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# A Brief Analysis of Dazai Ji's Projection of Himself in the Setting Sun -- Male and Female

Fei Zhao

Shanghai Industry and Commerce Foreign Language Vocational College, Shanghai 201399, China.

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**Abstract:** As a representative writer of the scoundrel school, many of Dazai's articles are mixed with the projection of self-understanding. His aristocratic birth and neglected childhood laid the foundation for his conceited and inferior character, which is even more reflected in the Setting Sun. The role of "The Rising Sun" not only becomes a projection of Dazai's current life and personality, but also reflects the social status quo of many Japanese aristocrat who chose decadence and self-abandonment after the war because they could not adapt to social life. This paper takes the male and female characters in the Setting Sun as examples, studies and analyzes the insinuates and expectations left by Dazai Ji in the characters, and probes into the self-meaning and self-value in Dazai Ji's eyes.

**Keywords:** Dazai Ji; Rogue School; Setting Sun; Self-Projection

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## 1. Introduction

The rogue writer Dazai is known for his decadent and self-deprecating style. It is not difficult to see from many of Dazai's works that he likes to project his own image more or less on the 'little people' in his articles. He came from an aristocratic family, and as the penultimate child of eleven siblings, with a father who was busy with officialdom and a mother who was weak, he was known as the most obscure child in the family. At the age when he should be paid attention and love by his family, Dazai Ji was ignored and ignored, which also had a great impact on his literary creation.

## 2. Self-projection of Sunset and Taizai Ji

### 2.1 Background and theme of Setting Sun

"The Rising Sun" is Dazai's representative work after the war. At that time, the defeated Japan fell into chaos, the material life was scarce, various social trends were rampant, and the values that people had been propagating and cultivating for many years also became disintegrated, and people felt confused, uneasy and hopeless under the loss of the original values<sup>[1]</sup>. The title of "Rising Sun" has two meanings of "hope" and "despair", which is similar to his experience. Dazai uses his own emotions to create the characters of Kazuko, his mother, and Naoji, which become his self-projection and hope.

After the war, the Japanese government implemented land reform, and many aristocratic classes were confiscated by the government, lost their economic sources, and no longer as glamorous as in the past. The Rising Sun was born in this historical background, telling the life of a declining nobleman and son.

### 2.2 Dazai's self-expression and projection

Dazai Ji was born in Tsugaru County, Aomori Prefecture, Japan, in a small number of large landlord family, although the lack of parents and brothers at home love and attention, but in the era of many people even have enough to eat, wearing silk and satin, do not worry about food and drink. The atmosphere at home was undoubtedly oppressive, but in primary school he found himself getting the best treatment due to his background. This also led him into a deep contradiction and meditation: the family that made him feel pain became the guarantee of his comfortable life. In school, those who can show their status as "the son of a big landlord" are the clothes they bought with money earned by their father. Dazai Ji for the family inferiority but also created his identity and feel vain conceit.

The characters in the author's works are inevitably seen as more or less allusions to the author himself. There is no doubt that Dazai Ji was unable to survive and die in his early years, and his several suicides were full of longing and longing for life. At that time, because he projected life into his works, his works were mostly decadent and gray. After Dazai married Mikiko Ishihara, life seemed to get better gradually. He strives to run a family, have children, and his peaceful and comfortable mood is once again reflected in the book. In "Abandoned Me", the protagonist's ending is not as tragic as usual, but no longer decadent and enjoy life again. When the Setting Sun was created, his mind returned

once again to the tangled scene of life and death.

### 2.3 Self-fiction and male image

In *The Setting Sun*, Kawako's younger brother Naoji is called into the army due to his declining status as an aristocrat and can no longer maintain his former life, but he becomes addicted to drugs in the army. He drank, took drugs, abused drugs, womanized, and finally took his own life by suicide. From these things alone, Naoji seems to be a negative character, but in Naoji's suicide note, Taizai explained his reasons for doing these things: I entered high school, and those classmates from a completely different class from me, they are strong weeds. I was oppressed by their strength and refused to yield, using anesthetic, half mad and half stupid to resist<sup>[2]</sup>.

For all that, what Naoji did seemed absurd. While taunted by the "only aristocratic status, and no aristocratic temperament" of the down-hearted aristocrats, while silently envying the mother who really has a noble attitude and deserves the aristocratic status in his heart. This contradiction also made him feel painful and tired, unable to integrate into the society, he finally chose to commit suicide in despair.

