The Destruction of Confucianism and Socialism in Chinese Popular Comedy Films

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Abstract—Since 2010, the genre of comedy became predominant in film market in China. However, compared with the huge commercial success, these films received severe public criticism. These films are referred as trash (lan pian) by the public because of the fragment narrative, the non-professional photographing and advocating money warship. The paper aims to explain the contradictive phenomena between the higher box office and the lower mouth of word within hegemony theory. Four popular comedies that ranked top 20 in domestic revenue in the year the film released will be chosen to analyze their popularity in general. Differing from other popular films, these comedies' popularity is generated from their disruptive pleasures instead of good stories or photographing. The destruction in Confucianism and socialism formulated the public consent or popularity, and caused the public criticism as well. Moreover, the happy-endings restore the normality at the superficial level.

Keywords—Confucianism, destruction, reconciliation, socialism.

I. Introduction

THE Chinese government after 2000 transformed the cultural policy from an emphasis on public service and ideological control to one of profit-seeking cultural industries that cater to market needs. This was accompanied simultaneously by marketization and industrialization of film industry. Chinese film industries underwent a dramatic restructuring and prosperity from 2005 to 2018. This is not to imply that the film industry was purely commercial in orientation. There were considerable ideological interests at stake, too. However, the way the ideological leadership found expressions in films changed dramatically in this period.

Comedy films that used to be only a very insignificant percentage in the Chinese film industry gained predominance from 2010 onwards [14]. From 2012 to 2017, comedies have been able to be the box office success in domestic film market according to annual Report of Chinese Film Industry. From 2010 to 2015 [17]. The comedy accounts for about 1/3 of filmmaking yearly and constitutes over 1/3 box office. However, the critics and the public media refer these movies as 'trash' (lan pian). The key concept 'comedy' in CNKI (China National Knowledge Infrastructure) that functions as a comprehensive Chinese integrated knowledge resources system, the result includes over 500 articles related to comedy trash. The content of these articles involves four aspects. First, the narrative of these comedies is fragment and lack causal relations [11]. Second, these movies destruct the traditional values such as righteousness, loyalty and benevolent [8]. The

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third aspect connects to the second one. The comedies encourage money warship, luxury lifestyle and sexuality abuse [9], [10]. Lastly, the comedy copies the Western comedy strategies and fails to explore the local comic elements [12].

Besides the apparently generational difference that caused these criticisms on the comedies, there would be deep ideological tensions to make the rise of youth comedy and contradictive phenomena. As Woolacott puts why particular genres are popular at any one historical moment and why they may increase or decrease in popularity over time depends on how the genre "articulates, works upon and attempts in different ways to resolve contemporary ideological tensions" [2].

In 2014 and 2015 comedy films not only generated maximum revenue in box office, the number of movies made under this genre was the highest when compared with others. The article selects four comedy films released in these two years to analyze how Confucianism and Socialism are destructed. These films are Ning Hao's *Breakup Buddies* (2014, box office No.1 in 2014); Deng Chao's *Breakup Guru* (2014, No.10); Fun Image's *Goodbye Mr. Loser* (2015, No.6) and Dong Chengpeng's *Loser's Movie* (2015, No.8). Other comedies will be mentioned in the analysis as well.

II. Destruction of Confucianism

The life of the Chinese people is permeated with Confucianism, which functions as a religion in China. Confucianism had been foregrounded in ancient China, and even in 21st century, at the moral or ethical level, Confucius values gain official support and are expressed predominantly in mediated productions because the values tend to make the hierarchy and political homogenization normalize. The comedies destruct three essential aspects of Confucianism in the 2010s.

A. Righteousness & Profit

Confucianism is basically a philosophy of relationships between different levels in a hierarchy, from the ruler down to the individual. Each individual in society owed a duty to his superiors and had responsibilities towards his inferiors. The person who thinks of his moral obligations when faced with opportunity for personal advantage is the 'gentleman' (righteousness), while a 'small man' is well informed on the subject of what is profitable. 'Righteousness' is the priority for all Confucians. Mencius who was Confucius' most significant successor, once said in the book of Mencius.

