

A Study on the Intergenerational Reconstruction of "Nostalgia" and Its Influencing Factors in the Liang Village Trilogy

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Abstract. In the context of rapid urbanization, "nostalgia" is no longer merely a sentimental longing for the past. As a distinct emotional experience and cultural phenomenon, it embodies both a yearning for one's hometown and traditional ways of life, and a profound reflection on modern existence. Liang Hong's *China in One Village*, *Leaving Liang Village*, and *Ten Years of the Liang Village*, as representative works of nonfiction rural writing, portray the varied intergenerational understandings of "nostalgia". This paper explores the similarities and differences between the "nostalgia" of the parent generation and that of their children, while analyzing how changes in social structure, cultural inheritance, media technology, and national policies influence the expression of nostalgia.

Keywords: Liang Village Trilogy, Nostalgia, Intergenerational reconstruction of nostalgia

1. Introduction

In the early rural literature of China, the methods of fiction and reminiscence were often employed to describe the hometown [1]. Thus, in the eyes of the authors, the hometown depicted was filled with the charm of rural life. It was not until 2010 that People's Literature established a "Non-fiction" writing column and launched the "People's Land · Activist" writing project. This project encouraged authors to express various aspects and levels of social life through "writing actions" and "real experiences", and to showcase the rich and diverse experiences of Chinese people in this era [2]. Liang Hong was one of the practitioners. She focused on the historical changes and culture of rural China through oral record and interview methods, and incorporated her own thoughts and evaluations, writing the Liang Village Trilogy: *China in One Village: The Story of One Town and the Changing World*, *Leaving Liang Village*, and *Ten Years of the Liang Village*, which truly recorded the living conditions of the countryside and her pain about the culture of her hometown, and made her works have the characteristics of being present, personal experience, and reflection.

In Liang Hong's works Liang Village Trilogy, nostalgia is a very important dimension. Instead of merely depicting the sentimental "nostalgia", he transformed it from the traditional "dispersed homesickness emotion" into a structural social critique.. Therefore, this paper examines the similarities and differences in nostalgia across generations within the Liang Village Trilogy, as well

as the ways in which nostalgia has been aestheticized and commodified in contemporary society, and the factors that have driven these transformations.

2. Literature review

The academic community's research on the Liangzhuang Trilogy Village focuses on the following aspects. Firstly, from the perspective of rural literature. In *Liangzhuang: A View of China*, Yang Qingxiang pointed out that the Liang Village Trilogy is not only about the development and changes of Liangzhuang, but also a microcosm of China's urbanization process. The disappearance of traditional ethics, the disintegration of common memories, the pollution of the ecological environment, and the desolation of the spiritual world that Liangzhuang faces are the challenges faced by rural development in China [3]. Le Shaochi pointed out that Liang Hong's nostalgia is not an abstract and illusory memory, nor is it a filtered memory. Instead, through rational investigation and analysis, it describes the emotional bond that the wanderer and his hometown cannot part with but cannot truly return to. By documenting the real life experiences of the rural people of Liang, it tells about the urban-rural gap, the household registration system, and the drawbacks brought about by the blind pursuit of achievements in rural development [4]. In article *From 'Rural China' to 'Urban China' - Reading Liang Hong's Leaving Liang Village*, Li Yunlei proposed that the Liangzhuang trilogy chronicles the survival trajectories of the people in Liangzhuang after they left the village, depicting the current living conditions of rural people in China. These people, relying on their own labor, have contributed to the development of cities, but have been excluded from urbanization [5]. This fragmented urbanization development has made these wanderers become homeless individuals without clear identities, emotional attachments, or a sense of belonging. This reflects the current situation of spiritual barrenness in China's urbanization process. Secondly, some scholars conduct research from the perspective of non-fiction writing narration. Liu Yamei narrates Liang Village Trilogy using two distinct ethical narrative methods: absence and presence [6]. Xie Shanshan, in *Research on Contemporary Chinese 'Non-fiction' Literature*, examines the themes and narrative characteristics of the work [7]. Ye Jun believes that Liang Hong is present in the scene, breaking the spatial and temporal dislocation that generates rural emotions, and adding a new dimension to the narrative methods of Chinese rural literature [8].

