

Marginal Narrate: New Historicism Writing of "Zhao Yu Sports Report Trilogy"

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Abstract: As a kind of enlightenment perspective of contemporary literary theory, new historicism entered China at the end of the last century. The literary theory of new historicism emphasizes the complicated treatment of the relationship between "literary text" and "social historical text". At the end of the last century due to the constant failure in the international sports game, and the narrative began to focus on the "Marginalization" outside the athletes. Zhao Yu's Sports Trilogy opened an important page of sports reportage, making it reconstruct the heroic narrative of the previous sports literature which completely different from the narrate of victory literature before. This also shows that sports reportage has a marginal writing. And non-athletes and other marginal elements become an important perspective of sports reportage.

Keywords: Marginalnarrate; Zhao Yu; Sports reportage; New historicism

1. Introduction

In 2022, the report of the 20th National Congress of the Communist Party of China proposed: "To strengthen the influence of the Chinese civilization, adhere to the position of Chinese culture, tell China's stories well, spread China's voice well, present a credible, lovely and respectable image of China, and promote Chinese culture to the world." [1] [2] [3] As an important content, the Chinese story has been discussed again. As the key of content elaboration, Chinese stories have been talked about many times, which shows the rich value behind them. For a long time, China as the other has been shaped by the Western value form, and such China is not a three-dimensional China, but another marked by the western mainstream value under relativism. China's story is also mostly framed and contrasted by Western mainstream values. In the long course of history, an ideologically dominated binary opposition has been formed, and a lovely and friendly image of China has been obscured in the gaze of such opposition. In the present era of great changes unseen in a century, the dissemination of Chinese stories is not only the connection between the lineage of excellent Chinese civilization and the world's human civilization, but also an indispensable path for the internal self to be recognized by the external mechanism. It has not only important cultural value, but also diplomatic and political value that cannot be ignored.

Sports and literature have historical homology. They are the crystallization of wisdom in human production and labor, and also the concrete expression^[4] of the objectification of human's essential power. From this point of view, the combination of the two can not only enrich the connotation of sports culture with the art form of literature and promote the prosperity of sports culture, but also spread the spirit of sports in literary works and "tell the story of Chinese sports well". Sports literature takes sports figures and major events as the creation background, takes words as the medium, and uses literary expression and detail depiction to engender sports with more vivid vitality and appeal^[5]. As for literature, in the 1980s, Western literary theories began to be introduced into China, which made Chinese literary theories change in ways of thinking and discourse, and became an important theoretical resource for literature and art construction at that time. In the mid-1980s, there was a sudden upsurge in literature research methodology. A large number of Western literature research methods were translated and interpreted, and these novel methods were tried to be applied to literature research practice, thus changing the face^[6] of contemporary literature research in China. As a unique literary form of sports literature, sports reportage also began to flourish in the 1980s, and many literary works began to emerge, because in the 1980s, when Chinese literature began to recover after the "Cultural Revolution", in addition to novels, reportage could not be isolated from the Western literary theory. In the reportage, sports reportage occupies a very important territory^[7]. Under such a background, the creation of sports literature is inevitably influenced

by Western literary theories. Among the numerous works of sports reportage, Zhao Yu's Chinese Sports Trilogy is a unique existence. Different from the praise of victory in "Raising Eyebrows and Drawing Out Swords" and Lu Guang's "Chinese Girl", Zhao Yu opens a marginal writing style. That is, he pays attention to the elements outside the athletes and competitions, and presents the original shade outside the field artistically. He pays more attention to the marginal narratives such as "fans", "sports education", "retired athletes", "scientific training" and "insider", which exactly conforms to the "new historicism" theoretical style in Western literary theory. New historicism is different from traditional historicism, that is, it no longer focuses on grand narratives such as major events, but focuses on the survival and development of ordinary people, and it no longer focuses on the abstract universal history described in "historiography". Instead, it enters the periphery of social life from a concrete aspect to show the inconspicuous things^[8] in the society. This new historicism marginal narrative creation technique is also used by Zhao Yu. Compared with the grand narrative of champion Glory before him, he pays more attention to the "edge" beyond the "grand". Zhao Yu pays attention to a kind of edge which is different from the previous grand narrative in the major sports events, which also presents a new idea of new historicism. This focus is also a reflection on the spirit of sports.

