

Analyzing the tragic image in Penelope

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Abstract: *The Penelopiad is a groundbreaking adaptation of the classic Homer's epic Odyssey by the Canadian literary queen Atwood. It has become a classic of the "restatement myth" series. Since its inception, it has been praised by researchers both ideologically and artistically. This article uses Rene Girard's scapegoat mechanism and persecution text theory to interpret Margaret Atwood's The Penelopiad from a new perspective. Although the female characters Penelopiad and the twelve maids in the novel encountered different things, they could not avoid the fate of scapegoats. The entire novel all conveys the author's profound intentions. It not only criticizes the cruel oppression of women in the patriarchal society, but also condemns the class violence suffered by the people at the bottom. The characters in the author's writing use the voice of "the other" to complain from the female perspective of the victimization of the weak "scapegoat" in the patriarchal society background sacrificing others in exchange for the normal social order and the maintenance of the right of the aristocratic class, which also reflects the oppression of the aristocratic class to the people at the bottom.*

Keywords: *scapegoat; stereotypes of persecution; oppress*

1. Introduction

Canadian writer Margaret Atwood, the winner of the Booker Prize, the highest award in English literature, is renowned in the Canadian and world literature for her meticulous and profound style of creation. "Penelope" is the strongest work of Margaret Atwood, and through the rewriting of the classic work, the author gives Penelope a fresh life and a realistic sense of reality. Researchers have now focused mostly on the postmodernist characteristics of the novel and its own feminist ideas. For example, Zeng Xiaoqin, Wu Wenjie and Coral Ann Howells analyze the narrative structure and narrative sound of their works, Thinking that the biggest feature of Penelope is the collective narrative voice, Make a single story appear multi-dimensional; Liang Yubin, Yang Lixin and Kapuscinski K and others analyze the female image in the work that the grotesque violent world of writer Troy has been dissolved, The novel responds to the trend of postmodernist revaluation and voice the "others"; Pan also compares Penelope with the Canadian national upbringing, Thinking that this work is somewhat a symbol of collective Canadian national unconsciousness, It contains Canada's national mentality of praying for peace and tranquility but helpless to American hegemony. These show us the hidden unknown potential and multi-angle examination in the work.

In the Book of Perth, the girls and the twelve maids, who lead the reader, are always in a passive position oppressed by the patriarchal network; the fate and path are sadder, they become not only the ants of the patriarchal society, but also the victims of the class. Through the theory of scapegoats in the mythological prototype criticism, the discussion of the female image of the works reveals their different but identical contradictory communities, and eventually reduces to scapegoats in the social class and cultural background.

People's desire always comes from others, and in the process of realization is blocked by others, people are surrounded by envy, envy, hatred, thus causing the persecution of others. Gilla's social crisis, the characteristics of the victims, the crimes that the victims are accused of and the violence themselves reveal the persecution hidden behind the article. On this basis, the image of the twelve maids was sublimated, and the violent controllers instigated people to the persecution of the twelve maids. After the crisis was solved, the victims were sacrificed for peace and social order. The paper closely combines the persecution process of the twelve-maid image, the spiritual sublimation and the persecution theory.

2. "The History of scapegoat Mechanism"

As a concrete, historical prototype, the scapegoat image has appeared for thousands of years, and has

long existed in Western literature. From the original sacrifice way into from "people" to bear the fruit of sin, in the alternation of time development and use, at the same time in some popular works also have a great embodiment, it describes the social background and the inner deep meaning, also shaped a lot of classic characters spread widely, left a deep impression on readers. Therefore, we should first understand its meaning, the origin of the image, make an analysis of the image of the scapegoat, through the characteristics of the characters and social connotation to show the weakness of the scapegoat.

2.1 The origin and connotation of the scapegoat

The scapegoat image, which was first a sacrificial ritual, dates back to the Jewish nation. From the human point of view, sacrifice and prayer are believers and objects of respect. Man, and God reveal the human respect and service of the superior God through communication. Faith communicates with the object of faith in this way, hoping to get the gods to bless their purpose. The earliest meaning of the scapegoat is found in 22 of the Old Testament Genesis: the scapegoat itself is a substitute for the sacrifice, and the sacrifice (Isaac of Abraham) itself aims to express faithful devotion to God under the guidance of God. In other words, it is not difficult to find that the scapegoat itself also has the expression of dedication. Another is recorded in the Old Testament of Liman, where the sacrifice mode changes from people to sheep, which also means that God also defaults to this way.

