



# The Characteristics and Problems of “Confession Discourse” in Contemporary Chinese Literature Viewed from Two Kinds of Confession Concept

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**Abstract.** As a hotly debated topic in the field of contemporary Chinese literature, although the narrative of “confession” borrows religious consciousness to a certain extent to realize the transformation of its own discourse and deepen the discussion, it also has problems such as the vacillation of signifier and signified, the confusion in the use of concepts, and the unclear logic and so on, most of which are presented as the lack of confession discourse with real “confession spirit”. This paper uses the two main concepts of confession formed in the context of Western history and culture, “Theodicy” represented by Augustine and “Anthrodizee” represented by Rousseau, to sort out the confession narrative in contemporary Chinese literature. It can be noted that the Chinese contemporary literary context presents an overall admiration for “Anthrodizee” and many internal alienations, as well as the emergence of a weak awareness of “Theodicy” that needs urgent attention.

**Keywords:** Confession discourse · Theodicy · Anthrodizee

## 1 Introduction

As an important word from the original Bible of Hebrew civilization, “confession” has long been one of the most important motifs in the history of Western literature. From the etymology traced back to Christian culture, “confession” can be understood as a mystical cycle between the other side and this side, the Godhead and the personality. That is to say, “people” realize their own defects of “original sin” and act are not allowed by God, so they sincerely confess to God, reflect on their guilt, and sincerely repent in order to be forgiven. During this process of people alerting themselves to their own limitations and learning to be prudent, they regain the attention and mercy of God, but will usher in stricter constraints, and such constraints will be internalized into self-examination. Therefore, the “guilt” will always regenerate and accumulate to a new threshold. After being frank with God again and again — around “guilt”, confession has the ultimate meaning of communicating with the other side.

As a Western humanistic tradition nurtured by “God’s civilization”, the logic of “confession” has two representative theoretical resources that need to be distinguished: the “Theodicy” concept of confession represented by Augustine and the “Anthrodizee” concept of confession represented by Rousseau. “Theodicy” originates from the most classic teachings of Christianity. “Anthrodizee”, as a diversion after the “Religious Reformation”, tends to “conscience” and people-centeredness. The two are very different in terms of concept and understanding, treading different paths that lead to the different destination. With the indiscriminate use of the word “confession” in contemporary Chinese literary creation and criticism since the new era, the two concepts of confession have been misused, rewritten, and confused. The signified that people want to understand has long been drawn to the emptiness and nothingness in the distortion and ambiguity of the signifier, which leads to the incomprehensible and embarrassing aphasia of the realistic creation, and the precious cultural heritage behind the “confession” discourse is lost. It is worth reorganizing and expounding the difference and value of “confession” in different textual contexts.

## 2 “Confession”: Origin and Evolution

According to the investigation, the “confession” discourse was originally a complete “Theodicy”. The so-called “Theodicy”, that is, “God is justice” [1], is a set of transcendental solutions based on a profound insight into human nature. God transcends human beings in the spiritual dimension and height, and is perfect and eternally correct relative to the limitation of human beings. Human beings inherited the “original sin” of Adam and Eve, which tarnished their perfect nature. Therefore, “the inherent evilness of human beings” and the “dark consciousness” in human nature has become an irrefutable conclusion. This is where the most basic doctrines of Christianity are explained. The depth of sin means the urgency of salvation, and the urgency and absolute legitimacy of man’s incompleteness and God’s redemption. After the self-sacrifice of the “incarnated” Son of Jehovah who died and resurrected, “confession” has become the only correct way to achieve “salvation”, which is the realization of the highest life value, in a self-consistent moral and logical way.

The two major sources of Western classical traditions: the difference between Hebrew civilization and Greek civilization is an important factor catalyzing the evolution of the Christian concept of confession. The traditional Christian belief system includes two basic issues: “who to believe in” for Christ and “what to believe in” based on doctrine, with a whole system that focuses on people and gods, sin and punishment, confession and redemption. Human beings are passive and lack true autonomy, and must rely on a higher existence. Augustine’s *Confessions* promoted this view, i.e., entrusting the salvation of man entirely to God.

