

The Concept of Society and Man in Pu Sungling's Stories

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Abstract

This article discusses the concept of society and man in Pu Sungling's stories. The story does not say why the ancient Chinese family fell into poverty, but given the historical situation, it is understandable that this family could not adapt to the new conditions as a result of the Manchus coming to power. Still, the family survives, and the fraternal relationship is continued by twenty-one-year-old student Jin Chuybing Ji. This classification is mainly due to the fact that the upper strata of society in the works are severely criticized.

Keywords: student, woodcutter, doctor, military, farmer, artisan, seamstress, jealousy, infidelity, insecurity, divorce, mother-in-law, marriage, bribery, prostitution, bureaucracy, strong censorship, injustice, difficulty of examination, familiarity, ignorance of examiners.

Introduction

Every work of Pu Sungling is part of his universal view of the whole universe, of being, and requires reflection and enrichment of considerations in this regard. This fact allows the writer's stories to be approached as a special, holistic work. His works pay little attention to the upper class, but describe in detail all aspects of urban, rural, family and social life.

“Liao Jai's Stories about Miracles” reflects the life of the Chinese people in the XVII century, with a socio-political system, family traditions and values, a world of social traditions and heresies, as well as the lives of officials, judges and monks.

We cite the following directions in Pu Sungling's critical views: 1) a critique of Buddhism and its growing influence; 2) criticism of officials sold for money; 3) criticism of the examination system; 4) criticism of the legislative system. This classification is mainly due to the fact that the upper strata of society in the works are severely criticized.

Pu Sungling also depicts details of marriage and dress, the hierarchy of family relationships, and other similar themes in bright colors. Based on the content of the author's “Liao Jai's Stories about Miracles”, if the thematic classification is made only on topics related to man and society, the following situation can be observed: 1. Stories written against the evils of society (bribery, prostitution, bureaucracy, strong censorship, injustice); 2. Stories about family relationships and problems (jealousy, infidelity, insecurity, divorce, mother-in-law, marriage); 3. Criticism of the imperial examination system (difficulty of examination, familiarity, ignorance of examiners); 4. Stories related to the human profession (student, woodcutter, doctor, military, farmer, artisan, seamstress); 5. National values (family traditions, weddings, births and naming ceremonies, holidays, rituals).

The main findings and results

The consistency in the choice of heroes for Pu Sungling's works is evident in the fact that all the characters are usually members of the lower strata of society - the poor and peasants, as well as the impoverished representatives of other strata. They are far from the criteria of Confucianism about the human ideal. Nevertheless, according to the author's idea, he made these people the protagonists in his works and raised the "human factor" in them.

During this period, the change in the style of writers in the history of Chinese literature was due to ideological views, as the peasants and uncles, who formed the main stratum of the Chinese population, became increasingly interested in the life of the people.

Since the same stratum of society made up a large part of the population, their way of life included many interesting but still undiscovered topics. In literature, the concept of personality is distinguished by its versatility. "If we call each person an individual, the next stage of man is the status of a person ... personality is, first of all, a person's obedience to his nature and the pursuit of his life, or at least an attempt to do so" [1.11]. Accordingly, the protagonists of Lyao Jai's stories listen to their nature and strive to find their place in society.

In the XVII and XVIII centuries, the tradition of recognizing the life and traditions of the common people and using words in this direction that were simplified and close to ordinary speech grew and expanded.

Chingfen ("青凤") [2.79] based on this story (as in Asia, Europe and the Middle East at the time) there was a simple situation in the family, i.e. the man falls in love with the woman, the parents who want to protect the girl's place oppose their relationship. However, all the difficulties are overcome and the lovers reach puberty and the girl's father treats the groom well. Such traditional plots are common in the genres of Chinese literature and folklore.

Pu Sungling used elements specific to the values of the Chinese people in his works in the first place. Let's say a mythical image of a fox that can easily adapt to the human world comes in handy. Just like the Chinese people, the image of a fox that follows moral norms is observed: "方持论间，叟掩入。叟怒曰：“贱辈辱吾门户！不速去，鞭挞且从其后！” - "As soon as the student embraces the girl, an old man suddenly appears. The old man shouted angrily at the student, "You have disgraced my house! Get out of here, if you don't go well, I'll whip you!" This situation is a natural reaction of a father who witnessed such a situation: his unmarried daughter is hugging a young man tightly in some house.

The images in the system of works of the writer can be divided into three groups: 1) fox - people (胡 - families and their concubines); 2) student; 3) secondary characters: the student's uncle and his family, the guard, the student's wife, servants).

