

Hei Huamei: A discussion of the Possibility of Hierarchical Communication

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Abstract: *Hei Huamei*, Lao Teng's novel collection, actively intervenes in social reality, effectively integrates novel creation with real life, and presents constructive power in thinking and creation. It presents the social reality and intellectual class localization and interprets ordinary people differently. Taking "the local" as a link, *Hei Huamei* recognizes the potential for communication between two distant classes, reflecting the rare contingency awareness in creation. It undoubtedly bears a significant textual and social value in the contemporary social context.

1. Introduction

Hei Huamei, a newly published novel collection by Lao Teng, describes the complicated and fluctuant social reality of modern China through Lao Teng's real and rich experience and exposure. Lao Teng also makes efforts to give a constructive understanding and interpretation of the reality in the novel collection. The grasp and excavation of hot topics and themes in society shows an admirable sense of responsibility and has the taste of a classical scholar. The two main characters portrayed in the collection are intellectuals in or near the officialdom and ordinary people who dwell on the outskirts of cities (urban fringe area or shanty area) or in rural areas (there are 12 such areas covered in the novel, and nearly 60 characters are portrayed). According to the previous literary tradition, the two have always been in the context of enlightenment and enlightenment, interpretation and interpretation. Through Lao Teng's hope for the intellectuals' localization and his interpretation of the ordinary people, the two classes, which are rarely involved, are connected, opening the door to dialogue and communication.

2. Localization of the Intellectual Class

The reform and opening, which began in the eighties of the last century, has to a large extent brought immeasurable impact on the politics, economy, culture and life of contemporary Chinese society. Technological rationality and scientific pragmatism prevail in society with rapid market economic development and modernization. Thus, people fall into the cycle of technocracy and scientism when they take advantage of material abundance and information convenience. With the broken cultural structure of the Chinese archetype [1], people are drowning in their real-time desires, making interpersonal relationships atomized and individualized.

The new political and economic system's conception of "individual self-worth" focused on the level of money and self, and man became a lonely, nihilistic individual. Over time, the entire society and its inhabitants gradually lost the feeling of "correlation as a whole." Since the 1990s, the intellectual class has taken a page from the Western model of modern intellectual existence and reflected on the Enlightenment's rise and fall since May Fourth Movement. They tried every effort to break through the limitation that conventional intellectuals are full of moral passion but with insufficient intellectual rationality. Therefore, urbanization in China under globalization and the emergence of the middle class are associated with the intellectuals. Writers are part of the above-mentioned intellectual class, who share a certain convergence in their spiritual orientation. Writers affirm and recognize their professional consciousness and roles, which expresses their desire to detach themselves from mainstream ideology, discover their literary selves, and build the literary discipline's independence. The overly absolute perception, however, also causes literature to lose its broad social and humanistic essence, and the spiritual, ethical, and sense of responsibility are ignored or neglected. *Hei Huamei* expresses cultural reflection and literature construction to the intellectual class. In other words, modern intellectuals need to integrate themselves into social life and form an organic bond with people's daily lives. Thus, they can establish and enter the "correlation as a whole" [2]. The intellectual class needs to be down-to-earth and eliminate the "transplantation to the West." Therefore, by taking root in people's daily and learning how to learn and deal with problems from a pragmatic perspective, they can develop a deep understanding and sympathy for ordinary people.

After retirement, studying photography and treating parallax are two clues to observe the ideological change of Shangguan Chun in "Shangguan's Eyes". Before

