

The Power of “Voice”

The Metaphorical Narration of “Voice” in Chinese Contemporary Novels

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Abstract—As an important communication medium, voice constitutes an intuitive and transparent aspect for people to grasp literary works. The voice image is applied widely and diversely in contemporary Chinese novels, not only including the description of the sound of nature, but also the outline of the voices in social life, which provides us with a representative text of the "voice" with shift and cadence as a medium for political and cultural propaganda. The shout of "tweeter" is regarded as the "leader's voice" of the authoritative discourse, as well as the revolutionary songs sung in a certain era, among which many voices are hidden in the author's own social environment and also permeate in the cultural structure of fictional scene. These "voice" images that have their metaphorical meanings changing all the way are different in the same way and have the same in difference, and they contain a political and cultural metaphor that is not disorderly.

Keywords—"voice"; *Chinese contemporary novels; metaphorical narrative art*

I. INTRODUCTION

Just like seeing the mirror for the first time, human has the dual feeling of surprise and fear for the initial reaction to language, and the magic of language is often the masterpiece of voice — it is produced with a strong force that can hold people's souls, and also makes Wizards can always use peculiar voices to convey and strengthen the power of their magic. Just as "the spoken language sound may also have the same function as the image of the gods" [1], and people's fear of the magic of the voice always is highly consistent with the fear from their self-consciousness; because of this magic power, the voice is bound to be closely related to "power", so that the powers often pay great attention to the "voice". In ancient Chinese poetics, the voice has never been limited to the meaning in physics, it also has rich contents of ethics and political science, and the description of voice always metaphorically points to social ethics and national politics. "a Well-governed and stable society certainly has the music full of leisure and cheerful atmosphere, showing the political harmony; the turbulent society must has the music full of resentment and anger, showing the political shackles of the time; the state conquered by others certainly has the music full of sadness and worries, showing that the people were suffering at that time. The music of each dynasty is always closely related to the politics of the time."

When the "voice system" is controlled, the truth of "governing a state" is complete.

Coincidentally, "all literary works are first of a sound series, and then the meaning is reproduced from this sound series" [2], and regardless of the voice effect, but as an important communication medium, the voice constitutes an intuitive and transparent aspect for people grasping literary works. In Chinese contemporary novels, the voice images is applied widely and diversely in contemporary Chinese novels, not only including the description of the sound of nature, but also the outline of the voices in social life, of which many voices are hidden in the author's own social environment and also permeate in the cultural structure of fictional scene. These "voice" images that have their metaphorical meanings changing all the way are different in the same way and have the same in difference, and they contain a political and cultural metaphor that is not disorderly.

II. THE AUTHORITATIVE DISCOURSE — THE LOFTY CALL FOR THE REVOLUTION

The "seventeen-year" revolutionary historical novels are generally filled with a "divine voice" — the "authoritative discourse" issued by the Party Central Committee and Chairman Mao is impassioned and extremely powerful, forming a highly centralized "Red Passion" that infects and inspires the emotions of every reader. These "authoritative discourses" are ubiquitous in the "seventeen-year" revolutionary historical novels, with a strong and powerful control, always playing the role of educating and making revolutionaries vigilant, especially when they are shaken in distress and hardship, the "Leader's Voice" of Chairman Mao and the Party Central Committee will quietly come to, echoing in the ears, annihilating any psychological swing of the revolutionaries in the bud, achieving heartening and inspiring morale and ensuring the success of the revolutionary task.

