

I. Turgenev's Novel *Rudin* in Chinese Literary Studies

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Abstract—The article discusses the relevant studies of Ivan Sergeevich Turgenev's works by Chinese litterateurs and critics from the second half of the 20th to beginning of the 21st century, notes the enduring interest of the Chinese audience to the work of Russian prose writer, in particular, to the novel *Rudin*. The author speaks of the attention to the prose writer's "path" to the novel, and proves that the special interest of scientists to Dmitry Rudin, the protagonist of this novel, which caused Chinese specifics and the relevance of many problems associated with this image. The article explains the evolution of the attitude of the Chinese to Rudin: from agreement with Russian researchers - a "superfluous person" - to disagreement with them. At the same time, the author compares Rudin with typically similar images in Chinese literature.

Keywords—Chinese literary criticism, "superfluous person", *Rudin*

I. INTRODUCTION

Because of the historical and cultural limitations, initial study of Turgenev and his work was carried out only in the circle of Chinese writers in the first half of the 20th century. While in China, the translation of Turgenev's works was at the initial stage, and the scientific studies were still in their infancy, they are relatively superficial and unsystematic. From the 1950s to the 1970s, in China, research on Turgenev was practically reduced to zero. In the 80s, research developed rapidly, focusing on the novels and the characters in them. In the 1990s, Chinese critics began to study Turgenev's novels and stories, conducted comparative analysis of Chinese and Russian works and the artistic aesthetics.

Novel *Rudin* was in the center of the research in Chinese literary circles. *Rudin* is the first novel in Turgenev's creative career. The novel was completed in 1855 and published in the journal *Sovremennik* in 1856. It is noteworthy that when the reissue was published in 1860, the writer added a finale for Rudin. Description of "Rudin's death" made his image controversial. The first edition of the Chinese translation was released in 1957, and then

seven more versions of the translations were published one after another, which laid the foundation for a more in-depth study of the literary text. The study of the novel *Rudin* in the second half of the 20th century in China has brought great results, attention was focused on the type and character of the protagonist, the comparative analysis of Chinese and Russian similar characters and artistic characteristics of the novel.

II. THE "SUPERFLUOUS PERSON" IN THE WORKS OF I. TURGENEV: FROM THE FIRST WORK TO THE NOVEL *RUDIN*

Most people believe that Rudin is the most typical "superfluous man" in Ivan Turgenev's works. It should be noted that the appearance of the image of Rudin was not sudden, but traceable. On this issue, the Chinese scientist Wu Xiaoxia in her article writes: "From the work *Parasha* in 1843 to the novel *Spring Water* in 1871, Turgenev described 'superfluous people' from generation to generation, who lived in Russian society in 1940-60 years" [1]. That is, Rudin is not the first "superfluous person" created by Turgenev. On this basis, the researcher Zhang Liming for the first time presented a clear "Rudin line" in the works of Turgenev, explained in details "the process of formation, establishment and completion of Rudin images reflecting the Turgernev's understanding and development on the Russian liberation movement" [2]. He believed that some features of hamlet were already manifested on the young persons in Turgenev's work *Andrei Kolosov* (1844). The characters in *Hamlet Schigrov County* (1849) and *The Diary of a Superfluous Man* (1850) further describe the peculiarities of the Russian hamlets, which are purely visionaries and utopians. Then the writer created a number of similar images in such works as *Three Meetings* (1852), *Two Friends* (1854), and *Yakov Pasyonkov* (1855), these characters also cannot go beyond the "dreamers". Only after the publication of the novel *Rudin* in 1856, "Rudin line" was finally established. From the analysis of this article, it is clear that "Rudin line" is the line of "superfluous persons".

