

The Representation of "National Harmony" in Yokota's Works: Take "a Beautiful Elegy" as an Example

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Abstract: Fumiko Yokota's Beautiful Elegy describes the daily life of the White émigré Chinese and Japanese living in the "Manchukuo" from the perspective of women. In 1942, it was collected in the book "Manchukuo National Creation Anthology" by Yasunari Kawabata. In the "Manchukuo" era when thoughts and speech were strictly controlled, Fumiko Yokota followed the realistic, humanitarian and feminist creative techniques in the Japanese period. This is very rare in the creation tide of "national policy literature" advocating the founding myth and national harmony at that time. In this paper, I will mainly analyze the relationship among White émigré Chinese and Japanese in Beautiful Elegy, and the living conditions of the three nationalities. On this basis, we can understand the Fumiko Yokota's creation intention, and explore the ethnic opposition and estrangement revealed by Fumiko Yokota.

1. Introduction

In the early 1930s, Yokota took part in the Japanese proletarian literary movement as a left-wing writer, published such popular works as Invitation Day, The Book of the Day (the candidate of Akutagawa Prize), and joined the Japanese Romantic School in 1937. Yojuro Bao Tian, the representative of "Japanese Romantic School", once highly praised that "Yokota is the light of Japanese women's literature and art, and talented women like her are rare among Japanese women writers" [1]. In 1938, at the invitation of Kenjiro Kitamura, Yokota came to Puppet Manchuria New Beijing (now Changchun) and joined the Manchurian Langman School. Since then, she has become one of the most representative Japanese female writers in Puppet Manchuria. During the eight years of her life in Puppet Manchuria, she described the social situation of Puppet Manchuria in detail with delicate brushstrokes from the perspective of women, and created realistic and humanitarian works such as Fog, Snowy Day, Blue Flower, Homesickness, Beautiful Sun, Size of Clothes and Beautiful Elegy [2]. However, due to the differences in cultural standpoint, research methods and research purposes, the domestic research on these works has not been fully carried out. According to the author's humble opinion, the domestic scholars' research on puppet Manchu literature generally focuses on the rebellious literature and rebellious literature of Chinese writers, and seldom mentions the literary creation activities of Japanese writers. In recent years, with the in-depth study of Puppet Manchuria literature, scholars have gradually brought Japanese writers into their research

field of vision, and the results of group investigation on Japanese writers have been published one after another, and related articles are scattered in major academic journals. However, there are few individual studies on Yokota. This paper focuses on Yokota's *Beautiful Elegy*, and analyzes in detail the relationship among White émigré, Chinese and Japanese and the living conditions of the three nationalities, so as to grasp the author's creative intention and explore the ethnic opposition and estrangement revealed by the author.

2. The Historical Stage of *Beautiful Elegy*

Beautiful Elegy, composed of three independent short stories, *Wind*, *Love Letter* and *Tale of Christmas*, was first published in the magazine *Manchuria Administration* from 1938 to 1940. In 1942, it was included in the *Selected Works of Various Nationalities in Manchukuo* by Kawabata Yasunari, and became one of the representative works of Japanese literature of Puppet Manchuria. Although the novel has nothing to do with the plot, it was all written by Yokota Wenzhi when he settled in Kuanchengzi, the settlement of Belarus. In history, Kuanchengzi can be called the epitome of northeast China's history and the witness of Japan-Russia power competition.

