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AUTHOR'S STYLE IN CHINESE LITERATURE IN THE SECOND HALF OF THE XX CENTURY: ON THE EXAMPLE OF YAO XUEYIN'S WORKS

Summary. The research object in this article is the individual author's style in Chinese literature of the second half of the 20th century, illustrated through the works of Yao Xueyin (姚雪垠), one of the most prominent representatives of this period. China's socio-political changes, from the May Fourth Movement of 1919 to the Cultural Revolution and the Policy of Reform and Opening Up, are explored through the examination of the writer's creative path. The article analyzes the author's life and biographical heritage, identifying the key motifs of his work, including depictions of revolutionary struggle, condemnation of corruption, resistance to Japanese Pan-Asianism, affirmation of humanistic values, and the significance of the “common man” in history. Yao Xueyin's use of multi-layered language is revealed: from the vernacular baihua and northern dialects to wenyān, archaisms, chengyu, historicisms, exonyms, and military terminology. Works such as *Li Zicheng* (“李自成”), *Sprouts* (“新芽”), and others are analyzed, combining autobiographical elements, documentary sources, and deep psychological character portrayals. The research shows that the author created historical narratives that accurately conveyed the life of the peasantry, despite strict censorship, while maintaining both accessibility and artistic sophistication. Specific emphasis is given to precise explanations of general health, life, relationships, as well as the discovery of long-standing customs and etiquette. Yao Xueyin's style is recognized for its combination of high literary tradition and living vernacular, which has contributed to the popularity of cultural heritage and the public's commitment to “high” art. The article draws on the research of Ukrainian, Chinese, European, and American scholars, summarizing the events of the formation of modern Chinese literature and defining Yao Xueyin's place in the literary process of the second half of the 20th century. It emphasizes that his works remain relevant today, as examples of the fusion of historical authenticity, artistic mastery, and profound reflection on social issues.

Key words: Chinese literature, author's style, modern Chinese literature, Cultural Revolution, realism, literature of reforms, Yao Xueyin, chengyu, historical novel, dialectisms.

Problem Statement. The social and political transformations in the country's economic development and the spiritual quests of the Chinese people were reflected in Chinese prose of the 20th

century. The past century's history of China is marked by various epochs, with prose being a key player in society's cultural life during transitional periods. This was the case at the beginning of the 20th century during the “May Fourth Movement”; a similar situation occurred in the mid to late 20th century, when large-scale research in the field of literary fiction began following significant political changes in the state. The political and economic experiments that accompanied the Mao era caused a deep socio-political and spiritual crisis in the country, as is widely known. From the late 1970s, consistent economic reforms began (including reviving elements of the free market, private property, and foreign capital attraction). After nearly thirty years of the communist path toward realizing the national ideal, an inevitable “thaw” in the socio-political sphere led to an activation of progressive public forces, which caused an inevitable rise in the field of literature, particularly in prose creativity. The politicized stereotypical prose of the Maoist period gradually gave way to a new prose – independent, vivid, full of reflection and search.

Analysis of Recent Research and Publications. Ukrainian sinology still lacks research on Chinese prose and Yao Xueyin's works. Recently, Ukrainian sinologists have increasingly focused on mid to late 20th-century Chinese authors. The Ukrainian sinologist N. Isayeva contributed significantly to the study of literature during this period, particularly Chinese prose. Other Ukrainian researchers, such as O. Vorobei, K. Murashevich, D. Vyshnyak, D. Kharyshyn, D. Moskalov, V. Maksymets, and M. Ilnytska have also studied Chinese prose of the second half of the 20th century. Worth noting is the work of A. Rodionov, “Chinese Literature of the Modern and Contemporary Periods”. The lack of attention given to Yao Xueyin's work leaves a gap that determines the importance of this research.

Purpose. This research aims to establish a link between the literary process during the middle to the second half of the 20th century and earlier periods of recent Chinese history and the global literary process, determining the most distinguishing aspects of the author's style in Chinese literature from the middle to the second half of the 20th century. An examination of Yao Xueyin's life-biographical legacy, an explanation of the primary motivators behind his work, and his author's style.

