

Research about Sensibility of Local Literature between Chinese Mainland and Taiwan in the 1980s

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Abstract:

A significant genre in Chinese literary history is local literature. It has been a recurring theme ever since it first appeared. Being the pioneer of regional literature, Lu Xun's writings are pieces in which he describes his home environment while feeling homesick, allowing him to live elsewhere. Following decades of growth, local literature has persisted in producing unique works based on Lu Xun. Many experts specializing in rural literature have emerged with changing connotations and ideologies. During the 1980s and 1990s, mainland China was represented by authors such as Jia Pingwa and Wang Zengqi. Representative writers from Taiwan include Lin Qingxuan. This article examines the similarities and differences between Mr. Wang Zengqi's "Ordination" and Mr. Lin Qingxuan's "Flying into Miscanthus" about language, folklore, and the natural environment. Through a comparative examination, one may observe that the emotional support depicted in mainland and Taiwanese local literature follows a similar trend across historical periods—from hometown to spiritual home—before evolving into emotional fulfillment.

Keywords: Local Literature; Wang Zengqi; Lin Qingxuan; emotional support; spiritual home.

1. Introduction

Local literature has always been a crucial area of study for literary studies. In Lu Xun's works of local literature, the countryside represents the motherland of those distant from home, bringing feelings of longing and melancholy. These days, local literature focuses on the spiritual crisis and the revelation of the diversity of rural Chinese history [1]. The appeal for humanity in local literature has returned after the reform and opening up, gradually becoming a thriving renaissance. Currently, "homesickness" is no longer required in local literature. Without a doubt, it expanded the possibilities for writing vernacular fiction. Additionally, a literary wave was sparked in Taiwan by the growth of local literature, the clash of modern literature, the rise of national consciousness, and public conversations concerning cultural and ethnic allegiance. Therefore, the author of local literature will focus more on the local setting while they are writing, fusing national and personal sentiments.

The works of Wang Zengqi, the representative of current literature, have regional characteristics [2]. One of Taiwan's greatest writers, Lin Qingxuan, wrote with much nostalgia in his prose. Chen Hongyan also makes arguments in his research by looking at characters, family love, homeland thinking, and childhood memories [3].

Although both authors are contemporary writers, and their works all exhibit elements of local literature, there is currently a shortage of research comparing the two and examining the evolution of local literature on both sides of the strait. Both as representative creators, his works bear personal emotions and the signs of the times. Comparing the two is very important for developing this kind of literature. This research's primary focus and direction are likewise related to this.

This essay investigates how Taiwanese and mainland performers communicated local literature in that era through an analysis of Wang Zengqi and Lin Qingxuan's literary works. Although cross-strait vernacular literature has faced diverse circumstances, the essence of traditional Chinese culture remains the same, with Chinese people viewing their home country as a source of psychological solace.

2. The Love Story of a Young Monk by Wang Zengqi

Local literature does not adhere to political discourse or explore the relevance of the Enlightenment. There are also creative expressions in the history of modern literature. For example, Shen Congwen is one of the representatives of local literature since it focuses on preserving folklore [4]. Local literature often includes pastoral literature,

particularly hometown folklore. Whether it be the natural landscapes or the culture of the region one grew up in, these are all important features of this land. Wang Zengqi does a fantastic job in this area in his novels, which is why his creations are so grand that they give people a warm, energetic feeling. As a student of Shen Congwen, he was deeply influenced by his teachers. In the early days of his creation, there was a strong sense of the local in his novels. Consider *The Love Story of a Young Monk*, revised based on the author's 17-year-old experience. The author conveys a sense of place in these sentences by portraying traditional country life and detailing the events that occurred during this time. The author delineates the things that happened during the period of the protagonist Minghai becoming a monk in detail, tells about his hazy affection for Xiaoyingzi, and describes the lives of all kinds of characters. This article incorporates Gaoyou's folkloric festivals and celebrations while maintaining a Buddhist background.

2.1 Characteristics of Nature

The way the natural environment is portrayed in the article „*The Love Story of a Young Monk*“ strongly reflects the area's qualities. Like the expression to Minghai (Xiaomingzi), who should take the boat into town [4], it can reflect the unique geographic setting of the author's hometown. The necessity of rowing boats to get away reflects the features of this region, which is home to several rivers and lakes. Aquatic crops like „Lotus seedpod“ serve as evidence of the geographical characteristics of Gaoyou and a unique marker of the author's hometown. Readers can sense the environment of the water town of Gaoyou from these phrases and the writer's depiction of details, even if the writer did not use much space to illustrate natural elements like rivers and lakes.