At the end of the 19th century, the Qing government was forced to sign a series of unequal treaties under the coercion and inducement of Russia. One of them is the Sino-Russian Secret Agreement, which agreed to build Dongqing Railway in Russia. After the completion of the Qing Railway, Russia set up Kuanchengzi Station in Erdaogou, northwest of Changchun Old City, and built basic living facilities and military facilities such as schools, hospitals, commercial streets, churches, clubs and cemeteries around Yikuang Street, Eryou Street and Sanfu Street. With the influx of Russian troops, railway workers and ordinary people, Kuanchengzi Station and its affiliated areas have become a gathering place for Russians and a Russian military fortress. In 1904, Japan and Russia launched the Russo-Japanese War in order to compete for rights and control rights in Northeast China, which resulted in the loss of lives and corpses everywhere in Northeast China. However, the corrupt Qing government was at the mercy of Japan, and implemented the so-called "outside neutrality" policy, which resulted in serious trampling on the national territorial sovereignty. After the war, China's Lushun, Dalian's lease right, the railway south of Xinjing and its affiliated areas were ceded by Russia to Japan. In 1907, Russia bought back Kuanchengzi Station for 560,000 rubles and sent troops to station it. At this point, the political situation in Northeast China has changed greatly, and Kuanchengzi Station has become the dividing line between Japan and Russia's vested interests. In order to manage the plundered railway and the construction of its affiliated areas, Japan set up South Manchuria Railway Co., Ltd. in 1906, and set up "Xinjing Station" on the south side of Kuanchengzi Station in 1907 to fight against Russia. In 1935, the Soviet Union resold the rights and interests of Beiman Railway, including Kuanchengzi Station, to puppet regime Puppet Manchukuo, and left northeast China. However, a considerable number of White émigré (employees of Dongqing Railway and their descendants, Russians who opposed the new Soviet regime or fled the Russian revolution and emigrated abroad) still live in Kuanchengzi, and they have become the description objects of various literary works because of their miserable life without nationality. In 1937, Kuanchengzi Station was withdrawn. Kuanchengzi, the former economic center, is also gradually declining.

On the other hand, Kuanchengzi, with its unique spatial landscape and exotic flavor, has become a post station for many Japanese literati, such as Kenjiro Kitamura, Yasunari Luchuan and Yasunari Kawabata. In order to experience Russian culture, Japanese literati who moved to Kuanchengzi basically stayed in the homes of White émigré and while experiencing fashionable Russian life, they made literary creations. According to Kenjiro Kitamura's recollection in "Love in the North", besides the Japanese common people, there are also related personnel of the Kwantung Army and

Chinese businessmen living in Kuanchengzi. With the deepening of Japanese colonial rule in Northeast China, colonial consciousness gradually penetrated into every corner of Kuanchengzi, a Russian town, and also changed the spatial pattern of Kuanchengzi. "The original shops on both sides of Eryou Street are full of excitement. After the Manchuria Incident, the initial Datong College was set in the alley of Kuanchengzi, and the creepy gunfire echoed in the alley every night, and the business was depressed ... (omitted) Now there are only a few small restaurants left "[3]. In 1937, in order to promote colonial ideas such as "King's Paradise" and "Harmony of Five Nationalities", the Japanese puppet authorities set up the Manchuria Film Association (Man Ying for short), and set up temporary studios and actors' dormitories in Kuanchengzi. As the studios are all transformed from the abandoned platforms and warehouses of Kuanchengzi Station, they are extremely empty and deserted, and monsters appear suddenly, which makes people feel afraid.

Kuanchengzi, as a settlement of Chinese, White émigré and Japanese, is an important practice place of the idea of "national harmony" of Puppet Manchukuo, and it is also the most obvious place of ethnic conflicts in Puppet Manchukuo. What do people living in this Russian town think of the puppet Manchukuo? How does Yokota reflect these realities in his works? This article will focus on the detailed interpretation of the text.

3. The Image of Han Nationality Oppressed by Other Nationalities

The young Chinese Wang in *Love Letter* was born in a village with a strong traditional culture in Northern Manchuria. He went to Japan to study abroad. Because of his excellent Japanese, he worked as the secretary of the Japanese government in the capital "Xinjing" after returning home. In the eyes of the Japanese boss, he is smart and capable, has mastered the advanced culture and technology of Japan, and his behavior is no different from that of the Japanese. He is an outstanding young man who bears the future of the puppet Manchukuo, and is essentially different from other "barbaric" and "ignorant" colonized people. In the face of difficulties and obstacles in life, he is unhurried and fearless, and he can resist the oppression of the outside world with confidence. Under the influence of the suzerain culture, Xiao Wang not only assimilated his culture and language, but also began to actively seek the equality of status and the true spiritual integration with the Japanese.

He made friends with Japanese people, talked about literature at the home of his Japanese friend Chundao, and attended the banquet hosted by the colonists. At the banquet, he was overwhelmed by the modern beauty of his Japanese boss's wife.

