

# *The concrete interpretation of the humanistic spirit of realism in the literature of 1980s*

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**Abstract:** As an important entrance into the literature of the 1980s and a methodology for understanding the literature of the 1980s, the humanistic spirit of realism has been deeply explained and developed in content and form in the literature of the 1980s. Around the subject and theme of "people", contents such as human dignity, free will, human subjective consciousness and survival desire were included in the creation of literature in the 1980s, which promoted the transformation of literature in the 1980s from "what to write" to "how to write", and further enriched the connotation of the realistic humanistic spirit of The Times.

There are two major traditions in Chinese literary creation - realism and lyricism. The realism tradition was further interpreted and developed in the noisy and turbulent 1980s. In order to continue and complete the task of "enlightenment", the writers of the 1980s returned to Pick up the tradition of realism and use the realist humanistic spirit as the methodology to write and construct creation, criticism and literary history. As a basic prototype of literature, the realist humanistic spirit points to the realist creation that has been discussed, and as a theoretical perspective, the realist humanistic spirit points to writing people and writing people's lives, the techniques, forms and structures used in creations that focus on writing truth. It is by presenting the process of continuous interpretation of the realist humanistic spirit that the continuous changes in various literary trends in the 1980s and the development of literature in the 1980s can be described in a more complete and detailed manner.

## **1. The noisy and turbulent literature of the 1980s.**

The 1980s was a special, caught-in-the-crack period, with the fission of the old and the new, the collision and fusion of Chinese and Western cultures, and the Western "humanism" and "existentialism" The influx of new concepts such as "modernism" into the country promoted the integration of literature, philosophy, and sociology at that time. This became a critical resource and theoretical weapon for writers and critics, and also became a driving force for the transformation of literary trends in the 1980s. One. Most research articles call the 1980s the "Year of Methods" and "The Year of Culture", and the literary theory and literary criticism of the 1980s also focused on psychological mysteries, unconsciousness, non-utilitarianism, pure literature, etc. In addition, combining the discussion of "rewriting literary history" in the late 1980s with the current narrative of literature in the 1980s, its importance and uniqueness are self-evident. Taking this as a starting point,

we will discover the particularity of literature in the 1980s and the development of literary research in the 1980s.

Based on this, Cheng Guangwei, a professor at Renmin University of China, proposed the "return to the 1980s craze" in 2005. He pointed out that on the ruins of literature after the "literary revolution", 1980s literature reconstructed people's literary memories, and this kind of literary memory served as a unique and important reference and first-hand material, reshaping the spiritual outlook and literary map of the 1980s. In addition, and most importantly, we need to think about what the literature of the 1980s will mean to our literary life today <sup>[1]</sup>? If we want to solve these problems, we should go back to the literary scene of the 1980s and the specific literary works of the 1980s to deeply explore whether the literature of the 1980s continued and completed the enlightenment tasks that the "May Fourth Movement" did not complete. In what way has the realist humanistic spirit begun to return and develop? In the process of trying to break away from political interference, is the discussion and pursuit of the humanistic spirit another thing that literature in the new era is looking for?

On the other hand, the "sound and fury" of the 1980s saw the emergence of many "isms" and "ideological trends." Coupled with the participation of academic seminars, literary journals, and literary reviews, the short 1980s was regarded as too romantic and sketchy. The paragraphs are divided so that when looking back from the present, the historical understanding of readers, writers and critics is far from the real literary scene, and even a state of contradiction appears. But this kind of conflict and contradiction does not mean that the various ideological trends and isms that emerged in the 1980s are disappearing from each other or that the east prevails over the west, but that the commonalities outweigh the differences, and we can find ways to create and comment on them in various ways. Its rationality can be seen in the history of literature. As mentioned above, "realism", "humanistic concern" and "humanism" are common concepts held by literature throughout the 1980s and are constantly given new qualities in practice. The construction laid a theoretical and physical foundation and broadened the way for reconstructing the concepts and history of the 1980s.