I love my life. I also love righteousness. But if I cannot have both, I'll forego my life and adhere to

righteousness. There are things which are more valuable than life itself. While it is true that we all hate to die, remember also that there are things which are worse than death [5].

Therefore, righteousness is the foreground discipline in Confucianism. In Chinese history, righteousness had been reconfirmed in various works during different periods. However, it is subverted completely in comedies in the 2010s on a wide scale and this differs from the Chinese generic history of comedy. In China, comedy used to satire or recover the negative things in order to reinforce or reinvent the Confucianism [3].

In *Breakup Guru* (2014), Mei Yuangui runs a company to help couples separate without pain. His customers are mainly male celebrities who are tired of the current partner. The celebrities pay high fee to Mei Yuangui who promises to make the girl initiate the break-up, and for this he changes his identity (sometimes pretends to be the royal member) and seduces the female protagonist.

Mei Yuangui's behavior is immoral according to Confucianism. As the proverb says, it is worse to separate the couples than to destroy a temple (ning chai yi zuo miao, bu po yi zhuang hun). Temples are the divine places to give bliss to people. People who deliberately destroy the relationships are referred to as non-righteous. The myth is emphasized by a legend White Snake. A monk named as Fahai separates a couple (a man and a female snake), and then he is scorned for thousands of years. From Faha's perspective, he aims to maintain the order in universe because the snake is a monster who cannot marry human beings. Otherwise, the marriage will destruct the universal order. Despite his good intentions, Chinese people could not accept his behavior because of non-righteousness. However, the social convention is subverted in the movie of *Breakup Guru*. Mei Yuangui separates couples in order to make money. Comic moments are produced with his different strategies to seduce the girls to leave their partners. For example, he hires a group of local people to be his servants, and he himself dresses up as the king of Mauritius. Then 'the king' encounters with the girl who is the girlfriend of a famous novelist. 'The king' continuously expresses his feeling to the girl with false luxury gifts and asks her to be his queen. After the girl agrees and separates from her boyfriend, 'the king' disappears.

The movie emphasizes the guru's tact to bring about grotesque moments. These comic points disrupt the righteousness through making the non-righteous revenue acceptable. Similarly, in *Loser's Movie*, Da Peng promises to make a bad movie just for money. In *Goodbye Mr. Loser*, Xialuo is avid to be rich so that he could stay with his secret lover. In *Breakup Buddies*, Gehao's wife leaves him because he is poor. In *Someone Like it* (2016), the loyalty of marriage is turned into comic events because of the essence of 'stubbornness', while the betrayal behavior is valued due to the characteristic of 'wisdom'. In these movies, the way of earning bread is in the expense of righteousness. Moreover, the movies make these non-righteousness moment comical to formulate popular appeals. The subversion of righteousness

such as love based on money and betrayal in marriage presents the symptom of hysteria. The hysteria, in Freud's words, is the way to release the deep oppressions caused by a dictatorial society. In the disguise of comedy, the public' grudges and complaints speak out.

B. Respect for Teachers

The second disruption of Confucianism is subverting the teacher's authority. Confucius was a teacher for most part of his life. The thought of 'Respects for teacher' (zun shi zhong jiao) originates from Rites (one of Confucian books written in B.C 475-221). The Master insists that the initial step for being a sage is 'respect for teachers'. This opinion was strengthened by two well-known myths in Chinese history.

The first one is *Three Moves by Mencius' Mother* (meng mu san qian). Mencius was the most significant Confucius' interpreter, and a major representative of the Ruist (Confucian) school. Mencius's mother had relocated three times to find a good educational environment for him. Living near teachers helped Mencius to become a sage at last. The second one is *Cheng Door' Snow* (cheng men li xue). It is a story about Cheng Yi who was one of the neo-Confucianism representatives in Song dynasty. According to Song History, Yang Shi Autobiography, two young men, Yang Shi and his friend, went to Cheng Yi's place to study. As they found Cheng was sleeping, they waited outside for 3 hours even in the heavy snow to show their respects to the teacher.

