

## Why women kill :Simone’s identity analysis and growth context

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### Abstract:

In Beauvoir’s *The Second Sex*, the image of the female “other” is constructed, and the gradual development of the female “self” is explored. From this perspective, this study will analyze and elaborate the image of Simone in *Why Women Kill* in different periods of the film, explore the growth and transformation of Simone’s character and its reasons, try to further improve the theoretical system related to feminism in the film and television culture, and provide certain reference significance for the portrayal of female characters in today’s relevant film and television works. Simone’s marriage embodies the problem of sexual minorities, which has corresponding practical significance and provides a certain feasible plan.

**Keywords:** Why Women Kill; other; female self; wife

### 1. Introduction

In 2019, “Why Women Kill” became a hit TV series in the United States with its dramatic plot, gorgeous, and exaggerated editing techniques and rich characters. Starting from a female point of view, the play tells the story of how heroines in different periods in the United States deal with their husbands’ infidelity in marriage. It reveals the development of the female movement around the same house in different generations. The role of Simone, played by Chinese-American Lucy Liu, has been widely discussed. This paper will draw the attention of researchers from the role of Simone’s emphasis on identity and development of its growth vein in different periods, which reflects the transformation of “other” to “self”, reflecting the spirit of post-feminism. At the same time, it also provides certain reference significance for the popular “excellent heroine drama” with female growth as the core in today’s film and television culture.

### 2. Post-feminist thought

Post-feminism originated from two feminist ideological movements and gradually took shape after the 1960s. It is short for postmodernism and feminism, but it is not a simple combination of the two, its essence is a complex product of the further development in the combination of feminism and *The Times*. Post-feminism mainly includes the following views: opposing grand narrative, advocating the establishment of scattered local small theory; Abandon the traditional metaphysical dualistic thinking mode, advocate women return to nature, return to self; It opposes essentialism and universalism, affirms gender differences,

emphasizes the differences in social status, race, class and culture among women, and advocates that in the social and political practice of striving for equality between men and women, the interests and destiny of the whole human society should be considered in consideration of their own goals; It emphasizes the consciousness of female subjects, affirms differences, shifts attention from politics to personal experience, and advocates a diversified approach to pursue equality.

To sum up, post-feminism aims to deconstruct the logic of the binary opposition between men and women, place women in the real environment of history, ethnicity and race, build a diverse and different female world, and on this basis end and rocentrism and achieve social equality between men and women. However, this equality does not mean that women enter the field of men, but in the male and asexual to obtain the status of women’s “self”, not with men as the subject, women as the object of the absolute concept. This thought helped modern women’s ideological awakening and women’s movement to further develop.

The French feminist literary critic Simone de Beauvoir wrote in *The Second Sex*: “No group can ever identify itself as a group without presenting the other directly to itself.” [1] Put forward the concept of the other, and re-elaborated Hegel’s “master slave dialectics” from the perspective of female philosophy, and put forward the relationship model of “other-self”, which was further improved and consolidated by feminism. Therefore, this paper will take the female character Simone in the American drama “Fatal Woman” as an example to analyze how film and television culture embodies the post-feminist “oth-

er-self' theory.

### **3. Simone triple character image analysis**

#### **3.1 . The early stage focused on identity - Gay wife**

Simone tried to create a perfect "other" image in front of the public in the early stage, with strong economic strength, a happy family, and he is also a carefree life of parties and beauty salons every day. So when Simone learns that her husband is gay, she is furious and even slaps her face when she learns that he swallows sleeping pills and tries to kill himself, but she still tries to create the perfect image to the outside world, calling an ambulance for her husband and pretending to be drunk.

She hated Wanda, who sent her proof photo, more than she hated the fact that her husband was gay. She hated the fact that her perfect life had been exposed. "My first husband liked wine better than me, my second liked cocaine better than me, and my third liked men better than me, see the pattern? I've always thought of myself as a great woman, but how great can I be if no one wants to love me?" In order to obtain the love of others and get comfort and satisfaction, the self-value attached to the evaluation of others.

Despite knowing that her husband was gay, she still attended her daughter's engagement party with him, and she never ended her marriage after fighting with her husband against each other, tying herself in a traditional female marriage relationship, influenced by the traditional female dedication, and despite having superior economic accumulation to her partner, Still to the relationship between people and family order restrictions, the law is not perfect and imperfect, dedication of self-limitations and other fetters gradually to their own "gay wife" identity.

Anthony Giddens once proposed that "women exist as the object of sexual desire rather than the subject" [2]. They also strive to maintain the "perfect" image in the eyes of others and place themselves in the evaluation views of others to satisfy their inner satisfaction. Abandon the inner thoughts and pursuits of self, strive to maintain the perfect mask of today, and put themselves in the object status of "other" in the society, in the position of corresponding opposition to self, deeply trapped in the pattern of traditional values, difficult to break away from; At the beginning of the 1980s, the LGBT community made some progress in social status, and the spread of HIV was even more fearful. At that time, people's prejudice against homosexuals and discrimination against AIDS patients also made Simone conceal her identity of "gay wife". Both the prejudice of The Times and the domestication of society made her

female self-awakening even more valuable.