In most literary histories, the literature of the 1980s has been included in the historical narrative of "new era literature" and framed in a textbook-style ideological narrative, which in turn has obscured the literary creation and development of the 1980s. <sup>[2]</sup> Expressions such as "Seventy Years of Contemporary Literature" have allowed the vertical meaning of time to be recognized as the fixed meaning of literature, while the horizontal meaning of space is absent. This lack has led to the failure of literature in the 1980s. Research and writing of literary history cannot break through the literary field itself constructed by the society and history of the "80s", and a discourse system full of differences and diversity cannot be constructed. Literary research and literary history of the 1980s cannot Narration cannot move towards becoming an academic community and academic ontology. Even if we use the words "noise" and "turmoil" to describe the literature of the 1980s, we still need to consider the impact of different literary stages on it and the dialogue and confrontation between these stages.

## **2. The emergence and development of the realist humanistic spirit in literature in the 1980s.**

When reviewing the "new realism" novel trend, Mr. Ding Fan mentioned that realism will always be the mainstream of modern and contemporary Chinese literature. In the early 1980s, Chinese realist literature has been confirmed through constant discussion, creation, and criticism, and its continuity, enlightenment, reflexivity, and criticality are unquestionable. But repositioning the Chinese realist literature of the late 1980s is indeed a very difficult issue at both the theoretical and practical levels. The 1980s was an era when ideals and reality, darkness and light, social responsibility and personal emotions coexisted. Writers used various methods and borrowed various theories to reshape the disappeared "literature". Concern for social reality, responsibility and emotion for the nation will

inevitably be reflected through literature's concern for reality, denying all the unreasonable old ones, looking for new ways out for society and literature, and calling for modernization that is good, is the theme and tone of literature in this period.<sup>[3]</sup> Therefore, we often say that writers in the 1980s are the most responsible generation. What they are diligently pursuing is the return of "literature" and the revival of reality.

In the unremitting pursuit and efforts, the literary world ushered in the peak period of literary creation and criticism in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Realism and humanism became an important model and mode of literary creation in the 1980s. The theme plays a pioneering role in literary trends such as scars and reflections. This ambiguous literary trend with unique characteristics of the times continues the "May Fourth" realist tradition and is a critical and socialist realism. The most prominent part of scar literature is the revolutionary humanism that emphasizes the proletarian stance. The intellectual generation reflects on their spiritual trauma and self-esteem after their faith is shattered and their ideals are lost, by recalling their lives and narrating their intellectual experiences. Painful introspection of thoughts, their accusations of undermining the political power of the revolution, criticism and reflection on all excesses during the revolution, and narratives of individuals' overwhelming indignation against the "revolution" became the main voice during this period. Sound. In June 1981, the convening of the Third Plenary Session of the Eleventh Central Committee of the Communist Party of China ended the issue of "revolution" and opened a new historical chapter in the pursuit of "modernization." Reflective literature was under the dual influence of Western philosophy and social changes. Beginning to call for the return of the humanitarian spirit (with a color of individualism). The returning "rightists" are not keen on presenting and licking their wounds through literature. They portray themselves as cultural heroes who have never given up their faith despite all difficulties and dangers, trying to use "the meaning of life lies in tempering". The logic of "self" is used to sew personal suffering experiences into historical narratives and grand narratives, completing the sublimation of literature and self.

When the cultural heroes in reflective literature gradually realized the Chinese people's desire for economic development, their resistance to the old system, and their pursuit of modernization, they quickly jumped into the wave of reform and transformed into A reformer who is determined to kill. It was in this context that reform literature briefly became the protagonist. Reform literature continues the creative tradition of realism and takes economics as the core of the narrative to revitalize the economy, reform society, satisfy people's desire for material wealth, and cater to the aesthetic expectations and imagination of the public for reform. Based on the narrative logic of satisfying people's demands for material interests and protecting people's freedom, rights and dignity, it has created a group of "new social people" images, actively participated in social change and modernization, and expressed Reform literature writers' enthusiasm for the reconstruction of the nation. On the other hand, reform literature also focuses on solving one of the most important issues in the new era—how to reconstruct a belief in the nation-state, the concept of collectivism, and the spirit of the hero, and explore this. The remnants of scars and reflections are still there, and the problems of faith vacuum and spiritual panic have not been resolved (even though this is a paradox). Both literature and society are in urgent need of a positive value concept with idealism as the core. The emergence of literature not only represents the public's recognition and acceptance of social transformation, but also reflects the development of literature under the new order. This is the proper meaning of reform literature.

