The Characteristics of Heroes Portrait in *Water Margin*

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**Abstract.** Relative to the heroism of orthodox “saving” work in *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, the heroes portrait in *Water Margin* is deeper affected by townsfolk’s ideas, tends to self-centered and maximize to pursuit the interest of the spirit and material, even has a new phenomenon that in order to achieve self-worth by any means. The heroes portrait in *Water Margin* presents the new characteristics which goes against the traditional concept of hero.

**Introduction**

Although the figures written in *Water Margin* \cite{1} have many controversial in history, some thinks they were heroes with loyalty, and others think they were bandits Rebels. However, there was no doubt that the Leong's Legends were respected as heroes for a long time. The *Water Margin* and the *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* have been carved as *Hero spectrum* in the Ming dynasty. Yang Minglang commented in the preface of *Hero spectrum*, “why they were called as heroes in *Water Margin* and the *Romance of the Three Kingdoms*, the answer was the heroes in *Water Margin* created by the Liangshan’s geographic features and the heroes in the *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* created by the times.” \cite{2} Nevertheless, the heroes created in the *Romance of the Three Kingdoms* were all about the dominant class. Compared with it, the heroes created in *Water Margin* were more came from the underworld. Thus, the heroes portrait in *Water Margin* has embodies the distinct characteristics of the times and deeper affected by townsfolk’s ideas, has presents the new characteristics which goes against the traditional concept of hero. Here, the author wants to analyze from the following two aspects.

**Satisfy Material Desires are Heroes’ Basic Requirement**

In *Water Margin*, “big mouth to eat meat, drinking bowl, large scale gold and silver” was the purpose of Liangshan heroes. This simple slogan pinned their embarrassment and constraints which they trying to get rid of their real-life and their simple ideal of meet unlimited material desires. This is why they became to an outlaw for coach or took refuge in the mountains. Dai zhong advised Shi Xiu to the partnership, he said: “In these times it doesn't pay to be too proper. The addlepated emperor is kept in the dark by corrupt officials. My understanding wasn't terribly clear, but on impulse I joined Song Jiang's band in Liangshan Marsh. Now we all get fair shares of gold and silver, and receive whole sets of clothing. Sooner or later the imperial court will declare a general amnesty and we'll all be given official posts.” (Chapter 43) Zhu Gui advised Zhu Fu to the partnership, he said: “Your tavern business isn't very good anyhow. Why not take your wife and children and go with me up the mountain and join our band? Gold and silver we share and share alike. You'll have whole sets of clothing. You'll be happy there.” (Chapter 42) Some researchers also keenly noted this problem, “although there reveals many aspects of swordsman culture, yet it mainly the self-interest culture.” \cite{3}

Because there were a strong desires for material, Liangshan heroes were extra value for money. There were a lot of descriptions of “hero love of money” in the books. For example, after Wu Song killed some people in the Duck and Drake Bower, “he cut a strip from the clothes of one of the dead men, dipped it in blood and wrote large on the white calcimined wall: ‘The slayer is Wu Song the tiger-killer!’” This is the real heroic act and spirit. However, “he stamped the silver flagons flat and
placed them inside his tunic” just because these things were made by silver. (Chapter 30) After Yang Xiong killed his wife in jade Screen Mountain, “He sliced her open from breast to belly, hauled out her organs, hung them on the tree, and cut her into seven parts. Then he wrapped her hair pins and ornaments into a bundle.” (Chapter 45) Yang Xiong did not care about his wife’s life, but he exceptionally cherished his wife’s few pieces of silver jewelry. After Li Kui pulled out his knife and cut Li Gui’s head off, “He went back and searched the house. Beneath some old clothes in two bamboo hampers he found a few pieces of silver and a number of ornamental hairpins and earrings. These he appropriated, and from the body of Li Gui retrieved the silver ingot he had given, and wrapped the loot in his bundle.” (Chapter 42) It is no wonder that some researchers evaluation, “the government and liangshan all had to use money to open and all love for money.” [4]