And the thought of Greek civilization is based on a dualistic thinking structure, which regards human nature as the rise and fall of rational intellect and irrational carnal desire. If the former prevails, the human nature will be good; if the latter prevails, the human nature will be evil — the structured model thinking eliminates the value of “sin”, and naturally there is no need for a supreme “God”, because everything depends on the practice of subjectivity, morality and conscience. Especially in the era of Rousseau, the

Renaissance began to create the myth of “human” and the affirmation of human personality and subjective initiative rose to an unprecedented position with the implementation of the Enlightenment. Thinkers represented by Rousseau exalted the freedom above all else, the individual returned to the center of the universe, and human nature was no longer defective, filthy, and ignoble, but full of light, hope and possibility. In this way, Rousseau’s *Confessions* replaced the justice of “conscience” with the justice of God, advertised the freedom of individuality, individual liberation and the inherent goodness of human nature, and achieved a discourse of “Anthrodizee” that rebelled against God. He praised: “O conscience! Conscience! You are the holy instinct, the voice of heaven that never dies” [2]. Rousseau emptied the authority of God and replaced it with the drive of conscience. He praised the infinitely bright individual, pushed the goal of judgment to the outside world and the society of human beings, freed them from the bondage of unknowable relations with unknown existence, transferred the biggest contradiction and accusation, and achieved the independence of human beings themselves. As the scholar Zhu Xueqin pointed out, Rousseau transferred the motive of people’s confession (the absolute attribution of “sin” from top to bottom) to human beings as a collective, and the moral responsibilities and moral obligations that people should bear were greatly reduced.

It should be noted, however, that Augustine’s Theodicy thinking has not been replaced since then, but has changed its appearance in the Reformation represented by Martin Luther. Although man has the right to speak directly with God and “justification by faith”, the realization of the meaning of man’s life and the most basic moral bottom line are still generated in God’s teachings [4]. The position of “God” has been subtly hidden and people must ultimately return to God and return to God’s embrace. In the 16th and 17th centuries, the Puritan church in England once again held high the universality of “guilt”. Even when discussing the punishment of “sin”, the existence of laws and constitutional power institutions was highlighted, but the final “power of interpretation” still belonged to God. Man is sinful, restricted by law, and even more restricted by God.

### 3 The Origin and Transformation of “Anthrodizee”

Beginning in the pre-Qin period, the devastation of war and the collapse of social order brought urgent pressure to the thinkers. Like the ancient Greek philosophers, they deeply felt the invincibility of many forces of society and nature and the pain caused by the limitedness of human beings. But what was different from the latter was that they focused more on a kind of “life” pain rather than “spiritual” pain. The “spiritual” pain could only arise in the calm questioning of the meaning of existence and the fate of life. However, the pre-Qin thinkers were in a chaotic predicament where the basic requirements of real life couldn’t be met. There was no peaceful “altar” or “Scripture Reading Room” for them to pursue their destiny and meaning after food and clothing. To solve the current problems was the first priority. Therefore, it was more important to restore the social order in which the ritual collapsed, and to reproduce the realistic concern of the rule of Shun and Yu than to think about the ultimate. The doctrines of philosophers such as Lao Zi who proposed a solution to this problem started from the relationship between man

and the universe and nature, and gave up all initiatives that were different from “Heaven”, “harmony between man and nature”. Confucius further refined this respect for order into the social order of human relations, suppressing human subjectivity, requiring people to constantly reflect on their “position” and maintaining the stability of the order system. Apparently, there was a supreme order similar to God that limited man. So does such a logic count as an Augustinian concept of confession?

Some scholars believe that there is always a unique value unconsciousness behind this, which prompts China to spontaneously resist in the process of moving from limitedness to the other side. Thinkers represented by Max Weber believed that the ancient Chinese spiritual field with Confucianism as the official Orthodoxy isolated the basis of the “guilt” of Augustinian confession.

