

Self-realization of Marginal Survivors

Discussion on the Marginalized Figures of “Journey to the West”

Funing Yang

Faculty of Liberal Arts
Northwest University
Xi'an, China

Abstract—This article takes “Journey to the West” as an example to discuss the selection of characters, the characteristics of the characters, and the causes of the characters. It focuses on the interpretation of how did the marginal survivors such as Sun Wukong and Zhu Bajie to achieve self-realization in the novel “Journey to the West”, as well as the unique aesthetic effects brought by this approach.

Keywords—*marginalized central survivors; centralized marginal survivors; self-realization in laughter*

I. INTRODUCTION

In human history, culture has always been divided into two parts that are opposed to each other: one is the official culture and the other is the folk culture. Both of these two cultures are indispensable components of the human cultural system. However, due to differences in the living positions and living experiences of the subjects represented by them, their descriptions of society are not the same. The main body of official culture is the people in power who are in the center of society. They not only have the sense of superiority in the living experience, but also the makers of the mainstream ideology, and they hold the dominant discourse power of society. At the highest level, they try their best to distinguish people according to their high and low distinctions and draw their borders so as to maintain their current position. Therefore, in the official cultural form, “The borders are sacred and unshakable; the borders cannot be overstepped and depreciated. This is a picture of the world in which all phenomena are strictly divided, each occupying a different hierarchical position... It is steady like a rock. There is no place for irony simulation and chaff here. There is no position for the mocking two-faced person. There is no place to change masks and costumes... The official grade is unshakable. [1] The official culture with a clear hierarchy seriously denies all changes, intimidates people, and makes them to be fear of changes, so that they strive to maintain the current situation. In contrast, folk culture is created by the masses of people at the margins of society. It pays more attention to the renewal and replacement of society than official culture. It can truly reflect the fate dynamic of the people's lives and vividly evoke the human voice as a whole. The creators of folk culture are marginal survivors opposed to those in power. They have a longing for a better life. Because of this longing, they constantly try and collide and establish a new cultural system in cross-border contacts. This is Folk culture and folk culture is

the manifestations of struggles of marginal survivors. They try to get rid of their own living conditions at bottom level by means of subversion, playfulness, and absurdity. Therefore, folk culture is a culture that has been broken down and reconstructed, and it is a culture that crosses the border.

One of China's four masterpieces, “Journey to the West”, is a folk cultural work written by the marginal survivor (Wu Chengen) on the basis of folk script. This novel tells the story that a team with Sun Wukong as their core experience numerous difficulties and dangers in order to get the scripture from the Western Heaven. The author draws a lively and vivid mythic world. With its rich ideological connotation, various characters, grand narrative structure, and its bizarre and absurd imagination, the novel draws a thick brush in the history of Chinese literature and has an important significance in the history of world literature. Among them, the character images that have been created shine brightly in the human mind world for thousands of years. The most typical ones must be Sun Wukong- the “Great Sage Equaling Heaven” who was born in the savage and wild and make a living in the three divisions of the universe, and Zhu Bajie- the “Chief Divine Altar Cleanser” who was banished from heaven, stupid, lazy and greedy. Under the aura of heroism, these folk fiction characters are calmly viewed. They represent the collective ideology of the Chinese people in the Ming Dynasty. It is also a process of self-realization by a group of marginalized social strata through the novel.

II. THE MARGINALIZED "CENTRAL FIGURE"

Tang Monk is undoubtedly the protagonist of the West Journey. The process of him leading the three disciples to obtain the Scriptures is both adventurous and full of romanticism. The readers think that the storyline should be centered on the Tang Monk, but in “Journey to the West”, Tang Monk, the protagonist, became a supporting narrator to connect the narrative under the brilliance of Sun Wukong and other disciples, thus becoming a marginalized "central figure".

