set in medieval Europe, there are many similarities between their stories and modern life.

Giving Women Audiences Psychological Comfort and Realistic Thinking

Several of the main women in the play have had moments of glory, for better or worse endings,

and in real life, the female audience at large may be able to psychologically identify with the characters when they encounter difficulties, but in moments of character brilliance, they may have a hard time empathizing with the characters. The female viewers will have a beautiful imagination and aspiration through the stories of the female characters, just like the teenagers who like to watch hot-blooded anime to save the world, the female viewers can find psychological comfort in the drama, find an opportunity and channel to escape from the pressure of reality and relieve the insurmountable pressure in their lives.

For some highly educated women, *Game of Thrones* could offer a new way of thinking. The plot and fate of the characters will bring new inspiration to contemporary women, provoking them to reflect and think about their own lives and to solve life's problems through a more balanced way of thinking.

Conclusion

The success of *Game of Thrones* and the overwhelming response among women shows that it is in line with the pursuit of women's rights in contemporary society, and that it inspires and conveys a positive energy to the women. Inequality in the status of men and women is still sensitive in society, especially in political life, and as society develops, the status of women in political society is changing, for example, in the United States 100 years ago, Susan B. Anthony was punished for illegally voting in the U.S. elections, simply because women in the U.S. did not have the right to vote at that time, after her death, the U.S. finally gave women equal voting rights and gradually improved the U.S. Women's political status is now almost equal to that of men, today millions of American women can be free in political life, the former women's rights fighter Susan B. Anthony has finally been pardoned, Hillary Clinton and other female politicians have even been free to run for the presidency of the United States, society's protection of women's rights continues to progress, the status of women in social and political life continues to improve, scenes from *Game of Thrones* that were once unhistorical settings are being realized in real life. Excellent film and television works should be like "*Game of Thrones*", in the entertainment at the same time, can reflect the current state of society, thought-provoking, film and television creators should have a greater sense of social responsibility, in the creation of reflective of social thinking, to convey more democratic, fair values.

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