

The Utopian Property of the “Happiness” Narrative in Yan’an Literature and Art¹

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The thesis analyzed how the “happiness” narrative in Yan’an literature and art effectively played the ideological function by combing the three interlocking narrative mode. It also pointed out that “happiness” narrative included the complex tension of reality in the effectiveness. The thesis tried to present its historical reality and the coexistence of cultural Utopia.

Keywords: Happiness Utopia Dilemma

Echoing the New Democratic Revolution, “happiness” contains two meanings in Yan’an literature and art: the happiness of daily life and the happiness of the realization of the subjective value. Specifically speaking, the two meanings are supported by three interlocking narrative: The end of oppression, the beginning of happiness, the realization of subject. The arrival of a new society means the end of suffering and the beginning of happiness. In order to continue and defend happiness, more human sacrifice is needed. There are two reasons why such a sacrifice can be taken as happiness. Firstly, it dedicates to the victim’s own class collective well-being, to his offspring can last long happiness; Secondly and more importantly, the victim realizes his social and historical value by giving his life, which is also a “happiness”, even is the sublimation of the more advanced, happiness.

The main function of ideology of happiness is to build a new democratic revolution on the ideal picture of the people’s Liberation in the future, and establish corresponding relations between the ideal picture of the future and the changes had occurred and was coming in the real revolution process, so that the culture ideal of the new democratic revolution can be presented in the literature and art , and because of its history and reality closely echoed the appeal, convincing, and then into a consensus.

Specifically, the “people” cultural ideals, first of all means that the external empowerment and internal awakening of the people’s liberation. The most important historical reality of this model is that people can improve their material life through their own labor, and obtain spiritual dignity and happiness. In essence, this model includes the respectation and satisfaction of individual emotion and desire. However, the cultural ideal of “people” also means the transformation from the individual struggle to the collective liberation mode of class and nation. The prominent feature of the model is to emphasize that we replace the ego. At the same time, this model has historical reality and cultural utopia. In the crisis, it can produce realistic combat to complete

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national independence, social liberation, and through their own or future generations to obtain a “happy future” to make up for. But after the crisis, if the realization of the subject value still called for more sacrifice for collective and repressed individual desires, it would not only delay the happy future promised in the previous crisis, but also need to build a new ideology, beyond the ideology liberation narrative, effectively answer the following questions: Revolution how to effectively deal with the historical resources of new problems in the new historical period,? After the crisis, how to continue the road of revolution? After the people turn over how to do? The revolutionaries and how to achieve happiness in everyday life?

In this view, two kinds of “happiness” are both the mainstream literature in Yan’an. They are neither simple binary opposition nor layers of the inside and outside of revelation. In fact, the promise, the pursuit and the realization of the “happy daily life” are the main demands of Yan’an literature and art. The realize of the value of narrative coexists with it in a long term. The process includes the contradiction between the cultural utopia and historical reality in the pursuit of the Yan’an and its cultural ideal.

The Ideal Narrative and Realistic Tension of the End of Oppression

The first step in the narrative of “happiness” in the construction of Yan’an literature and art is to say that the exploitation of the people has been finished, and that the end is permanent. The essence of this narrative in the reality is: after the overthrow of the old system, the new social relations will be the emergence of new power groups, the emergence of new exploitation and oppression?

Literature and art should not only show the fact that the old system has been overthrown in the real history, but also show the permanence of the ending in an artistic way. This requirement makes the landlords in literary and artistic works are often destroyed from the flesh, which is the most vivid and the most striking symbol of “the end of exploitation”.

