

2006电影《暖》笔记

- Nuan is a sentimental story from the point of view of a man smitten by a strong nostalgia for his childhood in the countryside. By nostalgia is meant a strong emotional attachment to things that are no more. This reminds of many literary texts by authors in the West who, like Huo Jianqi, felt a seismic change in social mores when capitalist markets flourished and when “... the conscious values of the bourgeoisie: individualism, the thirst for power, money, and eroticism, which triumph over the ancient feudal values of altruism, charity, and love.” Marxist critic Lucien Goldmann’s remark here about Balzac novels connects the poignant story of Nuan to another French literary heroine that Guy de Maupassant invented in *The Diamond Necklace*. The pathos of both stories comes from a sense that something profound has happened in how humans experience life.
- Nuan loses two boyfriends who seem heartless not to cherish her as she would have liked them to. But this is in large measures due to her misconceived self-pride and stubborn notion of how much she is worth as a young woman. She fails to take into consideration that China’s urbanization subtly but steadily takes away her social standing and worth as a rural woman, the same way Mathilda never suspects that the necklace she borrows from Madame Forestier is a fake. She and her husband worked hard for ten years to pay 36,000 francs to buy a diamond necklace that she lost only to be told, ten years later, that it is worth no more than 500 francs. A commodity society is what Nuan and Mathilda step into, with no ideas of how it changes the way people interact with one another. The redeeming qualities of the loser (Nuan or Mathilda) are lost and gone forever: the values of friendship, honor and truthfulness.
- It is this final realization that makes Nuan decide to marry Yaba, the deaf-and-mute, in the village whose personal value is inextricably tied to the land and a rural life as is Nuan, a cripple with no special skill or a college degree. What Nuan has and is being devalued in urbanization in China, is love which she innocently wastes on the little martial artist and on Jing He. Gone is the age in which things such as marriage, love, and true friendship mean everything. Neither Jing He nor the martial artist cherish and value Nuan as she would them, for their good looks, talents and what she thinks they represent. It never occurs to Mathilda that her moment of vanity is as cheap or meaningless as a fake diamond necklace. Both stories register a historical moment of social transformation in which people find new dreams and substitutes for what was.
- It may be a far stretch, but I would still argue that Guy de Maupassant and Huo Jianqi seemed keenly aware that what is no more is a finer and better side of whom we have evolved into in the age of social progress. Interesting questions to raise are what draws Jing He and Nuan together after years of estrangement and their respective marriages? What lessons is Mathilda supposed to learn from her one moment of vanity that coasts her a decade of handwork as payment? What is the nature of modernity or human evolution? What warmth does Jing He find in his childhood with her 暖? Do we dislike Mathilda or Nuan who never suspect a flawed and inauthentic world that forced them to understand things in a new light, and realize that everything that clutters are not necessarily gold or diamond? And ultimately, is it a good thing to have outgrown the age of *the biblical magi* who sacrifice their material possessions for the people they love. Modern Chinese must think hard whether the things they have rejected for social progress bring them closer to or estrange them farther from their human nature.