

On Wang Anyi's *The Song of Everlasting Sorrow*: The Appropriation and Rewriting of Popular Women's Narrative

Abstract: The contemporary Chinese female writer Wang Anyi's novel, *The Song of Everlasting Sorrow*, aligns closely with the fundamental patterns of popular women's narratives on a plot level, incorporating dramatic elements such as the Miss Shanghai beauty pageant, a love triangle, a May-December romance, and murder. However, the novel's narrative attitude maintains a distance from popular storytelling, presenting a literary quality characterized by detachment, irony, and compassion. Through "anti-legend" and de-dramatized writing, a reflective reconstruction of gossip, and the integration of characters into the fabric of daily life and spatial imagery, Wang Anyi transcends the typified tendencies of popular narratives, endowing the women's story with complex emotional layers and a sense of lived reality. As a counterexample, the failure of the film adaptation of *The Song of Everlasting Sorrow* lies precisely in its amplification of the original novel's popular elements, thereby betraying the core aesthetics of the literary work. In conclusion, the novel *The Song of Everlasting Sorrow* appropriates and rewrites the popular women's narrative model to establish a new paradigm for women's writing.

Keywords: Women's Writing; Popular Narrative; Wang Anyi; *The Song of Everlasting Sorrow*

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Hu Shiyang was born in Shanghai, China, in 2000. She is currently a Ph.D. candidate in Literary Creation at Beijing Normal University. Her fiction and literary criticism have been published in numerous journals, including *Contemporary*, *October*, *Flower City*, *Shanghai Literature*, *Literary Gazette*, *Novella Selection (Original Edition)*, and *China Women's News*. Her works have also been selected for anthologies such as *The Calm Sea: 2024 Anthology of Chinese Women's Fiction* and *Changjiang Literature & Art: Selected Fiction*.

