

The Family Ethical Narration in Yamasaki Toyoko 's Novels

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Abstract: During over 50 years of literary career, Japanese writer Yamasaki Toyoko has drawn works and devoted herself to literary creation. Her work encompassed a wide array of themes, a large span of time and space, and a large number of characters. Yamasaki's writing approach is not the same as the traditional Japanese watakushi shōsetsu writing paradigm, where she explores human nature, ethics, culture, etc. with realism. Narrative techniques are utilized by her to convey the thinking and exploration of diverse ethical relations and social problems. The novel by Yamasaki exposes the distortion of Japanese family systems in terms of family ethics and morality. While pondering traditional family ethics, she also expressed her desire for a harmonious and healthy family ethical environment. The paper focuses on the writing of family ethics in Yamasaki 's literature with ethical literary criticism and narratology, hoping to rediscover the literary value of her novels from the standpoint of ethics and morality.
Keywords: Yamasaki Toyoko; family ethics; the Japanese Family System; ethical literary criticism, narratology

1. INTRODUCTION

Yamasaki Toyoko, known as the Balzac of Japan, has devoted herself to novel creation unswervingly since the transformation of journalists to writers. Her career as a writer spanned 57 years. Yamasaki 's novels are different from traditional Japanese watakushi shōsetsu (Deng, 2013). She once said that "writers should care about the fate of the nation, the sufferings of the people, and my work is a rebellion against ' watakushi shōsetsu '"(Chen, 2020). Xia Gang pointed out that "from "Toyoko Yamasaki has always maintained her challenging posture towards self, society, and the literary world (Xia, 1987). Compared to the writer pacing leisurely in the ivory tower, her positive desire to keep pace with the times is indeed valuable"(Deng, 2013). Family ethics is "a code of conduct or code of conduct that regulates relations between family members and is an integral part of social ethics"(Li, 2022). Yamasaki reflects on traditional family ethics through the life encounters of different characters, profoundly revealing the distortion of ethics and morality in Japan's traditional family system, and also conveying her appeal to building a

harmonious and healthy family ethical environment. In the process of portraying the characters, she shows her ethical appeal by highlighting the human factor or animal factor in human nature. It can be said that her novels contain great ethical value, so ethical research is an important and necessary link to interpret her novels. In the past literature studies, ethical criticism focused on content, while narrative criticism often focused on form. In recent years, some scholars have conducted enlightening research on this issue. German scholar Ansgar Nünning pointed out that "the more literary ethical criticism borrows narrative methods, and the more narratology is interested in ethics and value dissemination, the more they can achieve win-win research results"(Nünning, 2015). Shang Biwu, a Chinese scholar, holds the same view: "To investigate the significance and value of a work, we need to study both the content and the form, and cannot attends to one thing and loses another" (Shang, 2017).The literary ethical criticism put forward by Nie Zhenzhao, a Chinese scholar, emphasizes the return to the historical scene, explains the ethical implication in literary texts from the perspective of ethics, analyzes the ethical choices made in the complex relationships between man and himself, man and others, man and society, and analyzes the ethical factors therein, trying to rediscover literary value from the standpoint of ethics and morality (Nie & Songlin, 2020). He also believes that " we should strengthen the communication and dialogue between narratology and literary ethics, the two most important literary criticism methods today, give full play to their strengths and advantages, and explore the meaning and connotation of literary texts in a complementary way." As mentioned above, the combination of literary ethical criticism and narrative theory can make the two literary criticism methods complement each other and helps better interpret the content and form of literary works. In the past 20 years, Chinese and Japanese scholars have made fruitful research achievements in the study of Yamasaki's novels, which also gives the author great inspiration. However, few scholars use ethical literary criticism and narrative theory to deeply study Yamasaki 's novels. In addition, it can be seen from previous studies that many scholars tend to focus on the study of character images and war themes, and there is no research on family ethics. According to this, the paper will try to extract the family ethics theme from Yamasaki's many novels through sorting out conjugal relation, parent-child relationship, sibling relationship. Specifically, this paper explores Yamasaki's novels from the perspective of family ethics with ethical literary criticism, and analyzes the ethical implications of her novels' narrative features with and narratology. By the use of two literary criticism

methods, this paper attempts to rediscover her literary value from a new perspective. Moreover, through diachronic analysis and reflection, synchronic analysis and induction, this paper brings insight into Yamasaki's family ethical thoughts and modern significance of her literature.