At the end of 1984, the editorial offices of "Shanghai Literature", the editorial offices of the Hangzhou Federation of Literary and Art Circles "West Lake", and the Zhejiang Literature Publishing House held a dialogue meeting for young writers and critics in Hangzhou. The topic was "Literature in the New Era: Review and Forecast". In the narrative of literary history, this meeting is the origin of "root-seeking literature." At the meeting, Cai Xiang, Han Shaogong, Li Hangyu, Li Tuo, Li Qingxi

and others talked a lot about the topic of "culture". Faced with the loneliness of literature and the loss of its subject status, literature in the new era has to begin to "turn inward" and turn to the discovery and exploration of the psychological structure of national culture. In addition, under the impact of "modernist literature", the struggle for the right to speak and dominate "culture" seems to have become a necessary choice to promote the modernization process. Therefore, the young writers and critics who participated in the conference consciously incorporated "culture" into the category of literature, rejecting simple imitation of Western culture and rejecting crude borrowing of tradition, which contributed to "The emergence of the trend of 'seeking roots'". Therefore, we say that root-seeking literature turns to a re-understanding of the value and significance of traditional culture under the ideological background of the anxiety of losing "national self" and "cultural identity", and attempts to illuminate tradition through "modern concepts". To recast "people's self and personality" and to re-care about society and the ultimate meaning of human beings, it focuses on "people" as a certain cultural spirit and personality ideal, not people in an individual sense.<sup>[4]p(57)</sup> This breaks through the creative limitations in the literature of trauma, reflection and transformation, and heralds the development direction of literature in the late 1980s. It is worth noting that root-seeking literature extends along the two dimensions of searching for culture and searching for language. The subject of search, the object of search, and even the process of search are all implemented in the life given by real life. Experience, the traditional, national culture, and "living" language generated in this experience may be the important resources that promote the transformation of Chinese literature into "modernity."

In the process of pursuing the modern transformation of literature, 1985 should be a time point worthy of attention. Under the "Eighth Five-Year New Dynasty", literature, art, film and other art categories were changing in new methods and new concepts. Qualitative changes occurred under the impact. Literature, which strives to pursue subjectivity, has finally parted ways with social history, moving towards freedom of form, towards its own modernization, that is, beginning to complete the question of "how to write" literature. Task. It can be said that avant-garde novels were developed under the influence of Western modernist literature and non-rationalist philosophy. The avant-garde writers tried to express their own philosophy about the truth of human nature and the universal destiny of human beings through their works. Thinking, in order to highlight the universality of this understanding, the narrative power of pioneer novels expresses "people" in a universal sense and "people" in an abstract sense, without caring about people's real life conditions. The "people" it expresses are more philosophical and metaphysical "people" who are far away from their daily living conditions and have lost the ability to.<sup>[4]p(57)</sup> Therefore, inevitably, avant-garde literature narrate history as a whole. Power, personal narrative experience dominates, and grand narratives no longer appear in works. Instead, they are writers' desire for innovation in writing, their indulgence in form, and their caution in content.

