

RESPONSES TO REVIEWER COMMENTS

We thank the reviewers for their thoughtful suggestions and insights, which have enriched the manuscript and produced a better and more balanced account of the research.

Reviewer #1: Major comments:

1. It seems as though the Golden Age is being glorified and you're trying to draw parallels between the conditions back then and those we enjoy in the modern age. Readers would benefit from an acknowledgement of its distinction with modern era conditions.

Response:

Thank you for this point/suggestion. We agree with this comment and have added the following acknowledgement/ment this as follows:

Though their status ~~was~~ is not to be mentioned in the same breath ~~with~~ as that of modern women, they ~~still did~~ established ~~enjoy~~ a respectable ~~footing~~ position that was at least comparable to that of men.

2. It is important to clarify the role played by education in the feudal society. The lack of education fed into the inequalities prevalent in the system, which in turn, exacerbated the education gaps. This catalytic, self-fulfilling effect is characteristic of the era.

Response:

Thank you for the this suggestion. We concur and have highlighted the role of education written addressed this in the new-revised version as follows:

In the feudal times, women had neither the opportunity nor the entitlement to ~~partake~~ pursue ~~in school~~ education. ~~Women-They~~ were ~~exposed to~~ limited to inadequate female education at home, which differed from ~~the standards of~~ male education for men and entailed exhortations and admonitions ~~about on~~ social rules. ~~Such-This education-system~~ persuaded ~~forced women females~~ to conform ~~with to~~ the feudal code of ethics by behaving in a certain way from a young age, ~~thus making~~ also ~~forcing them to~~ consciously and willingly submit to their fathers and husbands ~~from the inside out~~ entirely. Unlike modern women, it was ~~utterly~~ impossible for them to receive the same education as men on aspects ~~like the such as~~ society, nature, economy, and ~~the~~ value of life.

Commented [A1]: Thank you for giving me the opportunity to work on your response letter. I have checked each of the responses for tone, language, clarity, and correspondence with the reviewers' comments and the changes made in the revised manuscript. I wish you the best for the resubmission of your revised manuscript.

Commented [A2]: Instead of thanking the reviewers at the start of every response, I have included an acknowledgement here.

Commented [A3]: The response suitably addresses the comment.

Commented [A4]: While you seem to have addressed the role of education in widening the inequalities, the effect of inequalities on women education in subsequent generations is not yet explicit. The reviewer's comment focuses on "self-fulfillment" and the "exacerbator"/ "catalytic" effect, so I would recommend adding the following sentence before the sentence "unlike modern women...value of life":

This submissiveness, in turn, led them to refrain from educating themselves and women in subsequent generations, thus sustaining the inequalities over time.

3. The description of the transition from Stage 2 to Stage 3 in Chi Li's works seems abrupt, as if all women seamlessly progressed towards independence. There were in fact some rigidities and teething problems, which also featured in Chi Li's archives.

Response:

We have clarified ~~it the issue~~ in the ~~new-revised~~ version:

Chi Li's works changed with different stages. The female characters she portrayed in the first stage were unable to gain independence in the society due to a more conventional mindset and the lack of education; thus, they were more dependent on others. The female characters in the second stage were still subject to social prejudice despite having established a certain social status and received the same education as men. Some of them women adapted themselves gradually to societal changes and held-maintained a grateful attitude—, they They could be classified as self-awakened women. Some of them relapsed into degeneracy due-because of their to-resistance to new ideas among the several societal changes—, they They are-could be described as being deeply steeped in feudal views. The female characters created in the third stage established a social footing and-gained independence, some of which were able to live without men. We call them independent women.

Minor comments:

The language of the manuscript needs a review.

Response:

The ~~new-revised~~ version of the manuscript was ~~rechecked-edited~~ by a professionally.

Reviewer #2: Major comments:

1. Recommended citations: Works of art like *Fine Moon* and *Willow Waist*, which centered on the role played by women, can be cited to illustrate the prevailing notions at the time.

Response:

We ~~have~~ added these citations in the ~~new-revised~~ version ~~as follows~~:

Commented [A5]: You need not quote the entire paragraph in your response here. The comment is about rigidities and teething problems, so I have only quoted the most relevant text here.

Moreover, I believe the women deeply steeped in feudal views were the ones exhibiting the rigidities that the reviewer is referring to.

Commented [A6]: I have quoted the revised text here to showcase how the reviewer's comment has been addressed.

Like Ming Yue-hao (literally “fine bright moon”) in the short story *Fine Moon* and “she” in *Willow Waist*, the goal in life for a woman in those times was to marry a good man and follow his lead.-

2. “This implies that females will never be treated equally as men no matter how hard they try to assert themselves in the society” – this statement is inferential in nature. We must be wary of making such extrapolations based on historical facts.

Response:

This segment does is not about pertain to a historical period phase, but it is about the current, modern era.

Minor comments:

“Western Zhuo” should be “Western Zhou.”

Response:

We apologize for the typoerror. We have corrected the spelling addressed this, and the revised version has been proofread professionally.

Commented [A7]: I understand that the reviewer’s use of “historical” may be confusing. However, by “historical,” the reviewer is not referring to the distant past.

Essentially, the modern era is already in existence, so it could be thought of as historical in nature, and the implication that females will not be treated equally as an inference based on this.

Another way of looking at it is that the mentioned implication is a prediction for the future, and in the future, the current era will be considered historical.

Accordingly, the reviewer means that predictions must not be made based on facts or scenarios that used to be/are already in existence.

To address the comment, I would recommend deleting the sentence and letting the reviewer know that you have done so. I would be happy to edit the revised response.

Commented [A8]: While you have mentioned this to Reviewer 1, I believed it was equally important to mention it here, as Reviewer 2 is unlikely to read your responses to Reviewer 1, and crucial information such as this should be replicated for each reviewer, assuming no communication between reviewers.