In fact, in accordance with the policy of the Communist Party of China, eliminating landlords class refers to deprive them of their land, forbid them of exploiting farmers, and strive to transform them into laborers. Killing acts could be seen in radical land reform, but from a broader historical point of view, more landlords were survived. In the Soviet time, Zhang Wentian had urged “physically extinguish landlords”, at the time that was opposed by Mao Zedong. On June 17, 1933, chairman Mao Zedong of the Chinese Soviet republic temporary central government, presided over the meeting, the Ruijin land inventory movement in Huichang, Yudu, Ninghua, Changting and other eight counties, made two reports of “land inventory movement is a major task of the regional center and “The first step of Land inventory movement is the organizational mobilization”. The famous conclusion that “the landlord is eliminated in class and not the flesh” is put forward. In the time of Yan’an, in particular the Anti Japanese environment, or even stop the armed overthrow the landlord class, seize land, turn to “rent reduction” struggle to suppress rural exploitation forces, and the government furtherly absorbed the enlightened gentry to the Anti Japanese national cause through the “3-3 system”.

But in the literary works, the overthrown landlord must be killed, even being slaughtered. A lot of scholars explained the phenomenon from the perspective of the construction of “hatred”². Here is a classic plot of the “Sun On The Sanggan River”: the task force divided land titles into the hands of farmers, farmers returned them to the landlords secretly. The plot vividly shows that in the thousands of years of exploitation of the

² Zhang Ming, “Changes in Rural Social Power and cultural Structure of 1903—1953” Xi’an: Shaanxi People’ Press, 2013, “Mobilization Structure and Movement Political Operation Mode—the Land Reform Movement in North China (1946-1949)”, sponsored by the people’s University Research Center of sociological theory and methods, sociology website, May 11, 2007.

system, labors were not only exploited to extreme poverty on matter, but also completely imprisoned in spirit. They had taken the landlord oppression as a condition of life, and the landlords being knocked down is an "accident" incident, the incident occurred their first feeling was not "liberation" of joy, but the panic of life being out of routine. The ending in "changes Of Lijiazhuang", set the scene that the masses violate policy to kill the landlord. After the trial, the magistrate has agreed to the execution of Li Ruzhen, but the people who had long been accustomed to silence and giving in in the oppression this time murdered Li. This madness, if only from the perspective of hatred is beyond common sense, the county has made a commitment to the execution, revenge has been promised, why even in accordance with the procedure for a period of time cannot wait? If the end shot Li symbolizes the ending of exploitation and oppression that people had suffered, then this action faintly presented the people's distrust of the commitment given by the "county magistrate" on behalf of the revolutionary regime. Wang Anfu described the revenge Corps: "county magistrate! On the day when they were killing in the temple, much more than this cruel,—seeing, a chop hand, with peeling... I almost called them to kill!" Because of this painful experience, the end of the exploitation must be accompanied by a permanent commitment to become a prerequisite for happiness.

Why it affected so much attention that landlords who had lost the power should be killed? Besides the explicit explanation such as "heinous crime", "popular indignation", it reflected a very important thoughts of masses: they need be promised that the end is permanent—in literary works, the specific image symbolizes the exploitation and oppression, and the physical death in art means to convey the image of the promise of the new democratic revolution to the people: the exploitation had been end, and never be resurrected.

As a result, there was a lot of vacancy in the local power space. Would this vacancy be filled by the power of the people? Or the development of a new power field? This is the ultimate challenge of the narrative of "permanent end exploitation" in reality.

Zhao Shuli's novel "rhymes of Li Youcai" in contemporary novels rarely touched on this issue. The novel begins with the election of the village leader, which is a symbol of the transfer of power. The landlord Yan Hengyuan gave up the name of the village, but still firmly grasp the core of the power of the country in fact.: after Yan Hengyuan was ousted, his nephew Xifu took over the village leader and continued Yan Hengyuan's evils. Even when the revolutionary government found Xifu's evils and removed him from top to bottom position, Yan's godson were elected at last. The plot shows: on the surface, the farmers had got the voting right, but in fact, the long term deterrence helped Yan Hengyuan not only ruled the farmers' spirit firmly, but also ruled the farmers in real political power core.

