

# The embodiment of “growth” in Jin Ailian’s bildungsroman

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**Abstract:** This paper will make a preliminary study of Jin Ailian’s Bildungsroman, who was born in 1980, entered the literary arena in 2002, and has attracted much attention in the literary world. Most of Jin Ailian’s novels focus on the growth narrative. Therefore, this paper aims to investigate the works from the perspective of the novelty of the Bildungsroman of the 2000s, which has been continuously created since the last century. Jin Ailian’s novels describe the sufferings of contemporary characters in a clear or sincere tone, and win the favor of the public with the form and skills of traditional novels and the persuasive narrative, meticulous and fresh psychological description. In particular, her Bildungsroman shows the sensibility of the new generation and the growth will of the subject.

**Key words:** growth narrative; Novelty; Growth will

In order to investigate the literature of the 2000s, we need to think on the basis of the literature of the 1990s. However, in the 1990s, with the spread of distrust of exaggerated narration, the grand narration was reduced. In the great challenge of cultural industry and commodity aesthetics, literature fell into an isolated situation in which it must establish its own identity. In Korea in the 2000s, novels dealing with human growth were constantly created and varied in various forms according to the situation of the times. Bildungsroman mainly tells the inner contradictions experienced by the characters who entered the adult world from childhood to adolescence and the awakening process of the self world around spiritual growth. Most importantly, the spiritual crisis experienced by the characters in the works and the consequent self awakening require the establishment of the relationship between self and the world. However, the growth novels in South Korea have different development processes from those in the West. The Western upbringing novels are the forms of the period of the integration of personal inner ideals and the possibility of social existence. On the contrary, the modern literature of South Korea started from the colonial situation where the ideal of the individual heart and the society could not be integrated. South Korean Bildungsroman depicts the division and hesitation that cannot be integrated into the existing social order. Therefore, Korean Bildungsroman has the characteristic of finding the desire for reconciliation at the level of transcending the existing social structure.

When it comes to the novelty of Bildungsroman in the 2000s, Jin Ailian has to be concerned about. After entering the literary world in 2002, Jin Ailian has a gorgeous experience of winning awards and the attention of the literary world. Most of his novels tell the story of birth and growth. However, it is worth noting that she has replaced the depression and disillusionment shown in the initiation novels of the 1990s and the exploration of female identity shown by existing female writers, but has improved the sensibility of a new generation, such as neutrality and positive comedy, and has shown the growth will of the subject to deal with and digest the tragic reality of the late capitalist society in its own way. Compared with the 1970s, when we can still find people who transcend the sufferings of life in reality, the early 1980s in the period of despair, the 1990s, when we needed to rely on internal purity to disintegrate the illusory world staged, the conditions of the increasingly powerful society, and the 2000s, when we need to consciously try to visualize the harm and lack imposed on individuals, society is changing rapidly. With the change of the external world, the narrative way of describing growth has also changed. This paper will preliminarily analyze the characteristics of Jin Ailian’s growth narrative. This paper expounds the novelty of his Bildungsroman and the creation tendency of Bildungsroman in the 2000s. The failure of young people in her works to enter the “market economy”, a common public sphere in modern society, means that they fail to integrate into the daily social space. Therefore, in the so-called normal social life, they are not reasonably distributed, that is, they lack a sense of belonging as people of this era. This paper will explore the characteristics of Jin Ailian’s Bildungsroman, and clarify the practical significance of the novelty of his Bildungsroman.

## 1 Cosmic imagination

According to the discussion of critics who observed the characteristics of the novels in the 2000s, the style of the 2000s is divided into fantasy and reality. Different from the previous era, the fantasy of the 1990s cannot change the tragic understanding of the world. While the fantasy of the 2000s deeply feels the reality, it is better to add its own fantasy to the existing reality rather than try to change it. There is also a tendency to ensure certainty in the realistic understanding of tragedy by not distinguishing between reality and fantasy and masking reality with fantasy. Therefore, people will have the desire to get rid of daily restrictions and jump to the sky, which makes people dream of breaking away from the sharp structural network of late capitalism, not the existing order system, but the paradoxical world that fundamentally negates its structure, that is, the “cosmic imagination” breaking away from gravity space. In who is playing with fire on the beach, there is a universal dream. Just as the father writes the birth story beautifully, the child will also imagine his own birth story and become the maker of his own origin. The sleeping “I” in the novel floated up in the sky in a dream, overlooking the father of the story subject, the mother of the story object, the audience’s me, and the story centered on them. Recalling the father in his youth, he distorted the origin of “I” and told you. Although it is a lie, “I”, the origin of mankind, has become a beautiful and dreamy thing because of imagination. “I” became the child of sparks, the child of soap bubbles emitting the aroma of vinolia into the universe. In this way, the creation of “I” was rewritten. This imagination is a powerful force for resetting relationships.

“If those flowers and fires are all dad’s seeds, where are the other children now?”

Dad said.

“Copenhagen”

“What?”

“In Copenhagen. Also in Scandinavia, Buenos Aires, Stockholm, Pyongyang, Istanbul.” The above is a quotation from the original text. On this basis, the seeds of life spreading like sparks are sprouting all over the world. “Just like the wind blowing tens of millions of kilometers from the North Pacific in order to come to me, no wonder I must meet that dream.” I fell into a deep sleep again, and went back to the moment when I became a young man and woman who were born with seeds. I became a spark to comfort my mother’s little loneliness. Beyond this lack of symbolic objects, the warm cosmic imagination in who is playing with fire on the beach is also a beautiful dream story based on the non Oedipus wishes outside the Oedipus structure.

