

## The Location, Surface and Its Connotation of the Revolutionary Landscape

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**Abstract.** Landscape description in novels is closely related to the narration. The novels of the “17-year revolutionary history” present various scenic locations of different times such as before the civil war, during the civil war, in the crucifixion and after the victory, and different surficial sceneries from different perspectives such as the linear, the scatter-pointed, the line-pointed and the point-linear ones, thus all of which demonstrate the connotations of landscapes under the perspectives of the revolutionary routinization and spirit.

### Introduction

In the novels of the “17-year revolutionary history”, compared with other novels, the landscape description in the novels is limited and the images in the novel are categorized (they are mostly land, mountains, rivers, and plants), and the characters in these novels resent the appreciation of the scenery (rejected as the petty bourgeoisie taste). However, as the commentator says, “In the history of Chinese literature, landscape description has always been regarded as a purely technical method or form, and has not been raised to the same level of the humanities, themes, styles, and even national cultural memories”[1]. There is a lack of in-depth interpretation and systematic summary of the landscape description in the novel. Therefore, this article attempts to reconsider the landscape descriptions in the novels of the “17-year revolutionary history” from the perspective of the distribution and composition of the landscape and try to find its inherent correlations with the revolutionary culture.

### The Location of Landscape and the Routinized Revolutionary Life

The landscape is conceived by the locations, which combines the geographical information as the spatial location and the historical experience as the historical experience [2]. In the novels of the 17-year revolutionary history, landscape description is reflected in the whole process of the revolutionary narration (namely, the fight, the frustration, the sacrifice, and the victory), and thus it shows four kinds of landscape locations:

(1) Before the war. By the presence of the scenery, on the one hand, people are brought into the daily world; on the other hand, the scenery is pushed to the edge of war. As a binder, the scenery connects daily life with war. And because of the universality of the scenery, the sudden and abnormal nature of war is obscured, which let people regard the war as a part of the everyday world unconsciously. For example: “A mass and large-scale armed action is about to rise. On these days, as usual, the leaves of poplar trees on the Qianli Di are lush... Late smoke comes out from the chimney. People come back along the village road with hoes and baskets on their backs. ... The evening wind blows along the white river... The river ducks faltered to home after eating. Two white geese, water chickens, long-necked herons, and a herd of cattle ... When darkness came, lamps were lit in the cabin, and Zhu Laozhong called Zhu Dagui, Zhu Laoxing, Yan Zhihe and Wu Laoba organize the Hebei Red Army Guerrilla known as Suojing Squadron” (*Sowing Fire*). All of above describes the outstanding the daily routine of the landscape before the revolutionary riots with a large number of verbs, especially the movements of ducks, geese, herons, and cows. These movements meant that the revolutionaries were eager to try their armed actions.

(2) During the war. In the fierce revolutionary war, everyone should concentrate on the confrontation, but people cannot completely ignore the scenery as the environment and background of their own body. At the moment, the scenery transmits the sensual thinking of the everyday life, filled with emotion [3], stretches the revolutionaries of the diversified emotions, and strengthens the impulse of the revolution. For example, during the rest of the war, guerrillas discovered the beauty of Weishan Lake in summer: “a piece of green bitter ginger, cattail grass, wild duckweed and water chestnuts floating on the water surface, lotus blossoms in pink” (*Railroad Guerrilla*). They not only discovered the beauty of Weishan Lake, but also traveled through the lotus bushes, bought fish and wine, enjoyed its beauty, and entered a strange space of daily life to show revolutionary heroism, romanticism feelings. Guerrillas also stocked the energy of the follow-ups when they enjoyed the food and wines.

(3) During the revolutionaries suffer. The crucifixion of the hero is the test of the revolution, and death is the highest revolutionary sacrifice. At this time, the flash of the landscape makes the double meaning of suffering and death, namely the farewell to the revolution and the farewell to the daily world. When the revolution falls into the daily world, the sacrifice shows the departure of lingering individual life. For example, “The next day, the sky is clear. The wilderness exudes a fresh, moist muddy atmosphere... The mother was led by Wang Zhu and Wang Liuzi, and they escorted to the north mountain... She patrolled the innocent, beautiful and rich rivers and mountains... Ah! It’s nice to be alive! What a wonderful homeland! My mother is full of passion for life” (*Sow Thistle*). At the time of approaching of death, the scenery awakened the mother’s nostalgia for her homeland and her love for life.