Zhao Shuli pointed that the first problem is that it is very difficult that the old power class in the countryside be cleared over a night even after the new regime had been set up. The old ruling forces not only still entrenched in the rural power core, but also corrupted bottom workers who had been assimilated into the new core of power, transformed them into delegates of the old power, so as to firmly maintain the old power relations. This means, to a large extent, challenged the new regime's effort to subvert the old power relations and liberate the poor through the election of poor farmers, and other measures. Xiaoyuan in the novel was a member of the oppressed, but when he entered the core of power, he was corrupted immediately, no further lead farmers to eliminate the old ones, just "set up arm as a director, and even began to oppress their poor brothers.

Zhao pointed that it would be more difficult to permanently end the exploitation in reality: even if the landlord from the core of power were cleared (or extermination down), how to ensure that new power field

would never copy the old? How to ensure that the new power space for the people really? In the reality of history, the regime in Yan’an was famous for its “democracy”, it did give the real democracy to the bottom people..Mao Zedong has declared that the government should be the forerunner of national democracy.³ But Zhao Shuli in the novel, revealed that the farmer did not get rid of the shadow of oppressors from their spirits.

The Happy Beginning of the Ideal Narrative and Realistic Tension

Breaking the old world, ending exploitation, for the people, is just ending their “unwilling” life. Only by creating a “willing” life, can they truly feel the power of commitment to the people’s “happiness” from idea of the new democratic revolution. In this sense, the second step in literary and artistic works constructing ideal of “happiness” is to tell the story of the bottom laborers “turn over” in the economic, political and social life, and it is regarded as the their beginning of a happy life “gaining the land” is the most important symbol plot in the story. The inherent problem of the narrative in the reality is that there is a huge realistic tension between the beginning of happiness and the realization of happiness. But the new society how to ensure the land can produce the life that they have ample food and clothing? There are many complicated problems, such as the reorganization of relations of production, the choice of the mode of production to improve the productivity, the principle of the distribution of interests between the public and the private, and improvement of the living standards of laborers.

There are a lot of stories in Yan’an literary and artistic works about that farmers struggle in extreme poverty owing to without land in the old society, and then gain the land in the new society, produce material wealth from the land, live in abundance. In this narrative, happiness is mainly in the sense of daily life: eating, wearing and labor, the three classic daily life scenes, become an important plot to support this narrative.

“Reformation of hobo” is an important theme of Yan’an literary and artistic works, from the point of newborn soul, it tells the story of oppression from the old system and reformation of people’s heart from the new system . It is worth noting that, in this theme, Improved material life is one of the basic and important consequences of the new soul. In contrast to the improvement of food and clothing, the plot of free labor of farmers on the newly acquired land is more symbolic and artistic. In Liu Qing’s novel *The Son Of Land*, the fundamental reason of leading Laosan Li to astray is that he has no land, therefore, land has become a fundamental motivation to change his fate and purify the soul. At the end of the novel with the lyric language description of the scene where Laosan Li stand in the newly acquired with new hope.⁴

The waste lands reclamation is a pioneering work and coincides with what literature and art convey is nature of beginning of happiness. After surveying carefully the similar texts in that period will reveal that the acquisition of land and the reclamation of wasteland is a commonly used plot. This text generally ends up with that the labors embrace the vision of the future and throw them into the reclamation work, but planting, harvesting and the most important plot distribution often miss.

In another work of wastelands reclamation that has a broader influence—the Yanko dance drama *wastelands reclamation of brothers and sisters*⁵, it can be seen that this work fill missing plot up. In this yangko dance drama, enthusiastic waste lands reclamation do not point to improving their living firstly—it is

³ “ Hu Qiaomu recalled Mao Zedong”, Beijing: People Press, 1994, p. 123.

⁴ Qing Liu, *The Son Of Land, From Yan'an litery collection of Literature and Art, Stories Vol*, Changsha: Hunan People Press, 1984, p. 468.