2. Marginal Narrative Object

The subject of history is a question that any historical narrative must answer^[21]. New historicism has always been related to the interaction between text and history on the subject, and Zhao Yu's attention to people is a positive response in narrative, which is reflected in the narrative objects in his works. Different from the description of sports narrative in the early new period, looking at the previous sports reportage works, in terms of narrative objects, whether it is Zhang Ming's Goddess Archer in the Seventeen Year Period, or Lu Guang's Chinese Girl at the beginning of the new period, they all reveal a kind of identity in narrative direction, that is, they focus on the athletes themselves in terms of characters, and on the grand competition in terms of events. These two elements of the central narrative mode constitute a grand narrative of physical nationalization in sports reportage. The emergence of "champion literature" is a response^[9] to the historical collective unconsciousness of "sick man of East Asia". Liu Xinwu's 5.19 Long Lens is unique. Although in terms of narrative objects, it still does not "cross" the central field of sports reportage, athletes and sports competitions, it opens the enlightenment of subjectivity beyond the ideological discourse of the two. This enlightenment can also be said to be a return, and the revolutionary narrative of sports gradually fades in its own meaning. The narrative object began to pay attention to the outside and the individual, and the daily description gradually became an important element of sports reportage. "The return of literary texts from politics to the state was a common phenomenon^[10] in the 1980s." Under such a return, Zhao Yu's Sports Trilogy also began to pay attention to the "off-field" and "daily" in the narrative objects, and broke through the two core elements of athletes and competitive competitions, and then paid attention to the marginal things of the core elements, restoring the shaded marginal narrative objects in sports reportage. The narrative of sports is no longer just telling the feelings of home and country as usual, but developing the richness of sports itself in a more three-dimensional way.

Sartre pointed out: "We cannot define existence as presence -- because absence also reveals existence, because absence is still existence."^[11] For Zhao Yu, marginal description on the object is to present the absent existence in the previous sports reportage, and to intervene in these elements that were not present, which makes his works different from other sports reportage. In the first chapter of the Dream of a Powerful Country, the author carries out the narrative with a dialogue with an old fan. It is worth noting that this old fan is also an old soldier in addition to the identity dimension of a fan. Such an emphasis makes the group of fans be covered in the reportage. "Fans" as a marginal element is difficult to enter the mainstream sports narrative, Zhao Yu's description here makes sports reportage a change, which is inseparable from the social environment at that time, Zhao Yu's "fans" is not the first time to appear in sports reportage, in Liu Xinwu's "5.19 Long shot", Fans use a violent symbol to open the author's deep meditation on the connotation of sports, and in Zhao Yu's "Powerful country Dream", "fans" is more like a daily expression. In addition, the old fans in the first chapter are not only the carriers of Shouting and cheering in the readers' memory, but also carry a richer meaning. Zhao Yu describes this old fan in this way: "He never bothered to watch any domestic games, only watching the battle between China and foreign countries, and when he supervised the Chinese team, he looked at the image, not because he was deaf and unnecessary, but precisely because he was afraid of sound, afraid of annoyance." Due to the mutual construction between the dual identity of soldiers and fans, the old man should bear the responsibility of the "Sino-foreign war" of the soldiers under the main line of historicism, and need to enter the inner circle of sports as a fan to "supervise the war", such duality constitutes the typical symbol

of sports reportage in the early new period, human beings in the long process of civilization. They never stopped thinking^[12] about memory. In fact, just like the latter two pieces of the trilogy, the Defeat of the Army in Seoul and the Investigation of Ma Jiajun, the reflection on the problem has been running through Zhao Yu's trilogy. As a sports journalist, the restoration of authenticity and the processing of artistry have always been the inevitable control, which is also the main feature of the new historiography, and using the perspective of the scene to examine the phenomenon of sports fringe problems. Although such narration cannot be comprehensive and continuous, it forms a fragmented text. This fragmented text nar^[13] rates from a restricted perspective. It shows that in Zhao Yu's opinion, the marginal fans in sports reportage are more able to touch the truth of events than the top athletes in the omniscient perspective.