2. THE INFLUENCE OF RELIGION ON THE JAPANESE FAMILY SYSTEM

The birth of the Japanese family system has also undergone long social and historical changes. In this process, it has a subtle and far-reaching impact on the thoughts and behaviors of the Japanese people. It can be said that the history of changes in the Japanese family system reflects the changes in Japanese family ethics. The formation of the Japanese family system is inseparable from the influence of Japanese Shintō. As one of the spiritual pillars in the development of Japanese society, Shintoism plays a vital role in the formation of the Japanese family system. Shintoism is a native religious belief in Japan, influenced by Confucianism, Buddhism, and other religions, forming a religion centered on nature worship and ancestor worship. One of its cores, ancestor worship, became the foundation for the birth of the Japanese family system. Ancestor worship is crucial for maintaining the Japanese family system (Liu, 2005). First, it encourages people to practice filial piety and obey their parents. Secondly, it promotes the continuation and development of the family business. Thirdly, it provides people with spiritual motivation for their lives. The Japanese "family" is "an objective existence that is formed centered on blood families, but transcends blood families, and continues continuously from the first ancestor and inherited by future generations (Zhuo, 2006)." In Japan, the "family" revolves around the family business, paying attention to the inheritance of the family business, and valuing the existence of the entire family. As a result, it has formed the characteristics of prioritizing ancestral worship over blood ties and emphasizing collectivism over individualism. The sanctification of family business is actually a product of Shintoism. Japanese people believe that the family business is bestowed by the Gods, so they may prioritize maintaining the family business over considering their children's marital happiness. In addition, the formation of the Japanese family system has also been influenced by Confucianism from China. Japanese people selectively absorbed Confucian concepts such as father guides son, husband guides wife, and respect for seniority. Although the Japanese family system objectively promotes the mobility of Japanese

social classes and the prosperity of family business, it also leads to inequality among family members. For example, systems such as primogeniture brought about conflicts between family members. After the war, the abolition of the family system was specified in the Japanese constitution, and the emperor system, which was the largest family system in Japan, also fell from its divine status. On December 15, 1945, the U.S. military issued an order to abolish the State Shinto, which not only abolished privileges of Shintoism, but also shook the core of the family system, which was ancestor worship (Li, 1997). However, behind the equality of law, there are still remnants of feudalism in the family system. For a long time after the war, the phenomenon of "husband's domination" caused by the ideology of "male superiority and female inferiority" and the phenomenon of recruiting sons-in-law under the concept of "family business first" continued to exist. With the socio-economic development and the rise of the women's movement, the younger generation in Japan has rebelled against the "patriarchal authority" under the influence of liberal democratic thought, further promoting the disintegration of the family system. By reading Yamasaki's novel, we can discover the remnants of the Japanese family system and the signs of its disintegration. These are reflected in the changes in interpersonal relationships within the family in her novels. For example, the loosening of the male protagonist and the female protagonist's internal model, the lack of the father's parenting role, and the strengthening of the affection between siblings.

3. UNBALANCED CONJUGAL RELATION

Conjugal Relation occupies the core position in family ethics. Regarding the ethics of husband and wife, Yamasaki constructed two narrative models: "the wife is superior to the husband," and "the husband is superior to the wife," and explains the ethical conflicts between husband and wife in the specific historical and cultural context of Japan. For example, *Nyokei Kazoku* and *Onna no Kunsbō* highlight the family environment of "strong wives and weak husbands" in female-line families under the concept of "family business first" and "recruiting sons-in-law." *Karei-naru Ichizoku* depicts the normal relationship between husband and wife in the context of Japan's patriarchal society, where the husband is strong and the wife is weak. *Fumō Chitai* and *Unmei no Hito* show the conflicts between husband and wife under the post-war Japanese society model of "the male is in charge of the outside and the female is in charge of the inside". "Yamasaki

Toyoko attaches great importance to the exploration of real-life emotions and perceives the physical space of actual existence through the psychological space of actual existence. What she shows is another world that is close to real life, takes place in a civilized era but is far away from civilized society (Li, 1999)." The novels showcase the conflicts and contradictions between spouses in a special family environment and the atmosphere of the times, indicating the author's ethical orientation in looking forward to building a harmonious marital relationship. First of all, taking *Nyokei Kazoku* and *Onna no Kunsbō* as examples, it illustrates the relationship between husband and wife under the influence of the core essence of the family system of "family business is the top priority" and "the wife is superior to the husband". "Completely different from the Chinese tradition of passing family property to sons but not daughters, and to daughters-in-law but not sons-in-law, the purpose of adopting a son-in-law in Japan is to inherit the family business (Nie, 2017)." Therefore, family members are often bound by this idea and have to go against their will when it comes to marriage and lose the right to choose. In addition, the custom of son-in-law and son-in-law also has a certain impact on the ethical relationship between husband and wife. The two novels show such a special family form. that is, the ethical environment within the family seems to be incompatible with the ethical environment of the entire society where men are superior to women. Yamasaki's novels often use the third-person omniscient perspective. However, in the narrative process, to achieve ethical significance, the narrator will select the perspective of specific characters. At the beginning of *Nyokei kazoku*, the narrator, as an observer, stands outside the story and observes and records the funeral of Yajima's family from a photographic perspective, creating a realistic sense of presence, highlighting the luxury and grandeur of the funeral, and creating suspense. Then the narrator uses the perspective of the eldest daughter Fujiyo to stay the story time in her complex mood. Through her inner activities, "Compared with the funeral of her mother who died six years ago, it seemed a little inferior, but she considered that her father was only a live-in son-in-law of the Yajima family, which was also a grand funeral," (Yamasaki, 1966). It occurred to Fujiyo that her father, who was married into and lived with his bride's family, had endured for 30 to 40 years, and claimed that his last wish was that his funeral should be at least more grand than her mother's, so she could not help feeling sad for her father's ignorance.",(Yamasaki, 1966) revealing that the status of father and mother in the family seems different from that of other families. In order to solve the suspense at the beginning of the novel, the narrator manipulates the