The stories have been rewritten in many literature works and operas across thousands of years in Chinese history. The tradition of 'respect for teachers' has been continuing and reinstated even in the present era. Teachers in literature and on screen used to be portrayed as always positive, connoting sacrificed, dedicated and benevolent prior to the 2000s. Nonetheless, the film *Goodbye, Mr. Loser* suggests that education aims to maintain the current power relations and knowledge structure, rather than improve equality and democracy. The teacher chooses 'Three Good' (san hao xue sheng) students according to their parent's social status instead of their performance at school. The singing competition among the students rewards the singer based on their hypocritical loyalty to the country, not their talent in music.

The educational system in comedies is unfruitful and unjust. The school administrators cannot tell the differences between good and bad behavior. The amorous headmaster threatens the parents to expel students for little mistakes and suggests sexual revolution. The avarice teacher asks students to bribe him with money. As the Loser's kisses his first lover with violence, the dean explains that he is helping artificial respiration. When the Loser is too existed to jump from the classroom after beating teacher Wang, the headmaster argues that the Loser is too shameful to suicide himself because he beats his teacher.

To make things worse, the representative teacher, Lao Wang (teacher Wang), assaults students with words and attitude. He classifies them into the first-rate idiots and the second-rate idiots. He despises their poor academic grades and praises the one whose father is a government leader. In his

class, he tells the students to send him a radio in order to erase the bad record. The only good thing in him is fighting with hooligans to rescue the Loser. This behavior is ironic, according to King, in that it mixes the plausible and implausible [15]. It is plausible because teacher Wang behaves like a hooligan; it is not plausible because as a teacher, he 'rescues' the students not through the education in school but by fighting with hooligans outside school. Therefore, though he beats the hooligans, he proves he is an educational hooligan. In this way, the teacher's authorities and the educational goals are completely questioned and reversed.

C. Gender Bending

Another outstanding disruption on\of Confucianism exists in the gender bending. The breach of gender boundary means disrupting the order, the system and the patriarchal ideology partially. Confucius once said in Analects:

In one's household, it is the women and the small men that are difficult to deal with. If you let them get close, they become insolent. If you keep them at a distance, they feel badly done by [18].

Though many interpreters over the centuries have tried to soften the thrust of this remark, there is no getting away from its general disparagement of women. The assumption that they did not have comparable moral potential as men meant that in the Confucian view, women had no place in public life. The patriarchy ideology persisted until the twentieth century, but transformed into different manifestations. For example, the so-called 'female doctor' (nv bo shi), 'female driver' (nv si ji), 'female leader' (nv qiang ren) are reference to women who are successful in career, but they are not femininity and then are not popular in relationship. Members of Political Bureau of the CPC Central Committee have been all males since 1949.

In comedy films of the 2010s, trickster-type characters are usually male, while woman are often characterized as sources of repression or oppression and as representatives of dull conformity with the norms of 'tradition'. Therefore, the movies is replete with images of imprisoning women, such as Ye Xiaochun in *Breakup Guru*, Liu Yan in *Loser's Movie*, Ma Dongmei in *Goodbye Mr. Loser* and Avatar in *Breakup Buddies*. These women are all blind lovers and sacrifice for men willingly. Comic effect is often created through departures from what are considered to be normal or dominant gender roles, mainly the feminized or childlike male and the masculinized woman, or anything that falls between the binary gender poles. In this sense, the challenges on the gender boundary are a kind of temporary blockage in the system of patriarchal codes and representations, and could produce the disruption of pleasures.