"After the middle of the Ming dynasty, Neo-Confucianism strongly promoted asceticism and consider human desire as a counterpoint to heavenly principles. Zhu Xi said: 'The saints speak a thousand words and only teach people to learn heaven principles and destroy human desires.' Nakedly advocating patriotism, asceticism and use ethics to suppress people's appropriate living demands".[2] In the meantime, with the

great changes in the social economy and the development of commerce, the Ming dynasty's civic culture has gradually flourished. It is in contrast with the authoritarian rule of the Ming dynasty ideology and culture. The civic culture opposes ignorance and abstinence, affirming human desires and personal values. Along with the prosperity of the civic culture, on one hand, the citizen class in the culture has become the subject of desire and has been vigorously promoted. On the other hand, the openness and cross-border nature presented in the civic culture have given people tremendous spiritual pleasure, and in turn, this has affected the lives of citizens in reality. In the novel, the character of Tang Monk is mainly dominated by the Confucian spirit, although Tang Monk should represent the ideology of the Buddha, "Wu Chengen, who was deeply influenced by Confucian ideas, still put the thought of 'advocate moral and disparage force', 'advocate moral, despise talent and intelligent' in the creation of 'Journey to the West'". [3] Therefore, Tang Monk not only has Buddha's nature but also have Confucianism ideology. Obviously he is a representative with the most official culture temperament. He represented the social ideology of the official culture. In this way, Tang Monk, on one hand, upholds the basic characteristics from official aspect, such as noble spirit and tough quality: Before the journey, his disciples once warned him that "The Western Heaven is far away and many monsters and demons along the way, I'm afraid that there will be no return and no protection for lives". However, Tang Monk did not withdraw from it, he made a promise to The Emperor of Tang Dynasty: "If I can not arrive to Western Heaven and get the Scriptures, I shall not return to China even after I dead. I shall fall into hell". It is clear that his determination cannot be taken and his heart cannot be changed; to seek the Scriptures, all the way through the 81 difficulties, among which no matter encountered what kind of threats, temptations, fears and horrors but he still did not change his original intention. It can be seen that his heart is unchangeable; the official culture gave him his noble birth: Tang Monk was the reincarnation of the Buddha's disciple, and he was accepted as the director of the Monk after he entered the society. Later, he was accused by the Bodhisattva and go to the Western Heaven to get the Scriptures. These make Tang Monk look brilliant in the novel. But on the other hand, these characteristics have also left Tang Monk increasingly away from the aesthetic category of the citizen class. The civic culture needs the survivors from the "margin" who share the same ideals and pursuits. Therefore, Tang Monk became a clue of serial stories, a moving camera lens, through which we can see the performance of other marginal figures, and he gradually faded into the supporting role of the novel, becoming the marginalized figure in the novel.

On the other hand, in the realization of the story, it is necessary to constantly "break through the obstacles of various materials and spirits and bear the risk of failure". [4] The realization of any ideal all need to rely on physical breakthrough and friction to achieve, only rely on the guidance of the void soul, the ideal can only be a bubble. Unfortunately, as the spiritual leader of the society in official culture and the embodiment of perfection and purity, Tang Monk must "do his best to show that he is the achiever and the model of the ideal principle in order to distinguish himself from those achievers

who follow the principles of happiness". [5] As a result, he was trapped in the prison of official culture, playing a inflexible and rigid role as the apologist of official will. There is no doubt that such Tang Monk does not have the ability to "break through barriers and bear risks". Mr. Hu Guangzhou said: "(Tang Monk) is weak, incompetent, timid as a mouse, listens to rumors, he is indiscriminate, selfish, indecisive, stupid, almost refuse to mend his ways after repeated educations. In the group, he is neither spiritual strength nor an actual combatant, but is a 100% burden. As for his role in the journey, impolitely speaking, he should be negative. His tears are more than actions, and he cannot walk without the white horse. If there is no Sun Wukong, he will be beyond redemption". [6] In Wuzhuang Temple, he was pedantic and rigid not knowing the ginseng fruit and caused Sun Wukong's theft. Facing the mortal devil, he was easily trust devil and drove away the Sun Wukong who faithfully protected him; He strayed into the Leiyin Temple, and rammed into the Pan-Sindong, etc.. In almost every time we saw a raging and tearful Tang Monk. The "Sacred Monk" was only revealed his softness and weakness in the face of disaster and suffering. When he needs to take practical actions, he can only chant the "Amitabha" and wait for others to rescue him, and his ideal realization can only rely on the help of other characters with strong physical desires and from the margins. When these marginal characters enter the center of the novel's vision, Tang Monk began to be gradually marginalized.

