

“Waving High the Delicate Mistress”: on Feminist Geography and American Identity in the Valley of the Moon

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Abstract : In The Valley of the Moon, Jack London implicitly presents the connection between the city and the male, the country and the female, constructing a gender space where the city and the countryside are opposed. But meanwhile, London is constantly dismantling the gender space through the reversed travel map so as to highlight the fluidity and productivity of female space. Under such circumstance, the original gender space has to be reorganized. Through the construction of gendered urban and rural spaces, Jack London presents the national crisis in the process of urbanization of the American West in the late 19th century, while the female-led reversed travel map reproduces the original contribution of the American West to the construction of nationality. In the end, the reorganized neutral space “valley of the moon” reflects the “garden” motif in American national imagination and plays an important role in rebuilding national identity. This research studies the feminist geography and cartography in Jack London's novel The Valley of the Moon and analyzes the gender-politics attribution in the literary geography writing in London's novel on this basis. The research returns to the American historical context at the end of the 19th century, focusing on how London's feminist geography embodies his sense of nationality and investigating how female-dominated literary cartography reconstructs American identity. This paper takes Literary Cartography, and feminist geography as the ideological guide combines with the discourse of gender politics. comprehensively uses various literary criticism methods such as deconstructionist literary criticism, and new historicism literary criticism, etc., Through the study of Jack London's work, the paper aims to analyse how London constructs a national image by literary geography.

Keywords : American identity, American west, feminist geography, garden motif, the valley of the moon

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