However, as history develops, this way of atonement has obviously changed the —— scapegoat, into people, even so-called divinity. The change is illustrated with numerous examples in British writer Joe Fraser's work, "The Golden Branch". For example, the ancient Romans miss the god of sowing and harvest, in the agricultural god festival, often play the god 30 days before the festival. The performer could take advantage of God's rights within thirty days, but when the festival arrived, he had to commit suicide on the altar of the god he played to complete the sacrifice. It can be seen that the way of replacing sheep for collective acceptance or atonement has been widely used, and it has also brought an indelible impact on human life.

2.2 Image of the scapegoat

The word scapegoat derives from an English translation of the Willian Tyndale Bible in the 15th century. As recorded in the book: the former Jewish nation, to appease the gods, chose a sheep by lottery, bringing it to the highest cliff outside the city-state, hoping in this way to replace the crimes and evil fruits committed by the whole people. This method was immediately widely used and spread, in the use of later generations has become a special cultural phenomenon gradually existed. In general, the group or collective for their own interests, and let an irrelevant person bear criminal responsibility, on behalf of the experience.

The French contemporary philosopher Rene Girard found the prevalence of the term scapegoat by studying the Bible, Western history and ancient Greek mythology. "There was once a common phenomenon in the western society where the scapegoat mechanism ——, in order to prevent the onset of the whole social crisis, gained life by creating a 'basic violence' and a 'constructive violence' replacing other violence," he pointed out." The narrative text is summarized as the persecution text, interpreting the implied scapegoat mechanism, combing four paradigms: the first paradigm, the description of the social and cultural crisis at the time, a general chaos, the second paradigm, the crime of the troublemaker, how the accused was selected and what kind of criteria; and fourth, the scenario where collectivism sentenced the victims. In the literary world, scapegoats based on the relatively extensive. Known as Amir in *The Kite Chaser* and Emily in *The Rose to Emily*; Amir was her father's scapegoat, Emily was never able to live with her own ideas and needs, she was the scapegoat for the social background culture of the old South at the time. Both are to replace others to undertake mistakes, innocent sacrifice, and become "scapegoats" on behalf of others.

3. The embodiment of scapegoat mechanism in Penelope

The theory of "persecution text" was proposed in the French contemporary literary critic Le Gerar in the works, Girar felt that everyone has the ability to imitate, but this ability let people compete with each other, thus causing violence, leading to their fight and persecution, reflect this kind of violence is the paradigm of persecution theory. "The Book of Penelope" has the clear persecution text and the scapegoat, the hero Penelope, although born and high, but she cannot escape the fate of the patriarchal society oppression; and the contrast twelve servants as the persecuted side of the underlying society, did not

flinch, no silent. They sang for themselves and justified their grievances.