Because many mobsters value of money, the money objective play a role of buy people’s heart, “spent one’s money in reducing distress” was regarded as the synonyms of “sense of justice” and also became a usual means that the leader set up their prestige. Chao Gai was famous in the world because he spend him money to help his friend. “The ward chief of East Bank Village was surnamed Chao, his given name was Gai. Born of a well−to−do family native to these parts for many generations, Chao had always fought injustice and helped the needy. He liked nothing better than befriending gallant men, and put them up in his manor whenever they came to him, no matter what the circumstances. When they were ready to go, he gave them silver for travelling expenses.” (Chapter 13) So was Song Jiang, “He made friends only in the gallant fraternity, but he helped anyone, high or low, who sought his aid, providing his guest with food and lodging in the family manor, tirelessly keeping him company, and giving him travelling expenses when he wanted to leave. Song Jiang scattered gold about like dust! He never refused a request for money.” (Chapter 17) Therefore, Jin Shengtan was highly evaluated of him, “he got acquainted with the heroes... just only silver.” [5] They meet the material needs of those living on the river's lake bawcock, this generosity is also a basic principles to measure personality by good fellows of the green woods.

In Water Margin, regardless of material desire makes a man to give up petty routine life and become an outlaw for coach, or material makes some heroes won the fame, they are all reflects the heroes’ strong desire to of hunt for material.

Law of the Jungle is the Rules of Heroes if They Want to Survival in the World

Let us analysis the phenomenon of bullying of justice in Water Margin. In the eyes of ordinary people, the hero is bound to have the quality of good and evil, lives of the poor, but the hero concept manifested in Water Margin, were more concerned about whether they have enough force to overriding all over, not just the quality of justice. Even a man tough enough to be bullying, it does not prevent him to became a hero.

First, “wins cottage” plot mode interpretation of “bullying”. In Water Margin, it descript that the heroes in order to fight for a foothold for himself, they used the most common method—the strong bullying the weak, with their own force to get their fancy cottage, even if this cottage is already other hero of territoriality. Therefore, the novel “wins cottage” this plot pattern arises at the historic moment. The original “wins cottage” plot, is started from the warlords compete Liangshan in the bloody killing.

After Chao Gai Captured the Birthday Gifts, the gallant men everywhere would scorn him, he had no place to live, they went to Liangshan Marsh. The head of Liangshan is a man who named Wang Lun, he is narrow and stingy and very fussy about whom he took on, so Wang Lun did not accept them. Then Wu Yong attempted to rally Lin Chong to Stirs Internal Strife in the Water−Girt Stronghold. Finally, Chao Gai Won a Battle in Liangshan Marsh. Yang Zhi and Lu Da were driven into a corner; they heard that there would be safe in the Precious Pearl Monastery on Two-Dragon Mountain, “on Two-Dragon Mountain in Qingzhou Prefecture, is a monastery known as the Precious Pearl. It's nestled in the mountains and has only one path leading to it.” (Chapter 16) Yang Zhi and Lu Da want to capture it. The Two-Dragon Mountain was Deng Long's band. So they killed Deng Long, occupied a hill to act as a lord. From “wins cottage” plot mode, we can be seen that the law of hero is unconventional, they worship force, the stronger became kings, the braver wins, bullying is the rules which hero accepted.
Second, killed innocent people was a vicious continuation of bullying. If the “wins cottage” was limited to a hero’s suppress to opponents who strength of resistance, the killed innocent people was non-human nature extends of bullying the weak. When Song Jiang went to third attack on the Zhu Family Manor, Hu Cheng had already surrendered and seized Zhu Biao to Song Jiang. Li Kui had captured nearly five hundred men and an equal number of good horses, in addition to innumerable cattle and sheep. However, “Black Whirlwind went on killing smoothly. He charged into the Hu Family Manor and slaughtered the old squire and the whole family, young and old.” When Song Jiang asked Li Kui why killed all people, Li Kui answered: “Who's got the patience? Any live one I met, I cut down.” (Chapter 49) Li Kui’s pride and Song Jiang’s connivance reflected that the heroes lack of respect for innocent life. Song Jiang want Zhu Tong joined his band in Liangshan Marsh, he let Black Whirlwind killed Zhu Tong’s little son of the prefect to watch the lantern. “It was a bright moonlit night, and Zhu Tong plunged in among the trees. He saw the little boy lying dead on the ground.” (Chapter 50) To the great cause of the achievements of the hero, the most innocent child can be a victim. But the novel did not revealed the slightest condemnation of such behavior. Instead, this became a common expression means of contrast hero character. What’s more, the killing of innocent people was not individual acts; this was the norm of Liangshan heroes. When Wu Yong by a ruse took Daming city, “Chai Jin went with Cai Fu to his house where the superintendent collected his family and belongings. They prepared to leave for the mountain stronghold. ‘You must save the ordinary people of the city, Excellency,’ said Cai Fu. ‘Don’t let them come to any harm.’ Chai Jin relayed his request to Wu Yong. But though the Military Advisor immediately issued appropriate orders, by then half the population had been killed or wounded.” (Chapter 65) “Most of Liangshan heroes were without families and childless.” [6] When the Liangshan heroes siege of the darning city, there had no leader considered the innocent people’s suffered, the novel narrated the inhuman act such as massacre also did not the means of detracted Liangshan heroes’s heroism. As the researchers noted, ‘Those Liangshan heroes’ cruel and the heinous killing as if they really were the hero who ‘enforce justice on behalf of Heaven’. Their cruelty were subconsciously negligible by the readers.” [7]