Weber believed that the moral philosophy under Confucianism’s “gentleman’s view” was a dual requirement for the perfection of intellectuals’ personalities and social obligations, the ultimate goal was to obtain the enrichment of knowledge, the happiness of the family, and the success of the career through rational self-control, and the temporal ethical taboos and commandments were a big thing, and for these people who were bent on material gain without restraint from the other side, “sin” was unseemly and indecent, and their expectations for the next life were decadent and negative [3]. Indeed, Confucian ideology is based on an ethics-centered order relationship. This overlapping and interlocking moral order: monarch, father, husband, etc., determines Confucianism’s stable requirements for interpersonal networks and spiritual atmosphere. “Sin” is offensive and doesn’t conform to harmonious regulations. The sense of guilt that is trapped here cannot go further into the torture of human nature. The doctrine of Confucius and Mencius is a doctrine of “returning”, the goal of which is to open the obscurity that obscures people’s true nature of goodness, so as to return to the most ideal, most harmonious and most perfect “benevolence, righteousness, courtesy, wisdom and trust” in the great harmony of Yao and Shun. This kind of promotion of man’s progress and efforts in reality seems to highlight man’s subjectivity, but the ultimate goal is to transform man into the most stable order. It is different from the Augustinian pessimistic and self-dissecting understanding of the essence of human nature, but focuses on a bright and stalwart image, and pursues the restoration and preservation of a self-cultivating high morality. This is incompatible with Christian “confession” in the Western sense, which is precisely the advanced philosophy of existence that has influenced the Chinese for centuries. Therefore, Anthrodizee is naturally self-consistent in the traditional thinking logic.

During the period of contemporary Chinese literature, especially after the Cultural Revolution, works represented by Ba Jin’s *Collection of Random Thoughts* and Feng Jikai’s *Ten Years of One Hundred People* have caused a sensation in the literary world, and aroused people’s attention to confession writing and confession awareness. However, although Ba Jin’s *Confessions* makes him known as “the conscience of China in the twentieth century” and “the Augustine of China”, it can be found through comparison that the most crucial concept in his work — “speaking the truth”, is far from Augustine’s inward dissection of the dark part of the soul and his entrustment to God. “Truth” is still far from the level of “confession”, and to whom does “confession” confess? Reader?

People? Those who are no longer alive? Or your own heart? Do these have sufficient torture power, high-dimensional trial qualifications, and the power to express forgiveness and forgiveness on their behalf? — It can only be said that this is based on conscience, self-relief, and indictment against society, and there is no ruler of sacred value, a kind of expectation for external judgment and salvation. After all, the maintenance of moral cultivation and social image is crucial — a kind of self-argument under the declension of Rousseau's *Anthrodizee*. Naturally, its sincerity can't be denied, but its relative limitations must be seen. Based on this, it enters into the field of contemporary literature to analyze in detail, and sorts out several basic types of the development of *Anthrodizee* in China.

### 3.1 Relativism

Because of the lack of the absolute value and ruler of conviction and ruling, all trials depend on morality and self-consciousness and optimism about human nature. After entering into the complex and treacherous Chinese political ecology and social system, its key meaning core is easily dispelled and blunted by various “philosophies of life” or “relative rationality”. Dai Houying described the “rebel” Xu Hengzhong and others' self-refutation of their absurd actions in various political turmoils in the work *Human, Human*, fully demonstrating this relative mode of “Chinese characteristics”: “I” did have something wrong, but this cannot be blamed on me, because higher-level officials, leaders, and the vast “public” are doing it, and what they are doing is even more serious. “I” just listened to orders, was implicated, and was forced to follow the crowd. No matter how bad it is, “my” fault is a drop in the bucket compared to others. In a seemingly reasonable relative quantification, the individual's guilt doesn't constitute the slightest burden on the subject at all, and even the individual resents being “implicated”. The same is true of the secretary of the party committee in the work, who is just “obeying the orders” like the below following the behavior of the above. They all ignore the determinative role of individual rationality in behavior, fall into what Hannah Arendt calls “The Banality of Evil”, do not recognize the absolute significance of their own crimes, but transfer their contradictions in some absurd comparison.