In Li Yingru's "Struggling for Ancient City in Wild Fire and Spring Breeze", it is described that the revolutionary Yang Xiaodong encountered some difficulties when he first came to work in the provincial capital; his mind and thoughts showed dramatic fluctuations, and the instability of this emotion deeply affected his normal work, at this time,

"another voice" — Chairman Mao's instruction of the party organization sounded in his ear:

"No! No!" Another voice is criticizing him in his mind. "No matter whether Gao's uncle and nephew can play a role, only this enthusiastic and capable girl can give help to find Han Yan, which is just power. This power is used to unite the masses, the masses are dry firewood, and the party is a fierce fire, and when dry firewood touches the fire, it will burn in the mind of the enemy..." when thinking of it, he got clear in mind and eyes, and became comfortable.[3]

The "another voice" is given by Chairman Mao in the party organization, and as the core leader of the entire revolutionary group, obviously he has a stronger will and a firmer stance than the ordinary revolutionaries. By generally reading the "17-year" revolutionary historical novels, there are not many descriptions of their positive images, but the "authoritative discourses" delivered by him have a very high frequency of occurrence; as a key stand, it helps revolutionaries build confidence in the danger and disaster and make them ultimately overcome difficulties.

Obviously, this "voice" is beyond the scope of ordinary sounds we usually call, and is regarded as a spiritual pillar of certain groups of people for their faith; as a kind of spiritual phenomenon, it reflects the rationality and emotion, attitude and behavior of the subject of faith to certain belief objects. The revolutionary leaders really can command the battle thousands miles away and strategize for victory only in a command tent, to make our army defeat the enemy with a force inferior in number even when powerful enemy pressing on to the border, and to make triumphant news keep pouring in. In the literary creation, the author exaggeratedly put the leader to the altar to accept worship, and even Yan'an was crowned with the title of "democratic holy land" with strong religious overtones. The givers of "authoritative discourse" promised to revolutionaries that as long as they persist in the revolutionary path, regardless of life and death, they can be awarded the greatest sense of sacredness can feel the sweetest happiness. Therefore, even in the face of inhuman torture and the supreme moment of life and death, as long as they keep in mind the "authoritative discourse" of Chairman Mao and the party organization, all difficulties will be overcome, and they will become calm in the face of death.

In fact, just as God teaches his people through his voice, "obedience to instruction has always been the direct demands of society for people; all the society is more regulating people's bodies and behaviors through the voice of authority, otherwise it will be expelled or sentenced. Voice is the expression of power, and as people cannot exist away from society, they naturally cannot get rid of power and voice, and are eventually internalized."[4]

In the era of Jin Jingmai's creation of *The Song of Ouyang Hai*, everyone is listening to the leader's voice devoutly by the radio or tweeter and following his highest instructions for behaviors, therefore, "when the great communist fighter, Ouyang Hai faced the "key moment of the collision between the train and the war horse, a loud voice rang at his ears: 'Death for the benefit of the people, is heavier than Mount Tai...'"[5]. In the works, Jin Jingmai

allowed Chairman Mao's instruction appearing in Ouyang Hai's ears and eyes for four times continuously, which is a "resonant voice" but also a "lofty thought, great strength and firm belief". Even so the voice effects of revolutions and romances are not known, but the intention is clear that the writer hopes and is willing to let the "leader's voice" ring in the ear of every Chinese when they do things. So when the voice of the "leader's voice" rang in his ears timely, Ouyang Hai made a self-sacrifice; his loftiness is just from his obedience, just as after the voice echoed, his last sentence before his sacrifice: "right, so done according to Chairman Mao's instructions." Just as you think about in the day and have a dream at night, really the voice can sound in the ear by contemplation, imagination, and faith.

In the "seventeen-year" revolutionary historical novels, "voice" as a narrative image with metaphorical meaning, make the revolutionaries always firmly decide their sacrifice for overall situation under the call of "authoritative discourse" to abandon their body, their families, and cover up their sorrow, when they are devastated in body by blood, face the pain of losing family in spirit, falls the lowest point in their life, and feel lost and despairing the revolutionary dilemma. For the revolutionary cause, this is certainly a supreme character, but for individuals and families, this is indirectly a cruel violence. However, in the novel of "seventeen-year", the "authoritative discourse" summoned such lofty violent psychology that also represents the education of the party and the enlightenment for the revolutionaries by the party's spokesmen.

