

From Lu Town and Wei Zhuang of Inferiority to Wali Town of Misery -- on the Acceptance Theory of Xun Lu's Rural Novels by the Ancient Ship from the Perspective of Time and Space

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Abstract: Villages and towns are unique cultural spaces in Chinese society, carrying specific cultural and power structure. Wei Zhang's description of the countryside accepted the rural factors in Xun Lu's novels and put forward new changes under the background of economic reform and urbanization in the new era. This paper firstly presents the folklore and ancient metaphors in Lu Town - Wei Zhuang and Wali Town from the spatial perspective and discusses the characters and their traits nurtured in the towns. In the second part, the tensions between the roles of the squire and the underclass, the basic power and the clan power, and the male power and the female power are analyzed in the context of the power structure of the countryside. There are also comparisons between the images and fates of characters portrayed by Lu and by Zhang. The third section focuses on the individuals' contradictory mentality in the process of urbanization. Through *The Ancient Ship*, Zhang criticizes the remaining brutality of the countryside and points out its future through suffering and confusion. By comparing the writings on the countryside of Lu and Zhang from a spatial and temporal context, we can learn about social changes in different times and the writers' thoughts on the humanity in different political settings.

Keywords: Wei Zhang, *The Ancient Ship*, Xun Lu's novels, rural society, Theory of Acceptance, urbanization

1. Introduction

In recent three decades, academic research conducted by Chinese scholars on Wei Zhang's full-length novel *The Ancient Ship* has mainly focused on the following aspects.

Firstly, the novel looks back upon the suffering of nationhood from a macro perspective of New Historicism. According to Baoyun Chen, it breaks through the limitations of his conceptions and steps out of his thinking and Chen considers it a kind of transcendence as the writer depicted "suffering" in an unconventional way. Haibo Zhou, Shuyuan Lu, and Zifu Liu have all commented on *The Ancient Ship* from the perspective of history and realism. The article *The Historical Consciousness of The Ancient Ship* (Reading, No. 6, 1987) by Zheng Wang and Xiaohua points to an extremely important spiritual dimension, namely, the strong "historical consciousness" in the novel. Based on them, what the main characters think about are not only the people involved and changes that are closely related to their immediate future, but also the longer and broader life, and the reality today, and the misfortune of our ancestors. They also put forward that even if merely looking at the time span, we can strongly feel that Zhang created a rather conscious historical awareness in the early stage. Unlike the above single dimension, Shuyuan Lu's *From the Abyss to the Peak: A Review of The Ancient Ship* (Contemporary Writers' Review, No. 2, 1988) focuses on the "conflict of life," "cultural fault" and "artistic realm" in a comprehensive way. Lijun Zhang's *The Ancient Ship: The Heavenly Question of Historical Evil and Spiritual Redemption in China's Hundred-Year Rural* (Southern Literary Forum, No. 1, 2019), on the other hand, presents the suffering of the land reform in the Wali Town and the redeemer Baopu Sui from four aspects, providing a comprehensive analysis of the history, humanity, and suffering shown in *The Ancient Ship*.

Secondly, the world of individual existence is analyzed from the perspective of characterization. In *True Life, Complete Humanity--Characters of The Ancient Ship* (Contemporary Writers' Review, No. 2, 1987), Song Suiliang, who expresses affirmation on the characterization, reveals the unique spiritual

structure and narrative characteristics of *The Ancient Ship* by analyzing the inherent uniqueness of the characters. He linked the characters to the reformation of the time when “the wind was hanging by a sail”, thus giving them a deep relevance and a profound sense of history. However, merely discussing *The Ancient Ship* in terms of clans and individuals is far from enough. The author believes that the characters in the novel should be understood holistically from the rural Chinese cultural system, that is, they should be integrated into the ethical and cultural system of Wali Town for a rural Chinese interpretation, rather than from the theory of modernity or family literary history.

Lastly, there is research from multiple perspectives and cross-disciplinary studies. In the mid-1980s, the monolithic development of Chinese literature began to disintegrate, presenting a new trend, so many articles reviewing Zhang's *The Ancient Ship* from new perspectives and methods emerged. Articles adopt a comparative theory include *Overlooking and Engaging with a Comparative view of The Ancient Ship and Floating*” (Contemporary Writers' Review, No. 1, 1988), *Non-mainstream Reform Novels in the Golden Age--A Comparative Study of The Ancient Ship and The Ordinary World and its revelations on writing* (Contemporary Writers' Review, No. 4, 2018), and *From The Ancient Ship to Family – Wei Zhang's Realism Exploration and Its Significance* (Journal of Shenyang Normal College (Social Science Edition), No. 4, 1997), *On the New Change in the Creation of Wei Zhang's Novel Wandering Narrative - From The Ancient Ship to The Secret History of Aiyoburg; The Humanism of Baopu Sui and the Overall Implications of The Ancient Ship: A Discussion of the Shortcomings of The Ancient Ship and a Reply to Comrade Peng Ding's “Debate”* (Zengyu Cao, in Fiction Review, No. 4, 1988); the rest of the research on thematology, linguistics, and narratology, such as *The Statue of Thought: On the Thematic Structure of The Ancient Ship* (Qiang Luo, in Literary Review, No. 1, 18) and *Analysis of the Narrative Form of The Ancient Ship* (Ki-Liang, Novel Review, No. 5, 1989).

In summary, the author finds that most of the comparative theories are developed with the comparison between Wei Zhang and other writers of the same period and the genealogical flow of Zhang's works as a beginning. The focuses are mainly on family, rural, wandering, underclass and women, with some showing criticism based on relevant western theories. However, few studies give attention to the rural novels during the May Fourth Period in China and to be more specific, to Wei Zhang's *The Ancient Ship*. Considering Zhang's experience and the books he read, the profound influence of Xun Lu on him should not be ignored. As the founder of “rural literature” in modern Chinese literature, Lu's creative spirit and fighting personality of national transformation influenced Zhang's rural novels, and it can be said that Lu was Zhang's early mentor on critical writing. Zhang read Lu's novels with his soul and created works including *Learning Xun Lu Again, Forever Xun Lu and Thinking of Xun Lu's Novels Again*. In *Reading Xun Lu's Novel at night*, he said, “Mr. Lu has influenced me more than almost any Chinese writer. He never compromised and never yielded.” “He always insisted on the spirit of independent intellectual judgment, never followed the clouds, and never succumbed to money and power. He has always been a resilient resister and a sober warrior, against the sources of pressure that can cause widespread and powerful pressure in any era.” [1] Zhang agrees with Lu's use of the pen as a weapon to expose the ugly and suffering society, and in *The Ancient Ship* he also follows the style of writing about countryside pioneered by Xun Lu, examining various sufferings and contradictions of the countryside with a critical eye.

