



Feminist Utopian Discourse in Eighteenth-Century Chinese and English Fiction: A Cross-Cultural Comparison

Qian Ma

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Beginning with a general discussion of patriarchy as the starting point of feminist utopian literature, Qian Ma's study focuses on a cross-cultural comparison of feminist utopian discourse in six 18th-century Chinese and English fictional narratives: Charlotte Lennox's "Female Quixote", Sarah Scott's "A Description of Millennium Hall", Samuel Richardson's "Clarissa", Chen Duansheng's "Destiny after Rebirth", Cao Xueqin's "A Dream of the Red Mansion" and Li Ruzhen's "Destiny of Flowers in the Mirror". The study also examines the contrast between the feminist idealistic world and the patriarchal realistic world within fictional narratives, and the contrast between fictional ideality and social realities in China and England during the 18th century. Although restrictions of patriarchal society fostered a tendency for early feminist writers to express social criticism obliquely in the form of utopias, the writers discussed in this study were true forerunners of contemporary feminism, and their works anticipated today's feminist concerns.



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