

Chinese Poets in the Context of Romanticism and Modernism Concept of Symbol/Sign

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S.T. Coleridge's and T.S. Eliot's great influence on Chinese poetry is connected with such categories, as: *imagination, poetry dramatization theory, objective correlative theory, and poetic De-Personalization theory*. Together, they have had a profound and lasting impact on the development of Chinese poetry.

1. The symbol theory of Coleridge and Ai Qing

In *the Rime of the Ancient Mariner*, Coleridge uses a romantic and supernatural imagination to reveal the human interest and seemingly real appearance. He believed that imagination as organic esemplastic power is opposite to fantasy as mechanic combination:

The poet uses the image of Albatross as a symbol of creativity, inspiration, imagination. As the albatross is symbol of Christ spirit, he shows the divine guidance of God. He seems to be a certain core power, connecting the whole poem to the fullest, and the symbol of the albatross becomes the core image of the whole poem.

Ai Qing's poems highlight the expressive function of poetry text and the symbol thinking of poetry creation by reflecting vivid images of reality. Symbol is a concretized feeling, the embrace of the poet from the feeling to the material he has adopted, and the weapon for the poet to awaken the readers. These are all carried out with the poet's imagination and creativity as the core. Ai Qing believes that the poet's brain will always have a kind of magnetic force to the world: it constantly gathers and organizes the images, imagination, symbols, associations of many things... It can be seen that both Coleridge and Ai Qing attach great importance to imagination. The combination of creativity and imagery, in his poem *When Dawn Was Dressed in White*:

*Between the purple-blue forest and the forest
From the ash hillside to the ash hillside
Green grassland, green grassland,
flowing on the grassland, fresh milky smoke. [1, P.145]*

Ai Qing's symbol theory advocates the concrete representation of the real world through image thinking, that is, to convey the poet's feeling of real life through imagery, using purple blue to paint forests, green ash to color the slopes, and grasslands between the two. Green as a transition, and all these colors are surrounded by emulsion-like smoke, appearing moist and full, a kind of cool freshness is blowing in this thick painting, Ai Qing however, with a keen sense of color, he wrote the harmonious and distinct colors at dawn. In Ai Qing's poem *My Season*:

*Black resentment, golden love
They are the same and have nothing to do with me;
And for the care of life,
And what lucky hope,
The remaining leaves that have fallen from the beginning
Tell you everything that is credible. [1, P. 167]*

Ai Qing uses jet black to describe resentment, and golden yellow to decorate love. The raindrops become all-encompassing gray, and the color of the elephant writes abstract emotions. Not only does it not stick to the primary light, but also dyes the colorless. The abstract things become visible, and the colors are imaged. They have life and individuality because they have been infiltrated by the personality and life of the poet. Ai Qing himself said: Give everything with character, give everything with life. This kind of creative technique, which fully combines the poet's imagination and the transformation of imagery, makes the poetry full of deep hazy beauty.

2. The influence of Eliot's symbol/sign theory on Bian Zhilin

Eliot clearly put forward the concept of *objective correlative theory* in *Hamlet* for the first time: The only way to express emotion with art is to find an *objective correlative*; in other words, sign is to express a certain emotion in order to achieve the final form, the external facts of experience must be evoked immediately. The only way for a poet to express emotion in his work is to look for these *objective correlatives* [3, P. 65]. Bian Zhilin not only fully applied this theoretical principle, but also borrowed from western mythology and western modern poetry imagery and applied it to his own poetry creation, which aroused stronger resonance among people. Bian Zhilin's *White Conch Shell*:

*The ethereal white snail shell, you leave no dust in your holes,
Leaked into my hands, but there are a thousand emotions:
The waves are surging in the palm of my hand, I sigh your divine work,
Your wisdom, the sea, you are thin enough to wear beads!
I can't help but exclaim: "You are a clean fetish, alas!" [2, P. 211]*

The poet picked up a snail shell with beautiful markings and shapes like magical craftsmanship, triggering infinite reverie. Bian Zhilin uses the *white snail shell* as the main sign in her poem to expand the association, which runs through the whole poem. First of all, praise the ethereality and purity of the white snail shell, which is the magical creation of nature, which shows the love, surprise and worship of nature. The white snail shell uses a humorous way to say that although its material value is not high, it is not only a white snail shell, but also refers to a natural object that many people think is worthless but actually contains rich spiritual value. In addition, the white snail shell also symbolizes an ideal person. White snail shell is the typical objective counterpart here.

Conclusion

Symbol/sign as an element of poetry is the basic structural core and functional unit like plot in drama and novel, it is a unique narrative method of poetry. The new generation of poets in China kept learning from Coleridge and Eliot, combined poetry with reality and national cultural traditions, and applied western imagination theories, modern *wasteland consciousness*, modern poetry form, and poetic theory into their poetry creation. They have enabled Chinese poetry to reach the level of synchronous development with the world's new trends in poetry.

References

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- 3) 3. Eliot, T.S. Collected poems. – San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich Publishers, 1984. – 221 P.