narrative time and uses the chronological disorder to recount the deformed family environment of Yajima family. The marriage between father Yoshizō and mother Matsuko can be said to be a marriage of interest, and this interest comes from the purpose of inheriting the family business. Therefore, there is no basis for love between Yoshizō and Matsuko. In this big family, women are in a high position, while live-in sons-in-law are in a low position. Matsuko always bosses her husband around when she gets along with him. This partial flashback shaped the image of Yoshizō who has a humble position in the relationship between husband and wife. The family form of "the wife is superior to the husband" also highlights the unequal marital relationship between spouses. The novel *Onna no kunsho* also has few direct descriptions of conjugal relationship. However, the narrator depicts the great disparity between husband and wife in the family through indirect description. The narrator shows the humble image of the father through the perspective of the daughter Shikiko "serving the mother like a servant", (Yamasaki, 1965) while the mother has the aura of an heiress and the "elegant demeanor and humble attitude" (Yamasaki, 1965) that a famous merchant wife should have. The root of this "strong women and weak men" marital relationship lies in the custom of uxorilocal marriage in Senba Osaka. Secondly, taking *Karei-naru Ichizoku* as an example, it analyzes the relationship between husband and wife in the ethical environment of a patriarchal family where "the husband is superior to the wife". *Karei-naru Ichizoku* refers to the ethical dilemma of the absurdity, deformity and lack of ethics of Japanese society in the rapid development period of capitalist economy. In this seemingly wealthy and harmonious Manpyō family, there exists a non-standard family form beyond social morality. Yamasaki once told a Chinese reporter in an interview: "When you go back, you can tell Chinese readers that they can completely believe that the facts revealed in the novel are true. Japanese society is not as beautiful, tidy, and glamorous as it appears. It is very ugly inside (Mo, 1981)." At the beginning of the novel, the narrator depicts the luxurious picture of the New Year dinner of the Manpyō family, and spare no effort to play up Daisuke's superior family status as the head of a family. Then the narrator's perspective focuses on the two women sitting beside Daisuke, but the narrator seems to be in no hurry to disclose their identities, which is intended to arouse the curiosity of readers. The story goes on. The omniscient narrator skillfully announces their true identities by telling the story of Daisuke's intention to establish nepotism. It turns out that one of these two women is a wife, and the other is a mistress. "It seems strange to others, but for Daisuke, he has lived like

this for more than ten years and won't feel constrained or unnatural (Yamasaki, 1973)." This sentence is obviously the narrator's comment, with a specific ethical position, indicating that the narrator cannot agree with Daisuke's ethics different from ordinary people. In addition, the narrator also tells the details of Daisuke's wife saying good night with Daisuke's mistress, which further subverts the reader's ethical cognition. Readers' curiosity is aroused again, and they are full of questions and incomprehension about the fact that Daisuke's wife seems to frankly accept living under the same roof with her husband's mistress. The narrator does not hide any more, and recalls the reason why she accepted this act of violating marital ethics from the perspective of Daisuke's wife. When her husband Daisuke proposed the idea of "wife and mistress living in the same room" for the first time, which was an outrage of ethics, she was reluctant, but she was too weak to resist. She did not even think that her husband would put forward the sordid and immoral requirement of "making love with his wife and mistress at the same time", which went beyond the ethical limit she could bear. She returned to her mother's home in great humiliation, but no one helped her and finally sent her back. When asked to share the bed with her husband and mistress again, she flatly refused that "sex between husband and wife should not be like animals". The Sphinx factor in the wife has been struggling, and the human factor makes her unable to tolerate things beyond the ethical boundaries of husband and wife. But the husband, who has been controlled by the animal factor, ignored his wife's feeling and proposed that he had enough reason to divorce. Her husband's words are like the last straw that overwhelms the camel, Yasuko, who has no wife's dignity in Manpyō family, is deeply humiliated. She is desperate and wants to seek liberation through death. The readers are eager to know the reason that the husband said, but the narrator seems to hide it intentionally. This narrative gap causes suspense again. The suspense created by the narrator formed the ethical knot of the novel. For Daisuke, the ethical taboo between his father and his wife has led to his own ethical confusion, so the animal factor of Daisuke has dominated his thoughts and actions throughout the past decade. The ethical taboos committed by Daisuke's father have destroyed the family's ethical order, and also caused the inextricable knot between Daisuke and his wife. Finally, *Unmei no Hito* is taken as an example to explore the conflicts between husband and wife under the post-war family model of "the male is in charge of the outside and the female is in charge of the inside". At the start of the novel *Unmei no Hito*, the narrator creates a seemingly harmonious family atmosphere, but gives prominence to the