In the comparative study of the works of Xun Lu and Wei Zhang, Jipeng Wang's monographs *A Comparative Study of Xun Lu and Chinese Literature* (Jilin People's Publishing House, 2002) and *A Trial Analysis of the Xun Lu Factor in Wei Zhang's Novels* (Journal of Ningbo Vocational Technology College, No. 4, 2008) are among the few articles analyzing the similarities between Zhang's novels and Lu's works. The latter article draws on the similarities between the two writers' ideological characters, starting from the intellectuals' attitudes toward life through women's trauma, spiritual and cultural connotations, and battles. However, the thesis is a broad interpretation in a broad context, mainly looking for similarities at the spiritual level, without a detailed analysis of the similarities in the rural spatial environment and character construction, and there is a lack of comparison based on any novel of Zhang.

Therefore, this paper attempts to analyze the acceptance of Xun Lu's rural novel factor in Wei Zhang's *The Ancient Ship* through careful reading. The purposes are to study the connections between the rural literature of the May Fourth Period and that of the 1980s in China, to look for the similarities of the writers and the situation then based on the connections, and through their differences, to look into the problems at different evolution stages of the genealogy of rural literature. Both novels set the stories in villages and towns. What themes are implied in this spatial scene and what are the hidden characters and events? What exactly is the relationship between a specific locale, the writing style, and the characters? When such spatial scenes are described in almost identical cultural forms by modern writers, does it mean that a unique cultural space is being generated? How do different characters get along with each

other under the rural power structure? How did the city interfere with the rural during the modernization in the 1980s? How do the characters in the spatial structure respond, examine, and criticize? How did the cultural character of the rural space and the spirits of its inhabitants change when modern China is moving towards modernization? Based on the above questions, this paper explores the spiritual connotation of the two writers' works and the different contexts of the times.

2. Lu Town and Wali Town from Spatial Perspective

Both *The Ancient Ship* and Xun Lu's rural novels are set in small towns, and both focus on the spiritual world and pursuits of the local residents. This chapter tries to present the spiritual connotation behind the small towns.

The small-town scenes in modern literature not only reflect the small-town culture which has been hit hard in modern China, but also record the cultural and psychological changes of small-town people including modern writers. The scenes of small towns integrate the writers' reflections on the real rural society, making the towns a space that carries the writers' historical and cultural consciousness. Both Zhang and Lu absorb the literary scenes with a historical perspective and describe their feelings about the evolution of rural culture during the period of social transformation. Through the study of the unique spatial imagery of the town and the group image of its inhabitants, this paper examines the literary and cultural value of such unique cultural spaces, reflects the writers' historical and cultural consciousness, aesthetic style, and critical discourse, and explores the possibility of literary expression of the relationship between the countryside and people from a spatial perspective.

2.1. Lu Town - Weizhuang: The snobbish world where Xianglin's wife and Ah Q live

Lu Town, depicted by Xun Lu, is a water town in the south of the Yangtze River, with special local food and social drama reflecting a strong regional style of eastern Zhejiang Province. At first glance, it seems that Lu is purely listing the folk customs. However, it is in such detailed descriptions of the complicated folklore of Lu Town and Wei Zhuang that Xun Lu gives deeper thoughts and expression to the life patterns of the small town. Lu alludes to the culture of human relations and the ceremony of sacrifice held annually at the end of a year in Lu Town, implying that Xianglin's wife is one of the offerings to their ancestors. She complies with the duty of a wife but cannot get rid of her image of infidelity. Because of this, she is not allowed to participate in the "well-wishes" sacrifice ceremony and thus suffers from the mental torture and dies eventually. The sacrifice is not only a ritual for ancestors, but also a process of enlightenment and correction for the "wrong kind" who betray human morality. The tragedy is caused by the cultural space of Lu Town where ancient customs are maintained. These folk customs, as the embodiment of tradition in daily life, inevitably have opposing relations with modernity. Lu's descriptions of folk customs learn from the folklore itself, expressing the pursuit of modernity but being trapped by folklore, showing that it is difficult to get out of the fence of tradition.

Xun Lu uses a lot of bleak language in the space depiction of the town, presenting a sense of decline and pessimism. Such pessimism is not about the so-called "revolutionary future" but about the fate and future of the "ancient country". In Lu's early writings, he creatively uses such pessimistic concepts as "ancient country" and "ancient civilization". The pride of long history and ancient civilizations is reflected in Lu's concern for the decline and destruction of ancient nations based on the concepts of history and evolution. In *On the Demonic Poets*, Lu expressed concern about the destruction of ancient countries, "people have to read the cultural history of ancient countries, following the generations, to the end of the volume, will be miserable to feel, such as spring temperature and into the autumn, hook Meng extinct me, withered in front, I have no name, and leads to destruction." [2] The ancient countries here mainly refer to ancient India, Hebrew nations, and ancient Egypt, and China was unlucky to escape the fate of destruction. But the potential of decline and even extinction is still hanging over China. If China makes no efforts to change and "if China is still immersed in its past success, then there will probably be an unpromising future". This is Lu's concern for China, an ancient country that has survived but still faces internal and external troubles and he warns people of the pessimism. From the above analysis and quotations, we can conclude that the reason why Lu names the place in *Ah Q* "Wei Zhuang" is to suggest the decadent "ancient country", as "Wei" can be also interpreted as "the end" in Chinese.

In Chinese, "Wei Zhuang" is a homonym of "disguise", which implies that this is a decaying empire that looks shiny on the outside but has been eroded from the inside. The debate between "Wei" (未) and "Mo" (末), two Chinese characters that are similar in pattern but with opposing meanings (i.e. "Wei" means "not yet" and "Mo" "the end"), first appeared in the study of *Dream of the Red Chamber* [3], where

Xueqin Cao wrote in the first episode that the phrase “I have not learned” is misinterpreted by some as “I have learned at the end”. “Weixue” is from *The Analects of Confucius*, which means “lacking knowledge in a certain aspect”, “not having learned”, or “not having learned much”, mostly used for self-effacement. The term “Moxue” was first used in *Zhuangzi - Waiyang - Tiandao*, referring to the “last stream of learning” as opposed to the “fundamental learning”. Later, the meaning has developed to be “the river is going down”, and it was used as a term of self-effacement in addition to modesty, so it was used as a term of self-effacement as well as criticism and attack. The author of this paper agrees with researchers who regard “Wei Zhuang” as a caricature of “Mo Zhuang”. The profound meaning of this name is in line with Lu's analysis of the national character in this location. “Wei Zhuang” is actually a metaphor for the declining rural society and the country. For why Lu does not name it “Mo Zhuang”, there are two reasons. First, in the political environment of the time, Lu's direct reference to “Mo Zhuang” may cause unnecessary troubles. Second, Xun Lu's deliberate ambiguity can also lead to diverse interpretations and on the other hand, reduce the absoluteness of his views and pessimism. For Xun Lu, he is not sure that the pessimistic and despair feelings are real. From the analysis of the name “Wei Zhuang”, we can see more clearly the inferiority of Ah Q, namely, the illness of the “ancient country” that Lu wants to reveal. But he is also confused about who is the real madman and whether the era he lives in is desperate or hopeful. Just as he wrote in *Wild Grass - Hope*, “Despair is the same as hope.” [4]