In addition to the direct, the most important male character in *The Rising Sun* is the writer Mr. Uehara. Although he and Zhi Zhi are mentoring relationship, but together smoking opium, decadent day, he has a family, but no family responsibility. While living with Koyama Chuyo, living as a married couple but without the name of husband and wife, he is devastated when he learns that Koyama Chuyo has had sex with other people. This sense of collapse may be derived from the contradictory conceit and inferiority of too Zai Ji, he thinks that his identity is extraordinary at the same time, and fear that the hill is not his wife but better than his wife's early generation will choose others. From the perspective of Dazai Ji's childhood experience, his constant making friends with women and his constant martyrdom with women is a symbol of immaturity and conceit. In the article, Mr. Uehara is mature and melancholy in the eyes of the protagonist Kazuko, and it is not difficult to speculate that this is the projection of Dazai Ji after looking at his own image and beautification, which is also the image he wants to show in front of people.

## 3. Strong female image

### 3.1 The appearance and shaping of female image and the opposition of self-fiction and authenticity

In *The Setting Sun*, the heroine Kazo is a very classic image of female aristocrat. Kawako was born into a family of declining aristocrat. Unlike Naoji, who wants to escape from the aristocrat class but is arrogant because of his identity, Kawako is a sensitive and insecure woman when she appears. She lacks the aristocratic aura of her mother and always lives under the aura of tranquility and elegance of her mother, and even feels that her mother is a noble and she is a beggar<sup>[3]</sup>. The turning point for Kazuko was the death of her mother. Before her mother died, Kazuko was like a little girl, dependent on her and looking for something to depend on. At this time, He Zi is still the traditional aristocratic mentality, dare not break through the self, also do not break through the self. When she saw her mother gradually becoming weak, she felt panic and anxiety, and tried to find something else to live on - love. Mr. Uehara, who had a family, had kissed Kazo six years earlier, and she had sent a letter to him, putting aside her aristocratic and feminine reserve, asking for his love.

For Kaz, from the moment the letter was sent, she had fallen into a rebellious love affair. Wanting to become a mistress is undoubtedly shameful and anti-moral, and will be rejected by people among the common people, let alone Kazuo, who has a noble status, so taking this step is difficult for Kazuo, but it is also a breakthrough. Just six years ago, how can such a strong emotion suddenly erupt? This is Tazaiji placing his own anti-vulgar spirit, that is, the spirit of fighting ethics and morality, on Kazuko<sup>[3]</sup>. Naoji's resistance to society and the old rules is depravity, and Kaz's resistance is an unnatural love. She spent the first half of her life following the rules, and the second half of her life just living for herself. Such a different outcome is the projection of two self-consciousness of Dazai Ji, one is the failure of self-collapse because he cannot reconcile his inner contradictions, the other is the successful reconstruction of self-consciousness; One is despair, and the other is hope in despair.

The mother is the one who Kazuko relies on most before deciding to fight class and stereotypes. She is gentle and elegant, and is considered a true aristocrat by both Kazuko and Naoji. For Dazai, Mother is distant and vague. He created such an image of a mother in "The Rising Sun", perhaps he longed for but could not get. Dazaiji wants such comfort, such love, so he places his feelings on Kazuko, who is like a bird nestling under the glow of her mother. The existence of his mother fills the lack of maternal love in Dazai Ji's childhood, she is perfect, but perfect things will not last, let alone the mother as the best representative of the old aristocracy, Dazai Ji is also aware of this, so he writes softly, the most gentle description of his mother's death. The motherly love of Kaz became another possible projection of his life, tough and beautiful.

## 4. Conclusion and Prospect

### 4.1 Summary of research results

Taizai projected soul and longing onto the characters in *The Rising Sun*, as the text said that people live for love and revolution. He

wanted to be gentle and serene, and he wanted to be involved in the revolution, like all those who participated in the revolution. But his birth and family forced him to become a self-inferior and conceited person, he was torn by the society in the spirit, and wanted to die like Naji, but deep inside he wanted to become Wazi - to change himself, to fight against the obsolete rules and classes, and to regain a new life. However, life is not as full as the ideal, Dazai Ji between Kazuko and Naji finally become Naji, throwing Tamagawa water and dying for him may not be a bad thing, which also conforms to his projection, his idea: gain a new life in death.

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