Feminized man is the comic subversion of gender codes through masquerade of cross-dressing or male/female impersonation. The slippages of gender boundary in the comedies of the 2010s iterates in the drag. In *Breakup Guru,* the breakup guru impersonates a female model in a tight and sexual dress with a long hair wig. In the following shots, the 'model' presents different dancing with various female gougers' clothes, giggling and flirting with the audience. The

quality of drag is relatively convincing and creating quite plausible illusions of gender transformation. His feminine body languages shift the heightened moment's location from the spectacle drag to moments of slippage between real and fake gender identities.

Mei Yuangui (in a drag) then tries to persuade a transgender female celebrity (who is a real transgender star in reality) to sign a contract. He complains to the star that he is suffering from excessive male sex hormone. This punchline brings about the comic effect because the audiences know that the star is a transgender (potentially suffering from the same situation). The comic point confirms the moment of breaking gender boundaries by acknowledging the real transgender stars' social status. Later, as Mei Yuangui presents female model walking, pole dancing and singing, the presence of grotesques is disruptive of gender identities though the cosmetic interventions help to construct or fabricate conventional female identity.

Mengte in *Goodbye Mr. Loser* is a tall, strong boy in appearance, but his behaviour is soft. He calls himself 'Laoniang' (a lady's nickname). His classmates laugh at or even despise his body languages. He finally transgresses himself into a woman. As Mengte firstly emerges in the film, his classmates laugh at his femininity because he cannot meet the conventional gender expectations. The slippage of gender boundaries recuperates towards the norm. However, as he finally transgresses into a complete female including the name, people around him accept him as one of them, and do not consider him as an 'other' though they still feel uncomfortable. This implies the normalization of gender breaking.

Similar moments of partial transformation offers comic spectacle on numerous occasions in these movies. In Loser's movie, the male broker is in pink and tight dresses. At the beginning of the images, the close-up shot presents him with a lipstick during make-up session. This intends to undermine the conventional attributes of the norm (traces of lipstick and eye shadow as signifiers of proper heterosexual contact with a woman). Moreover, he is quite confident with his appearance and maintains his female identity in every moment. Obviously, the comical moments generate from the incongruities between his make-up and his voice.

Zhang Chaoyang (CEO of Sohu Portal web) acts as the real person in *Loser's Movie*, practices Yoga, showing the flexible body and feminine voice. As a public figure of Internet Company, he is always in formal and serious appearance. This film makes the audience uncover the 'truth' and gain the pleasure from the disparities between the masculinized public figure in reality and the feminized man in the film.

In such comic moments, the frantic gender reinvention or mixed signification blurs the gender lines. Biological gender fixture is not only transcendently important but marks a departure from supposedly dominant conventions. In this sense, the cross-dressing connects to the inversion, deconstruction and exaggeration of normality.

The number of 'masculinized' woman is much less than that of feminized men in the comedies of 2010s. Ma Dongmei

in Goodbye Mr. Loser is a brash, willful woman. She is the typical Chinese tomboy with masculine tone and pursues her classmate Xiao Luo. She fights with the hooligans in order to rescue Xiao Luo. However, Xiao Luo likes another girl who is more feminine. As Ma Dongmei tries to be a traditional sweet girl by putting on a nice dress, Xia Luo comments that she walks like a pig dressed in the beautiful clothing.

The characters are comic partly because of their difference from the more passive roles usually ascribed to women in patriarchal societies. The unruly girl subverts and liberates from restrictive binary gender categories. This might offer a pleasurable form of release from such confines, a vicarious form of transgression into usually forbidden territories. However, the scope of activities of masculinized woman is severely constrained to the single narrative of a woman's life: of her relation to men. Without marriage and a husband, the woman is often assumed as a broken person. The narrative confines such roles to a single-note performance. In this way, the film offers some reconciliation of gender roles through her sacrifices for him. Sacrificed love is supposed to be the traditional womanhood characteristic according to Confucianism.

According to King, the question of remaining women 'in their place' is of greater sensitivity than that of men, with more at stake [15]. The unruly woman represents a more serious challenge to the gender hierarchies on which so many social relationships are based. Therefore, the gender reinvention in masculine woman remains the ambivalent.