⁵ Dahua Wa, Bo Li and You Lu, *Mastelands Reclamation of Brothers and Sisters, From Yan'an litery collection of Literature and Art, the Yanko dance drama Vol*, Changsha: Hunan People Press, 1984, pp. 1-18.

different from Laoer Liu treats eating white noodles as pursuit of new life. Their primary pursuit of reclaiming wastelands diligently is keeping up with labor hero. While labor hero’s labor is obviously having other significance apart from improvement of their own material life, brother’s last lyrics also point out that: *the people of border area have ample food, wear warm clothing, live in abundance, expel Japanese enemy, build a new china*. In the lyrics, first of all, waste lands reclamation points to the improvement of the material life, but this improvement include the whole “the people of border area” rather than your own family, the labor has apparently not only belongs to the laborers themselves, it suggests that labor is being organized. More importantly, the labor points to the goal of “expel the Japanese enemy”, “build a new china”, simple genre of the Yanko dance drama have no complicated explanation about background of history, but according to the fact of history, it means that the product of labor not only can improve their living, but also should be supplies in demand for supporting the anti-invasion war and the liberation war, should be wealth foundation to support the new national and new regime. That is why “Labor hero” is more meaningful than Qiuchang Ma.

But the problem is that the peasants’ power of domination of their fruits of labor. This problem does not say that farmers have no obligation to the new regime, but how to stipulate the and how to undertake duty, whether farmers can obtain the right to speak by virtue of their ownership of the land and identity of labor producers? How to ensure that their wishes are properly and fully respected? Out of understanding of anti-invasion and anti-oppressive war, they can support actively the new regime with their own labor production. But how can the new regime request reasonably this support? Before the large scale production campaign, the border area government internal officers had a fierce controversy about the problem of salt transportation. From the standpoint of seeing more unreasonable burdens on farmers, Boqu Lin and Juezai Xie opposed current policy of salt transportation that salt is transported by peasants and is supervised by the officers, and pointed out that this policy led to farmers “migrate toward another region”, damage seriously their production and life, “the harvest was bad”, “no one to weed”. From the standpoint of realistic financial requirement of the border region government, Zedong Mao supported current policy, and pointed out that the farmers should undertake necessary burden, and the compulsive enforcement of government is necessary⁶. In this argument, their uncooperative behavior—“migration” reveal mainly the attitude of the farmers, but they have no right to speak about how to use and distribute their labor.

The Yan’an regime as a new revolutionary regime, the scale was small, and the distance between masses and regime was near, so not only Boqu Lin, Juezai Xie can see farmers’ real situation and will, but also Zedong Mao who was supporting the salt transportation policy subsequently adjust the burden on farmers by launching the large scale production campaign, having better troops and simpler administration and so on. the argument expose the lack of farmers’ real labor power, but which deeply sow the seeds of troubles: a happy life is promised by revolution, how to ensure from the beginning of “gaining land”, ensure a good harvest after realizing a happy promise of living in abundance, living and working in peace and contentment?

The Main Value of the REalization of Happiness and the Reality of the Ideal Narrative Tension

During this period there are a lot of story of ordinary workers, who get struggle consciousness and then sacrifice for the revolution. They all like the old lady from *People in Yan’an*. Longing for the happy life after

⁶ QiaomuHu recalled Mao Zedong, Beijing: People Press, 1994, pp. 137-153.

victory, they work hard, struggle, and even bloodshed. At the end, they showed great happiness and satisfaction before leaving the world.

In the memorial of an ordinary soldier Zhang Side, Mao Zedong wrote *Serving the people*⁷, a classic expression of this narrative authority. He did value distinction in people's death, treating for the provisions of the people's interests as weightier than Mount Tai., whether he or she is a cook, or ordinary men. Because they devote themselves to the revolution, even sacrifice, their death won the value. Although significance of natural life disappearing, as this value to the memorial embodied in the form of a symbol, they will be subject to people's memory forever long.