Presentation of the main material. Yao Xueyin (姚雪垠) is a prominent figure in China's latest literature, and his creative path was influenced by new literature that emerged from the May Fourth Movement of 1919. It was preceded by the revolution of 1911–1912, which was provoked by a deep crisis and the decline of all industries. The events of 1919 should be broken down into cultural and political aspects altogether. Consider them in a broad sense. Enlightenment is the first concept in Western culture, which promotes humanism, humanitarianism, individualism, and individual freedom (what Hu Shi 胡适 referred to as “human literature” and “freedom literature”). The second aspect is nationalism, which promotes class struggle, the worker-peasant revolution, and the artistic expression of Leninist and Stalinist Marxism that was brought about by the “cannon fire of the October Revolution” [1, p. 67]. Considering all of the above, there was a need for new literature that would become accessible to the public (new literature was needed to be made available to the public (there is a problem with the speech of literary *wenyan* and colloquial-literary *baihua* (白话)[2, p. 67-68]), and will also raise the problems of social life of his era. With the expansion of China's international relations, European literature became widespread, which had a great influence on the emergence of new literature. American scientists note that after the revolution 1911, authors turned away from classical composition methods, and many writers (in particular Hu Shi 胡适 and Lu Xun 鲁迅) advocated writing in the vernacular *baihua* (白话). The change in Chinese education from a fascination with classical literature to science and technology subjects reduced the mastery of traditional literary skills. At the same time, civil service examinations for official positions were abolished, which were based on knowledge of the four founding books of Confucianism. The use of *baihua* (白话) has proven particularly effective in prose [3].

During this period, a new and distinctive style emerged that merges Chinese literature with European specificity. The literary revolution of January 1917 culminated in the creation of new writing. Researchers note that Liu Bannong (刘半农), Qian Suantong (钱玄同), Hu Shi (胡适), and others argued that new literature should be understandable and straightforward. Its basis should be colloquial language, and the measure of aesthetics should be the truthfulness of what is depicted. Lu Xun (鲁迅) and Hu Shi (胡适) were the initial representatives of this trend at that time [4]. There was not only a transformation of the topic, but also a phenomenon in the language as a whole. According to Patrick D. Murphy's article, a similar process took place in Japan simultaneously. It has been going on for a considerable amount of time. However, the transformation of the language took place in parallel with the attempt to accept and adapt foreign concepts, literary styles, and even philosophies, although these changes were met with fierce and diverse resistance. Japan is modernizing its katakana system to accomplish this goal, and China is transforming an ideographic representation [5, p. 12].

Undoubtedly, the popular Western world trends, such as European romanticism or modernism, were not enough to satisfy the readers' needs of that time. The combination of the ideas of the proletarian revolution and the author's style of that time was a significant manifestation of his style at that time, rejecting obsessive Japaneseness.

Left-wing literature was the dominant literature from 1927 to 1937. Such authors as Lu Xun (鲁迅), Mao Dun (茅盾), Xia Yan (夏衍), and others embodied Marxist views of the world, including

art, in their works [4]. It's worth noting that writers of that era were characterized by acute social problems, which were sharply limited by the class approach. As a matter of fact, the significant impact was on the literature of neighboring Russia, which had fairly close economic ties and significant cultural influences due to the introduction of the ideas of proletarianism. It is worth mentioning that the generally accepted time frames for the division of “new” and “latest” literature in China are not quite reliable, as the boundaries between these two directions have been rather blurred during the formative process.