(4) After the victory. The scenery after victory faces the future, while the scenery in the distance indicates the future of revolution. Although it is vague at the end of sight but omnipresent. It shows that the revolution has permeated people’s daily life, and the revolutionary psychology remains unchanged, and the revolution will last forever. For example, “They looked through the telescope at the mountain top where the battalion commander, Zhou Dayong, led the soldiers to attack with gunfire fiercely. In the north, over the Great Wall, suddenly a powerful storm rushed and lightning set off and the rumbling sounded. The storm is sandwiched by the thunder, and it is swept through the forest with an imposing momentum. It has rolled over the hills around Yan’an and has swept through the Yellow River Basin where the nation has fought for thousands of years” ... (*Defending Yan’an*). The soldiers fought bravely to kill the enemy, the victory was in sight, the head of the army stood in the mountain overlooking the scenery of the wind and lightning, thunder and lightning, devastating scenery momentum in the distance to raise a new revolutionary space.

“From the perspective of the character of fuzzy edge of the people’s vision, to view the characteristics of continuous motion, the scenery is indeed a space connected with the daily life” [4], also namely scenery on behalf of the daily life space, and so the scenery always emerge during the whole process in the revolutionary war, which means that is impossible to separate revolution from the everyday life. This is the result of the profound influence of the revolutionary psychology during the 17-years, as well as the requirement of human nature. From the views of the integrity of the revolutionary humanity, “If heroic life transcends the triviality and confusion of daily life and embodies the lofty significance of life, then the bits and pieces of mortal life will finally show that the heroic life is too abstract and too heavy... and as the time goes by, the daily life becomes orderly and is restricted by trifles, Isn’t it often unreasonable to make people eager for generosity and enthusiasm” [5]? Only ordinary and heroism are complementary to each other, which is the true human appeal. This means the combination of landscape and revolution can overcome the separation and shape the integrity of human nature. During the 17-years, following the principle of typical environment in the realistic literature, some writers insisted that human life is closely related to the surrounding scenery... “As a literary product of real life reflected in people’s minds, there are often scene descriptions, because characters in the works cannot live in a vacuum after all” [6]. The natural environment is also added to the typical environment which most people only interpret as the social environment including class struggle and economic status.

## The Surface of the Landscape and the Revolutionary Spirit

Any landscape has its surface, and the surface refers to the universal meaning of the morphological representation of the landscape. According to Nakamura's explanation, it approximates some kind of afterglow left in the perception of no-meaning graphics in Gestalt psychology. In ancient times, the representation of the surface generally refers to the elemental structure such as "metal, wood, water, fire and earth, while in modern times, it is mainly called lone pine, weeping willow, mountain stream, river and street" [7]. In the novels of the 17-year revolutionary history, there are four kinds of scenery surfaces, and especially the former two are more common.

(1) Linear scenery. The scenery has one strong line, clear layers, and the straight line which make everything become vivid, containing endless vitality and power. For example: "from the top of the mountain under the big rock, spring water flow out of, thin but very powerful... Water flows, through the thorns, turning the tree, rushing through the rock strata, merged into streams with other companions, rolling turbulence" (*Sow Thistle*). With the development of the revolution, more and more people will come together to join the army. Even though there are many obstacles and destruction, such as thorns, trees and rock strata, as long as the revolutionaries are united, they will move forward steadfastly. Revolution will be like a surging waterfall which will eventually crush all counter-revolutionary forces with the sweeping force.

(2) Scattered scenery. Like scattered perspective in traditional painting, its scenery is loose, but when these points are in the direction of unification or defend a certain center (it often represents the party and leaders in the novels), they will form the collective power of the revolution. For example: "In the morning, the fog covered Yan'an, the mountains and rivers around Yan'an City... In the fog, the bells of animals sounded strange and loud... In the distance, people sang Xintianyou on the hilltop covered with fog. This simple and beautiful song is to sing the credit of the Communist Party and Chairman Mao... the bright red sunshine shines on the top of the pagoda mountain... on the hillsides and ditches around the city, people are listening to classes and discussing the difficulties in their study" (*Defending Yan'an*), the scenery seems to be messy, but all the scenery has been sunlit, and they were held in the light of the revolution or leader and worked hard for the bright future of the revolution.