This narrative equals the realization of historical subject value as happiness. In creating a better future, more happiness, individual sacrifice also means complete fusion and dedication to history. There, sacrifice is called eternal of life, completely realize the historical subject value, and the sublimation of happiness.

In reality, The author of *People in Yan'an* may not notes that there is a profound plot: Chairman Mao's commitment to the old lady's victory refers to Japanese beaten off, and the sovereignty given back to China. However the old lady died in 1947, two years after the victory of Anti Japanese War. In fact, when the victory comes? How to fulfill the promise of happiness? That's the essential problem of the narrative in reality.

According to Mao Zedong in *New Democracy*, the historical characteristics of China revolution are divided into two steps: democracy and socialism⁸. Under this statement, achieving communism is the highest creed of Chinese revolution, also the ultimate meaning of the victory. The utopian nature of the statements, resulting in later seize the power only as the first step in the Long March. The revolutionary party becomes into the ruling party after the revolution still need to keep positive power of revolutionary will⁹. But at the same time, the delay of the victory of the revolution, also means the delay of the happiness commitment.

Reviewing of these works in Yan'an, The image of tomorrow often refers to the Anti Japanese War. The war of liberation, which after the Anti Japanese war, is out of consideration . *People in Yan'an* tells that Chairman Mao commitment to beat Japanese invaders. In Liu Baiyu's novel, *Sun Caihua*.¹⁰ When it comes to the revolution information brought back by Sun Caihua's husband, young rural women Sun Caihua feel panic at first: the husband told her that he determine to participate in the Anti Japanese, even cost his life. Because the former for the others, today for their own. Obviously, the husband has a happy consciousness with sacrificing for the liberation of the nation, and that consciousness is also infected with Sun Caihua. She produce in the war, This description is typically writing out the war (revolution) that enhances and improves the daily life of people. However, even begun to realize the meaning of the revolution, her heart still treats better daily life as the ideal. The imagination of tomorrow in her mind is daily and real .in the future when the team leaving, we still live in daily life. That is to say, in Sun Caihua's mind, the revolution has brought liberation, the improvement of life, but it is still not the norm of life. Her wish is to return to the peace of the daily life.

In this state of mind, It can be said that her husband's sacrifice almost broke her hope for tomorrow. In the end, Sun regained the hope, not because of sublimation of a more noble consciousness, but because her children: they continue her husband's tomorrow. Raising the child, she hope her husband's sacrifice could send their

⁷ Mao Zedong, *Mao Zedong Anthology*, Beijing: People Press, 1991 ,P.1004 – 1005.

⁸ Mao Zedong, *New Democracy*, *Mao Zedong anthology*, Beijing: People Press, 1991.

⁹ Mao Zedong, *In the Seventh Session of the Communist Party Central Committee of the second Plenary Session of the Report*, *Mao Zedong Anthology*, Beijing: People Press, 1991, p. 1438.

¹⁰ Liu Baiyu, *Sun Caihua*, Changsha: Hunan People Press, 1984, p. 344.

children in a different tomorrow and live a happy life. This hope of tomorrow and children become the driving force of Sun Caihua to get out of despair, but also profoundly reveals the reality power of people who struggle for the revolution.

After liberation, Sun Caihua's son grow up will lead what kind of life? What kind of life Sun Caihua's son may live in when he grows up in the People Republic of China? Liu Baiyu didn't write an after story, however, we could reinterpret the classic film *sentinel under the neon light* from this perspective. The father of the soldier Tong in the movie has sacrificed for the revolution just like Sun Caihua's husband. And Tong's mother, just like Sun Caihua, deeply identify with her husband's devotion. From this perspective, Tong can be recognized as Sun's son. He grows up and lives in new China. Although Tong was criticized in the script, more importantly, his performance in the new China subtly implies Sun's expectation of her son's future life. Sun supported her husband to fight for the revolution. What she expected as return after the revolution ended is living a happy life with her husband and no worries about livings. Tong put pursuing a happy marriage in the first place instead of being a soldier and stick to his post, although he is a soldier. Tong is described as a man who forgot the history of revolution in the script. Under the logic of the film, Tong's forgotten of the history refers he betray his father because his father sacrificed for the revolution. But if you look back to what Sun Caihua expected and what her husband sacrificed for, you will figure out what they did is to create a new world without war and oppression that their son (and later generations) could live in with happy marriage. In this case, Tong's pursuit should be a partial meaning of his father's sacrifice.