2.2. Wali Town: The Blood of Rural Ethical Culture

Different from Jiangnan water town where Xun Lu lived, Wei Zhang was born and lived in the ancient “Qiyi” land and has been deeply influenced by the culture of Qi and Lu in Shandong Province. This culture is reflected in Zhang's works through the depiction of the landscapes, life scenes, and stories of people, as well as the sentimental and generous spirit of benevolence and righteousness, the sense of hardship, and the life attitudes. It is a kind of Confucian culture with the thought of helping the world.

Different from a focus on the folk customs in Lu Town, Wei Zhang writes more about people's life. Mrs. Zhangwang [5] is a typical inheritor of folk arts and crafts. She can make mud tiger and wild sugar, set bones, do massage, tell fortune, and read the face. Her skills are vividly depicted in the novel. What is more, she is also a senior cook with a seasoning technique that is popular among people. “Crouch by the pot and throw in fennel, scallion, coriander, beans, peanuts, garlic cloves, cucumbers, chicken feet, pigskin, orange peels, chopped apples and pears, and peppers... about twenty ingredients in total.” According to the legend, once when she is putting these ingredients in, a big green grasshopper hopped by the side is grabbed and thrown into the pot by her without hesitation. “[6] Such characters make the novel's space environment lively and unique with a sense of “wildness”. This to a great extent relieves the dullness and stagnation from politics and reality. Yun Guo, a doctor of traditional Chinese medicine, also has a strong nature of local Chinese folk culture, especially when reading books by the “Qi” method, which seems absurd but is actually unique in Chinese culture.

Wali Town in *The Ancient Ship* truly reproduces the distortion of human nature in that special era and the changes of that land under the impact of the reform tide. *The Ancient Ship* and the ancient Laizi Kingdom reflect China at that time. *The Ancient Ship* shows its unique perspective by beginning with the history and spiritual representation of the ancient Laizi Kingdom. Xuantong Li's “Lecture on Ancient Times” and the “Ocean Discourse” quoted from *Hai Dao Zhen Jing* later by Sui Dynasty are both ancient language codes mixed with rich cultural information in a country of confusion, which constitutes the oldest and freshest bipolar discourse with contemporary scientific and technological terminologies like “contemporary missile technology”, “Star Wars” and “infrared remote sensing” by Technician Li of mining team after the reform and opening up. The river in Wali Town is gradually shallow, and the ancient boats excavated are burned as firewood by ignorant people, which represents the decline of traditional culture. Zhichang Li's invention and application of electric light and engine, the opening of Su Waki store, and the discovery of the Underground River and coal witnessed the impact and innovation of the influx of new culture on traditional culture. Zhang's *The Ancient Ship* interprets the reality of contemporary society in the changes of times and historical development from another level, interspersed with words about land reform, the Great Leap Forward, and the Cultural Revolution. These discourses of different times, different cultural backgrounds and different spiritual codes are intertwined and presented together in the spiritual world of a generation with Baopu Sui as a representative, constituting the internal conflict and tension of language, culture, and thought, which is an example of the acceptance of Lu's local novels in different historical backgrounds.

The patriarchal family system and rural ethics still influence people, as Buzhao Sui finds that “for most of the time, both young and senior people from the same clan get together, most of which are from Sui, Zhao, and Li families. No one gets them together, it was all about the power of the land.”[7] This

shows that in rural China represented by Wali Town for thousands of years, the spirit and emotion of farmers are still connected with the ethical culture of the patriarchal family in rural China. Behind the emotional psychology and behavioral logic of every farmer in the Town are deep-rooted family status and emotional affiliation.

What Wei Zhang and Xun Lu see are not evil persons, but the soil that breeds infinite suffering behind the villains. Both the evil of Bing Zhao and Duoduo Zhao and that of the Returned Villagers have connections with a type of cultural soil and a specific political climate of the times, and they are all supported by the patriarchal system of some families behind them. Based on this, Zhang's main character is neither a hero who punishes evil and promotes good, nor a radical critic, but an epitome of the bitter reality. Baopu Sui "does not hate any person but the misery and cruelty of life." [8] From reading *The Heavenly Questions* to *The Communist Manifesto* late at night, to reflect on the different paths of his father, his uncle, Bing Zhao, and Jiansu, Sui gradually finds a new path of redemption different from the past vengeful and circular paths. This new path is no longer the Hamlet-like hesitation, the lonely resistance of the "Byronic hero," and the "superfluous man" of Russia. It is no longer the fantasy of the Russian "superfluous man", nor the alienated rebellion of Ah Q-type Madman, but a mission to revitalize the vermicelli factory in Wali town and realize the road to collective prosperity. This is a kind of Chinese "great love" based on the local ethical culture and Confucian benevolence and righteousness.

3. Role Tension under Rural Power Structures

"Tension" originated from the field of poetics. It was put forward by the American new critical theorist Alan Tweeter in his book *On Poetic Tension* in 1937. [9] As far as literary works are concerned, behind the emergence of a successful text, there are often one or more tensions that are opposite but related to each other. They wander in the state of confrontation, comparison, and contrast of characters, bringing readers a comprehensive and three-dimensional intuitive impact feeling. From this point of view, *The Ancient Ship* is characterized by the tension writing of the characterization and the fierce collision of different roles' fates, which shows the author's profound reflection on social reality and complex humanity.

3.1. Squire "eat" people at the bottom of society: the bullying landlords and the humble low-class

3.1.1. The sources of Squire's Authority

The word "squire" refers to a class that occupies a certain position and plays a certain function in traditional Chinese society. The so-called "traditional society" refers to the imperial period when centralized power dominated the world after the disintegration of feudal system near the 3rd Century B.C. [10] The squire is generally composed of retired bureaucrats or their relatives, as well as educated landlords, but they are not the bureaucrats in offices. In the novel *Divorce*, Musan Zhuang and Ai Gu's father and daughter go to Master Wei's house to ask for a solution to the marriage dispute of Ai Gu. Then why should Ai Gu's marriage dispute be settled by Master Wei and the seventh master? What are their identities? It can be seen from the novel that although the seventh master is very authoritative, he is not an "official". Although he changes the post with the county magistrate, which is somewhat equal, it also shows that he does not belong to the bureaucratic system, and he does not hold formal power. Then why was he able to decide the marriage dispute of Ai Gu? This is because in the rural power structure, they do not protect their rights and interests by occupying political power, but they put forward a set of ethical norms to limit the power of political power.