III. Destruction of Socialism

According to Althusser, a popular text is structured as much by "what is absent" (what is not said) as by "what is present" (what is said) [7]. Together they make up the 'problematic' of the text. The presence tends to cooperate with the dominant ideologies, while the absence challenges the leadership of the ruling class. Because the challenges are not directly posed, but discovered by 'symptomatic reading', it is called the indirect challenge [7]. To read a text symptomatically is to perform a double reading: reading first the manifest text, and then through the lapse, distortions, silences and absences (the 'symptoms' of a problem struggling to be posed) in the manifest text to produce and read the latent text. The absence in comedy film's text not only legalizes the political correctness but also challenges the socialist conventions.

Goodbye Mr. Loser presents a loser's transgressive experience between the reality and the illusionary world, through which his life subverts completely. He becomes a celebrated musician by plagiarism. Friends who used to laugh at him in reality admire and service him. He married his unrequited lover, but she betrays him. As he suffers from cancer, his wife, friends and relatives leave him. He wakes up and finds his experience a dream. He accepts his real life and loves his wife (not beauty) more. A symptomatic reading of the film would reveal a problematic in which a question is posed: why is the loser avid to be rich?

The question could be answered in its symbolizing settings. Chicken feather (ji mao) culturally means trifles or people who tend to indulge in trivialities in China. It is quite unusual to decorate dresses or room with chicken feathers. Therefore, the specific associations that the feather inspires in its representativeness is irony and allegoric at the wedding ceremony and in the expensive suit. In the film's opening sequence, Xiao Luo appears in an expensive suit with a chicken feather in his jacket pocket at the wedding ceremony where the room is also decorated with various purple chicken feathers. His classmates point out playfully that the chicken feather is a sign of a loser, and makes him jokes about him in public. As he is lying on a chair besides the swimming pool in his mansion, wearing a nighty with a chicken feather in the illusionary world, his same classmates consider the same feather artistic. Therefore, the purple chicken feather has its own perfectly specific dramatic associations in this film. Whether it is an art or a joke depends on Xiao Luo's social status. The repetition of chicken feather symbolizes the distortion of the 'socialism harmonious society'. Theoretically speaking, the socialism harmonious society ensures freedom, democracy and equality to every citizen. Practically, the privileged class dominates and controls the whole country, while the underprivileged people are deprived of so-called equality, freedom and democracy. Just like the chicken feather, it is an art with power. Without the power, the chicken feather is a joke and a sign of loser. Then the chicken feather gives ample cause and context for similar speculation or association around friendship, love and kinship.

The presence in the film is that a loser realizes his dreams in his transgression into his dream world. The absence is that why he is a loser and how could he realize his dreams. The answer exists in the symptomatic reading. Reading the 'symptoms' for evidence of an underlying disease would construct the huge social strata in mainland China from the film's contradictions, its evasions, its silence and its fairy-tale ending. The teacher categorizes the students into two groups according to their parent's social status: the talent and the idiot. The talent endows all privileges to ensure their further success in society, while the idiot is destined to be the loser in future. This implies that the privileged class controls and destroys the equality and purity of education. Therefore, the school functions as the manifestation of power relations. The hierarchical system positions the lower class people in an underprivileged condition, and they could not break the limitations without magic resolution, which happens in the film. In addition, the films *Loser's Movie*, *Breakup Buddies*, *Breakup Guru* produce a series of absurdities in pursuing 'success and money'. The focus of these movies is a response to the growing social stratification. The socialist politics brings about the privileged class including the descendants of red revolutionary martyrs (the first and second generation of communist members) and government leaders in different levels. The so-called egalitarian raised in Mao era, which presumably thinks as the characteristic of the socialism, has been broken. In order to maintain the continuity of the socialist politics, both 16th National Congress of Communist Party of China and the Third Plenary Session of the 16th Central Committee of the CPC put forward the concept of

'harmonious socialist society'. Democracy and equality are the fundamental principles in harmonious socialist society.