In relation to Turgenev to these heroes, we can also understand that Turgenev only satirically revealed the image of "superfluous person" in works such as *Hamlet Schigrov County* and *The Diary of a Superfluous Man*. In these works, the author already expressed regret and

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sympathy for the fate of the characters. In stories *Three Meetings* and *Two Friends* the author concentrated the attention on satire or sympathy. And in the story *Yakov Pasyukov* Turgenev argued that the “superfluous person” had flaws, but it was not his personal fault, the main reason was the Russian society. The publication of the novel *Rudin* later confirmed this judgment. In the novel, the writer, using the words of Lezhnev, a former classmate of Rudin, expressed his attitude to Rudin, “this is not Rudin's fault: this is his fate, a bitter and heavy fate, for which we will not blame him..... For being good in him, let us be grateful”. Thus, the creation of Rudin is not a sudden thought of the writer, and consciously matures with early creations. In comparison with early Turgenev's “superfluous people”, the image of Rudin is more complete and versatile, and it gives people more space for research.

III. DISPUTES ABOUT RUDIN IN CRITICISM OF CHINA

In Russian literature of the 19th century, there were many different classical artistic images. Among them, the “superfluous person” and the “new person” are extremely typical. We can say that the term “superfluous person” became common in Russian literary studies with the advent of Turgenev's works. The term “superfluous person” was first appeared in the work of Turgenev - *The Diary of a Superfluous Person* (1850). And only after that the term “superfluous person” became common. Onegin (*Yevgeny Onegin*, A. S. Pushkin, 1831), Pechorin (*Hero of Our Time* by M. Lermontov, 1840), Belto (*Who Is to Blame?* by A. I. Herzen, 1846) - all of them were “superfluous people”. Of course, all these images have some common features, but each writer gives his character various traits.

The above writers “represent the social life of Russia and express the features of the era through the image of ‘superfluous people’” [3]. Onegin lived in the 20s during the Decembrist uprising. Under the influence of the noble revolution, Onegin tried to reform his estate, but nothing happened, and he became the “ancestor” of “superfluous people” in Russian literature. Qu Qiubai (1899-1935), Chinese well-known revolutionary and proletarian theorist, one of the important founders of Chinese revolutionary literature, noted that “the character of Onegin was caused by the social environment when serfdom collapsed. Whenever the old society collapses and a new society is not created, all useless good people are superfluous.” [4] And Pechorin – “superfluous person” in 30s, showed the anger and desperation of the progressive youth after the suppression of the Decembrists; Belto and Rudin are examples of aristocratic progressive youth in the 40s. In the 1840s, the crisis of serfdom intensified, and at this time, “superfluous person” showed strong discontent with society and tried to change something. Rudin tried a lot of improvements, but he gave up as soon as faced with obstacles, and, ultimately, he could not get rid of the fate of “superfluous people”. “From the view of Russian public life and the degree of criticism of the aristocratic intelligentsia, Rudin is more typical than the former superfluous people.” [3]

In the traditional sense, Rudin from the very beginning was considered a “superfluous man” in Russian literature of the 19th century. Indeed, Chinese scientists generally agreed with this view in the early stages of research. Scientist Gao wenfeng (former director of the Institute of North-East Asia at Academy of Social Sciences of Heilongjiang Province) writes in his article: “This problem has been solved and confirmed by many researchers, there is no doubt about that” [5]. Cheng Kaizhong, a specialist in literary translation, writes that “Rudin, a nobleman who was created Turgenev, is a ‘superfluous man’, which appeared in Russian literature after Yevgeny Onegin, Pechorin, Belto” [3]. In his opinion, Turgenev inherited their traditions in depicting the image of “superfluous person”, stating that the character is closely connected with the era and social environment.

The above-mentioned researchers analyzed Rudin as a “superfluous person” in the historical perspective. And Chen Shen, a researcher at the Foreign Languages Institute of the Social Sciences Academy, noted that it was impossible to ignore the subjective factors of Rudin, and the essence of the issue was not that Rudin was a “superfluous person”, but how to treat this “superfluous person” and what this “superfluous person” was. On the one hand, he believed that we could not only blame Rudin, the blame also lied on society. On the other hand, Rudin lacks subjective initiative: he can understand the objective world, but he does not know how to transform the material world according to his understanding. Despite this, compared with the criticism of Cheng Kaizhong, Chen Shen praised Rudin, “Among all the ‘superfluous people’ in Russian literature, Rudin is the most outstanding propagandist and the most qualified pioneer and mentor of the new generation” [6].