The first group consists of representatives of a strange universe. The second group is the representative of the group formed in opposition to the supporters of daily life. "The student wants to see these miracles. He didn't listen and they stopped him." This is due to the miracles and demons that once appeared in his uncle's house. Because of these abnormalities, his family was forced to leave their home and move to another house. "The student is not afraid to face the devil: "夜方凭几，一鬼披发入，面黑如漆，张目视生。生笑，染指研墨自涂，灼灼然相与对视。鬼惭而去" - "At night, while he was leaning on the table and

reading a book, the devil came to him - the devil was staring at the student, his hair disheveled, his face darkened, his eyes smiling. The student smiles, pointing to the side of the pipe, and rubs his eyes. He found the strength to smile as he looked at the devil. The devil has lost his temper, turned and fled”. Thus the dark forces can be overcome with a sharp look. Even the devil stumbled in such a situation and fled. Perhaps the student, who did not believe that the creature next to him came from another world, thought that someone was joking.

The author also states that, like his uncle the student, he was from an ancient clan who was once wealthy and had large houses, but in time these houses began to be destroyed.

The story does not say why the ancient Chinese family fell into poverty, but given the historical situation, it is understandable that this family could not adapt to the new conditions as a result of the Manchus coming to power. Still, the family survives, and the fraternal relationship is continued by twenty-one-year-old student Jin Chuybing Ji. The image created by the writer goes beyond the Confucian principles of the time: “Jin Chuybing’s uncle calls his nephew by his name, he behaves selfishly and immorally”. But Chuybing is ready to answer for his actions, and he says, “I’m guilty, the price of a student is the same as a yellow baby, what has Chingfen got to do with it? If you forgive Chingfen, then even if you kill me or see me, I will not spare my body for this.” Of course, no human qualities are alien to him, and Syaoeray’s request to save his father reminds him of the evil done to him: “I rescue to save, I just wanted revenge for being humiliated,” he explained to Chingfen. Even Confucius said: «巧言令色, 鲜矣仁» [3.24] - “Owners of beautiful speech and outward beauty love people less”.

In Pu Sunling’s stories, the images of the heroes are shaped in a short but clear and understandable way. He also tries to show the main character of the protagonist while expressing all aspects of the protagonist in his actions.

The image of Chuybing is not individualized by the author and is described as a look that is typical for most of the stories in the collection. The psychological image in this image expression does not yet exist. The realities of the development of the image occur when the image is fully expressed without showing its main features and a brief description. The image of the fox-human family (the Hu family) is typical of the typical Chinese family of the seventeenth century, which manifests itself in the observance of much higher moral rules. Another important aspect is that this girl’s name is Chingfen.

The hieroglyph “青” corresponds to the word “blue” and often means the color of the sky. Another meaning of the hieroglyph is “young”. This means that the girl is indeed young, that she belongs to the lineage of angels, and that the angels will always be young. So the girl’s name is similar to her figure. The second hieroglyph that makes up the girl’s name - 凤 “bird of happiness” - is a traditional symbol of strong love between a man and a woman, as well as family happiness. As the author points out, Chuybing and Chingfen have been waiting for love and happiness for many years. In Pu Sunling’s works, in addition to depicting the human image as an individual, there is also a way to generalize the image: he emerged as a representative of some general group, a certain class, that is, a characteristic feature appears in the poetic image. This indicates a completely new approach to the human image. New approaches to the literary protagonist lead to a change in perceptions of the place and importance of literature.

Pu Sunling’s stories emphasize that working on human and social issues does not always lead to happiness. In the works of the writer, the usual aspects of the creative method

of Romanism are highlighted, and it is characterized by the expression of a plot close to folklore, as well as the relative simplicity of artistic speech. Pu Sungling refers to the image of the legendary fox in his work and uses metaphor as one of the main means of artistic expression.

The names of the characters in the stories also have a lexical meaning appropriate to the plot of the work. In writing the story, Pu Sungling initially focuses on literary traditions, and he himself enters into reality. A short but informative description of the protagonist is typical for his work. The description draws the most general image of the protagonist, such as where he is, smart, intelligent or ignorant, beautiful and charming.

According to Confucian rules, the responsibilities of each member of the family are clearly defined and family members must strictly adhere to these rules. It is important that the fate of the protagonist is at the center of the plot of Lyao Jai's stories, and that this is reflected even in the title of the work. This is "Ying Ning" [2.106] protagonist Ying Ning, "A Siu" [2.678] other hero Siu, "A Bao" [2.1193] other hero A Bao, "Chingfen" [2.79] other hero Chingfen, appears in such examples. The protagonists of these works, ie girls, embody such aspects of Chinese society as shyness, modesty, loyalty to the land, loyalty to the family, respect for adults, diligence.

The child's respect, esteem, and love for his parents are valued as the foundation of humanity, which defines the national spirituality inherent in all of humanity. This value was formed in ancient times in China. A study of Pu Sungling's work shows that violations of the norm governing family relationships are condemned by the public and considered contrary to established traditions.