The authority of the squire should first be sanctioned by his superiors. Xiaotong Fei's *Chinese Squire* Holds that there is a dual-track politics in traditional society, and its power system is composed of top-down imperial power and bottom-up squire power. Therefore, although scholars and officials (in feudal China) are at the bottom of the ruling class, they still hold the real and authoritative political power endowed by the emperors. [11]

In addition to the authority granted by the superiors, the main foundation of the squire's power lies in the "politics of elders" [12] and the trust of the villagers, who are highly respected and knowledgeable. The first thing that the squire had to do was to obtain a scholarly reputation, which was the foundation of the squire's leadership in the rural society and the primary characteristic that distinguish them from other villagers. On the one hand, it provides them with the necessary knowledge and ability to deal with local disputes and maintain order in the villages. On the other hand, the achievements of squires require passing the imperial examination, which is the recognition of the imperial power and the certification of

national legitimacy. The combination of imperial power and squire power well builds up the management structure and ideological coherence of the grassroots units. In *Divorce*, Ai Gu believes that the knowledgeable the seventh master understands what he is doing. [13] She does not seek out the seventh master in the lawsuit because of his power to enforce violence, but because she believes that he is fair and will not favor the Shi family by accepting their food and drink. The seventh lord Zhao in *The Storm* mediated the village dispute with a copy of *The Three Kingdoms*. "The seventh lord Zhao was the owner of the neighboring village Maoyuan Hotel and the only outstanding person and learned man within this thirty-mile radius; and being knowledgeable, he has some of the stench of adherent of a former dynasty." [14]

At the same time, "old" is a typical feature of traditional squires and a cultural metaphor of ancient and decadent China. In *Changming Light*, "Sitting at the head of the table is Laowa Guo whose face has been wrinkled like a dried orange, but also stroked the white beard on the chin as if to pull them off". [15] The description of The seventh master in *Divorce*, "The first time I saw the person, I know he must be The seventh master. He is clumpy but much taller than Master Wei. With thin eyes and a dark beard, he has a large round face. His head is bald, but the brain and face are very rosy and shiny." [16] The old and rich appearance of the seventh master is vividly depicted. In *The Ancient Ship*, Duoduo Zhao's stomach "is so full that seems to be swelling. His face was full of cross flesh with white bread, and there are some strange purple spots on both cheeks. [17]

The authority of the squire is also related to feudal superstition and religious authority. In *Divorce*, *The seventh master* seen in the eyes of Aigoo's father and daughter is the first of all playing with a "fart plug" [18] old and rich appearance, complemented by the hand playing with a fart plug, together with outlining an old but meaningful image. "All at once, *The seventh master* rolls his eyes upward with round faces lifted, making a tall and swaying sound from the long and thin bearded mouth. 'Com-ming!' The seventh mastershouts". [19] This word embodies the power and knowledge of classic Chinese, together with the "fart plug" in his hand, it forms a different cultural height from that of Ai Gu and other villagers. In *Changming Light* (*Changming* means everlasting in Chinese), Laolwa Guo and other squiremen predicted the destruction of Jiguang Village when they argue against putting out the everlasting light, and moreover, the light was lit at the time of Emperor Wu of Liang Kingdom so putting it out would be a great disrespect to the ancestors. These words scare the people back. In *The Ancient Ship*, the fourth grandfather, Bing Zhao was praised for his ability to "predict" earthquakes: "The fourth grandfather has become a god that controls the sky and the earth!" [20]

3.1.2. The writing of "Cannibalism"

The narrative poetics of "cannibalism" plays a pivotal role in Xun Lu's fiction, most directly in his *Diary of a Madman* where he writes: "When I looked into the history, I found that it was not dated, and every page was written with the words 'benevolence, righteousness, and morality. I couldn't sleep. I read carefully for long hours before seeing the word through the seam. I see that the whole page is full of the word - 'cannibalism'!" [21] Master Lusi and other country squires naturally become cultural symbols of "benevolence and morality" and "cannibalism". Through the activities of each squire in the rural world, Xun Lu "intended to expose the disadvantages of the family system and rituals," ultimately achieving the purpose of national criticism.

"Cannibalism" has long been recorded in the history of Chinese literature. In his novel *Diary of a Madman*, Xun Lu also borrows the examples from ancient history books, such as "exchange children for food". From Lu's remarks on the motivation of *Diary of a Madman*, Zhantao Guo acutely captures the connection between his "cannibalism" narrative and Taoism and *History as A Mirror*, from which he believes the word "cannibalism" comes from. [22] In addition, Lu's "cannibalism" writing may also have been influenced by ancient Japanese narratives. In the eyes of Japanese scholar Dongmu Li, "*Diary of a Madman*" is borrowing and imitation of "cannibalism" in the Meiji period. [23] However, the author believes that this is slightly biased, because "cannibalism" is not a uniquely Japanese writing tradition and the themes and images of "cannibalism" are often mentioned in ancient and modern Chinese writing.

The author believes that Xun Lu's "cannibalism" has four meanings of "flesh and spirit".

The first meaning is that "human flesh" is eaten, and the objects of consumption are specifically divided into human flesh and blood. The initiators of "cannibalism" are divided into animals and humans. In the novel *Well-wishes*, the son of Xianglin's wife Ah Mao is carried away by a wolf; there are also writings about people drinking human blood, such as *Medicine*, in which Xiaobong Hua eats human blood steamed buns made from the blood of revolutionary Yu Xia. In *Diary of a Madman*, the novel first wrote about "cannibalism" in the third section, i.e., "a big villain in Wolf Village was killed by villagers, and several people dug out his heart and liver and fried them to eat."

The second meaning is the devouring of the human spirit. The madman has the illusion that his relatives are going to eat him, and the “soul” of Xianglin’s wife and others is stripped and devoured in the rumors of the other half-gods and half-ghosts.