All the above-mentioned events were formative for the personality of the future novelist Yao Xueyin (姚雪垠), who began to rapidly gain popularity in the forties of the last century, coinciding with the course of the war. The key motives were the condemnation of corruption at all levels of government and the terror of special services. However, the principles of Mao Zedong's policy took the lead. At the same time, there has been a rise in the frequency of decisive criticism of the Kuomintang regime. We also found confirmation by comparing the works of the chosen author with those of scientists from the Western world. For example Kirk Denton, who emphasizes that a vivid example of the manifestation of this feature is, in particular, the work “Storm around fort” (“碉堡风波”). Its theme is the satirical exposure of the greed, corruption, and thirst for profit of officials, above all else. The fort's construction was their responsibility to protect the village from enemies, including robbers. However, the fort was never built and the village was completely destroyed. Another such example is the work “Elections” (“大选”), which also deals with the dishonesty of senior officials, where a failed scientist buys votes to secure the position of an official for a failed son [6, pp. 229-331]. The same motifs are revealed in the novel “Li Jicheng” (“李自成”). Therefore, one should not deny the deep thoughtfulness of the then head of the newly created People's Republic of China and the involvement of literature and all art to manipulate society and spread the party's ideas.

Research of that time singled out the following main plot directions: glorification of the combat revolutionary past of the CCP; description of the exploits of Chinese soldiers who assisted the people of Korea in opposing American imperialism, and the friendship of the Chinese and Soviet peoples [2]. It would be worth adding ideas of resistance to Japanese pan-Asianism, as in the work “History of the red lantern” (“红灯笼故事”), where the bright preaching of the policy of the united front is felt. The story is written in the form of a parable. An attack by enemies has caused the father and two sons to be separated. The father asks his sons to look for him in the mountains one day, when they become adults, by a single landmark – a red lantern. They faced many difficulties, but in the end, they met on their way to their father and staged an armed skirmish due to a misunderstanding. A vivid artistic technique is used where the brother goes against each other but are forced to reconcile by their only enemy. Together, they overcame it. The literature of Yao Xueyin (姚雪垠) is a representative of the specific era, and these ideas can be observed with the unaided eye. It is worth adding that this text is considered one of the most complete, instructive, and artistically complete. Despite the concept of an individual author's style, writers of the same period often have tangential features in the subject matter of their works, which is an integral part of the influences on their worldview.

It is well-known that the Cultural Revolution lasted from 1966 to 1976. The massacre of artistic figures was known as a bloody

one in history. However, during these times, Yao Xueyin (姚雪垠) appears as a phenomenon, who not only continues his creative activity, but also avoids persecution and persecution at the request of the “chief”, 1957, when he was recognized as “right”, twice received support from him in «difficult times», and already in 1976 was awarded the Mao Dun Prize (茅盾文学奖) for the second volume of the novel “Li Jicheng” (“李自成”).

Perhaps the most profound and famous work of Yao Xueyin is the historical novel “Li Jicheng” (“李自成”), the duration of which was written for more than 40 years (October 1957 – May 1999). In addition, more than one work of Wang Weilin, a close friend and associate of the writer, is dedicated to this. The man considers the novel to be famous, and the way it was written is legendary. Also, according to the testimony of the figure, Yao Xueyin “embodied the humanistic spirit of the Chinese nation” [7]. Mao Zedong calls concern about the writer's life phenomenal. It is worth mentioning that Deng Xiaoping, who eventually also became his patron, gave significant praise to this artist's work.

Yao Xueyin's work vividly represents the anti-Japanese movement's ideas, as previously mentioned. Popular unification against an oppressive enemy is widely accepted as a cause of cultural and national uplift. One of the vivid examples of the embodied characteristic feature of the author's style of the specified author is the work “Sprouts” (“新芽”). The main motive is to protect the family from the brutality of Japanese persecution. The death of all family members, except for the boy who joined the partisan unit, was a symbol of indomitability and the rebirth of a new China that needed to be fused. Analyzing this work, another characteristic feature of Yao Xueyin emerged: a call to ancient writings and a call to higher moral values through the prism of centuries of experience:

“我实实在在的告诉你们：一粒麦子不落在地里死了，仍旧是一粒；若是死了，就结出许多子粒来。

— 约翰福音第十二章” [8].