III. "TWEETER" — A STATE'S POWER METAPHOR

Since 1949, the "tweeter" in China's vast rural areas has quickly become the main medium for national mobilization and propaganda due to its wide audience and without limit of text obstacles, it has spread the voice to vast remote areas and assisted the authorities to control and manage all the territory. As a magic weapon to promote the party' and the state's policy, the tweeter closely connects the will of the state with the remote rural areas, and always makes the voice of the central government reverberate in the ears of the masses. The legitimacy of a state can be supported by the most common people only when the state spreads its political ideas and values to the vast rural areas in the most standard "resounding and energetic" form and make it quickly head, recognized and accepted by the people. For a new country, the tweeter can achieve propaganda of thought, cohesion of mind, unity the people, and can effectively fight against hostile members; for ordinary people, the tweeter urges their enthusiasm of "grasping production, promoting revolution", and more the miracle of the tweeter makes them produce a sense of sacredness — for love and worship of the country's leaders.

"At that time, a tweeter was hung on the old locust tree in the village, where Chairman Mao's voice was sent and the song of praising Chairman Mao was played. Usually just a few songs were played. When it was just dawn, the first song "It's Red in the East" was played in the tweeter, and then people were be informed to attend a meeting or go to watch the literary and art propaganda performance; the

performance was the model opera "A Qing Sao", and sometimes people listened to a report of the central government... Before the report, the song of "Three Rules of Disciplines and Eight Points for Attention" was played, and the last song was always "Sailing on A Sea by the Helmsman." I can sing them till now..."[6]

As we know, if the tweeter spreads the voice of the Party Central Committee from far Beijing to a remote mountainous villages, this one-dimensional national voice will reverberate over rural fields, and its propaganda and political effects will be clearly unmatched by other media. Especially in the "Cultural Revolution" period, under the idea impetus of "revolution is not waiting for anyone, message must be delivered overnight!", the expression of ideology has become urgent, and in order to deliver the instructions of Chairman Mao ad the Party Central Committee at the fastest speed, the tweeter has become the most direct publicity tool. It is worth noting that as the state's power symbol, the tweeter is not allowed to be used by any individual freely, and even if, the individual must be given the status of an ideological spokesman by the state.

In the novel "Furong Town", only the leader Li Mangeng of production brigade had the right to use the tweeter before the Cultural Revolution, and after he was denounced in the Cultural Revolution, this privilege came to the current secretary Wang Qiushe, while the propaganda content must be recognized and approved by the state in national ideology. Undoubtedly, under the control of political ideology of "politics beyond everything else", the tweeter has a sacredness that is closely tied to the image of the state; if anyone attempts to despise or challenge it, the one must be opposite to the state and the socialism, and inevitably he/she will be criticized fiercely. Just as "the tweeter is just broadcasting, or it is just someone is speaking, but when the sound volume reaches a certain limit, it is not just broadcasting, and not just someone is talking, and you must listen to it... There is never news in the tweeter, but only propaganda, it is a kind of violence. You have to listen to it, even if you are not willing [7]"

As an image in a novel, the "tweeter" contains the author's strong emotions and values meaning, by which a field of cultural power forms in each village: centralization controls people's lives, and the tweeter naturally becomes an important role in the novel, intertwined with many important factors: sudden changes in life, crisis, the authority decision to change individual destiny, etc.; the readers not only see it but also feel it, hearing its voice: as depicted in the novel, in the villages where the "tweeter" hangs high, people are familiar with the words "party" and "country" in the tweeter, which make people have no way out, but it is also strange as the state's power it represents cannot be touched, high above, and the void is intangible and unrecognizable.