## 2 A spiritual leap beyond the tragic reality

In the spring stilts, the teenager treads on the spring stilts alone on the roof, and the solitary movement jumping high into the night sky has the potential to leap like the universe. At first glance, what happens in the universe with infinite time and space is just a repetition of what happened in reality. But even the ordinary and humble daily life, when expanded to the level of the universe imagination, the humble reality will also achieve beautiful transformation.

In the scene of the rubber powered device test flight participated by my brother in the novel, the aircraft falling vertically in circles are compared to the rain of flowers falling from the sky. My brother’s secret of winning the first prize by accident was followed by other contestants. Everyone used the same method to lengthen the crash time. The scene was described by the group dance of the plane’s falling, which implied that even in the humble reality, such miracles would happen occasionally. After seeing these scenes, teenagers will go home and walk on spring stilts alone like that whenever they encounter moments beyond their understanding. This process points to the sky, but it can not completely leave the ground. It will soon return to the original point, and it will tilt if it is not careful. However, walking on the spring stilts, one by one, we can understand from life. The body movements of the gradually mature teenagers are a wonderful display. In addition, the spring stilt overlaps with the rubber power unit made by his brother and is connected to an imaginary spaceship again, so that the speaker can become a great man when he grows up and send his father into space. The humble life and the miraculously changed moment of the world are a frightening trance experience. The illusory reality that emerges in the novel and the things that are as vague as the cosmic starry sky and considered beautiful by people are all looking for their own meaning. In this way, the ordinary daily life of teenagers who grow up through their yearning for the unknown world and curiosity about the universe, and a variety of scenes that break away from the theme and transcend the limitations of time and space, form a special atmosphere. In this process, the connotation of personal simple growth has been extended. In the end, Jin Ailian’s cosmic imagination temporarily broke away from the reality of tiredness, boredom and sometimes unbearable life pressure. Psychologically, it transcended all contradictory things and tried to bring positive meaning to negative things, so as to actively express people’s lives in a circular way in the direction of reconciliation and peace, reducing fear and comforting anxiety.

## 3 The space for poor youth to achieve maturity in the 2000s

In Jin Ailian’s novel paper fish, there is also a situation in which the owner hopes to tolerate the humble reality. In the novel, there is a child. He was born in dunghill. He used notes to realize his personal creation. He grew up uneventfully, put aside his parents’ nagging, and secretly determined to build his own writing utopia with notes in the attic as his own space, in addition to the walls outside the floor. But in the end, the cracks in the wall could not be seen because of these so-called Utopian notes, leading to the collapse of the attic. But after the collapse of the attic, a piece of golden paper like ginkgo leaves floated from somewhere and fell at his feet. He gently stepped on the note paper with the sole of his shoe to prevent him from floating away. He bent down and picked up the note. With a trembling hand, he spread out the wrinkled notepaper. Is one of the lines in his novel. “For the first time, he opened his dry mouth and said to us. Maybe it was because of hope. After reading this sentence, he could not help sobbing.” Even in the reality that there is no way out of depression, it also shows clues of hope, and never shows disappointment and depression even under extremely difficult circumstances. “Paper fish” is regarded as a metaphor in the post IMF era. The owner’s public notes created another world similar to reality. Finally, through his hard work, the fish with a mouth opened like a nightmare became a swimming fish with scales made of notes. Although in the end, his world was at an impasse, it is worth noting that the word “Hope” in the scattered notes was impressive, which also implied that the struggle would continue.

“So why did he and I waste so much? And why are you still persisting in this waste? He opened his dry mouth and said to us for the first time. Maybe it was because of hope. Because he hadn’t opened his mouth for a long time, his hope smelled. But that’s natural.” In the complex capitalist structure, adults in the late capitalist era, who had great difficulty in changing their real identity, mistakenly believed that reality was a magical space and lived in the modern fairy tale realized instead of desire. Therefore, the growth in the late capitalist society means the transformation from fantasy to disillusionment and melancholy. In the novel, the protagonist finally realized his daily life of “the notes exposed through the cracks of the bricks are like the intestines of animals, which makes him feel ashamed”. Generally speaking, anxiety and fear force the subject to obey, but on the other hand, they stimulate the desire to cut off. Therefore, the anxiety and fear of young people in Jin Ailian’s novels can be said to be embodied by the way of suppressing the desire of the tragic subject created by capitalist

ideology. But what is different is that the uneasiness and fear she describes is not just the illusion of disillusionment and depression, but the positive expression of hope in any way and the pursuit of real growth.

#### 4 Conclusion

The Bildungsroman of the 2000s was in a period of deepening capitalism in the late stage. The boundary between reality and fantasy was broken. It showed the new desire not affected by ideological fantasy and the fantasy Bildungsroman with the possibility of reconciliation, so it was favored by the public. In the extremely difficult times caused by the economic crisis, the description of a unique struggle for survival, and the emergence of humor, universal imagination, laughing at reality and other new ways of dealing with it, have been tried in the Bildungsroman of the 2000s. In her novels, fantasy comforts the characters like strange jokes. At the same time, there will be humor. The literature of the 2000s especially loves humor. It can be said that without humor, we can not surmount some painful period. Although humor can not realize dreams, it can definitely comfort people's lives. Jin Ailian was born in 1980. In 1997, he experienced the painful period of youth during the economic crisis. It can be said that he has experienced an unfortunate generation. She carefully captured the living space of young people under such difficult conditions. Although their hard struggle towards social growth is inevitable, the characters in Jin Ailian's Bildungsroman are that they do not stop growing or fall into the illusion of melancholy, but actively comfort themselves and explore real growth in any way, It has unique novelty compared with previous times.

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