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retiring, Shangguan Chun was the chief consultant who helped the government make major decisions completed, and the perspective of the problem was the temple official. During his visits to Jinjia Village, Lianhua Village and eye surgery for his photography, Shangguan Chun realized that he was proud of the great harm caused by the ecology, ethics and people's hearts of the big projects he had promoted, and his perspective shifted to the people. The encounters and choices of Jin Qi and his wife, the boss of the ship, Aunt Tian, Doctor Bai, Lao Dong, Zhang Shanxian and others are the enzymes that promote Shangguan Chun's inner thoughts, and it is also from these people that they can extract folk knowledge and wisdom, gain a deep understanding of social reality, and realize their own value and dignity here. "class of 1981" takes the development trajectory and mental journey of six people in the same dormitory of Shencheng casting major as the main line, and their respective life choices and circumstances reflect the epitome of the restructuring of traditional enterprises in Northeast China under the change of times. No matter what kind of profession they are engaged in or what difficulties they experience, they have never lost the ideal of "a better future, forged together", and integrated themselves into the development of one economy and the livelihood of ordinary people in one place. Sima Zheng, the protagonist of "Handcuffs", has been pursuing the fugitive Sha Liang for more than ten years, naturally having the purpose of safeguarding legal justice and dignity, but the deeper psychology is the resentment and unwillingness after his profession was challenged. Sima Zheng's modern legal consciousness and the underlying logic he felt during the pursuit process constantly collided and collided, and finally prompted him to develop a deep understanding and sympathy for Sha Liang, Shi Decheng, Sha Jushi and others who violated the law due to good intentions based on his own encounters. From a prison guard with a professional future to being dismissed as an ordinary person, Sima Zheng's pursuit road was extremely difficult. He's physical and mental process of being forced to be localized also formed a kind of question, how to define fairness and justice in places where the law cannot examine the complexity of life and the subtleties of human nature?

The localization in Lao Teng's novels is reflected in the characters and plot and his attempt to present the essence of literature as "public imagination" based on the historical and cultural information and social reality conflicts expressed by novel language. Thus, novels, a type of literature, can communicate the nation's history, politics, culture, and reality in public vision. *Hei Huamei* exhibits a distinctive quality in that the work is not deliberately detached from politics and mainstream [3], which is consistent with Lao Teng's earlier novels in creative ideas. On the contrary, Lao Teng reconsiders the "public imagination" embedded in literature as its essential attribute, providing aesthetic values and a positive response to contemporary social life and reality. The rupture between political decision-making and people's livelihood, the discord between the legal system and civil order, the swallowing of land by

commercial capital, and the plundering of the ecological environment by economic development are all contradictions and antagonisms that are linked to the sensitive points of today's society and involve the imagination of policies, economics and other systems, and have been repeatedly explained in the novel collection. *Hei Huamei* expresses ideas of constructivism while reflecting and criticizing. With imagination and diversity, literature frequently resists and reveals the truth, showing the sophisticated and dark sides of human nature and the unknown sides of civilization and institutions. Therefore, it can generate power to change the overall public. Nussbaum commented on Dickens's *Hard Times*, "It contains a normative vision of a scientific, political economy and the scientific, political imagination. If economic policy is formulated without acknowledging the complexity of the moral life of every human being, its struggles, its complex emotions, its efforts and fears for understanding, and cannot separate a person's life from a machine, then we should question its claims" [4]. Literature, in turn, is intrinsically connected to the vulnerable and broadly expresses human feelings and concerns. The "poetic justice" of the literary public imagination not only understands but also inspires every ordinary individual who lives in it. This may be the responsibility that writers who are the main body of literary creation and a member of the intellectual class should have. Through this "localization," Lao Teng exhibits his comprehension of literary "intervention."

3. Different Interpretation of the Low Class

The concept of low class was proposed by the Italian scholar Gramsci. The low class is the lowest group of people in society. It is manifested in low political status, in the economic pits, undereducated, etc.

Hei Huamei describes the low-class people who dwell on the outskirts of cities or in rural areas, which shows Lao Teng's different interpretation and understanding of the underclass that is becoming common knowledge in contemporary writing. Emerging in the 1990s, low-class literature has become vigorous and powerful in the literary world since the 2000s. Meanwhile, the low class has also become a field for various theories and discourses [5]. However, the low class cannot establish their discourse system quickly due to the lack of political, economic, educational, cultural, and other social resources. As a result, the intellectuals take responsibility for narrating and voicing for them. They can make imagination and criticism in literature with a different vision from that of the underclass, by which the underclass won't be ignored and can be in the spotlight. Rationality and exploration are also particularly essential in front of the low class and the complicated social reality. "The low class" gradually becomes a moral metaphor in contemporary theoretical narratives. Thus, writers' morality is judged when the aesthetic form of "low-class writing" is evaluated. It also becomes an important symbol of whether the works reflect writers' humanistic intellectual tendencies and