Pu Sungling refers to the search for a true friend and reader who "understands him" and can appreciate his talent in the context of a number of his works. The protagonists in the writer's stories - in many cases, find true friends and like-minded people among the representatives of the underworld. For example, "E sheng" (叶生) [2.55] is a story about a young scientist. He wants to thank his true friend and mentor that even if he dies, he will come to his friend again and even take an exam with him. The "extraordinary historian's" respectful expression in this work is reminiscent of "Liao Jai's personal writings". One XX century researcher even analyzes this as a covert biography of Pu Sungling.

Pu Sungling's self-expression is not the main focus of storytelling. We learn a lot about important events in his life in his memoirs about his late father or deceased spouse in the preface of his book of family advice. Unlike some Chinese biographies, this preface does not include official reports on his professional activities as an official biography written by the same subject himself.

"Liao Jai's Stories about Miracles" is an escape from the reality around Pu Sungling. In order to avoid punishment for criticizing society, the writer resorted to supernatural stories. The writer, in contrast to an arranged marriage, sang of the pursuit of love, glorified values, and criticized problems. He preferred to write about fantastic events rather than propagate superstition. This educational function of Liao Jai's works was recognized from the very beginning.

As mentioned in previous chapters of the study, Pu Sungling signs many of his stories under the pseudonym Lyao Jai. It was under this pseudonym that the writer could openly criticize society. In other words, Pu Sungling said things he couldn't speak in Liao Jai's

language. The destiny of man, no matter who he is or what his position is, is at the forefront of the writer's stories. Lyao Jai protects everyone from the injustices and evils of society. In society, the human factor struggles in a unique way to take precedence. Of course, foxes, spirits, monks, sorcerers, blind fortune tellers, and others help the writer in this struggle, as we have mentioned before. These images take an active part in the stories in determining the truth.

Through the stories of Lyao Jai, he finds a unique way to punish fraudulent and corrupt officials who do not obey the laws of society. Of course, such heroes are also present in world folklore. For example, Roben Hood in the West, Nasriddin Efendi in the East, Aldar Kosa and others. But the images enumerated mainly protect the representatives of the common people, the oppressed and degraded poor. The heroes of Lyao Jai, on the other hand, protect anyone, no matter who they are, for justice in society. "Padishah khazrat" [2.1030] in his story he saves the deputy governor of a large province from slander. In this story, Pu Sungling introduces another magical and invisible in society to punish an unscrupulous and corrupt governor, but a fair society and a just king who punishes the wicked, struggling to decide the truth in real society. The word "王者" (king) in the title of the story is not taken for granted. Although the deputy governor is an official, he is an honest man. That is why he is brought before the legendary king, who cannot be seen by others, and even allowed to speak to the king in order to justify his name in the name of the governor:

“在此以前，巡抚有一晚跟他的一个爱妾睡觉。醒来后，发现爱妾成了光头，头发全没了。整个官衙的人无不惊骇，谁也猜不到其中缘由。原来州佐带回来的大信封中，装的就是巡抚爱妾的头发，还附着一封信，内容是：“你从当一个小县令起家，如今做到这么大的官职，贪婪地收受贿赂，赃银不计其数。上次的六十万两银子，我已查收入库，你应该从自己的私囊中补齐原数。这事与押解官无关，不得惩办他” [2.1030-1032]. *“One morning before the incident, the governor stood up and saw that his wife was completely bald. Her hair is missing. In an attempt to explain why, court officials and the military governor himself have launched an investigation. Meanwhile, the deputy had returned with a letter bag. When the governor opened the bag, he saw not only the letter, but also his wife's hair. The letter said: “Since you took office, you have always been involved in endless bribery and fraud. What happened to the 600,000 liang silver money in my hand in the face of your actions? Don't be stingy, if you take 600,000 liangs out of your pocket and fill the central treasury, you won't run out. Do not punish the deputy for the lost silver, he is not a sinner”*. Through this story, the writer promotes the idea of a just society and a just king that he dreams of. The fear of the governor after reading the letter, the release of the deputy, and his eventual death add to the impact of the story. The writer's intention in this play was to glorify human perfection and criticize superstition.

The author embellishes his stories with metaphors, using supernatural characters such as the fox spirit to convey his moral lessons. Lyao Jai also tells unusual stories. Virtues are glorified, vices are condemned.

Conclusion

In his works, Pu Sungling described the socio-political, cultural-enlightenment and personal-domestic relations between man and society in a profound and unusual way. He criticized the illegalities taking place in the society, bribery, and inaccuracies in the examinations held in the course of his career. He valued the ancient traditions of China, respect in family relationships. Most importantly, the writer expressed his conceptual views

on man and society in the environment in which he lived, in the language of word art, in a symbolic-metaphorical way. He stressed the importance of universal concepts based on the teachings of Confucianism, Taoism and Buddhism in ensuring a prosperous life.

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