In addition to these two articles, it is noteworthy that in China in 1980-90s there was a culmination of research in the field of Russian literature. At that time, a lot of articles about Turgenev were published in the Chinese literary community, and most of the works confirmed the opinion that Rudin was a “superfluous person”. These include: “Turgenev and his novels - in honor of the 100th anniversary since the death of Turgenev” (Xie Ruijie, 1983), “Superfluous person- specific image in Russian literature” (Zhang Yu, 1984), “Li Ni and Turgenev” (Sun Naixiu, 1985), “Images of superfluous persons in Russian literature of the 19th century (Guo Xueliu, 1986), “The intellectuals in the novels of Lu Xun and the superfluous people in the Russian literature” (Li Xiaohong, 1987), “Self-Criticism of the aristocratic class - analysis of ‘superfluous persons’ in the Russian literature history” (Zhou Qun, 1988), “Superfluous people at different times and in different countries – comparison *Rudin* and *Chen Lun*” (Liu Nianqun, 1988), “Comparison between superfluous people in the work of Lu Xun and in the history of Russian literature” (Xu Huimin, 1988), “Similarities and differences of the superfluous people in Eastern and Western literature” (Zhang Li, 1994), etc.

Considering Turgenev's research in literary criticism of China, we can also find that since the 1980s, many researchers have put forward new theories, one of which was to oppose Rudin in the number of "superfluous people". And these researchers have proven their views in all aspects.

In 1987, Li Jinkui directly named and published his article "Rudin is not a superfluous person". He believed that Rudin was not a superfluous man, and an aristocrat with progressive ideas. "Turgenev created the novel 'Rudin', aimed at forming an image of progressive intellectuals among aristocrats in Russia in the 1840s, as well as describing their social role and fate at that time" [7]. In his opinion, Turgenev showed a contradictory attitude to the creation of the main character Rudin, and the writer did not have a deep understanding of the role of the noble intelligentsia at that time due to class differences and era limitations. This leads to a one-sided depiction of Rudin. Rudin's belonging to the aristocracy did not allow him to get closer to people of simple origin.

In 1988, Lin Yaguang, professor at the Sichuan Institute of Foreign Languages, in his article "Review of the Rudin's case - comparison of Rudin with 'superfluous people'" also directly pointed out that Rudin was not a superfluous person. He stated his point of view as follows: not all progressive aristocrats, separated from the people, are superfluous. After all, Rudin always insisted on his own dreams and aspirations; the superfluous person is a suffering egoist, but Rudin, in turn, is an altruist. Rudin's life is a life of self-sacrifice for striving for truth; the "superfluous person" is dispassionate, pessimistic and depressed, but Rudin is an optimistic and enthusiastic young man; unlike empty conversations and fantasies of the "superfluous person", Rudin actively promoted and acted.

In addition to the above articles, in the article "Rudin is a superfluous person?" the author wrote that "the conclusion of 'Rudin is a superfluous person' does not correspond to the reality of this work, and in fact detracts from the aesthetic value of this literary image" [8]. The article "New Comments on the Image of Rudin" gives a comprehensive confirmation that Rudin's words and actions play an important role in the development and promotion of Russian society at that time. The author believed that Turgenev correctly assessed the historical role and exploits of the noble intelligentsia. The article "New Comments on the Image of the superfluous person—Images in Russian literature of the 19th Century" (1999) stated that "analysis and understanding of superfluous people should not be limited only to the Russian historical context in the first half of the 19th century and the requirements of the era preceding the October Revolution 1917, it is necessary to rethink them in a new historical period" [9]. In the opinion of this article, the "superfluous person" is not "superfluous".