3.1 Description of the social and cultural crisis

Penelope's image in the novel is undoubtedly like a prism, reflecting the opposite images of other women, but a combination of them, which is a scapegoat under a typical male cultural crisis. First Penelope was different from the twelve maids, and she was born and noble. Her father was the Spartan king, This enabled Penelope to live a life of respectful excellence since childhood, She need not worry that any great thing would suffer and strain her bones, Just enjoy a privileged life is enough, Do not consider the pressure of life; And the mother of daffodils brought half her immortal, Make her even more noble; Twelve maids come from the bottom of society, They have no strong family background, Their parents or slaves, Or maybe the farmers, Or the serfs, Their children must do hard work, From day to night, Suffering a heavy task of labor inconsistent with their age, They cannot not violate the orders of their masters, You can only listen to it. Second, Penelope is different from Helen. Pepper good, docile and stubborn and conservative, she waited for twenty years, waiting for his man to return, with their own intelligence output "loyal net" rejected suitors, and her cousin Helen on the contrary, in the book there are many places are comments on Helen, namely, "Helen ruined my life" and "Helen bath", and a chapter on her, namely "Helen's news". Helen is beautiful and enchanting, is a woman who can cause countless men's madness, let the city into the sea of fire. Thus, two therefore was thus in contrast to the twelve maids and Helen, but Penelope's fate was essentially the same. On the one hand, Penelope, as controlled as the twelve maids, by the male-dominated culture, Sacrifice of the proud character, She knew that the maids were instructed with her, The truth of the delay between the suitors, But remained silent on the Good Friday of the twelve maids, Not speaking out for the maid, Tell the truth; On the other hand, she was as controlled as Helen in the male-dominated patriarchal and female culture, To the perfection, Helen proud of his jealousy, And her actions have expressed the purpose of serving men with beauty, The man's gaze at her made her indulge, This was the same as Penelope's sad loss of his marriage and serving his father and husband, His father spoiled her after trying to drown her in the water, The reason is seeing Penelope as a hoarding commodity to gain wealth: " According to ancient customs, The great mass of shining marital booty had to remain at the home of the new wife, In her family's palace, " ; To wait for the husband, The thread of loyalty and sorrow caught the net of Penelope's fresh fate, Free her from her fate, So Penelope cannot anyway escape the substance of the tragic fate under the patriarchal social culture, designated by his father and husband, Become a scapegoat for the "Chaste Woman," It is all sad in the times and in the socio-cultural context.

3.2 Charge of "troublemakers" crimes

Among the three violent crimes and sexual crimes summarized by Giral, female servants were accused of sexual crimes. The accusation is the controller who decides to participate in the persecution of the fate of others, to satisfy their desire for power according to their joys and dislikes, to arbitrarily set charges out of nowhere. They were held directly or indirectly, by Odysseus and Penelope to deceive the aristocracy and commit their own sex crimes, and they felt wronged and hopeless. Unlike Penelope, in a poem sung by the maids, they tell their miserable childhood life: as slaves, they have no freedom, they have to do hard work, endure hunger, as the lowest position of the lowest women, they must endure the arbitrary humiliation of the hostess, or even do her scapegoat, bear crimes for her, and the perpetrators did not feel guilty. Penelope's unhappy childhood memories had been in heaven, because all she lacked was only the attention and care of her parents, while the maids were terrified to be bullied and tortured by noble men. In the final analysis, the painful experience and unfair criminal complaints of the maids came from class violence, the influence of the patriarchal influence of men and the cunning and sinister appearance of the aristocracy. In the works, the author gives the twelve maids the say, their oppression on life is no longer obedient, become the complainants of the aristocracy, they dare to resist and cry for themselves. The first is to accuse the Queen Penelope 's chorus lyrics: "the panicked performance of Penelope' s danger, in Odysseus return, did every possible to hide her dirty behavior with the suitors, and begged the nurse to help her conceal the facts, and blame the maid to destroy them". This scene has overturned the queen's admirable virtue, showing her ruthless dark side to the reader without shelter. The servants were also charged with indignation against Odysseus, whose anger reached unprecedented commanding heights, as witness Penelope said the testimony against the maid was "they were raped without permission," and to the more ironic Odysseus himself, the typical representative of the aristocratic class in the story, lingered in the tender country of the goddess. The sins of the servants aroused such strong opposition from the "class" rulers that Penelope, once a sister, or the equally guilty Odysseus, were united to obstruct these evil horses which were very different from the aristocracy. The

attempts of the maids to appeal the truth were brutally wiped out by the upper class and their cries for themselves were forcibly buried. Their personal interests were controlled by the will of the upper-class groups and became innocent victims. In this sense, they were indeed "poor" and "pathetic". Their tragedy revealed the coldness and flaws of the aristocratic system. Of course, these are not just peculiar to a region or an era. Modern judges use modern logic to push out their masters are not, they resist to be raped, they have no power to refuse, because the judges do not want to violate the trend of history, cannot violate the symbol of superior power and the rules, do not want the maids or not to a fair judgment. So, the servants become scapegoats, which is the crime of taking themselves away with his sacrifice; the tragedy of the maids is the reflection of power than life, but no longer fragile, they resisted and fought, and called on the goddess of the execution of dissatisfied servants.