Japan's wife is beautifully dressed, her appearance is even better than ordinary people's, and an incredible beauty pats her heart, almost paralyzing her. This is because the huge difference between the modern culture owned by the colonists and the culture of the colonized people shocked Xiao Wang's spirit, which made him impressed by the strength of colonial culture, and even had the desire to integrate into the upper class where the colonists lived, and this desire was manifested in his love for his Japanese boss's wife [4]. After the banquet, he often visited his Japanese wife who lived in Kuanchengzi, and instead of chatting with each other, he talked about the past and the present, and even challenged his own bad acting to win each other's favor. However, no matter how Wang caters to the ruling class and worships Japanese culture, it can't change the fact that he is a colonized person with low status-"Manchu". Therefore, for Xiao Wang, what stands between him and his Japanese wife is "not only the problem of wives, but more importantly, the national estrangement between Japanese and Manchu". He couldn't give up, but he couldn't. His bitter secret love made him toss and turn, and he couldn't sleep at night.

The Japanese wife is a very aggressive woman in the novel, which is the double superposition of the Japanese colonial image and the new female image. As an official wife who accompanies her husband to work in Puppet Manchuria, it should be her main task to teach her children at home.

However, after she came to Puppet Manchuria, she didn't devote all her energy to her family life, but attended all kinds of parties, learned about Puppet Manchuria, and took all the imprisonments and oppressions she had suffered in Japan to seek relief from colonial men. Niu Dao Chunzi, a writer who is also the wife of the puppet Manchukuo official, wrote in the essay "Women in Manchuria": "We women in Manchuria have one more task than women in China, that is, to realize our pride and pride as women in the ruling nation ... as long as we grasp the hearts of Manchu men, we can also grasp the whole Manchu nation"[5]. This is a true portrayal of Japanese women living in Puppet Manchuria. They are full of superiority, want only to ravage puppet Manchuria, and use all methods and means to play with Chinese men.

Although the Japanese wife in the novel was vaguely aware of Xiao Wang's secret love for herself, she not only didn't give any emotional response to Xiao Wang, but wantonly mocked and teased Xiao Wangdao: "Xiao Wang, maybe it's rude to say so. I think you really look like Japanese, unlike Manchu." "Then how do you see love? It is also common for Japanese and Manchu to get married". These provocative inquiries made Xiao Wang pale and cruel. After that, Xiao Wang became the direct victim of Japanese wife's colonial consciousness. In a chat, the two talked about Chinese traditional drama. Xiao Wang said that he liked watching but couldn't sing well, but the Japanese wife was "like the wolf who fooled the white rabbit", and happily began to tease Xiao Wang and insisted that he perform a passage. In desperation, Xiao Wang had to obey, so he put his hand on the edge of the table, bowed his eyebrows, and wanted to take the opportunity to confide his inner admiration and anguish to his Japanese wife. He sang, "Madam, please help me." Japan's wife first thought that Xiao Wang was ill, then clapped her hands and laughed and said, "This is the confession scene in the drama. It seems to be pleading. Xiao Wang, you can become a dramatic actor, and you may succeed." Her words, like handfuls of swords, pierced Xiao Wang's heart, making it ridiculed and painful. Wang Yiran Jr., whose dignity was greatly hurt, left New Beijing, the core area of Japanese colonial rule, and returned to his hometown in the north. He wrote in a letter to his Japanese wife: "The stupid scene is over. I'm determined not to see you again. Anyway. To put it bluntly, you made me feel humiliated. "

Japan's wife's banter and playfulness finally prompted Xiao Wang's awakening of national consciousness. He was finally able to face up to the reality of suffering oppressed by Japanese colonists, and suddenly realized that love across nationalities and classes was always accompanied by ridicule, discrimination and loss of subjectivity by colonists. The "national concord" was just the product of the colonists' deliberate cover-up of national oppression, and only by rising up against Japanese colonial slavery could real equality be achieved.