In the 21st century, the debate about whether Rudin was a "superfluous man" was clearly moderated. Chinese researchers rarely wrote directly about this in articles, and

chose a euphemistic way to express their own views on Rudin. For example, in the article "Passion and moral imagination in Russia: about Enlightener Rudin" (2008), the researcher presented his point of view from three sides: life, death of Rudin, as well as the social significance of the image of Rudin. The author stressed that in the middle of the 19th century, in times of social instability, it was Rudin who lit the fire of hope.

IV. COMPARISON OF RUDIN WITH CHINESE "SUPERFLUOUS PEOPLE"

In addition to the dispute over the image of Rudin since the 1980s, Chinese literary critics have focused on the comparative study of superfluous people in Chinese and Russian literature.

Turgenev had a profound influence on the famous Chinese writer of the 20th century Yu Dafu (1896-1945) - a modern Chinese writer, the revolution hero, who "created the first superfluous person in the history of modern Chinese literature" [10]. In the article "The superfluous people in different times and in different countries" the author compared the "superfluous men" in different eras and countries based on the analysis of the novel *Rudin* by Turgenev and *Sink* by Yu Dafu. Firstly, the author described the common features of the characters and the causes of the tragedy in two works. The protagonist, anonymous, in the novel *Sink*, who studied in Tokyo because of antipathy to internal feudal social education, felt unprecedented discrimination and social indifference in Japan. He loves life, but he did not understand; he was talented, but he was not succeeding in anything, and also failed in love. All this led him to despair, misanthropy and suicide. Despite the fact that the hero in the novel *Sink* and Rudin lived in different countries, at different times, but "both of them see the darkness of society, have some critical attitude to reality, they are both separated from the peoples, can not find a place in society" [10]. The most fundamental reason for their tragedy is "their own weakness" [10]. The two "superfluous persons" had a lot of similar moments, but the writers created the characters with different artistic techniques. "Turgenev mainly expressed Rudin's thoughts and character traits through his language and actions. Through the conflict between Rudin and the environment and characters, the conflict between 'superfluous person' and society is expressed." [10] And Yu Dafu basically expressed emotions and thoughts of the character through descriptions of his mental activity.

In addition to Yu Dafu, Li Ni's creation also received the influence of Turgenev's creativity, and he created his own "superfluous persons". In the article "Li Ni and Turgenev" outlined the connection of the creative work of Li Ni and Turgenev, and also compared the "superfluous persons" in the works of these two writers. Li Ni (1909-1968) - Chinese novelist and translator, translated the novel *Dvoryanskoe Gnezdo* in 1928 when he was 19 years old, in 1939 he published the translated novel *Eve*, and corrected the translated work *Rudin* in 1957. And all of these

Turgenev's works were translated into Chinese from English. Li Ni had been involved in translating Turgenev for 30 years, despite the fact that he doesn't understand Russian language, he had a deep understanding of Turgenev's creative. In his works we can see the shadow of Turgenev.

For example, the title of the novel *Distorted Zero*, the theme, the manner of narration and the type of character of the hero in this story are similar to the creation of Turgenev. The short story "The diary of a superfluous person" was first translated in Chinese as *The Diary of a Superfluous Man*, and was published on November 21 in 1926. The title of Li Ni's work *Distorted Zero* was taken from Turgenev's work *The Diary of a Superfluous Man*. In the *Distorted Zero*, the young artist, who called himself "superfluous person", left his hometown to escape from dark reality, and went to a small rural school in the north, where he fell in love with the nurse Sun Yin. However, the girl had her ideal, she wanted to contribute to the liberation of the Motherland and because of this they had to break up. "In portraying the character of the heroes, Turgenev relies on the contrast between the weakness, incompetence of intellectual men and courage, strength of the heroine." [11] Rudin and Natalia can be compared in character with the artist and nurse in the novel *Distorted Zero*. The nature and fate of the young artist are similar to Turgenev's "superfluous person": they are weak and incompetent, unable to understand the direction of their progress, and their love ends in failure. The difference between them lies in the fact that Turgenev's "superfluous person" lived in a society of serfdom and royal despotism, and the Li Ni's was forced to face the ruthless artillery of the invaders.

