Feasibility Analysis and “Alienated” Expression of Qu Qiubai’s View of Happiness

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Abstract: It has both theoretical and practical significance on the study of Qu Qiubai’s heart path from the perspective of happiness. So the key points of this thesis are the existence of Qu Qiubai’s view of happiness, the necessity of the research and the foresight of its development. On the basis of previous research, the study eventually forms a prospective analysis of the relevant research and the conclusion of the existence of Qu Qiubai’s “alienated” happiness. “Alienated” happiness is a kind of happy expression which has the characteristics of Chinese traditional Taoist theory. It is not only a kind of happy attribute, but also a form of happy practice. Qu Qiubai’s “alienated” happiness is attributed to the special identity and temperament of his “scholar leader”, which is formed in the elastic wisdom that his alienation is consciously transformed into the pursuit power and the catalytic element.

Keywords: Qu Qiubai, View of Happiness, Feasibility Analysis, “Alienated” Happiness

1. Introduction

Throughout the past few years, Qu Qiubai’s research has attracted much attention and the results are abundant. Researchers have explored the new academic value source and growth point of Qu Qiubai’s research from various angles, such as life, ideological interpretation, and his work. Their research results strive to show Qu Qiubai’s thoughts and images objectively, comprehensively, and accurately in the form of whole monographs or single papers. This shows that Qu Qiubai’s thoughts and his discussions play an important role in the system of early Chinese Marx theory, and it is also an important innovation and development of Marx theory in China. This highlights the significance and broadness of Qu Qiubai’s research. Therefore, the level of research needs to be improved and the research area needs to be expanded. From the fields of literature, politics, philosophy, sociology and education to economics and psychology, the research of Qu Qiubai’s images and thoughts is becoming more and more stereoscopic and pluralistic. But notably, little research focuses on Qu Qiubai’s view of happiness from the perspective of ethics, which doesn’t mean that Qu Qiubai’s view of happiness has not entered into the horizon of academic researchers. For a long time, many studies concern Qu Qiubai’s outlooks on life and philosophy, and the concept of happiness is implied as one of the outlook on life. But these studies lack a systematic, mature and unified viewpoint. So previous relevant references or summaries cannot reveal basic data and theoretical results significantly. However, the necessity of the study can’t be ignored. In order to promote the research on Qu Qiubai’s view of happiness, this paper analyzes the “alienated” characteristic of Qu Qiubai’s view of happiness specifically.