social responsibility [6], which has inadvertently restrained writers' expression and narrowed and simplified the understanding of underclass literature. Based on this, in front of the increasing problems of homogenization, superficiality, and extremism in contemporary "underclass writing" [7], it is worth discussing how to explore the possibility of class dialogue and communication in a broad perspective and construct a rich and multidimensional representation of the underclass. Lao Teng has made valuable thinking and attempt in *Hei Huamei*.

Low-class novels frequently use comparable techniques and logic to measure and capture low-class reality, such as the spectacle effect, distorted and complex human nature, and the opposition and rift with daily routine [8]. Lao Teng depicts the issues and struggles of the underclass while pursuing goodness and hope, as opposed to the severe representation of the underclass' suffering. The three generations of Bi Guoxing's ancestors in "Yuanqing Mountain" are all tanners, strictly abide by the old rules handed down by their ancestors, and wholeheartedly protect the tranquility of Yuanqing mountain. After the exploration of molybdenum ore, in the face of possible benefits, Longshan Forest Farm became a testing ground for all kinds of people's hearts and human nature, and the tanner Bi Guoxing kept running in order to protect Yuanqing mountain, and the ranger Wu Laogui even paid the price of his life. The final ending of the novel is gratifying, Yuanqing mountain, where the Longshan Forest form is located, is preserved, and the protection base is approved. Although this ending has an idealized color, Bi Guoxing, a person at the bottom of the heap, still adheres to simple rules and benevolence in the face of the temptation and pressure of money, power and love, and the flash of human nature of the low class is self-evident. In "Shangguan's Eyes", through Shangguan Chun's photographic journey, the encounters of the hidden low class in the process of urbanization are highlighted. Because of the construction of the Puhe Dam, Jinjia Village was not only relocated, but also flooded the ancestral tomb. As the village chief, in order to keep his promise, Jin Qi has been diving to help villagers go to the grave for twelve years; In order to build a high-end community, the digging up of Lotus Island led to ecological imbalance and species extinction in Lianhua Village, and many villagers, represented by the boss of the ship and Aunt Tian, had to leave their homes to survive.

Expect from material hardships, Lao Teng also focuses on the destruction of the basis on which the ethical values of the underclass depend. He also ponders it over during narration. The climax of the novel "Shangguan's Eye" is the argument of demolition or maintenance of Dongguan Street, which is also the radical change in Shangguan Chun's ideological concepts. Dongguan Street is the oldest neighborhood in Puhe City, and from a modern point of view, Dongguan Street is backward in urban construction, but with the footsteps of Lao Dong and Shangguan Chun, Dongguan Street is a living history book of Puhe City. The low class of the city is concentrated here, although it only

maintains the lowest cost of survival, but it is also optimistic, open-minded and diligent, which is their last support for living and maintaining dignity from the city. Dongguan Street was finally protected and repaired under Shangguan Chun's argument, sparing the fate of being demolished. Sha Liang, Shi Decheng and others in "Handcuffs" are poor and sick, and have been imprisoned, but while still managing their bleak lives, they pity the weak and seek goodness and beauty.

Lao Teng analyses the causes rather than narrates them in detail when portraying low-class images and hardships. He demonstrates his complex thinking and the brilliance of human feelings toward the underclass via personal experiences. He emphasizes the overall reflection and the way of displaying the rights and dignity of the underclass during creation rather than only focusing on suffering, making the portrayal unique.

4. "The Local" as A Correlation

The local includes both the land that provides the means of production and subsistence, and the people who live in it, the two are organically unified. Nostalgia for hometown, cherishing the land and living in harmony with the environment contained in the local are important parts of traditional Chinese culture. The morality, emotion, and ethics formed and developed by the long local society have been repeatedly spoken by novelists, which is also a reference and reflection on the current social situation.

