Abstract

Lu Yin is one of the best-known female writers of the May Fourth Period in the history of Modern Chinese Literature. She is talented and intelligent, but suffers many a setback during her lifetime. At the young age of thirty-five, she died of dystocia. During her fourteen years of creative writing, she has published a large number of works including novels and essays. But it is so regretful that she has not received fair evaluation from critics of her days. For example, Mao Dun regards her novels as mainly concentrated on romantic love and her viewpoint is "narrow". As Mao Dun has great influence over the literary circle, critics of the later generation also tend to focus excessively on ideological discussion and seldom study the artistic forms and contemporary significance embodied in Lu Yin’s works. Some critics even compare the protagonists of one of Lu Yin’s most important novel The Ivory Ring, against the archetype in real life. They conclude that the novel is a failure because the main characters in the novel don’t accord with real models in the real world.

This dissertation aims to present Lu Yin in a different aspect. Part one of the dissertation consists of three chapters. Tracing her life long activities, the dissertation examines how her legendary life experience has influenced this precocious and talented woman, all of which are reflected in her literary works.

The second part of the dissertation is divided into 4 chapters. Some of Lu Yin’s most important early and later representative novels, and essays that are classified into four stages are analyzed in depth. With meticulous study, this dissertation shows that most of her early novels are ‘autobiographical’ novels, with touchy stories and full of contemporary sentiments and spirits. However, there are great changes in her later novels. Not only does Lu Yin retrospect her previous ideology, she also pays more attention to portray the character’s psychological world. Her novels reveal the true feelings of women’s of her generation. They challenge and question the ethical principles that imposed on women in the old society. Lu Yin’s hundreds of essays, which make a notable impact on her counterpart, retain her consistent style, also reveal the writer’s anxiety and distress.

As Lu Yin displays the intellectual female world from the female perspective, she is indeed a pioneer of modern Chinese female literature. Through detailed study of her life and her works, today’s readers can fully appreciate her contribution and thoroughly understand the intellectual female’s emotion and thought of the 1920s and 1930s.