

The Sinking of Sex, or the Sinking of the Nation?--Textual Analysis of The Sinking

Min Zhao

Chengdu College of Arts and Sciences, Chengdu 610400, China.

Abstract: Yu Dafu's *The Sinking of the Nation* tells the story of a young man whose sexual desire is unsatisfied, and the process of sinking until his death, which aptly expresses the uncertainty and helplessness of the youth of the May Fourth Movement, and highlights the individual's subjective consciousness. The article analyzes and explains from the background of the creation era, the creator and the text to show that the unsatisfied sexual desire is the key to lead the protagonist "he" to sink step by step, and then explains that the expression of the individual consciousness in "Sinking" is higher than the will of the state, and tries to restore the author's original intention to make a pluralistic supplement to the interpretation of "Sinking".

Keywords: Yu Dafu; Sinking; Sex; Individual Consciousness; National Consciousness

Introduction

Since Yu Dafu published the collection of novels "Sinking" in 1921, he started the creative career of the original genre of lyrical novels of "self-preface biography", and his masterpieces "Sinking", "Bewildering Nights" and "Silver Gray Death" are all characterized by the writing of personal emotions and feelings, which truly expresses the bitterness and depression of the youth of the May Fourth Movement, and causes the emotional resonance of the young readers and the national consciousness of the country. They have aroused the emotional resonance and widespread concern among young readers; among them, "Down" is the most lyrical depiction, which has been constantly explored and studied by later scholars. The two most representative points of view are the expression of patriotism based on the class analysis method and the depiction of sexual psychological dissatisfaction and the expression of personal subjectivity; nowadays, the teaching dominated by the national consciousness conveys the nationalism level to the readers more often. Accordingly, the author compares and analyzes the two main points of view, in order to restore the meaning of the author's creation itself wants to express.

1. The Downward Spiral in the Changing May Fourth Movement

In 1917, the New Culture Movement began, which set off a literary revolution in the literary world, blowing a spring breeze of unprecedented emancipation to the Chinese literary world at the beginning of the 20th century. Zhou Zuoren published "The Literature of Man", proposing humanitarianism as the basis of literature, freeing man from the feudal yoke, treating him as an equal or even superior to the will of the state, and calling for attention to the individual and the creation of "human" literature. Literature, as a social ideology, in a period of social stability, necessarily reflects a set of discourse norms and belief systems with legitimate authority established by the social and cultural structure of the society; in the May Fourth period, China's old feudal cultural order was on the verge of collapse, and a new type of social ideology was still in the nascent stage; at the same time there was a steady flow of Western literature of various genres and styles, which were still in its infancy. At the same time, there was a steady stream of ideas and doctrines from various schools of thought in the West, and there was no unified ideology as the dominant one, so literary works expressing personal and writer's feelings about social life became the coincidental theme of some writers' creations. Writers of the Creative Society, who focused on the bold exposure of the writer's state of mind, including the conflict between the spirit and the flesh in the individual's private life, as well as the perverted psychology, were its representatives. Since the publication of the collection

Down in 1921, the "autobiographical" lyrical novel became a creative trend and an original genre. However, as a pioneering work in the genre of "autobiographical" lyrical novels, "Down" appeared in an era of "chaotic but relatively free atmosphere, conducive to out-of-the-box thinking, and bold introspection of traditions. The basic theme of writing was "discovering and expressing people", and the personal feelings of the writers were dominant, while the national consciousness and patriotism were not obvious. Therefore, judging from the social background and cultural structure at that time, it is biased to say that the theme of Down to Earth is strong patriotism because of a few cries to the motherland in Down to Earth.

The protagonist of "Down" is a young intellectual who stays in Japan. Facing the deconstruction of the ancient cultural system of his motherland and without mainstream ideology to dominate his beliefs, he can only feel uncertain and confused about his future, and he tries to find a way out but can't get it; at the same time, his motherland's poverty and weakness, in the face of the strong imperialist country Japan at that time, always makes people feel inferiority complex and self-pity, and the most typical manifestation of it is that the desire of sex cannot be fulfilled. The most typical manifestation in the text is that the sexual desire cannot be satisfied. Spiritually there is no lofty belief to support, and the body can not get normal satisfaction, can only let "he" into deep despair, and ultimately chose to throw himself into the sea. Throughout the whole essay, the main character "he" is depicted in his personal spiritual and physical distress, this double contradiction and dissatisfaction make him generate resentment, and then traced back to the poor and sick country; personal feelings and needs are dominant, and the country is only one of the factors leading to his own situation, just a kind of comfort for the loss of the self. In general, the mainstream of literary writing in the May 4th period was to discover and express people, to give them an independent status in literature and to emphasize their individuality. In this period, the reorganization of the social and cultural structure and the formation of an open and chaotic ideological situation were conducive to the birth and development of all kinds of writing themes, and The Sinking of the Sun was born in such a circumstance, and the themes it expressed and the significance of its literary history are self-evident. Its theme and significance in literary history are self-evident.