Third, appreciation of the evil. If bullying developed to the extreme, that was the indifference of the weaker painful. When the Water Margin describing the plot of heroes killed someone, they often appreciated and relished the evil details. If not this, it seemed that this was not sufficient to non-performance of the hero’s heroic feelings. “Although the total amount characters about the description of ‘bloody’ scene in Water Margin were small, but it scattered throughout the book.” [8] In the chapter of Song Jiang Slays Poxi in a Fit of Anger, “Before Poxi could scream again he pushed her down with his left hand and with his right slit her throat. Fresh blood spurted. Poxi gurgled. Afraid she wouldn't die, Song Jiang slashed with his dagger once more. The girl's head dangled loosely on the pillow.”(Chapter 20) When described Yang Xiong killed his wife, the writer said: “He sliced her open from breast to belly, hauled out her organs, hung them on the tree, and cut her into seven parts. Then he wrapped her hair pins and ornaments into a bundle.” (Chapter 45) The author was careful to express so cruel acts and used enjoy tone to set off the hero’s domineer and pride.

There were often had the detailed description of the eat people’s heart in the novel. When Huang Wenbing was captured, “Only then did Li Kui cut open Huang's chest, pull out his heart and hold it up for the assembled gallants to see.”(Chapter 40) There even had the voice of experience of cooked people’s heart. When Song Jiang was captured by Wang, “‘Let's get started, boys.’ Wang the Stumpy Tiger urged. ‘Cut out this ox's heart and liver and cook us three portions of sour and peppery sobering-up broth!’ A robber brought a large bronze basin filled with water and set it down in front of Song Jiang. Another robber, rolling up his sleeves, held a shiny pointed carving knife. The first robber scooped up water with his hands and splashed it on Song Jiang's chest. Cold water drives the hot blood away, so that the heart and liver, when removed, are crisp and tasty.” (Chapter31) The novel described this evil, not only had slightest evasive, but also told the experiences of eat the hearts with full of great spirit. This was the undoubtedly wanton trample of trampled upon the weaker.
The Power Strife is the Way which Liangshan Heroes to Realize their Value

The principle of the survival in took refuge in the mountains was the able men first, so the position of leader of the cottage was the highest goal of Liangshan heroes. There were only Song Jiang and Chao Gai who had qualified to compete the leaders in one hundred single eight. Thus, the novel in shaping the image of the heroes, had not shy away their power struggle.

“Leadership were not required with unrivaled martial arts and Super wisdom, they only need to have a unique personality - the leader personality of let the hero in the world submit to him.” [9] Chao Gai from captured birthday gifts to fight with Wang Lun, and early operation of Liangshan cause, had been able to allow people to surrender, lived in the chief position. However, since Song Jiang became an outlaw, Song Jiang's prestige increasing and pressure over the Chao Gai gradually, the reason was very complex, but one of them was the deliberate power strife. After Song Jiang became an outlaw, he was always took the bull by the horns, bear the brunt whenever things encountered from the front. On the one hand, he did this because of his enthusiasm for the Liangshan cause. On the other hand, he did this also for himself buy off the heart flow, and gradually put Chao Gai overhead. Chao Gai was not the people of fear and dangerous, before Song Jiang took the occupation, he had scraped repeatedly, such as robbed execution ground to save Song Jiang in Jiangzhou. He was always took the lead. However, after Song Jiang took the occupation, he put Chao Gai’s position just as the symbolic leader.