3.3 Formation of collective violence

The fourth category of the persecution paradigm is the violence caused by collective persecution itself. Western culture is constantly grinding or even killing the theory of collective violence, but the text always appears the rings of victims surrounded by different forces resulting from the formation. First, the maids lived in their own society, when they were so different from their rulers, wary of cunning but firmly held at the throat of fate, they trembled but never can only live a pleasing life, no rights and freedom. The maids were surrounded in separate lives, always shrouded in the fear of hunger and death. The palace was lifeless and ambushed, surrounded by collective violence, surrounded by various layers, and forced slaughter of "scapegoats". Secondly, after the so-called exposure of the maids' "crimes", both Odysseus, the execution order, Penelope, or the suitors, all surrounded an invisible circle around the maids, holding them firmly in the cruel circle of injustice, justified and unreasonable appeals. The evils committed by the slaves did not push them to the guillotine, even infected with the suitors from the compliance and execution of Penelope's orders. But the rulers aimed all at the unarmed maids, as if the bottom of them were the source of instability. If they removed the humiliation of the ruling class and found a more reasonable handle for the coercion and bullying brought by the system at that time. But in fact, the people who hated the maids felt the same feeling, but they were at the other end of the rope. In fact, Odysseus and the imperial ministers had formed a high-pressure situation against Penelope. She is squeezed between strong chastity moral fetters and an equally strong instinctive desire to make difficult choices. Since Penelope exists as a virtuous and reserved figure, the upper class focuses on indirect, effortless means of "watching" that duress her to return "on track". Behind the collective will, with the help of Odysseus, the tragic circumstances of the maid were justly ignored by Penelope, who was more inclined to treat the maids as beasts who would bite her at any time, the threat of her own reputation, whipped and framed them mercilessly, and acquiesced to the crime of adultery. The maids were eventually sentenced to death, carrying all the sins and ugly faces of the rulers. Having a different behavior from the power of the aristocracy, the maids were thus treated specifically, becoming intolerable to the aristocracy and patriarchal society, thus acting as scapegoats and eventually being executed to secure the high honor of the ruling class. This look at Girard's scapegoat theory suggests that the scapegoat is a behavioral paradigm for the collective good. From the persecution of the maids, the innocent maids became the scapegoats of Penelope and the lower victims of the patriarchal and class system, but these social problems and institutional injustice have not changed. The maids complained, through descriptions of their tragic fate, of their fate, especially at the bottom of the society where women were controlled by the patriarchal system.

4. Living dilemma and futile struggle of sin sheep

4.1 The embodiment of the scapegoat dilemma

"scapegoat" is used to sacrifice, through people kill it and eat this ceremony, "Penelope" as the bottom characters framed twelve maids, as a scapegoat tortured by evil society, no human rights, they are like the ants at the bottom of the society, do the homes work but not food and clothing, endure aristocratic society bullying and hostess, all this let them see light and hope.

Penelope, short of family care, had at least his life secure, and the twelve maids, from childhood experience without pleasant childhood memories, did miserable work from hours, and no time to rest from dawn to dark. They cry, no one sympathy or comfort. They accidentally doze off, and there will be a leather whip waiting. In the adulthood of Penelope, although political marriage sorrow, like a commodity to choose, for the benefit of mutual exchange, but at least get the ceremony, and have a certain voice, and the servants into the aristocratic class, the master want them to sleep with they cannot refuse.

In the eyes of men, the maid is only the aristocratic men, and in the eyes of the Empress Penelope, the maid is her bosom friend, she treated them like sisters, but in fact they were finally easily discarded. To her purpose, she sent them hidden around the suitors, to help her timely and understand, convey news; but when the danger came, the maids suffered no resistance to violence, as Penelope, who regarded them as "sisters," indifferent, appease their wounded hearts, and admit their mistakes. Instead, continued to use them to comfort them to accept the facts. It can be seen that in Penelope's "false" sister affection, she regarded the maid as a pawn, did not care about their feelings, like throwing off the annoying cowhide sugar. From this we see that such sisterhood affection is and its false, then in the maid's narrative, also did not improve to the deep friendship between them and the Empress Penelope, perhaps for them, the queen is only the master, how can they have sister affection with the master?