unequal relationship between husband and wife in the Japanese traditional patriarchal society in details. The hero's wife, Yuriko, takes care of her family every day. The scene of her husband coming home at two or three in the morning and Yuriko getting up to greet him has been described in detail twice in the novel. In addition, the narrator uses the technique of "interactive narrative" (Genette, 1980), "no matter how late her husband comes back, she always waits for him (Yamasaki, 2009b)", which clarifies the fact that she has waited for her husband to return late countless times. The scene of a wife waiting for her husband to return late highlighted that the feudal conservative concept of "good wife and good mother" still existed in Japanese society in the 1970s. Yuriko learned that her husband's extramarital affair had caused a big scandal, so she asked her husband for the truth, but the husband had a bad attitude and refused to communicate. Yuriko experienced a lot of suffering and felt bewildered-and torn, but she still chose to take a tolerant attitude for her family's sake. Yuriko's understanding is in sharp contrast to her husband's strong arrogance, which shows her wife's humble family status. Faced with her husband's indifference, Yuriko finally made up her mind to break up with him. She wanted to support herself, but the life of a perennial housewife made it difficult for her to integrate into society, and she felt the misery of not being able to live. After encountering many difficulties, Yuriko finally found a job that could support her family. Although it was very hard to work while taking care of her children, she also experienced an unprecedented sense of accomplishment at work, which made her more confident. Yuriko's awakening actually heralds the impact of the family model of "the male is in charge of the outside and the female is in charge of the inside". Indeed, "the gender division of labor of 'male outsiders/female domestics' once greatly alleviated the social pressure caused by rapid economic development, but now it is undergoing new tests brought by new pressures (Li, 2022)." The traditional gender division of labor leads to a lack of communication between husband and wife, causing the wife to always be at a disadvantage in the relationship. As Yuriko awakens her female consciousness, she becomes stronger and more confident.

4. ALIENATION AND RECONCILIATION: THE TURN OF PARENT-CHILD RELATIONSHIP

Chinese scholar Li Zhuo believes that Japan's patriarchal family was

formed relatively late, but patriarchal authority is very developed, almost all-encompassing in family life, and protected by law. For example, the right to solemnize marriage, the right to sell children, the right to dispose of property, the right to teach and punish (Li, 1995). The traditional family system in Japan not only causes imbalance in marital relationships, but also affects the harmony of parent-child relationships. In Yamasaki's novels, children have a great disagreement with their parents in many aspects such as their outlook on life, values, and marriage. However, in her later works, we also found that both parents and children are trying to understand each other and strive to create a harmonious parent-child relationship. First, take the three novels *Onna no Kunshō*, *Karei-naru Ichizōken* as examples to analyze the silent rebellion of children under the patriarchal system. "In the narrative process, the use of narration, flashback, narration interposed, supplementary narration, pre narration, spatialization of time and other means to deform time elements such as time sequence, speed, time distance, time frequency, so as to produce unexpected or unexpected ethical consequences" (Wu, 2013), it can be seen that narrative time also contains ethical implications. Pauses and scenes slow down the narrative speed, which also creates enough time for readers to think in the ethical context. The narrator of the novel *Onna no Kunshō* is good at manipulating narrative time, ingeniously arranging a description about Senba Osaka where Shikiko was born, rendering the lonely scene of Senba at this moment. The contrast between the prosperity of Shin Sai Bashi and the decline of Senba area inspires readers' curiosity about the growth environment of Shikiko. The stop of story time also gives readers enough time to imagine. Then, with an intelligent use of flashbacks, the life of Shikiko eight years ago unravels Gradually. In the home of the woolen wholesaler, everything from talking to dining etiquette is forced to comply with the rules and customs of the shipyard. After graduating from the girls' school, perms were very popular, but her parents never agreed with her. Even if her friends went to learn Japanese tailoring, her parents still insisted that she learn Japanese tailoring. She was also asked to wear Youchan silk and clothes all the time (Yamasaki, 1965). The insistence of her parents made Shikiko more rebellious. She especially yearned for western fashionable things and became more addicted to western tailoring. Although her mother finally agreed to let her learn western tailoring, the gap between Shikiko and her parents still exists. At home, Shikiko ostensibly obeys her parents and speaks Osaka dialect, but when she leaves home, she speaks Tokyo dialect immediately. However, a war took away