### 3.2 “Attempting an Ineffective Solution”

In some novels, characters seem to have a deep and painful awareness and resentment of what they have done, swear to repent and put into practice. However, if you read it carefully, you will find that these confessions ultimately do not lead to the subject's real sense of guilt and reform, they do not have sincerity and determination that truly deep down in the soul, and they are more of a kind of self-recognition like attempting an ineffective solution. For example, in Zhang Xianliang's novels, some scholars believe that he practiced thorough, explicit and sharp self-exposure and self-criticism, and dared to face up to his own problems and the truth of his innermost being, without wearing a false mask. However, in the author's opinion, the disclosure of these issues has a fixed stylization, being superficial and formalistic, without being right on the target of the darkness in the depths of human nature. The writer describes that a refugee who survived the near escape felt “endlessly guilty” because he drank an extra bowl

of porridge, and “I” was self-loathing because of the longing for the girl who helped “me” who was in desperate situation. This is out of moral self-judgment but also out of the influence of Rousseau’s *Anthrodizee*. But the characters in the writer’s descriptions only blamed these “deep-rooted bad habits” on the corruption of “me” by “poison of the bourgeoisie”. The first concern of the characters is not in what sense there is a problem with their own behaviors, not thinking about external factors from this or even having a conscience condemnation of people and things that they unintentionally hurt, but being more concerned about whether their moral condition is healthy and complete. Once they become calm and complete in morality and situation through a certain opportunity, all sins will be self-dissolved, and all self-cleaning and overcoming of setbacks will be separated from “I” and become the proof of one’s self-promotion, with no more guilt.

### 3.3 “Seemingly in Harmony but Actually at Variance”

The reflection and review of the history of the soul of intellectuals after the catastrophe naturally makes the concept of “confession” be called and incorporated into the works. Shu Ting calls for tolerance and tolerant love in a poem of repentance and prayer with her mother as a priest/god. But in a deep sense, Shu Ting’s poem doesn’t have a transcendent listening object, nor is it for the purpose of finally obtaining “forgiveness” through repentance and avoiding the burden of the soul. The “confession” in Shu Ting’s poems is never about obtaining some kind of easy release, but rather trying to get rid of the anxiety of some embarrassing and secret situations. Confession is in exchange for the power not to stand still in the same place, and even the judgment is kind: “Mom/May all who have been forgiven by you/Will once again judge themselves for your forgiveness” [10]. At the same time, this repentant person has very clear self-consciousness and subjective initiative, and she is not out of some kind of heavy self-criticism of “sin”. Her conversion to the personified “God”, the beloved mother, is her most sincere belief.

In *Spring Night*, the lyric subject repents of the mediocrity of his life and sighs with deep feeling for his uncontrollable fate:

You sigh,  
Life is truly a cup of bitter wine,  
You repent,  
During 28 years, there are no flowers and no frost,  
Why the strong body of yours,  
Is like a weak poplar tree shaking in the wind. [10]

The figure of God has never appeared in the poem, and the confession and question of “you” cannot be answered. The trick of fate makes the lyric subject who is constantly looking for a breakthrough step into the trap that has been set up step by step, and no matter how profound the reflection and summary are, in the “strong wind” of the spring night, they seem weak and powerless. The cruelty of life doesn’t even allow one person to lick his wounds, so what the poet calls for is not individual repentance but collective repentance. This is not only the sin of the individual, but also the sin of the whole society. No matter how powerful and status a man is and possesses, he cannot be concerned only for himself. The society needs everyone to reflect on thoroughly. Although this is different

from Anthrodizee in the traditional sense, the poet's sincerity and deep feelings cannot be denied. "Why did you sacrifice? Where did you fall/The era hung down its hands and was too feeble to answer/ History hid its face and refused to speak for the time being" [10]. The lyric protagonist temporarily replaces that high-dimensional criterion, torturing human nature and history.