The third implication is the long-standing cruel mentality of Chinese feudal society. It is from the wolf village eating the “wicked” that the madman once again becomes more conscious of the fact that “history” eats people in the name of “benevolence and morality”, and he curses and criticizes such cannibalism. It is from the fact that he was eaten and that the “wolf village” ate the “wicked” that the madman awakens. The elder brother in *Diary of a Madman* is a typical image of a squire: As the head of the family, he is in charge of the household affairs. As a feudal landlord, he is in charge of the food and clothing of the tenants in the countryside. The madman’s crazy words reveal that the elder brother said that he could “eat his son with ease” and that he believed that the bad guys “should not only be killed, but also eat the flesh and sleep on the skin”. “He was not surprised to learn that the village was eating hearts and livers. In the face of the tenants’ request for rent reduction, he flatly refused. Xun Lu also emphasizes the image of Big Brother as the “representative of the feudal family system”. The fact that the elder brother had taught the madman the feudal filial piety of “cutting off the bones to heal the relatives” and instructed the servants to confine the madman like a chicken and a duck, and that the sister died while the elder brother was in charge of the household affairs, proves that “when he reasoned, not only did he have human oil on his lips, but his heart was full of the meaning of cannibalism. “[24]The tangible object of “cannibalism” as the elder brother completely exposes the cannibalistic nature of the invisible family system and rituals. In addition to repeating some of the means of subduing the “wicked” as described by “Big Brother” and criticizing the cruel mentality of “cannibalism” in reality and history [25], the main story is about Dr. Ho’s visit to the doctor. In addition, we mainly write about the scene of Dr. He’s medical treatment and the association of the ancestor of Chinese medicine with “cannibalism”. These two sections have two main functions in the novel: the first is to render the fear of being eaten through the hallucination of the “madman”, and the second is to criticize the phenomenon of “cannibalism” in which the quack doctors eat people.

The fourth meaning is environmental cannibalism, where the “power of numbers” is arguably the most important means of creating a hostile, indifferent, and depressing environment. In “Diary of a Madman”, the hallucinations and “madness” of the madman seem irrational, but in fact they are quite consistent with the reality of the situation. This environment is created by the power of numbers, the “talking” of “talking” everywhere. Its beauty lies in the fact that it is in between the improbable, both to make the opponent feel indifferent and oppressive, but not directly to “you”, so that you want to “fight” or vent and can not find an opponent. With this “cross talk” of the way corresponding to the “expression”, rather than “language” has become the most important means of showing hostility, creating indifference. Such expressions include “eyes”, “face”, “sneer”, “laughter”, and “smile without laughing”. The madman in “Wei Zhuang” is confronted with a fearful and depressing environment “created” by people in this way.

3.1.3. Non-conceptualized bully landlords

Xun Lu’s rural novels involve conflicts of interests between landlords and farmers, but because the landlords in his works do not have the status of grass-roots bureaucrats, they do not collude with the government to form a community of interests. During the Republic of China, the inferiority of gentlemen became a serious social problem. Gentlemen become the minions of officials and warlords, or exploit and oppress the people for their ability. Gentlemen tend to degenerate and ruin the body of local society. Although this has something to do with gentlemen themselves, it is more the result of the deterioration of social ecology. Local tyrants and evil squire naturally existed throughout the ages, but the local tyrants and evil squire became a powerful social group, which was a deformed product in the specific historical environment of the Republic of China.

Although the bullies in Xun Lu’s writing have a disgusting side, their “viciousness” and “domineering” are within certain limits. For example, in Xun Lu’s “The True Story of Ah Q”, Master Zhao is indeed overbearing. When he heard that Ah Q claimed his surname was Zhao, his own family summoned him, reached out and beat him on the mouth, forbidding him to be surnamed Zhao again. However, Mr. Zhao’s “evil” did not go so far as to be a blatant hooligan, he did not rob the people’s daughters, forcibly seize the property of the poor. Zhao’s father and son had no administrative positions in Weizhuang, and the Zhao family was not seen to have close ties with the government. When the revolution was in full swing and the future was uncertain, Mr. Zhao was actually fearful of Q and respected him as “Old Q”. Xun Lu’s rural novels also highlight the low-profile or miserly side of landlords. For example, in *The True Story of Ah Q*, although the Zhao Grandfather’s family belongs to the first family in Weizhuang, they live carefully and are “stingy” with others and themselves. In the novel Zhao Fu’s evening, “It’s a rule not to

turn on the lamp, and then go to bed after eating”, only “When Great-grandfather Zhao is not a scholar, he is allowed to light a lamp to read articles”.

After the new period, literature deconstructs the image of “bully landlord” and deliberately shapes the image of non-bully landlord, which has its historical inevitability and realistic rationality. Because the narrative strategy of bullying landlords in a specific period not only played an active role in promoting the deepening of the agrarian revolution movement, but also made many non-bullying landlords and their children not treated fairly in reality, which did have many negative effects, especially many violent acts in the process of land reform, which should be taken as a warning. However, it is not a realistic attitude to deny the existence of bully landlords or the long-standing objective violence of landlords against farmers, thus denying the necessity of land reform.

Since Wei Zhang's *The Ancient Ship*, the images of landlords who are not bullies or villains have appeared one after another, or these landlords have appeared in a contradictory image.

Simply defining the good and bad, right and wrong of Zhao Bing and Duoduo Zhao is difficult to touch the soul of this unique character image “local Chinese style”, and it is impossible to effectively interpret the richness, complexity and paradox of the spiritual world contained in their images. This is also the unique charm of Zhao Bing's squire image. This person is a bully, but there is still fear of life in evil. This solid unattainable figure is also weak and lonely, and it is not a conceptual bully model.

Zhao Bing was a standard poor peasant and proletarians, who became a revolutionary leader during the land reform period. From the perspective of rural folk culture, Zhao Bing is the “four grandfathers” according to seniority. Zhao family has the highest seniority in Gaoding Street, and naturally occupies the highest position in the patriarchal clan system. This is the most important and secret factor that Grandpa Zhao Bing enjoys great influence in Wali Town. Zhao Bing is very handy in the context of modern class revolution, but still follows the local Chinese ethical culture: fearing life, observing “rules”, pursuing the golden mean, and so on. In dealing with Li Qisheng's revelation of the Great Leap Forward deception, Zhao Bing rescued Li Qisheng who was still alive after punishment. In the years of famine, Zhao Bing risked his life to “rob food” himself; In the emergency of destroying the ancient city wall during the Cultural Revolution, Zhao Bing made decisive suggestions to break the troublemakers' legs, which all showed Zhao Bing's spiritual temperament as a folk hero and savior. With the passage of time, Zhao Bing gradually withdrew from the political stage of Waraccoon town, and began to indulge in reading, making friends, drinking tea and growing flowers, massaging and keeping fit, and being at ease with the local squire life, but he did not damage his authority in the hearts of villagers at all, but became more refined and interesting. Of course, his temperament and interest style didn't achieve true refined and elegant, but still had a kind of narrow evil. From a higher level, figures like Zhao Bing are also a kind of carbuncle that grows out of national diseases. In this sense, the paradox, complexity and diversity of Zhao Bing's image can find the spiritual gene of his life in the blood of local Chinese ethical culture.