#### **3.2 . Medium-term focus on identity - lovers**

After Simone learned that her husband's gay identity, in order to relieve the heart of worry, at the same time, to the male as the main body of society to prove their "other" status, hide their perfect image in the outside world, and turned to the 18-year-old Tommy to forget love. The lack of love in marriage and finding a new love reflects Simone's intention to self-awaken and get rid of the trap of self-pity and self-love in the traditional marriage, which is also the process of finding herself.

One after another dining car private meeting seems to open Simone's heart, in the dating with younger, more dynamic boys feel the "upper" state in love, gained a certain degree of dominance, but also contribute to the perfection of their self-cognition. Speaking to Tommy, Simone confided that as a child she worked in the family laundry stealing Egyptian cotton, was woken up in the early hours of the morning to wash, iron, iron and return sheets, and that her mother told her "if you want to sleep on expensive sheets, choose who sleeps with you carefully." As de Beauvoir said, "The tragedy of women is the conflict between these two; The essential requirements of the subject, who always establishes herself as essential, and the requirements of her constituting the non-essential situation." [3]

Simone deliberately maintained the image of "the other", deeply poisoned by social discipline, and attached to the thoughts of others as her code of conduct, successive marriages represented a desire to obtain secular perfection, and set aside traditional age concerns and expose their hearts, further exploration of self, achievement of self-tracing, brave challenge to social tradition and custom. Tommy, who is far from his age, is in love.

At this time, Simone broke away from the spiritual shackles given to her by her family in the emotional vortex, and she realized that she was no longer the appendage and foil of the people sleeping beside her, but another subject with independent identity attributes, and her self-awareness gradually began to reveal. Although in her love with Tommy, she had the pleasure of deliberately retaliating against her husband's homosexual behavior, with the purpose of "revenge of the other", she kept searching for herself in the process, and taking the initiative in the love affair prompted her female self-consciousness to break away from the shackles of traditional patriarchal authority and explore a new self.

#### **3.3 . Later focus on identity - feminists**

After Simone learned that her husband was suffering from AIDS, she took the initiative to come to the door to per-

suade her husband's lover to make peace with him, and to take care of her sick husband, she abandoned the so-called prejudice in the world step by step, and began to break her own "perfect" image in front of others, and gradually grew into a feminist.

From the confrontation with the husband to the companionship of friendship, from the attachment to the social status and economic conditions brought by the man to the inner abundance of self-acquisition and self-satisfaction. In the face of her husband's time is running out, long changed into a red dress and he danced a tango, the final moment will needle into Carl's body, to complete her "revenge". She shed her old clothes, cut her hair short, and after her husband's death, set up her own foundation to contribute to the medical research of AIDS. Although her appearance at this time is not glamorous when she first saw the show, she has an independent and confident light. This plot is not only the 1980s feminists and gender minorities to break through the social shackles, but also Simone's own transformation from "other" to "self" post-feminist realism.

Third, deficiencies and reference significance

In this story, although Simone as a whole shows a positive and progressive feminist growth history from the other to the self, the female role's obedient return, unconsciously catering to the male subject, seemingly independent consciousness, and at the same time, the plot progress such as coming to the door to find her husband and lover and dispersing her assets to set up related organizations, seems brave and independent. But in fact they are more dependent on the traditional marriage relationship and on the husband. In addition, the screenwriter uses the husband to shape the image of a gentleman to cover up his inability to resist the traditional marriage relationship, which makes the traditional marriage always bound women, and only disguises the patriarchal society more, rather than really centering on female thought. Simone's path of female self-growth is still in line with the zeitgeist(3) Later focus on identity - feminists

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#### **4. Deficiencies and reference significance**

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The development of women's rights movement has promoted the enhancement of female role self-awareness. However, the old social psychological structure of women and the traditional positioning of women in family and society still cause certain limitations. Further exploration is needed to balance ideological and commercial attributes and create a more suitable film and television culture related to feminism. The character image of Simone in *Deadly Woman* helps film and television culture to get rid of the traditional "male" thinking color and provide more diversified shaping for women. Actively explore the image of women, promote the diversification of female roles, find a clear difference between women's traditional values and patriarchal system, and promote reform and development; Help women to shape the phenomenon of "self" and get rid of the bondage of social gender; Promote the diversion of TV dramas, attract more female audiences to participate actively, increase the topic degree, improve the discussion degree, and increase the commercial attributes of film and television culture.

### 5. Conclusion

In the development of The Times, the status of women continues to progress, from women to gaze at others to enjoy themselves. Although there are women's difficulties in every era, with the development of The Times, the marriage model continues to progress, social ideas are becoming more and more open, and women are gradually moving from passive to dominant. They realize their own value and explore their own value, support social minorities to fight for rights, pursue economic ability on a par with men, pursue equal rights between men and women, and achieve true equality between men and women. Women are gradually no longer in a secondary subordinate position, and truly step on the social stage. Diversity supports social development and realizes true female independence. At that time, and is at the forefront of The Times and society, rather than breaking through the restrictions of The Times.

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### Reference:

- [1] Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex* (Full Translation), translated by Tao Tiezhu, China Books Publishing House, 1998
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