Another form of literature's pursuit of modernization is to move from "narration" to "description", from history to "ukiyo-e", and from hotness to coldness.<sup>[5]</sup> This kind of creation that tends to objectively and truly describe the original appearance of life and highlight the "character subjectivity" in the work was initially classified as the "naturalism" school. However, if it is connected with the realism tradition of Chinese literature, in contrast to the "realism" that critical realism has always emphasized, it may be more appropriate to use the term "new realism". New realism novels follow the "people"-centered literary development track established by the literature of the new era, conduct in-depth exploration and thinking on the value and destiny of people, and express the writer's profound humanistic thoughts. Compared with the literature of the mid-1980s, it has eliminated the cover-up of "people" by traditional ideals and values, and no longer indulges in metaphysical thinking about human nature, human value and destiny, but instead emphasizes the importance of human nature. The description of ordinary people's actual life conditions shows people's living

conditions and expresses the alienation of "people", further confirming the dominant position of "people" in literature. Moreover, new realist novels write about ordinary people rather than heroes, about human loss, alienation and human tragedy rather than about human sublimity and greatness, about the ordinary and mediocre rather than about classics and eternity. At this point, we can say that the new realist novels call for realism in the new era based on human real life, which not only absorbs certain forms and techniques of modernism, but also moves the experiment down to the entire society and society. Human beings, this is the sinking of literature and the rise of humanities.

Generally speaking, the literature of the 1980s originated from the "Seventeen Years Literature" and in the process of moving towards the "Literature of the 1990s", the core of the realist humanistic spirit has always provided sufficient driving force. Among them, scar literature and reflection overturned the legitimacy of literature in the previous period, passionately complained about the suffering of history, and began to express the desire and pursuit of new literary legitimation and literary subject value, which is profound. The attitude of formal rupture opened up the creation and narration of another "classic text", but we know that this brought about the rapid end of avant-garde literature, but it is undeniable that avant-garde literature promoted the diversification of contemporary literature, openness and nationalization. Furthermore, the inward turning trend of literature in the 1980s complemented the creation of avant-garde literature; the uniqueness of the new realistic novel is that it uses secularized, subjective emotional narratives and The depictions that are close to reality and the original ecology have impacted the ideal realism that dominated the early 1980s, brought novel creation back to daily life, expelled moral judgment from the text, and regarded individual life desires and consciousness of existence. As the basis of narrative logic, the real living conditions of people who have been forgotten and obscured by history and times in the past and the significance of life for recognizing people are highlighted. All the thinking about the value and destiny of "people" in literature in the 1980s were absorbed into new realistic novels and narrated in a reverse, almost indifferent form and attitude, completing the transformation of traditional literary creation principles. Rebellious.

### **3. The specific interpretation of the realist humanistic spirit in the literature of the 1980s.**

Throughout the development of literature in the 1980s, in the changing process of literary trends of thought, and in the works of specific writers, it is not difficult to find that there is a close relationship with realism. Concepts such as humanistic care, humanism, and pure literature related to the humanistic spirit are the core and driving force, and these concepts were also specifically explained and developed in the 1980s. Here, we grasp the concept of "people" that is related to the above concepts as the context of sorting out the entire literature of the 1980s, starting with the "alienation of people" in the "Seventeen Years Literature", and focusing on the survival desire of "people" And life consciousness is reaffirmed, rediscovered and bloomed with the greatest value. Here we try to summarize the overall development trend of the literary realism humanistic spirit in the 1980s, that is, focusing on a certain layer of reality. Face, shape heroes, ignore people - pay attention to the entire reality, shape people, call for the return of humanity - pay attention to the survival of ordinary people, express the desire for life - feel confused about the dilemma of life, try hard to explore but can't find relief. This is a process from top to bottom, from imperfection to fullness, from the individual to the whole, and back to independence. But in the final analysis, this was the colorful 1980s. Its rich content, diverse forms, and radical ideas, without departing from the core of realist humanistic spirit, became the main object of literary criticism and research, has also become an important perspective for people to understand the literature of the 1980s.

