

## Research on Chi Zijian's Death Writing of Depictions of Death

Tingxin Ma\*

School of Literature & Media Dissemination, Shandong University of Technology, Shandong  
255049, China

\*mtx68@163.com

### Abstract

**From ancient times to the present, death has been an enduring topic in literary works. However, in Chi Zijian's literary world, death is not despair, but a glimmer of hope in the rough and bitter fate.**

### Keywords

**Death; Consciousness of Death.**

### 1. Introduction

Death, as the end of life, is an inescapable fate for everyone. The novel "Under the tree" begins with death and ends with death. There are more than 20 deaths in the novel. The disappearance of life reveals the unfortunate fate of the hero's seven fights, and reflects the hardships and sufferings of life. This paper mainly analyzes the strong sense of death in this novel from two aspects: the manifestation and significance of death and the symbolic image of death.

### 2. The Manifestation and Significance of Death

#### 2.1. Natural Death

Natural death, that is, the end of natural life, refers to the death that conforms to the law of natural development of life and occurs without external intervention. In the novel "Under the tree", there are two modes: death from aging and death from illness. The author doesn't show too much sadness about the death of these two modes. Death is a kind of calm for the living and a kind of relief for the dead.

The first mode is aging and death, such as the death of Grandpa QiDou. When Grandpa QiDou had his last breath, almost no one cared about him, and seemed to ignore his existence. Not only adults, but children also learn from the tone of adults, thinking that he "dies early, is quick", "dies early, and lives early". What is shown here is not MoMo's attitude towards life, but a natural law that is human nature.

The second mode is death from illness, such as the death of Jin Kaihe's wife, a woman who has been paralyzed at home all the year round because of illness, has long lost her strong body and handsome face when she was young. Illness has already tortured her. Her life was undoubtedly a drag on her family, so after her death, everyone felt relieved. Her death is a relief for everyone and even for herself.

#### 2.2. Unnatural Death

Unnatural death, that is, the early termination of natural life, refers to the premature death caused by other factors besides the natural development law of life. In this novel, there are two modes: suicide and accidental death. This kind of death often plays a role in promoting the development of the storyline in novels, and embodies a strong sense of death.

The first mode is suicide, and the most typical one is the death of QiDou's mother. Being extremely submissive is QiDou's impression of her mother all the time. However, it is puzzling to QiDou that such a submissive woman chose suicide as the end of her life. She thinks that although her mother is weak and sick, she should die quietly after exhausting her last strength, instead of ending her life in such a tragic and extreme way.

The second mode is death from illness, such as the death of Jin Kaihe's wife, a woman who has been paralyzed at home all the year round because of illness, has long lost her strong body and handsome face when she was young. Illness had already tortured her, and her life was undoubtedly a drag on her family, so after her death, everyone felt relieved. "The funeral of Jin Kaihe's family is always filled with an atmosphere after a storm comes a calm", and everyone is concerned that there is no such woman's piercing scream in the world. In the near future, there will be a poor and healthy woman sitting on Jin Kaihe's Kang instead of feeling sympathy and sorrow for her death. Her death is a relief for everyone and even herself.

In a word, Chi Zijian wrote this kind of familiar death in a detached and peaceful manner, which shows that the natural law of life can't be violated, so he can only look at these people's consciousness of death with the attitude of accepting it safely.

### 3. The Symbolic Image of Death

Literary image is a kind of "ideographic image" created by the author according to his unique life experience and emotional experience, which often expresses the author's life experience and philosophical thinking about things.

#### 3.1. Red Horse

Horse has always existed as a means of transportation in ancient times, but it has become an image symbolizing death in Chi Zijian's works. It seems that there is no correlation between the two, but in fact, Chi Zijian's arrangement has a certain meaning. As a means of transportation, the horse's function is to greet and send, and in the novel, the horse has also become the "messenger" of the funeral, which makes the coming and going of the horse coincide with the coming and going of life.

Perhaps because the mountain road is rugged and far away, the funeral mode in the novel is that four red horses pull the coffin into the cemetery instead of carrying the coffin by manpower. The story begins with QiDou's mother's death. "Four red horses of different ages pull a red coffin to the mountain, and her house is always short of one person.". Since then, the hooves of four red horses have almost run through QiDou's life. "Every time QiDou sees them, the unusual hooves will ring in their ears, and the shadows of four red horses will come towards her like four fireballs, which makes her wonder why this sound hangs over her like a ghost for a long time." For QiDou, there are four red horses parked in everyone's house, and they are ready to leave at any time. Every arrival of Red Horse means the death of a life, as does QiDou's mother, QiDou's grandfather, father and menstruation's family, and the whole novel is shrouded in the shadow of death. In addition, the appearance of the red horse makes death full of Zen, and death can be reached in a carriage pulled by the red horse. The boundary between life and death is getting smaller and smaller, even close to nothing. The author seems to intentionally convey the idea that all beings are equal before death. It has nothing to do with your social status, wealth and moral character. Whether you accept it or not, you will face death one day.