Another article "Comparison between 'superfluous people' in the works of Lu Xun and 'superfluous people' in the history of Russian literature" (Xu Huimin, 1988) and "Intellectuals in the novels of Lu Xun and 'superfluous people' in Russian literature" (Li Xiaohong, 1987) compared "superfluous people" in the works of Lu Xun – Mr. N in the story *Stories about hair*, Lu Weifu in *In the inn*, Wei Lianshu in the story *Lonely person*, Juan Sheng in the story *Injury and death*, with Onegin and Pechorin, looking for their internal connections, similarities and differences in the nature of the "superfluous person". Note that comparative studies of Chinese scientists are not limited to Russian and Chinese literature. Zhang Li in her article, "Similarities and differences between superfluous people in Eastern and Western literature" (1994), even compares the Russian "superfluous people" with Japanese [12].

Thus, in different countries and in different historical epochs, if the social conditions were similar, the same or similar characters could be created, which would lead to the same literary phenomenon. The image of the "superfluous person" exists not only in Russian literature of the 19th century, but also in China in the first half of the 20th century. This shows that literature has commonality. And the literature of different countries is not isolated. The mutual influence of writers and their works allow literature

to be global.

V. THE STUDY OF THE ARTISTIC ORIGINALITY OF THE NOVEL *RUDIN*

Since the 1980s, Chinese literary circles have conducted a comprehensive study on the artistic features of Turgenev's works, of course, including the study of the novel *Rudin*. The researchers pay great attention to the psychology and description of the landscape in this novel. Zhu Xiansheng in his article "Two characteristics of Turgenev's realism" analyzed psychologism, believing that it was characterized by "description of the result of psychological activity - the actions of the characters, not the psychological process. This is an extremely concise approach" [13]. And this characteristic is also embodied in the organic combination of psychology with the description of the landscape.

Lu Zhaoquan demonstrated symbolism in Turgenev's novels: the partial symbol and the common symbol. The author believed that a partial character was mainly reflected in natural landscapes, such as Avduhin pond, where secretly met Rudin and Natalia, and the autumn night when the last time Rudin talked with Lezhneva. "This is not just a description of nature, but also a symbol" [14], but the author did not explain what exactly they symbolized. As for the General symbol, it reflects the potential value of the work, the hidden meaning of the images [14]. Rudin, as the image, is "a symbol of the giant on words, the dwarf in action" [14].

The general style of Turgenev's novels is "subtle, gentle, slightly sad and imbued with poetic elegance" [15], this style is reflected in a series of beautiful female characters, in the depiction of natural landscapes, psychology, as well as in the lyrics and discussions. In the article "the Originality of Turgenev's novels" the author uses a fragment of Natalia's sobbing during the separation with Rudin, in order to reveal Turgenev's artistic technique to convey the psychological emotions of the characters through their physical movements.

In addition to descriptive means, Chinese scientists have studied the common features of all novels. For example, the article "A dramatic feature in Turgenev's novels" says that dramatization is expressed in the plot conflict, the configuration of the characters and the structure of the plot. The author believes that dramatization makes Turgenev's novels elegant and poetic. But it also makes the novels "much less expressive than the works of Dostoevsky and Leo Tolstoy in life breadth, depth and intensity" [16].

VI. CONCLUSION

In China, there are not many articles specializing in the artistic characteristics of the novel *Rudin*. Most analyses of artistic peculiarities are carried out in complex articles and monographs. This is mainly because China, in the process of adopting this novel, is focused on analyzing the typical character image, clarifying the character's literary and

social values, and analyzing the ideological nature of the work.

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