2. Yu Dafu's self-narrative--The Downward Spiral

Yu Dafu once said: works of art are writers' self-narrative biographies. He said that he just wanted to "write my state of mind nakedly", in order to "the world can understand my heart's pain is right" ^[1]. "Sinking" is the most representative of Yu Dafu's "autobiography" lyrical novel series, using the above point of view, the trajectory of the life of young people staying in Japan can be said to be a kind of artistic processing of Yu Dafu's life in the literature. He wrote in the preface of: "Describing the psychology of a sick young man can also be said to be the anatomy of youth depression Hypochondria, which also narrates the bitterness of the modern man - that is, the conflict between the demands of sexuality and spirituality - but my depiction is a failure. -But my portrayal is a failure." ^[2] It can be seen that the author tries to take the conflict between flesh and spirit as the theme to be expressed, but when we read the text, we can obviously find that the novel depicts "flesh" much more than "spirit"; although there is also an aspect of "spirit" in the novel. Although the aspect of "spirit" is also involved, the large number of sexual descriptions in the work tends to make readers deviate from the "spirit" side and pay more attention to the personal demands and desires of the main character; accordingly, when analyzing the theme, more attention will be paid to the individual consciousness that it expresses. Correspondingly, when analyzing the theme, more attention will be paid to the individual consciousness shown, and the "spiritual" aspect may be neglected, not to mention the "national" consciousness level, so Yu Dafu said pertinently that his description was a failure.

For the concept of "country", Yu Dafu's writing of "Down" may be more vague, and the concept of "China" must be juxtaposed with "Japan" to be clearer: "In these two articles, there are a few points about the oppression of Japanese nationalism on our Chinese students, but for fear of being regarded as propaganda novels, I didn't dare to make an effort in describing them, but I did embellish them with a few strokes."^[4] From Yu Dafu's "Down", perhaps the concept of "China" was more ambiguous when he wrote "Down". ^[3] It is not difficult to see from this self-explanatory statement that Yu Dafu's original intention was not to bring up the level of "country" as some later readers thought, but in order to more truly express the depressed life of the young people who stayed in Japan far away from their home country, he had to write some, but did not dare to write more, and so the text only appeared in a few places, but was still popular among many people. A few places, but still for many people implicated in the theme of "patriotism". Knowing people and respecting objective historical facts and author's will is the prerequisite for interpreting works; it is a bit reluctant to deliberately dig out the noble "patriotism" in "Down".

3. The appeal of "him" in "Down".

When we read the work of "The Sinking", it is not difficult to feel the melancholy atmosphere of the whole article, the beginning of the article explains that "he recently felt lonely and pitiful" [4], and then the second section of the article says that "his depression is very much" [4], which means that he himself is a kind of melancholic disease. The second stanza goes on to say that "his melancholy was very serious" [4], indicating that he himself was suffering from a kind of melancholy. According to modern medical knowledge, this kind of disease needs to be properly convalesced, emotional stimulation will directly lead to individual death; the text of the "he" is alone in a foreign country, no relatives to take care of, no good classmates to accompany, always alone in his thoughts, thoughts into extremes, and ultimately chose to jump into the sea to commit suicide, in the author's opinion, it is more than normal. In the author's opinion, it is perfectly normal. Of course, the article does appear a few times yearning for national wealth and strength of the cry, the first cry is in their own feelings by the three Japanese schoolgirls eyes, aroused their own desire but do not dare to speak with them, that their feelings and their "what is related", that "they sent the "The autumn waves they sent, is not it only for those three Japanese?" [4] He then fell into self-fantasy, thinking, "They already know, they already know that I am a Chinaman, otherwise why don't they come to see me!" [4] So on "this night, he kept a diary saying, 'China, China! Why don't you get rich and strong? I can't hold back any longer.'" [4] In the end, he attributed the insult he felt to the country's poverty and weakness, and called for the country's wealth and strength. However, when we read the original text, we can clearly know that there is no description of physical or verbal insults by the Japanese students to the main character, "he", so "he" thinks that others look down on "him" as a result of his own inferiority complex. Therefore, "he" thinks that others look down on "him" because of his own inferiority complex. The second time is that he blames his death on the poverty and weakness of the country when he commits suicide at the end. Throughout the whole text, people feel that "he" calls for the motherland only with the help of "the country" as a cover for his sense of inferiority, and "the country" becomes the excuse and refuge for the individual's own frustration. Therefore, the author can think that the several cries for the motherland's wealth and strength in the text are the subconscious search for a strong support for everyone in helplessness and uncertainty, inferiority and cowardice, not necessarily expressing how strong patriotic feelings, but is the natural development trend of human emotions, just as people always cry out to the heavens and the earth when they feel despair, which is a common human feeling.

As for the May Fourth Movement, Benjamin Schwartz argues in *The Quest for Wealth and Strength: Yan Fu and the West* that the nation-state has become an overriding value in modern China. The word "motherland" has never been used so frequently as in modern times, and the sense of China has never been so deeply rooted in people's hearts as in modern times, from political leaders and literati down to the commoners and children. Therefore, Yu Dafu's writing is not exempt from this, the country is bound to be mentioned, but this mention is not the same as patriotism and such national will. Therefore, it is improper to think that *Down to Earth* mainly expresses the national will.

4. Conclusion

It is not without reason that Yu Dafu's *Down to Earth* aroused the enthusiasm of the youth under the May Fourth sentiment at that time once it was published. Through the analysis of three aspects, it can be seen that "Down" focuses on the depiction of personal subjective consciousness and emotion, which expresses the bitterness and uncertainty of the youth in the May Fourth period. This kind of emotion was common in the youths at that time, and Yu Dafu expressed this kind of emotion, which made *Down to Earth* a powerful masterpiece of May Fourth Literature that expresses the self and the subjective consciousness.

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About the author: Zhao Min, 1993.05, Gender: female, Nationality: Han, native place: Bazhong, Sichuan, title: Teaching assistant, Education: Master, unit: Chengdu University of Arts and Sciences, province city: Chengdu, Sichuan, zip code: 610401, research direction: Modern and Contemporary Chinese literature.