

# Traditional culture based on the analysis of Huxiang culture and Tang Haoming's historical novel creation

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**Abstract:** *Huxiang culture has deeply influenced Tang Haoming, but few researchers interpret and criticize Tang Haoming's historical novels from the perspective of Huxiang culture, resulting in misreading and critical comments. Tang Haoming is a writer deeply influenced by traditional culture. There are two contexts for the generation of Tang Haoming's Historical Novels: one is the transformation of the perspective of historical literature. The second is the prosperity of modern "New Confucianism". Scholars' images in Tang Haoming's historical novels have traditional cultural personality, while women's images are women suppressed by traditional culture. Combining the research results of Hunan academic circles including Tang Haoming himself on Huxiang culture, and thinking about traditional culture, this paper analyzes the motivation of Tang Haoming's literary creation and his sense of responsibility of consciously carrying on cultural inheritance, and reveals the cultural characteristics and ideological value of his historical novels, taking "being practical" and "suffering consciousness" as the breakthrough point.*

**Keywords:** *Huxiang culture; Traditional culture; Tang Haoming; Historical novels*

## 1. Introduction

China is a country that cherishes history. Five thousand years of civilization history has precipitated a very strong historical consciousness for Chinese culture and has also created a very developed historian culture. The current novel creation of historical themes is still very prosperous. In the context of globalization, Tang Haoming updated historical concepts, paid attention to and explored traditional themes, and used the "Late Cao Trilogy" ("Zeng Guofan", "Yang Du" and "Zhang Zhidong" ), in the form of literature, reappeared a period of history from the rise to decline of the Manchu Qing Dynasty, which set off a wide and lasting reading frenzy among readers. At the same time, it has aroused widespread concern about the creation of historical novels in the theoretical circle, and critics are in a lot of time [1]. While agreeing that Tang Haoming's historical novel epic has both artistic quality, they pointed out that Tang Haoming was stuck to historical facts and lost his literary talent. While acknowledging that Tang Haoming's historical novels enjoy the artistic effect of both refined and popular tastes, he accused Tang Haoming of being too bookish [2]. The word "culture" has a wide connotation. Broadly speaking, it includes all kinds of "explicit" and "implicit" material and spiritual civilizations, which is the sum of the whole life style. Therefore, both history and novels belong to culture. History and novel are not only a concrete cultural form, but also a specific cultural code [3]. As a literary style that reflects past social life, historical novels are cultivated and developed in a unique cultural field, and will inevitably contain various historical and cultural information. Chinese culture, especially traditional culture, is the matrix of Chinese historical novels. Chinese historical novels have been nurtured by traditional history and culture in an all-round and multi-level manner, which not only reflects the historical life landscape of a certain era, but also reflects the inner connotation of specific historical culture[ 4]. Therefore, this article proposes a study of traditional culture and Tang Haoming's historical novel creation based on the analysis of Huxiang culture.

## 2. Huxiang Culture and a Brief Summary of Tang Haoming

### 2.1. Huxiang Culture

Huxiang culture is recognized as a regional culture, but people have different views on its meaning. It is generally manifested in two aspects: one is Huxiang culture in a very narrow sense, which is related to Hunan administrative region and has inheritance context, stable academic thought, social

psychology and folk talent education. It is called Huxiang culture. Another is Hu Xiang culture in a broad sense. It is recognized that all the history and culture of Hunan belong to Hu Xiang culture. As shown in Figures 1 and 2.



*Figure 1 Inheritance of the Academy of classical learning*



*Figure 2 Zhuzhou Yan Emperor Mausoleum*

In fact, these two views can be expressed by different concepts such as "cultural region" and "regional culture" [5]. The two viewpoints are interrelated, that is, regional culture has evolved into a stable cultural nature through continuous accumulation, and gradually reached the standards of cultural regions, but there are some differences. There are two necessary conditions for the formation of the Huxiang cultural area: First, the established historical political district of Hunan. Second, it relies on the human geography of Huxiang. Neither of these two conditions can be formed in a short while, they are accumulated over a long period of time.

## **2.2. Tang Haoming**

"What an individual is doing, what he believes, thinks and feels, is not determined by the individual, but by the cultural environment. Spirit is only a reflection of culture. Only by thinking about culture can human consciousness become something understandable." "a specific cultural environment shapes specific individuals. People are not only the product of a certain cultural environment, but also the creator of the cultural environment [6]."

Tang Haoming was born in Hengyang, Hunan in 1946. Chairman of Hunan Writers Association. He is the author of historical novels Zeng Guofan, Peng Yulin, Yang Du and Zhang Zhidong, etc., and has compiled and published the Complete Works of Zeng Guofan. Member of the Tenth National Committee of the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference, member of the Sixth and

Seventh National Committees of the Chinese Writers Association, won the honorary titles of young and middle-aged experts with outstanding contributions from the state, and successively won the first and second Yao Xueyin Long Historical Novels Award, the National Book Award, the "Five One Projects" Award in Publicity Department of the Communist Party of China, the China Publishing Government Award and the Outstanding Person Award. Figure 3 shows the Tang Haoming.



*Figure 3 Tang Haoming*

Hengyang is a historical city. Since the establishment of Hengzhou in the Sui Dynasty, it has a long history of more than 1,400 years. As one of the ancient prefectures and counties, Hengyang has always been an important political, economic, cultural, and military town in southern Hunan, and was influenced by the culture of the Central Plains earlier. Legend has it that Yu Shun patrolled south and once held a ceremony to worship the princes at the same time in Hengsh. Later, Li Bai, Du Fu and Huang Tingjian expressed their feelings on the Hengyang Range Rover, leaving a well-known saying. Han Yu prayed, Yue Kaiyun, Zhu Xi gave lectures on the snow, and Zhang Shishi discussed the classics, all of which left traces in Hengyang. Zeng Guofan and Peng Yulin, famous generals of the Qing Dynasty, once founded the Hunan Navy in Hengzhou. As far as the influence is concerned, the folk customs are gradually opening up. People in Hengyang dare to work in the world. Cai Lun invented papermaking, which has made great achievements for thousands of years. Wang Chuanshan's "new face" and extensive annotation of the six classics directly opened the source of Huxiang culture. This influenced Tang Haoming in his youth.