2.2 Linguistic Characteristics

Variations in regional dialects and languages play a significant role in the essay. The reader may clearly understand the language features of the author's hometown from *The Love Story of a Young Monk*. For instance, in the text's minor-key mountain song, „Sister threshes barley with a youngster, whispering intimate affairs while beating. Though the conversation is private, It continues in the next thresh of wheat“ [4]. „Youngster“ words are completely different from Mandarin's description. The Wang Zengqi dialect of his hometown is full of geographical characteristics. Furthermore, these mountain songs depict pure people's customs in clear and assertive language; hence, it can be claimed that they serve as a good example of the traits of the language system in the author's hometown. At the same time, specific epithets are integral

to the language system. For example, Renshan, who was Mingzi's uncle and people called him „manager“ instead of „abbot“ [5]. This is most likely a particular name and feature of the Jianghuai River basin. Moreover, this language feature also supports the content of the text. It can be said that „voice“ has built the cultural field of folk literature and deepened the work's cultural sense [6]. These languages are a byproduct of regional traits and originated in the soil of Gaoyou.

2.3 Folkways and Traditions

Most of the daily practices of traditional societies are centered on being a local field of life, and specific social networks are formed in this social environment [6]. An additional aspect of Wang Zengqi's work is the depiction of folklore in the piece, with the Gaoyou region serving as the backdrop for all of these activities. The „Yulan Society“ monks threw the cymbals, wore embroidered outer clothes, and performed scale services. These activities are distinctive to this region of Gaoyou and represent the unique customs performed at particular folk festivals. The text contains a Buddhist context filled with the Buddha's will. The author puts his religious ideas and regional folklore features throughout the author's childhood memories and eventually co-integrates them into the context. This is also an important feature of Wang Zengqi's Local Literature.

It can be seen that Mr. Wang Zengqi's passion for his hometown through analysis; he uses paper and ink to convey his intense sense of nostalgia for it. Additionally, consider the fact that, as a literary genre, local literature portrays the author's spiritual abode. Their spiritual home shapes the author's everyday environment. Wang Zengqi realized his life goals in this everyday environment and formed his ideal life form—warmth—a secular romantic existence [7].

3. Flying into the Miscanthus by Lin Qingxuan

Early and mature articles by Lin Qingxuan on local culture draw from a variety of sources: some delve into the mysteries of life and Nature; others discuss children's tastes and convey his childlike perspective; still others recollect their own experiences and creative processes. *Flying into the Miscanthus* recalls the author's and parents' stories. Being one of the leading authors of regional Taiwanese literature, Lin Qingxuan's works are largely nostalgic for the rural. It depicts rural Taiwanese life at the time. Childhood bridges Lin Qingxuan's works, allowing him to revisit his hometown and history. This road has laughs and tears, dread and longing, and joys and sorrows [8]. In addition, his writing style is distinct, detached, so-

phisticated, and classical, with a strong Zen quality and Buddhist aesthetic notion. He writes about local culture and literature. His local literature can be said to be cultural and regional.

3.1 Characteristics of Nature

This article's description of natural features highlights Taiwan's distinct geographic position and attributes. For example, when Mother squats by the big stove in the kitchen, chopping the grass stalks of banana trees with all her might, and the scene where she chops a banana chunk hard when she gets angry reflects the style of Taiwan as a tropical island. Another scene is the author's mother leading her to the sweet potato fields, where she picks leaves by walking through the miscanthus in front of the house. The plants listed here are referenced multiple times in Lin Qingxuan's novels; at the time, many families in Taiwan consumed this diet [9]. Like Niaoshencai, it is seldom known on the mainland but is typical in the author's hometown. The geographical and climatic features of the Taiwan region are reflected in all of these artifacts, and there are some similarities with the regional description of Wang Zengqi's Gaoyou Water Township in the earlier description.

3.2 Linguistic characteristics

This article has excellent linguistic elements as well as a lot of terms and phrases that are rich in historical and regional flavor. For example, when Lin Qingxuan asked his mother for money to buy jindan, which 0.1 yuan can buy two, "0.1 yuan" reflected the price level then. In those days, Jindan was also a consumed snack, informing readers about one of the past entertainment options available to kids in remote Taiwan. After being denied, the writer at the time refused to give up, which led to his mother chasing and beating him. Although the language is simple and unsophisticated, it unmistakably draws up the image of an actual rural woman. In addition to portraying the image of a typical rural mother, the author's depictions of other plot characters in the family form a microcosm of a rural family. It is precisely this kind of boundless freedom that allows beauty to permeate Lin Qingxuan's article.