3.1.4. Q's humble and shabby underclass life

In the face of the powerful squire's authority, Q, based on his animalistic principle of “avoiding the strong and tending to the weak”, takes bullying the weak as the most important way to realize the social value of his life. By bullying the weaker ones, he gains the recognition of society and others, and thus obtains a relatively strong position. Xun Lu wrote in “Grave - Miscellaneous Memories”: “I think the Chinese people have enough grievances, naturally caused by the ravages of the strong. But they do not quite rebel against the strong, but give vent to their fears on the weak, and then say it in a blatant way, can prove the cowardice of these people, even if there are ten thousand fires of indignation, what can be burned except the weak grass?”[26] It is evident that this mentality of attachment and fear of power is common, and attachment and fear are only two sides of the same coin. The mentality and phenomenon of servility, which is dependent on the powerful, is also an important aspect of Mr. Xun Lu's criticism.

Q's dependence on the squire to achieve success, in this way of life, full of despicable and cowardly, he realized his value in life, not to the rightful side, not to the strong resistance, but against the weak vent.

3.2. Fundamental rights “listening” to ethnic rights: ugly peacemaking under the blessing of the regime

Wei Zhang focused on showing the abnormal picture of rural politics caused by the mixture of traditional rural culture and realistic political culture, and expressed his cultural criticism of rural politics in 1980s.

In *The Ancient Ship*, Zhao Bing, the fourth grandfather, is the person with the highest seniority in the Zhao family. Zhao Bing has a natural patriarch status in the village where kinship is emphasized. At the same time, in the era of impetuous national politics, Zhao Bing knows the current situation of grass-roots power well, loses no time to establish his divine authority in Wali town, and lays a solid foundation for securing grass-roots political power. The earthquake can't disturb Grandpa Four's dream; When the old city met the wall, Grandpa Four said, "Go and break the leg of the leader first." [27] In the famine years, the mayor Zhou Zifu didn't ask for food at a meeting in the county. "Four grandfathers Zhao Bing slapped him in public" and told him "You should go back to the county immediately and get the radish for me! Otherwise, I will lead the whole town to gnaw your skull!" [28] Grandpa Zhao Bing himself knows very well that his natural high seniority can really make him enjoy the respect of the townspeople, but only by actually grasping the grass-roots power and clan power, symbolically defending the interests of Wawa raccoon dog town and the townspeople, and becoming the spokesman of people's right to speak, can people's obedience be completely in their hands.

What Zhao Bing hides behind safeguarding the interests of the townspeople is a heart trying to enter the grass-roots political power. When the grass-roots regime throws an olive branch to him, people's rights will become worthless. Grass-roots political power is eager to make use of the patriarch's popularity among grass-roots people to achieve substantial achievements, while Zhao Bingyou is eager to become a part of his own power at the expense of people's rights.

The Ancient Ship demonstrates the powerful patronage of political power. Provincial and municipal foreign trade departments inspect subordinate factories: "You don't have much problem there. I understand the situation there in Zhao Duo Duo, this 'entrepreneur' is doing a good job. But you still have to remind him to stop being arrogant" [29] He fully understands that the governor understands the matter of mung beans with impurity starch, and calls it a "remarkable innovation". From Zhao Duo Duo's contracted vermicelli factory, to the county and then to the province, the regime's shade over the vermicelli factory under the clan's management was partly due to national economic policy considerations, but also in an attempt to show the party's political performance. In contrast, Sui Miangsu, who lacked the blessing of the regime, could only get a bank loan of five thousand dollars at most.

Fourth Grandpa Zhao Bing is also well versed in politics. The political power hits it off with representatives of ethnic rights who try to enter the political power. Fourth Grandpa protects the implementation of this economic policy valued by national politics. Once there is a problem, Zhao Bing will spare no effort to solve it. When the fan factory re-contracting, see Su went to see the director Luan Chunji, Luan Chunji's tone remained the same, neither too hot nor too cold, just saying that it was possible to re-contract, but worried that it was just a formality. The director knows very well that it is very suitable for Duoduo Zhao to contract a fan factory: not only Duoduo Zhao can create huge economic benefits for the town; What's more, Duoduo Zhao has the support of four grandfathers, Zhao Bing. As a pillar industry in Wawa raccoon town, the fan factory can make profits permanently only with the support of people who have the right to speak at the grass-roots level. Otherwise, the economic pillar at the grass-roots level will face unpredictable obstacles. Therefore, at the conference of contracting the fan factory again, Luan Chunji took pictures at the right time, seeing that he lost the opportunity of contracting. Grandpa Zhao Bing said to Duoduo Zhao, "You've been a fool for half a life, and now you've done a good thing to set up a company. Here's 200 yuan. Fourth Grandpa is poor, and the investment company shows his heart-you count it on the spot. "[30] Grandpa timely and tactfully bought shares in front of everyone in an attempt to help Duoduo Zhao raise funds by virtue of his prestige. At this point, the peace between clan power and political power tends to be completed. The fan factory gets Zhao Bing's support downward and the government's support upward. Under such double guarantee, Duoduo Zhao can ensure that the big fan factory can get the contract. Zhao Bing holds the voice of grass-roots people and the lifeline of township economy in his own hands, which in turn adds a favorable bargaining chip to the establishment of his position in grass-roots political power. The government's strong support for township enterprises is very beneficial to the recovery and development of China's rural economy. However, if we go back to the source, this person in power is not really a person who can get economic benefits for farmers and rural areas, and the national economic policy will be distorted into a tool for personal profit.

Zhao Bing is well versed in the complexities of grass-roots struggle. In Wali town, no matter how high his seniority and power are, he can't do anything about political power. Therefore, he trained Duoduo Zhao as the best candidate for the position he can't reach. Zhao Bing's prestige can eliminate the grass-roots people's doubts about Duoduo Zhao, and when there are political changes, Duoduo Zhao can be his umbrella. This is where the paradox of grass-roots rights appears. People who are not revolutionary or even counter-revolutionary eventually steal the right to speak of grass-roots people and hoodwink the grass-roots state power. When the fan company contracted by Duoduo Zhao was seized, half of the

expansion money was insufficient, the loan was rejected, and investors demanded money. Zhao Bing told Susu with the help of Zhang Wangshi: "If a fan company really wants to prosper, it must be managed by Susu." Grandpa four often told me so. "[31] Zhao Bing saw clearly the political and economic environment at that time, and he knew that at this time, it was completely different from the inspection by the foreign trade department in the past. His so-called politics could not continue to blind the state power that was gradually on the right track. He had lost his political right to speak, and he couldn't lose the power to control the economic pillar of Wawa raccoon town again. Therefore, Zhao Bing actively abandoned Duoduo Zhao and actively sought to find out what he saw so as to enjoy the support of the new couple. At the same time, he also used his eagerness to regain the fan factory, and justifiably once again.