#### 3.2. Seven

"Seven" is often a concept of time for the deceased in the proposition of death. "The July 7 mourning custom, commonly known as 'doing seven', is an important way for the living to 'cross over' for the dead. From the initial mourning of the deceased, the 'Dharma' will be done every seven days until 49 days."

In this novel, "Seven" is endowed with the connotation of death. The hero is called QiDou, and the book is divided into seven chapters, and each chapter is accompanied by the growth of QiDou. The first chapter, "After the Funeral", tells that QiDou's mother hanged herself because she couldn't stand the torture of illness, and then her father went out to work, and QiDou lived a miserable and miserable life since then, which kicked off her miserable life. In the second chapter, "In Slogu Town", QiDou followed menstruation to Slogu to visit his elderly grandfather who wanted to see his granddaughter for the last time. Finally, his grandfather got his wish and died without success. The third chapter, "The mail carriage is coming", the Jin Kaihe woman who suffered from illness all the year round finally swallowed her last breath, and people used the mail carriage to send the news of a person's return to God. The fourth chapter is "Murderer". QiDou's father, who wanted to come back to spend the Spring Festival with his daughter, died in a car accident on his way home, and the adopted menstruation family was shot by the madman next door. Although QiDou was the only one who survived, she was completely orphaned. In the fifth chapter, "Cabin under the White Karu Mountain", QiDou who came to Sanjiu Work Area became a substitute teacher, and the wife of the work area chief of Sanjiu Work Area died because of dystocia. QiDou married the work area chief in order to save a student's fate, but the marriage lasted only one day. Knowing that QiDou's work area chief chose to let QiDou go, QiDou, who had finally settled down, started drifting again. In the sixth chapter, "Sailing Days", QiDou came to the white ship as a waiter. Her quietness and beauty made her constantly sought after by men, and at the same time, she was hated. The captain who was falsely accused of having an affair with her jumped out of the car and committed suicide because of mental disorder, while the sailor who loved her drowned. In the seventh chapter, "On the farm", QiDou ended her life of drifting at sea and married an ordinary farm worker in pursuit of stability. Although she ended the suffering of drifting, the claws of death continued to extend to the people around her, her son was taken away by ruthless illness, and the owner of his lifelong belief, Little White Horse, died unexpectedly while hunting, and his childhood playmates also died on the battlefield. It is worth noting that Chi Zijian used the death image of "Seven" to render a strong death atmosphere, but at the same time, he also expressed his compassion, pity and memory for the deaths of these characters through the memorial significance of "Seven". This slightly contradictory attitude shows Chi Zijian's awe and respect for life.

#### 4. Conclusion

Generally speaking, Chi Zijian's novels are filled with the breath of death by describing the manifestation and symbolic image of death. The air echoed with a funeral atmosphere, as if dead people were everywhere and rotting everywhere. People live as if they are coming to suffer, and it is the same everywhere, and there is death everywhere. Just like QiDou, the hero in the novel, suffering goes hand in hand with her, and there is no escape. There is no doubt that Chi Zijian has a unique opinion on death, and her unique thinking on death comes from her own life experience and personal experience of death. In the novel "Under the tree", although she focuses on describing death, her death is sad without hurting. She digs poetry and beauty in the process of life in her writing of death, dispels the fear of death with tender strokes, shows the tenacity of life, and triggers our comprehension and thinking of life and death.

#### References

- [1] Fang Shoujin: "The Wizard of the North-Chi Zijian", Harbin: Heilongjiang People's Publishing House, 2002.
- [2] Cong Lin: "Life Opens to Poetry--The Poetic Quality of Chi Zijian's Novels", Changchun: Jilin People's Publishing House, 2016 edition.

- [3] Li Huijun: "Chi Zijian's Rural World and Narrative Spirit", Wuhan University Press, 2017 edition.
- [4] Xie Youshun: "Sorrowful but Not Desperate Writing-I Read Chi Zijian's Novels", "Contemporary Writers Review", No. 1, 1996.