In the typical hierarchical society, slaves are always the bottom of the society, they are not regarded as people, in the concept of the master and servant of the social class, the two can never be equal. In the Book of Penelope, the maids have no right to survive, they are trampled, used, played, only confessed, like only lambs to be slaughtered, which all reflect the plight of their survival.

4.2 The vein struggle of the scapegoat dilemma

In the Book of Penelope, the twelve maids, in vain, cried out the injustice of society, and the ugly faces of the aristocracy. Atwood gave twelve maids and Penelope the right to remember, overturning the shackles of the patriarchal society in the Odyssey, thus giving them the interest to speak and the sense of resistance.

The whole work seems to describe the tragic fate of the women, if the patriarchal and class society really explores the root cause of the tragedy. It is not hard to find that the novel does not reflect the positive conflict between women and male social culture, in which Penelope said he recognized the Odyssey at first sight, but pretended not to know, and then secretly cooperated with their actions. Eupheptic shapes Penelope as a protected flower living in an ivory tower, Just enjoy the outcome of her husband 's son' s victory afterwards, And the novel subverts the image, But she took the initiative, Build the maids with "silence," Let the maids bear the evil she committed, A lost chastity of Penelope under the gaze of her husband, More than the epic that she was the perfect and obedient goat under the meaning of the patriarchal culture, In the face of their own survival crisis, Her subconscious mind again found a scapegoat of her own, Sacrifice the servants who obeyed to her to clear the inhuman collective sin under the patriarchal culture, She was undoubtedly a perpetrator, too. Secondly, the scapegoat mechanism implied in the work also reflects the strong impact on class oppression. The maids sang the fancy of if I were a princess. Sing about their dreams, the disillusionment of their dreams, the prayers for God. The maids became "scapegoats" mainly in their low status. Class rulers regarded this hostile relationship of different powers as thinking it caused disaster to themselves. So, by the ceremony of Odysseus giving them to death, the rules shaped by the supposed upper classes can be saved from destruction. In fact, the work not only reflects a cultural crisis in the patriarchal society, strong and weak men and male respect for women, but also gives an indirect description of the religious crisis. Penelope died to readers as a ghost: "But occasionally we are called out by the mage and warlock — and the power of the underworld." "The gods have always been afraid that the world is not chaotic..." According to my judgment, the gods have fallen asleep, ", which all show that people would rather believe in the manages and surgeons of the crooked ways than leave an inch in their hearts for their former devotion to God, and who is the scapegoat under this social crisis?

In addition, Atwood implanted in the scapegoat the image is not stopped in the background of human life, braver to describe after the persecution, dare to struggle, but the maids have not received justice processing actually make the tragedy of the scapegoat more solemn. As Zeng Yanbing said, "Absolute metaphysical pursuit arises from absolute pain, the tragic state of the existence of life, or the state of 'sin' as Christianity understands." The maids tried to free their scapegoat identity, there is always hope, but this hope was disappointed, they all this so-called struggle is in vain, this is the scapegoat this special identity to give their life tragedy, eventually they chose to rely on the goddess of revenge, asked Odysseus as a representative of class and male culture is first punished, no matter where Odysseus seeks help, in the lyrics or drama, in books or music, even put in page notes or appendix! But did Odysseus eventually receive no explanation in the story of punishment, and where did the trapped real-life women look for Nemesis? They can only obey backwards and endure all this.

5. Conclusion

Through the scapegoat mechanism, it is not difficult to find the wonderful structure of Atwood works, using the ancient Greek tragedy, from the perspective of feminist voice, describing the traditional patriarchal society, her characters have subversive changes, the subversion of the classic not only conveyed the profound feminist thought to readers, also created a new, comprehensive female image. At the same time, her writing not only ridicule the "scapegoat" of wanton bullying in the patriarchal society, but also reflects the impact on class oppression and expectations for the whole human society. Neither feminism nor the "upper" class can kill the week as ignorant, and substitute "scapegoats" instead to achieve the best interests of the whole. The deep prayer for love and equality is the fundamental driving force of life, in Girard's words, "the time when we forgive each other; if we are still waiting, we no longer have time."

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