Putting it in the literary scene of the 1980s, the realist humanistic spirit is specifically interpreted as the intellectual generation's critical review of history and painful reflection on faith in scar

literature. It is manifested in the awakening of individual self-awareness, and individualistic emotions are highlighted; in reflective literature, most "right-wing writers" actively inquire into the deeper historical causes and even cultural roots of trauma and disasters, which are specifically reflected in their works: Individuals take the initiative to reflect on history and the present, and shape themselves into innocent victims and defenders of culture; Everything revolves around "people", but in each period, the connotation of "people" is different and unique. Literature's care for people has finally moved from unreality to reality, and literature's care for people is different. The writing of desire finally moved from neglect and rejection to praise and ultimate presentation.

Implemented into the text, this kind of humanistic spirit and humanistic care is manifested in the concern for personal destiny and emotional trauma, concern for the future of the country and the nation, and the discovery and recognition of human beings' strong sense of life, and the writer's awareness of the search for "subjective consciousness" is not only the confirmation of the subject status of literature, but also the authentication of the identity of the literary narrative object.

In the stage of scar literature and reflective literature, the direction and purpose of writers' accusations and criticisms are very clear. It is not the "revolution" itself, but the political power that destroyed the original idea of "revolution". They actively planted the utopian imagination in their own hearts and in the hearts of their readers that "light will definitely come after darkness". Although the heroes who realized this utopian imagination were absent, the authenticity of this imagination And no one doubts its rationality. It is undeniable that this kind of narrative logic "incorporates the huge disaster caused by the "Literature" decade, the desolation of life, the ruin of value, and the accident and futility of group and individual life into a certain hope. and a narrative model that opens up salvation, so that a narrative model in which "justice and evil compete for value objects and should succeed" becomes an ideology that can be accepted by reality, and a "desirable" utopian historical summary Xian.<sup>[6]</sup> Liang gave Zhang Yonglin the responsibility to build a utopia, shaping him into a highly rhetorical and general . In the novel "Greening Tree", Zhang intellectual, and accomplished this by inverting the structure of the "enlightenment role" position in the Enlightenment Movement since modern times. A narrative of intellectual thought transformation and self-reflection. Even though he was placed in the position of "the one being enlightened". Zhang Yonglin still consciously repented and praised, and found a reasonable explanation for this behavior and phenomenon from a moral perspective. At the end of the novel "Class Teacher", the vision of "the future of the country and the nation will be bright" is also expressed. The kind of humanistic feelings and confidence in reality that contemporary writers still have after going through hardships are precisely The value of scar-reflective literary works is also the result of the literary practice of the realist humanistic spirit in the late 1970s and early 1980s.

During the reform literature stage, writers actively created an idealized state in texts that echoed the mainstream of social change. By shaping the image of heroic reformers, they broke the belief vacuum and made the Chinese people Out of the shadow of the national disaster, they can rekindle their sense of collectivism and reconstruct a healthy national psychology. This kind of narrative mode is the embodiment of the return of realism in the new era, because literature "is not only realistic, but also has ideal factors. These factors are not external, but are rooted in the soil of reality " is a spiritual trend that will inevitably appear according to the trajectory of life development. <sup>[7]</sup> "Qiao Guangpu, Li Xiangnan and other reformers basically have no weaknesses such as selfishness, cowardice, hesitation, and worry about gains and losses. This deviates from the principle of constructing the complexity of people, but achieves the ideal personality of the reformer.<sup>[3]p(14)</sup> This narrative model that highlights the positive image of reformers is fundamentally different from the model that deifies ordinary people into heroes in the extreme left context. That is, the shaping of the image of reformers is derived from real life. Authenticity and sociality are unquestionable.