However, current scholarship lacks a diachronic examination of the intergenerational differences in nostalgic sentiment and fails to address the heterogeneity in rural cognition across generations. It has not yet revealed how the production of new rural memories in the era of digital media, including short videos and social media, participates in the re-encoding of contemporary nostalgia. Therefore, this paper introduces an intergenerational perspective and incorporates media-related elements. Through a combination of close textual reading, intergenerational comparison, and sociohistorical analysis, it investigates the similarities and differences in "nostalgia" across generations in the Liang Village Trilogy, as well as how media dissemination and the aestheticization and commodification of nostalgia in contemporary society have contributed to its transformation.

3. Intergenerational reconstruction of nostalgia: textual representations and differences

3.1. The nostalgia of elders is a remembrance of traditional moral etiquette, traditional way of life and traditional culture

China in One Village depicts the lives of left-behind elderly people, children, and women in Liang Village, Rang County, Henan Province, exposing issues such as rural hollowing-out, the decline of

education, environmental pollution, and land abandonment. It reflects the disintegration of traditional ethics and ways of life.

In *China in One Village*, the nostalgia of the parent generation resides in the abandoned groups left behind. The text notes that more and more new houses are being built in the village, but their locks are rusting and fewer people remain. Only a few withering elderly people walk along the paths between the fields. Many of the houses in the village are newly built, equipped with urbanized facilities and designed in a European style. However, inside these urban-style houses are still small stools, old televisions, and dirty, cluttered bathrooms. The residents are farmers wearing clothing from the 1970s and 1980s. The stark contrast between the newly constructed houses with delicate designs and the elderly left behind highlights even more clearly their loneliness and sense of loss. This sense of loss is imbued with a feeling of powerlessness, as described by Aunt Zhi in the book: "In the village, almost every household is like this, full of left-behind children and elderly people. Elders in their fifties, sixties, and seventies are all raising grandchildren, acting as both father and mother, and responsible for their education. Yet, the grandchildren at home are still disobedient, and sometimes the sons and daughters-in-law do not send money home" [9]. From the words of the elderly, one can sense helplessness and sorrow about being left behind, yet they also regard this as a natural and everyday condition. At the same time, one can feel their tenderness, love, and tolerance for their grandchildren. However, they dare not demand filial piety from their children because they feel they have not provided them with sufficient financial support. In the traditional worldview of the older generation, filial piety was regarded as the foremost virtue. Yet, the sons and daughters-in-law now view their relationship with their parents as one of rational exchange. This indicates that with the departure of the younger generation from the village and the increase in income, traditional cultural mechanisms have been disrupted, and the foundation of filial piety in both culture and society has been lost. Behind the phenomenon of left-behind elderly and children lies the alienation of kinship bonds.

In *China in One Village*, the nostalgia of the parent generation is also reflected in the disappearance of the physical spaces that carry collective memory and a sense of belonging. The text repeatedly mentions the old houses in the village. "When the door to the old house is opened, dust falls everywhere". "There are large broken walls and shattered tiles all around". "Looking forward from my house, I saw a large stretch of continuous ruins. Altogether, there were fifteen collapsed houses and courtyards, with at least four such areas of ruins" [9]. The old houses and jujube trees were once symbols of a vibrant village and a lively way of life. Now, with people having left, the village has become lifeless. The ancestral hall today has "peeling walls and tilted beams", roof tiles that are "damaged like the missing teeth of an old man", a shrine "covered with thick dust", ancestral tablets that are "tilted and disordered", and incense burners with "only cold ashes left" [9]. These details reveal that the ancestral hall, once the central ceremonial space for ancestral worship and clan identity, has fallen into disrepair. People once held ancestral rites there during Spring Festival or Qingming, which strengthened blood ties and maintained an awareness of their roots. The ancestral hall was also the center of social life. "Weddings and funerals were all held in the ancestral hall". Now, however, it has become "a storage room for miscellaneous items or a mahjong parlor". A close-up scene of an old man "touching the doorframe and sighing" illustrates the elderly's helplessness toward the disappearance of clan traditions and culture. It is a kind of elegiac remembrance of a solidified past. The text also describes the threshing ground, which was once a bustling scene "lit brightly throughout the night during the summer harvest". The "wooden winnowing shovels" and "stone rollers" evoke memories of collective labor. Films were screened and storytelling performances held at the threshing ground. Today, it has become "a weed-covered