her parents' lives, and she could no longer communicate with them about her true feelings. Shikiko 's memory was interrupted by her students, flashback ends, and returns to the story time. The narrator, through direct speech, expressed Shikiko's inner thoughts "yearning for a free world free from suffocating rules and customs". Ginpei, the second son in the novel *Karei-naru Ichizoku*, could not get rid of the shadow of his childhood. When he was young, he saw his mother commit suicide unsuccessfully. Years later, everything that happened that night was not obliterated from his memory. The narrator uses Ginpei's perspective to flash back. This narrative technique makes readers stand in the perspective of Ginpei and experience everything he experienced at that time. In order to portray his internal trauma, the narrator changed his narrative perspective and commented from the perspective of an onlooker:" Ginpei hid what he saw at that time deeply in his heart, and his character gradually became more and more withdrawn, even he no longer believed in his father, and took an onlooker attitude to everything". Through the voice of the narrator, it can be seen that Ginpei was greatly stimulated in spirit, and this childhood shadow also caused irreparable cracks in the father son relationship. As one of the victims of the darn feudal thoughts and the patriarchalism, Ginpei knew in his heart of hearts he could not resist his father's authority, so he began to indulge himself. From a cheerful optimist to a cynic, he always challenges ethics intentionally or unintentionally. He grew up in the contradiction between obedience and resistance, but he could not hide his loneliness. His sense of loneliness roots in the alienation between parents and children. No one cared about the reason for his great change in temperament, so he grew up in a chaotic ethical environment and became as inhuman as his father. Father is the symbol of family authority, leading the family order, and in charge of all family discourse. Because the spousal relationship is the foundation of the whole family ethic. Conjugal relation of discord leads to disharmonious parent-child relationship, which also stimulates the children's potential desire to break free from the bondage. The disharmony of parent-child relationship also leads to the children being held hostage by their fate, and individual values are also facing a huge impact, falling into ethical dilemma. The narrator skillfully uses the narrative mode to transform time and space. The text is embedded with internal monologue, interspersed with memory description, and shows a kind of oppressed living reality under the patriarchal discourse with words of great tension. For Daisuke, the parent-child relationship is based on the relationship of using and being used, investing and being invested on the basis of money. The novel presents a pyramid like family power structure.

The father, Daisuke, at the top of the hierarchy, held himself aloof from other family members with an identity privilege that could not be overstepped, ignored the emotional needs of his family members, and took himself as the center, regardless of hurting others. Both the voice of the characters in the novel and the voice of the narrator highlight the personal bondage of the family under the patriarchal system. Second, take *Shiroi Kyoto* as an example to analyze the vocal resistance of children under patriarchal system. The parent-child relationship in the novel *Shiroi Kyoto* can be seen from the fierce confrontation between father Professor Higashi and daughter Saeko about their views on marriage. In order to get rid of the excessive control of the third-person narrator over the story, Yamasaki Toyoko used direct quotes to enhance the sense of picture and reality, so as to give prominence to the father's control over the children's life in the parent-child relationship, and also let the readers understand the characters' inner thoughts more intuitively. Saeko looked at her father firmly and told him, "The reason why I'm not interested in the blind date arranged by my father and mother is that the complicated interpersonal relationship and feudalism in the medical department of the university distort their personality. I hate their distorted personality. When you even selects a blind date for me, you not only consider the character and ability of him, but also carefully investigates whether he is in the same academic faction with you, which university he graduated from, whether his relatives have backstage, etc. I don't want such an artificial marriage (Yamasaki, 1978)." There will no doubt be Saeko who strongly oppose the so-called forced marriage. Professor Higashi was almost shocked by his daughter's momentum, but he still refused to give up. "If I can find people to match my daughter from the candidates for professors...", from his indirect inner monologue, we could detect that he still wanted to consolidate his position through his daughter's marriage. The father, who was controlled by the animal factor, didn't not consider his daughter's feelings at all. He is just eager to take advantage of his daughter's marriage for greater benefits. It can be seen that the hereditary system of rights passed down from the Tokugawa shogunate in Japan has not completely disappeared even in the post-war Japanese society. "In a system of patriarchal supremacy, men who are fathers will deteriorate their feelings towards their daughters. They will privatize their daughters and see them as part of their private property. In their eyes, 'daughters' are no longer people, but 'things' (Moro, 2018)". On the one hand, influenced by the idea of patriarchy, Professor Higashi regarded his daughter as his private property. He intended to use his daughter's marriage to the scholar-tyrant to continue his power and status.