4. The Image of the White ÉmigrÉ Whose Survival Foundation is Deficient

The novel *Wind* tells the story of Japanese and Russian children playing on the grassland outside Kuanchengzi. Japan's children's Jun caught a sparrow and played in the depression with Shravachka, a Japanese Kai and a White émigré. Later, Vasily, a disabled child from Belarus, came "with an old man's pace". Just when he wanted to join them in the game, he was strongly opposed by Kai and Shravachka. Toujun invited Vasily to join them out of his superiority to the weak. However, when Vassili's foot reached the bottom of the depression, he fell to the ground because of his physical disability. This triggered the ruthless ridicule of the three bystanders. Soon, the three children abandoned poor Vasily and set foot on their way home. Ashamed and desperate, Vasily picked up a poor sparrow that had been tortured to death in the dark twilight, carefully put it in the pocket of his coat, and left with his usual steps in the wind, looking happy[6].

From the perspective of the other, the author depicts the scenes of Japanese and Russian children playing delicately, implicitly shows the cruelty and superiority of Japanese children, and skillfully

uses a large number of metaphors to reveal the impoverished living conditions of White émigrés under Japanese colonial rule. For example, in the cold late autumn evening, Japanese children's Jun and Kai are dressed brightly, or traditional plaid clothes are matched with a harmonious sweater jacket, or warm blue sweaters are matched with fur pants. And Shiravachka, a White émigré child, "wears an extremely worn velvet jacket and the same pair of woolen trousers. It's funny that he also wears red clogs". Vasily, a disabled child, is wearing a thin old cotton-padded jacket and open-toed shoes. This sharp contrast can't help but make people feel sad. The "shabby velvet" seems to tell the story of their prosperity and glory, and the name Vasily (Russian means ruler and king), under the enlightenment of Japan's "talented people", "Shravachka" (Russian means weak) was not only assimilated, but also lost its former glory. In the end, as its name implies, it could only become a weak person who depended on the Japanese forces of the ruling class to isolate and survive.

Although the author describes the children's world, it actually refers to the real society advocating "national harmony". Regarding the world situation of the puppet Manchukuo capital "New Beijing" at that time, Kenjiro Kitamura wrote in "Memories of Love in the North": "At that time, officials loved to eat, drink and be merry, but when they put on concord uniforms to promote the spirit of the founding of the People's Republic of China and the idea of concord, they were spirited ... (abbreviated) and this 'wind' spirit was honored as the ideology of New Beijing". Puppet Manchukuo officials are full of the idea of harmony, but they talk a lot, but they don't do things in a down-to-earth manner. The construction of the so-called "king's paradise" and "national harmony" led by these people is full of impossibilities [7]. Under such a social background, the novel "Wind" strongly satirizes the ideology at that time. In the puppet Manchukuo, Yokota Wenzhi witnessed not the prosperity of all ethnic groups, but the situation that the White émigrés with a deficient survival foundation were struggling at the bottom of society. She lamented the misfortune suffered by Vasily, a White émigré child, and called for the realization of true national equality and common prosperity by deconstructing the structure of the disabled(ruled) on the edge of power/the healthy (ruler) in the power center[8].

5. The Image of Japanese as a Traveler

The novel "Tale of Christmas" tells the story of "I" who came to Puppet Manchuria after two years and revisited Kuanchengzi, the former residence, with a wandering mind. When the car "I" took passed through the "opium and gangster's lair" and slowly headed for the broad military road under the jurisdiction of the Japanese, my chest lit up the flame of expectation, and I was delighted with the new look of my home. In a small shop on the street, "I" met my former neighbor. She was a lonely old White émigré woman who was abandoned by her family and lived a poor life alone. At her invitation, "I" bought vodka, dried ham and fruit to spend Christmas night at her home. That night, the old woman who hadn't drunk vodka for a long time drank like a thirsty woman. After getting drunk, she sang the Russian songs she loved to sing. At first, she just hummed softly, then her voice became louder and louder, and her expression became vivid. Finally, she choked and cried. Although "I" didn't know the meaning of the song, this sad song made my heart tremble. Looking at the sad, silent old woman, "I" seemed to understand everything. No matter what reason the old woman came to Puppet Manchuria, in the final analysis, she was a traveler living in a foreign land like "I"[9], wandering in this so-called "National Concord" and "the promised land of kingliness" with anxiety, loneliness and a sense of loss of hometown.