III. THE CENTRALIZED MARGINAL FIGURE

The representative of the "marginal figure" in the novel is undoubtedly Sun Wukong and Zhu Bajie. These two figures could only play a supporting role in the story of Tang Monk seek for the Scriptures from Western Heaven, but they stand out from the story and become enduring classic figures.

The "marginal figure" such as Sun Wukong and Zhu Bajie were originally very humble existences. The Sun Wukong came from "marginal world", he was born in savage and wild places and had no father or mother, where even could not be included in the official division of the "Three Realms" category. He is the real representative of "lower people", "grass people" and "pariah". Because he create a tremendous uproar in the heavenly palace so he was confined under the Wuzhi Mountain, "he drank dissolved copper when he was thirsty, and ate iron when he was hungry"; while Zhu Bajie, he was original immortals but later got banished into the secular world, bad luck made him became a pig, so he was also abandoned by heaven. Obviously, these two characters are living on the margin. They have no lofty ideals. Compared with Tang Monk, who has the heart to deliver all people from torment, they are ordinary and nidering. Before Sun Wukong was recruited by the Jade Emperor, his ideal was only to escape from the "death" cycle, so and he could be a king of the mountain in Huaguoshan forever, if it wasn't for the recruitment of the Jade Emperor and the stimulation to him by the incident of "Horse Master", I am afraid that Sun Wukong will always live his loose and free life in his Huaguoshan; And the ideal of Zhu Bajie was even more simple. He comes from the bottom of the three-layer system of God, Man and Demon, what he represents was also the true vision of the majority

people in the bottom level of feudal society: "Three acres of land, a cow, a wife and children". Basically it covers the original ideals of Zhu Bajie, and every time when they encounter setbacks and frustrations, he always shout to split the luggage and return to Gao Laozhuang. These shouts not only reflect the fear and sluggishness of him, but also the highlight of his self-vision.

Not only did they have low births, but they also performed the low behaviors that were considered by the official culture. In the chapter of "Save the Tuoluo from filthy demons", Zhu Bajie incarnates into a giant pig and break down the thousand years dilute persimmons along the way, it is so-called "Thousands years dilute persimmons are now gone, and the Qijue Hutong is open from this day"; In the chapter of "Tang Monk was captured in Yangfengling, Bajie lead the way in the Middle of the mountain", the Sun Wukong said: "Capture the tiger and dragon, kicking the heaven and well, I all know a little. If there is anything in the house that throws bricks and tiles, and the pot and door are open with no reason, then I will be able to deal with it". But these behaviors are often considered as low behaviors but they are the most authentic and have most characteristic of the flesh. These behaviors are exactly the core which narrative conforming to the rules. They use the seemingly low-spirited "flesh desires" to safeguard Tang Monk's "kindness" and carry out escort for "seeking kindness". They are the supporting actors and represented many of the real people in the real society. Their life styles such as embarrassment, selfishness, stupidity, laziness, etc. are also vividly demonstrated. On this stage, people through "Marginal figures" like "Song Wukong" and "Zhu Bajie" return to "self", taking off their coats of reality, lifting the shackles of civilization, and breaking the inherent rules. "Put on masks and wear fancy dress... Enjoy indulging your own original instincts... Then reconstruct and realize your own Ideal". [7] They are the promoters and assistants of the continuation of the story. They play an important role in the development of the plot and the realization of the hero's ideal. When they stand on the center of the stage, the unique life styles brought by the marginal characters turn the stage into a crowded and lively big stage. They represent the power of people from the margin: the publicity of physical desires, the collisions with the world of others, the continuous subversion and renewal of self have given the entire novel a carnival lifestyle. The journey has shed its material and physical atmosphere. In this atmosphere, the boundaries of official cultures all have been eliminated, and the civic culture has the dominate position; all individual centers have been dismantled, and cross-border contacts have enabled the emergence of people's power. This is "the constant renewing power of the material body". [8] The readers feel that pleasure brought by the liberation of human nature. It is for this reason that marginal figures gradually shift from the edge of the story to the center of the story and become the subject of the story, while the original central character is gradually diluted.