To sum up, it can be seen that the poet's use of confession discourse in her poem is essentially a metaphor for her sharp and sensitive critical spirit, not only analyzing herself, but also urging the society and the public to analyze themselves rather than seeking self-purification. As said in the poem:

If that were me, just  
 My tragedy —  
 I would have forgiven,  
 My tears and anger  
 May be quiet down;  
 But for the fathers of the children  
 For the children of fathers  
 For under the monuments everywhere  
 No more trembling for the silent rebuke;  
 For the picture of sleeping in the streets once  
 No longer makes people's eyes nowhere to hide;  
 For naive children a hundred years later  
 Don't guess the history we leave behind;  
 For the blankness of the motherland,  
 For this rough period of the nation,  
 For the purity of the sky  
 And the integrity of the road  
 I demand truth. [10]

Here, the poet says sadly that if it is only her own suffering, there will always be a day to let go. But in the face of the inescapable plight and suffering of countless people in reality, who is qualified to replace for the repentance? Who is qualified to represent forgiveness? Rather than indulging in the fear of "self-limitation" in order to promote one's own liberation and escape from acute reality difficulties, the poet constantly tortures her own conscience, not out of "redemption", but takes the initiative to attack with a great care that transcends time and space and a deep sense of responsibility, questioning the reality and the truth. The poet's call of "confession" in a special historical context refers to the pain of the whole era.

The huge and complex collective unconsciousness in the Chinese tradition has naturalized and transformed the concept of confession in Anthrodizee, showing strong traditional characteristics. Under the influence of the concept of "one's conscience" and "self-cultivation", people's guilt is often attributed to the pollution and influence of external things on themselves, and what they need to do is to remain more unmoved and be "worthy of their conscience". Even if there is "introspection", it is only a reflection on the appearance of behavior, speech, etc., and lacks deep insight and observation of the self. Again, taking Ba Jin's *Confessions* as an example, Ba Jin admitted that some of the

things he had done in the past were “violating his conscience”. But he only stayed at this level, expressing a deep indictment to the dark times of the past, berating himself for “daring to disobey and have no principles”. Then he concluded that people need to follow the guidance of their conscience at all times and “say whatever they want”. Above, Rousseau’s optimism about human nature and traditional Chinese adherence to “one’s conscience” are integrated. The goal of “confession” is to “purify one’s heart” and return to a pure and undisturbed ideal state of goodness. And because of this, because of the lack of examination and dissection of transcendental absolute meaning, it is questionable on what balance can an empirical “conscience” be judged to be sincere.

Therefore, when the Anthrodizee is introduced into China, its easily-exploited weakness becomes apparent. Under the banner of “confession” is a mixture of the entanglement of discourse, the halo of self-promotion, the deviation in the manner of attempting an ineffective solution, and the cunning of diverting contradictions. Shi Tiesheng says: “With only injustices in the past but no soothing confessions, probably only resentment will be constantly cloned. Lacking a sense of confession, one has no choice but to blame the painful experience on history, believing to be unrestrained and open-minded. It seems that history is a garbage can, encapsulating and concealing the sins that no one wants to touch again, and then everyone can be clean” [9]. “Confession” becomes a mere form that makes a fuss and a deceitful trick and stunt to gain benefits, being hung in the air and abused, being used as a tool to demonstrate identity, increase social status, and evade responsibility.

#### 4 The Undercurrent and Emergence of “Theodicy”

After the Cultural Revolution, a creative undercurrent close to the Augustinian concept of confession gradually emerged, reflecting original insights. After Beicun became a formal Christian, the profound understanding of the classics and teachings brought by his identity gradually overlapped with his identity as a writer, prompting him to provide a “divinity” view on the cultural crisis and spiritual crisis over the past half century from the perspective of “faith” in the true sense: “We can go beyond the characteristics of contemporary literature (decadence, formalistic obsession, and self-abuse) to penetrate into its interior, and see the more deadly situation, namely, the loss of confidence and ability leads to depression of the will, and the exhaustion and shrinking of this vitality is the inner crisis of the humanistic spirit” [5]. The spiritual crisis in the intellectual world makes Beicun deeply aware of the fragility and limitations of people in the broad environment and groups. The era of holding high the banner of subjective initiative has created a group of decadent, depraved, non-personalized and homogeneous “people” who do not have the ability to think independently and basic principles. In his works such as *I Have a Covenant with God* (《我与上帝有个约》) and *Anger* (《愤怒》), he constantly penetrates into the darkness of human nature through the light of divinity, and uses texts to experiment with the possibility of resurrecting God in the spiritual desolation.