As for why "I" came to Puppet Manchuria and why I left Puppet Manchuria two years ago. The author Yokota Wenzhi didn't point it out clearly, but we can get a glimpse of it from Homesickness. Homesickness is the first work created by Yokota Wenzhi with Kuanchengzi as the stage, which

mainly depicts the wandering life of Japanese male Yoshimura in Puppet Manchuria. Ji once dreamed of becoming a painter, but his life was so difficult that he had no choice but to abandon everything in his hometown and go to Puppet Manchuria to seek his dream. Yoshimura was excited when he thought that people like himself could make a difference in Puppet Manchuria. However, the reality gave Yoshimura a blow. In the pseudo-Manchu job, he suffered from the oppression of his boss Iwamoto everywhere and suffered a lot. After his dream was shattered, his homesickness became stronger and stronger, and he finally left the "promised land" of Puppet Manchukuo, which made him feel desperate. JiCun, who left Puppet Manchuria, and "I", who set foot on Puppet Manchuria again, although they are the debut characters in different stories, their experiences have certain continuity and complementarity. Therefore, Tales of Christmas can be said to be the sequel of Homesickness. As emphasized in < Christmas Tale >, "I" who set foot on the land of Puppet Manchukuo again is no longer a "dream catcher" actively involved in the construction of Puppet Manchukuo, but a "traveler". "Traveler" refers to the person who travels in metaphorical symbolic space, and also observes the space of "the other" as an outsider. In other words, the puppet Manchukuo established by the Japanese has become a group that has nothing to do with "I" and is an existence that cannot be recognized by "I". "I" tried to integrate into this group, but ended in failure. So, although I am looking forward to the new scenery here again, I actually have no sense of belonging in my heart, only the feeling of being adrift and helpless.

To sum up, whether it's a hopeless Yoshimura, a lonely wandering "I", or a poor old White *émigré* woman, they all suffered oppression in the Puppet Manchukuo, and suffered all the hardships, which is the epitome of the wandering people immersed in homesickness and anxiety. Although they were labeled as "nationals" by the colonial ruling class, as far as they are concerned, both the promised land and the native land are in distant countries instead of the puppet Manchukuo. Invisible, this is also a clever satire on the "promised land" puppet Manchukuo [10].

6. Conclusion

After Japan occupied the northeast by force and concocted the puppet Manchukuo, it caused fierce resistance from all ethnic groups in the northeast. In order to stabilize the people's hearts, the colonial rulers advocated slogans such as "King's Paradise", "National Harmony" and "One Virtue, One Heart, One Day at a Time". At the same time, in order to avoid the condemnation of the international community, it was declared that the puppet Manchukuo was the result of self-determination of all ethnic groups. The result is a false democratic atmosphere. Of course, many people are immersed in this atmosphere. They are confused by the so-called ideal of founding a nation, are keen to talk about the myth of the founding of the puppet Manchukuo, and even think that they can achieve great achievements in the puppet Manchukuo of "democracy". However, no matter how the colonial rulers advocated "national harmony", they could not hide the discordant voice between the colonists and the colonized.

By reading Yokota's *Elegy of Beauty*, we can understand the change of power relations among Japanese, Chinese and White *émigré* and the oppression among different nationalities. Although they live together in Kuanchengzi, they can be called "strange bedfellows". There are unbreakable national barriers between them. The binary opposition combination of Japanese wife and Chinese youth, Japanese children and White *émigré* children, Japanese and White *émigré* old women, these "colonists and colonized people" means a strong confrontation. Although Chinese youth and White *émigré* children all have a beautiful desire for "national harmony" and try to break through the shackles of nationality and politics to establish sincere love and friendship with the Japanese people, all their efforts have only brought ridicule and discrimination from Japanese colonists. In addition, in the author Yokota's mind, ethnic prejudice and colonial rule have seriously hindered the

communication between ethnic groups and the progress of mankind. The puppet Manchukuo ruled by the Japanese is not a real paradise. To eliminate ethnic barriers and realize the living and working in peace and contentment of all ethnic groups, we must rise up against colonial slavery. At the time when ideological speech was strictly controlled, "ideological criminals" and "speech criminals" emerged one after another. How to describe the resistance struggle of colonized people was one of the topics that writers faced at that time. Due to the limitation of space, this paper does not discuss the ways of struggle in the novel in detail, and takes it as a future topic for further study.

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