Now go back and sort out a few novels in this collection of novels, "A Man's Carnival" through the eyes of Xiao Ke, a beautiful dentist, to compare the property maintenance work with municipal government cadres, university professors, demobilized military cadres, and business owners. the humanity and character of these so-called elites are eclipsed by comparison with DaBen; Several college roommates in "class of 1981" have had successful careers for many years after graduation, but Salted goose eggs with a unique flavor and liquor of Taoshanbai in Songzhangzi Township are still lingering thoughts in their memories; Xiao Ding, a provincial civil servant in "No rain in Liaoxi", has always been concerned about his poor and disaster-stricken Yuzhou hometown and relatives; Director of the new district with a doctorate in "Not a Drop Left" listened to the fishing farmers talk about why the people called Green Pine Lake a lama's eye, and became more and more determined to refuse real estate developers to develop Green Pine Lake into a high-end villa area. The novel of the same name in the collection of "Hei Huamei" mirrors XiaoMan and a black donkey each other. The benevolent black donkey and kind XiaoMan resolve the fight between Ma Wukui and Mayor Hou. TianShui Town returns to its previous tranquility. Through combing and thinking about the character setting and narrative tendency, it is not difficult to find to find out the author's intentions. es to survive.

Characters and things that represent the local culture and folk ethics, which Lao Teng values a lot in his novels, are the protagonists or the elements driving the

storylines forward. They even have the potential to enlighten the intellectuals. For a long time, local Chinese cultural ethics and emotional values have been profoundly engraved in Chinese people [9]. Still, as modernization and marketization continue apace, traditional values and cultural notions are gradually blurred. Lao Teng is also nostalgic as a poet. While outlining the various aspects of the development, he illustrates the reverse enlightenment of the intellectual class by the cultural ethics and value beliefs deeply rooted in folklore. The prison guards of “Handcuffs” have become friend with fugitive without knowing it. Some of the villagers’ violations of the law were aimed at raising money to help Sha Jushi do good deeds. Newly built nurseries (mainly to take care of children who cannot register their household registration and left-behind children) and nursing homes and temples carry the beautiful vision and hope of the low-class people. The lines between good and evil, modern law and traditional morality, humility and nobility are intricately entwined and even blurred [10]. Sima Zheng acted against modernism in the novel’s conclusion by giving up arresting Sha Liang and granting the villagers’ requests for goodness and stability. Lao Teng illustrates the possibility of class communication under the development of the times through *Hei Huamei* using the local and folklore correlation.

In Lao Teng’s view, the possibility of hierarchical communication, requires a new call for the local and the traditional values it represents. The rapid advancement of modernization in China naturally has its positive significance, but the instrumental rationality, excessive knowledge worship and materialization, brought about by modern logic gradually showed a destructive side. In this process, the living space of the low class has been continuously compressed, and the traditional culture values they adhere to have lost the soil for growth. This kind of culture values was once widely recognized in Chinese society. This is also Lao Teng will sigh “no longer cooking smoke” [11]. We cannot view development from an old-fashioned, stagnant perspective, nor can we blindly cling to the construction of a local utopia. The local value identity embodied in the overall structure of Chinese culture is a kind of enlightenment and revision of the modern alienated society, which is the key to the current hierarchical communication.

5. Conclusion

Nowadays, people are concerned about class solidification, the underclass’ situation, and a series of problems arising from them, which are urgent problems needed to solve. Most writers avoided this issue or reacted pessimistically, while Lao Teng responsibly points it out and creates thought-provoking works. Notwithstanding the inevitable idealization that comes with Lao Teng’s novels, *Hei Huamei* presents invaluable textual and social values in the current situation. His thinking about the two representative classes of current society is the originality of his novels. The possibility of communication between the two classes also has

enlightening effects on today’s society and culture. The empathetic local cultural identity and the rational overall modern cognitive vision, the essence of traditional culture and the new modern humanistic spirit organically coexist in Lao Teng’s novel narrative.

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