The quote above from the holy scriptures of the Gospel of John is an absolutely exceptional gesture for its time. After all, proletarian society was quite clear about religiosity. However, Yao Xueyin focused on Confucian principles instead of religious problems. In his works, the author constantly recalls ancient works. For example, in the novel “Li Jicheng” (“李自成”), the mention of “Xing jing” (“星经”) is a book of interpretations of celestial bodies and signs of the Han, and “Wangqi jing” (“望气经”) – Book of divination by the form of clouds, a book of canons on the topic of interpretation of celestial har signs in Tang dynasty [9].

Another postulate of Yao Xueyin's educational goal is to promote the importance of a small person in a cycling society. Also, the main idea of proletarianism is self-sacrifice for the common good. It would be appropriate to give an example of the story “Half a cart of straw”. European research scientists have also proved this postulate. It is the awakening of revolutionary consciousness in a simple peasant with a satirical nickname taken as the work's title. The protagonist joins a partisan group (similar to resisting Japanese pan-Asianism), sacrificing what is most valuable to himself. Through numerous vicissitudes of life, the man concludes that some of his desires are too selfish and contradict the noble and comprehensive motives of the revolution, victory in the war, and the spirit of the era of that time. The main character is severely injured during a Japanese attack at the end of the story. He is taken to the hospital, where he mutters about his cow, which is supposed to be nearby. For the common good, the man sacrificed himself and his simple

life. The work begins with a frame-preface (which is also a characteristic feature of Mr. Xueyin's author's style) from the first-person narrator. To create an atmosphere of reality, which is quite important for political literature, the text is created in the form of personal memories, or memories that, in a certain way, touched the narrator's life. The stories of this author are focused on dialogicity and “autobiography”. The language is simple but vivid. The dialogues fully convey the era, including the dialects of Henan and Anhui provinces [6].

From a theoretical and practical point of view and taking into account the above-mentioned facts, one cannot help but be suited to the biographical nature of Yao Xueyin's literary legacy. After all, Bao Guangjie in his report notes, referring to Yao's interpretation of the “History of the Red Lantern”, in the essay “About Zhao Yiping”, which deals with the influence of the scientist on his literary activity, that he – became the ideological companion of his creation, the real person – Zhao Yiping. The man was a teacher at Datong School in Qixian County, Henan Province. To improve the soldiers' morale, he had to travel to Shandong. So, at the secret farewell dinner of a group of progressive teachers and students, where the author was also present, Zhao told a deep story about “red lantern” [10]. It is also worth remembering that Mao Zedong identified himself with Emperor Qing in the novel “Li Zicheng” (“李自成”). The image of the character was largely taken from the leader.

Yao Xueyin mainly uses *baihua* (白话), which has elements of Classical Chinese *wenyan* (文言) and also included a northern dialect. Despite strict censorship, the writer reproduced the life of the peasantry with incredible accuracy. He created historical novels in which he used notes from the Qing dynasty. He owes considerable skill in the field of “coexistence” with strict literary requirements to Guo Mojo (郭沫若), under whose leadership he worked in the propaganda department. The use of speech and the significant use of phraseological units became Yao Xueyin's calling card in the literary world. Due to China's numerous defeats in wars, German, English, French, Russian, and sometimes even Ukrainian immigrants entered the country, forming the modern Chinese language, which subsequently disappeared from high literature. This approach revived the peasantry and brought ordinary people closer to art and high culture. Despite the simplicity of his speech, Yao Xueyin's style is distinguished by high artistry and sophistication. The meaning of what is written is the top priority, not its poeticization. For example, the novel's second volume, which won the author the Mao Dun Literary Prize “Li Jicheng”, is an example of controversial literature. First of all, the genre – is a historical novel, secondly – highlighting the shortcomings of the sole form of government and the significance of public sentiment for general prosperity, thirdly – the popular uprising ends in defeat (the open form of calling in literature for such a solution to social problems was blatant during the period of the Cultural Revolution), the fourth – available form of presentation, the fifth – deep problems of social inequality, loyalty, observance of Confucian principles and countless other problems are covered by the work. Each character is not limited by the framework of “good” or “evil”, but is a living person thanks to the work's perfect manner and deep psychology. Loyalty to the Emperor was behind the servant's betrayal.