2. An Analysis of the Existence of Happiness in Qu Qiubai’s Research Findings

The research of each discipline has its own unique methodology. The importance of methodology is not only reflected in the nature and law of the research object, but also in the understanding of the scientific and rationality of the research object. In order to show Qu Qiubai’s thoughts and images more objectively, comprehensively and accurately, the research methodology is very important. As an important research object of history, revolutionary history, party history, political history, ideological history and cultural history, the
research on Qu Qiubai involves many fields, including philosophy, politic, economy, society, history, culture and literary. Therefore, it can’t be attributed to a certain discipline, but interdisciplinary research. The two lines of “specific years” and “achievements” are generally followed. And the study of his works is also detailed according to this two lines, but can only be considered as the combination of the application of the two lines. The line of “specific years” typically exists in Ding Yanmo, Liu Xiaozhong’s “Qu Qiubai Chronology” and Cai Guilian’s “Qu Qiubai”. The line of “achievement” typically exists in Wang Tiexian and Zhang Linzhang’s “The Legend of Qu Qiubai” and the “New Research on Qu Qiubai” compiled by the Jiangsu Provincial Research Association. As for application of the combination of the two lines, works and papers are more extensive. Based on methodological research, the corresponding studies try to break through the stereotypes of past interpretation, and truly present the comprehensive, systematic, open, multi-directional and stereoscopic attitude of Qu Qiubai’s research. But as professor Yang Kuisiong said in his “Bearable Care - the Students and Politics Before and After 1949”, “our evaluation system is not as strict as it used to be but it is still so narrow to Qu Qiubai as well as some intellectuals like Zhou Yiliang.” [1]. Qu Qiubai’s dual status as a literati and a revolutionist has always been two important factors that affecting the tendency of study. Literature, politics, philosophy, sociology, pedagogy and so on are all hovering between these two tendencies. From Gu Mingdao’s “Bi Kewei and American’s Research on Qu Qiubai”, Zhang Hong’s “Review of Qu Qiubai Research in Japan”, Xiang Kuiyang’s “a Review of the Study on Qu Qiubai in Western Europe and Australia” and He Xia’s “An Introduction to the Study of Overseas Qu Qiubai”, the foreign Qu Qiubai researchers are mainly focused on literature and political domain. This may be related to the environment of international public opinion and the positioning of Qu Qiubai. At Qu Qiubai’s 50th Anniversary Memorial Day in June 18, 1985, Yang Shangkun, the Standing Committee of the Political Bureau of the Central Political Bureau, made a high evaluation on Qu Qiubai at the Huairen hall in Zhongnanhai: “Comrade Qiu Bai is one of the main leaders of the early Communist Party of China, the great Marx, the outstanding proletarian revolutionist, theoretician and propagandist and one of the important founders of Chinese revolutionary literature.” This is a high evaluation on the life of Qu Qiubai martyrs, and it is also a double definition of the identity of Qu Qiubai as a Marx and a revolutionary writer. But as academic research and discussion, we need to develop the diffusion of thought and the sublimation of established theory on this basis. In the field of literature and history, it has concluded that Qu Qiubai was born in the class of “the bankrupt” in the dangerous and bumping social organization, which is a traditional intellectual image. Under the baptism of the May 4th Movement, the influence of the October Revolution and the attraction of “the free God of the new era”, he went to Moscow to study. He studied and accepted Marx theory and communism there and gradually became a vibrant and unyielding class revolutionist and a loyal and steadfast Marxist. Therefore, there is a complex process of development between Qu Qiubai’s so-called “two kinds of consciousness” and “dual personality”, which is of vital importance to comprehensively and accurately understand Qu Qiubai’s stage feelings, regional ideas and the overall images. It is also this process that has made Qu Qiubai “a lifetime of struggle and glory”. The process of Qu Qiubai’s confusion and struggle is not only the process of the development of his literary thought and political thought, but also the process of his view of happiness.

Qu Qiubai’s literature about happiness is really very few. On the contrary, there are many explanations about Qu Qiubai’s suffering and tragic life. But does this mean that Qu Qiubai has no sense of happiness? Chen Ying, a researcher at the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, in his book “The Theory of Happiness in life”, refutes the argument that “bitterness and happiness can’t coexist, the happy people have no pain, the suffering people have no happiness” [3]. In his book, he described Chen Jue as an example: “when he did his duty for the people, he died in his heart, and he did not betray the cause of revolution for his own life.”[3]. Chen Ying believes that: the bitterness and happiness of the body, the bitterness and happiness of the heart, the pain and happiness of the mind often intertwined. Therefore, sometimes the people who strive to be happy and the people who feel happy are not equal. As Rawls said, “the selfless dedication to a legitimate cause, or a person devoted to developing the happiness of others, is not regarded as a person pursuing happiness in the normal sense. It is a mistake to say that the saints and heroes, or those who have an obvious plan to surpass their lives, will be happy. But the saints, the heroes, and the people who recognize the constraints of justice in their intentions, are in fact happy when their plans are realized. Although they are not in pursuit of happiness, they feel happy when achieving the requirements of justice and the happiness of others, or gaining the virtue they admire. Rawls said: "happiness includes some kind of activity achievements and the certainty of rational results” [4]. Marx thinks, “the happiest person is the one who can bring happiness to most people”[5], “those who bring happiness to most people, the experience praises them as the happiest person” [5]. There is no doubt that Qu Qiubai is such a person. Qu Qiubai’s achievements in revolutionary movement and his persistence of the ideal of communism are more than “rational belief”. Qu Qiubai, from “black sweet hometown” to “hungry village”, has gone through confusion and pain to pursue the truth and experience of “communism”. He has “opened up a road of light for everyone”. So today we look at this great Marxist and revolutionary writer of early China from the perspective of happiness. He is indeed a happy man. Perhaps he has never pursued his own happiness, but his happiness is unique and “difficult to know”. But it can’t be said to be alone because it is worth learning and praising by later generations.