However, in this film Tong's mother portrayed an image of his father as a martyr and denied his pursuit. Tong's mother and Sun have similar experience, but the martyr image of Tong's father is not referring that the meaning of sacrifice is expecting him live in a happy life, but warning him to remember the sacrifice of his father (or the history of revolution), to remember this is not the end, to remember revolutionary will and to remember his father's ideal, value and the devotion sacrificed for.

Comparison of the thoughts of Sun and Tong's mother suggests the double meaning of revolutionary history and the victim: on the one hand, fathers (symbolizing historical roots) created happiness by sacrificed themselves; on the other hand, fathers' sacrifices (symbolizing the heavy history in the depressed) bring into oppression while pursuing happiness.

In this narrative logic, Li Zhun's novel *Cannot go that way* express the duality of suffering history. Song Laoding in this novel, is one of the laborers living in old society with industrious and frugal characters but suffered from exploitation and oppression. The significance of his suffering history makes him to be liberated. He got his own land to farm which means liberating his working rights because of revolution. Liberation inspired him. And he accumulated some wealth by hard working with great passion. If this happens in the Yan'an Period, his image would be used to criticize loafers. Not only because his working attitude would be an example to loafers, but also wealth accumulated by hard working could inspire loafers to get rid of bad habits and become an honest labor. Labors could live in a good life by working is the first step of living in happiness life in Yan'an Period.

But in the story in the new China, Song's image refers he is a traitor because of forgetting his suffered history. He accumulated wealth by work and the gap between he and Zhang Shuan widened, both wealth and thoughts. In the past, poverty and despair people form a group who are hard-working but suffering. But things are different when sufferings ended. Song wanted to buy land and hire workers. In fact, he was recalling the

situation of exploitation and oppression. And Zhang feared Song, just like Song feared his boss before liberation.

In the end, Song gave up his plan of buying lands and hiring workers because of father’s image. It’s Zhang’s father who refers to the painful history that Song experienced. Song was standing on Zhang’s land and recalled Zhang’s father who had similar experience like him. He realized that Zhang’s father, though a farmer, doesn’t own any burial ground. This memory was recalled by Song because of the presence of Zhang’s father and made him give up his plan. In this story, presence of father constrained Song’s pursuit of wealth and desire.

Conclusion

Those victims sacrificed for the revolution are remembered and respected with no doubts after People Republic of China is established. Tian’an Men Square, the political heart of China, has a monument for the people’s heroes. It has the famous inscription written by Mao Zedong, that is the people’s heroes are immortal. This is the highest commemorates and respects. And it is also an immortal memory of suffering history and tough experience of China. But we need to answer the following question carefully. How to remember this immortal memory in our day life, especially in peaceful and developed times and people pursuing better life quality?

Wang Shiwei fondly memorized the victim of comrade Li Fen to criticize the wealthy and peaceful image in Yan’an during Yan’an Period. His article implies we should constrain expectation of happy day life by remember history of sacrifices, and implies pursuit of common life is the opposite of revolutionary. Although this thought in his article was refuted during Yan’an Period, some articles with this thought came up again after the establishment of People Republic of China. Establishment of PRC suggests a beginning of a historical event. It also comes up with a question of how to remember history. This is China revolution in ideal commitment and honor, facing a difficult choice between happiness and the arrival of time delay, but also presenting the pain between the Cultural Revolution ideal Utopia and profound contradiction with the feasibility.

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