3.3 Folkways and Traditions

As a cultural person who has taken spiritual refuge in Buddhism, Lin Qingxuan emphasized ethical care, and his experience of folk life is also more profound [7]. There is little narrative about folk customs and traditions, but many are good at reflecting the rural character. When writing about the younger brother who died of illness, according to customs, the mom should hit the coffin with a cane to blame the child for not being filial. It can be a long-standing tradition that the author's hometown has carried on to

this day. Though his mother did not follow tradition in doing so, Lin Qingxuan could depict his mother's response with empathy and compassion. The author uses a gentle tone while acknowledging and respecting the traditions of his hometown and his mother's behavior. The author mixed families, the tradition of the countryside, and the concepts of uprightness and warmth, generosity and preciseness, fortitude and not domineering, succinctness and humility in this local literature [10,11].

The author's final expression in this article is missing his mother and hometown. The object of praise is far more than just his mother; he elevated that sentiment to the mothers of rural areas throughout Taiwan. This is the brilliance of his article. As a local literary essay, the language is so mellow that it masterfully conveys the author's feelings.

4. The Love Story of a Young Monk and Flying into the Miscanthus

The Love Story of a Young Monk tells the hazy love story between Ming Hai and Xiao Yingzi through the description of the monk's daily life to reveal the beauty of human affection. Wang Zengqi did not pay too much attention to tips for writing articles and also deliberately downplayed the description of the plot. The story's development is always uneventful, and the architecture is clear and simple. However, this article's biggest features are straightforward language, a shallow style of writing, and the blending with Buddha nature. This element gives readers a sense of spiritual peace as they read. People, animals, plants, flowers, and landscapes combine to form a modern, rustic three-dimensional area [12]. People are frequently spiritually motivated by works of local literature. Let these words be an embrace for the weary travelers. Let those who depart possess the bravery to embark once more. In *Flying into the Miscanthus*, Lin Qingxuan recalled his childhood with simple and fresh words. It is all about some common little things, for example, accompanying „my“ mother to watch Firefly, choosing dishes together, and being chased and beaten for being naughty. Three typical fragments of rural life are not special; however, it is difficult to revisit the experience of childhood and the countryside in the heavy traffic in big cities. This article describes an ordinary peasant life scene with its plain and close-to-life text. There are no praises to express nostalgia and regret and no long lyrical texts to express nostalgia for his hometown. The mother's portrayal represents thousands of everyday rural women in Taiwan; rural settings are also frequently seen. It is a form of emotional sustenance, a form of nostalgia, and a kind of praise.

These two essays are both representative works of local

literature in the two places. The same beautiful tone conveys the feelings of a generation towards their hometown. *The Love Story of a Young Monk* seems to be a story that the author never took part in; actually, it is rewritten based on the author's personal experience. *Flying into the Miscanthus* is written about the author's personal experience of childhood; that is to say, both works have the author's personal experience. The article also leaves traces of the author's behavior everywhere; the local customs, natural scenery, and dialect here are vividly remembered by the two writers, who have not returned to their hometowns for a long time. The author of *The Love Story of a Young Monk* notes at the end of the book that the incident occurred 43 years ago in a dream. The landscape of his hometown is made up of the central region of the land where our ancestors were born and raised, as well as the folk traditions and culture that have been passed down through the years. Even after 40 years of wind and frost, it still lasts long. Lin Qingxuan showed that Taiwanese culture is part of Chinese culture; traditional culture has always been in the same vein[13]. Lin Qingxuan always said he was a sweet potato; the red heart of the sweet potato is on the mainland. There are many sweet potatoes. It is like they grow together on the land of the Chinese nation. These authors penned their novels using heartfelt language exclusive to their hometowns. Although the land that raised these writers was different, the sense of belonging that the land of China gave them has never vanished. Both works carry a deep nostalgia for their hometown and a nostalgia for the wandering soul of a wanderer.

5. Conclusion

A literati's deepest sentiments for his homeland are always embodied in local literature. The literature of Wang Zengqi's native Gaoyou is a kind of lovely remembrance of that place. He has always created such a spiritual home for himself in his heart, regardless of how society changes. People can experience a comforting, cozy feeling from the words. Lin Qingxuan, in the historical context of the development of Taiwan's vernacular literature at that time, expressed his feelings for his family and hometown in this article. At the same time, he injected national elements into his deep feelings. Writers on both sides of the strait wrote down their records with sincere words for their hometowns. Although the land that nurtured them was different, all of them carry a period of nostalgia for their hometown, and the nostalgia of the wanderer's wandering

soul is sustenance. As both Chinese, the hometown and homeland will always be places where people can return to their roots and comfort their spirits. Although the local literature on both sides of the strait has developed in different contexts, all are used as a cradle for blooming fond memories of the ideal homeland of the spiritual homeland.

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