3. Implicit Analysis of Happiness in Qu Qiubai’s Legacy Documents

At present, the study of Qu Qiubai’s literature, artistic
thought and the theory of political revolution is quite thorough. However, the material excavation and theoretical exposition of the concept of happiness are not enough. The research value of the related literature cannot be denied. The research on Qu Qiubai’s view of happiness needs to refer to these literature. The following is a correlation analysis of the happiness implied in Qu Qiubai’s legacy documents.

Qu Qiubai, who originally planned to “escape from the world” in Wuxi, seems to be “mentally sentenced to life imprisonment”. The darkness of the society, the miserable livelihood of the people, and the danger of the country are constantly stimulating his mind. So he finds numerous “?” and at the same time, the quest for the way out of society is more and more strong [2]. In the winter of 1916, when Qu Qiubai went to Wuchang, he once sighed: “the dream of being pessimistic is not long. With boundless waves, calm and evil waves, I wash my heart and ease my depression. Hunger and thirst are wisdom, and there is a ray of hope”. [6]. It can be seen that the pain of his mind and the desire for the pursuit of truth reflect the inner contradiction of Qu Qiubai during his “escape”. He is always controlled by the “inside requirements”, but he also wants to surpass the scope. He has always had an “incredible riddle” in his mind which has become a shadow to watch him [7]. Mr. Liu Anting said that the “shadow” of the riddle is actually an ideal and ambition that makes him restless. In fact, this ideal and ambition originates from his estrangement of the evil society and the sympathy of the people. This also determines that such ideals and aspirations will increase the degree of his alienation, and also derive their own happiness of “ideal aspiration for rationality confirmation”.

The book “Childhood” expresses Qu Qiubai’s real thoughts and feelings. On the one hand, he expressed his misery of “childhood”; on the other hand, he expressed his disgust for “the most ruthless struggle” and the suffering of his persecuted [8]. At the same time, it revealed the joy and persistence of seeking knowledge. The “skeleton” in “Skeleton”, is also “not silent”, in which the words “skeleton”, “ghosts”, “boring records”, “to the ghost” are not different from “redundant words”. The book “Unnecessary Words” said: “life experience has been exhausted, leaving a shell” [10]. The pain and helplessness can be clearly seen in the annexed “no manuscript catalogue” of “Oil Dry Time” and in the “Skeleton” which said “meat has been rotten and blood has already dried up” [9]. However, the “Unnecessary Words” written in prison and the “unwritten catalogs” planned to write imply a positive and upbeat attitude [2]. At the end of his life, Qu Qiubai did not forget to continue his ideal career of communism. As Marx said, “if we choose a career that works best for mankind, then the burden will not overwhelm us because it is a sacrifice for everyone; what we enjoy at that time is not poor, limited, selfish pleasure, but our happiness which belongs to millions of people” [5]. So you can say that Qu Qiubai feels alienated and miserable, but it can be said that he is always persistent and happy. He sticks to his dream and belief, and is also happy with his dream and belief.

“These two consciousnesses struggle continuously in my heart and also corroded a great deal of my energy. I have to repress my own gentry and vagrant emotions to create new feelings with the Marx doctrine I have learned. But the sense of proletariat in my heart has never been truly victorious” [10]. “There is always a point in “dual-point” to achieve the actual victory. It is because of my political tiredness that my inner ideological struggle can’t continue.... I really have no interest in political and party problems”. [10] These have been the “iron proof” of suspicion of Qu Qiubai’s loyalty to communism. However, the invisible complex behind the surface words is worth rethinking. “Superfluous Words”, on the one hand, criticizes his depression and on the other hand sticks to his revolutionary position. At the same time, Qu Qiubai expressed his own dual personality and the proletarian consciousness, but also said, “It is absolutely wrong to say that I have given up Marx’s doctrine”[10]. “My thinking has gone up to the preliminary of Marx’s doctrine in the youth period, and it can’t be changed.” “Now that I am on this road, it is not easy to change.”[10] In the “Superfluous Words”, he emphasized his political career and he was very firm on the revolution and the ideal of communism. Qu Qiubai’s “dual consciousness” is destined to increase the degree of pain while decreasing the sense of alienation. Alienation and happiness, happiness and pain are interwoven and complementary.