In China, dialects are commonly classified into northern and southern categories. Yao Xueyin's author's style is characterized by the first. For example, the use of 挂着 [guàzhe] in the modern literary language *putonghua* (普通话) has the meaning of “what

hangs”, but in the northern dialects and dialects of the central provinces of modern China, it has the meaning of “postpone to ageless” or “postpone (something)”. Or 不胜 [bùshèng] – “invincible” used in the sense of “worse”, 胡同 [hútóng] – hutun (胡同) can only be found in Beijing, and “joke” (笑话) can be used in the rough form of “mocking (someone or something)”. The text contains the objection commonly used by representatives of the northern regions “不敢” [bù gǎn], as well as the reinforcement of 更其 [gèng qí] [11]. It is worth noting that, in particular, for the novel “Li Jicheng” (“李自成”), the use of dialectics was provoked by the researches of a number of documents of that time, a significant part of philological works of the Ming Dynasty, as well as works of fiction, was written in the *Yunbai language* (韵白), in Qing times, among scientists and officials, the most common language was *Jingbai* (京白).

The central parts of the modern People's Republic of China had a dominant phonetic system and vocabulary. The recognition of Yao Xueyin's creative handwriting added “credibility” to his works. This is confirmed by the opinion of scientist L. Lysychenko, who observes that “one of the most important components of lexical meaning, which is determined by the vast majority of linguists, is the relation to the phenomena of objective reality” [12, p. 272]. Using terminology is a feature that Yao Xueyin's creative output shares. To a large extent, military or clerical terms in works of art acquire connotations and emotional coloring. For example, the term “situation” (情况, qíng kuàng) in the dictionary of military terminology means “change” when used in the context of the battlefield. Or the use of “阿” (ar-) as a prefix, characteristic of dialectic speech [11]. Therefore, for translators working on the works of a specified author, it is necessary to apply complex translation strategies and take a deep and thorough approach in their professional activity.

It is also important to note the frequent use of historicism and archaism in Yao Xueyin's works. Yao Xueyin's works are filled with many, making them recognizable. It also deals with the ancient names of cities or their parts (京师 [jīngshī], 奴儿干 [nú'ér gān], 德胜门 [dé shèng mén]). The use of outdated pronoun forms is also typical. From the pages of the writer's works, you can learn that there was another form of the pronoun “我” – “朕” [zhèn] in the sense of “we” when the Emperor spoke about himself. Using fixed expressions is one of Yao Xueyin's contributions to popularizing Chinese linguistic and cultural heritage. Perhaps the most striking example of this is “Li Jicheng”.

The legendary expression “自古未有权臣在内，大将能立功于外者!” – “From time immemorial, there has been no all-powerful dignitary, just like a general who has not known defeat, and Yue Shaobo is no exception. His efforts are in vain”. As of today, historians have recognized it as a symbol of the general composition of the feudal era in the Celestial Empire. The use of idioms (成语, Chéngyǔ) a significant part of which comes precisely from the ancient Chinese language, is another sign of the author's style of the writer. In his dialogic speech, he frequently refers to the origin of these expressions. A significant proportion of stable expressions of this type are characterized by the integrity of the constituent structure, as noted, in particular, by O. Fedichev [13, p. 84]. Despite everything, they need a perfect understanding of their content, for the sake of organic application in the flow of artistic speech, giving it sophistication and expressiveness. It would be appropriate to note that their use requires significant skills in the grammar of the Chinese language, since in some places, idioms *chengyu* (“成语”, chéngyǔ) have features that characterize a noun phrase, but

are used as circumstances, an appendix, or a predicate [13, p. 88]. For example, 毕恭毕敬 [bì gōng bì jìng] has an ancient origin from the ancient text “Book of Songs” and has the meaning “highly respected”, which is a synonym expression [14].