In the root- seeking literary stage, in order to continue the ideas of "enlightenment" and "national

criticism" and to respond to the concept of the country's pursuit of modernization, writers used the carrier of "culture" to return literature to the nation and the nation. The people try to use this to eliminate and hinder the "authoritarian" tradition and modern discourse hegemony that hinders social and literary development. Therefore, writers return to the countryside, the countryside, and traditional culture, narrate stories with rural and ethnic characteristics, and revive the aesthetic consciousness hidden deep in the national psychology. This kind of narrative mode has a distinct group and experiential nature. Group consciousness, national spirit, and aesthetic taste exist as the underlying theoretical basis of the text and are constantly being explained. Li Hangyu's "Ge Jiangchuan Novels" takes Ge Jiangchuan, which has a rich Wuyue culture, as the starting point, and begins his journey of finding his roots. When "The Last Fisherman" Fuqua appears, we will think of Jiang Zizi and the characters in "Border Town" An old boatman, but you will soon find that Fouquet is too complicated compared to the previous two characters. While striving for all the needs of a person, he also brings the nobility and seclusion of an ancient fisherman. While everyone is running towards a prosperous life, he is still down and out. This is the reality of the people of Gejiangchuan, and it is also a helpless reminiscence of the past that can never be returned. Li Hangyu described "Ge Jiangchuan" as a humane and affectionate object, and wrote a story of a "fisherman" on the basis of profound traditional culture. This fisherman not only symbolizes the ancient hermit culture. Transformation points to the unshakable position of realism in contemporary literature.

During the avant-garde literature stage, it became popular to challenge the aesthetic taste of traditional novels and subvert the traditional narrative model of realism. Writers consciously seek the consciousness of "formal subject", regard "narration" as the purpose of writing, and emphasize "narration" itself. In their experiments, how to tell a story is more important than the content of the story itself<sup>[8]</sup>. When literature begins to turn to solving the problem of "how to write", it heralds the break between literature and the outside world, and the writer's disappointment and dissatisfaction with the environment in which he lives. But in my opinion, this is still paying attention to reality and expressing expectations. Although it is inevitable that most works eventually lead to the dead end of "typification" and "pure form", we can still find traces of the humanistic spirit in the creations of writers such as Ma Yuan, Yu Hua, and Su Tong. Yu Hua's series of works full of violent aesthetics, such as "Reality", "Alive", "1986", etc., all hide his deep understanding of the plight of human existence and suppressed life consciousness. Just as described at the end of "Alive", Fugui lives alone, with only an old man beside him, but he tells the old man stories every day. The story is about his family. When he recalls those moments with his family. When he lives a happy life, he can forget all the suffering and feel that he is still alive. Based on this, we can say that avant-garde literature has indeed never returned to the pursuit of form, but it has never given up on the many discussions and thoughts about human life, life, and destiny that the story content itself must carry.

In the new realistic novel stage, the intervention of life and reality, the focus on "people", and the writing of ordinary people made the works of this period very popular among the public. At the same time, new realistic novels exclude moral values, lofty ideals, heroic epics, etc. from the text, and strive to restore the true nature of life to answer the question "What to write?" This natural style narrative mode is often accompanied by the use of "zero-degree narrative". Behind the seemingly indifferent and non-evaluative style lies the writer's meticulous observation and love for real life, and his compassion for the struggling little characters. The novel "Food for Dog Days" focuses on a very common issue - what to eat. The land and food that Chinese farmers rely on for survival have become the objects of constant narration, and people are driven by instinct, have no time to care about good and evil, beauty and ugliness, let alone think about the important issues of the nation and the country. When the moral values and national justice in traditional novels recede into the background, and human instinct and survival desire take the main position, the original purpose of life can be thoroughly described, and the signifier of the word "realism" and the signified is merged into one.



From the "discovery of human beings" during the May Fourth Movement to the "disappearance of human beings" during the "Wen" period, to the "alienation of human beings" in the 1980s, the theme of Chinese literature has always been "human beings". In the development process of contemporary Chinese literature, the "human theme" has been broadened and given the characteristics of the times and profound connotations. Human life consciousness, human emotions and desires, and the complexity of human nature have all been included. In it, the reality of society, literature, and people are vividly depicted and displayed. This just shows that the realist humanistic spirit serves as the inner driving force for literary creation, literary criticism, and literary historical narration. Strength, has been unswervingly practicing the theme of "human" literature.

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