Qu Qiubai once evaluated himself that “I thought I was very happy but there only leaves those who are sick with me. It is really painful.” [6]? This humorous self mockery just shows Qu Qiubai’s cognition of the logical relationship between happiness and pain. As Miyashiro Neya, a Japanese psychologist, written in his book “Emotional and Reasonable”, “there is a time of happiness and a time of pain”. [11] So when we study Qu Qiubai’s pain and struggle, we should also see how he is happy because of his ideal.

4. Prospective Analysis of Qu Qiubai’s View of Happiness

In recent years, the study of the sinicization of Marxism and Qu Qiubai has gradually become a hot issue in the study of Qu Qiubai. The research on the sinicization of Marxism and Qu Qiubai has also produced a number of academic achievements. Scholars have studied Qu Qiubai’s views on Marx’s doctrine, Qu Qiubai’s theoretical achievements in exploring the sinicization of Marxism and Qu Qiubai’s contribution to Marx’s philosophy. The achievements are quite fruitful.

In Qu Qiubai’s understanding of Marx’s doctrine, the studies mainly focused on the formation stage and the main content of Qu Qiubai’s Marx’s doctrine. There are roughly two kinds of views on the formation stage of Qu Qiubai’s Marx’s doctrine. Yu Rui’s “three stages of theory” in “Qu Qiubai and the Sinicization of Marxism” and Qin Zheng’s “four stages of theory” in “Qu Qiubai’s View of Marx” are typical representatives of “stage theory”. With regard to the specific content of Qu Qiubai’s view of Marx’s doctrine, scholars have also elaborated. For example, Hu Fengshun’s “The Historical Process of the Sinicization of Marxism and Qu Qiubai” and
Zhou Yiping & Lin Zuhua’s “The Two Features of Dissemination of Qu Qiubai”. In Qu Qiubai’s exploration of the Chinese revolutionary road, there are four viewpoints in the academic circle, namely, “four points”, “five points”, “six points” and “eight points” [12]. Yu Jia’s “On Qu Qiubai’s Contribution to the Sinicization of Marxism” is the representative of the “four points” theory; Wu Hanquan’s “Qu Qiubai and the Sinicization of Marx” is the “five point” theory representative; and Yu Rui put forward the “six points” theory on the basis of Wu Quanan; “Eight points” is put forward in the article “Qu Qiubai and the Sinicization of Marxism” by Qin Zhengwei & Xia Xianghe. The academic circles have accomplished some achievements in the study on Qu Qiubai and the Sinicization of Marxism. Scholars carried out research from Qu Qiubai’s understanding and dissemination of Marx’s philosophy, especially the formation of Sinicization of Marx’s philosophy. Hu Weixiong’s “Qu Qiubai’s Contribution to the Spread of Marxism philosophy” and “Qu Qiubai: the Philosopher in the History of Chinese Marxism Philosophy” by Bu Xiangji all expounded Qu Qiubai’s contribution as a popularization. So this systematization is not perfect, and this study of Qu Qiubai and the Sinicization of Marxism should be published. However, most of the present achievements are presented in the form of paper, so the degree of systematization is obviously not enough. Moreover, the study of Qu Qiubai and the sinicization of Marxism should expand the research space on the basis of modernization and popularization. So this systematization is not perfect, and this trend needs to be deepened and developed. As we all know, Marx has a comprehensive, scientific and highly practical sense of happiness, and Qu Qiubai, as an important representative of the early Marxist in China, has also been influenced by Marx’s theory on the formation and transformation of his values and outlook on life. His view of happiness, as one of the most important aspects, can’t be ignored naturally. Therefore, the study of Qu Qiubai and the sinicization of Marxism view of happiness, as a very important developmental level and expansion space, should become the trend of this research. The exploration of Qu Qiubai’s view of happiness is an important part of the study of Qu Qiubai and the sinicization of Marxism, and the significance and value are self-evident. Looking at the rapid economic development in China in the last thirty years, the cultural and social structural changes are almost equal to that of other countries for one hundred years. As the society enters into the period of accelerating transformation, there will appear many social phenomena and problems that can’t be completely debugged in all fields. Everyone feels confused facing the rapid development of material civilization, the raging waves of money worship, the reality of the loss of human desire and reason, and the emptiness in spiritual world. The happiness of life has not increased with the development of material civilization, but decreased, which is clearly proved by “loss of meaning” and “loss of life”. People thought that money is happiness or right is happiness, but when these things get, they are more annoyance, anguish and emptiness. This leads to the alienation from society and the distance from happiness. Thus, there results a trend of “breaking” in the whole society. People’s understanding of happiness has also begun to deviate. Human material, spiritual activities and their products have changed from the conditions of realizing happiness to the power of controlling themselves. As an important part of the development of the sinicization of Marxism, Marxism’s scientific and practical view of happiness has provided reliable basis and prospect for our further research on “happiness”.