3.3. Male power "deceives" women: victims and rebels

In Xun Lu's rural novels, he portrayed a poor and pathetic group of women: the caustic Yang Ersao (杨二嫂), who worked so hard to make ends meet, Shan Si's wife, who did not know what tomorrow was, and Xiang Lin's wife, who worked so hard and was so numb that she could not control her fate; Wei Zhang also found his spiritual home in his confessions to women, and his attitude toward women was one of respect and love, both respect and love, but not respect and love. Huizi, Hanzhang and Xiaokui in *The Ancient Ship* are women who have a sense of autonomy and will not hold back and resist under oppression. Women are more resilient than the men in Wei Zhang's works and have a greater capacity to endure hardship.

3.3.1. The repression of women by "theocracy"

Mrs Xianglin married twice and was widowed twice. When He Laoliu unfortunately died of typhoid fever, she was afraid that she would be robbed by two men in the underworld after her death. In order to get rid of this "sin", she even went to the temple to donate the threshold for thousands of people to step on, and ten thousand people to step on. Behind all kinds of ridiculous behaviors, there was a tendency of self-denial and self-abuse formed by women in that era under the influence of long-term feudal patriarchal culture. In *Divorce*, Aigu willingly accepted his unfair arrangement under the coercion of the Seven Great Men, the spokesman of feudal forces.

The *Blessing* is about a broader aspect of life, including the indifference of "clan power," "husband power," and "divine power" to unfortunate women, which is the soul of the novel. In the novel, Xianglin's wife is not only hard-working and hard-working, but she also has an undeniable personality and a rebellious attitude in a society where submission is the norm. Although she is an authentic "foolish woman", she has such blood in her body. In the novel, this dignity and stubbornness of Xianglin's wife is traced through the mouth of Granny Wei, who hits the corner of the table:

"How could Xianglin's wife be willing to comply?"

"There is nothing to comply with. A mess is always a mess; as long as a rope to hold, stuffed in the palanquin, picked up to the man's house, pressed on the flower crown, pay respects, close the door, it's done. But Xianglin sister-in-law really out of the ordinary, I heard that at that time is really the same as the sharp, everyone also said that about because in the school home to do things, so different it." [32]

Xianglin's wife is hard-working and hard-working, but she is not at the mercy of others when it comes to maintaining the dignity of her own personality. There is still a wildness in her that has not been alienated by cultural slavery. She is not opposed to remarriage, but to the way her in-laws sell her like cattle, a conspirator against the patriarchal society.

The resistance of Xianglin's wife is also manifested in the fact that even though she is almost a beggar, she is not tired of telling people her sad story, and they laugh and jeer at her, she still defends her dignity by her stubborn and even arrogant way. Later, when the scar on her forehead became a new laughing stock, she also reported the same contempt "without even turning her eyes away":

"She about from their smiles and tone of voice, also know is laughing at her, so always stare, not say a word, and later not even head back. She spent the whole day with her lips tightly closed and the scar on her head that everyone thought was a mark of shame, silently running the streets, sweeping the floor, washing vegetables and panning rice." [33]

This is the woman who was trampled on by everyone, this is the stubborn character and proud personality of the woman who was insulted and damaged in Xun Lu's writing.

3.3.2. *The persecution of women by abnormal squire power*

When Duoduo Zhao was a child, he wandered around the street like a ghost. People in his clan ignored him. He was too timid to even look at pigs. He could only eat what those pigs had thrown away. However, the landlord's old yellow dog kept him from getting hurt all over. Lao Zhao's family gave him advice: he bit you and you ate it. From the origin of Zhao's blood, this cruel strategy similar to war has had a great influence on the formation of Duoduo Zhao's sinister and cold personality. Abnormal personality enabled him to do whatever he wanted in Wali Town by virtue of his tiny power: from beginning to end, he thought that Baopu Sui's stepmother aniseed was bourgeois, inserted scissors into his clothes and hinged the aniseed's self-immolation body, and used harsh words to pee according to aniseed's body.

Duoduo Zhao said that Huizi is a "reactionary thing who is determined to play". But at the same time, she is a woman with awe-inspiring dignity and amazing will. She is the daughter of a big capitalist and the wife of a capitalist after marriage. Her class attribute is very clear. She is grumpy, violent and stubborn, and will never give up exploiting interests. When she learned that her husband had handed over the fan factory, she broke her finger and stained the table with blood, which was shocking. When Duoduo Zhao obscurely clasped the oil bowl to her breast, she picked up sharp scissors without hesitation. However, Duoduo Zhao, who fights against power, wants dignity and chastity, which means giving up his life. But she still grabbed him with a face of blood.

The main house of the Sui family's old house will be confiscated, and the fennel "won't move without biting her teeth, she won't say anything" and that "beautiful brow is full of strength and hatred." Inheriting the mother's strength, the chapter contains confession under forbearance and inner perseverance and resistance. As a sinner of the Lao Sui family, she thought that she was not worthy of the Lao Li family, and begged Zhichang Li to leave her. She bore all the pain and entanglement in her heart, and "her skin color is getting paler every day, almost transparent." The erosion of suffering chapter did not make chapter chapter chapter give up revenge for fourth grandfather Zhao Bing. She "tore his clothes and cut his chest with her nails." "She pushed the scissors straight forward and poked them into Grandpa Four's lower abdomen." [34]

In order to defend her will, Huizi would rather choose destruction. When she committed suicide by taking poison, she personally burned down her first wife's room, showing her determination to live or die with the interests of her family and class. She died unyielding and radiated the most harsh cold light of human dignity.

The two writers are similar in their exploration and reflection on the tragic fate of their characters and their ultimate ending arrangements. Most of the female characters in Xun Lu's and Wei Zhang's works are persecuted, and they can only self-destruct in the face of the oppression of the powerful clan, squire and men's power, and all the efforts made by Xianglin's wife herself are not recognized by the society, and she can only end her life amidst the scorn and disgust of people in that era. Xun Lu and Wei Zhang consider the social and historical background of women's fate, reflecting on national inferiority, rural ethics and land reform, and presenting a dialogue across the ages. They do not arrange an impossible ending for those good women, but rather set them in a socio-historical context. As Xun Lu himself says, "What happens after Nala leaves?" [35] He is most conscious of the fact that these women do not know where they are going, nor do they know what lies ahead. He is more concerned with thinking about reality and life, reflecting on the deeper socio-historical connotations of women's tragedies. The women in Wei Zhang's novel are stoic and rebellious in the face of the "ravages". Although they are oppressed by many hardships, the erosion does not sap their will; Fennel still rises up against the clan power of the Zhao family, and Hanzhang stabs the scissors into her fourth grandfather's stomach.

