

Original Paper

The Dilemma and Choice of “Nora’s Departure” of Sexual Transversion

—Taking “the Second Half of Shen Congwen’s Life” as an Example

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Abstract

Throughout Shen Congwen’s life, the great leap of identity has added legendary color to him. The starting point of all changes can be traced back to the period of Xiangxi. At the age of 14, he joined the army, tasted the warmth of human feelings in the army, and finally promoted to the scholar’s document with his own efforts. However, his yearning for freedom made him finally give up his well-paid stable work and go to Beijing alone with his dream to seek another form of independence. The classic female character Nora created in the “Doll’s House” seems to operate a happy life in the eyes of outsiders, and her heart has a demand for freedom and independence beyond the context of the times. Shen Congwen’s life trajectory in reality may provide a male interpretation for Nora’s text. This article is based on the book “the second half of Shen Congwen’s life”. The book uses a large number of direct quotes, detailed letters and various types of literature. It is of great significance to understand Shen Congwen and understand the ups and downs of individuals in the torrent of the times.

Keywords

Shen Congwen, “the second half of Shen Congwen’s life”, nora runs away, the rebirth of Shen Congwen

1. Introduction

Text In the long river of literature, the fate of classic characters often reflects the profound conflict and choice between the times and individuals. The “exodus” of Nora in the “Doll’s House” is not only a

literary presentation of the awakening of women in the late 19th century, but also a profound revelation of the eternal tension between individual free will and social bondage. Applying this analytical framework to Shen Congwen, a legendary male writer, especially focusing on the complex experience of his later life, constitutes a unique academic attempt. Shen Congwen is a literary master who came out of Xiangxi. His persistent pursuit of freedom and dreams in his life is similar to the transfer of “Nora’s departure”, showing a unique dilemma and choice in the wind and rain of the times. With the help of the detailed historical treasure house of “the second half of Shen Congwen’s life”, this paper focuses on the analysis of Shen Congwen’s writing and analysis of the past self in the second half of his life in the form of close reading of the text, aiming to explore how Shen Congwen used his pen as a sword to write a symphony of personal destiny and the changes of the times in a complex and changeable social environment.

2. Deep Reflection and Critical Thinking Ability

Shen Congwen’s way of “avoiding the important points and dwelling on the trivial”. Shen Congwen and his son Huhu discuss the story of the characters in “*Xiang Xing San Ji*”. Huhu said that some people called Shen Congwen as China’s Tolstoy, but Huhu felt that Shen Congwen was inferior to him. Shen Congwen replied: “Yes. I’m not as good as this man. Because I got married, I had a good wife, then you came again, then the war also came, these ten years I have not written anything for life. The results are not good. Not comparable”. But Shen Congwen said that he should try to catch up and write ten books to twenty books, it is not difficult to write so much. It can be seen that in Shen Congwen’s eyes, he has the potential to become China’s Tolstoy, and the family is one of the reasons, but not the main one, because Shen Congwen’s expression of the family uses the word ‘good’, and the classic works such as “*The Border Town*” are also written after marriage, and the war is not evaluated by any word, only saying that the war “came”. Looking back on Shen Congwen’s life, the reason why he could not continue to write was that political factors accounted for a large proportion, but Shen Congwen did not mention it. Therefore, Shen Congwen describes the causes of a bad thing, often “avoid the important points”, the insignificant factors first put on the stage, the deeper factors are not willing to mention. And “it is not difficult to write so much”, which also suggests that Shen Congwen’s shift from a writer to a miscellaneous cultural relics researcher is a personal subjective will, and he does not want to write works that violate his heart.

In addition, Shen Congwen also has a way of thinking that is good at “thinking”. When facing changes, he is first good at “thinking”. On the eve of the great historical turning point, Shen Congwen discussed the direction of literature. Shen Congwen compared politics to “traffic light”, and pointed out that literature needs to be limited by “traffic light”. What if someone has to operate a traffic light? Perhaps some people think not to traffic lights, go better? Progressive layers, although the question, but the expression of the meaning of rhetorical questions, and then some concessions’ literature is naturally

subject to political restrictions, but can retain a little criticism, the right to amend it? That is, when Shen Congwen faces great changes, the first thing to consider is whether this change is necessary; if someone feels unnecessary, can they ignore this change; if this change cannot be ignored, how can we minimize the negative impact of the change on writing?