On the other hand, the narrator presents us an emancipating women who challenges the patriarchal dogmas. Saeko was influenced by Western civilization, eager to get rid of bondage and pursue free marriage. The divergence of marriage concepts also intensifies the contradiction between father and daughter, leading to the disharmony of parent-child relationship. Finally, taking *Fumō Chitai* as an example, we find that the parent-child relationship shows a tendency toward reconciliation due to the dissolution of parental authority. *Fumō Chitai* mainly uses a narrative technique intertwined with sequence and flashback to reproduce the process from alienation to reconciliation of parent-child relationship. Flashbacks reveal the father Ikitadashi separated from his son Makoto at the birth. When Makoto was born, Ikitadashi was drafted by the country. A picture of Ikitadashi in military uniform accompanied his son's eleven years of childhood. The omniscient narrator recounted the scene of his father's reunion with his family at that time. When Makoto saw his father in shabby clothes with an old face, he said "That wasn't my dad" (Yamasaki, 1983a). The absence of father's love in childhood causes the son's indelible pain. The estrangement of father-son relations caused by the blank period of father love is always the inextricable knot of the son. The father who returned to his family was busy with his work all day, so the relationship between father and son never improved. The father who returns to his family is busy working all day, which leads to the relationship between father and son never improving. When Ikitadashi learned that Makoto had directly chosen his future job without consulting him, he silently accepted Makoto's choice. This also implies the disintegration of paternalism. Makoto has an independent personality, and can do what he wants according to his own life plan without following his father's will. Thereafter, the sudden death of my mother cut off the bond that maintained the relationship between father and son, making the estranged relationship between father and son even worse. Makoto didn't want to see his father again, but he had to go home to worship his mother. When Makoto found the cup stained with female lipstick in his father's room, misunderstanding made their talks broke up in acrimony. Ikitadashi did not give up improving his relationship with his son. He said that he would only consider remarrying after Makoto got married. When getting along with his son, although there are differences in values and outlook on life between Ikitadashi and his son, he still respects the child's ideas and does his best to improve the parent-child relationship. His efforts were finally recognized by his son. At the end of the novel, Ikitadashi rushes to his daughter's house eagerly to tell her the good news that Makoto was

married. " Makoto sent me a picture for the first time, and I want to show it to you"(Yamasaki, 1983b). The photo sent by his son is no longer an abstract symbol, but a symbol of reconciliation between father and son. The narrator uses direct quotation to highlight his father's joy. The daughter said in surprise, " Makoto unexpectedly sent photos to her father first. It seems that Makoto has changed a lot since his marriage". This direct quotation confirms that Makoto first shared good news with his father rather than his sister, and it indirectly proves that Makoto took the initiative to seek reconciliation with his father. This return of kinship is full of the warmth of ethical flesh and blood, which is also the witness of the return of ethical values hidden in the narrative itself.

5. CONFLICT OF INTERESTS AND FRATERNITY: SIBLING

In Yamasaki's early novels, we can find that primogeniture in the Japanese family system has brought harm to brothers and sisters. In her later novels, with the collapse of the Japanese family system, brothers and sisters grew up in an equal and warm family environment, and the kinship ties between siblings were better maintained. *Nyokei Kazoku* and *Unmei no Hito* present completely different sister relationships. From the overt and covert fighting between the three sisters in *Nyokei Kazoku* to the friendship and mutual help between the two sisters in *Unmei no Hito* , we can discover the ethics of sibling relationships that Yamasaki hopes to construct. The story time of the early novel *Nyokei Kazoku* started from the father's funeral, and the novel has been centered on the main line of interest disputes caused by the inheritance of the three sisters' property. Yamasaki is good at subverting the conventions of linear narrative. By controlling the narrative time, the omniscient narrator gradually reveals the background information of the characters in the novel. "When the three daughters were very young, they were raised in their own rooms, and the nannies and maids were also separated to take care of them alone" (Yamasaki, 1966). The supplement of three sisters' growth background narrows the distance between the reader and the characters in the novel, so as to understand the reason why the three sisters are so penny pinching, regardless of blood relation. In the novel, another point that can't be ignored is that the narrator interrupts the text to explain or comment on the characters or events. "no matter how concealed the narrator is, or how he claims to be neutral, he will intervene implicitly or explicitly in the narrative work, and this intervention must be related to a certain ethical stance (Wu, 2008)." The three daughters have