### **3. Traditional culture based on Huxiang culture analysis and Tang Haoming's historical novel creation**

Influenced by Huxiang culture, Tang Haoming has a strong sense of responsibility for cultural heritage, which further determines his prudent attitude towards historical materials and the overall expression of "elegance and integrity" in his creation.

Tang Haoming mentioned in the article "I Write 'Zeng Guofan'": "I first considered writing a research monograph on Zeng Guofan, and expressed my knowledge in rigorous academic language. It is for me to complete such a monograph. It's not difficult. It's enough to make the published papers coherent and enrich it, and some publishers have agreed to publish it. However, I gave up this idea and decided to do something much more difficult than it, and that is to write A long historical novel with Zeng as the main character. There is an obvious reason here, that is, the research works on Zeng have been made, whether in the past or now, whether in large volumes or pamphlets, while there are no novels with him as the protagonist. Doing this kind of thing has the significance of filling the gap. But this is not the main reason. The main reason is that I like literature and am willing to do some literature."

Tang Haoming's historical novels, with his all-round mastery of the world under his pen, carefully create a specific historical and cultural atmosphere, and make the cultural atmosphere an indispensable background and background for the novels by being familiar with the social general situation, living conditions, folk customs, local customs, daily life and laws and regulations of that period of history, thus achieving "cultural truth" in a higher sense and realizing "perfect combination of history and poetry". As he said, "Under the premise of grasping the historical tone of the era under the pen and the main characters to be depicted, we should enrich history, refine history, and live history, so as to achieve artistic reproduction of history. If we say that historical materials are like A volume of incomplete ancient paintings, literary works should be a complete sculpture. Writers need to use artistic means to fill its gaps, and let it stand up and present it in front of readers in a three-dimensional way. "

Based on the principle of "it does not happen, but it may happen", Tang Haoming makes a balanced reasoning on the character's character and makes a reasonable fiction on some plots and details, so that the novel obtains an artistic sense of reality.

It is precisely because of this "statecraft" feeling and cultural inheritance consciousness influenced by Huxiang culture that Tang Haoming, unlike some writers, holds "awe" of history, holding that "history is a public space, not a private space created by some novels", and "individual people should have a sense of awe of what the public has created". "The history of China is a human civilization created by the Chinese nation from generation to generation. As the common ownership of a nation, once it encounters humiliation, it will certainly provoke public outrage and anger. For those who do not respect Chinese history, every Every descendant of Yan and Huang has the right to condemn." He wanted to tell the world about the living environment and consciousness of the ancients in the form of literature, and use it for reference and humanistic care. Literary theorists accuse Tang Haoming's historical novels of sticking to historical facts. Although it is not groundless, Tang Haoming's loyalty to historical materials stems from his creative motivation. He should show his direct living environment and survival consciousness as much as possible and tell the world his direct historical wisdom. His cautious attitude towards historical facts stems from his inheritance consciousness of elite culture and the influence of the spirit of "practical application" of Huxiang culture on him. This just constitutes his unique personal style and features, which is valuable and respectable. This kind of historical narration is not an official novel or a political novel in a simple sense, nor can it be read as an image of "larceny". This kind of reading process is different from the fun appreciation at the superficial and vulgar level, and also from the solemn reading of historical anecdotes. It has both elegant elements and vulgar factors, and is a process of cultural enrichment, as well as the role of ideological enlightenment or cultural popularization education.

#### 4. Conclusions

When Tang Haoming demonstrated the unique charm of the traditional culture of the Chinese nation, he also carried out in-depth reflection and modernity of traditional culture. Tang Haoming's reflection still has some shortcomings. First, he is mostly in a state of value isomorphism with traditional culture, and has an idealistic color to the traditional cultural personality of Zeng Guofan and others, and fails to constitute an effective criticism of it. Second, while respecting and carrying forward the national traditional culture, it lacks strong criticism of its violent and autocratic side. The writers have given a certain degree of understanding to Zeng Guofan's "heavy codes must be used in troubled times", Zhang Zhidong's return in the "blood splashing reform" and Yang Du's reneging, which potentially supports the autocracy and oppression caused by the traditional political culture and weakens the due criticism of knowledge. For example, Zeng Guofan predicted that Jiang Zhongyuan would establish the world with Kung Fu in the future and finally die with frugality. The old blind man calculated that Zuo's brothers have different future. "Those who were born in Hexi kill thousands of people, and those who go out will enter the phase. Born in Hedong, he killed thousands of animals, slaughtered pigs and slaughtered sheep. ". Hu's test of "Qian Zi" sums up the latter half of Yang Du's life: "The north and the south compete with each other, and noble people come out". What is most incredible is that elder Wuyu of Xuesai Temple can accurately determine the three major signs of Qing Dynasty's death within two or three years. It is this mysterious witchcraft in the novel that makes people see the profound culture of Huxiang. Even so, the value of Tang Haoming's cultural and historical novels cannot be underestimated. Their cultural grasp of history, inheritance of traditional historical literature and fiction art, and rational reflection on traditional culture show a historical novelist's thinking on historical fiction and how we are modernized in the era of globalization. In terms of culture, its significance is huge.

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