The comedies of the 2010s do not involve in any political issues, which used to be the main comic themes in the 1950s and 1960s in China. However, showing the longings for success and money confronts the issues (social stratifications and political privileges) without the risk of giving them a dangerous and unnecessary visibility. In this way, the social problems are answered without the questions themselves having been formally posed. The emphasis placed on entertainment is, therefore, a response to the twin questions (which remain unasked in the social stratification but exist in the assumptions that constitute the problematic): do success and money make a harmonious society?

Macherey further explains Althusser's problematic that a text unconsciously reveals its relationship to the ideological and historical conditions of its existence [19]. In this sense, the titles of *Goodbye Mr. Loser, Loser's Movie, Breakup Buddies, Breakup Guru, Lost in Hong Kong, Lost in Thailand* and *Monster Hunt* could be read as political implications. The linguistic meaning of losers, breakup, lost and monster explain the ideological necessity of silences. For example, the word 'loser' is Diaosi in the Chinese dialect, which literally translates to 'dick string' and can only be applied to male youth. It originated from online fan club of a soccer player named Li Yi. He was always a loser in soccer games. Therefore, the original meaning of Diaosi is 'loser'.

Kristeva comments that psychoanalytically-oriented notion of the abject word which exists in-between the public and the private (body) could disturb identity, system and order [20]. The abject word 'loser' (Diaosi) is unusual to use in public. Many teenagers and young adults refer to themselves as Diaosi in films, games, TV programs, social websites and reality. Cao states that not only do Diaosi stories demonstrate that the younger Chinese hold a more playful and cynical attitude regarding social inequalities, but also challenge the ruling values, dominant masculinity, hegemonic power and overturns normality in a self-belittling way[1].

The narrative of the comedies allows the audience to develop sympathies to the characters who assumedly suffer from troubles due to personal defect. Meanwhile, symptomatic reading in these films dislodges the work and makes us see, perceive and feel the terrible contradictions of socialism. In other words, on one hand, the meaning we read from the text is both historical and ideological disruption. On the other hand, the restoration and reconstruction of the happy-ending confirm the socialist dominant position.

IV. THE FUNCTION OF HAPPY-ENDING

As mentioned before, the necessary condition for the popular culture to be popular is that it persuasively puts different ideologies together. This can be seen under two aspects in comedy films. One is about how the comedy cooperates with dominant ideologies to gain public release; the other about how it challenges dominant ideologies.

In terms of ideological tensions, Chinese ideologies mix Confucianism, socialism, consumerisms and individualism in the 2000s. Though socialism and Confucianism are in hegemonic position because of their leadership in politics, they cannot provide effective representative system to accommodate consumerism and individualism. This is probably because two major points of ideological rupture occurred since 1949 in Chinese history. The first one happened in the transition to the communist system after the establishment of People's Republic country, which destroyed Confucian values, especially during the Cultural Revolution period from 1966 to 1976. In the Maoist era, the attack on ancestor worship and lineage organization struck directly at the cultural and religious core of the extended family. Mao Zedong's regime set to break up patriarchal ideology and establish an "ideologically based egalitarian social order".

The second revolutionary shift happened over the course of China's economic reforms, as a market-based economic system was gradually set up and the 'Reform and Openness' policy was implemented since 1980. This reform began by improving micro-incentive by allowing micro-units to share newly created profits, resulting in subsequent reform of the resource-allocation mechanism. The so-called "egalitarian social order" was broken by the huge gap between the rich and the poor caused by the new distribution system [6].

Though China has gained rapid economic growth in the last three decades, new values based on market economy have not dominated the social life. This is probably because the market economy is still under state control. Deng Xiaoping (the leader of Chinese Communist Party in the 1980s) defined it as 'socialist market economy' or 'capitalism with Chinese characteristics' in the opening speech at the fourteenth national congress of the Communist Party of China in 1992 [21]. In this sense, contemporary Chinese society has been described in several 'post-'coinages: postmodern, post-New Era, post-Reform and post-socialist. These terms indicate a sense of intricate linkages to their predecessors and therefore a lack of "affirmativeness" of their own cultures. As a result, these –isms meet and intermingle each other in the field of cultures [4].