Shen Congwen compares politics to traffic lights, which actually reflects Shen Congwen's view on the relationship between literature and politics. He does not believe that the discipline of politics on literature is beneficial to literary creation, but is set as a "traffic light" such a tool that has advantages and disadvantages for "free nature". Therefore, from the beginning, Shen Congwen has deviated from the requirements of this political change for literature. The literature required in the new era takes the "political" factor as an undoubted premise, and politics is proposed as the "fuel" of literary creation to benefit literary creation. Even so, Shen Congwen still tried to put forward such a path "on the one hand, there are restrictions on the traffic lights, on the other hand, he also wants to walk" between objective restrictions and subjective wishes. It can be seen that Shen Congwen still hoped for literary creation at the beginning, and he was reluctant to give up literature. After seeing the depth of literature being held by politics, he devoted himself to the study of miscellaneous cultural relics that were less noticed. Like Nora, there is a painful struggle before she completely walks out of her "husband's home". In the face of the unknown new world, Nora or Shen Congwen all have a suspicious eye. There is no doubt that the literature required by the coming new era is not based on "thinking" as Shen Congwen is accustomed to, but must start with "faith". Political and political requirements must be accepted as a prerequisite for writing. Such a requirement itself is contrary to Shen Congwen, who claims to be a countryman. Therefore, it is inevitable that Shen Congwen cannot choose literary creation after the advent of the new era.

After the increasingly fierce literary revolution, Shen Congwen sobered up, his characters have always been alive, so he was difficult to accept his own literary world there is a strong, one-size-fits-all interference factors, then decided to put aside, "people near middle age, the concept of solidification, pen habits have not been easy to reverse, coupled with a lot of misunderstanding, soon was not forced to put aside, but also eventually put aside. This is the inevitable result of people of our age". Here, Shen Congwen explained that the subjective factor of his own writing is that the habit of writing is difficult to change, the objective factor is misunderstood, but the most important, Shen Congwen's most difficult to understand the relationship between literature and politics is still mentioned.

3. Individual Ups and Downs in the Torrent of the Times

The entanglement of the small self and the big self, the pursuit of egoism will eventually be difficult. The naive Shen Congwen once thought that it was not only him who faced the ideological struggle and was difficult to enter the new era, but the people of their age and their generation. However, he finally found that the people around him seemed to easily change their roles and accepted "what is it". Only he

was asking “why”. He said that he was completely isolated, isolated and desperate. I did not have the illusion of survival. I should rest so! He is keenly and sensitively aware that people around him do not know him. In the great changes of society and history, people around him can change from time to time, or pass by, but he himself can not do so and refuse to do so. Shen Congwen’s confrontation with the times is destined to be a sad song. He sticks to his own ideas, and his spiritual load is too heavy. He is also a man with a very sense of mission. On the one hand, he has to do something, on the other hand, he can’t participate in anything. The string in his mind is too tight, and finally he can’t support it. He collapsed and chose to kill himself. Shen Congwen’s suicide is to fight with death and express his rejection of the future, because this “future” is contrary to his literary creation concept and outlook on life. Such a future is not the future he fantasized about before he “ran away”. The story of “Nora’s departure” is practiced here, real and cruel.

The heterogeneity of “running away” is not only unacceptable to the society, but even the family cannot become a safe haven. Shen Congwen’s peers and friends adapt to the new society very quickly, and later evolved into a small family. Only Shen Congwen, as a non-progressive factor, needs people to supervise. In the confessional text “politics is everywhere” written during Shen Congwen’s spiritual pressure, it describes and summarizes various feelings in the past year. One of them is the exchange of ideas between two junior high school students’ sons and fathers. The son returns from labor, although physically tired but mentally excited. They join the pace of the times and are happy with this “dedication”. It is believed that Shen Congwen, as a father, is not progressive and has no idea. The country is so good, not yet happy to work, Shen Congwen believes that “progress is not progress, the surface can not be seen. I learn different, different use”; talking about his father’s research work in the museum’s antiquities, the sons thought, “What’s the point of going to the museum to get antiques! The father thought” that’s history, it’s culture! Didn’t you say to overthrow the feudalism? Feudalism is not just two words. It is worth knowing more about the fact that how many cultural civilizations the working people have created in the oppressed exploitation.

