



Illuminate the Hidden Pain in Our Hearts——Analysis of the Image of “Aunt” in Mo Yan’s Novel Frog

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Abstract: Frog is a long-form masterpiece created by Mo Yan with the great concentration that touches the most painful part of the Chinese soul. The novel consists of four long letters and a drama written by the playwright Tadpole to the Japanese writer Sugitani. It is about the life experience of an “aunt”, a Chinese rural obstetrician and gynecologist, with vivid and touching details showing the sixty years of undulating birth history in rural China.

Keywords: Frog; Aunt; Birth History; Appreciation

1. Personal Legend

1.1 The life of “magnificence” and “ups and downs”

The story takes place in the northeastern township of Gaomi. The “aunt” named Xin Wan is a Communist Party member. Her father, Liufu Wan, learned Chinese medicine first, and then joined Bethune to learn Western medicine. In the early 1950s after the founding of the Republic, the daughter of the anti-Japanese martyrs inherited her father’s career and became the first batch of midwives adopting new methods in the Republic. Later, she became an excellent gynecologist. At the age of seventeen, she became the ‘living Bodhisattva’, “Goddess sending kids’ in the eyes of the villagers. During the Cultural Revolution in the 1960s, the “aunt” experienced countless political movements and struggles. Her personality has changed dramatically. After the implementation of the family planning policy in the 1970s, she became the deputy leader of the communal family planning leadership group and became a firm promoter of the family planning policy. Until her retirement in her later years, she felt regretful about the lives she had destroyed.

1.2 Personal characteristics of rural obstetricians and gynecologists

When she was young, she was arrested by the Japanese to be the hostage. At the age of seventeen, she gave birth to a baby with the new method for the first time, showing the temperament of a talented gynecologist. With her calm composure and new birth delivery methods, the women admired her so much that her hand was deified by people as “her hand can remove illness by simply touching the patient”. While the other women were pregnant and having children and were busy managing the rice, oil, and salt, the aunt galloped on the frozen river with her medicine chest on her back, her trousers on her legs, and her bicycle. When ordinary women are exhausted in childbirth, she becomes as independent, free and bold as men.

At the age of twenty-two, the “aunt” who had passed the age of marriage and marriage had established a love relationship with the pilot Xiaoyu Wang and developed to be about to marry. While everyone was excited and proud of this happy event, the mythical love unexpectedly ended with the pilot’s betrayal from the Soviet Union and the “aunt” attempted to commit suicide by cutting off her wrist. The trauma caused by the failure of love and the Cultural Revolution finally completely changed the “aunt”. She devoted herself completely to the work of family planning and gave up her gender role. She changed from a “living Bodhisattva” in people’s mouths to a “demon” with blood on her hands.

And as the special era gradually goes away, the retired “aunt” can no longer hide in the family planning work she

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has devoted for. The nightmare chased by the frogs entangles the aunt's tormented soul. She married the clay sculpture artist Hao Dashou and reproduced the 2,800 children destroyed by her hands one by one, trying to make up for her guilty. At the end of the drama of the same name, the "aunt" was arranged to hang in front of the crowd to symbolize the scene of regaining humanity.

2. The history

At the end of 1965, New China was under pressure from a rapid population increase. In the first family planning climax, the "aunt" became the deputy leader of the commune family planning leadership group in response to the party's call and Chairman Mao's instructions. Regarding her duties, the "aunt" understands that "the family planning must be done. If we let go of birth, it will be 30 million people a year, and 300 million people in ten years. In fifty years, the earth will be taken by the Chinese". Therefore, the birth rate must be reduced at all costs. This is also the Chinese contribution to all mankind! Chairman Mao said that humans should control themselves and achieve planned growth^[1]. From the Warring States period until the Qing Dynasty, the rulers of successive generations have been encouraging policies for childbirth. The newly born republic was also far from getting out of the shadow of war, which consumes the population and desires its population to be full of military power. Until the implementation of the family planning policy, the concept of more children and more happiness was deeply rooted in people's psychological culture. "Aunt", as a rural intellectual, clearly knew the nature of Chinese rural farmers. "The people we are facing are farmers. They are stubborn and not reasoning. Nobody will listen to you talking about policies."^[2] As a new-educated gynecologist, the village cadres of the family planning policy know that China will face huge population pressure. Even though "I was scolded by the backbone during the day and smashed by black bricks at night. Even the five-year-old kid pierced my leg with the awl." The "aunt" cold-bloodily followed the order of the country and the indicators of superiors. She wanted to "Drinking the bottled poison, and hang herself with the root rope"^[3].