developed a lack of flesh and blood feelings, and they are lonely, conceited and competitive" (Yamasaki, 1966), which is obviously the narrator's public comment on this deformed parenting style. "For Fujita, it is more important to inherit the family name and take charge of real power than any other inheritance. However, her father gave these to her sister Chizu, and he even left a will for mistress, which made her anxious". The narrator's explanation and comments highlighted Fujiyo's eldest daughter's pursuit of fame and profit, and she always wanted to gain more benefits than her sisters in the inheritance distribution. Chizu, the second daughter, said that she would not give a penny when distributing the inheritance. The narrator commented that " Chizu, who has always been gentle and quiet, has become another person today, stubborn and stubborn". Hinako, the third daughter, also joined in the battle for inheritance under the influence of their aunt. The novel focuses on the main line of inheritance distribution, and vividly interprets the greed and selfishness among the three sisters. Regardless of a true sisterly feeling, their words and deeds of mutual suspicion destroyed the normal family ethics. Under the temptation of fame and wealth, the three sisters were controlled by the animal factor. They were penny pinching and scheming in the inheritance contest, but ultimately lost to their father's will. "Aunt Yoshiko, Chizu, Daiko, Yoshida and Hinako all think that Fujiyo, the eldest daughter of Yajima family, has a strong desire and greed. However, she will be deprived of everything and must leave the family, so she is sad and angry, even crazy". From the indirect inner monologue at the end of the novel, it can be seen that the voices of the narrator and the characters in the novel are mixed, Fujiyo, who was completely controlled by the animal factor, ended up in a tragic. Contrary to the narrator's criticism of the distorted sibling ethics hidden in *Nyokei Kazoku*, the narrator's affirmation of the harmonious and warm sibling relationship ethics hidden in *Unmei no Hito*. In the novel *Unmei no Hito*, the narrator designs a heart to heart talk between father and daughter, in which the rapport between sisters is indirectly clarified by repeated narration, "when going out, children are often put in each other's home" (Yamasaki, 2009b). Therefore, when Yuriko was in the predicament of her husband's extramarital affairs, she first thought that the person who could help her was her sister Fusako. When she called Fusako for help, Fusako did not hesitate to help her immediately. There is no doubt that Fusako's support gives great support to Yuriko, who is in trouble. At a family gathering, the elder brother and sister-in-law complained about Yuriko's husband's extramarital affair for fear of affecting their reputation. Yuriko kept silent for a long time about her sister-in-law's aggressive words.

Instead of refuting, she bowed her head and apologized. At that time, Fusako still firmly stood by Yuriko and persuaded her family not to blame Yuriko for the influence of the public opinion caused by her husband's extramarital affairs. She believes that Yuriko is also a victim. The novel uses varied narrative techniques to show a warm sisterhood, which is in sharp contrast to the sisterhood in the early novel *Nyokei Kazoku*. From the sibling relationship of overt and covert fighting in the early novels to the sibling relationship of fraternity and mutual assistance in the later novels, it reflects the ethical expectation of the implied author, Yamasaki Toyoko, to build a harmonious family.

6. TOYOKO YAMASAKI'S NARRATIVE TECHNIQUES AND FAMILY ETHICAL THOUGHTS

"Narration is a psychological gestalt behavior, a spiritual rather than physical energy flow or dynamics. It is related to inspiration and desire, imagination and memory, instincts and intuition, reading and training. It is related to the author's personality, language endowment, writing experience, life experience, era and cultural environment, as well as values and ethical tendencies" (Zhang, 2019). Therefore, the ethical expression at the narrative level of the novel hides Yamasaki's personal ethical tendencies. The life experience in Senba Osaka is the source of her early novels. Under the influence of the Japanese family system, which puts the family business first, the old merchants in Senba Osaka still retained the custom of recruiting son-in-law. This family oriented custom not only deprives women of the right to choose marriage independently, but also leads to estrangement in the marital relationship. As a result, Yamasaki's reflection on the confusion of family ethics caused by old customs was presented in her early novels. With the enrichment of life experience, she based on the current writing, and examined everything in her hometown again with her wise eyes. The sparks rooted in childhood memories and interview experience make her novel creation move towards a broader social stage. She once said in the interview that in Senba, Osaka, it was true that wife and concubine could sleep together to serve their husband (Yamasaki, 2009a). For example, *Karei-naru Ichizoku*, it depicts the restlessness and dirtiness of the city brought about by the rapid economic development, and satirizes the dark side of family ethics chaos in a materialistic society. In the novel, she expresses her indignation towards this abnormal phenomenon by depicting the tragic fate of women. It can