It seems to be a debate between father and son, new and old, progress and backwardness. In fact, there are also several roles and misplaced understandings. First of all, Shen Congwen, as a “father”, is in a “backward” position in this dialogue and needs to be “transformed”. Listening to his son’s so-called “correct opinions”, China’s thousands of years of father authority has been overthrown, and the power of father and son in the small family has a certain degree of dislocation; the second is that the son and the father look at history from different perspectives. The son conforms to the ideas of most people and regards the study of ancient culture as a manifestation of ideological feudalism. Shen Congwen believes that this is the crystallization of the wisdom of the working people; finally, the difference in the way of thinking between the two sides, Shen Congwen is very convinced of his sons, the understanding of the country, mentioned “progress is not progress, the surface can not see” and “feudalism is not only two words”. The word “surface”, as the name suggests, Shen Congwen believes

that some revolutionaries who shout slogans are just drifting with the flow. They do not understand the essence of the revolution and the meaning of the revolution, that is, their understanding of the revolution stays on the “surface”. In fact, they cannot distinguish who is progressing and who is not progressing. Because the criteria for judging progress are too simple, as long as they are willing to “fool”, everyone can make progress on the “surface”. The degree adverb “not only” is placed here to increase the tone, indicating that Shen Congwen has a set of his own judgment system on feudalism or not. He believes that the “feudal” understood by the sons is only the superficial meaning of feudalism, but they naturally accept the knowledge transmitted under this set of social disciplines and use it. Therefore, Shen Congwen concluded from this debate that “children start from” faith in everything, and the country they understand is naturally very different from the country I understand from “thinking”. This habit of “thinking” in advance is precisely the quality that Shen Congwen, as a countryman, has always had.

4. Shen Congwen’s Way of Reshaping Himself: Self-reflection in the Form of Words

In Shen Congwen’s love story, he realized that he could not control his emotions, so he saved himself through letters. In 1939, he wrote a letter to his eldest son, who was only four years old, asking them to come to Kunming, which was naturally written to Zhang Zhaohe, because his son was still young. This was Shen Congwen’s letter “The meaning of drunkenness is not wine”. At this time, Shen Congwen, who was unable to extricate himself from love, hoped that the arrival of Zhang Zhaohe would cut off his thoughts that he should not have. Similarly, in Shen Congwen’s “turning a big and old boat to try”, Shen Congwen worried that the “revolution” would break up his family and panic forever. Under such inner struggle, he wrote to Ding Ling, who was in the position of the Communist Party at that time, to confess his fears, and to make specific demands and try to create new careers. This is also Shen Congwen’s initiative to save himself from crazy destruction - to ask people close to him through letters. When Shen Congwen’s spirit almost collapsed, he wrote two autobiographies, “*A man’s confession*” and “*About southwest lacquerware and others*”, aiming to trace back to the origin of life and seek strength inward. After being rescued by suicide, Shen Congwen was not only rescued at the physical level, but also at the spiritual level. He tried to make a detour and planned to sew and mend at the edge of the big stage of the times. At this time, Shen Congwen used “kindness” to describe himself. The great compassion is the calmness after the great enlightenment. He can accept the fate, not think it through, but wake up in a dream. He thought of Cuicui in the quiet. The characters in the book can be seen that Shen Congwen’s creation is closely related to his life. Writing is a way of Shen Congwen’s self-salvation. Now that the road of writing is blocked, he urgently needs to find another force to support his life.

After Shen Congwen’s suicide attempt, he found that it was not beneficial to the country to stick to the past without making changes. The corresponding strategy he came up with was “forgetting myself”.

However, in the second half of his life, Shen Congwen's writing of the past self often appeared. Shen Congwen deliberately writes about the past self, which may be to heal the mind of the present. He will enumerate the things of the same state of mind before to comfort himself at this moment, and regard the indigestible emotions at this moment as the reappearance of previous difficult moments to motivate himself. When the reality shows a positive trend, Shen Congwen recalls the same positive moments in the past to gain double energy. Compared with the first half of Shen Congwen's life, the second half of Shen Congwen's life constrained his talents, adjusted his sensitivity to external changes, and realized the independence of personal thoughts in a roundabout way.