With the turbulent social and economic waves in China, the "aunts" in her later years can no longer rely on those grandiose reasons and the external system. Her inner thoughts were even more contradictory. In the fourth part of the novel, Mo Yan used his best skills to "imagine truly" an "aunt" nightmare experience. The drunken "aunt" was chased and bitten by thousands of frogs and became seriously ill. History does not give individuals too many choices. No matter how cruel, life requires everyone to bear the consequences for their choices.

3. The magic of reality

The award speech of the Swedish Academy said that Mo Yan's work can combine "magic realism with folk stories, historical records and contemporary social reality."

3.1 Women whose life is distorted by the magic

The magical color of Mo Yan's novels originated from the conscious pursuit of Mo Yan's unique creative concept. Mo Yan used the image of "aunt" to create a series of plots and characters with "mysterious and illusory colors". For example, the beginning of the novel writes about the ancient customs named after the body parts and human organs, and the story of eating coal in the hungry years. These all make the novel start with a mysterious and illusory color. Another example is the various methods adopted by the "aunt" in the process of unswervingly implementing family planning, such as chasing people on the river, pulling trees to destroy the house, and the mysterious dream about the frog that is entangled with the "aunt". In the promotion process of family planning policies, the situation in cities and villages is very different. Urban promotion is relatively smooth. In rural areas, it encounters extremely fierce resistance. Fierceness is a magical scene unimaginable to people who have not seen it with their own eyes.

Frog was published in 2009. In the same year, Ma Sang, the writer, secretary of the party group, and director of the Population and Family Planning Bureau of Handan County at Hebei, serialized a series of essays reflecting the family planning process in twelve issues, *My Heavy Monument*. In one of the articles entitled *The White Nights of Sixteen Villages*, he also described the village cadres' implementation of the family planning policy and the demolition and destruction of villagers who violated the policy: "The rural cadres who were holding iron hammers and pickaxes, making their hands sweaty, couldn't wait for the words to fall to the ground, and they couldn't wait to use their hands. The glass

was broken, the door frames and windows were broken. On the fifth strike, the last supporting brick was smashed. The roof seemed to hesitate for a moment, and suddenly a “click” burst out of the broken signal. First slowly and then suddenly accelerated the falling speed. Huge and Heavy, the roof of the house was inevitably pressed down and collapsed in an instant. Everyone’s ears were deaf for half a minute. The smoke and dust swept the entire courtyard like a huge wave, and quickly spread to the street...”^[3] It seems that Mo Yan’s description of similar scenes in his novel *Frog* is really restrained reproduction of a village in the eyes of a teenager. The reality scene in the implementation of the family planning policy is so cruel that we would prefer it to be a magic metaphor.

3.2 Women surrounded by magical images

In the novel *Frog*, the image of “frog” runs through from beginning to end. From the title of the novel, to the origin of the name of the playwright tadpole, the nightmare of the “aunt”, the mysterious fear of the “aunt” of the frog, the surrogacy company under the cover of the bullfrog company in the book, and the description of the details everywhere. This imagery envelops the whole article clearly, and clearly conveys the author’s understanding of the theme of fertility—“Solemn and secular, serious and absurd”. Some characters in the novel *Frog* such as “Aunt” and Grandpa do have their prototype characters, and plots such as eating coal, demolishing houses and digging trees have indeed happened in the past.

4. Conclusion

More than half a century has passed since the initial introduction of the family planning policy in China in the 1950s to today. When the scale of mankind is not proportional to the world space in which he lives, this controversial national policy has spread from cities to villages in China, becoming a pioneering activity in human history. Every Chinese has become an experiencer of this incident, seeing it from all angles, feeling all the pain and tears, struggling, and being confused about the collision between the ancient custom of natural reproduction and the family planning policy. This is a national painful choice. The image of “aunt” reflects the hidden pain that every Chinese who has experienced family planning and China has just begun to face the mistake directly. Writing, in this sense, is to “reveal them patiently, understand them, illuminate them, possess these hidden pains and scars, make them ourselves, and make them a conscious part of our spirit and writing.”

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