Attention to detail is a defining characteristic of Yao Xueyin. He gives detailed descriptions of the attire of the main characters belonging to the era (the attire of a higher-ranking official for an audience with the Emperor), interiors (which is only worth the description of the Emperor's tea table from the novel “Li Jicheng”), ancient customs, norms of etiquette (“大人” [dà rén], as a polite address used for a person older in age and higher in rank). We found many examples that require separate research during our research on the author's artistic heritage. Even the use of jargon, such as “窝”, demonstrates the completeness of the author's in-depth analysis of the era before and during the creation of the work, and his ability to perceive and meet the needs of his reader subtly.

Conclusions. Yao Xueyin's work is inherently characteristic of the period of development and formation of modern Chinese literature from 1949, through the policy of “Great Leap Forward”, “Cultural Revolution” and “Policy of Reform and Openness”, which was reflected in the literary process and influenced the characteristic features of handwriting of all authors of that time. The artistic perfection of the works of the writers of the specified era lies in the depth of the approach to solving social problems facing the characters, the truthfulness of the reproduction of peasant life and the life of ordinary people, including the removal from the canons of a purely literary language in order to satisfy the reader's need for “accessible” art. While not ignoring politics, the novelist incorporates revolutionary concepts within the confines of censorship. Authors from the middle of the 20th century are distinguishable by the vocabulary they use in their creative work, which combines high language used by officials during the Emperor's time, peasant sayings, and highly artistic language figures such as Chenyu. To stimulate the ethnic memory of the people, the writer uses phraseological structures, archaisms, historicisms, and exonyms. The chosen writer's creativeness as a representative of the group aims to simultaneously raise morale and touch experiences, while triggering emotion during the reading process. Each character in the work is a character with psychology, not divided into “good” or “evil”, emphasizing the reality of what is written. A significant part of the work has autobiographical connotations. It is common for characters to be written off as non-real people. Yao Xueyin's works are still relevant, despite being written in the latter half of the 20th century.

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Семеніст І., Федюк В. Авторський стиль у китайській літературі другої половини XX століття: на прикладі творчості Яо Сюєїня

Анотація. Об'єктом дослідження у статті є індивідуальний авторський стиль у китайській літературі другої половини XX століття на прикладі творчості Яо Сюєїня (姚雪垠) – одного з найяскравіших представників літератури Китаю часів «культурної революції». Творчий шлях письменника розглянуто у контексті суспільно-політичних трансформацій Китаю від «Руху Четвертого

травня» 1919 року до доби «культурної революції» та «політики реформ і відкритості». У статті проаналізовано життєвий і біографічний спадок автора, виявлено ключові мотиви його творчості, серед яких – відображення революційної боротьби, засудження корупції, опір японському паназіатизму, утвердження гуманістичних цінностей і значення «маленької людини» в історії. Розкрито використання Яо Сюєїнем багатшарової мови: від народної *байхуа* та північних діалектів до *веньяню*, а також архаїзмів, що поєднуються з ідіомами чен'юй, історизмами, екзонімами та військовою термінологією. Проаналізовано твори «Лі Цзичен» («李自成»), «Паростки» («新芽») та інші, у яких поєднано автобіографічні елементи, документальні джерела й глибокий психологізм образів. Показано, як письменник, попри жорстку цензуру, створював історичні полотна, що правдиво передавали життя селянства, дотримуючись доступної для читача форми та водночас зберігаючи художню витонченість. Особливу увагу приділено деталізації описів побуту, одягу, інтер'єрів, відтворенню стародавніх звичаїв та етикету. Виявлено, що стиль Яо Сюєїня вирізняється поєднанням високої літературної традиції з живою народною мовою, що сприяло популяризації культурної спадщини та залученню широкого загалу до «високого» мистецтва. Стаття спирається на дослідження українських, китайських, європейських і американських науковців, узагальнює події становлення новітньої китайської літератури та окреслює місце Яо Сюєїня в літературному процесі Китаю другої половини XX століття. Підкреслено, що його творчість і сьогодні зберігає актуальність, демонструючи зразок поєднання історичної достовірності, художньої майстерності й глибокого осмислення соціальних проблем.

Ключові слова: китайська література, авторський стиль, новітня китайська література, Культурна революція, Яо Сюєїнь, чен'юй, історичний роман, діалектизм.

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