wasteland" or "a parking lot for agricultural vehicles". Traditional threshing methods have lost their value. The village ponds, once covered with lotus leaves and full of blooming lotuses where children could play, have now turned into sewage pits. The brickyard that was once mined used to have "two to three hundred mu of land, typical black soil, and in May or June, when the wheat turned yellow at the tips, it was truly a beautiful sight". Now, "the land has lost its nutrients and can no longer be cultivated". Spaces that once carried memories of collective labor are gradually disappearing. From the author's father's description, one can deeply feel the older generation's helplessness and sorrow about the destruction of the land. Their emotional attachment to the land is expressed in sayings like "In the past, farming was life. Now the land is barren, and people feel soulless". "If farmers do not farm the land, something bad will happen sooner or later". After mechanized farming replaced traditional tools, the elderly would "stare blankly while touching rusted sickles" [9]. This demonstrates the older generation's persistence and attachment to the land and to agricultural culture. Farming was a habit. As long as the land remained, people retained the habit of returning home. As Liang An said, "No matter how poor we are, we cannot sell the land. It is our last support". Nostalgia, for the older generation, is the collective memory of labor and the belief that farming is essential for survival.

The dissolution and functional transformation of collective memory spaces such as ancestral halls and threshing grounds reveal a rupture in cultural memory and the gradual disappearance of traditional clan culture. The older generation harbors a deep emotional attachment to Liang Village, encapsulated in the sentiment of "being born here, growing up here, and eventually dying here". They feel a strong sense of belonging to collective memory spaces like the ancestral hall and the threshing ground. Thus, the elderly choose to remain close to them, while the younger generation sees the ancestral hall as a "blurred backdrop of memory". The ancestral worship ritual during the Spring Festival has been reduced to a formalistic practice of "burning some paper and leaving", indicating the disintegration of the ritualistic maintenance of blood ties and the gradual collapse of the family structure centered on the clan. In the past, the village was a clan-centered settlement, "essentially expanding outward from a central point as the population increased". The allocation of homesteads was also based on familial proximity and the size of the family. Now, villages organized around surnames have been transformed into settlements organized around economic capacity. The location of one's house has come to represent economic power and social status. On the first day of the Lunar New Year, every household used to cook large pots of food and interact according to generational seniority. A village resembled one big family, filled with human warmth. Today, most of the young people in Liang Village have gone out to work, family gatherings have diminished, and kinship ties have loosened. The book mentions the brief reunions during the Spring Festival, followed by long periods of separation. "They saved money to build two-story houses, which remain empty all year round, with lights turned on only briefly during the Spring Festival". "My father can barely say three sentences to me on the phone. All he ever asks is what score I got on my exam" [9]. The improvement in material conditions only serves to highlight the hollowness of interpersonal relationships and the fading of neighborly bonds. The former "acquaintance society" in the countryside has gradually been replaced by a "semi-acquaintance society" or even a "stranger society". Mutual assistance among villagers has declined, and the "human warmth" once embedded in nostalgia has grown increasingly thin. The alienation of blood ties has rendered nostalgia untransmittable across generations, turning it into a fractured collective memory.

It is thus evident that, for the older generation, nostalgia is an imagination of the "complete family". As one elder in the text states, people are bound to return in the end. Nostalgia is a longing for the collective memory of family reunion, a profound attachment to traditional agricultural culture

and the land, and a commitment to traditional morality and a sense of ownership in village life. Traditional rituals serve as the cultural vessels of nostalgia. When blood ties can no longer support these rituals, nostalgia loses its channels of expression and becomes an unspeakable solitude. Nostalgia, in this sense, becomes a lament for a way of life that is forever lost.