Beicun points out that when people are in the predicament of their self-mind being exiled as rootless duckweed, with nowhere to convert to and no meaning, only the omniscient being from a higher dimension has the qualifications for “I” to entrust everything,



[6] and only God has the ultimate power of “final word”. “He is the way, the truth, and the life” [7]. Moreover, God doesn’t need to be proved by the knowledge and logic that human beings think they have penetrated the truth of the universe. Those solve the problem of cause and contribution at the material level, and it is not contradictory that the mind and spirit belong to God [8]. The metaphysical world he lays out in the text provides the soil for sincere confession to take place. Since then, in the spiritual realm of contemporary Chinese literature, God, as a high-dimensional redeemer, has been officially endowed with the power of “forgiveness” and “judgment”. And “confession” is no longer toolized, but truly sees human beings through the eyes of God.

At the same time, many more writers and critics have found “the way to the dwelling place of God”, taking on new qualities and new questions.

#### 4.1 The Thorough Dissection

In many essays and memoirs, Shi Tiesheng has unreservedly exposed his delicate and complicated mentality. He neither shies away from the past, nor is he restricted or coerced by the current mainstream pattern, but confronts his true self, speaks sincerely, and refuses to make disguised words. In an era when everyone argues against the mainstream, focuses on reflection and is exposed to the discourse of “remembering the shame” that has become the new mainstream, Shi Tiesheng doesn’t follow suit. In *Remember the Shame of Cultural Revolution* (《文革记愧》), he frankly explains his true state of mind when writing his memoirs: Although he subjectively wants to write down the facts word for word, he still intentionally leaves out some really indescribable things. However, he doesn’t deny the meaning of “remembering the shame” itself. He is well aware of the limitations of himself and everyone, so he cannot avoid the responsibility of history. The painful historical lessons cannot be simply blamed by a few people. Everyone who participates more or less in the identification should bear the judgment of guilt, consciously confess and consciously be punished.

Shi Tiesheng believes that the key is not the amount of “sin” or the “force” of the society, because as long as people have experienced the “path that the ugly has traveled” [9], it is necessary for them to confess. He borrows the Bible text in *Essays in Sickness* (《病隙碎笔》) to point out: “Since sin is universal in the hearts of men, then confession is necessary for everyone” [9]. The inherent instability and fragility of human nature based on real-life experience makes all the “beauty and virtue” lies set up to build utopia seem hypocritical and comical. Therefore, the acceptance of “sin” is a basic confrontation with real life. Only by facing up to this somewhat cruel reality, can improvement and progress be possible [9]. Shi Tiesheng emphasizes the importance of guilt and confession over and over again: “In the dead of night, God always comes in the dark night of your soul. Confession is not only to confess the sins that have been revealed in the daytime, but also to see how the flow of the heart rushing in the dark deviates from the requirements of God. Confession is not for others, not even for God, but to see God, to look upon him, and this kind of look compels you to be honest” [9]. And this kind of honesty itself becomes the Sword of Damocles hanging in the air, forcing the self to give up all hypocrisy, deceit, and pretense, and to face the darkest truth of human nature and the secrets that the self most wants to hide. Shi Tiesheng believes that the God who represents the ruler of eternal meaning is the highest justice that is perfect and flawless.

People are not qualified to claim true justice. Unless they always move closer to a God of higher standards, they will inevitably fall into confusion and disorder. “Confession, in addition to lowering your head, one must also look up; in addition to knowing that the choice is right now and the action in the past was wrong, one has to ask about the future” [9]. Starting from the ups and downs of his own life and the impermanence of fate, Shi Tiesheng enters the vision of God through a thorough analysis of himself. Thus, with a sincere, serious and solemn attitude, he has made a powerful response to all the empty sounds of nothingness echoing on the land of China.

#### 4.2 The Transition from “False Gods” to the “True God”

The Theodicy concept of confession has encountered a lot of resistance and criticism in the development process of contemporary writers’ creation and commentary. One of the basic viewpoints is the criticism of man’s unconditional surrender to God in “confession”. Based on instinctual vigilance against authority and blind confidence in “man’s victory over nature”, a large number of researchers believe that the Theodicy concept of confession reveals “unconditional prostration at the feet of God”, “extortion and kidnapping of freedom”, and even denounces related theories for “spiritual slaves”, believing that this kind of confession based on manifested obedience, humility, and fear is not sincere, because “no one can truly explore another person’s heart”.