In the second part, Defeat in Seoul, Zhao Yu continues to cut into the marginal object, this time from another perspective of sports. Through the interview with Zhang Caizhen, the leader of the Sports Commission after the national team lost in the Seoul Olympic Games, Zhao Yu once again uncovers the marginal object of sports -- the National Sports Commission. Here, Zhao Yu narrates the National Sports Commission behind Zhao Caizhen as a concrete person. In previous sports reportage works, the Sports Commission has always been a powerful influence on the narration of athletes in their works, and they convey information about the value and nature of sports to athletes. Although such a role rarely enters the center of narrative theater, its role cannot be ignored in the reportage. Lu Yunting once described such existence as the leader of a coming-of-age ceremony in the sports circle. They (the State Sports Commission) expressed the cruelty of competitive sports through war terms in sports training, thus constructing the subjectivity of athletes in the game. Both of them contain an element of mutual harm. Both can hurt each other to varying degrees, and they can also exorcise their own feelings^[14] of hurt. In this context, Seoul's defeat went beyond sport itself to a kind of defeat in a national war that brought back the nation's sense of value to an era of humiliation. Zhao Yu sees the National Sports Commission as a metaphor. In the fourth chapter of the War against Seoul, the interview with Zhang Chae-jin makes the signifier of the National Sports Commission, which was originally a mobilization institution of national will, turn to the signifier of concrete life. In the beginning of the chapter, Zhao Yu initially described Zhang Caizhen's life path as a grand novel, focusing on a specific person instead of the grand momentum of the place where the National Sports Commission is located, and embellishing the past narrative hidden by the narrative object Zhang Caizhen in a crude way. To make this person's life experience more three-dimensional in the grand narrative contained by the National Sports Commission, and touch the truth once again. Then Zhao Yu restores the dialogue scene through her own language style. This time, Zhao Chae-jin's attitude toward the defeat in Seoul begins to reveal the language paradigm of her organization. She believes that such a defeat "loses morale" and "loses morale". Here, Zhao Yu's restoration of the interview makes Zhang Caizhen's characters return from their own rich story characteristics to the National Sports Commission, the big other, and his words and slogans become their own words. When the subject is questioned by the greater other in society, the "square of the circle" of the inquiry cannot automatically and without residue produce the subjectification form and realize the subject's imagine-symbol identification^[15]. At the end of the fourth chapter, when finishing the interview, Zhao Yu saw a peacock feather on the bookcase in Zhang Caizhen's office, and then gave a self-monologue -- "All women love beauty." The marginalization of the peacock feather's perception of the heterogeneity of women who love beauty in the paradigm of the National Sports Commission is also a metaphor for the re-examination of the paradigm of sports in the new era.

Li Liyan once said in "Savage Civilization" that "failure, even if it is only a sports failure, means that the deep psychological scars^[16] are touched." It can be seen that the failure of sports in the international arena is a blow to the national spirit and a wake up to the modern history of humiliation. However, since the new era, the function of sports in Chinese society has undergone a powerful change. In the past, the "nation-state" sports narrative could not control the definition of modern sports. For sports, the meaning of "nation-state" standard needs to be more inclusive of individual understanding. Since the founding of the People's Republic of China, China's sports cause has been bearing the great responsibility of the nation and the state. The promotion of the national spirit and the honor of the country constitute the main clues of sports narrative. As for the fans, management departments and other elements, because they cannot directly participate in the presence of competitive games, they become a kind of fringe. This kind of edge makes sports reportage become a single-dimensional eulogize, but it is ruthlessly ignored for the individual outside the stadium. Zhao Yu observes and excavates this edge, and this marginal narrative dimension makes the "reportiness" of revealing problems perfectly merge with the "literariness" of language art. The marginal narrative object is also a clear reflection on the sports thinking that the gold medal is supreme in the society. In the trilogy, the War in Seoul looks like an inquiry into the competitive purpose of sports in the international arena, which is a reflection on the previous narration of "champion literature". In this inquiry and reflection, the diversity of sports value in life dimension is reflected, and

the concern for humanity constitutes the main aspect of this value. Away from human development, there is no meaning ^[17]to get ten thousand gold MEDALS. Zhao Yu uses marginal objects to highlight the missing humanism in sports, and the humanism of sports is also expressed by the literary spirit under the new historicism, thus establishing a two-way connection between sports and literature.

3. Marginal Narrative Theme

In the narrative theme of the China Sports Trilogy, the return to the trivial details of daily life is regarded as a new way of narration. To some extent, the daily life of the narrated objects is still related to social history. "Daily life is resorted to allegorical form and thus has symbolic significance"^[18]. Zhao Yu's use of narrative themes is precisely the use of such "daily triviality". In the first book, *The Dream of a Powerful Country*, a chapter named *Mother and Son* is worth noting. Zhao Yu reveals the problems of physical education at that time from the perspective of a mother. The author gives special details about the mother here, the mother is the wife of a football coach. It also has a certain symbolic significance behind. The mother is neither an athlete nor a coach. In terms of narrative theme, the identity of "mother" indirectly reflects Zhao Yu's marginalization in narrative theme in sports reportage. The linguistic characteristics of reportage are first reflected in its credibility, that is, adhering to the principle ^[19]of authenticity. Zhao Yu tells sports from the perspective of a mother, which changes the one-dimensional narrative theme of sports reportage, which only tells about the game, and restores a multi-dimensional sports with elements such as kinship and blood. Such marginal narrative theme is also in line with the narrative style of Chinese literature history in the same period. After 1978, there appeared a tendency in the narrative theme of literature, "that is, the re-narration of family affection and the rethinking ^[20]of the relationship between blood and class." Many works with this theme came into being, such as *Scars*, *The Wall*, *Grandma's Star* and so on. But for sports reportage, such themes seem marginal. In the narrative theme, Zhao Yu does not describe the competition and athletes, but tells the story of the mother who is not a fan outside the stadium. It is not difficult to see that Zhao Yu wants to change the perspective of the sports grand narrative represented by the sports reportage in the past with such a marginal theme. Taking the marginal theme of blood as the starting point to examine the nature of sports, once again traces the meaning of sports, which gives this marginal narrative theme more philosophical interrogation. Just like the title "*Dream of a powerful country*", it can be seen as the above pursuit of transcendence, but also as a gap with the goal.