3.2. Nostalgia among the younger generation: identity anxiety in mobility

Young people in Liang Village often leave school before completing junior high and begin working in cities. Leaving Liang Village documents the living conditions of migrant workers who have left their hometowns.

Liang Village residents who migrate to cities for work depend on the city for their livelihood but are unable to truly integrate into urban life. They have become "strangers in a foreign land" within the city, and their nostalgia carries a strong sense of rootlessness and displacement. They mock themselves as beggars who have come to the city to "scavenge for a living". They live in rented rooms on the margins of the city, spaces that are low, cramped, dark, and damp. Inside are short and worn-out tables and stools. The bare furnishings of these rooms reflect the mentality of the villagers toward the cities in which they work, a place of temporary residence for outsiders.

The nostalgia of migrant workers is rooted in a spiritual sense of uprootedness. Some long to return to their hometowns, only to find themselves homeless. Others aspire to establish themselves in the city, only to discover they are trapped in rigid social hierarchies and lost in questions of identity. In cities, migrant workers face unfair treatment such as delayed wages, discrimination, lack of recourse for occupational diseases and work-related injuries. "City people call us the 'Liang Village Gang', as if it were the name of an infectious disease". Therefore, they hold no affection for the cities where they live and do not feel any connection with them. As described in the book, villagers from Henan Village and other Henan people living in Henan Village never truly interact, whether in Xi'an or Dongguan. Their bodies may be in the places where they work, but their souls find no refuge in those cities. While working in urban areas, they encounter problems related to household registration discrimination and lack of access to medical insurance. As one migrant worker states, "They do not even let you walk on the road. What else can you call yours? Rural people never had anything. Being able to feed your family is already enough" [10]. They speak of the unequal treatment between rural and urban residents. In their accounts, the city where they work feels like an enemy. They long to return to their hometowns. As the second eldest brother who drives a tricycle says when speaking about going home, "There's no better feeling than going home". The second eldest sister adds, "In the days leading up to going home, I cannot even concentrate on work. All I think about is going home" [10]. In the book, migrant workers are crowded into rented rooms in urban villages. At the head of their beds are old photographs of Liang Village, and they listen to Yu opera tapes to pass the time. Their memory of the village remains frozen at the moment they left. At this point, nostalgia becomes a search for identity and belonging. A woman who has worked in Dongguan for fifteen years still says, "I will return to Liang Village next year". This mentality of "perpetual temporariness" reveals that nostalgia has become a spiritual palliative that delays the anxiety of reality. Just like Sister Wang, who always keeps an unused return ticket in her storage box, nostalgia has been transformed into a suspended hope. When some of them finally return home, they find their children distant or even estranged. Some children complain about their parents. A father who drives a tricycle in Beijing says that during each Spring Festival, he feels his son is becoming more and more unfamiliar. Nostalgia here is tinged with guilt and helplessness, as in the saying, "The nearer home, the more timid I grow." Migrant workers exist in a state of physical displacement and spiritual rootlessness. "I feel stifled when I return to Liang Village for the New

Year, but in Beijing, I still feel like an outsider". "My child was born in the city but is neither a city dweller nor a Liang Village person". The hometown has also become a place that can no longer be returned to. For migrant workers, nostalgia is not only about geographic distance but also about an emotional detachment from their native place. The loosening of kinship ties has deprived them of the tangible sense of "rootedness". Nostalgia thus becomes a suspended state, they can neither assimilate into the city nor return to the remembered home of the past.