At the same time, in the "marginal figures" still reflect their dual character. On one side, they are the protagonist' noble assistants in order to make protagonist's noble more vivid. The protagonist confirms himself through them and draws a portrait of him through them, and separate from the marginal

figures to become an independent surviving individual; on the other side, they are the "obstructors" who deviate from the will of the protagonist. In the story, when "marginal figures" start from their own nature and reflect their side of "Affirmed the happiness principle and publicity the physical desires", they would deviate from their masters' minds. At this time, they became the "obstructors" of the master' willing. The true life style of marginal figures were different from their masters' will be revealed. In the Journey to the West, there are many such episodes. The most famous one should be the twenty-seventh chapter of "The demon plays Tang Monk three times and the scared monk banishes the Monkey King". When the Sun Wukong killed the demon's incarnation three times, it is the performance of the protagonist who publicizes his personal desire to "punish evil and kill demo", but this bloody flesh desire is contrary to Tang Monk's image. So that it has "he farewell his master with tears and kowtow, and exhort Monk Sha with grief. He wiped the grass in front of the slope and turned his feet to the cane on the ground. He fly to the sky and enter the earth like rollers, he has the best ability to fly cross the mountain and sea. One can't see a shadow between the instants, and it will return to the old journey" this wonderful scene. This is why, at the beginning of the story, Guan Yin Bodhisattva gave Tang Monk a inhibiting magic phrase, this inhibiting magic phrase is exactly the tight restraint for "marginal figures" deviate from their master's will. But at the same time, it is just like a label that will always remind people of the characteristics of "Affirmed the happiness principle and publicity the physical desires". The value of marginal figures is also fully reflected in this deviation.

IV. SELF-REALIZATION IN LAUGHTER

"Journey to the West" is different from other novels. It is highly interesting. This interest is concentrated in these marginal figures. The "marginal figures" in the novel are witty and weird. In addition to the comedy, their laughter also has a layer of mocking and self-affirmation, among which Sun Wukong and Zhu Bajie are the most typical example.

Human laughter is mostly due to joy or pleasure, but in the novel, the laughter of the marginal figure, Sun Wukong, is often not the reason. Sun Wukong who is the guardian of Tang Monk's west journey, plays a bodyguard role all the way and during the journey he was confronted with an unknown demons and monsters in order to protect the Tang Monk's human body. Tang Monk' Amitabha not only did not play a positive role in removing the obstacles, but often became the restraint of Sun Wukong, so he went all the way with worries and concerns and most of the time, the emotions are tense. However, this marginal figure also have "laugh" moments, his laughter is probably divided into arrogant laughter and mocking laughter. The arrogant laughter usually appears when he acts as a "evil killer" and kill the demons. In the chapter of "The demon captured the ape with clever, Monkey king gain the treasure by cheating", "When the monster heard human humble and stretch its head out of the sedan to check, Wukong jumped in front of the sedan and hit a stick, hit a hole, brainwashed out and ran out of blood, then he drag it out of the sedan and check, it was a nine-tailed fox. Wukong laughed: "Monster! What is grandmother? You call yourself

grandmother, then I should be called grand grandfather!” His laughter is both affirmation and triumph for his "evil killing" means, and the value of marginal figures is also reflected in the process of killing; At the same time, it is also an upsurge of the flesh desires of marginal figure, which is the contradiction and divergence of Confucian idealism that "Journey to the West" wants to transmitted to readers. Another type of laughter is mocking laughter, this laugh is hidden in the book, although it may not sound out, it does not diminish its power. Sun Wukong laughs at a wide range of objects; he was mocking the incompetence of Jade Emperor: "Although he lives forever, but he should not the Emperor forever. As the saying goes: The emperor took turns to do it, and it would come to my house next year. He should move out and let the heaven palace be mine. If he still refuses to do so, I must be disturbed and never make peace"; He was mocking Guanyin Bodhisattva: "She deserved to have no husband forever; He was mocking the Tathagata Buddha: "Tathagata, if we think this way, you are still a nephew of a demon". These mocking create a subversive aesthetic experience in the novel, according to the logic of the hero mock the weak, in Sun Wukong's mockery, the Jade Emperor, Guanyin, and Tathagata all fell down from the altar. The authority that was originally up high was completely subverted. In addition, what is more prominent is the mockery to the Zhu Bajie, it was all over the book. In the chapter of "Monk don't forget the nature, four saints test his Zen heart", he was mocking Zhu Bajie: "Good Son-in-law! It is time to thank for the parents; you did not report the happiness to master, but still play here! Where is your mother? Where is your wife? What a good and reliable son-in-law!" In this kind of mockery, besides the heroic quality, the Sun Wukong also has small people's mischievous and cuteness that was more in line with the image of the marginal figures. Sun Wukong's laughter stems from his freedom of thought and inner self-confidence. It is because of his freedom of thought, although he did the apprenticeship of Tang Monk under the spell, he still lived by his own ideas and did not change his own way of doing things along with his identity change. He embrace his own life in his own way is precisely because of his inner self-confidence, he does not need to cater to anyone so that he can mock the authority without concerns.