From this relationship of attribution and affiliation, it seems that the Theodicy concept of confession has indeed handed over the most important self-built barriers of reason and subjectivity. Whether the Christian spirit derived from the Western cultural context is truly applicable to the Chinese context also needs to be discussed. However, the author believes that compared with the phenomenon of “false gods” that frequently appears against the overall background of China, this belief model attributed to the “true God” is undoubtedly more positive.

If it is said that “true God” has eternal absolute value, it is the introspection and self-control of the individual’s own heart under the state of “cautiousness” created by morality-high-dimensional supervision-ultimate meaning, and it is a virtuous circle with continuous positive feedback and continuous growth of mind power, then “false gods” are a kind of limited power manipulation with ulterior motives. The moral code of the “true God” is eternal and has a clear goal, and no other individual of the same dimension is qualified to exercise the power of judgment and forgiveness. The worship of “false gods” is based on the comprehensive manipulation of social information, public opinion, and values, and the “self-censorship” standard it requires changes from time to time. Behind the apprehended danger in every sound lies the inside story of interests and power. Through the restraint of the group and the coercive obedience of the repression and coercion of public power, all dissents become “applause”. Principles such as “justice” and “goodness” change with the change of the right of speech in the human control. Individuals no longer have sincere reflections and principles, truly become numb spiritual slaves, and even are tolerant and self-satisfied repeatedly in the fictional Utopian expectations, and finally become innocent tools and victims under the operation of “false gods”. Otherwise, why was a radiant “Earthly God” born at the time when “atheism” had always been advocated? Even though the affiliation of the criticism of Theodicy is “servility” and “deficiency of subjectivity”, people who are in the state of lack of

absolute value are taken advantage of by the disguised ultimate, which leads to the loss of subjectivity and rationality. What is different from Theodicy is that it not only lacks the basic guidance of truth, goodness and beauty and the pursuit of the perfection of the meaning of individual life, but even uses the name of “God” to achieve personal gain and attack dissidents.

As scholars have said, in traditional culture, Mencius and others’ illusions about the goodness of human nature and using it as the basis for their own academic theory make the true face of human nature and the cruelty of society consciously avoided. “It is easy to replace the real transcendence and the real value standard with the strong, the high, the saint, and even the king, the tyrant, and the powerful. And when the strong, the high, the saint, and even the king, the tyrant, and the powerful use their own standards to judge people and dominate their own destiny, individuals and even the world are willing to be bewitched and even controlled by them”. For this world, there has never been a perfect personality. The pollution of power and desire will eventually erode all norms and justice, and only high-dimensional inspection and supervision can be reliable and stable. Since the new century, due to the lack of in-depth understanding of the historical reality, individual survival experience, and spiritual history of the last century, and also due to the ideology’s blocking and prohibition of relevant information materials and the deliberate ambiguity of relevant historical assertions, the thinking inertia and thinking patterns left by the “false gods” repeatedly appear, which deserves people’s vigilance and reflection. The emergence and writing of Theodicy makes people see the limitation of all individuals and the darkness of human nature, so that they can go deep into the sharp interrogation of the soul and mind through a kind of eternal “moral introspection”, providing a valuable attempt for people to get out of the “false-gods” discourse and build an autonomous spiritual order.

## 5 Conclusion

Borrowing the two concepts of confession in the context of Western culture, this paper provides a clear theoretical perspective for sorting out Chinese contemporary literary culture. When the discourse of “confession” is involved in the re-cognition of society and people as a new thinking perspective, the different cultural contexts and the noisy discourse competition will undoubtedly obscure its real value. Therefore, it is more necessary to clarify the context and clues behind various complex phenomena and to identify the underlying core issues. Especially when a “confession” gesture that has lost the spirit of confession becomes the object of praise and affirmation, it is even more necessary to return to the investigation and theoretical discussion of the classics, so as to illuminate a clear path in the dark and unclear ashes of history.

**Authors’ Contributions.** This paper is independently completed by Chunyan Xu.

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