In Leaving Liang Village, some migrant workers return to their hometown due to illness or other reasons. However, upon returning to rural life, they often exhibit, consciously or unconsciously, behavioral traits or temperaments shaped or influenced by urban modernity. These urban characteristics may appear, to varying degrees and in both overt and subtle ways, out of place in the relatively traditional and underdeveloped countryside. For example, Jiang Geda returned to the village in high spirits and hosted a lavish banquet. "That noon, he held a grand feast in town, handing out cigarettes, offering toasts, shouting loudly and making a big scene" [10]. His return carried an element of ostentation. The villagers responded with a mix of admiration, envy, and discomfort. In the narrative, the couple Guanghe and his wife, who had gone out to work in their early years, returned to Liang Village after receiving compensation for the death of their children and built a new house. This provoked intense discussion among the villagers. As they put it, "The new house they built was exchanged for the lives of their children" [10]. Deeply ingrained traditional ethical norms made it difficult for the villagers to accept that Guanghe used the compensation from his children's death to construct a luxurious home. Guanghe and his wife not only suffered the grief of losing their children, but also had to endure the moral condemnation of the rural community. At this point, a gap emerged between returnees and the villagers. The returnees became subjects of gossip in daily conversations. In the city, returnees had always felt like outsiders, yet when they returned to their native village, they once again found themselves treated as outsiders.

Compared with the older generation who stayed behind in Liang Village, migrant workers' nostalgia exhibits characteristics of "deterritorialization" and "dematerialization". Their nostalgia is no longer rooted in the land, in certain public spaces, or in the persistence of rituals. Nor is it a longing for specific tangible objects. In the minds of migrant workers, the hometown has become more of a symbol. As noted in the book, whenever someone from Liang Village is bullied in another place, the Liang Village residents in that city quickly form a united group to offer mutual help and support. Migrant workers are searching for identity and belonging. As Shuanzi says in the text: "The main thing is the lack of identity. Deep down, we feel inferior, like there's no hope, no future, no sense of participation". The purpose of leaving the village to work was to pursue a better life. Now, although they have built new houses and acquired vehicles and their material conditions have improved, they find themselves without spiritual support and without a clear identity. They long for social recognition, for genuine inclusion in a system where they can locate the value of their existence. In the text, Zhenglin, Liang Dong, and Liang Lei are young individuals who have received education. They drift through cities, yet due to the household registration system, they belong neither to the city nor to the countryside. What is their true identity? This question reflects the confusion experienced by the younger generation of those who have left Liang Village.

3.3. The reconstruction of nostalgia

In China in One Village, Leaving Liang Village, and Ten Years of the Liang Village, the nostalgia of the older generation is rooted in a commitment to the land and to public spaces that hold childhood and collective memories. However, for the younger generation, the spaces and images that once carried shared memory, such as the land, rivers, and ancestral halls, have been transformed into

arenas of economic pursuit and sites of consumerism. Village ponds that once existed have long been filled with sand and soil, converted into foundations, and built upon with rows of new houses. These former ponds have become black, polluted pools filled with trash. The Tuan River has been contaminated by upstream chemical plants. The once-clear river water has turned into stagnant, foul-smelling water. Sand excavation sites and paper mills have taken the place of the river. The elementary school, which villagers once insisted on attending "even if they had to borrow money", has been turned into a pig farm in the interest of generating tax revenue. When the pursuit of economic benefits becomes dominant, nostalgia gradually disappears. These changes expose how nostalgia is commodified, distorted, and even dissolved by capital and the modernization process. Such transformations go beyond environmental and economic concerns; they also reflect a rupture in cultural memory and identity, turning nostalgia from a natural emotional attachment into a consumable symbol. The river was once the center of life in Liang Village. It provided irrigation, drinking water, and was embedded in childhood experiences such as swimming, washing clothes, and fishing. It symbolized natural nostalgia, and, along with the land and clan structures, formed part of the villagers' collective memory. Although sand mining and papermaking brought temporary economic profits, they destroyed the river's cultural significance. The natural carriers of nostalgia have been commodified into extractable resources. Nostalgia itself has been reduced to a symbolic commodity that can be bought and sold. The village elementary school once represented cultural enlightenment and carried the villagers' hopes that the next generation would one day leave Liang Village. Its transformation into a pig farm reflects how short-term economic returns have displaced the cultural function of education. The disappearance of the school signifies the village's severed imagination of the future. Nostalgia is thus reduced to "survival" rather than "development".