(3) Line-point scenery. It takes the momentum in the distant view, uses the linear structure, and takes the essence in the near view, and uses the scattered point structure. Straight lines set the solemn tone (the rays are rushing forward), and scatters can increase the freedom and activity of the environment. At the beginning of *The Legend of Lvliang Heroes*, the East-West trend of Lvliang Mountain forms a clear line and is the ray extends to east. Its dynamic nature tries to bring readers into the story quickly, and revolutionary heroes will appear on the scene. Then, the narrative suddenly stagnates on the Hualin Mountain and the viewpoint diffuses on the mountain. It seems to open the door of the treasure of the mountain. All kinds of scenery are in sight. It is dazzling: there are a variety of trees, beasts, coals, medicinal herbs and the water. These scatters give people a taste of the richness and magic of nature.

(4) Point-line scenery. Contrary to the line-point scenery, it firstly broadens the natural space in the discrete point of the landscape, and then converges on the linear landscape to show the special status and importance of the latter. For example: "the shallow water near the shore is a bitter green ginger and bulrush. The waters of the lake are covered with wild pecans and water chestnuts. The lotus flowers are pink and cannot be seen at the sight. Fishing boats full of fresh fish are from through the lotus bushes, the fishermen can pick and peel and taste the fresh lotus seeds on the flying boat" (*Railroad Guerrilla*). The list of bitter ginger and pupa shows that the products of Weishan Lake are rich (many scattered points); the straight line from fishing boats passing through the water links up with scattered objects. Fishermen can use them as a cover to feed on them. It is this advantage of geography that guarantees that guerrillas can continue to fight.

The landscape surface of the novels of the 17-year revolutionary history can be classified into two categories: line and point, which are related to the duality of the revolutionary spirit. In Arendt's view, the revolutionary spirit contains two contradictory factors; "On the one hand, the

establishment of a new political body and the planning of a new form of government, and the revolutionary spirit involve the stability and persistence of the new structure. On the other hand, those involved in this event must have had the experience of being fully aware of the capacity of the human beginnings, of the soaring spirit, which has always accompanied the birth of new things” [8]. The former means revolutionary rationality and requires clear hierarchy and clear structure of scenery, which requires the help of the abstract meaning of lines, for instance, the horizontal line has a clear sense of direction, while the vertical line is upright and solemn; the latter represents the revolutionary passion, requiring free and comfortable, scattered and even disorderly arranged scenery, so it is attractive. In addition, the two are not absolutely opposite and irreconcilable. The revolution needs not only strong rational guidance, but also a great romantic.

The reason why these scenery surfaces can contain revolutionary spirit is mainly influenced by the tradition of comparison and the concept of Five Elements. In the ancient literati tradition, the scenery was moralized. *The Analects of Confucius* said that “benevolent people like mountains, and wise people like waters”. In *The Songs of Chu*, a large number of different flowers and herbs symbolize the author’s virtue. The moral landscape creates the habit mechanism of spiritualization. In the folk religion, natural scenery is also abstracted as the Five Elements of “the metal, wood, water, fire and earth”, and these elements are generated and controlled each other, which means that the spirit contained in the scenery has different meanings, and they can be transformed and generated mutually. Therefore, the revolutionary spirit contained in the landscape of the novel of the 17-year-revolution-and-history also has many forms.

## Summary

It is obviously that in the novels of the 17-year revolutionary history, there is indeed a heterogeneous and isomorphic relationship between the landscape and the revolution. The landscape appears before the war, during the war, during the suffering, and after the victory. It means that the revolution has penetrated into all people’s daily life, indicating that the revolutionary ideology has gained people’s deep recognition. At the same time, the linear landscape should be in line with the revolutionary rationality of the clear order and the clear direction, while the dotted landscape radiates the free and lively revolutionary romanticism, and the natural scenery has become the symbol of the revolutionary spirit.

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