For example, in the chapter of Song Jiang’s First attack on the Zhu Family Manor, Chao Gai said: “‘I will personally lead our forces down and purge the Zhu Family Village so that our reputation for valor will not be lost. Children, off with their heads!’ Song Jiang answered with plausible-sounding justifications: ‘You are the highest leader here, brother. Why sally forth on minor matters? I have no talent, but with a contingent of men and horses, and the help of some of our brothers, I'd like to attack the Zhu Family Manor.’”(Chapter 51) Faced with this compliment and positioning, Chao Gai must acceptably with peace of mind. But then, it seems that Song Jiang would never give the opportunity to Chao Gai to assault.

When Chao Gai listened that Chai Jin was trapped in Gaotang prefecture, he proposed to save Chai Jin by himself. “’Lord Chai has always been benevolent to our fortress,’ said Chao Gai. ‘Today, he's in danger. We must rescue him. I'll go personally.’ ‘You're the highest leader here, brother, you shouldn't make a move lightly,’ said Song Jiang. ‘I've long been indebted to Lord Chai. Let me go on your behalf’”. (Chapter 57) Next, in the chapter of Song Jiang fights on mount Huashan in the west, Chao Gai listened Shi Jin and Sagacious Lu were captured, he was enraged and went to rescue them, “’How dare those animals be so unmannerly!’ he fumed. ‘I'm going down there personally. If I don't capture those rogues I won't return!’ ‘You're the leader of our fortress, brother,’ said Song Jiang. ‘You mustn't lightly take action. Let me go.’” (Chapter 58)

At this time, Song Jiang had not much explanation, he manifested the way of it could be that and formed a convention, without objection. When Song Jiang attacked Mount Mangdang, “Song Jiang was furious. ‘How dare those crooks behave so rudely,’ he fumed. ‘I'll go down and deal with them!’” (Chapter 58) The novel did not mention Chao Gai’s reaction in this plot, it seemed that he had no room to fight. Just as some researchers put it, “Chao Gai has nothing but a hollow victory.”[10] Chao Gai was not without consciousness of Song Jiang’s exclusion, because every time when Song Jiang laid down his life to rescued the brothers, the others would returned to their life for the friendship, and Song Jiang made contributions to the aura. There were a lot of plots that mentioned nearly everyone in the cottage were Song Jiang's henchmen. When Wu Yong went to persuade Song Jiang as their leader, he said “Your name, brother, is world renowned. We wish to choose an auspicious day and invite you to become our leader. We will obey your commands. If you don't take over, brother, who else would dare?” (Chapter 59)

In attack to Zengtou village, Chao Gai did not want to continue the tolerance, he was enraged. “How dare those animals be so unmannerly!” he fumed. “I'm going down there personally. If I don't capture those rogues I won't return!” (Chapter 59) Chao Gai knew he was just had a few opportunities, so he desperately went ahead, too quick success and ignored some obvious flaws, he was dead before the ship even sank. Before Chao Gai died, he turned his head to Song Jiang and
said: “Preserve your health, brother,” he said. “Let whoever captures the bowman who slew me become the ruler of Liangshan Marsh.” (Chapter 59) On his deathbed, he was determined to negativist Song’s mind, use a unique way to thwart Sung boarded the first chair, which was full of resentment of Song Jiang and the final lamented struggle for power losers. The depict of Song Chao’s struggle for power was very cool and objective in Water Margin and not superficially reveal the narrator’s subjective tendencies. This can show the author’s identity of the way that power strife could create heroes.

Summary

In conclusion, the heroes portrait in Water Margin was in the unique background, influenced by the public consciousness, showed a tendency of use self-interest as the core, it is the meaningful phenomenon in literary history.

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