be said that her reflection on family ethics under the constraints of old customs is reflected in her early creations. "Yamasaki Toyoko has always learned from her favorite French writer Balzac, Chinese writer Ba Jin, Japanese writer Ishikawa Tatsuzo, Inoue Yasushi and other works, so through her words, we can not only feel the unique delicacy of female writers, but also detect the rare virility and toughness of female writers. This also formed her unique narrative charm and artistic temperament (Xu, 2023). "Yamasaki skillfully change the narrative perspective, manipulate the narrative time, and appropriately use the intervention of the narrator in her creation, so the novel presents literary aesthetics and contains moral education. Although Yamasaki's novels mostly use the third-person objective narrative perspective, the transformation of narrative perspective in the writing not only promotes the development of the story, but also causes readers to think about the crisis of Japanese family ethics. Secondly, her novels rarely use linear narrative techniques, and the changing time flow triggers the readers' ethical thinking. Through the analysis of narrative time, it is not difficult to find the hidden ethical implication in the novel. In terms of time sequence, the narrative is full of tension through time reversal; In terms of time distance, it mainly uses summary or pause to adjust the narrative speed, and the relaxation of the narrative rhythm creates space for readers to think; In terms of frequency, repeated narration reveals the deep psychological space of the characters, so that the family ethics under narrative rhetoric can be highlighted. Finally, by analyzing the voice of the narrator in the text, readers can understand the ethical orientation of the implied author Yamasaki. The flexible use of narrative techniques is closely related to the ethical implication of the whole novel and the ethical thinking that inspires readers. Her novels subvert the conventions of linear narrative and have a fascinating immediacy, far beyond that of ordinary narrative. The family is called the cell of society and the starting point of ethics. The discourse position of family ethics is restricted by the development of social civilization and economic and political rights. In order to explore the family ethics in Yamasaki's literature, we must go back to the story time of the novel and re-examine the ethical implication in combination with the social background at that time. Through text analysis, we can find that the formation and changes of Japanese family ethics are affected by many factors, including not only the influence of Japanese regional culture and customs, but also the mixture of Chinese culture and Western civilization. It is influenced by both the Japanese family system and the liberal democratic civilization of the West. Yamasaki's creation is different from the characteristics of traditional

Japanese literature, which is "apolitical". The writer's sense of mission urges her to look directly at the social focus with a sharp eye, and the description of human evil is always vividly brought to life. Especially in the stage of rapid economic development in Japan, interpersonal relations are dominated by capital. She focused on the ethical dilemma of family members and clearly described the panorama of family ethics, thus expressing her distinctive moral position and ethical thinking. In her early and middle novels, Yamasaki laid particular emphasis on the ruthless disclosure of the deformity of family space, and in her later works, her depiction of family warmth increased significantly. Hegel once said that "love is the unity of ethics (G. W. F., 1982)." Love is two-way, with love, there is a sense of self-identity. Once love does not exist, family harmony will lose its foundation. It also fully demonstrates that what she aspires to establish is equal love between husband and wife, harmonious parent-child relationship, and warm brotherhood. Through literature, Yamasaki reflects on family ethics through literature, calling for breaking free from outdated and outdated ideological constraints and building a harmonious family ethics environment.

7. CONCLUSION

Throughout Yamasaki's novels, her ingenious design mainly shows the changes of family ethics in Japan from the 1950s to the 1970s. She started her novel creation on the basis of full investigation and information obtained in the early stage. Through the perfect fusion of fact and fiction, she infiltrated the family ethics she saw and understood into the text. This paper combs the overall situation of her novel's family ethics writing and clarifies the relationship between the narrative techniques and the family ethics theme. First of all, mainly from the narrative perspective and narrative time, it focuses on exploring the unequal status and ethical confusion between spouses caused by the Japanese family system, such as the system of recruiting son-in-law and the "good mother and good wife" in the context of a patriarchal society. Secondly, taking the dwarfing of the father's image in the custom of recruiting son-in-law, the alienation of the father son relationship under the patriarchal system, and the childhood shadow caused by the blank period of father love as examples, this paper expounds the estrangement and reconstruction of the parent-child relationship. Finally, through the narrative perspective and the involvement of the narrator, it clarifies the implicit author's criticism of the conflict of

interests and ethical conflicts between brothers and sisters in the deformed family environment, and her affirmation of the brotherhood relationship of harmony and mutual assistance. It can be said that Yamasaki's novels integrate artistry and ethics, giving readers aesthetic pleasure while showing the conflict of Japanese family ethics. With her outstanding narrative talent and keen eye for capturing human nature, she superimposed her attitude into her novel writing. She skillfully employs various narrative techniques to reveal the impact of the Japanese family system on family ethics and the impact of Western liberal and democratic ideas on traditional family ethics. "The essence of the family ethics concept is the mutual assistance of family members, which means that family members are primarily recognized by family affection and get along friendly. Everyone strives to contribute and contribute to the harmony and prosperity of the family. This is the most initial, beautiful, and warm emotional contribution and enjoyment of human life, and also the essential requirement for the survival and development of human society (Tiezhu, 2021). "This is exactly the family ethics that Yamasaki is looking forward to.

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