Some villagers who achieved success through work or business outside the village have returned and chosen to build luxury villas. These homes are not only upgrades in living conditions but also visible displays of economic power and social status. They have become symbols of success. As consumerism spreads, the rural social structure that once relied on kinship and clan traditions has shifted to one based on profit-oriented relations. The hierarchical pattern of clan-based society has been replaced by contractual relations of the market economy. Human relationships have become increasingly monetized. Wealth and economic capital have replaced traditional criteria for evaluation. Due to out-migration for work, the previously close-knit relationships among villagers have become distant and unfamiliar. Migrant workers, during their brief returns home for the Spring Festival, have neither time nor interest to participate in the public construction of Liang Village. The older generation once believed that Liang Village was the center of life, their home, and that everything within it was closely tied to them. Today, there are two Liang Villages in the minds of the people. One is the private home, the other is the public village. People have withdrawn from public affairs and submitted to the authority of village cadres. The deep affection once held for Liang Village as a place of birth and growth has been replaced by apathy toward the village's development among the younger generation.

When rows of planned, fully equipped villa-style houses rise along the roads and cultural teahouses are quietly established, people hope that improving the rural living environment and reviving cultural forms will enhance the cultural atmosphere of Liang Village. However, they find that villagers rarely go to the teahouse to read or to the opera stage to watch performances. The village Party secretary, finding it too laborious, has only organized one opera show and a film screening. In a village lacking collective memory, cultural substance, and human warmth, how can nostalgia be preserved? It may become a scenic spot or a popular place on social media, but it can no longer provide spiritual shelter for its people.

4. Core factors influencing the intergenerational reconstruction of nostalgia

As society evolves, nostalgia exhibits marked intergenerational differences. The ways in which different generations perceive and express nostalgia are influenced by changes in social structure, the transmission of culture, the development of media technologies, and the orientation of national policies.

4.1. Changes in social structure: urbanization, population mobility, and rural economic transformation

Since the launch of the reform and opening-up policy, China has undergone rapid urbanization. A large number of rural residents have migrated to urban areas, gradually loosening the rigid urban–rural dual structure. At the same time, however, this process has led to rural depopulation and aging problems [11]. Upon returning to her hometown, Liang Hong observed that the appearance of the village had undergone dramatic changes: young people had left to work elsewhere, while the elderly and children who remained behind had become the main population of the village. Many houses were left unoccupied, and farmland was abandoned. Urbanization is not merely a spatial shift; it has profoundly altered the emotional connection between individuals and their hometowns. This transformation has directly affected how different generations experience nostalgia. The acceleration of population mobility has hastened the deconstruction of rural society. The traditional village was a community of acquaintances, but large-scale migration has gradually dismantled this communal structure. The nostalgia of the older generation is built on neighborhood relationships and clan ties, whereas that of the younger generation is more often grounded in individualized family memories and even relies on "rural landscapes" on social media to maintain emotional connections. The transformation of the rural land economy has also influenced the expression of nostalgia. In the traditional agrarian society, land was not only the basic means of production for farmers' survival, but also the core carrier of emotional attachment and cultural memory. For the older generation of farmers, nostalgia is often characterized by a deep affection for the land, which they regard as "ancestral property". Even if they no longer cultivate it, they are reluctant to transfer ownership, as land symbolizes family continuity. This direct interaction with the land endows their nostalgia with strong concreteness and a pronounced sense of protection. However, the implementation of large-scale, mechanized agriculture and land transfer policies has transformed the economic function of the countryside [12]. In many villages, land has been contracted by external capital to grow cash crops. Local farmers either collect rent or become full-time agricultural workers. In the eyes of the younger generation, land is no longer essential for survival. Whereas traditional agriculture's core function was to sustain the family, modern agriculture increasingly tends toward market orientation and landscape transformation [13]. Rural areas now attract tourists through the development of agritourism and the homestay economy. Farmland is turned into tourism projects. The nostalgia of the younger generation may take the form of appreciation for "fields of blooming rapeseed flowers" or "rice field murals", rather than a sense of identity with agricultural culture. This shift renders nostalgia more like a "consumption experience". As a result, the younger generation tends to view land as an "asset" or a "commodity" and is more inclined to support land transfer or monetization. Their nostalgia often lacks a strong sense of emotional responsibility toward the land and is more a matter of economic calculation and strategic choice.