5. Nation-state Narrative Discourse's "incorporation" of Personalized Runaway

The individualistic "Nora runaway", only stitched in the nation-state discourse, can find a chance to speak. Shen Congwen turned from a writer to a study of cultural relics. Some critics believe that this is a submersion of his literary creation talents. However, this is Shen Congwen's deliberate turn. His attention to "folk" is to some extent the preservation of his own strength. Shen Congwen pays attention to the folk things, and is a kind of miscellaneous cultural relics that are not easy to be noticed in the folk things. Textiles are the most inclined among a large number of "miscellaneous cultural relics". This is also a particularly weak and particularly neglected part of the traditional cultural relics research. From the choice of research objects, it can be seen that Shen Congwen is good at paying attention to the neglected corners.

Shen Congwen, a self-contained system, even if "rashly" entered the unfamiliar field, he also had a skill that made him based on society. Shen Congwen's method of studying history is also different from others. Others start from historical materials and derive from historical materials, that is, book knowledge. Shen Congwen combines textbook knowledge with practical experience through on-the-spot investigation. This research method is also very similar to the "countryman" habit of Shen Congwen, that is, he does not believe in theory, but prefers to believe what he sees and touches with his own hands. Shen Congwen applied the method of literary creation to the study of historical materials, and also made great achievements, which proved that this method was feasible. He did not receive systematic training, but his own system, one of the fundamental reasons is that he is not concerned about the surface of the beautiful, but the people, through the phenomenon to see the essence, he has his own unique cognitive system can always go deep into the nature of the problem, which has to be said that nature gives him a talent, and he also grasps the talent, hard work, play to the extreme. This kind of talent and effort may be another path opened up by "Nora" after leaving and being limited, which not only preserves the individual's independence to a certain extent, but also alleviates the fierce conflict with society and can be accommodated by society.

Therefore, Shen Congwen's relationship with the world is not our stereotype of confrontation, or escape, on the contrary, he is more positive to face, seek opportunities. Whether it is when he first

entered the literary world, he emerged in the literary world with rapid writing and quantity wins, or in the era of premonition that the train should change direction, and he chose to go round and round after feeling difficult to reverse the direction, it shows his positive attitude towards entering the world. He confessed his fear to Ding Ling, who was already in power at that time, and took the initiative to find ways to protect himself, to seek recovery, and to try to create new careers. The study of historical relics was Shen Congwen's new career. During these forty years, Shen Congwen also experienced many social changes. He saw the great changes in Chinese society, and also saw the complexity and diversity of human nature. But no matter how the environment changes, Shen Congwen always adheres to his own beliefs and pursuits. He recorded these experiences in words, as well as his thoughts on life and his understanding of the world. Even if he could not write, he tried to record them in other ways. During his trip to Jiangxi, Shen Congwen explored a way to express his feelings: writing ancient poetry. Shen Congwen's classical poetry is "review the past and sing praises to the new life", and the part of reviewing the past are obviously more brilliant. Shen Congwen always summarizes his life characteristics in the reviewing the past life, but the interests and requirements of the times focus on the "new" part, which is tantamount to buying caskets and returning beads. This is similar to Shen Congwen's feeling that people did not understand his *"The Border Town"* for a long time.