5. “Alienated” Happiness: The Alienated Expression of Qu Qiubai’s View of Happiness

The research methodology of “happiness” in both ancient and modern times provides an important way for latter people to analyze happiness. Marx not only interprets happiness from the affirmative aspects of happiness, but also seeks and realizes happiness from the “misfortune” of “happiness”, which provides the necessary angles and ideas for the study of personal happiness. Moreover, according to Rawls’s division of “the people in pursuit of happiness” and “the people who is happy”, the breakthrough point of Qu Qiubai’s view of happiness is based on the alienated emotion. And the particularity of his “alienated” happiness is highlighted by the different forms of alienation in different periods and the corresponding path of his “conscious transformation”. After years of combing and summarizing, the author thinks that Qu Qiubai's view of happiness is characterized by the “alienation” expression. This is a kind of ideological expression which has the characteristics of Chinese traditional Taoist theory.

To be clear, Qu Qiubai was once a “happy man”. In pursuit of the value of a traditional intellectual and the cultural value of his body, Qu Qiubai tried to yearn for the realization of these values, and enjoyed the ideal state and spiritual pursuit.

1 See the specific content: Yang Weirong, Zhang Fangyu: Qu Qiubai's Happy Meteorology—“Alienation Type” Happy Harmony Form, Journal of Nanchang University (Humanities and Social Sciences), 2017(1).
of “leisurely and happy” style. This is, of course, a “lucky” but ultimately did not become Qu Qiubai’s ownership. Qu Qiubai is a man who prefers to save the country and the people with a knife. He can disregard the “pain of alienation” and his own “jade body”. He dares to look at the pain and helplessness, and admit negativity and alienation. He is clear that his happiness is to be realized in the pursuit of “communism” and “a bright road for everyone”. Facing his own situation and social reality, Qu Qiubai gradually realizes that communism and people’s happiness are not at hand, and we must strive for them. He is willing to make any sacrifices for it. As Marx said, “our cause is not obvious, but it will exist forever; and facing our ashes, the noble people will shed tears”, “the happiest people is the one who can let most people happy”, “the people who have brought happiness to most people, the experience praises them as the happiest man”. On this level, we may say that Qu Qiubai is no longer “a person seeking happiness”, but there is no doubt that he is a “happy man”. His theory and ideas about happiness is worthy of praise. So it can be said that Qu Qiubai’s ideas and pursuit of happiness have different forms of expression through “alienation”. Whether it is the alienation in the period of “pursuit happiness” or period of “happy man”, this expression constitutes the typical characteristic of Qu Qiubai’s view of happiness, i.e. “alienated” happiness.

The so-called “alienated” happiness contains two levels of meaning: it is a kind of happy attribute as well as a happy practice. For the attribute of happiness, it shows a feeling and attitude of “out of mud without dyeing” and “not with the flow of turbidity”. The gain of personal happiness is independent of social happiness, so it is usually far away from the “evil world” and “the vulgar”, accompanied by the complex of “world weariness”. Under the situation that the main body is unable to change the world but pursue spiritual freedom, it is similar to Zhuangzi’s “free life and inaction”. This is the characteristic of “alienated” happiness embodied in Qu Qiubai’s early pursuit of happiness. For the practice of happiness, its performance is no longer an alienation from the world view, but an alienation of methodology. First of all, the subject has begun to have a strong sense of responsibility for the society, realizing that the realization of personal happiness depends on the pursuit of social happiness. Therefore, it will not be hidden from the world and yearn for transcending freedom, but because of the influence of external factors, the road to happiness is constantly frustrated and sought. In the process of finding the path, adjustment is skillfully used to transform the alienated emotion into motive force or the corresponding catalytic element so as to keep going on the road of practice. This kind of happiness attribute contains Rawls’s “subjective belief in the achievement of a certain activity and the reasonableness of the results”. This rationality convince is a “motive force” that encourages it to be happy in any way of practice, and alienation is a very prominent manifestation of it.