Chinese new historicism is different from Western new historicism, the Western "new" is methodological, aiming to restore a historical dimension, while the Chinese new lies in the value orientation. They try to establish a narrative mode^[21] against a single historical exposition. It can be seen that Zhao Yu uses "blood and kinship" to re-understand the single exposition of sports in the reportage. Judging from the various answers on the origin or essential value of sports in the academic circle, Zhao Yu's reunderstanding is undoubtedly effective, and the relationship between sports and people has also been expanded. In competitive sports, pure instrumental rationality has alienated the subjective status of people, which brings a series of hidden social problems. And the symbol represented by "mother" is to reconfirm the subjectivity status in sports, to define the absolute subject of people in sports with the ethical subject of the family, and then to present the social issues in text. On the surface, the use of "mother" to reveal the social problems existing in the sports circle essentially diversifies the historical narrative of Chinese sports, deriving from the text dimension to the social dimension. This marginal narrative subject enriches the discourse world of sports reportage and makes the meaning of sports itself more open.

4. Marginal Narrative Strategy

Different from the irony of sports nationalism in *Dream of a Powerful Nation* and the reflection on the loss of victory in *The War of Han City*, Zhao Yu used a unique technique in the narrative strategy of the third book, *Ma Jiajun Investigation*, synecdoche. According to Hayden White, an American scholar, the essence of historical text is a fictional poetic language. In terms of its meaning, it is based on four rhetorical ways: metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche and allegory, which is a typical new historicism narrative strategy. Among them, synecdoche is a comprehensive way to look at the relationship between the object and the whole, "the whole is essentially different from the sum of parts narrative structure. This makes the film more clearly show that the narrative strategy of *Ma Jiajun Survey* is different from that of the previous two parts with concerns and feelings. This time, it begins to make a marginal statement, connecting the sports narrative of people and countries. *Ma Jiajun's story* should have been regarded as

the second champion narrative in the reportage after Lu Guang's female athletes, but Zhao Yu chose another path in the narrative strategy, that is, to give an in-depth brief description of Ma Junren, the "champion coach", and to re-elaborate the conventional champion narrative. "It is not only the investigation of Ma Jiajun, but also the" investigation "of the management mechanism and talent training mechanism of Chinese sports, the" investigation "of the deep structure of Chinese culture, and the investigation of life and human^[22] nature that cannot but make everyone think deeply. Different from the previous discourse that emphasized the priority of the country and the nation, Zhao Yu's narrative strategy in "Ma Jiajun Investigation" is marginal. He attaches more importance to the authenticity of Ma Junren, rather than blindly advocating the honor on the field.

Although Zhao Yu did not aim to negate the Maja Army, he used "heaven, earth and man" as the headers of the three parts of the "Maja Army" Investigation respectively. In his opinion, these three elements with traditional culture can exactly restore the authenticity of "Maja Army" and Ma Junren. However, it is not difficult to see that Zhao Yu wants to cut into Ma Junren with the title of champion as a typical model, in this incision to show the real picture of the current situation of sports, to perspective and touch the problems that Chinese sports need to face. This synecdoche strategy of "small incision, big depth" also shows a kind of writer's rationality. After witnessing the national passion brought by numerous championship narratives, what Chinese sports reportage needs is a kind of national rationality.

5. Conclusion

The writer's thoughts will give the main content of the narrative of the work. The problem of sports is solved by the concern for society. Such concern is the emergence of patriotic enthusiasm of Chinese intellectuals in history. Since the May Fourth Period, the unity of literature and journalism has enabled Chinese intellectuals to criticize and reflect on the tradition and analyze social problems with an independent character, which reflects a recognition of the social ontology. The writers of sports reportage have inherited this spirit, placed themselves within the social paradigm, and expressed their good wishes for social development. Through Zhao Yu, Liu Xinwu and other writers' interpretation of the defeated Seoul Asian Games, the investigation of the coach Ma Junren, and the riot incident in the stadium from the multi-dimensional perspective of sports, and the multi-dimensional vision of sports reportage writers' sense of mission for the concern of Chinese sports society, sports as a public social topic.

With the influence of the theory of new historicism, sports reportage writer Zhao Yu carried out a marginal narrative, which was embodied by the narrative object, narrative theme and narrative strategy in her work *China Sports Trilogy*. Through this marginal narrative, the overall characteristics of sports began to be revealed, and the possibility of the development of sports in literature also increased. For a literary work, the marginal narrative sublimates the artistry of the work with the authenticity of the other side, which fully reflects the richness of the element of "telling Chinese sports stories well".

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