IV. UNUSUAL "SONGS" — THE END OF POLITICAL IDEOLOGICAL DISCOURSE

In the intellectual youth novels of the 1980s, "voice" as an image is different from the expression of politics in the form of literature in the "17-year" novels and "Cultural

Revolution" novels, but it expresses the profound literary and cultural significance as a political cultural code with the form of politics. The multiple voices appearing in the works are ostensibly opportune, but actually have some other meanings in the words, which represent a voice that is revolted, breaks through taboos, and a true human nature voice. These "voices" are intertwined in the unfolding of the plot to form a network. On the intersection of the network lines, they either break through the taboos or subvert the power; either dispel the authority or subvert the tradition; either pursue the true feelings or call for human nature. Voice images such as the quotation songs, revolutionary songs, and propaganda slogans were frequently subverted in the works of this period, which completely dispel its sublime.

In "TangTang Jinniu River", several stout men, such as Niu Hanguo, Huolang and Da Laoli, carried Jiang Acui's son's coffin. Unexpectedly, the surnai miserably blew out a quotation song: "We Communists are like seeds and the people are like land. When we come to a place and we must integrate ourselves with the people... [8]" The surnai should have blown high-spirited and joyous revolutionary tones as painful and tormented songs. And then these songs drew tears from the people, which was more emotional than the atmosphere created by simple words, and made a sharp contrast to the quotation songs during the "Cultural Revolution" that was an impassioned rhythm of encouraging people to fight and upsurge. An impassioned tone was integrated with sadness from losing own son, which was very satirical. When the lovesick Song Haiqing played revolutionary songs with his Piccolo to console his lonely heart, the excitement and excitation of revolutionary songs in the past was also in sharp contrast to the loneliness and intolerance at that time. In the tension of contrast, it highlighted the suppressed humanity and pulsating desire of the special era.

Similarly, in the "Maqiao Dictionary", Wanyu, the best singer in Maqiao, was called by the literary and art propaganda team, and asked to wear a spring plowing production clothing to rehearse a song about catching spring plowing and promoting production. He eventually reluctantly agreed with a great deal of ideological work, but in the days of rehearsal, he was quite lazy and indolent, which not only could not remember the lyrics, and even called someone names while singing, and eventually he was fined fifty pounds of rice because he fled from the battle. In fact, he is a man who is "not serious in many things, but very serious on the issue of singing, and who is not serious in lots of times, but the heart of the song is extremely firm [9]. As the spokesman of folk tradition and culture, he is absolutely unacceptable to the spring plowing songs as political propaganda materials. It is completed unmasked that rural folk ethics and rural operation mechanism begin to weaken and rebel political discourses.

From "TangTang JinNiu River" to "Maqiao Dictionary", a series of related political movements have been routinized. It ostensibly has downplayed the meaning of politics; however, it has revealed the strongest voice of the politics of the times in depth. They all refer to the image of "voice" in a consistent way, people cannot deviate from political ideology

in every act and every move just because these voices are regulated by the authority of the age, which results in the suppression of the instinct to speak and to speak as "human beings" and reveals such the human eternal thought as "human nature", "life", "survival" and others. Those who normally show the "human" instinct, dare to speak, dare to choose the voice they want to hear, such as Wanyu, will be subjected to the pressure of power, and even be punished. This cannot but be said to be a paradox.

The reform of the value and significance of "voice" represents the miniature of the social changes in China since the middle of the last century. From the "leader's instruction" in the revolutionary period to the "loudspeaker" in the collectivization era, and to the deconstruction of revolutionary songs after the reform and opening up, the value born by the "voice" and its attached social and cultural significance have undergone tremendous changes as a result of the changes of the social structure caused by modernization and the values pursued by people. In the revolutionary period, "authoritative discourse" was the beacon; in the collectivization period, the high-pitched loudspeaker penetrated the state power wherever its voice travelled and became the weapon of political propaganda, where they all had the function of some kind of political metaphor. In the literature of the new period after the reform and opening up, the state power began to recede slowly and difficultly, the public gradually excluded and alienated the political ideological discourse, so the voice came down from the higher political altar in the past to the market-oriented utilitarian level. We don't know what kind of "voice" will be in the future, but the reform of "voice" will still remember the memory of those special periods in the end, but will have a new "social framework".

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