In the course of Qu Qiubai’s “alienated” happiness transition in his life, the two different kinds of happy attributes, i.e. the traditional and modern features, have formed the grand and majestic happiness of Qu Qiubai. The former is the fusion of Chinese traditional literati before he becomes a Marxism. Qu Qiubai, a Chinese traditional scholar stratum, has his own unique psychological evolution and struggle process. This process makes his early “estranged” happiness with its unique cultural atmosphere showing a unique state of happiness. This cultural spirit is derived from the spiritual structure of Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism. This “estranged” traditional form of happiness, as his special status and unique situation of the “old scholar”, shows the wisdom of life and the “elastic world of happiness” of Confucianism, Buddhism and Taoism. The realm of happiness also manifests gradation and integration with the cross transformation of happiness forms. The latter is gradually formed in the process of growing up to be a Marxism, with the progressive Marxism doctrine. In this period, the “alienated” happiness, as his special identity and temperament of the “scholar leader”, reveals his indeterminacy to dissociate from politics and literati. It shows his internal transformation from the “alienated” world view to the “communism”, and the elastic wisdom of transforming the “alienated” emotional consciousness into motive force and catalytic elements. Its flexibility is reflected in trying to seek a “unity” and “balance”, which highlight the historical characteristics of Marxism happiness. However, due to the constraints of the times and his character, Qu Qiubai was mixed with non-scientific factors in the process of balancing happiness pursuit from “introverted transcendence” to “extrovert transcendence”. But its progressiveness and enlightenment can’t be ignored. To some extent, it is a kind of progress from “unconsciousness” to “consciousness”, which is mainly reflected in his attitude and cognitive change to his “alienation” attribute. The “unconsciousness” is reflected in his passive and unacceptable attitude to the estrangement of the alienation between himself and the outside world in the early days. The “consciousness” is embodied in the initiative and consciousness transformation of his “dual personality” after contacting with Marxism.

6. Conclusions

On the basis of implication and existence, the study eventually forms a prospective analysis of the relevant research and the conclusion of Qu Qiubai’s “alienated” happiness. It needs to be pointed out that “alienated” happiness is not a specific idea of happiness, because it has no established contents and methods. And it is not a kind of fixed form of happiness, either. As a happy expression of alienating emotion, it is contained in the traditional Chinese humanistic spirit and their flexible pursuit. It has been endowed with new characteristics with the change of times. From the philosophical methodology of “affirmative and negative” to study the problem of happiness, it is possible to use the dialectical relationship between “alienation and intimacy” to quote the characteristics of Qu Qiubai’s “near but not tolerant” happiness. Thus, the special existence of “alienated” happiness in Qu Qiubai, a traditional Chinese happiness form, is systematically introduced in this paper. However, the baptism and influence of Marxism make Qu Qiubai’s “alienated” happiness experience a change from traditional to
modern form. Only by systematically reviewing this change course and summarizing the practical enlightenment of Qu Qiubai’s view of happiness, can we focus on the ecological transformation of the “alienate” happiness under the context of “sense of gain”. This logical order constitutes the whole thread of the research on Qu Qiubai’s view of happiness. The research on the process of the “alienated” happiness in Qu Qiubai, who is transformed from “alienation of the world” to a firm Marxist, can expand and deepen the study of Qu Qiubai and the understanding of Qu Qiubai and sinicization of Marxism. It also has positive theoretical and practical significance on sorting out the conflict of the modern social values, alleviating the alienation conflicts in social transition period, thus forming systematic cognition about happiness and pursuing rational happiness.

References