6. Shen Congwen's Hand-painted Illustrations-does not Wake up

The illustrations of the book correspond to Shen Congwen's ideas to some extent, as well as his positioning and self-awareness of himself in this world. In the book, Zhang Xinying (the author of the book *"the second half of Shen Congwen's life"*) inventively inserted four paintings hand-painted by Shen Congwen, the third of which is "ship is still dreaming and floating in the sea". It was the sea of red flags, the sea of songs, the sea of gongs and drums. (In a word) "Here the red flag can be seen as a red regime, ideology, singing and gongs and drums may be around the people are for the establishment of the new regime, for the unity of ideology and cheer, hustle and bustle refers to Shen Congwen himself, but he is still immersed in his own small world, free to float freely, even if he wakes up at a certain moment to realize that he has become incompatible, he also understands the confusion, but does not wake up, to protect their own side of the pure land. The text of the fourth picture "The sound is so lively that the people on the ship woke up. A man holds a net to fish for fish and shrimp. The net is not as big as a straw hat, and no one will enter the net except shrimp. Strangely, he still fished". The "real" wake-up boat person can also be seen as Shen Congwen's sudden awakening, but the wake-up person does what others seem to be fruitless-fishing fish and shrimp with a net. Just as Shen Congwen's second half of life has always had a sense of urgency and mission to do miscellaneous cultural relics research, the research results have been repeatedly regarded as waste paper.

In addition, there are great differences between fish and shrimp in body shape. The tool taken by the man on the ship can only fish out shrimp, which is also a realistic portrayal. The "knowledge" that

many people flock to study is big fish, and the research of miscellaneous cultural relics that is not valued is shrimp. Shen Congwen chose the “shrimp” in the eyes of others, and he kept writing. Zhang Xinying chose these paintings as the beginning of the book, which is not only Zhang Xinying’s understanding of Shen Congwen’s spiritual world, but also “Shen Congwen in Zhang Xinying’s heart”. Other clever ideas are too numerous to enumerate, such as chapter setting, the title of the sixth chapter is “line re-line”, so the list is some place names, cities; the last section of the last chapter is entitled Zhang Zhaohe. Zhang Zhaohe is closely related to Shen Congwen. It is very reasonable and appropriate to take Zhang Zhaohe as the end of the second half of Shen Congwen’s life.

The research on the second half of Shen Congwen’s life is not deep before. The academic community generally studies Shen Congwen as a “writer”, and believes that Shen Congwen in the first half of his life plays a greater value. Therefore, there may be preconceived prejudice in the study of Shen Congwen’s second half of his life. Subjectively, Shen Congwen’s second half of his life is full of suffering, and his achievements in cultural relics research are far less than literary creation. Zhang’s work is not only in the choice of materials, but also in the restraint of emotion and the ability to coordinate the overall situation. Shen Congwen’s Xiangxi world is smaller than Shen Congwen, and Zhang’s “*the second half of Shen Congwen’s life*” is also smaller than the Shen Congwen he studied. In addition, Zhang Xinying also pays close attention to the overseas translation, overseas dissemination and overseas research of Shen Congwen’s works, and forms a contrast between intentional and unintentional. During the Cultural Revolution, Shen Congwen’s works were regarded as “garbage” at home, but “popular” abroad. At the same time dimension, the attitude towards the same literary works at home and abroad is so different, which adds irony to this absurd Cultural Revolution.

Including Shen Congwen’s exile in his later years, he kept tossing and turning, and he was anxious to transfer people here before he was “received”. It is very absurd to read. Mr. Zhang Xinying did not just limit himself to Shen Congwen as an individual to talk about the second half of Shen Congwen’s life. Instead, he closely linked the second half of Shen Congwen’s life with the era in which Shen Congwen lived, and expressed the entanglement between the two in the choice of materials.

7. Conclusion

Like Nora, although she is worried about the changes in society and the voices around her are noisy, she still sticks to her heart and bravely goes to the “unknown”. The runaway Nora may be physically and mentally disillusioned, and may also complete self-redemption. Shen Congwen’s lectures in the United States in his later years talked about his initial experience of literary creation and the study of cultural relics. He did not mention the injustices suffered during the Cultural Revolution, because he had completed his self-salvation. He cured himself with the only little beauty in the world, such as the friendship that he still maintained in difficult situations, the support of his family etc. Therefore, the “complete” Shen Congwen did not need to show the “broken” to everyone. Shen Congwen has no

resentment against the times, does not want to accept the compassion of others, but also has the courage to be responsible for his own life. He only wants to be an unremarkable boat and run his own world outside the vigorous trend of the times. Just as Nora herself does not intend to condense into a symbolic symbol, she is only willing to seek the rebirth of herself. In the process of China's modern transformation, it is not only women who encounter difficulties. Men in contemporary China are also experiencing various spiritual crises. Shen Congwen's second half of life may have given a roundabout new path.

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