4.2. Cultural discontinuity: the loss of familial affection and the fading of traditional rituals

In traditional society, the family and the clan were the core carriers of nostalgia. The concepts of lineage and filial piety reinforced individuals' emotional attachment to their hometown. However, the simplification of traditional funerals and weddings, the weakening of clan consciousness, and the gradual disappearance of dialects have led to the increasing dilution of the cultural carriers of nostalgia. Among the younger generation of Liang Village residents who have been away working for long periods, relationships with parents and children have grown distant. Daily companionship has been reduced to short reunions during the Spring Festival. This rupture has made nostalgia fragile, turning it into an emotion no longer arising naturally.

4.3. The development of media technology and modes of communication

The advancement of media technology has profoundly altered the ways in which nostalgia is expressed. Many Liang Village residents working away from home stay in touch with their families via mobile video calls, while the younger generation engages with rural life through short video platforms. This mediatized form of nostalgia has changed how people perceive their hometowns. In these videos, the countryside is depicted as an idyllic and pastoral scene, while in reality Liang Village faces problems such as hollowing-out and environmental degradation. The younger generation's nostalgia may be based on beautified, fragmented images, resulting in a virtual form of nostalgia rather than one grounded in authentic rural experience. The elderly who remain in Liang Village use WeChat to video call their children, but such communication cannot replace real companionship. Media technology alleviates longing but also renders nostalgia increasingly abstract. This immediacy of contact weakens the nostalgic experience that traditionally emerged from distance, reducing the emotional intensity of nostalgia. Nevertheless, media technology can both dissolve and reconstruct nostalgia. For example, some young people rediscover their hometown by filming documentaries or writing online literature about rural themes, allowing nostalgia to continue in new forms [14].

4.4. National policies and the symbolization of nostalgia

In recent years, policy discourses such as "rural revitalization" and "preserving nostalgia" have elevated nostalgia from a personal emotion to a cultural strategy at the national level. Liang Village has been renovated to appear more "tidy" and "aesthetic", but such transformation often comes at the cost of erasing traces of original everyday life. When the countryside becomes a tourist destination, some places utilize nostalgia to develop the cultural tourism industry, for instance, by reconstructing traditional residences and hosting folk events. However, this commercialization may cause nostalgia to lose its authenticity, turning it into a performance. As a result, nostalgia shifts from a private feeling to an object of public consumption, becoming a resource for cultural tourism.

5. Conclusion

The intergenerational reconstruction of nostalgia serves as a microcosm of broader social transformation. From the older generation's deep longing for the land and their loved ones, to the younger generation's perception of nostalgia mediated through screens, Liang Hong adopts sociological fieldwork methods, combining long-term village observation and in-depth interviews to deconstruct romanticized images of the countryside through data and case studies. In doing so,

nostalgia is no longer a romantic recollection or imaginative construct. In the Liang Village Trilogy, intergenerational differences in nostalgia reflect tensions between urban and rural life, as well as dilemmas of identity. These generational differences in the experience of nostalgia are, in essence, psychological projections of the urban-rural dual structure. The older generation's nostalgia is rooted in a steadfast attachment to land and collective family memory. The first generation of migrant workers expresses a longing for their hometown and insists on being buried in Liang Village after death. In contrast, the nostalgia of later generations is shaped by economic rationality and displays characteristics of symbolization, commodification, and aestheticization. This transformation reveals the rupture of culture and collective memory. Therefore, the continuity of culture must serve as an anchor for reconstructing cultural identity within a mobile society. Only in this way can tradition acquire renewed vitality in the contemporary era.

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