4. The contradiction and exodus of the rural under urbanization

In the mid-1980s, when the process of urbanization and reform had just begun, most of the works of the same period used the dichotomous model of advanced and backward to construct the relationship between urban and rural areas, and regarded going into the city as the direction of rural development. But the establishment and disillusionment of Wei Zhang's ideal of reform expresses his rejection of the road to modernity, which is the urbanization of the countryside. Wei Zhang's rejection of the city is not a rejection of the city itself, nor a rejection of modernity, but a rejection of the commercialization and consumerism-oriented modernization path of the city at that time. Therefore, *The Ancient Ship* narrates the conflicts and contradictions of the urbanization transition stage in the 1980s with the countryside as the background. The narrative of the countryside in the context of urbanization is based on a new variation of Xun Lu's rural novels. The main manifestation is that the power hierarchy between urban

and rural areas is often internalized deep into people's conceptions and becomes the peasants' consciousness. Under the embarrassing situation of the extrusion and transformation of urban culture, farmers have lost their conscious identity as farmers, but they can't really integrate into urban life.

Both writers are thinking about the future of the countryside, let's take the example of the boat's escape in *The Ancient Ship*. In *The Ancient Ship*, the metaphor of the boat is used to symbolize the rise and fall of the town:

“There is an abandoned pier in town to this day, which vaguely bears witness to the mast-like booms of yesteryear.”

“Then finally a second and a third boat ran aground. Something terrible happened: the river became narrower and narrower, and finally no more boats could enter. People watched a big pier slowly drying up.”[36]

The free navigation of the boats is a symbol of the town's heyday, while the drying up of the river and the inaccessibility of the boats in the last forty years represent the suffering of the town and the original sin of Sui Pao Park is a closed and circular state, they are not transferable, and all people and things in this land have an inescapable suffering and responsibility. There is also an ancient warship in Wali Town:

“The side of the ship is rotten and broken, only a keel of more than six feet long remains.”[37]

The ship was first submerged in history and neglected by the people, and finally saved by the rediscovery of not only the “compass” of the “Seaway Needle Sutra” and the “Heavenly Questions”, but also by an excellent “helmsman”, Baopu Sui. The first neglect of the ship is a metaphor for the people of Waveland's initial loss of navigation, and the final rescue is a metaphor for the revival of Waveland and China and the ultimate triumph of reform in the land. Baopu Sui ponders day and night the root causes of suffering and the ways to eliminate them, reading the Communist Manifesto and the Heavenly Questions over and over again, trying to find in them a way to free the people of Wau Beaver from their suffering. Baopu Sui, who repents and redeems himself for the original sin of human nature, finally changes his passive waiting and bravely stands up to lead Wau Beaver Town towards survival and revival. In the end of *The Ancient Ship*, “Wau Beaver Town” is not heading towards the confusion of “Lu Zhen” and “Wei Zhuang”, but towards modernization, which is in line with the tide of urbanization in the 80s of the last century.

5. Conclusions

Xun Lu once said in his “Compendium of Writings under the Lamp” that the feudal hierarchy was so oppressive that people “could not move and did not dare to move”. [38] Xun Lu has portrayed the working women like Xianglin's wife, Sister Shan Si and Aigoo, and this article focuses on their mental suffering. The loss of labor rights, the cold eyes of the people in Lu's town, and the threats of Liu's mother about the two men's struggle, however, forced Xianglin's wife to a desperate situation, making her a representative of the unfortunate fate of working women in old China. In addition to the feudal hierarchy, Xun Lu soberly exposes and criticizes the inferiority of the Chinese national character, such as cowardice, numbness and indifference. Q is a typical example of the inferiority of the nation, and he concentrates the inferiority of all Chinese people. The story is a look at the state of existence and historical fate of people living in “Lu Town” and “Wizhuang” to reveal the “cannibalistic” nature of feudal cultural thought, squire power, clan power and male power.

In the 1980s, modernization became the main theme of the times. In order to realize the transformation to socialist modernization, a large agricultural country with thousands of years of feudal society and a backward country with a century of humiliating history needed the blood of revolutionary struggle and the sweat of labor and production, and at the same time, people needed to undergo a spiritual transformation full of sorrow, pain, hardship and twists and turns. Based on his conscious understanding of this layer of content, Wei Zhang looks at the contemporary reform life from the comprehensive perspective of history and culture, combines the reflection on history and the observation of reality, and writes about the rhythm of the times and the emotions of the people in his own unique feeling.

Wei Zhang inherited Xun Lu's critical spirit of facing reality directly. He takes a sober stance in examining and criticizing the cruelty of the land reform and the Returned Villagers, and the oppression of the underclass by the bullying landlords such as Duoduo Zhao. Wei Zhang inherited Xun Lu's sympathy and concern for the fate of intellectuals. Both Xun Lu and Wei Zhang sympathize with intellectuals who have made contributions to the revolution but have not been recognized or even suffered

bad luck. Wei Zhang has an intellectual suffering complex, and his writings give profound thoughts and questions to the sufferings and cruelties of the past, the deformities and pains of human nature, and the injustices and sins of human beings, while exploring the realistic path to resolve the sufferings and sins with a generous humanistic spirit, fully demonstrating The writers' pondering on the homeland in the stage of urban-rural transition.

In the process of modernization of Chinese society, the town of Waxbeaver, as the intersection of the countryside and the city, has not only fully demonstrated the convergence and collision of tradition and modernity, yesterday and today, but also witnessed various historical interpretations and cultural changes, as well as the complexity of a nation's pain and reflection in the process of such evolution. On the one hand, the economy is developing rapidly and the material world is extremely rich; on the other hand, people's world of thought has no support and no sense of belonging.

Although the main inhabitants of "Wali Town" have left the ridge of the fields, they have inherited their traditions both in terms of economic foundation and cultural concepts, and have not been able to break away from rural civilization in essence. Through the spiritual pains and the journey of the people of "Wau Beaver Town" in the changing times, Wei Zhang reveals the constraints and effects of thousands of years of history and culture on reform, and takes a deeper cultural look at the reality of urban transformation. When they encounter urban civilization, they use their bodies and minds as containers to accommodate the encounter of two heterogeneous civilizations. Faced with such social reality, Wei Zhang resolutely embarked on a journey of return, seeking a spiritual home.

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