Gramsci argues that hegemony in popular culture could only be kept so long as the dominant class's ideologies succeeded in framing oppositional ones [22]. In this sense, socialism and Confucianism would not be leadership roles in the comedy. However, the figuration of different 'voices' or 'ideologies' in comedies keeps socialism and Confucianism's 'domination' to gain public release. The strategies lie in the magic happy-ending.

In *Loser's movies*, as the narration approaches the ending, the hooligans menace the protagonist (a loser) to kill him if he could not pay money back. Then the film magically makes the priceless diamond appear in the dog's body. In *Goodbye Mr. Loser*, when the character (xia luo) becomes famous and rich, gets infected with HIV. People around him are busy in arguing how much money they could receive, and no one cares about the patient. The magic resolution turns out as a dream. In *Breakup Buddies*, the broken friendship recovers from the protagonist's coma accidently, while the sudden change of the protagonists' reaches the happy-ending in *Breakup Guru*. In

these happy-endings, the protagonists of comedies reconcile with themselves though they are often established as adversaries in the beginning. The cynic loser in *Goodbye Mr. Loser* satisfies with his life (unemployment); Dapeng fulfils his dream in *Loser's Movie*, getting rid of the name of 'loser'; Gehao recovers from broken relationships in *Breakup Buddies*; Mei Yuangui restores the relations with his girl in *Breakup Guru*. The reconstruction or restoration in the end of the narrative implies that the disruption or departure during the narration has to go back to the dominant trajectory. The happy-ending functions as the reconciliation with the dominant ideologies. However, the restoration or reconstruction is achieved in the magic way, rather than naturally arriving at the revolution based on the internal narration. As *Loser's Movie* approaches the end, the hooligans intend to kill the loser because he spends 10 million Yuan (the hooligans' money) to please a girl. All the friends including his girl leave him. He ruins his reputation by drinking and fighting with a woman in public. The ending should either present the character returning into his previous life as a loser after becoming a celebrity by acting the role of 'loser' in TV series, or the possibilities of disappearance, rather than restoring him to be a hero and getting the diamond back from the dog's belly. Without magical or accidental causes, the film could not reach the happy-ending based on the filmic internal relations. Therefore, the happy-ending could be read as a strategy to defend legibility as a disruption from social conventions. The 'happy' or 'harmonious' codes are transformed into signs of socio-historical backgrounds and superimposed on these movies in the 2010s.

V. CONCLUSION

The deepening economic reform caused the changes of social structures and values in the last thirty years in China. The former changes brought about the huge social stratification, while the latter resulted in the crisis of confidence and identity. Government corruption and dereliction of duty demystify the socialist and Confucian ideologies, and then the public deliberately alienates and departs from mainstream values in order to break the previous imprisonment. However, the dominant ideologies still keep the leadership through institutional functions. The comedies of the 2010s reflect the social reality by disrupting the socialist and Confucian values. Except for the disruption of dominant ideologies, all forms of comedies adapted the new humorous technologies, which generated in the departure from the orthodox or norms that imprisoned the public, to cater for the people's tastes in an attempt to gain commercial success. However, these new amusement strategies also relocated the audience's preference, wrenching them away from their traditional associations and selectively reconstructing them in an association with new sets of values and ideologies. As Bennett argues:

In giving them what they wanted, such impresarios at the same time transformed the tastes, preferences and practices of the people, inscribing them in new sets of cultural and ideological relations [16].

In this way, comedy legalized its functions as disruption and destruction of the dominant ideologies. It also could be possible to speculate that consumerism and individualism are struggling for the hegemony in China because they represent the new social values and power relations, but socialism and Confucianism still maintain dominant position at the superficial level in popular cultures.

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