Another representative of marginal figure Zhu Bajie, is more likely to make people laugh. Zhu Bajie was original an immortal, but later he was deprived to the secular world, and reincarnated as a pig, then turned into a human being, later he became a demon. So he had the characteristics of immortal, human, pig, and demon. In particular, pig has become the main aspect of his image. He has the appearance of "fan ears, rake mouth, and a big belly with long black hair", it is funny and full of joy. The reason why this marginal figure has to show people like this has a great relationship with the understanding of "pig" in traditional Chinese culture. The ancients once had reproductive cults for pigs. Therefore, pigs are easily linked to sexual desire. The pig's gluttony makes the pig's image has a close relationship with appetite and greed. Therefore, he is paranoid to desires, he does no quit killing, he is an "evil killer", he will be proud when killing the demon; he does not quit stealing, there is no regret when he steal ginseng fruit with Sun Wukong in the Wu Zhuang guan; he does not quit lust, he happily hits the sky marriage and shamelessly take advantage

from the female demons; he does not quit lying, when he go out on the patrol, he could just tell a lie and fell asleep, such things are too numerous to enumerate on him, and even after obtaining a positive result, he has to be a altar cleanser to satisfy the appetite. But he was given the name of "Ba Jie": One is quit kill, two is quit steal, three is quit lust, four is quit lying, five is quit drinking, six is quit dress fancy clothes, seven is quit sit in high chair and sleep in wide bed, eight is quit appetite, this "eight quits" and the his behavior contradicts everywhere, and his body is more "Eight no quits", in the conflict between "quit" and "no quit", the appearance of marginal figures are more vivid, the margin of the official culture that he represents — the ideology of the citizen class is even more pronounced. "These images are opposed to all the readiness and certainty, all narrow seriousness, and all the readiness and certainty in the field of thought and world view". [9] This is precisely the biggest deviation from the Confucian thought-form represented by Tang Monk. "It is the Zhu Bajie' boldly pursuit for instinctive desires that thoroughly deconstruct all kinds of seriousness that is loaded on life". [10] The laughter caused by Zhu Bajie is not only a ridiculous laugh in the surface sense, but also a carnival laugh. On him, people get rid of all the rules and prohibitions, and put them back in to the survival of marginal figures, find the original self in maximum, so as to achieve the spiritual carnival.

The laughter evoked by these marginal figures is not just a laugh after a sense of pleasure, the laughter means liberation and redemption, as Nietzsche said: "Only through pleasure can we lead from the gloomy, owl-like seriousness to salvation". [11] In the pleasure, the boring and stereotyped image of the official culture gradually fades in the novel, and the folk culture represented by the marginal figures gains the initiative in the novel. People return to destroy all rigid rules, embrace new world and completely subvert the fear of inherent life, and make all seemingly majestic things appear genuinely ridiculous. In this way, the unofficial and truthful life truth was born, and during the process to obtained and practiced truth, the crowd gained a sense of realism and a childlike pleasure returning to themselves. At the same time, they also gained self-assured joy from the marginal figures that represented themselves. They saw the display and eruption of their own strength through the laughter of marginal figures; they saw the value of their own survival and eliciting his own laughter through absurd and exaggerated forms and confirm the importance of this value. The marginal figures in "Journey to the West" have achieved complete self-realization through themselves and readers two aspects, and led readers to experience the self-realization pleasure, which lead to the road to salvation.

V. CONCLUSION

Above all are some of my superficial understandings of self-realization of marginal survivors in "Journey to the West", "A world is formed in our dreams. This is a world that belongs to us. This fantastic world reveals to us the possibility to expand our living space in the universe that belongs to us". [12] "Journey to the West" is a journey in which we see a different self, as well as the spiritual needs of people at different levels.

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